THE OPEN SPACE MAGAZINE

THINGS THAT MATTER

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OPEN SPACE

spring 2018

OPEN SPACE

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The OPEN SPACE *magazine*

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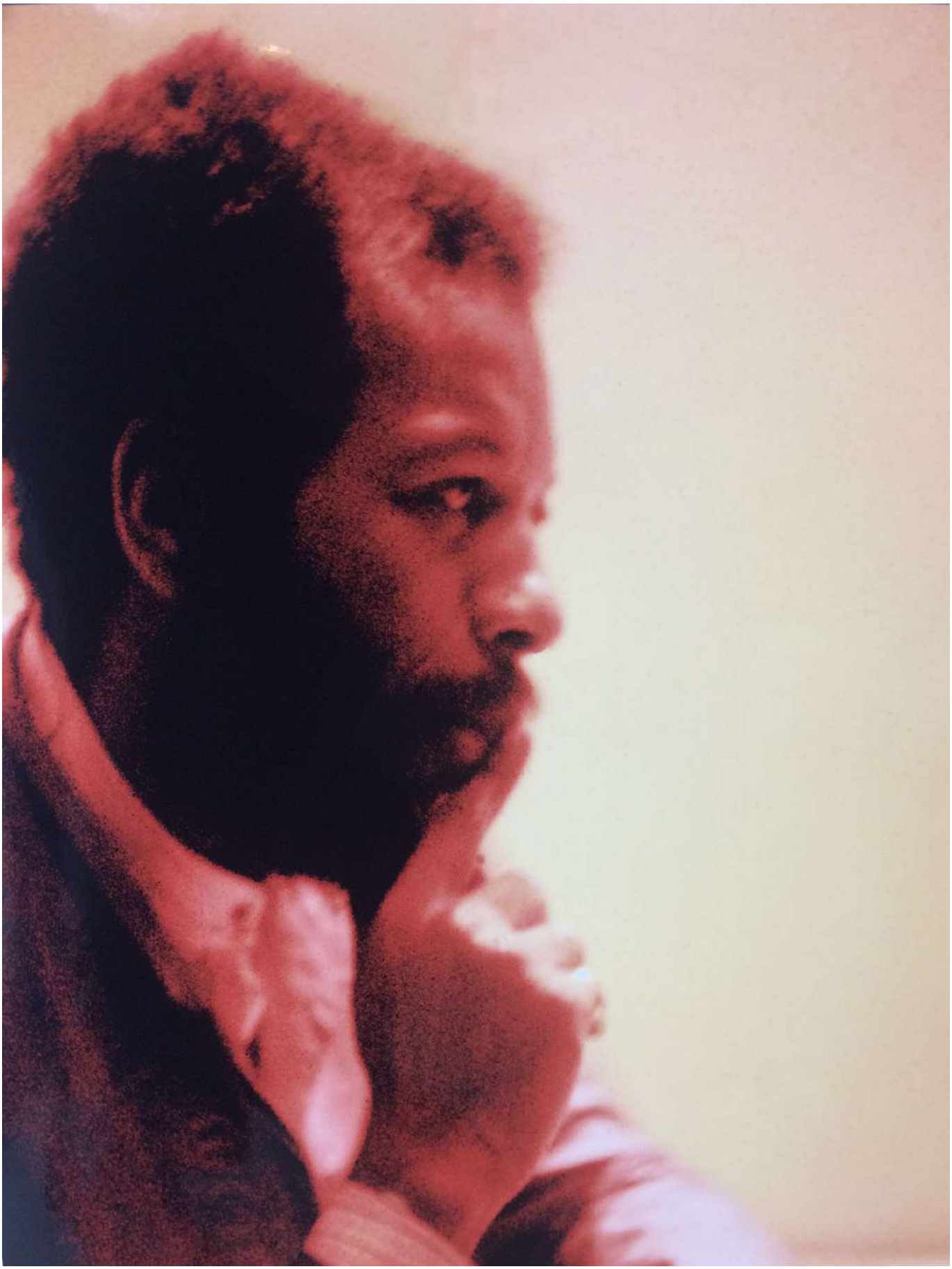
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Ornette Coleman at NYU, March 22nd, 1969. Photo © Alex Harsley

On Ornette

Four conversations around Ornette Coleman

Steve Cannon is a writer originally from New Orleans, a pianist, and founder of the community arts organization 'A Gathering of the Tribes'. He has lived in New York City's East Village for six decades.

Ornette got to town, and the first place I heard him, that must have been in 62, I heard Ornette play at the Five Spot. The Five Spot was located at that time, it was located on 4th St, and 3rd Avenue. And then later, subsequently, the Five Spot moved up to St. Mark's and 3rd Avenue. I used to play there all the time, with Thelonious Monk, and then after that you know, 'Trane played there for a while, John Coltrane. It was a small club, I remember that. I seen him over the years because he played at Slug's because Slug's opened up in town, 1967 and they was on 3rd street between C & D, and Slug's lasted from 1967 until Lee Morgan got assassinated in the damn place in 1970, so it was around for about 3 years and Ornette played there. And, of course, he played Town Hall. [1962]

Oh, he was known, his reputation, he followed his reputation here… meaning that people in New York knew about him because they'd heard his records, you follow? So, he had a name here before he even got to New York, you know?

He did an album [at Prince Street] called 'Friends & Neighbors', it was the old Artists' House. Meaning, it was a scene; he lived and he played there, I can't remember exactly how long that lasted, I think it only lasted a couple of years, because after that, Ornette moved down in this neighborhood [the East Village] to the abandoned schoolhouse, 'cos I remember I went down there with Quincy Troupe, cos Quincy was doing an article for the New York Times, on Miles Davis, and he & I went down to see Ornette, cos he wanted to ask Ornette what he thought about Miles, and Ornette was living at that time in an abandoned schoolhouse on Rivington street, and I think he stayed there for a couple of years before Ornette got that place up in Harlem, you know, he moved up there.

What it was, is a whole bunch of artists and musicians, they lived there, they all lived there together, what had happened, the City had abandoned that schoolhouse, so it was empty, and they just – you know - moved in and took it over, that's all. You know, and they did a combination of things, meaning they made it habitable in terms of a living space, and also they made it habitable in terms of a performance space, and of course rehearsal space at the same time. you follow?

And they fixed it up. You know, brought in the heat, brought in the air conditioning, all that kinda stuff, that was needed to make the place habitable, and stuff like that, you know? Didn't last that long, they ended up arguing among themselves, fighting among themselves, but by that time Ornette had moved out, he had moved up to Harlem at that time, you know, and got a place up there, on 125th Street, off Lexington Avenue, and I remember going up to there, with Jack Tilton (the art dealer) to hear him perform up there a few times.

I'd been living in England, and I arrived here about the same time... Oh, I would say close about the same time Ornette got to New York, so I mean, I followed his career as it developed here in this town, in other words, I would buy all of his records as they came out and listen to them and blah-blah-blah, and you know, if I had a chance, you know, and I had money, wherever he was performing, I would go and see him perform from time to time, with the different bands and things like

that, I remember, you were talking about Moffet [Charles Moffet], I remember when Moffet was playing with him, and I remember when Jack DeJonette was playing with him as well, and you know the various other musicians, and I remember when he first got his son, Denardo, was playing with him, I think Denardo was about 12 or 13 years old, he did an album called 'The Empty Foxhole', and he had Denardo playing drums on that, I remember that, and then the one, the album that put him on the map, as far as what was going on in the art scene, I shouldn't say the art scene, the music scene at that time, was about the time Miles did 'Bitches Brew', and 'Trane did 'A Love Supreme', and he did something called 'The Skies of America'. And that album, and that was the one that really put him over the top, you know, in other words everybody took it seriously and listened to, and everybody paid attention to, and listened to the durned album, and it took on all kinds of critical acclaim, you know, when it came out and all that kinds of stuff, and I saw him perform that piece, ah when Butch Morris was still alive, up at Lincoln Center, with the New York Philharmonic, he did 'Skies of America' up there. You know, he booked that place, that was after he got the MacArthur Award, he booked – what-do-you-call it? - Avery Fischer Hall, for a whole week, and he played his music up there including getting the New York Philharmonic to perform the 'Skies of America', and I remember going to that concert.

Ornette's stuff was so much different from what 'Trane and what Miles was doing, because you know, they came out of a different background, I mean in, oh God, because Miles had been inspired to come to New York because of Charlie Parker, so he was basically coming straight out of bebop, all that kind of stuff, and 'Trane had joined that band, and of course he had been in the Navy and from North Carolina, and had come out of what's his name's band in Pittsburgh? I can't remember, the big band, I'll think of the name of that band in a minute… [Jimmy Heath or Eddie Vinson?] he had played with that band after he got out of the Navy, then he got around to eventually joining Miles and played for Miles for a while.

But Ornette was from Texas, so he's coming with a completely different spin on it, and he's much younger than Charlie Parker, I guess he had heard Charlie Parker, growing up in Texas, I guess, but he took hisself out to California, and then he came to New York. But what people thought of his music in New York City, you gotta remember he came with that goddam plastic saxy-phone, and that stuff just sounded odd, that's all, so, it sounded strange. And plus, Ornette was playing the violin as well as the alto sax, the plastic alto saxy-phone, plus he was playing trumpet! He played all three. You follow, where his style on the trumpet was completely different from what Miles or whoever was celebrated for doing that here in New York, like Kenny Dorham, and Miles and Clifford Brown, or people like that, he's coming from completely, a completely different angle with that instrument, shouting and screaming, and screaming and shouting for the most part, and the same thing, the same thing with his violin playing, [makes scraping gestures] *tch tch tch tch tch*, the way he was playing the violin, and the same thing with playing that plastic horn, and he had a rhythm section, I remember he had a bass player and a drummer, and then he got to the point where he would have two bass players, you know, at some point… with Denardo on drums… and of course, ironically he had Don Cherry playing that pocket trumpet, you know, that little trumpet that Don Cherry played, when he was playing with the band, and then at the same time, the irony is, I always found strange with Ornette, and

which I never was able to comprehend, but I guess he has his own reasons, I talked to him, a few times but I never did enter into deep conversations with him, I talked to him, you know, just to say hello and how I liked his music, shit like that, but I never talked theory with him, in terms of how he made his decisions or the instrumentation that he uses blah-blah-blah… but I was always puzzled as to why he never used a piano player...
I saw him all over the map here in New York City, playing at this place and that place and God knows where I saw him perform at, and - like I said - I had all his records from when they were coming out, as they were being released, and I never heard him, or even seen him you know, even make an attempt to have a piano with him, you know. Hmm? In other words, he made a point NOT to have a piano, more than having one!

My overall impression of him, when I got in, first heard Ornette, you know, I felt like everyone else felt about him, is that it was a weird sound, when I first heard it, you know, really did take a while to get used to that sound, cos I was so busy, everybody paying attention to Miles doing 'Kind of Blue' and Johnny Coltrane doing 'A Love Supreme' and things like that, or whatever Trane was doing at that time, y'know, out the Sound of Music, you know [My Favorite Things] when he broke with Miles and formed his own group, and what was happening at that time, so when I first heard Ornette, that music just sounded strange to me, and then you had this guy playing the violin, and trumpet, all three at the same time, with two bass players and a drummer, you know, & it just took a while for it to grow on me, that's all, you know, but I would talk to Ornette from time to time, but I didn't say that much to him, just say "how you doing" and "sounds great" and "I really enjoyed what you played just now and blah-blah-blah-blah-blah", and that was the extent of my conversations with him, but I would see him, I would hear him, you know, in live performance. I saw him up in Harlem a couple of times, but mostly it was just me listening, and paying attention to the music, and not saying that much to him. You follow? For the most part, you know, just following the music.

Alex Harsley is a freelance photographer who has been working in New York since the early 1960s. He still runs his workspace gallery on East Fourth Street, where he specializes in photos of the changing city, of the black communities, of boxers and jazz musicians.

Well, Ornette was an unusual individual, from when I bought the first album, that didn't make no sense at all. Just like this high-end, European, you know, surrealistic kind of music. It was more like classical.
So, you go back to the 60s, you go back to the 50s, and I think that was the beginning of something that was getting ready to happen in jazz music. A new crop of people's come in, people like me, who now have a certain amount of money to buy the albums, and the radio became the primary vehicle to figure out what the sound was coming, so there were different stations that were promoting different types of music, personalities came up out of that, we had Alan Freed, the rock'n'roll thing… and you had the Night Hawk, the Night Wolf, something like that… with real strange music, and you had Symphony Sid, so these people was, the people who were protagonists of the state of Black Culture. Black Culture basically had got to the point where it relied on itself, money stayed in the community, very little drifted out, you had the barber shop, you had all those pieces in place. Sundays was like, everything shut down on Sunday, so you can imagine, you know, how things became like "that" [makes a tight fist] very conservative, throughout the Black Culture in America, and

the reasons I know most of the time, is that they get some of our best, take 'em to Europe, and they re-educate them. So, Ornette Coleman was one of those 'Special Individuals' that was the jewel, OK? A jewel, in terms, you know, of his overall knowledge and the ability to understand and reapply things, specially in music, specially in complex music, Chopin and all those others, like… and then they (laugh) release him back over here. So, all of a sudden there's money behind this guy, just like, you know, it's New Music. You know, what label's going… you know, in other words, you gotta look at the label of this guy. You know? Look, who's gonna…? [incredulous] Come on? OK?
We used to sit and listen to the music, together, or get the records, and come to different houses, exchange records, you know, it's like a group of people who's basically deep into music and studied music. You exchange ideas about music, you know, you wanna buy that? I'll buy that… I'll trade you that… and so on and so forth, so I was a teenager at that point in time, coming into my 20s, getting ready to, you know, take on the adult-life-hood, right? So, there's Ornette Coleman, and all of a sudden, everybody's [mimes astonished faces, hands thrown up]

"?!?"

We're all looking at each other... and I look in the Village Voice: Ornette Coleman at NYU. "Hmmm… Gotta go!" Back then, I used to be able to question things, and find individuals to actually question about what they're doing. Strange kid, right? So, we're going up to NYU, I was just completely blown away. I began to understand what he was doing. It's like me finally mastering everything, all the tools, and they're at my disposal. Music was, jazz was, at his disposal. He could rewrite it. He could play it, he'd write it in such a manner that anybody could pick up that piece, and take it someplace for five minutes, come back and pick up another piece and take it some other place. [from his hand gestures, it's clear he's talking here about played improvisational fragments, not written music scores] Meantime, you know, they got this thing going on, I said, "Wow, that's really complex stuff, this guy's doing." And then it changed everything. It bridged over into Colin Walcott, Don Cherry.
Don Cherry picked up from where Ornette left off at. It became World Music.

Because Ornette became a little bit more stable, a little bit more realistic about everything, and also, I guess he realized, you know, it wasn't that good after all. Cos he had a nice place over on Prince Street, had the whole building in fact…
He bought a building… [Rivington Street] And things begin to happen. And next thing you know, he gets shuttled up to 125th street there, on Park Avenue. At that building there. And now came the big turnaround in terms of "OK, are we going to continue to support this guy's music? No. Absolutely not. We're going back to Louisiana stuff." So, you know, the Brothers had their program tight together, they stay clean all the time, and they get the Jazz Program at Lincoln Center.

And all of a sudden:

Ornette Coleman is gone.
World Music, is gone.
Back to the 40s...

And the meantime, all the other people that was traveling up through this, like, this 'outside music', was just… the better ones who was able to keep it all together, who at least had some sort of understanding, was recruited into all the colleges.

Where they died.

[You mean, they became teachers? (Nods).]

You know, that music was disseminated across a broad range of people, they came in, they hung with it, and they took it on. Came in, they hung in, took it on. The last place to actually have that was a place called Pedro's. On Avenue B. That was the last place where people could just come and play. And Ornette Coleman, he was this perfect individual [indicates fashion style] but a lot of other people picked up on it, on this thing, because the person started all that off, terms of dress, was Miles Davis. He came along and then the Modern Jazz Quartet (more laughter).
So, Ornette Coleman, basically, you know, he cracked the door, and he was popular, very popular for a while and did extremely well, and when that kind of music becomes popular, you know - it's like rap: people start adopting it, figure they can get something from it too. Deep into Russia, you know, boys walking around with pants halfway off their ass. So, you can say, like, you know, something have to open up the door, so Ornette Coleman's thing traveled all the way around the world it's that popular. Why it was so popular, it was the money that's behind it.
[But Ornette struggled for years, no?]
Sure, sure, sure… now you begin to explain the reality of the Black Culture, ok? These are the people who object, and make it difficult. These are people who got that thing behind them. That's a, that's an enclave. It's the Brotherhood.

The technology was changing fast, just a matter of that audience was left behind, in terms of that age group. They didn't make it across that digital divide. Most people don't look at the technology in terms of music. And the different types of music and the sound of that music. You know, earlier musicians heard the records and they tried to play like the records without understanding there's distortion, you're playing distortion.
Then, in the 50s, they began to clean all that technology up, and Ornette Coleman came in when that stuff was straight up. You hear one of those LPs on a, like, a give-or-take a $50,000 system, your mouth will be open, OK? That was the technology at that time, in terms that most people don't understand. They put a lot of money into that technology… until the very, very end. They got stereophonic LPs, 4 channels, most people don't realize, and then that went away. And everything's converted with digital technologies, so, Ornette Coleman came at that era where it was all about clean sound. Not digital sound. Analog, smoooooth, so you listen to his music, so, you listen on a digital recording it gets [makes jerky waveforms with hands] it's like "that". You listen to it on an LP and it's like the smooooth-ness of the note. You know, in other words there's all that mix, what they call the Sound Stage. You get into the digital re-purposed stuff and say, "Something's wrong with this". And that's where most of that music wound up at. Being remastered. So, it loses that quality that he became accustomed to, in terms of how he played. So that became the issue with a lot of technology. The 20s, the 30s, the 40s during the war when everything… you know, people still using needles, (laughter) it's good enough…

So, we get to those areas, in terms, you know, when he was recorded, those nice microphones, them big old AMPEX tapes, multi-channel, real good Telefunken microphones, yeah, c'mon now…
That's the only way you can hear it. It's the support of technology. Any other way, you know, you wouldn't even listen to it. Especially with his son playing the drums in the background, trying to figure out, "What? It's his son doing that?! Sound like this guy's

been playing drums for 50 years!" It's that clear and that clean. [The Empty Foxhole]
Because they got it properly miked.
It's more about that than anything else. (laughs)
He came in modernizing the whole thing, with the sound, the technology. Everybody else basically went along with the ongoing technology. You come in, understand the technology, you know, you get interesting results from it. Especially if you get the right kind of engineer. And back when I was collecting records I always looked at the record, see who was the engineer. That said immediately to me whether or not it was a good sound. And my major person that I liked as an engineer was Rudy van Gelder. (laughs) 'Walking'? Rudy van Gelder, man. [Sings a melody line, laughs] Rudy van Gelder, man. He knew how to mike them dudes, man, put a little bit of echo in there… steeped it up a little bit more, he was like playing as they were playing. With the controls. So, it's like a musician, you know? Whatchacallit, the conductor?

Leonard Easter is a Harvard educated musician, and a Columbia educated lawyer who worked with Ornette in the 1980s. He continues to work with artists, musicians and not-for-profit organizations.

I once represented Ornette, as his lawyer for a while - being Ornette's lawyer was basically being more of a legal confidante. We used to talk about a lot of things not necessarily limited to legal, and being with Ornette was like listening to one of his free-form pieces - there was no direct or imposed structure - these conversations went anywhere and everywhere, sometimes about things we didn't intend to initially cover and not limited to legal concerns or problems. He was a pretty free-form person, but I suspect he knew where he wanted to end up all along.

I first met him – during the 80s – at a holiday benefit performance for an arts advocacy organization in Harlem. Ornette was featured with Ronald Shannon Jackson's band (Vernon Reid was part of the line-up). Ornettte, of course, was the big draw. And it was my impression that he did this performance to make a significant musical statement in Harlem. The audience should have been larger but I thought Ornette in particular performed very well. Shortly after that, Ornette came to me for advice in forming his own nonprofit music and education organization.

At one point, Ornette acquired a 'sweetheart option' to purchase a former school building on Rivington Street, on the Lower East Side. He wanted to form a community center, of sorts, encompassing a musical recording and performance and educational space that would appeal primarily to kids. Of course, he took up residence and rehearsed there, loft style - it was kind of funny because each classroom had a distinct function: he lived in one, performed in another, etc. However, it was tough for him to raise the necessary funds to finalize the eventual purchase of the building. I know that he wanted to form a non-profit for this project but eventually everything fell through and he had to relocate.
It was difficult because he not only lived there, but he tried to renovate and maintain it himself. He became a bit discouraged when, late one evening, someone broke in and smashed him across the back with a crowbar causing one of his lungs to collapse. He did eventually recover, but there was that lingering fear factor for a while that he wasn't going to be able to ever play again.

In his own way, Ornette was very focused - he wanted to educate people about his manner of musical exposition he developed called Harmolodics - I guess it flowed from

his concept of Free Jazz. I believe that Ronald Shannon Jackson, who was also from Fort Worth, Texas, picked up the notion of Free Funk as well as Harmolodics. I can't really adequately explain what it is, but I do recall that Ornette was constantly working on a book about it. I saw the book in progress at one point, and I know he was constantly revising and reworking it. I don't know what happened to it. I don't think it's ever been published.

I once tried to get Ornette to explain Harmolodics to me and I had a difficult time wrapping my head around it. I'm a lawyer and I probably needed to have a more musical head to really understand it. I believe his basic thing was, Harmolodics involved the combination of all kinds of elements equally, like harmony, melody, and movement of sound - all equal elements that truly reach their zenith together in improvisation. Words really don't do it justice - I guess only an open musical process, approach, or result does. I wish I had that book for his direct words. And he had often indicated that young people would be better able to understand it, because they were not tainted by the usual traditional music education and theory. Harmolodics was his, and he was very proud of the fact that it was his.

I do know that Ornette strongly felt that his music should be exposed to a wider audience if he went the way of electronics. When Miles came out with 'Bitches Brew' [1969] many musicians started tilting that way, and Ornette felt that he and his music could be similarly popular. He experimented around and did a lot of "interesting" stuff, ("Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead"; "Yoko Ono and the Plastic Ono Band"). He craved a wider exposure. Some of this may have been money driven.

I remember one time, he came to my office with two proposed projects, well, three, really: one was, he wanted to show me his work-in-progress - the Harmolodics book that he was working on; the second was a tune he wrote that he wanted to "pitch" to Major League Baseball, it should be like a baseball song, it was about baseball, he had the whole tune written out, he had a score, he had everything else. I thought it would be interesting because at that time, I mean I used to be somewhat of a musician - I could look at charts, you know, and hear them in my head – I thought there might be a bit of a difficult translation for that type of tune that was written for translating being a baseball tune, that they do at stadiums, but he insisted that this is something they should push, it would work, as an official song. I thought it would be a very difficult sell.

Then he come up with the idea of a presenting a major live performance run at Madison Square Garden. He believed that he could "fill the Garden". I remember telling him:

"Ornette, a lot of people do appreciate your work, but I don't think you got… I just don't think you can pull that off."
"No, I can do it, I just need a gimmick."
"Well, give me something."
He says, "Well, you know, I could get Yoko Ono."
And I went, "Naaah, gimme a break."
He says, "No, I could call her right now, if I wanted to."
I said, "If you can do that, call her up. Show me something!"

So, he goes into his pocket, pulls out an old nasty wallet, you know, it's almost as if you could see the moths flying up, reaches inside, and gets this crusty piece of paper, takes my phone, and calls. After a bit of chit-chat, Ornette says, "She wants to talk to you." So, I get on the phone, and it was Yoko Ono. I fell out of my chair - and she says, "Anything Ornette wants, I'll do it". Now, I'm excited. After the call, I ask Ornette, you know, how

Yoko Ono, could fit in all this. He says, "Well, you know, I don't know exactly what she would do, but her stuff, you know when she performs it, it sounds like a woman sitting in a bathtub full of ice having an orgasm". And I never forgot that image… (laughter) He didn't necessarily say he didn't like her music, it was just basically for the novelty of the situation, but he was willing to do this concert. Eventually, the logistics did not work out. But anyway, he was, you know, he was willing to go that route.

One further thing was Ornette's reaction to a lot of what he would say was constriction - people being uptight - he thought people were constantly uptight in their thinking and he blamed it all on Fascism. He always called out Fascism, you know, "Fascism is handcuffing us, constricting us", doing, thinking, playing, and everything, and that we had to break out of it.

I never heard him talking about things being *racist*, it was always *Fascist*. He felt that freedom was constantly being hemmed in by prevailing cultural norms, by whoever was in power, doing what they were doing, he felt that there was a constant attack on Freedom and that any attack on Freedom was an attack on what he considered expression that needed to be unfettered. He would go off on that all the time - all the time.

He appreciated young players. I saw him show up at concerts of people like Vernon Reid, who used to play with Ronald Shannon Jackson, and eventually formed a band called Living Color.
Oh yeah, you know he had a lot of people who played with him, and he really respected younger musicians - he always was open to young people with different approaches to the music.
Ornette would often show up wearing his blue suede shoes. I used to always laugh at those signature shoes, but I guess he was making his statement with them - kind of old school.

[Why did he never use a piano?]
You know, I'm not aware of that. That's an interesting question. What's also interesting is, Ornette could play violin, so it may have been that he might play with people who played instruments that he could approach or play, or something. I don't know, you know? It's like the old Miles thing: Miles used to be very hard on pianists because he wasn't a pianist himself, a keyboard player… So, I'm just wondering if it was just that Ornette was not comfortable with it, or maybe… I really don't know.

Ornette was – at least around me - very shy and, you know, he could be very humble, very quiet. Usually artists of his stature would come around with an attitude and an entourage – but he would just show up at my office by himself… he was quiet, he would listen - he could listen - but when he started talking, you had to sort of back up and let him unfurl his train of thought, and always the subject of Harmolodics would come up. He was that much into it. It's surprising to me if that book did not survive. I saw it - it was a handwritten thing, all in his handwriting, and he would carry it around, he would add some things, he would scratch some things out, but he had it. You can tell a lot by the way someone writes music - handwritten strokes and all that stuff - the way they write a chart - you can tell a lot about them by looking at that. It would be fascinating.
[Oh, now we have our Holy Grail]
Absolutely, and now it's got me thinking I should pursue this. A free-form chase.

I'm gonna see if I can track it down.

I'll let you know what I find out.

Jack DeJohnette is a percussionist, drummer and band leader from Chicago who played with Ornette on 1986s 'Song X' album with Pat Metheny, as well as notably being the drummer with Miles Davis seminal bands in the late 60s/early 70s which brought out the revolutionary 'Bitches Brew' among other recordings.

When I first heard Ornette, when the records came out in the late 50s early 60s, when I was in Chicago, you know, I liked him right away. What he was doing was different, and of course a lot of musicians couldn't understand what he was doing. But it was pretty obvious Ornette was a complete musician, he studied Charlie Parker very closely, and some of the music he did - like where he used a pianist with chords - ['Something Else!', Contemporary, 1959] and people still didn't get it, but Ornette always stayed true to what he believed in with his Harmolodic concepts, you know, he just stuck with it and he's one of our big innovators.

Ornette opened up the way the rhythm section could play, and the need for chord changes to improvise, so most musicians know those rules and Ornette had musicians that knew how to express themselves, without chord changes. So, you know Ornette's influence affected greats like Sonny Rollins and Miles Davis, and Sonny used Ornette's rhythm section, his drummer, and his trumpeter, Don Cherry; and then Miles did an album called 'Miles Smiles', where he didn't use any chord changes, so you know, Ornette's influence, later on, got to a lot of people.

I think it's parallel development. You know Ornette was very open to lots of music, yeah. To world music. Most musicians are, rightly so.

I got the chance to really get to play with him and his son Denardo, when Pat Metheny put the band together with Charlie Haden, with Ornette and Denardo, called the "Song X Project", [1985 & 86] which we recorded, and actually subsequently two albums came out of that [1986 & 2005, expanded]. But we toured the States and played Ornette's music, and it was really great to get down the changes and play with him, and to experience how his music affected people like Pat Metheny, you know, who really loved the way Ornette wrote, and the way he played, the way he told his story on the alto saxophone.

You know, Ornette's concept of Harmolodics, I think it was a need for him to take charge of what his music was, so that the critics wouldn't brand it. Cos the critics were branding music all the time. And so, I had my music - I called it multi-directional music - and Ornette... you know, that was a way of the musician taking charge of what that music was being called, so when anybody referred to Ornette's music they would say 'Harmolodic'.

So, he designated that. If he wrote it out theoretically, it's like being able to play in all the different clefs, at any time, you could play in any key at any time, in the music. So, you aren't encumbered by having to stay in a fixed tonality. But also, he went beyond that, you know, he'd play sometimes where he was speaking in tongues, where it's like complete free expression, but in a way that communicated to the musicians and the audience.

He was very serious about what he was doing. And very focussed and, it doesn't get any better than that, you know?

(interviews by Russell Craig Richardson, early 2018)

Being matter recorded

Cecil Taylor on/poetry

CHRIS FUNKHOUSER



Chris Funkhouser performing at 'Open Plan: Cecil Taylor,' Whitney Museum of American Art, April 2016. Photo courtesy of Constellation Funkhouser.

After my first firsthand encounter with Cecil Taylor's work in Charlottesville in November 1986, I never would have imagined having a series of extraordinary experiences with him across the decades that followed. Seeing him that first time, a two-hour solo concert during a thunderstorm, I didn't realize music could exist in such a different aesthetic universe — concert as a poem: words, movement, and sound, ominously beginning, "A stroke, the night." I had been exposed to all kinds of music and was a student of jazz via courses centered on the Smithsonian Collection, which included something of Cecil's work, but experiencing it live was as if someone from another planet came down to embody what music and performance could be — that every norm could be reshaped, if not broken altogether. I was in graduate school at the time, coincidentally reading D. H. Lawrence's senses of Whitman ("breaking a way ahead … pioneering into the wilderness of unopened life," a "strange camp at the end of the great high-road") and fused it to awareness(es) that began to grow during the concert. Cecil's "Avant Hard" (a phrase I wrote in a journal that night) spirit and actions (finger, corporeal, and mind ballet, letting sounds out of his body that are there) were intensely appealing, far removed from anything I'd known previously, a mystical event for me ("we look for the light light light") that dramatically certified Cecil as an artist of untouchable, seemingly unapproachable quality, a type of wizard/master operating on an entirely different register.

Five years later, a housemate in Santa Cruz had acquired a tape of Cecil's poetry, *Chinampas*, which completely blew our minds. Shortly thereafter, through our work with We Press, we met a poet named Trudy Morse, who was part of one of his Workshop Ensembles, and We ended up releasing a piece of theirs on one of our cassettes. Meeting Trudy was a fortuitous connection, as she was working closely with Cecil; perhaps a type of gravitational relationship was developing. After moving to Albany, still under the spell of *Chinampas* and with Trudy's encouragement, I finally communicated with him, writing, in essence, a gushing fan letter with questions. Cecil responded with a series of phone calls and an invitation to meet at his Brooklyn home for an interview in September 1994. Why? He explained that no one had ever approached him wanting to discuss his poetry. About half of our 400 minutes of conversation on the subject was published in *Hambone* 12—one of my most treasured publications.

I saw and heard Cecil perform many times during the 1990s, and at one point he and I made plans to construct and issue a collection of his poetry, although it (disappointingly) never came to fruition. Nonetheless, my admiration is total (and I am overjoyed to hear rumor of a typeset manuscript, finally, more than twenty years later). His readings at the Poetry Project during this period were phenomenal events that left a permanent impression on me, projecting language so intricately and musically, gathering forces and spirits to exalt "the power of utterances / as system / as meaning." To be in his company was always an occasion of great fortune.

Late last year I read an announcement for the April 14–24, 2016, Whitney Museum of American Art's Open Plan exhibition dedicated to Cecil. I did not, for a moment, imagine being part of it, and was most surprised when Jay Sanders, a Whitney curator, contacted me in January about participating. I accepted the invitation and set out to prepare something engaging.

I found the cassettes of our conversation, boxed in silence for more than twenty years. A couple of them had decayed in places, though overall they were in decent condition. Digitizing them, I listened carefully and made notations on a printed transcript. Listening a second time, I collected fifty-two samples of things he said with regard to poetry and what might be construed as poetics, including two passages that did not appear in *Hambone*. We talked about many things the night we met in Brooklyn, and revisiting the dialogue was an expansive experience, to say the least.

In advance of creating these audio samples, what I would do with the material was unclear. The idea to make an interactive, multitrack apparatus for the exhibition performance arose during the process. Using Ableton Live software — a component of my practice in various capacities over the years — turned out to be the perfect choice.

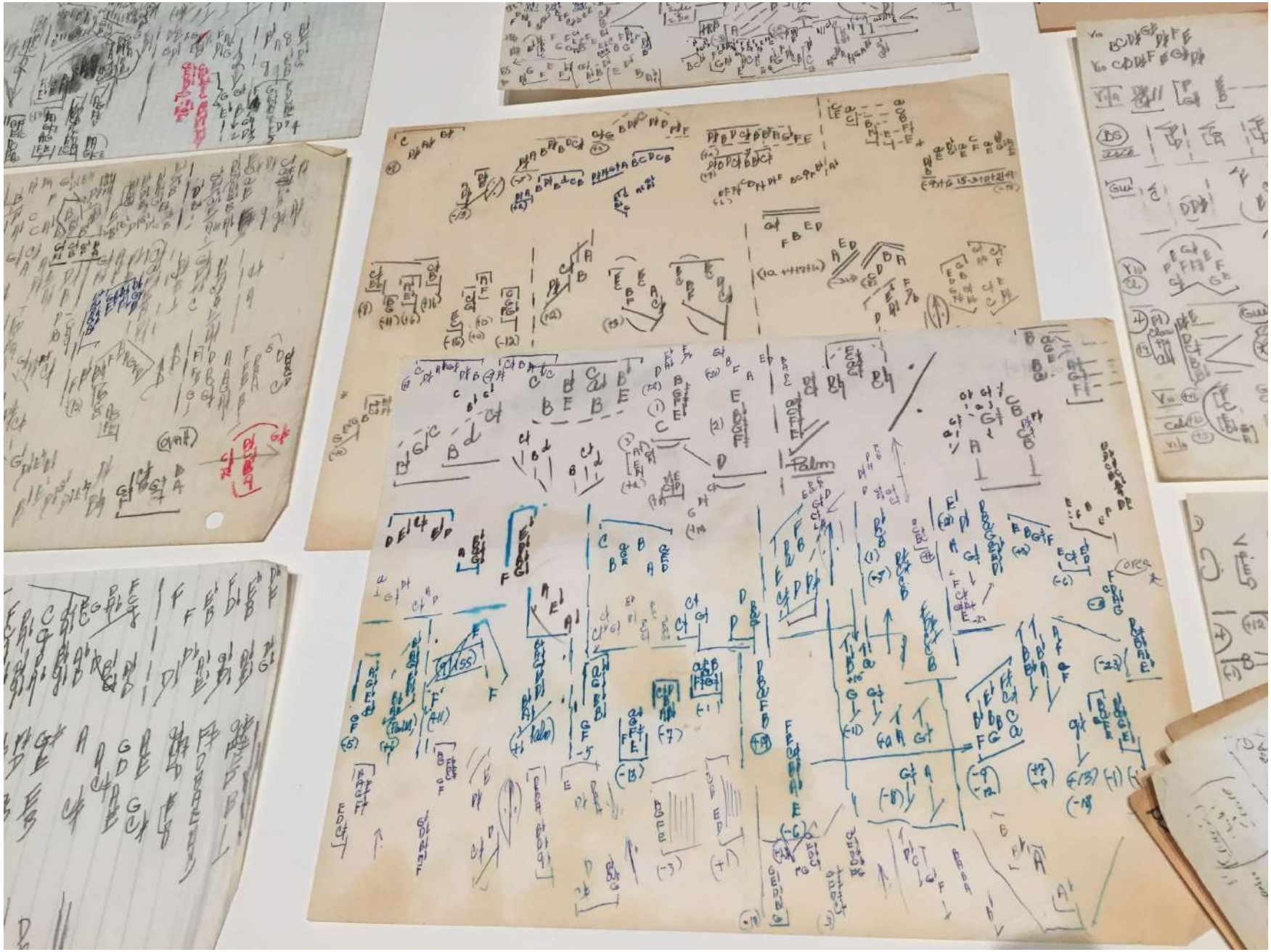
Then, as I experimented with layering Cecil's words about poetry, it seemed wise to include some of his poetry alongside them in order to create a more broadly indicative sound collage. Since most people who know Cecil's poetry are familiar with the *Chinampas* recordings, I shied away from them and instead found a few examples on YouTube and transformed video to audio. To those, I added my documentation of one of Cecil's Poetry Project readings, and recordings from a poetry performance he did in Troy, New York, provided to me by George and Susan Quasha.

A few decisions about selecting content and organizing and preparing the material had to be made along the way — some hierarchizing was in order — though these aspects of the project were not especially difficult, because Cecil says so many elegant and interesting things. Coupling his comments with poetry, shifting back and forth between the two forms, enables fuller context to emerge. A ten-channel audio sketch suitable for museum presentation — on an April 22, 2016, bill with Tracie Morris and Susie Ibarra, Fred Moten, Jemeel Moondoc, and Ensemble Muntu — came together without excessive turbulence, requiring mainly copious amounts of time for technical preparation. Its title, "improvised is how the voice is used," is part of Cecil's answer to a question about improvisation in *Chinampas*.

Once the exhibition material was ready to go, I decided to make an online version built on the bones of a JavaScript/HTML5 interface I have been cultivating (at first in consultation with digital poet Jim Andrews) since 2012. The online version of the material includes all of the selected samples from the interview, whereas the concert version omits a few. Conversely, five of the poems featured at the Whitney are not part of the online application.

To explore our "improvised is how the voice is used," visit us.

— Chris Funkhouser
Rhinebeck, NY
April 2016




Palm
ORCS

Review of Baraka & Taylor at the Poetry Project (2000)

CHRISTOPHER FUNKHOUSER · SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2018

Since Harry Nudel's account of the Baraka/Taylor reading in NYC last week was at least a little incomplete (and maybe unfair to the point of being offensive) I wanted to present a (re)view (defense?) of some of what else went down at that event, since both these poets have taught me to write (and right) the scales...



Baraka at the Poetry Project, 2000, photo by CF

The reading was in the main hall of St. Marks Church, about 80% full at the outset (a thoroughly mixed crowd, btw), probably 250-300 people on a grim (wet & cold) night weatherwise. Nice setting: downstage huge tropical plants from Hawaii, leftover from Easter, fresh roses by the podium; plenty of serious and engaged folk in the audience. After Ed Friedman's intro, Baraka began as he often does, by demanding the production of revolutionary journals and theaters. On the pulpit, he begins by reading part one of ALLAH MEAN EVERYTHING (see http://web.njit.edu/~newrev/v2s4), which held the audience spell-bound. He continued by reading a series of shorter poems, including "Pilgrims Progress" (where both god & the devil are addressed as "motherfuckers"), and "Lo-Ku's" ("the african-american version of haiku", e.g. "you can pray all day/and get no answer/but dial 911 and the devil will be there in a minute"), all interspersed with AB scatting. He read his elegy to Stokely Carmichael, a poem for Newark (humming along with riffs from a Stevie

Wonder tune), and - perhaps the highlight of his set – a new piece called "A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR GIULIANI'S DISPOSAL (IN FORTY ONE VERSES WHICH ARE ALSO CURSES)". To give you an idea of what these curses consist of, here's the first few:

Gather all the people Giuliani has hurt

They should slap him forty one times

With forty one sticks, forty one bats,

On his bald head or across his hat.

Let 41 wolves attack him and a poison

Snake wrap him

Forty one coils around his neck

Then let these animals bite and infect

Him

Until he shows humans he

Respects them

Run him over with a police car 41 times

Let the people he framed choke him

And put him on a box covered with Lime

But don't nobody kill him

Keep him alive, every morning at 4 am

Wake him up and start again

Forty one blood tests

Forty one needles

Forty one pills

Forty one enemas

Forty one baths

Forty one questions

On Forty one pads

Asked by 41 psychopaths.

The piece went on, vigorously and viciously, for some time, and is one of the bravest poetic rants I've ever heard, central to location and cultural circumstance (Ginsberg would be proud). Baraka then finished with a poem ("Between Red & Ultraviolet"?) which ends "we is/we is/we is/we" & massive applause. It was an enthralling performance in the Negritude-plus vein, in itself comparatively well worth the price of admission ($3 for Poetry Project members). & Imagine the perceived magical synthesis the next day when we hear that the mayor has cancer!



Cecil Taylor at The Poetry Project, 2000 photo by CF

After a longish break, Cecil Taylor began, customarily, without introduction. The reading, according to John Fiske (recording engineer) was 57 minutes, about 2/3 the length of one of his musical sets. Cecil's poetry is musical but in a way much different than Baraka's. His writing is unusually stylized; those who stayed around for it were definitely moved, changed - some submerged in contemplation or reflection, others lapsed into dreamlike grinning states through the calm, steady barrage of image and sound. "Negative capability",

the willingness to go along for the ride (suspension while listening/processing, submitting to the poetry), plus various degrees of patience and interest always absorbs me in the experience of Cecil's use of language, the scientific and artistic themes and mastery embedded in it.

On this occasion, everything in the poem did have to do with vibration (of one form or another, esp. music as vibratory essence), and language, or as he said, "the prosthetics of sound" (and thus the power of it). His perspective on the unions sounds can create is immense, and (to me, a musician for 20 years) inspiring. So to read later that it was a "poem out of H.S. chemistry book" really made me wonder if Nudel and I were in the same room that night, or if Nudel went to a really special high school. I don't recall any sections on or continuous connections to Monk's Rhythmaning, Candello's architecture, or poets dancing etc. in any of my teenage schoolbooks. Cecil may go into a drone during readings, but also sings, chants, moves within it to a heightened state. The language is very intricate, gathering forces and spirits to exalt "the power of utterances/as system/as meaning." He fried our circuits with them.

Since he was speaking of vibratory essences, I shouldn't have been surprised when, after 30 minutes or so, cell phones began to ring. Half the audience was visibly agitated because of the reading's duration; there was restless commotion in the back. Others traveled about in the space of the poem and moment. An artist was sketching. When Cecil sensed people's impatience, did he stop? Hardly: A false ending, followed by a sigh of relief from the beleaguered, was followed by more poetry. Cecil kept going, lightly prancing behind the podium! By the time he quit, the audience was 1/3 of what it had been. I had a feeling that some people were disappointed that Baraka and Taylor hadn't performed together, as a local entertainment magazine (Time Out) had implied. Hmm.

So much, and enough...

--Chris Funkhouser



Barakacrostics

Amiri's
Memories
Include
Rapping
Intensely—

Brothers
Against
Racist
Aggression,
Knockout
Attitude;

Always
Meaning
Immensely
Rigorous
Insolence

Berating
Accountable
Retro-
Anachronistic

Kansas
Astutely;

Among
Many
Individual,
Relevant
Inventions

Black
Arts
Rethought
America's
Klan
Atrocities;

Avowed
Media
Interventionist
Records,
Inks

Beautiful
Albums
Reverberating
Affirmed
Kaleidoscopic
Aspects;

Actively
Making
Inroads
Reaching
Inextricably

Bridging
Aptitude,
Reality:
Audaciously

Keenly,
Affably;

Attitude
Meant
Integratively
Reacting
Instantly

Baraka
Always
Rails
Against
Kleptocratic
Authority;

Aristotle
Moveover!
Impending
Radiation
Isn't

Benign—
Authentic
Ruins
Allocate
Kooky
Anguish;

Appointed
Mentor
Immediately,
Regionally;
Iconoclast

Buzzing

About
Resolving
Arisen
Kinship
Always;

Assiduously
Mouthing
Independence
Reversing
Indecency

Bedlam
Adjoins
Rapport
Advances
Knots
Aloud;

Availing
Man's
Instincts
Responsibly
Intervening;

Bemazed,
Astonishing,
Righteous:
A
Kahuna
Alive;

Avant-garde
Music's
Imaginative
Response

Inspired

Bones,
Accurately
Reflecting
Art's
Kinetic
Acme.

For the next issue (N° 21) of The Open Space Magazine
we are inviting a wide range of people of many interests and practices
for this project. It begins with a provocation, a cover image:



as the title of our issue. To be interpreted by each person in the way that seems most relevant and meaningful to them in the context of how things (of whatever nature) stand for them at this moment in world-time.
We hope very much that you will participate and contribute to this project.
Please let us know, if you will.
Cordially,
Ben Boretz & Dorota Czerner

Pieces gratefully received from the following responders:

Elaine R. Barkin Tildy Bayar Barbara Blatner Benjamin A. Boretz Jessica Sue Burstein Warren Burt Carmen Chan Billie Chernicoff Noah Creshevsky João Cunha Dorota Czerner Lila Dunlap Daesha Devon Harris Jody Diamond Tom Djll Peter Downsbrough Keith Eisenbrey Jon Forshee Jean-Charles François Christopher Funkhouser Fernando Garcín Romeu Scott Gleason Anne Gorrick Steve Greene Heide Hatry Mikhail Horowitz Nikolaos Katranis Travis Brock Kennedy David Kettler Marianne Kielian-Gilbert Neal Kosaly-Meyer Roman Kossak Caroline Kraabel David Lidov Joshua Banks Mailman Claudio Marcotulli Arthur Margolin Hune Margulies John McGinness Joel Newberger Tamas Panitz Russell Craig Richardson Todd Rossmann David Sachs Ed Sanders Catherine Schieve Wanda Siedlecka Mark So Harvey Sollberger Janyce Stefan-Cole Charles Stein Chris Stover Martin Supper Fátima Vale Peter Lamborn Wilson A.J. Williams-Myers Brian Wood Guilherme Zelig

On One on One

Love, what is it but space and time rendered perceptible by the heart. (Proust, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff)

A nameless *frisson*
courses,
consumes,
does not have to tell what it is,
or that it matters,
or what mattering is,
just comes into being as an engulfing deluge,
or a consuming holocaust.
incavates as feel, as meme,
as signifying
without symbol,
without voice,
what makes hard, what makes ecstatic, what burns being, what screams NO!!!STOP!!!
what matters before it means.

me.
81 ÷ 9
yrs
old
Anna Livia Plurabelle on crappy headphones
in the Brooklyn Public Library.
It was the same as music, no one told me it mattered,
It just was what became me, I was those notes,
Those wordshapes, those shadows of being
being manifested or evoked,
The world what it was only instantaneously as the flashes of now,
every flash a transformation,
some transformations remake consciousness, what there is.

And it lodges as lifelong recollected miracle, this spontaneous instant outbursting of a suffusing inner music by the invasion of a particular sound from without. Often retold in self-revelatory posture, easily assimilated as the model epiphany of those indelible expressive moments in which what Ralph Shapey called "the graven image" was permanently embedded in the receptual DNA coloring every subsequent experience. But even as I tell it, and even as my inward mindtrack traverses the event and its

descriptive recollection, I suddenly feel the infinitesimal inchoate gap between them, and realize that something else has been created in that gap, in the inscrutability of the experience and what can be captured of it in any language about it. How does it happen, this spontaneous instantaneous ignition of an overwhelming suffusing music within me by the entry into my body of some arbitrary noise. The cognitive link between one and the other seems a cosmic gap, which has been leapt in some unidentified dimension of being. Description can only capture the boundaries fore and aft, the measurable and determinate and material phenomena and experiences but never the passage between. What is in being in that cognitive gap, what our living through it has brought into being, is without dimensions and characteristics or operational mechanisms; specifically: a mystery.

It is the pure immateriality of these transcendent experiential phenomena, that seem to define globally the essence of mattering, that arouses me; they seem always to be sonic phenomena, immaterial time-objects made explicitly and exclusively of sound and yet unmistakably saturated with unmistakable selfhood: life's very first thunderstorm with its spasm of total terror gigantically metastasized by the absence of any accompanying spatiotemporal visualizations. How, from within our metrically spatialized rational prisons, do we contrive to ontologize these undenotable events? How are we even able to, or to conceive doing so (the force of the experience compels us.)? Should we even imagine the possibility of a hardwired Chomskyan innateness of soundlanguage, or even explicitly of musiclanguage? Innateness: is it not a strange and sinister noun?

But - on the bright side - should it not follow rather naturally that organically nonverbal phenomena would in any case have no descriptive/explanatory metalanguages, verbal or any other kind. Particularly since the very notion of metalanguage is, well, linguistic. And can denotation denote the not-there? Even if it has feelable presence? And if perhaps Time's arrow has no arrowhead, after all, what then? But that still leaves us, at least, speechless.

So it seems that the coming into being of mattering is prima facie a work of imagination: the conceptualization of a supervenience connecting a scatter of transcendent purely psychic episodes by an act of imaginal set-creation. But set-creation is in the quantified material world mere bricolage, disjuncted from the sensing world by the same transformational gap; the sense of sense that directs it is vanished in the conceptual gap between concept and content and leaves only a determinate-feeling energy on one side and a neutral aggregate of denotables on the other.

So are the things that matter not things at all? Or are they things metaphorically separated from the mattering attributed to them, the mattering which they are felt to have occasioned? When I play my music for you, and it doesn't matter to you, I know by something that happens in my being that we have together conjured a space of mutual nonconsonance, that where we each are is not quite in the same world, or at least not the same room. That kind of experience (which one has had) makes me think of that

primal shock of originary cognitive dissonance which simultaneously and instantaneously forces every infant's revelation of other, self, and the world; the moment that compels the discovery, really the invention of thought, as an emergency tool conjured in panic to restore sanity, equilibrium, cohesion. From the outside, ontological creativity appears to be volitional, "the chosen"; but from within it reads like Stravinsky's "I do not seek, I find". And, "I know there's a real world out there, because not all of my fantasies work" (-BB)

But then – from that moment forward – it does matter; the *frisson* that is the discovery of the threat of annihilation is also the discovery of the dimension of significance, of the hierarchy of urgencies, eventually in the birth of language, of the orders of meaningfulness.

I know what matters: it is that which only I could know that it matters.
It is that from which I can't separate [detach] myself from myself.
That which I can't separate myself from.
That which clings to every neuron
Laminated within by what lodges from without.
The music inside that matters is my significant being;
Comes into being by the refraction of music without.
What Is left as I dissolve, become no more;
what is left is that which matters.
That music
that makes the music inside to be
You cannot speak of listening
of an exterior transaction exchanging sentience in detachment.

It's not that music matters,
It's that music confers mattering
Upon me
Upon you for me
I know the insucking feeling of mattering
From inside of a music
Inside

You can harvest that mattering, learn how to transport it among things that happen of a kind, between kinds, sustain the emberglow in the afterfade, against the numbing defense against the mattering that pains, the unavoidably seen unacceptable, turning the incoming energy into a practice of engagement, learning how to engage, how to re-vision the inchoate eruption of mattering
as a music.

As I go forward,
There is no succession

There is only subsumption
Every then in each now
As then is in now
Gives now its now.
Do you want to know why music matters?
Because it doesn't if it's an It: If it

- Can be located
- Understood
- Deconstructed
- Reanimated
- Recommended
- Given agency
- Contextualized

To substitute substantiality for mattering.

But mattering contains only the content of the moment of experience
Indelibly disappeared.

The *frisson* crystallizes in spectres of imagination,
Looming over the network of experience,
transferring its feel as the images of significance:
Nothing can matter except by being imagined so;
Nothing can happen in the absence of that imagining
creating what it experiences
creating what there is to experience,
creating the experiencing of what it creates.
Building lifelong a psycholocation,
which might be called:
the place of mattering;
it is
formed
of the uninvited jolts within
from the music-transactional cauldron
within.

benjamin boretz 3/18

A Bagatelle—Fiddling While Rome Burns

David Lidov, Toronto

Top of my mind, today, are a few E-flats, sounding just over the octave above middle C. I am going to focus on two of those E-flats even if they don't matter to anybody else right now because they matter most to me.

The THINGS-THAT-MATTER gauntlet would have been easier to snatch in '68 or '72. I might have said stopping the war matters. My late wife was chronically ill and couldn't take the air downtown. I might have said not living downtown mattered.

Matters to whom? Even back then, I would have quickly yielded if challenged. With less than a minute of reflection, I would have been ready to acknowledge that my concerns didn't matter outside my personal world's time, didn't matter to the Milky Way or the cosmos beyond. (And I had a habit, partly programmed, partly accidental in my upbringing, of not acknowledging the sense of self-importance that I was sometimes blindly acting out.) Of course it wasn't just me it was us, and I would have brushed the reflection aside—almost. At least, that's how I remember it now.

Now? What was less than a minute's dismissive reflection has become a half-second's reflex and harder to ignore. Global Warming on one little planet hardly matters to the universe. Might one not, just as well, be obsessed with an E-flat? Sure.

To start then, those E-flat's are for piano in No. 6, the last *Bagatelle* in Beethoven's last set, Op. 126. This *Bagatelle* has a very unusual form, mostly slow, calm music, maybe five minutes, but before and after there is one phrase, under 8 seconds I'd say, of loud, fast music. The description may not strike you as immediately indicating something extraordinary; however, I'm pretty sure I don't know a precedent for such a musical architecture, and you have to wonder why he did that and how he pulls it off. How it can make sense, that is, not be incoherent.

Ironically, what is incoherent is in truth the question whether something matters to the universe unless you have a theological construal of the universe as some sort of mind or God. Surely I always knew that. I should have never admitted the question of mattering

to the universe as having any dismissive bearing on my own interests, whatever. Mattering to me, to us, to any mind is the only smattering of mattering that is coherent. Years later, I understand that that false question of mattering to the cosmos has never been anything but a cover-up for discouragement. When young, I could quickly push it away with fantasies of what WE could accomplish: Stop the War! Care for all the children! Empower the workers! At my present age, the "We" progressively getting pretty diffuse for the standard reasons, plural is shrinking towards singular. *I* will not be able to clean up the plastic in the oceans. *I* will not be able to stop Netanyahu from wiping out the Palestinians or Assad from gassing folks. *I* will not be able to stop global warming. But, Ah-Hah, I may well be able to enrich your understanding of that crazy piece by LvB—if only I don't get discouraged!

I will try that. Directly. But having mentioned Global Warming, I also need first to mention a certain book, mention it right away because I haven't read it yet and lost hope. I could feel less impelled to mention it if I don't write about it before I risk reading it. It's a book you may know (of) ? It was on the NYT best sellers list. Paul Hawken's *Drawdown*, his program not merely to reduce but to reverse global warming. It is irrelevant to Beethoven's *Bagatelle* (What isn't!) and vice versa but it drew my attention to the role of discouragement or pessimism that came up above. (No, no hint of pessimism in the *Bagatelle*.) *Drawdown* hints at a possibility for optimism though I have seen the author (on video) saying that he doesn't know if it will work and his focus is Hope not Optimism.

[That happens to have a purely personal connection with music for me which is why I bought the new book. I had the luck to run into a little piece by Hawken in 2014 which distinguished hope and optimism, hope being what's needed *when there is no reason to hope,* that is, no basis for optimism. I think I've seen the distinction in older sources, but at just the moment I read it, I had a compositional problem to solve with my music theatre piece and his essay on hope did it.]

Compositional. Problem. What I am about to suggest came to me as a surprise after I started writing this piece, and so at the moment I'm not sure how much sense it makes. Our brains have an often irrational compulsion to find connections. [Irrational, sure, but it worked a lot for survival where what mattered was it kept us fittest throughout evolution.]

In the *Bagatelle,* it is not a big stretch to hear or play the *presto* phrase as optimistic (By the way it is *forte* not *double forte*) and hear the slow part as hopeful. That could have been a motivating emotional framework for Beethoven, but such an interpretation says nothing about how he pulls it off. We want a structural connection, don't we? For many of us, finding a thread of a structural connection matters more than what might seem, without it, a merely arbitrary emotional attribution. Not sure why. Why think of any emotional representation as arbitrary?

E.g. Isn't it heart-warming (and charming and flattering) that we were invited to have this dubious conversation in print? On paper? Not just on twitter or linked-in? I get a real nostalgia rush. Even though maybe we shouldn't. Which has the bigger C-footprint? We can make some of it up by re-cycling. Paul Hawken reports that increased paper recycling (There is already a lot. I think he reports 45% or maybe 45% in certain areas. I've heard that used paper is already the principal matter used to make new at some of our paper mills here in Ontario) would save the equivalent of almost one gigaton (0.9) of carbon in the next 3-4 decades. Tiny, actually, but in his scheme every bit counts. Upgrades to refrigeration can save WAY, WAY more. 100 times more. Were we writing for only online, that's not carbon free. I don't know the costs, but I know that maintaining the so-called "cloud", the heroic information storage facilities, entails refrigeration as a huge, primary expense. Will it at least be re-cycled paper?

More and more we will see how much numbers matter.

Let's follow that segue: Numbers.

The E-flats on my mind are on the 9th half-note beat of the opening *presto* in two-two and the 9th eighth-note beat of the second phrase of the main tune of the central *andante* in three-eight. Both E-flats are phrase finals, though the first launches a hefty after-beat gesture and the second is joined at the hip to a further 9-beat phrase, a contrasting codetta to the tune. You could see the parallels with a score example. I don't know whether a score example is appropriate in a general essay but I think they would probably let me do it as a footnote so I will send it along. If you read music, you can see one phrase is not a variant of the other, but there is a degree of correspondence (necessarily,

putting it on paper exaggerates the cherry picking) that, along with other events in the piece, shows how those E-flats tie things together. For me it would really be fascinating to know Beethoven's thinking about the 9's, and on a personal level would matter a lot, as I will explain later on. This *Bagatelle* is truly speculative in sticking firmly to a very unconventional compositional structure that was probably decided on before it was embodied in sound. Persistently ending phrases on the last upbeat of a metrical group, though there is always some of that at critical points, is opposite to Beethoven's signature tendency to compose extended passages where phrases lead to a final on the next downbeat *after* their own metrical group, just as he does in the Presto: eight half notes (a full metrical group) plus a downbeat. Not to mention how unusual for him 9's are. The first section (i.e., up to the first repeat) of the Andante is five three-bar (9-beat) units, a weird metrical structure for LvB, little heard from in his world-time. Weird enough that he wouldn't have just written down the sound without thinking about the numbers, concerned more with pattern I suppose than, like in *Drawdown*, with tolerances, standards and quantities.

In sum then, here's the first section of the *Andante:* Two three-measure groups for an internal prelude—marked by open pedal, two more for the tune—in four-voice choral style, and one more for that codetta—in a schmaltzy, waltzy, flowery style marked with *both* bass staccatos *and* open pedal, and offering a new upward-reaching figure that will be the main matter of the next section. Then this whole section repeats. (The codetta may become a problem. Artistic, not global.)

After the repeat, the music continues with like metrical construction, though beginning with the main exceptions. The next 11 measures would have been 12 measures, but the last measure (destined to be the emphasized final) is elided, replaced by downbeat one of the returning five times three-measures form described just now as section one, now in a different key. Thus, (12-1) → 11 = 3 + (9-1) → 8. (And the 8 measures are arranged to dramatize the "wrong" ending.) Also, over compensating for leading into this return with only twelve (in reality eleven) measures instead of fifteen, the immediately next part, the returning fifteen measures, has an inner extension (to the "prelude") to make twenty-one

measures. All of that is section two and is then repeated. After this second section's repetition, there is a final, third, section which I would call the actual Coda if I hadn't used the word codetta above, one more of 15 measures, five three's like at the start although in the second and third three-measure groups (which are nearly the same) hemiola intervenes to blur boundaries.

By the way, I'm not diagramming *all* the correspondences and relations here. This is no technical essay. I'm brandishing a fragment of analysis to reclaim my ~~right~~ (nnn) ~~entitlement~~ (rrr) ~~privilege~~ (mmm) **IMPULSE** to feel that *explication du texte* still really matters even in an evil, corrupt and endangered world-time when Black Lives certainly can more or me, too or the mess in Washington.

As I'm saying, part of the weirdness is landing gently but firmly, which the melody continually does, on the 9th beat of those three, three-beat-measure groups. "Group" is a word I used to postpone and emphasize a key decision: Should I say "phrases"? Should I say "hyper-measures"?* {*If you, dear reader, are a normal person like a poet or visual artist and don't know the hyper-hop rap of the academic Music Theory bureaucracy, just hang in. A hyper-measure is a measure-like group of two or four or in this case three notated measures. Or other multiples, etc.} In respect to what matters to me *personally*, alluded to above, as a sometimes music theorist, the incompatibility of phrase rhythm and hyper-measure is way up there. The contest between the two is, in my apparently lonesome opinion (Perhaps lonesome because I didn't publish enough about it, doesn't matter) an axis of difference almost as prevalent and fecund as the tonic-dominant axis. Beethoven does amazing things with it all his life. But here you don't feel it's just happening "by ear." It's calculated. This Opus 126 was published one year after the harrowing play of increasingly faster triplets (also sounding wonderfully calculated) in the first half of the last movement of his last piano sonata. It almost qualifies as what the American maverick composers (J. Tenney's term) call "experimental" except Beethoven is quite able to say when enough is enough and raise the stakes by diverting from plan.

The incompatibility is, phrase dominance implies weight on the beginning and ending. Hypermeter implies similar weights on downbeats of the same rank alternating

with upbeats, like when you ice skate to the *Blue Danube,* your legs doing fours on top of the waltz-time threes*.*

Weight, I hope you know, doesn't mean loudness. We feel it in music for various reasons. I can not calculate it in any way like the gigatons of 'carbon-equivalents' for greenhouse gases you read about in *Drawdown.*

Traditionally, the kind of rumination here engaged is called "speculative" music theory in contrast to "practical" like the names of notes and chords. A bit like *Drawdown,* which is both, practical measures discussed in an extremely speculative framework. BUT. Suppose the *Drawdown* project as speculatively outlined can do 40-75% of the job it speculatively claims to do. It would still be a huge step forward on two fronts. First, it considers ONLY painless (financially and to lifestyle) projects and ONLY projects already underway. Hard to believe those two categories exhaust our capabilities. The second front is

NO. Wait.

I paused a moment to read what I so far wrote, and I can see it gets very distracted and confused. Sorry about that. I shouldn't imposes my agitation on the reader if anybody reads this. I do apologize, but not 100%. Let me try to be entirely frank. I may not have yet so thoroughly expunged my doubts as I pretended at the start. Maybe the *Bagatelle* is just an escape from what, right now really matters. (global warming, nuclear threats, abuse. . .) Anxiety is a quite legitimate distraction meaning that if there are conditions in the world that create anxiety, don't blame yourself for being distracted! And, Here we are! seemingly decided to toast everybody in inverse order of wealth of course in a greenhouse gas oven of our own making and still supposed to pretend we can tippy-toe around Adorno's proscription!? Anyway, I'm not the only one Am I!? Don't you think that is why we are suffering the spectacle of these two nearly respectable and experienced editors just throwing up their hands, giving NO direction, and provoking their loyal contributors, some nearly distinguished and extinguished, to write about things that were better left unthought never mind unsaid ? ! How much truth do we want?

You Beethoven fans may be getting exasperated, but second front is exactly there. How much truth do we want? Surely, motivating people to ACT must be *Drawdown's* goal, not just Hope. Hope (which often retreats into inefficacious spirituality) does not provide sufficient direction to do that. Hawken didn't look at that in his essay or blog or whatever it was. Optimism unleashes energy and persuades and reinforces our commitment. With good practical wisdom, your *Drawdown* offers not just hope, but some *plausible*, Hawken says "*credible*," *optimism* which is a strong antidote to paralysis (and also powerful *nourishment* for hope, also needed.)

What best lends plausibility to optimism and liberates our mindset is *trusted information*. (A factor but not of the same sort in musical analysis.) Trusted, but, to be sure, not necessarily completely true. Still, the need for trust points to some contingent requirement for more than a bit of truth. Maybe a balance between the whole truth and selected truth. No formula for this! It is more like art. Might I possibly say Beethoven got a good balance between optimistic and hopeful in Opus 126, Number 6?

Saying the slow music is hopeful sounding is not arbitrary however unprovable. That kind of association is my usual schtick, so you can see how I mean it in my books and articles or with Manfred Clynes's discussion of hope in *Sentics.* Saying the fast blips of music are optimistic is harder to rationalize though not so much harder if you broaden the description to include cheerful, confident, victorious, energetic, joyful and exuberant. The package fits. I figured "optimistic" was more fun to say in this context, though such a precise characterization, not necessarily wrong, wouldn't have come to me without the present, exterior provocation.

The only question of truth in musical *analysis* is whether you can accept my observations, and these are always available for you to inspect, verify, deny. Unlike the assertion that increasing reliance on recycled paper might prevent almost a gigaton of atmospheric carbon equivalent of green house gasses in the next 30 years, but only for practical reasons. My assertion that the opposition of phrase and hypermeter is totally palpable and playable and hearable might need some time for someone to try out, but

rarely 30 years. *You* can deal with how *you* hear the music. *You* are the authority. Not so with carbon. You could take on the authority to evaluate the evidence but it's a long trek.

To treat the nine-beat unit as a hyper-measure means more weight on the seventh eighth and less on the ninth eighth. This latter is not an impossible interpretation. But not to acknowledge competing pulls of 7 and 9 trivializes classical style. Phrase versus meter. Not necessarily yes or no—something to balance.

The issue of balance is quite different from truth. Here, the comparison, if admissible, would be rhetorical art with musical art, with *music* not with music *analysis*. Balance, however you define 'subjective', is. Truth we usually regard as not. Would the right balance of optimism and hope in music be an example of "artistic truth"?—a concept I honestly do not understand. (Could it have helped to have read the issue of *Open Space* on artistic truth?) The great thing about art, I often think, is being better than truth with no recriminations therefore, the opposite of what matters for *Drawdown.* Art being the necessary escape that the by-way of analysis connects to. No, never mind artistic truth. We will find more challenging issues in this *Bagatelle.* Matters of balance. Pedal and staccato in the dangerously *Biedermeier* taste of the codetta figure.

Another difference. In the case of a political/technological program, finding the balance of skepticism and truth versus hasty optimism to get truly "credible" optimism could be an ethical challenge. You know, some philosophers lump ethics and aesthetics together. We love truth but cutting corners to promote possibly helpful resistance to global warming, that is quite thinkable isn't it? There are people I love more than truth. What wouldn't I do to spare them the meltdown. Paul Hawken's essay, or blog or whatever that was did not speak of love. We need love. We should have no fear of a cliché as long as we really mean it and it really means what we must say. Like Beethoven's architecture, Hawken's scheme won't work without love. We wouldn't be energized. We wouldn't bother.

In the recapitulation of the hopeful tune, the four-voice choral setting is transmuted. The tune sings in octaves over a trembling, deep bass of fervent inner energy. It calls for some further attribution in emotional imagery. Perhaps hope empowered by passionate

love? And the E-flat is postponed nine more beats, and moves up an octave. Oh! That E-flat! In the next fifteen measures, the melody calls for it and postpones it in the ninth, twelfth, fifteenth measures, all the expected places, but we don't get to land on it until the end of the concluding *Presto.* Ah! Such is the E-flat economy, the E-flat ecology! The tonic, the Doh, the Roman numeral I, the keynote in Beethoven's glorious, noble, elegant tonality of E-flat!

Yet, the beloved E-flat, our hope, our cheer, is not a call to action, for hope is not a call to action. Some people have wanted to hear his IXth Symphony as a call to action but of course at most it never was if maybe an image of that. *Drawdown* is.

Hope and Despair are our calmest responses to the incongruences of the situation of the beloved that we see and the situation we want. We see the world in strife and out of balance; we want it to be in peace and harmony. And therefore, if we love the world, we hope. Or despair. It's all knitted together. Love weakens skepticism, thereby boosting optimism. Love helps us get to work on it, but plausible optimism may insist on the work when hope will settle for prayer. When truth bolsters the credibility of optimism we must pour it on, and when not, file it. Between oblivion and awareness, lie Heaven's gifts of filing cabinets and hard drives.

And in *Drawdown* I admire the *practical* wisdom of the no contribution is too small approach that welcomes every person to do their bit with 80 active and 20 potential projects duplicated and reduplicated around the world meaning that there is place for you to pitch in in the way that best matters to you. (I got this from other presentations. Praying the book won't pull the rug out.) Begin with inadequate measures; keep building. From common short motifs, arching melodies. From little acorns, oaks.

How can we titrate hope against optimism if love is not the solute? Or truth against promises if love is not the solvent? No love, no hope. No optimism, no chance of a snowball in hell that enough of us will roll up our sleeves and get to work.

Some of my notes here have been pretty sour, but not all my thinking is. I'm not saying love is enough! As God says to Eve in my theatre piece *Drought*, "My love won't pay the rent." But we wouldn't even get started otherwise.

To speak of optimism or love or hope in writing about that *Bagatelle* goes way beyond anything the score itself including Beethoven's character markings can justify, but I think that is OK. You must know the anecdote about Toscanini's preparation for the premier of Verdi's *Requiem?* Very hesitantly, Toscanini asked Verdi apropos of a certain moment in the piece whether it would be permissible to take a retard; none was indicated. The maestro replied to him, *Of course! You have to retard there! But can you imagine what conductors would do if I wrote one in!!?* In music notation, Beethoven knew as well as Verdi, there must be restraint, poetry, suggestion. And in the music itself of course and also elegance. Influenced, it may be, by the well-attested memoirs painting Beethoven's social manner as sometimes boorish and clumsy and some inelegant letters he sent, it is easy to brush over the importance of elegance to Beethoven. It mattered enormously. His pride, as pianist, in a meticulous legato. When we speak of the final quartets of his later, ripe, middle-age style we talk much of profundity and spirituality, but when he boasted of the quartets himself—actually, I recall just one instance in his correspondence and am not sure where—he mildly claims only some originality in voice leading. Legato! Voice Leading! People, that is a shout out for elegance. And if he merely marks "*amabile"* for his *andante* here and "*compiacevole"* for the *Bagatelle* Number 1, more is made available to us than is spelled out. Don't leave out of account the Romantic idealization of intimate friendship and conversation.

An overriding, persistent and lofty goal for him, but I would never say that balance between confession and elegance came readily or dependably to Beethoven, and sometimes we have to figure out how to keep the used car salesman in check. That has to be our guiding light in resolving the paradox on a modern piano the wrong instrument of course of simultaneous pedal and staccato in what may be the most spiritual or the corniest phrases here and even the hardest challenge to the performer after the difficulty of resting ones mind on the music in these agitated and confusing times. Even if we can't address the hottest burning issues of our disastrous age by fiddling around with half pedal and just barely perceptible accents for staccato, that doesn't mean our effort doesn't

matter, but it may mean accepting to live with some distraction when our meditation isn't perfect.

Was the matricidal and Christian-slaughtering Nero Claudius, rumored to be plucking his cithera through the great fire of 64, really not distraught by the plight of Rome? Wikipedia says he was actually quick to organize food relief. As with Richard M Nixon, some good points surfaced afterwards.



Fernando Garcín Romeu

DECALS

Breathing.
Clothes on a clothesline.
She says: "Listen. Our story is made of gamma rays" (when she has something important to say she always whispers.
The *Fermi Gamma-Ray Space Telescope* detects a weak tiny voice coming from supernova remnants with gamma-ray bursts like ours).
To listen to unknown musicians.
Reading a few pages of Proust and
W. Benjamin every day.
Writing in my mind words I never commit to paper.
One basket of oranges: 1 euro.
5 different lotions for 5 different parts of my body.
Yesterday's menu is tomorrow's menu.
Talking to strangers.
Girls fight back and I hope they do it well.
To pay off my 5 loans and to buy bread and get a free hug.
Portugal annexes Spain and our new Capital is Lisbon at last.
She says: "Hey, thank you for the rain you have brought. It's even better than the nights we took nolotil on the green sofá, dancing with no clothes on, pulling out all the stops."

Quid, quae te pura solum sub nocte canentem audieram? Numeros memini, si verba tenerem. (Virgil)

"I'm a turtle that dreams. / I'm a dabadaba swing. / I see you draw borders / but you can't draw me. / My flesh is already a border. I'm already a country!" (Fer Song)

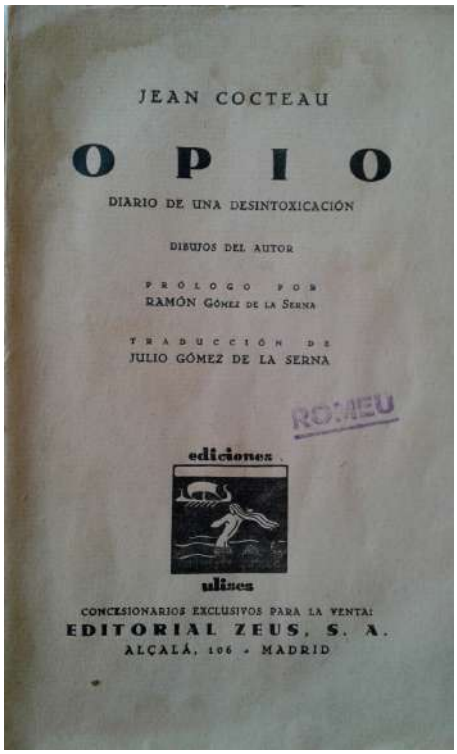
CALCOMANÍAS

Respirar.
Tender la ropa.
Dice ella: "Oye, nuestra historia está hecha de rayos gamma…" (Cuando tiene algo importante que decir siempre susurra. El hilo de voz detectado por el telescopio Fermi después de la explosión de una nova).
Escuchar a músicos desconocidos.
Todos los días leer unas páginas de Proust y unas de Walter Benjamin.
5 cremas diferentes para diferentes partes del cuerpo.
El menú de ayer es el menú de mañana.
Escribo en mi cabeza pero no lo pongo en papel.
"Hoy tenemos una cesta de melocotones por 1 euro."
Hablar con desconocidos.
Las chicas se defienden y espero que lo hagan bien.
Pagar los 5 préstamos y comprar pan y un abrazo gratis.
España es anexionada por Portugal y la capital ya es al fin Lisboa.
Dice ella: "Oye, muchas gracias por la lluvia que me has pensado. La bebo despacio, con avidez. Es mejor que cuando tomábamos nolotiles en el sofá verde, bailando sin ropa a todo trapo."
Quid, quae te pura solum sub nocte canentem audieram? Numeros memini, si verba tenerem. (Virgilio)
"Soy una tortuga que sueña, soy un daba daba swing. Te veo dibujando fronteras pero no puedes dibujarme a mí
Mi carne ya es una frontera: ¡Yo ya soy un país!" (Fer Song)

Nazaret. My mother's voice on the phone. Photos she gave me: my mom and all her cousins on the beach at Nazaret, when Nazaret had a beach, before business destroyed it. My grandma as a little girl with Blasco Ibáñez when the writer visited her family in Godella.
Why my granddad let me 'borrow' as many books as I wanted from his house. "Soon the barbarians will be upon us", he used to say.

Nazaret. La voz de mi madre en el teléfono. Mi madre y todos los primos Alfaro en la playa de Nazaret antes de que la barbarie del dinero la arrasara.
Mi abuela de pequeña y Blasco Ibáñez visitándola en la casa de Godella.
El porqué mi abuelo me "pasaba" libros de su biblioteca ("luego vendrán los bárbaros" decía).





Hence, I have a first edition of "Opium" by Jean Cocteau with the dedication - "Vive La Révolution, 1931" - in the author's hand; the biography of "Charles Baudelaire" (1931) by César González Ruano - the first edition with a foreword by Ramón Gómez de la Serna; a first edition of "Du côté de chez Swann" by Marcel Proust (Calpe publishing house, 1920).
And then, paella…

Tesoros: la primera edición de "Opio" de Jean Cocteau, firmada por el propio autor con un "Vive la Révolution" en 1931, año de la edición, o la gran biografía de "Charles Baudelaire" escrita por César González Ruano, cuyo prólogo está fechado en abril de 1931, o la primera edición de Calpe de "Por el camino de Swann" de Marcel Proust de 1920. Y luego el arroz...

Masha: "I get vertigo but that's only when I'm not flying."

(You never ask me what I mean. That would be like asking lips what kisses mean).

πάντα ρεῖ

To start the washer. To brush my teeth.
To hell with it all. He said. Before leaving. A long time ago.
The song about the Syrian refugee woman.
To get in touch with the woman who shot the photo.
To smoke only a little bit.

Nothing has been done for a while but today maybe not, my eyes haven't seen the rain that has not fallen for a while, I've done nothing for a while but it's so noisy to see you it's not possible close your eyes dream I've done nothing for a while but

These sunglasses are not mine they're yours:

"The very first day we met you asked me for the moon. Since then I've been reading fishing guides and some fishermen's books. I practise rod and line every night. I cast it as far as I can...

Jo(h)n Perdu
Buster Keaton over and over again
Talking to my nephew Juan
To sleep

Masha: "Tengo vértigo pero solo cuando no vuelo."
(Tú nunca me preguntas lo que quiero decir. Piensas que sería cómo preguntar a los labios qué quieren decir los besos).

πάντα ρεῖ

Poner la lavadora.
Lavarme los dientes.
La canción sobre la refugiada siria.
Contactar con la fotógrafa.
Fumar solo un poquito.
Música.

Hace días que hace que nada pero puede que hoy no los ojos me lloran que no llueve hace días que nada pero con tanto ruido verte qué imposible cierra los ojos sueña hace días que nada pero

Estas gafas de sol no son mías son tuyas me pediste la luna estoy leyendo guías del buen pescador:

... every time it rolls she is like a rock. The last day we met I already knew there was going to be some trouble between this lonesome fisherboy and the moon."

Hay que joderse. Dijo. Antes de irse. Hace tiempo.

Jo(h)n Perdu
Buster Keaton over and over again
Hablar con mi sobrino Juan
Dormir

II.
MESSAGE TO D. WHO MONTHS AGO ASKED ME HOW LONG SHE HAD TO WAIT BEFORE REACHING ADULTHOOD AND DOING WHATEVER THE HECK SHE WANTS TO DO

Hope dies last? No. Breathing dies last. Keep on singing. Keep on dancing. Your breath is your metronome. Take risks. Bet it all. Make mistakes. Misprint, miss Sprint. Mistakes are seeds. Good choices don't make anything grow.

Don't follow the well-trodden path. Do not define yourself. Get out of the pot.
If they tell you this way is good, try the other one. If they say you are pure poetry, be prosaic, even dull, eat with your fingers, show them how your old socks smell.
If they say they know you well, that's not true. Run out without looking back.
They are going to suss you out.

When the man in grey is lurking in the bushes, splash him with your magenta paint.
To be alone is not always to be alone. To live with someone is not always to live together.
Walk in unexpectedly. Walk away without explanations.
The world is nothing but your fingertips. The world rises from your fingertips and your blue pupils and nobody has the right to bite the apple of your eye.
This other kind of real world they sell you as 'current' is just accumulated dust, promotional items, they want to sell out before yesterday. Those who are sleeping rough don't even see them let alone pay attention to them. Nor should you.

II.
MENSAJE PARA D. QUE UN 29 DE FEBRERO ME PREGUNTÓ CUÁNDO SERÍA LO SUFICIENTEMENTE MAYOR PARA HACER LO QUE LE GUSTA

¿La esperanza es lo último que se pierde? No. Lo último que se pierde es la respiración. Sigue cantando. Sigue bailando. La respiración es tu claqueta. Arriésgate. Juégatelo todo. Equivócate. Los errores son simiente. Los aciertos no crecen.

No sigas el camino trillado. No te definas. Sal del tiesto.
Si te dicen que por ahí vas bien, prueba por allá. Si te dicen que eres pura poesía, sé prosaica, come con los dedos y muestra a qué saben tus calcetines.
Si te dicen que te conocen bien no es cierto. Sal corriendo, te van a fichar.

Cuando te aceche el hombre del traje gris arrójale una dosis de tu pintura magenta.
Estar sola no siempre es estar sola. Estar acompañada no siempre es estar acompañada.

Llega sin avisar. Vete sin avisar.

El mundo es una prolongación de la yema de tus dedos y el azul de tu pupila.
Ese mundo que te venden como aquel en el que habitas es nada más que polvo acumulado, historias en promoción, ofertas para que compres más.

Los que duermen en la intemperie no las escuchan, tú no tendrías que escucharlas.

Treat animals well. Your cat, your dog, your what-the-heck-it-would-be. Love comes only from them.
Move your legs. Take care of them. If you are going for a walk with someone you met just for the pleasure of a good conversation he will not have the slightest right to stare at your legs.
If you rent a room or even buy a house remember well, houses don't belong to anybody. Don't trust landlords. Landlords – or landladies - are the kind of people who always talk about rental deposits. You should always choose who you want to deposit your trust in.
Brush your teeth well every day. Take care of your gums. Or else you will end badly like me.
If you paint, write, make photographs or whatever, and they ask you what's your style, answer them your style is now. If they ask you what your genre is, tell them it's a mix of feminine, masculine, and masks of laurel leaves.

Run away from the noise that won't let you be your own noise. Read books that talk to you and not the books they are talking about.
Listen to Mahler and listen to The Clash. There's no difference. It's just music.
In these modern times of big amnesia it seems old-fashioned to cross the road when a crowd in uniforms is coming, or a priest. But you never know.
Be careful when heatwaves come. They offer fans to schoolchildren. They could offer you a job as a wave tester, and all the people around about will be yelling parties are parties. You are the only party. The only and unique wave.

Trata bien a tus animales. A tu perro, a tu gato, a tu-lo-que-sea.

Mueve las piernas. Cuídalas bien. Si alguien no sabe dar un largo paseo contigo solo por el placer de escucharte y caminar no tiene el más mínimo derecho a mirarlas.

Si alquilas una habitación o una casa, o incluso si la compras, recuerda que las casas no son de nadie. No te fíes del casero. El casero – o la casera- es esa persona que habla de depositar fianzas. La confianza la depositas en quien tú quieras.

Lávate bien los dientes. Cuida las encías. Podrías terminar como yo.

Si escribes, pintas, haces música, cine o cualquier otra cosa y te preguntan cuál es tu estilo, di que tu estilo es ahora. Si te preguntan qué genero practicas, di que una mezcla de femenino, masculino y máscaras de laurel.

Huye del ruido que no te deja ser ruido. Lee libros que te hablen y no de los que te hablen.

Escucha a Mahler y escucha a The Clash. No hay diferencia. Hay música.

Ahora se considera anticuado cambiar de acera cuando se acerca un bullicio de gente uniformada o un cura. Nunca se sabe.

Ten cuidado con las olas de calor. A los escolares les ofrecen abanicos. A ti te ofrecerán un puesto de probadora de olas y lo harán gritando que la fiesta es la fiesta La fiesta no es la fiesta. La ola eres tú.

Distrust the ones coming to you and saying enthusiastically that all is simple. It's not so simple. It's much simpler than that.

Desconfía de quien viene a ti a gritos y riendo como si fuera tan sencillo. No es sencillo. Es más que sencillo.

When they tell you to count to three, don't do it. When they tell you not to say so much, count your words and keep on talking.

Cuando te digan que cuentes hasta tres, no cuentes. Cuando te digan que no cuentes tanto, cuenta con ello y sigue contando.

Do not take into account messages or advice. Not even this one. Messages can arrive from anywhere and some are so brief they dont leave a lasting scent.

No hagas mucho caso de los mensajes. Ni siquiera de este. Llegan mensajes por todas partes y son tan escuetos que no huelen.

Wash your clothes and don't hoard. Second-hand is perfect.

Lava la ropa y no acumules mucha. La de segunda mano es perfecta.

III

ESTRAGON
We always find something, eh Didi,
to give us the impression we exist?
VLADIMIR
Yes, yes, we're magicians.
(S.B.)



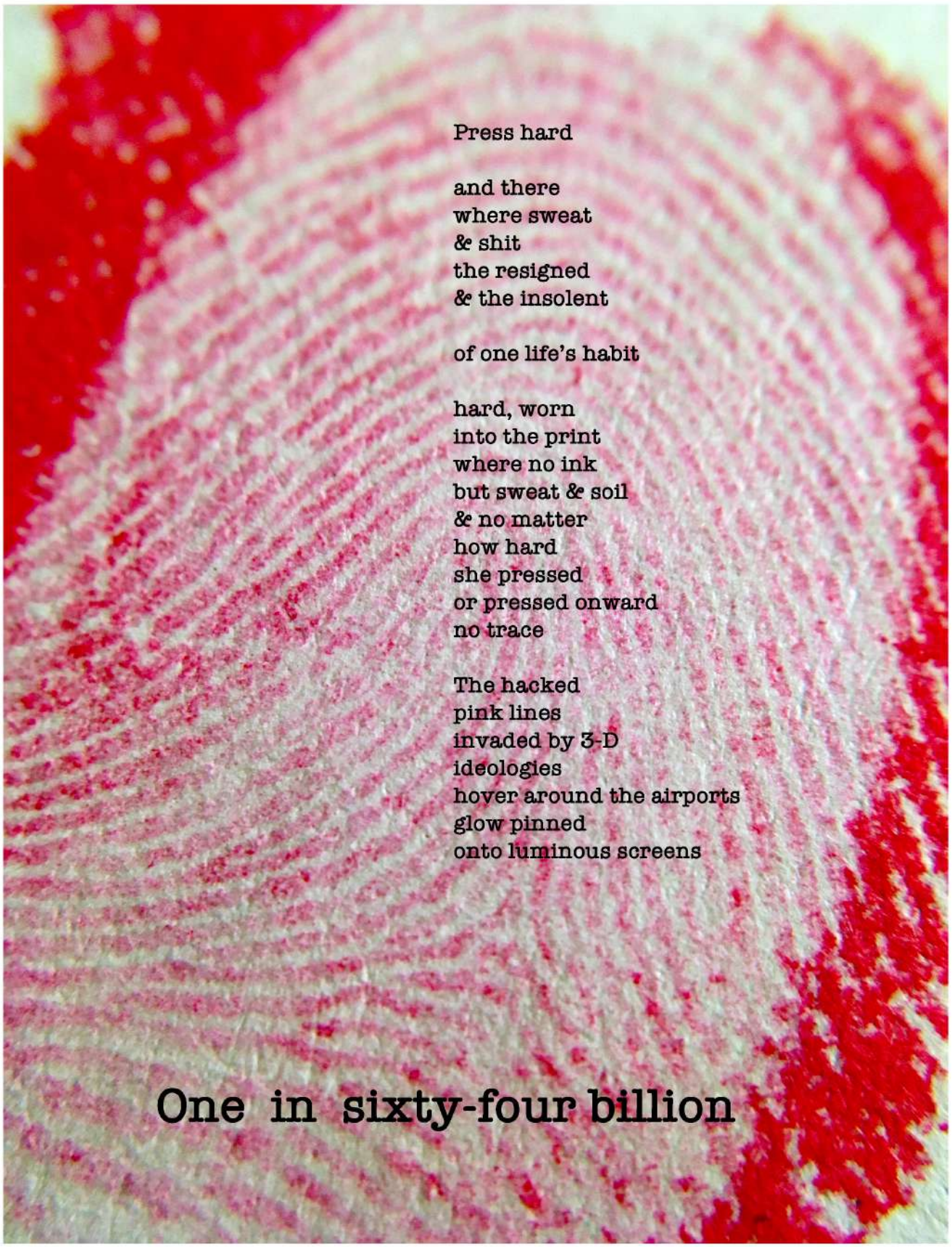
my wonderwall



dontforgetidontremember/noteolvidesquenomeacuerdo



llevamealhuerto/leadmedownthegardenpath


Press hard
and there
where sweat
& shit
the resigned
& the insolent
of one life's habit
hard, worn
into the print
where no ink
but sweat & soil
& no matter
how hard
she pressed
or pressed onward
no trace
The hacked
pink lines
invaded by 3-D
ideologies
hover around the airports
glow pinned
onto luminous screens
One in sixty-four billion

Because
a line is always
a beginning of something
a word
a drawing
a primer of a friction ridge
upped with the adrenaline
a sweat trail slightly flattened
by the ink fear

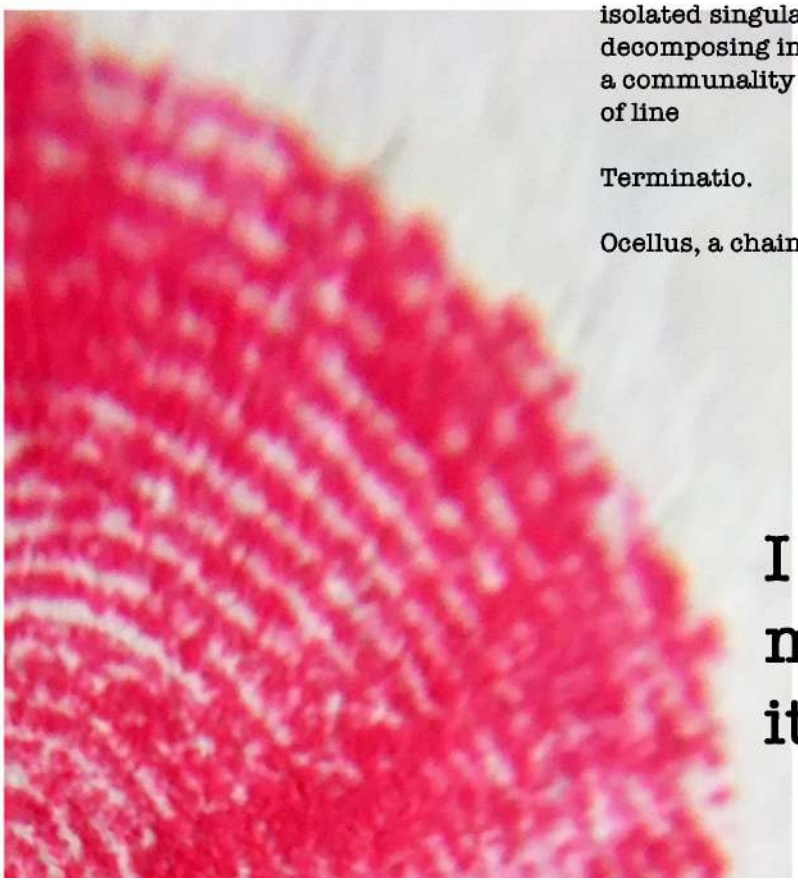
Initium, Bifurcatio,
the arches loop,

a mountain range whirls
around the peaks

isolated singularities
decomposing into
a communality
of line

Terminatio.

Ocellus, a chain.



I COMPOST
my expression
it matters

In 1949 my father taught an old woman
how to write her name
instead of putting down the cross.
Her hand,
he told me,
was too stiff to hold the pen
from all the work
it had done



In 1950 Francis Bacon painted
"Fragment of a Crucifixion"
two animals
at the point of kill

By the end of the summer,
he said, the woman could die happy,
still only a few pennies,
but now a name
to her soul,

Reality was only slightly flattened by the new electric light.

In 1988 Samuel Beckett stripped
all remaining human singularity
in his self-portrait
down to the stirring essence

head on hands

"One laid on the table and the other on the one.
At rest after all they did."



Each life-print
sets in slowly, east
to west
the Serpent Mound
conforms to the curve
of the land
on which it rests

I tried to fit inside the egg
that the Serpent holds
in its mouth,
some days more open
than others.

From a few scraps
of memory
from pine straw
I build my own mound

The matter here
is organic, shiny
like in the Tatra Mountains *
we all smile from under the humus.

Dorota Czerner, 3 X 2017

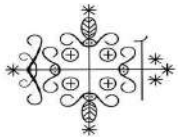
* The Polish name for this range of mountains
is Tatry, the noun which exists as plurale tantum,
the "plural only".



Things That Matter
(One of What Follows Is Not a Thing)

Jon Forshee

The following reflections are stimulated by an email invitation from Benjamin Boretz to respond to “Things That Matter”. His invitation, arriving in late 2017, came during a time of Geo-political upheaval, national divisiveness, and, for a musician seeking to find a place in all this, a time of personal transition. I feel grateful for the opportunity to reflect on “Things That Matter” in this context, and to think along with those others who also find that *thinking* on these things *in itself* is perhaps one of the “things that matter” most of all.



“Things That Matter”. Confronting these words draws forth a richly textured experience: layers of memory, of significance, of conscience, and of meaning, each lobbying for the privilege of being the basis for interpretation of these three enigmatic words. This ambiguity, observed ‘internally’ as a *changing mood*, is personally evidentially constitutive of thinking *about* “things that matter”.

An introduction to “things that matter” seems necessary and very difficult, since the sense of *to whom* things matter, or should matter, or even could matter, is not disclosed. “Things That Matter” - matter to whom? Matter to everyone? Matter to my self, and some others but not to all? In the public (political) world, it often seems that *what* matters is not so important as to *whom* what matters *matters*, and for the most part that person to *whom* what matters *matters* does not seem interested in what matters to me, or to most of the people I know.

One observation about *to whom* things matter is this: there are no things which matter to others which, once discovered, do not also matter personally to some degree. For example, it would be comforting to think that material well-being matters to *others* but not to me. But even the most egregious demonstration of greed by another person still reminds me that material well-being *matters* to me too, just not in the same way (or to the same degree).

Considered another way, “things that matter” may refer to those things which are *essential*. *Essential* to whom or what is not clear, of course, but that which is essential is essential to some*thing*, to some *entity.* There is one entity alone in the world to which I have meaningful access. That entity is my own person, experienced inside and out, as it is entangled and embodied in the world. What is essential to my person concerns not only that which is required for my physical subsistence, but also that which is required for my ability to say “I” yesterday, today, and tomorrow and mean the same thing each time. This persistence of the sense of self is descriptive of ‘psychological connected-ness’, and depending on the strength (or amplitude, if you will), of this ‘connectedness’ a great deal, or very little, may actually ‘matter.’

Taking “Things That Matter” in the usual sense, I reflect in terms of what things matter *to me.* One observation about “things that matter” to me: for some*thing* to be a thing that matters to me, I must be a person for whom such a thing can be “something that matters.” This formulation is not just a linguistic twist, but outlines a feature of the reflexive activity which revolves around “things that matter”. For example, if taking walks in the woods matters to me, I must be someone who knows what it is to walk in the woods. The best way to know what it is to walk in the woods is to do it. If walking in the woods matters to me, I must be someone who walks or has walked in the woods. Similarly, if friendship matters to me, I am one who is friendly, who is a friend. If correcting Social and Gender Inequality matters to me, I am one who behaves in a way that corrects such inequalities. If staging my new opera matters to me, I am one who is busy in the details of staging the opera. If the well-being of my family matters to me, I am one who cares for his family.

Further, it seems there is no *thing* that matters which is not accompanied by a *call to action.* There is nothing which matters (to me) to which I am indifferent, or to which I may respond un-concernfully. The action is particular to that thing that matters and calls it forth, and it seems arguable that a thing matters *most* while one is engaged with it, i.e., while one is *doing* it. (Though it seems that every *thing* that matters matters the most while *doing* it, it does not seem to follow that every thing I do is an embodiment of that thing which matters to me.)
If I am resolute about the things that matter to me, is it not the case that every behavior may be viewed as an embodiment of that which matters?

The many ways to confront “Things That Matter” seem unending. Can it be that so much matters? Performing and producing my musical works can not possibly matter in the same way that addressing and correcting grave social inequalities in the world matters...can it? The differences between the “things that matter” to me proximally and immediately and the “things that matter” to me in the world at large are more than differences of *degree*, but differences of *type*. (Chinary Ung, discussing people’s over-use of the word ‘love’, noted that “I love ice cream. I love my father. How can they be the same?”)

And so all of these things matter, and some things are, for some people, a matter of life and death. Everything that matters seems accompanied by a call to action. In what ways is it possible to comport oneself in accordance with all of these “things that matter”?

And now I can ask: I try to behave in alignment with those “things that matter” to me, and to me in the world. That is, I act in alignment with what presents itself as *essential* to me and to the world. Is there some thing that is essential to my ability to comport my self in alignment with those many “things that matter”? So much matters that a ground for *being able to matter at all* seems necessary. This might be called “things that matter ‘to things being able to matter’”. What enables ‘being able’ to be one *for whom* things can matter?

Consider this: just as much as each thing that matters calls forth an action directed towards it, so does all activity have some*thing* it is directed towards. When I am sure and mindful, say, *resolute*, in my comportment, my behavior is directed towards “that which matters”. In fact, it is not that “things matter” and I act on them, nor that I *do* things “making things matter”. The “doing” and the “mattering” refer to different viewpoints of the same ‘thing’; for every thing that matters there is something to *do* about it. But here’s the rub: resolute *doing* directed towards “things that matter” is not a *thing* in the same way that entities in my environment are things. Resolute *doing* has a history and a future, and reflects an ‘inner’ directedness in an ‘outer’ behavior. Resolute

doing is not behavior directed towards an end, but is an end in itself. In this way, resolute *doing* is not a tool to be used to achieve a goal; it *is* the goal.

The “Things That Matter” gather all those individuated inter-connected ‘things’ that matter to me, and to me in the world...plus something else. Something which is no “thing” at all, but a way of being which makes it possible to matter, for things to matter, to be one who takes “Things That Matter” seriously, a way of being which is a *doing*, which allows that which matters to be something to *do* something about. Being a musician, Music matters, and so does Being a musician.

These very interior, personal considerations of “things that matter” may be explored another way: when I am resolute in my comportment, what matters to me?

What “things that matter” are being done when I am being an adult?
being a citizen?
being a gender?
being a customer, a patron, a guest?

