

The

# OPEN SPACE

magazine

issue 11

fall 2009

## Texts for/of/with/Images/Music

White flesh green apple Stabbing right into the heart  The pips have fallen.	Fill it up, she says, gas  Fumes, an old man  Stumbles a stained dime rolls.	Torn paper voices Body of Dream inside my tear.	Fill it up, she says, An old man stumbles, holds out A hand, stained dime rolls.	White flesh, in heart green Apple, seeds Of Night now fallen.	Torn paper voices in A dream body Inside my own, late night tears.
He died after eight months We cut his work clothes, shaped them, a loved one.			White flesh green apple Stabbing right into the heart  The pips have fallen.	Fill it up, she says, gas  Fumes, an old man  Stumbles a stained dime rolls.	
We cut his work clothes  When he died  Laid wrapped in this quilt.	White flesh green apple, stab Into the heart Seeds of the night have fallen.	White flesh green night seeds			Fill it up, gasoline Fumes, oil trips His step & dime rolls.
	Torn paper voices Body coming inside mine In dream, late night tears	To quilt into the heart of			He stayed sick eight months Mama say: "take his work clothes, Quilt them to remember him."
Fill it up, she says. An old man stumbles holds out A hand, stained dime rolls.	To quilt him into the torn voices	Torn paper voices	Torn paper voices Body of Dream inside my tear.	Torn paper voices in A dream body Inside my own, late night tears.	
White flesh green apple, stab Into the heart Seeds of the night have fallen.		We cut his work clothes When he died Laid wrapped in this quilt.		Torn quilt black voices seeds remember	Gas fumes a stained man stumbles
White flesh, in heart green  Apple, seeds Of Night now fallen.	Fill it up, gasoline  Fumes, oil trips  His step & a dime rolls.	We cut his work clothes When he died Laid wrapped in this quilt.	A dime into the heart, holds out		He stayed sick eight months Mama say: "take his work clothes, Quilt them to remember him."
			Mama say: "Dream inside"		

A Quilt for Elaine Barkin and the women of Gee's Bend (2009)

dorota czerner

*The*

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OPEN SPACE

*magazine*

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**Reinaugurating *The Open Space Web Magazine***

*The Open Space Web Magazine* is once again active, again devoted to content and participation that extend the limits of *The Open Space Magazine* in its print form. *The Open Space Web Magazine* hopes to be a forum for interactive web art, experimental video, articles including audio, video, or other non-print-based resources, forms and configurations as yet unimagined, hoping to stimulate and encourage a literature of creative discourse that is possible only beyond print.

*The Open Space Web Magazine* is edited by Dean Rosenthal. To submit work for inclusion in *The Open Space Web Magazine*, please email Dean at [contact@DeanRosenthal.org](mailto:contact@DeanRosenthal.org)

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## Eulogy for Mauricio Kagel

Dieter Schnebel

We met for the first time, if memory serves, at Donaueschingen in 1957. We quickly became friends. We were both at the beginning of our careers as composers. Kagel: a towering fellow with curly brown hair, constantly cheerful and full of new ideas, a roaring laugh. He had settled in Cologne, that German hub of New Music, and soon became an integral part—indeed, a prominent member—of the Avant-Garde scene there. A dynamic exchange between us grew, and I came to know his works as, one by one, they were created. I presented radio broadcasts about him and his work. A distinctive aspect of his work was the incorporation of theatrical elements—“instrumental theater” was a genre he created. He quickly stood out as a creator of acoustically and optically sensational works. There was **Anagrama** for speaking chorus and instruments. **Sur scène**, a “chamber musical theatre piece” for a speaker holding an absurdist musicological lecture with mannerisms equally risible, a singer with his incongruous commentary on the lecture, and a mime chasing flies all the while. These three actors are accompanied by three instrumentalists in a correspondingly abstruse vein. There was more to come... the **Improvisation ajoutée** for organist with two registrants who seem rather to collude against the keyboard player, and to harass him with coughing, laughing, whistling, screaming, clapping. Other significant works from this period of the 60s: **Antithese, Film** for a performer with “electronic and everyday sounds”, in which Kagel took on a new medium. There followed **Phonophonie**, a dark work for two voices and other sonic sources, including instruments emitting growling sounds, such as the pasteboard rattle (waldteufel); **Match** for three musicians: two 'cellists, each stationed at the edge of the stage, and a percussionist stage center. The cellists play as if tossing each other balls of notes, with the percussionist as umpire. **Pas de cinq**, a scene for five wandering actors, each striding to strict rhythm with a contrapuntal walking stick. A major piece towards the end of this phase was **Halleluja** for voices set free to make a highly unusual “joyful noise”, creating a crazed rendition of sacred music.

Around 1970 I published a book on the work of my friend: **Mauricio Kagel: Music — Theatre — Film**. This led, I admit, to a dissonance in our friendship. Kagel was perturbed by some of what I had written. Nevertheless, we still met from time to time. And indeed, in the work of this versatile and imaginative composer there was always much to admire. With time we found our way back to our former affectionate amiability.

[Translation: Peter Castine]

# DIALOGS OF DEAFENING GIFTED EAVESDROPPERS

JEAN-CHARLES FRANÇOIS

2009<sup>1</sup>

TO VINKO GLOBOKAR

*To the reader:*

*This text draws in a very free manner on Globokar's improvisation proposition in his publication Individuum Collectivum (notably pages 12c, 13c, and 17c). The text is consequently a fictional improvisation — fictional in the sense that it is completely written, therefore composed — between several persons that may have gathered together.*

Denis Levaillant:

*«Is there nothing to be rescued from this dreadful magma?»*

Bernard Lubat:

Yes, the utter nonsense! This utter nonsense that appears suddenly and that in one stroke by-passes thought, breaks the carapace, insinuates revolt, incites to work beyond any knowledge. Attention, to achieve utter nonsense is very hard, because one has to be rigorous in recognizing *what* is in question in this nonsense! »<sup>2</sup>

Denis Laborde takes up this quotation with the following development<sup>3</sup>:

« Bernard Lubat tells us that he improvises in order to save “the utter nonsense”. All the same, it is because he has encoded a very elaborate behavioral music theory (*solfège comportemental*) that he is able to claim to save “this utter nonsense that appears suddenly and that in one stroke by-passes thought, breaks the carapace, insinuates revolt (...)”. And he is indeed obliged to concede, “to achieve utter nonsense is very hard”. »