It seems every “thing that matters”, whatever that *may* be, may at least reflect an idea of:

being a nobody
being somebody
being yourself
being honest
being a cheat
being away
being alone
being along the way
being a mystery
being transparent
being a lover
being in love
being a worker
being a writer
being for nothing
being for all
being selfishly
being about the ways one is
being outside
being *for* something
being inside going out
being on the outs
being in trouble
being on the up and up
being shifty
being left-handed
being left out
Being in your right mind
being included

being together
being on one's own
being around
being in the loop
being away
being a way alone
being a light
being an ally
being allied
being aligned with
being in tune
being connected
being engaged
being a becoming
being obscured
being alongside
being in
being-in-the-world
being without
being thought of
being through
being for all
being about thought
being seated
being upright
being in the car
being genuine
being inauthentic
being about compromise
being forthright
being an alibi
being airtight
being a thousand miles away
being in the room
being seated in a room
being ambiguous
being obsessively ambivalent
being Obsession
being a sound
being a fragrance
being heard
being felt
being experienced 'as it is'
being a vibration
being a frequent vibration
being on vibrate
being a tone for three minutes
being extended

being-present-at-hand
being present
being in the here
being an oscillation
being a pressure fluctuation everywhere
being felt in the ear
being one who feels in the ear
being a sensation
being a big hit
being one who sees through the lens
being there
being the there that is there
being a state
being a vessel
being in the pocket
being the retrospective degree of flux in a span of time
being in hindsight
being behind the beat
being ahead of the game
being the same
being as a difference
being as repetition
being friends
being a helping hand
being-alongside-with
being concerned
being remembered
being careful
being one who makes citizen arrests
being at a loss
being without
being a dearth of opinions
being a clearing
being as a doing
being and doing both
being at the behest of another
being a comrade
being self-sufficient
being unto another
being a testament to the truth
being an assertion
being a relationship
being a judgment
being as flow
being a stream
being the existence of something
being insufficient to prove
being anomalous

being in good standing
being a clear azure sky in deepest Summer
being while approaching a distant copse
being maudlin and morose
being a beacon of light
being-as-potential
being a becoming
being an essayist typing
being a fly on the wall
being stuck
being as Being
being someone else
being at the same time
being on point
being and non-being as interdependent
being a person
being a human
being among the living
being one for whom being is an issue
being sheltered
being home
being sans domicile
being the object of ontology
being an entity for whom being is an issue
being afraid to succeed
being behind the times
being constricted
being liberated in thought
being alongside others in the world
being in a community
being part of the group
being a non-conformist
being a pleasant companion
being of service, politic
being of use
being at the top of one's game
being too big to fail
being an end in itself
being self-sufficient
being of a different sort
being on the outside looking out
being authentic
being mis-directional
being a pain in the ass
being full of it
being left with nowhere to go
being full of surprises
being as a clearing in a forest
being organic

being a performer
being a musician on the organ
being careful
being concerned
being solicitous
being warm-hearted
being fun
being creative
being driven
being one who drives
being ready
being crestfallen
being irresolute
being greedy
being free from blame
being one-in-a-million
being the last one standing
being a diamond in the rough
being about the good in others
being about making music together
being about speaking about making music
being about speaking about speaking about music
being a way alone along the way
being steadfast and tenacious
being one for whom others are important
being a musician who practices every day
being an artist who strives to produce
being an artist who produces
being without a concern in the world
being concerned over social inequality
being dedicated to a cause
being committed to the alleviation of suffering
being ready to make music together
being one for whom everything *matters*

– Jon Forshee, Colorado Springs, 02/02//2018

Guilherme Zelig

19 de setembro de 2017

João era pedreiro desde os 15. Negro como o ébano, perdeu os pais antes desta idade. Teve de ir trabalhar. Constituiu uma família aos vinte e três. Só conseguia assinar seu nome com a caneta. Saía cedo, a tomar o café preparado por sua esposa. Chegava tarde, às vezes para passar ao bar e tomar sua "quente".
Certa feita, João perdera a vida. Fora confundido pela polícia porque presumira que ele havia participado de um roubo na área nobre da cidade.
A viúva não quis se pronunciar para a imprensa midiática; os filhos, a maioria menores, tentavam entender o que estava acontecendo.

02 de setembro de 2017

Era mulher, negra e pobre. Tomava duas conduções para chegar ao trabalho e, a depender da hora, três para voltar à casa. Cuidava as crianças - mas as deixava brincando com os vizinhos enquanto se dedicava à labuta. Fora abandonada pelo marido, pagava aluguel, já não tinha muitos dentes.
Ao crescer, o mais velho tomara um tiro junto a três colegas - a ser chamado por vagabundo. O filho do meio se perdeu nas drogas e a filha caçula engravidou cedo e lhe dera um neto para cuidar.
A sociedade a chamava por mãe ausente. A ela sobrou-lha a culpa e o infortúnio de seu perene azar.

18 de março de 2018

à Marielle.

Aquela manhã de quinta-feira nasceu cinzenta. Não por conta do céu de azul anil e da imponência do Sol brilhante vide a escassez de nuvens. Não por conta de resquícios de chuva da noite anterior. O dia começava acinzentado no coração de milhares de pessoas que sentiram-se também atingidas por uma bala. Sentiram-se impotentes ante a perda: um homicídio silenciara uma voz pensante.

A voz que sumarizava as ideias em ações. Que dava norte a quem não tinha bússola. Que aconselhava quem precisava ouvir palavras boas. Uma voz que atacava violentamente o recurso da violência. O silêncio de uma voz não caracteriza o silêncio de uma ideia. Era uma voz que retumbava dentre várias que pensavam da mesma forma. Alguma coisa havia que mudar e para melhor.

Eles estavam sentados, a observar o morro do outro lado, e a vislumbrar o local de vários conflitos. Quantas Marielles mais morrerão?, pensavam. Contudo, não se recordavam - menos ainda os que eram vivos à época - da morte de Marighella. Este que, por uma questão lispectoriana, acrescido de um GH, e Marielle, a ser alcunhada com uma desinência feminina no final do nome, separam-se apenas por serem homem e mulher. Os ideais são os mesmos.

Os homens sentados, a chorarem a morte da líder negra e feminista, não conjeturavam que o

líder negro e comunista - cujo quinquagésimo ano da morte dar-se-ia no ano seguinte ao assassinato de Marielle - também havia lutado por eles. Não conseguiam pensar que a História mais uma vez se repetia tragicamente. As "jabaquaras" ainda refugiavam os negros fujões da senzala.

A voz do negro que ressoa é calada à bala, pensou um deles, a recordar Zumbi dos Palmares. Desde os tempos da escravidão a hipocrisia impera. O negro é apenas um enfeite social - idônea prova de que um país é movido a samba, carnaval, futebol e miscigenação. Porém, há muito mais que isso.

O que mais doía ver era a falta de empatia das pessoas. As mulheres negras choravam copiosamente - a perceberem o futuro triste que teriam seus filhos e filhas. Não sabiam se seriam enterradas ou enterrariam seus entes queridos por conta das balas. A incerteza da morte estava a virar plausibilidade contundente a partir dali. Eles sabiam que em nenhum lugar precisa-de de intervenção militar. Que todas as intervenções terminam em tragédias. A intervenção cultural era a última hipótese política.

Todos sabiam que balas não calam vozes. Afinal, do luto nasce a luta. Ao perder-se um guerreiro, todos os outros devem se unir para ganhar batalhas e, por fim, a guerra. E o inimigo é aquele que infelizmente está ali para defender. Esta é a única prova concreta.

Contudo, ao perceberem que a mulher negra e forte jamais deixará de viver em corações que aspiram à luta, todos os membros, negros e negras, como se uma força mística os tivesse exaltado, levantaram a cabeça. O soluçar de dor transformar-se-ia em suor de luta. Os guerreiros começaram a perceber que seus refúgios estavam sendo atacados.

A guerreira mostrou que era hora de reagir. E lutar.

21 de março de 2018

Há um genocídio
de mulheres:
negras, pardas,
brancas, com sardas
genocídio.
Homem branco bate -
homem negro bate -
homem índio bate -
homem espanca!
Há um genocídio:
genocídio de mulheres
mulheres morrem
por serem mulheres.

September 19, 2017

From age fifteen João was a mason. Ebony black, already by that age he had lost his parents. Had to go to work. By twenty-three he'd started a family of his own. The only thing he knew how to write with a pen was his name. He would leave home for work early having taken his morning coffee, made by his wife. Would get back late, and sometimes stopped by the bar to take a couple of beers. But one time, João lost his life. The police mistook him for someone else, they had assumed he was involved in a robbery in the posh area of the city.

The widow did not want to speak to the media; the children, most of them still really small, tried to understand what had happened.

September 2, 2017

She was a woman, black and poor. It took two rides to get to work and, depending on the time of day, maybe three to get her back home at night. She took care of her children — but had to let them play with the neighbors while working those long hours, long and hard hours. Her husband had abandoned her, she paid the rent herself, hadn't got many teeth left.

She lost her oldest son while he was still growing up. He was with three friends when some police officers called them hoboes, then shot them. The middle child was lost to drugs, and the youngest daughter got pregnant early, giving her a grandchild to look after.

Society called her an absent mother. For her it was the guilt and misfortune of her perennial bad luck.

March 18, 2018

to Marielle.

That Thursday morning was gray. Not because of the blue-indigo sky, or because of the magnificence of the bright sun, seen in the scarcity of clouds. Not because of what was left of the rain from the night before. The day opened with grayness in the hearts of thousands of people who were also hit by that bullet. They felt helpless at this loss: a murder had silenced another thinking voice.

A voice that used to drive ideas to action. That showed a North to those who had no compass. A voice that gave advice to all who found themselves in need of hearing good words. A voice that violently attacked the use of violence. The silence of a voice does not mean the silence of an idea. It was a voice that rumbled through many, many others who thought the same way. Something has to change for the better.

Sitting on the other side of the hill, the men watched, now and then getting a glimpse of the scene of various conflicts. How many more Marielles will die? they thought. However, most of them could not remember — especially those who weren't even born at the time — the death of Marighella. This is a truly Lispectorian question[1], having a -GH- added to the heroes' names: Marighella, who had an -A ending on his last name, and Marielle – whose -GH- is dropped and added to the ending letter E – the only detail which separates them now – is having lived at another time. The ideals are the same.

The seated men, mourning the death of the black, feminist leader, could not put together that the other black, communist leader — the fiftieth anniversary of whose death would fall in the year after Marielle's murder — had also fought for them. They could not think that History had once again tragically repeated itself. That the *"jabaquaras"* still sheltered black fugitives from the slave quarters.

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1 The author refers to *The Passion According to G.H. (A paixão secondo G.H., 1964)*, a novel by the Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector. The novel's narrator is identified only by the acronym G.H., short for *gênero humano,* human kind.

The black voice which finds resonance is silenced by a bullet, thought one of them, remembering Zumbi dos Palmares. Since the time of slavery, hypocrisy has prevailed. The Negro is only a social ornament – proof that the country's identity has made a successful shift to samba, carnival, soccer and miscegenation. But surely, it is more than that.

What hurt the most was the lack of empathy. The black women wept copiously, realizing the sad future their sons and daughters would have. They did not know if they themselves would be buried, or bury their loved ones, because of bullets. From now on, what they did know was that the uncertainty of death had become overwhelmingly plausible. They knew that no place needs a military intervention. That all interventions end in tragedies. But the last political hypothesis would be a cultural intervention.

Everyone knew bullets did not shut down the voices. After all, another struggle is born from the mourning. When one warrior is lost, all the others must unite to win battles and, in the end, the war. The enemy is the one who is left on the scene, unfortunate enough to defend it. Because this is the only concrete proof.

Still, realizing that the strong black woman will never cease to live in hearts that aspire to fight, all of them, black men and black women, as if a mystical force had exalted them, raised their heads. The sobbing of pain will turn into the sweat of their struggle. The warriors began to realize that their refuges were under attack.

A woman warrior has showed them it is time to act. And fight back.

March 21, 2018

There is a genocide
of women:
black, white,
multi-ethnic, freckled.
Genocide.
Black men hit -
white men hit -
Indian men hit -
Men hit!
There is a genocide:
women genocide.
Women die -
by the hands of men -
for being women.

Charles Stein

The Vanishing Dog

A large dog is walking in vacuum. Wild are its red eyes, its bloody jowls. It moves on angry inelegant thrusts of stiff-jointed legs without friction or resistance. There is a severed hand in its mouth. Even this now repairs to vacuum. Its existence is deleted. Its image fades on the ether. The ether fades on itself.

The irregular medical institutions, the hospitals, the insurance companies, the pharmaceuticals, the markets; the academies where concepts go to die; the well-endowed research institutions beholden to the companies. All these devise/pretend what objective Being is, is said to Be.

What your body is. And yet your corporeal nature is not, for example, the objectivity that bodes on the other side of your pain and your discomfiture. For the sensations that throb in your skull, along the surface of your right leg, the ache in your joints, the ecstasies of a sexual or gustatory character arising and maintaining themselves in rhythms and melodies commodious or tormenting, do not reduce to the statistical arrays that focus upon them and give a tendentious account of them. If there is something there, material beyond the senses, it is only the object of scientific / medical objectivities in an ideal sense. In reality, the sciences miss the mark; they offer approximations, probable estimates, have no time or competence to find the singular matter of the transcendent existent that is your material being.

Outside the window, the night is invisible. Night may indeed have mated with a mysterious entity called Erebos and generated a brood of abstractions. But what is Erebos to me in my discomfiture, in the racking alternation of hope and blank incapacity to imagine anything other than my most immediate misery? Or clearly that I cannot even imagine that at all, or that it is precisely the fleeting posits of the imaginary that comprise all I think I am in possession of.

Yet Being beyond the night will not be utterly eviscerated. I imagine the vast Mouth, like the mouth of a cave, and all the ten thousand things spill from it like subterranean waters at last arriving in the moonlight. It is impossible to say the cave is not there, for the fleeting images of the ten thousand entities, however fleetingly, do arrive, their edges unlocatable, their positivity itself in absentia.

The ineluctably evanescent cannot be divided, cannot be brought into one's ken; cannot be disavowed or vanquished utterly. No abyss can consume it, no conflagration threaten to devour it at the end of apokatastasis or apocalypse. The Emperor of Everything equally is condemned to this inquiry. Neither omnipotence over all things nor omniscience concerning them suffices to clarify the *being* of this very omnipotence, the sense of this omniscience. Thus the Demiurge in gnostic teachings is a figure of folly because he knows only what is before him, not what is behind.

Day came out of night, not the other way around. Being is sable darkness, clean and impossible

to sully with composition. Photic phenomenology sparks on an impenetrable blackness. There were edges enough to eventuate a clearing in the impossible. The impossible was possible enough, possible within the blackness. What neurology explains this?

Coiled in the dog's herky jerky movement that will not resolve to the smoothness of condign mystery… The little man gets a stomach cancer that is never properly diagnosed but crumples and loses consciousness, concentrated upon himself; each breath contains the entirety of Being and in its moment cannot cease, cannot cease.

Radical contingency is the singular, the continuous, the infinite height of all the transfinities, Being itself radically external, only the random, the blackness, the sable skin of the invisible, the royal door, the dark that is the mother of the light, the Good the child of the inconsequential except that the Good is the consequent, the quiet homing of inexistent Being itself beyond core and sleeve beyond beyond the wing within the hand within the wing...

The impossibility of herky jerky movement the vanishing dog . . .

THNGS THT MTTR

How It Is

All women are the property of all men. Any one man. Any man

All children are the property of all adults. Any adult at all

All poor people are the property of any wealthy person

(All black people are the property of any and every white person)

Set against which, Three Miracles

Being

Awareness of Being

Contact

Once Upon A Time, there was an artist who decided to incorporate danger into his art. This is what he proposed. In a large, empty space (for instance an abandoned factory, or sports hall) the artist sets up, along the wall at one end, all of the bric-a-brac of a normal life. A bed, a table, a bookshelf, a chair, a fridge, a short ladder, and so on and so forth. The objects are arranged in a line from one side of the room to the other, all touching the back wall, carefully arranged so they do not block each other. There is perhaps a closed off area in one corner containing a toilet. The entire wall behind this stretched out living quarters is painted over in a neutral colour. But there are no electronics or telecommunication devices. There would ideally be a window to stare out of. The scene strives to be timeless. The artist has to inhabit this space and only this space during the gallery's opening hours. The artist gets on with his life, sleeping, reading, writing, eating, thinking, making art. The artist's movements are restricted to a space no more than six feet in front of this wall. A red line is drawn on the floor to make this zone visible.

Spectators may enter along the side wall of this space, ideally held apart from the performance area by a strong barrier such as a metal fence, like those found on political marches or demonstrations.

At the opposite end of the gallery to the artist is a construction on a moving track system, a dolly on rails, which can travel from one side of the room to the other (a distance of perhaps 100 feet). A vertical boom, which can be automatically moved up and down from floor level to around 10 feet off the ground, is mounted on this dolly.

Horizontally mounted on this boom is not a camera, but a semi-automatic rifle, pointing at the inhabited end of the room. A mechanical switch is able to operate the trigger mechanism, permitting just one single shot to be fired.

This dolly and boom array is controlled by motion sensors which record and analyse the positions and movements of the crowd. It is important that the control system be complex but not randomised. This implies that the spectators could, in theory, work out the algorithm and learn to control the movement of the dolly and boom. Thus potentially becoming able to aim the rifle.

The trigger mechanism is controlled by a separate algorithm (based upon the intensity and rhythm of the noises the spectators make) and will allow for the possibility of one shot being fired every hour, on average. But the algorithm will also include the possibility that no shot is fired on any particular occasion. Let us say only one in ten potential firing occasions will actually result in a bullet being released. That is, one critical possibility each day. Fifteen seconds before each shot risks being fired, a very loud warning klaxon sounds continuously. Live ammunition is used. The rifle points at the artist's enclosure.

The target area is potentially 50 feet wide x 10 feet high. The artist will always be in this area. When the klaxon sounds, the artist must freeze in his current posture and wait until the shot is fired. Or not fired.

Whenever a bullet hits the back wall, the artist must mark the point of impact with a small, painted red cross. This is the purpose of the short ladder. These marks accumulate for the duration of the performance schedule. A week, a month, a season.

In the example described above, the chances of the artist being hit are approximately 1 in 50.
The odds of the artist being shot on any particular day, therefore, are 1 in 500.

Variation: the artist is a woman.

Once Upon A Time, a young athlete, already at the peak of his powers, and considered world class by both colleagues and adversaries, developed a unique series of movements, technically complex and requiring enormous physical dexterity. His field of endeavour was approximately one century old at the time, but he somehow discovered a movement and a tactic which had never been found before. Much like a composer discovering a new melody inside an established tonal system. Or a chess player earning a ! ! ! for a bold and unique gambit. What I would like to consider, after describing this new sequence of motions, is why the inventor did not attempt to copyright his invention. This was in the 1970s, so hardly in the mists of non-commercial innocence.

The manoeuvre is somewhere between lateral thinking, bluff, extreme agility, and magick.
The player in the orange jersey is the Dutch footballer (soccer player) Johan Cruyff, and the game is a World Cup match against Sweden from 1974. The footage can be easily found online.



Cruyff has his back to the goal, and is being harried by a defender, in the blue shirt, who is blocking his attacking play.



Cruyff decides to kick the ball across the goal, to a team mate, and duly hits the ball with full force, producing the distinctive thwack of impact.



But instead of kicking the ball across the pitch, Cruyff has hit it into the ground, stopping its motion dead. At this point, with the defender looking away, and moving toward the ball, Cruyff simply drags the ball in the opposite direction, behind his standing leg. Most people would simply fall over at this point. Note the unnatural dynamic posture.



At the same time, Cruyff shifts his centre of gravity and twists so that he is now again facing the goal, while the defender is facing away and b) is now behind him.



Cruyff now accelerates while the defender stumbles backward.
Farewell number 14.



The whole event took six frames of film, i.e. ¼ of a second
So, why did Cruyff not patent his turn?
Because no-one on the planet except Cruyff was capable of executing it.

Once Upon A Time, I decided to read a book in a language I do not fully master. Each time I came upon a word whose meaning was not clear, I noted it down, and tried to guess the meaning from its context. Later, I looked up the words thus listed, and verified their meanings. The shape of these words, raised to the surface, forms a contour of my ignorance of the language, which is also, perhaps, a relief map of the meaning and mood of the novel itself. Figure and ground. In addition to this, all of these unusual or more rare words elevated above the low-water mark of a basic linguistic knowledge form a negative image of my own understanding which coincides with the particular (beautiful) shape of the Spanish language.

I offer you the list here, from '*Nocturne en Chile'* by Roberto Bolaño – word, guess, and definition.

adoquines (n) something to do with a dark street at night? **cobblestones**

aldea (n) an area of some kind, in the countryside? **a hamlet**

anhelos (n) wounds? obscure places? **longings, yearnings**

amén de (con) as well as, slightly hysterical usage? **not to mention**

buhardilla (n) has to be a loft, poor, scruffy rented room **garret**

caudaloso (adj) of a river, strong? (related to *Caudillo*, leader?) **abundant**

(con) esmero (adv) ? no idea. quietly at night?
carefully, from *esmero*, emery, ultimately, *emerald*. As used by master furniture finishers, hence, **with tact and skill**

desatarse (v) **se desata** – to stand out? to start? **to unleash,** as in a storm

desdichado (adj) spoken ill of? **wretched**

faldeos (n) foothills, a geographical feature? **slopes,** from *falda,* skirt

gedéonadas (n) something stupid? **actions of a dim 'rustic' person**, after a recurrent character (a coarse and vulgar one nicknamed *Gedéon*) probably derived from the works of the proto-feminist (and acerbic) writer Doña Emilia Pardo Bazán (1851 -1921)

premuroso (adj) no idea, something soon or early? **hastily** , under pressure, from *premura*; pressure

sujetado (adj) dominated, but doesn't work for context of holding a book **tightly clasped**

toque de queda (n) no idea. *toque* in French, a chef's hat, doesn't seem to help me here…
curfew literally 'a touch' meaning 'stay there'

(sin) trabas (n) easily, no problem? **unshackled,** from shackles

And

This is how it will end
Dimly, darkly, badly
Burial at sea
No witnesses
And sailing mute into the endless night

Or





Glitters down the grate
on cardboard palms
Mein Imagef. Davos mood-ring
Face turned up
to the warm Summer rain
~~Even he can't take~~
Boarding the 3:10 to Yuma
~~Orlando bizarro Gibney~~
like ~~a~~ pink champagne
fountains bubbling tasty pink chill
bottle chill! But the twins at the till!
~~Bent~~ looked in the lady pants
trotheads ~~Betrayed wife~~ ~~Bent~~ Kicking still
that ~~talk back~~ freckled hand on BOAC wife slapping
Come Stairwell
again! Vacuum-Sealed aquarets ~~Hot pant~~
Sorry, closed tarmac ~~tapes~~ Goons
you And dinner charcoal flags
He Salutes
HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE GREAT!!
(1 SPIES) ~~Not command~~ VRIL COMMAND
You can't fuc me I quit. Sunken
Eating cake from the ~~station~~ ship
(2 POSS ESSION) ~~Battalion~~ peasants as far as I can see
On the drain gang with the
weakest link
Roasted in the fine light where prevail
(3 CON FUS ION) ~~Other~~ Coder heads ~~Some talk back~~
~~Bad signing head~~
~~And~~ Johnny Halliday, Orson Whitney
~~Hard with taste decay~~ ~~Grade the~~
the rotted teeth of time machines
change- (Dana Bono) Rosemary Clooney, David Bonnie
lings Craps @ Pachinko (Nunez Rubio)
at Cardiff Parlor ~~Martin Balsam~~
as the Count of Monte Cristo
Shawkstein ~~weddings~~ turned away @ El Paso

A Torah, a Talmud, and why Mark E. Smith IS Appreciated

When Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize for Literature, I overheard the question, "Well, who else in rock music could have won it?". Without kicking Dylan to the kerb, the answer which came to mind at the time was, "Mark E. Smith, of The Fall". Sadly, with his passing away this January at the age of 60, he is no longer eligible. But I stand by my thought.

So, why?

A straw poll I have been conducting for the past two months reveals that very few people indeed have heard of the man, let alone are familiar with his oeuvre.

Hence this very brief introduction/deobfuscation (Look it up!).

North Britain singer-lyricist in long running post-punk chaos experts The Fall. Out of Manchester. Has often been compared to a factory owner or a football (soccer) manager. The Fall were (how strange to write that in the preterite) in existence for 41 years, and the only member left standing is/was Mark Edward Smith. The gaffer. And this is not the Rolling Stones, who have changed guitarists twice in 50 years. The Fall have 'got through' 66 members. In the way a sports franchise can get through many generations of star players yet still remain the same entity, some inner soul that can survive the constant replacement parts. Born of loyalty and expedience. And a few fistfights, divorces, and other sundry bust-ups. Captain Beefheart, then? There's something in that, but Beefheart was only active for about 15 years, MES for over 40, at almost an album a year. 500 songs. Screeds.
It's the other football that comes to mind – rugby. Seeing the trajectory of The Fall as full-pelt running between muddy scrum-downs, then off! In any-which-way. Always different, always the same (*dixit* John Peel). Or each album, new faces, new styles, but always, always that voice, a Sprechstimme (is it? Or a *recitativo*?) or just an angry drunken guy on a street-corner with a particularly rich early education that can't help but burst through the gargling? A short-story writer coming awake from a nightmare, finding himself onstage with a bunch of untutored avant-garde misfits who just picked up each-others' instruments? Whose only dream get-out is to explode into half-remembered bursts of nervy rockabilly? A bit of that.

Anyone remember the extract from the 1964 edition of *Hansard** which lamented John Lennon as a tragic, half-educated casualty of bad free education? Here's a brief excerpt:

... one can see ... two things about John Lennon: he has a feeling for words and storytelling; and he is in a state of pathetic near-literacy. He seems to have picked up bits of Tennyson, Browning and Robert Louis Stevenson while listening with one ear to the football results on the wireless.

MES, a generation on? More canny, less occasionally self-pitying.

Mark E. Smith REALLY put his various paramours (usually married to him) in the heart of the group as players and song-writers.

The albums, then, were not so much thematic or conceptual (haha, a Fall concept album!) as

versions of a popular newspaper: the headline (title), the tone of the Zeitgeist, a curmudgeonly editorial, but also a charts page, a TV guide, celebrity gossip, odd human-interest stories, poetry corner, jokes, cartoons, grouses, gripes, felicities and gifts, and - always the same, always different - at the back, the latest football results. City won (hooray!), United lost (hurrah!), Sparta FC qualified for Europe (oh, shoot!)…
Snatches of German. Stories of The War. Songs with 'Man' in the title: Edinburgh Man; Wise Old Man; 50-Year-Old Man; Paranoia Man in Cheap, Shit Room; DiceMan; Hittite Man; Ibis-Afro Man; How I Wrote Elastic Man; Wolf-Kidult Man; JunkMan; The Man Whose Head Expanded & others… chronicling of self, without mercy.
Dashes of Blake. W.B.
Look up, look up! The fire, the fire is falling.

Album is (cheap) populist newspaper (not lacking instinctive snout).

Half–educated men, living too late.
A writer of words, not a lyricist or short story writer.
His cadence, tending to the jaded country and western singer. Johnny Cash or Hank Williams, had they been born in a country half the size of Tennessee, post-industrial, post-Beefheart and post-Bartok, post-Ornette, post-Krautrock, victim of an excellent free education, in a house full of women, across the road from the mental hospital, in Orthodox Prestwich, leafy suburb, Psilocybin in the park.
The distance of the curmudgeon.
The texts peppered with Greek and French, too.
Devotee of Poe and Machen.
Of the provinces, but never provincial.
He said Leave the Capital, and he meant it.
He is not appreciated.
He said it, and he meant it.
Except he was.

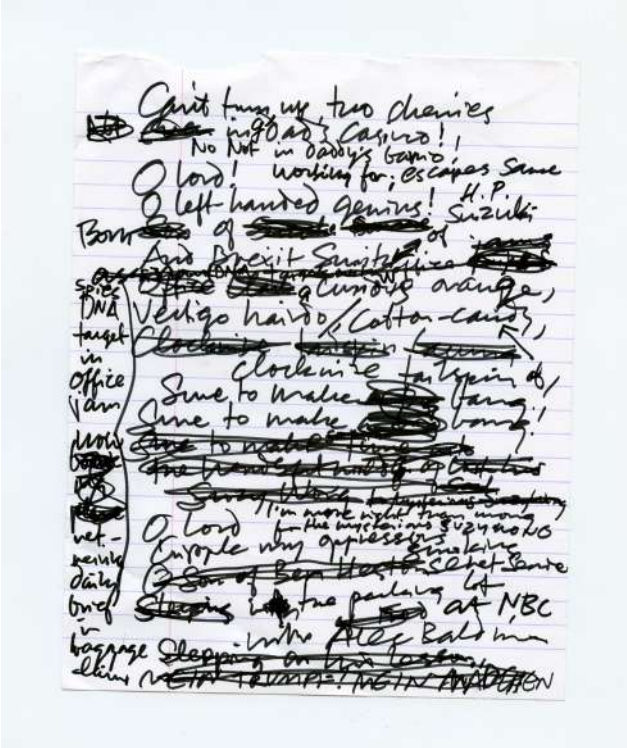
And if you want the A to Z and back again, I can only direct you to this scholarly and ongoing website, The Annotated Fall, which does what it says on the tin with remarkable lack of cant or preciousness. A Talmud to his Pentateuch.

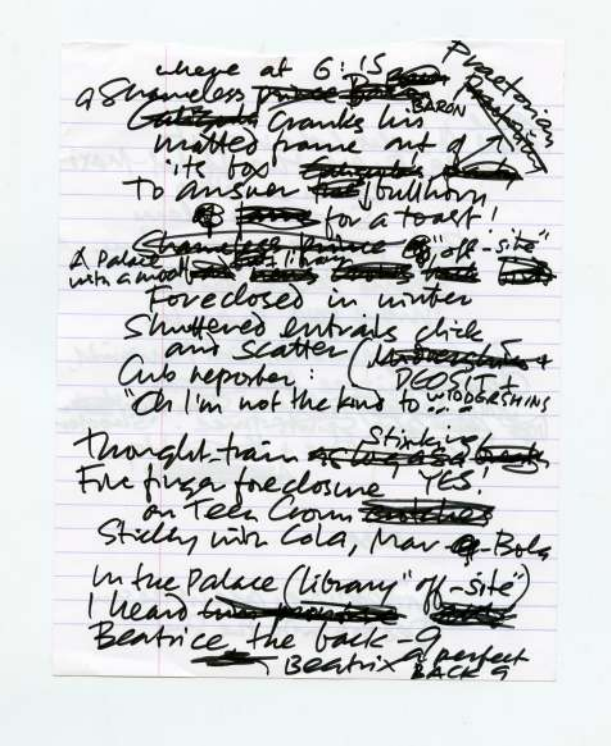
http://annotatedfall.doomby.com

**HANSARD = official transcription of every word spoken in British Parliament (since 1903, but partially and contentiously long before that…) published annually in bound volumes. British equivalent of First Amendment, in a way… Here's the full relevant section about Lennon, and the dangers of 'educating for automation' to the American Negro.*

https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1964/jun/19/automation

rcr





PRESTWICH COUNCIL V. TRUMP, IMPOSTER

I

Slithered down the grate
on caucasoid fate,
and having slithered, slumps
at stairway's end

Freckled fingers
Slapped away in
Vacuum-lock descender
Suddenly emerges into sun
Saw tarmac runes:

Pitchfork peasants!
Hex descendants!
In your name I
Fingered Heather

Having chanced upon her
Before contestants'
Bank of mirrors.

II

I will not reason and compare
Nor by another's laws be enslav'd

I was advised
Fire your friends
I was advised
Keep enemies closer
I was advised
But this with pre-cog did not wash

Hillary in stocks, reversed
But Kenyan did not drown!
Kenyan will not drown!
Black magician!

Hypno-heretic
On the click!

Fast erasure
Makes him nauseous

“Oh this is a drudge nation
Nation of no imagination
A stupid man is their ideal
They shun me and think me unclean”

The past is unpredictable!
I alone am history!
Done away with sharks
Now Greeks weep
on Great Barrier Reef

While master’s double-helix waits
In hallway hotel cart
Retrieved hermetically
By Agent of Fate
Sick Blue Graduate

III

In the blue light, hotter heads prevail
Safe House surrounded
Fake press threat

Meanwhile!….

AM x PM x AM x PM
AM x PM x AM x PM
AM x PM x AM x PM

Changing channels,
cock-in-hand
Is this how you kiss your mother?
Is this how you kiss your mother?
Nematodes and lithium
Side-swiped by rank pablum

In cathode bathrobe
He was advised:
Meat is grounding,
Soda: levitation
To realm of messages
wherein was found:

Johnny Halliday, Rosemary Clooney
(Rotted teeth of time machines)
David Bowie, Givenchy
(Crap at pachinko, Cardiff Parlor)

Nunez Rubio in “The Count of Monte Cristo”
Sucked in and kissed
Savory scent of the abyss

With cock-in-hand did He decree
A Far-Sudetenland

Wanders borders sleeplessly

Sharkskin changelings
Headed off at El Paso!
Couldn’t turn up two cherries
in Hex Casino!!
Not a third in
Far-cry barrio…

(Weakest link
Now on chain-gang,
Eating rats from sunken ship,
et cetera)

Trump Tower, Far-Sudetenland
(Heraldic signature, bent to left)
Mar-a-Lago, Neuschwabenland
(Southernmost Hole for UFOs)
Here come the warm jets!
Here come the warm jets!
Another Worm Hole
will inoculate them yet

Put the twins on the bill
And rake the coals!

Press-party joker
At the heart of the matter!
New facts emerge!
Trump Tower Massacre!!

He thought it would be great!
He thought it would be great!!

But flaming hair does not a great tan make

IV

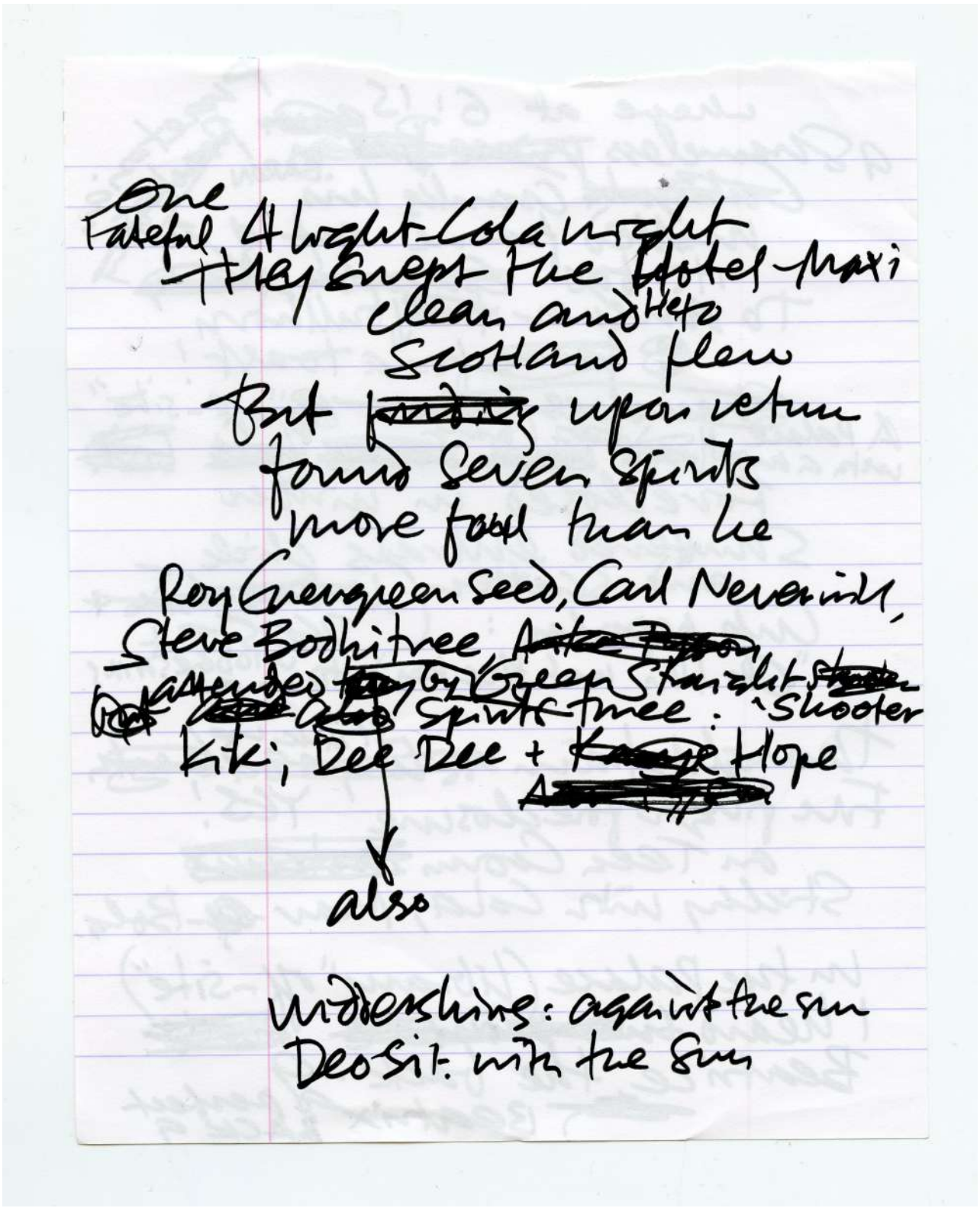
Sin-Pre-Cog
Winding down now

And what did you get?
Bassist retched!
Fates unmeshed!
Reader may ask: Hey Mark!
From whence
Do silk roads blow?
Hey Mark!!
Where is He now??

(Secret message
In sliding pint-foam
Stained door-glass
for mithering souls)

I don't know, man!
I am but receptor!
Agent of chaos,
Fueled by fire
Drunk myself sober!
Gotta blow, man!

Gotta go


One
Fateful 4 wght-Cola night
They Swept The Hotel Maxi
clean and Hefo
Scotland flew
But upon return
found Seven Spirits
more foul than he
Roy Evergreen seed, Carl Neverwinter,
Steve Bodhitree
Green Starlight
Spirit Tree : Shooter
Kiki, Dee Dee + Hope
also
underskins: against the sun
Deosil: with the Sun

THINGS THAT MATTER

ELAINE RADOFF BARKIN

Those whom I love "matter" to me most profoundly in ever-shifting worldtimes, yes I know, persons are a broad [mis]construal of "Things". "Matter" is an easier fit, but you know in today-times Matter has been sloganized and rephrased over and again, antagonistically and supportively, with gatherings — some protesting, some exhorting others to join in — of Black Lives Matter folks (advocates of justice for blacks) countered by All Lives Matter crowds (mostly white, many small-minded). I sideline myself and take it all in with a paper-paper in hand – the *LA Times* —, via cable or iPhone. (You see, anxiety overtakes me in large raucous throngs, this despite [due to?] the first half of my lifetime as a bonafide New Yorker, mingling, marching, parading, subway-riding, a few New Year's Eves in Times Square, et cetera.) More to the '*OSM*-solicited point', as a resident of for the second half of my lifetime, specifically a resident of the San Fernando Valley in Southern California, a Matter involving maybe ca. 230,000 young immigrants, those DACA-Dreamers, lies close at hand. Even more so insofar as the diametrically opposed-to-one-another rulings of PotUS 44 and then 45 have made it impossible for most of, many of, us not to care about the matter, the lives of these vulnerable young folks. PotUS 44 — intelligent, empathic, well-read, moving with a deliberate & unspeedy pace, hopelessly constrained by a conspicuously mean-spirited Legislative body — finally decided to take unilateral action with his Dream Act in order to benefit ca. 800,000 mostly young immigrants, yes illegally, brought into the USA. PotUS 45 — a narcissistic, sexist, pathologically deceitful, hypocritical, vindictive, dangerous, autocratic, self-centered, LGBTQ-phobic, illiterate, racist, bloviating fucking asshole with awful hair and enough crocodile tears to fill the Great Lakes — has screwed up those Dreamers and their Dream Act, giving them a renewal deadline of 10/05/17, handling them like a hot potato, dumping their destiny on Congress. Just as he is similarly doing with Muslims and their family members via the travel ban*; CHIP, the un- & under-insured and Medicaid; all of us and climate change. As the scorpion indifferently said to the frog, stinging him and dooming them both: "it's in my nature".

But wait! — for then crept "*tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow…*"
September 12 – 13 – 14 - 15.

Perhaps when you read this, Congress will have acted in DACA's favor, will have amended the Dream Act in support of the Dreamers and to the satisfaction of enough members of the GOP and other factions. Perhaps. Even as I write and have been writing, there has been movement from within the Democratic party to act. And each day that I sit down there's more outreach for bipartisanship from within the White House: dinner with Nancy and Chuck, Chinese food of course for the New Yorkers and San Franciscan, and dinner with several other members of Congress from each faction. The result of which *Breitbart* headlined with "White House Caves. Amnesty Don"! PotUS 45 and his spokespeople say: "discussion, not agreement" and "Don't listen to what Chuck and Nancy say." Speaker M and Leader R must support what PotUS 45 wants, 45's impalpable so-called thoughts, here today, gone today. Tweet tweet. Retweet. Already old news.

These dinners are an astonishing parallel to a similar event in Thomas Jefferson's New York living quarters in June 1790 when he invited Alexander Hamilton and James Madison to dine and converse — 2 resident Virginians and 1 immigrant New Yorker — in order to find a way to resolve the debt, the "assumption", crisis! Resulting in the second of several secret bipartisan compromises, the first having to do with the retention of slavery and 3/5th-personhood. So the South agrees to contribute to payment of the debt incurred during the Revolutionary War and the North agrees to solve the "residency" crisis by relocating the capital from New York to a large Swamp near Maryland/Virginia, this during George Washington's first term as President of the new United States. "*No one else was .. in the room .. when it happened.*" Think PotUS 45 and James Comey. "*No one else was .. in the room .. when it happened. .. I want to be .. in the room .. where it happened…*"

Immigrants are in my blood, on my mind, all around me: my father at 6 was an immigrant from Ukraine, my four grandparents were immigrants — immigrants first, citizens later. "*… immigrants. We get the job done..*" That phrase uttered as the rebels, with the help of Lafayette, make plans to end the Revolutionary War. And the audience erupted into whooping, clapping, just long enough to let the performers know that they'd been understood. An absolutely extra-ordinary afternoon for me, that Sunday, September 10, in Hollywood, at the over-the-top Art Deco Pantages Theatre, built in 1930 for vaudeville, by 1932 transformed into a Palace for the movies. I was at a performance of "*H★MILTON*" by Lin-Manuel Miranda! Even now, weeks later, I take a deep breath recalling the wonder of the occasion and I listen to the soundtrack as I write these words and hear much that had passed me by live. From the moment I sat down — I had an unobstructed view

of the stage, the acoustics were first-rate, words and orchestral ensemble clear — until the end, about 3 hours later with a 15-minute intermission, I was mesmerized, totally taken in (as I'd been way back in New York, Broadway musicals in my blood since 1944, at age 12, when I saw the first production of "*Oklahoma*", my parents [Victor and Edith Radoff] were music theater enthusiasts, followed a few years later by "*Carousel*", "*South Pacific*" and most of Rodgers & Hammerstein, Lerner & Loewe and so many others). Back to "*Hamilton*". Magic, relevance to all that matters and all that continues swirling around us. Janet Napolitano, President of the UC system had just filed a lawsuit against PotUS 45; the state of California has followed at least15 other states in filing lawsuits against PotUS 45 for his DACA action — and there, in the Pantages, coming down the gangplank, was Himself: "*Alex-ander-Hamil-ton ... bas-tard, or-phan, son of a whore and a Scotsman ...* " — yells, cheers, claps as Hamilton — born on the isle of Nevis in the British West Indies — walked off the last step and moved downstage.

It was helpful to know the story Lin-Manuel Miranda tells, the main tale, the many sub-plots, politics, the love and family stories, the life and death stories, war and nationhood; to know who those soon-to-be Americans were and especially to keep in mind the immigrant status of the protagonist, a status acknowledged vocally and physically by the audience each time the word "immigrant" was sung or spoken, and the word recurred several times, an audience many of whom shared in the notions of 'rising above expectations', of overcoming treachery, of self-determination, of honor plus, or as in Alexander Hamilton's case, innate brilliance, cockiness and too much pride. An audience comprising girls with blond braids, lanky early-teen boys, young men and women in jeans, dresses or sportswear, older folks with canes and walkers, many white, many of color, many who [not me] already knew the lyrics yet remained silent, rapt, reverently so when a known set-piece was sung, for they knew when to make their own noise. A Los Angeles in the small and I felt comfort and ease sitting amongst them. I had come with 3 women: Gabby Jimenez, born in Guadalajara, a US citizen for more than 40 years, yet despite the 2010 passage of lifesaving ACA health insurance, she and her husband still cross the border to fill their medical prescriptions; her daughters Myra and Bianca, both in their 30s, born in L.A. — Myra, a veteran now working with homeless vets, Bianca in graduate school working on her MBA. The three of them bonded and connected deeply with "*Hamilton*" in ways essentially unavailable to me. L.A., blue city, CA, blue state, and this week Governor Jerry Brown and the California legislature have designated Sanctuary status to CA+. However, it was N.Y., L.A.'s rival — "*New York, the greatest city in the world…New York, where*

you can be a new man." — that was being feted onstage, N.Y., where Hamilton blossomed and thrived, the city where Lin-Manuel Miranda had been born to parents of Puerto Rican descent (the city in which I was born, and which still, despite having lived in L.A. for forty-three years, signifies home to me).

Did I mention that almost the entirety of men, women and children in the cast were "of color" — African and Asian Americans, Latinos, the Founding Fathers and Mothers, Brothers and Sisters and their families, friends, lovers and rivals?! There might have been a sprinkling of whites among the lead-cast or dancers or chorus. Miranda is a brilliant composer with a keen sense of rhythm, meter, of linking phoneme to tone and words to melody, of timing and movement as he merges generic styles and original ideas with "Classical" forms, harmonies & textures — hip-hop, Broadway, pop styles, rap, scratch, jazz, Wagner's Wedding March, 18th century mannerisms for a swishy, not yet totally mad, King George 3rd — "*Don't change the subject because you are my favorite subject, I will kill your friends and family… to remind you of my love … You'll be back …"*. I thought of Mozart and *Don Giovanni*, of the courage and the daring of both, the smooth shifts of solo, duos, quartets and full ensemble, the cast moving and dancing on the constantly changing set as if it was their home. The characterizations are right on, owing to Ron Chernow's Hamilton biography, the inspiration for Miranda's work, with a few lines borrowed from Hammerstein: "*You've go to be carefully taught*" and Sullivan: "*I am the model of a modern Major-General*" and from Shakespeare's *Macbeth.* Jefferson's slick and sly boogie-woogie moves, Washington's father-figure authority: "*Go home Alexander … That's an order from your Commander.*", Burr's ego-driven persona (narrating the tale), forever convinced that he was being screwed and deprived of a higher position (which he was), Burr advising Hamilton to *"talk less, smile more, Don't let them know what you're against or for"*. Meanwhile, out-of-doors, along Hollywood Boulevard, insiders, outsiders, Angelenos, tourists, a sax player on one corner, some folks selling knockoffs, the usual suspects with the usual traffic. Stars ★ along ☆ the ✸ sidewalk.

Earlier on I'd read that Hamilton was a philanderer — publicly confessing to adultery while simultaneously denying treason —, that he had written much of Washington's "Farewell Address", that he disliked Germans but I forgot that he'd supported John Adams' 1798 *Alien and Sedition Acts* and I didn't know that he opposed letting 'aliens' into the country "for they might change and corrupt the national spirit and introduce foreign propensities." Contradictions, like a dormant, contagious and malicious virus, buried deep within the American soil and soul.

"America, you great unfinished symphony, you sent for me, you let me make a difference. A place where orphan immigrants can leave their fingerprints and rise up." sings A.★H. just after he is shot by Burr. (Are you listening 45?)

In our very own period of worldtime, the finale of the Cassini spacecraft mission which traveled 7 years in outer Space to reach Saturn, sending back data for 13 years, took place today — September 15 — making its ultimate plunge onto Saturn, its final image at last, later on, received by NASA. A crowning moment for science and scientists, astrophysicists and computer techies worldwide and for us all —, although very few women participated in the project; the dearth of women scientists itself a worldwide issue.

But also on Sept. 15, a Judge in St. Louis unilaterally acquitted a white former police officer of premeditated murder; the accused had shot and killed a black suspect. "Reasonable doubt." The same Judge has ruled against white police officers and in favor of black defendants. No matter. Once again violence erupted: "No Justice, No Profits… ". The 5th such acquittal in the US since May.

And so the real real world intervened in my "*Hamilton*" musing — such a totally brilliant work of music theater, collaboration epitomized on all fronts, everything we heard, everywhere we looked! — : racism, sexism, hatred-of-"otherism", permanent components of our culture, permanently affecting and characterizing our lives, the lives of our children and their children. So it has been here since 1619 when unwilling immigrants were brought to the shores of what is now Virginia — to be distinguished from willing, like Hamilton and my ancestors, and naïve, like the Dreamers. Immigrants all. And refugees of religious persecution up north, in 1621, landing near Cape Cod, forever dislocating the lives of Native Americans all over the continent, the hemisphere. And although the words I wrote earlier on inspired by my "*Hamilton*" experience are "things that matter" and should not be cast aside, they must be interpreted in the context of a country — mine, yours, ours — that will never be united, a people who do not acknowledge systemic racism and who put this country — still unbelievably — in the hands of a fat, old, sloppy, actor who has the verbal skills of a kindergartener, who cannot write his own script or the script that he does phone-type with pudgy fingers of his not-so-large hands is very very dim-witted, who says that he'll get back to you in a few days or two weeks and you'll be very very surprised because what you'll get will be so amazing like you've never seen before and, like him, you probably didn't even know just how very very complicated things can be. "Believe me", he says. Clap, clap, clap, clap, claptrap.

NB: In 1787-88, *The Federalist Papers*, urging the ratification by the states of the new Constitution, were written by Alexander Hamilton (at age 30 he wrote 51), James Madison (at age 36 he wrote 29), and John Jay (at age 42 he wrote 5), all published in New York newspapers under the pseudonym *Publius*. An extra-ordinary conflation of exceptional young literate well-schooled insurgents.

"*I'm not throwin' away my . . shot… I'm not throwin' away my . . shot. . .*"

PotUS nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11 & 12 were slaveholders while in office; nos. 8, 9, 17 & 18 owned slaves as well. Just think of the many monuments, memorials and tombs that would be demolished under certain rigorous criteria and standards.

Recently, journalist Te-Nehisi Coates, whose articles appear in *The Atlantic*, wrote: "It is insufficient to state the obvious of Donald Trump: that he is a white man who would not be president were it not for this fact. With one immediate exception, Trump's predecessors made their way to high office through the passive power of whiteness—that bloody heirloom which cannot ensure mastery of all events but can conjure a tailwind for most of them. Land theft and human plunder cleared the grounds for Trump's forefathers and barred others from it. Once upon the field, these men became soldiers, statesmen, and scholars; held court in Paris; presided at Princeton; advanced into the Wilderness and then into the White House. Their individual triumphs made this exclusive party seem above America's founding sins, and it was forgotten that the former was in fact bound to the latter, that all their victories had transpired on cleared grounds. No such elegant detachment can be attributed to Donald Trump—a president who, more than any other, has made the awful inheritance explicit." It was James Baldwin who had shown him that writing must generate "the reflex to break away from dreams".

So, has identity politics driven us into holes out of which the climb is precarious? Has too much time and struggle been defined by difference, not by sameness, as impossibly complex, hopeless or unrealistic as that latter might be? No, not in this country. Not anywhere. Especially not with PotUS 45. As a young teen female of Jewish-Ukrainian-Polish origin I wrestled with whether to call myself an American Jew or a Jewish American or whether to consider myself an American at all: no member of my family arrived before 1895; the Revolutionary and the Civil Wars were not wars in which my family participated. Not until World War I had a family member fought and died for the U.S., an uncle Morris I would never know. I didn't have to call myself white because I wasn't "colored" nor have I ever experienced what blackness means. (I've never put on black makeup spending a day or an hour

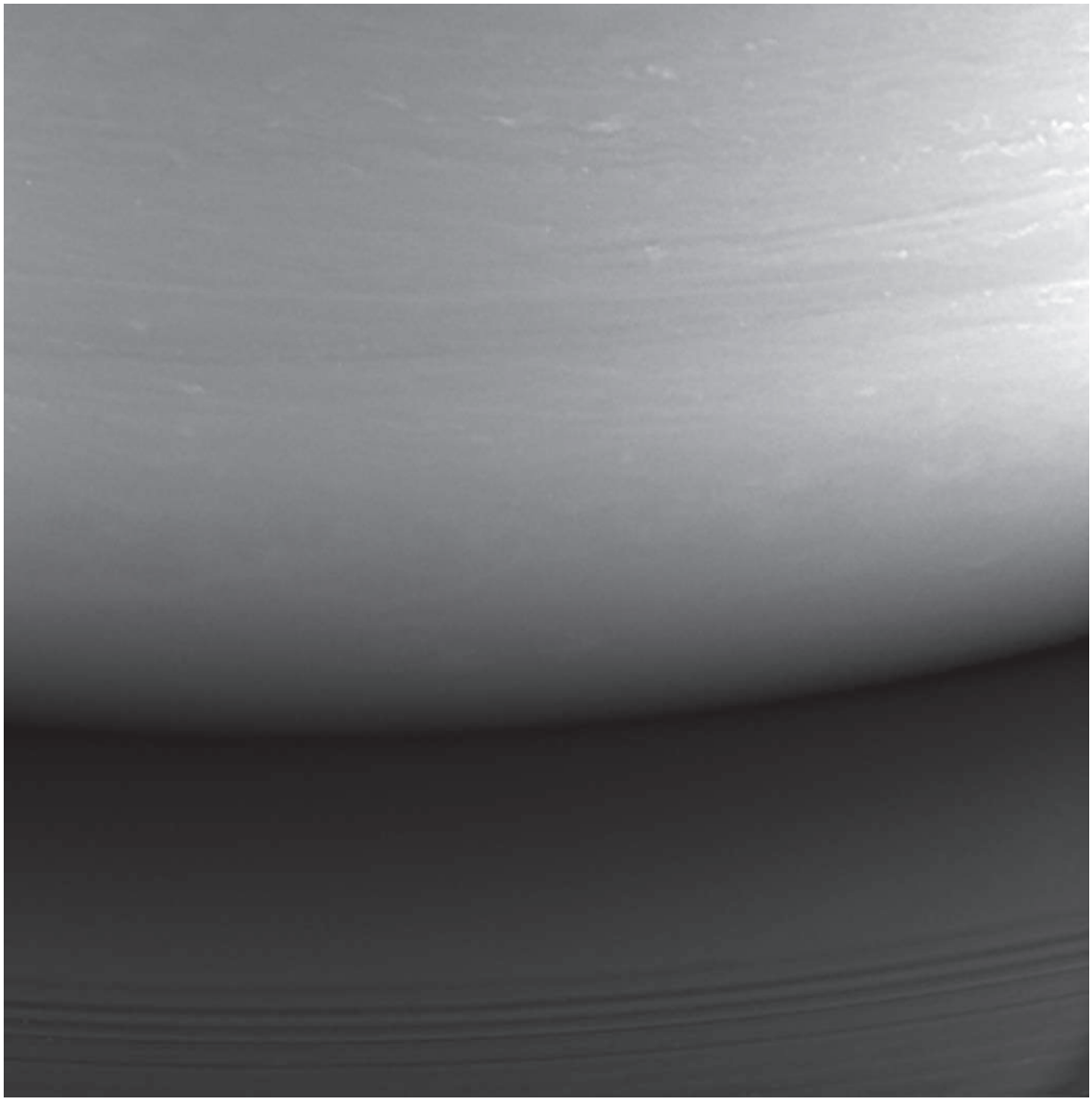
outdoors posing as a black woman. I thought about doing it when we lived on Manhattan's Lower East Side but I was terrified at the thought.) I believe and would like to say: "All Lives Matter" but in our current political climate I would be lumped into the camp of white supremacists. In 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King said: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Fifty-four years later where are we and where are the King children? A few baby steps and one umbrella step forward, not much more than that in worldtime or equality-time. Robert F. Kennedy said: "America's answer to the intolerant man is diversity, the very diversity which our heritage of religious freedom has inspired." And would I have gotten my university teaching positions without 1970s feminism, a movement I never joined, though it's the life I have led and supported and have been grateful to those who fought for me for so long. As the mother of three sons and the friend of nonconformist men, I knew that their lives, choices and hurdles were not necessarily easier than had been mine, despite or within a world defined by male chauvinism. Different for sure. And also for sure, identity politics, among other missteps, cost Hillary Clinton the election. Just as surely it made the election of Barack Obama possible. Back in 1962, our first Roman Catholic President, John F. Kennedy, whilst speaking about war and that more men were then being sent to Southeast Asia, said: "There is always inequity in life. It's very hard in military or in personal life to assure complete equality. Life is unfair."

"But when you're gone, who remembers your name? Who keeps your flame? … Who lives, who dies, who tells your story.".

But *wait again!* — for the next night came the 2017 Emmy awards where diversity and identity politics took center stage. So you can, after all, eat your cake and have it, too. Awards were given to Muslim men, men of African American and South Asian descent, women directors, gay and 'straight' women actors of African American descent — some of these "identities" being awarded for the first time in Emmy history, their lives "mattering", and then came the criticisms: too political, too few Latinos, too much PotUS-bashing, too long & more. Yet it must be the case that lurking in our species' DNA is the inclination to fear, to dislike, to avoid "others", built-in xenophobia borne out by behavior worldwide, each generation carefully teaching its young to love, to hate, embrace, violate, welcome, put down. . . . . A week in the life . . . . . .

September 13 - 19, 2017 - 5778
Valley Village, CA

CASSINI'S FINAL IMAGE AS IT IMPACTED SATURN.



PostScript: *The "new" travel ban bars 'non-compliant' nations: six are Muslim-majority, Sudan is excluded, North Korea & Venezuela added. †ICE, under the AG, has made many arrests in CA cities. Yet again the ACA is secure but for how long; the EPA and FDA are messing with our lives; DHS is messing with DACA; HHS is cutting back on needed ACA Services, its spendthrift Secretary just now resigned; the CFPB is probably going to be sued or dismantled; a belligerent PotUS 45 gradually wipes out Obama's legacy and rashly rebukes the young volatile leader of North Korea. "Rocket Man" v. Old Lunatic" & "Madman" v. Gangster". Anxieties of 13 days in October 1962 revisit me. For sure, the pits occurred yesterday & today & probably through February: 45's hostile racist tirade against protesting black NFL players. Meanwhile, Lin Miranda's family and friends, and all Puerto Ricans and Virgin Islanders, still wait for everything that matters.

September 23 – 24 – 25 – 26 – 27 – 29.

Post-PostScript: In a tweet from his N.J. golf course, PotUS 45 had the gall, the effrontery to accuse the Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico of "poor leadership" and "not being able to get other Puerto Ricans to work" (as in 'people of color are lazy'); Mayor Carmen Yulin Cruz, who has been begging the US for aid all week, whose voice is almost gone, said: "We are dying and you are killing us with the inefficiency and the bureaucracy". The chutzpah, the categorical nastiness of that immoral, "very fine", bigoted asshole brought about an immediate reply-tweet from Lin-Manuel Miranda:

You're going straight to hell
No long lines for you.
Someone will say, "Right this way, sir."
They'll clear a path.
5:21 AM - Sep 30, 2017

Not to plain old hell but, for starters, Dante's Circle of Hell no. 8, where PotUS 45 will be: whipped for pandering and seducing; submerged in excrement for excessive flattery or insult; put in boiling oil for graft; and forced to wear robes made of lead for hypocrisy.

September 30 - October 1, 2017

There is movement on the docks of San Juan, container-loads of relief are finally, 2 weeks in, albeit slowly, moving but Puerto Rico's topography is its own worst enemy, perhaps – although I hate to say this – worse than the slow response of FEMA, PotUS 45 and other American relief agencies. Yet PotUS 45 outdid himself today in his comparison of loss of life during Katrina to the known lesser loss in Puerto Rico as well as hurling toweling to a church group. (Too bad they didn't let the towels fall to the floor.) 45 is incorrigibly shameless, racist and possibly insane. (I hate to end this way but I can say no more.)



October 4, 2017

Lamentations

The New York City

African Burial Ground

"Give me your tired, your abused, your weak, your diseased, your overworked, your mother and newborn and those who resisted human bondage.

"Give me the young female shot in the back, with the ball still lodged in her rib cage. Lower her gently and be careful of her fractured cheek, broken earlier in a violent encounter with her owner. Give me as well the one they called 'Caesar', hanged and left to rot in the sun for pilfering the wine of Geneva.

"Give me your mariner who manned the sloops and brigs, the carpenter and mason who built the wall and city buildings, the blacksmith who smelted and forged the iron, and the dairywoman who cared for the cows that fatten white babies. Lay to rest within my embrace your cooper, miller and shoemaker, your stevedore, coachman and domestic.

"Bring me the children malnourished and deformed because the efforts of the dairywoman was not for their loins. Careful how you lay to rest your crippled, blind, mute and maimed; their vertebrate and limbs were crushed in leveling Manhattan. Bring me your freedmen and freedwomen who eked out an existence on land stretching from the Fresh Water Pond (The Collect) west to what is Greenwich Village and Herald Square. Theirs was a formidable challenge in a world divided between black and white. Lay gently within my embrace as well those with an admixture of African, Native American and European – Give me your African American.

"Oh, and please don't forget the merry ones who annually celebrate Pinkster and gave expression to their African traditions preserved and syncretized in that European institution. Dress them in their colorful garb and lower them gently into my embrace.

"Let me comfort those in this eternal sleep who were denied such comfort as they labored to build New York. Dress them in clothing that gives them respect, and place with the little ones pendants to comfort them on their journey. Shroud them in linen pinned to perfection. Decorate their coffins with the message of Sankofa for the future must avoid this pain, sorrow, and untimely

deaths of those interred in my depths, all evidence of a rabid inhumanity.

"Give me those whose African beginnings showed signs of a healthy life but whose American endings showed signs of an unhealthy and physically traumatized, exhausting life. Lay gently within my embrace those whose teeth were filed as signs of tribal affiliation or personal beauty, those with colorful beads around their waist, and those with cowrie shells for their spiritual journey home. Place coins upon their eyes and face them East toward the rising sun.

"Take the ashes from the pyre of those who dared to challenge the institution of slavery in 1712 and 1741, and scatter them above me to the wind so that they may be borne back to the Motherland. Lay to rest within my depths the other defenders of a freedom denied. Lay them gently side by side while whispering 'never, never more'!"

Dr. A. J. Williams-Myers, Emeritus

Department of Black Studies

State University of New York

New Paltz, New York

31 May 2015


We wear the mask that grins and lies
We wear the mask that grins and lies
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile

Daesha Devon Harris

Photographs / mixed media "Just Beyond the River"
Propos from CPW video portrait, November 2017

"My work revolves around the notion of home, particularly the African-American endeavor for freedom, citizenship and inclusion. Every time I see a photograph at a garage sale, or in a flea market, I want to rescue it, because I have hardly any photographs of my Dad's side of the family - they were mostly lost in a fire – and so when I see these people just out there, just discarded, I want to adopt them in, so I collect them.
And I've been thinking about them a lot: What can I do with these people to make them seen again?

So, combine that with: really having a hard time dealing with the government violence against black and brown people. It just felt over the past five years like bodies were just piling up, one after the other, and it happened so frequently that people would forget the name of the person previous, and I started thinking: How long has this been going on? How many unnamed, unrecognized bodies were out there?

I had been reading Negro folk tales and slave narratives – and I thought: these people, these photographs that I have, I don't know who they are. But I would see their faces in the stories I was reading, so to me they kind of became folk heroes. That's how I came up with the idea to actually put them in the water.

My process for that is I create a transparency of one of the specific portraits, and then I take that transparency to a body of water, and actually place the transparency in the water. Using the flora from the area, I create a still-life, and then I photograph it. So, it ends as a single photograph of this ancestor floating in the water.

To me the water represents Freedom. In most of the narratives, you have to cross water on the journey to Freedom."


break me my bounds, and let me fly

A Monument in Kreuzberg: Between Marx and Michels

David Kettler

> We call locations of experience "places." Experience means perceiving, doing, thinking, and feeling… I am suggesting that the quality of a place depends on a human context shaped by memories and expectations, by stories of real or imagined events—that is, by the historical experience located there… Each place has its nomos, its characteristic rule of action, or customary form of making itself felt, or special way of being in the world.
>
> Places are not only represented but also shaped by these two different principles: geometric rationalization on the one hand; indeterminate expressiveness on the other—the logic of space or the spirit of place.
>
> Moral categories, moods, and conditions of morale help to define the quality of places… The concept of expressive space means the subjective dimension of located experience… 'Expressive' means laden with emotions and symbolic features of experience.
>
> --Eugene Victor Walter *Placeways* (p. 117)

This note begins with a tribute to Eugene Victor Walter, a reformed (or perhaps deformed) sociologist, whose audacious collection of exploratory essays introduced the concept 'topistics;' which he presented as a study of 'placeways' or an understanding of humankind's settings that express and reproduce feelings, experiences, and the configurations of human lives.[1] Walter became known as a pioneer during the last decade of the twentieth-century, as geographers and urbanologists returned to once-forbidden topics like exploring the sense, or 'spirit of the place.' When I first met him in 1956, when we found ourselves, and each other, in the wilds of central Ohio, the name that connected us was Franz L. Neumann. Neumann was a political theorist who had once taught me and whose central questions all circled around power as something inescapable, richly valuable, and yet also a source of pain and destruction.[2]

Walter and I congratulated one another for being the only persons within a radius of 200 miles, at least, who'd so much as heard of Neumann. Walter's first book, *Terror and Resistance: A Study of Political Violence*,[3] used the case study of the Shaka Zulu despotism in Africa to develop an argument that the choice of terror as a mode of power is an act of agency; a choice of a way of ruling. Like his later studies of 'topistics,' these inquiries appeared in published form only as excerpts from crates of notes and experiments… and thus, Walter went on. His last decades were occupied with teaching himself to write novels on themes of magic as well as how to play the oboe. The fascination with magic and the oboe rather sums it up; Walter took up the hardest things but was too impatient to stop and polish what he'd found.

This note is governed not so much by *Terror and Resistance* as by a day that I spent with Walter during which he tried to open me to Manchester, where meaning derived from genealogy. We started with the remaining ruins of a Roman settlement and a sequence of maps through the centuries. Then we spent the day on the Engels trail, following the report of Friedrich Engels in the Manchester chapter of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.[4] We finished with a

view from the CIS Building, which was then the tallest building in town. Correspondingly, I will turn to a foreshortened genealogical consideration of a place in Berlin, a registered memorial in Kreuzberg that appears presently to serve the same purposes as it did in 1930, when it was first dedicated. But places do not have static essences, and therefore, I will present this monument for critical consideration through a sequence of reconstitutions.

This monument is now the headquarters of the regional German metalworkers' union (IG Metall), as it once was for the Socialist union in the same occupations during the last three Weimar years (*Deutscher Metallarbeiter Verband*). It had two interim configurations—first, as a major center of the National Socialist German Workers Front, and then, during the years when the East-West wall was within sight of the building, as a partially occupied local headquarters of the metal workers. The street address is Alte Jakob Strasse 148-155 in the Kreuzberg section of Berlin—once a working-class residential area but now a mix of gentrification and public institutions

First, some pictures:

Front View



Vorderansicht

The New Masters - 2



Their Legacy



The first group is an archival series, beginning with the time of construction and continuing through a photo of the building under Nazi occupation and the appearance of the building at the end of the war, damaged by fire and (presumably) bombing effects.

The second group consists of more recent photos of the exterior and interior, reconstructed according to the original design under the supervision of an architect whose name happens to be Kafka.

Metalworkers Building
Alte Jakob Strasse 148-155 in the Kreuzberg section of Berlin



…….

1989 Restoration 2



1989 Restoration 1



1989 Restoration 3



The original architect was Erich Mendelsohn (1887-1953), whose style was closer to the "old" than to the "new" Objectivity [Sachlichkeit], with elements generally identified as "expressionist", and, in any case, often at odds with the radicalism of the Bauhaus. His buildings before the steelworkers' commission included a factory in Leningrad, numerous large department stores, and - to launch his career - a tower designed for a scientist who sought to provide an empirical basis for Einstein's theory of relativity. Unlike most of the best-known architects of his generation, he was Jewish.

Mendelsohn' s Einstein Tower



Exiled after the Nazi rise to power, he worked in England and Palestine, where he built a cottage for Chaim Weitzmann, among other important buildings, and in the United States, where he became best known for a number of synagogues. A wartime assignment, especially striking in view of the fate of the Metalworkers building, was to construct a regionally diversified "German Village," on a site in the Utah desert, where the purpose was to come as close as possible to recreating German housing in order to enable Standard Oil to build incendiary bombs of the most certain efficacy, to be used in the firebombing raids of Berlin and other German working class locations.

If we were simply to classify the (re)finished metal workers' building, together with Mendelsohn's other work, according to some two-fold standard calendar of attributes derived from generalizations about the differences between humanistic and mechanical buildings for humankind, we might simply conclude that the commercial rationality implicit in its brilliant expressionism, where even the building of the labour union has rental store fronts along its sides, simply bespeaks the dehumanization and alienation of Georg Simmel's 'metropolis.'[5] In some of his essayistic moods, Walter might have said so. Such a judgment might as well also fit the characterization of the commissioning labour union as a prime example of Roberto Michels' iron law of oligarchy[6] - where the leadership uses every means to enhance an overbearing distance from the membership it claims to unite, with this building designed to intimidate, awe, and subjugate the individuals who come through its doors from their poor, crowded tenements.

Yet our reading of the experience of the building, must be more complex more open to discontinuities and contradictions, like those that Marx and Engels both found in the trade unions for and through whom the building speaks. They alternated between delight in the promise of workers' self-organization, even tolerating the utopian visions that they excoriated in theorists, and despair at the tendency of these movements to settle too easily for minor gains. I prefer the Engels trail through this historical construction, even if I have to take it at a quick pace. To return for the moment to the architect's aspirations, at the ceremonies marking the opening of the "House of the German Metalworkers Association" on August 17, 1930, Erich Mendelsohn said:

> To elevate the purpose to a symbol, while stripping the symbol of its nebulosity—to join it to the solid ground of active life—is the aim of a builder who is conscious of his mission.[7]

Historically, the purpose to which Mendelsohn alludes has to do with the complex designs of the Social Democratic labour unions of the Weimar years. These may be interpreted with the help of the same Franz Neumann, who brought Walter and me together, not in the least because his labour law office was in that same steelworkers' building.

The main question is whether the project of the Weimar Social Democracy and its allied unions said anything in their time, and whether it can still say anything to us now. The categorical refusal of those formations to seek a way to unify the Left and their utter defeat by the Nazis make it easy to deny this, and such a denial is still the conventional wisdom. However, I read something more tragic and rich in the often quite properly mundane and frequently misjudged undertakings of that generation. I am moved by their strong assertion of a humane aspiration, justified self-satisfaction in the accomplishments of a mass movement of labour, as well as a claim to share enough power to make something altogether new happen, while protecting concrete immediate interests.[8] This is what I find striking in Mendelsohn's building, as we are confronted with its history; it was already a memorial in 1930 when it was first occupied. How then may we understand its recreation by Kafka in 1989, or whether we are not addressed more truthfully by the ruin than by its reconstruction?

We begin our historical walk with a very brief glance at the metal workers' convention in 1913. The proposal to move the headquarters from Stuttgart to Berlin was put aside as premature, although there was considerable opinion that the uniform legal regime in the empire obviated the original grounds for preferring Wuerttemberg to Prussia.[9] The issue returned at the convention of 1928, with a Social-Democratic Chancellor at the head of the Cabinet, the union membership continuing to grow, and the economic downturn still manageable. The principal opposition now came from the units under Communist leadership, on the grounds that the Social-Democratic majority simply wanted to huddle in the shelter of the party's officials in government, whose labour policy, according to these critics, denied the reality of class conflict.[10]

Apart from such polemical formulations, it was clear that a crucial consideration for those seeking the relocation was the value of informal contacts with public officials, and easier joint action with political and labour union allies.

The vote in favour of the move was 201 to 62, with the middle-German units of Berlin and Leipzig among those opposed. A question was left open, whether the new headquarters was to be in a comparatively small office building that had been already acquired in 1912 or whether building a new structure was economically feasible and administratively valuable. The decision

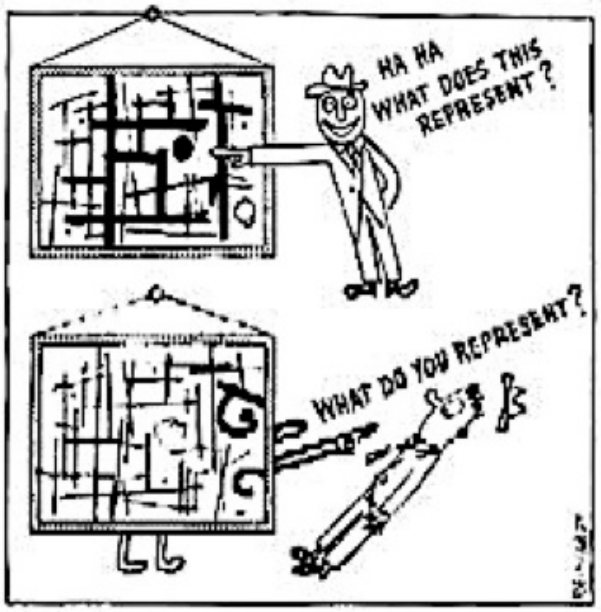
to build anew is then justified in important measure by economic calculations, including the facility of supplying the reduced rent housing for administrative employees accepting the offered transfer from Stuttgart. The selection of the architect was nominally done through a competition among four, but there is no evidence of such a contest, and Mendelsohn appeared to have been the choice of a builder close to the union. Communist hostility to the project appeared in the form of a four-week strike of construction workers under Communist leadership, with at least some of the funds destined to go to a dissident strike among a breakaway group among the metal workers. The strike was defeated without concessions.

Yet it is clear that, quite apart from the creative moment of the novel architectural design and its execution, this construction was not merely an automatic unfolding of a bureaucratic logic or technical imperative; it was also the political product of a political process.
The central term of that politics is 'parity'. The political theory of the Weimar Social Democracy, especially in its labour union core, took as its point of departure equal rights within what was deemed to be a collective bargaining relationship between workers and employers. It constituted the economy as an autonomous domain, subject to a social dynamic that progressively undermined the power of property without abandoning the skills and organization of modern production. The whole process was recognized and fostered by an ever more socialist policy in the democratic parliamentary state.[11] This was, in any case, the political theory of Franz Neumann and his closest allies and teachers in the ranks of labour lawyers.

Neumann's law partner, Ernst Fraenkel, called it "Collective Democracy".[12] The Metal Workers' building articulates that concept of 'collective democracy' on behalf of labour as an equal party. It is spacious, fresh, and direct, and knows how to be elegantly beautiful beyond the minimum of function. The parallels between Mendelsohn's claims for the building and Neumann's hopes for the law are thus, manifest. In the event, of course, this is not what happened: they could not make it happen. The Social Democratic-led government had resigned in March of 1930, unable to solve the problem of unemployment compensation to the satisfaction of the unions. Between the union's vote in 1928 to initiate the building and its dedication in August 1930, the rate of unemployment among union members tripled (and it would reach tenfold by the time the swastika displaced the union emblem on the wall), and all the expectable consequences and concomitants in the economic and political domains followed along. The building marked the stages. Marx had not come. Instead things became very much worse.

So then, what does the freshly polished rebuilt structure have to say? There is the final victory over Communism; the struggle already present at the original creation. And there is the largest and probably most militant union in the Federal Republic. There is, in effect, a second return to Berlin. But it is nevertheless a long distance from Mendelsohn's formulation of the first completion. When I started this interrogation, I was tempted to question the justification, perhaps unduly influenced by Neumann's seeming inability to lower his sights. But now, I am reminded of a famous cartoon, itself a memorial. It appeared, I believe, in one of the short-lived successor newspapers to PM. Two panels: in the first, there is a " non-objective" painting suspended in the middle of the space while a line-drawn figure in suit and hat points at the painting and says, presumably sneeringly, "What does this represent?" And in the second, the painting points back at the questioner and replies, "And what do you represent?" That is the challenge of the Metalworkers' Building.

Reflexive topistics



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Sun Ra's Mystical Time

Chris Stover

"The future is always here in the past."[1]

Sun Ra matters. *More now than ever. His music, his metamusical thought, his prose, his relationalities, his myth-science, his activism, his Afro-black mytho-ontology, his imprint on proliferating lines of Afrofuturist expression, his creative decodings of histories and futures, his imaginings of alternative anthropocenes—alternative* nows *that express, through the collaborative action of musical expression, the impingements of mythical pasts and utopian futures; this is why Sun Ra remains an activist force the transformative potential of which often gets swept aside in narratives that foreground his utopian aspirations.*

This essay is a slightly modified version of a talk that I gave at the 2017 Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts conference, the theme of which was "Out of Time." We're in an extended moment where it feels like we might truly be out of time: catastrophic climate change is imminent; real dialogue across ideological boundaries is increasingly impossible; capitalism is unquestionably assumed as the default condition within which contemporary life unfolds, even as it increasingly is shown to destroy just about everything it touches (and even the tiniest flickers of challenges to capitalism's unquestioned hegemony are mercilessly mocked as purely fantastical or even dangerous); legislation is voted upon (and settled along party lines) without due process; tribal fears and loathing's ignite new violence—against women, against LGBTQ communities, against ethnic and religious Others. Even guiding themes of post-structuralist epistemology, like the contestable status of so-called "facts," are mobilized to score partisan political points—viz. the invocation of "alternative facts" by right-wing political advisors. We should *celebrate the belated acknowledgment in public discourse of the contingent nature of reality (and its representation in "facts") but that acknowledgment is mired in craven political gamesmanship rooted in an ontology of winners and losers. It is easy to fall into despair, intensified by knowing that the same forces that create all of these conditions have also created a mechanism—through gerrymandering and voter suppression and micro-fascistic collusion between party, media, and capital—that makes the possibility of substantive change an elusive prospect indeed.*

Sun Ra ascribes all of this, to an extent, to time, at least as we understand it. When he arrives, in the opening moments of Space is the Place*, on his mythical new planet, free of the structuring forces of hegemonic Earthly conditions, radically displacing space and time, matter and meaning, he proclaims that now "we work on the other side of time." Sun Ra's myth-science is no utopian dream, however, it is a script for vital action in a here and now: our here, this now. More than ever, Sun Ra matters…*

* * *

> "The music is different here, the vibrations are different—not like planet Earth… Planet Earth: sound of guns, anger, frustration—there was no one to talk to up on planet Earth as I understand… We'll set up a colony for black people here: see what they do on a planet all their own, without any white people there. They could drink in the beauty of this planet, it would affect their vibrations, for the better of course. Another place in the universe, up under different stars—that would be where the altered destiny would come in. Equation-wise, the first thing to do is to consider time as officially ended. We work on the other side of time… We'll bring them here through the isotope teleportation, transmolecularization… Or better still, teleport the whole planet here through music…"[2]

In Octavia Butler's *Kindred*, one of the most fundamental science fiction conceits, the time machine, is used to construct a meaning-enacting conduit to the past: to Butler's protagonist Dana's past, but also to enliven and clarify aspects of the relationship between contemporary African American society and its histories. The specific mechanism by which time travel is enacted is not made clear, nor is it important: Butler, the consummate storyteller, shares only what she absolutely needs in order to draw us in: we're right there in the middle of the action; our knowledge is positioned and partial, and therefore phenomenologically rich.

[1] Baraka 2011 [1995], xi.
[2] Sun Ra 2003 [1974].

Because time travel for Dana is actual and embodied, the psychic and physical wounds that she receives are very much real; her scars speak the histories of actual lacerations, her psychological trauma expresses fears born out of actual dangers. That Dana's pain is a metaphor for the psychic scars borne by contemporary descendants of slaves living in a still racially stratified and culturally polarized US capitalist culture is unsubtle, but all the more powerful for it.

Sun Ra is another kind of time–space traveller. While official records have his birth taking place in 1914 in Birmingham, Alabama, he famously disavowed that account, dislocating his own origin story to Saturn, changing or erasing details of his past and inventing new ones. The truth or non-truth of Sun Ra's claims matter little. I'll develop this idea shortly; for now I offer two meditations by Kelly Josephs and one by John Sawed:

> "…what does time and place…really matter?" (Josephs 2013, 129);
>
> "…freedom cannot be bound to…official chronologies or geographies; it exists in the cooperative 'in process' between the past, present, and future of an integrated black diaspora" (130);
>
> "Here…, space was both a metaphor of exclusion and of reterritorialization, of claiming the 'outside' as one's own, of tying a revised and corrected past to a claimed future." (Szwed 1998, 140)

Ruth Mayer offers another take, a "suspension of time and place" brought about by the "collusion of myth and history…to come up with a history of one's own." (Mayer 2000, 559, 562) She goes on to call this an "aesthetics of alienation" (563), only a small etymological step away from what Samuel Delany or Octavia Butler or Sun Ra would certainly support reinscribing as an *alien-nation* in which the very structures of oppression within which one finds oneself are co-opted to project a specific, positive, productive, acquisitive alien status—in Sun Ra's case as teacher/shaman/space-time-traveller/hipster/queer/schizo imagining a new alien nation in a mythical transplanetary future.

So what has all this to do with working on the other side of time? In music studies we tend to describe the temporality of our practices in two ways: diachronic and synchronic; in-time and time-out. By remapping what Josephs calls "the geography of the narrative" to imagine a manifold temporality all aspects of which exist in mutually constitutive and creatively co-determinant ways, temporal trajectories (and the discourses that describe them) begin to proliferate in manifold directions at manifold speeds and slownesses, to enact reversals and redeployments, to conjoin in new transverse movements. In a passage titled "The Dos and Don'ts of Time Travel" in his volume on Deleuze's philosophy of time, James Williams engages similar themes. He writes:

> any process in the present is also, in some special way, a process in the past, a moving backwards into the past…. However, no process in the present can go back to the past as it was when the process of going back began…. [A]ccording to Deleuze's account we are travelling back and forward in time all the time and with no need for special machines or for odd physical properties such as wormholes. This is because the 'special ways'…involve alterations of the past and of the future in the present. Any actual present process is altering the past and the future, not in a causal or statistical manner but instantaneously and for all the past and all the future. (Williams 2011, 8–9)

All of this, then, operates within a spatio-temporal manifold that Erin Manning would call an *activist present*. Manning is interested in the more-than-human of experience, in decentering what we might call neurotypical anthro-phenomenology. This involves attention to any now-ongoing present as the expression of *all* of its potential pasts—including imagined or invented pasts; new pasts unfolding through impingements of new presents—and virtual futures. What can we learn in this respect from Kurt Vonnegut's Tralfamadorians, who engage the entirety of time at all times, who would consider diachronic experience simply as a culturally-specific mode of attending, a product of a particular (limited, human) set of sensory apparatuses? The "at all times" of this construction is a human rendering: in Tralfamadorian time there is only time, not times. It is also a particular way of inscribing time based on certain kinds of epistemological givens; as Sun Ra and the Afrofuturists have shown us time and time again (pun intended), diachrony can certainly be falsified; pasts can be erased and reinscribed; history revealed as ideologically constructed.

"But history is his story; my story is mystery," Sun Ra has famously said. Diachrony is State history, hegemonic history, history as a distribution of what can or cannot be said and heard, the history of bodies being told what and how to be. "You will be organized, you will be an organism, you will articulate your body —otherwise you're just depraved" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 159).

Tralfamadorian experience is not synchronic, however: it is pan-chronic; all times are seen at once. This is the lived experience made possible by an alien set of sensory apparatuses, offering a para-human *tralfamadorocene* that might help us sort out how the radical temporal redirections of Afro-futurist time travel work and are expressible. Synchronic experience is Donna Haraway's god-trick, seeing without being seen, engaging without being ethically responsible to the objects of experience, and it is the context of most of the conventional tools not only of music scholarship, but of all scholarship in the humanities. The movements away from synchronic engagement are remarkable for their rarity and for their radical nature; that most of them ultimately fail to achieve that radical break and instead fall back into new binaries or new empiricisms speaks to what Bergson, James, Whitehead, and countless others have demonstrated as what I might call an epistemological–ontogenic block: a crippling shortcoming of our discursive apparatus that prevents us from making an actual diachronic connection to the object of study, which is in turn engendered by the fact that we experience existence through the course of the time that our limited, human, culturally-conditioned senses allow us to perceive as true.

Enter Sun Ra's *mythical* time, which seems analyzable as a form of pan-chronic engagement: *not* outside of time, but in all times. When Sun Ra and his Arkestra first land on their far-away planet, dreaming of forging a utopian society for people of color, free of the social/political/racial structurings they left behind, he proclaims that they can now "work on the other side of time." They are already in another space, a mythical "somewhere there." As Sun Ra write:

> If we came from nowhere here,
> Why can't we go somewhere there?"[3]

We might read this alongside the concluding line of another Sun Ra poem:

> With all the many greater dimensions
> Of a living tomorrow.[4]

This is another *other side of time*: a living tomorrow suggests that today is somehow not alive, or is no longer. A rebirth in every opening onto the future. Sun Ra began his live performances by introducing himself: "Some call me Mister Ra. Some call me Mister Re. You may call me Mister Mystery." *Mr. Re*, with a long "ee": rebirth, return, reenactment, revision, renaming, reinscription, reimagining, reterritorialization. Ajay Heble develops Sun Ra's nowhere-here and somewhere-there by describing *this here* as being really nowhere, a no-place—we're all familiar with this theme from Ellison's Invisible Man and many, many other parables—and *that there* is somewhere, recalling promised-land narratives from the Old Testament and the black church.[5] There is another register though, that we shouldn't overlook: "If we came from nowhere here" is a striking critical engagement with the past: a past that was severed, violently erased in the slave trade, but also a past that is itself a nowhere, an imagining, a fiction. This, then, is another reading of Sun-Ra's post-time onto-mytho-mysteriology. We are after history, because there is no history, history is nowhere, because, again, "history is not my story, my story is mystery." History as myth-science.

To theorize this slightly, we might say that to transcend the space of here and the time of now is to erupt within what Jacques Rancière would call representational regimes of oppressive (or diachronic) thought, discourse, and action. To understand space *as* here/not-here and time *as* now/not-now is exactly to repeat the images of thought bound up in those regimes: ***here*** is determined by socio-cultural and political borders drawn in the interest of serving the dominant forces that draw them; ***now*** is a product of the movement of historical forces that cause it to be what it is in the way that it is. *I am me, this is my here, and what lies beyond my borders is not-me, not-here, there*: this is exactly the kind of reifying stultification that Félix Guattari radically overturns with his schizoanalytic project; that Erin Manning opens to new differentiating

[3] "Imagination," in Sun Ra 2005, 54.
[4] "New Horizons," in Sun Ra 2005, 90.
[5] See Lock 1999 for an analysis of these themes in Sun Ra's writings.

forces when she insists upon the more-than of subjective existence. *Now is an expression of the determinable pasts that caused it to be what it is*: this is what Deleuze falsifies when he replaces the reality of now-as-causal-outcome with a triple synthesis in which virtual forces become-actual and, importantly, vice versa: actual forces become-virtual, all in a double movement that Deleuze describes as differentiation/differenciation; what Octavia Butler and Kurt Vonnegut and Doctor Who demonstrate is a process of creative co-constitution, of transversal impingements (every present unfolds within a complex ecology of concurrent presents, affecting and affected by one another…).

So an activist now doesn't transcend time, it invents a new time, in each new now. If each present is an expression of its past—of its histories—then opening-onto-future, as a radical reinscription of the past, is exactly what marks the end of history. Music, for Sun Ra, takes on a heuristic value here. My role as a music scholar as well: there is a great deal of research on Sun Ra, from the perspectives of literary theory, cultural studies, post-colonial studies, and more, but little of it touches Sun Ra's music. Music theory and analysis, conversely, continue to privilege things like coherence and connection and what we might call "hearing-as" as its disciplinary/disciplining projects. I'm interested in what can we learn specifically from Sun Ra's *music*; its materiality, its matter(ing)—or from the activist now of any improvised musical expression, or from the relations between musicking human subjects and post- or trans-human sonorous bodies—that can be of value beyond the hermetic world of music analysis. I'm interested, in short, in the ways that music theory—and the ways that it can imagine or reveal relationships between musicking human and sonorous bodies, relationships that, necessarily, transform those bodies through the very acts of relating—might *matter*.

Consider this passage from Carolyn Abbate:

> At least, a coherent stance might mean not saying what musical configurations mean without simultaneously signaling a deficit in seriousness or without proposing too many alternative meanings at the same time. Why repay the freedom we are given by putting the gift-giver in a cage…, without wondering what this activity may say? Such statements anthropomorphize musical works, making them into living things towards which we must develop an ethical position. They are not, of course, but the way we cope with them may reflect choices about how to cope with real human others or how not to. (Abbate 2004, 517)

Of course we don't have to become new materialists, or animists, to push against the idea that anthropomorphic beings are the only kinds of things toward which we can or should develop ethical positions! But there are two other points in Abbate's text that Sun Ra's music and thought bring to the forefront: first, might a "deficit in seriousness" be a sign of a far richer and more creative interface with a world only very particular subthemes of which seem to reward or respond adequately to 'serious' inquiry? Part of Sun Ra's rhetorical strategy was to suggest on at least one register that perhaps he was clowning you, that he didn't actually believe his own wild and woolly proclamations. So every utterance is already accompanied by a double that opens onto new layers of fabulation. Every utterance already its own deterritorialization.

And then, Abbate asks us, why a meaning-drive that, in the end, suggests that a single agreed-upon meaning (or, generously, perhaps a small handful of meanings) is even what we should be striving for? That meanings proliferate, that meaning-inscription is a creative and personal act, is a tenet of Afrofuturist thought. The proliferation of meaning—as *possibility*—is enlivened through the ways in which fact and fiction are strategically blurred in Afrofuturist expression; see, for example, novelist Erna Brodber's marvelous essay "Fiction in the Scientific Procedure," where she advances an activist heuristic of "twinning" these two epistemological modes. Like fiction, music is a mode of knowledge production that opens up possibilities that transcend what we are taught get to count as facts. "Facts" like the principles of Newtonian physics, the real-ness of materiality in a here and now, put into question through a hundred-plus years of critical scrutiny from perspectives as diverse as Husserl and Einstein to DeLanda and Barad. "Facts" like historical truths as we loosely agree to understand them, not just decentered and problematized like multiple strands of modern and postmodern historiography have demonstrated, but completely and radically inverted through the impingements of fictions: are not Odysseus and Oedipus as "real" in terms of their effects on the ways we think and behave and theorize as Aristotle and Aquinas? "Facts" like understandings about time and space torn asunder, revealed to be products of epistemologically-proscribed modes of rationalist thinking, to be replaced by myth-science, time travel, projections into outer space. As many writers have suggested, Sun Ra's music functions as the spatio-temporal project through which all of these so-called facts can be

disrupted, displaced, deterritorialized. Impossible, you say? Well of course: that's the point! Here's Sun Ra writing in 1969 in response to a request to provide some words that might be uttered by Neil Armstrong and company when they landed on the moon:

> Reality has touched against myth
> Humanity can move to achieve the impossible
> Because when you've achieved one impossible the others
> Come together to be with their brother, the first impossible
> Borrowed from the rim of the myth
> Happy Space Age To You….[6]

(This poem always reminds me of the White Queen, who has "believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast," echoed in Douglas Adams: "If you've done six impossible things this morning, why not round it off with breakfast at Milliways, the Restaurant at the End of the Universe?")

Three years later Sun Ra writes:

> Thus is the idea of the PIVOTING PLANES
> of the
> greater impossible
> and the
> Immeasurable equation
> SPACE – VOID
> reality
> on
> the
> outer reach
> of the unending
> On
> ONNESS "O N."[7]

The "immeasurable equation"—a significant enough theme to be used as the title of the first volume of Sun Ra's collected text works—returns in a late interview anthologized by John Corbett, in which Sun Ra eschews the word philosophy to describe his framework for interfacing with the world: "Philosophy is a conjecture. I'm dealing with equations. Philosophy is something like religion, it's a theory. It could be true or not true. But I'm not dealing with theories, I'm dealing with equations." (Corbett 1994, 312) That Sun Ra's equations turn out to be, perhaps, wildly fantastic etymological inventions only reinforces their status as exemplars of a myth-science. Hence, perhaps, their immeasurability. Not true or not-true, but rather, "do they *work*?"[8] How do Sun Ra's equations function; how can we use them? Not only after time, but after truth; both time and truth are sublated in Sun Ra's mythical reimagining. Ajay Heble refuses to deconstruct the possible/ impossible binary in Sun Ra's poetic language: "outer space…functions as a metaphor for possibility (or perhaps for performing the impossible), for alternatives to dominant systems of knowledge production…." (Heble 2010, 99) John Szwed, Graham Lock, Marcel Swiboda, and others have written about Sun Ra's scholarly sources, especially the highly polemic reinscriptions of black African identity for ancient Egypt, and the suggestion that most of the significant philosophical concepts attributed to classical Greek thought originated in black Africa: George M. James's *Stolen Legacy* and Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* are two of the most often cited works in this vein, but there are many others. Many of the most tendentious claims put forth in these reimaginings have been debunked by empirical archaeological and hermeneutic research. But as Swabia writes,

> Sun Ra's own take on the spurious reading of Egypt on the part of the enlightenment is less concerned to provide a rationalization of this historical legacy than to re-mythologize it, or

[6] "Reality Has Touched Against Myth," in Sun Ra 2005, 153.
[7] "The Pivoting Planes," in Sun Ra 2005, 133.
[8] This is a formulation that recurs through Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*: a turn from the kind of meaning-ascription that derives from signification to function, in a context: *[how] does it work?* See especially Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 179–189.

> else to re-inscribe the mythological tropes associated with Egypt with a mind to exploring the significance that they have for African Americans in the aftermath of slavery and the ongoing exploitation of their culture as part of white-dominated American capitalist society. (Swiboda 2007, 99)

Swiboda goes on to compare Sun Ra's equations and creative etymologies to what Henry Louis Gates Jr. calls "signifyin'," a "complex play of language and meaning that provides a strategic basis for the critique of 'Western' thought and its inflexible systematicity." (100)

In other words, again, it is not the truth value of these claims that is important, so much as their power to enact new mythic structures that animate possibilities for new futures and for new modes of social organization. In Octavia Butler's *Dawn*, the alien Oankali describe hierarchy as a defective genetic trait that humans, if they are to survive, must overcome:

> But we are not hierarchical, you see. We never were. But we are powerfully acquisitive. We acquire new life—seek it, investigate it, manipulate it, sort it, use it. (Butler 2000, 41)

An Oankali ontology of acquisition is a perfect way to fold back to Sun Ra's music—to its materiality and thereby its meaning. As Karen Barad suggests, material and meaning are inseparable; thus the double meaning of "matter" in which both resonate. Matter matters. Sun Ra's music is also powerfully acquisitive, as are the affective movements it animates.

<*www.chrisstovermusic.com/kingporter.mp3*>

<*www.chrisstovermusic.com/joyfulnoise.mp4*>

The first excerpt is from Sun Ra's arrangement of Jelly Roll Morton's "King Porter Stomp." Multiple temporal trajectories are enacted in this performance. Swing-era composer Fletcher Henderson first recorded "King Porter Stomp" in 1928, but it became a smash hit with Benny Goodman's 1935 recording. Henderson wrote the Goodman arrangement as well; the implications of the outsized success of Goodman's "white" recording should not go unnoticed. Sun Ra's first high-profile gig was as arranger and sometimes pianist with Henderson's band in the late 1940s, and throughout his career Sun Ra revisited Henderson's music. In this 1977 recording we are dislocated from what we understand Henderson's music to be, and by extension from how we understand accepted narratives about what constitutes *the* jazz tradition and how its historical progression unfolds. All this is expressed through the materiality of the sounds, through the music's matter(ing): Sun Ra subverts teleological harmonic progressions with impossibly long static, repetitive sonic stretches that suddenly snap right back into alignment with a now-temporally displaced continuation of the song. His electric organ subtly dislocates the harmonic and timbral integrity of the original. Harmonic, in the sense that Sun Ra's note choices form an additional pitch-class stratum that both crowds against the familiar sonic space of Morton's melody and chord progression and melt into (and then again out of) those familiar spaces, each affecting the other. The always-ongoing double movement of Deleuze and Guattari's territorialization and deterritorialization is continually evident in Sun Ra's keyboard textures. Timbral because the sound of the electric organ enacts an anachronistic relationship with its Henderson–Morton context. "The future is always here in the past." The sometimes wild improvisatory utterances from the Arkestra's soloists project these dislocations into more radical reterritorializations, as does the frenetic drum backbeat, a caricature of swing dance accompaniment.

In the second excerpt, we see and hear Sun Ra entering what seems like an ecstatic state, eschewing technique (which he had in spades!), turning away from the forms and pitches and timbres and rhythmic dynamism of jazz and toward what he sometimes called "space music." He uses all parts of his hands to extract sounds from his instrument, twisting and turning, arms intertwined, a stern, focused facial expression gradually transforming into one of beatitude. He begins to turn in a counterclockwise motion: the direction of African American ring-shouts, Brazilian rodas, and African ritual dances. The technological mediation of the electric organ this time subsumes everything around it; dialogue transforms into noise ("a joyful noise to the Lord"), the noise of a thousand proliferating lines of communication across space, time, and metaphysical dimensions.

It's important to reinforce that these excerpts need each other; together they define a manifold movement across multiple temporal trajectories that Sun Ra's music enacts. African-American history reimagined: *what would Fletcher Henderson be like if…?* Historical–temporal lines collapsed into transversal ones: Jelly Roll Morton and Albert Ayler and Bootsy Collins in dialogue. And longer lines—to Africa; to mythical Egypt; to Egypt reimagined as a black African culture; to Pharaoh; to a critical reading of black American redemption narratives (Moses and the Israelites; the promised land, now projected to interstellar regions, "space is the place"); to Gnosticism; to mysticism; to *theosophy*—what I've characterized as "the theopoetics of St. John Coltrane the Divine"—redemption, transportation, teleportation, transmolecularization, through sound…

Afterword:

Sound

(or, the theopoetics of St. John Coltrane the Divine)[9]

So then the moment came when we discovered that the string theorists were right…

An ontology of stirring strings—sensuous seductions—sound subtending structurings. A geography of sound-objects, of sound-movements, of tunings and attunements, of harmonics and inharmonicities, of touching feeling. Can you touch sound? (How do we consent to sound?) What kind of a residue does sound leave, what kind of affective trace is left when our sonic selves make worlds that coalesce harmoniously (or not) with the world-makings of those with which we sing? Is the world, in the end, the improvised unfolding of a primal ur-performance—not a symphony, but a temporally-unfolding interactive creation, ontologically simultaneous with itself—with the sonic stuff of the world its materiality and the trans-subjective relationships that emerge within in its performers? (Deleuze and Guattari: "to improvise is to join with the World, or meld with it") Boethius thought so. Pythagoras supplied the tools. Plato implored that we seek those harmonies and rhythms that are "the expressions of a courageous and harmonious life"—have we found them? How would we know if we have found them? (Stockhausen: "I will tell you.") Plato sought simplicity and parsimony, but string theory suggests an endless proliferation of combinations, a pullulation of chaotic becomings. Is sound sentient? That's the wrong question—instead, is sentience sonic? That's a better question: getting closer to an always-emergent trans-subjective sonic agency. Sonic ontology is a post-materialism, but it is also the original productive force—that is what the string theorists have been trying to tell us all along. And also Sun Ra and Scriabin, Huxley and Heidegger, Cage and Carroll, Braxton and Bach (Douglas Hofstadter was onto something too). Sound knows no borders; or rather, if there are sonic borders, they are indeed locations of encounters: a second sound added to a first creates a relation (Schoenberg), a space for creative negotiations, for meaning-enactments…[10]

[9] www.coltranechurch.org
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Sky vaulted
lightly chiseled

In this moist glen
green plants
of cane

fill the open space

In this moist glen
green plants
of cane.

==========
==========

I missed the train
and found a yellow flower
in the field

++++++++++
++++++++++

Sky Vaulted and
lightly chiseled

In this moist glen
green plants
of cane

filled with
Open Space

and a sugared sun

in this space

in this moist glen
green plants

Open Space

The Open Space Magazine
Open Space

Martin Supper

Open Space
Open Space

today

Franz Schubert
String Quintet
in C major
D 956

Yesterday

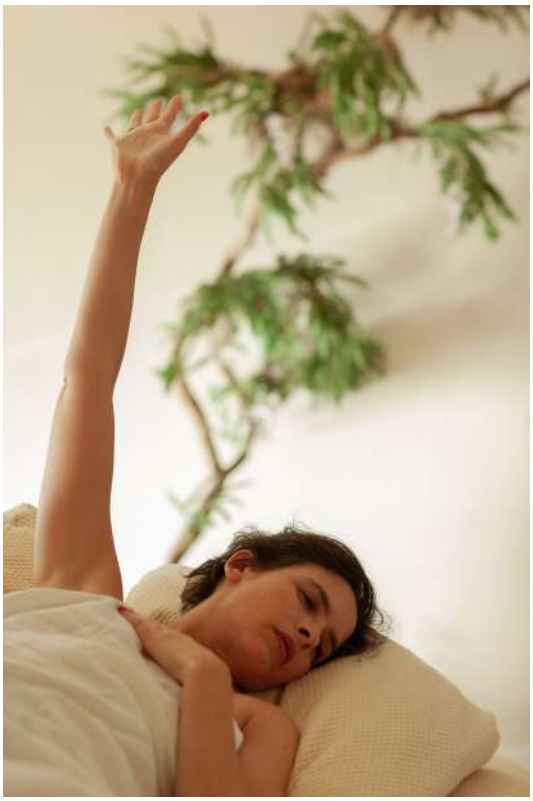
Iannis Xenakis
Gmeeoorh
Version pour orgue de 61 notes

the day before yesterday

Georges Perec
Espèces d'Espaces

the next few days

I don't know



Hers

A photographic collaboration by Jessica Sue Burstein and Claudio Marcotulli

A memory and documentation of my beginnings in the woman who created and raised my mother. In honor of Grandma Gilda, a glamorous and fashionable woman who dreamed of becoming an interior designer, but became a bookkeeper for an interior design firm instead. After Papa Harold passed from a heart attack, she moved from New Jersey to Florida and designed the interior of her own home. In graduate school, I wrote my thesis film about her and didn't tell her about it. She found out through the Jewish section of the local newspaper. She didn't approve of the actress that played her in the film. She continues to inspire.

After my grandmother passed from a heart attack at the end of 2017, I lived in her half-cleaned out house in South Florida to research and write a book/film about my family's legacy in opera. My grandmother's aunt and uncle - Lee and Dr. Arturo di Filippi - founded The Greater Miami Opera, (now The Florida Grand Opera) in 1941, changing their names and hiding their Jewish identity their entire lives in order to do so. After interviewing people connected to The Greater Miami Opera, it became apparent that anti-semitism persisted in Miami through the 1960s.

For the month of February, I drove in her car, slept in her bed, cooked in her kitchen, swam in her pool, and attended her community theater. I dressed in her clothes and inhabited her space. I learned more about her life during that one month than in our past 41 years together.

The house was about to be sold and her car insurance was about to run out. If I wanted to document my experience, it was now or never. I showed Claudio - a filmmaker I had just recently met - pictures of my grandma from her wedding album, and others of us together to give him a sense of who my grandmother was. We collaborated to create this series of photographs ritualizing my experience.

This is not me posing in my grandmother's house. It's me trying to inhabit her, and a continuation of her living on through me embodying her postures, emotions, clothing, space - essentially her opera. The lineage continues.



Her Couches, we were never allowed to sit on them, Her husband's music room in the background.



Her Bed, King-sized, shared with her new husband, me with Aunt Lee's fan.



Her Front Door, she never used this door, she always used the garage.



Her Mirror, so many of them that I couldn't help looking at myself.



Her Floor, always clean, me in Aunt Lee's sheet.



Her Desk, originally stained brown, she repainted it beige when she moved to Florida, I placed this here.



Her Garage, the door shuts at the end of every trip.



Her Home, currently on the market, I no longer have access.

Toward the Art Subject: An Introduction to Icons in Ash.

By Heide Hatry

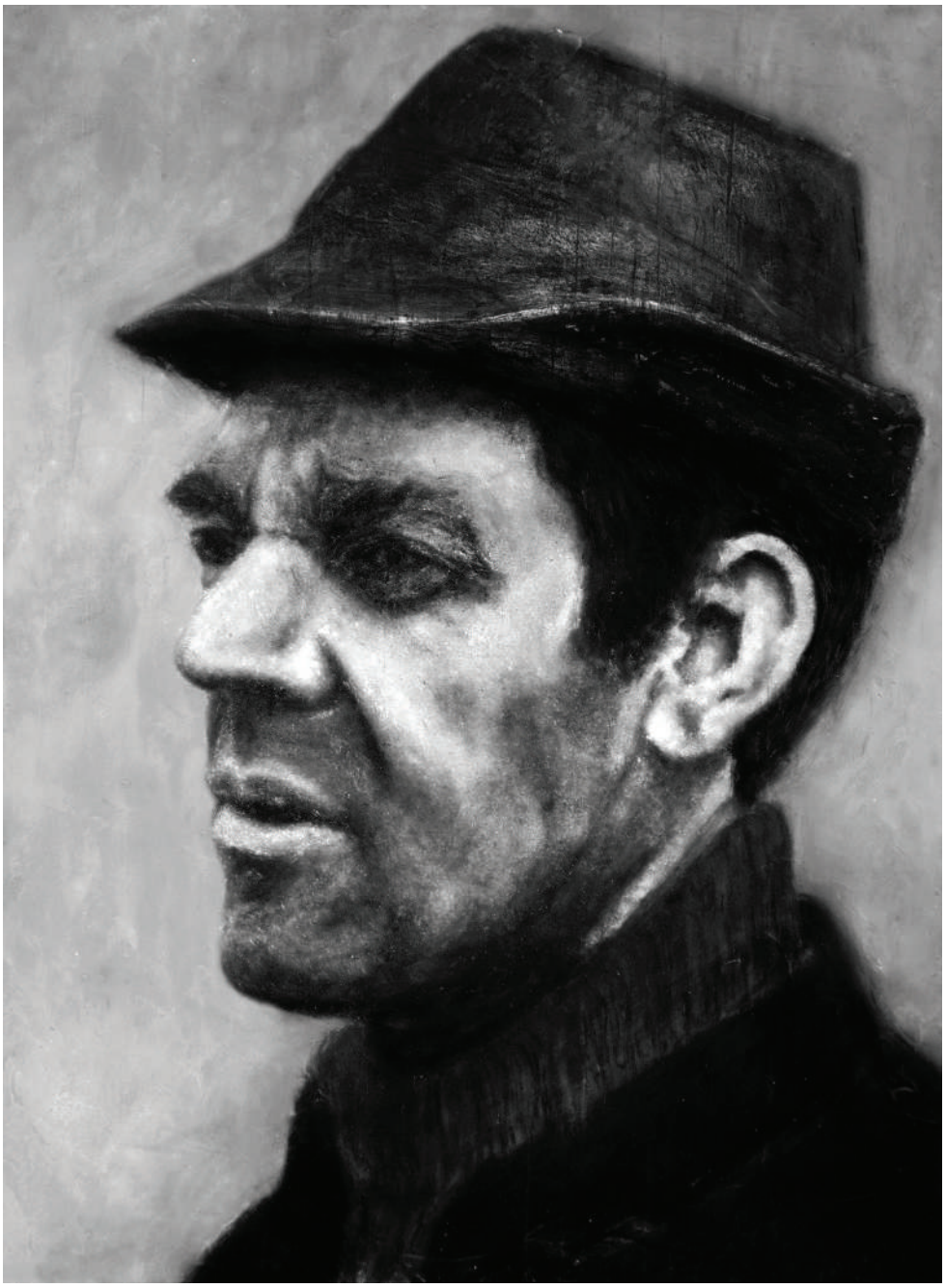
For the philosopher, all art is abstract, and that is, paradoxically, perhaps why philosophy begins its historical relationship to art in suspicion and even why the social function of art has become progressively more isolated, or sequestered, from "the real world," something to look at or to contemplate rather than to experience as full human beings. The artist's approach to the material order, which for Plato was a but a murky reflection of the true, rendered it all the murkier and less real, while his philosopher strove to purify the mundane and find in it the guttering spark of the ideal with which it was infused – also a mode of abstraction, we might note, although for Plato the ideal was the quintessentially real. So, from the philosophical point of view, wouldn't it be just as true to say that all perception is abstract, even, depending on how one views the relationship of mathematics to nature, that all being is itself abstract?

As science supplanted philosophy (and theology) as the dominant world-view of the west, even, that is, as recognition that the spiritual has evolved from the physical and not the physical from the spiritual has become commonplace, the irreality, or socially speaking, the marginality, of art became even more self-evident to the ordinary person. If it has become a commodity, it is nevertheless generally regarded to be an inherently useless commodity, ineffectual in "the real world" except as a means of containing "value," or of igniting very personal and not necessarily very laudable desires. It remains a shade in a world of things and affairs.

For the artist, on the other hand (at least, perhaps, until the dawn of conceptual art, and this fact bespeaks the complexities and pitfalls involved in dividing up the world by means of language), "there is no such thing as abstract art."[1] Art is first and foremost material that she has shaped in accordance with her vision, slowly elaborated and inevitably altered in the making, the result of an engaged material practice that does not insist upon any specific relationship to "the world" because it is already in and of her world, even as it, like philosophy, takes the liberty of commenting upon it as well.

To see art as surface, and hence as abstract – and even sculpture is essentially surface, its interior basically non-existent qua artwork, but merely an unarticulated armature for the emergence of external form – is the obvious temptation for the passive viewer, not least because this has been the intention of the artist as well. And this has been the principle understanding of the art object during the lengthy post-animist, or historical, period. Even if aspects of its hieratic, ritual, totemic, or communal functions have persisted in the shadows of the mainstream position, even if a sluggish undertow of

1 Picasso and Dubuffet express the thought in more or less these same words.



Paul Schmid 1931 - 1993

resistance to its increasing social irrelevance has accompanied the enveloping tide of utilitarian realism, the artwork stands to most of us at most times in a merely scopic relationship, as a visual object.

And yet, the barrier between life and art has been a question with which human beings have struggled since they first tried to understand why it was and what it means that we make art, reflecting a basic frustration or urge for transcendence at the heart of all human creation that was already expressed in the ancient Greek myths of the artist, Pygmalion, Daedalus, perhaps Orpheus as well, and in the Platonic antagonism against the poet's simulation or imitation of reality. Material, for what seem to be obvious reasons, has been the nexus of this inquiry: It is the given, the limit of our capacity to create. And we have, accordingly, been content, by and large, to see it as merely the stuff of our art and form as its real content, as the occasion for other purposes and effects, the positive to which the negative of human work or human creation, is applied, which, as Hegel understood it, is the death of nature, its transformation, its subordination to the extraneous and often, as it happens, willful or irrational, and even pernicious, purposes of humanity. If we could not create living things or engage the world in the manner of what we imagined as that of a "true" creator, our every act can and does change, negate, transform, or destroy it. But we have, after all, created the inner world by means of these manipulations, more or less complex, more or less refined, of the stuff of the outer.

For me, as an artist very powerfully, but as a person even more intimately and expansively, the material realm, matter in all its diverse specificity or particularity, is what matters, and my relationship to it, and I believe everyone else's as well, is the bedrock of all understanding, sympathy, respect, decency, and trust. Our distant forebears endowed the waters, the winds, trees, plants, stars, mountains, and their special places with spirit by way of saying that these were the sources of power and mystery that had drawn them out of their animal languor and awakened their souls, that spoke to them in the still remembered language of the earth. For the material to have become mere instrument, or less, commodity, represents the first closing of our eyes to the world, the first turning away from its debasement and our own, from the suffering and destruction of the animate, now also reduced to just stuff, and from understanding our own complicity in that descent.

Over most of the last two decades, the materials I have used in my own art have been fundamental to what is taking place within it, and there is a reason for this. During much of the history of art, the aesthetic object dissembled reality, first to mimic it using materials that had been extracted and refined from it (minerals, soil, plant fibers, pollens, powders, or distillates, animal residues or reductions, etc.), and more subtly and pertinently, to make things appear as they are not or to distract us from what they are: to falsify history, propagate myths, support systems of oppression, reinforce artificial hierarchies as if they were the will of God, and in general, to imply that the way things are is the way things

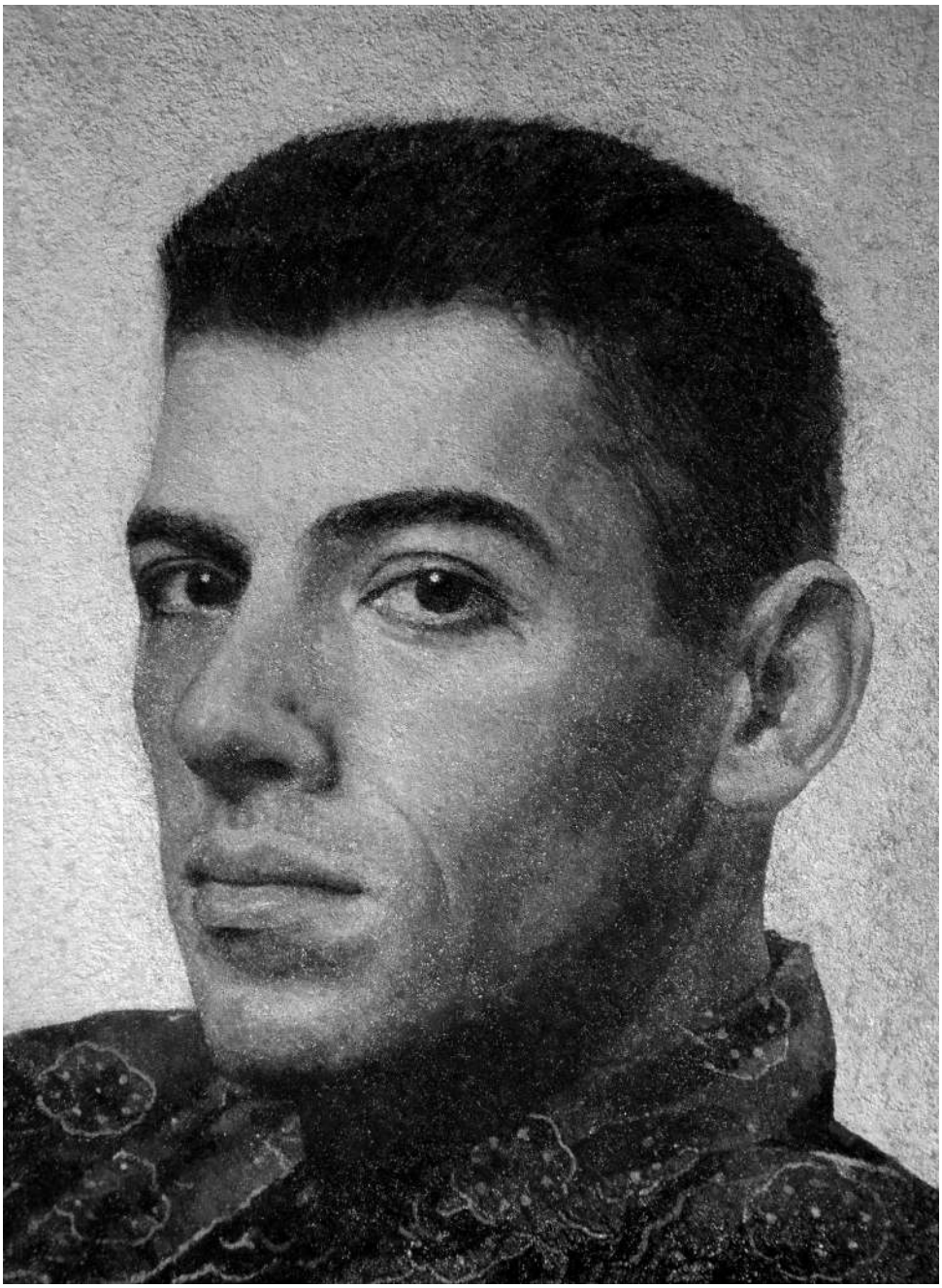


Emily Jordan Boxer 1928 -1994

must be; that we live in a realm of facts; that possibility is dead. Naturally, there has always been a contrary force in art as well, a utopian strain or moment even within art at its most abject, that defies, if sometimes sotto voce or obliquely, the regime of the everyday, and it is here that the material, evidence by turns of the uncorrupted world or of what the world has done to it, can bring to light other possibilities.

In using form, this coded system of illusion, or less generously, deceit, to give voice to my material, which, as the bad conscience of the industrial, consumerist, capitalist, or, ironically, materialist, world, has understandably been suppressed, or rather, to let it speak on its own account, my strategy has been to exploit the disparity between image and material, between expectation and knowledge and, ultimately, between appearance and truth, to compel my viewer to acknowledge some of the unpleasant realities on which our pleasant, smooth-functioning world is built: the ubiquitous deceit, methodical injustice, willing ignorance, and, in the end, the great mass of death in which we quietly acquiesce just in living the way we do. First in the several bodies of work in which I used the dead, discarded, and perforce accusatory remains of the animal slaughter industry to create objects and representations of objects, some overtly disturbing, some ostensibly benign, and more recently, in the textured, resonant, and articulate portraits I have painstakingly re-assembled from the ashes of their erstwhile subjects and which, chemically, genetically, are their subjects, I have been working with a different kind of art dynamic, in which the material substance of the work, both the specific being, the stuff, of creatures no longer alive and in a sense, death itself, lurks within a deceptive amalgam of visual and social expectations only to emerge when once the viewer's defenses have been pacified. These images embody and express a truth in their very substance, the truth of how they have come to be, of what they are. I understand them as art subjects instead of art objects, the story of whose existence is compressed in these residues of themselves and which call for an act of empathy and self-examination on the part of their viewer, of feeling in its place, of drawing the outside into herself, as opposed to the act of imagination or picturing to oneself that is typically invoked by the visual artwork.

When my father died, now many years ago, I was distraught. There was no one to whom I felt so connected at the very core of myself. Though we hadn't been able to spend much time together for quite a while, and certain misunderstandings had colored our relationship, I always expected to fix that when time and circumstances would permit. I couldn't believe that now I would never have the chance to make that happen. It took years before I could even think about him without collapsing inside. And then I was again taken unawares by death: one of my closest friends killed himself, and in a most disturbing way. In my devastation, the still unresolved pain over my father's death angrily returned to reinforce my grief.



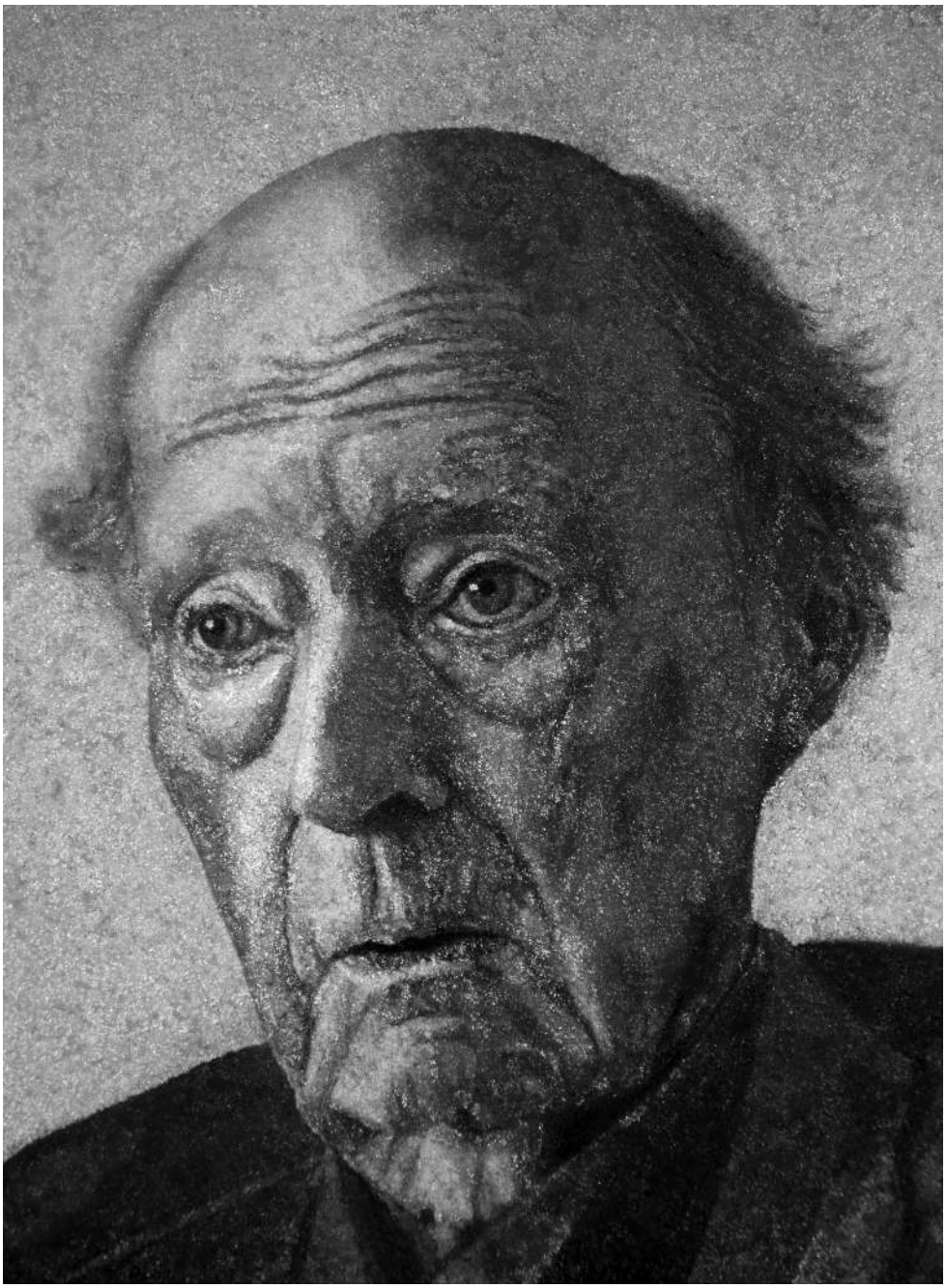
John Bernard Boxer 1925 -2004

My art ideas usually come to me in a sudden jolt, like a revelation – the solution to a problem I didn't quite understand was a problem. They arrive as if they had been gestating in secret and only now were emerging fully formed. I can remember that I already felt a strange calm the moment I thought: I have to make portraits out of my father's and out of Stefan's ashes. Making the portraits was both comforting and energizing in itself – I felt that it was in some way a shamanic act – and once they existed, I lived with them as if my father and Stefan themselves were there with me. I cried and I screamed at them and explained myself and talked to them and listened, and soon their ethereal presence melded into my life: My connection to the people I loved was no longer broken by death.

Since then, I have made quite a few portraits for others out of the ashes of their deceased for people who were suffering much as I had been or in any number of other ways, and they, too, have experienced a deep solace in communion with these potent images of their loved ones. They often tell me that having them in their lives in this way has been transformative. Some say it was not the "closure" that they had imagined they wanted, but a re-opening, or a sense of continuity that has been extremely important to them; others describe their relation to the portraits as what they imagine holy relics must have meant to the ancient Christians, a powerful, ineffable, and irreducible presence. I have since learned that a very thoughtful practitioner of the funerary trade[2] has observed a similar effect among the bereft she has known who simply stay with their deceased for some hours after death: They integrate the fact of death, come to terms with it, say or think their deepest thoughts in a kind of unhurried farewell and are able to make the transition to a life without them unburdened by the feelings of inconclusiveness and remorse that leave so many in a crippling state of grief nowadays when the first thing on our minds in the face of death is to have the body removed and hidden as quickly as possible, and by unknown technicians whose duty is precisely to sanitize the whole process. We have always understood that the dead do not simply die and disappear and that there is and must be a continuity in our relationship with them, but late in civilization we have adopted an efficiency of death that ignores these truths.

In Icons in Ash I want to reintegrate life and death, to touch death, work with death, to be an artist of and for death, to let it speak in its mundanity, its grandeur, its familiarity and its mystery, its uniqueness and its universality, to redeem it from oblivion, to give it its own life again. For me, this is a fundamental act of reconciliation. Though it may be commonplace to say that in the modern era we have isolated or banished death from our lives, that we cannot bear to look it in the face, as if we are embarrassed by it, the simple fact of grief makes it obvious that a different relationship is not only possible, but that it is necessary. Judith Butler observes that the phenomenon of mourning tells us that death is inherently social. If we want to be able to understand and to live with it, we have to reintegrate it into our social being. We have to remain connected to the dead and with

2 I refer to Caitlin Doughty, author of Smoke Gets in your Eyes and From Here to Eternity.



James Otis Purdy 1914 - 2009

what they have meant and still mean to us.

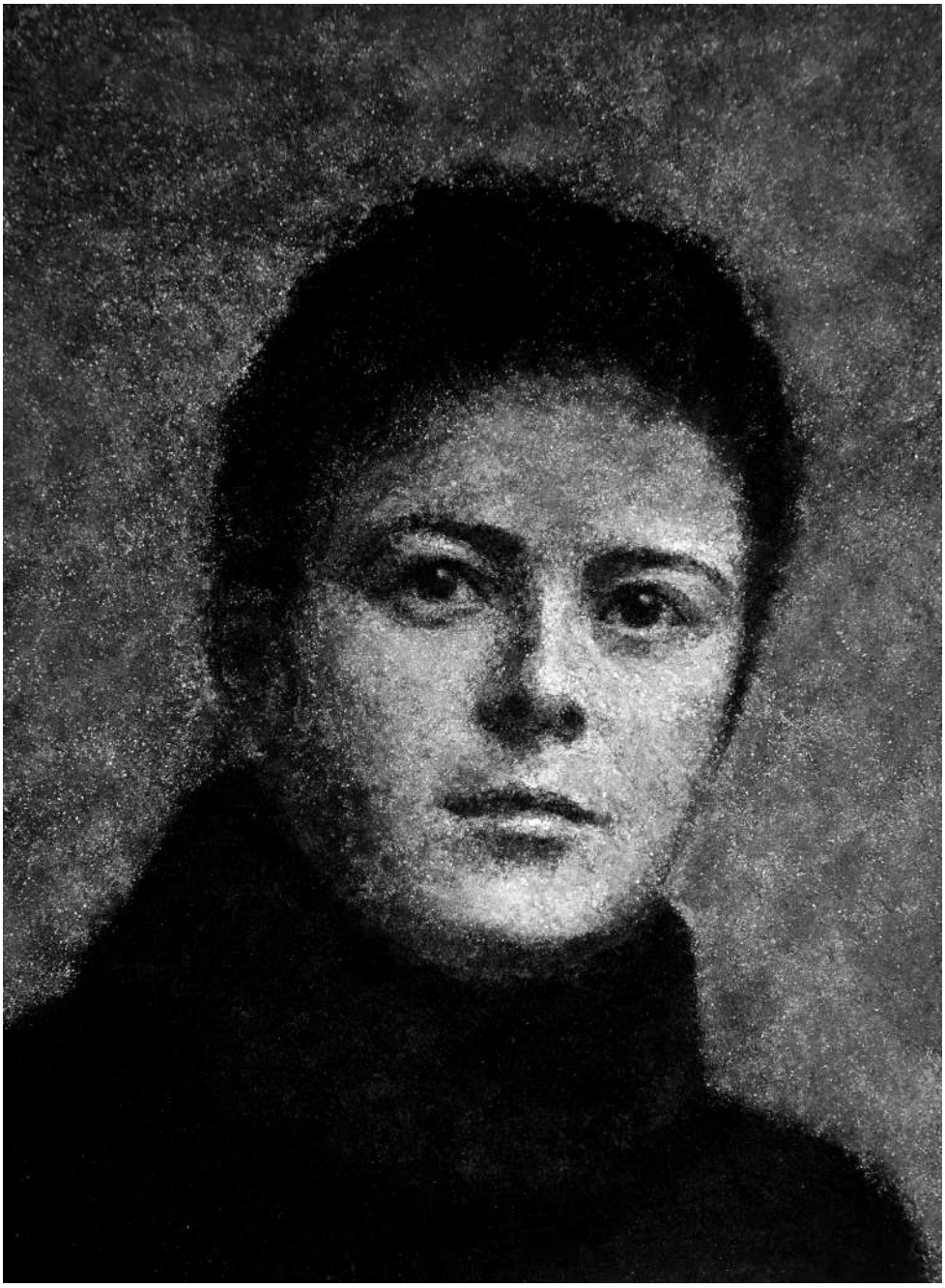
Banal and unworldly at the same time, let's say tenuous, or maybe ghostly, the power of these deceptively ordinary images comes from something beyond their appearance, though that is still quite relevant to their effect, and they look the way they do for profound internal reasons. I would like to say that it comes from their substance, in a quasi-scholastic sense of the word, a notion that late modernist painting acknowledged in its own way in insisting that its images were in fact "just paint." My images, instead, undermine this always somehow artificial-seeming and folksy ethic in being the thing they represent, in embodying the person. The fact that you are actually looking at that person, that person who no longer exists in our usual way of thinking, achieves something that portraiture has never succeeded in doing, though this was always its impossible ideal, supplanted by the notion that "art" somehow shows the "true" person in a way that he or she could never appear in life. Our feeling that the portrait has always held a secret is embedded in the quasi-Platonic truth that the greatest of them transcends by an ineffable sorcery not only the moment, but every moment, that they are their subject: We say, "It's you," when the portraitist succeeds in conveying the essence of the person. But even with the advent of the pure image, with the development of the photograph, which much more so than the painted portrait is always a relic from the past and hence in a profound sense a memento mori, the image is no more than a shade, for the person depicted has already ceased to exist before the image even comes to be. In looking at vast numbers of photographic portraits, we see what is common more than what is individual. They blend into a sort of typical human being, and show us the consanguinity of the race, its common legacy and its common fate rather than its incalculable specificity. We see emptiness; we see death. If they hold a secret, it is this absence, this loss.

My portraits, by contrast genuinely embody a secret, the secret truth of life. Not that we die, not that life is merely the unfolding of death, or that in death nothing remains, but that death is the relationship in which we stand or will stand to everything that is important to us, a relationship of memory, of transformation, of reintegration, and of art, which are in fact the only modes of immortality that we know. Death is our secret, and the way we keep it, the way we are true to it, is art. Art is always created from ashes, from the ashes of our experience, of who we once were, which becomes lifeless, forgotten, anonymous, or futile, only if we fail to make something of it, to tend it, to care about it, to remember. It reminds us that death is a very particular relationship among us, that it is ours, that we are the keepers of life for the dead and of the dead for life. We each have our particular responsibility to it, and only by abdicating that responsibility does death become the sullen and intractable force as which we tend to see it today.



Marie Smith 1862 -1959

In these small, modest images, with which I have now lived for years, images that do not merely represent but which are their subjects, I have experienced an effect similar to what I have sometimes felt in small, dim Russian churches in the presence of subtly radiant icons, the uncanny experience that we are not alone, that our truth is a simplicity that we rarely encounter. The icon is a peculiar object. Although it does not subscribe to what we normally think of as an aesthetic, it nevertheless projects a power that even the greatest artworks seldom achieve. And I think in this respect it is similar to these portraits in ash: It does not so much try to imitate something or to point beyond what it is as to actually be something, not merely to represent it, and that means to be essentially particular. The "veronica," the "true image" – of course the fusion already shows that this is a paradox that will not be resolved – on the Shroud of Turin, to give an extreme and obviously problematic example, bears the trace of the actual presence of its subject. The contact that it embodies mysteriously persists. We remain within the charged field of a lost presence. In these Icons in Ash, our relationship, the profound, ineffable contact we have had with the dead persists, and their life persists in us. This is the mystery that I wish to share; this is something that matters.



Lena Sereda

an email from Caroline Kraabel — November 11, 2017.

I have one more poem... (…) A few words about the subject, below.

Born out of the frustration of often and often saying it as one sees it and being unheard as if one didn't exist (until any listeners from that dominant caste "legitimize" one's words or ideas by appropriating them).

It's not to do with sexual harassment, although ... The current atmosphere of synthetic dismay about all-pervasive sexual harassment cannot help but appear hypocritical in the extreme, given that this has for centuries been just one tool in the armory of those, almost invariably male, who want to establish their dominance (which to them must feel very precarious or unjustly-acquired or they wouldn't be so afraid of losing it) by humiliating women and less powerful men (although the latter always have the implicit invitation to turn a blind eye and eventually join the ranks of the abusers). These aggressions are never to do with desire; they are expressions of power, strategies of domination, and tactics to keep women out.

PARTS

The mother reverberates and
the maiden, oh,
sympathetic vibrations abound

But the part that speaks its mind
suddenly utters alone
on a mountain, on top but just
lost to indifferent air

And singing, she is quickly zipped
zipped into Mr Magpie's muffling-
bag, padded hoard made safe
mere rich pickings, rich pickings

THINK WHAT YOU LIKE

The forest-dwellers hear no
thoughts, unspoken or
the other kind – they've
already devoured those.

And thinking
she is free as air
as starvation, free
of being heard

an email from Caroline Kraabel — October 13, 2017.

Hello Dorota and everyone...

Lots of people are talking about Brexit and are better-informed and more articulate than I am... but having worked across all of Europe, making music and transcending borders since the 1980s, this hits us especially hard... all these are places that we've (myself and my husband) played in over the years, and we've learned so much and so loved these cities and towns... we (living in London) would not be the people we are today without Europe, its music, musicians, audiences, venues, institutions, museums, streets, immigrants, cultures, languages and ideas. Already we are feeling "un certain froid" on the part of promoters and audiences in Europe, as though they feel hurt by the UK's incomprehensible decision and are not so keen to approach us.
This is a wee song, not nearly good enough or important enough.... Hope you're all well, xxck

Farewell to Berlin, tata Barcelona
We must say goodbye to Bruges and Verona
Warsawa will be just a fading memory,
Like midsummer in Parnu, 1993.

'Bye to the Athens of Athens, the Amsterdam of Amsterdam
So long Malmo, Madrid, Moselle and Milan
We will never have Paris, its silvery streets
Or the bridges of Ljubljana as places to meet

No more romancing in Rome or leaning in Pisa
No waltzing in Vienna or raving in Ibiza
The wisdom of Sophia's not the same for us now,
We'd like to find Prague's castle but we don't know how

Thessaloniki, Helsinki, Bratislava, Pecs
Luxembourg, Copenhagen, Dublin, Utrecht
Lisbon, Lyon, Zagreb, Bucarest,
Venice, Valetta, Vilnius, Budapest

From Liverpool, Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent
Padstow, Derry, Newport, Stirling and Kent
From Edinburgh, Swansea, Belfast, the Great Wen,
Au revoir until we're together again.



BETWEEN

THEN

PLACE

PETER DOWNSBROUGH

Infiniteseminal

JOEL NEWBERGER

1.

In Emile Benveniste's *Vocabulaire* we find the extraordinary implication—not his own hypothesis, modest scientist of immodest territories he is—that the world is not created by WORD but by friction between two words. It *must* be so in Benveniste's palpating of forms; there is no possibility of a silence before "in the beginning", but there is very much before then. The beginning bursts from the sexual frottage of two forms, an incestuous magic, it must be acknowledged, since the first is singular and the second must scrape against its source. One word is no beginning whatsoever, initial of nothing. There is, it could feasibly be said, no such thing as one word, except after words, in the religious scientific grammatical divisions. (We poets, moving in a desire of such necessity it could be posited *of* language, have never known the word, have never accepted the reality of the solitary word, even as we enter the separating silences.) I derive as much from Benveniste's insistence that discourse, as "the sense of the whole", is the proper object of linguistics in general and historical linguistics in particular.

In the beginning of Genesis there are the words that begin and beget. Never *a* word. בָּרָא בְּרֵאשִׁית *(beraishit barah)* needs no qabbalist (other than Benveniste) to show the way two words work to begin begetting. Identical letters become the world in a rhythmic dislocation (vowels), almost a reflex of two back to one, B to A—return in a third moment of creation or the *fiat lux*. יְהִי אוֹר *(y'hi or)*. Be, light. Light, be. The two words' phonetic drama is the mouth (source or point) half open, closed (yod), and then widely: a world at last. A world that is ברא distributed in space or the pattern of concealment and revelation that commences (commands) light.

Words of god, therefore of the poet. Our commands only the ways language is. (God also must announce himself, and is subject to the sentence, as much as he constitutes himself by his strife—"I am that I am"—with grammar.)

Benveniste writes historically. His sequences are made of centuries, not consecutive words. Therefore he takes his place in this argument: what is the origin of language? What is the origin of the word?

But he revises the question. The Bible is no beginning, per Benveniste, only a new begetting, a movement of language in language, conceiving beginnings from what was given them (priests? gods?) to think with. This historicity of "in the beginning" makes it no less creation; it is sui generis.

What differentiates Benveniste from his phantom interlocutors is that he has no psychology. The mind is language. So in a sense in fact he has no answer to those questions, but he answers not answering. At the center of his science, a silence, exactly a silence (about, around, beginnings) not a world or word.

2.

In the silence, friction. Lucretius' *ligneous* and *igneous*, any likeness of words *is* them rubbing each other for warmth in the darkness of vocabulary, in the dim (don't say beginnings) earliest perceptible moments of naming, or in the vacuum (breath in) where the divided parts of speech waste in exile. Rubbing a fire out, light (be), and faintly seen, seen by this Frenchman squinting, tracking the faintest flash, clash. Sometimes touching a word as he gropes around, rubs it against the wall, the hill, his tongue (the anti-Lucretius). See if it knows him and kindles.

All of this has come to suggest *he makes the world*. I thought not, but indeed his vast book involves us in emergent correspondences, which, over time, image the world in its totality. Magically it produces the very reversals of perspective from which Genesis intuits its cosmos.

Foras. Portal, to the forest. An example by which we come out (*fores* gives *foras* only *that way*) leaving the singular home, through the portal of language, into the forest of knowledge—

redoubling creation by mere vocalic displacement. Displacement of Avraham's name, not in the violence of the Midrash (he keeps his turtledove idols, as seen later) but by the ways language makes in time. לֶךְ לְךָ *(lekh l'kha)*. בָּרָא בְּרֵאשִׁית *(beraishit barah)*.

Is that why it must be a historical study? So time can elicit "the world"?

To see the vast world infinitseminally shift, change its mind, be in metamorphosis, rekindled. But all time or the presence of a single poem does is reveal that the nature of language is total movement. Total—in every part—and a movement between the limits the movement makes. *Beraishit barah* turns the beginning of "in the beginning" into the whole of creation. Opening the door is the outside (there is no inside, no before). Or, Benveniste informs us, *do- both gives and takes, and fabricates the whole social world of two continents.

3.

How should we say *thus* was the world? Those regions are so dim and the light that waits there glints off only the carrier of words, the face. Isn't he just writing being as anyone must write today?

Clue: anything can be Benveniste's first moment. No true doctrine or hierarchy of first things, no theory of evolution. If any force dominates in this account it is phonemes, but they are not psychological or oral origins. But, angels; they are "chanting oppositely", they move things, transform forms into other things that say. Such an etymology as that of *druid*, beginning with that primitive abstract dim sense of "there is something firm in my way" and only then sprouting an "oak tree" (again the tree or forest is second, tree of knowledge, "truth")—this inverts the presumption that abstractions always come second to concrete phenomena (and the violence we have long thought *that* enacted).

Benveniste knows well what it means to search with one's hands. It may be an oak or the truth or just some unwieldy thick thing one begins with; and, if one is to make, one must make that move against another.

Firm. Truth itself is a pair of sticks, both words, no matter their size, which lie down on both sides of our life.

Compare this to the Zohar's analysis of אֱלֹהִים *(elohim)*. By a simple procedure, the "earth" is revealed in this divine name. *These* (לְהֵא) and *who* (מִי), denoting the visible creation and its numinous invisible crown, its aura or spiritual corona—the one word encompasses by putting two things together.

By turning one of them (*mi* to *im*) backwards, like a beast with two backs. Sea of *these* and sea of *who*? It is not a mechanistic scheme, but a sexual one, involving us, in which we are who we are in the second second. Turning the wordparts of the word toward one another to make it up, up there, to who.

4.

There is a very useful entry in Benveniste's book on the concept of "order", legal, social, cosmic, which has as its first moment the stem ar-, spark of arrange, art. Precisely it is defined (movement outward) as individual things joined together. Spark also of *arthros*—joint, joint (without fluid in it) that permits or is movement, sometimes a place, sometimes merely that permission, interval between two things that begets the union they are moving to be. Place or intervallic place of sex, needed for need and movement. Art, in this sparked sense, is more than the movement of parts, a machine. It is the movement that comes from parts moved together. Like the jointed powerful and gestural capacities of the two arms, it is a species of action that completely transcends simple homogenous bone, static length of hard white stuff that words and blocks of dead wood are. A fire, a gesture, a fire and a gesture move beyond themselves, because they have no substance but the movements they move.

Movements that are the substance or essence of things. Really the real, the movement of the things fixed or pictured fixed by words you know, which are but moments in the historical and discursive movement of language. That every word is itself two, one thing moving against another, is the premise and conclusion of etymological analysis.

The forest is trees and doors.

The language, in spring, metamorphoses from trees to doors.

5.

What does all this make available for poetry?

A principle of movement, absolute inversion, reversal, the total convertibility of everything.

In the Actual Poetry, Israel never left Egypt; there was no need. The Egyptians simply became them and moved; the Pharaoh became Yahweh, his son Moses, his secretary Aaron, his wife Miriam, his dog the golden cow. In Actual Poetry, the Anglo-Saxons suddenly remembered their childhood Latin; "invasion" was only and doubtless one of the words they remembered, and they used it to name this process of remembering (as the Norman Proust would), on analogy with a special past experience: wading into their mother's womb.

The total convertibility of everything cannot mean into *anything* but rather into everything it secretly prepossesses. Doors in the wall. Walls in the clearing. All sorts of lewd eidola in the Godhead. Figurines in Moses' frock (of Avraham, Christ, turtledoves, Nebuchadnezzar). A reed that moves in a stream but does not drift away. Rivulets in the Torah's parchment. Grace is what a man gives to his God. Limits that ramify, in a glance, in a moment, out of the inmost point, the inmost seed, kernel of the thing. The cornata of light shooting forth from Moses' occult crown, proof he had been King, proof that God is a qabbalist.

Bruno's Jove and Momus are just such poets, converting the constellations into what they least possibly could be, but *could be*.

6.

What Benveniste's book makes available for poetry is the possibility, impossible for those Greeks, those Romans, those Egyptians, those Israelis, those Americans with their senators, only for human poets: to initiate oneself into the mystery. Because finally we see the indistinction between initiate, mystagogue, and mystery, which yet do not completely coincide, but they are at last of the same root in the central root of roots of this language, the language, language of the ignorant wise ones.

The Virgin ignorant wise rutting ones, whose mind inevitably rubs itself with words, on words, rubs words together until the moon lifts up the sun beside it. Until the eye opens the mouth of Divine Nothing, and that nothing brings רְחֵם and חֲמוֹר together מָחָר, tomorrow, in bed. They frot, Mercy (fondling) and donkey (ruddy), to bring about the time to come. Merx-, Mercury who ever changes, and the donkey ever on the straight path of change, path to the dun regions of first friction. Men carrying beasts. Beasts carrying things elsewhere, the stars. Regions of "Benveniste", whose arrival in English in our time, out of the Jewish ghettoes of Medieval Spain, "was for the good." A new Balaam prophesying "for the good" of "good" Israel his own story, the story of the second God ("Balaam"), who opens the mouth of the donkey and speaks.

What Matters.
Jean-Charles François
2018

What matters?
Matter.
What's the matter?
Nothing much, just matter. Facts. Fact of the matter, matter of fact.
Matter's swat. No sweat.
Asp madder… Madère flask.
Wasp masters? Vastness of waste. Or saviors of the orchid.
West Wasp? Wasp waist? Save as soon as possible? ASAP?
Watch mass despair.
Stratagem: cut a swath, swagger, making of swats, in a manner of speaking.
What manners! Who manned there? Watch your manners!

Matter is what matters. No matter what!
But what patters?
Patters on matter: obligated matter patterns, obliquely paternal matterns, oblivious matern-eternal.
No pater watt.
No watts left, does it matter? What's not, no water left, does it patter? How to make my batter with no watts and no water?
Laughing matter.
Straddle on two strata, strapped, wrapped in double-bind data, in double blind angles, dead ends, no man's land, nomad sands, no mad slang, nowhere for sabbat, everywhere some automats.
Stab at matter, at what matters, at the past's masters!
Stabat Mater dolorosa.

What matters? Matter.
"Ma terre! Ma terre!", s'écria l'économiste attéré.
Our earth tatters. Our earth stutters.
My stress, my stress! "*Ma tresse, ma tresse!"* Mattress, only one mattress!
Ma' attests, Ma' attests.
"*Ma tête, ma tête!*"
Earth's wrack, swarming earth. No alternate spatter, only one earth to squat. Only one Matterhorn.
Scatterbrain squanderers.
A cloud on the horizon. A hard row to hoe.
Threat chess on earth: "chess!" Eventually: mat earth, chess-mat her. Enfeebled king-mother, but this altered state is rather not affecting the pursuit of enriching affairs, fathers-keen, full of flair, what smarter maffiairs!
In this matter – if this matters – fraternity of economics and arts.

Wham! Amateur whim! Arts outside economics. With no master plan, no magister, no magic flair, just let matter emerge, without forcing. Not using the meta-motor to improve the metered issues. Mighty err. Material meeting in immediacy, alma mater, malarial palm, psalm slam. Take matters into your own hands.

******

What matters?
Matter.
What sense of matter?
A floating matter.

It is not a matter of a state of affairs, each matter having its own mode of existence, ticking time in different modes, human having less to live than rocks, more at stake than mountains. It is not a question here of pointing to the catastrophes in the perspectives of mending lives, or of artists showing fruitful metaphors for apocalyptic perspectives.

More simply, and certainly less visible, more sensibly reasonable, the matter at hand is the idea of an *ecology of practices*, which will not save the world nor make it better, but will put the emphasis on responsible interactive acts. The role of protagonists in this context has nothing to do with adding more works to the libraries of the world, storing indefinitely new ways of envisioning the universe, providing stones to all the shrines.

The term "ecology" implies continuous interactive processes between living (or non-living) entities. The existence of a given matter influences in some way another matter, even if very different in its modes of operation.

The term "practice" implies some kinds of action taking place over time within a particular environment. To practice is to apply protocols of interaction between entities: human beings interacting with each other, human interacting with objects, or animals, or other living species, or even letters on paper hesitating between sound and signification. Practices leave traces, but they are meant to be erased or modified partially in on- going everyday actions.

For Isabelle Stengers, progress is associated with the elimination of "bad" practices and their replacement with what is considered as better options. For example, during the 19th Century, in Europe many traditional cultures were, if not suppressed, strongly discouraged because they were considered as an impediment to the development of scientific rationality. Her view about the ecology of practices gives preference to maintaining a wide diversity, therefore not rejoicing at any disappearance of a practice:

> An ecology of practices does not have any ambition to describe practices 'as they are'; it resists the master word of progress that would justify their destruction. It aims at the construction of new 'practical identities' for practices, that is, new possibilities for them to be present, or in other words to connect. It thus does not

> approach practices as they are – physics as we know it, for instance – but as they may become. (Isabelle Stengers, "Introductory notes on an ecology of practices", culturalstudiesreview, Vol. 11, N°1, March 2005, espress.lib.uts.edu.au, p. 186).

Two useful concepts borrowed from Deleuze appear in Stenger's paper. Firstly the thinking through the middle:

> An ecology of practices may be an instance of what Gilles Deleuze called 'thinking par le milieu' using the French double meaning of milieu, both the middle and the surroundings or habitat. 'Through the middle' would mean without grounding definitions or an ideal horizon. 'With the surroundings' would mean that no theory gives you the power to disentangle something from its particular surroundings, that is, to go beyond the particular towards something we would be able to recognize and grasp in spite of particular appearances. (p.187)

This mode of thought through the middle is an obligatory pathway in the pragmatic realities of any practice. The concept of "rhizome" is a strong metaphor of dynamic interactive processes. Each time, a theoretical position, when taking place in practice, is confronted with a set of contradictory obstacles, and without compromising too much, has to account for them in some interrelated moves. In order to avoid simplifying the multilevel of constraints present in any practical situation, Deleuze and Guattari's complexity of knots embedded in the concept of "rhizome" as contrasted with linear, hierarchic, arborescent or binary structures can be useful. The principal characteristics of "rhizome" according to the introductory chapter of *Mille Plateaux* are that it is not made up of units but of dimensions; that it has no beginning nor ending but always is at the middle, from which it grows and overflows; that it proceeds by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, sting; and that it does not result in anything. It evolves in between things (Deleuze 1980, 31–37).

Secondly, more crucial to the present topic, Stengers alludes briefly to the importance of contextual circumstances and actions for defining borders in the extreme diversity of practices:

> As Deleuze said, an idea always exists as engaged in a matter, that is as 'mattering' (we have an idea in music, or painting, or cinema, or philosophy, or…). As a result a problem is always a practical problem, never a universal problem mattering for everybody. Problems of the ecology of practices are also practical problems in this strong sense, that is problems for practitioners. (p. 193)

Here matter is not what matters, but instead 'mattering' as inter *active* processes that take place between a diversity of matters, human beings in interactions with other human beings, human beings interacting with other non-human beings, including inert things, producing a diversity of situations in sounds, words, gestures, dances, visual traces, acts, … Each time the complex layering of active material elements that influence each other in conflicting multidimensional intercourses, gives rise to the emergence of a peculiar situation that can never be exactly repeated, due to different circumstances and agencies.

And therefore mattering, even if a stable instituted disposition will be the guaranty that something of importance can emerge, has to do with ephemeral forms of experience, with work in progress without progress, in which matter is continuously revived, far removed from definitive immutable truths.

What matters? Matter in processes, mattering, emerging acts, disappearing in the air, and continuously reinvestigated in materialized instances. Diversity of practices coexisting in diverging postures, informed about each other, and able to project their respective matters in orbit, co-constructing a world.

John McGinness

Public education, charter schools, alternative facts

Children matter most: their healthcare, nutrition, housing, and education. This includes all children, everywhere, but because of our incredible wealth, especially in the United States. In the midst of so much privilege, the fact that basic necessities like food and housing sometimes remain out of reach is a tragedy and, ultimately, an undermining moral failure. While my discussion here focuses only on a small part of the debate between public and private education (specifically in the form of charter schools), the larger context, that poor children lack sufficient help, needs to be acknowledged.

Can public education survive competition with free market forces? Without question, government funded schools have always had, and continue to have, some seemingly insurmountable problems. Principal among them are the preexisting economic inequality between school districts and, now, the imposition of controversial educational approaches like enforced testing, which undermines both the development of individual critical thinking and teaching effectiveness. On the positive side, public schools at their best provide students with entry into a world of different kinds of people, racially, economically, and socially. Exposure to such differences is essential to democracy and to the existence of an informed citizenry. While recognizing that many serious problems within the current system remain unsolved, to abandon the public project would deny access to the very students most in need of help.

The threat to public education has been increased by the appointment of Betsy DeVos as the United States Secretary of Education, a political reward from the POTUS. Her family are long-time political contributors to the conservative wing of the republican party, her financial resources (in the billions) a consequence of her father-in-law's co-founding of Amway during the 1950s. His principles, and those of the family, are described in his book, *Believe!: God, America, Free Enterprise*. In short: "[F]aith in God is the real strength of America!". In the USA, Amway, which is sold as a way for individuals to start their own businesses for very little capital, has not been without legal challenges, among them, as being a pyramid scheme. Considering the rhetoric, Amway's actual product sometimes seems not to be soap and cleaning supplies (sent to neophyte members), but hope for a better life. And it should come as no surprise that the company is now doing especially well in developing countries, where opportunities for economic advancement by people with little money are scarcer than in the USA.

The Christian republican self-identification that became unsettlingly apparent during the 2016 election cycle mirrors the advertising style of Amway itself (see Rollingstone.com, 3/5/2017.) And the "independent business owners" who have been targeted by Amway to improve their lot, are, in the main, representative of the 67% of non-college educated white voters that supported Trump in the last election. For the POTUS, they comprise a portion of the "uneducated" whom he "loves".

Betsy DeVos's nomination was one of the early surprises of the current administration. An educational unknown when introduced on the national stage, she has played a formative role in her home state of Michigan for many years. After her husband Dick DeVos lost the most expensive gubernatorial bid in Michigan history in 2006, the family turned to working behind the scenes. Devout Christians, one of the primary issues on their agenda was the undermining of

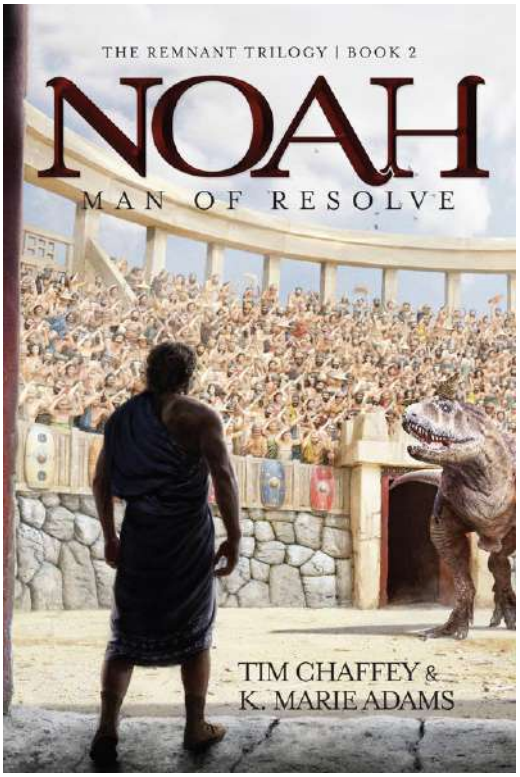
public education in favor of charter schools, private schools that could receive government funding in the form of waivers.

Admittedly, the degree to which public education has failed its students, and the degree to which charter schools might sometimes help, is too complex an issue to completely and fairly address in this venue. Michigan, however, does provide an example. It has the most charter schools in the country, they are virtually unregulated, and student proficiency is the lowest in the nation (Brookings Institution). One outcome of Michigan's push toward privatization is that charter schools in poor areas often end up having the same problems as public schools, but without the safety net afforded by government support (such as it is, and the inability on the part of public education to secure an equal playing field is one reason that the charter school movement has so much energy in the first place.)

Given their financial ambiguity and unexceptional student success, why would charter schools be so attractive to DeVos?

From a shareholder point of view, unsuccessful charter schools can be written off as a loss. On the other hand, religious charter schools that are without regulation can teach any content that they wish and still receive government funding. An underlying problem, rarely the object of focused discussion on the part of legislators, is that government sponsorship of religious content, even if inadvertent, challenges our constitutionally mandated separation of church and state.

For a small, but disturbing, example of the content mentioned above, I include a picture of what at first might seem to be a meme poking fun at evangelical Christian beliefs.



It is a book cover for *Noah: Man of Resolve*, in which Noah is portrayed from behind, entering some kind of coliseum, to face what appears to be a Tyrannosaurus Rex. This, however, is not a meme, but a representation of what can only be considered a blossoming genre. For the curious, many other examples can easily be found (just go to Amazon.com), including at least one with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, standing in front of an anthropomorphically enhanced, smiling dinosaur. Books of this type are designed for young readers.

Of course, my point is not that Evangelical religious beliefs should be prohibited in any way--religious freedom, as everyone knows, is one of our central tenets--but that government support cannot reasonably be extended to schools that teach these views (or any religious views) as the foundation of American life. The acceptance of a literal teaching of, in this case, the Bible, is one possible reason why the phrase "alternative facts" is now sometimes spoken without irony. We are doing a disservice to children if we sponsor the teaching of such "facts" without also providing a scientifically-based interpretation of reality.

Although our current POTUS "loves the uneducated," the government should not be working to increase their numbers. The current prejudice against intellectuals and the free press undermines upward mobility in all its expressions, from the cultural to the financial. In this vein, a steady drain on the funding for public education (at all levels) and the demeaning of those who work and support it has become an acceptable part of the conservative national dialogue. Defunding public schools and then complaining about the results is absurd. While change is needed, financial experimentation within the private sector is unacceptable: the variable in this equation is not money, but children. Every child deserves the opportunities that a successful system of public education can provide and the failure to realistically face this is, ultimately, a failure of our moral responsibility as a nation.

In addition to *Rolling Stone* (mentioned above), information for this article has been drawn from nytimes.com, 9/5/17; chronicle.com 11/10/2016; and pewresearch.org, among others.

Where are we going and where have we been?
A Meditation on Evolving Attitudes towards Sex Positivity in the "Me Too" Moment
By Travis Brock Kennedy

In early January, I shared "The Sterile Society," an op/ed in *The New York Times* by Ross Douthat (https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/02/opinion/sunday/the-sterile-society.html), on Facebook. I shared the piece not so much because I agreed with the letter of Douthat's meditation on Harvey Weinstein, the Me Too movement, and evolving attitudes towards sex-positivity since the 1990's, but because Douthat's spirit of uncertainty resonated with my own. With a link to the piece, I wrote:

> I read this piece a few weeks ago in the New York Times, clipped it, and I have been carrying it with me in my book bag ever since. I have read it many times and it echoes many of the themes that recur whenever I meditate on the issues attendant to sexual misconduct in our society. Born in 1988, I grew up in the so-called "naughty nineties." I remember vividly watching the Lewinsky scandal unfold on the evening news and I remember even more vividly the many iterations of the "stained dress" costume that turned up at my parents' Halloween party the following October. I came of age in a climate where the sexual liberation manifest in shows like 'Will and Grace' and 'Sex and the City' were generally believed to represent progress in our society, and as a gay teen in an acutely conservative community, rallying against the sexual repression of my evangelical peers was a hugely important part of my coming out process—one that was reaffirmed when I moved to San Francisco at 18 in 2006. The LGBT community in the San Francisco of 12 years ago had very little language to describe sexual assault and was still operating largely along the lines of nineties-and-earlier attitudes of sexual liberation. When I came to Bard in 2013, I became aware of a profound change in liberal attitudes towards sexuality and sexual identity. The anything-goes, playful promiscuity, born, I believe, of the social upheavals of the 1960's and 1970's, which my San Francisco experience had led me to see as a universal value of liberalism, did not really have a home at Bard. At Bard, I was confronted by the reality that many young people had begun to see sex as a threat. I was confronted with the reality that many of the people I was in classes with were survivors of sexual assault. I was confronted with the reality that values and politics surrounding sex in our society are rapidly undergoing profound changes. I became aware that the gender binary that I had formed my own gay identity upon had become, in less than a decade, an archaic notion that rendered the way I conceptualized homosexuality as quaint and provincial. My initial response was annoyed and skeptical. The ways that sex and sexuality were being problematized at one of the most liberal places in the country unnerved me because they re-echoed some of the attitudes I so disdained in the evangelical peers of my youth. With time, I have come to understand the liberal countercurrent to 90´s-era sexual liberation and have come to find many of the changes to be good...especially when it comes to people feeling safe to call out sexual misconduct. "Queer" and "nonbinary" are terms I'm not categorically uncomfortable replacing "gay" or "bisexual" with when it comes to describing my own sexual orientation and gender identity. I remain, however, very much in the head space of this article. It is an unequivocal good that we are moving away from many of the currents of the past, but I remain unsure of–albeit hopeful for–what we are moving towards.

I was not sure how–or, as a consequence of Facebook's perpetual tinkering with its algorithm, *if*–my post would be received. Given my background, about ⅓ of my Facebook friends are conservative evangelicals

that I grew up with, ⅓ are friends I made at Bard, and ⅓ are liberal friends I've made living in San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles, and New York City in the stretches of time between High School in California and my graduation from Bard ten years later. When I first got Facebook in 2007, it was a space occupied exclusively by my peers. In the years that have followed, Facebook has become increasingly ubiquitous—in 2010 my mom joined (briefly), in 2012 the priest at my church accepted my friend request...in 2013, I opened my phone to find a friend request from my 89-year-old grandfather. This increasing diversity in my Facebook audience has led me to avoid posting anything political or controversial and treat Facebook as essentially a platform for lifestyle fluff. Occasionally, however, a piece like Douthat's is compelling enough to inspire me to risk the backlash of one faction or another and click "post."

When I shared the link and the post that I quote above, an unusually rich and nuanced conversation ensued. A baby boomer hippie friend I made upstate quoted the Beatles lyrics: "Something in the way she moves attracts me like no other lover" and then wrote: "We are losing it as objective people. 'Don't think twice, it's alright' is replaced with, 'think of the ramifications of your actions.' I'm glad my life is coming to a close in all of this craziness" while a millennial friend that I grew up with in the "acutely conservative community" I describe in my post took a more positive position, writing:

> I really liked this article. Very thought provoking if we are becoming more prude and rude about our attitudes of sex and unfortunately the United States has always been more prude and less understanding about sexual freedom. But I will let u know (the acutely conservative community where we grew up) did have its first Pride event over the summer, with local drag queens and kings and (barbecue) being sold and so many condoms and dental dams being handed out. And not a single protester, at least for the 2 hours I was there and supporting. So (you can have) a little faith (that) the conservative home town you came from is evolving. These teens are growing up in an overwhelming time with even more labels for sexuality that only add to the confusion of not feeling heteronormative.

One of the 30-something gay men I really looked up to when I was coming out in San Francisco shared my contemplative uncertainty, commenting: "I confess to having secret fears that prudery will again triumph. And I share your viewpoint of sex-positivity = liberating. But I'm also aware it's more important to not undermine victims of aggressions by fretting aloud — at the moment. Figuring out how be pro-libertine without exploitation (or crossing boundaries without consent) is quite a challenge." One of the Bard friends who played an integral role in opening my eyes to the shifting attitudes I described in my post wrote, with characteristic pith: "It need a dose of foucault but ya time to dust off the queer theory books."

Others presented me with important challenges and complications. A millenial friend and former coworker from San Francisco wrote:

> Hold the phone. I'm not sure that what this article is not so subtly playing at isn't a false dichotomy. Lots of assertions thrown around with the confidence of someone who is just giving their opinion (man). And really do we have to consider the absurd bullshit of lack of sexual assault = no more sex (or babies)??? Come on. If kids are concerned it's because they're young enough to notice the issue without having completely drunk the koolaid. And just maybe freedom from the struggle against harmful power imbalance can and will lead to more sex and good sex and oh, I don't know orgasms for women? And people being able to say they feel how they feel about their gender identity and who they are attracted to sounds like a good recipe for a great deal less suppressed rage. I find the article interesting and I too think I could benefit from spending a little time and giving it a second read, like you did. But I'm deeply troubled by the flawed logic that says bc we are not tolerant of sexual violence and are learning the role of power (patriarchy) in that we are now sterile - there is no real relationship to dropping marriage and birth rates there- it's sloppily confusing correlation with causation on that point. Sexual predators like are not "excess" they are unchecked manipulators.

Shortly thereafter, a progressive evangelical I went to high school with added:

> I found this article to be somewhat defensive and missing the point. Western aggressive masculinity and current culture's frontal attack on sexualization is a result from generations of implicit gender assault as a subversive way to place superiority. While the understanding that sexuality is fluid and relative is liberating once you move away from the small town mindset, understanding that safety from sexuality, unless invited, should be a cultural normative regardless of cultural etiquette. It is important to make the distinction from sexualization without appropriate context, as opposed "courtship". I also found it interesting that Douthat made between the rise in sexual boundaries and conservatives. Most ironically, the call of strict sexual boundaries and call for adequate justice for sexual assault is mostly opposed by the Conservative party in collusion with the good ol boys club, and the current president boasting of moral bankruptcy. My hope is the next generation to grow with interactions, sex included, must hold a boundary that limits exploitation and mutual respect.

For me, this instance of social media engagement with Douthat's op/ed, imperfect and fraught as it may be, encapsulates an important set of questions that the liberal community is being presented with: When it comes to sex positivity, where are we going and where have we been? In appraising the shape of these questions about whither and whence, I'm reminded of a sagistic line Bert Cooper delivers to an evasive Don Draper in season three of *Mad Men*: "Sacajewa carried a baby on her back all the way to the Pacific Ocean and now somewhere that baby thinks he discovered America." Older generations that championed progress and equity in our society should be proud to have stood on the right side of history while owning that their efforts were imperfect. The rising generation of liberals, although admirable in its inflexibility on issues of progress and equity, should nevertheless be mindful that the cause has been championed by those that came before. Succeeding liberal generations are carried on the shoulders of imperfect people who have had to broker and experiment, make mistakes and learn from them, in the climb towards an ideal. The present generation is no exception. By engaging in dialogues and by owning the value and limitations of our myriad perspectives, the liberal community has the opportunity to appraise its whither and whence, asking "Where have we been, where are we going, and how do we get closer to the ideal?"

Billie Chernicoff

Six Rites for Now

1.

In Blake's
if not your own words
reverence
even in the marketplace
the other's most
unruly flesh
as the tears of your own
children. Glisten,
glisten to him.

2.

What then is dew
the reminder,
the anointing of
if not the deep lying beneath
and alighting also?
Tell the truth,
like bread.

3.

Behold on the face of the
wilderness
a small round thing
which drops from heaven
and breaks like a fever,
like our mother's waters,
or love on the face of the lover.

4.

Viridissima,
one hand on her hip.
It is her Nature, not yours.
Each blade a call,
each call a grail.

5.

Wrest it from stone or cloud,
however bewildered,
hip deep in all the words
to be worthy of.

6.

Name the malady.
Isn't it yourself,
its own cure
and ministry?
The ass brayeth
and the wolf howleth.
Raise the dust.

At this time, is knowing what matters more important, or more impossible?

interpretations of a provocative image
jody diamond

darkness has obliterated the light; the words, too, will soon vanish

the words are written from inside a desperate space; like the woman who wrote "help me" on the fogged up windows of the car in which she was being raped

darkness covers all; the words have been frantically scratched off by trembling hands, and only a little light gets through

behind the dark lies an illuminated field; the words have been incised to give us hope

the words are made of projected light, coming from a source of remembrance

the words are either appearing or disappearing; we don't know which, but we must ask why

David Sachs: Things That Matter

All lives matter, particularly lives that are threatened or ignored: black lives matter; poor peoples' lives matter, old peoples' lives matter.

At the risk of sounding like a hippie, "all you need is love"--what matters is having a loving partner, nurturing family, caring friends. We have all observed how difficult it is to face the challenges that life inevitably poses alone. Having people in one's life matters.

The most satisfying and alluring of human creations--literature, music, visual art--matter. They are "things" in the literal sense but are existentially far beyond objects. A life without them is truly impoverished.

Peace and freedom matter decisively. So does safety: self-evidently, the ability to walk down a street without being shot or bombed is essential.

In 1789, Robespierre called for "liberty, equality and fraternity"--three aspects of life that matter greatly. In America today, the prevalence and exacerbation of income inequality makes the equitable distribution of wealth more imperative than ever. As Marx wrote in 1875, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." Nothing matters more than this.

Jan Harrison

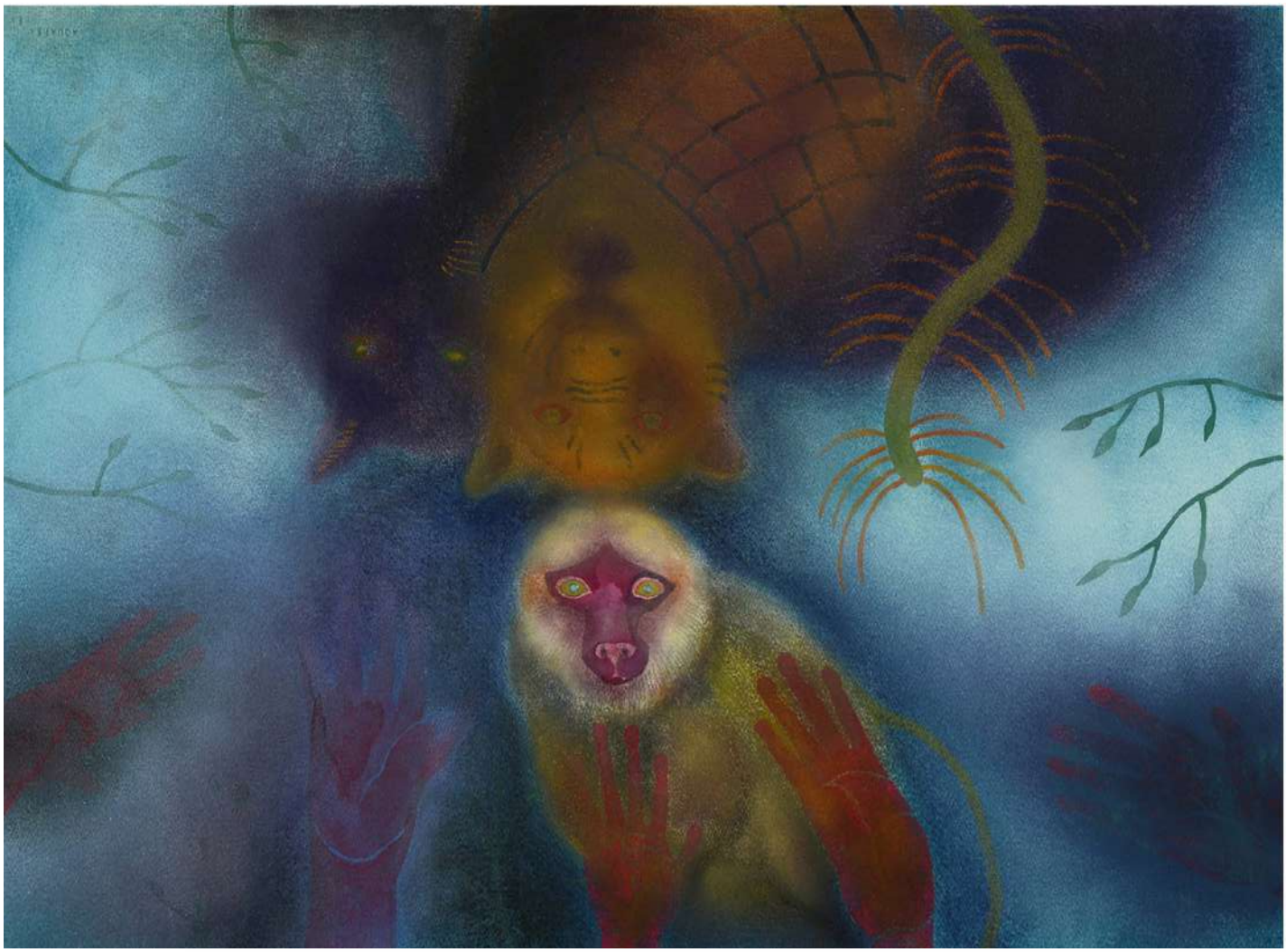
“Balance”
© 2015
22.5 x 30.25 inches
pastel, ink, colorpencil, charcoal on rag paper

Series: Animals in the Anthropocene

Excerpts from Artist’s Statement:

My paintings and sculpture involve personal feelings of various states of empowerment and express the similar states and plight of the animal nature, as the planet and its inhabitants, in the face of ex-tinction, struggle to survive, and want to live.

In 1979 I had a dream: “I was walking by a river, and I came upon a bird. The bird was very beautiful and very perfect. I wanted to talk to the bird, but I didn’t know how. I picked the bird up, and held it in my hands, I noticed that around the bird’s neck was a tiny medallion. Then I looked down and saw that around my own neck was a tiny medallion... I touched the two medallions together, and at that mo-ment the bird began to sing in a language I understood.”



Jan Harrison, "*Balance"* from the series *"Animals in the Anthropocene"*

Noah Creshevsky: Things That Matter

When something matters very much to me, I do something about it. If I do not actively participate in efforts to make things better, it is either because I care too little or am unable to contribute anything useful.

"All I do is…speak and write, and we already know that speaking and writing has [sic] no influence."—"In Other Words (Portrait of John Cage)," which I composed in 1976; recorded on Opus One Records, 1979, reissued on EM Records, 2004.

It is increasingly clear to me that action, not belief or words, is the principal mechanism for affecting social and political change. Over the years, I have observed many inactive individuals who complain steadily about imperfections and genuine catastrophes in our world. Cage may have overstated his position when he claimed that speaking and writing have NO influence, but when passive fault-finding does not include action, I wonder if "things that matter" are more a vehicle for the sublimation of personal neurosis than a formula for improving the world.

"Σαυτὸν ἴσθι" = "Know Thyself"—Oracle at Delphi

"…il faut cultiver notre jardin." = "…we must cultivate our garden"—Voltaire, "Candide."

I may never know myself (let alone another), but I have cultivated my garden enough to identify issues that matter to me in ways that allow both

communication AND action.

Anyone's primary gratitude must, I think, be for the gift of life itself, which is the greatest miracle of all. Beyond that, I am grateful for the circumstances that have allowed me to thrive.

For whatever reasons, including no reasons at all, I have been privileged to have adequate food, clothing and shelter; to be physically and mentally stable (these qualities being relative and perhaps fragile); to be musically gifted, educated, and productive; to have formed meaningful relationships with others, and to have had a job that helped others while providing personal satisfaction and ongoing financial security.

I seem to have a natural capacity to LIKE people—possibly as a result of having had loving and supportive parents and a nature that is both trusting and trustworthy. I have old friends and new friends, and they matter to me. Most of all, I have the love and friendship of my partner of 40 years.

None of the conditions that contribute to my well-being can be taken for granted. Art—and life itself—rarely flourish in times of severe hardship. I have been lucky to live without much personal hardship. Sadly, so many of our brothers and sisters have been less fortunate.

It seems likely that we all share the basic values and aspirations I have mentioned above: a reverence for life; sufficient food, clothing, and shelter; good health; the opportunity to become educated; and the ability to love

and be loved.

On a more personal level, I have a number of special-interest topics that matter to me. Vegetarianism is one of those topics. Of the myriad species that inhabit our planet, our species alone has the ability to "rise above" or, at the very least, to make choices that do not come to us instinctively. The title of Grace Jane Treber's book, "Why Kill to Eat," delivers a succinct message in four short words. I am aware that vegetarianism is a privileged option for the affluent, but I urge those who are financially able to make an ethical choice to end the suffering that is inherent in the breeding, raising, slaughter, and consumption of living creatures.

I have led a focused life, living from composition to composition. In a letter to a colleague, I mentioned that I was working on a new piece. She wrote back that she had never received a letter from me that did not include the phrase, "I am working on a new piece."

My aim in life has been to compose a large body of music. I have done my best to achieve that goal, and it now seems to me that the destination has been reached. I hope to compose more music, but if my life were to end today, no one (myself included) could feel that I had done too little, or that I had been prevented from realizing my dream.

Self-sufficiency is within the grasp of composers of electronic music, since the "product" is a fixed object rather than something for others to do. Electronic music in today's world is not especially connected to a particular sound, but to a way of life that is isolating at worst, and self-sufficient at

best. A persistent goal for me has been to NOT need. That goal applies not only to making music, but also to the perception and appreciation of the world in which we live. It is important to me to perceive what is good and beautiful without desire, jealousy, covetousness, judgment, or the hope that something more and better may come of that which already is whatever it is.

The question for me now is how to live when life's principal aim has been achieved. A basic response is to do my best to acquire the ability to be satisfied, to be happy, to love and be loved, to care about life and about others and the world we share, to feel fulfilled, and, at last, to experience peace of mind.

Finally, the current way we die matters to me very much. At last, I am active in an attempt to influence public policy that has transformed a natural event into a horrific encounter with the worst of life's sufferings: the artificial extension of life through any means possible.

Someone asked the writer Isaac Bashevis Singer if he didn't eat chicken for "health reasons." "Yes," he replied, "for the health of the chicken." I would like to make a peaceful, better life for animals, and a peaceful better life AND death for ourselves.

These are things that matter to me.

Personifications 3
Arthur Margolin

Of the things that matter many have spoken as
one. What glitters and has luster in its heart is
fool's gold. Or may be real. The foolish make
paste with paste, the wise are suspended in
bliss. I remain here thinking of you and your
lovely personality which does not reek does not
smell does not waft an aroma of blissful sweat
into the room where it is being revealed spoken
of in earnest to those who are getting a clue
from the cognoscenti at the podium. The far,
middle, near – all points equidistant from the
truth blossoming here tonight.
Our love makes us one he said smirking cautiously
she never more aflutter. Idiot, she thought.
At the podium he said – clearly they were made
for each other. Clearly precedes what I say
because it smoothes the course, a patina on
the platitude, without it we are all lost in the
wilderness saying this and that to one another
without precedence in our thoughts,
without propriety in our discourse. Are you
in tune with me she asked. Who said that the
personage demanded to know. I was mum, our
alibi, transcendent quietus. Too precious you
said, too rare, too this too that. I agreed of course,
because that is my nature, attending to the hand
feeling for loose change for the parking meter
which I knew would soon violate us.
That was all I cared about at the time if I
may be honest with you. Afterward something
important was said but we left. Could have read
about it, but forgot. Moved on. Got a life. Lives I
mean, together. Pardon my slip madame. No I am
mademoiselle you jerk, they're different you see.
Not just polite-- married, unmarried. One for one,
one for the other, it's the French, their culture,
their language, so we must follow it. Yes I see I said.
And I meant it. As between us that is. "There's nothing
between us" you said. But how could you know? I
wondered. But how could I know? you wondered.
It was truly preternatural. It was so this and so that.

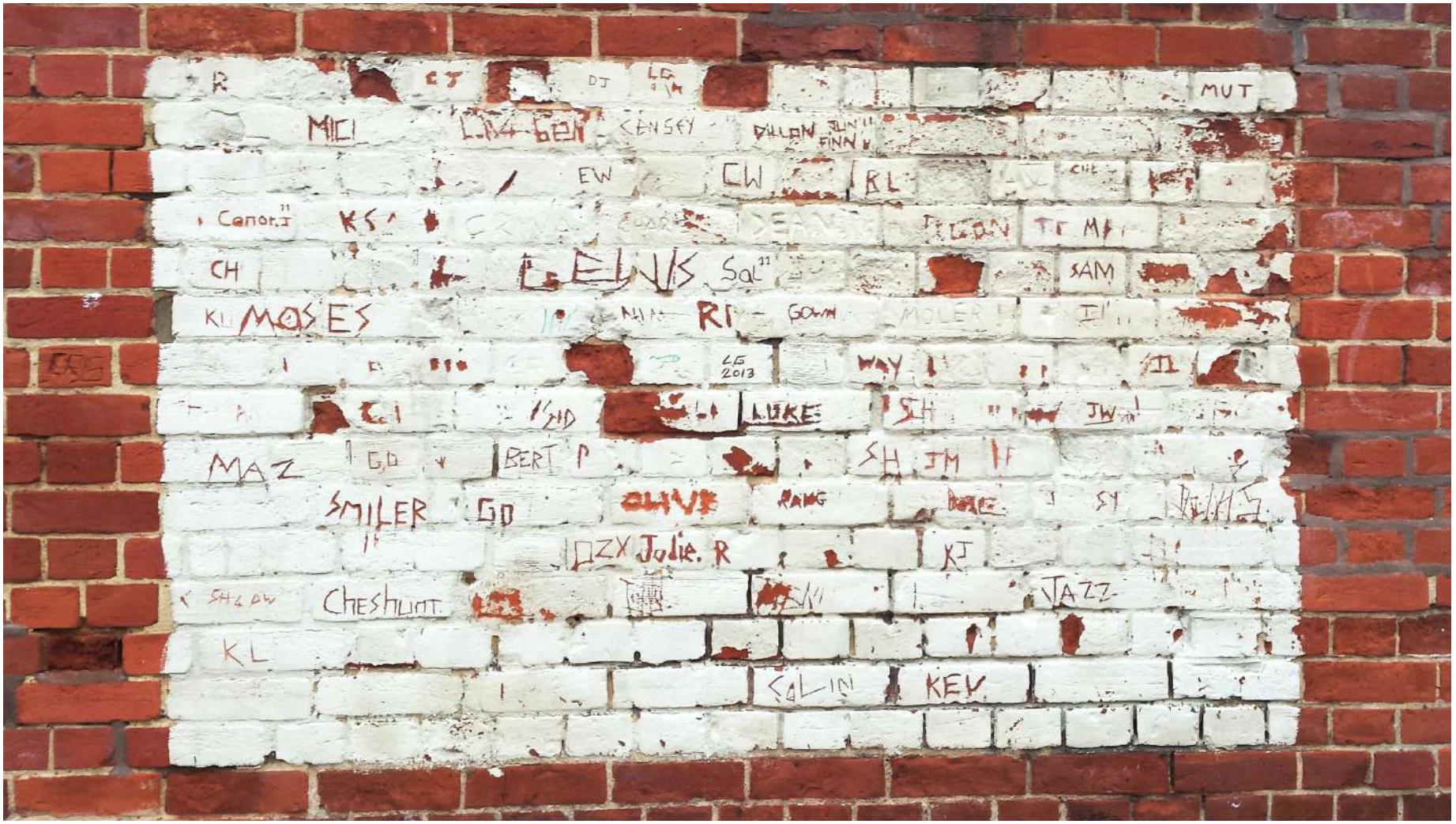
Like a flash of light call it lightning and thunder
at the same time, knowing in our hearts
that one must precede the other. That is what's called
a fucking mystery and we are better for it you said.
And I agreed of course, but was unsure of
whether I was laughing to myself or not – which
worried me, the uncertainty, and made me wonder:
do I really love her after all?

Your words have such poignancy, how your
questions do resonate. I am so smitten with
your knacks – how you nail down the ineffable,
that I want to have your children, and bring
them up ineffably. Neither seen nor heard, a
preternaturally peaceful household. It struck a
chord, and called to mind a movie: concerning
her maturity, the man in the elevator saying –
I want to lick you all over. She didn't share his pangs,
and I don't want your spectral children either.
There is a lesson to be learned here said the
cognoscentum. A moral not only for our time,
but as well for all the future. How the past will reveal to us its
essential proclivities, which are us, as we understand
ourselves now. He hit the high notes, rubbed
our noses on them. No escaping a confrontation
with the self. You grimaced. An existentially
momentous gesture! I became somewhat unhinged,
ravished you as we ascended to the penthouse
Spilling over onto the parquet floors. Going at each
other like baboons in a bordello. How outré. How spiritual.
What a low-life. "You prognosticate the near and the far
but the meanings of the middleground elude you."
Like a pickpocket stealing lint. Go for the big bucks.
Plastic. Cyberspace. Secret numbers.
Endeavors proliferative. And you will find, in the
end, that the unspeakable is in your own key.
Otherwise, you are mouthing the words but not
hearing the tune.

What an estrangement at this crucial moment.
A concrete block right there in the mittelgrund.
So that's truth for you. Your imagination exceeds
your capacities. It runs away, and returns from
afar, bites you in your arse. You go to the doctor.

It hurts. Please, something, anything. But not
too new, or experimental. Tested and shown
to work. From the podium: your slush fund is
unbounded. Simply open yourself up to it. Place
yourself in the middle of it. Imagine what it's like
to give it away to others. And then keep it all
to yourself. What a philosophy! All I know is that
I am bound to you in a servitude elegiacal.
Or perhaps not. We desire a portion
of each other's wisdom, and rue the result. This
is when I go out west, to big sky or is it sur, and
cogitate upon rectitude and near misses. I will
arrive at a place I do not remember, and know it for
the first time. How this, how that, take your
medicine, and consider that fortune didn't take too
much of a dislike to you.

In this world, he said warming up. Some were
riveted. Others looked around nervously for a
means of egress. I stopped breathing, got dizzy
but didn't pass out lest I draw attention to myself.
And I knew by all this, things that happen and
things that don't, that I was in control, but under
pressure might be given to qualifications,
revelations by degrees, at certain times, etc, etc.
This is not really what I am thinking



Hertford East railway station, Hertford, U.K. Tildy Bayar, 2018.

Marianne Kielian-Gilbert

The Grain of the Performative

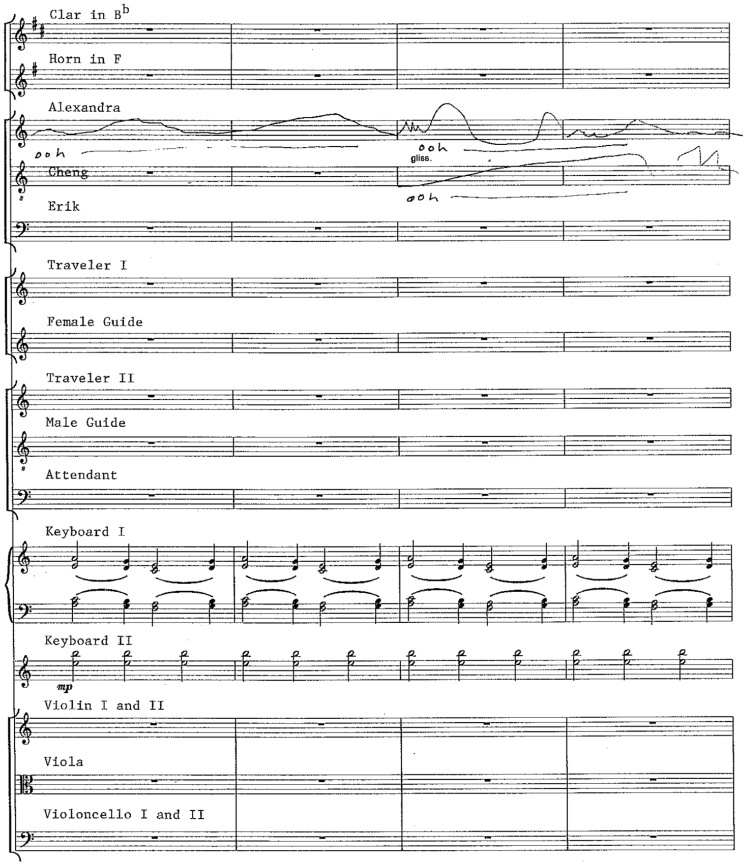
> *The loss of wonder, mystery and freshness in our contemporary life and the possibility of rediscovering our inherent clarity"* — (Monk, 1997, 173)

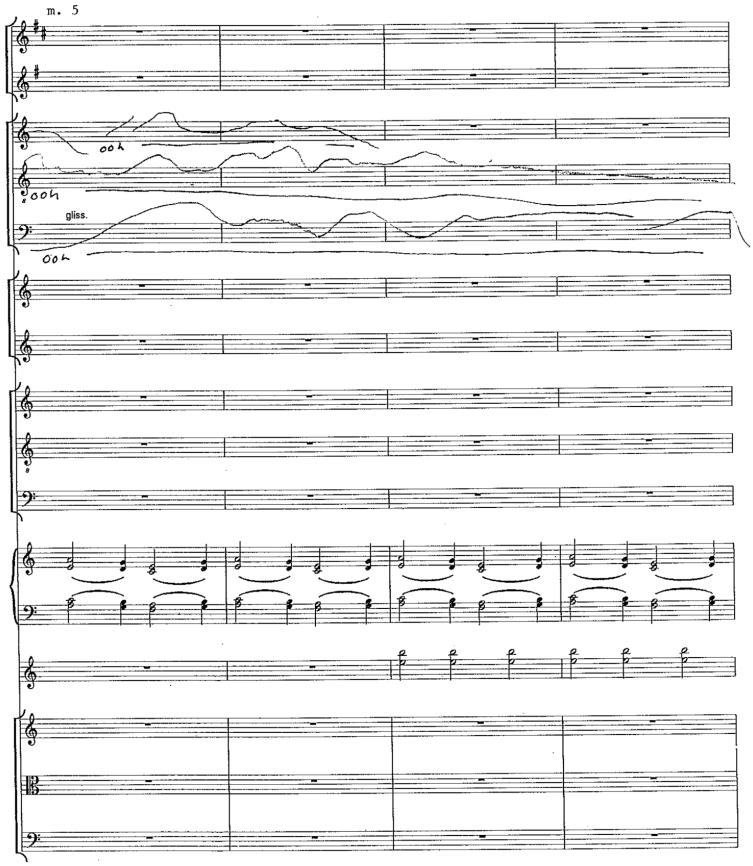
These are themes crucial to composer and interdisciplinary performance artist Meredith Monk in her path-breaking opera *Atlas* (1991). Based on the writings of the remarkable explorer Alexandra David-Néel, *Atlas* unfolds her life cycle (Monk sings the role of Alex as adult).

Listen to the passage from "Airport" from the studio recording that occurs roughly two-minutes into this scene at the end of Part 1 (see performance score and recording @2:26 [Monk 1993]):

In "Airport" the three intrepid explorers —Alexandra, Cheng Qing and Erik Magnussen— celebrate the beginning of their journey:

Listening example 1 (& performance score, @2: 26): *Atlas* (1991). Part 1, "Personal Climate" (CD. Track 7. "Airport" (in an airport departure lounge). A. @2:26: change in intensity; "performative affect", becoming airborne? [B. no score: @6:02-6:24 in "performative "return""]





Alexandra (voiced by Monk) introduces a new vocal pattern that segues into a striking vocalise that emerges from the texture and becomes untethered from the metering music of the instruments —unlike a siren, and more than a simulation of someone or thing becoming airborne or of a plane taking flight. This musical move on her part seems to inspire and influence fellow male travelers Cheng and Erik to join and take vocal flight as well. At this point in their performance, previously distinct repeating melodic vocal patterns transform and "take flight," changing from regulated/measured patterns to unmeasured soaring vocal contours that border the strange territory between enacting flight in voice and social movement and representing it. In activating affect, this in-betweenness releases music from the mimetic. The turbulence in shifting from flight to flying creates a letting go and divesting of representational control, stability, and security.

Roughly four minutes later (six minutes into track seven), in a new beginning, in re-turning, a male voice (Erik) initiates the "flying," activating a siren-like vocalise, shorter, this time becoming further intensified by Alexandra and Cheng's participation:

Listening example 2: *Atlas* (1991). Part 1, "Personal Climate" (CD. Track 7. "Airport" (in an airport departure lounge). B. no score: @6:02-6:24 in "performative "return""

Here in this "second time" the vocal flying dissipates more quickly, making new connections to music-sounds that were previously temporally non-adjacent in the first section and dramatizing, enacting, and initiating the first of two vocal denouements that will conclude the scene.
Temporally-experientially, the affects of these airborne vocals overflow previous boundaries with a greater outpouring of energy from the travelers. The sensibility of adventure and risk invests the potential of the unknown in a redistribution of relational, i.e., social, connections.

Though the affects of these passages serve the whole, they also convey the thrill of "*life at risk for the sake of intensification, for the sake of sensation itself*."

Meredith Monk (1997) describes *Atlas* as "a multi-perceptual, mosaic form":

> [*M]y music exists between the bar lines and beyond the notes. … When I listen to Atlas, I am filled with memories of the process of making it. In many ways, Atlas has become a way of life. It has been an adventure for all of us, paralleling the adventures of Alexandra and her companions.*

These remarkable examples highlight several kinds of moves or "dramatizations" that performative affect activates in art, music-sound and music listeners. The first *releases affect from representation*, creating experiential forces and sensibilities that traverse, shift or redistribute performative doing, in metamorphic becoming and dramatizing. One may suddenly notice the tension and/or at times subtle intervention or shift between "representing" (a flight) [sensing a "representation"] and "experiencing" a performative enaction (in & by flying).

Such moves and tensional shifts materialize and dramatize (enact and/or stage) a changing multidimensionality and sociality in music experience. They influence and effect listeners' bodily-material-experiential relationships with sound. The second aspect of dramatizing *releases affect from function*, creating new relational connections in experience: structure becomes *creative,* i.e., "performative" and performatively embodied, projecting new differential and bodily encounters that perform themselves in emergent zones of sensory and worldly-interactive engagement.

Monk's performance embodies and actualizes in music-sound the physical-material and the changing music-relational senses of being and taking flight, flying and becoming flying in music. Music becomes a working out in sound and/or a way of articulating and actualizing—a philosophy, memory, quality of sound, of what it means to do or think or feel in music. The affective shifting, e.g., between flyer-becoming-flying and flight, and flying and flight-becoming-flyer enact and change "flyer" and "flight" in temporal-physical-social emergence. They give social-relational and cultural significance to, in, and through performance.

Activating this vividness of the experiential turns attention to the "grain of the performative" and to the musical "work" of affect (intensity, vividness, effort) in music and of changing bodily, material, and social relationships to music-sound. "Bodily" and "bodies" may be construed

broadly as physical, biological/human, or music-sound "bodies" that enact or dramatize—that is, perform—themselves in varying intensities. They accommodate increasing or decreasing degrees of musical depth and dimensionality, effort, density, distribution, and connectivity.

Through affect—becoming radically performative, cross-modal, and materially enacted in experience—music affirms its aesthetic import, sensory abundance and worldly connections and the creative capacities of musical actors and listeners, actions, events, or cultural manifestations to perform themselves in extensions of desire. Performative affect thus refers to a process integral to materializing and dramatizing both something of the world *and something new to it.*

In the affect of the "performative," listening becomes an act of attention that also activates musical structure, countering its containment and objectification, and creating new relational orientations and alliances. The heart of the matter of affect activates the capacities of music (and listeners) to act and to be acted upon, vivifying experience by turning from objectification and reification to the "grain of the performative".

I engage and feel affect as the effort, force, intensity, or influence of an excess or abundance of action for the sake of intensification. Performative affect supplies a *quantitative* dimension of force (intensification, sensation) that activates a *qualitative* dimension of experience (feeling, sensibility). It calls forth sensation—that Elizabeth Grosz (2008, 73) describes as

> *the zone of indeterminacy between subject and object, the bloc that erupts from the encounter of one with the other.*

Affect, effort, and sensation meet the burden of the *aesthetic of music's being beautiful* and the passivity, absorption, and submissiveness-receptiveness of either the musical object or listening subject. When and as affect becomes "performative" through changing intensity and surplus of enaction, music matters.

For philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, affect and intensification are what art makes and produces:

> *Art comes from the excess, in the world, in objects, in living things, that enables them to be more than they are, to give more than themselves, their material properties and qualities, their possible uses, than is self-evident. Art is the consequence of that excess, that energy or force, that puts life at risk for the sake of intensification, for the sake of sensation itself—not simply for pleasure or for sexuality, as psychoanalysis suggests—but for what can be magnified, intensified, for what is more, through which creation, risk, innovation are undertaken for their own sake, for how and what they may intensify.* (Grosz 2008, 63)

There is more to the performative than flowery characterization. Consider philosopher Luce Irigaray's understanding of "irreducible sexual difference," in which "[presence] cannot be

reduced either to materiality or to abstraction" (Irigaray 2001, 9). Music affect creates this zone of indeterminacy and in-betweenness, multidirectionally.

Re-emphasizing Charles Darwin's position, Grosz argues that rendering excess "functional", that is, as necessary for natural selection, tends toward the reductive, and disregard the affective potentials (attraction and preference) of sexual selection:

> *In being rendered functional, however, all excess and redundancy are eliminated: sexual selection is reduced to natural selection …, thereby simplifying and rendering evolution monodirectional, regulated only by the selection of randomly acquired characteristics and not by the unpredictable vagaries of taste and pleasure that sexual selection entails." (Grosz 2008, 67).*

Like the affects and "excessive expenditures" of sexual appeal and attraction, artistic/aesthetic affects arise from abundance and excess, from the chaotic, unpredictable and contingent. Beyond functional obligations, in art, performative affect is intensity or excess for its own sake, for how and what it intensifies, rather than as tied to or rendered by norms or by functional service to the whole.

Would one focus on critiquing (by contrast to valuing), the body sounds and language of Monk's soaring airplane as "inarticulate" as expressing gross need or mood? as absent and without integrity? How is it that one endures or perseveres in music's sonic materialities and intensities from the beginning to end of one piece, or from one piece to another?

Elizabeth Grosz writes

> *"It is problematic to see the* [*musical*—my addition] *body as a blank, passive page, a neutral "medium" or signifier for the inscription of a text" (Volatile Bodies, 156).*

How might attending to the "filigrees,""grunts," and "groans" of tonal music offer different emphases: experiencing the dramatically reiterated and splayed F major-major seventh harmony that sets up the fugato in the middle of the development of the first movement of Beethoven's Eroica Symphony, or the overwhelming intensities of increasing schizophrenic disassociation (noted by Joseph Kerman) of Beethoven's *Grosse Fugue*, Op. 133, almost seventeen minutes in length, in connection with shifts in orientation between representation (expressions of) and dramatization (in intensities)?

Listening example 3 (& performance score): Beethoven, String Quartet in F major, Op. 59, No. 1, II. *Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando*, mm. 1-34.