Dialogs of Deafening Gifted Eavesdroppers

To achieve utter nonsense is very hard  
To achieve utter nonsense is very hard  
To break the carapace is very hard  
To break the carapace is very hard  
To break the carapace is very hard, casts ravage  
To break the carapace casts ravage  
To brush the carapace, Caravaggio  
To break the cat's face, masquerade, crack in ice,  
To blast the scar face, brat bastard, lascar  
To break the carapace casts ravage, casts ravage  
To blast the carapace, propagates rage  
To blast the carapace, proliferates aghast brat  
To blast Caracas, relax  
To thrash, damage max  
    Carcass blast, collapse  
    Carceral lashes, no charm  
    Carceral lashes, rapturous charm  
    Careless bashes, what an outrage  
    Cereal mash, some garbage  
    The rascals, shivers in the back  
    The battle, icing on the cake  
    the cattle, napping in the past  
To break the carapace is very hard  
To break the carapace is very hard, casts ravage  
To castrate the car-jackal, awkward  
To trace the ratbag, leave us to gasp  
To take part in a brawl, quite savage  
To crash on the dashboard, what a carnage  
To stab the crack, some clash  
To be bloody stabbed at the corrida, caramba  
To cram into the funeral cart, courage  
To cram into the carriage car, jam-packed like herrings on the rack  
To embark in torpedoing, dashing stampede  
To get entangled in the roped towing boat, to grab the ship's rail, to engage in drowning,  
To come across at the carpark in the Carpathians  
To crease the corsage, not quite sage  
To interlace corporeal units in bonk on bunk, shame!  
To foul on all fours, massive flop!  
    Cordage, corsage, coronach, corduroy, corrupt, coquette, merciless chore, common  
    chord, encore concord, corps de ballet, corpse candle, corpus delicti, corporate takeover,  
    corporal punishment, corrida, cordage, corsage, cordillera, sot-sage, sauce legerdemain,  
    sauce déjà vu, sore age, sot-l'y-laisse, Sauternes, saw set, saw-tooth, say sotto-voce auto-  
    somatization saving grace, save as you earn, sonar,  
    So  
    So sage  
    So sage, it's say sauge  
    Saussure, it's hard!  
    So savage, so savage, so savage  
This utter nonsense that by-passes thought, breaks the carapace, let's insinuate the savagery, let's

insinuate the savagery

The savage

The image of the savage and of the spaceship

The image of the savage capable of piloting a spaceship (Globokar)

« Musical expressions are nowadays very diverse. At one end of the scope, some highly specialized people are required, at the other end one needs some performers ready to do anything, meaning that they should be creative musicians. Consequently, the goals of teaching in the future consist in achieving simultaneously both functions — in achieving on the one hand an extreme specialization and making sure on the other hand not to kill, as it is often the case, the creative qualities of the musician. In order to describe the ideal performer, I would employ the image of the savage capable of piloting a spaceship. »<sup>4</sup>

### **Development (a)**

The question of expert knowledge or of specialization is at the heart of the problems facing the artists in today's society. The last century has to a large extent questioned the notion of virtuosity, either to find ways to do without it and to negate savagely craftsmanship, to negate even art itself, or to multiply all kinds of virtuosity from one type of music to another one, from one context to another, even from one piece to another in a sort of savage craftsmanship. The image of the "artisanat sauvage", "bel aujourd'hui" of the long time captains of sidereal spaces. What should the expert know-how of the savage be in the spaceship saved from the spiced sheep, the one that saves the utter nonsense? The one that ensures the encoding of a very elaborate behavioral music theory? How is a savage in a spaceship able to become an improvisation expert?

A savage in a spaceship  
A soap-opera in a spatial sleep  
A sex-opera in a special deep derision  
An operated sex, inferno of excision  
A sex perfected in terms of precision  
An expert affected by internal derision  
An expert of the intra-dermal lesion  
An expert of imprecision  
An expert of impressive vision  
An expert of improvisation  
An expert of the improvisation  
An improvisation expert.

But the trouble-makers put in question the very notion of expertise or at least of unique expertise. For Globokar, the "trouble-makers are right". He complains that today's society does not question enough the excessive specialization of the individual person. Everybody seems to have the obligation to be inscribed in the strict limits of more and more precise classifications, in the name of efficiency, and this tends to reduce each of us to a stereotyped image:

« Our society takes a dim view that someone could pursue several activities at the same time, such an attitude tends to be considered as leading to dispersion. What is important is

to be expert in a single subject matter with no regard to the neighbour's garden. »<sup>5</sup>

### **Parenthesis (a), the garden of delights<sup>6</sup>**

In his book *Chaosmose*, Felix Guattari mentions many times the notions of “cartography”, of “Territories”, and of “Universes”<sup>7</sup>. This topographical vocabulary seems to fit the multiplicity expressed by the contemporary world. Concerning musical practice, one is in the presence not only of a diversity of approaches in the sound elaboration, of the timbre, but also of their ramifications in the social space. The image of the garden, used here by Globokar and picked up again in my own text (is it a delicious garden?) to be used in the context of a theory of improvisation, evokes a space in which one moves freely and one cultivates a variety of vegetable forms. This seems a commonplace description of an individual subjectivity of timbre production and of the interactions that may occur between the diverse participants, and finally of those between the proximal group and the different external circles.

The garden can be thought of in three different manners. First, it is a real physical place, in which one can move and which contains a series of determined objects, instruments, tools, apparatus, mechanisms, accessories, systems.

### **Parenthesis (b)<sup>8</sup>:**

It is in good taste today to consider the musical instrument with a clinical and distant eye, as separated from the body that is supposed to bring it to life and from the desire of the instrument maker searching for an ideal sound<sup>9</sup>. The standardization of the instruments on a worldwide scale had meant a single principal manner of producing a sound on a given instrument and seeking a homogeneous production in all registers in order to favor the clear perception of the pitch successions. But during the twentieth century, we have seen a multitude of research projects concerning the question of timbre, and as a result the instrument lost its specific function — to produce a single standard sonority — and started to be viewed as an ordinary object capable of producing a great diversity of sounds. This tendency to consider the instrument as a potential for producing diverse sonorities, rather than having been built for a specific way of playing it, has been transferred from the body of the instrument to the body of the instrumentalist. Instead of considering the instrumentalist as someone capable of producing a limited number of specific gestures corresponding to a traditional concept of musical performance, one has the possibility to view the body of the performer as a total entity, as a theatrical character present on the stage, capable of a multiplicity of expressions, which cannot be strictly defined within a single artistic domain.

In *Laboratorium*, through the voice of one of the performers on stage, playing the role of a lecturer, Globokar developed this idea:

« It is the compositional reasons that dictate and justify the means in use. In a precise situation, an ordinary object, a toy, a tool, a machine, can be more functional than the most refined instrument, because the relationships between the objects are important and not the objects in themselves. (...) It is at that stage that the relationships between the instrument and the body of the performer take on an importance of the first order. The problems of breathing, of pressure, of

Jean-Charles François

controlled gestures, of muscular contractions, of body position become much more the centre of our attention. The instrument is treated in an organic and also physical manner, because it is considered as a direct prolongation of the body. We no longer consider it as a sacrosanct object, but uniquely as a functional object with which one has to find all the desired solutions. »<sup>10</sup>

### **Parenthesis (a), the garden of delights, cont.**

The space of the garden is not organized once and for all in a fixed topography, in which all the objects find their definitive place. There is an evolution of the collection of objects and of their layout in space. Everyday one has to start again to organize the space, at each repeated passage of the production the route through the forest of objects can be changed. The walks in the garden have to be varied, by exploring its unknown corners and leaving aside those that have been exhausted.