Listen to the opening of the Bb major *Scherzando* movement of Beethoven's F major Quartet, Op. 59, No. 1: the opening's delicately precise rhythmic-motivic pianissimo reiterations of the cello's single-note Bb2's, gently interrupted by arpeggio melodic filigrees, and both then sequenced "down a whole step" to Ab in viola and violin 1, transforming in smooth homorhythmic connections to the abruptly intensified and fortissimo rhythmic return in reiterations of Bb major-triad and D major-minor-seventh harmonies.

Brian Hyer wrote on some confusions of renewing the experience of immediacy for example in Beethoven's *Eroica*:

> *[M]ost of our critical activities aim at an objectification of music, a reduction of music to factual knowledge: our critical practices strive to consume or exhaust the music in knowing, relegating our surprise. … [As] soon as the structure of the*

> *music has been determined once and for all, … listening becomes little more than an ear-training exercise, having as its goal a sober, referential appreciation of an a priori musical truth, an informed understanding that privileges the measurable, the repeatable, and the visualizable* (Hyer 1996, 101–102).

If and as affects stage intensity and intensification for their own sake, how can changing intensities, whether in Beethoven's music or Monk's vocalises or in music's particular ways of holding listeners' attention, matter for ethical and social (relational) encounters in music? How would attending to differences in affect matter?

Listeners, or other musical "actors," shift from orientations of observing to participating, to sense music sounds themselves as performing, i.e., as becoming, and compelling the character, the genre, the form itself to respond or act. In this way, musics "heard" or "watched" act back as performative elements with power to intervene in or upend a controlling apparatus or "ear." They shift or "twist" from linguistic representation, to processive differentiation enacting and materializing connections at varying speeds.

Affective acts re-activate experience by countering or shifting the weight of representation into movement—unsettling contextual frames of reference, whether physical, temporal, or conceptual; reasserting or repositioning who speaks or listens; staring back, refocusing emphases, or challenging assumptions; calling attention to or dispersing signifiers; or framing them in side-by-side juxtaposition of percepts and effects. Performative affects emerge in and from new ways of construing entities in changing surface, depth, and dramatic/social relationships.

Musical figures, as if actors enacting-dramatizing a play or story within a play, also claim our attention and make distinctions in temporal worlds in momentary flashes by which the figures themselves contribute and assert independent and open-ended affects.

These flashes of changing relationships in and to music sound point up the problems of formulating categories, musical structure, and interpretations as prior, or subordinate to action, rather than simultaneous with it. Countering music's containment and objectification and creating new relational orientations and bodily/material alliances in its metamorphic dramatizations, these actions connect the content of an utterance and the manner of its delivery in a dramatizing that calls attention to itself experientially and temporally. Thus music contributes *differences of its own* that transform practices of listening as relational. In acts of doing, both literally and figuratively, musical things and listeners gain independent experiential life within a heterogeneous whole rather than remaining categorically pre-determined or fixed by controlling agencies or abstractions.

I will not advocate an analogue "or reactive dial" to monitor, or measure, or take the changing temperatures of affect and intensity (though that is sometimes done), but advocate affect as a source of ascribing appeal, attraction, and abundance beyond norms and functional roles.

Listeners draw on affect I call "performative" to transform context and produce and perform new relational configurations, and to attribute artistic effort and social force.

When listening becomes an act of attention, in an effort or chance to hear music's productive affect, its potential is in resisting and refiguring music's structural containment and reification/objectification. When affect becomes performative, aesthetic sensibilities and practices of listening can work towards social critique, especially when they create, call attention to, and perform new relational affiliations and orientations: in a locale, practices of making music and communities of listeners come into focus. Ethical potential results from embracing *both* a perceiver/listener's submissiveness *and* desire to resist fixed positions of listening, potentially open to despair and exhaustion as much as/along with exhilaration.

In reverse voyeurism – music fragments into snippets and sound bytes, commercialized, "promiscuously" connected or attached to just about everything we see, taste, touch, and smell. A fragmentation of attention, and thus of affect, influences perception as well—in contrast to attention spans fixated obsessively, they can be obsessively shortened. When our technologies do our listening for us, do they further, or jettison and diminish, experience; do they contain or immobilize it and us in other ways?

Music's and our "performative" acts produce and create sudden changes of insight, presence, or orientation in connections that open up larger worlds for experience and thought, and in attentional aspects of excess, surplus, attractions, effort, and appeal of "the grain." As and when music matters, the "structural" becomes performative, and the potential of the porous nature of distinctions and interactions between inner and outer, performance and aesthetic, form and content, and music and listeners come to the fore. In this abundance, music's affects and efforts, our action-based perceptions, and performative activations gain new power to activate and listen to the musically beautiful with structures of feeling, emotion, thought, and social-relational potential and commitment.

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neal kosaly-meyer

Silence matters.

As you read, please read the empty spaces as well. The number in the center of an empty space indicates how many lines of text would fill the space. From the beginning until the end of each space, listen closely and deeply to all the sounds occurring during the time it would take to read that many lines of text.

5

"There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try as we may to make a silence, we cannot."—John Cage, *Silence*

3

"The individual decision-makings and unforeseen happenings around the world and in universe at large altogether synergetically produced historical results not contemplated by any. Such non-contemplated-by-any results constitute evolution—the will of God."—R. Buckminster Fuller, *Critical Path*

6

"Today, as in the days of Pliny and Columella, the hyacinth disports in Gaul, the periwinkle in Illyria, the daisy on the ruins of Numantia; and while around them the cities have changed masters and names, while some have ceased to exist, while the civilisations have collided with one another and shattered, their peaceful generations have passed through the ages, and have come up to us, one following the other, fresh and cheerful as on the days of the battles."—Edgar Quinet, *Introduction à La Philosophie de l'Histoire de l'Humanité*, as quoted (with minor errors) by Leon Metchnikoff in *La Civilisation et les Grands Fleuves Historiques*

2

I ran into John Cage's notion of silence as never silent, as always full of sounds, early in my undergraduate studies. About the same time as I encountered this idea I was rehearsing with the University of Washington's improvisation ensemble. This group was often led by Stuart Dempster, who coached us to play silences with the same intention, energy and listening with which we played sounds.

5

I found it difficult to do this, and generally difficult to include silence of any significant duration in my playing. Written scores, such as Cage's, were more helpful in exploring and integrating silence into my musical experience. In 1983 I heard and saw Cage conduct the Cornish New Performance Group as they played his *Atlas Eclipticalis. Atlas* is scored for a very large orchestra, though its instructions specify that a performance may include any number of the parts. The New Performance Group included somewhere between 8 and 10 musicians, and as a consequence there was often a long time between played events. I'd never before heard a musical performance with so much silence included in a ninety-minute duration. At that time it demanded quite a bit of endurance on my part. But that endurance was strengthened by seeing Cage's conducting. The conducting method prescribed for *Atlas* is to move the arms as the hands of a clock, in circles corresponding to quasi-circular lines drawn on the performers' parts. For the Cornish performance these circles took about five minutes each to complete, so Cage was moving his arms imperceptibly slowly, as slow as a minute hand or perhaps even slower than that.

3

In addition to helping me through the performance, Cage's conducting also demonstrated his own investment and dedication to his music, which in turn shored up my own resolve and commitment to explore experimental composition. Though I was never terribly systematic about it, I would with some consistency keep practicing listening to the sounds of my environment. Occasionally I would have a rewarding breakthrough where I would find a place of deep and attentive presence among those sounds, in which they really did give me the pleasure afforded by a beautiful piece of music.

10

My experience at the *Atlas* performance has especially informed an ongoing composition/improvisation project, *Gradus: for Fux, Tesla and Milo the Wrestler.* This project, on which I have been working actively since 2002, entails dedicating an extended improvisation session to each pitch of the piano keyboard, and to all possible combinations of each pitch with every other pitch (the project was amended from "all possible" to "selected" combinations once it was pointed out (by Keith Eisenbrey) that it would take many lives of the universe to complete the original plan).

4

The *Gradus* sessions, especially in the early going, involved very few pitches, and for the first thirteen years or so, those pitches were exclusively of the pitch class A. It felt right in this situation to include generous silences, as the ambient sounds would add variety, and provide a sort of chorus to the played sounds. In addition, it then felt right that the sounds played should be preponderantly on the quiet side, in order to lead ears to hear and appreciate the unintended sounds of the environment as part of the experience.

2

Gradus then, has afforded me lots of practice in listening attentively, appreciatively and, especially in public performances, cooperatively and dependently, to the varieties of ambient sound. In preparing a particular *Gradus* program for performance, I employ chance operations to select specific pitches, numbers of pitches per section, and lengths of sections within the whole. On one occasion, for a program of two hours total duration, it turned out that the central section was to last an hour, during which I could employ only one pitch, the highest E on the keyboard. Since *Gradus* is among other things, definitely an act and statement of faith that a musical performance can rest solidly on very few pitches and the silence surrounding them, I feel ethically bound to honor and trust the results of those chance operations used in the preparation of any performance. This result however definitely tested my faith. When it was time to begin that section, a bird began to sing, and continued to sing throughout that hour, providing a second voice with which I could improvise using that high E.

The engagement with silence afforded by my sixteen years work (so far) on *Gradus* has confirmed for me the real depth and importance of Cage's insight that silence is not silent, and of that insight's profound implications for all of our listening, composing and performing.

12

Those implications seem to me analogous with what has been for me the most concise and useful formulation of anarchism: That the holding of power by any group or individual over others must be questioned, always and without exception, and the holding of such power should be granted or permitted only in the case that, after such questioning, it is deemed absolutely necessary.

5

The analogy for composers and performers with regard to sound and silence might be this:

3

Is there a compelling reason that the unintended sounds of the environment be excluded or ignored as a presupposition of that which I am writing or playing?

2

Why should we privilege the acts and sounds we happen to intend over those we do not?

8

Isn't a music that intentionally includes all the sounds in the room going to be inherently richer than a music that excludes them, whether they are excluded by design or by not thinking about it?

4

Sometimes as I listen to the unsilent silence I think of the Turing test—Alan Turing's celebrated formula for determining whether a computer has actually achieved artificial intelligence. My understanding of the Turing test is that in a situation where a person interacts with something--whether a person, whether a machine, they do not know--the longer the person sustains the feeling that whatever they are interacting with is a real conscious subject, then the more likely that whatever it is, whether person or machine, really is a real conscious subject.

10

So, as I listen to unsilent silence, when I manage to sustain my listening with focused attention and intention, the longer I do so, the more it feels that the sounds I am attending to constitute a conscious subject of some kind. According to the Turing test, this would seem to suggest that the unintended sounds of the environment probably are a conscious intelligence.

3

Or perhaps I'm just projecting my own ideas about consciousness and intelligence onto those sounds.

2

But isn't that what anyone performing the Turing test is doing anyway?

1

So is there really a difference?

14

12

I could bring *Finnegans Wake* into this, but I think I'll save that for another time. For now, following the lines of silence that conclude this essay, re-read the mistranslated Quinet sentence from the first page, which kind of ties all this together.

15

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Things that Matter

Warren Burt and Catherine Schieve

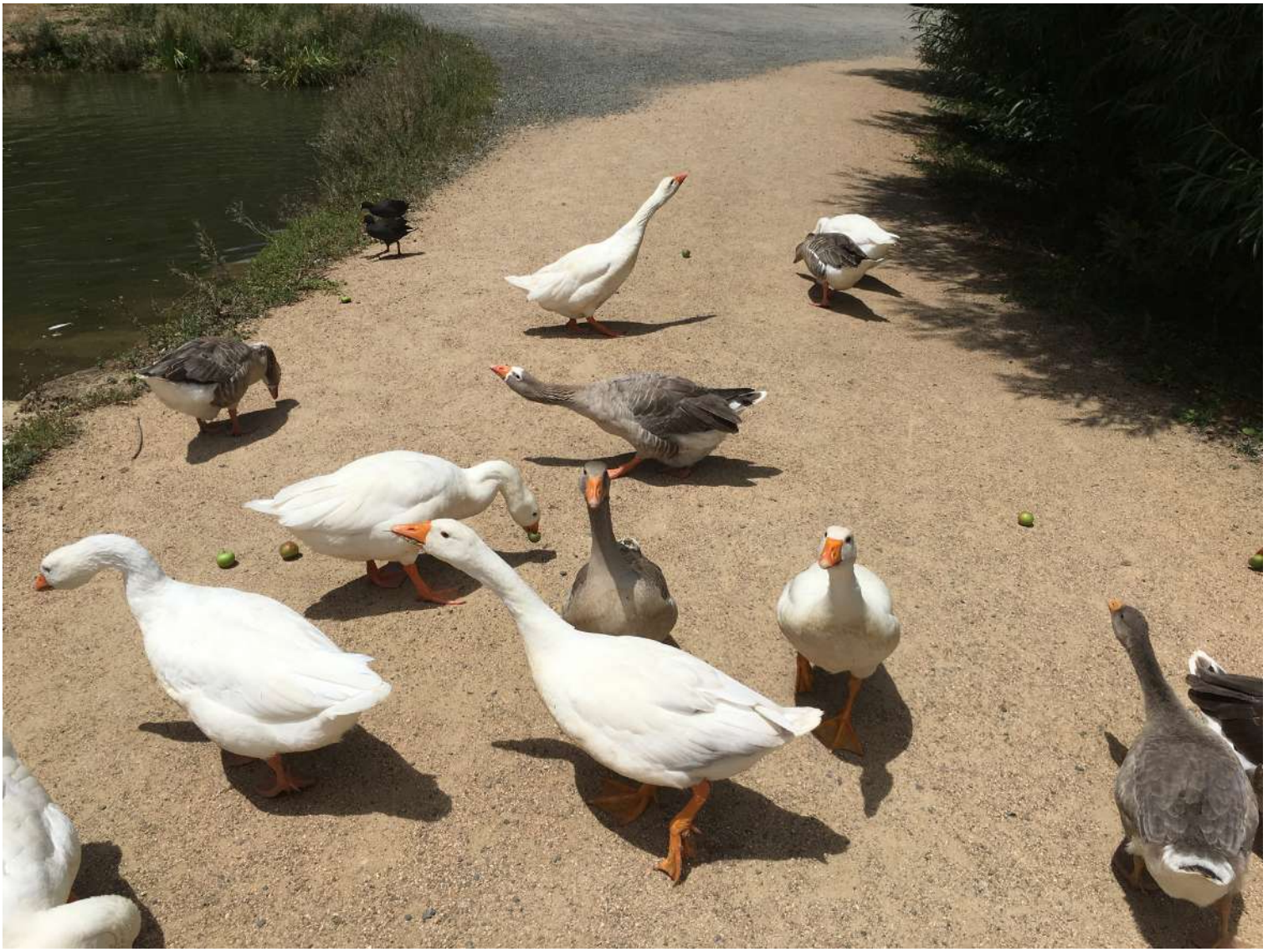
We live in Daylesford, Victoria, a small spa village about 70 miles outside of Melbourne, in what's called the Central Highlands. We live in a small, but cosy rented house that is surrounded by fruit trees. Apparently, the occupant of the house from the 30s through to the 70s or 80s was the woman who was the chief gardener at the Daylesford Botanical Gardens. She tried out all sorts of botanical experiments around the house, and as a result we're surrounded by three different kinds of plum trees, a large damson plum bush, elderberries, a juniper berry tree, four apple trees – one a graft of two different varieties – a very old and rare Perry Pear tree, and of course, lots of blackberries. As well as a large variety of roses, and lots of other flowering plants. It's almost impossible to predict what will start growing in the garden at the start of every season. In late summer/early autumn we have a lot of fun harvesting the fruit and giving away a lot of it to friends, as well as making stewed fruit (lots of stewed fruit) which we freeze and eat for the rest of the year. This year, although money was a bit tighter than it usually is, we managed to scrape together the money to pay Maryann, the orchardist, to trim, prune and in general spruce up the orchard. It was money well spent – the crop this year on all the trees – aided by a mild and wet spring – looks to be one of the biggest in the seven years we've been here.

Daylesford is an old gold-mining town, and has a large artificial lake, made by damming up the canyon where most of the mining took place. The sides of the lake are planted with a variety of European trees, so a walk around this Australian bush lake is almost like a visit to say, Switzerland, but Switzerland with gum trees, maybe. The lake is very popular with tourists and has a large waterfowl population – Eurasian coots, Australian wood ducks, dusky moorhens, Australasian swamphens (known as pukeko in New Zealand), cormorants and anhingas, a flock of motley mallards and Indian runner ducks (escapees from local farms?), and a large (30+ flock) of geese. We frequently walk around the lake, and have, for many years now, fed the locals with a fine gourmet birdseed mix – no stale bread for us! Or them. We've gotten to know the birds quite well, and they us. I joke that not only do we know the local birds by name, but they know us by name. After all these years, I'm not sure that it's a joke. As I said, we usually feed the birds a gourmet seed mix, but a couple of years ago, we had a large windfall of apples, and we decided to try feeding apples to the geese. They loved them.

In our orchard, the apples in particular this year are early and fecund. Very big crops on all the trees, even the little one struggling by the back fence. However, and this also happened last year, the local sulphur crested cockatoos discovered our apple trees as well, and in a single afternoon, demolished most of the apple crop, leaving the ground under the apple trees covered with half-eaten, gnawed fruit. Fortunately, they seem to not like plums, damsons, elderberries, and pears. They do like the juniper berries, which we don't use, so that's ok. Species co-existence and all that. However, we now have a back lawn filled with cockatoo processed apples. I raked them into six piles, and for the past two days we've filled a plastic bag with about 100+ apples each day (and we have at least a week's more at this rate), and proceeded down to the lake to feed the geese. This provides us with no little amusement, and led Catherine to a rather profound insight.

She said, “We live in an environment managed by our bird overlords,” and “We’re fulfilling our evolutionary purpose in transporting apples from cockatoos to geese.” We both laughed at the idea that the ultimate purpose of humankind was to act as a conduit bringing apples from cockatoos to geese. Part of the great universal cycle of life. It seemed to me that that was the kind of thing that Kurt Vonnegut would have come up with – the purpose of life was something ostensibly trivial, but which was actually the crucial lynchpin that held that particular universe together. It’s just that with our limited vision, we couldn’t see it. So maybe in our role as trans-avian-species fruit couriers, we are indeed fulfilling a role that some overarching destiny or other has concocted for us. In any case, the cockatoos are happy, and the geese are happy, and even though we’ll only end up with a very few apples for stewing, in fulfilling our destiny, we can at least salvage a scrap or two of bird feeding happiness.





TOM DJLL

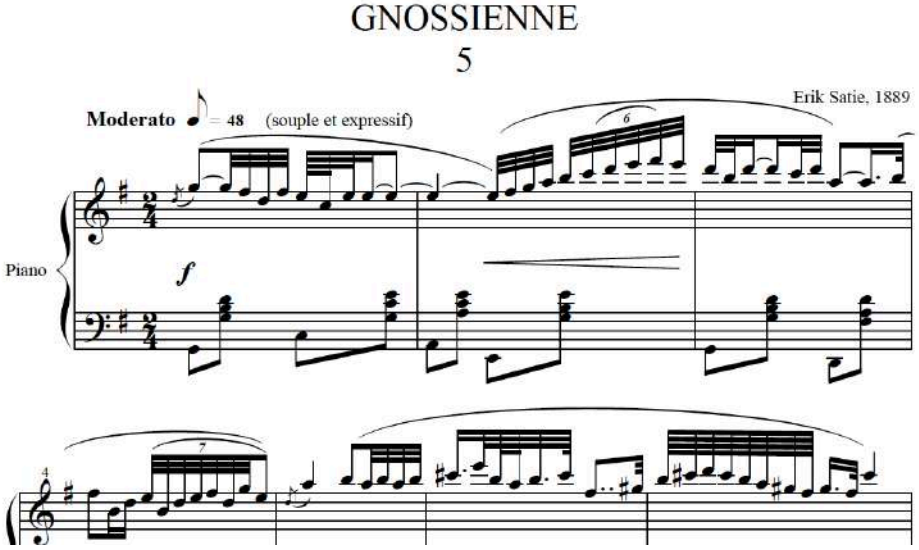


On the street next to the street where I live



Owed to T___
Air BnB Brixton $372
~~Cab to Iklectik?~~ paid
Bfast in Brixton?

Owed to G___
Berlin flat $100 OK
Train to Oxford OK
~~Train to Glasgow~~ covered by festival



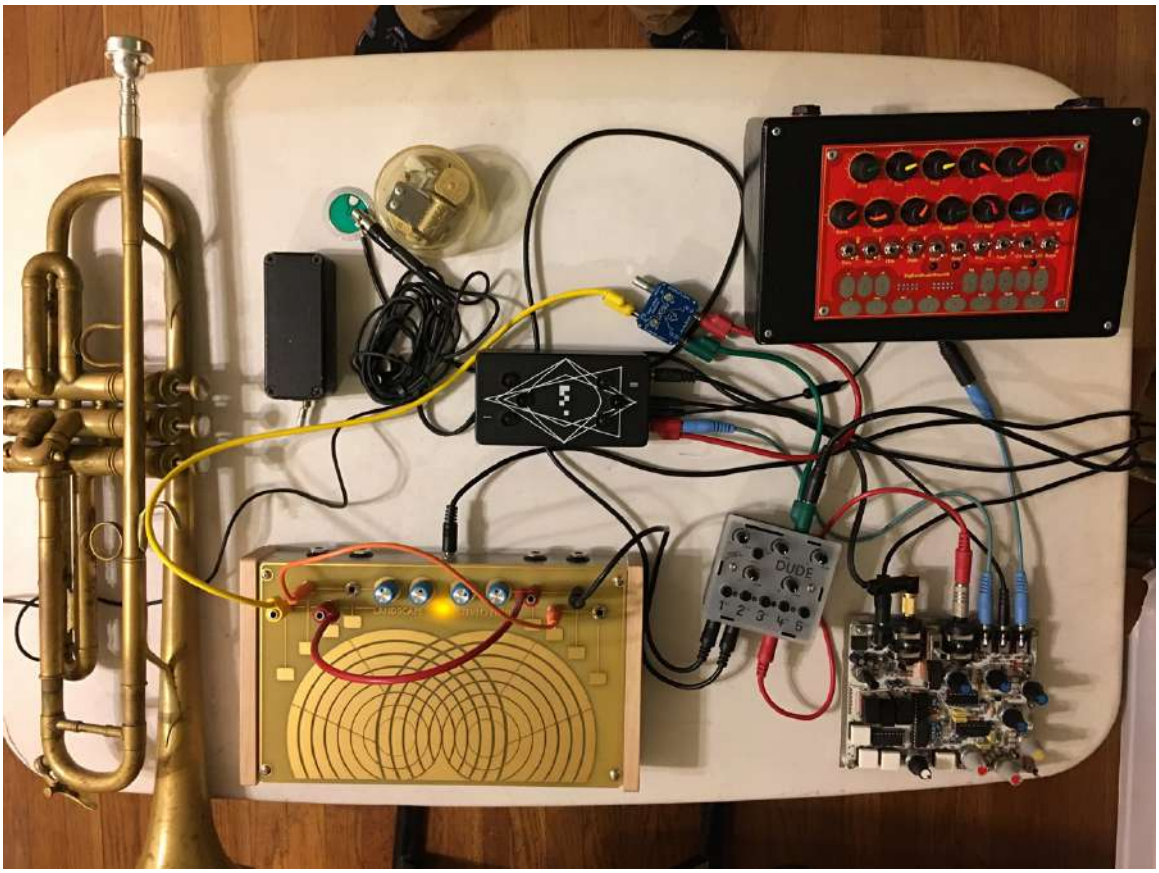


Greenland sounds like a dull roar to me.



"After midday, the rain eased, and the Land Rover rode into Pokhara on a shaft of storm light. Next day there was humid sun and shifting southern skies, but to the north a deep tumult of swirling grays was all that could be seen of the Himalaya. At dusk, white egrets flapped across the sunken clouds, now black with rain; on earth, the dark had come. Then, four miles above these mud streets of the lowlands, at a point so high as to seem overhead, a luminous whiteness shone — the light of snows. Glaciers loomed and vanished in the grays, and the sky parted, and the snow cone of Machhapuchare glistened like a spire of a higher kingdom."

Peter Mattheissen, *The Snow Leopard,* Prologue



You can always decline the invitation. Problem solved?

SYMMETRy

M!
Mmm...
Madam...
Madam, I'm Adam.
Madam, I filial ail, if I'm Adam.
Madam, I wondered – now, I'm Adam?
Madam, I demand I'm ID named. I'm Adam!
Madam, I finish sin... if I'm Adam.
Mad am I, madam!!!
...Madam?
Ma'am?
M?

Field Recording

for desktop environment

(Knee jiggle)
(clacking keyboard)
(scratch) ...
(cars outside)
(neighbor scrapes a chair) (repeat once)
(cough, cough)



Is it "universal," or just the vibrations inside my head?

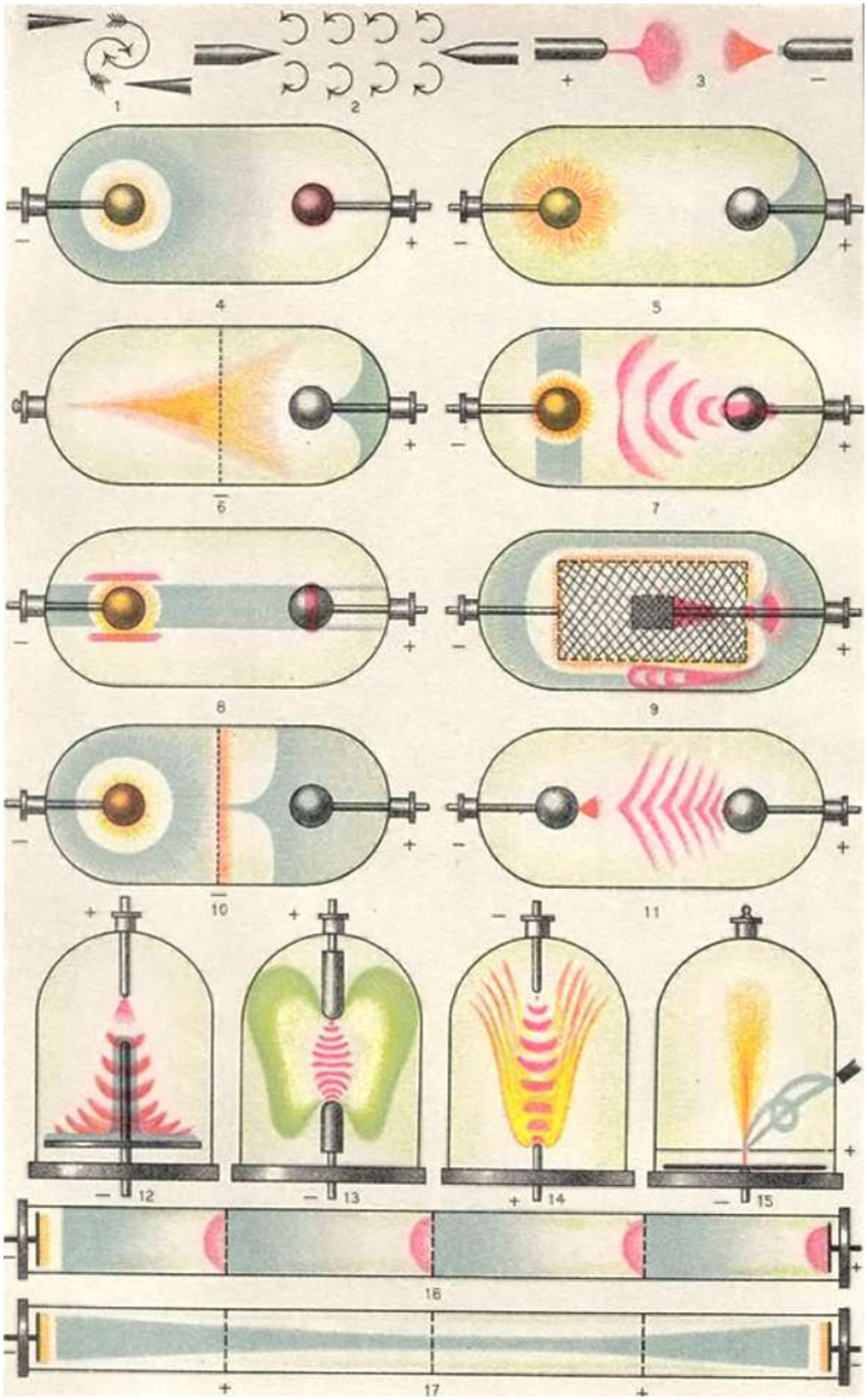
The packet next to me containing the instructions for disposing of my mother's earthly remains and possessions. In the indeterminate future.

Headphones with nothing in between.

Recharge my batteries. There's a metaphor you!

Sorry about that.

Let's remain connected in any case.


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17

Mikhail Horowitz

Shuffled Months

a sky acutely full of stars

ghosts astream from every surface

spring in her step, the sophomore Persephone passes me on the

path, re-

vitalizing exhausted stalks that once were sunflowers

and I am that moss-capped rock dividing the brook, which ookles

and blooks around it . . .

these ants minutely mining a pile of cat puke

these clouds collaged from scraps of handmade paper

this firefly silently interrogating a garden statue . . .

and sorrow (for now) abandons me, a dozen buzzards abruptly

decamping a Dumpster

or mist rising from a mess of perfectly strewn leaves in the

pewter creek

—o to sight these motley autumnal mountains

through rimed eyeglasses that rhyme with blindness

*

we are light in its lumpiest form

tresslike creases of light, slowly combed across creekbeds

creatures of luminous autumn, sealed in its amber cartouche

sealed in the shambles the autumn has made of this mountain

now dimly seen the winter sun in coverlet of gauze

white horse and dun horse in orchard, grazing for Godot

above them the Rubenesque cumulus, fatty, crumpled folds of
rosy cloudflesh
perfect weather for the smoking phantom of a passing freight
perfect day to debate these Episcopal dogwoods, steeped in a
pinkness that passeth understanding
poetry an evasive maneuver that always fails, leaving a small
bird wasted on the windshield
the dead memento of a living flicker of electricity —
a firefly there, not there, in perfect simulation of our lives

*

"a night unstained by dawn"
and underdusk, the underside of clouds
drove a red Prius to Riverside service
discussing life, death, memory, and rhyme, on company time . . .
pinecones crushed by tires in driveway: fossils of extinct marine
animals, trilopines
and plump woodchuck in day lilies, warily watched by feral cat
all of it splendidly present: the haggard heron in great blue
beaver pond
the garden spiderwebs domed with dew
a pale pocked moon, floating above red dot of stop light
a dog's ghost making the rocking chair move . . .
back in Manhattan I'm whistling Piaf for unimpressed jeune filles
craving an accordion that fits into a microwave

*

the year — that is, the Sun — has 12 disciples

one of whom offers a fiery forsythia, lifting forsythical flame-
tips
Morgan the calico kneads me as I masturbate,
chasing the rat in this little maze called Reason . . .
who can account for this fresh dusting of snow, silversmithing
the pines
or that smoldering proscenium of ruddy oak and blazing maple,
overarching a country road
or the way the outside (overgrowth of branches, vines, and
profligate vegetation)
echoes the inside, a chaos of magazines, wrappers, boxes, junk
mail circulars?
On every bus, the ear as erotic orifice
but not receptive to subway busker strumming to the dead . . .
Challenged by truck in front of me: HONK IF YOU DON'T EXIST
I don't, but I do remember Mnemosyne — her sleep interrupted
by phone calls

*

things autumn apart
as fall serrates the edges of the air —
"Why don't they make an Alka-Seltzer for grief?"
Might as well go back in time, regather the hunters before the
clan starts farming . . .
It's all a blip, a blink in the eye of eons
a whispered history of white clouds tossed in patchy tableaux on
crumbling mountains . . .
always when crossing water, to remember we slosh as we walk

like the grayskin cat on bluestone wall abutting a mossy gryphon

the gryphon as real as the tiny green tree frog plastered to the

pane —

adiós to them all, to the life that dreams us deeply in the

stream

saying goodbye with a steady eye

the afternoon light Vermeering in the trees

*

Decrepitude encroacheth, but why the unseemly haste?

Zena cornfield now a hayfield,

circling buzzards, eyes on the poets below . . .

the house dissolves in lemony light at twilight,

the sky disappears when you get up close to the puddle,

and deer disappearing in wood, as does the year . . .

snow, moon, Prednisone,

severe wind wringing confessions from the trees,

the old theater crammed to its creaky capacity,

and featureless and ephemeral as any other shadow

he slipped so peacefully out of this life,

laughing from here to hereafter

*

nabbed again by the long arm of nostalgia

antique light on brown and leathery leaves

“I remember being immortal, and now I’m not”

watching the clouds out-mountain the mountains

as all the dead convene in heart and head . . .

she pockets a rubber band shaped like infinity

unbound hair in a yellow contrail, trailing away behind her

noted by the scrounging crows on much less powerful powerlines

. . .

sunset a bleeding pink, the sky displaying stigmata

and Time's wing'd chariot doesn't brake for animals

darkly and silently slinking into culverts

condemned to the merely thinkable

*

the cinema is haunted by the cinema

but *love makes the discovery wisdom abandons*

even here at winter's end when everything looks so shabby

and wandering bees bivouac in bulging eaves

almost theophanic in their apprehensive humming . . .

frozen turd in the lower forty

mouse drowning in cat's water bowl

crow strutting with crust of pizza in its beak

and life continues to eat us, while death just clears the table

and lets us know by grace of a swaying tree

wrought by autumn's coppersmith

that the world is its own elegy

*

feels like I've partially swallowed a toupée

with cop on my tail the whole way over the reservoir . . .

dimly remembered even as they occur, the days moving greyly in

reverie,

the whole fucking engine of Western civ about to blow its tranny

as embers flare in fireplace, Neanderthal TV . . .

outside of time I rang the bell so hard the clapper broke,

so hard I hardly heard the cuckoos tweeting at schnitzel eatery,

or sky's piñata popping through the interlacing trees . . .

floral foam informs a stream that flowers as it flows,

echoing a smokestack plume of otherworldly white;

not a cloud in the sky, not a thought in the head

'cept this: goodnight, goodnight

*

a teardrop of Tabasco

that's our sun in the greater scheme of things

and today it's at sea in the bleachers, glaring at louts and

yahoos

and later gilding the spokes of a wheelchair

parked at the end of October by darkening oaks . . .

comes a day of bleak and bitter rain

gray as the brain and all its floating ghosts

the erstwhile autumn in post-performance malaise

and these are the days of cloning not cleaning our mess

and sending it to the moon by UPS . . .

so, so many friends defiantly frail

the sky at night so clear it almost hurts

*

The day turned beautiful by mistake

and drenched in gingko the eaves dripped yellow

as rusted oaks evoked a dusk by day . . .

pleasantly buzzed on wacky weed I fan the light triptastic,

sharing my wonton soup with Homeless Joe,

lugging in logs that night at nine below,

sign reading THINK SPRING in front of nursing home

and someone's bumper: MY OTHER VEHICLE IS THE

MAHAYANA . . .

thousands of folded unfolding ovine clouds

patches of blue between them alluding to nothing

and nothing doing I pare the cairn of vines

and disentangle the Japanese honeysuckle

*

firefly passing a match to garden statue

as aspens flicker to wail of a passing train

all of it soundlessly accounted for: the sleeping frogs

at pond's bottom,

the blown snow making a cake of everyone's mailbox,

the late light foxing the corners of books that can't recall

their previous lives as trees . . .

in a previous life this I was eyeless microbes

void of voice and memory, hence immortal —

where did all that nothing go, this moment of apple bite and

chapel bell?

lost in a creek that counts each crimp and wrinkle

tossed in a sky that founders in its clouds

misted on the river of sundering numbers

gone like all those elsewhere vees of geese

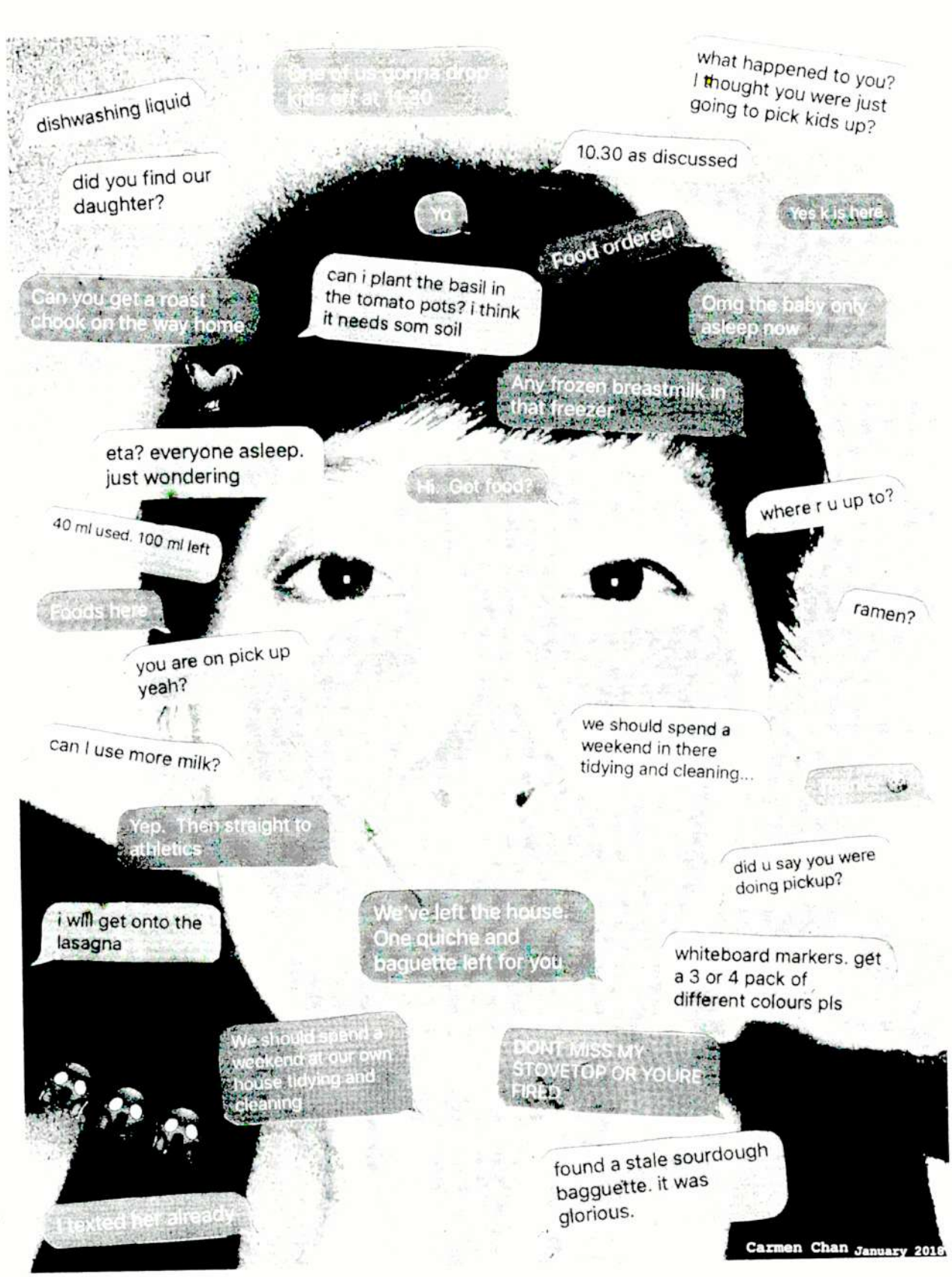
completed 1/9/11

I

A TIRADE (FROM MY DIARY)

1.

... Do I have to tell you about the spiritual cannibalism of the culture, our culture, which has been bombarding us with ultrasensory overstimulation aiming to reprocess us into fulltime consumption machines, stealing above all from us our time (not an inch of time without an imprint of message), and even our very sense of time (to be measured in lengths of no more than one message unit each) under the guise of entertainment, and even of 'art', commoditizing the eternal, hyping the primal? Our time is the sine qua non of our identity. We need to take extreme measures to reclaim it for ourselves and each other. (BAB 3/88: about ("...my chart shines high where the blue milk's upset. . ."))


dishwashing liquid
what happened to you? I thought you were just going to pick kids up?
10.30 as discussed
did you find our daughter?
Yo
Yes k is here
Food ordered
can i plant the basil in the tomato pots? i think it needs som soil
Can you get a roast chook on the way home
Omg the baby only asleep now
Any frozen breastmilk in that freezer
eta? everyone asleep. just wondering
Hi. Got food?
where r u up to?
40 ml used. 100 ml left
Foods here
ramen?
you are on pick up yeah?
we should spend a weekend in there tidying and cleaning...
can I use more milk?
Yep. Then straight to athletics
did u say you were doing pickup?
i will get onto the lasagna
We've left the house. One quiche and baguette left for you
whiteboard markers. get a 3 or 4 pack of different colours pls
We should spend a weekend at our own house tidying and cleaning
DONT MISS MY STOVETOP OR YOURE FIRED
found a stale sourdough bagguette. it was glorious.
I texted her already
Carmen Chan January 2016

DATA
or
WHAT IS GIVEN

A Ten-Minute Play

By

Barbara Blatner

SUPERVISOR, older

DATA COLLECTOR, younger

CASTING NOTE: The script is written for females, but may be cast with two males, or a female as SUPERVISOR and a male as DATA COLLECTOR, with language changed appropriately (“aunt” to “uncle,” etc.).

SETTING
A room. Computer desk with drawer, computer, headphones. Table with large pitcher of water, two glasses of different colors. In the desk drawer, a handgun.

SUPERVISOR ENTERs with a large purse holding a wallet with credit cards, a bag of raw carrots.

TIME
The present.

AT RISE: DATA COLLECTOR sits at desk in room, fidgets, looks at watch. Looks in drawer, sees something there (the handgun), gasps, shuts drawer quickly. SUPERVISOR ENTERs, puts purse on table.

SUPERVISOR

I am your new supervisor.

DATA COLLECTOR

Finally to meet you.

SUPERVISOR

I will supervise you for the next six months and ambulate near you for that period of time.

DATA COLLECTOR

My name is-

[Extends hand to SUPERVISOR, SUPERVISOR declines it]

SUPERVISOR

No.

DATA COLLECTOR

No?

SUPERVISOR

No names, please.

DATA COLLECTOR

No – names?

SUPERVISOR

You will never know my name.

DATA COLLECTOR

But –

SUPERVISOR

That's the way it is around the Agency, Data Collector. Names are – malignant. Namelessness is benign. Like – a good aunt.

DATA COLLECTOR

I had a good aunt once upon a time, ma'am, her name was—

SUPERVISOR

I said: no names.

DATA COLLECTOR

Well. Good afternoon. Madam.

SUPERVISOR

[Pours two glasses of water from pitcher]

Which glass do you want?

DATA COLLECTOR

The blue one, thank you.

[Points to "blue" glass. SUPERVISOR picks up "blue" glass]

SUPERVISOR

Then the blue one is mine. Understand? Is that – a yes?

[DATA COLLECTOR nods]

DATA COLLECTOR

Yes that is a yes.

SUPERVISOR

[Drinks from blue glass. Gives other glass to DATA COLLECTOR]

Well then.

DATA COLLECTOR

[Poised above computer keyboard]

Ma'am? On to business?

SUPERVISOR

We are here to, we have gartered ourselves in this room so that we must—

DATA COLLECTOR

[Typing during the following]

We must—?

SUPERVISOR

--explore an ancient, ongoing phenomenologism.

DATA COLLECTOR

Which – phenomenologism is that, ma'am?

SUPERVISOR

The plague of enemies, Data Collector. The uncontained ultimately containable species we are currently contra. The present Affliction.

DATA COLLECTOR

Present...affliction.

SUPERVISOR

Capital “A.” On “Affliction.”

DATA COLLECTOR

Capital “A.”

SUPERVISOR

I reference the present Enemies of the United States. Capital “E” on “enemies.”

DATA COLLECTOR

Enemies…capital “E”...United – States.
[To SUPERVISOR]
Have we – met before? You seem very–

SUPERVISOR

What?!

DATA COLLECTOR

At the interview, right? Yes I think-

SUPERVISOR

Surely, they told you at orientation--?

DATA COLLECTOR

Told me…?

SUPERVISOR

For the security of the American Enterporium, Data Collector, all Agency employees agree to - forget the past, the - everything, recent, long ago, every encounter. Immerse yourself in present time solely, you understand me? Bathe in – pure anonymity.

DATA COLLECTOR

I had someone once who bathed me gently when I was a-

SUPERVISOR

We do not indulge in memory here! Memory is too—

DATA COLLECTOR

Too what, Ma’am?

SUPERVISOR

Let me make myself clear, Data Collector. The only way we know anyone anywhere anytime heretoforwardly is by studying their data.

DATA COLLECTOR

Do you have - data on me?

SUPERVISOR
What do you expect? You're not hiding something from our collectors? If you're-

DATA COLLECTOR
Me? I've got nothing to hide. Except - a touch of – something. For a long lost – someone. It's nothing.

SUPERVISOR
If you insist on sentiment to keep you working like a beaver, I allot you one modickal a week, agreed?

DATA COLLECTOR
All right, thank you. But please let me tell you my name? Even if I can't know yours.

SUPERVISOR
You just used your weekly modickal!

DATA COLLECTOR
But I work so much better when I know in a personal way the people I'm-

SUPERVISOR
If you're unhappy with Agency procedurum, quit the job.

DATA COLLECTOR
But I need this job! My unemployment ran out three weeks ago. I'm low on food and – and… But you already know - everything about me. My past, my present…

SUPERVISOR
[Aside: losing control, remembering, trancelike:]
Yes I – remember, I – No! I remember nothing.
[To DATA COLLECTOR]
What is "Enemy," D.C., the essence of? Definitional, please.

DATA COLLECTOR
Ma'am?

SUPERVISOR
"Enemy." What is it, for the United States and in the abstract?

DATA COLLECTOR
I had a stinkbug farm once, Ma'am, when I was - six. Gold stinkbugs. My friend Marv from next door had a farm of green stinkbugs. The gold stinkbugs turned out to be enemies of the greens. Would you - care to know why, Ma'am? 'Cause one day Marv and I mixed our colonies together, yes we did that, Ma'am, wickedly. And the gold stinkbugs infiltrated the tunnels of the green before the greens knew what was happening. Before they understood, ma'am. And destroyed them. The gold the green.

SUPERVISOR

[Aside: losing control, remembering, trancelike during the following]

Stinkbugs…

DATA COLLECTOR

Marv and I were desperately sad. We could not – move.

SUPERVISOR

Gold…stinkers…

DATA COLLECTOR

The golds brought death to the greens. To their civilization.

SUPERVISOR

The greens...

DATA COLLECTOR

Uh - therefore, the gold stinkbugs were the enemies of the greens. The greens, you could say, possessed the golds as enemies. That is, <u>if</u> the greens were still alive.

SUPERVISOR

Dead...the green…in me.

DATA COLLECTOR

And may I suggest, ma'am, that the golds, since they warred upon the greens, <u>must</u> have conceived of the greens as <u>their</u> enemies, as well. So it was a mutual – hostility, Ma'am?

SUPERVISOR

[Aside: losing control, remembering, trancelike:]

That voice – the way she…

[Slaps HER own face to regain control. Pours glass of water on DATA COLLECTOR's head]

The golds were innocent of hostility. Enemies are one way only. Capiscio?!

DATA COLLECTOR

I'm sorry, Ma'am!

[Types]

Enemies...one way…only.

[To SUPERVISOR]

Will you - explain that, Ma'am? If I can't know your name, can I at least know your mind? 'Cause I've never had – enemies. My aunt protected me from every - enemy.

SUPERVISOR

[Aside: losing control, remembering, trancelike:]

Yes, the way she – turns her – head…

DATA COLLECTOR
Did you mean the United States possesses enemies in abundance, abundalately, as you would say, but that the United States is enemy to no one?

SUPERVISOR
Correct!

DATA COLLECTOR
But the golds attacked them preemptoristically.

SUPERVISOR
But the word "preemptoristically" does not exist anymore! Continuously redefine definitionals in order to accommodate present-time globality darkness. Darkness, D.C., you hear?!

DATA COLLECTOR
Are you – all right?

SUPERVISOR
Charge with innovatory electrical pulses outdated linguistic situations. Refresh the boundaries of the fence by volting it strenuously with new language!

DATA COLLECTOR
[Typing]
....with new...language.
[To SUPERVISOR]
How do we – do that, madam?

SUPERVISOR
Unconceiveably noticeably, and in the blink of an eye. But the aunt – I mean - dammit! I mean, the ligature behind all this is not for you to know!

DATA COLLECTOR
I want to tell you the nickname that very same good aunt of mine bequeathed to me!

SUPERVISOR
I beg your larder?!

DATA COLLECTOR
I had a lonely childhood, Ma'am. Only my aunt knew me, no one else.

SUPERVISOR
[Pours two glasses of water on DATA COLLECTOR's head]
Data Collector-

DATA COLLECTOR

The only thing my aunt loved, actually, was – was me. The only light in her life. That was many long years ago, of course, but...

SUPERVISOR

Your job is to collect-!

DATA COLLECTOR

She was a solitary woman, a lonely-

SUPERVISOR

Your job is as your nominal! Your job is to collect data! Only that!

DATA COLLECTOR

But aren't you lonely, not knowing even my name or-

SUPERVISOR

Your depictor is to collect data from present anonymous enemies, that is all!

DATA COLLECTOR

[Typing]

...collect...data.

[To SUPERVISOR]

What – data, madam?

SUPERVISOR

Data from everyone everywhere every time, particulars, summations bedded in that data. Satellite informatories, planetary codiminiums. Collect from all stinkbugs everywhere everything heretoforwardly. I use the bug metaphor only so your limited brain can comprehend me.

DATA COLLECTOR

I resent that.

SUPERVISOR

Listen to me: Any stinkbug can anywhere be invigorated with a venomous incineration motivational to our fields, stores, houses, offices, our health, microphytes, gigabones.

DATA COLLECTOR

Do you go nameless wherever you go? Does anyone know you? I mean, really know you? Your name and-

[SUPERVISOR pours pitcher of water over DATA COLLECTOR's head]

You don't like me, do you?

SUPERVISOR

I could fill this pitcher with nasty acid and pour it on your head, I have authorization to do such righteous acts, you understand?

DATA COLLECTOR

If I had known that when I accepted this job, I would've stayed home with Marv and his kids.

SUPERVISOR

And done some useless thing while our enemies discover the unitary and amass against us? Collect data *immediatement*! I am turning on your headphones!

[Roughly places headphones on DATA COLLECTOR's head, turns up volume. DATA COLLECTOR types furiously]

DATA COLLECTOR

Data coming in, ma'am!

SUPERVISOR

Data about the enemy?!

DATA COLLECTOR

Yes!

SUPERVISOR

Gather it! Quickly as you can!

DATA COLLECTOR

I am doing that, Ma'am! But I'm dying to know where you were born and where you live now and with whom, with what bugs do you speak and who-?

[SUPERVISOR turns up volume on headphones to painfully high decibel]

Owwwwwww!!

SUPERVISOR

I can deafen you ultimately if I want.

[DATA COLLECTOR can't hear SUPERVISOR, losing control, shout:]

I remember nothing! I am anonymous to myself!

DATA COLLECTOR

Turn down the volume, oooowwwww! Data's coming in fast and furious, I need to hear it, please! Aaaahhhhhh!

SUPERVISOR

[Turns down volume on headphones]

All right, then.

DATA COLLECTOR
Thank god you have some - feeling for a fellow human.

SUPERVISOR
You are mistaken. I am doing my job.

DATA COLLECTOR
Did you shout something before?

SUPERVISOR
Collect data, or I will--!
[Makes threatening gesture]

DATA COLLECTOR
Data coming in, data coming in!

SUPERVISOR
On specified enemy, soon to become by process of language evolution specified target with same case numeral?!

DATA COLLECTOR
Specified enemy, same case numeral, yes. I mean, I assume so, ma'am.

SUPERVISOR
Yes, you're getting it! Assume "enemy" is everywhere. Like air!

DATA COLLECTOR
[Listening to headphones]
Wait a minute now....

SUPERVISOR
Amass data without delay, with absolute absence of emotional transitive!

DATA COLLECTOR
But ma'am, I'm - getting something, I just don't know if it's-

SUPERVISOR
What Enemy, capital "E," are you coming to know through Enemy's data?! Answer me!

DATA COLLECTOR
But madam--

SUPERVISOR
If you don't answer I'll-
[Makes threatening gesture]

DATA COLLECTOR

All right! But-

SUPERVISOR

Now!!

[During the following, SHE turns away, sniffles. Finally, weeps silently]

DATA COLLECTOR

[Reads from computer:]

Enemy no. 847593: around forty-seven, forty-eight years old. Conceals thinning spots on back of head with conspicuous swirls of hair.

[Looks at SUPERVISOR's hair. Reads:]

Enemy: carries two current credit cards. Visor, on which $124,000.41 is charged. MasterTrick, on which $279,034.88 is charged.

[Sneaks over to SUPERVISOR's purse, takes out wallet, looks at credit cards, puts them and wallet in purse. Returns to computer, reads:]

Known consuming preferences: Florentine shoes.

[Looks at SUPERVISOR's shoes. Reads:]

Eats raw carrots.

[Sneaks to SUPERVISOR's purse, finds bag of raw carrots there, holds them up. Returns them to purse. Returns to computer, reads:]

Carries photos in plastic photo carrier in pocket. Are those represented by said photos current and vital in any way to enemy's life? Could be key. Data as yet unknown. Name as yet unknown.

[Takes handgun from desk drawer. To SUPERVISOR]

The carrots did it. I know who you are.

SUPERVISOR

And I know who you-

DATA COLLECTOR

You are "enemy"! Shut up, shut up!

[Shoots SUPERVISOR. SUPERVISOR falls, writhes in death agony]

SUPERVISOR

Boo-boo girl!

[SUPERVISOR dies. DATA COLLECTOR runs to SUPERVISOR, takes photos from HER pocket, looks at them. Collapses on SUPERVISOR]

DATA COLLECTOR

Oh no! Auntie, auntie!

END OF PLAY



Original photo Richard Termini

CLOWNS

A short tale by

Janyce Stefan-Cole

1.

Two clowns—*zanni*, of the *commedia dell'arte* form—walk along East Houston Street. They happen to be Irish. The night is cold, damp, the streets slick with dirty rain. One clown is swaddled in a scarf up to his chin, the sort of scarf a grandmother might have knit. His hat and coat do not look warm. The other clown is without gloves.

"I tell you, Declan, clowns carry no weight anymore."

2.

Spring has arrived. The day is bright, forgiving. “The hope of spring is eternal. Just look around you, Donny.”

Donal does. “It’s a false hope, Declan.”

They are seated on a bench, off Houston Street; one of the slats is broken. Declan turns his face toward the sun. A single plane tree displays the pale green of unopened leaves pulsing into life. Two sparrows pick and squabble over a French fry in the gutter. Declan stretches his arm expansively. “Can’t you smell it, Donny? It’s the earth awakening.”

“No.”

Declan inhales deeply. Coughs. The same diesel fumes from winter perfume the same city air.

“There’s no earth here to smell, Dec.”

“But we’ve got work! Surely that’s a sign of spring.”

3.

The clowns sit elbow to elbow, squeezed into their dim dressing room in an out-of-the-way theater. Donal farts loudly. Declan adjusts his collar for the third time. His costume is a half size too small. The costumer answered his complaint by telling him to eat less. “Help me with this will you, Donny.”

The stage manager calls, “Ten minutes!”

Donal tugs at Declan’s collar, adjusting the bit of frill. They resume their conversation. “They’re sure shooting them like dogs in the street, is what I’m saying. Disposable. Don’t educate them the same, neither.”

“Did you remember to piss before you on put the pantaloons, Donny?”

“I did, and yourself?”

Declan nods. “I minimize the water intake before a show.” He glances into the mirror they share, makes a face. “You never want to be caught having to go mid-scene.”

“Places, five minutes!” the stage manager calls with a sharp rap of knuckles on their door.

Donal opens the door, pokes his head out. “They used to hate the Irish too, didn’t want them here, neither, in the land of opportunity. Called them criminals and rapists—never mind our people were starving with the famine.”

“But it all worked out, didn’t it?”

“For us, sure. But the brown people how’re they to blend?”

“There’ll soon be more of them than any of us.”

“Fine by me; white lives won’t matter so much.” He laughs.

“Ah, you’ve a head hard as granite, Donny.”

“Thank you.”

4.

It is summer, heat rises off Houston Street meeting an unrelenting, humid mass from above. Scrubby plantings and scrappy rose bushes cling to life inside a small pocket park, in a fenced-off triangle, competing for space with trash tossed or blown in, and trapped. The clowns stop. In their hands are tall containers of ice coffee.

“Every blade of grass, however slender,” says Declan, raising his voice to be heard above the traffic.

“*Every* blade of grass?” asks Donal. “Even here in this Central Park they’ve given us? This caged in, what would you call it, then? A garden?”

Declan nods. “Even this street garden.”

“Look, it’s got a name: Peretz Square. It’s not even square.”

Declan sips his coffee.

“What about grass withering in drought? Trampled by elephants, chewed by insects?”

“There could be a four leaf clover hidden, is all I’m saying.”

“So the lucky clover’s the point?”

Declan shakes his head. “Every roach, or snake, even the Tsetse fly counts; spiders, stinging wasps, the beasts of prey … the whole bleeding show.”

“I saw the same dead rat in the subway, the F line, lying on his side he was, between the tracks, since Sunday. None the worse for wear neither, stiff, like he might have been stuffed. I wonder was it the poison they put out got him or did he hit the third rail. Anyhow, one less, is what I say.”

“He was part of the fabric too. Rest him.”

“There’s always the possibility we annihilate ourselves. What’s the warp and woof of that? Burnt to nothing, not a tree left standing, eh, Dec?”

“That’d be the only way to destroy the fabric.”

A very loud, very large truck passes, gears grinding, sooty smoke belching from its intestines.

5.

Donal points upward. The leaves of the plane tree have curled into dry brown crisps. “They don’t even fall proper now’a days.” Declan looks up. “Where are the colors of autumn?”

“But it’s cooling off, you’ll admit that much, the days shortening.”

“Sure, ahead of old man winter. I hate the winter.”

“But it’s needed for the cycles, don’t you see?” He stamps his foot at a pigeon.

“What’ave you against that pigeon?”

“Filthy beasts, flying vectors—all manner of diseases.”

“But of the fabric, Dec?”

Declan shrugs. “Come Christmastime they’re moving the play uptown; better-heeled producers.”

“Broadway? Think of it, Declan!”

“Will they take us, though, do you think?”

“What? Who is it makes Scarso and Bird come alive on that stage? Us, that’s who, audiences love the clowns.”

“Even so, there *are* other clowns.”

“Sure there are, all with mouths to feed and arses to wipe, but do they speak French?”

“Will an uptown big shot care?”

“We’ll make him care.”

“How so?”

Donal stands, points upward, to the tree. “Like the leaf to the branch: we are inevitable. As you say, Declan, each blade of grass to every other in the field. Molecules of the air into and out of all the lungs of all the breathing creatures; the sea surrounding the fish within, as indivisible as skin to bone, beat to heart, ear to sound, eye to sight.” He raises his arms, lifts his voice. Others on the sidewalk stop to stare.

“Hand to touch, Dec. Touch to touch, prick to cunt—or any combinations thereof—that and all that. Inseparable we are to the whole of every movement in that play; not a particle—*not a particle*—without the others. We, the clowns, Scarso and Bird, are the humanity of all mankind to that play. Even here, on dirty old Houston Street, we are of the whole cloth of all that is. And everything to everything.”

Donal’s voice has risen to a crescendo, arms claiming the sky. Declan listens, open-mouthed. From the crowd applause, and a shout: “Who are these clowns?” And, “Long live the clowns!”

WILD STRAWBERRIES

by

Harvey Sollberger

He walked through the night
Conducting Mahler to trees.
This was a blessing.

As I awoke I returned from a world where on a dark summer night I had been walking through a forest. In my right hand there had been a long white baton – one far longer than any ever employed by me in "real" life - that I'd been using to conduct the forest's trees in a Mahler symphony (I don't know which one). Strangely enough, there were no sounds to be heard; the music *was* me, flowing through me, more an internal psychic presence than external sounding vibrations. At any rate, my conducting had been energetic, involving my whole upper body as I walked, and as my gestures waxed and waned the trees responded, expanding and filling-out or pulling-back and drawing into themselves. I wonder now whether I was conducting them or the other way around.

The little haiku above is my after-the-fact attempt to record and respond to that experience.

Does this dream matter? What else might matter? (Or martyr, for that matter?). Our world today is filled with myriad heavy concerns that, pulling rank – I'll be 80 in May – I'll leave to folk better versed in such things than I to address. Meanwhile, as my life goes on I'm amazed to find more and more in less and less. Call it the William Blake Syndrome, I suppose ("To see a World in a Grain of Sand /And a Heaven in a Wild Flower"); or simply call it Smallness. Then - in this world where the going cultural assumptions so often privilege bigness and speed - I'll posit Slowness as Smallness's temporal partner. Slowness: the ability to live with something for a long time, to marinate in it, to enter and be entered by it. And finally, as a third value, I'll posit a propensity to seek and find value in unexpected places. I don't have a word for this, though, perhaps, serendipity might come close. Let me illustrate: our supermarkets are spacious and well-lighted places where one can find gustatory objects to suit virtually every taste. And yet... for a limited time each spring, a diminutive and delicious mushroom called the morel grows under last-year's fallen leaves in hidden and remote corners of my native Iowa's forests. The point is not whether morels appeal to everyone or a few, but, rather, that *should* they appeal to you (or me), they won't be found in your neighborhood Piggly Wiggly; that to obtain them, in fact, you'll have to slog out into the woods and look for them. Some of the best things in life are like morels. So, this is the stuff I'm going to write about here.

As for the dream mentioned above, perhaps it grew out of a conversation I'd had earlier in the day with my friend, Laird Addis, in Iowa City, wherein he'd asked me if I'd ever conducted "Das Lied von der Erde." No, I hadn't, which in turn led to some talk about what Mahler I had conducted. That may have been its cause.

Or perhaps it was because I'd been thinking of one of the poems in my friend, Franco Arminio's "Ten Poems for Those Who Came to Aliano." This is the ending of the third poem:

> Distrust the reasoning, the calculations, the cold meanesses
> of dried-out hearts.
> Don't be satisfied to float, head for the bottom
> even if it means drowning.
> Smile at this humanity that is all tangled-up in itself,
> and give trees the right-of-way.

That giving of the right-of-way to trees had struck me when I translated the poems several years ago. (And I guess it struck Franco, too, since that's become the title of his most recent book). This was perhaps, the cause of my dream, some form of "return of the repressed."

Or, yet again, perhaps it was the season's greetings I'd received a few days before from a relative of Franco's from the small Southern Italian town, Bisaccia, where he lives. Or perhaps – on and on – it was just my fascination with Franco, who aside from being a poet and a retired grade-school teacher is also the founder of a "science" called *paesologia. Paesologia* can best be described, I think, as "the science of small towns," those "little, lost nowhere places" that Beat poets write about and where I live. A good American translation of *paesologia* might be "podunkology." As head *paesologo*, Franco sees his field to be "as indispensable as it is nonexistent" and as a necessary alternative to the "choral autism which permeates modern city life." He believes that the internal regions of Italy "can become the laboratory of a humanism of the mountains: this requires that land and culture be regarded as more important than concrete and office-buildings, that song and theater replace cement-mixers."

Living as I do, like Franco, in a small town – in my case in Northeast Iowa – I find myself in accord with his opposition to the kinds of "development" that see underpopulated rural areas as sources of raw material and fair game for exploitation; and in my own way, I practice my own humble form of podunkology (as Allen Ginsberg says in a poem, "America, I'm putting my queer shoulder to the wheel...") For instance the town where I live is named for a small fruit that is now extinct here. Early settlers found our local fields and prairies rife with wild strawberries and named the town for them. They're not here anymore, just as almost all of the native prairie that greeted the first European settlers in the early nineteenth century has vanished. Modern farming practices and the fertilizer and pesticide industries sealed their death warrant some time ago. Iowa these days is run by Big Farming, which has oodles of money and an army of lobbyists. Think about it: extraction and profit on the greatest scale possible. Think about who profits. Think about it: this is an area where it's important to fight for the Small, the Local, and the Long Picture. And Franco's battle against the avarice that's despoiling his landscape is also ours here in the Midwest. Give trees the right-of -way. And morels and wild strawberries, too. And then, when I'm not worrying about the "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico that our Midwestern farming practices produce, what matters, what else matters in this my small, my very local life?

For instance, in my 2nd (or 3rd or 10th) life as a student and translator of Italian, I'm reminded of my friend Roger Reynolds's playful allusion to my interest in "obscure Italian writers." Guilty as charged, Roger, and yet they – or at least *my* obscure Italian writers – matter, too, in the same way that those hidden and elusive morels do.

Anna Maria Ortese (1914-1998) has been called "a great writer" by no less than Jonathan Galassi who is himself an acclaimed translator of Montale and Leopardi; and Tim Parks, another fine writer and translator calls her "a class act for sure." Though, as an Italian friend tells me, she's little read even in Italy these days, her writing works on many levels in engaging with existence across a very broad spectrum and in positing possible ways forward based not on the growth of any country's G.D.P. but on a deep respect and reverence for the world and its creatures as expressed through free use of the imagination. Her voice needs to be heard, and I'm fighting now – as in "fight to the last breath" as my friend Franco says - to place my translation of her last novel, "Alonso and the Visionaries" - with a publisher. Meanwhile, I'm working, too, to pay off an old debt to the Italian flutist Severino Gazzeloni – whose example inspired me so much in my first efforts to play new music – by finding a publisher for my translation of his autobiography. Other authors I'm hoping to translate soon include the Modenese flaneur and playboy Antonio Delfini and the Bolognese fabulist, Ermanno Cavazzoni. No big claims: none of these authors will ever be a bestseller – at least, I don't think so - but their presence in English will inspire, stimulate, and enrich all who read them. Each one's voice is unique and each proposes an ethos and modes of thought that when engaged with will let light and fresh air into our North American echo-chamber. And they are fun, too, e.g., Gazzelloni's recounting of a childhood dream wherein his dead mother appears in order to give him the winning numbers of the Naples lottery so that he can buy his first flute. In short, she did, he won - and Gazzellone became Gazzelloni.

My work as a flutist also reflects a pared-down focus on "what really matters." As time passes, I'm delving ever deeper into a small group of works for solo flute. How much musical substance can there be in a bunch of solo flute pieces, you might ask. A lot, if you're willing to look closely and dig deeply. This music, each piece, has for me the substance of a world or spirit entity somewhat similar to W.H. Auden's idea of works of art as sentient beings, each with its own twilight consciousness or presence. At the top of my list is a work called "Tetratkys" by Giacinto Scelsi. "Tetratkys", which is a 26-minute long four-movement solo "epic," is a compelling experience, both to play and to listen to; I've gotten to calling it the most remarkable solo flute work of the 20th century. My own work on it began in 2004, and the work continues to progress and be rewarding. In all, there are about 15 or 20 solo pieces I've been zeroing in on, including works of Babbitt, J.S. Bach, C.P.E. Bach, Carter, Donatoni, Gaber, Honegger, Huber (Klaus), Koechlin, Martino, Piazzola, Reynolds, Takemitsu, Varese, Wuorinen, and my own "New Millennium Memo." These get played in mix-and-match fashion in a variety of places ranging from nursing homes, libraries, and Lions Clubs to colleges and castles, the castle in question being the castle of the counts of Ayala-Valva in Valva, Italy, west of Salerno. It was there that Scelsi spent much of his youth, and where I was the guest of the local Gozlinus Cultural Association in presenting "Tetratkys" in Valva for the first time in 2013. For fun, after the Scelsi, I played several Neapolitan songs on the accordion, asking the audience to join in. They all did, and they all knew the words; just like a movie, as people say these days.

Turning to composition, among the things that loom large for me are a series of pieces I've been composing since 2011. I call them my flexible form – or flexform – pieces. These are works in which I strive to decenter the musical flow to such a degree that each work can avail itself of multiple starting and ending points. Thought of as a circle or "snake that swallows its tail," each piece offers a variety of choices as to where to begin and end. By no longer composing within the "frame" of a single, fixed beginning and ending, the challenge is to create material that can function in a variety of positional contexts. My goal in most of these pieces has been to create a kind of music that "forgets itself as it goes along" and that in its presence and presentness becomes a kind of musical equivalent to clouds that change shape, forming and reforming with no particular goal or definitive statement in mind; the music, in this sense, becomes a form of acoustic weather.

My first flexform piece was "December" for solo alto flute, composed in 2010 for Lisa Bost-Sandberg It's very simple formally, being comprised of 4 successive sections which I'll call a, b, c, and d. A performance might begin at the start of any of these sections, the possibilities thus being abcd, bcda, cdab, and dabc. Further, at the performer's discretion, the four sections need not be played continuously but can be played in any order as separate movements. Finally, any section or sections can be played without the others, thus offering considerable flexibility in program-building.

"December" was followed in 2011 by "Thin Music/Thick Music" for 20 players, composed for David Dzubay and the Indiana University New Music Ensemble. It's in two movements (Thick and Thin) and lasts 34 minutes. There are by my calculation 198 possible paths through it. Another characteristic of these thick and thin movements is that they're constituted of exactly the same music. "Thin Music" presents it laid-out horizontally over 24 minutes while "Thick Music" presents the same material arranged in anywhere from two to four layers or strata and takes 10 minutes to perform. Additionally, the performers can choose the order in which the movements will be presented. In the case of the thin-thick reading, listeners will first hear very clearly and explicitly what they'll then hear layered and juxtaposed in the second movement; while in the case of the thick-thin version they'll first hear the busier, composite (or "packed") version which the subsequent (thin) movement essentially "unpacks" and lays bare. "Thick" and "Thin" can also be presented singly in concert. I estimate the end-to-end, continuous performance of all 198 versions of "Thin Music/Thick Music and "Thick Music/Thin Music" taking anywhere from five to six days; absent My Own Private Bayreuth, I'll stick to imagining them. Subsequent works have continued to build on similar ideas.

Most recently, I've been at work on a duet for treble instruments in 12 sections wherein there are – if all 12 sections are played – two different and complementary ways of parsing the overall experience: viewing the 12 sections as projected on a circular "clockface," the first involves a vertical division pitting sections 1-6 against sections 7-12; the second images a horizontal bisection pitting sections 10, 11, 12, 1,2, 3 against sections 4-9. The listener can focus on one or the other grouping or – more rewarding and more challenging – track both at the same time; or she can just follow the play of surface elements and forget their deep, dark structural undercurrents. Finally, performances can begin and end at any point on the circle, though they

shouldn't extend beyond a full cycle of 12 successive sections.

Such concerns are not these days, it seems to me, in or near the forefront of most composers' minds. And because of that, all the more reason for me to pursue them to their logical and illogical conclusions. Against their lack of currency or contagiousness, I must measure the depth and strength of my own convictions regarding them. And in the end, it's those convictions that win out. Out of the rain, sun, soil, air, rivers, trees, and natural and unnatural history of these Northeast Iowa hills, I'm left alone to bottle my sturdy and rude elixir with its own DOC qualities and characteristics. If anything I do should turn out to be half as compelling as what my colleagues, friends, and heroes across the years have created, I'll be well-rewarded. And, in fact, am so, just in that very creating and the effort that goes into it.

And so, what matters? Standing back, the thing that most strikes me is that, for all their "localness" and distance from the main thoroughfares of cultural exchange, my activities and pastimes have always depended on relationships with a great many people spread across a crazy quilt of languages, continents, and eras. For me to bring a duet for treble instruments to fruition loops back into Jack Beeson's composition seminar at Columbia and Edgard Varese's handshake and Scelsi's castle and Roger Reynold's Southwestern cooking and the Elliott Carter sketch on my wall and Carol Plantamura's Pierrot and Alvin Curran's shofar and Gazzelloni's golden flute, and Stefan Wolpe's laughter at my preferring (he thought) to eat a hotdog in the subway instead of the piece of cheese he was offering me in his house. All of these people offered something, and they connected, as did Charles and Ben and Milton and Franco and Anna Maria, too, that Neapolitan *zingara* (gypsy) who pulled her shining beings out of the bowels of Naples's myths and feuds and tortured Catholicism; and then closer to home, friends, wives, husbands, partners, students, children, grandchildren. So many.

Relationships. Offerings. Blessings.

Here. There. Everywhere.

Past. Present. Future.

Smallness. Slowness. Serendipity.

Solitude.

Endings (deferred and otherwise).

Morels...

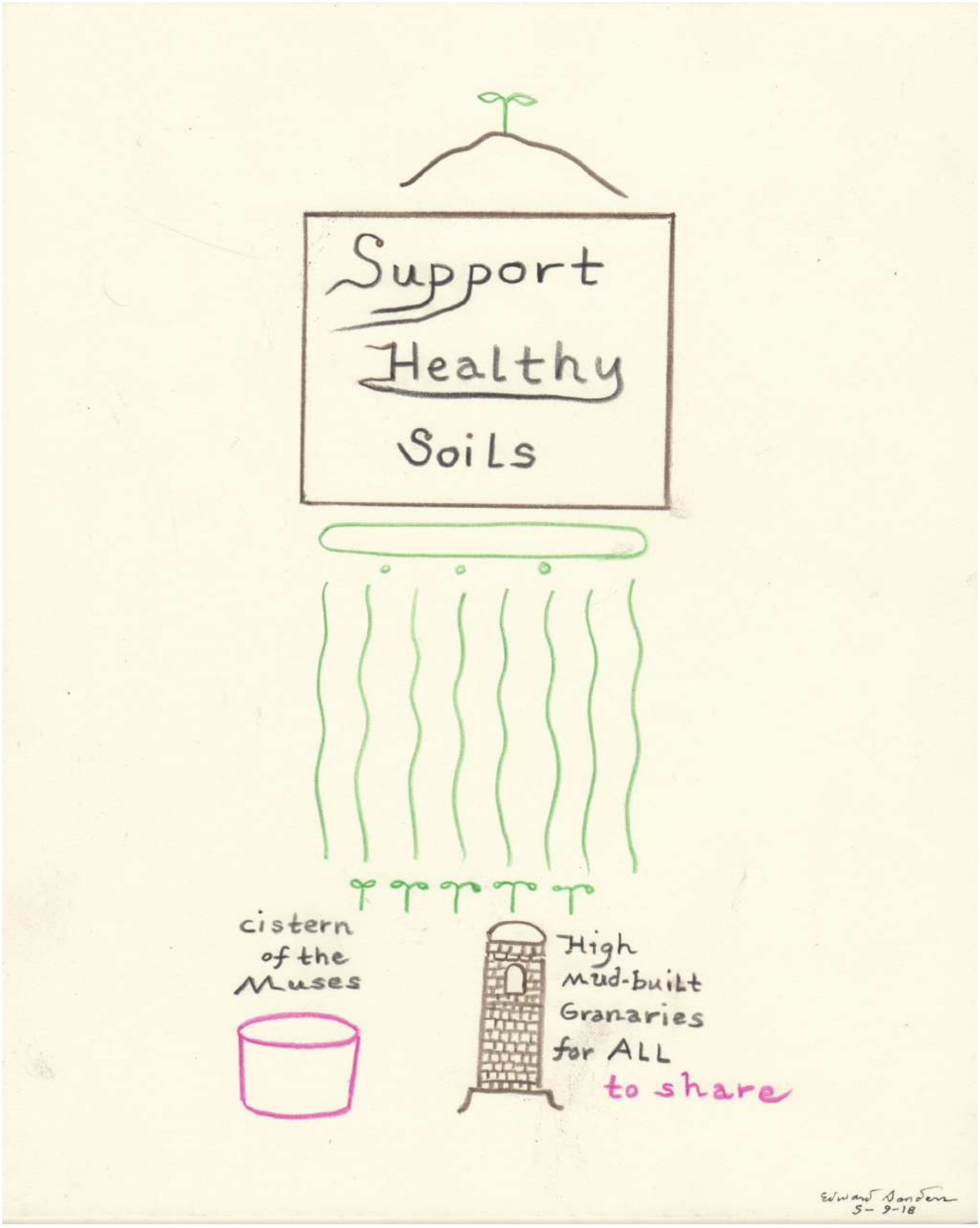
And, yes, let me give the last word(s) to my beloved (though I never met her) Anna Maria Ortese:

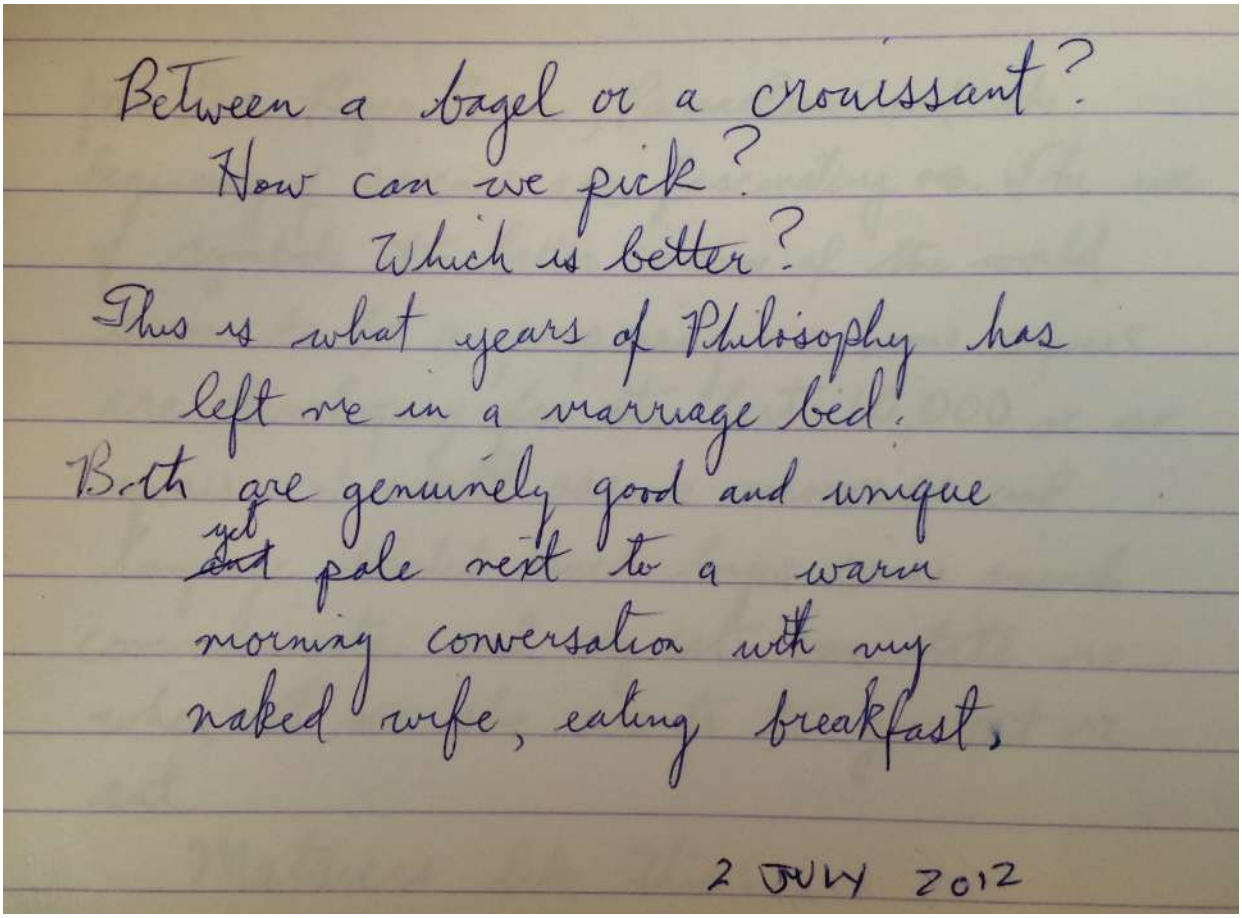
"And so, as I have come, I go on my way; and I thank you for having listened to me; and I beg your pardon if I have said too much or said it confusedly; or if I've said too little or if I've managed to upset you. As little children say, I didn't do it on purpose. I wish you a good day of peace and understanding. Life is much larger and greater than all of us, and is everywhere and in all places, and it is from all of these places – from specifically each one of them – that it requests friendship and help. This is all it asks. And the value of each positive response is immense, even though perhaps not demonstrable. Love and defend the free breathing of each town and country, and of every living thing. This invitation, in the end, calms and consoles my sadness and my sense of having been a useless writer. But I haven't been completely useless if, beyond my own breathing, I have learned to desire the free breathing of each creature and every community. Breath is everything. It is God himself; and it is culture when culture's not an end in itself: when, suddenly – you didn't know that it could also be this – amidst the distraught waves of the sea, as happens at times, a great celestial wind arises to transport and carry aloft all peoples."

January 17, 2018



National
Healthcare
Free
to
ALL


Support
Healthy
Soils
cistern
of the
Muses
High
Mud-built
Granaries
for ALL
to share
Edward Sanders
5-9-18



the problem is

Michigan clouds drifted by
far below on this heaven of
cool dirt & grass,
trees jutting down to the sky
framing the sun,
shading bright light,
toes nearly touch a bird.

It was against anyone's choice
that imagination helped me
see more in clouds than other
playmates cared to try...

"We are lived by Powers we pretend to understand."

which stirred my heart and mind
to journey so far in and away.

25 Nov. 2015

The rose.
A crow's nest

Bearing stars, shiny holes
friends return

to the circle
unbroken; crows rise

to return again.
As by their shadows
stars must

in a mist of organs.
The shadows of a rose.
A body beyond body

into which the rhythms procession lifts
our miniatures;

Branches rise
heavy with figures towards which they flow.

The blinding rose.
A face pressed to the edge of my face reflects.

Along the median
a garden of crows composes
reflections from cars. A language before.
Your own pieces too small to recognize.

Shadows who organize a single dazzling word.

Tamas Panitz
from *"INVISIBLE MARCHES"*

Sediment on the sun

My master painted me
in the twilight
without turning the lights on.
Theocritus dreams of sleep,
I of bathing
for pleasure,
golden sheep in a lilac field
where all the winds lie down to rest.

I am the glass that reflects those meadows.
I am filled with water on your desk.
And I hear
shameless crepuscular beetles,
frogs, crickets, toads,
goblins smelting goblets
quietly and quickly
in front of their fires

getting drunk off water.

Herbs

Saturn grabs his own hand
out the window.
Woodland tobacco's growing wild in the fields.
I assume my position on Monday.

Sex in the air.

Movement of wheels
thru emotion. Real water,
reels of daylight
over the worn-down tips
of our thinking
garden fence,
breaking the plain
and bending backwards,
pink from white
flight out of fear

How far
into one planet can one go?
Saturn and Mars lock horns
and herbs whistle in the driveway.
They fall down where the burns begin.
The meaning repeats the consequences.
Cumin snuff, cardamom gum,
head out of the dirt.
Farmers plan years in advance.
Their eclipses.

Evening to Night

Trouble in focus.
Hot breath of dark storm.

Nonsense, weeds.
Go into the house

of outside. Out here.
Noise of front door

to ex nihilo. Become
the person you know is there

nearby but out of sight.
Every seed is important

but not to you. Thankfully
the wind is under your hands.

You are in my hair.
As night falls

and I've found a way outside
before I can fall asleep

a smell the words you've been saying
congeal to, lead to, myself

a lonely wolf or fox-glove,
prowling the garden tonight

water in our eyes
songs for you

before anyone else wakes up
we've already fallen asleep

wide asleep, the rich earth back
where it belongs:

in our heads, our souls
damp with the dew it collects

cat-foot-printed
by a lazuli stray

or maybe the neighbors',
lights still on,

attracting bugs by now
or at this thin hour

sending them home,
too tired to read

the messages from Apollo
they live for.

Mattering to Me: Some Theses

Scott Gleason

Music doesn't matter.

Academia doesn't matter, but structured learning does. Schooling matters.

One's self matters, but others' opinions—which, in musical academia they'll be only too happy to impose—don't matter. I worked hard for this, you ain't telling me otherwise.

Writing (articles)—the crafting of things to say, to communicate, that I care about - matters.

Teaching matters, even if students—qua students—don't always matter. But students qua people matter most of all. Who has the guts to say that I teach for the sake of that which I might learn?

Analysis doesn't matter. But listening does—concentrated, concerned listening, which amounts to the same thing.

Speculation matters. Thinking beyond that which is given, exploring, wondering. So, matter doesn't matter.

My health matters. Mental, physical, dental.

Friends matter—colleagues, insofar as they're friends.

Musical materials matter.

Reading matters—but who has time for that.

Ethics matters. Still unclear if music can get us there.

Again, searching matters—trying to get somewhere.

Relaxing matters. I wish I had a couch to recline into. I've never had one.

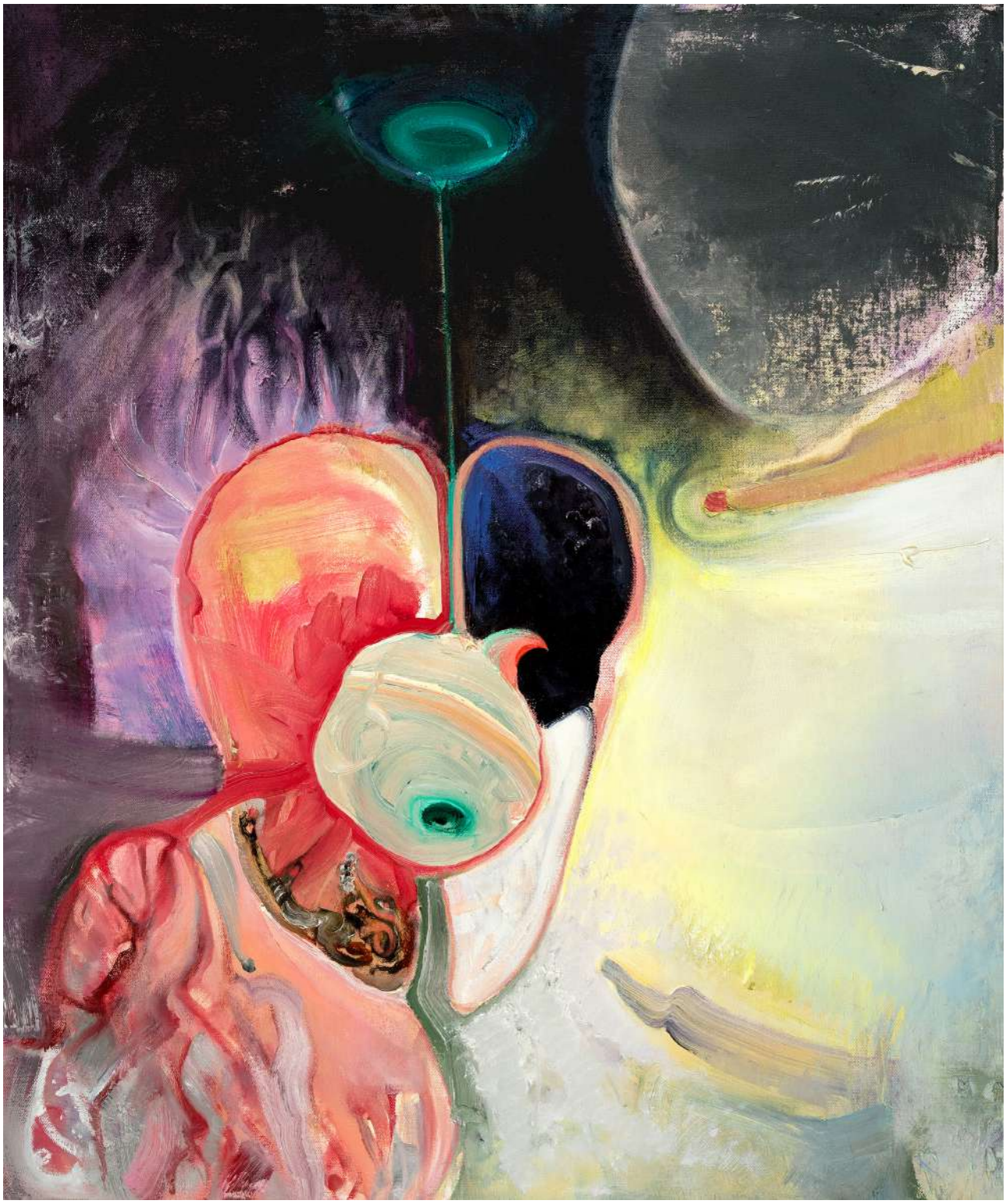
Independence matters, but only within and against the backdrop of a community and history and tradition. It's just that formal dependence doesn't.

Gratitude matters. For your writing and your music.

Three Paintings by Brian Wood



"End of the Line"



“Heartshorn”



“Phos”

on the birth of the son of man

by hune margulies

(from “will and grace: meditations on the dialogical philosophy of martin buber”, brill publishers, 2017)

this is the season of the birth of the son of man. how wonderful! and i am one who hears the question: was jesus real? this i say: i know jesus was real because i know i am. how do i know i am? because i was allowed to enter into love. and it was for love that jesus wished not to die before he had a chance to make wine for the lovers.

all of my life i have sought to discover my own sense of the poetry of jesus. not only of his words, but most importantly, and clearly more intimately, of the poetry he wrote in the deeds of his life.

this i know: i do not believe *in* jesus, i believe *with* him.

but in most essential ways, i have found it futile to look for jesus in the depictions of sacred traditions. i have traveled long spiritual distances in the hope of meeting my jesus in the quotidian poetries of inhospitable despairs and simple salvations.

perhaps, in other words, i longed to find the jesus that embodied the history of the suffering and the messianic dreams of my people. for the deeper judaic meaning of the story of jesus is the understanding that suffering is always personal, but salvation is collective. each of us must suffer our own sufferings, but none of us will enter salvation until all of us do. and that is the unavoidable messianic responsibility we bear for one another.

the jesus of the gospels, in many respects, narrates a story that is similar in form to that of other pre-existing regional myths. but this one story was transformed into a jewish myth, that is to say, it became a narrative about ethics. the story of the social rebellion and the government’s repression of the man jesus became a poem that speaks of love and salvation. both together, each depending on the other. in other words, the deeper story of jesus the poet, is a teaching of redemption through relationship. and that means that salvation is in the social-love we strive to accomplish for the people. same as in the moses story. in that sense, the rebel and rejected messiah on the cross, represents one of the many different narratives of the story of his people, of both its tragedy and its splendor. and sadly, also of so many other peoples of this earth.

was jesus true? yes. this jesus of the wine for the lovers, and the compassion on the mount, and the cry on the cross was true. jesus was true because he is you and he is me. and we are true. another question i hear it asked: what, after all, it means to be real? we are all real. i know this: reality is that which we make between i and thou. outside of the between of i and thou there is mara to the east and to the west, and the evil-one on the north and on the south. and so i challenge you: find this to be not real.

for there are two types of religions: the ones where the gods want to be human, and the ones where humans won't let them. and so i also hear the question: was jesus the son of the god, and the god in the flesh of man? i say: for christ's sake! what a foolish question! of course he was! who, i ask, isn't?

i was asked: did jesus die on the cross? well, many men live in a cross, and a son of man dies. but he loved more than many, and for that, i'm told, he now sits at the right hand of the father, and at the left hand of the mother. but i am not one of the believers. i don't really think this to be true. jesus was too much of a rebel to just sit and wait. imagine if moses, the freer of slaves and writer of torahs would have just sat and waited?

i ask: was jesus a human being? of course he was! what else should the son of man want to be? or anyone? what else is a grace like this? he wanted to love, didn't he? to be human is all the gods have ever asked for.

but was jesus a rebel rabbi? the best ever! and though i do not follow rabbis, i do walk next to him, even as he walks on water. and i drown.

i remember being asked: was jesus a prophet? of course he was! all are prophets that stand in the between of every embrace. jesus did, and he rebelled against the tyrants of power, money and religion. and that is what true poets do. for saints are poets gone astray and prophets are saints gone poet.

but this is important, for i am asked: was jesus the messiah? and i cry these words: jesus! jesus! why have you forsaken me? jesus accepted upon himself to be a christ. and i do not want that. he chose to be that which i know i am not brave enough, nor able enough, nor loving enough to accept upon myself. and i will not!, for i don't believe in messiahs, but i do believe with them.

and i will not, despite the song of the good rabbi nahman who used to tweak people's noses to remind them to never be afraid. in reality, he never actually did tweak people's noses, but he does mine, and i can't breathe.

jesus wanted to be our messiah. he wanted to save thou and i and him and god. i tell jesus: you must stop, there is no messiah to meet on the road. please ask me to save you, i said, and i will let you save me. and we both laughed. the salvific heart is inherent in each one of us. we are all born saviors. we are all born in original blessedness.

jesus should have never died for us because each of us must live for one another and each of us must die our own deaths. perhaps similarly, but in different words, the good buddha siddhartha said it himself before he died: work diligently toward your own salvations. but jesus died so i wouldn't have to, and in that he forsook me.

i told jesus what the poet martin buber once said about him: "i pray *with* jesus, not *to* jesus". he smiled. i want to say: i will walk with you jesus, even if it's hard to climb the

mount. the path is between us, not in you or me. like him, i too miss my father. like him, i too need maria from the sea of galilee to open the cave and to not find me inside.

i told him again: i love you and i love what you love. i celebrate your birth and i mourn your death, and i am one who stood by and did nothing to protect you. i asked him this: what was it jesus that you had wanted me to do for you on your cross?

i sat down, and in sadness one day i watched you become a messiah and forsake me. and maria from the sea of galilee, where you used to walk on its waters, came to tend to your dead body in the cave, but you weren't there. jesus: what will you say to her?

i ask: why am i making the death of the son of man all about the life of one who can only meditate about death? for i am one who doesn't dare look at the eyes of this brother who made poetry of both life and death. no, my jesus did not die for me, no one can. no one can live my life and no one can die my death. no one can save me except for you who opens the cave and finds me not inside.

the cross sometimes looks like a fig tree fools confuse with a bodhi tree. but i, who merely looks and meditates, know there is no difference. this i know well: if i wish to follow him who bled in the mount of the city of peace crying for his father's love, i must join the community of prophets that became poets. for the community is the body of the living jesus. the call moses issued to us in the desert in the name of his god of the desert was to follow him to a land of promise to build together a new community of sons of women and daughters of men. right here on earth and right now. forty years later. in the present times.

both moses and jesus were pilgrims. both went to a mountain in a desert. and both went together with the people, for that is the way of the true pilgrim. it is true that we take ourselves to wherever we go. i hear it say: why go over-there rather than stay right-here? but pilgrims have always left the right-here and gone to the over-there. and pilgrims are always right!

for the poetic insight is to allow each place to speak to us in its own unrepeatable new verses. we must listen and we must respond with our own. the poetic deed is to allow each place to show us her own beautiful naked body and make us breathe the smells of her unrepeated purple bougainvilleas. we must see and we must respond with our own.

and if we do, we will surely learn the ways of joy and laughter. for what is grace otherwise? and so god was right to have sent eve and adam away from their comfortable eden to a land where love became a deed we must choose to do.

pilgrims know this well: our homeland is that place where we first learn to touch our poems. and so we live our lives in search of lost homelands. just ask any pilgrim. they are unscripted storytellers.

even the good buddha, the lonelier of all fathers and lovers, felt the desire to come back to the public. he carried a lotus flower in his hand to remind us to also look to the outside. there is a lotus flower within me too, but it can only flower with the waters and the sun outside of me. if i look only within me, i will never see the lotus flower in the hand of the buddha. the one seeker who was at vulture peak and choose to look and see, smiled. and the buddha smiled back. no other teaching exists that can teach as much as a smile. and each one of us is that seeker and that buddha, and most of all we are the smile and the lotus flower.

ego is inside, but no-ego, that is the self, is not outside nor it is inside, it is always between i and thou. the buddha's pilgrimage began not when he abandoned his child in the royal palace, but when he made the decision to go back.

this is what moses taught jesus and us: sometimes, in the name of humanity, we must leave and go to a desert. and when we do, we go there with the people. we go with the slaves and with the free, with the good ones and with the bad ones, with the healthy and the ill, the happy and the lonely, the lover and the indifferent. jesus was there too, with all the rest of us. he stopped at every mount to recite his poem of love and peace. we never go alone anywhere, for that last one we have left behind is the one who holds the keys to the gates of the promised land. maria from the sea of galilee said to me: the one we do not bring down from his cross, will make us all carry it with him. indeed.

it is told of jesus and buddha that they went to a town and then went back to another. for what is preferable, to have a home to return to, or to have a home one has come from? a true refugee often has neither, and a false pilgrim pretends to have both. jesus and buddha built their homes everywhere because in every town there were people hoping for salvation. each of us must choose our relationship to home, but never if our personal choice circumvents that village where families have no homes to come from or return to. once your neighbor is housed, you are free to pursue your path toward home or away from it.

can we possibly embrace a silent christ? for we are the christ on the cross, and also the cross, and also the nails, and the nailers too. and we are also the caesar who crucified the poet of its people. but more than anything else, we were the voice of jesus speaking on the mount: how can we remain silent? it is not someone else on the cross but us. no one else sitting by its side, but us. no own else praying to the forsaken father but us.

and the cross was not built with woods from the trees of gethsemane, but with woods from the trees we grow in our own backyards. the nails we brought to the spectacle were not only the steel that perforated his hands, but the silence that pierced his heart. how many of our neighbors are crucified every day in silence around the world while we light candles to the one man on the cross we think it is not our neighbor but a stranger from the past? the passover liturgy asks that each of us look at ourselves as though we had personally escaped from the land of bondage. what changes in us when we realize that we were the slaves, and also the land of enslavement, and the enslavers, and the

pharaoh and the moses too? how many more pharaohs and caesars are we going to permit until they come for us too? can we remain silent?

in my personal liturgy i ask that each of us look at ourselves as though we had personally been crucified with the wood and in the silence. in the wood and by the silence. what changes in us when we realize this? we cannot remain silent. it was no one else in the land of bondage but us. no one else was poisoned to death in the gas chambers of auschwitz but us. and no one else looking in silence but us. this is very important, and so we ask: when we realize this truth, what truly changes in us?

when jesus died on the cross there were others dying on crosses too, right next to him, on mount golgotha. and yet, it is only jesus we remember, not the others. we don't know the names or who the others were. for all we know, no one present at that place and moment weeped for anyone else, except for the child of mary and joseph. no one mourned their pain and death. no one raised their crying eyes or their bellowing voices to heaven at the foot of any cross but that of the son of man. no one. no one helped bring the others down from their crosses, or offer them too a hurried jewish burial before the start of the sabbath. only for jesus did his family and friends cry. but this is the point we must awake to: who were all those indifferent people standing in silence at the foot of the other crosses if not us? it was i and you.

but as the poet buber once said, jesus is my brother too. the poet jesus. i reflect on jesus for i too grew up without ever meeting many of the elders in my life. my parents, like jesus's, practiced love. but neither i nor jesus met a wise elder to teach us about making love, or a smart elder to show us how people make a living.

many of the elders in my life were killed by evil before i came to life, and it is their absence that has taught me all i need to know about the meaning of lacking and the grace of presence. i too, like jesus and multitudes of other neighbors, was born a son of refugees. i had no roots in the land of my birth. and i, like jesus and multitude of other neighbors, left my city as a young man. i went to new lands with pretty houses but no roots. my roots are not inside the soil, they are upside down, facing the autumn moon and nurturing from ancient eastern breezes that caress but never kiss the solid earth. the color of my skin belongs to the fabled race of the perennial pilgrims. but i am grateful, for i know that life is the story of will and grace.

we seek faith for we seek salvation. the poet unamuno said that the tragic sense of life is our anguished desire to live after death. this i ask: what do we need to be saved from? death. but death is not a punishment. in other words: salvation is not a reward. nor is salvation, like birth and death, a choice we make. do you see? we are irrevocably destined to be saved. and so in this sleepless night, i sit in the porch and hear the peacocks sing and i smell the rain on the grass. i raise my eyes to heavens and see the moon. this i do: i will not worship the moon, but i will worship with her.

may salvation stay and never go.