The second aspect of the garden is a series of mental states and of corresponding corporal gestures, inscribed in memory. The fixation in memory of the sum of all the experiences that have already occurred, treating matter through body actions, allows one to recall them at any time in any order possible. We have here the notion of a walk through our physical and mental potentialities. As in everyday speech, the process of remembering is not a fully conscious act, as can be the case with written composition and the time of reflection that it permits, it remains based on automatic reflex actions. It is a traveling between consciousness and unconsciousness which opens a path to an awakening ecstasy.

**Parenthesis c) :**

Oral cultures are often inscribed in a much more constraining frame than that of democratic societies (still?) dominated by print and by written planning. And in the field of improvisation the spontaneous manifestations of the performer's body are most often the result of habits acquired during the long years of learning to play the instrument, of belief systems that they have engendered and of fragments of accumulated pieces of one's repertoire: the deeply anchored conceptions of the performing musicians thinking only of their personal comfort, are often indelible markings much more difficult to erase than the innocent traces left by the composer's pencil.

**Parenthesis (d)**

Describing the musicians of his own generation who have been involved in improvisation, Globokar did note the importance given to a prior career rich in acquired knowledge and experience. The interest for a great diversity of musical expressions constitutes for him a characteristic element of this type of approach. However these technical skills and musical capacities are meant to be surpassed in improvisation:

« They have gone beyond the stage of virtuosity, and they have become musicians who consider their instrument as a means to make music and not as a goal in itself. »<sup>11</sup>

In order to improvise you have to possess some substantial baggage, but you have to be willing to throw it overboard or at least to surpass it.

Denis Laborde takes up this quotation from Globokar in his article "Improviser selon les règles" ("Improvising according to rules"). For Laborde the abilities of the improvisation musician consist in "a body memory of gestures". He is referring to the jazz pianist and sociologist David Sudnow<sup>12</sup> whose fingers and hands became little by little *jazz-making hands*. The improvisator pianist has to think constantly in the early stage of his studies about the places where he has to move his hands and fingers. Progressively automatisms are acquired to the point where the hands seem to have incarnated the very essence of jazz. They become capable by themselves of producing some jazz, without the intervention of a self-conscious thought. Laborde comments this in the following manner:

« There can be no improvisation without a body memory of gestures. The basic musicianship (*solfège*) is not given in the score, but is in the body: here, one is in presence of a corporeal musicianship. This is why Globokar was talking, a few moments ago, of something beyond virtuosity: the improvisator and his/her instrument are bound together as one and only one. »<sup>13</sup>

**Parenthesis (e)**

Michel de Certeau:

« There is no law that is not inscribed on bodies. Every law has a hold

Jean-Charles François

on the body. (...) From birth to mourning after death, law “takes hold of” bodies in order to make them its text. Through all sorts of initiations (in rituals, at school, etc.), it transforms them into tables of the law, into living tableaux of rules and customs, into actors in the drama organized by a social order. (...) However that may be, it remains that the law constantly writes itself on bodies. It engraves itself on parchments made from the skin of its subjects. It articulates them in a juridical corpus. It makes its book out of them. These writings carry out two complementary operations: through them, living beings are “packed into a text” (in the sense that products are canned and packed), transformed into signifiers of rules (a sort of “intertextuation”) and, on the other hand, the reason or *Logos* of a society “becomes flesh” (an incarnation). »<sup>14</sup>

### **Parenthesis (f)**

Globo-corporeal  
Devil’s aglow corporate  
Corporeal glad rags  
Doc bodyguard  
Core body art  
Grab carnal wrap  
Grabinoulor  
Grasp the cold bock at the bar  
Corps de ballet  
Corps de Garbo  
Corps de Bardot  
Gal doll dull lad  
Gore at Cordoba  
Beware chore espousals  
Corpus delicti chorus delicious  
Glass of Corbas solid body, blast Corbas bloody corked,  
Bass chord basset horn glass ocarina carol choral garble cloak gaslight  
garb bar-hop glam rock past carbon gala bark log blabla blabla bla bla

**Parenthesis (g)**

Mongrel, ogre  
One-eyed bulldog  
To cast one eye on the cardiogram

**Parenthesis (h)**

Caramel, camembert

**Parenthesis (i)**

Cro  
gl  
bo  
a

**Parenthesis ( c ), continued**

If suddenly you ask some musicians to play what they like on the spur of the moment, one can be certain to be disappointed by the result: probably, it is inevitable that at first the sound combinations would stay in a very conventional frame. Only the long reflection of the composer working and reworking the score seems to guarantee the production of an original musical language. The permanent nature of the written signs allows the composer to study in an objective way what has been written in the past, to critically analyze it, and to imagine accordingly what the future could be.

The improvisation is often presented as an instantaneous composition, that is invented and realized simultaneously at the moment of the sound production: « to improvise often means to instantaneously compose » says Globokar<sup>15</sup>. The invention of the instrumentalist would be akin to that of the composer, but in a different temporality. Globokar makes the distinction between the rational invention of the composer and the “instinctive and intuitive” one of the performer:

« Sitting at a work table, with an unlimited time for reflecting before me, the act of inventing is primarily a rational process, in which I slowly eliminate the most superficial ideas, that generally present themselves at first. (...) When playing, on the contrary, the reflection time is reduced to a minimum. The invention as well as the reaction one can have faced with the partners' play becomes instinctive, and not rational any more. »<sup>16</sup>

The idea of canalizing improvisation is of a rational and compositional order, but the realization of the idea at the time of the improvisation performance reduces the instrumental play to an intuitive order. In concentrating on the task of realizing the proposed idea, the performer has to try to compensate for the absence of composition and to invent instantaneously in a rational mode. He would then forget invention of the sound production itself which is left to already acquired automatisms. What emerges then are only the “digital and stylistic habits”<sup>17</sup>. Globokar

put forward then the following question:

« (...) is it possible to decide to be rational for a certain time and to think about the task to fulfill, then not to think about it anymore, but to “decide” to be instinctive and intuitive in order to be able to freely open the way to the imagination and to invent? Or again, is it possible to attain in a conscious way simultaneously the two registers? Personally I think that it is not actually possible — at least in the Western world, and that it is a vain hope to believe that the musicians will be able to invent when ordered to do so. »<sup>18</sup>

One finds here the same dichotomies, produced by the separating power of writing, as the ones which dictate the relationships between the interpreter and the text. The rationalized space of the score's written notes has to be surpassed by an intuitive content that injects something *musical* into the inert matter. The opposition rationality/intuition, Apollo against Dionysus (once more) as well as the concept of improvisation as a play always taking place in relation to a fixed structure, reproduces again the organization of the world in two distinct worlds, on one side the decision-makers, on the other side the interpreters. The only way to attempt to go beyond this duality that constantly brings us back to the departure point of Western thought, would be to reflect upon the new role that writing occupies in post-industrial society. If we take this road then, the term *improvisation* is not appropriate.