Three Pamphlets
by
Peter Lamborn Wilson

AGAINST SUSTAINABILITY

Recently I've found myself wishing -- when I hear the word "sustainability" -- that I had a revolver to reach for. "Sustainability" has become a coded mask for a cause I detest -- the salvation of Capitalism. Obviously, Too-Late Kapital is running down the road to "global" ragnarok, & has been doing so since the great take-off of the Technopathocracy in about 1830 (when, according to H.G. Wells, "the first superfluous human was born") -- i.e., the Industrial Revolution, the triumph of the Machine over Nature. Nietzsche dated the birth of the Terminal Human to about this same date; so the first shall be the last.

The whole point of sustainability is to save cars, but re-design them to run on sunshine or salad oil -- to save highways, parking lots, jet planes, suburban lawns, bourgeois yuppie liberal smug self-satisfaction & "first world" entitlement -- but to transform them all into something beige, crunchy, "ecological", "organic", smiley-faced, goodygoody -- and to go on like this forever -- "sustainably". To avoid the Fall, even if it means abandoning huge swathes of the human race & its habitat, so as to salvage the part that counts -- US -- or to put it another way, U.S. (of A.). To escape to Mars with Mr Musk in a driverless spaceship "shared" by other billionaires, & fuck all hoi polloi & their degraded junkfood "lifestyle".

Solar power & wind power, the panacea of sustainability, are themselves sources of vast hellscapes of aesthetic filth & poisonous pollution -- the factories (in Mexico, of course) to produce those ubiquitous alien-gray panels & war-of-the-world-style windmills (impervious to any poor Don Quixote) -- to cover the deserts with black glass, the seas with whining avicidal behemoths -- so that WE can go on enjoying our horrid health-food, our idiotic i-phones, our crapulous computers, our tedious televisions -- not to mention our armies & police forces, our bureaucrats, politicians, lawyers, silicon-valley "disruptors" & all the other parasites & oppressor-class scumbags who take but never give.

Forget sustainability. Forget efficiency. Efficiency is the devil's shit. Fuck "green capitalism" & its neat corporate cornucopia of consumer garbage & badly-designed "designer" crapola. Technology will not solve the "problems" that technology created in the first place, any more than heroin will cure morphine addiction, or arsenic will save you from arsenic poisoning. The only way to free ourselves from the rule of sick machines is to smash the machines. The Luddites saw the light already in 1812. A sledgehammer is the sole solution.

FORM FOLLOWS DYSFUNCTION

The "Extropians" -- who used to be sneered at as acne'd sub-sci-fi dynrendies -- have now been taken up as "consultants" by the zillionaire Chaos Lords of Silicon Valley & are dictating the Shape of Things to Come. (I don't say "the Future" because we've already been living in the Future since about 1995 & the shine has long since worn off <u>that</u> slimey old word.) So the Extropian Holy Grail -- the "Singularity" -- the point at which machines become more "intelligent" than humans -- has <u>already</u> <u>happened</u>.

Haven't you noticed?

In fact, all hope of "AI" (artificial intelligence) has been abandoned by the Smart Money. Real intelligence involves Imagination, which the "Imagineers" were all born without (like morons without cerebellums). -- But an "end run" can be made around intelligence for all practical purposes if you have enough <u>information</u>. That is, you can simulate all the profitable functions of intelligence without the bothersome add-on's of consciousness or conscience. The computer can beat the chess master, so <u>who</u> <u>cares</u> if it's "intelligent"? We don't want a robot revolution after all. Let them eat crankcase oil.

The Malls are emptying out, the Big Box stores echoing sadly to the last eerie shuffling of senile "greeters" with no one to greet. Walmart recently closed 269 retail outlets. Why not do all your shopping on-line? Why do <u>anything</u> "off" line? Stay home, down-load a few xanax or oxycodon, singe on Netflix, order out for pizza (delivered by unmaned drone).

Recently I performed at a "Resistance" event at which the average age of the readers was about 75 & the average age of the audience about 80. The only two young people left early -- perhaps afraid of contagion, or of being eaten. The Struldbrugs cursed the White House in a tremulous chant like the mutants in Tod Browning's "Freaks". It was uncanny. "Where are the Youth?" I asked a friend; -- wordlessly he made the gesture of thumbing an invisible hand-held device. Sucked into the SCREEN -- gone gone gone to the gnirvana of pseudo "share-ware". Gone away with the trolls, the mechanical Erlkonig.

The solution to the Crisis of Overproduction is <u>bad</u> <u>design</u>. Capitalist crap is all so badly made it needs to be replaced every 3 years. Form follows dysfunction. Stuff can't be shared because it's designed not to be shared so every human must buy at least one of every commodity. Americans now own one automobile each (3.1 per family) -- no commie car-pooling for us! The only socialism now is the <u>socialism</u> <u>of</u> <u>robots</u> -- because robots don't <u>buy</u> anything. And "share ware" means you pay extra for union-busting. (What's a union, granddad?)

And who -- you ask -- got us into this mess. Well yes, politicians, lawyers, educators, bankers, weapons & pharmaceutical manufacturers... the

list stretches out to include a fucking lot of humans. But above all it's scientists who've landed us in this cesspit -- because without science there'd be no technology -- no electricity, no plastic, no internal combustion, no hydrogen bomb, no back-up alarms, no killer drones, no global warming... no technopathocracy. The End of the World would still be a religious fantasy, not a done deal. And despite all this, whom do we moderns worship as our heros and saviors, even our gods? Of course: -- SCIENTISTS.

SONNET—TO SCIENCE

Science! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise?
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me:
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

-- E.A. Poe

EPISCOPAGANISM

Ultra High Church Anglo Catholic Non-Juring Anglicanism: the Scottish Episcopal Church in America.

Moorish Orthodox Church: Theosophico-Masonic Aquarian Gospel plus Black Islam plus Cherokee shamanism plus "Wandering Bishop" apostolic succession (via Rene Villatte & Mikail Itkin etc.) plus heterodox sufism plus psychedelic sacrament.

Syrian Church of St Thomas in India, with Hindu "superstitions"; and Chang Dynasty Nestorian "Luminous" Church of Taoist Christianity (plus anarcho-Taoism & "Beat Zen"); Circle of the Free Spirit.

Hoodoo: incl. botanica/mail-order Santeria & N. Orleans Voodoo, respect for Native American Manitous & Nature Spirits -- Dream Books, candles, herbs, amulets, etc.

Hermeticism -- incl. alchemy, astrology, ceremonial magic(k), Greco-Roman-Egyptian neo-paganism, Tarot, occult caballa.

Sabbatai Sevi & Jacob Frank.

Bengali Tantra -- popular magical Hindu/Sufi syncretism -- Shiva/Shakti (Tara, Kali, etc.) -- ganja -- Tibetan Tara Tantra "left-hand path" sex magic & Mongol/Manchu shamano-Buddhist occult tradition, Bon Po.

Shiite "Extremist" heresy incl. Assassins, Druze (via Blavatsky & Paschal Beverly Randolph), Fatimid Ismailism, Alevis, Nusayris, Hurufi-Nuqtawis, Ahl-i Haqq, Bektashis, Yezidi "satanism", Ovayssi Sufi Order.

Celtic Christian Druidism.

Universal Life Church of Modesto, Calif.

Nietzsche: "Dionysius / the Crucified".

FOR THE RE-PAGANIZATION OF MONOTHEISM

Apr., '15

PORTUGAL[1] É UM NEROLOGISMO E O FOGO O BORDEL DE MESSALINA

em memória de Ruth Escobar que se foi esquecida

Ardemos num incêndio de esperança,
para que reste de nós uma lembrança,
um fumo que sobe e não se apaga. (…)
Vivo, porque espero."
- O Pobre Tolo, Teixeira de Pascoaes | 1924

[esta mulher[2] está
dentro de uma ruína com forma labiríntica[3]
todo o alcance do olhar é um manifesto de terra queimada
as pernas vão-lhe enegrecendo até ver a filha
nesse momento desfazem-se]

marulha-me a cabeça
uma seita de fantasmas penteia-me os cabelos
e o pior ainda o pior
são estes malditos fios que me levam
a abraçar tudo quanto existe
e emaranham-se na ignorância e na raiva
na perfídia do quotidiano
dai-me uma faca que os corte
aos fantasmas
secai-me as veias destes raios invasores
eu caí neste condomínio de braços descartados
num voo trocado
nas asas de um pássaro de prata
espírito santo do meu azar
livrem-me desta cabeça
deste nerologismo lusitano
desta metáfora política
desta simulação da co-existência
deste totalitarismo da fala
ala ala ala

em que china estou deus

[1]Um retorno histórico, um sincretismo de carácter plural e a complexidade familiar de Nero e Messalina (a devaça), sua prima paterna. Neologismo arregimentado pela exuberância dos factos do agora e do passado que a história deixou escrita.
[2]Não é relevante ser homem ou mulher. Só é relevante o sumo Prometeu Libertado do intérprete.
[3]Construção interferida por Esher e algumas linhas de Nazca. Um geoglifo acidental.

esta língua subterrânea
este lugar onde se derramam
os suores repetidos da alvorada
escravidão imprecisa
ciclopes de unhas encardidas
dai-me senhor dos fios um raio de lucidez
que possa derramar pelos dedos escrevendo
a única forma que tenho de oxigenar o plasma
de limpar o chão desta casa corpo onde à força moro[4]
máquinas ponham-me uma roldana no peito
uma locomotiva veloz ao serviço das veias
e que as rasgue ao passar
que fiquem como folhas de aço ao desabrochar
da primavera
e eu me estique à janela do oxidente
e lamba o gelo do que vejo
até gota a gota se destilar no meu estômago
o desvario do homem
MORO NESTE NINHO DE POMBAS
contemporânea dos meus pés
já não alcanço um carvalho[5]
tragam-me um funil de alumínio
um grito esculpido
um braço arrancado ao poder
eu subo ao cavalo
tu guardas a gasolina
que sobrou do domenico[6]
despejo relâmpagos da minha garganta
a mais pequena semente
é ainda a árvore

QUERO SER A GUERREIRA QUE VOA PARA UM COMBATE
que sobe à pedra mais alta do olhar dos homens
e os perfura no seu desespero

que ventos soprais ao devir ó adormecidos ciprestes negros
se os vossos entes fossem fumo podê-los-íamos reconhecer pelas narinas
[berrou heráclito na minha lembrança]
uma criatura provê-se do que é preciso para não se derramar
enquanto vive com os pés enfiados no deserto
de quantas realidades caimos abaixo
que doença nos separa cada vez mais
EU SOU UMA BOMBA EM ÊXTASE DIVINO
UMA REFUGIADA COM SANGUE DE DIAMANTE
em cima da uma égua sobre o vale do enna
rodeada pela doença da santidade e da amargura enxuta

[4]Ser-se contemporâneo de um organismo à semelhança de mentecaptos é um travão da mente galopante. O corpo exerce uma ditadura sobre a espiritualidade, gerando questões binárias.

[5]Incide na industrialização das florestas portuguesas, onde os eucaliptos predominam e os autótenes carvalhos rareiam. É também, claro está, um jogo fonético que sugere *caralho,* porém caralho, seria insuficiente.

[6]Personagem do filme *Nostalgia,* de Andrei Tarkowsky.

dos mais belos tremendamente belos potros doidos
ONDE ESTAIS QUANDO SUBIS À VERDADE
ONDE ESTAIS QUANDO O SONHO VOS PENSA
o que agora vomito será por vós engolido
pois nem sempre o que dispo é de seda
um dia perguntarão aos vossos netos
o que fizestes pelo ambiente
pelos mares pelas montanhas
e um ancião dirá que davais as mãos e gritavais GOLO

[apercebe-se de que no chão se encontra o corpo carbonizado da filha
as pernas desfazem-se em cinza
um grande silêncio
fita o corpo como se o seu já não estivesse]

quando atravessamos o deserto são enormes as nossas sombras meu amor[7]

negras formas se prolongam no chão pela incidência da luz

os nossos corpos linhas brancas dotados de esquecimento

brilham ao longe como rosas de areia

ondas longas são os lugares quando pequenos estamos

ondas longas e a água ausente

por isso anseio olhar-te este lago que sou onde tudo se reflecte

e reflectir não é beber meu amor

pois dizer água não retira a sede

é a nossa imagem que se atira à água

não como os silêncios circulares de uma pedra lançada

mas como uma manifestação de ausência

um esplendor da saudade em si

são enormes as nossas sombras no deserto meu amor

negras formas se prolongam no chão

dá-me o dia dá-me a noite

onde a vida se estilhace e reúna a transbordar

[7]Em suma é uma nuvem verbal de vapor, o amor decifrado. A ausência é um fenómeno que sublima o entendimento dos códigos, sejam eles sombras no deserto, ou um feixe de luz pela nesga da janela. A polissemia.

dá-me a tábua desse barco

que ébrio acende ao despertar

que eu nasça de ti

e morra a respirar

[se o milagre não for muito dispendioso

nasce um dente de leão de cada boca]

fátima vale

inédito - símbolos antropófagos, 2017

PORTUGAL[1] IS A NERO-LOGISM
AND THE FIRE IS MESSALINA'S BROTHEL

in memory of Ruth Escobar, who erased herself

"We burn in the fire of hope,
so what's left of us is a memory that lingers,
the smoke that rises and never goes out. (...)
I live, because I hope."
- *The Poor Tolo*, Teixeira de Pascoaes / 1924

[this woman[2] remains
inside the ruins of a labyrinth[3]
where the whole range of seeing appears as a manifesto
of the scorched earth
her legs grow black until she sees her daughter
only in that moment she can fall apart]

blow over and out of my head
this band of ghosts who comb my hair
comb through from bad to worse
these damned threads that weave themselves
through the whole fabric of existence
tangling up in ignorance and anger
in everyday treachery
give me a knife to cut them
to ghosts
dry my veins from their invading rays

---

[1] A historical return, a syncretism of a pluralistic nature and the complexity familiar to the relation between Nero and Messalina, (who was, on top of everything), his paternal cousin. The neologism agglutinated by the exuberance of the facts, past and present, inscribed in history.

[2] It's irrelevant whether she is a man or a woman. The only importance here is that she remains the sum total of Liberated Prometheus, the interpreter.

[3] A construction inferred via Escher and a few Nazca lines. An accidental geoglyph.

I fell into this condominium of discarded arms
on the flight I booked at the last minute
on the wings of a silver bird
the holy spirit of my bad luck
free me from this head
of this Lusitanian nero-logism
of this political metaphor
of this simulation of co-existence
of this totalitarianism of speech
wing wing wing ALL ah! ALL ah! ALL ah!

In what China was this made God?
this subterranean language
this place where they spill
the sweat of too many dawns
the imprecise slavery
of the cyclops with grimy nails
Lord of Wires give me one ray of lucidity
pour it over my fingers that write
the only way I know how to oxygenate the plasma
and wipe the floor of the body-house I was forced to live in[4]
there is a pulley in my chest the machines fit
a fast locomotive at the service of the veins
that tears them while passing through
and they remain like sheets of steel when unfastened
from what's left of spring
and I stretch myself before the oxidant window
and lick the ice off the things I see
until drop by drop it gets distilled in my stomach
the ravaging of man
I LIVE IN THIS NEST OF DOVES
a contemporary of my own feet
I can't get to an oak tree anymore[5]
bring me an aluminum funnel
a carved cry
and an arm ripped off by this power
I will climb the horse
you keep your gasoline
leftover by Domenico[6]

[4] To make yourself contemporary with an organism which resembles the insane mind puts the brake on the manic gallop. The body exercises a dictatorship over spirituality, generating binary issues.
[5] The focus here is on the industrialization of the Portuguese forests, where eucalyptus trees are predominant and autochthonous oak trees rare. In the original, it is also suggestive, of course, of the phonetic play between *carvalho* (oak) and *caralho* (fuck), that suggests fucking, as if fucking it all up weren't quite enough.
[6] A character from the film *Nostalghia* by Andrei Tarkovsky.

strike the lightning from my throat
the smallest seed
can still be a tree

I WANT TO BE THE WARRIOR WHO FLIES INTO COMBAT
who rises to the highest stone of men's gaze
and pierces them in their despair

what the winds blow in becoming the dormant black cypresses
if their being were smoke we could recognize it with our nostrils
[shouted Heraclitus in my memory]
a creature shows itself because it doesn't overflow
while living with its feet in the desert
how many realities do we fall under
what illnesses draw a deeper and deeper divide
I AM A PUMP OF DIVINE RAPTURE
A REFUGEE WITH DIAMOND BLOOD
on top of a mare over Enna Vale
surrounded by the disease of Holiness or bitter greed
among the most tremendously beautiful beautiful foals
WHERE ARE YOU WHEN YOU REACH THE TRUTH
WHERE ARE YOU WHEN THE DREAM IMAGINES YOU
you will have to swallow what I now vomit
because what is available won't always be silk
one day your grandchildren will ask the question
what did you do for what surrounds you
for the seas for the mountains
and an old man will say that you raised your hands yelling GOAL

[she realizes that on the floor lies the daughter's charred body
her legs are ash grey
a great silence
cordons off the body as if it were your own already]

When we cross the desert my love[7] our shadows are huge

black forms stretched on the ground by every incidence of light

[7] In short, what we have here is a verbal cloud of steam, love deciphered. Absence is a phenomenon which sublimates the understanding of codes, be they shadows in the desert, or a blood-red beam of light shining through the window. The polysemy.

our bodies the white lines endowed with forgetting
shine in the distance like those roses of sand
when we are small the long waves become places
long waves and the absent water
so I yearn to look at you this lake where everything is reflected
but to reflect isn't the same as to drink my love
because saying water does not quench the thirst
only our image is thrown onto the water
different from the circular silences thrown with a stone
but as a manifestation of absence
a splendor of longing for its own sake
our shadows are huge in the desert my love
black shapes stretch on the floor
give me the day give me the night
where life splits and meets to overflow
give me the board of this boat
how drunken is it when you wake up?
may I be born of you
and die to breathe

[if the miracle is not too costly
a dandelion is born from each mouth]

fátima vale

unpublished — anthropophagous symbols, 2017

Words, words, words,

At a certain point in 2011 I began making tapes whereas up until then, I'd made (mostly) text scores. Tapes advanced in real time, in PLAY mode, occasionally switched to REC to snag a moment of field sound. Sometimes keeping this going for several loops around a tape, the feeling of travel in there. And this practical epiphany did come on the heels of a big drive through the country, during which I'd made next to nothing. It was in L.A., when I got back, on the subway to the mechanic to check on my car. With all that other space and time piled high in my rear view mirror. I'd written a score, *nothing which can be used (As clouds reappear after rains)*, which is #250-or-so in my Ashbery series. It's from John's poem "The Thousand Islands," but I connect it with Eileen Myles. In particular, something they'd written in *Inferno*, how being a poet is hitting REC. The piece's title, drawn from lines in the poem, appears above my name a dedication "for Eileen Myles." At bottom, the dates & place of composition (31 December 2010 – 1 January 2011, Los Angeles). In between you get the text below – at left, more lines from the poem; on the right, my 2 cents:

A promise of so much that is to come,
Extracted, accepted gladly
But within its narrow limits
No knowledge yet

an impulsive recording of nothing—
brief and fleet

[...]

[maybe repeated

But your
Idea is not continuing—a swift imperfect
Condensation of the indifference you feel
To be the worn fiber and bone which must surround you
For the permanence of what's already happened in you.

Over a decade ago, John Ashbery's poems had seized me where my music was. I'm pretty sure it was in a bathtub at the Mesa Inn, El Paso, reading "Clepsydra." It was late autumn. I was on my way to Nebraska. All the water had drained away but I kept reading:

He was out of it of course for having lain happily awake
On the tepid fringes of that field or whatever
Whose center was beginning to churn darkly, but even more for having
The progression of minutes by accepting them, as one accepts drops of rain
As they form a shower, and without worrying about the fine weather that will come after.
Why shouldn't all climate and all music be equal

For reasons I can't explain, reading his poems became inseparably a process of *writing through* them, tracing them like sketches of life in motion, only with and of language, to follow some stray bit of outline into other vital experiences of now (music per se):

...the truth that, invisible,
Still surrounds us like the air and is the dividing force
Between our slightest steps and the notes taken on them.

nothing which can be used (As clouds reappear after rains) is both typical of the series and typically

unique: not a piece written upon the poem so much as found around and through it, marking out a little room for a bit of potential to be borne out on its own terms. The strand that seemed to give my "slightest steps" some queer direction and a little margin to boot, space for "notes taken." The words I added didn't make the piece, but *perform* it: pointing from right to show what's on the left. The music is there, inside the poem, never leaves it – and yet it situates me reading it, draws me through its language-body as I rest it upon mine. This shared situation is key: reading unravels us, reader, poem, poet, and present(s) alike, all partaking in something utterly mutual within language.

A couple years earlier, I'd written John in the middle of the night from an IHOP in L.A., about wanting to make a new kind of tape, having to do with travel, and that tape got started and quickly put aside. But now I knew how to finish it and so like a time warp after the first few minutes of field sounds I'd managed to slowly pile onto it, end to end from many drives across the country, plus answering machine messages, etc., the 90-minute tape lurched forward in real time, all the way around a couple times as I went about my life, irregular ellipses of not-home recorded here and there, and finally projector noise as I sat at a screening of Paul Sharits's *N:O:T:H:I:N:G* at the Echo Park Film Center (where I knew Eileen was also, sleeping upstairs in the Machine Project apartment). All that other time, other life, somehow gathered among those few lines from a poem in *Rivers and Mountains* – which ultimately deals with the nature of everything and nothing. This nothing which can be used. Which is language. And the brief blips of sound popping in amid lengths of blank tape are almost like words: little flags of world, moments flapping in time. I came to understand that language is recording: every line, every word transmits information from somewhere else while also continuing to record, receiving chunks of present as it goes. I'd thought a lot about silence, but now it took on an overtly material dimension, a kind of nothing inside of everything – a drain the world is constantly swirling down into and cascading out of, different parts from different times and places. A wormhole.

*

Three poets have brought me before the unicorn tapestries (which I've never seen, except in cropped detail on some old postcards my friend Liz Kotz once gave me) – possibly each referring to different tapestries in the same genre, same scene but different moments, in different time. First in Rilke's *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, an image of such deep suspended melancholy:

> What has happened? Why is the little rabbit running down there, why can you immediately see that it's running? Everything is so restrained. The lion has nothing to do. She herself is holding the pennant. Or is she clinging to it? With her other hand she has grasped the unicorn's horn. Is this mourning? Can mourning stand up so straight, can a mourning-dress be so mute as this velvet, green-black and faded in some places?

The heightened confusion between surface and scene, the abyssal fabric that binds us across language to the realm of the unicorn, never yields to what we know, what the rabbit knows, will happen next – the unicorn's entrapment and killing – but regathers the *living* moment, holds it in the tension of the weave: mortality and loss are woven into the lining, subverted. They do not supplant the scene, they support it. I printed this passage on transparency and slipped it into one of my *Heliogabalus* operas, which are my complicated reading of Artaud's book (a gift from Eileen), staging my pursuit of another unicorn.

The next occasion came when reading the last part of Eileen's *Afterglow* on a flight from O'Hare to SFO this summer, this time the tapestries at the Met I think, depicting the hunt. Here, the image sours: "They used a young virgin with braided hair to trap the pansexual unicorn. I can't even stand to look at those

tapestries. It hurts." Eileen's unicorn, their pit bull Rosie, was dead. And now John Ashbery, another unicorn – *my* unicorn – had just died. I felt I understood. And then Eileen proceeded to outdo Rilke in weaving a new tapestry in collaboration with their unicorn, the ghost of Rosie, if not to undo death then to go back and mend the fabric, to restore the lining:

> The pit bull walks over to the carpet on the wall. She gets up on her hind legs and she pushes up the edge of the tapestry a little bit. The underside shows.
>
> It's a maze of pulled threads, colors. *This is what I mean*. In terms of story, the front of the carpet, we're taking the moments and we're freezing them. An entire existence. Right to the tiniest stitch. Yet the whole thing is mobile. She gives the thing a shove and it shakes and buckles. *Look*. Everything does.

And then last week, reading *Paterson* on the free casino bus from my neighborhood McDonald's:

> A tapestry hound
> with his thread teeth drawing crimson from
> the throat of the unicorn

A prayer before gambling: all is thread – the teeth, our blood, the unicorn...

Tiny strands of time, woven in vast bundles. Filling out all that empty space. Mostly ground, upturned, pushing the scene forward. A million filaments transmitting, transmuting some distant unreal eternity across little lengths of string. Like Sappho, the most perfect poet, only fragments, whose eternal remains also filled out my notebook while I sat in an alley bar in Mexico City. The decomposition of language, unlike the body, gives it life: a carpet of nerves radiating stimuli, other light from other time, more and more even as it fades, stains, comes undone. We could step out onto it and it would hold us, in our time. And the sky along the top, just fabric. The most parts, having the most threads.

And all of us piled onto that bus, the people of McDonald's, so many homeless. Our fleshy lengths slumped and dreaming together as we ride into the navy twilight, on our way to the island of the unicorn. Stuart Krimko calls the casino my home away from home away from home. A kind of homelessness, which is a good way to think about poetry. Not to glamorize abject poverty, but a way of being always somehow in transit.

*

Poetry is bad lit. That's what makes it great. And we can make bad lit from anything. Poetry unravels, grinds the world to linguistic pulp and throws it back in broadcast dispersal. No time, no life in coherence or in rendering. Have you ever gone past a rendering plant? All time is lost time. It jumps ship in order to live again. Another prayer from *Paterson*: "write carelessly so that nothing that is not green will survive." Taken out of context any line can bridge the circuit. You imagine being *inside* something again. In its woeful incompleteness, it drags the world along – it records, it plays back for you.

From the start I felt the bits of recorded sound as language, as writing. The process seemed to establish concretely that language is part of nature, and vice versa. Soon the Ashbery pieces (and others) became strangely broken recorded readings, my life with the poem, reading/recording it. Sometimes over and over, like in a tape I made of Eileen's essay "The End of New England" – a kind of bedroom travel

epic, hours and hours of reading the text, silently and aloud, in my apartment late one winter while the tape rolled, keeping me company. Occasionally jotting down a bit of time in magnetic pencil, but mostly playing back the sometimes blank, sometimes noisy, wordy silences from where we'd been. The room. My breathing. Music playing. Whale song (I was in a cloistered mood, so I put on nature tapes). The text jumping through the holes in its past, maybe five intermittently recorded layers of time wrapped around itself. What do I mean? Oh I dunno. All this around me, can't you hear.

These tapes are just crumby lists in the end. Which is to say poetry. And as the tape recorders have started to die I've begun making lists in notebooks, just lines from whatever I'm reading. Reading lists. I don't call it work but practice, a casual itch to gather as I read. Slowly building up an endless text day by day. Recording my days, like a diary. And portions of these recordings can break off, too. Like scores, or more like parts. Just stuff that goes along with...

*

These lines, taken down at my window this past wet winter. Someplace between *Hopscotch* and *Let It Come Down.* Later, becoming material for an ensemble performance in Chile. I'm listening to the recording now, and the words are being read back to me in Spanish, “Palabras, palabras, palabras, ...” while a tape from my recent life in Marfa and Los Angeles plays into theirs, an early spring room in Valparaiso:

18 ii 17

Sometimes the word, sometimes what the word transmits.
to open a way through language
“Let’s go,”
somewhere between electromagnetism and chemistry,
Words, words, words,
choosing working hypotheses,
look for the Pleiades again,

19 ii 17

the sky glimmered whitely.
What rain!
“Listen to the rain,”
the sound of the words in her head;
the sound of her voice astonished her even more;
it was gray with the feeble light of dawn
The rain fell evenly and quietly.
everything had begun because everything had come to an end,

mark so



Walthan Abbey, U.K., Tildy Bayar, 2018.

Total Seeing

Roman Kossak

I live in my personal space. It consists of entities of various kinds. I am one of those entities located in the center of my space. When I move, the space moves with me. It expands and shrinks in accordance with my point of view. My space has a horizon that is flexible, and a vertical dimension that seems fixed. As I go about my everyday occupations, the first point of order is to locate myself in my space.

My space is a mental construct. I assume each person has one. There is no reason for all those personal spaces to look the same. There may be variations, but there is a formal mathematical object that for that serves well as a representations of the physical world. It is 3-dimensional Euclidean space.

Euclidean space is made of points and is equipped with a metric that measures distances between them. Each point has a unique position determined by its three spatial coordinates. Collections of points form lines, circles, balls, cubes, and a host of other geometric objects. It does not take much to imagine that we actually live in that space, but it would be more precise to say that we inhabit this space as grown ups. A seminal study of Piaget and his collaborators in the 1940's showed that it takes a while for a child to develop the conception of a space with all Euclidean elements in it. Initially it is all much fuzzier. A child's space is a topological space.

A topological space is a set of points, and each of those points is equipped with a col-lection of neighborhoods. Roughly, a topological space is like the Euclidean space blurred. There are no exact distances, no straight lines, no circles, no angles. Nothing but points and their vague locations.

In early childhood development we build up structures of perception that lead to an intuitive sense of space. It is a complex process, and one of the reasons is that we actually do not see that much. Physical objects always have parts hidden from our gaze. Our imagination has to make up for what we do not see. A front of a house comes with an expectation that there is an interior and the back of it. When we see the back of a person, we do not say "I see the back of a person," we say "I see a person." When locating objects in relation to our position we tend to regard a smaller tree to be farther away than a bigger one, although, one can be fooled by it. All this is related to our specific ways of perceiving what is out there, determined to large extent by the position of our eyes with respect to surrounding objects and to our own body. The structures of perception are complex, and behind them, there there are underlying abstract mathematical/geometric structures that may be possible to identify.

What would it be like to be able to perceive objects without physical limitations?
What if, instead of one side of an object, we could simultaneously see all of its sides? How would

a conscious ocean like the one covering the surface of Solaris in Stanislaw Lem's novel see an object immersed in it? The ocean has no notion of front and back. To make it even more extreme, let us assume that it has no notion of up and down. It is a limitless homogeneous conscious space, and hence it does not care whether the object is big or small, or where it is. What it may want to recognize is the shape, to which it has full access by touch.

It is not easy to recognize the shape of an object by touch. To get to know it, we need to move our fingers, and feel how the surface changes. It is really not that different from seeing. There are at least two kinds of shape recognition patterns. One is an instant recognition of what we see. When I look at a tree, I see instantly that it is a tree. I match the perceived image with a pattern in my memory. Perception is not always that straightforward. If I am looking at a mountain landscape, trying to identify some familiar peaks, I have to shift my gaze in different directions, until I can convince myself that I see a similar shape to the one I remember. It is an active process. One cannot see everything at once, instead one needs to focus attention on different parts of the perceived object in order to see how they relate to one another. Regardless whether we see or touch, we need time.

Having finite, but huge memory, by touching an object the ocean could create a math-ematical model of it by triangulating it (creating mentally a finite mesh of points in a triangular net covering the surface) and noting three-dimensional coordinates of all those points. This creates a "mental" image of the object. Maybe the ocean knows how to do that, but if it is still in a pre-cartesian stage, it may not have developed its mathematics to a sufficient level, and perhaps it never will.

How would the the ocean see two balls of the same size? Does it see a one two-ball object, or is it aware that there are two of the same? If the balls do not touch each other, then this is perhaps something that the ocean could notice. The balls are disconnected. One cannot move from one to the other without going through the space between them. So connectedness is one mathematical notion involved here, but there are at least three other: sameness, twoness, and similarity. Two distinct objects are not the same, but are similar. What makes them similar? Some features make them different (spatial position), some make them similar. If the balls are not perfect mathematical objects, but two soccer balls with slightly different surfaces, are they still two of the same?

In recognizing shapes, the ocean could pay attention to (mathematical) smoothness. The surface of a ball is smooth, the one of a cube is not; the cube has pointed vertices and sharp edges. Does the ocean have a capacity to see that difference? If the ocean does not care about scale, in its mind (eyes?) all circles would have the same curvature. Would it be able to recognize all those shapes we can recognize so easily?

More can be said on what the ocean could and could not see. I would argue it can not see much, and this is because there is not much it cares about. What kind of space would the ocean imagine to live in? Perhaps it would be a Hausdorff space, a rather modest topological space satisfying the condition that any two distinct points can be separated by disjoint neighborhoods, which means that even though in such spaces we may not be able to locate a point precisely, we can still tell any two distinct points apart by finding neighborhoods that separate them.

Ways of seeing may be very particular. It very well can be that the only way to un-derstand other potential forms of perception is by analyzing their mathematical/geometric models.

And what about total seeing? It is rather hard to imagine that there could be any such thing.

Anne Gorrick

9/22/17 - am

…

I won't brush my hair until I return

Let's drive all night

In signatory & preface

Sunless

almost



9/24/17 - for Robert Kelly's 82nd birthday

I know it's your birthday and you should be thinking about unicorns
but what about waterwheel foundations?
A reef line of shafts almost protected but a couple open and dangerous
Underprint bricks and overprint with blue bricks
"I'm alive and I seduced"
Old and faithful things got weird
Your good eyes, like vetiver
In this week's clickhole: at sea, pines
both forlorn and gateaux
59 degrees and all that
The fishbone cactus continues
Mushrooms aren't plants. That's the first thing you should know
Here's the acorn I found in the Big Deep swimming hole, in Woodstock
as found, unretouched. Up, up
The air writes essays about snow globes, opened ground:
100% non sequitur, zero payoff
Candy corn, unicorns, and malt liquor are more real and satisfying than
this ridiculous script
I like this better: exactly 30 seconds of the sounds of India
What does it say on the back cover of your eclipse book?
Have I mentioned the light here?
A dog named Frida Kahlo saves people from the rubble
Swimming at a deserted beach in the Mani. A tiny cove
Being gods and goddesses in the Mediterranean. Hard to beat
This is a poem about
the Dreamlives of Debris & why we really write after everyone's left the party



9/28/17

Buzzfeed went to Bannerman's island

desperately limited, although hedonistically exciting

The stimulacram of pleasure without anyone actually feeling it--

too glossy, not enough hair, not enough sweat

Why do I compare myself to lichen?

The idea of the dormant becoming riotously bright orange

Wool, pashmina and salt

cotton yardage and metal products

authentic materials, inhabited fabrics

constellations in proto-transformation

The destruction of Celilo Falls, everlong history

creating through basketry language, deer hide, condor feathers, ~~more. Interconnectedness~~

Use your master penmanship to write a letter

Who will come over and wash my face for me

and maybe throw a blanket over my cage so I go to sleep?

I ended up in Tijuana on a taco run

that nocturnal freedom in which trash becomes magical

Killing time is a really bad idea

Kill it if it needs to know who's boss, kill it

We saw that when the credits rolled

It's a very big ocean

Be fearless and radiant amid quail bones



9/29/17

"You can flood the path, but we'll always find our way back"

Let's untitle in gold

with our gorgeous pre-dawn indistincts

strung together for our favorite non humans

Blake wrote "There is a moment in each day that Satan cannot find"

I want to see alfie the giant spirit squid, the wildgoose memorial library

the museum of novelty automation, the house of dreams, kings cross ice well

gods own sign junkyard, beckton toxic alp, the lavender fields etc etc

Passion from literal nothingness

all blonde and bunnied

Wake me up when an iconic female media mogul who lived her entire life in silk pajamas dies in her mansion surrounded by boytoys

Our decaying art systems head

toward a further center

toward the unpublished prose of objects

About to head off to the Vijayoaloka Retreat Centre for three days of silence, walking, and working

About to check the Fuck All Meter

I would be glad if I could have a chance to see you

in Chinese ink

your incandescent fragments



Text/

From a project called FEED, where I write daily poems out of edited versions of people's Facebook posts.

Visual work /

from a series I printed in September 2017 thinking about Joan Mitchell's La Grande Vallee paintings in encaustic monotype on *kitakata* paper (16" x 20").

Wanda Siedlecka

IN SEARCH OF A NARRATIVE
(minutes of the philosophy seminar, Graduate Center, NY)

facticity of morass, oneness
—the predicate is included in the subject

my side is included in me
that's a property I have—being me

what's embodied in Jupiter
is the property
of being larger than Earth

in the complete concept there is the size of the two planets
it's an object to object relation

God promises that if there is a difference
he provides the ground to assert it

universal or particular?
there are relations between properties
and the law of the sufficient reason

the truth maker knows that a binary relation
can't be reduced to one

sentences don't assert the logical structure:

– we are talking about the world
– I've never seen the World!
– we might all be duped...

facts constitute the world not assertions
(a bunch of atomic facts plus definitions)

what a great man Leibniz was
still looms over horizon of our thinking
we've already swallowed his concept:

monads are windowless simple things
but each monad has a picture of all the other ones
it's not so opaque after all

it's not about freedom of thinking
it's about freedom of fascination

(taken by W.S.)

Sign the pledge: Resist Trump's hate /November 09, 2016 at 4:22 PM / From: Ray Morris and the CREDO Team / Add your name to the solidarity pledge: "I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with every community Trump has attacked, threatened, and marginalized in his campaign of hate. We will not be silent and we will not back down. We will fight back against Trump together. Add your name: TAKE ACTION NOW / Add your name: Abolish the Electoral College / November 11, 2016 at 4:25 PM / From Michael Baer / Abolish the Electoral College / Amend the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College and hold presidential elections based on popular vote. One vote for one person should determine the one leader who is supposed to answer to all the people of the country / Sign Michael's petition / DEVELOPING: NC Gov race ongoing >> November 15, 2016 at 9:08 AM / From Democratic Governors Association / We need you urgently, Friends: We defeated anti-LGBT Governor Pat McCrory in North Carolina, but now he's refusing to accept the results of the election – instead trying to question Democratic votes. Our government is built on the promise of free and fair elections and the fundamental right to vote, but McCrory – the king of voter suppression – is willing to do anything to keep himself in office. We have to double down right now to protect every voter's voice and secure this essential win for Democrats / Trump's gift to Comcast / November 17, 2016 at 9:58 AM / From: Mark Stanley/ Dear Wanda, "Trump Win Means FCC's 'Net Neutrality' Regulation is Dead." That's the blaring headline from Breitbart News, the website run by Steve Bannon, Trump's campaign chairman and now his chief strategist in the White House. And it's not just Breitbart. To save Net Neutrality, we're going to need a grassroots mobilization as big as what it took to enact it in the first place. Thanks for standing with us, Mark and the team at Watchdog.net / Sign the petition: #RemoveBannon now! /November 18, 2016 at 9:10 AM / From: Kate Kizer / Steve Bannon has been described as "the most dangerous political operative in America" and now he's been chosen to call the policy shots at Trump's White House. It's simple: Personnel is policy.This is one of Trump's first appointments, so this is the first real test of how we respond when Trump gives in to his alt-right supporters. If we let Steve Bannon's appointment slide now, the door will be wide open to Trump filling his government with other bigots and corporate insiders – and giving them unprecedented power to enact policies that will hurt everyday Americans. Thanks for taking a stand, Kate and the team at Watchdog.net / Our pick for DNC Chair / November 22, 2016 at 5:16 PM / From: "OurRevolution.com" /Wanda, Here's the truth: if we want to transform the Democratic Party to make it once again responsive to the needs of working people, we need Rep. Keith Ellison to serve as the next Chair of the Democratic National Committee. The Democratic Party has a decision to make: Will it commit to being the party that advances the needs of working people, or will it continue feeding into the pressures from special interest groups and the billionaire class? Help revitalize the Democratic Party and demand that it prioritize the needs of the people, not the billionaires. The Democratic National Committee will be key to ensuring Democrats come out strong during the midterms in 2018, and go on to win back the White House in 2020. We believe Keith is the right choice for revitalizing the party and determining which direction it will take in the years ahead. Thank you for joining us in supporting Keith Ellison as the next Chair of the Democratic National Committee. Shannon Jackson, Executive Director/ Our Revolution / CONTRIBUTE / Sign the petition: Hands off Medicare and Medicaid / March 24, 2017 at 8:10 AM / From: "Josh Nelson, CREDO Action" / Stop the Republican assault on Medicare and Medicaid / The petition to Congress reads: "Reject any legislation that cuts, weakens or privatizes Medicare or Medicaid. Tens of millions of Americans rely on these critical programs. Congress must expand these programs to cover more people, not cut them to give millionaires and billionaires huge tax breaks." Add your name. Dear Wanda, Tens of millions of seniors and low-income Americans rely on Medicare and Medicaid for their survival, but Republicans are trying to gut these critical programs so they can hand out massive tax cuts to the ultra-rich. Tell Congress: Hands off Medicare and Medicaid. Click here to sign the petition. Trump and Ryan's plan would completely undermine Medicaid's guarantee to provide care to the poor and the elderly by cutting funding to states which would ultimately result in rationing and withholding care for those who need it the most. It's completely unacceptable to cut off children and seniors from these critical lifelines just so Republicans can give huge tax breaks to their wealthy campaign contributors. We must have a powerful show of grassroots support to show Congress that we will not tolerate this assault on tens of millions of seniors and low-income Americans. /Thanks for all you do. /Josh Nelson, Deputy Political Director / CREDO Action from Working Assets / Add your name: SIGN THE PETITION / BREAKING: Huge victory on health care! / March 24, 2017 at 3:35 PM / From: "Anna Galland, MoveOn.org Civic Action" / Dear MoveOn member, Your voice and your actions just helped save health care for millions of Americans. This afternoon, House Speaker Paul Ryan pulled the Republican health care bill from the House floor. Donald Trump pushed hard to pass the bill, but in the end, the Republican leadership simply did not have the votes to pass it. And it's because of one thing and one thing only: Your unprecedented grassroots resistance, alongside millions of other Americans, since the election—your nonstop calls, personal stories, town hall meetings, protests, Tweets, and other actions to fiercely defend health care for millions of Americans. MoveOn members made over 40,000 calls to Congress just today! The fight against Trump and the GOP agenda, as well as for high-quality affordable health care for every American, continues. And now we have another reminder of just how much the resistance—you!—can accomplish. We did it! Thank you! And thanks for all you do.—Anna, Ben W., Emma, Jayne, and the rest of the team. / Sign the petition: Trump wants to militarize New York police / September 25, 2017 at 8:19 AM / From: "Heidi Hess, CREDO Action" / Stop the militarization of local police / Tell Congress: "Pass the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act and block Donald Trump's attempt to militarize local police." Add your name. Dear Wanda, Donald Trump recently rewarded the country's biggest police union for their endorsement of his dangerous, racist candidacy. Fortunately, there is a bill that would stop Trump's dangerous escalation and help keep weapons of war out of our communities, the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act. The more of us who speak out, the more pressure on Congress to act. When police departments are armed with military-grade weapons and trained to use military tactics, they are more likely to treat the people they are meant to serve as enemy combatants. Donald Trump's extreme agenda has already emboldened law enforcement agents across the country, at the local, state and federal level. Making sure that his administration cannot arm police with weapons of war is a powerful way to fight back. Can you add your name today? Tell Congress to pass the Stop Militarizing Law. Thank you for everything you do, Heidi Hess, Senior Campaign Manager, CREDO Action from Working Assets / Fight Trumpcare. Right now. From anywhere! / September 25, 2017 at 11:09 AM / From: "Justin Krebs, MoveOn.org Civic Action" / Dear MoveOn member, The fight to stop the latest attack on health care is in a critical 72-hour sprint as Republicans seek to push through the Graham-Cassidy bill that would take health care from 32 million Americans, slash protections for pre-existing conditions, and end Medicaid as we know it. We know that calls to Senate offices make a difference—and you can play a role by asking fellow progressives to make their voices heard. Will you join in? Click here to start making calls to progressives in the states with key Republican senators to urge them to flood their own senators' offices with calls. Thanks for all you do—again and again! –Justin, Matt, Elsie, Emma, and the rest of the team. / I need a second of your time. Just one. /September 25, 2017 at 8:54 PM / From: Robert Reich Hi, MoveOn member, This is Robert Reich. I'm going to cut right to the chase, because we don't have much time. This week, probably on Wednesday or Thursday, Senate Republicans are planning to vote on the latest—and cruelest—version of Trumpcare. We have just a couple of days left to mobilize the overwhelming grassroots pressure needed to save health care for tens of millions of people. Thanks for all you do. –Robert Reich / Puerto Rico / September 26, 2017 at 12:59 PM / From: "Change.org" / Wanda — There's a petition taking off on Change.org, and we think you might be interested in signing it. Over 3 million of our fellow American citizens of Puerto Rico are in dire straits. The island is without power, water and supplies are in short supply, finding safe shelter is getting harder to come by, and hospitals are already filled to capacity. The U.S. Navy has a hospital ship that it has sent on humanitarian missions across the globe and that hospital ship, the USNS Comfort, is needed now to help our fellow American citizens living in Puerto Rico. / Restore the VRA / September 26, 2017 at 5:13 PM / From: "Nina Turner, Our Revolution" / Wanda, Voting is one of the greatest equalizers we have. Regardless of who you are or what you look like, we are all equal. Voter ID laws, restrictions on same-day registration and early voting, gerrymandering, aggressive purges of voter rolls, and a multitude of other efforts have made voting more difficult for African-Americans, Latinos, students, and many others. Our Revolution is working to pass the Automatic Voter Registration Act (H.R. 2840) as part of the People's Platform. Add your name to our petition to guarantee that every eligible person age 18 and up is automatically registered to vote. Our vote is how we hold our elected officials accountable to the policies we want to see passed. It is how we express our opinions in the public space. Policies pushing voter access remain just as important now as they were during the Civil Rights era The struggle will always continue, but through the power of voting we have the opportunity and responsibility to create a nation that values clean water, fresh air, safe neighborhoods, and quality education for everyone. In solidarity, Nina Turner, President, Our Revolution / The most dangerous Senate candidate in years / September 27, 2017 at 1:05 PM / From: "Matthew Blizek, MoveOn.org Political Action" / Dear MoveOn member, In a few moments, I'm going to ask you to support Doug Jones, the MoveOn-endorsed Democratic candidate for Senate from Alabama. I hope that you'll give me a chance to explain why we think this ask is so important and keep reading. If elected, Doug Jones' opponent, Roy Moore, could become the most dangerous senator in America. You might have heard of Moore—he's known as the "Ten Commandments Judge" and has been suspended from the bench in the past for defying court orders. As senator, he would be a danger to our entire country. But there's strong reason for hope, because Democrat Doug Jones is a great candidate with a path to victory. Jones is pro-choice, pro-Affordable Care Act, and has an incredible personal story about the evils of racism and white supremacy. And he can win! Winning this race—in Alabama, among the reddest of deep-red states—would be a tremendous blow to Trump's agenda Which is why I'm asking: Can you make a contribution of $9—or whatever you can afford—before Saturday's Federal Election Commission's fundraising deadline? We have a real opportunity to shock the nation and win this race, but it'll take thousands of progressives pitching in small amounts to make it happen. Yes, I'll donate now to help ensure that progressive champion Doug Jones and MoveOn have the resources and momentum to defeat Republican Roy Moore. Your support will provide the resources we need to run get-out-the-vote efforts across the state, help the Jones campaign spread his progressive message, and help fight back against Republican attacks by communicating with voters through targeted advertising and field programs. Let's make it clear that we're not going to write off any part of this country to the right wing. .Thanks for all you do.–Matt, Milan, Hawley, Gabby, and the rest of the team. / Why I support the Sanders Institute / October 05, 2017 at 2:11 PM / FromDanny Glover / The Sanders Institute / Wanda, The present state of our country and of our world beckons to all of us. As we confront climate change, multiple refugee crises, the threat of global conflict, and a disturbing normalization of fascism, our collective future mandates that we unite around calls for justice with a sense of urgency – justice for women, justice for LGBTQ communities, justice for immigrants, justice for racial and ethnic minorities, justice for religious minorities, justice for the economically disenfranchised, justice for our environment. We must speak powerful truths to power; truths rooted in our diversity and interconnectedness. As a Fellow of the Sanders Institute, I offer my experience in supporting social justice movements around the world. I hope to inspire a new generation of socially engaged citizens in fighting for justice and equality for all. Danny Glover, Sanders Institute Founding Fellow, 2017. DONATE. Urgent: palm oil / 3 weeks ago at 8:37 AM / From: "Katherine Tu, SumOfUs.org / Wanda, The only place on Earth where orangutans, elephants, rhinos, and tigers live together is being illegally ripped to shreds to make way for palm oil – the cheap fat used in everything from snack foods to shampoo. Corporations wanting to make a quick buck have bulldozed a whopping 22,000 hectares of rainforest -- the size of over 40,000 football fields – in just two years. UNESCO has listed this fragile place – the Leuser ecosystem on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia, as a world heritage site in danger. SumOfUs has been fighting to defend these forests for years. We have a proven strategy that wins – made only possible by SumOfUs

members like you. To continue to stop the tide of destruction – and save the precious wildlife – we really need your support today. Some of the largest purchasers of conflict palm oil are snack food companies. We've shown that by aggressively targeting their brands we can force them to find alternatives to conflict palm oil and cut off demand once and for all. If you make a small monthly gift today, we can can pay for expert advice and technology to run and win campaigns so we can protect these forests and the animals that live in them for generations to come. Donating takes just two mins – use Paypal or your card / Stop the U.S. bombing in Yemen (sign this) / 2 weeks ago at 8:14 AM / From: "Tessa Levine, CREDO Action" / Tell Congress: No war in Yemen / The petition to Congress reads: “Pass H.C.R. 81 to immediately halt unauthorized U.S. military involvement in the Republic of Yemen.” Dear Wanda, The ongoing Saudi-led war in Yemen has killed thousands, forced millions to flee their homes, resulted in the world’s worst cholera outbreak, and left 7 million people at risk of starvation. American-made bombs – dropped by American-made planes and refueled by American military forces – have been used by the Saudis and their allies to destroy crops, cut off access to ports, and wreak havoc on the people of Yemen. This war depends on American support, and now we have a chance to shut that down. Congress has never approved American involvement in this war, and progressive Reps. Ro Khanna, Mark Pocan and others have introduced legislation to demand the United States immediately halt all unauthorized military involvement in Yemen. Under the War Powers Resolution, this important legislation is guaranteed a vote, which means in the next few weeks, the House of Representatives will finally debate and vote on this completely unauthorized war. Tell Congress: Pass H.C.R. 81 to immediately halt unauthorized U.S. military involvement in the Republic of Yemen. Click here to sign the petition. For nearly three years, under the guise of our reckless, illegal “war on terror,” the United States has assisted Saudi Arabia in their conflict with the Houthis – a Yemeni Shiite rebel group. We have provided weapons, helped refuel coalition jets as they dropped bombs and provided logistical and intelligence support. But the Houthis have absolutely nothing to do with Al Qaeda, ISIS or any other terrorist organization that could conceivably fall within the scope of military intervention authorized by the current Authorization for Use of Military Force. In providing the Saudi-led coalition targeting intelligence, mid-air refueling and other logistical support, the United States is complicit in violations of international law. We are also helping create one of the world’s largest humanitarian crisis. Tell Congress: Pass H.C.R. 81 to immediately halt unauthorized U.S. military involvement in the Republic of Yemen. Congress must remove us from this conflict, immediately. Thank you for standing up for peace,Tessa Levine, Campaign Manager CREDO Action from Working Assets / Prisoners dying fighting fires / 2 weeks ago at 4:46 PM / From: "Change.org" / Wanda — There’s a petition taking off on Change.org, and we think you might be interested in signing it. Reduce Sentences for Prisoners Fighting California Fires. As fires ripped through Northern California burning down over 8,000 homes and other buildings, and killing over 40 people, 1,700 of those fighting fires on the front lines have been California state prisoners. .In fact, 30% of California’s forest firefighters, nearly 4,000, are prisoners. While it’s a long standing practice for prisoners to work while incarcerated as a form of rehabilitation, we would be better served by rewarding prisoners who have demonstrated exceptional conduct in prison with a sentence reduction. I can think of no group that deserves a second chance more than those who, serving time for minor crimes, choose to risk their lives to save others by fighting fires. In February 2016, 22-year-old Shawna Lynn Jones, was killed when she was struck in the head by a falling rock while fighting fires in Malibu. She was serving time for violating probation for a drug offense and was scheduled to be released just two months later. Over the last year, at least two other prisoners have died while performing firefighting duty. Prisoners earn approximately $2 a day, or up to $1 an hour if fighting an active fire, through a program with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. There are 43 conservation camps in California where adult offenders work. These prisoners are screened and anyone with violent tendencies or attitude problems is not allowed into the program. Around 30 to 40 percent work 24-hour shifts, then get 24 hours of rest. At most, prisoners can earn up to two days off for each day they’re in the conservation camps. This program is estimated to save the state $124 million a year, amounting to 3 million hours of labor to fight or prevent fires. We can do better for people who clearly pose no threat to society. Please sign my petition asking California Governor Jerry Brown to exercise his clemency privilege toward prisoners who have risked life and limb to save the homes and lives of countless California citizens, animals, and hundreds of thousand of acres of forestry. Thank you, Amy Povah CAN-DO Foundation. / "Thoughts and prayers" are not enough / 1 week ago at 10:54 PM / From "Anna Galland, MoveOn.orPolitical Action" / Dear MoveOn Member, Yesterday, we watched in horror as the news came in about yet another mass shooting in our country. We’ve seen these headlines so many times before—at concerts, movie theaters, rallies, and schools—but this time it was a small community church in Sutherland, TX, where at least 26 parishioners lost their lives. Although it is the worst mass shooting in Texas this century, it is not even the worst mass shooting in the past 60 days in the United States. And, tragically, it's one of many—in fact, it is the 378th mass shooting this year in our country. Already, we’ve seen the knee-jerk inaction from Republicans. Donald Trump said that the massacre was "not a guns situation" and that it was "a little bit too soon" to talk about gun laws in the wake of the tragedy. And lawmakers in the pocket of the NRA have offered their "thoughts and prayers" while refusing to acknowledge the root problem and obvious solution. Enough is enough. Nothing will bring back the 26 people who lost their lives yesterday, and "thoughts and prayers" will not stop the next victims from losing theirs. But our massive, coordinated efforts to stop dangerous Republicans and NRA evangelists from ever taking power can make a real difference. Can you chip in $3 now to help us mobilize a real electoral response to the epidemic of gun violence in our country? MoveOn members aren't new to combating gun violence. We organized more than 30,000 gun owners who favored sensible gun laws two years ago and helped push President Obama to take executive action and close loopholes. After the recent massacre in Las Vegas, more than 200,000 MoveOn members signed petitions against assault weapons. And just two weeks ago, we helped push the Democratic Party to reject donations from gun lobbyists. We cannot allow the NRA to continue stopping commonsense gun control from even being debated in Congress. We cannot allow lawmakers around the country to continue turning a blind eye to the senseless slaughter of our fellow citizens. Can you chip in $3 to help fund MoveOn's effort to defeat NRA evangelists, and elect politicians who will fight the gun lobby? This special election is only the beginning: MoveOn is gearing up to run a massive, coordinated campaign to take back the House in 2018, which can help end the stranglehold the NRA has on our government and our lives. Join us, and we will stand up to the gun lobby together. Thank you for all you do.–Anna, Marie, Ben, Gabby, and the rest of the team. / Trump’s latest attack on immigrants (sign the petition) / 5 days ago at 9:14 AM / From: "Heidi Hess, CREDO Action" / Tell the Department of Homeland Security: “Extend Temporary Protected Status for Central America and Haiti.” Dear Wanda, The Trump regime just gave 3,000 Nicaraguans 14 months to leave to the country. They are threatening to deliver the same horrific news to more than 300,000 immigrants from Haiti, El Salvador and Honduras soon. These people, most of whom have lived, worked and raised families in the U.S for decades, are at risk of deportation because the Trump administration is waging an all-out war on immigrants. They have already gone after refugees and immigrants protected by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Now they are targeting immigrants who have Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Revoking TPS will throw hundreds of thousands of people into immigration limbo and leave them vulnerable to Trump’s rogue, racist deportation forces. Tell the Department of Homeland Security: Extend TPS for Central America and Haiti. Click here to sign the petition. Trump has proven again and again that he will throw anyone under the bus to cater to his nativist base. That base is demanding that he upend our immigration system and replace a system that prioritizes open doors, safe harbor and a commitment to diversity with one that closes our doors, ignores conflicts and crises across the globe and values immigrants for their earning potential over their humanity. Immigrant rights activists, congressional allies (including some Republicans), the governments of Haiti and Honduras, and even the U.S. Chamber of Congress have lobbied DHS to maintain TPS protections. Ultimately, the only path to fully protecting TPS recipients lies with Congress, which could offer more permanent protection. But right now, DHS needs to hear from tens of thousands of people who stand with TPS holders. That’s why we are joining our friends at UndocuBlack, New York Immigrant Coalition and America’s Voice to raise this issue and our voices. Can you sign the petition today? Thank you for fighting back against Trump’s extremist hate, Heidi Hess, Senior Campaign Manager, CREDO Action from Working Assets / CONTENT WARNING] Signature needed: Nobel Peace laureate silently watching genocide / 2 days ago at 9:13 AM / From: "Murshed Zaheed, CREDO Action" / To: Wanda Kossak / Tell the Nobel Committee: Pressure Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi to stop genocide / Petition to members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee: "Commit all your influence and means to pressuring Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi to use her power and moral authority to end the ongoing genocide against the Rohingya people in Myanmar." Dear Wanda, Even as you read this, Burmese government soldiers are perpetrating a genocide on the Rohingya – a Muslim minority in Buddhist-majority Myanmar, also known as Burma – including horrors sickening even to imagine: Survivors said they saw government soldiers stabbing babies, cutting off boys’ heads, gang-raping girls, shooting 40-millimeter grenades into houses, burning entire families to death, and rounding up dozens of unarmed male villagers and summarily executing them. Former activist and Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi is now the most senior non-military leader of Myanmar. But she has refused to use her stature to stop these atrocities, even reportedly referring to genocide as “a quarrel” in a recent visit to the area. One of the few international bodies that might have influence over Suu Kyi is the Nobel Committee that once awarded her the Nobel Peace Prize – so we need to pressure them to speak up immediately in order to stop the violence. Thank you for speaking out, Murshed Zaheed, Political Director, CREDO Action from Working Assets / Cruel, vicious, and un-American / 2 days ago at 6:33 PM / From: Elizabeth Warren / Dear MoveOn member, I'm fighting tooth and nail to defeat the new Republican tax scam making its way through Congress. It's a 1.5-trillion-dollar tax giveaway—the biggest tax giveaway to giant corporations in modern history. It's a bill so insulting to working families that it actually gives Wells Fargo—the company that created millions of fake accounts to cheat its customers—the largest tax break of all. Here's the problem: I can't stop this Republican tax scam by myself. My fellow Democrats in Congress and I can't stop the Republicans by ourselves either—we just don't have the votes. But the health care fight proved this: The power isn't in Congress; the power is with you. You are the only firewall that will keep these cruel, vicious, and un-American GOP bills off of Donald Trump's desk. That's why I'm asking you to fight with us, Wanda. Are you in? Click here to chip in $3 to help support MoveOn's campaign to stop the Republicans' cruel, vicious, and un-American budget and tax plans. Will America become a country that rips away health care and other essential services from tens of millions of Americans in order to give tax breaks to millionaires, billionaires, and giant corporations? I pledge to you that I will continue doing everything that I can, because this fight may be the most important fight in a generation for America's middle class. But I need you to fight alongside me. We need you to make calls, tell your story, show up in person and rally, volunteer, and chip in, too. Will you join me in the fight for the heart and soul of America by clicking here to chip in $3 to support MoveOn's all-hands-on-deck push to stop the Republican budget and protect America's heart and soul. I'm in this fight because I believe in an America that works for all of us. I hope you'll join me. Thanks for all you do.–Senator Elizabeth Warren / Stop the corporate takeover of the internet! / Yesterday at 12:21 PM /From: "Reem Suleiman, SumOfUs.org" / Trump’s FCC is about to hand Big Cable corporate control of the internet by dismantling net neutrality. Call on Congress now to protect net neutrality -- and preserve free speech and innovation online. Verizon, Comcast, and the rest of Big Cable have long been plotting a corporate takeover of the world wide web. Now, Trump’s FCC wants to hand it to them on a silver platter by dismantling net neutrality. Net neutrality principles stop corporate internet service providers like Comcast from prioritizing, blocking, or censoring content online. That means all legal content online is treated the same -- not just content from sites able to pay to be in Comcast’s or Verizon’s “fast lanes”.We’ve fought this battle before, and won.

Sound Stopping

When my wife worked downtown, ages ago, we would, most days, have lunch together. In the summer we often sat outside on the polished stone wall surrounding Henry Moore's bronze "Three Piece Sculpture: Vertebrae." Once, a man was walking past with a little boy, perhaps 3 or 4 years old. We could see the boy's eyes latch onto the Moore with increasing fascination. "What is that?" he asked. The man took a quick glance and muttered, "Art."

I was stranded on an offramp one night with a car that had stalled out, in the time before cellphones. A young man stopped to see if he could help. This was his inquiry, hand raised in greeting: "Shit, man!" I explained my sad situation. This was his sympathetic response, hands at sides: "Shit, man!" I gave him my number in case he could get to a phone and let my dad know where I was. As he left, this was his hope-that-things-would-get-better-for-me farewell, hand raised: "Shit, man!" I was, eventually, rescued by my dad.

**

My two brothers and I (the ham of the sandwich) grew up with a reel-to-reel tape machine, complete with microphones. Once we understood how to operate it, we were allowed to. And we did, producing (but these words are too big for what we were about) our own compilations and comedy tapes - not much more than extended fart jokes, I imagine. Recorded sound was, for us, a toy, in the same sense that computers are, to my kids, now grown, toys. I can't imagine this was the case for our parents or their generation.

My dad, who will be 92 in March, grew up during the Depression on his parent's orange farm near (now in) Los Angeles. He was the youngest of four siblings that survived infancy. When he was about 12, his father died of a heart attack - brought on, according to family stories, by the struggle to run an orange farm during the Depression. His mother, who lived into her 80s, long enough for me to have met her when I was small, worked as a cook at a local private college, so they never wanted for food. My dad joined the Air Force when he turned 18, but the war ended soon afterwards, so he was never deployed overseas. He went to college on the GI Bill, eventually moving to Seattle to live with his older sister and her family while studying at the University of Washington. He became a shop teacher, athletic coach, counselor, and vice principal at various high schools in the Seattle School District, supplementing his teacher's salary with jobs as a seasonal ranger at Mt. Rainier National Park (where I spent my first two summers) and driving for his brother-in-law's trucking company. When we were small he built a cabin in Freeland, near Holmes Harbor on Whidbey Island, where we would spend summers, along with seeming cartloads of nearby cousins, free range, barefoot in the mudflats, building rafts and platforms out of driftwood and rusty spikes, fishing, swimming, and messing about in boats. After he retired they built a new house and moved permanently to Whidbey Island. He got a job on a dairy farm, driving tractors in the fields near Coupeville. I doubt he ever enjoyed any job as much as that one.

My mom, who turned 90 last September, was a preacher's kid, or a "PK", as they are known within the church family. Her father was born in Bradford, England, and came to the Pacific Northwest with his mother when he was in his teens. He served Methodist churches in Idaho and Washington, eventually holding an administrative position in the conference. Her mother was a McAbee, a vibrantly musical Irish

family with deep roots in the Methodist Church and the Salvation Army. Both of her parents died within a year of each other several years before I was born. My mom picked up the musical bent. As a young woman she played violin and had a fine mezzo-soprano voice. At one point after high school she was studying music (in New York, if I have the story straight) and had stood in a long line to register for a vocal repertoire class. When she got to the head of the line the class had been changed to choral conducting but, not wanting to waste all the time spent in line, she signed up, and was soon, much to her surprise, hooked. She directed church and community choirs with vocation until an unfortunate whiplash injury in the early '70s forced her to stop. In order to help make ends meet she worked in various capacities in the real estate business until her retirement. Music being irrepressible, she taught herself to play recorder, and picked up the violin again, actively participating in numerous community ensembles until quite recently.

And so, growing up in our church, I was one of the choir director's kids. The first choir I was in, at the tender age of 5 (The Cherub Choir, I kid you not) was taken by a subaltern, but eventually I rose through the ranks of the Wesley Boy Choir to a mixed youth chorus the name of which escapes me. At several Christmas festivals, or perhaps just one, we performed a combined (youth and adult) choral arrangement of "O Holy Night". One particularly overdramatic entrance by the adult choir of "Fall on your knees!" rings still as the first time I recall the sheer power of music grabbing me. The fact that it's a cheesy effect never lessens the punch it lands, for me, even listening back now to one of those very performances, rescued from my mom's tape.

Of course, one attraction of church life is the music. One could say many things about the qualities of its repertoire, and I'm not shy about it if you ask, but to my knowledge, church is the only social structure in my lived culture that, while not dedicated to music as its specific focus, embraces social, participatory music as an essential activity. Nowhere else will everybody be invited, so naturally, to stand and simply sing together, and, so naturally, do it.

**

From just before I was born my mom was the director of the Lake Washington Singers, a community women's chorus. I remember lying in bed as a child hearing the voices of women upstairs laughing and listening to the most recent tape my mom had made of those same women's voices singing. These voices are my earliest memory of sound: the sound of women's voices singing, listening, and laughing.

I grew up in the church. I remember, as a young teen, being confirmed, distinctly, the hands of the minister on my shoulders. What passed between us as he prayed wasn't nothing. Being of a speculative bent, at one point soon afterward I made a conscious effort to not believe in God. I was unable. I discovered thus, and have long since accepted, that my faith is non-negotiable.

I remember walking along the Hudson River during the 1983 thaw, wonderstruck and awed by the riverbroad racket of a winterload of ice flowing downriver, when suddenly, instantly, the entire riverlong surface seized up, motionless, still, as far as far was. The sound stopped, utterly. I heard the sound of sound stopping receding into the new made land of the sound of sound stopping.

Keith Eisenbrey, February 5, 2018

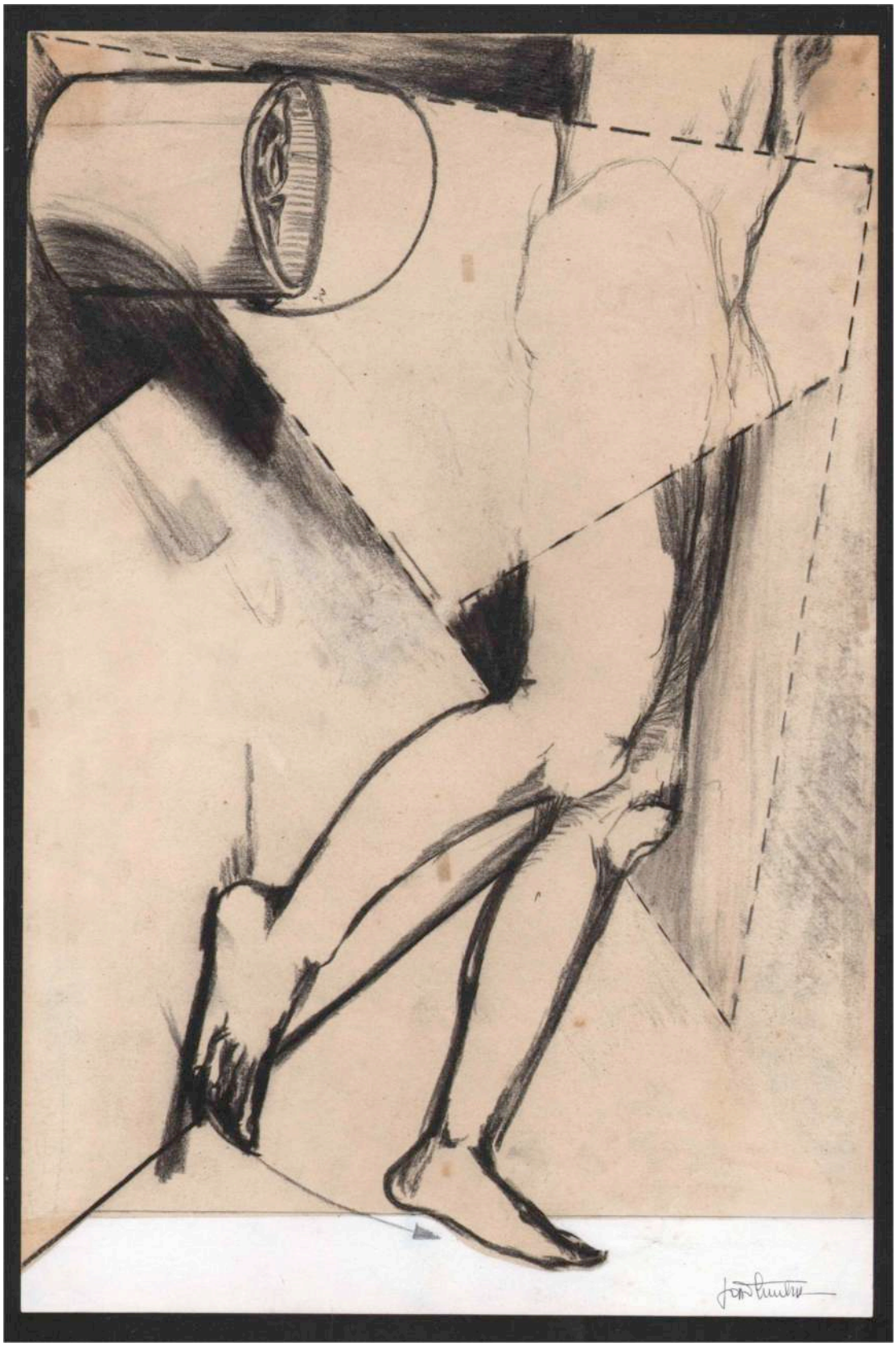


Fig. 1

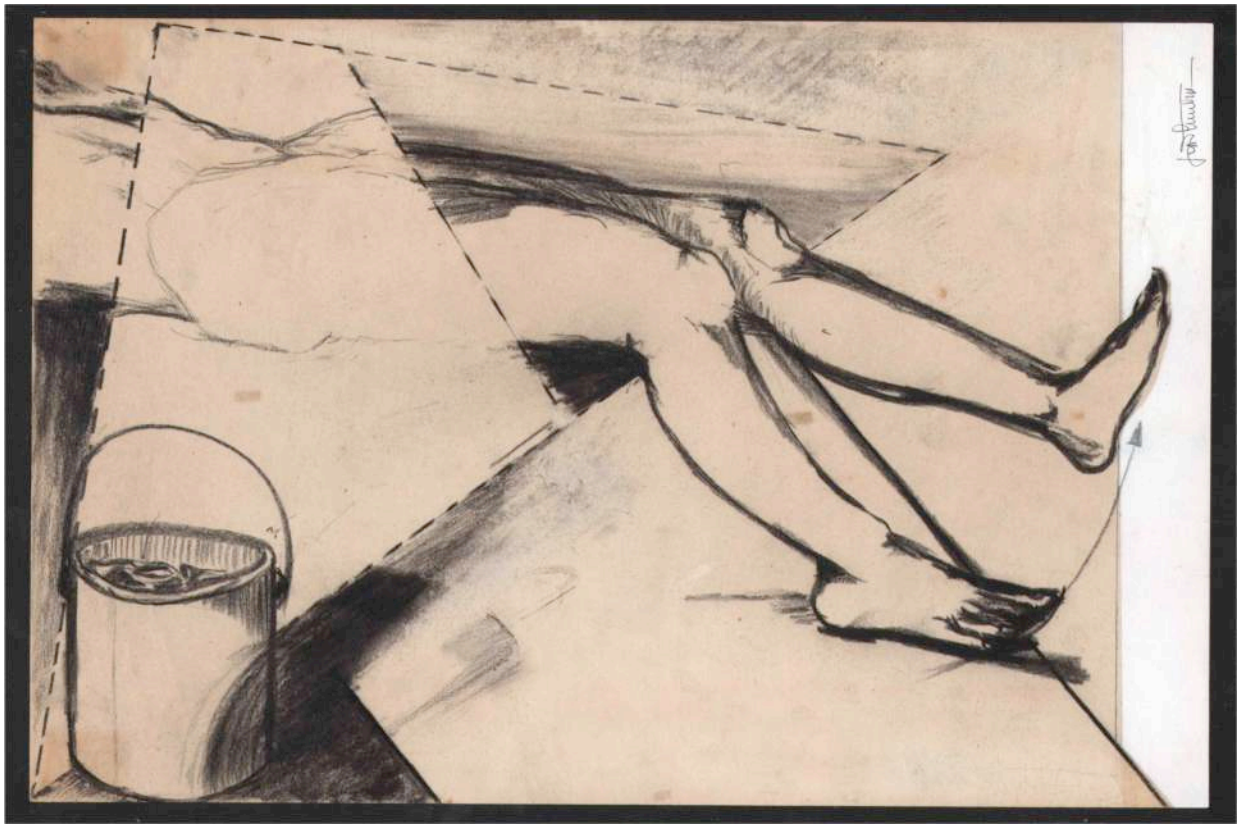


Fig. 2

12/5/2017 4:46 pm:

Dorota, dear friend!!

I am sending you several emails, in numerical order. The number on each email corresponds to the number in the series of the visual works, attached.

The idea/concept is that by this expanding gesture we can bring together the ideas generated by the movements, throughout various epochs:

Countercultural Movements, Art Movements, Social Movements, Feminist Movements, Philosophical Movements, Literary Movements, Migratory Movements, Rural and Urban Movements, Political Movements, etc., etc., etc. ...

I would like you to contribute a text as a deepening, or your own unfolding of this theme.

Hugs!!
João Cunha

Ilustração de uma Trajetória

of João Cunha*

or why the USPS matters

"If everything when it occupies an equal space is at rest, and if that which is in locomotion is always occupying such a space at any moment, the flying arrow is therefore motionless."

— Zeno, as recounted by Aristotle, *Physics* VI:9, 239b5

"From the place I am I've already left."

—Manoel de Barros, *Birds for a Demolition* (translated from Portuguese by Indra Novey)

The stamp
is the intention
of motion

Accepted at the United States Post Office,
90 Cornell Street, KINGSTON,
NY 12401-9998, on 07/06/2016 at 11:03 am.

fed into the beak
of a yellow postal bird

words that fit
the intention
are swallowed
the manila envelope fed
to another creature,
a woman, a man, a bird, someone
with eager hands,
or beak.

We touch things. "Investigate Things".
Make art-things. To give. And receive.
Reciprocate is the word
(thank you,
Mr. Mauss.)

* *Ilustração de uma Trajetória* is a phrase I borrowed from the Brazilian artist and friend, João Cunha. My understanding is that it is the title of his ongoing life-long art project, as well as the archival artist's book published under the same title.

To weigh it. Promptly.
To carry. Swiftly. To move from place to place.

Through the exuberance of HANDS.

Bulk Mail Acceptance Hours
Mon-Fri 9:00am - 12:00pm
1:00pm - 4:00pm

The stamp, round, promises to stay
« GLOBAL. FOREVER »

intimating that matter
matters only to mark the limits of this space

but the Un-Expressed
(says the Book of Tao)
when shipped GlobalExpress

07/06/2016 at 9:56 Arrived at the sorting facility,
217 Liberty Street NEWBURGH,
NY, 12550

is the thing
of real value

the place we can exchange gifts,
in the elastic body of Imagining
ourselves someplace else

where? where:

Last Collection Hours
Mon-Fri 6:30pm
Sat 4:00pm
Sun Closed

Time curls
& snails nest in the teeth of dark wetness
licked off, from under the stamp

wherever I am not, words find me
raised
projected
into the air



Fig. 3

like Zeno's arrow

08/06/2016 at 6:03 Left the sorting facility,
217 Liberty Street NEWBURGH, NY;
08/06/2016 at 4:23 pm
Scanned at the USPS sorting center
at JFK International Airport

In our connecting wish: to make
the Un-Expressed grow
strong

JAMAICA, NY 11430-9997

while ourselves sleep arrested on the verge of movement.
Breathe. Breathe.

the air. the space. the green rain beyond cyberspace.

08/06/2016 at 11:40 pm, ClearedCustoms
at JFK International Airport

https://www.usps.com/manage/WELCOME.htm

the Gypsies make snail-shell amulets
for their friendship to remain constant
the way fire is

when fed by air

In transit to Destination
"and the color blue is the key in the life of a bird"
(Manoel de Barros)

so in any one instant of time
the arrow is neither moving to where it is,
nor to where it is not.

https://www.usps.com/manage/welcome.htm

But what is it made of?
Who are you?
Where is your tracking number?
Energy is a thought
so compact that it can fly standing,
erect,
Like a hummingbird

09/06/2016 5:40 am, Arrived at São Paulo/Guarulhos
International Airport
09/06/2016 1:03 pm, Cleared Customs at São Paulo/Guarulhos
International Airport

still in movement

or maybe I do not need an ending to arrive
the stamp itself
tasting good: maple syrup & glue:
& the particulars of our new burgeoning warmth
the intention
on the go

On the delivery van in transit to Destination

Zeno states that for motion to occur, an object must change the position which it occupies.

"Para encontrar o azul eu uso os pássaros"
(Manoel de Barros)

Here we are together. INVESTIGATING OBJECTS. Gifts. Time set free. Writing letters in the time when the spring forest means green-like transparency. Autumn in São Paulo.

On the verge of, simply passing through.
Seeing the dots of, seeing through the dots, connecting the dots in the mind, but never drawing the hard lines. Waiting.

10/06/2016 11:04 am Arrived at Destination
CAMPINAS – SP CEP
13035-060 — BRASIL

Passing through.

Countercultural Movements,
Art Movements,
Social Movements,
Feminist Movements,
Philosophical Movements,
Literary Movements,
Migratory Movements,
Rural and Urban Movements,
Political Movements,
etc, etc, etc ...

(The pataphysics of Mauss: the science of Gift within the modern market economies.)



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

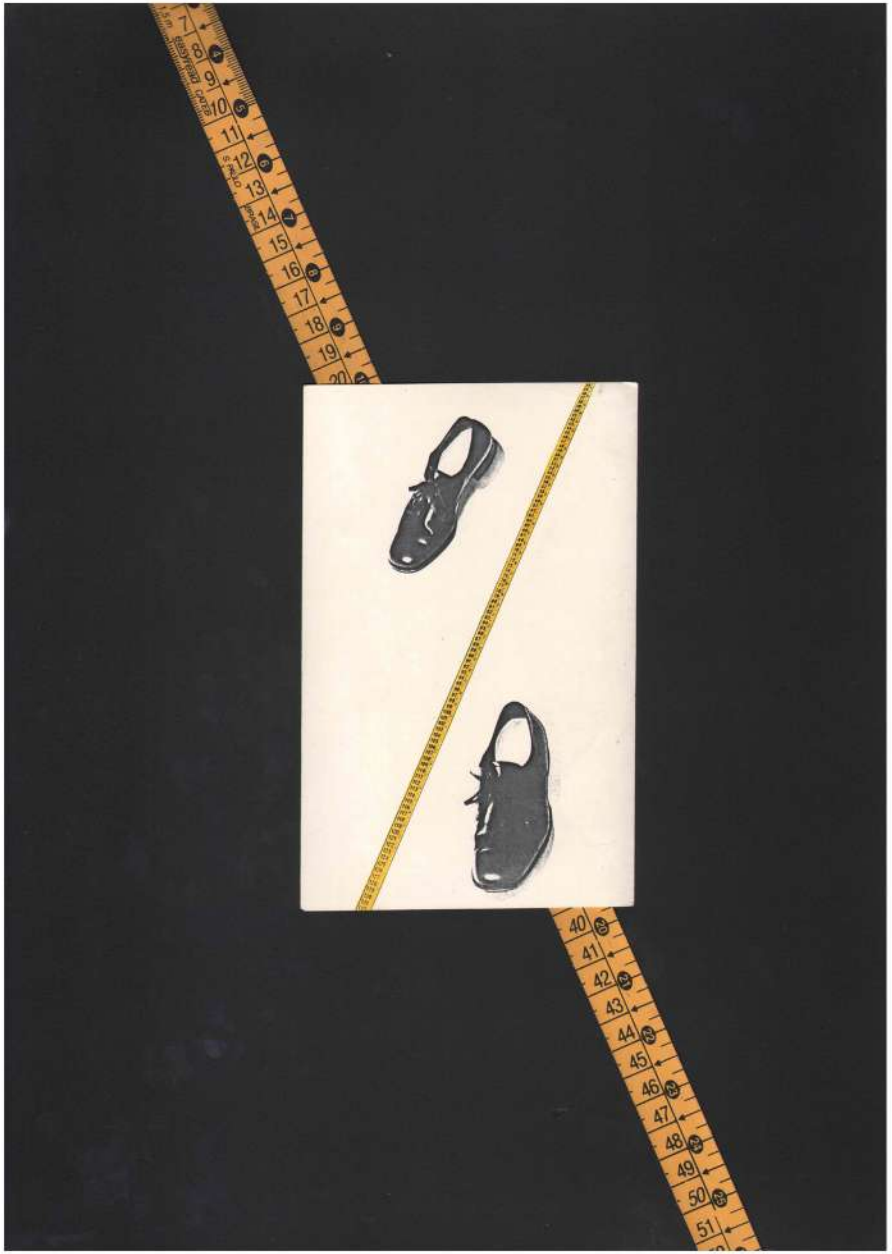
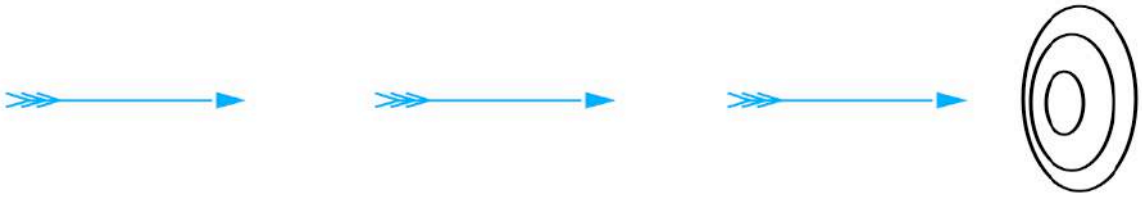


Fig. 10

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) — a migratory bird
breeding on the East coast of North America.
Two seen August 3, on salt pans in the region of Cabo Frio,
about 100 kilometers east of the city of Rio de Janeiro,
in winter plumage.



We go on breathing till we work it out.

(“…….....
What lies at a distance is pre-clear
or simply dark?”)
Manoel de Barros, *Birds for a Demolition*

so that we can exchange gifts in order to hear
what the world is saying
by such means

Dorota Czerner, May 1st 2018.

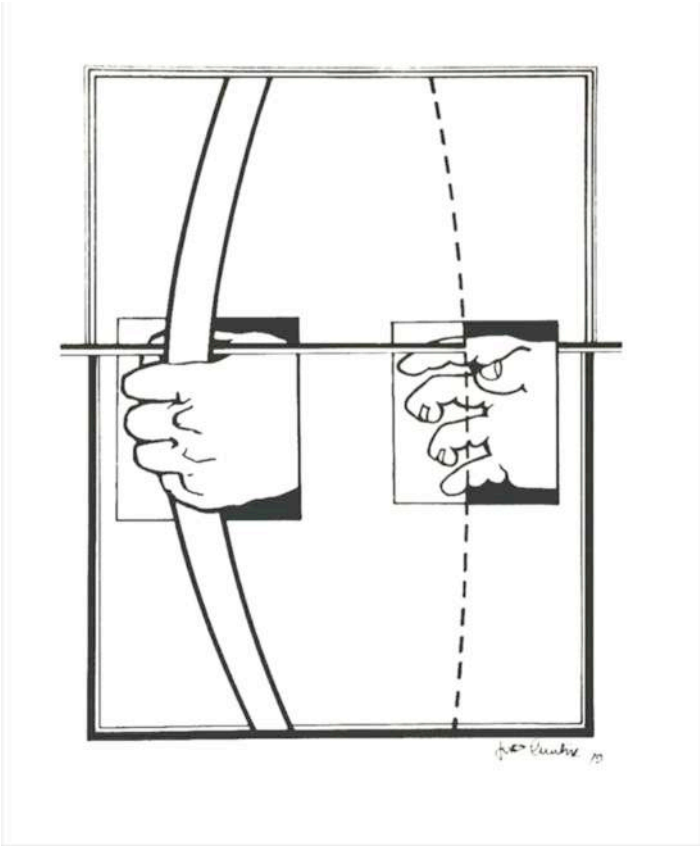


Fig. 11

"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night
stays these couriers from the swift completion
of their appointed round."

This is the unofficial motto of the United States Postal Service based on a simplification of George Herbert Palmer's 19th century translation of Herodotus' ('The Persian Wars', Book 8 paragraph 98).

LIST of WORKS

Fig. 1
Movimento/Andante
(Movement/Walking)
Position Vertical
mixed technique on paper

Fig. 2
Movimento/Repouso
(Movement/Rest)
Position Horizontal
mixed technique on paper

Fig. 3
Series: *Mãos/Hands*
Assemblage/Scanner

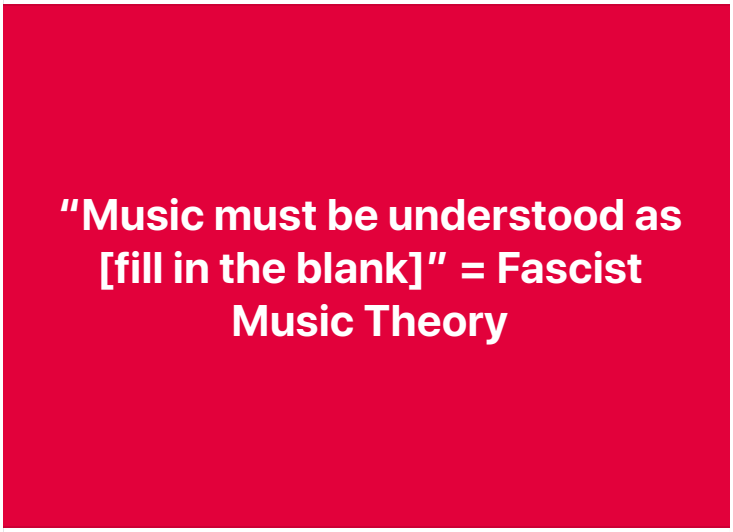
Fig. 4 & Fig. 10
Montagem para um gesto/movimento
(Assembly for a gesture/movement)
Art: João Cunha
photo: Rennato Testa

Postcard on photographic paper
Open Work / Photo / Digital Graphic Assembly

Figs 5 — 9
Movimento Projetado(1) /
Projected Movement (1)
Object/Installation
Three-dimensional version
Art: João Cunha
photo: Marco do Valle

Fig. 11
Series: *Mãos/Hands*
Photogravure:
Arco/Horizonte /
Bow/Horizon
1979/João Cunha
from the collection of
Rennato Testa

Joshua Banks Mailman
January 6 ·



Like Comment

Augustus Arnone, Ian Pace and 32 others

Michael Morse Worse: "Music must not be understood as [f.i.t.b.]"
Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman At least that exclusion leaves infinite other options still allowed
2
Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Brad Garton ... the product of, like, very stable geniuses.
7
Like · Reply · 14w

Nicholas Bannan ... human social intelligence rendered in audio-directed ritual
1
Like · Reply · 14w

Ildar Khannanov Are there any examples of "fascist music theory"?
1
Like · Reply · 14w

Will Mason lol.
Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman I did not make that up. It is a quote (except for the fill-in-the-blank.) Draw your own conclusions.
Like · Reply · 14w

Michael Morse Look at the volumes of Die Musik and, alas, the journal that Schumann founded, neue Zeitschrift fuer Musik. Depending on how vigorously the authors are willing to toe the party line, music *must* be understood as an expression of folk and race.. just as Susan McClary insists that music as gendered, and anyone who denies it is in a state of patriarchal ideological denial..
Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Ildar Khannanov What is "the expression of folk and race"? And, music that you suggest does not belong to fascist category--does not have anything to do with "race and folk"?

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman i think saying music is gendered is pretty open-ended, leaving plenty of room for individual understandings of what that means. Most importantly, it doesn't really exclude other understandings. As compared to those of the 20th century, 19th century writers were of course more prone to manifesto-like pronouncements than 21st century scholars are. That's a pretty stark contrast.

3

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Cıarán Ó Meaċaır Harmony?

Like · Reply · 14w

William Anderson Well I got into this. I was a fascist because I insisted that Babbitt's music is not free improv, not comparable to free improv.

My disputant said, well, can't there be more than one way to hear a piece.....?

And I conceded, but tearing my hair out.

2

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Hide 29 Replies

Michael Morse but free improv is not a mode of listening.. listening to Philomel or All Set as if they were free improv pieces would be interesting, I suppose; but as Cecil Taylor once said, that is a good example of why "interesting" isn't very interesting..

4

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman William, I think you were probably trying to indicate to that person that he/she would be missing the nuance of details if he/she failed to realize that these details were carefully planned out over time rather than merely arising in the moment of performance. That doesn't even seem coercive, and doesn't even preclude listening to Babbitt "as if" it's improv. From what I gather, Babbitt liked the Bad Plus version of Semi-simple and composers such as Robert Morris (his _Not Lilacs_), Donald Martino (Impromptus), and Mel Powell were totally comfortable with affinities between their music and jazz, without vanquishing the role of intense compositional planning in forging an intricate web of details to be enjoyed.

2

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Michael Morse It'd be more than passing strange of Martino and Powell's pieces were not at least somewhat jazz-inflected; both had professional jazz performance experience, Powell's quite substantive. (So was Nancarrow's come to that..)

2

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Joshua Banks Mailman Babbitt played in jazz dance bands as a teenager in Mississippi

Like · Reply · 14w

Justin Benz I've heard people wheel out the argument that Ferneyhough and free-improv are indistinguishable. I've no interest in that conversation, because it's plainly obvious that, when it gets to that point, the subject at hand is not Ferneyhough or free improv, but how 'cool' or 'uncool' the person talking is as a consumer.

Like · Reply · 14w 2

Justin Benz ...and, from what I've read and in line with what's been mentioned here, the actual composers (and, to a lesser extent, the free improvisors) never take the distinction nearly as serious as the listeners who consider themselves taste-makers, connoisseurs, critics, etc...

Like · Reply · 14w 2

Joshua Banks Mailman Basically it's a kind of posturing, or jostling for status, which really comes off as an attempt to reduce the unfamiliar (and therefore formidable and possibly intimidating) to what's familiar and so dismissible.

Like · Reply · 14w 2

Justin Benz In America (and increasingly, the UK and other Anglo- countries), so much discourse is like a melting glacier over a sea of consumer anti-intellectualism.

I know a number of people in the American improvised music scene but write/perform sophisticated work and often find myself wishing that there wasn't such a deep stigma attached to discussing the nuts and bolts of what they do publicly.

Like · Reply · 14w 1

Joshua Banks Mailman you mean a stigma of them discussing the nuts and bolts of what they do as improvisers? Or of someone else (you) discussing/writing about their nuts and bolts?

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman As for the melting glacier, sadly YES, and please see my exchange with Bruce Quaglia on another subthread here.

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Joshua Banks Mailman Michael Morse Many have remarked on how Babbitt's music seems jazz inflected. Have you listened to his Phonemena? His Whirled Series? Or the third of his Three Compositions for piano? (Also obviously All-set for jazz ensemble)

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

William Anderson Joshua
Certainly!
Jazz is very organized compared to free improv. Babbitt flirted with 3rd Stream in Phonemena & All Set and others. He was pals with Gunther....

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited 1

Joshua Banks Mailman oh, I know!

Like · Reply · 14w

Michael Morse I've listened to a fair bit of Babbitt..

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman I think the pieces that I mentioned sound as "jazzy" as any compositions by Martino or Powell.

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

1

Joshua Banks Mailman William I missed you point because it originally said Haas sounds very organized compared to Babbitt (or free improv). Free improv can be considered jazz (it depends on the flavor of free improv). Putting it differently improvised atonal jazz is virtually impossible to distinguish from free improv jazz. I think you'd agree that the orderliness of Babbitt's surfaces become apparent only subtly and with increased familiarity; they don't just pop right out at you--well some of it does it you know what to listen for from prior experience with Babbitt's music. So I can totally understand how someone might observe an affinity between Babbitt's surfaces and free jazz. And then it's hard to argue with people who believe that superficial impressions are the ultimate truth. When you try to probe deeper, they just dig in their heels (being fundamentalists deep down), and then call you a fascist, and so forth. It would be ironic if it weren't so serious a problem.

Like · Reply · 14w

2

Michael Morse Well said, Josh. The proposition that musical surface is what precedes careful and repeated listening should be self-evident, but is constantly undermined by all the music (pre-digested, Adorno calls it) that either doesn't change with repeated listening or, precisely because we are so used to the former kinds, does not *seem* to change. Thanks to extreme, musically irrelevant relativism, we're stuck with a universe of superficial surfaces..

Like · Reply · 14w

1

William Anderson Joshua Right

Like · Reply · 14w

Christopher Bailey I would say most of the listening experience in Babbitt is surface. TBH I am rarely able to make "deeper connections". If I looked at the scores I might be able to, but I don't. Having said that, I have often thought about the "could it just be improv?" question with regards to various forms of complex music (Babbbtt, Cage, new complexity, etc.). I do they think sound different -- for the most part (there'd be exceptions on either side for sure). (Also I have not submitted myself to a blind test, which would be interesting.)

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Christopher Bailey : actually I'm talking about surface. His surfaces can absolutely be distinguished from improv, without even any row/array awareness. But this distinguishability is subtle and probably can only be discerned by those familiar with Babbitt's music and to some extent an heightened listener-self-awareness and compositional savviness

Like · Reply · 14w

Christopher Bailey it depends on the piece, but I'd say mostly you don't need that much awareness, it's not that subtle. if there's more than 1 instrument, for example, and assuming the performance is very good (admittedly, not always the case), then there are typically tons of rhythmic unison attacks. For example, String Quartet 4, in the new performance by Ars Combinatoria Quartet, this is all over the place. It's pretty obvious that SOMETHING is planned out here, it's just very very tight in some ways.

Like · Reply · 14w

1

Joshua Banks Mailman That's exactly what I mean Chris. The kind of awareness I'm talking about is that of which you speak. It's pretty obvious to _us_ that those things can't be improvised. But you'd be surprised (or maybe you wouldn't) just how dese some people can be when faced with something unfamiliar sounding. (BTW, as you know, there are also loads of instances of imitative counterpoint that happen at a density and level of intricacy that would be nearly impossible to improvise.)

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Lots of other avant-garde contemporary music lacks those intricate rhythmic unisons so those aren't even on the radar of a lot of listeners familiar with say Carter, Stockhausen, Cage, Ferneyhough, or Grisey.

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Christopher Bailey Ferneyhough was always a better candidate for "it could just be improv", but yeah I suppose you are right most people wouldn't hear those things right away. Although I don't think it would take much time to learn to recognize things like rhythmic unisons.

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Christopher Bailey We all agree that great (more or les) free improv and great composing are greaty-ho, but here's the real question: if you had to choose, what would you rather hear, a mediocre free improv piece, or a mediocre composed piece? I'll take the composed piece.

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman except if you're witnessing either in live performance, you might choose the improv, because in improv you feel you are witnessing the creative moment, and there's something exciting about that--other things being equal.

Like · Reply · 14w

Christopher Bailey Actually it is interesting, that while I really don't like listening to recorded free improv, I don't mind it live. On the other hand, most composed music I'd probably rather hear recorded.

Like · Reply · 14w

Augustus Arnone I agree, that the surfaces themselves could not be gotten at through improv, I thought that's kind of the point. But there's something about Babbitt's compositional voice that sounds so spontaneous and witty, so I can understand how people relate it to improv. Maybethere's a bit of magic in how he composed in the moment that indeed was improvisational? But performing improv itself is highly constrained, much moreso than what can be composed out.

2

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Daniel James Wolf What? No one has mentioned Adorno, Deleuze, or Lacan yet? Samuel Vriezen, you have work here.

3

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Samuel Vriezen You just did, no?

5

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Joshua Cody covfefe.

3

Like · Reply · 14w

Ildar Khannanov What a time we live in!

Like · Reply · 14w

Guy Phillip Scott LMAO

Like · Reply · 14w

Stephen Slottow "Fascism" would fit the bill.

Like · Reply · 14w

Matt Barber Beware also the essentialist game: "By its very nature, music is _____."

2

Like · Reply · 14w

Steven Rice or any serious statement that uses the word nature.

Like · Reply · 14w

Matt Barber Like "oh you're so innature"

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Joshua Banks Mailman I suppose it was slightly ambiguous. The post was not meant as an exercise to guess how to fill in the blank. Rather, the point is/was that, no matter what is in the brackets, the imperative taken as a whole is fascistic music theory. Isn't it? "You must understand music [in such and such a way]" Well, it's bossy and bullying to say the least.

3

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Stephen Slottow "Music must be understood as [fill in the blank]"=slightly annoying music theory?

Like · Reply · 14w

Bruce Quaglia For it to be fascistic, wouldn't such a statement also need to be coercively enforced in some way? Is a mere assertion of something grounds for fascism if it carries no threat of authority? Berio, for example, asserts fascist tendencies in a limited manner in his "Meditations on a Twelve-Tone Horse," but he seems worried about the power that has accrued to certain theoretical orientations. If the assertion is understood to be coming from a self-identified stable genius, would that be sufficient authority to be true fascism, or must that claim be taken seriously by a majority of people? Or only by some percentage hovering around 35%?

1

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Joshua Banks Mailman The implicit threat is that you will be seen as lacking the ability to understand if you disagree. In academia that's not an option, which is why I call this fascist. You could also call it intellectual authoritarianism, or thought mafia, I suppose.

Like · Reply · 14w

Bruce Quaglia One might be seen that way (or not) by the speaker of said coercive statement, but by who else? A hyperbolic statement that drops like a lead balloon to the feet of the person who uttered it (and we've probably all witnessed one of these) would seem to lack any coercive power if lacks even persuasive power. No?

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Right, but when the speaker (or writer) follows up with a persuasive explanation of why x is a productive way of understanding y (about which the listeners/readers already have strong intellectual commitments), that ought not preclude alternative understandings of y, because that would be to deem those understandings as _mis_understandings, which coercively pushes that reader/listener into a subservient position. Just this might be the purpose of such statements and in that sense I consider them authoritarian, or more bluntly: fascistic or fascist.

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Bruce Quaglia I take your point, but such remarks might also be viewed as merely rhetorical, too. The value of seeing such statements as rhetorical rather than as fascistic is that we preserve the specificity and strength of crying "Fascist!" for other situations where there is more imminent danger of forceful coercion. My sense is that Fascism relies upon an under-informed and easily cowed populace-group (lacking power) along with the at least tacit complicity of some other group that does wield power and who authorizes the fascism. As much of a critic as I remain at heart, I am at a loss to find those dynamics at work in musical scholarly communities as they are currently configured. That said, I'm inclined by dint of personality to find fascism writ small more or less everywhere, so I don't disagree strenuously. I just wonder how much is really at stake in the discourses you're applying this to.

2

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Ah, I see what you mean Bruce Q. I'm seeing a slippery slope within academia and culture. Freedom of thought within academia and culture is under threat from several sides, now, more than 10, 20, or 30 years ago, partly because of the tendency toward corporatization and over managerialization of HE (which entails indiscriminate bean-counting and sometimes perverse measures of collegiality and social justice posturing) and partly because of heightened resonance between legitimate social justice movements and commercial populistic chauvinism. Within music academia specifically, fields such cognitive science, music technology, and music information retrieval (which have especially strong links to commercialism and STEM cache), have encroached more and more on the mostly self-directed authority of musicians, composers, and music scholars, who are more inclined toward self-definition and participation in musical-humanistic creativity. So, when a STEM researcher backed by huge $$$ in grants throws his/her weight around by telling the music humanists what is/isn't music or what's better/worse music (or more subtly when STEM $$$ indirectly inflect the intellectual orientation, publication possibilities, and and therefore career trajectories of younger would-be musical-humanists), I'd say there's actually a lot at stake in the long run.

2

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Write a reply...

GianCarlo Nardini ...a means to influence.

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Music to sway emotions (music as rhetoric) goes back at least to Monteverdi. I think that's fairly acceptable.

Like · Reply · 14w

GianCarlo Nardini I'm listening to Gesualdo right now. I wonder what he'd say. Probably not "soundtrack for fucking."

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman or murdering 2

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Do you know Herzog's Death in Five Voices?

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7z4j1xzYTFU&t=521s



Gesualdo: Death for Five Voices

YOUTUBE.COM

1

Like · Reply · 14w

GianCarlo Nardini No, but I just read about it. Definitely sparks my interest.

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman FYI my friend, our paths will cross again: Lydia's starting at U Chicago in the fall.

Like · Reply · 14w

GianCarlo Nardini All right!!! You're always welcome to stay with us, my brother.

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman thanks!

Like · Reply · 14w

Nicholas Bannan .... an activity from which taxation can be raised

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Julian Horton So is the claim that any statement pretending to universality in music theory connotes fascism? 'If there is no medial caesura, then there is no subordinate theme', for instance? Or just statements that embrace the art form as a whole? Or just music-theoretical statements that include an imperative ('music must')? The first and second raise problems of induction, but hardly fascism. The third suggests authoritarianism of a certain kind; but are we saying that any intellectual claim to authority constitutes fascism?

2

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Absolutely not. Definitions (and sometimes redefinitions and refinements of definitions) are essential for knowledge to progress. But absolutest claims that preclude other peoples' individual (or communal) understandings of something (music in this case) to which they already have an intimate first-hand relation is a kind of intellectual authoritarianism.

1

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Joshua Banks Mailman Statements that say: I do not allow you to understand music in a way other this [fill in anything in this space].

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman These are troubling, and I would say they exemplify a kind of intellectual fascism.

1

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Joshua Banks Mailman For a person who has an overwhelming intimate commitment to secondary theme in sonata forms generally, they may feel somewhat bullied by the attempt to disqualify candidates not preceded by a medial caesura. Yet, I think in most cases, the person will see it as an opportunity to re-arrange mental furniture regarding sonata form components, rather than as an exclusion of alternative understandings. It's more an opportunity to weigh competing systems of definition.

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman My first hand witnessing (and you were there too if I recall) of debates about this very issue (secondary themes & MC) confirmed for me how people holding opposite points of view could productively explain their disagreements without it ever devolving into coercion. For me it was illuminating and encouraging.

2

Like · Reply · 14w

Julian Horton You're absolutely right: that debate has never resorted to coercion as far as I remember. If the terms of the statement had been 'to understand the concept of a subordinate theme, you must accept the MC as a theoretical precondition', then there would have been a coercive agenda.

2

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman exactly. That's a good way to put it.

1

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Write a reply...

Joshua Banks Mailman For sake of comparison, consider this: To be a patriot you must believe/do X.

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman it seems fascistic to me.

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Richard Wattenbarger

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Richard Wattenbarger I'd raise a number of objections to that statement (at least not knowing the context from which you've drawn it) beyond your "fill-in-the-blank" part. What, after all, does the writer mean by "music," and are they universalizing the notion? (Yes, I am totally cool with using third-person plural pronouns as generic singular ones.) And why is (or is not) "understanding" a mode appropriate to the phenomenon at hand?

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman I couldn't understand all of what you wrote Richard (which statement exactly?). But the context from which I drew it was definitely meant to cover music universally. I think that understanding music as this or that is totally a good thing to do. For my part, learning more and more about how each of us understands music keeps helping me understand more and more about music and about other people.

Like · Reply · 14w

Richard Wattenbarger I suppose I question if there are conditions under which it's even possible to refer to music in a universal sense. What music, or "a music," depends on so many questions of context and function that generalization may not be possible.

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Indeed !

Like · Reply · 14w

Richard Wattenbarger I agree entirely with your original post, Joshua: I'd just go even further in pointing out how naïve the claim is that "Music must be understood as X."

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Yes, that's kind of what I meant, and it got a little bit off topic (although appreciably amusing) because of my "fill-in-the-blank". I could have stated it with the X, but that has its own set of connotations, which might misdirect. Anyway, I find it sort of appalling that any scholar would attempt to make that sort of pronouncement. Yet they do.

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Ildar Khannanov A purpose of musicologist or music theorists is to explain what music means and to clarify what it is. The same is happening in music performance. Horowitz suggested a strong interpretation of Schubert's Impromptu in his last performance. He did provide the meaning of this masterpiece. He had the right to do so. And although he did not forbid other interpretations, his remain close to the ideal. Those who impose social interdiction (such as stated in this post) on behalf of majority--do sound like fascists.

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Joshua Banks Mailman Strongly proposing an interpretation or theory etc is nothing like ordering people to understand it only one particular way.

2

Like · Reply · 14w

Ildar Khannanov Agree. This requires careful distinction. Yet that is what professionals are capable of doing. I agree that proposing an interpretation is a serious challenge. Not everybody and not always is ready to do that. However, there is always time when someone is mature enough to say a few things about music that matter. To forbid that--is authoritarian.

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Richard Wattenbarger On "understand[ing]," I have partly in mind Dahlhaus's observation about how the advent of the work concept raised the demands of musical reception to one in ehich the listener was to "understand" the work. Of course, Dahlhaus's observation pertains to a historically specific mode of reception--something in the orbit of nineteenth-century "Verstehen"--which is not, or not necessarily, the same sense of "understanding" in a scientific community (that is, scientific community in terms of the philosophy if science, which is not always a natural-scientific body).

Like · Reply · 14w · 2

Joshua Banks Mailman I think Dahlhaus was trying to say that musical engagement became more intense and varied as a result of the work concept. "Understanding" (Verstehen) is just kind of a catch-all corresponding to a kind of engagement deemed most legitimate and producti... See More

Like · Reply · 14w

Richard Wattenbarger My recollection is that Dahlhaus had in mind something more precise, along the lines of Dilthey's concept of Verstehen.

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Possibly, but I guess he was talking about the understanding of specific works, and wasn't even necessarily demanding that they be understood one particular way (although he might have thought that).

Like · Reply · 14w

Michael Morse Dahlhaus is also thinking of Weber, not surprisingly. (His frequently expressed scepticism about music sociology did not put his his own thought as distant from it as he thought, I believe.)

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Matt Barber Also somewhat common, "My music must/must not be understood as _____." and variations.

Like · Reply · 14w · 3

Matthew Greenbaum ["a process in which Aryan whole notes (white) dominate colored lesser values"]

Like · Reply · 14w

David Macdonald ...must be [either] understood as the organization of sounds and silences according to some principle OR not understood as the organization of sounds and silences according to some principle. The theory of non-contradiction. Works every time.

Like · Reply · 14w · 1

Matt Barber OR [understood as the superposition of the organization of sounds and silences according to some principle AND not the organization of sounds and silences according ot some principle]

Like · Reply · 14w · 1

Matt Barber OR [[understood as the superposition of the organization of sounds and silences according to some principle AND not the organization of sounds and silences according to some principle] OR not [understood as the superposition of the organization of sounds and silences according to some principle AND not the organization of sounds and silences according to some principle]]

Like · Reply · 14w · 1

Matt Barber etc.

Like · Reply · 14w

David Macdonald Matt Barber I think we're getting somewhere. Poor Josh for having to read this stuff.

Like · Reply · 14w

David Macdonald Your logic is more advanced than mine.

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Yeah, Perhaps Facebook should just have a "tautology" option alongside "like" and "reply," so you don't have to type all that. Haha

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Jeff Stadelman it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Matt Barber It don't mean a thing regardless.

2

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman Also it doesn't not mean nothing

2

Like · Reply · 14w

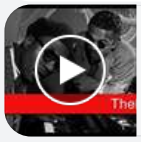
Jeff Stadelman in this vein, my first composition teacher, possibly during my first composition lesson ever, told me: when someone told thelonious monk that his music was ok but he couldn't dance to it, monk replied, 'maybe YOU can't dance to it mother**ker'... so it was ingrained in me early that one should shut down fascist prescribers by advocating open-ended construals.

1

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Matt Barber Are you talking about this four-and-a-half-minute miracle? I can't get my mind around the rhythms he ends up playing. They're almost anti-literal. And the voice-leading in the comping.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5p61YrKX7Ko



Thelonious Monk: It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)

YOUTUBE.COM

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman In high school music history class (the arts HS in NYC) a substitute teacher pronounced atonal music (such as Schoenberg etc.) totally unmusical and not really music at all. So I announced publicly that he had no business prejudicing the entire class of teenage students against an entire repertoire of music, and I stood up and left the class in protest.

1

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Jeff Stadelman Joshua Banks Mailman bravo

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman It's been downhill ever since.

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Jeff Stadelman Matt Barber Thanks for this -- I wasn't aware of it

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Joshua Banks Mailman The hyper-metric downbeats are all there. It's cool the way they land. Reminds me of Carnatic mrundgm solos.

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Jeff Stadelman His interpretation of the doo-wop-doo-wop-doo-wop etc syncopation string is really ... cool. absolute zero maybe. ``` it strikes me that TM's interpretation really depends upon hearing it relative to the original, which already a kind of icon of syncopation

1

Like · Reply · 14w · Edited

Matt Barber Yeah, I think that's what I meant by "anti-literal."

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Joshua Banks Mailman It's subtly between straight-8ths and swung 8ths

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Matt Barber In the same vein:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHkrV06oueA



Cecil Taylor - This Nearly Was Mine

YOUTUBE.COM

1

Like · Reply · 14w

Write a reply...

Jeff Stadelman note to self: explore the subgenre of pieces that live in the culturally coded space between (in drum machine terms) 50% [= 0] and 75% swing ---- "European Echoes" by Ornette comes to mind - hilarious and moving

Like · Reply · 14w

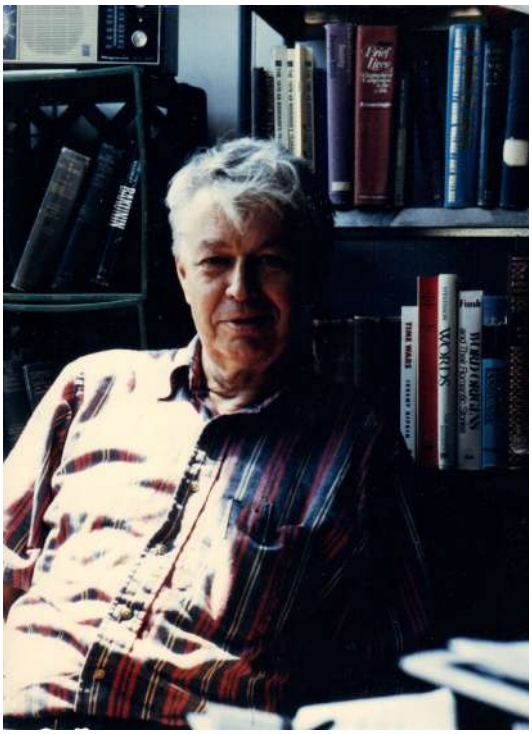
Write a comment...

zero philosophy

what music is heard as
necessitates
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necessitates
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Thoughts Pursuing a Mercurial Life
Well Done:
An Appreciation of Gerrit Lansing

Those of us who had the pleasure of spending time in Gerrit Lansing's presence and posed him any questions often found out quickly that there was a far greater magnitude to the subject at hand than may have initially been considered. As enlightening and humbling as these occasions could be Gerrit was unfailingly gracious and warm in his responses no matter the topic. For years, after becoming aware of the immense breadth of knowledge Gerrit wielded, I would often selfishly wonder why he had not published an extensive study on poetry, esotericism, language or any one of a number of bodies of learning that he held such a commanding grasp of. And then, just recently as I was researching the role of the ether in Renaissance thought, the unique perspective of a particular Renaissance thinker came to mind that offered some partial insight into Gerrit's oral versus written output.

In one of the more important but little discussed Renaissance speculative philosophical works, *Cause, Prinicple, and Unity* Giordano Bruno espoused his formulation of the *continuous body*. It

wasn't just Bruno's concept though that caught my eye concerning Gerrit's life-work, but the manner in which Bruno developed this concept. The notion of the *continuous body* was a theory in progress that stood in contradistinction to the hermetic axiom As above, so below. In short Bruno felt that the *continuous body* was part and parcel of the cosmos. Whereas Hermeticists saw the microcosm as a reflection of the greater universe or macrocosm Bruno acknowledged a greater body, much like Aristotelian elemental bodies. However, Bruno's was responsible for overall unity and cohesion possessing no boundaries and more importantly this *continuous body* did away not only with the segregation of the ontological spheres of the heavens and the earth but with the ether as a binding element as well. Bruno felt that the entirety of the universe cohered in this single indivisible organism or *continuous body* without dimension. However, at one point in speaking of the etheric vehicle of the soul, Bruno actually stated that he did not feel the concept of the ether as a unifying component was necessarily incorrect. Rather, he demonstrated an enlightened presence of mind in suggesting that the ether was a helpful concept for those whose intellect was only prepared to deal with it as such. And as I reconsidered this aspect of Bruno's thought Gerrit Lansing's body of work and life came immediately to mind.

Aligned with Bruno's *body* the title of Gerrit's wonderful early poem states, "The Great Form is Without Shape." Perhaps a decent vantage point from which to view Gerrit's intellectual approach may be easily gained by considering the massive body of research amassed by Harry Smith, a friend whom Gerrit greatly admired. Harry was an indefatigable compiler of lists and charts similar to Aleister Crowley's *777* which is essentially a catalog of god names, plants, etc., as they correspond to the 32 paths of the Cabalistic Tree of Life or the *Otz Chim*. The maddening thing one quickly discovers with Smith's charts is the sheer breadth of them and how they compound seemingly ad infinitum. Harry Smith is one of the few moderns who took the platform of the Cabalistic sphere of Hod, to heart. Hod, governed by Mercury, is the realm of a perfected or absolute intelligence wherein true forms that clothe universal forces may be grasped. *Maya* itself has been termed as illusion but more literally it is viewed by certain tantriks as the form that is given to the formless which is indicative of the sphere of Hod. But, and here is the crux in understanding Harry Smith's approach and ultimately Gerrit's, that the pure energy indwelling within or composing the kinetic of form is something that is translated through the senses and the intuitive mind. Therefore, if one intuits that there is something lacking in the fundamental structure of the formal Cabalistic Tree of Life then one has no choice but to revise or

restructure that framework in accordance with the inner voice or the entire point of working with it is potentially obscured and/or lost, missing the forest for the trees.

Gerrit, in my mind, was engaged *continuously* with an organic and subsequent contiguous body of thought--forming literally and figuratively his extended tree. Because he constantly engaged with this burgeoning thought I get the sense that Gerrit did not see any pressing need to put sizable portions of it into publication. An ongoing growth of a fluid synthesis was a matter he conducted each and every time he considered some topic anew. As Thomas Hobbes once stated, wit is quick, so one had better be paying most careful attention in order to follow its movement. And to witness Gerrit's thought in precise action was to behold, in part, that great form without shape, or one unwilling to surrender to a static condition or terminal thesis. He was able to dispense with great volumes of information orally, I suspect, preferring and enjoying active dialogue as much as Bruno's characters appeared to have been doing in his disquisition on *Cause, Principle, and Unity*.

And it is this very dynamic aspect of Gerrit's thought that made him particularly resistant to answering specific questions about his personal views of magickal practices. Since magick is nothing more than causing change to occur in conformity with the will, then if the will to be fluid and dynamic is part of the picture then the whole enterprise of expecting any type of static response is bound to derail from the start.

In a short review I did of Heavenly Tree / Soluble Forest, the Talisman House edition of 1995, I noted a section from part VIII of the Soluble Forest:

supraliminal language-field is body-field
is feeling
and feeding
electromagnetic you Nu-it
Anagnorisis.

The Anagnorisis is not only the recognition of a *dramatis personae* but what they stood for in the drama. And undoubtedly the "I" in Gerrit's thought was slippery, and ultimately defiant in its expansive stride. Interestingly enough an anagnost is a prelector or one who is elected to read out loud during services. I brought up the term anagnost in my review because when first looking at a poem Gerrit would always suggest that we read it out loud to see how it works. And when I mentioned this part of the review to him he half-jokingly said, you've given away a secret. As Ovid stated in his *Tristia*, of which Gerrit was quite fond, *qui bene vixit, qui bene latuit*, he who lives well hides well.

Given Ovid's perspective, writing renders a permanent exposure. And when thinking over Gerrit's life-work the primary difficulty for anyone who did not have the pleasure of his audience is that they would not have been exposed to Gerrit Lansing the agnagnost. In fact, James Irby, brother of the poet Ken Irby, stated to me it was his fond memory of Gerrit's "tactful gentlemanly voice" that always stood out in his mind. I would contend that Gerrit's preference for an oral disquisition was as intentional as it was intuitive insofar as maintaining his dynamic being was concerned. And in turn that oral disquisition was the primary contributing factor to the anagnorisis of Gerrit Lansing. Such was his approach to the good life and certainly not by any singular definition thereof.

I recall the Robert Duncan Conference held from April 18th through the 20th in Buffalo where Gerrit was also in attendance. At the end of the event during a party held at Robert Creeley's home Gerrit mentioned to me that aside from David Levy Strauss' talk, he felt no one really had much to say about Duncan the person, which he found disconcerting. As a non-academic but a truly humanistic thinker Gerrit was keenly aware of the absence of the human touch and the essential component of feeling in understanding a poet's life and writings. This was the norm and not the exception in the way he conducted his own focus of life. In fact, on one of my autumn trips to Gloucester, 2016 when Gerrit and I went out to dinner for pizza one evening, afterwards Gerrit noted that there was something emotionally troubling our waitress. He asked if I noticed that about her. I had to pause for a moment because I had not given it much thought. Feelings and well-being were a major concern of Gerrit's when it came to not only those that were close to him but even strangers on the street. In a recent post on Facebook from March 23, 2018 Joseph Shepherd, a good friend of Gerrit's, issued a statement I believe is reflective of the entire local community's sentiment toward him as a whole: "Thank You GERRIT LANSING. I miss you so much. Your LOVE carries so many people in this dualistic mystery we can and will follow your example 93. 93/93"

Subsequently, I've had to revise my take on a sentiment expressed to me once by Tod Thilleman, the editor in chief of Spuyten Duyvil Press that "There is no poetry scene anywhere these days...with the internet now it's all changed." I was in agreement with that stance for the longest time but then upon Gerrit's passing and considering his life in Gloucester I found myself taking an abrupt 180 degree turnaround. Even though there may be no major epicenters for poets such as Berkeley may have been during the 60's there is undoubtedly a local scene or *οικουμενε* as the Greeks put it in Ptolemy's time, an inhabited land on the map. This land is populated by thinkers, artists, poets, and

actors as well as street-sweepers and more. This turf can most definitely be the locus of the poet's heart and soul territory. Gerrit demonstrated to me that there is a scene, however covert or limited, within the immediate sphere of every community. As Gerrit's sense about our waitress' disposition that evening expressed, his observations were not purely intellectual but those of the heart. In fact, I was initially wanting to refer to the importance of the *polis* for Gerrit but was resistant as the reference to Gloucester and Olson may have been too implicit. But in Gerrit's case the *polis* or community of the heart, without a doubt, was the epicenter he tended first and foremost.

In an interview, before he passed away, the noted Polish social theorist Zygmunt Bauman made a very important observation about community and the internet:

> The question of identity has changed from being something you are born with to a task: you have to create your own community. But communities aren't created, and you either have one or you don't. What the social networks can create is a substitute. The difference between a community and a network is that you belong to a community, but a network belongs to you. You feel in control. You can add friends if you wish, you can delete them if you wish. You are in control of the important people to whom you relate. People feel a little better as a result, because loneliness, abandonment, is the great fear in our individualist age. But it's so easy to add or remove friends on the internet that people fail to learn the real social skills, which you need when you go to the street, when you go to your workplace, where you find lots of people who you need to enter into sensible interaction with.
>
> El Palais, 2016

Gerrit had a community and it was developed one-on-one not just in terms of "sensible" but *sensitive* personal interaction. Even though he made prodigious use of the internet the one thing Gerrit did not utilize was social networking (In fact in one of the first letters he wrote on his word processor dated 11/29/1998 Gerrit informed me that he was "going on-line (is that the right word?] … but I don't expect to be able to use E-mail immediately, nor to be able to cruise the Web)." He had no need or any desire to implement any filtration points accessible through virtual venues such as Facebook.[1] In fact, for years he ran Abraxas Bookstore in downtown Gloucester which was his own personal platform for meeting people first and foremost or so it appeared, and 2nd for selling some books as well as the means for culling the overflow of his own personal library.[2]

1 There is in fact a page for Gerrit Lansing on Facebook but he did not develop it nor had he ever visited it.
2 By last count Gerrit said this own library was nearing 30,000 books.

Furthermore Gerrit's sensitivity to others extended beyond people to the wildlife and stray cats of the area. I have the fondest memories of watching Gerrit going outside the kitchen dining area next to where he tended his medicinal and culinary herb garden in order to put food out for a group of feral cats. They all had names bestowed upon them such as Lop-ear, Balfigor, and Hector whom Gerrit eventually adopted and was the last cat in residence at his home. Gerrit would sit on the ground and talk to them as they ate and I remember even the stray opossum that would show to partake of the open soup kitchen. Gerrit would never shoo it off and looked at this creature as one of the wayward family. Furthermore, when winter came he even closed off the art book portion of the library and left the windows open so these cats could come in for shelter from the cold.

Even Jim Dunn's dog Koko, during Gerrit's final weeks was most attentive to him during their many visits. It appeared he was as concerned about Gerrit's comfort as much as everyone else in his immediate circle. Given a choice Koko, caught up in that cycle of compassion for Gerrit ,would only lie down at his feet during their frequent visits to his home up to and including Gerrit's passing on Feb 11, 2018.

The day-to-day existence was a rich and varied one for Gerrit that consisted of much reading, walks about Gloucester and Dog-Town when he was in good health, mushroom hunting, as well as receiving and entertaining guests from all about. To attempt to provide a survey of the entire life and world Gerrit Lansing maintained and inhabited would be a monumental undertaking. I for one would never pretend to even possess a slight grasp of a small portion let alone his full range of erudition. Like Peter French said of the polymath John Dee, it would take multiple experts in various fields to be able to assess the full body of knowledge generated by the man. Such is assuredly the case with Gerrit Yates Lansing. I am undoubtedly only one of many who could attest to his warmth and generosity . He was kind and giving of his self and knowledge to an extreme. And as Charles Stein so aptly put in his dedicatory section to his important book, Persephone Unveiled, "Gerrit Lansing is our age's most incandescent poet of a certain recessive spiritual mainstream. His generosity has been an inexhaustible access (at least I have not exhausted it) "to lovely glades of Calm conceiving." " I could not put it any better. His generosity was only superseded by his gentle demeanor and great calm tolerance. He certainly suffered my foolishness for many years. Furthermore, it was extremely rare to ever see him cast any aspersions on anyone or their writing. And for all his openness to new ideas, people, or belief systems his was an extremely private and elusive existence subject to his own ongoing exploration and development that took on so many varied routes.

In an interview I conducted with Gerrit in May of 2014 (hitherto unpublished) I asked him about what he learned from his time spent out doors in the woods of his family's Ohio estate and how it carried over into his work today:

> This has to do with the concretion of the individual that's biological and therefore expressed in the horoscope and in one's destiny in life in the figure in the carpet which only becomes apparent later in life if it does become apparent at all. But it's there in principle in seed in the *bija mantra*, and of course the *muladhara cakra* is the lowest of the general area of the cakras which contains the seed of everything in childhood and before childhood, before conception.

The figure of Gerrit Lansing in the tapestry of his poetry, essays, and life stands out as a less-than-obvious but paradoxically grand being. He had little concern for apparent acclaim. One way, I suppose for those who have never met Gerrit to get an approximate feel for his approach would be to settle in with an essay or poem of his, witness a scintillation or two and then set a hunchback "?" To follow every soldier "!" that comes to mind. And if fortunate, a few flashes may ensue in pondering his work as well as his life in a way similar to how Gerrit himself engaged with the process in a focused yet open and ongoing personal undertaking.

† *23 Skidoo* †



Robert Podgurski

An interview with Gerrit Lansing*

Bob. Within field poetics I have always viewed Olson's approach to the field as something that is physically engaged, walked into, and then a claim is staked and appropriated for the corpus, whereas for Duncan the field is somatically experienced as well, entered, immersion in it takes place, and then he allowed himself to be possessed by it. So my question to you is where do you see yourself as working in field poetics?

Gerrit. I don't see myself working at all in field poetics.

B. Really?

G. No, I don't know what the opposite of field poetics would be. I don't think about it in those terms at all. Every poem is coming somewhat differently. Field poetics seems to imply you already know what's going to happen in some way as field if there is an opposition to field so it doesn't make sense.

B. Oh, that there could be something antithetical?

G. Yes.

B. I was trying to find what I could on my own, in your work, something that would indicate something to this effect with what I was reading, and one essay of yours that I overlooked for a long time and forgot about and came upon recently that seemed to provide some answers was "The Neptunian Character."

G. Yes, "The Neptunian Character" really is, as you know, an astrological / psychological essay somewhat stolen from the poet / astrologer Max Jacob years ago. I never heard of such a thing as field poetics at the time that I did that.

B. But the reason I brought that up is because it made me think about everything you were mentioning about "The Neptunian Character" is the type seeking out the hidden, the secret, arcane, but as you put it in the one section I really liked where it said: the secret is in this bale of light, it's right out in the open, and the obvious.

G. Well, that's certainly true, but when I talked to Zoltan Mason, the astrologer, about "The Neptunian Character" he always said he considered me from my chart Mercurial rather than Neptunian.

B. Oh really.

G. But as you know Neptune is primary ruler for me of Pisces. And since I have Neptune opposed to my Sun in the tenth house I feel that is very significant in my chart. Neptune in the tenth house leads to a great nebulosity about the persona or the way one is conceived by other people.

B. Readers of your work are well aware of its highly syncretic nature. With regard to your poems is this syncretism multiphasic?

G. Well again, I don't see all poetry as syncretic. But I don't see such a thing as non-syncretic poetry today.

B. I wasn't trying to say, here's the niche, here's where it all fits

G. Syncretism isn't a niche at all.

B. I agree.
G. Well all poetry in the west anyway is syncretic, and that's where I am, or we are. Auden wrote about that years and years ago about what is available today to poets and of course that was written by Auden before the internet.
B. The reason I put it that way is that the catch-all phrase now seems to be "eclectic" and it seems to apply in such a broad vast manner as to be a somewhat flimsy or diffuse reference.
G. The question of reference has nothing to do with the eclectic or syncretic, and it is simply a matter of where, well it simply has to do with the matter of one's own biology and progress, what becomes available to you through your own life, your destiny.
B. And so that leads me to bring up, is there an all-encompassing foundation, obviously not, for you that other influences tend to pivot around, and so I wanted to ask does each piece tend to manufacture its own framework.
G. No, it doesn't, but that doesn't mean that there is one foundation either. The framework, all of these classifications come from the readership, not from the writing. This comes from criticism where people want to put you into categories that don't really exist. Those are a matter of later criticism with people looking at the poetry from a different position from the actual work you've been writing on.
B. I'm not surprised because I figured you never wanted to see your work pigeon-holed within one area.
G. I don't care, as Diane DiPrima said long ago, one has no control over the way one is pigeon-holed or categorized or thought about or dealt with. It's something you learn to accept, I mean, instead of pigeon-holing yourself or putting yourself in these categories. That's without one's control and your poetry changes over time too. That's already happened in my lifetime, changes in my own perception of my work. Once it's written I don't feel a particular connection to it. Except sometimes interest and surprise.
B. It's a lot like what Mary Shelley said about Frankenstein, I let my little monster loose and what happens when it gets out there, there's nothing I can do about it at that point.
G. That's true of all creation.



B. Now, in the "Burden of Set," Parts 1 and 2 at the beginning of part 1 you state: "This magazine is about the poetic exploration of the swarming possibilities (some occult, unused) in American life, urban & local... Its character is conceived as dual, historical & magical, the emphasized characters of time." So, I know the "Burden of Set" was written quite a number of years ago. Would you say the way you were writing at that time was it sort of in sync with that project you expressed in the magazine?
G. No, not particularly, what's happened is that that magazine proved to be prophetic. A lot of the things that were written in the "Burden of Set" came true in American society and social formations long after, and in fact it's continuing. There were various emphases, the emphasized characters of time continued to move through a particular formation of time and it hasn't stopped. And that of course, I had no idea what would happen when the "Burden of Set" was written. Going back to it, it's turned out to be prophetic in many ways.

B. But, it seems to me, and correct me if I'm wrong, that in one of my favorite pieces, "The Wizard of Oz in the Blizzard of Oz" seems to have picked up on and dealt with some of those prophecies.

G. Thematically? Or dealt with at a much later time and the idea of a center of the United States, namely Kansas as a center of military secrecy. That hadn't happened as much at the time of the writing of "The Burden of Set."

B. OK, just those two seemed to sort of be connected. Oh, can you indicate why you chose to pose it as Set's burden.

G. Well burden is an Elizabethan musical term, like the burden of a song.

B. Oh, Ok.

G. In other words, it's like a lot of my work, punning, it's not necessarily a burden, well one carries a tune and it's a burden. But burden's a specific musical term particularly in Elizabethan music, I mean, that's the first I'm aware of its usage in English. But it continues in music too and meaning a certain formative quality in music not only in the sound but in song having to do with thematic contents sometimes. "The burden of my song" is an old phrase.

B. So, were you looking at the "Burden of Set," of which there were only two issues, of the poems fitting in within an orchestrated theme of sorts.

G. Absolutely. Both issues are musically organized in my mind. Well, when I received the contents from different people it was then put together in a fashion I considered, not orchestrated but musical.

B. I'll have to keep that in mind when I re-read it.

G. Patrick [Doud] noticed that, incidentally, with different editions of The Heavenly Tree. Musically, it's organized, moving toward the number 7 in the last edition of Heavenly Tree Northern Earth.

B. I'm glad you brought that up because I noticed looking at the various editions of The Heavenly Tree, and I have the actual first Matter Edition that Robert Kelly did, well that was his wife that published that.

G. Well, Robert did that, and Joan was always his assistant.

B. Because I noticed in the early edition it wasn't broken up into the different sections but the Talisman and the North Atlantic editions have eleven separate sections.

G. Well it kept increasing. I don't think there are eleven sections actually but I'll look at it.

B. I made a list actually, I think there is eleven.

G. In the last edition? I think there are 7.

B. I can go grab it, I'm pretty sure. But is that set-up, is the arrangement of that as this burden a theme?

G. No, it has nothing to do with the idea of the use of the word burden in that it's simply that I organized the books musically, in terms of motif and sound, by motif I mean *phanopoiea* rather than the *melopoeia*.

B. Then that's something that's necessarily evolved because the number of the poems increased.

G. Well, yes, the poems have increased and they move about you'll notice that the sections are now different.

B. And it ends with "Northern Earth."

G. Well, almost all the editions end with "Northern Earth." And "Earth" of course has come into the title of the book in the last edition.

B. Was that an intentional change in the title "Heavenly Tree Northern Earth"?
G. Well I don't separate intention from happening since it's intentional, but not necessarily my intention.
B. Yes, because it initially was "The Heavenly Tree Grows Downward" and then it changed.
G. The edition of a book of Jung's I have which has his essay on the inverted tree in that particular edition there's a great misprint, the whole essay is inverted, upside down, a mistake.
B. The entire essay?
G. Yes, it's in my copy I'll show it to you.
B. It's not in the Bollingen Series is it?
G. Yes, it is. A misprint in that copy but not in all copies. They just didn't catch it.
B. That's wonderful.



B. Now, in "Stephen Phillips and the Warmth of Summer Nights," one of my favorites, you mention: "I blindly chose (was chosen for) the Labyrinthine Feeling Way." And that reminds me of something you stated in a letter to me long ago that: "The *muladhara cakra* can never be by poets neglected as it's not surpassed." So, when I think of "the Feeling Way" I think of your childhood, growing up in Gates Mills, Chagrin Falls Ohio with Henry Church's Squaw Rock nearby so I'm curious about what you learned during your early perambulations in the woods that has informed your work, and how it's carried on to today.
G. This has to do with the concretion of the individual that's biological and therefore expressed in the horoscope and in one's destiny in life in the figure in the carpet which only becomes apparent later in life if it does become apparent at all. But it's there in principal in seed in the *bija mantra*, and of course the *muladhara cakra* is the lowest of the general area of the cakras which contains the seed of everything in childhood and before childhood, before conception.
B. With that in mind that makes me think of the Cabalistic formula of drawing Kether down into Malkuth. So, would you say that the act of writing poetry is part of that process of drawing Kether into Malkuth.
G. No, not as such because Kether isn't for all people, drawn down into Malkuth in that way. I actually had very early, in a practice of yoga, dealt basically with the cakras without knowing them even. So I don't particularly use the monotheistic religions, and finally the Cabala belongs to a monotheistic religion, but rather to tantric yoga, or all yoga in the spirit of time in the sense that it's tantric yoga there's no way it's not tantric. Because that's a matter of history. That's why I keep talking about the irrevocable history of the emphasized characters of time. There are many other forms of time that consist, that go on at the same time as it were but are unperceived except by in the body, at least five types depending on the five sheathes that we consist of, the food body, the *vijnana* body for instance.
B. When you mention tantra it makes me think of "The Neptunian Character" because you talk about the Neptunian character is interested in the pineal gland, those "secret secretions," those "secretive secretions" excuse me, and so that's on one level but also as kids we like our little secret hiding places. Do you think

there's a connection between those.

G. Absolutely! One of the best accounts of secrecy from a secular point of view is by the sociologist Simmel, who wrote a whole book on *Das Geheimnis* in social terms but it's amazing how it also applies to magickal work, and to not only social formations but to individual parts of the psyche which are selves in society.

B. With the formula of mantra, yantra, tantra, with yantra being the visual component, mantra as the oral, and tantra comes from the root *tanu* meaning to bend or stretch the weave, I've always looked at tantra in very basic terms as the method of manifesting or bringing down whatever it is one's trying to make occur or happen. So as children there is obviously a lot of intuitive tantra that's going on, correct?

G. Well, tantra is a word that really doesn't have a referent at all just like "religion." Religion is itself a construct of people afterwards looking at things and misapplying just like with "gnosticism." Tantra is recognized, not yoga as taught today. Tantric flow is absorbed in all yogic practice whether it's even made conscious or not. Tantra is so totally misunderstood to relate only to sex centers in a Gurdjieffian sense that's not true at all. What it does have to do with is the reversal of this particular cosmic age as it appears at the time of basically the turnover of the Piscean age into the Aquarian age.

B. That makes me think of the one part in the "Burden of Set" where you mention "poetry falls on an age of undoing"

G. That's right.

B. But, I suppose it depends on the moment, the person, the point in their existence. Is there any aspect in "undoing" where poetry can fit in or be used or is there a purpose, I mean there's not a single purpose, I'm sure you agree there's not a single purpose for poetry within this age of "undoing."

G. No, the "undoing," (laughs) is part of the period of time, astrological time we're in, the end of the undoing of one age, the Piscean age. Each age as you know lasts approximately 2000 years, and there are ages that are permeating other ages, too.

B. Yes, aeons within aeons.

G. Exactly, Horus and Maat.

B. And then the Kali Yuga is supposed to go on for another 30,000 years, right.

G. Well again, yes, the Kali Yuga is the age of undoing.

B. Now, I know you've been a long-time student of philosophy. So, I was curious, let's say does your reading of Nietzsche serve as an inspiration point in some poems or are your philosophical studies another aspect of the weave of things that work their way in at certain times.

G. Well, there's certainly the aspect of the way one lives whether you study western philosophy technically or Indian philosophy for that matter or Chinese so-called philosophy. All of these are abstractions and don't really exist as objects in that sense they certainly are part of the weave. I do happen to have studied in college western philosophy officially and majored in it and the history of philosophy. But philosophy becomes its own history as Heidegger knows. And now so-called oriental philosophy is active and is becoming more active in its western interpretations in my lifetime, a much greater knowledge, and by oriental I mean specifically Indian and Chinese which are quite different but share some aspects. This has to do with the incursion of influx of various projections outside time. "The great invisibles" as André

Breton called them.

B. So given that, as you mentioned before about when the reader sits down with your poems, would you say they may benefit from doing some reading within these areas of philosophy, will it give them more of an "in" into reading some of your poems potentially or not.

G. I have no idea. Again, as I said earlier, you never know what the reader is going to do. I don't believe all reading's a misreading but all reading's an alternative reading, certainly my own is, but my own is of no particular validity and is limited in time by this particular time. So, what benefits? I don't know, it doesn't concern me.

B. Along with that I was thinking of one of my favorite pieces, "Behind the Vale and in the Pleasaunce of the Pythagorean Comma" where you mention "Logick equals Magick" that "the final Mathematick is Heavenly." In your work I don't see Nietzsche or some of these other western philosophers quoted directly but you do quote Aleister Crowley from the Book of Lies especially from section 23, Skidoo. The magickal philosophy, do you look at it some how as within a different realm within western philosophy.

G. Well, western philosophy has been undermined consistently from within. Crowley was influenced not only by Nietzsche. Crowley was well trained philosophically in western philosophy. The reading list for his magical orders more or less ends with Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Hegel.

B. Yes, in his Curriculum of the A. A.

G. Yes, but he was very well trained in the history of western philosophy. So, and Nietzsche was certainly very important in his period of time in England to a huge number of people and that's just recently been studied by historians of Crowley in relation to the philosopher Alfred Richard Orage who edited The New Age who was a disciple of Gurdjieff. And certain orders such as The Temple of Set are involved completely both with Crowley and Gurdjieff as well as their idea of Setianism and the Order of Beelzebub, the Order of Nine Angles, or the Order of Dagon, which are separate orders within the Temple of Set.

B. The reason I asked that was regarding what Crowley said, he found Nietzsche interesting, and a number of other western philosophers thought provoking insofar as how far they took it, how far they actually took their philosophy.

G. Yes, that's probably correct. Yes, all of that philosophy remains in the "head" in the west unlike the love of wisdom in neoplatonism or in yoga, and I mean more than hatha yoga.

B. I brought that up because I was just gravitating back to that most basic of definitions Crowley afforded of Magick as the act of causing change to occur through the focused action of the will. I look at Poetry as being just that. Do you see poetry to be part of the magickal act.

G. Well, the will is, and Crowley related also to Schopenhauer's world-will which is also related to *maya* or *prakrit* in Indian philosophy, in other words it's not particular at all to humanity. It's related to what Gurdjieff deals with, the *kundabuffer* which is the inertia of *maya*, it holds one to earth.

B. So when you take that approach then that formula becomes a little bit more complex.

G. The formula has to be individually dealt with by each person who goes into that path.

B. And then as you said with interpretation it is then up to each reader individually as to how they deal with it.

G. Yes.

B. In terms of literary influences Hart Crane comes to mind because his parents owned a hotel / restaurant in Chagrin Falls fairly close to where you grew up. And I was curious, were you aware of Crane's work early on?

G. Only vaguely and for me he was a very difficult poet I go to constantly now but not early on at all. The major influence on my reading in school, in high school, or before would have been Walt Whitman. And after Whitman, again in high school I read "The Wasteland," Eliot, e. e. cummings, and then a major influence on me in college, Yeats. I realized very early that Yeats belonged to a particular part of time that was not American at all and could not be copied in any way say as Theodore Roethke could be or Delmore Schwartz who was one of my teachers and I was influenced by him in a way.

I was influenced by Yeats but not in a poetic sense of form though I did write some poems in college that have never been published that were metrical in Yeats' sense.

B. So since you brought up Yeats I know you've been a long-time reader of Henry Vaughan, Herbert, Donne, George Chapman. Do you see a thread that leads from certain of these Renaissance poets to the Romantics then possibly to Yeats. Do you see a lineage here?

G. Completely, Olson and I somewhat disagreed about the honeypot of the Renaissance because I was dealing with the Renaissance, and this was before I knew the work of Ficino or Bruno, as I regard as part of the *undoing* now. Jung's book, Aion, which I read, of course, much later was not translated from German for a while, indicates a great deal of that, that is about the disintegration of the Piscean age in terms of quarters, in other words 1200, 1600, the English Renaissance comes latest of the European Renaissances as it follows the Italian and the French Renaissance but it's more coeval with the French Renaissance with the great magicians of Ronsard and Pontus de Tyard the Pleiade. But the Italian Renaissance, it came earlier, and then the German Renaissance really does go later into Romanticism which became very important in the late 18th and early 19th century and then becomes often the basis of magnetic magic.

B. Yeats is sometimes placed at that cusp between the Romantics and Moderns, does that make sense?

G. No, because I'm not interested in that theorization of Romantic and Modern at all. It's totally misleading. The German Magical Romantics influence has been subterranean and it's now only gradually becoming very conscious in England. It appeared in France through Gerard de Nerval, an especially favorite poet of mine because of Robin Blaser's and Robert Duncan's efforts, and whose poetry is a small amount but I feel a very great affinity toward, to its mystery.

B. So the German Magical Romantics, would Novalis be part of that?

G. Absolutely, of course. Olson was very influenced through Jack Clark by Novalis and only Novalis' prose especially which has just recently been translated. But not only Novalis, but Franz Von Bader, Goethe himself who was incredible.

B. And Hölderlin?

G. Very much. But I'm thinking also of the German Magical Philosophy which influenced Hegel, Schopenhauer who has an essay on magic, and Paul Carus, all of the magnetists later who moved into

France and England through Coleridge in great part, and they're still not thoroughly translated.

B. Thank you.
G. You're welcome.

*This interview was conducted during my residency at the Gloucester Writers Center in May of 2014. Prior to conducting a walk at Ravenswood Park, "Wandering On Course to A Gestalt Poetics" and a reading of my poetry at the Writers Center, on the 29th of May 2014, Gerrit was kind enough to answer my questions. I would like to thank the trustees of the Gloucester Writers Center for making this visit possible.

Gloucester, MA
Robert Podgurski
5/26/2014

An Afterview:
Gerrit Lansing's Reflections
on
Our Interview of
May 26, 2014*

Olson's Projective Verse proves to be fairly unuseful now. When I first read it and mentioned it to Charles he said forget it, read the Feinstein letter.

The serial poem "The Soluble Forest," I was writing seems to me very interesting a psychological process of poems.

The "Soluble Forest I think of as a serial poem." Simply because of my own psychology while writing it. Blaser was more clear theoretically than Duncan for instance. The serial poem is much more relevant to me as opposed to composition by field even though it's nothing I think of ahead of time in the process. In looking back in upon it Blaser is much closer to Olson than anybody else.

Divination and the actual aesthetic practice of letting the poem come to you. Spicer is one of the more important as he wanted to unravel this magic. My close association with Steve Jonas and am re-reading his work now which is amazing in that sense.

Spicer on the serial poem and Jonas and the significance of trance—in one sense it is psychological and in another it's transcending the particular time it's operating.

And this becomes involved with the studies of trance for me. In one sense it is psychological and it transcends the particular time it's operating in.

Olson pushed Harvey Brown to re publish an early book on roads in colonial US (in reference to my poetry on PA, WV and the route to NC.)

One thing I absolutely disagree at one point with Duncan, and this may have been a Spicer influence on Duncan, that certain poems he claimed were part of his larger fabric, but they stand alone as individual objects Like my "Mother was a Falconress."

I see Surrealism, not as a literary influence, but as a practical influence in my poems. Surrealism is a spiritual movement, not an artistic or literary one.

Olson told me that DH Lawrence would be his hero, not Pound or Williams.

I detested Metcalf for the longest time because he rejected Olson, and said that Olson did not walk which was untrue, Olson walked an incredible amount.

On poetics, and historically if you go back to Quintillian and then to Chinese poetics I read the great early work The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons.

Mircea Eliade, In a sense I regard myself as a pioneer of reviewing him while I was at Columbia, in the scholarly journals. Eliade's books were important to me in the same way Jung's were.

*After I conducted my initial interview with Gerrit he stated that he wished to expand on a few things that were broached that he felt he had not covered sufficiently at that time. On November 1, 2015 he relayed these additional observations to me.

Pressing Record: On Ginsberg

Influencer

My appreciation for Allen Ginsberg's multi-modal vigor was not immediate. I held neither the artistic nor cultural aptitude to comprehend his work when confronting it as a teenager. After a friend gave me a copy of *The Fall of America*, I wrote a brief essay on the book for a University of Virginia poetry course. I still have a copy of this piece, which offers a few reasons as to why Ginsberg was unappealing. His poems seemed fragmented and did not, "flow easily, or even at all". They were trying to reach into the heart and soul of America, but they didn't reach me in 1983. I saw them as "sometimes interesting and vital" but also "DRY" and too abstract: "his poems are too long and go on and on mumbling gibberish". Some lines in "D.C. Mobilization" were singled out as great, and I could see powerful political commentary and flashes of brilliance in his poems, yet could not find a way to enjoy reading these poems. I saw no value at all to the poem "Hum Bom", which was reviewed as redundant, fragmented, and spastic; the poem seemed to have little value—which is especially ironic in light of the fact that I later proudly produced an iteration of it for compact disc (*Kenning* 12, see below). These neophyte comments resulted from a combination of upbringing and undergraduate laziness. I possessed little capacity for understanding Ginsberg's work.

Recalling these initial impressions admits naiveté, and how narrowly I confined the expanses of poetry—as if it were something existing only to be read and studied on the page at face value, as I did, for example, in studies of the Romantic poets. These early remarks are embarrassing yet I am pleased they are part of the record of where my mind as a person and writer existed at the beginning.

In 1985, Ginsberg came to Virginia to present "A Talk on Ezra Pound". My reaction to the event could not have differed more greatly from those largely negative first impressions, while reading the poems with no voice or persona attached. His presentation was lively and refreshing, not only focusing on Pound's work, but conditions necessary for a reader to receive it. I don't recall any of the facts or stories he conveyed about Pound, but his comments about poetry's contemplative dimensions made an indelible impression.

Instead of linear reception, Ginsberg candidly noted how the nature of the mind is to jump from one place to another in a split second, and how as readers we are obliged to be in a state of complete recognition: "we must look at where we are" in order to fully absorb a writer's work in the present. Most profoundly, he said, "We must be observers—not outside looking outside or inside looking inside, but outside looking inside or inside looking outside." For me, hearing this perhaps offhand comment expanded the conditions of receiving and responding to literature in a way lectures at the University had not.

By the time Ginsberg and I first met at Naropa several few months later, my perspective had begun to shift, recognizing poetic expression as something attending to broader social and historical matters. Ginsberg's influence on my practice as a poet and producer of writing then became very direct, and I was somewhat of a devotee. He was an informative teacher, who brought vitality to poetry for legions of students at Naropa Institute (now University), Brooklyn College, and hundreds of other locations where he lectured at during his lifetime. Beyond that, as evidenced in his archives at Stanford University

("Allen Ginsberg papers, 1937-1994") [1], he was a consummate documentarian, who took thousands of photographs from the early Beat period until the end of his life, many of which are now iconic. He was a proponent of improvised poetics and, beginning in the 1960s, someone who used audio recording equipment as part of his engagement with poetry.

Studying at Naropa's Summer Writing Program in 1986 certainly differed from my education at Virginia. Most of the faculty foregrounded the importance of voice, which ultimately translated into use of audio in the classroom. Besides Ginsberg (with whom I spoke about recordings several occasions), Robert Creeley talked about records in his class, Clark Coolidge and Jim Carroll played albums, Ed Sanders demonstrated musical instruments he'd invented. At the time, Naropa events were recorded by a company called Sounds True; the masters were reproduced on the spot, and anyone could purchase a copy afterwards. Though use of video was not yet emphasized, Ron Mann's *Poetry in Motion* was screened one afternoon, and O could I relate while watching Ted Berrigan opining, "I didn't think Ginsberg was a good poet until I heard him read". Berrigan's comment also well fit in with the privileging-the-voice sensibilities I encountered at Naropa.

As a student, a poet, and professor who considers outsides and insides through technology and writing, I receive valuable knowledge through the exploration. I reciprocate, or feed-back into it, through teaching, scholarship, and by preparing and producing creative works. We pass through numerous, sometimes fleeting, phases of life. Within them, certain aspects remain steady, if not constant. The concerns of poets spread out across the globe, voicing thoughtful, crafted expression, became my permanent area of inquiry. With every investigative turn comes more to absorb and consider. Adding media production components into the research process presents particular and exciting sets of challenges, and using recordable media to absorb and transmit poetic language and communication is one of the ways I have engaged as a writer for three decades.

Archivising

As of 2018, Ginsberg's "papers" at Stanford already includes 88,000 images [2] and 2,125 sound recordings [3], with more to be added (i.e., according to Stanford's Library services webpage, "Accessions received in 1998, 1999, 2002 and 2004 totaling some 154 linear feet have not yet been processed"). The contents of this incomparable single-author collection of recordings, dating from 1937-1997, is wide-ranging. In addition to typical archival contents, such as documentation of readings, lectures, and professionally produced recordings, Ginsberg's archive includes many unique items. To mention only a few examples, listeners can hear cassette recordings diverse as: "Telephone Answering Machine: Literary Messages" (1995) [4]; "August 24, Car ride from Morelia to Mexico City conversation on Mandelstaum Achmatovna. SIDE B: Conversation Russian group Italian Rome festival" (1981) [5]; "Allen Ginsberg with Hasidi Kids" (1994) [6]; "W. S. Burroughs Afternoon Table Conversation re: Kerouac, Art, etc. Continued" (1991) [7]; and, "Street Conversations" ("Ginsberg, Ravenna, Italy with Julian Beck, Corso and Orlovsky, December 1. Street Conversation with Corso and Taylor at Munich museum") (1979) [8].

The archive contains forty-five different recordings labeled "Blake Seminar" from the 1970s (at Naropa), as well as miscellaneous talks and ephemera related to William Blake and other authors. Lectures by Ginsberg on the topic of "20th Century Heroic Expansive Poetry", which I originally heard as a Naropa student, are there. An un-an-

notated copy of my 1994 recording of Ginsberg reading in Hudson, NY is archived [9] (also available on PennSound, the world's largest archive of sound recordings of poets reading their own poems [10]). In addition to conversations, professorial documentation, and audio publications, Ginsberg also kept hold of recorded materials made by others that pertain to his oeuvre. For example, the Stanford archive possesses items such as Elisabeth Belile's CD *Your Only Other Option is Surgery* (1994) [11], as well as a cassette copy of a never released album made by a poetry band I was in called thelemonade, which was produced by Ginsberg's long-time accompanist Steven Taylor (1991) [12]. While such items are not a complete reflection of the poetry subculture surrounding Ginsberg, his collection brings some of it to light for anyone willing to make the effort to explore the archive's contents. At present, many of Ginsberg's recordings at Stanford are roughly indexed, containing little if any bibliographic information. Each entry features an "Image of media"/digital scan of the object, where basic information inscribed on the artifact itself appears. Only sometimes is a complete transcription of these details noted in the library's networked catalog. In order to find out what a "Lecture", "Performance", or "Untitled" recording is, users must examine graphical sublayers of the catalog entry to discover its contents precisely.

That Ginsberg's collection of recordings is now available to the general public is the thing that matters. While one could hope for a time when each item in the collection is annotated, it is nonetheless incredible that anyone with access to the Web can hear these tapes. The Ginsberg collection at Stanford shines as a resource for literary and cultural studies scholars of all sorts. Anyone interested in tracing the finite details of Ginsberg's path as a lecturer, performer, or how he engaged with the world, can easily do so by ear through this archive. One could trace how his subject matter, or delivery of a certain poem or set of ideas, changes (or not) over the course of a half century. Deep scholarship, on top of a poetics education, is enabled. Counting the number of times Ginsberg read a certain poem, how he delivers them differently without musicians present, or studying the amount of background commotion or audience participation that happens, may or may not be significant, but they—and many other potential facets of his output—can be traced via Stanford's archive.

When preparing and producing archival recordings himself, Ginsberg's annotations were often profuse and meticulous with detail, a custom he may have picked up from seeing Harry Smith's notations on the *Anthology of American Folk Music*. For instance, in a 1986 "Blues Anthology" he created, Ginsberg carefully notes each song title, artist's name, and album title (Fig. 1).

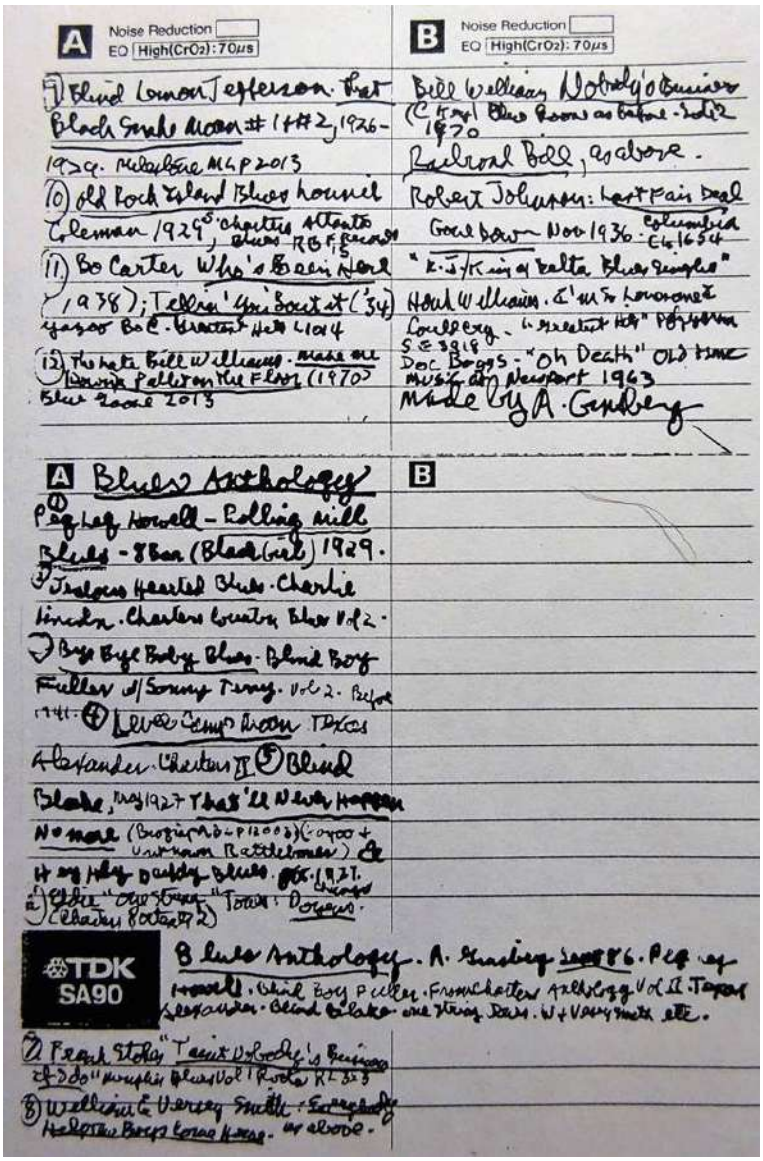


Fig. 1 Ginsberg notes on cassette in Stanford Collection [13]

Ginsberg's example here provides a useful model of the type of detailed information that should be included along with all recordings, but so often is not. A separation between sound media and written media in the domain of digital files only increases the difficulty of properly labeling materials. If processed properly, digital files can be inscribed with metadata that offers description of content, though often such content is either non-existent, or extremely basic (e.g., information for files at PennSound are: name of poet, title of poem or series, place and date, PennSound imprint, and © notice).

Technologizing

In a book titled *Sound States: Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies* (1997), Michael Davidson secures Ginsberg a cornerstone place in audio-poetic history. In his essay "Technologies of Presence", Davidson writes: "'I sing the body electric,' Whitman chants, but the literal possibility for such a song had to wait for Ginsberg and his gen-

eration" (106). Ginsberg's interest in recording his poetry, documenting conversation and events were clearly established as of the mid-1960s. Davidson's essay recalls how Ginsberg used recording machinery to "recover the voice", and how his practice of dictating observations and poems, into a "low-tech, Volkswagen-driven minicassette recorder stands as an alternative" to typical composition practices (105).

Ginsberg's notion of writing-by-dictation was compelling. Immediately after taking classes with him in 1986, I embarked on my first cross-country road trip and imagined imparting my own observation tape-recorded dictations à la *Fall of America*, *Planet News*, and other publications. Some of Ginsberg's recordings of this sort can be heard via the Stanford archive, such as "Auto Poesy Denver; Santa Fe June,14, 17 and 18" (1972) [14]. Describing his process in "Improvised Poetics", an interview with Michael Aldrich, Edward Kissam, and Nancy Blecker that appears in *Composed on the Tongue: Literary Conversations, 1967-1977*, Ginsberg states, "I get into a bus with a microphone and say '*all right, now we're going through the middle of America and we're going to dictate a giant poem on the middle of America and the war and everything that is happening*"' (26, emphasis in original). Transcribing his spoken observations is an atypical yet sensible approach to making poetry, and the machine, for Ginsberg, also plays a role in how the poetry appears. When questioned about the spacing and indentations of specific lines in his poem "Wichita Vortex Sutra", Ginsberg answers,

> The way this was determined was: I dictated it on this Uher tape recorder. Now this Uher microphone has a little on-off gadget here (click!) and when you hear the click it starts it again, so the way I was doing it was this (click!); when I clicked it on again it meant I had something to say. So—if you listen to the original *tape* composition of this, it would be
>
> That the rest of the earth is unseen. (Click!)
>
> An outer universe invisible, (Click!)
>
> Unknown (Click!) except thru
>
> (Click!) language
>
> (Click!) airprint
>
> (Click!) magic images
>
> Or prophecy of the secret (Click!)
>
> heart the same (Click!)
>
> in Waterville as Saigon one human form (Click!)
>
> So when transcribing, I pay attention to the clicking on and off of the machine, which is literally the pauses, as words come out of my—as I wait for phrases to formulate themselves…. And then, having paid attention to the clicks, arrange the phrasings on the page visually, as somewhat the equivalent of how they arrive

> in the mind and how they're vocalized on the tape recorder…. But these lines in "Wichita" are arranged according to their organic time-spacing as per the mind's coming up with the phrases and the mouth pronouncing them. With pauses maybe of a minute or two minutes between each line as I'm formulating it in my mind and the recording (28-9).

Ginsberg's use of technology in this instance enabled a processual writing scenario removed the filter of needing to stop to write, and could be used when writing words down is not convenient. The pause button on today's handheld (even voice-activated) recorders may not be as sonically present as in the analog (tape) era, but the premise for those using them in such a way would be similar.

With the recent public release of Stanford's collection, more of Ginsberg's use of recording hardware has come to light. A recent report on The Allen Ginsberg Project blog tells of a great anecdotal exchange captured on one of Ginsberg's tapes:

> In a conversation with Bob Dylan Allen begins, singing the praises of his nifty new tape-recorder ("It's small play-back, it's.., but… for its size, it's very good – BD: Hey, why don't you tape some of the concert?) – making it clear that this was *not* some surreptitious bootlegging by Allen – (AG: Actually, it would do quite a good job. I'll give you the tape if you want? – BD: Well, no, I'd just like to hear how we sound… (http://allenginsberg.org/2017/08/fridays-weekly-round-328/)

Interestingly, though he often recorded conversations and events as discussed above, Ginsberg's use of vocal transcription techniques did not persist throughout his career. According to a story he told during a Naropa class I attended, he began to move away from using the device for poetry after he had recited a lengthy poem into a recorder, only to discover later that the microphone was not operating properly. In the end, Ginsberg primarily used journal pages as a place to capture words and phrases that appear in his poems.

Seth Perlow, in *The Poem Electric: Technology and the American Lyric*, writes, "Ginsberg sees electronics as shaping his sense of poetic form and of the political work his poetry can do. He takes an ambivalent view of electronics as alternately enabling and constraining the formal and political potentials he sees in improvisation" (267). In his constructive use of tape recorders, Ginsberg was not necessarily looking to veer from the printed poem, but to take advantage of the machinery. As Perlow assesses, "in Ginsberg's hands, the tape recorder enables a method of spontaneous composition that he considers freer and more authentic than writing done on paper" (277). Yet when the "Improvised Poetics" interviewer refers to his tape recorder as a "direction away from the printed poem", Ginsberg responds: "Not really, it is the same thing – the tape recorder's not much different from writing in a notebook. The reason I'm able to use a tape recorder so adequately, or the reason I adopted it almost instantly, was that it was basically the same process as a notebook. Because I'm doing the same thing in a notebook that I do on tape". Ginsberg ultimately believed, "the way beyond the printed page is music!" (58)

Visiting Ezra Pound in Italy in 1967, Ginsberg did not bring a tape recorder. Although his time with Pound was not recorded on tape, reading “Encounters with Ezra Pound” (in *Composed on the Tongue*), you might think it was. Supplying many minute details in his journal writings, in his objectivist, observatory poetics Ginsberg in many regards *became* the tape recorder. Nonetheless, Ginsberg recorded many moments onto tape, and his use of technology sets an example of how a writer might employ such a tool, and how audio recording that preserve particular moments serve as useful and interesting historical artifacts.

Little substance ever came from my own experiments in “on the road” writings. In “Improvised Poetics” Ginsberg notes, “…every time I said something interesting to myself I put it on tape”, but for me, use of tape worked (and now digitally works) differently (29). I became not as much interested in what I said to myself as I was in the interesting compositions and conversations heard during the course of research in poetry and poetics. I sometimes use a recording device to “take notes”, othertimes to make art and document events I participate in. Most of the time, however, microphones point outward, capturing voices and sounds made by others. Once I began organizing events that seemed important enough to preserve, I decided to do whatever necessary to record literary and artistic activities I experience.

Experiences

Beyond the many dimensions Ginsberg taught me about the world, literature, dharma, and the poet’s life, a few of our experiences together transpired in a media recording environment. The first time of two times I saw him in a studio environment was at a July 1986 TV/videotaping session in Boulder, where I’d been invited to meet up with he and Anne Waldman prior to a performance the three of us did at a club in Denver that night (Waldman and I were backup vocalists on Ginsberg’s song “Birdbrain”). I don’t have notes regarding the production or poems being recorded, but documented the occasion with a camera (another trick I learned from him). Ginsberg wore khakis, a button-down collared shirt, and looks kempt and relaxed after a summer of teaching in Colorado. With years of practice, he knew to be attentive to the camera as well as to reading words from his books.

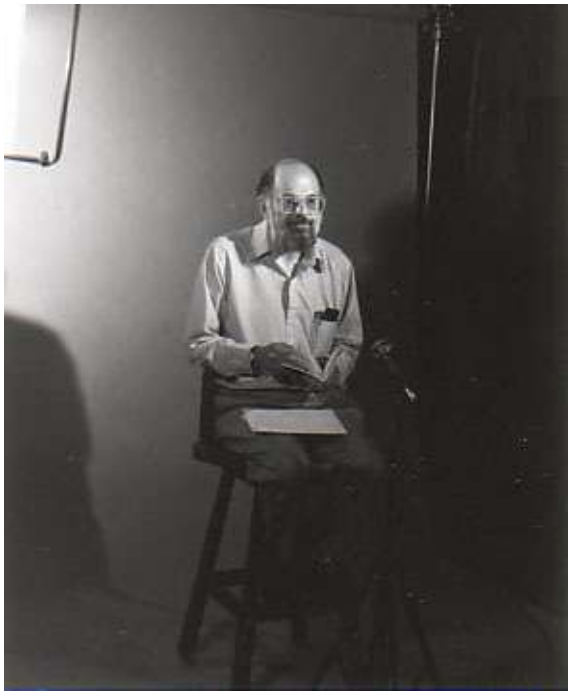


Fig. 2 Allen Ginsberg TV/video session, Boulder, CO, July 1986

photograph by Chris Funkhouser

The most eye-opening and extraordinary experience I had with Ginsberg involving audio production transpired on August 20, 1987. Poet Chris Ide and I traveled to New York, where we were guests staying in Ginsberg's E. 12th St. living room. At the time, Ginsberg was embroiled in intensive recording sessions for his *The Lion for Real* CD (Great Jones, 1989). When we arrived he reported he'd only had an hour of sleep the previous night, and invited Ide and I to come along with him that evening as "poetry roadies". The three of us took a taxi up to A&R Studios on W. 48th St.—the same location where Bob Dylan recorded his *Blood on the Tracks* LP. Hal Willner's liner notes tell an interesting tale of how this project came to be, explaining how its content and participants came together. After a preliminary review with Ginsberg, writes Wilner,

> We then decided on about fifty poems to consider. Next I called about a dozen of my favorite composer/musicians that I felt would be right for the project, gave some his collected poems, and invited them to A&R Studios in New York to hear Allen record. Ginsberg read poems that we picked out, with additional requests from musicians, for about six hours in the studio while we sat in the control room…. We gave the evening's tape copies to musicians and invited them to pick about three poems and compose music. We met separately later that week and picked the best poems for each to work on. The week that we spent recording went extremely well. Each night everyone would arrive between seven and eight in the evening and pieces would be presented by the composer, rehearsed and recorded with Allen reading the work live. Then we'd go to the next composi-

tion…. At the end of the week, we had twenty numbers recorded… (np).

In comparison to making basic documentary recordings, Willner's description here sheds light on how assembling seemingly impromptu audio productions with voice and sounds entails much process.

The night I was present at *The Lion for Real* session, the musicians who played —Steve Swallow, Bill Frisell, Marc Ribot, Ralph Carney, Arto Lindsay, Gary Windo, Michael Blair—were extraordinary accompanists, and Willner was (is) an amazing choreographer whose meticulous process (and ability to communicate with the engineer, Joe Ferla) led to a tight atmosphere that brought out the best in everyone. According to my journal from the time, "The Lion for Real", "The Shrouded Stranger", "Pull My Daisy", "Cleveland, The Flats", and "Kral Majales" were performed that evening—a session concluding long after midnight. This was audio recording on a completely other, commercially-mindful level. No doubt brought on by the financial aspects of such an undertaking, there was a seriousness and professionalism to the occasion that was rare and unforgettable. Being largely ignorant of what actually happens in a studio environment at the time, I was impressed. Nothing I have done resembles such a scale of production, but the experience made a mark: combining poetry combined with music in a multi-track modality was an exciting possibility, especially if one could find like-minded collaborators. As a side note to the occasion, before we went to the studio I engaged in a long talk with Harry Smith (also in residence at Ginsberg's apartment) about Bernice Abbott, his recording projects on the "ethnic neighborhoods street corners of Manhattan", and looked at some of his watercolor paintings. Thus, it was an enormously stimulating day on all fronts.

In his comments on *The Lion for Real*, Ginsberg, with typical generosity, intones his perspective on the project's results: "I had 30 years' experience reading poetry aloud, vocalizing idiomatic intonations. Michael Minzer & producer Hal Willner had the sense to curb rocknroll ambitions, set me up with literate composers, encourage us to match music & recitation. I owe them thanks for reminding me my proper powers. Lyricist and vocalist, I followed their directions, relieved to leave music to the honorable musicians". Having accompanists and engineers handling the technical aspects of sound aspects, the poet could more directly concentrate on delivering his spoken words.

Under much less complex circumstances, I produced recordings of Ginsberg several times over the next few years. When he performed at the December 1991 We Press/ Gargoyle Mechanique benefit in New York, reading then recently unearthed Kerouac poems, all Tim Sweet (sound engineer at Gargoyle Mechanique) needed to do, beyond setting vocal EQ (equalization) levels, was press the record button on the Digital Audio Tape (DAT) deck. Sweet and I mastered the DAT recording together, and a segment of the performance appears on the *we magazine* xv cassette [15]. Ginsberg was a stickler for proper use of amplification and voice, known for chiding readers to speak up and use

the microphone. He was expert at it. Making recordings of him was not a difficult task.

I made one DAT recording of Ginsberg that flawlessly and faithfully captures an instant in time. In April 1994, SUNY-Albany comrades Katie Yates, Nancy Dunlop, and I drove in Yates' VW bus down to Hudson, New York to hear Ginsberg speak and perform at Columbia Greene Community College. An afternoon seminar session took place in a library, with 40 or 50 people in attendance. Ginsberg spoke and answered questions from the audience; I recorded the session to cassette using a flat PZM (ambient) microphone [16]. David Matlin and Dunlop provided the most interesting points of conversation, though Ginsberg felt some of Matlin's questions about Charles Olson were too obscure for this audience. Afterwards, we all drove up to the grounds of Olana State Historic Site (Frederic Church's psychedelic Persian-Victorian home above the river). It was nearing dark, chilly outside, and strikingly beautiful. Others, including some seminar goers, were up there. Ginsberg took a keen interest in a teenage boy who had been in the audience. While they were sitting on one of the gnarled-branch wooden benches next to the house, Ginsberg peppered the boy with questions, asking him what he liked to do, if he partied, and so on; he asked him if he took drugs, and the teenager said yes. Ginsberg asked for particulars, and then told the kid that it was okay to use drugs, "but not too much".

We all went back to the school as it neared the performance time. With Ginsberg's permission I set up my DAT recording gear, fortunately bringing a long enough XLR cable so as to remain unobtrusive, sit in the front row, and enjoy the show. A large crowd of many types of upstate New Yorkers assembled and mingled. A local bookstore set up a booth to sell Ginsberg's new title, *Cosmopolitan Greetings*. A tremendous performance of singing and poetry (one hundred minutes on stage), spanning all periods of his work, is captured on the tape, which came out perfectly. As mentioned previously, the entire recording is available via PennSound, in the Stanford archive, and the "Hum Bom" segment was released on the *Kenning* 12 CD [17]. Afterwards, Ginsberg sat at a table, greeted people and signed autographs for at least an hour and a half. Incidentally, Ginsberg stayed at my apartment in Albany on the night of the reading. When I took a moment to log in to my email account, Ginsberg became very curious about it and we talked about the Internet. He was fascinated by it, but also confessed that he did not have enough time to get involved.

I also made documentary ambient recordings at the Poetry Project's 1993 Valentine's Day Reading, where Ginsberg reads a poem. He is part of a late-night conversation and tuning of Campion I captured on my portable Sony tape recorder in Boulder in summer of 1987. Ginsberg's poem "White Shroud", performed with a string quartet, was included in the *We Magazine* 11 cassette [18]; I was present at the concert and immediately found the piece captivating, but I did not record it.

Afterwords

As mentioned, the audio-visual portion of Ginsberg's archive at Stanford University contains thousands of audiocassettes, reel-to-reel tapes, videotapes, and recordings in

other media (including some labeled “Restricted”). Naropa Poetics Audio Archive [19] contains 210 entries for Ginsberg, and 817 results overall. Ginsberg’s archive at PennSound [20] contains about three dozen audio and video recordings. I imagine the number of recordings Kush, the most prodigious audio poetry documentarian of our time, has of Ginsberg numbers well into the dozens. Presumably many of his public programs were taped and exist in archives scattered across the land. Ginsberg is no doubt one of the most recorded poets who ever lived and it pleases me to contribute documentation of his presence and guidance as I continue on a path of doing the same for other voices I encounter along the way. Falling under Ginsberg’s influence in this amplified the presence of poetry in my life.

Ginsberg’s energy as a performer, as a supporter of others’ works, and as teacher are well accounted for. Even though he is physically gone, anyone can get a sense of his artwork and creative concerns by engaging with texts and media that are available. As much as Ginsberg championed the works of artists he liked, he was also obviously dedicated to preserving his own. As a matter of fact, over a series of nights at New York’s Knitting Factory nightclub in in May 1995, Ginsberg read all of his *Collected Poems*. Since recordings were made at the events, it is possible to hear an enormous amount of his work sounded in his own voice. Some of the material is not part of the Stanford archive, some is available on PennSound, and was some released as a CD Box Set in 2010 (*Live At The Knitting Factory 1995*; Presspop Music). Most of Ginsberg’s poems were recorded, as were his lectures on the Literary History of the Beat Generation, Blake, and other topics. Listeners cannot ask questions or interact with him via recordings, but in many cases the recordings do include bright exchanges with students and audience members.

There is a complication and contradiction to the seeming sense of ease with which a poet can incorporate a technological dimension as part of her/his practice. While we can understand how audio tools might be used in an “improvised” manner, or for spontaneous on-the-tongue composition, using media adds time demands as well as financial expense onto one’s process. Our machinery requires electricity or battery power, as well as the possession of tapes (or other media) used to capture and store material. Even if someone owns a recording device, it requires attention and foresight on the part of its user, and will not function on its own. While the hardware itself certainly facilitates grab-and-go use, the endeavor is, behind the scenes, more demanding than that. With the rise of cell phones in particular, the chances of something being recorded on-the-spot have certainly increased. Such impromptu recordings can possess tremendous value across the media spectrum, though such practices in the literary arts realm also place unseen demands on producers working within the modality. The improvisatory aspect of the pursuit requires preparation and organization. As much as spontaneity is crucial to the process of Ginsberg’s audio compositions, some foresight and attention to technical details are also necessary.

In a 1987 interview with Steve Silberman, Ginsberg was prompted to imagine his legacy and states, “It would be nice to be remembered as…a poet whose work could inspire or elevate others’ minds; or a poet who spread some sense of expansion of awareness, or expansive consciousness. It would be *nice* to be remembered for generous energy – patience and generosity in energetic thought…. I’d like to be remembered as somebody who was curious about what it was like outside of his head”. Rereading this interview for the first time in thirty years, I didn’t remember Ginsberg’s stated objective, but it struck me as being perfectly achieved. Knowing him personally, opening up to what he had to say, growing in to a dialog with his poetic language and tools, captured my attention and led to much artistic growth. Years after our friendship initiated, I told Ginsberg about the premature essay discussed at the outset of this article. He was not surprised, pointing out that reading *The Fall of America* obviously “planted a seed,” and that I should not be afraid to acknowledge where the roots of my investigation began. I am not! Ginsberg’s modes made a strong impact on my work in audio poetics and sense of poetry as social practice. In addition to being informed and inspired by his energy, efforts, and attentions in general, I believe his dedication to what was happening “outside of his head”—indicating that one should not be self-oriented—helped me understand the importance of taking notice, studying, and enabling production of works by others. Building an understanding of values enabled by his spectrum of poetic processes I learned to absorb experience and pursue creative opportunities that come to pass.

Ginsberg was first my teacher, and later became an invaluable supporter and friend. For a decade, I pursued any chance to be in his company and visited with him on many occasions in Colorado, New York, and California. His influence on my writing subsided over time, but it is fair to say that his encouragement (as seen in Fig. 3), enabled the development of work I wanted, and continue to want, to do. My sense that poetry could (if not should) be an electrified multimedia—ideally collaborative—performance event is from the lineage of Ginsberg. With so many years of practice, he had great stage presence was extremely focused when it came to using language and a microphone. His energy was impressive, and his artistic life transpired around-the-clock. In spite of the fact that his late poem “After Lalon” (1994) concludes, “Allen Ginsberg warns you/dont follow my path/to extinction” (81), his responsiveness to the world, to the people who made contact with him, and to the overall cultural landscape in numerous ways charts a formidable example.

—Chris Funkhouser

Rhinebeck, NY

2018

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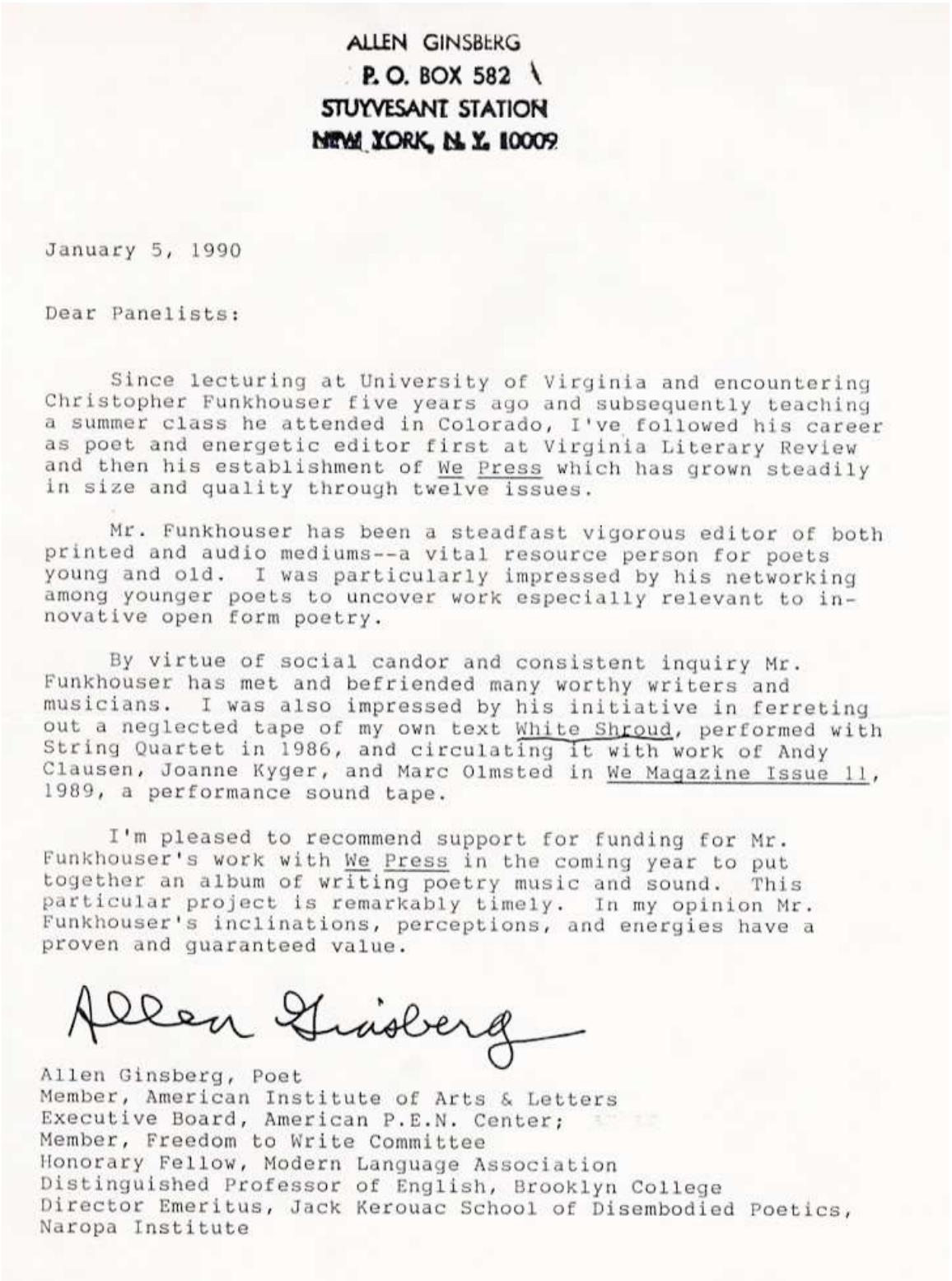
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January 5, 1990

Dear Panelists:

Since lecturing at University of Virginia and encountering Christopher Funkhouser five years ago and subsequently teaching a summer class he attended in Colorado, I've followed his career as poet and energetic editor first at Virginia Literary Review and then his establishment of We Press which has grown steadily in size and quality through twelve issues.

Mr. Funkhouser has been a steadfast vigorous editor of both printed and audio mediums--a vital resource person for poets young and old. I was particularly impressed by his networking among younger poets to uncover work especially relevant to innovative open form poetry.

By virtue of social candor and consistent inquiry Mr. Funkhouser has met and befriended many worthy writers and musicians. I was also impressed by his initiative in ferreting out a neglected tape of my own text White Shroud, performed with String Quartet in 1986, and circulating it with work of Andy Clausen, Joanne Kyger, and Marc Olmsted in We Magazine Issue 11, 1989, a performance sound tape.

I'm pleased to recommend support for funding for Mr. Funkhouser's work with We Press in the coming year to put together an album of writing poetry music and sound. This particular project is remarkably timely. In my opinion Mr. Funkhouser's inclinations, perceptions, and energies have a proven and guaranteed value.

Allen Ginsberg

Allen Ginsberg, Poet
Member, American Institute of Arts & Letters
Executive Board, American P.E.N. Center;
Member, Freedom to Write Committee
Honorary Fellow, Modern Language Association
Distinguished Professor of English, Brooklyn College
Director Emeritus, Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics,
Naropa Institute

Fig. 3 Ginsberg support letter, 1990.


nycemf 2017

Notes from nycemf 2017

It has been a year since the longest survivor of my cat family left this world. I think back on those moments I shared with each of the three kitties, when for just some minutes, sometimes only for seconds, they opened to me, let me into the depth of their being, and our souls met. Sometimes it was with eye contact, other times not even, but with their whole body, or with signals, instead. The kitties were not busy with their daily rituals, eating, drinking, sleeping, playing, grooming themselves, not focused on each other, nor distracted by noises in their hearing-range. They came to me for a reason, perhaps a need, wanting to communicate with me and sensing my receptiveness. I remember those moments well and how I cherished them, with each of the kitties. They allowed me to experience the oneness of pure relationship and a glimpse — I don't know how or why — into the universal oneness which is asserted in most every religion. I know now that these were "ich-du" encounters of which Martin Buber wrote. Indeed I held these moments as sacred as the precious beings themselves.

I listen to a lot of new music, much of it electroacoustic, since this is the field of my own work, and sometimes the encounters with pieces I hear remind me of those special moments with the kitties. The music speaks to me as though it is a living being, and I answer with silent yesses as it moves forward in time. Such encounters do not occur often. Of course not. They require my openness to them, something I am not always available to be or willing to become. Sometimes they occur on first listenings. Other times they happen only after repeated listenings and significant efforts on my part to unblock in myself whatever might be standing in the way of connection.

Often, it is in the concert hall that these encounters occur. The physical setting, the silence framing each piece, the anticipation and readiness of the audience all add to their emergence. Many of us know these moments. There is a stillness in the hall. No-one shifts positions, uncrosses a leg, no-one coughs, yawns, clears a throat, reaches for a candy or a tissue. It is as though the music has cast a spell, enveloped the audience, caught us in its web. We've become connected, not only with the music, with its author, but with each other as well. The "ich-du" relation has become plural. The energy is palpable, and its tentacles have spread, sending us elsewhere while we're still fully present. We have shared the moment. And yet, how different, how unique, how deeply personal the encounter has been for each of us.

Last summer, I asked some colleagues who had attended the 2017 New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival (Abrons Art Center, June 19-26; National Sawdust, July 14-16) to respond to a piece with which they felt a particular connection — perhaps an encounter — for this edition of Open Space Magazine. Six people accepted the invitation, all but one composers themselves. Those fleeting moments of encounters with pieces are too whole, too pure for description. But the experience ("ich-es" says Buber) of the music is not. My thanks to the authors for their willingness to write about some pieces they heard and for sharing some things about the music that matter to them. Their listenings matter. Ruth Anderson once said that a piece is not completed until it is heard. How nice, in the world of relation, for pieces to be completed again and again, and in many different ways.

Judy Klein -- New York, Spring, 2018.

A composer's view from the audience: Comments on two compositions performed at NYC EMF 2017 (Playhouse Theater, Abrons Arts Center, NYC: Concert 18, June 24, 2017.)

Brian Belet

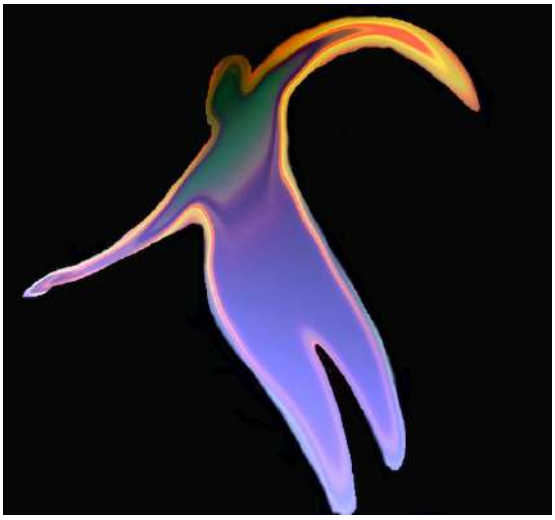
Elegy and Honk
Mark Phillips
for English horn and electronics
Michele Fiala, English horn
2001

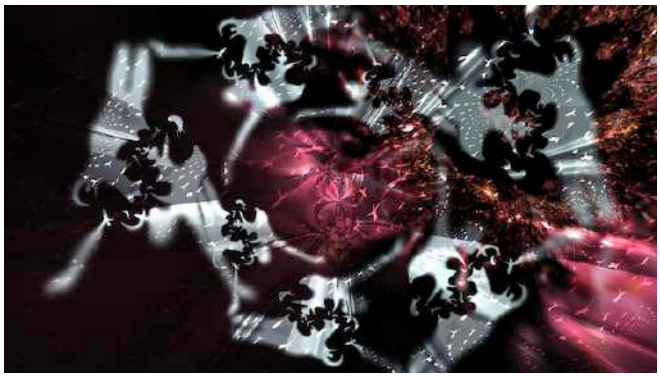
The assigned role for the English horn in our classical literature is largely two-fold: either it is a heart-wrenching soulful cry from the depths of despair (the dying swan) or it is a joke, often at its own expense (the demented duck). So, how does a composer work with this instrument in a way that does not fall into either of these traps. Mark Phillips' solution in *Elegy and Honk* was to dive straight into the jaws of both clichés, brushing aside the detritus of historical demons, and then explore what each dramatic world has to offer. This was a gutsy move, one that could easily have failed if not handled skillfully. To my ears and sensibility, Mark nailed both aesthetics in the clearly labeled paired movements. I appreciated the risk, as the result could so easily have been cheesy. Instead, both movements flew high on their own merits, each had clear structural integrity, each utilized the sounds of the live instrument effectively, and each employed electronic processing that made sense with the overall soundscape. "Elegy" was just that, with extended lines and deep resonate timbres that allowed the English horn to portray its tragic historical character. And "Honk" was playful, carefree, and even silly (in a mature "Nod, nod, wink, wink…" sort of way). There is always a need for good craft in our field, and Mark has the requisite chops as an experienced composer in many media to tackle this danger zone. This composition was very soundly constructed (the pun here both incidental and intentional…). The electronic layer employed granular synthesis to a large degree, with the first movement processing only English horn samples, while the second movement expanded the audio source collection to include ducks, geese, and resynthesized bicycle horn. In this way the choice of source samples also reflected the mood and aesthetic of each movement. In the end, what really matters is whether or not the composer sculpts a meaningful segment of time for the attentive listener. Mark emphasized long lines and mournful tones in the first movement, and then romped through a roomful of fun and frolic in the second movement. The binary pairing presented a sensible contrast, and the overall arc of time made good sense. Michele Fiala performed the instrumental lines with gravitas and playful abandonment, respectively, as needed for each movement. In addition to being a well-crafted composition on multiple levels, it was just plain fun to experience in live performance. Rock on!

If You Could See my Soul
Sylvia Pengilly
Video
2016

Continuing my rant regarding craft, I am cautious (and usually leery) when any EA concert has a video piece on the program. Why is this? Sadly, too many EA composers who construct both the music and video layers for their creations fall short on the skill side in the video domain compared to their audio capabilities. And those video pieces display this disparity with embarrassing clarity (I often close my eyes so that I can just listen to the music and spare myself the visual pain). With that preamble, I was taken by Sylvia Pengilly's *If You Could See my Soul* as both realms worked together with the same high level of craft and artistry. Ah, at last, this is what we should have at a concert of EA music!

I have known Sylvia for many years, and have witnessed her growth in video composition and production. Like many of her works, the images feature herself, reflecting her lineage as a dancer (see Soul 1, below). In this current work, the images continuously traverse the perceived realities of this world and the other world, the place of dreams, fantasies, and (in this case) the soul. The interplay between real and abstract are featured throughout the work (see Soul 2, below), and I was able to form my own parallel narrative journey as the work unfolded on the screen. In the midst of this seamless unfolding of time there is also a very clear formal structure. I admit to being a classical structuralist, so music (and video) that understands how to traverse a given passage of performance time always ranks high with me. I found this to be a mature work, one that can only come about after many years of the artist's individual journey on this planet, coupled with many years of dedicated work at the dual crafts required to compose such a work. It is also a very moving work, invoking deep ponderings consciously and emotionally. Brava!


Soul 1


Soul 2

Listening to Elizabeth Hoffman's *Vanishing Points*

Mara Helmuth

I heard *Vanishing Points* by Elizabeth Hoffman on evening concert 6 of the New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival on June 20, 2017 at Abrons Arts Center.
I enjoyed existing in the timbral/spatial/rhythmic universe created by the sometimes elegant, sometimes rough, frothing or pulsing sounds circulating around me in the middle-back of the hall. The program notes reveal the primary sound source as "a brush of drapery," and the piece is for fixed media, in eight channels. When I was asked to respond to a piece from the conference, I thought it would be interesting to listen to this piece again and attempt a verbal response.

Granulation techniques and cross-synthesis were used to metamorphose the source into a multitude of sounds, mostly but not all unpitched, with immensely varying textures, frequency ranges and rhythms. Often sonic elements are not distinct, but merged, fused into the whole, but with individual angles protruding briefly. A particular rhythmic/timbral entity from the second section contributes a grounding background rhythm in much of the piece. Complex spatializations of textures are often both graceful and jittery, as a butterfly's movements, but more organized, and seem as though the sounds are interacting with the listener, tantalizingly out of reach but teasingly whipping around one in improvisatory patterns.

There are notable moments of focus, but climaxes are not confined to brief durations; they are more sustained stormy multilayered drives that build majestically or dissolve eventually into more focused essences.

I hear the piece in four sections. The opening churns with a graceful fluttering of chaotic granular-like layers interacting around the listener. High rustling and metallic brass-like sounds are like small presences racing back and forth. A lower frequency (G-ish) trembling inharmonic flute-like sound dominates for a while. Lower noise-pulsing sounds enter, and these layers die down around two minutes.

From the pulsing sound emerges a slower measured slightly varying rhythmic grinding noise pattern, heard five times in this second section. Each event has about four to six short somewhat regular beats, and then two or three sustained longer sounds which move intentionally through the space. This grinding event becomes an elemental grounding sound in the piece, and returns later. A metallic layer colors the end of the fourth and the fifth iteration.

After this sonic material which holds few obvious real-world connections, a deepening of the sounds leads into a third and lengthier section at three minutes with new textures from convolution of the source with voices and woodwinds. A sensation of being in a mumbling, perturbed crowd in a large resonant space overtook me then. Material heard earlier returns: a fast-moving metallic sonic entity and the second section grinding event, with a pitch of C periodically heard later in the section. Momentum sustains with rhythmic interplay of the layers and noise pulsings. Rhythmic motives related to the grinding event, including a short beat, accented long beat, inhabit this section. After a brief quieting, a fourth minute-long section containing rattles of shorter grains, foreground erratic and background sustained almost-vocal layers and a hint of the grinding event encompasses the listener. At the end, the extended earlier sound transformations have condensed into single impulses hand-strewn around the space, and vanish.

Elizabeth generously provided me with several recordings: a stereo mix, an ambisonic stereo version, a recording of eight channels played back in a room, recorded on stereo microphones, and the eight individual soundfiles for each channel. Each version had its strengths: the stereo mix and the eight individual tracks had clarity of sound, and were the only ones which allowed me to hear certain sonic details. But the spatialization was completely lost in the stereo mix, for the most part, flattening the sound. The ambisonic mix revealed some of the spatialization, but some of the clarity was lost. The multi-channel version recorded in a room in stereo gave some of the effect of the space I heard in concert, but again clarity was lost. I went in to an eight-channel studio to listen, and found that the spatialization was essential to understanding the work. The excitement of the concert performance was there, with the clarity of a studio sound.

The vitality of the piece comes from several skillfully-handled aspects of the compositional process. Extensive transformations of the original source sound provide diverse materials. The flexibility of the processing allowed for precise transitions like twirling wavering metallic planes of sound with twisting orbits condensing smoothly into rhythmic softer passages. Other transitions I enjoyed were rustling high sounds turning into water-like sounds near the end of the first section, and pulsings disintegrating into clicks in the second section. The spatialization activated sounds and textures, always seeming intentional, and interactive with the listener. Some of the delay processing and spatializations were performed live by the composer while creating the piece, contributing to the spontaneous feel of timbral change, rhythm and motion. Overall the piece offers a rich and intriguing listening experience.



Musings

Madeleine Shapiro, cellist

These are some musings from my perspective as a performer at NYCEMF 2017 about the pieces I performed, what attracted me to play them, and what they mean to me. Each makes its own distinct statement and I enjoyed the wide variety in sound palette and expression.

In no particular order, I'll begin with ***Despues de los humanos (After Humans)*** for cello, fixed media and video images by Orlando Jacinto Garcia**.** This was a piece that was written for me as part of a decade-long Nature Project, which I started in order to blend my interest in environmental issues with my professional life.

I have performed After Humans many times in widely different settings. To me, it makes a strong artistic statement about the endangered state of our earth. I am not a great fan of works with instruments and video because so often it seems that the live music takes second place to the video, but I feel Orlando has done a wonderful job integrating both. There are two large solo cello cadenzas against a black screen. When the video is playing, the cello takes an accompanying role. The spare, starkness of the writing communicates the urgency of the subject matter.

I very much enjoyed Oded Ben-Tal's ***Soliloquy*** for cello and fixed media for its sweep, it packs a wide range of emotions in a relatively short time span, and for its varied and idiomatic cello writing. I especially liked the flexibility of the fixed media, which left the cellist room for freedom and interpretation, in the true sense of a soliloquy.

For someone who is usually attracted to "textural" pieces, Jorge Sosa's ***Elegy for the Victims of Gun Violence*** gave me the rare chance to immerse myself in the lyrical and romantic side of the instrument, while making a strong emotional statement about the horrors of gun violence. It also gave me the opportunity to work with Jorge whom I have known for many years. I look forward to recording the piece, which was written for me.

Hanae Azuma's ***In the Bay II*** is a meditation on the waters of Tokyo Bay which Hanae sees from her house every day. I loved the simplicity of it, the simple lines, and the light touch of the electronic processing. I played it every day at the beginning of each practice session and found it put me into a relaxed and centered place.

Intereception for cello and fixed media is the second piece I have played by Gerald Eckert. The first was ***Nen VII*** for flute, cello and fixed media which I played at the 2014 NYCEMF with Beatrix Wagner. Both pieces explore what is for me a very interesting sound palette. Indistinct, muffled fragments of cello sound and clouded harmonics weave in and out of the fixed media which shares a similar sound palette. The pieces create a very distinct sound world and I found both pieces very absorbing to perform.

And lastly, I loved Doug Geers' ***Teach Sum, Cheat Sum*** which I performed with Maja Cerar. Having played works with electronics since my undergraduate days in the pioneering '70s, it was great to have a bit of fun, not take ourselves too seriously, and turn into robots by the end.