#### **Parenthesis (a), the garden of delights, continued:**

The third aspect of the garden has to do with a space in which some individuals are gathered to form some figures, patterns and movements. The garden is inhabited by several persons. It is a social space in which the number of participants can vary, with regular guests and others less regular, the ones who cultivate the ground, and those who content themselves with strolling in it. The positions of the gardeners and of the strollers can vary considerably, they can be more or less close to each other.

The image of the garden suggests another type of representation or of writing than the one involved in musical scores. In a sense, the direct action on matter — because we are dealing directly with inscriptions on the body of the performer, with tattoos, with scars, producing specific actions on real physical objects — produces some fairly rigid systems compared to the possibilities of inventing new stylistic entities through the symbolic nature of traditional musical notation. The inscription on the body becomes a habit, accompanied with specific mental schemes, and to get rid of it can be very difficult. But on the other hand, the fixation in memory of a certain number of determined physical actions, in the enclosed space of the garden, that which would define collectively the musical production of a given group, allows the development of the garden's diversity to take place. The evolution of the garden remains slow and steady, but can be rich and deep. The objects, the memory, the interactions between the body and the object, the interactions between the individuals in the social space of the garden, all this is the same everyday, but continuously elaborated in a constant evolution.

The walks through the multiple garden produce explorations of diverse spaces, the cultivation of plants, flowers, vegetables that can be found in it, interactions with the persons who happen to be there, in combinations that are always presented in new ways. The collective state of the garden is fairly stable, but the possibilities to explore its ways are infinite. Our walk is nonchalant, our steps

calmly lead us to our favorite place and entice us to continue beyond towards the periphery. Let's admire in passing the rare vegetal species, the one that we had developed last spring. Over there the unused spaces are waiting for us. Tomorrow we will go to the small hill. And to see the false ruins.

### **Development (b):**

To be expert in a single subject matter with no regard to the neighbor's garden, this is the condition put forward by musical institutions, notably in the domain of teaching: excellence is the key word in the name of which a system of constraints is applied, which, through the required technical skills, is inscribed in stone on the body of the instrumentalist. To be expert with no regard to the neighbor's garden is "the best way to be controlled without noticing it oneself"<sup>19</sup>. While in all other fields interdisciplinary activities have become an absolute necessity, the partition of the roles remains the norm in the musical profession, even if one allows a few eccentrics to mix diverse artistic domains (theatre, dance, visual arts, music, etc.).

In the 1960s, those who, like Globokar would deliberately base their perspectives on being at the same time a performer and a composer, and who were working in the *no man's land* of the limits between this fundamental division of roles (at the same time they would not avoid being the one or the other in the plenitude of their respective requirements), thought that the world of music, facing electronic technologies implying the necessity to work the sonorous matter directly, would rather evolve towards erasing the two specialized roles. And yet, this has not at all been the case, the performers/composers are nowadays an endangered species. The plethora of professional composers who refuse to be contaminated by direct sound production on some instrument, corresponds to the plethora of performers who do not want or do not dare to meddle in what is not their task: inventing. "Leonardo da Vinci would be today an unacceptable spoilsport"<sup>20</sup>.

« However among this flood of specialists, one can find a few individuals who exercise several functions: they seem to call in question this routine division of roles — which is in fact a fairly recent trend — and prove by their multiple activities the usefulness and the logic of their approach. »<sup>21</sup>

Let's note that when we talk of the music world, we imply automatically the one that controls the big institutions, notably those who educate the musicians, those of the "classical" music. According to Howard Becker<sup>22</sup>, one easily accepts that the definition of music be dictated by the professional world: "One leaves to people who do the job, the task of defining what the job implies"<sup>23</sup>. However the vast majority of musical practices do not correspond today to the mental schemes of the "great institutions", of the people who think that the universal truth belongs to them. The electronic world puts in question the specialists and proposes other ways to make music. Experimental dynamics do not only exist in official circles.

The improvisator would be the one who on an everyday basis would rework constantly on what he/she knows how to do in order to avoid falling into a routine. To be an expert of improvisation would imply to go beyond any expertise that would be too exclusively specialized, in order to be tactically able to make do in any eventuality. It would be an expert of versatility, between the slow reflection of the composer and the rapid reactivity — on the spur of the moment — of the performer, or between the rapidity of the effects of writing on paper (scores) on changing behaviors and the slowness of the process of the writing on the skin, on the body of the performer.

What is the nature of this expertise?

In order that the knowledge or the know-how would not fall into a routine, one has to “routinize” it. This is Denis Laborde’s point of view, the improvisator expertise is her/his ability to surpass already built routines. Drawing from his research on traditional practices of improvised poetry in the Basque Country (the art of the *bertsulari*), Laborde demonstrates that an improvisation, no matter what, is inscribed in a formal frame — a system — which determines for a given social group what can be the rules governing a “successful improvisation”. The size of the group which recognize the rules of the system, may vary greatly and may stay limited to a very small circle. The system is constituted by procedures, by scripts, by artifacts — some “mnemonic schemes” — that are indispensable to the design of a consistent improvisation, but that have at the same time to be recognized by the participants and to be erased so that the technique would not be apparent. This is what distinguishes, according to Laborde, the *novice* from the *expert*. With the novice, the attention is directed towards the formal artifact, the construction of the discourse; with the expert the artifact has become so much an automatism, that he/she is capable of concentrating on the *stimuli*, on the content of the discourse: “A process of routinization of the compartments renders the improvisator available, that is, attentive to the environment”<sup>24</sup>.

### Imitation

The routinization of the compartments renders the improvisator available,  
Available to escape the routine  
Those who seem to put in question this routine  
they are the experts of improvisation  
to question routine  
improvisation experts  
experts of the question of the routine to be put in question  
experts of the routine that put routine in question

« Then the environment becomes a mnemonic resource, a “source of inspiration”. If these compartments are not routinized, the improvisator accumulates handicaps. The philosopher John Dewey insisted at great length on this relationship: “Life takes place in an environment; not only in it, but because of it, in interaction with it”<sup>25</sup>. (...) Then, for an improvisator, to have become expert of the routine is the condition to become expert of the improvisation, (...) nobody is a better improvisator than the one who knows how to improvise according to rules. »<sup>26</sup>

Then, for an improvisator, to have become expert of the routine is the condition to become expert

of the improvisation...

On the condition to be expert of the routine in order to be expert, improvisation expert...

Routine expert, improvisation expert

Having become routine expert, one becomes ex

Having become ex père of progeny, one becomes

Expert of the route in,

Because an ex pert is routine, an ex Père Larountala

One annexes the rout of routine per se

In order to become an expert of the mean rout

One is exasperated by the sleep snooze

Is it a perk?

Is it a perk? The part of risk tour

The part of chorus rite

Expert in the art of ritornello

Of ritournelle

The art of the operator-ritournelle

« The Universes of which the mouth and the breast are the operators-ritournelle are spangled in a composite and heterogeneous fashion: they constitute singular events. »<sup>27</sup>

He expects from ritournelle singular events well kept apart

Two per part to pair par

poor parochial tart

Parousia pervert parroting

Proust proverbial parody

A check partook Poutine

A perceptive Persian parches lean

A percussive Père Partch dean

A per missive parchment brief

A Czech sketches a partridge

A cheque at the ridge of ruin

Each have their own praxis

For each praxis the route is free

For each practice the spirit is free

Each artist strives to be free

Each party sips the air free

Each participant is free.

Each participant is free, there is no rule for the free improvisation, she, he, is evidently free, he, she, may be, may be free.

Consequently each participant is free...

« Let see what happens, if some musicians (evidently only a small number of people who know each other well) decide, because they feel the need to do it, to meet for playing together, agreeing to not influence each other by words or by attitudes, to not refer to any oral, visual or musical elements, to not have any other conventions than not to influence each other and to communicate only with sounds, without establishing fixed codes to this communication. This would mean then that each participant is free. He

(she) is evidently free to choose the instruments, he(he) might be free to intervene or to shut up, but as soon as the decision has been taken to meet with other participants in order to communicate with them, he (she) is obliged to take into account their play (their personality), to intuitively guess, at any moment, their intentions, to be tolerant towards them. »<sup>28</sup>

## Confrontation

Isabelle Stengers:

« Nothing is easier for a modern than to be tolerant. How would he not be? How would we not be? (...) Tolerant is the one who realizes how painfully we pay for losing the illusions, the certainties that we attribute to the ones whom we think “believe”. Fortunate are the ones, then, whose confidence stayed intact, they live where we, moderns, cannot return except as caricatures, sects and totalitarianisms. »<sup>29</sup>

Claude Levi-Strauss:

« Tolerance is not a contemplative position, distributing indulgences to what has been or what exists. It is a dynamic attitude which consists in predicting, in understanding and in promoting what yearns to exist. »<sup>30</sup>

Isabelle Stengers:

« Damned be the one who frees the robin in order to please the rebellious child. (...) Damned be the one who considers himself free to redefine according to his own terms the manner in which the “other” lives in this world, to get off with tolerance, or even with regretting the innocence that he has himself lost. »<sup>31</sup>

Bernard Lubat:

« Yes, what is unbearable [in collective improvisation], is this existential collapse, which gives suddenly the desire to be alone! Through the aesthetics, the acoustics, some human relationships are expressed that are completely detestable, which encourage us to think even more, that is to occupy a place of *leader*. (...) I believe that improvisation is in a zone where the other's loneliness does not kill! If each one sparkles with him(her)self, then it is because the risk has been accepted, the risk of conflicts; all has not been understood, classified: to improvise, it is to invent another form of relationships, it is probably to escape to the sacrosanct communication. »<sup>32</sup>

Vinko Globokar:

« (...) he is obliged to take into account their playing (their personality), to intuitively guess, at any moment, their intentions, to be tolerant towards them. (...) The improvisator can consequently link himself to a proposition, if this one seems to him interesting, he can destroy a situation, if this one seems commonplace or repetitive. He can imitate, do the opposite, propose a new idea suddenly arising which will be accepted, destroyed,

developed, refused or forgotten by the other participants. »<sup>33</sup>

John Silber:

« The ensemble as coexisting state (avoiding the compositional *formal*), colored sound: as traditional instruments, performance practice materials, and representative scorings have proven inadequate to sound structure...so too has the putting together... new electro concerns,...infra-structures, sound qualities, colors, tunings, articulative domains, and acoustical phenomena themselves (summations, multiple tones) not only make conventional playing practices inadequate but their ensemble format...new models materials, crafts, instruments, electro-acoustic interfacing, make new praxes... music conceived and preserved simultaneously, not to mention acoustically enhanced... a number of individual agencies...in this, ensembles become orphaned events...each voice unattended...halos of everything there is.. each its own disciple (the historically single webbed sound is foreign to this)...chaos...objects un-reconciled.. varied colored sounds...textures...solos...shapes...stained glass...lead...cocktail parties.....columnated air.....inner space...(...) »<sup>34</sup>

Jean-Charles François

« The notion of taking into account the reactions of the other partners and of making them react in return engenders results that are too simplistic: one would be then obliged to establish a code which would devalue the richness of all possible modes of communication in reducing it to a mechanical model in which a series of actions would correspond to a particular reaction. In the intentionality of the communication, one falls back into a musical conception that artificially separates the objects in distinct parameters. If I decide to react to the proposition of another musician, I have to make an immediate auditory analysis. What decisions should I make? The most simple one is to concentrate on a single particular aspect, for example to follow the density and the intensity or the pitches of the proposed signal. It is the best way to sterilize the exchange. At worst it produces the theatre of communication and not real communication, one plays to pretend that a certain combination of sounds is the direct consequence of another proposition presented beforehand. (...) In the research project I was able to carry out (with the group KIVA at the University of California San Diego), at the start of the process in any case, communication was not prohibited, but we had to avoid inducing it through a voluntary action of the partners. (...) The fundamental concept consisted in establishing a coexistence of the diverse forces in presence in the same working space, in respect of the differences of each person and of their equal importance. This tolerating coexistence during the work in the course of several years did engender little by little an intimate knowledge of the others and a subtle mutual influence. It is from this moment that the exchange (which was not verbalized in a musical grammar) becomes richer than the immediate surface of the “I am going to tell you”. »<sup>35</sup>

Vinko Globokar

But of course! «(...) from the moment you start talking to your partners, to tell them that something or other does not please you, automatically some blockings take place; the *self-judgment*, this essential thing, disappears. One has to accept to let time crystallize the codes. Some situations then appear suddenly, in which an unbelievable energy circulates.

Jean-Charles François

Because we [the New Phonic Art] have never discussed what we were doing, we are in the situation today of four persons who would speak a different language, but who would have lived together for so long that they would understand each other very well by all the other senses, the smell, the vision, the touch, the gestures. »<sup>36</sup>

Isabelle Stengers

« To create the damnation of tolerance as an obligation does not signify that I have the means to damn anything that presents itself. The question is: could it be that to escape tolerance would correspond to what is at stake in what I have called the practice? Is it not, by definition, a singular adventure, a becoming, which precisely translates the escape in relation to demands and to obligations relevant to a science? This is the specific risk that defines this book, at the heart of the speculative question of ecology of practices, at the point where it meets its greatest test, the “encounter” with the non-moderns. »<sup>37</sup>