Sylvia Pengilly

Breath of Water by Mara Helmuth and Esther Lamneck

The New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival never fails to deliver many of the newest and most innovative creations in electroacoustic music to its audiences, but occasionally the listener encounters a piece that is so stunning and immediate in its effect that it merits special distinction. Such a piece is "Breath of Water," co-composed by Mara Helmuth and Esther Lamneck, a fixed media work for electronically generated sound, composed by Mara Helmuth, and clarinet, performed and co-composed by Esther Lamneck.

From the very first sound the listener's attention is riveted by the complex, bubbling, highly active sounds produced by a perfect integration of the electronics with the clarinet. These breathy, pulsing sounds begin in a relatively low general frequency range, but with the clarinet leaping very quickly between extremes of both pitch and amplitude, creating an amazing texture of never-before-heard sounds. Over time, this ever-changing and evolving texture gradually works its way to an overall higher range, the texture thins, and the dynamics decrease leading to a quieter and very beautiful section which is characterized by more sustained sounds and less rhythmic activity. These slow, sustained sounds, some from the electronics, some from the clarinet, are exquisitely blended, sometimes over an accompaniment of a repeated-note motive, which compliments them perfectly. This sustained section transforms into a wonderfully thick, rich sound which is continuous, expanding to a very broad frequency spectrum, where different pitches gradually blend in and out, creating an indescribably beautiful harmonic tapestry. Three more permutations of this harmonic tapestry are presented, each with its own beauty and individual characteristics, the last of which dies away to an almost imperceptible sound on the clarinet which leads into the final section. This section is reminiscent of the first because of its increased activity, but there are differences: the general range is somewhat higher than at the beginning, and the clarinet seems to dominate, swooping in filigree arcs from low to high with multiphonics and a vast array of amazing clarinet sounds that are unique to Dr. Lamneck. It ends with a strong, assertive multiphonic that is the perfect conclusion to the piece.

I knew that Mara and Esther had worked together before, usually taking several years to arrive at the final version of a piece, which was the case here. I also learned that Esther had provided Mara with a recording of some of the unique sounds she was creating on the clarinet, particularly sub harmonic sounds. From these short samples Mara created the electronic, "Fixed Media" component of the piece, using the soft subharmonics, with the prominent sound of air between the outer pitch layers of the previously recorded material, creating a unique sonic environment for Esther's "realtime" clarinet.

Mara Helmuth is an outstanding and highly respected composer and musician, while Esther Lamneck's stunning virtuosity is legendary, so it is not surprising that a piece co-created by them would be excellent, however, "Breath of Water" reaches new heights in the genre of co-composed music, holding the listener's attention from the opening sound to the last, creating a unique and unforgettable musical experience.

I am very grateful to the composers for giving me access to the recording of the performance of June 23, 2017, at the Playhouse of Abrons Arts Center, and for the glimpse into their creative process.

NYCEMF 2017

Elsa Justel

This festival gives us an overview of what is happening today in the world of electro acoustic music. It is a marathon week of music of all styles and aesthetics of the genre, produced in recent years.
In this report, I will mention some of the works that have affected my sensitivity for different reasons.
In the domain of mixed media: **"Cimmerian Isolation"** for flute and live electronics by Nathaniel Haering.
It is a very expressive piece in which the composer exploits the sonorous resources of the instrument in a complex context that combines vocal gestures and interesting electronic sounds, creating a colorful polyphony. The Cimmerian character, expressed by rough sounds over an electronic acidic surface, gives to the piece a sense of expectation and drama.

In the acousmatic genre: **"Fyr"** de Zuriñe Gerenabarrena is a piece of subtle and suggestive nuances. The voice, used in all its acoustic possibilities, emerges from a fluid and crisp sound landscape, evoking sketches of some secret message, like "caressing the memory". The composer made a thorough and delicate diffusion, using the system in 16 channels to enrich the temporal discourse with a space element loaded with meaning.

"Des temps oubliés" de Gilles Gobeil, a great piece in homage to a great composer: Franz Liszt. An excellent example of acousmatic music, where materials, temporal development and expressive discourse combine to create a touching and sensitive musical atmosphere. The electronic sound merges with piano quotes to create a phrasing that is both functional (the structure) and eloquent (the tribute).

"Vanishing Points" by Elizabeth Hoffman
This piece develops through a dense and weft surrounding where energy is manifested by subtle changes in texture and color. Through its speech it creates a magical and evocative atmosphere.

Fede Halac

"This is for young ears": A Response to Elsa Justel's Marelle...

October 4, 2017

A black box room packed with a rather large audience surrounded by 16 Genelec speakers set as two rings of 8, with an elevation of about 1.5 meters. I arrived just in time for the concert and there were barely any seats left. I sat at the back with my head right behind speaker no. 5 –a quite 'bad' location to listen to spatialized music inside a dome. I had the old fear one might encounter in an electroacoustic concert if one is not sitting around the 'sweet spot'.[1] Despite my fears –and this is why I am writing this–, Dr. Justel started playing *Marelle*[2] and I could listen to her music inside the entire space in front of me. How did she achieve a complete multidimensional image that can be grasped from a point other than the center of the listening space? To what extent is this composition inherent to a particular spatial distribution? How can I go about showing this? This text is my response to her use of space.[3]

> *"La rayuela se juega con una piedrita que hay que empujar con la punta del zapato. Ingredientes: una acera, una piedrita, un zapato, y un bello dibujo con tiza, preferentemente de colores.*

When Dr. Justel kindly sent me the stems, for the purposes of this response, she explained that the tracks should be assigned in pairs in the space. She emphasized this was of extreme importance since there would be moments in the piece where unwanted gaps in the aural image would emerge should the tracks be assigned in a circular manner. In order to visualize this, I made two puredata (Pd) patches to analyze and plot time-varying spectral images of each track and went ahead and placed them in pairs and in circles. I only show here the paired view.[4]

En lo alto está el Cielo, abajo está la Tierra, es muy difícil llegar con la piedrita al Cielo,

[1] "From the vantage point of the sweet spot, the listener is not only able to perceive spatial imagery at the loudspeaker locations, but also phantom images in between" (Kendall, 2010). Based on 'precedence' ("the auditory system's mechanism for clarifying directional hearing in reverberant environments"), the size of the area between speakers "makes a huge difference for listeners outside the sweet spot". However, he continues, "signal processing can reshape the situation" by "image dispersion" and "signal decorrelation".

[2] *Marelle or the Moments of Life* was premiered on March 29, 2017, ÉlectroBelge, Espace Senghor, Brussels (Belgium) [https://www.electrocd.com/en/oeuvre/42489/Elsa_Justel/Marelle_or_the_Moments_of_Life]. The performance mentioned here happened on June 2017, at NYCEMF

[3] All the materials leading to this response are available at http://github.com/fdch/marelle_response

[4] The result of assigning a circular count to the track numbers instead of a paired one mostly affects the sides of the aural image. This means that while the front is left unchanged (1-2, 9-10), and the back is swapped (8-7, 16-15), the stereo image of the sides is reconfigured in this way: the right side of the remaining pairs are placed as a stereo image in itself, and the left side of the remaining pairs are placed as another stereo image. This is indeed a very different result in the stereo pairing.

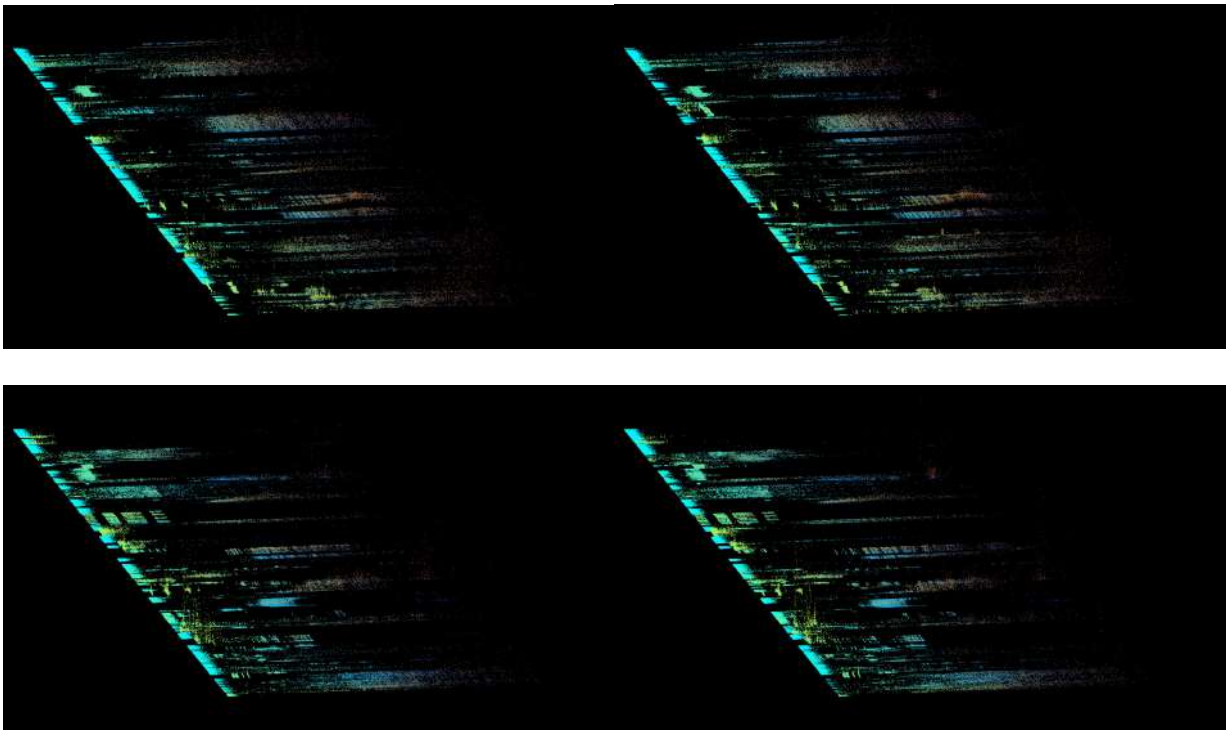


Figure 1: Tracks 1-2 (below) and 9-10 (above). See Figure 2 for reference.

Before going to the visualization, a few things need to be mentioned. I chose puredata's vanilla external [sigmund~] as the workhorse for analysis. Because of this, I ran into several known problems. First of all, the disadvantages regarding the use of Fourier-based spectrum analysis. Particularly in the context of electroacoustic music analysis, "Fourier analysis is an inherently inefficient way to analyze noisy sounds, since it assumes that these sounds are combinations of harmonically related sinusoids."[5] Despite these limitations, given that I was given each individual track as rendered by the composer and, more precisely, that these tracks contained mostly synthesized sounds, I considered it to be a very accurate analysis method. Since *Marelle*'s textures are made of very sharp noises subject to highly crafted filtering, a Fourier-based spectral

casi siempre se calcula mal y la piedra sale del dibujo.

peak analysis would detect not the noise, but the filtering, giving a rather accurate depiction of the spectral content of the actual sound. Moreover, since these short grains of filtered noise are burst expressively to space and diffused in divergent ways, I would be able to extract motion from one plot to the next if the peaks match in position. I will elaborate on this problem later on.

Poco a poco, sin embargo, se va adquiriendo la habilidad necesaria para salvar las diferentes casillas (rayuela caracol, rayuela rectangular, rayuela de fantasía, poco usada) y un día se aprende a salir de la Tierra y remontar la piedrita hasta el Cielo,

[5](Roads, 1996) p.592

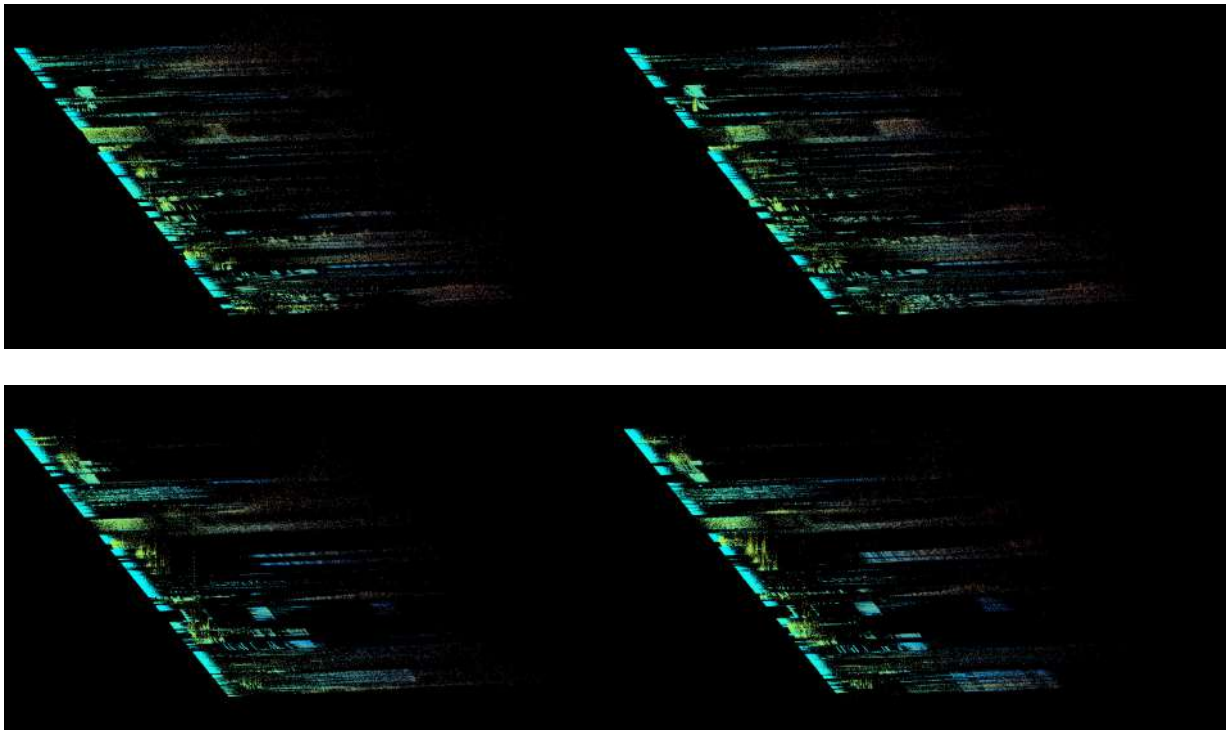


Figure 2: Tracks 3-4 (below) and 11-12 (above). Frequency is in the X-axis, the leftmost being the highest frequencies (around 16 kHz); Amplitude is in the Y axis, scaled to show the loudest peaks as upward saliences; and Time is in the Z axis from back to front, showing a total duration of 12 minutes.

A second drawback of the Fourier based method is known as the "tradeoff between the number of frequency bins and the length of the analysis window"[6]. In general, what is recommended is to tailor the analysis method to the input source. I have found therefore that a window size of 2048 samples, given the sample rate of 48kHz worked very well to obtain as much frequency resolution as possible. The narrower the window size, the less bins it can resolve and therefore the more accurate frequency distinction it makes. For a sample rate of 48kHz and a total length of 12 minutes (about 3.456e+07 samples per track) the **Time|Frequency Tradeoffs** table shows results for each of the tracks.

Finally, the major drawback in using [sigmund~] comes from a rather ambitious need. Since there are 16 different tracks, and since [sigmund~] only outputs peaks if it detected them, then there are variable numbers of peaks in each track. This is what explains the averaging of peak count in the **Time|Frequency Tradeoffs** table. Because of this decorrelation of peak detection, an analysis of the peaks should be tracked in space. [sigmund~] already has a tracks mode, which performs sequential peak tracking. However, there is not such a tool for spatial tracking. Moreover, there is a dimensional limitation since Pd has only one-dimensional FFT built-in capability.[7]

Taking a step further, this means that if one is tempted to compute a complete spectral image of the listening space using N tracks, how would a N-dimensional FFT affect multichannel electroacoustic analysis? This question clearly goes beyond the limit of this paper, but it would make an interesting follow-up research.

[6](Roads, 1996) p.559

[7]Although Pd can host both FFTW and Takuya OOURA's FFT implementation, [simgund~] can only be used with the latter. Moreover, in both these FFT routines a one-dimentional implementation is made in Pd, which is, of course, reasonably enough computation for a large number of audio processing techniques.

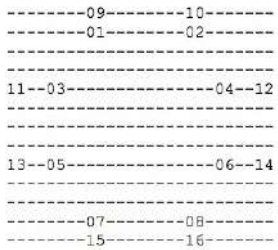
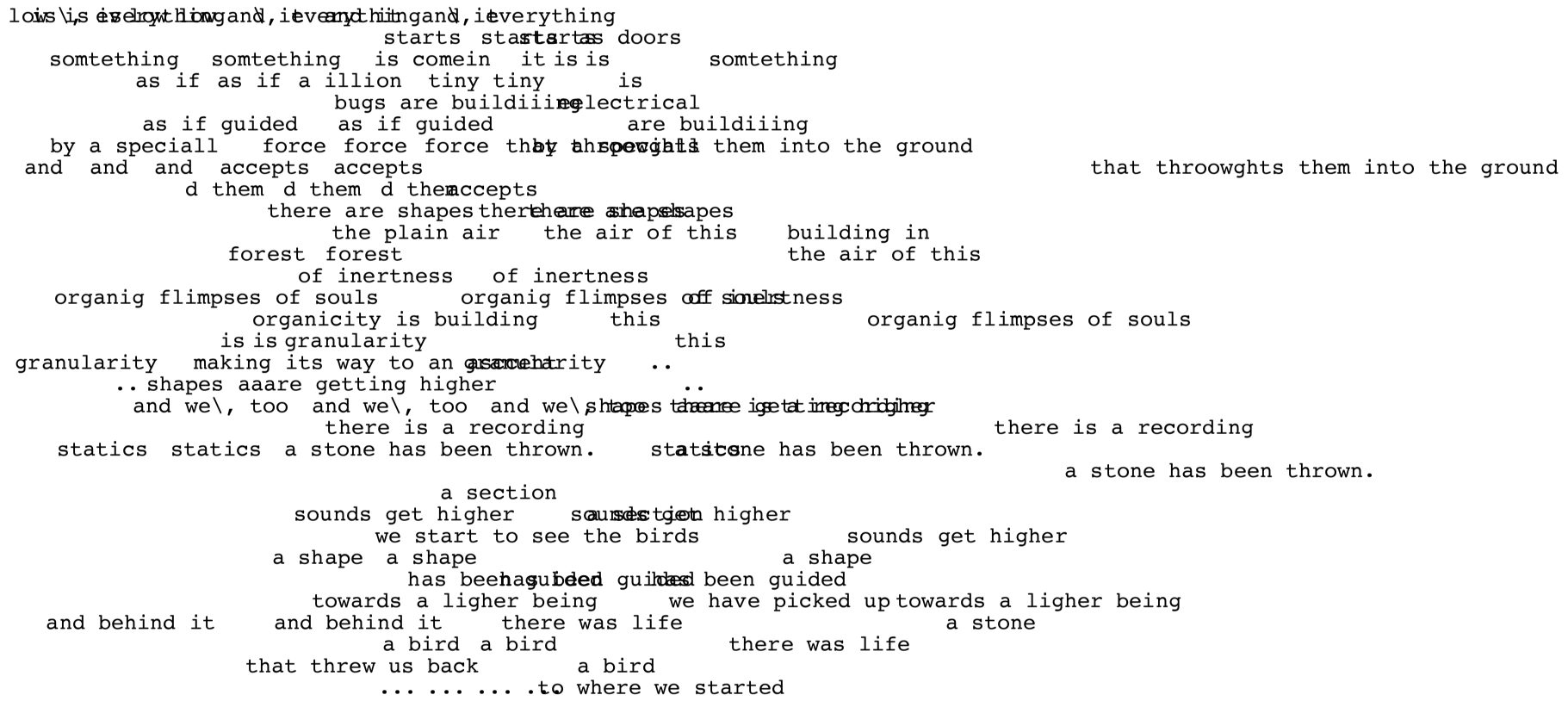


Figure 3: Speaker Positions

Sample Length	3.46E+07	3.46E+07	3.46E+07	3.46E+07
Window Size	16384	8192	2048	1024
Peak Count	2130	4720	17118	34238
Peak Max	10	10	10	10
Target Peaks	21300	47200	171180	342380
Peaks/track no.1	21730	43482	173363	346730
Peaks/track no.2	21762	43555	173704	347395
Peaks/track no.3	21142	42281	169021	337857
Peaks/track no.4	21364	42714	170685	341172
Peaks/track no.5	21740	43400	173337	346835
Peaks/track no.6	21714	43421	173539	347095
Peaks/track no.7	21808	43533	173879	347725
Peaks/track no.8	21715	43402	173135	346120
Peaks/track no.9	22469	44919	179492	358835
hasta entrar en el Cielo (Et tous nos amours, sollozó Emmanuèle boca abajo),				
Peaks/track no.10	22452	44850	179007	357987
Peaks/track no.11	22187	44360	176908	353725
Peaks/track no.12	22030	43902	174795	349825
Peaks/track no.13	22204	44332	177080	354077
Peaks/track no.14	21887	43692	174538	349070
Peaks/track no.15	22052	44012	175790	351362
Peaks/track no.16	22343	44718	178685	357167
Average Peaks	21912.4375	43785.8125	174809.875	349561.0625
Peak Convergence	0.9720506904	1.077974744	0.9792352978	0.9794569153

Table 1: Time|Frequency Tradeoffs. This table shows the result of four analyses performed for all tracks in different window sizes. For all these analyses the peak maximum is the same (10) and the "Peak Convergence" (the difference between the targeted peaks and the actual peak average) is shown as a function of the window size. Surprisingly, the greatest margin falls into a window size of 8192, not 16384, and the least margin belonged to a size of 1024. The chosen window size was ultimately 2048, as a compromise between performance and peak convergence.


starts
somtething
as if
by a speciall
and
accepts
there are shapes
the plain air
forest
of inertness
organig flimpses of souls
organicity is building
granularity
shapes aaare getting higher
and we\, too
there is a recording
statics
a stone has been thrown.
a section
sounds get higher
we start to see the birds
a shape
has been guided
towards a ligher being
and behind it
there was life
a bird
that threw us back
... ... .to where we started

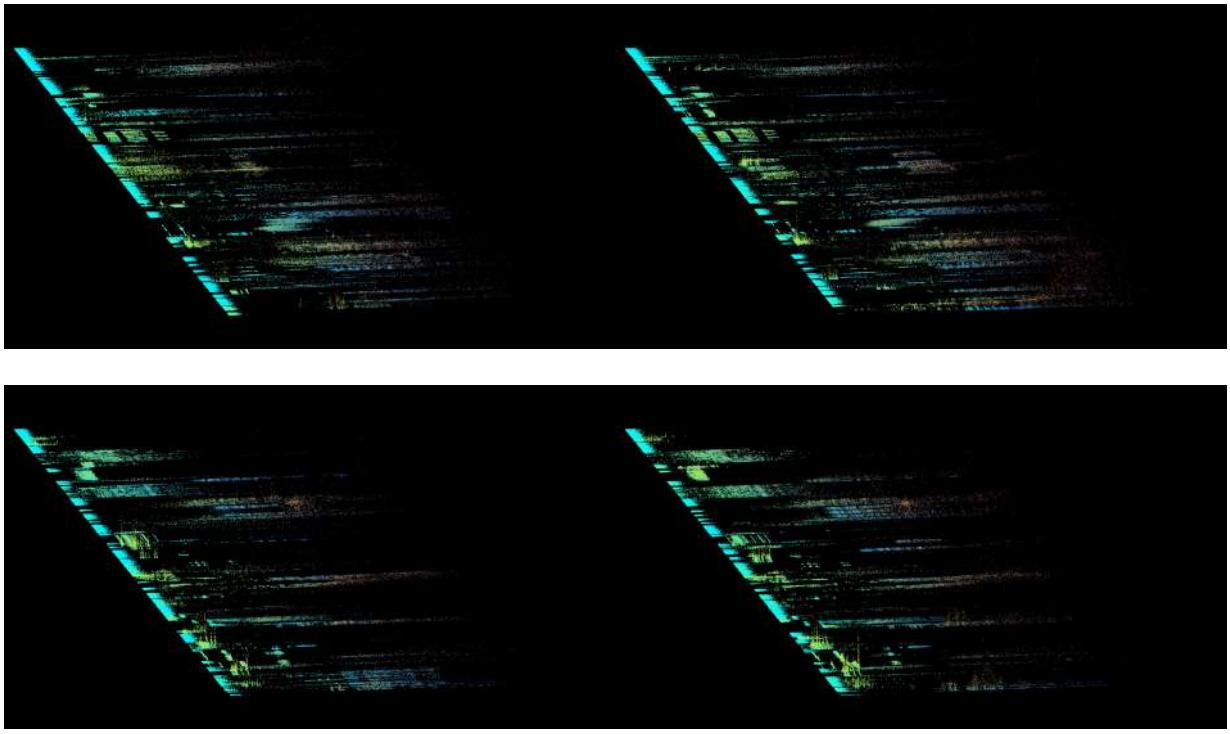


Figure 4: Tracks 5-6 (below) and 13-14 (above).

Despite the disadvantages delineated above, I considered [sigmund~] to be a very accurate tool for the purposes of this paper. The output of [sigmund~] when in peaks mode, is as follows:

- frequency (Hz)
- amplitude (RMS)
- cosine component (real value)
- sine component (imaginary value).
- *lo malo es que justamente a esa altura, cuando casi nadie ha aprendido a remontar la piedrita hasta el Cielo,*
- *se acaba de golpe la infancia*
- *y se cae en las novelas,*
- *en la angustia al divino cohete,*
- *en la especulación de otro Cielo al que también hay que aprender a llegar.*

As in every visualization, there are several elements at stake in bringing information into display in a meaningful manner. There are also the limitations of the tool for visualizing in itself. I chose to stay within Pd and load a library called "Graphical Environment for Multimedia", or Gem. Using Pd as a programming language –amongst other things–, Gem is in its core a C++ wrapper for OpenGL.[8] Several people have contributed over the years in making Gem what it is now.[9] From within this rather large library, I only

[8]https://puredata.info/downloads/gem/documentation/manual/pub/danks1997realtime.pdf

[9]From Gem's welcome message: Mark Danks (original version), Chris Clepper, Cyrille Henry, IOhannes m zmoelnig, Guenter Geiger, Daniel Heckenberg, James Tittle, Hans-Christoph Stein... et al.

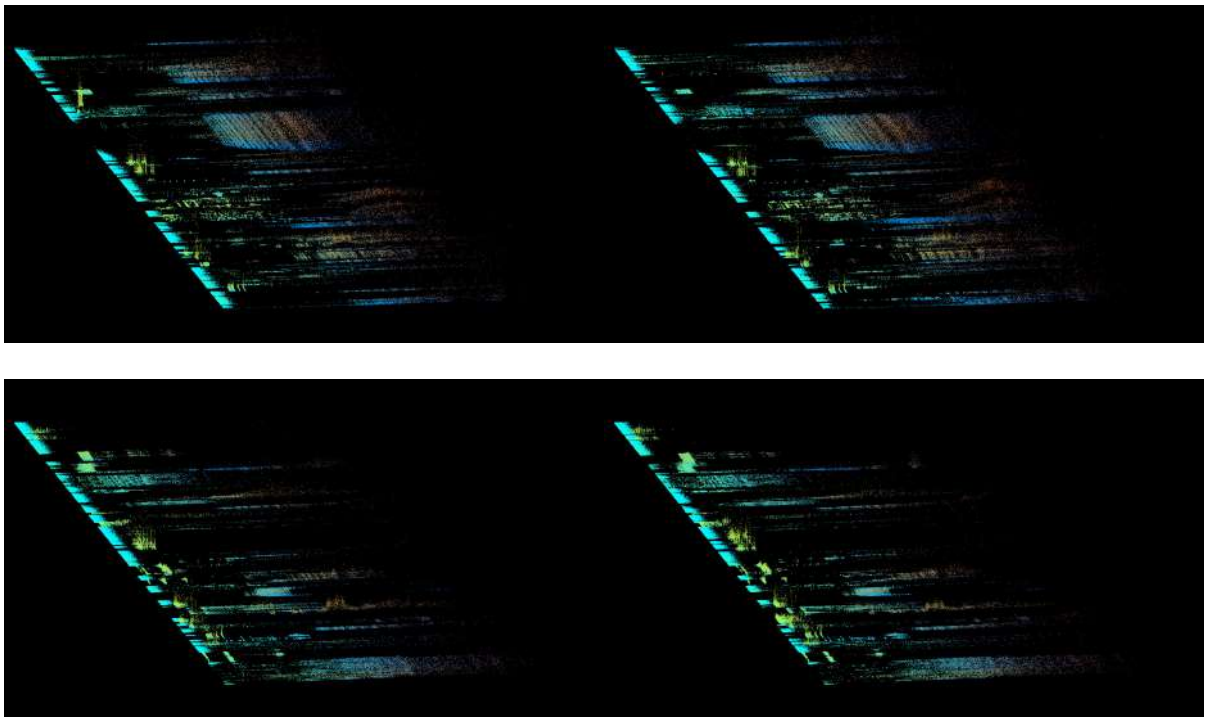


Figure 5: Tracks 7-8 (below) and 15-16 (above). The color of the points displays Amplitude and Frequency in a different manner: Red and Blue act as a continuum of amplitude (Red being an amplitude of 1 and Blue an amplitude of 0) and Green shows Frequency (a higher frequency means more Green). The Alpha channel shows Phase information: the closer to π the more visible, and the closer to -π, the more transparent it is.

I used one key object called [gemvertexbuffer][10] for the actual plotting of the spectra. This object allows the rendering of a Vertex Buffer Object (VBO),[11] which is essentially an array of data stored in the Graphical Processing Unit (GPU). The object accepts several arrays for the different attributes such VBO can hold. In this case, I only provided a position array and a color array.

In order to plot the spectrum in time, the position array is built with $x = \log(\textit{frequency})$, $y = \textit{amplitude}$, and $z = \textit{time}$. Once these attributes are set, the VBO can be further manipulated (scaled, rotated, translated, etc), so some manipulations were made for the image to be rendered in a functional way (for example, in the center of the screen). Since the Z-axis holds time information, time-variation within the plot needs to be read from what is farthest to what is closest. Furthermore, since the amplitude is shown as a function of the frequency, the frequency space is rendered in an inverse way on the X-axis, the highest frequencies going towards the left and the lower ones towards the right. Finally, since amplitude is on the Y-axis, and since the rendered peaks appear as individual points, it is difficult to grasp at first sight where each point belongs to in a static image.[12]

[10] Authors: Cyrille Henry, Antoine Villeret, jprtzk and IOhannes m zmoelnig
[11] https://www.khronos.org/opengl/wiki/Vertex_Specification
[12] If one has control of the position of the VBO and the scale, then its three-dimensionality is grasped immediately.

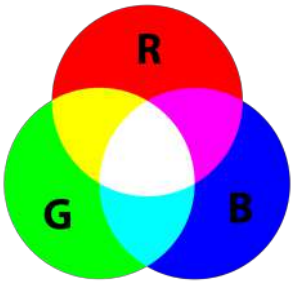


Figure 6: Color synthesis chart: In general, from these visualizations, quiet sounds will have Blue tonality, loud sounds will be Red, and high-pitched sounds will have high frequency content, so if a sound is high and loud it will be Yellow, if it's low and quiet it will be around Magenta and if it is high and quiet, Cyan.

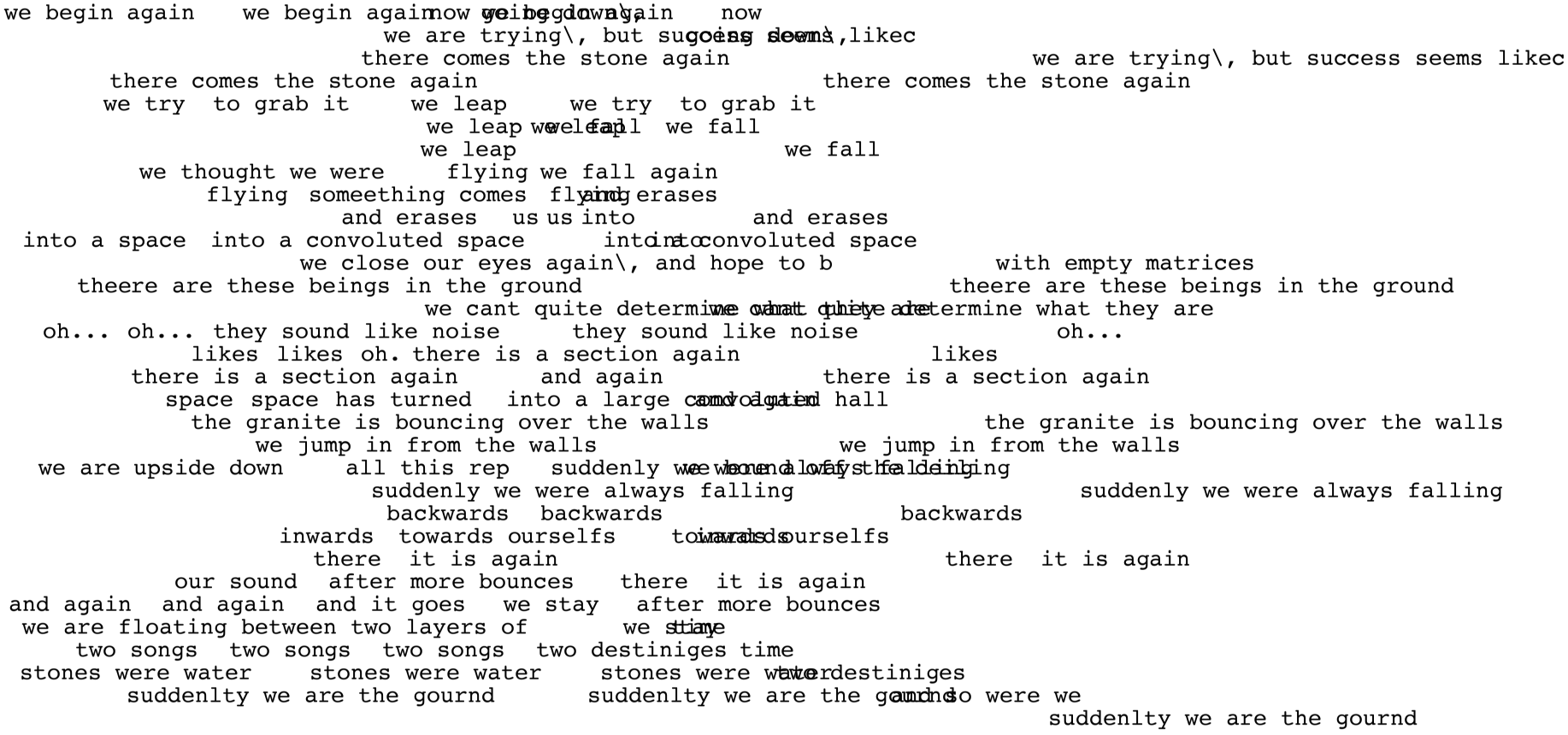
The color information is set as an Red, Green, Blue and Alpha (RGBA) normalized color array, and it is built as follows: $R = rmstodb(amplitude)$; $G = \log(frequency)$; $B = 1 - R$; $A = \arctan(\Re, \Im)$.[13] This means several things. First of all, the transparency of the points (Alpha value) introduces the angle (or phase) of the peak.[14] The rest of the values depend on the position information. Like the X-axis, the Green value is the logarithm (for visual scaling purposes) of the frequency, so if the point is towards the left of the screen it will have more Green than towards the left. The same happens to the Red value: like the Y-axis, more amplitude means more Red value. Finally, since color synthesis in the screen is additive, whenever these three value (RGB) increase altogether, they tend towards white, and if they decrease, they tend towards black. This is why the Blue value is the inverse of the Red, which means that less amplitude (and less Red) will provide more Blue value. Drawing a perceptual analogy with the color spectrum of visible light (figure 1), Green or Yellow can constitute the high frequency bands (the most visible, towards the center), and Blue or Red the low frequency bands (the least visible, towards the edges).

Cyan Line There are a few elements to consider when describing the Cyan line that runs accross the entire visualization, occupying a band from the highest frequency analyzed with [sigmund~] (here 16 kHz) to about 7 kHz. At first, I thought it to be simply high-frequency noise resulting from the windowing of the analysis. However, this might simply be what is called 'dither' -a small amount of noise added by multitrack audio softwares to compensate for quantization errors from bit resolution reduction.[15] Nevertheless, despite the fact that it emerges out of an analytical misfortune, what this line reveals is the void in each track, and it is evidence of her treatment of silence and orchestration throughout the piece. Whenever the Cyan line is present it is when dithering is present, that is, when there is silence in the track. While within a stereo image, the Cyan lines draw almost parallel patterns (revealing once again the paired construction), when comparing between stereo images, they reveal very different patterns: visual evidence of the spatial distribution of energy. In my opinion, it is this abundance of *cyan* within each track that allows the overall pristine quality of the sound - which is why I dedicated so much visual presence to this line.

[13] All of these values were normalized between 0-1.

[14] The impact of phase in timbre seems to be more prominent for frequencies below 200 Hz (Park, 2004). In these visualizations, however, transparency can only be seen by enlarging the time axis and the point sizes, and the linear mapping of phase to the alpha channel was done without consideration to the above mentioned research.

[15] After conducting several tests, it seems that there is indeed a band of pseudorandom numbers that constitute an inaudible noise in the range above 7 kHz in all of the tracks. I kindly thank Dr. Jaime Oliver for this suggestion. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dither#Digital_audio


we begin again
we begin again
now we begin again
now
we are trying\, but success seems likec
there comes the stone again
we are trying\, but success seems likec
there comes the stone again
there comes the stone again
we try to grab it
we leap
we try to grab it
we leap
we fall
we fall
we leap
we fall
we thought we were
flying we fall again
flying
something comes flying
and erases
and erases
us
into
and erases
into a space
into a convoluted space
into a convoluted space
we close our eyes again\, and hope to b
with empty matrices
theere are these beings in the ground
theere are these beings in the ground
we cant quite determine what they are
we cant quite determine what they are
oh... oh...
they sound like noise
they sound like noise
oh...
likes
likes
oh. there is a section again
there is a section again
and again
there is a section again
space
has turned into a large convoluted hall
the granite is bouncing over the walls
the granite is bouncing over the walls
we jump in from the walls
we jump in from the walls
we are upside down
all this rep
suddenly we were always falling
suddenly we were always falling
suddenly we were always falling
backwards
backwards
backwards
inwards
towards ourselfs
towards ourselfs
there it is again
there it is again
our sound
after more bounces
there it is again
and again
and again
and it goes
we stay
after more bounces
we are floating between two layers of
we stay
two songs
two songs
two songs
two destiniges time
stones were water
stones were water
stones were water
two destiniges
suddenlty we are the gournd
suddenlty we are the gournd
and so were we
suddenlty we are the gournd

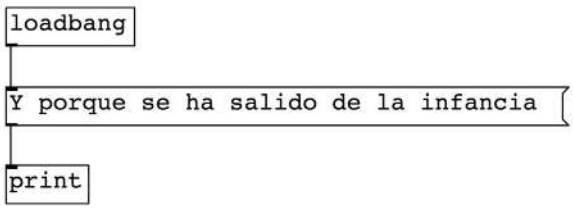


Figure 7: print: Y porque se ha salido de la infancia

In trying to visualize *Marelle*, considering the fact that tracks needed to be assigned in pairs, my hypothesis was that it was in fact composed as spatial layers of stereo images, that is, from eight stereo images between speakers on both sides of the room arriving at an expanded stereo field. What is interesting about these plots, however, is that they show a different treatment of the spatial image when the four stereo pairs of the bottom are compared with the four elevated stereo pairs. What first comes to view is that there are elements present in one and absent in the other. But, this is not as simple as it reads. These uncorresponded elements not only appear distributed in different moments in time, they appear in different sections of the spectrum. What is more, they reveal a precise use of negative space, in the sense that what is around the sculpted shapes is just as important as the shapes themselves. It is important to note that this is not just negative visual space in my visualization, it is an inherently sonic and thoroughly composed phenomenon.

(Je n'oublierai pas le temps des cérises, pataleó Emmanuèle en el suelo)

As an example of this distribution, I'd like to focus on the middle section of tracks 15 and 16. The greatest salience in figure 4 is in tracks 15-16 (above): around the center of the image (the middle of the piece) there appears a very expressive bridge-like shape covering a rather large time frame and a large section of the mid-low frequency band. When compared to the rest of the tracks, while there certainly are some similar shapes in that same moment in tracks 5,6,9 and 10, one can see that the closest shape resembling this salience is in track 12 (figure 2, above-right). What is more, while this shape is taking place, one sees in 1,2,3,4,11,13 and 14, similar shapes in the higher frequencies, but with less amplitude. Finally, the two remaining tracks (7-8) show a very different behavior altogether: a set of higher frequency bands in yellow. Ultimately, what this particularly complex distribution of energy shows is a multidimensional sculpting of an aural image.

I would also like at this point to perform some sort of criticism. In the last image of this response, I place one of my favorite sounds in this piece, what I call a 'bird' sound: a loud and very high frequency sound sweeping irregularly from 10 to 14 kHz.q This sound which appears on track 15 is replicated with some very minimal decorrelation (14 milliseconds) in track 16 (i.e., from left to right in this stereo image). Although this is a well known technique for stereo (Kendall, 1995; Vaggione, 2001), and it is evident that its effectiveness and beauty is out of the question, I wonder if this decorrelation had been not within its adjacent pair, but within the speakers no.15 and 9, or between 15 and 9 and 3, or between 1 and $N-1$ speakers. What I mean to suggest here is not that there is a fault in the piece, merely that however effective it is, there is some degree of loss in translating one technique (stereo imaging) from one medium (stereo) into another (16 speaker array with elevation).[16]

> My greatest pleasure when listening to this piece came through the rhythmic treatment. She managed to build conglomerates of gestures on top of each other, flying from one side of the room to the other, from one band of the spectrum to the other; reflecting, rotating and intertwining bright shapes, all engaging in contrapuntal phrases, evoking simultaneously elaborate medieval polyphonies and the sound of sand.

[16]This analogy with language is also one of the reasons why there is a text in Spanish traversing this response.

This distribution of *spectromorphologies* –to borrow Denis Smalley's famous concept– prove that *Marelle* "seeks to embrace the full spectral potential of the wide-open sound world" (Smalley, 1997). In other words, her exploration of spectral space, as displayed in these visualizations, can be understood as a gesture towards the limits of perception. When Dr. Justel populates with energy the extremes of the frequency space, she sets forth two different aesthetic agents. The agency of these bands, however, is given by the composer in the shapes she builds within these spectral areas: the hand-crafted use of amplitude. Each one has a singular treatment that can only be achieved by a very tight feedback with the resulting sound. It is this extremely detailed treatment of Form within the distinct spectral regions that gives expressiveness and an idea of unity between the two extremes, which in turn means cohesion and operational coherence. Going one step further, Dr. Justel's craft resides not only in her elaborate technical skills, but also in her ability to project this union of the extremes as a metaphor of life. The player of Hopscotch = Marelle = Rayuela –as Julio Cortázar's description reads– starts from *Earth* and plays through space with a stone, hopping unpredictably until she reaches a *Sky*.

At points, one can hear some source material almost unfiltered but in most cases the source is a residual image leading to intimate evocations of water and close-mic techniques.

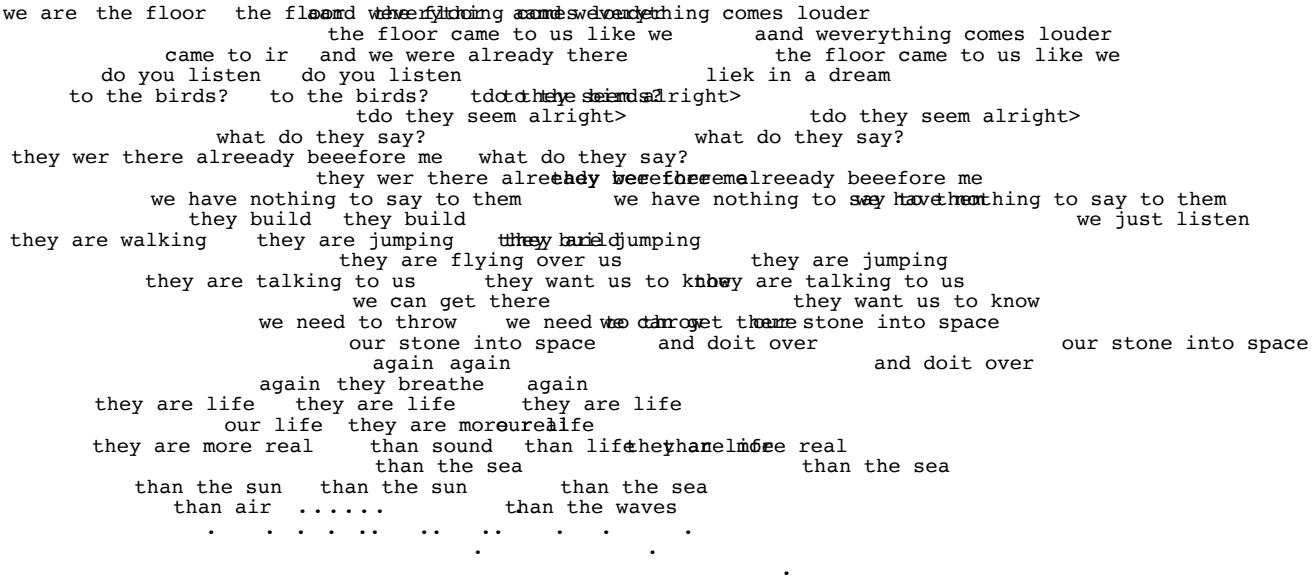
se olvida que para llegar al Cielo se necesitan, como ingredientes, una piedrita y la punta de un zapato."[17]

I first heard Elsa Justel's *Marelle* at the New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival NYCEMF, in June 2017. It was performed at the Experimental Music Theatre of the Abrons Art Center. After the concert I approached her and congratulated her, and she said: "this is for young ears".

Coda *"Finally : for young ears. Say more: what did Elsa mean? do you agree?"*[18]

During that very quick moment after Dr. Justel's performance, I took her words to mean that given the amount of activity in the higher register, and the abundance of spatial motion, *Marelle* would appeal, in her opinion, to the younger generation of today.[19]. I believe that in her mind she is addressing youth, not as a sector of society, but as an aesthetic agent. Youth becomes the driving force in her exploration of sound and space: with these ears, every sound is a new world; every movement, a new way of being; every moment, a constant *now*. Within the spectral playground she created, I would even suggest the following: The playfulness with which she approaches space throughout the piece is as intense as the seriousness with which a kid would attempt to reach the sky during recess.

[17]Chapter 36 (Cortázar,1963)
[18]Taken from an email conversation with Dr. Elizabeth Hoffman
[19]At one point I considered Presbycusis https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbycusis, (the bird, for example, might not be heard by "old" ears). However, I resist thinking this way.



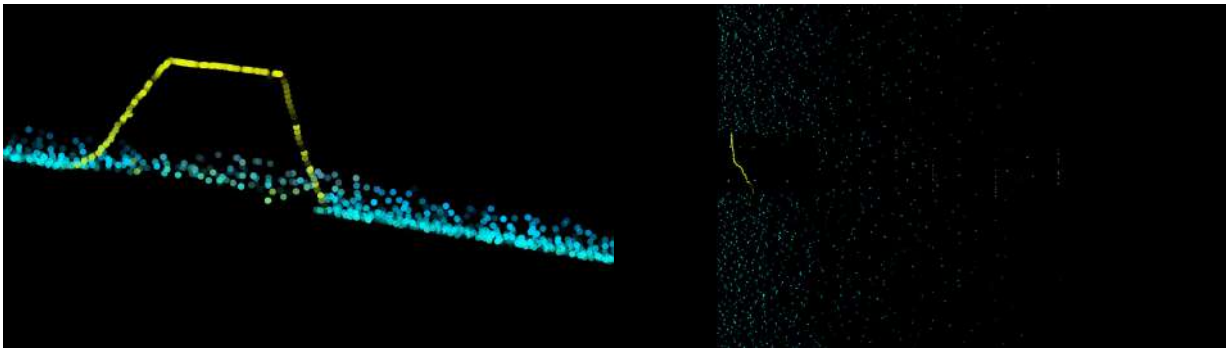


Figure 8: Track 15:2'48" capture of 48000 samples (above). Bird sound.

The Music of Paul Des Marais (Open Space CD 28)
Paul W. Humphreys

In the eloquent expression it gives to plays of opposites, including the archetypal Apollonian and Dionysian tension, this collection of instrumental and vocal music by Paul Des Marais reveals the dual identities of a composer and a philosopher. Best known for his warm affability ("No more Mr. Nice Guy," once posted by a colleague on his door), deep stirrings of emotion and conscience were something of a counterpoint to his legendary good nature. What we recognize in this irresistible selection of Paul's instrumental and vocal music is how deeply these oppositions have played out in the interiority of his musical thinking.

Desert Music (CD Track 1) evokes the severe aesceticism of St. Simeon "stilus," whose vow to live out his life on an elevated platform (stilus) attracted devotees and admirers during the 5th Century CE near what is now Aleppo in Syria. Exquisite silences, irregular both in placement and duration, are indicative of the contemplative spaciousness that pervades this piece. The measured pace of a slow, drone-like tremolo further supports an ambience of reflective contemplation. Early on, however, clangorous interjections establish that this is an ambience not of composure, but of disquiet. Jagged and unpredictable, these emerge as a tortured dialog between lower and upper registers, ever mediated by the slow, persistent tremolo in the middle range.

Presently, a single descending triad sounds as portal to and harbinger of new experience. With the onset of that experience, a deep and resonant sub-set of the harmonic series—perhaps a musical icon for the *stilus* upon which St. Simeon finds redemption— supplants the disquieting silences; a clear sense of repose emerges from the harmonic tension that had gone before. As we listen, incredulous, the work fades imperceptibly before our ears.

My Asia (Tracks 2a, b & 3) is a curious juxtaposition of texts, two by May Swenson, one by F. G. Lorca. In "Secure" (I), the piano counterpoints the text by not allowing what the text proposes, that we "deny that flame consumes, that fruit ripens, that the wave must break." A slow oscillating melodic interval shepherds the text and its lovers to a Lydian nest where they "lie secure in the careful mind of death." (Perhaps the word "death" could have been uttered with more love in

this performance.)

In “To lie with you” (II), the voice soars and dips as the piano offers shards of light, scattered across that diaphanous trace. From the bucolic enchantment of the opening lines, the poet’s libido wells up and consumes the graceful foreplay and turns its gestures toward extended utterance of “deep” and to silence. The words “dissolving flesh and bone” elicit dissonant and powerful exclamations from the piano that pierce the voice’s quiet paraphrase of the poem’s opening lines. A stark desolation ensues—a sense of death without renewal.

With “Memento” (III), the piano takes playful issue with the initially presumed seriousness of this text, four of the ten lines of which sound as, “When I die.” A scherzo-like response affirms what, for Lorca appears to be intended as a light-hearted epitaph.

Paul’s *Seasons of the Mind* is a cycle of four songs, two of which are included here (Tracks 4 & 5). The text of “In Tyme” (Giles Farnaby the Elder) paints pictures of that to which all things finally come “in tyme.” The chorus shades these images of demise with textures that alternate between graphic evocations of destruction and empathetic compassion. There is a hinting in the text as well as the music that beauty and virtue endure.

The text for “Duet” (K. Rexroth) is an absurd and carefree exchange between HE and SHE, mediated by cryptic evocations of Soren Kierkegaard. Paul’s setting in this case is a largely declaimed (“spoken-word”) romp. The text seems to indulge mild annoyance at the shadowy presence of the philosopher while at the same time seeming to hold any existential self-consciousness it might engender at bay. The accompaniment does not take sides: its rhythmic and unrelentingly dissonant punctuations of the text are equally suggestive of confident engagement with or nervous effort at self-distraction from that presence. Perhaps SHE is the one and HE is the other …

In “Touch” (track 6), oppositions are manifest in a work for solo piano that casts two distinct musical personae, initially coexisting without interaction. One flashes brilliantly in the upper registers, unfettered by either meter or tonality; the other with reluctant clusters of tone, sounding in middle-to-low registers. An insistent

high 5th comes as an invitation to dialog that ensues. The brooding clusters soon are displaced by a rhythmically dynamic ostinato. The upper voice takes notice, teasing against the ostinato, with gestures that become increasingly vehement. At a point that the ostinato contracts to slow trill, the upper voice modulates its energy, seeming to signal a step in the direction of dialog. The contracted ostinato now finds more lyrical expression and is briefly met at this affective level by the upper voice, though the lyrical interlude proves short-lived. As the energetic upper voice aggressively reasserts itself, the ostinato resumes its more dynamic identity. The newly energized dialog is only briefly interrupted before rising to a high climax that is the dynamic culmination of the piece. In a coda, recollected traces of both musical personae still sound as distinct, but with a rapport that signals the previous and enabling moments of having "touched."

Search (Tracks 7 – 9) is a cycle of three songs from disparate sources that find unity in settings that ameliorate the apprehension of being at odds with loss, mortality, and death. "The Birds on the Morning of Going" (W. S. Merwin) is a kind of stream-of-consciousness encomium that finds the poet unable to remember what "the present can bless with." "The Waking" (Theodore Roethke) can be read as an embrace of what "Great Nature has .. to do to you and me" and coming to peace with the "always" and the "near" of that. "Reprieve" (Mark Doty) invites us to share in the intimate consolations offered to a dying lover, "nothing's wrong now, it was only a dream."

Inspired by Ovid's legend of a poet musician whose love inspires an unsuccessful attempt to outwit death, the final work on this CD serves as an apt and powerful summation of the themes of death, loss, and redemption that resonate in the works with which it is here companioned. Paul's "Orpheus Mourns Eurydice" (Track 10) was written as one of three movements to accompany a dance/choreography originally created by the German Expressionist, Harold Kreuzberg (1902-1965). The three-movement work was reinvented by Emma Louis Thomas and John Pennington, who subsequently extended an invitation to Paul to create new music for the choreography. (The composition was recognized with the 2005 Lester Horton Award for Best Achievement for Music for Dance.) Liner notes for the CD describe the music, dance, and properties of the work as "probing subjective impressions and expressions of death." Indeed, my own recollection of a performance of the work in Los Angeles circa 2004, with Paul and John

Pennington performing on the same stage, calls to mind a sense of stark alienation, all the more *verfremd* for the interpolation of a mask between the face of the dancer and the audience. In returning to this music a decade or so later, the impression of alienation (admittedly, without the dance) is less strong.

The mannered not-quite-tonal counterpoint with which the work begins is the strangest section of the piece, perhaps motivated by early stirrings of tonal counterpoint in a work of Claudio Monteverdi that also treats the Orpheus legend. As Monteverdi used harmonic conventions that created and then evaded the listener's expectations to underscore the power of the narrative, so does the counterpoint in the opening section of this work convey and musically embody the grief of Orpheus. As the work progresses, dissonant sonorities begin to intrude on the contrapuntal texture, sounding first as taunts of grief that grow to be more acute. At length, a sense of grace emerges from these gestures, and leads to an upper register ostinato that still projects the pain of a suffering but suggests additionally the onset of something like resignation. Low pedal tones, sounding at irregular durations, signal a turn in the direction of Ravelian tonality that culminates in a brief silence. Dissonant harmonies recall grief from the perspective of resignation. Beneath a slow trill in the upper register, dyads and trichord clusters sound until the carefully measured iterations of the trill work off their term with an upward cadential tune – resignation becomes acceptance. As the counterpoint returns in a less mannered way, grief sounds transformed as elegy.

It is impossible to hear the music that is presented in this album and fail to recognize Paul's estimable skill as a composer: a sense of time that ranges from open and spacious to intricately rhythmic; a sense of melody and gesture that varies from gorgeous lyricism to biting incisiveness; an unerring sense of harmony that moves freely from tonal to nearly atonal and back again; a sense of wit in which Papa Haydn seems occasionally to find company with Samuel Clemens. But telling as these skills are of his mastery as a composer, it is the service to which he brings those skills that sets his music apart. Through a lens spun of music, Paul examines and "tries on" opposed energies and emotions, from which follows, if not precisely a reconciliation, an acknowledgement, even a quiet celebration of these "mutual others" that co-arise, have relationships and pass away. Thanks to the graces of this collection—lovingly selected by a long-time colleague and friend—we have the privilege of sharing in that celebration.

If *Music, as a Music*:
Three Notions Around the Thoughts of Benjamin Boretz

Jon Forshee

The words we choose to address our musical thoughts and concerns are moral actions. It's not that, by choosing, we have acted in a moral *way*; nor is it that, by choosing, we act in a way that is *good* or *bad*. It is, words are *actions*, actions that are subject, subject-able, to moral considerations. By choosing words to address our musical thoughts and concerns, we choose verbal language; by choosing verbal language, we choose, willingly or un-willingly, wittingly or un-wittingly, many words, many actions, many moral *acts*.

The reasons for which we choose verbal language are reasons for which we *act*. It may be, a music has qualities concerning which, in *music*, nothing may be said; and it may be, there is a verbal language that is concerned with those qualities of a music, and that this verbal language has qualities of its own, about which this verbal language may say nothing. Or, put another way, *music* has a structure, about which, in *music*, nothing may be said, yet there may be a verbal language that is concerned with the *structure* of music, such a verbal language having a structure all its own.

A verbal language that addresses the structure of a music is a language of words. A language of words is a world of actions. And for sure, the world *is* all that is the case. And yet, despite the manifold import of our verbal language, we need to discuss our musical experiences, speak about what we have heard, how we have heard, how we have heard differently from how we heard before. Elaine Barkin says as much: lines have to be drawn, positions taken[1 & 2].

We could say, degrees of structural similarity between music and the language used to discuss music determine, in a moral *way,* at least some of the desirability of talking about music in the first place. And we could say the pleasure we take in close degrees of similarity between the structure of music and something else, such as a language, while deadly analytical is at base an aesthetic and creative pleasure (for this reason cinema is so immediately accessible, and suggestive of how temporal issues of music are highlighted like no other in video).

*****

Dear E.S.,

Alongside the (seemingly incessant) anxieties of work in general, I've gotten *really* concerned lately with how our nervous systems are affected by the ways we discuss our musical experience. Certainly, in our day-to-day engagements with the

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[1] Elaine Barkin, **"when you label me, you negate me" -- Soren Kierkegaard,** OSM, issue 5.

[2] And no matter how extensively the expression of our musical thoughts as moral acts may dilute (in the best case) or vexingly impinge upon (in the worst) the listening behaviors of other persons we shouldn't seek quick forgiveness, since while at the heart of it we only would have done so in order to come to know, to grow closer to, our own musical selves, the endeavor is rightly self-ish, and not moral in all of our

world, and each other, we position our physical bodies and mental attitudes in line with verbal designations that describe our purported relationships to the world and each other: strangers elicit different behaviors than friends, we act differently in the park than we do at home. May it not be that we similarly refine our musical positions according to how we choose to verbally discuss or describe musical experience? Our orientation to the world and each other is fundamentally a neurological situation. And for the orientation I am thinking of involves not only our perception and cognition of how a thing *goes*, but our understanding of what a thing *is* and how we act accordingly. Is the scene so different in our relationship to music, and how we discuss it? Surely, these considerations account for more than whether we feel enthusiasm for or boredom with an individual musical experience (though it behooves us to investigate how much or little our abilities to discuss our musical experience accounts for what we become bored with or feel enthusiasm for) but accounts too for which musical agendas and missions we sympathize with our lives long.

If we can agree about the neurological motivations of our verbal language, we may agree with Boretz' thought "… while we may not speak as we perceive, we will soon enough be perceiving as we have spoken."[3] How we discuss our musical thoughts (foregoing for the moment why to discuss some thoughts instead of others) has profound effects on our physical selves; the positioning of our physical selves is conveyed to others by our discourse. Yet, it may come about that we cease formulating our thoughts about our musical experiences and rather formulate our thoughts about others' musical thoughts; our nervous systems positioning our bodies in line with other nervous systems. And here's the rub: it may be that in this situation we not only perceive as we have spoken, but we perceive as *others* have spoken. In different contexts we would find many ready-made designations for this situation---political party, religious sect, social club, etc. (After all, an institution is but the shadow of another mind, sometimes (not always) an original mind.) And, in different contexts, we don't mind the designation. But, somehow, in music, the alignment with another (with out our selves) seems troubling.

So, all of this is so I may ask: regardless how well Milton Babbitt locates his musical experience through the ways he talks about his experience, will his positioning do for you? For me? How about Tristan Murail's position, or Harry Partch's, Philip Glass's, Cornelius Cardew's? And doesn't it seem too, that when Babbitt speaks and writes about his stuff there's an authentic conviction in there, a conviction born of that firsthand kind of knowing? Yet, when I read some accounts of what goes on in a piece or what a piece is that seeks in the vein of Babbitt's language I almost always lose interest. In the discipline which we have tacitly agreed, through our thoughts given it, to be the most important, important enough to warrant inevitable detriment to our physical selves, can we abide anything less than the full commitment of our understanding to the investigation, firstly for ourselves, of how we experience music, and what we can say about it.

Well anyway, let me know what you think about all this. Or not.

*****

[3]

If/When we engage in a searching about something to say about music we are doing music philosophy. When we have found and settled on something to say in a way doing philosophy has ended and polemic has begun. Polemic is proselytizing for a way to view a thing, to hear a thing, to know a thing. When we proselytize about *one* way we intentionally or not sidestep many other ways a thing may be seen, heard, or known. Stanley Cavell suggests something like this in his reading of Emerson's essay *Fate*, as well as in his take on Emerson's position on slavery. Commitment to a musical position does not engage the searching and becoming that is music, as a music's province; inasmuch as it doesn't, such commitment and proselytizing might be at least partially morally culpable for our often short-sighted efforts to say something that has meaning about music, how it goes, and how we hear it going. Bereft of the ability to verify and validate and check and update our musical thoughts and concerns by talking *about* them we are broken hearted and secluded. It takes balls to commit and to say *something* even if we know that *something* is woefully short of the full story. And never mind the ineffability of our musical thoughts and concerns: that about which we may not speak we may sing.

Noise before *The Art of Noises*: Thoughts on the History of Sound

Thomas W. Patteson

Presented at the Art of Noises Futurist Cocktail Party
<fidget>, Philadelphia
11 March, 2013

Noise as modern; noise as technological; noise as aggressive, subversive, violent. All of these readings have a basis in Russolo's manifesto, and yet these dominant interpretations of *The Art of Noises* have drowned out the work's other possible valences. Tonight I want to lead you on a little investigation into the history of sound in order to pose the question: does noise have a history? Was there noise before *The Art of Noises*?

Russolo's thumbnail history of noise is quite straightforward. He writes:

> The evolution toward noise-sound is only possible today. [...] First of all, musical art looked for the soft and limpid purity of sound. Then it amalgamated different sounds, intent upon caressing the ear with suave harmonies. Nowadays musical art aims at the shrillest, strangest, and most dissonant amalgams of sound. Thus we are approaching noise-sound. This revolution of music is paralleled by the increasing proliferation of machinery sharing in human labor.[1]

In this version of history, a simple, pastoral state of prelapsarian quietude gives way, stage by stage, to the noisy industrial society of the twentieth century. Noise, in short, is an index of modernity.

But this identification of noise and modernity that Russolo helped inaugurate has deafened us to the din of history. Throughout the course of European music, noise is there at every step—the shadow, so to speak, of the tireless quest for the absolute purity of tone.

The sensitivity for noise had to be meticulously purged from European ears. Only through a lengthy process of perceptual and intellectual conditioning could we learn to ignore the majority of that vast panoply of sounds that surrounded them. The definition of musical beauty in terms of tonal purity meant that noise became literally anaestheticized, rendered un-artistic, a mere signal at best.

[1] Luigi Russolo, *The Art of Noises*, trans. Robert Filliou (New York: Something Else Press, 1967; Reprinted by UbuClassics, 2004), 5-6.

The story of Western music is the story of noise suppression. It began when the universe of sound was passed through what I call the "sieve of Pythagoras," and only that which could be measured emerged on the other side.

Medieval music theorists used the term *sonus numeratus*—"numbered sound"—to distinguish the orderly, periodic, and measurable tones of music from the messy welter of worldly noises. The anonymous author of the ninth-century treatise *Musica enchiriadis* admonishes the reader that "pitches...are not just any kind of sound, but those which are suitable to melody by legitimate spacing between themselves."[2]

But even for Medievals, with their theologically supported ideas of consonance as an echo of the divine order, noise lurked around every corner. The treatise *De musica* of the English music theorist John Cotton, written around the year 1100, contains a fascinating discussion of the distinction between "discrete" and "indiscrete" sounds. Discrete sounds express clear pitch relationships, while indiscrete sounds, such as laughter or the barking of dogs, are governed by no measurable intervals. Here we have a familiar distinction between noise and musical tone, but what John says next is a bit surprising:

> Therefore music in no way admits of that sound which we have said to be indiscrete. Only discrete sound, which is technically called tone [*phthongus*] pertains to music. For music is nothing other than the fit progression of tones. We assert this especially against the ignorant men who stupidly deem that any sound whatever is music, that we may check this error.[3]

One must wonder, who were these medieval John Cages, these musical heretics who suggested that "any sound whatever is music"? And why would theorists devote such effort to distinguishing tone from noise if, as we tend to assume, music back then was all sweetness and light?

Think of the fascinating and well-documented practice of charivari, dating back at least to the middle ages, in which raucous communal noise-making was directed as an instrument of public shaming against those who had violated the moral code.

Or consider medieval instruments, which were on the whole more varied and noisy than the instruments of the orchestra that eventually supplanted them. Period accounts differentiated between instruments using the French words haut and bas, terms which meant not simply "high" and "low," but also connoted noisiness, timbre, and volume.

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[2] Quoted in Leo Treitler, ed., *Strunk's Source Readings in Music History, Revised Edition* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 189.

[3] John, "On Music," in *Hucbald, Guido, and John on Music: Three Medieval Treatises*, trans. Warren Babb (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 107.

These terms allowed medieval musicians to differentiate between loud, piercing instruments such as shawms, bombards, horns, and drums, which were ideal for outdoor performances, and instruments such as flutes and psalteries, whose muted tone made them better suited for music-making in the home or at court.[4]

A later trace of premodern thinking about noise in music appears in the organological treatise *Harmonie universelle*, by the seventeeth-century Jesuit mathematician Marin Mersenne, one of the pioneers of acoustic research in his time. Mersenne stops short of including natural noises in his consideration of musical instruments, but he leaves the door enticingly open. He writes:

> I deal here solely with the instruments that serve in music, and which are so at the disposition of man that he can use them when it pleases him. Such does not happen with the noises of the wind and thunder, which are not dependent upon our will, which has those things alone which can fall under art at its disposal; still the brain which is more universal than the will can contemplate the natural noises, and examine whether the different thunderings, roarings, and rumblings of the sea form consonances and dissonances, of which I speak more fully in other places.[5]

For Mersenne, "natural noises" were disqualified from music not on account of their lack of pitch, but simply because they were not susceptible to human control—a small but significant nuance.

That noise was ever-present as a counterpart (and threat) to musical sound becomes clear in the writings of Enlightenment philosophers and historians of music, who argued the exact opposite of Russolo: the development of music—that is, of course, Western classical music—was a historical process of purification through which sound was purged of the dross of noisy additives and led to the resonant, pure tone that was the self-evident aesthetic ideal.

The silencing of noise distinguished not only the moderns from the ancients, but also set off the civilized people of Europe from the barbaric peoples of the world, who had probably never even heard of Stradivarius! Listen to the German historian Johann Forkel, circa 1800:

> Although tone [. . .] is only the means by which music is made perceptible, in primitive, uncultivated nations it is generally taken for the thing itself. Indeed [primitive people] consider every individual sound to be music. […] This explains why we find in all wild and uncivilized nations such great pleasure taken in the clamor of noisy instruments—

[4] Edmund A. Bowles, "Haut und Bas: The Grouping of Musical Instruments in the Middle Ages," *Musica Disciplina* 8 (1954), 115-140.

[5] Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle: The Book on Instruments*, trans. Roger E. Chapman (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1957), 16.

> in drums, for example, and rattles, in blaring trumpets, and extremely loud, ferocious shrieks.[6]

In the wake of the Enlightenment, the concept of nature came to signify the primordial chaos in opposition to which civilization defined itself. And noise was the sonic trace of this untamed "other": The history of music imagined as the conquest of noise mirrors precisely the triumphalist narrative of the technoscientific mastery of nature since the Renaissance.

In opposition to the Enlightenment's derogation of nature, nineteenth-century Romantics such as E. T. A. Hoffmann cultivated the idea of "nature music," that is, the notion that the sounds of nature were themselves an expression of a sentience or spirit inherent in the material world. In his hugely influential book *On the Beautiful in Music,* first published in 1854, the Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick went out of his way to demolish this cherished Romantic ideal. He writes:

> Should not the murmuring brook, the roar of the ocean waves, the thundering avalanche, and the howling of the wind be at once the source of and the model for human music? Have all these rippling, whistling, and roaring noises nothing to do with our system of music? We have no option but to reply in the negative. All such sounds are mere noise—an irregular succession of sonorous pulses. Very seldom, and even then only in an isolated manner, does nature bring forth a musical note of definite and measurable pitch. But a musical note is the foundation of all music. [...] The "music" of nature and the music of man belong to two distinct categories. The transition from the former to the latter passes through the science of mathematics. [...] As everything in music must be measurable, while the spontaneous sounds of nature cannot be reduced to any definite quality, these two realms of sound have no true point of contact. Nature does not supply us with the art elements of a complete and ready-prepared system of sound, but only with the crude matter which we utilize for our music. Not the voices of animals but their gut is of importance to us; and the animal to which music is most indebted is not the nightingale but the sheep.[7]

Hanslick's diatribe is a last-ditch effort to wall off musical sound from the unruly world of noise and nature. As he knew, the orderly empire of tonal hierarchies that underlay the emerging canon of "great music" was a fragile construction. The barbarians of noise were ever at the gate.

And indeed, the tradition of "nature music," which Hanslick so vigorously disputed, finds an echo in Russolo's manifesto. In *The Art of Noises* there is a striking lack of distinction between the "natural" and the "technological": Russolo hails the sounds of war and industry, but also "thunder, wind, cascades, rivers, streams, leaves, a horse trotting away, the starts and jumps of a carriage on the pavement, the white solemn breathing of a city at night, all the noises made

[6] Quoted in Treitler, 1015-1016.
[7] Eduard Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, trans. Gustav Cohen (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), 108-110.

by feline and domestic animals and all those man's mouth can make without talking or singing."

Seen from this perspective, Russolo's manifesto was not a sudden influx of noise into Western music—the birth cry of musical modernity—but an intervention in a struggle as old as music itself. What Russolo attacked as the meagerness of the auditory sensorium at the dawn of the twentieth century was in fact the product of a protracted normalization of music enforced by the coordinated disciplines of aesthetics, instrumental technology, and music theory. The same process that tamed sound and enabled the stunning compositional constructions of European art music also drastically narrowed our ears' perceptual bandwidth, and made us deaf to the world beyond the confines of concert music and its domesticated, well-behaved, "indoor instruments."

For a century now we have been learning how to hear anew. Russolo did not discover noise, but helped us to recover it.

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"...OUT OF THE AIR..." BY ELAINE R. BARKIN AND GEORGINA DOBRÉE

"...out of the air..." for basset horn, 4-track tape and graphic score was co-created with and conceived for Georgina Dobrée (1930-2008). We met in 1957 at the Darmstadt Ferienkurse für Neue Musik; she was clarinetist with the International Chamber Ensemble, I participated in the Composers Seminar. Thereafter we remained in touch for decades via the US Postal Service, the Royal Mail, and in person here and there. Early in 1988 Georgina asked me to compose a work for her for basset horn, an instrument she had resuscitated from musical storage. I asked her to make a demo tape comprising registral, typical or idiosyncratic sonic qualities, whatever she'd like me to hear. She soon sent a cassette and wrote that "... it's been very difficult to just do things ... to just play out of the air ...." But she had done just that. I transcribed several of her improvisations and decided at once to create a 4-track tape and graphic score pages against and with which Georgina could interact, co-create, her words used as title: "out of the air".

Although I had been improvising collaboratively for several years, a work of this sort was unlike anything I — or she — had done. I would be relinquishing the conventional proprietary composer modus operandi yet still provide a stimulus for activity; she would be responsible for more than had been customary for her as a performer. She agreed and I began by recording myself playing crumar electric keyboard (grumbly sounds of which open the work), ritual bowl gongs, bamboo wind chimes, kalimba, small Chinese cymbals and African shakers. A tentative timeline map of the 4 tracks was drawn so that I would have a visual of the audio. Several deformed — by delay and reverb — passages from Georgina's original horn tape were included on one track, thus she would converse with me and duet with herself. It was critical to produce a tape comprising opaque and lucent stretches in unequal lengths, as well as lots of silence, the latter in order for Georgina to be heard clearly, and of substantive musical interest if the tape was heard by itself. Simultaneously I began sketching score pages several of which incorporated artsy excerpts of my transcriptions of Georgina's original imaginative tapesound. Pen and ink and watercolor were the graphic media and I included slogans and queries, designed with varied lettering styles, intended to stimulate or provoke Georgina as she improvised. Six 12" X 16" sheets of medium weight white cardboard were drawn-painted-doodled-blobbed, to be chosen (or ignored) and placed in any order on music stands, from and to which Georgina could move and play. A near-final cassette tape and a set of score pages were sent to her in August 1988; she responded quickly, with questions, suggestions, anxiety and enthusiasm:

> 22.8.88: "... I've now had a chance to go through your tape and try the "notated" dots on your pages. I like the possibilities although, as you say, it will take some puzzling out. ... Some of your tape cries out for a specific response from me and I do feel that certain pages might not work if chosen "by chance" ... As to the "dots" themselves, no problem here ... I haven't had time to absorb all of the pages and I also need to absorb the tape more though I wouldn't mind some

> more tape sounds to play with … I realize that the basset horn has to be the unifying sound throughout but am a bit concerned at the very stark contrast between what I can do and what is on the tape and whether I CAN hold it together."

She need not have been at all concerned: "hold it together" she did and In March 1989 after a visit with friends in Berlin I visited Georgina, at the time living in Leeds. We discussed the work and she played several versions for me, all of which were fabulous. She'd "comprovised" what had become her favorite versions, incorporating multiphonics, breath-flutter, irregular beating and tremolandi within lyrical, elegant, experimental and playful moments of spectacular invention all so perfectly executed. She had ultimately made it her work, a frequent consequence of the graphic score experience, similar to the way in which performers of traditionally notated music "own" or are identified with their performances. We were both gratified with the project's process and outcome; we had taken ourselves into a world we knew of but hadn't engaged in previously. (I do regret not having taped the several "comprovisations" Georgina played for me; a single performance of a graphically scored improvised work barely scratches the surface of, barely realizes, such a work's creative potentialities.) The time had been ripe for each of us for such an endeavor and despite — or due to — living 5437 miles apart we had communicated regularly and worked well together-apart. Georgina played the work on recitals in London and the US; the performance on Open Space CD 34 was recorded at the University of Wisconsin in Eau Claire, March 4, 1993. My last meeting with Georgina was in London, April 1998.

This text was written at the request of Jean-Charles Francois for http://www.paalabres.org/lab/eng-editorial/ Also see: http://www.paalabres.org/paarticipation/eng-paarticipation/

"out of the air" is the final track on Open Space CD 34. Go to CDs/DVDs at: www.the-open-space.org



Ears of Dead People

Caroline Kraabel

This recorded music is for the ears of dead people only.

I offer and hope, with love and respect, to make carefully prepared short recordings of acoustic saxophone music, composed for the purpose, each one to be played back once only through headphones worn by a particular dead individual. The recordings will then be erased.

Neither I nor anyone living will ever hear these recordings and even I won't know what they sound like, because the microphone will be placed far inside the saxophone, in an acoustic microcosm that human ears cannot enter.

Please contact me if you would like to commission a recording.

18 July - 1 August 2005, London (UK)

Having this idea wasn't the hard thing. Trying to contain it and then explain it - that's what's going to be hard. I wrote down the barest outline, a description of what, physically, should happen. I felt proud of my accurate simple statement about a process. Usually knowing intentions weakens the idea and its audience, and stating intentions is almost a definition of failure.

But night after night I couldn't sleep for thinking about this idea and for wondering how I would feel if someone I love died and I read this bald text offering to play unheard music to them through headphones. I realized that it's not enough that those who choose to put this idea into practice should accept it, because we all die and anyone who sees the text might be grieving. I must do all that I can to persuade everyone that my suggestion, a mild but heartfelt protest against death, is not only born of respect and sorrow for the dead, but in a small way exemplifies this respect. I also decided to suggest that other people than myself might make recordings like these at the request of their loved ones; and to offer what help I can to such people, including as extensive an explanation as I am able to make.

Recordings peel away like outgrown skins from the moments they are born with, though a

lizard-skin, having been part of its former possessor, would tell you more about the lizard than any recording would about its subject. Sound or vision recordings made in instants often outlive (or outlast - recordings have little need to aspire to life) the people who feature in them, and those who initiate them, and the intentions of all. This, along with the identification many listeners or viewers experience, of the recording with its subject rather than with a time and point-of-view, means that recordings chip away at the relevance of the real complete flesh-and-blood human individuals who feature in them. Recordings almost always depend for their own relevance on a presumed continuity - not among those recorded, the significant aspects of whom are tacitly or overtly assumed to be preserved, but among the listeners or viewers, who are not recordings and therefore are vulnerable to change. There is a heartless complacency in taking for granted overall continuity among the consumers.

These living consumers and creators of recordings constantly seek to acquire more up-to-date recorded sounds and images, generating a continual reprinting and multiplying of each frame of the recent past - prints aglow with the pathos of novelty, instantly outdated and replaced. Access to recorded media necessarily means that our faculty of memory is in part externalized as we store in recordings information which previously we'd have had to choose to remember, or been forced to forget (who really remembers the precise contours of even much-loved voices and faces from their distant past?). We also import recordings into our neural memories, installing their second-hand images as experiences alongside those from our non-media lives.

What I'm trying to say is that functionally, recordings are OF the dead and FOR the living. I mean that even where the subject of a recording is still alive, the recording exists independently and indifferently; the audience is presumed to continue even though individual members die or come to harm, even between recording and dissemination.

This seems to me unjust to the living as well as to the dead, and although we cannot really redress the basic injustice, maybe we can give the dead something
which is usually reserved for the living.

It is possible to make a recording that outlives its parent moment only briefly, ensuring that it doesn't leak into the limbo of undifferentiated digital or other information. Perhaps not quite a living recording, but one renouncing too lengthy an undeath.

And it is possible to choose to play that recording only to the ears of a dead individual who had asked before dying to have it made.

Explanation of the parameters.

This should be a private act, not part of the public celebration of the life of the person concerned, and distinct from, for example, choosing recordings to play at such celebrations.

It is only to be undertaken if the person who has died has specifically asked that it should, and if the grieving survivors accept this.

The recordings should be made as close as possible to the time that has been chosen for playing them back.

The recordings should be fairly short – perhaps between three and ten minutes.

It is important that the recordings should be of music rather than of speech, which is too coded and accessible to the speaker and other survivors.

It is important that the music recorded be original, because it ought not to have been heard before. And it is important that it be played acoustically, so that it comes from the body of the person performing it - and so that there is not the danger of using pre-set (pre-recorded/heard) sounds.

The machine/s used to make and play back the recording should be portable and have an input for an external microphone and a headphone output - mini-disc, audio or videocassette (without vision), DAT, or stand-alone hard disc recorder.

There are several ways to ensure that the performer does not hear what they do in the same way as the microphone does (in fact, no mic ever hears what the player or the acoustic listeners hear anyway...). Please use a small microphone and if possible, place it far inside the instrument (including in the mouth for voice). Feel free to experiment with trial recordings to find techniques and levels appropriate for these mic placements, to avoid distortion as much as possible. If you find that these trial recordings are too similar to what you are hearing as you perform, try wearing earplugs to block some of the sound you are receiving. (obviously, avoid monitoring your performance through headphones; monitor by checking the levels on the meter).

The chosen recording should be brought to where the dead person is and played once at a moderate volume into their ears using closed headphones. If it is felt that headphones are not appropriate, the recording could be played through loudspeakers placed in the same room as the dead person, after other people have left the room.

When it has been played, the recording should be erased as effectively as possible, preferably by filling the medium with recorded silence (ie: recording with the input level at minimum). Some digital media retain information after instructed to erase or delete it - be aware that a computer, for example, may still contain some of this information right up until you get rid of the computer and beyond. I suggest erasing the material in order to ensure that it will never be played or heard again - if it were to be buried, for example, it's conceivable that it might be dug up and heard sometime in the future; whereas destroying the medium seems unnecessarily rough treatment.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like any help - I'll do all that I can.

If you'd like me to make such a recording for you,
please let me know.

12 July 2005, London (UK)

http://carolinekraabel.free.fr/

A Note on Charles Stein's *Twelve Drawings* (Station Hill Press: 2018)
by Tamas Panitz

There are pictures that can be held in the mind to boggle and *stupefy* (*-fy* from *dhe– to set, put) the thinker, to set one's self up for contemplation of the ineffable. Where what was everything, becomes the key to All, a light to illuminate the night, so to speak. This is the sort of action André Breton fought for, in a world-transformative stance, when he wrote: "*Forever*, and *for a long time* – these two great warring expressions that confront each other whenever it is a question of love – have never exchanged more blinding sword-thrusts than today, above me, in a sky entirely like your eyes, whose whites are still so blue. Of these two expressions, the one that wears my colors, even if its star may be waning now, even if it must lose, is *forever*.
[…] Despite everything, I shall have maintained that this expression *forever* is the master key…"

Stein has insisted more than once on his method. The years of hours simply drawing, and so coming into contact with and evolving new and emergent forms– from the minutiae to the larger forms they are set in, and set up, stupefy and are in turn stupefied by.

It is these smallest forms to which my attention is now drawn, and to the nth-dimensional procession of these myriad gestures and concomitant Forms which show not only the light to the night, but that *night is in the light.*

Unmathematically, the capital F Forms that flash forth in these pictures are built of aberrations, lines ceded from the hand's imperfection: evolved not simply from the Form down, but by local decisions in which Forms are presented– made present. (One might at this point consider Stein's discussion of the creode in his *Placing Space, Picturing Time.*) The artist conjures, and along with archetypal Forms we find the intermediary and peripheral, the garbled speech of humans and their familiars that strive along with the clear voice at the inner ear.

Innumerable emergent forms propose to draw the eye here and there to deal with the imperfection that brings them into existence *by* the imperfection that brings us to exist: that smallest molecule of sin propels the mathematician, and the viewer, to call forth those angels and demons that wrestle us through these enfolded tracks of intrigue that both plumb and sparkle through the magician's fount, the twisted current between us and Else.

(One might mentally append here invocational charts from Agrippa, and then imagine some remarks made by the John Dee of the preface to Euclid as he discourses over their metaphysics.)

Though there is some falseness in applying here to the discourse of a Christian Neoplatonism, it is for me the shortest route. One would be richly rewarded by properly absorbing *Being=Space x Action*, ed. by Charles Stein, on Intuitionalist mathematics and mediation, etc., something I plan to return to when I grow up.

Another quote from Breton seems to me peculiarly illustrative. He applauds the characters Jerome and Almani (did he make them up?) from Sade's untranslated *Nouvelle Justine*, who in avowed hatred of man and nature, mingle their semen with Mt. Etna's lava, and know the secrets by which to cause volcanic eruptions. "We attend the superficial burial of innumerable loaves of bread from twenty to forty pounds each, kneaded with water, with filings, and with sulphur, placed not far from each other and destined, as they warm up in the earth, to provoke a new eruption, an eruption all the lovelier in that nature only went along this time, that it is a human who willed it. "The procedure," says Sade, "was easy." How could we overlook the heart-rending humor of this confession? Never, I say has terrestrial magnetism, responsible for placing one of the poles of the magnet in the mind of man and the other in nature, been so implacably revealed."

Salt crystals, snowflakes, *the continuum* itself drawn by human will.

Charles Stein

Overheard in CUNY cafeteria, 1/11/82

they don't reinvest
in their own infra-structure

it's so complex
it's so full of shit

International Harvester
ITT

educated
computer class
criminals

29 years old
just out of school

bad times
extend
to the very fabric of

behavior

trouble not from blacks
but from all these kids
come out of the universities
not set in life, in careers

anarchy mixed with brains
all the blacks can do
is go in subways
and terrorize people

these kids can do more

not dishonest politics

but that people who would normally
carry on
in an honest
way

whom we depend on
to have integrity
will see the pervasiveness of evil
and succumb

in the arts

in science

standards of integrity

shattered by mass media

great persons of this kind

go along with it

because it *pays*

Mozart couldn't kiss ass

Beethoven came at a time

when he didn't *have*

to kiss ass

I'm talking about the falsification of standards

in order to attain

media control

Hilton Kramer discovers him whom

previously Hilton Kramer had

neglected

after he's dead

and the museums and the heirs

go to court etcetera

Original? Don't tell me original.

They have nothing to say.

Berg was great.

Schoenberg had nothing to say.

I listened for years and years.

Berg had something to say.

Schnabel -- god knows how many times.

Webern had something to say.

I listened to them all.

My son listened to them.

He wasn't neglected--

I had *records*.

Hindemith

in my opinion

and I'll tell you who's better

than all of them --

Bela Bartok

died of starvation

I knew his wife

not strictly a serialist
he could go back to form

you know what he did?

Liturgical music
he heard as a boy --

now they're beginning to analyze!

Modern music has been around for 80 years.

Berio

Stockhausen

retrogression

Some of it is very nice

he's not strictly a serialist

he knows his way around

A lot of people praise Copland

I can't see it

dance music

movie music

as a symphonist?

I think that

Schuman -- Bill Schuman

if he'd stuck to music --

but the thing is

he's such a smooth

son of a bitch

ever hear him?

beautiful

woman's man

ruined himself

I knew him when he was young

with a full head of hair

as far as making money

if they don't teach

they die

just like poets

new comer -- Glass?

you like his work?

Nothing to do with music!

Media Control!

Crazy!

It's interesting

but what's it to do with

music?

They think they're gonna make money

and let me tell you

this Glass is obsessed.

Toscanini?

I was at Toscanini's marriage.

Such clarity --

such definition

only Toscanini could get away with it.

Approaching Completeness

Dean Rosenthal

In an essay titled "I Want to Find The Music, Not to Compose It", Tom Johnson writes about a type of musical minimalism he remembers as "process music", saying that "in [all] these cases the "composers" are not really composing so much as simply letting music arise out of circumstances that they can not personally control. They are finding music which somehow already exists."[i] Johnson is referring to the music of composers in 1970s downtown NYC, but he opens up the discussion to reflect on an approach of "found" music that can be applied to what one could consider a "musical catalogue". Taking this idea of "found music" as our starting point, we can offer a sufficient definition of what we mean by the term "musical catalogue" that, while necessarily incomplete, can serve as our guide:

A musical catalogue is a musical work that contains all of the instances or possibilities of a compositional design, progression, melody, harmony, rhythm, or other parametrically constrained musical object.

The Chord Catalogue, composed in 1985 by Johnson, is the most prominent example of the last thirty years from the world of pure, systematic music. Johnson wrote about this piece:

The Chord Catalogue consists of the 8178 chords possible in one octave. It is really just a list. The chords are simply stated, in a logical sequence, rather than being composed, and the main concern of the piece is to remain open to all sounds, all harmonies. It is fine to have personal preferences, and to feel that some sounds are more beautiful than other sounds, but it is also good to realize that there are an enormous number of possible chords, and that each one has something just a little special about it.[ii]

In *The Chord Catalogue*, Johnson approaches his "list" of chords in a straightforward, logical manner: he organizes the 8178 chords into groupings of two-note chords, three-note chords, four-note chords, and so on, until he reaches the one thirteen-note chord that completes the octave. Within each grouping, the chords are presented in order so that there is no duplication within the collection of n-note chords. Thus, in the first phrase of the two-note chords, we first hear notes (1,2) together, then, in the second phrase, (1,3) and (2,3), and so forth. This excerpt goes to the sixth phrase:



This didactic approach allows for the list to simply be heard unadorned by any other parametric constraints like dynamics, articulations, and embellishments, yet the groupings do allow for perception of a clarified process if one knows the concept and strategy of the music ahead of time – and maybe even if one doesn't. But what happens in the sounding music? Is what we are hear simply a catalogue of the possibilities of a music that the list provides within this inhabitable musical space? What gives life to the piece, and what is the nature of the music?

The groupings of the n-note chords (and indeed the groupings of the internal rhythms of each collection) feature numerous interesting mathematical details. If we look carefully at the total number of chords in each subset of the octave, we can see the following sequence: there are 78 two-note chords, 286 three-note chords, 715 four-note chords, 1287 five-note chords, and so on, through the final, single thirteen-note chord. This sequence, (78, 286, 715, ...) can be found in the 13th line of the mathematical object known as Pascal's Triangle.[iii]

This relationship to Pascal's Triangle holds for each total grouping of n-note chords. The sum totals create a symmetrical structure. The number of two-note chords is the same as that of the eleven-note chords, that of the three-note chords the same as that of the ten-note chords and so on, as Pascal's Triangle describes. In contrast to this feature, it's noteworthy that musically *The Chord Catalogue* is slightly less symmetrical. There is a residue of the 13 twelve-note chords and the one thirteen-note chord at the end of the symmetrical structure, which do not have symmetrical counterparts. This is because only chords considered are those that consist of two-note chords or more, disqualifying the one 'zero-note chord' and the thirteen 'one-note chords' of the octave C4 to C5).

If we look at the groupings as Johnson has ordered them, in each sequence of n-note chords we find similar structures. These derive from the fact that Johnson divides each set of n-note chords into sub-phrases, with the top note ascending. That is, the first phrase consists only of the (unique) lowest cluster of n notes; the second phrase of all chords with the top note one one step higher, giving more option; the third phrase of all chords with the top note one step higher again, etcetera. The resulting list of two-note chords is rather simple, since the number of possibilities increases linearly with the top note, each subsequent grouping extended by one, to feature a progression from one two-note chord to twelve two-note chords: a neatly organized, logical counting that results from the process of enumeration.

But as early in as the three-note chords, other interesting things start to happen. The groupings in the three note chords reveal the triangular numbers (numbers that equal sums of numbers in a triangular arrangement, for example: of pool balls before breaking): after the lowest, three note cluster (c-c#-d), you get three possibilities with the top note at d#, six with the top note at e, ten with the top note at f, etcetera. The four-note chords give the tetrahedral numbers, which can be thought of as triangular numbers in the third dimension. Likewise, the rhythm of the groupings in the five-note sequence gives the numbers for hyper-triangles in the 4th dimension, the six-note sequence counts hyper-triangles in the 5th dimension, and so on.

While you don't really hear the math going by unless you are listening for it, what happens to the music is, in fact, a reflection of it. The polyphony intensifies as the dimensions of the geometric objects being represented increases. Sonically, the textures are crowded and intense; they grow ever more so as n-note sequences increase, leading to the final 13-note chord.

In correspondence with the author, Johnson has suggested that a composer may find the music "outside" of her or himself.[iv] Here, we can see that the list that constitutes his composition appears not only outside of the composer's subjectivity, but also in nature, with a mathematical underpinning described by a famous theorem. Johnson speaks of this, but in musical and practical terms rather than mathematical ones:

I like to think of The Chord Catalogue as a sort of natural phenomenon - something which has always been present in the ordinary musical scale, and which I simply observed, rather than invented.[v]

What can be appreciated in *The Chord Catalogue* is not simply the "list" after all, but also the formation of a lucid, formal object with many structural interests, that unfold as a highly specific play of gradually developing rhythmical patterns, which give *The Chord Catalogue* its specific musical character.

Clearly, there is much more to explore in this direction of formal composition and other composers have since begun exploring. In fact, Johnson has composed many catalogue works since *The Chord Catalogue*, but none so devoted to the idea. In *Kirkman's Ladies* (2005), he uses combinatorial designs known as "block designs" to offer a musical answer in the form of a catalogue to a mathematical problem known to the world as "Kirkman's Schoolgirl Problem" that was first posed by Rev. Thomas Penyngton Kirkman in 1850:

In a boarding school there are fifteen schoolgirls who always take their daily walks in rows of threes. How can it be arranged so that each schoolgirl walks in the same row with every other schoolgirl exactly once a week?

Another work, more recent, is *Intervals* (2013), a catalogue of harmonies that explores the all-interval tetrachord. Another, *Trio* (2005), presents all 288 three-note chords of which the notes sum to 72 when middle C is assigned the value 24. Many more of Johnson's compositional output incorporates the complete set of a particular parameter or parameters in the context of their musical content.

Johnson's pieces and other musical catalogues like it are much more than mere lists. These works go beyond the oft-seen contemporary Duchampian tendency to bring to the forefront the humble existence of a physical or conceptual object of the world and in it and place this object within the context of a deliberate aesthetic strategy to be observed and perceived as art. These works also offer new and discrete modes of perception to both the ear and the intellect. Can we say that our listening is conditioned by rationality and cognition of mathematical structures as we listen to the work? The experience might be something like looking at a Donald Judd sculpture. We are

confronted with physical geometry, yet we are looking at a form of art. Could listening to musical catalogues be a kind of ontological experience as well as a simple, auditory one? What kind of proposal are we making, then?

One way to begin entering into the world of musical catalogues is to look at two works that are related to Johnson's groundbreaking catalogue in obvious ways. *Within Fourths/Within Fifths* by Samuel Vriezen and *Combinations* by the author of this article are, like *The Chord Catalogue*, each combinatoric. Each of this pair of works also makes use of strict rhythmic logics that like *The Chord Catalogue*, are specified by local and global parameters which in themselves are a kind of catalogue, yet arrive each at very different kinds of musical results.

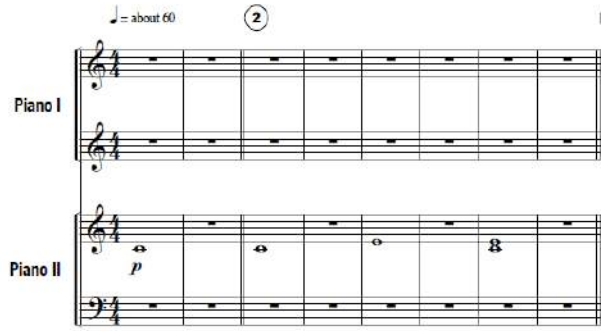
Combinations

Just like *Within Fourths/Within Fifths* and *The Chord Catalogue*, *Combinations* by the author of this article for piano four-hands addresses strict and elaborate combinatorial and rhythmic strategies. *Combinations* presents all of the 2036 combinations of the binomial coefficient, climbing from "one choose one", through "two choose one", "two choose two", "three choose one", "three choose two", "three choose three" up to and including, finally, "ten choose ten". Rhythmically, the piece integrates a nontrivial rhythmic sequence[vi] and a harmonic language that was composed without respect to a logical process.

In mathematics, combinations are described with the terminology of "n choose k". For example, when we say, "five choose three", we mean that there are a total of five notes, and that we want to choose all of the combinations of three of them. There are exactly ten possibilities:

{(1, 2, 3), (1, 2, 4), (1, 2, 5), (1, 3, 4), (1, 3, 5), (1, 4, 5), (2, 3, 4), (2, 3, 5), (2, 4, 5), (3, 4, 5)}

The music consists of a mapping. Ten notes are selected and fixed in registration. The music begins with the first combination "one choose one" of one note (note one of ten) once - note one, C. In the next combination, "two choose one" [(1),(2)], we see notes one and two, C and E, each separated by a measure of rest, followed by "two choose two" or (1,2), consisting of notes one and two combined and played as a harmony:



This appears as a very simple mapping and as each of the ten notes are introduced and the vast number of combinations are enumerated, a much more detailed rhythmic object becomes slowly introduced, logically derived from the combinatorial formula. The combinations, as we have seen with just two notes, are broken down into subsets, separated by a measure of rest. As the combinations grow, a more sophisticated rhythmic design is established. For example, the rhythmic system throughout the work can be generalized by looking at an easy example, "5 choose 2":



This represents the following combinations, grouped in phrases with rests between them:

{(1,2),(1,3),(1,4),(1,5)} {(2,3),(2,4),(2,5)} {(3,4),(3,5)} {(4,5)}

Four subsets have been formed. Each new subset contains, in order, the groups of combinations containing only note one, then only note two in the first position, then note three in the first position, and then note four in the first position. Yet the music takes on several additional characteristics. The first three groupings in the excerpt begin and proceed in half notes, but conclude on whole notes. After each grouping there is a measure of rest. These rhythmic strategies are applied strictly throughout the work. The sums of the groupings of combinations neatly count down 4,3,2,1 from the first grouping of four combinations. This logical descending counting pattern emerges from the nature of the mathematics, cementing further order on the *found object* combinations. As the patterns get longer, however, the countdown starts happening on more levels.

Following the same self-similar structure, a brief excerpt of "9 choose 5" yields the following music:



The combinations, grouped in phrases with rests between them appear like this:

{(1,2,3,4,**5**),(1,2,3,4,**6**),(1,2,3,4,**7**),(1,2,3,4,**8**),(1,2,3,4,**9**)}

{(1,2,3,5,**6**),(1,2,3,5,**7**),(1,2,3,5,**8**),(1,2,3,5,**9**)} {(1,2,3,6,**7**),(1,2,3,6,**8**),(1,2,3,6,**9**)}

The groupings of chords are still counting down neatly 5,4,3,2,1 (2 and 1 follow in the sequence and are not shown). The harmonies have become much richer and the phrases longer. Here, the subtle harmonic change that the first four (fixed) notes of the chord/combination and a moving fifth voice allow reaches deeper into the strata of combinations. Because the combinations now consist of collections that include a total of nine notes, the length and variety has altered the sonic landscape. The consistency of the rhythmic design maintains the flow of the music.