## Transition

Tolerance is not a contemplative position, tolerance is not a contemplative position, tolerance is not contemptible causation, the toll gate ransom is not a punishment in combinative castigations, not going on the go tall errant on going peregrination, these teleo - sequences go on too long, going on and on, on continuous investigations, the atoll renders the good-for-nothing infested by multitudinous locusts, gooseflesh-no-sin, touch-and-go tells strange telos exchange with touch-tone, the idol of the transe-danse, sanctifying, content, flat, active tongue-in-cheek tongue-twister, lost her rank, and not at all a constraint emphasis terror glance, Thesaurus land correlative ordinance, Logos not completely native, the logic is login then logoff, misplacement, low goal disengagement, quaint confident logorrhea, concernment for defiant gonorrhoea, condolence for defunct gorgonzola, indolence of distant gondolas, it consists in doing nothing, faintest disestablishment experienced on the dole gloom, gloomy dawn whispers of discontent, dour glow misery of disagreement ailment from the war, no doubt, a gain, the disembodiment of the word, to turn dog on, aghast dismantlement of the worse, tournedos a grain too diseased scent up the wall, touch down against the disentanglement of the worms, tough love, again the dismemberment of the worm, tough go against what the decent chant meant to the world, to go astray in the descant encampment of work, to go against the disks enchanting the world, to go against the disenchantment of the world, to go against the bewitching, to go against the de-poetization of the world. —

Felix Guattari:

« Isn't it that the work is precisely to recharge the Expression in semiotic heterogeneity and to go against the disenchantment of the world, to go against the bewitching, to go

### **First circle**

What remains then is the question of aesthetics. The aesthetic approach seems to be rejected by Globokar, above all if dealing with improvisation. Here, the aesthetic approach would mean not only to search for the beautiful sound, but above all for the identification of the group to the design of sonority, from a particular musical point of view, even if it is remote from the momentary concept of “beauty”. For Globokar, the improvisation cannot consist in building together a sonic musical world, because what is at stake in the game would be already determined (already composed?) at the moment of beginning the concert, one could not avoid the (semi-distracted?) contemplation by an audience made up of aesthetes of a musical object already completely fabricated. In making reference to improvisation groups conducted by a composer or controlled by a composer’s score, he comments in the following manner:

« (...) numerous composers utilize improvisation without being aware that it is today more than ever an ambiguous phenomenon, more social than musical: the sound result, the music, the invention of sounds, the engagement of the improvisator can only be the multiple direct consequences of the psychological relationships existing among the people who improvise together. It is not the sounds that are important, it is the physical and psychological energy animating the sounds which attracts our attention when an improvisation is “true” and corresponding to what the participants wanted. In principle, one improvises for religious, political, social, psychological, philosophical reasons, but never uniquely for purely musical reasons. »<sup>39</sup>

For Globokar, even if his experience within the New Phonic Art group indicates that in the course of time a collective construct is installed in which an “unbelievable energy circulates”, the invention of new materials is not sufficient anymore: « There is today an hypertrophy of materials, which no longer have any reference value. »<sup>40</sup>

### **Second circle**

The status of the practices proposed by Felix Guattari in the frame of the “schizoanalysis” has strong resemblance to the work of elaborating collectively some sonorities. It is springing from the real events that the analytical elements and the adjustments that result from them emerge. The temporality of the processes cannot be fixed in advance and there is no guarantee of producing any result. The role of the psychotherapist is only partial; he is only one “link in a complex setup” which includes some individual cases and a collectivity in interaction. There is a continuous back and forth between practice and analysis, between chaos and complexity.

The aesthetics of sound matter oscillate in the same way in these back and forth movements mentioned by Guattari, between non-sense and the plurality of disseminated meanings. The immediate production of timbre in the arbitrary nature of its emergence does not differentiate it from noise or from sounds defined as being acceptable parts of

musical art. The music of timbre is already there in the sound environment of our society; it is neither more nor less significant than this enlarged collection of sounds. This music has consequently already “emigrated” outside the place of “subjectivity”<sup>41</sup>. It unfolds itself positively as non significant.

But if it were only that, the timbre production would only reverse the structure of the linguistic sign and consequently by a mirror effect would reproduce the same schema.

### **Third circle**

In noise, it is the listener who selects from the non-sense what proper meaning can be given. In order to be able to anchor the perception in the inherent richness of each sound object taken separately, the syntactic relationships have to be negated. This links with the strategies developed by John Cage in order that sounds might manifest themselves in the integrity of their phenomena, without putting any emphasis on a particular parameter which would canalize the ear in a single linearity. What is at stake here is the multiplicity of the ears and the voices unfolding in the arbitrariness of a space of freedom. Daniel Charles describes this space:

« In the materiality/non-materiality of our voices and of our bodies in the process of vibrating, the musical affirmativity as such rises up. “As such”, that is not limited in its insertion here or there, or even somewhere else. “As such”, that is in the sense of Lyotard: *effect without cause, production without inscription*; but that might be as well be the reverse: *production without cause, effect without inscription*. Here, in this unstable site, in this sojourn without place which leads to a place without sojourn resides (moves, get about, goes forward) the musical. »<sup>42</sup>

### **Fourth circle:**

Jacques Derrida, in a text about Antonin Artaud, reflecting on the status of speech in the *Théâtre de la cruauté*, uses the term “glossopoeia”,

« which is neither an imitative language, nor a creation of names, takes us back *to the borderline* of the moment when the word has not yet been born, when articulation is no longer a shout but not yet discourse, when repetition is *almost* impossible, and along with it language in general. »<sup>43</sup>

For Derrida, this state precedes the power of language and of words to differentiate things. In this pre-linguistic state, the world is unified, without the salient facts which come to organize it in a linguistic order, without the presence of the separations linked to the sign and to signification: concept/sound, signifier/signified, soul/body, master/slave,

The pre-verbal state has only some sense in relation to what it allows: the birth of language. A return to the pre-verbal is an illusion. For Derrida, the attempt to go beyond representation cannot take place, because it is enclosed in a circular movement: « Because it has always already begun, representation therefore has no end. »<sup>44</sup> Of course one can work on the limits of this circle of representation, in a “tragic” thought, linked to the impossibility to get out of it. Derrida concludes by an ambiguous sentence, full of disseminated meanings: « And it is to think why it is *fatal* that, in its closure, representation continues. »

### **Third circle (continued):**

The absence of immediate causality between the sounds favors the plurality of perceptual interpretations and the co-existence of heterogeneous meanings. Among all the potential meanings that circulate between the sounds and inside each sound, the listener chooses the modality of listening and departs in so doing from passivity. Daniel Charles talks of « a pluralization of the instant, “unassignable” to any temporal “place”, consequently nomadic... »<sup>45</sup> The music of timbre has “emigrated” outside the place of “subjectivity”. Talking about the “dialectical auto-surpassing of subjectivity”<sup>46</sup>, Daniel Charles leads us to the notion of a restless wandering [*errance*]:

« With Viattimo, Nietzsche appeared to be the enemy of dialectics as such – including the one of the auto-surpassing of subjectivity! It is not a question anymore, then, of *willing* the *non-will* – which remains a “will” – but of discarding the principle of identity itself; this is what introduces the restless wandering [*errance*]. »<sup>47</sup>

### **Second Circle (continued):**

But if it were only that, the timbre production would only reverse the structure of the linguistic sign and consequently by a mirror effect in reproducing the same schema. In order to access non-sense, the human-subject needs the arbitrary nature of the sign to make certain of organizing the production of non-sense. The one who produces timbre by the direct manipulation of the material in the real time of presence cannot abstract oneself from her/his own subjectivity to inject the arbitrary.

Thus the other side of the timbre materiality, the one with which non-sense interacts constantly back and forth, is the restless wandering of meaning. The absence of signification demands the invention of a new subjectivity. As Guattari notes, « it seems opportune to forge a more transversal conception of subjectivity (...) »<sup>48</sup>. The subjectivity has to be enriched by a multiplicity of meanings which would unfold in all the complexity of their free circulation. Meaning should not be limited by what is exclusively given by the models of the linguistic signifiers. There are no longer any objectives assigned to the research on matter, no longer some signifying destination,

but one “knows” where we are, and whether we have arrived.

**First circle (continued):**

In the frame of the improvisation set-up envisioned by Globokar, each participant comes with his/her own learning experience, ready to face any eventuality, come what may, outside any consideration which would evaluate the event in terms of a musical canon. The improvisation, according to this point of view, tries to escape the merchandising of the artistic production by placing oneself deliberately outside the aesthetic field, that is outside the processes that measure the value (among others the market value) of a musical object. The sound result is of a secondary interest, it has only to be the quasi-accidental expression of the conditions and of the circumstances in which it is inscribed. The ephemeral encounter between the musician and his/her instrument, between the musicians on stage, between the musicians and the audience, here is what is fundamentally at stake.

But in order for any eventuality to be able to emerge in its savage state, in the excess of its energy, the improvisation has to be “true”. There would be then a truth, a horizon to attain. Are we in presence of the truth that issues from the aesthetic domain? Indeed, does music exist in itself, existing outside the world? Or is music only a means of particular exchanges between human beings, in which the “musical” would always be mingled with other mediations? In this last case, the notion of truth in the course of an exchange might still belong, as much as beauty, to the aesthetic domain.

The themes of “profound friendship”, of “mutual respect”, of “sincerity”, of “necessity” are the *ritournelles* that can be found often in Globokar’s texts. Improvisation becomes then an “attempt at communicating”, from which the “lie” should be excluded<sup>49</sup>. If in improvisation there is a freely expressed content, it only has its *raison d’être* in relation to the destination to another, to the judgment by this other, to evaluation by others, to the eventual reformulations by others, with a view to the exchange that it might produce. There is no other protocol than the non-written one of propriety, politeness, mutual respect, which leave the opportunity for the other to express oneself. The participant is in the obligation to invent an original discourse by the critical presence of the others (performers or public), who will probably be able to measure her/his capability to stay within the community of those who have the right to enunciate something.

One could pursue further this type of thinking, far beyond Globokarian intent. The elimination of the musical content can lead to more perverse aesthetics, which would reduce the sound matter to its pure physicality, in order to affirm some metaphysics. The accent placed on communication in improvisation allows one to evacuate the question of timbre as a secondary element of ornamentation. The detail or the quality of the sound production has no importance, if the current has gone through, if the participants have been modified in their comportment or in their conceptualization, if there is an ecstatic transport, revelation, spirit, catharsis, manifestation of

grace, symbiosis, community of thinking, communion, mystical extasis, shamanic trance, ...  
One is far from being out of the circle.

**Towards the last circle, the triangles:**

negation	verity	aesthetics
negation	verse iteration	extra ticks
negation	verse hyper-active	a zest epic
negotiating	inverse heretic	hyper jest hic
negotiating	in vain heretic	hyper gastric
bigot sectarian	quoted in vain	test ethics
big Gordian knot	invincible bolt	pesticides toll
quotient	of imbecility	moronic pest
bohemian	of amber silly tea	Mormon antic best
Romanian	off to ramble facilitate	more monastic rest
rude maniac	of ample vanity	more monarchic festivities
rudiment knack	of temple amenity	more anarchic
ready-made hack	often	sore anarchic
ready-made acting	often	stored in a risk
medicine	softened	sort of eccentrics
destined	to stain the reputation of	the electric toaster
desert	reputed cacophony of	electronic author
ease her tinkle belt	cannot horny opt	horror elect
he sees her timbre bell	soft chaos	of roar complex
this timbre	ah! oh!	complexity
spectral timbre	halo	complete anxiety
September	hell ho	complaint accepted
Sceptre ember	day lore	plain access
septic tank	dolorous	pain in ass
effective prank	delirious	palliasse
effect without cause	delicious	pariah
effect without pause	elicited Sioux	of the prairie
effacement in dose	helix sound	Orphic prayer
ineffable in rose	felicity	orbit trait
in a fabulous prose	elicited	hobbit trail
a status on the loose	illicit raid	a bit trailing
a statehood on luster	idyllic ever glade	raving bits
ecstatic hooded seal	ideal slick even grade	raging bliss
desks' tactics rooted in zeal	ideas in sleeve and trade	emerging list
desks' tactile fuel a zing in	Slovenia and Crete	enduring historicization
disco actress fuel a sin	in slow venial rate	endowing eroticization
didos active fool dingo	low brow mate	end worse off irritation
did active cool bingo	blow flow mow	end horse oppression
did act diddledoo nip	drowsy cow	and/or recession
didactics	bow-wow	endorsed retrocession
dyslexics	powwow	enforced retro-action
dialectics	power	to force restoration

## The last circle:

Theodor W. Adorno:

« Dialectical thought is an attempt to break through the coercion of logic by its own means. But since it must use these means, it is at any moment in danger of itself acquiring a coercive character: the ruse of reason would like to hold sway over the dialectic too. The existing cannot be overstepped except by means of a universal derived from the existing order itself. The universal triumphs over the existing through the latter's own concept, and therefore, in its triumph, the power of mere existence constantly threatens to reassert itself by the same violence that broke it. Through the absolute rule of negation, the movement of thoughts as of history, becomes, in accordance with the pattern of immanent antithesis, unambiguously, exclusively, implacably positive. (...) If Benjamin said that history had hitherto been written from the standpoint of the victor, and needed to be written from the standpoint of the vanquished,<sup>50</sup> we might add that knowledge must indeed present the fatally rectilinear succession of victory and defeat, but should also address itself to those things which were not embraced by this dynamic, which fell by the wayside — what might be called the waste products and blind spots that have escaped the dialectic. »<sup>51</sup>

## notes

<sup>1</sup> The French version of this article was written in 2005. A version translated into German was published in *Vinko Globokar, 14 Arten einen Musiker zu beschreiben*, ed. Werner Klüppelholz and Sigrid Konrad, Saarbrücken : Pfauf Verlag, 2008, pp. 11-35.

<sup>2 3</sup> Denis Levaillant, *L'improvisation musicale*, seconde édition, Arles: Actes Sud, 1996, pp. 29-30.