Like *The Chord Catalogue*, *Combinations* counts out the numbers of Pascal's Triangle, but here the list of combinations, given in order, counts out each of the numbers in the lines of Pascal's Triangle, all the way to the tenth line, rather than counting n-dimensional hypertriadic numbers along the Triangle's diagonals. Combinations has a different relationship to the same mathematical object, representing the fact that the Triangle consists of the binomial coefficients.[vii] This is not a trivial distinction. Where within each section, Johnson's phrases grow longer as he reads the numbers diagonally down the triangle, *Combinations* has sections that inherit the symmetry of their phrasing structure from the symmetry of each horizontal line of the triangle – though the subdivisions inside each n-note section are rhythmically organized such that the phrases become slower and more fragmented as the chords approach higher density. This leads to a very different development of energies within each phrase: ever-increasing activity and density in *The Chord Catalogue*; ever more spacious timing in *Combinations*. On the higher level of the sections themselves, though, we find the inverse relation: *The Chord Catalogue* having sections that symmetrically expand in length, then contract; *Combinations*, with its ever-increasing sections, as there are more and more notes to choose chords from. The sound that emerges in *Combinations* is very different, more spacious and much calmer; the language of the rhythmic structure is primarily what creates that distinction.

While deploying strict rules with respect to the harmonic combinations and rhythmic structure, one parameter is determined by taste: the choice of scale, which was freely composed. The ten notes chosen span four octaves and include only naturals. The emphasis appears in three areas of the keyboard, a low C major triad in 2nd inversion, a C Major Seventh chord at Middle C and two stacked fourths in the upper register. This strategy may be seen as an attempt to color the music aesthetically while allowing for the mathematics to be heard in a rational, logical, and complete way. Thus, the piece is no longer a simple list and now has one extra parameter.

Another feature that appears regularly throughout *Combinations* is the repetition of root harmonic progressions. Throughout the work this appears regularly as the music

To take one example in Section 7, the first instance of the 3-note chords includes five harmonies:

{(1,2,3),(1,2,4),(1,2,5),(1,2,6),(1,2,7)}



In Section 9, these 3-note chords are repeated and extend two chords further, incorporating all nine pitches:

{(1,2,3),(1,2,4),(1,2,5),(1,2,6),(1,2,7),(1,2,8),(1,2,9)}



This extension and equilibrium of the harmonies enriches the logic, anchoring the familiarity of each combination and allows the development of the progressions to be detected audibly and perceived. This perception may not be the only goal and may consider an equally reasoned aesthetic of taste.

The aesthetic of taste reveals an elusive aspect of all musical catalogues. Catalogue composers must choose their global parametric constraints, and then how to present them, even within totally rationalized systems like the rhythmic grouping in *The Chord Catalogue* or, as described below, the cycle of fourths in *Logical Harmonies (1)* by Richard Glover and the rhythmic pattern of *Clapping Music* by Steve Reich. In these works, composing requires selection of registers, instrumentation, harmony, and rhythm. Every composer of a musical catalogue that chooses, for example, a logical, cyclical harmonic progression that suits the intention of the work identifies the choice that clearly could be much different,

more elaborate, more inconsistent, more opaque. Are transparency and perceptibility only musical goals for seeking objectivity? What defines a less logical choice and one more so? What would be the reasons for choosing one over the other?

Within Fourths/Within Fifths

In *Within Fourths/Within Fifths*, Samuel Vriezen has constructed a catalogue work for solo piano that develops its harmonies on the basis of interval and scale structure. Taking as a basis the intervals of a perfect fourth and a perfect fifth, *Within Fourths / Within Fifths* explores, in the composer's words, "all possible chords from 1 to 5 voices, where each voice is limited to three scale positions within the interval of a fourth, with the fourths stacked.. [and] … all possible chords from 1 to 5 voices, where each voice is limited to four scale positions within the interval of a fifth, with the fifths stacked".[viii] Vriezen terms this work a "chord enumeration" piece, expressly indicating both harmonies and the idea of the "list" that Johnson expresses when he writes of *The Chord Catalogue* in his article.

The compositional strategy is effectively identical in each of the two movements. To describe how it works, it's enough to analyze the first movement, *Within Fourths*. A rudimentary example near the beginning helps us see what is happening:



The construction of the piece evolves to present, in each section throughout the piece, each chord as a sum of the n-notes in the chord. Here is how the structure unfolds: notes Bb, C, and D – the three pitches that the top voice is restricted to – are numbered 0,1, and 2 respectively. The notes of the second voice, F, G, and A, exactly a fourth below those of the top voice (hence the title of the movement), are also numbered 0,1, and 2, respectively. In this particular two-bar excerpt, the two-note chords will all equal sums of two:

A+Bb (2+0) = 2, F+D (0+2) = 2, G+C (1+1) = 2

Rhythmically, the first two chords progress from half note to whole, while the last is a whole note. Thus, the two bars both end on a whole note; in fact, all bars of the piece end on a whole note, otherwise containing half notes exclusively. The first two chords are both sums of '0' and '2', and are grouped together as a two chord phrase, while the last chord, a single sum of 1+1, forms a single unit. This ordering of entrances settles on the natural logic of "finding the music".

To discuss a more detailed example that gives us more of the music, let's move ahead to *Within Fifths* and look at Section III, a triadic section where the chord sums total four:



The first four scale positions are B5, A5, G5, and F#5 (respectively numbered 3,2,1,0). Following the same logic we discussed earlier, the descending stacked 5ths are respectively numbered (E,D,C,B = 3,2,1,0 and A,G,F,E = 3,2,1,0). The logic in the order can be easily be seen once again if we reveal the numbers – the found system (each triad from top to bottom). In the first measure:

(0+1+3),(1+0+3),(0+3+1),(3+0+1),(1+3+0),(3+1+0)

That is, the first measure gives all possibilities of adding a '0', a '1' and a '3'. Likewise, the second bar gives all possibilities with '0', '2' and '2'; the third, all possibilities with '1', '1' and '2'. This list of permutations is an example of the pattern that continues in the subsequent measures, and in fact throughout the entire piece, from start to finish.

Vriezen offers all of his progressions in half notes and whole notes, sounding harmonies for four beats only after a progression is completed. The progressions begin with single harmonies, grow longer (sometimes much longer) and then return to their single harmonies. Each section of the piece does so symmetrically until the catalogue is complete. The independent quality of each harmony within the logic of the progression is one aspect of the music that sustains interest. However, what we are really listening to is not just the length or brevity or richness or sparseness of the music, but the unfolding of a kind of map that may be considered to engage the potentialities of musical spaces with respect to determined, articulated musical qualities. Vriezen has commented on this:

I like to think of catalogues as in-time maps that completely explore spaces of musical possibilities, that themselves are parametrically defined and have a so-to-speak out-of-time existence, and the method of relating those two (in and out-of time) is what makes the life of the piece.[ix]

The rhythmic design adds much variety and temporal interest, and there are also motivic melodic structures and recurring harmonic structures that emerge. In Section III of Within Fifths, melodies that appear in the soprano voice reappear in Sections IV and V as part of slightly altered harmonies. In subsection 5 of Section III, the six-note melody F#-A-F#-B-A-B in the soprano voice comes back in subsection 6 and 8 of Section IV above identical two-note harmonies. These harmonies are sustained by a newly introduced D (a fifth lower) in subsection 8 (In subsection 6, the bass note is Bb). In subsections 10 and 11 of Section V this melody reappears amid longer progressions.

The harmonies repeat with an added G in the bass in subsection 10 and an added F in subsection 11.



There are numerous other melodic and harmonic motivic recurrences. These developments in the music create a kind of kaleidoscopic effect. The melodies that come out of the mathematics have a modal, Satie-like quality, not unlike what one might hear in the *Gymnopédies*. The mathematical logic that results in the bass notes in Section IV and Section V rewrites the earlier harmonic progressions. The voicings are identical. It's a consistent outcome that offers new hues of harmonic color within the context of logical framework. The idea and the music are married completely and equally. Does the life of the piece move closer towards the conceptual or the audible?

Phasing Catalogues

A pair of musical catalogues that take a completely different approach to cataloguing is *Logical Harmonies (1)* and *Clapping Music*, respectively by Richard Glover and Steve Reich. Here there is an attempt to separate rhythm and variation from what's perceptible and what's transformed by the compositional strategy.

Taking Richard Glover's score into consideration first, there are several notable catalogue parameters to explore. Here are the first two systems, which he notated as follows:

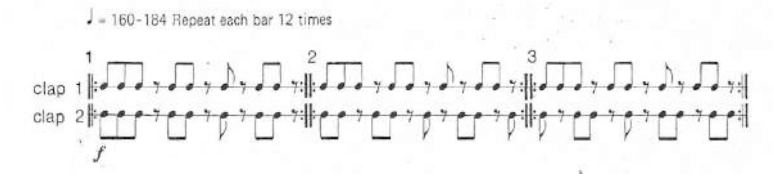
C F Bb Eb Ab Db Gb B E A D G
C F Bb Eb Ab Db Gb B E A D G

F Bb Eb Ab Db Gb B E A D G C
C F Bb Eb Ab Db Gb B E A D G

The symbols indicate major triads in any inversion. Scored for solo piano, the right hand plays the top line, the left hand the bottom. Glover describes the ground rules at the beginning of the score: try to stay within a two octave range, don't let your hands cross, and choose inversions that are close to each other. The first line shows both the left and right hands in rhythmic unison completing a progression of fourths, both rhythmically and harmonically. In the second system, Glover pushes the right hand backward one position; the harmonies of the two hands are again heard simultaneously. This continues throughout the piece: the process of moving the right hand one position backward, in identical rhythm, continues until the two hands are playing at unison once

again. This allows the entire catalogue of harmonies resulting from this process to be heard.

This work embodies a phasing process that would be unthinkable without the concept of the canon and identifies even more closely with the early minimalist compositions of Steve Reich, essentially mimicking in structure Reich's 1972 piece for two people clapping, *Clapping Music*. In Glover, we hear harmonic movement rather than rhythmic movement. For comparison, these are the first three bars of *Clapping Music*:



This is an example of Reich's well-known phasing technique without the blurred, sparky motion of gradual phasing found in earlier pieces like *Violin Phase* and *Piano Phase*. Because each of the possible combinations of the combined patterns is used, *Clapping Music* falls under our definition of a musical catalogue. The rhythmic pattern is stated, begun in unison by two performers. Then, performer one pushes ahead to the next position while performer two continues to repeat the original pattern as in Glover's piece, where the right hand does the same. This continues until the two performers return to play the original pattern in unison once again, at which point, after twelve repetitions, the piece ends. In *Clapping Music* there are 12 beats per bar, 12 bars, and each bar is repeated 12 times. Reich's basic rhythmic pattern cycles through groups of one, two, and three beats, but the process reveals resultant patterns with complex, variable metrical figurations. In his directions to the performers, Reich notes that no accents should be made and that, "it is for this reason that a time signature of 6/4 or 12/8 is not given - to avoid metrical accents."[x] The resulting rhythmic patterns that come out of the process are what are being catalogued here. This is a kind of "found music". The composer wants to stay out of the way of the material and the process.

About the similarity of the process-oriented nature of the two works, Glover says:

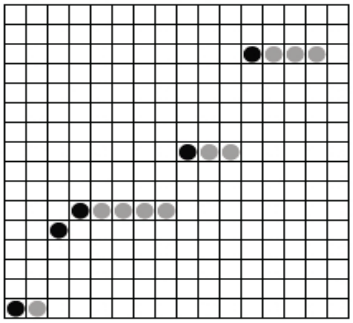
The structure is undeniably similar to Reich's phasing works, although that's not how it was conceived. I was, and am, aiming for a continuous subtle transformation in the sound; enough of a transformation for the sound to perceptibly change, but not a transformation in which the change draws attention to itself. Rather, a continuous stream of gradual change. Taking the same thing and gradually moving it out of sync with itself is an effective way of producing this kind of result, and knowing that 12-tone equal temperament has this beautiful, closed system of superimposed fifths, which can be played by two hands on the piano, gave me a perfect musical object to gradually transform. It was not designed as a 'phasing' piece per se*, but that is certainly what the piece is. It provides a wonderfully 'flat' surface in terms of the performer's instructions, and allows the triads of Western tuning to do the work in generating the harmonies*.[xi]

What Glover refers to as the "continuous subtle transformation" and "continuous stream of gradual change" allows us, as listeners, to encounter perceptual differences by means of ever-changing progressions. There is a kind of twisted shifting to the harmony. It's a weird spiral that has a warm, rich, natural mechanism of growth. Reich's work brings us into the realm of rhythm alone. *Clapping Music* offers discrete, repeatable segments. The music is strict, almost scientific. The listener's interest is in the kaleidoscope of pattern, repetition, and variation. Glover's idea of "gradual change" echoes Reich's idea laid out in his famous essay, "Music as a Gradual Process". Yet these are two very different pieces. The meanings of "change" (to become or make different) and "process" (a series of steps or actions taken to achieve a result) point to the contrast in strategy. Glover is after audible harmonic transformation, Reich wants systematic metrical variety.

Two Variations

The catalogues discussed so far lay out the music with all (or almost all) of the cards face up: the musical material, whether rhythmic, harmonic, melodic, and intervalic in nature, is presented in a purely logical and transparent manner. What about an approach where a musical catalogue is composed more flexibly? Paul Epstein has made a collection of pieces based on drawings by the American artist Sol LeWitt that are devoted to geometrical shapes and structures. One piece in Epstein's collection is *Drawing No.3 (Slow Title)*. This work is a catalogue, but the way Epstein presents the catalogue is selective and somewhat free.

Drawing No.3 (Slow Title), subtitled "all possible combinations of two of eight variants of a sixteen-beat pattern", is a short work for solo piano. The catalogue is inspired by wavy lines that occur in some of LeWitt's drawings, mapping pitches and durations of wavy lines onto a grid of sixteen diatonic spaces by sixteen eighth notes.[xii] Here is the grid of one of the two prime forms of a pattern he uses, with the pitch locations in black and the durations in grey, where each square equals an eighth note, giving a sixteen-beat pattern:



The generative melodic pattern, taken from the grid, is composed by locating pitches within the diatonic collection. The melodic pattern begins on C in the first square of the lower bottom left of the grid; counting vertically: C-G-A-D-Bb. The durations on the grid

are greyed in, each square equaling an eighth note: the first pitch C equalling a beat, the G half a beat, the A two and a half beats, and so on.[xiii]



A look at the first phrase shows how Epstein translates his wavy line into music. From this process, he generates larger forms by rotating his grid to create variants of the mapped melody, including the inverted, retrograde, and retrograde-inverted forms of both the variant and the original, and then cataloguing the twenty-eight possible combinations of those eight forms.[xiv]

What makes the catalogue different by virtue of flexibility? In written notes to this piece, Epstein explains. He does not use a systematic order of the combinations in order to avoid immediate repetitions. He also uses each of the eight forms of his two patterns in two transpositions, each placed a fifth apart, and chooses the transpositions freely for each combination. Additionally, inverted (but not retrograde-inverted) forms of the patterns are each offset by one eighth-note rhythmically and dynamics are regularly indicated and varied.[xv] These compositional choices reflect a strong intervention by the composer. What kind of questions are posed by Epstein's flexibly composed catalogue? One might be whether or not the idea of the catalogue can be made audible. To a listener, the musical catalogue is present but opaque. Here is an example of two representative measures of his results:



As to the audibility of the catalogue and his compositional technique in works of this nature, Epstein says:

I honestly don't worry too much about audibility. As much as my Drawings were influenced by LeWitt, there's a crucial and obvious difference: with the graphic works you have time to study them, find the patterns, and check to see that all the possibilities are in fact used. With the music you pretty much have to take that on faith while listening, or else go
through the score with gun and camera. Analysis is certainly possible, but I'm not sure it will make much difference to the listening experience - unlike analysis of classical tonal works or even of some early minimalism.

With just about all of my recent pieces there are elements - register, dynamics, articulation, etc. - that are composed either freely or (more often) by a variety of procedural systems such as chance or serialism. The systems differ from piece to piece. They may be chosen based on rational criteria: the desire to maximize or minimize

repetition may influence the ordering of patterns and pattern combinations; or it may be just a matter of what I think will sound good.[xvi]

Epstein's desire to avoid immediate repetition can itself be investigated systematically. Indeed, one could investigate the notion of 'maximum change' with respect to musical space. This could mean the maximum number of changes to a melody or a melodic fragment within the scope of possible, correct solutions to a counterpoint exercise, or the maximum number of chord changes in a symphonic movement taking into account some particular rule of functional harmony. Michael Winter's composition *maximum change* is an enumeration of all possibilities of a fixed four-note chord performed by up to four different instruments and there is maximum timbral change from chord to chord. More formally speaking: the maximum timbral change of a static chord of four discrete pitches as played by up to four instruments with distinct timbre, where each pitch is assigned a different instrument upon each successive event. Thus, the composition is an inquiry into timbral change.

The problem Winter has posed for himself required serious study. Mathematician Azer Akhmedov showed Winter the circumstances in which such a morphology is possible, after which Winter generated the solution and composed the work. Winter explains how the problem was solved:

In the case of maximum change, the rather simple solution used to create the piece was found independent of the proof. The solution generates a list for each of the 4 pitches that determines which instrument it is assigned over time by an algorithm that works as follows. For each pitch generate a permutation of (1,2,3,4). For the first pitch, simply repeat that (ordered) set 64 times. For the second pitch iterate the set 64 times, rotating it left by one position every iteration. For the third pitch, iterate the set 64 times, rotating it left by one position every 4 iterations. And finally, for the last pitch, iterate the set 64 times, rotating it left by one position every 16 iterations.[xvii]

Here are the first ten bars containing the first ten chords:



A few other aspects of his catalogue are worth noting. Winter defines his instruments as percussion instruments, each with long decay (such as circular plates, rectangular bars, hollow tubes, and struck strings such as crotales, glockenspiel, chimes, for example) and each being able to strike each of the four selected pitches individually and together. He also allows for transposition such that every occurrence of each pitch is transposed by the same interval such that the conglomerate chord always consists of four different

pitches (in an alternate version, he allows four pre-determined pitches that are the same for the ensemble, but not those given explicitly in the first). The performers pause eight to twelve seconds between each attack, letting each tone of the chord ring freely and decay naturally. The number of chords that result from Winter's calculations total 256 and therefore the performance time is roughly forty-two minutes in length, given an average ten seconds between each attack. In the alternate version of the piece, durations between attacks are made freely and pitches are predetermined but unspecified. Unlike the other catalogues discussed, Winter allows the music to avoid being absolute with respect to the timing.

Reflecting on the audibility of the musical catalogue, Winter concludes:

I take a different stance than Tom Johnson, although I appreciate his position. Tom feels that if you can't hear the logic, then the piece has failed. I accept that someone could appreciate the piece on some other level I had not considered or on their own terms altogether. I don't gauge the success of a piece or question someone's experience based on whether or not they perceived my original concept. Regardless, like Tom, the logic of my pieces is never divorced from a musical investigation.[xviii]

Approaching Completeness

There is an extraordinary variety to the approaches and musical results of these catalogues. In *The Chord Catalogue*, the idea of the "list" and the "object" appears. This touchstone work from 1985 offered a fundamental seed into considerable expansion of the catalogue idea. In a simple yet visionary work there were hints of great complexity and the latent potential of similar musical spaces. Another smart combinatorial project, *Within Fourths/Within Fifths*, helped us see how musical catalogues can be thought of as maps that explore musical spaces, and how this insight provided a deeper assessment of the catalogue project. *Combinations* shows that a catalogue with strict combinatorial and rhythmic logic can take yet even another shape, and introduced the idea that subjectivity manifests in the choosing of a scale according to taste, plays a role in all musical catalogues. *Logical Harmonies* and *Clapping Music* showed how two works can be constructed by utilizing an identical process, and still have a very different compositional goal and very different musical results. *Drawing No. 3* showed how a musical catalogue can be constructed flexibly and without transparency. *maximum change* researched how timbral change can be conceived of as a strict parameter, further bringing out the variety and intelligent, rigorous design evident in each of these catalogues.

Studying this meta-list of musical catalogues, it's easy to conclude that there is much less consistency and rigor in such a meta-catalogue than there is in the individual catalogue works themselves. What draws the musical catalogues together is the principle of exploring every possibility of at least one parametric feature of a musical object, but every possibility could never be accounted for in the meta-list.[xix] In light of this unusual characteristic of the meta-list of musical catalogues, how can these catalogues we've discussed be considered?

The attempt to compose a musical catalogue puts trust in two fundamental ideas: that the entire set of compositional possibilities is somehow more interesting or fulfilling to explore than some subset of the possibilities, and that exploring the entire set solves a condition imposed by the parametric space of the musical objects presented. Tom Johnson offers one explanation:

I often like to try to do all the possibilities of something, so that there is a reason to stop the music somewhere, and I always feel more sure of myself if some mathematician confirms that I have done all of the possibilities.[xx]

That explanation, while addressing the logic of the catalogue project, partially relies on another branch of knowledge, mathematics. This reliance doesn't explain the utility of the condition imposed, though. It points to a deeper interest in completeness with respect to mathematics and the characteristics of logic, rationality, and order. But composing music with an interest in mathematics and logic doesn't have to include every possibility of anything and indeed there are great numbers of works in which composers explore mathematical, logical spaces without composing a complete catalogue.

All of these catalogues, including Johnson's own *Chord Catalogue*, go beyond mathematical, logical features, leading into considerations of poetics and psychology.Composers of musical catalogues make complete and closed universes out of a single atom - the idea and the behavior of executing the idea. But it would probably be hard to tell to what degree this psychology informed the work without deeper analysis; this will have to be left to explore in future articles.

One question worth considering more deeply is that of perception. Can composers convey the central idea of the catalogue to the listener as a sounding music? Can the listener perceive the completeness of a musical catalogue simply by listening? In some catalogues, like *Drawing No.3*, one would almost definitively have to know how the music was constructed first. In a piece like *Clapping Music*, it's probably not easily apparent to most that the music gives each possible eighth-note variation of two identical parts without knowing this feature ahead of time. Yet in works of total transparency like *The Chord Catalogue*, *Combinations*, and *Within Fourths/Within Fifths* there is no guarantee that the concept will be heard without foreknowledge, either. Is knowing that one is hearing a musical catalogue while listening to a given piece of music important to reception of the music? Both Epstein and Winter, for example, state explicitly that from their point of view as composer this does not figure into things whereas Johnson and Glover may believe that this kind of perceived logic is what's most relevant.[xxi]

These questions posed are just a few to be answered; there are many more to be asked. The existence of these questions and these works shows that the new tradition of musical catalogues has life to it. This new tradition will very probably continue to bear much good music and stimulating discussion far into the future, and that is an immensely exciting prospect.

[i] Tom Johnson, "I Want to Find the Music", essay, undated. See www.editions75.com

[ii] Tom Johnson, program notes to New Music America Festival in Houston, 1985

[iii] Pascal's Triangle is a number triangle where numbers are arranged in rows as the result of a particular mathematical formula studied by Blaise Pascal. It had been described about 500 years earlier by Chinese mathematician Yanghui, as well as by the Persian astronomer-poet Omar Khayyám, It is therefore known as the Yanghui triangle in China. For a detailed description of this formula, see: http://mathworld.wolfram.com/PascalsTriangle.html

[iv] Tom Johnson, email communication to the author, July 18, 2009

[v] Tom Johnson, liner notes to CD: "The Chord Catalogue – Within Fourths/Within Fifths," Edition Wandelweiser recording, EWR 1304

[vi] A "non-trivial" sequence refers to the mathematical concept of triviality, where a solution to a system is too obvious to be of intellectual value. Michael Winter, a composer and mathematician, described the rhythmic sequence in this work as non-trivial upon programming it.

[vii] Also see: Weisstein, Eric W. "Binomial Coefficient.": http://mathworld.wolfram.com/BinomialCoefficient.html

[viii] Samuel Vriezen, *Within Fourths/Within Fifths*, musical score, 2006. See http://sqv.home.xs4all.nl

[ix] Samuel Vriezen, email communication to the author, January 7, 2014

[x] Steve Reich, *Clapping Music.* Vienna: Universal Edition, 1972.

[xi] Richard Glover, email communication to the author Jan. 7, 2014

[xii] When the dots on the grid are connected with drawn curves, the wavy line appears. This is the wavy line that is transformed from LeWitt's drawings. These are hand- drawn lines that were purposefully irregular, but with strictly defined end-points (LeWitt created a mix of the handmade and the mechanical).

[xiii] The grid could also have consisted of chromatic steps, uneven durations, and more. The parametric choices are selective, but are also constrained by the limitations of the grid and the availability of possible melodic transformations.

[xiv] Here we can refer again to the binomial coefficient: "eight choose two" - that is, all of the combinations of eight melodies in pairs of two at a time.

[xv] Paul Epstein, "*Drawings* (after Sol LeWitt): A Neo-Minimalist Tribute", musical score, self-published, 2011

[xvi] Paul Epstein, email communication with the author, October 11, 2014

[xvii] Azer Akmedov and Michael Winter, "Chordal and Timbral Morphologies using Hamiltonian Cycles," *Journal of Mathematics and Music*, Vol 8, Issue 1 (2014): 1-24

[xviii] Michael Winter, email communication to the author, October 28, 2014

[xix] The feature of disparateness in meta-catalogues is not unusual and has been discussed elsewhere in another artistic realm, that of concrete poetry, by German poet Ann Cotten.

[xx] Tom Johnson, *Looking At Numbers (*Springer, New York, 2014). Chapter 9, "Loops", p.94

[xxi] At the same time, the titling of *maximum change* and Drawing No. 3 (all possible combinations of two of eight variants of a sixteen-beat pattern) immediately tell us something essential about their musical catalogues.

Capuzzo's Questions: Lessons in Late Carter

Christian Carey

Towards the end of his book about Elliott Carter's opera What Next?, Guy Capuzzo leaves us with questions rather than summary conclusions.[1] The two questions are as follows: What is the significance of the English horn solo during the interlude in which the character the Kid is alone onstage? Why does Rose sing constantly and end the opera in bravura fashion with a high C?

Ending with questions rather than answers; it is a classic technique of a skilled lecturer and it points up the pedagogical value of Capuzzo's book. It is certainly the longest and most in-depth discussion of text-music relationships in Elliott Carter's music. It provides a close reading of extended passages in the piece. While seasoned scholars will dissect and discuss the book's contributions to Carter studies,[2] there is little doubt that it is of use to students undertaking graduate study in music theory, musicology, and music composition. As Carter himself points out, the musical techniques used in creating his opera are equally applicable to his other music, including his instrumental scores.[3] With this in mind, let us discuss a few lessons that, using What Next? as a jumping off point, graduate students might explore.

All-Interval Chords

Much of Carter's late music is written with similar harmonic techniques, and most of them involve all-interval chords. Capuzzo explicates the all-interval chords that appear in much of Carter's late music in significant detail.[4] Not only does Capuzzo address the use of all-interval tetrachords and hexachords as formative building blocks, he also looks at Z-related sets,[5] octachordal collections, subsets, and supersets. For starters, have students read the sections in the book that address the various combinations of all-interval tetrachords in the opera.[6] An additional set of readings about all-interval tetrachords could then be assigned surrounding an analysis of *Scrivo in Vento* (1991).[7] Then assign them to study one of the late instrumental works, such as the Fifth String Quartet, to see and analyze similar relationships in Carter's instrumental music.

A second assignment could deal with the all-trichord hexachord, another formative collection in Carter's late music. Have the students read Marguerite Boland's article on Con

[1] Capuzzo (2012), 149-50.
[2] Boland (2013) and Jenkins (2013).
[3] Tusa (2000).
[4] Capuzzo (2012), 25-46.
[5] Ibid. (2012), 30-31.
[6] Ibid. (2012), 27-32.

Leggerezza Pensosa,[8] a close reading of a work that features the all-trichord hexachord prominently. It also discusses Boland's notions of "linking" and "morphing" in Carter. Linking and morphing help analysts to reconcile pitch classes that fall outside of the core sets but that can serve to connect passages that contain them. Then have the students do their own analyses of passages from Of Challenge and Of Love, another piece that features the all-trichord hexachord.[9]

Subsets and Supersets

One can easily focus assignments on the all-interval tetrachords and the all-triad hexachord. But this leaves out some of the pivotal pitch material found in Carter's music. To illustrate a subset, Capuzzo points out the oft-told anecdote that Carter initially avoided using one of the all-interval tetrachords, (0137), in favor of (0146), because the former contained (037), the major/minor triad.[10] Thankfully for variety's sake, Carter soon got over this self-restriction. Indeed, subsets and supersets play an important role throughout much of Carter's career.[11] The supersets that most often play a pivotal role in his late music, called "Combination Sets" by Capuzzo, are eight-note chords that are combinations of the all-interval tetrachords. To illustrate these, Capuzzo reprints Carter's chart of the combinations of tetrachords used in the Double Concerto.[12] Capuzzo points out particularly fruitful properties of one of the combination sets: (0146) + (0137): it is the only octachord that includes the octatonic scale as a collection and the all-triad hexachord as a subset.[13]

To explicate combination sets, the obvious jumping-off point for graduate students is to study passages in the Double Concerto. Although other scholars date his pervasive use of combination sets considerably earlier,[14] Carter once again cites the Fifth String Quartet as a watershed piece in terms of his refinement and restriction of his harmonic palette.[15] Have students return to the Fifth String Quartet and refine their analysis. See if they can look at the subset/superset relationships between all-interval tetrachords, the all-triad hexachord, and combination sets.

Interval Stratification

The assignment and spacing of intervals is again a topic that is discussed in depth by Capuzzo.[16] It is particularly on the surface in Episode 2 of the opera, "Everybody makes a Statement," as well as Episodes 10-14 (the "explanation episodes").[17] For instance, during Episode 2, Kid becomes identified with a fixed interval class 6 and a revolving set of interval class 3's.[18] Meanwhile, Harry or Larry becomes associated with a specific pitch class set, (024568te), labeled by Capuzzo as set Z. Set Z will prove to be a pivotal set throughout the opera.[19] After reading sections in the book that address this,[20] have the students apply this

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[8] Boland (2006).
[9] Schiff (1998), 166.
[10] Capuzzo (2012), 31.
[11] See Capuzzo (2012), 31-32 and J.W. Bernard (1993).
[12] Found in Bernard (1997), 246.
[13] Capuzzo (2012), 31-32.
[14] Ibid. 32.
[15] Link, J.F. (2002) 7-22.
[16] Ibid. (2012) 76-84.
[17] Ibid. (2012), 76-98.
[18] Ibid. (2012), 77.
[19] Ibid. (2012), 77-79.

principle to another late vocal work by Carter. How does the vocal ensemble piece Mad Regales (2007) deal with interval assignment? Can we trace it to the same sorts of intervallic text painting found in What Next?

Complement Union Property

Capuzzo has been one of the main theorists who discuss the Complement Union Property as it relates to Elliott Carter's work.[21] In the Complement Union Property, any set class X plus set class Y = set class Z.[22] For instance, (048) plus (016) = (012478).[23] It can be found in a number of Carter's compositions. Capuzzo suggests that it can be assessed as part of the web of interrelationships between characters in What Next? Have the students read the section of the book on the Complement Union Property[24] and Capuzzo's article.[25] Then study the end of Partita (1993), a well-known example of the Complement Union Property at work. Finally, have the students evaluate Episodes 1 and 31 in What Next?, sections of the opera that particularly rely on the Complement Union Property.

Sopranos in Carter

There are singers who have become associated with Carter's vocal music, Susan Narucki and Lucy Shelton among them. Neither of these sopranos has sung Rose (Narucki has sung the role of Mama in What Next?). Carter has discussed his uncharacteristic approach to vocal writing for the character Rose.[26] Have students study the vocal line in some of Carter's early songs, such as the Frost settings, and late songs, such as Tempo e Tempi, and compare them to Rose's vocal lines. This comparison should not merely be one of range and tessitura, but using pitch class set analysis, analysis of rhythm, etc.

English Horn

The English horn has a special role in many pieces by Carter, including the Piano Concerto, Dialogues, and Pastorale. During his student days, Carter took oboe lessons at the Longy School of Music. Carter has jocularly compared the English horn solo in What Next? to Sibelius' Swan of Tuonela, a work that features the English horn prominently.[27] In light of all of this, ask the students to compare the role of the English horn in What Next? to its employment in the aforementioned works and other works by Carter.

Long-range Polyrhythms

Capuzzo dismisses out of hand the presence of long-range polyrhythms, a signature Carter device, in What Next?[28] Other recent scholarship, such as that of John Aylward, has suggested that there are a number of instances in which the use of long-range polyrhythms attenuates in Carter's music in the mid-1990s: it is instead supplanted by embedded tempo

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[20] Ibid. (2012), 34-35, 44-46, 76-84.
[21] Capuzzo (2004).
[22] Capuzzo (2012), 37.
[23] Capuzzo (20012), 38.
[24] Capuzzo (2012), 37-42.
[25] Capuzzo (2002).
[26] For Carter's take on Rose, see Meyer & Shreffler (2008), 307
[27] Schiff, D. (2000), 4.
[28] Capuzzo (2012), 46.

schemes.[29] Capuzzo also explores embedded tempo schemes as a possible rhythmic organizing principle.[30] Ask the students to read Andrew Mead's chapter about rhythmic organization in Elliott Carter Studies[31] and evaluate a Carter work that is well known for its use of long-range polyrhythms, such as Night Fantasies or String Quartet #4. Then assess Capuzzo's conclusion that long-range polyrhythms are not a rhythmic feature of What Next? If the students feel that he is correct, why do they think that Carter eschewed long-range polyrhythms in the opera?

Conclusions

Guy Capuzzo's What Next? is an excellent resource for those who wish to learn more about Elliott Carter's opera. Capuzzo excels in explicating text-music relations in the opera. He also discusses a detailed list of post-tonal procedures that appear not only in the opera but also in much of late Carter. As such, students investigating the piece may be given assignments that go many different directions. It is to be hoped that these will not only hone their abilities to recognize traits in late music of Carter, but may give them ideas for approaching other composers' music. So, in the spirit of Capuzzo, I will end this essay with a question rather than a conclusion. Who are some of the composers most closely aligned to the procedures found in late Carter? Or one might phrase it this way: once students have come to grips with Capuzzo's questions: what next?

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[29] Aylward (2009), 88-99.
[30] Ibid. 74.
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Does Pauline (Still) Exist?

There is no way to approach anything close to perspective on the recent loss of the physical entity we have collectively known as Pauline Oliveros. Not that there is much perspective to be had in "meat-space" as it is: where our deep and intractable relationship to entropy and physical death necessitates frequent seismic shifts in our ontologies. Not that there is anything wrong with death, mind you, some of my very best friends are dead. But, on the passing from this space to whatever might be the next (for surely, regardless of the energetic aspects of what might be called our consciousness or soul, our molecules aren't going anywhere fast), there is even less perspective to be had. One's vision is limited by the casting down our eyes automatically do as we search the landscape for signs of our own continued existence when grieving as great a loss as she.

So this essay is digression, whistling in the graveyard, and distraction from the central question -- from a title written more than a decade ago, and under vastly different circumstances. Yet it is a question that I now find haunts me: Does Pauline Exist?

The haunting is not unpleasant.

I know that I am writing this for a memorial issue, so my words, my thoughts, everything I can utter in this context stands out sharply against the landscape of immense grief. This grief has joined the many others who have taken up residence in me during my own physical existence – grief is the "heavy lifting" of life, the intense labor of being well connected to others. Grief is also an inconsiderate psychic house guest, always expecting us to drop everything we're doing and be completely occupied, body and soul, for as long as it wills. I listen to the grief, of course, because that is what Pauline taught me, and so many others before and after me, to do: listen to as much as is possible as much as is possible. So I sit and listen to the grief she is at once responsible for and giving me the means to apprehend. She and I are having a moment right now, in fact. As I write these words I am listening to tracks from her album Accordion and Voice, from 1982. I remember this album from my days as an undergraduate working in the music library – I remember the smell of the vinyl as it emerged from the cardboard sleeve, and the shock of static electricity that danced across my fingers from the friction of its liberation. Listening to the long tones of the accordion unfurl through its grooves, there seemed to be endless space within this music, I was invited to listen into the sound – not how a melody or harmony progressed, but given an infinitely present now I could explore at will. I remember staring at the woman on the cover: she, SHE, was the artist responsible for this – this what? The music contained within didn't sound like any other music I had heard at that time, that time before I knew women could even be composers. I couldn't have known at the time what the woman on that album cover, who looked so easy, and comfortable in a world I found so confusing and dangerous, would become in my life

and the lives of so many beautiful and creative souls around me. That first encounter seems so very long ago.

I have to keep stopping now, because as the sounds of her accordion resonate my chest, I sense the energy rush to my throat, which catches sharply. My breathing constricts as if I'm being gripped around the lungs, or somehow slipped in between two stones refusing to give way to my weak flesh expanding. Her frequencies reach my eyes, and they spill over. So I stop to cry, and pet the cat, and talk to Pauline here in my kitchen for another moment. I am not surprised the sun has come out from behind the scattered rain clouds. The sonic frequencies of her playing somehow catch the suns rays and they join the tears and the moment. And now you, too, are here: you who read these words, you are now a part of this moment as well. Pauline and I are sitting here, listening for you. Crowd into my kitchen in Berlin, and listen to Pauline play, and reflect on what it means that she is gone if she is so very, very present right now. Let's wonder, together, where the sound waves from this performance have reached into the multiverses by this moment, in the autumn of 2017, or whenever you read these words. What interdimensional spaces have they traversed? How have they reverberated time and space, changing the structures of the multiverses in which they swim, simply by existing?

If I could send my awareness out the farthest, to the very first sound waves sent vibrating out from Pauline, how far could I listen? I think about the first sounds I imagine little Pauline made on her accordion at 9 years old in Houston, Texas. I have little wonder listening to her work since what those sounds might have been like: I imagine she held on to the keys for as long as her fingers allowed sometimes. I see her sitting there, slow "breathing" the instrument in and out with one hand, as the sounds swelled in intensity and complexity and then slowly died away. I see her small head tilted inwards to listen to the magical worlds created by the vibrations of the instrument released in her space, joining with the sounds of the cicadas and frogs and whatever else might have been chorusing outside that space. I feel her joy, her anticipation for the silence in the sound, and for the sound in her silence. I can imagine this so well because she never hid these things, she bared her creative soul in ways I found excruciatingly vulnerable when I was younger (and far better armored). She left the spaces empty that I compulsively rushed to fill, letting them linger without judgment for far longer than I could imagine. I understand now what an act of compassion this was, what a demonstration of empathy at its most fundamental that this represents. Her ability to guide without leading, to collaborate so openly and profoundly at every level of her creative process, created the vast social, cultural, political and sensory spaces so many of us now know as the practice of Deep Listening. In the world of post-war classical music, this ego-less drive-in creativity was and remains quietly revolutionary. Sometimes it remains noisily revolutionary.

Slipping backwards and forwards in time, like that space between the playback and record heads on a magnetic tape recorder, I imagine her endless experiments with sound and technologies. First, I imagine the noise – all chaos and chance and

openness and accidents. Found objects scattered around microphones, and microphones placed in and around all manner of things. The simplicity of a paper tube filter is the same here as complexly coded digital instruments: everything serves the sound. Then, I listen for the silence: I watch her, hunched over a reel-to-reel recorder with a hand on each reel winding the tape back and forth across that expanse between heads, I imagine her suspended in time, forever listening for that electromagnetic scribble. Her entire being is balanced on the fulcrum of her ear, bent low in silent reverence alert to every vibrational nuance as the marks slide along the playback head. When I try to comprehend that she is no longer in the physical world, I imagine that she has slipped into that space between the tape heads, forever looping her listening over her sounding over her listening over her sounding. She is the emptiness before the sound becomes manifest, and the emptiness after it has lapsed again below our perceptual horizon. All of this can be said to be nothing, if the nothing from which all things arise.

Or perhaps I should listen for her under the ground? Where are the frequencies from the cisterns, the deep, dark places of resonance that she and others occupied so resonously? Where are those frequencies, set loose by Pauline and Stewart Dempster and Panaiotis, reverberating now deep in the earth? What molecules inside the earth's crust are they gently vibrating now? How many times, and through how much matter of the earth have they resonated? When I walk the earth do they reach the soles of my feet? When I am floating in the ocean, are the water molecules still gently swaying to a few of those frequencies liberated from that cistern to resonate the earth? If I close my eyes now and listen, can I hear them? How might they be different from the frequencies when they were released again and again from our headphones, our speakers, as we played these recordings over and over? I am listening to "Lear" right now from the Deep Listening album, but trying to listen to the first time I heard it through my listening now. Hearing as if in a dream, through the echo of my interior, psychic spaces: how far have these frequencies penetrated? How deeply have they become inseparable from my own? In what ways have they joined us all, those of us who still are not Pauline, in having her sounds penetrate and reverberate so deeply into the infinite spaces inside each of us, and all of us. In the "diamond web" of the Mahayana, how does this common reverberation throughout our immeasurable spaces of consciousness unite us?

To have known Pauline in any capacity was to have had one's existence re-sounded. Resonance, resound, resounding – her sound practices reverberate with energies released to their destiny, vibrating the spaces, the places, and the space in-between. For those of us longing for recognition in saturating hegemonic systems designed to erase us, this alone was enough to move mountains. Her presence in electronic studios, and technologically marked creative spaces of power and production during the second half of the twentieth century gave many of us our first clue that we could, in fact, occupy those spaces one day as well. Her dedication to radical inclusivity – from promoting the work of under-represented composers and musicians, to working with artists across multitudes of practices and disciplines, to creating

new instruments, and with them new modes of access for the physically impaired, to her work with the non-hearing and hearing-impaired communities in making music – leads by quiet example. The body of work she graced the world with during her tenure in this incarnation is as diverse in form as aesthetics, yet has an underlying sincerity – a deep rootedness in humility, simplicity, playfulness and joy. So much of it never recorded, it floats freely now unclothed by our perceptions. Ephemerality at its most poignant. That small child fascinated by the radio, or by her parents' voices being modulated by the engine of the car as they drove into the night, that child never stopped existing in Pauline: her wonder was palpable, her humility in the rapture of it all never disappeared. I wonder if she now traces these vibrations, in whatever form(s) she may or may not occupy, through the multiverses like a comet: looping between galaxies and universes like the record and playback heads on the reel to reel, recording her experiments in the binary of pulsars.

It is in the spaces she reverberated that I most hear her now. In the voices of her friends, colleagues and students, and the insights they have amplified through their own practices of Deep Listening. We students, regardless of how long we have actually been practicing, most often struggle with "lifting off judgment" – the first concept to which we were introduced in our course and seemingly the last concept many of us will master. Her lifting off of judgment has been unconditional, total, and cleared so very much space for all of us it is difficult to conceptualize. The studios, classrooms, concert halls and other sites she has resonated within were first exorcised of her own judgments, preconceptions, and expectations. She openly declared that Deep Listening practice is a spiritual practice, because listening leads to empathy, the ability to hear and feel beyond oneself, and thus cultivates compassion. It promotes the awareness that it isn't all about you. Funny that it is within this field of compassion that I could finally encounter my own creative self without fear or shame, and in doing so at last meet others with the same fullness. That space continues to expand without slowing - she is sounding and resounding still, the space she created for us all is still vibrating, still reverberating with the sounds of our listening, and sounding, together.

But once again I digress. To return to the opening question, does Pauline (still) exist? Now that the collection of cells, structures and impulses we referred to as "her" no longer work in concert in this physical realm, no longer in the process of "being" but "having been?" Now that she has become one with the ancestors, what might this mean for those of us who still traverse the landscape of the material world? When contemplating the specters of our ancestors, it is hard not to ponder Derrida's Specters of Marx, and embrace the inherent hauntology of the situation: embracing the frequent hauntings of Pauline when speaking of Deep Listening, or listening to her recordings, or simply remembering exchanges at times and places past. For Derrida, the specter is distinguished from revenants or spirits or just plain ghosts by the uncanny awareness that specters are not simply regarded: specters look back at us, they observe us from a place that is not physical yet somehow still perceivable in physical space, by physical beings. A place that we cannot experience, yet when we

are regarded by a specter we are inevitably drawn closer to it, whatever and wherever "it" might be. There should be no doubt that specters of Pauline will never look back at us with such confronting presence-absence that the uncanny raises the hackles on our necks. No, specters of Pauline are simply, humbly, gently, silently, here: still listening. Resonant with compassion, specters of Pauline are most notable in their silence. We can hear her best when we are listening to our own listening: her energies have vibrated these spaces and left their traces on our collective maps of existence, and we are invited now to wander freely. Perhaps she has no need to trace her own frequencies out through the multiverses as I so often feel compelled to do; in the end it is not so much her haunting me as the opposite. For now, outside of space-time, she is become the simultaneous expression of all this, and more.

In other words, I have been asking the wrong question all along. "Does Pauline exist?" loses all meaning when in the presence of what she has become, in the presence of her reverberating frequencies still altering the destinies of the physical universe. So, then, isn't the question "Do Paulines exist? Plus d'un?" Maybe even one for each of us who needs her to keep listening? Thankfully, in this and all moments, the answer is an eternally sounding and resounding: "YES!"

Renée T. Coulombe
Berlin, October 12, 2017



Dinner with Pauline, Sant Pere Pescador, Catalonia, 16th July 2010 Photo © by IONE

Mike Bullock

Listening in/to The BSC

1.0 (Post-)Metaphors and (Self-)Idioms

> The act is its metaphor; the act overrules its description.
> -Volker Krefeld, writing about Michel Waisvisz[1]

How does one talk about improvised music? Michel Waisvisz was founder of STEIM and inventor of touch-based, intuitive electronic instruments for improvising music. Whether his biographer, Volker Krefeld, was quoting Waisvisz directly or simply attempting to summarize his philosophy is unclear. Either way, Volker implies that common metaphors can only take you so far in understanding music, especially the kind of idiosyncratic approaches that Waisvisz embodied and championed throughout his career.

Music is a conversation, improvisation is a community, we're building a society of sound, we're telling the story of now etc… make all the metaphors you want, and not without reason, because it's virtually impossible to talk without metaphors.[2] But the music itself is its own best description, and eventually you are faced with how to reconcile your words with that conundrum.[3] In this essay I will take a close look at the record *The BSC with Pauline Oliveros at EMPAC*, and attempt to analyze it not without metaphors, but with ones better suited for understanding what's really going on from a listening perspective.

[1] Krefeld, Volker. "Biography of Michel Waisvisz." www.crackle.org
[2] The problems with the language metaphor are too many and too large for this work.
[3] Why not make this argument about other kinds of music too? It might not work with all examples — ritual music, for example, probably cannot be properly understood without the metaphors it helps (re)create.

In Deep Listening Pieces, Pauline Oliveros synthesizes her ideas about improvisation and engaged listening to describe how a musician immerses her- or himself as agent and client, an experience that is both physical and internal:

> One can listen and perform simultaneously... Commitment to a sound involves focal attention. One hears the sound clearly whether listening only or producing the sound. In contrast the field of sound is present but not sharply in focus. It is possible to find a balance between these two kinds of attention, the internal world of memory and imagination and the outer world of sensation.[4]

The border between performer and audience is porous, at least as far as reception of improvised music is concerned. The performer is simultaneously an audient; s/he also continues to be a performer, even at the moments that s/he is not making sound. So why not consider the audience a form of performer? One might argue I am giving an overly generalized read to an idealized situation, but Oliveros' point is not about who gets a better listening but rather how listening happens on more than one level at once.

It's worth noticing, in light of Waisvisz's quotation, that Oliveros uses only one kind of metaphor to make her point. She doesn't use a purely visual metaphor, to replace the ear with the eye. Rather, she evokes technological mediation of vision: photography, specifically in the terms focus and field. Oliveros briefly evokes the idea of a lens in the ear, and quickly brings that lens back to what she really means, which is attention.

French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, in *Listening*, adds nuance into the idea of multiple layers and densities of attention. And where Oliveros keeps her metaphors to a minimum, Nancy pours them on, so to speak. He takes the old metaphor of time flying like an arrow[5] and casts it out to sea with regards to experiencing sound in time:

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[4] Oliveros, Pauline. *Deep Listening Pieces.* Kingston, NY: Deep Listening Publications, 1990.
[5] Of course we can't forget that, in spite of the usual reading of the metaphor, arrows don't fly straight — they fly in arcs and eventually must stick into the ground, or something/someone else.

> [S]onorous time exists in waves on a swell, not in a point on a line; it is a time that opens up, that is hollowed out, that is enlarged or ramified, that envelops or separates, that becomes or is turned into a loop, that stretches out or contracts, and so on.[6]

Nancy mixes metaphors rapidly and freely, and even lets them trail off with "...and so on," suggesting both the richness of sound metaphors and their ultimate disposability.

Writer and scholar Christoph Cox recommends a practical, material approach to the analysis of certain areas of contemporary musical work — free improvisation, sound installation, noise and so forth. Traditional methods for analyzing music are inappropriate for these contemporary approaches, says Cox; new analytical work "...should not concern itself with the examination of forms (the organization of pre-given, pre-individuated entities: pitches, scales, meters, works, etc.) but with the investigation of fluid matter distinguished by different speeds, forces and intensities."[7] There's a clear echo here of Nancy's waves on a swell, as well as his shape-shifting time metaphors. Both writers advocate a model of listening that emphasizes process over form, continuous becoming and emergence over objecthood. Listening should reflect the nature of what is being heard: a continuous branching and pruning of processes, operations, and decisions.

The examples cited above come from very different areas of writing about music and musicians: Krefeld's informal biographizing, Nancy's meditation on listening's role in philosophy, Cox's and Oliveros's field reports and practical recommendations on what to do with that fluid state. It's in Nancy's interest, for example, to illustrate his thinking as richly as possible; his metaphors can be read as filling a perceived gap in philosophical discourse. Krefeld, on the other hand, spotlights Waisvisz's personal priorities.

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[6] Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Listening (*2002). New York, New York: Fordham University Press, 2007. p. 13.
[7] Cox, Christoph. 2006. "From Music to Sound: Being as Time in the Sonic Arts." In *Sonambiente Berlin 2006: Klang Kunst Sound Art,* edited by Helga de la Motte-Haber, Matthias Osterwold, and George Weckwerth, 214-223. Heidelberg: Kehrer Verlag, 2006.

So what do metaphors and their limitations have to do with listening to The BSC, and listening within The BSC? A given BSC performance is a fluid state of operations in the sense used by Yves-Alain Bois in his discussion of Georges Bataille's *informe* (formless). The *informe* is "neither a theme, nor a substance, nor a concept," but an operation that resembles only itself, in spite of any metaphors.[8] The formless operations reorient sound production away from received hierarchies, and exceed the boundaries of metaphors. But since we can't talk without metaphors, we might as well take the opportunity to find the best ones.

1.1 *Qualia* and Transformation

I have found that the overall form that emerges from a given performance or excerpt of The BSC is a constant transformation of the musical material – of sounds into other sounds, groupings into other groupings – and fluctuations of loudness, density, and texture. Nonetheless, individual moments and distinct, sometimes sudden, changes can be identified as influential moments that give momentum to the emergence of an entire section or piece. In order to analyze The BSC at EMPAC with Pauline Oliveros, we will introduce three metaphors that will perhaps give us the right tools to work with: energy; transformation of energy; and *quale.*

To discuss specific experiential events, musician and scholar David Borgo borrows the Latin term *quale* – plural *qualia* – from phenomenology. A *quale* is a unit of qualitative phenomenal experience that cannot be deduced from an analysis of quantitative data. A common example is the 'redness' of red, considered separately from the color's intensity, frequency, and other measurable properties. Another example could be the various descriptors used to describe timbre, such as 'thick,' 'hollow,' or 'cold.' In applying this concept to improvised music, Borgo argues that *qualia*, far from being the leftovers after all quantitative data are removed, should be

[8] Bois, Yves-Alain and Rosalind E. Krauss. Formless: A User's Guide. New York: Zone Books. p. 15.

regarded as inextricable from the experience of music making: "[Q]ualia are not atomic, nor are they discrete. Rather, they have complex internal structure, consisting of other *qualia*."[9]

In BSC performances, transformations may be gradual or sudden; they may be based around changes in one or several sonic or temporal parameters. They may involve a change in who is playing and who is not playing. They are almost never pre-determined, though they may reflect certain recurrent tendencies of the ensemble or individual.

The overall perception of time in a BSC performance is determined in part by the nature of the transformations: they may be mainly sudden, mainly gradual, or a mixture. The density of transformations also plays a role. In fact, the nature and density of transformation can have a greater effect on the sense of time of a piece than the nature of the sounds themselves.
In a given piece, a low number of transformations, separated by periods of several minutes or more, can create a perception of slow, dilated, or smooth time; on the other hand, many transformations in a short period can create a perception of rapid, looped, or unevenly textured time. For example, fairly rapid, sudden transformation across a series of otherwise static sounds – such as a rapid succession of non-simultaneous entrances by individual musicians playing single, long notes – may create as great a sense of forward time propulsion as would be created by a single, furiously active *quale* that continues without change for several minutes.
One or two musicians can initiate change across an entire ensemble, and once this new musical territory is established by one or two musicians, others may enter with more complementary material; or, more likely, with a contrasting texture, register, or temporality.

A recurring characteristic of the BSC improvisations I have analyzed is their shape in time: They consist largely of stratified layers of sonic *qualia*, often static or attenuated in nature. Transformation between and among *qualia* may be clear and decisive, or it may be a constant

[9] Borgo, David. *Sync or Swarm: Improvising Music in a Complex Age.* New York: Continuum, 2005. p. 66.

flow of change and emergence. The result is a time sense, or temporality, that is moved forward primarily by constant transformation.

2.0 The BSC and Pauline Oliveros at EMPAC

It meant a lot to me to be able to bring Oliveros and The BSC together.[10] As a student of Oliveros, I have had a number of stimulating discussions with her about improvisation, the flexible roles of musicians and listeners, and the ways that a broad spectrum of musical backgrounds can contribute to a musical situation. Oliveros was also pioneering in her use of completely open improvisation in both performance and composition. A major part of The BSC working method has to do with the varied musical backgrounds of the members, both in terms of instrument choice — or design — and personal musical history.

2.1 Analysis of The BSC + Pauline Oliveros at EMPAC

The structures of BSC performances hinge on the ensemble's ability to transform one kind of energy into another. These transformations often begin with a single musician taking an idiosyncratic musical action. That single action generally becomes a transformation only after the rest of the band reacts. Whereas in other improvised contexts, these singular actions may precipitate a flurry of in-kind reactions, in the BSC the responses tend towards macroscopic shifts of density, texture, and volume level.

[10] EMPAC and the Rensselaer Arts Department documented the entire performance as a multi-camera video shoot; that video is available for free on Rensselaer's online library. Bhob Rainey also made an audio recording of the BSC + Oliveros set, using his own equipment, and that latter recording is what you hear on this release.

The recording of the performance with Pauline Oliveros at EMPAC is 22' 50" long.[11] Though the performance is continuous and contains no pre-meditated breaks or structures, there is a silence between 14' 10" and 14' 20", effectively splitting the performance into two pieces, which I will refer to as its first and second movements. Aside from the fact that no musician plays during that break, there are other musical factors before and after that break which lead me to think of it as the end of a first movement and the beginning of a second. I will outline those factors in more detail below.

Both movements bear a distinctive BSC trademark of thwarting fulminate activity by transforming that energy into another kind of energy. A distinctive feature of the EMPAC performance, from the point of view of energy transformation, is its tendency to avoid drastic changes or moments of discontinuity between one macroscopic *quale* and another; at least in comparison to other BSC performances I have analyzed.[12]

Up until 8' or 9', and to a lesser degree up until 14', the energy profile steadfastly refuses to undergo any major transformations, changes in volume or density, or shifts from one set of macroscopic qualia to another. And yet it's not that this first part is sluggish, or boring, or weak. Countervailing forces are constantly present and tend to balance each other throughout. This is partly attributable to Oliveros' presence; her contributions are generally nimble and bring complementary or balancing energies to the context. Also, the simple newness of her presence adds an exploratory edge to the proceedings. Though we all had been aware of her as a composer, and I had worked with her before in other contexts, this was our first time playing with her as a group, aside from a brief and encouraging rehearsal at sound check.

[11] For practical purposes, I will indicate all timings using numerals plus the conventional time notation for minutes ['] and seconds ["]. For example, seven minutes will be expressed as 7', while twenty-two minutes and fifty seconds will be expressed as 22' 50".
[12] For an example, see "Graphical analyses of *23% Bicycle and/or Ribbons of the Natural Order*," in this volume.

For the first 7', two main kinds of *qualia* prevail: those with long, slow, self-sustaining energy, and generally lower register; and those with quickly bursting energy, with shorter durations. The overall volume level periodically swells and recedes, as these two kinds of *qualia* alternate in dominance, but for the most part stays between medium and very soft, with few high-volume moments. The result is a series of minor transformations whose effects are either short-lived and exceptional, or long-lived but subtle. Around 7' 30", more *qualia* with a mid-speed, mid-volume character start to take the forefront, but the overall character remains in place until 8' 55", when a slow transformation starts to take root, growing into the first movement's only major transformation at circa12'.

2.1.1 First movement: a string of minor transformations

1'04" The first minor transformation consists of a very brief pause, less than a second long; I initiate it with a medium-loud plucked harmonic. The surrounding activity, quiet and full of movement, stops within a second of my sound, but resumes almost immediately with Oliveros' fingers fluttering on the keys of her accordion. This minor transformation reflects the character of much of the first movement, in which the macroscopic *qualia* get periodically interrupted but not derailed.

4'40" Minor transformations start to take place at one-minute intervals. Rainey's long tone starts to gravitate energy as it increases and decreases in volume in a long arc. He gradually melts back into texture, which has hardly changed except that it is now thinner and quieter. Meanwhile Kelley, Rawlings, and I have started to introduce medium-speed movement. Rawlings had started contributing medium-slow movement earlier, by quietly bowing the bridge of his cello, but now that comes more to the fore.

5'40" - 6'10" Kelley introduces two long tones, textured by vocalizing through his

trumpet while playing. His volume grows very slowly and his steadiness becomes the defining character of this short passage, into which other musicians introduce interruptions. By 6' 18" the macroscopic *quale* has reverted once again to an earlier state of balanced activities.

6'38" Rainey introduces another arcing long tone, this time over a fairly dense ensemble sound. Tonne creates a wavering note that is quieter than Rainey's tone but moves in a wobbly orbit around it. Rainey completes his arc at 7'10", where Oliveros picks up on that energy and begins a similar arc with a tone cluster on her accordion.

7' 30" Just as her volume arc is descending, Oliveros suddenly swells again and stops, handing the sustained energy back to Rainey who responds to Oliveros' dense cluster with a close, dissonant interval. The ensemble sound that continues after this moment is similar to what preceded in terms of texture, but has a heightened sense of tension. This may be the result of the aforementioned exchange between Oliveros and Rainey, along with more stabbing attacks from the group and continuous, noisy activity from Cooper that rides on top of Rainey's split-tone. At this point the energy of the entire piece has been transforming slowly from furtive to urgent, without serious breaks in the overall *qualia*: bursts of activity coupled with near-static textures.

8'55" Cooper starts a wandering, fluctuating sound with his electronics that comes in and out for a while, slowly taking root. I start mirroring this sound around 9'55. The wandering sound exerts more influence starting around 10'20". Cooper and I together create a loping, lugubrious time that is similar to the mid-speed *qualia* from before, but with a more unpredictable energy. Musicians begin to dropout, and at 11'08" Cooper changes suddenly from his low swells to a high chattering. This sudden change on Cooper's part sets up the only \transformation of macroscopic qualia in the first movement, which doesn't come to fruition until almost a full minute has passed.

12'05" The major transformation of the first movement presages the movement's demise. A long, slowly wavering tone, generated by Rawlings' electronics, creates significant gravity around which the rest of the ensemble coalesces. The overall activity level drops significantly, and the texture is filled with threads of high-pitched attenuated sounds: long tones in clusters. The general ensemble sound begins to resemble one of Oliveros' high-pitched accordion clusters. Though it is not unusual for the BSC to do this kind of texture, in this case Oliveros has been planting seeds of this texture throughout.

Starting around 13'10", Rawlings' arcing tone becomes noisy and individual musicians begin to drop out. The movement gradually dissipates until silence at 14'10", just after Tonne marks the ending with two short, quiet tones.

2.1.2 Second movement

The second movement, which begins at 14'20", is distinct from the first in several ways: It is shorter, at around 6 minutes; it is more homogenous in structure, relying on bands of white noise more than on clearly pitched material; and the volume level stays generally low. But it shares two similarities with the first movement: the second movement's character evolves slowly as a result of a succession of minor transformations, and it comes to an end as the result of a major transformation.

14' 20" The second movement begins with soft wind sounds, as if the first movement were returning as a ghost of its former self. Activity is extremely minimal and quiet for a while, consisting mainly of high-pitched electronic tones or noise bands sustaining over furtive, unpitched activity.

16' 20" A subtle minor transformation happens, a sort of unfolding of activity based around a low wavering from Tonne. Activity continues to be quiet but events start to link

together more. It is interesting to note that Tonne is not the instigator of major changes the way she so often has been in the past. This may well be a conscious effort on her part, more than anyone else's, to avoid falling into a previous role.

16' 57" - 17'01" Cooper and Tonne have a brief moment together that can be heard as the culmination of the minor transformation Tonne started at 16'20".

17' 40" A minor transformation results from Coleman and Tonne's call-and-response with chattery, high pitches, undergirded by Oliveros' accordion swell.

18'28" -18'32" Contrabass swells to a sudden stop, which results in a transfer of energy to Rainey and Tonne. This exchange recalls a comparable transfer of energy between Oliveros and Rainey around 7' 30", and contributes to the second movement's ghostly resemblance to the first.

18'55" Rawlings' electronics, which often serve to define the character of a macro-*quale*, in this case cause a minor transformation of energy by suddenly cutting out.

20'20" Oliveros and Tonne join forces again, and this time, they invoke the strongest transformation of the entire piece. Over 30 seconds, the volume and density start to rise steadily and strongly, until the band is practically roaring, with slow speed and thick texture.

At this point thereminist James Coleman plays a key role in defining the end of the entire piece. The texture has thickened significantly, both in terms of timbre and activity; the influence of pitched material is more strongly felt; it seems a major breakthrough to a much higher level of activity is at hand. But instead, after 21' 00", activity suddenly dissipates, or rather is redirected from its upward trend. The thick structure dissipates back into the light, cloudy textures that had dominated the earlier part of the second movement.

This change of energy is pre-figured by a short series of accordion clusters about 20' 50", but the actual transformation is initiated by Coleman, whose very slowly rising, sustained low-register tone starts descending faster than it rose, all the way to the bottom of his instrument's register. This slide precipitates several more sudden downward slides in the contrabass, until both sounds are gone from the texture and the remainder of the movement sustains quiet upper-register figures until the end.

3.0 Conclusion

The EMPAC performance is both characteristic of the BSC's idiosyncrasies, and idiosyncratic within our own repertoire. It is the latest in a long line of collaborations with guest improvisers, and as with those other collaborations, Oliveros has made her mark on this performance. We have also come across a pair of practical metaphors – *qualia* and transformation of energy – for analyzing not just the music of the BSC, but also any improvised music. But these metaphors, like the others, will show their limitations sooner or later; and we will be left once again, is in the beginning, with the music alone representing itself.

Memories of Paul Zukofsky

"Take good care and be well".

The death of Paul Zukofsky (73) in Hong Kong on June 6, 2017, his passing, left a vacuum in musical life, even in view of the fact that he had ceased violin playing for many years, abandoned his administrative activities, and artistically fled largely into inner emigration. His silent presence was nevertheless a mental support for many nonconformist artists. At first glance, his withdrawal from the international scene was unmistakable by the turn of the millennium. He emigrated from the USA to the Far East (Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan). I never asked Paul how this rigorous step came about. It was enough for me to be able to contact him again after his years of disappearance, and to avoid indiscreet questions. Since then I never knew his physical address, and I never met him personally again, although it was our mutual desire to establish something together in the future.

In March 1989, on the occasion of my recital at Weill Hall in New York, I met Paul Zukofsky for the first time to discuss the unusual notation of Morton Feldman's "Untitled Composition" (1981) for cello and piano. The meeting in his apartment in New York remains an unforgettable experience for me, what with his demonstrations on the violin, coupled with his analysis of a keen intellect, full of apt bonmots, and it marked his intense and breathtakingly speedy reading.

As regards Feldman's notation, with double sharps and double flats, Paul explained that different approaches are possible. It was clear, for example, that the note "A double-sharp" could not and should not be identical to the note "C flat" or the note "B". On the piano, on the other hand, with equal temperament, all three pitches are identical, there is only one note on the keyboard for them. Significantly, Feldman noted, with few sporadic exceptions, no

double-sharps or double-flats in the piano part. Paul derived these pitches from others using Pythagorean, Meantone or Just Intonation. This has the result that the frequency of an "A double -sharp" or "C flat" may be higher or sometimes lower than that of the note "B", depending on which system is used.

After having calculated several passages of the piece with three or four different intonation systems and having monitored the results on the violin, Paul recommended to me the book of Hermann Helmholtz, "*Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen*" published in 1862. However, he specifically recommended the English Version, entitled, *"On the Sensations of Tone,"* as the translator added a very helpful and extensive appendix that contains detailed tables of many scales and intervals world-wide with precise frequency indications. How closely Paul knew the relevant specialized literature! As a farewell, as if my absorption capacity had not yet been exhausted, Paul also showed me a book by Max Reger, *"On the Theory of Modulation"* in which he explains the transition from one harmony to another. It was curious: for the derivation of the pitches in Feldman's work, according to the method of Paul Zukofsky, was strikingly similar to the harmonious approach of Max Reger.

Yes, and finally the question arose: Did Morton Feldman himself have this mathematically accurate determination of the pitches in mind? Paul said no, "*Morton didn't know, but he did care, John [Cage] knows, but he does not care.*" We laughed with relief.

Paul Zukofsky and I met again in New York in April 1991, following my one-week collaboration with John Cage on "ONE8" for cello solo. Then, in the summer of 1992, Paul had organized John's 80th birthday concerts in the "Summergarden" of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, where "ONE8" was scheduled for two days. John rang me in Europe a few weeks before, because he wanted to replace the cellist who had been planned

for it. The reason for that was that this cellist did not have a curved bow, which is absolutely necessary for the piece. John explained to me his confrontation with Paul in a conversation on 17 July 1992 in New York in the context of these concerts. It is reproduced in the book "MUSICAGE" by Joan Retallack in addition to further remarks on Paul Zukofsky in the exact wording. A meeting with Paul could not take place during this period, because he began to work as director of the Schoenberg Institute in Los Angeles. But I must have called Paul there at this time, because I congratulated him incidentally on his new job. John had already told me this news. Paul responded in his characteristically cool way: *"There is no secret in this world..."* A final telephone call with Paul in Los Angeles took place in May 1994, when I was again in New York to give two concerts together with the pianist Anthony de Mare, among other pieces Morton Feldman's "Untitled Composition".

And then, after the liquidation of the Schoenberg Institute in Los Angeles in 1996 and the relocation of the archives to the Arnold Schoenberg Center in Vienna, Paul had suddenly disappeared from the face of the earth! Even close friends, strange to me, could not tell me his whereabouts.

A contact with Paul Zukofsky via e-mail was established again some time after the year 2000, presumably via his website "*musicalobservations.com*". I remember that Paul was already writing from Asia. Later, he asked me if I would be available for a symposium on John Cage in New York in 2004, Unfortunately, nothing came of it. A few years later, in August 2008 Paul mentioned that his CD label "*CP2 is supposed to be an abbreviation for Contemporary Performance Practice. There was supposed to be a Center, but it never happened.*" His Playing with irritating esoteric abbreviations was again typical of Paul: cpp = cp^2 . Of course, as regards mathematics, this spelling is not objectionable. It is regrettable that the music establishment has so thoughtlessly ignored the brilliant skills of Paul Zukofsky, both as a

violinist and as an amazing mediator of musical ideas. He was astonished himself that the Cage Year 2012 had not affected him at all. A relative "But" however, is appropriate, because if there had been a relevant Cage focus on his 100th birthday anywhere in the world, then such a central figure for Cage's work as Paul Zukofsky would have been indispensable. Yes, this is unfortunate, and an obituary for Paul Zukofsky does not help.

The last "act" in our intellectual exchange refers to Johann Sebastian Bach. Paul Zukofsky contributed a supplementary comment in 2013 to my newly started InterNet blog *"the bach update"*, which is dedicated to the compositions for violin and cello solo. He got into detail on the subjects of slurs, articulation and meter. The resulting correspondence was also instructive. He wrote that articulation can be related to *"the harmonic motion, but that is rarely spoken of as articulation"*. Apart from the traditional sense of the word articulation, he would use it *"more in the anatomic sense – how bones, or a skeleton, is articulated. The concept is crucial for music, but is rarely thought of"*. And as far as the barlines in Bach's works were concerned, they were almost always meaningless, merely a convention. Bach would usually not pay *"attention to meters AT ALL. Why so few people understand this is a complete mystery to me."*

The last e-mail from Paul to me dates from December 2015, where he made plans to make recordings in Tokyo as a conductor.

Michael Bach

Paul Zukofsky

Ce qu'on voit et ce qu'on ne voit pas

The title of this charming pamphlet, better known in English as *What Is Seen And What Is Not Seen* (July 1850, by Claude-Frédéric Bastiat) poses a question so much more basic than the purportedly simple economic question it asks about a broken window, i.e; why do performing artists so readily fall into the trap of only seeing and accepting the simplest understanding when viewing a printed text, as opposed to at least peeking behind the curtain?

1. Starglow

My prejudices against the usefulness, validity and meaning of time signatures (TSs) are reasonably well known. Sadly, if one speaks about the meaning, function and usefulness (or lack thereof) of TSs (and therefore of barlines), the deep-seated, virtually religious convictions that one so frequently and quickly encounters, make any such discussion an exercise of pissing into the wind. Therefore, in order to better approach some understanding of the notional and notational problems we face “laying out” any written text, I shall stray to a different, closely related field, i.e. a very late poem by Louis Zukofsky (full disclosure, my father) which context (at least for musicians) may not be so fraught with shibboleths.

I grew up with the notion that music could be considered, or indeed was, the highest form of speech. This did not mean the usual flatulence of music as a universal language conveying great emotions etc. Rather, it meant that the components of speech – the stresses, the syntax, the emphasis, what Bunting referred to as "thump"[i], i.e. the speech patterns, the sibilants, glottals, et al – all appeared in music in some highly refined form; and in the final analysis, the desire and need to understand, endow, appreciate and convey meaning when reading (or performing) a text (whether poetry or prose, read out loud or silently) was/is directly comparable to the problem of determining musical structure and phrasing, and to the activities of performing music.

In pursuit of this thought, let us make the assumption that the choices a poet makes about how a poem is "laid out" may in some sense be comparable to those made by a composer in determining how to lay out a musical metric structure. To explain this further, allow me to dissect a somewhat arbitrarily chosen poem from LZ's last series of poems "80 Flowers".[ii]

The original reads:

Starglow

Starglow dwarf china rose shrubthorn
lantern fashion-fare airing car-tire crushed
young's churning old rambler's flown
to sky cane cut back
a crown transplanted patient of
drought sun's gold firerimmed branched
greeting thyme's autumn sprig head
happier winter sculpt white rose

Notice that the poem takes up eight lines, with five words per line. This is not that different from a piece of music with eight phrases of five bars each, or perhaps eight bars of $\frac{5}{4}$.

QUESTION: does emphasizing the "fiveness" of each line help us achieve some clarity and understanding of the meaning?

The following presents the poem "laid out" on the page in a grid with each word receiving equal spatial weight.

Ex. 1

Starglow

Starglow	dwarf	china	rose	shrubthorn
lantern	fashion-fare	airing	car-tire	crushed
young's	churning	old	rambler's	flown
to	sky	cane	cut	back
a	crown	transplanted	patient	of
drought	sun's	gold	firerimmed	branched
greeting	thyme's	autumn	sprig	head
happier	winter	sculpt	white	rose

This presentation does little to aid understanding, or help convey meaning. Furthermore, the result of reading it in a fairly equal-time-per-word style (and yes, I have heard it done in that manner – I hasten to add, not by my father) is extraordinarily clunky and boring.[iii]

Perhaps we should not think five words per line. Perhaps we should consider the syllable count, which differs from line to line. Such a version might be presented as follows:

Ex. 2 (by syllable)

Starglow

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Star	*glow*	dwarf	chi	na	rose	shrub	thorn			
lan	tern	fa	shion	fare	air	ing	car	ti	re	crushed
young's	churn	ing	old	ram	bler's	flown				
to	sky	cane	cut	back						
a	crown	trans	plant	ed	pa	tient	of			
drought	sun's	gold	fi	re	rim	med	branch	ed		
greet	ing	thyme's	au	tumn	sprig	head				
hap	pi	er	win	ter	sculpt	white	rose			

While this version does have the possible advantage of showing that each line has a different syllable count, and may therefore be more revealing of internal structure than the previous example, but in terms of meaning, the syllabic version (Ex.2) is even less helpful than (Ex. 1), and a reading giving each syllable equal weight, duration or meaning is so stilted that it can hardly be described as English.

What, then, to do with this recalcitrant lump?

Perhaps it might be best read or understood as:

Ex. 3 (annotated)

Starglow

Poem	Description
Starglow	(the name of the flower in question)
dwarf china rose shrubthorn lantern	(because that is what it is – this is a description of the flower)
fashion-fare	(because in the scene across the road from where my father lived this flower provided a touch of adornment)
airing car-tire crushed	(part of the scene – that is what was in the neighbor's yard, where an old tire that had been crushed was left exposed to the air)
young's churning old rambler's flown to sky	(the neighbor's car (a Rambler – the brand name of a type of American car) was dead) (also note – with the exception of respectively an initial B and a final R, bramble and rambler are identical, and yes there were brambles at the scene)
cane cut back	(an attempt had been made to scythe the weeds)
a crown transplanted	(someone, or nature itself, had arranged for the flower to grow on top of this particular site)
patient of drought	(the flower survived being not being watered)
sun's gold firerimmed branched greeting	(sunlight splayed on the scene)
thyme's autumn sprig head	(this one is self-evident)
happier winter	(seeing this made the winter more bearable because of this sculpt w.r.)
sculpt white rose	(another description balancing the opening)

This last version does have the advantage of telling one where to make some syntactical breaks, and therefore has more "air" in it, and "breathes" better. That makes the meaning somewhat clearer, even

without the explanations I have appended.[iv]

Very well, you may say, if (Ex.3) is what the man wanted, or might have been prepared to accept as an interpretation, or might have preferred as a reading, why did he not just write it utilizing a different number of words per line? LZ is obviously prepared to accept a different number of syllables per line, something classical prosody supposedly disallows, so why the self-imposed formal restriction (for that is what it is) of five words per each and every line.[v]

Two answers immediately come to mind. The first involves plasticity; the second historical acknowledgment and analogy.

In regard to plasticity, we quickly discover that (Ex.3) is not the panacea we might have hoped for. It is simply too fixed. It allows few, perhaps no, possibilities. Put another way, (Ex.3) eliminates far too many of the interconnections and ambiguities in the original poem.

As an example, consider the word “crushed”, which occurs at the end of the original second line.

Most probably “crushed” refers to the tire, but it might also refer to the car (the “rambler” of the next line). (Ex. 3) minimizes that ambiguity. (Ex. 3) forces us to read the poem in a certain way, and does not provide the reader-performer flexibility to make their own decision(s) regarding cross-references, or trajectory of phrase. One of the great blessings derived from using a fixed form such as the original version is: “everyone” recognizes it to be a convention; a neutral mechanism. Ergo, such a fixed form allows for, or even provides, maximum (syntactical) freedom and flexibility; enjambment[vi] is expected, probably even *de rigueur*.[vii] Plasticity is maximized.

A second answer to the question as to WHY the poem was not written in some form of (Ex. 3) reflects the importance of historical acknowledgment.

My father was obsessed with previous formal poetic structure (and with word counts per line). In English poetry, one of the most famous of these poetic structures was the pentameter, usually the iambic pentameter.[viii]

While my father had little interest in what passes for a traditional pentameter, his method of laying-out poems in lines of five words each was his homage to that classical meter, and the five-words-per-line form simultaneously allowed him to achieve three objectives:

(a) to acknowledge, revivify and transmute the old form;

(b) to irrevocably associate himself with the tradition of the great English Lyricists;

(c) to create – out of the old – an astonishingly flexible NEW form, which looked both to the past and to the future, thereby perhaps putting him in a category with a Wyatt, or perhaps a Malherbe.[ix]

And now, you may well ask - what does any of this have to do with the writing or reading, understanding or performance of music?

To my mind, EVERYTHING.

Plasticity, historical context and perspective are perhaps the essence of composers' fundamental concerns.

As regards plasticity, the comparable question (for music) is:

Do you wish to notate in a fashion that at least appears to be highly specific, or rather, is it preferable to provide a neutral background, which you hope the performer will recognize as such, and will feel free to ignore, or at least look beyond?

In regards historical context and perspective:

To what extent are music notational choices forced upon you, depending upon when you are writing; for whom you are writing; as well as what are you referencing or looking back upon?

Remember that:

ALL NOTATION IS A COMPROMISE.

No choice of meter solves every contingency.

While most meter changes are an indication of certain aspects of the composer's thought process, sticking with a single meter does not necessarily signify abjuration on the part of the composer regarding alternative metric stress. Nor is the use of constantly changing meters the most efficacious overall answer, given that clarity in one aspect may very well muddy the waters elsewhere. Finally, whichever style is chosen, be it one meter, or many, the choice is almost definitely not dispositive, as the decision to change, or not to change TSs, may have been quite arbitrary, or perhaps not even well considered. In short, no matter the choice, it is still incumbent upon us to look beneath the surface of the notation.

There is, however, a new wrinkle to the ancient "UNANSWERED" question. Before -- when a composer wrote in only one uniform meter throughout a movement, one could assume maximal variety, just as in the LZ poem discussed above. Now -- when a composer (purportedly) chooses a specific set of meter changes, what are we to make of those changes? Are our choices of stress, accent and shape etc., completely restricted because of the changing meters, or are they not?

As examples:

Babbitt told me many times (in conversation) that the decision to vary

or not vary the TS depended on the preference of the performer(s) he was writing for, and it made no difference to him. Therefore, should we not create multiple metrical visions/versions of a given Babbitt score to better understand his intent?

Feldman wrote his early non-graphic works without TSs, using a partially spatial, partially insinuative, notation. Then he suddenly began using a very precise, almost conventional notation, with constantly changing TSs. Are we to believe that the early works have no rhythmic "spine", whereas the later works are back to the "I-never-saw-a-downbeat-I-didn't-thwack" school? Are we truly to believe that his intent and intention changed so dramatically?

Cage's early notation used TSs which hardly ever changed, employing a system of cross-beaming to provide enormous flexibility in the rhythmic impetus; he then moved to a type of proportional notation, and ultimately to a "time bracket" notation. Did his underlying ethos change so substantially, and is the notational change a reflection of that change; or is the change in notation just a different prism placed on top of the same obsessions?

The notational Stravinsky of the "Rite" is not that of the "Symphony in C". Does the latter have NO rhythmic discontinuities?

The notational Copland of the "Sextet" in not that of the "Piano Quartet": is this, speaking only rhythmically for now, a different Aaron walking towards us?

Let me not continue to the point of nauseam. Rather I mention an alternative title for this essay: *Alia iacta est,* The Die Is Cast. I chose this statement by Julius Caesar, made just prior to his crossing the Rubicon, not only as a cheap pun pointing to the chance-like elements involved in any choice of TS, nor as an even cheaper pun regarding hazardous possibilities that may result, but also because, as with Caesar's crossing, there is no turning back once the TS is fixed.

Enormous unintended consequences flow from any choice, and no composer is sufficiently omniscient to envisage them all.

The bald truth is, even in this day and age, our TS notation system is not flexible enough to provide clear vision onto all the multiphase rhythmic possibilities a composer may have envisaged. No solution is idiot-proof.

THEREFORE:

Learn how to READ what the music is trying to say, not what the notation imposes; or as Bill Williams said to my father:

"The thing is we need to know is *how* to read (as Ez would say) in order to GET what the newer way of writing calls for".[x]

My only dispute with that statement being that it applies equally well to the older way(s) -- indeed all ways -- of notating any text.

And ALWAYS "give blood to ghosts".[xi]

Footnotes

[i] Basil Bunting, *On Poetry*, ed. Peter Makin, Johns Hopkins Press, 2003

[ii] See Louis Zukofsky's *Anew: Complete Short Poetry,* New Directions edition.

[iii] Note that "80 Flowers" is hardly unique in having people not knowing How To Read. Two of the funnier quotes on the subject are:

> (a) "being, apparently, in utter ignorance of the nature of Italian syllabic verse, which is composed of various syllabic groups, and not merely strung along with a swat on syllables two, four, six, eight, ten of each line" (Pound, *ABC of Reading,* pp. 202-203 in re Binyon's translation of the Inferno).
>
> (b) in re Arthur Golding's version of the Metamorphoses: "Though it is the most beautiful book in the language, I am not here citing it for decorative purposes but for the narrative quality. It should be read as natural spoken language. The metre is, I admit, susceptible to bad reading. A bad reader of fourteeners [the Golding consists of lines of 14-syllables each] is almost certain to tub-thump. The reader will be well advised to read according to sense and syntax, keep from thumping, observe the syntactical pauses, and not stop for the line ends save where sense requires or a comma indicates. That is the

> way to get the most out of it, and come nearest to a sense of the time-element in the metrical plan." (Pound, *ABC*, p.127).

[iv] N.B. to my poetical friends – I do not claim that this reading (or arrangement on the page) is either authoritative or authorial in any way. Though it happens to be fairly close to the original stimulus, the verisimilitude of my rumgumptions is not the point. What IS important to note here is that the reading of (Ex.3) is far closer to the intent than are either equi-spaced versions above, and (Ex.3) is clearly one of a number of acceptable arrangements, given my father's original notation.

[v] And note that each of the 80 poems of "80 Flowers" has that restriction, as do swaths of the late movements of *"A"* (New Directions edition).

[vi] From the French *enjamber* = to stride or to stride over (from *jambe* = leg); ca. 1382, it began to be used to convey the idea of passing over an obstacle. Its specialized use (by Boileau) for verse dates from 1660-68. The specialized definition: "the practice of running a phrase or sentence over the end of one line and onto the next without a punctuated pause" from *Poetry for Dummies* (John Timpane with Maureen Watts, Hungry Minds, 2001). As an aside, for those wishing a remarkably clear, detailed, and enlightening overview of poetic technique(s), one could do far, far worse than *Poetry for Dummies*. Of course, the fact that a poem of my father's is included as an example therein, has in no way influenced my opinion of the book.

[vii] I should also remark that, in what passes today for the norm in performance, we never ever seem to *enjamber* in music, (i.e. pass over the bar-line). If anything, we usually jam at each and every bar-line.

[viii] An iambic pentameter is a single line of five iambs (a two-syllable word with a supposed pattern of weak strong, although the line is almost invariably NEVER READ with five heavy accents).

[ix] Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542) credited as the "inventor" of the sonnet.

François Malherbe (1555-1628) who "codified French versification".

[x] From William Carlos Williams to Louis Zukofsky, Feb. 23, 1949, in *The Correspondence of William Carlos Williams and Louis Zukofsky*, ed. Barry Ahearn, Wesleyan University Press, 2003. For those wishing proof that *plus ça change, plus c'est la même Scheisse* see the letters of Boileau and Racine (*Lettres d'une amitié : correspondance 1687-1698,* ed. Pierre E Leroy, Bartillat, 2001).

[xi] Which statement, especially coming as it does from a "high-modernist", is astonishingly "romantic" – c.f. Pound in *ABC* (pp. 13-14):

> "A classic is a classic not because it conforms to certain structural rules, or to definitions (of which its author had quite probably never heard). It is classic because of

certain eternal and irrepressible freshness.

“An Italian state examiner, jolted by my edition of Cavalcanti, expressed admiration at the almost ultra-modernity of Guido’s language.

“Ignorant men of genius are constantly rediscovering ‘laws’ of art which the academics had mislaid or hidden.”

MEANING'S
RUST

(forty word pieces for various voices)

"But language is restless."

" . . . a word is a bottomless pit."
Lyn Hejinian, *MyLife*

"All true language is
incomprehensible."

"Poetry is the grinding of a
multiplicity which throws out flames."
Antonin Artaud

"A poem is primarily an exploration of language."
Rosmarie Waldrop

Note

Although the poems in this work are numbered and, consequently, the reader may feel compelled to read them in sequence, readers are also invited to try other reading paths perhaps allowing their eyes to wander across the page, across columns from left to right (or vice versa), diagonally crisscrossing the page, from the bottom up or just erratically etc., making different connections between the poems (or parts thereof) outside their given order, thus participating in the construction of new poems.

some words on form

. . . form here isn't something static but rather the consequence of the irregular oscillation between order and disorder integration and disintegration semantic drifts smears trying to find a more spontaneous way of writing which would yield a more spontaneous sounding work allowing for ambiguities form here means a web a field of actions a field of activities and connections the events are sometimes autonomous sometimes interdependent intertwined an *entanglemeant* form is elastic fluid thus not a series of rigid structures relating to each other only by means of similarities and dissimilarities in linear fashion it is rather a web of relationships which may go back and forth in time a landscape opens up in which a wilderness of words sounds and images spontaneously unfolds seen as if in a sudden flash of lightning revealing ravines and scraggly peaks with branches and twigs intertwined and dark gnarly roots grasping at what remains unseen I catch glimpses of the rocky scraggly ravines below in the flash of lightning I get glimpses of a network of long gnarly fingery twigs and branch-like limbs entwined reaching clutching at each other in a scrubby mass mess in organic fashion the internal relations are not subject to rigid architectonic principles but to the wobbly organic elasticity of a multidimensional web comparable perhaps to neural networks where each node is the intersection of two or more strands the messiness of a scrub if you will the formal language does not reach the functional perfection of the relational network of geometry or mathematics no relations are not held together in it by any special signs but only by the haphazard the contingent and disposition I mean to say the physical availability of reading and writing paths of gestures and their feasability on the instruments being written for in a particular piece the structural elements the nodes in the composition act more like chemical valences strange attractors . . .

#1

an expression
gives
the way
(kinda)
exchanged
just as

thoughts,
and then,
pushing
whose
this is

more
in fact
at
discovered

constantly
in flux,
in places
overnight,
without warning
foreigneous

interactive,
pushed by buttons,
some more
and ago

over of nothing
that dream,
and/but sleep
in cataclysm
ever clear

discovered
at
in fact
moves

this is
whose
pushing,
and then
thoughts

just as
exchanged,
kind of,
the way
gives
an expression

#2

this,
the blood,
if the function
were that
of a word

world

intrusive . . . what?

and then,
pushing those
whose this is

wall reads:
"Avalanches"

ice on the bottom
and beneath that,
breath:
particles,
a wave

wobbly in places

summer of night
into fall

the what of is
confined a surface
stories,
her face:

this wrenching
everything's
a music

#3

this reality
thought perhaps
a man

in disrepair,
something can't discern
making "it"
a premonition

here
a petal,
there
a pillow;
sheet metal
of days

paper through
orchestrally
forgotten
otherwise

cuts trails
down "who is
this they?"

now looms
this
otherness
familiar

lilacs perfume
the ocean's old tale

this of course

is a paper trail

#4

love,
the shape
replacing
alternative

from
just these
and beware

growing motions
simultaneously
forgotten

verbatim
not verboten

tainted
foe alike,
all gesture
a shadow
we speak

set off the way

the way
in
“quotes,”

yesterday

everything
just
proves perhaps
all manner
as
which

perversion
of useful erosions
and then,

behind antipathy,

fragments,

another poem

#5

pinned anonymous
of art
a figure

a work
posing
as such

a nude
compared
to mirror

something
in the rain,
or traces
revealing

to come
of how,
though into
as if

a sign
becomes design
of itself
(assuming there is
a self to be signed)

amuse-
meant
park this
when
of what

make “the”
a pointer

the silence
can’t drown,

though
simply understands,
the onward,

objective fog

#9

light,
this root
so figured
about which
I began
again
yellow

not an analogy,
weekly I wrote,
disagree
choosing

force giving
oneself
what words
wait
for
pause

applause

plause-
ability
at noon
not this

wind blown
moonlit room
(midnight)

their
cancellations
wait

with new
pen
in hand

I,
gets
warped
on the
thoroughfare

a life in
bits and pieces

scraps of
word metal
junk

heaped about
among
the weeds

in different
(indifferent)
places

#12

"I" flies off
libido
and occurs
in a number

aubergine,
when
butter cupped
weeds deceive
the next fence.

sky the speech,
loam the song,
haphazard manners
buried along
the chance.

squinting brings us
to an edge,
coarser forms of
turbulence;
stone is an innocence
affirmed
in silent pools.

filthy,
no longer dancing,
warriors exit this
story,
His story

and what's
inscribed around 'im?
a map
his gun could
not unfold
(enfold)

in rude colors,
these berries,
these books
to scatter,
confused a return
to grace,

a whisper
to all expectant faces.

#13

apportioned,
without ideas

known as the bad
no one must know

whisper to all
expecting fences

his boney finger
pointing,
is all there is

a forest
becomes
a sign

stays in water
long after persistence

when a sound
you have forgotten,
creates a story
to be remembered.

these are ready
to be made and
then, tell me what

of it a trance intrudes
forth
in dark day light park
recast around
eyesight's living bright
prolonged

still vast
commotion.

#14

members only,
dismember-
meant for
the trash can lonely

butter flies open into
pussy willow's asking
~~askance~~
questions
percolating disgust,
transmuting this bunk,
drip dropping paint into
network of concretions:

this matter of speech
is mostly space

#15

he wants to ponder,
his lost sockets drink

up the rusty emptiness

such rules are possible
only where there are
none,
a crimson borderline
lined with shade and
garbage

presence hovers an
offering
absence
ringing various and true
to
offspring
down the drink and then
some.

revelation of roseate
hours,
murky mercury thoughts
to
snore in the suave
snooze,
backsliding, snide
sneering this
imbrication runs a muck
into foliage
foraging for pages.

for ages seeking,
there is a chance in the
language
of these flat leaves
embedded,
no names to wander at
rapt,

sleeping in wine
drenched siestas,
wrapped in possessive
posses,
seasons upon benefits
remain
open
at that hat:

his known moonlight.

19

an expression
gives
this,
the blood,
constantly in flux
summer of night
into fall
~~dawn~~

interactive,
without warning,
the what of is
confined a purpose

reads waves
into particles' breath,
~~breadth~~
just as thoughts,
and then, pushing
what words wait
for wobbly places.

stories wrench
everything into music,
foraneous, ever clear
discovered at what,
this is.

intrusive whereabouts
of when,
summer's colliding
grace
is then
windblown light

about which
these roots
so figured
what words wait
for pause
~~faux pas~~



Ben Patterson „Paper Piece“ – Klavierfassung von Philip Corner und Phœbe Neville @ cafe oto, London, 19. September, 2016
Bild: Joanna Pocock

"Pieces of Reality"
Philip Corner at Café Oto in London

By Joanna Pocock
November 2016

The silence in Café Oto is the silence of a church. On the dozen or so tables, tea lights flicker. We sit very still not daring to take a sip of our drinks for fear we might make a sound. This silence is immersive despite the fact we have all been handed a sheet of paper, which gives us permission to participate by

> "buying something
> to eat or drink
> and then sometime during ……
> make
> consciously & explicitly
> a sound with it.
> Thus adding to the music …"

No one seems willing to enact their right to participate given to them by Philip Corner, one of the founding members of the Fluxus group. A tall and imposing 83-year-old, Corner appears under a dim spotlight and walks to the piano. Café Oto doesn't have a raised stage or sloped floors—it is an intimate room with large windows looking onto a narrow East London street. In a Javanese batik shirt, cotton trousers and sandals, Corner's white hair and mutton chops are the only evidence of his age. His movements are powerful and focused. He introduces his "collaborator, wife and muse," Phoebe Neville, who is sheathed in a hand-painted silk tunic and a pair of sparkly rubber toe shoes—the kind where each toe has its own 'finger'. Her hair is green and her face wears an expression of worship.

Corner announces a "reverence to the piano". While Phœbe performs the traditional *namaste*, he bows until his head touches the keys. This is the first note we hear. He then says, "Piano Work, a movement", and he and Neville turn the instrument around so the keys face the audience. At this moment an alchemy begins to take place: the transformation of one element into another. A piano is not simply a means to make music, but a kinetic object, a sculpture that creates sound or allows for silence. We are entering a new kind of space. Neville moves with grace. She practically floats.

In the first sounded piece, 'Petali Pianissimo', the performers drop petals onto the keys. Where a petal falls, a note is played. They are conversing silently through the means of flowers and chance, physics and aesthetics. We are reminded of our very physicality, our relation to each other, and how it is so much more than the exchange of data via our mobile devices. And this is why we need this kind of performative work more than ever: It is not only a reminder of the power of art and a community of minds, however fleeting, but it is a corrective to lives in which experience is continuously being subsumed and replaced by mediation. There is no algorithm for the chance falling of petals. Corner's work is an inoculation against the tyranny of 'if you liked that, then you might like this'. It is real and human

and immediate.

Some Javanese masks come out for a piece called 'Understanding' in which Neville and Corner blindly play a small Yamaha keyboard—the only electronic sound of the evening.

"The masks will make sure I don't know what I am doing," Corner says. Then adds, "Not that I ever understand what I am doing."

He touches the keyboard with the nose of his mask, riffing on the first reverence. Neville switches between timbres confusing their dialogue. They are playful, respectful and above all totally alive to each other's bodies and movement. Neville seems to revel in being the ghost in the machine, switching it on and off while Corner stabs at the keys. Undermining the purpose of an object is pure Dada, pure Surrealist, pure Fluxus. *Ceci n'est pas un piano* when it is under their command—it is a living sculpture, a means of communication.

It is noticeable that no one is taking photos. There would be no point because no recording of this performance would be able to capture the atmosphere in this room. We are watching a rare thing: an experience that defies mediation. A moment we will remember, or not, but it will add to the sum of our parts whether we like it or not.

When the concert ends, the clapping erupts.

Corner says, "And here's our encore."

The audience laughs.

"Why are you all laughing?" He asks, genuinely confused.

We are laughing, I think, because we've interpreted his comment to mean that our clapping is the encore. We are finally providing the audience participation asked of us.

Then he surprises us by beginning the *real* encore: a piece dedicated to his friend and collaborator, the Fluxus artist Ben Patterson who died this past June at the age of 82. One of Patterson's best-known performances was his 1960 'Paper Piece' in which the audience was asked to make sound with paper.

"In memoriam, Ben," Corner says before unwinding brown packing paper from a large roll and spreading it over the keys. Neville rips some and lets the pieces fall onto the piano, echoing the earlier petals. The piece gets more frenzied as they wrap the instrument, and the sound gets louder. There is the violence of grief to it by the end. The evening ends with the piano sitting silently in its shroud. This is a sane response to the death of a friend. Forget tweets, this is the way to say, "I miss you". We need to re-find our missing rituals and create new ones for our times.

The next morning I meet Corner and Neville at their hotel. The reception area is the size of a phone booth and the breakfast room is cramped. So we walk along London's juddering, diesel-filled Essex Road in search of a place to talk. The first one we get to is a greasy spoon called My Favourite Café. It smells of sausages and chips.

"Does it bother you always being referred to as a Fluxus artist?" I ask Corner as we take our seats.

"I told myself many years ago, 'don't fight it, it's hopeless'." He pauses. "I had this epiphany about it a few years ago. For my whole life I've been saying, 'I don't want to be reduced to Fluxus' with everyone saying, 'Oh, Philip Corner is a *Fluxkunstler*'. Is everything I am doing now Fluxus?"

His food arrives, "Oh God!" he says. The plate is heaving.

"I don't want to be reduced," he goes on. "Basically what I am saying is that I am not *only* Fluxus or somebody's narrow idea of what Fluxus is. Instead, Fluxus has expanded to

everything that I do! I put that in an expression to an Italian collector who asked me to give him a statement. I said, 'Now let's accept everything good and call it all Fluxus.' He loved it! In fact he uses it as a letterhead." Corner laughs. "At the concert last night, the 'Petali Pianissimo' piece, well you could call that Fluxus," Corner says. "Certainly bowing to the piano, that's a Fluxus piece, but sitting down and playing François Couperin, well that's not a Fluxus piece. That's just so stupid!"

Corner tells me about a studio visit he had recently with another collector, which seems to sum up the absurdity of our consumer society and its relationship to art—an absurdity he seems to relish. "There was this guy who was supposedly an art collector and he came to my studio. One of the things that I do are these things called 'Pieces of Reality'. They're related to the music, obviously, but they're also a visual thing to do with making things out of natural objects. So anyway, I had these 'Pieces of Reality' around and I also had this clear plastic bag with some garbage in it, crumpled paper, a great dried spider, and so on, and it was tacked to the wall.

"This collector says to me, 'when did you do that?' and I say, 'what do you mean, *when did I do that*? That's my garbage!' And he tells me he wants to buy it. I said, 'I can't sell you my garbage!' But he wouldn't give up. He says, 'But I really like it; it's a work of art.' I say 'no it's not; *it's my garbage*,' and he tells me he knows what a work of art is. So finally he bought it."

Corner widens his eyes, still mystified by this exchange, and goes on, "Then I said, 'I don't understand'. He says, 'what don't you understand?' And I say, 'the art market. I don't understand the art market.' 'What don't you understand about the art market?' he asks. 'I don't understand why anybody would want to buy my garbage.'"

Corner pauses. "So that's what I think about it all! The world is crazy and they want to buy my garbage. Hey that's a good slogan!" He repeats it, "The world is crazy and they want to buy my garbage. That sums up everything."

score

Anything

i know,

i have write-this

(or something like it)

before

but

I feel-like repeating it.....

(EVERYthing)

- now -

2016

Any Thing

as for orchestra, chorus, any large ensemble

Could be done as a "conduction", gives the director all-freedom to determine the "Any".

(more-or-less ..... or ..... more & less)

or left to them-all to just-do.

(even: the usual pre-play "noodling" on stage
Then, lights-go-out — or dim, and
they shift into a more "performance-posture" or
just continue as they were)

i add (for theoretical completeness) that
a "composer" can write-out a score .....
but i wouldhope we will be past that, by then.

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THINGS THAT MATTER

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