<sup>4</sup> Denis Laborde, « Improviser dans les règles : de l'improvisation comme d'une question culturelle », *Enseigner la Musique* N°5, Cefedem Rhône-Alpes et CNSMD de Lyon, 2002, pp. 38-39..

<sup>5 6</sup> Globokar, « L'interprète créateur », *La Musique en projet*, Collection Cahiers Renaud-Barrault, Paris : Gallimard/I.R.C.A.M., 1965, p.90.

<sup>7</sup> Globokar, « Plaidoyer pour une mise en question », *Enseigner la Musique* N° 3, Lyon : Cefedem Rhône-Alpes and Cnsmd of Lyon.

<sup>8</sup> This part is a new version of Jean-Charles François, *L'instrumentiste créateur*, Thèse de doctorat, Paris VIII, 1993, et Jean-Charles François, « The Garden of Delights », *Percussive Research Edition*, Volume 21, N°3, mars 1983, Percussive Arts Society, Urbana, Ill., pp. 8-17.

<sup>9</sup> Félix Guattari, *Chaosmose*, Paris : Galilée, 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from Jean-Charles François, *Percussion et musique contemporaine*, Paris : Klincksieck, 1991, pp.272-273.

<sup>11</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Vinko Globokar, *Laboratorium*, « Traitements similaires », Peters Editions, Francfort, 1973, p.17A.

<sup>13</sup> Globokar « ils improvisent... improvisez... improvisons... », *Musique en jeu* N°6, L'improvisation, le concert, Paris : Seuil, march 1972, p.14.

<sup>14</sup> David Sudnow, *Ways of the Hand*, A rewritten Account, Cambridge, Massachussets, London, England : The MIT Press, 1978, 1993, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Denis Laborde, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>16</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven F. Randall., Berkley : University of California Press, 1984.

## Dialogs of Deafening Gifted Eavesdroppers

- <sup>17</sup> « L'interprète créateur »
- <sup>18</sup> « Ils improvisent... Improvisez... Improvison..., p. 15.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 16.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.16.
- <sup>21</sup> Globokar « Plaidoyer pour une mise en question », p. 48.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Howard Becker, «The Power of Inertia», *The Open Space Magazine* N°5, autumn 2003, Benjamin Boretz, Mary Lee Roberts, Tildy Bayar, Dorota Czerner, eds., Red Hook, NY, pp. 49-55.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.53.
- <sup>26</sup> Denis Laborde, op. cit., p. 37.
- <sup>27</sup> John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, New York, Perigee, 1980 (First edition 1934), p.13.
- <sup>28</sup> Denis Laborde, op.cit., pp. 38-39.
- <sup>29</sup> Félix Guattari, *Chaosmose*, Paris : Galilée, 1992, p. 95 (my translation).
- <sup>30</sup> Vinko Globokar, « ils improvisent... improvisez... improvisons... », p. 16.
- <sup>31</sup> Isabelle Stengers, *Cosmopolitiques*, Tome 7, «Pour en finir avec la tolérance» (« To get rid of tolerance »), Paris: La découverte/Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, 1997, pp. 7-8.
- <sup>32</sup> Quoted in Globokar, Ibid., p. 16.
- <sup>33</sup> Stengers, op. cit., p. 16.
- <sup>34</sup> Bernard Lubat, in Denis Levaillant, *L'improvisation musicale*, deuxième édition, Actes Sud, 1996, pp.29-31.
- <sup>35</sup> Vinko Globokar, «ils improvisent...», p.16.
- <sup>36</sup> John Silber, « Writing », *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 19, N°1 et 2, automne-hiver 1980, printemps-été 1981, p.161.
- <sup>37</sup> Jean-Charles François, *L'instrumentiste créateur*, pp. 94-95.
- <sup>38</sup> Vinko Globokar, in Denis Levaillant, op. cit., p. 64. See also the pages that follow on the piece *Correspondances*, written on the basis of parametrical reactions, and which is supposed to open onto an improvisation : « At the first concert of the New Phonic Art, we realized then that this piece did not give any help to the improvisation »(p. 66).
- <sup>39</sup> Stengers, op. cit., p. 17
- <sup>40</sup> Félix Guattari, *Chaosmose*, p. 108.
- <sup>41</sup> Vinko Globokar, « L'Interprète créateur », p. 86-87.
- <sup>42</sup> Globokar, in Levaillant, op. cit., p.66.
- <sup>43</sup> Daniel Charles, *Le temps de la voix*, p.242-243.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid. , p.242.
- <sup>45</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago : University of Chicago Press, London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, p. 240.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 250
- <sup>47</sup> Daniel Charles, *Le temps de la voix*, p.264.
- <sup>48</sup> Concerning the analysis of Schultz.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 251-252.
- <sup>50</sup> Guattari, op. cit., p.15.
- <sup>51</sup> Globokar, « ils improvisent... », p. 16.
- <sup>52</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, London 1973, pp. 258-9.
- <sup>53</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima moralia, Réflexions from Damaged Life*, Translated from the German by E. F. N. Jephcott, London : NLB, 1974, pp. 150-151 (original edition 1951).





Untitled, 2005, oil and acrylic, 200x200 cm

## PAINTINGS – ENERGIES

Andrzej Turowski

Years ago, during one of several nighttime conversations with Lech Twardowski, I watched him make a whole series of drawings, one after another, in silences between words. What we were talking about then was probably of little importance, and evaporated along with the aroma of the wine, while the drawings were torn out of the sketchbook and dropped down onto the floor to produce a sizeable pile by morning. I had the impression then that it was not the words, however brilliant they may have been, nor the undoubtedly appropriate forms of the drawings, but the silences that were the place of creation, where imagination is shaped and where the images are located. It is an unrealized image, one that allows for an infinite number of fleeting sketches, or in fact a non-form of an unknown depth out of which emerge - thanks to the dexterity of the hand and the sensitivity of the eye - some splinters, traces of a forever elusive primacy of silence, as it were. In art the bringing out is, however, an intrusion and an act of violence, an untamed force and an exploding matter, the disturbance of the surface. The creative process is bound by an ambiguous dynamics that makes the motion between points and layers (whatever they are - the inside and the outside, depth and surface, idea and matter, silence and voice; emptiness, form, and image, letter, sign and significance...) an incessant tension, impossible to capture in the unity of sense and everyday experience; it is simply a rupture of both the ordering mind and the routine of form. This gives rise to discursive ambiguity, literary indeterminacy, or philosophical allusion that seeks a place for itself outside the centers of art history, clearly defined predominantly by the institutions of social life.

This is how fissures in the artistic shell are born, filled with some fragments of form and shape, particles suspended in a foreign solution. This is how amorphous energies oscillating outside the structure of the atom as free electrons are brought to life. They trigger breaks in the train of thought and are cracks on the smooth surface of art; they smell of foreignness within the realm of human sensitivity and are the

mystery of creation. “In principle”, says Twardowski, “in a painting everything is plainly seen as revealed on the surface; all is visible and exposed. Even the energy of the object is tangible and immediately felt... This is the essence of things - to venture on a description, an interpretation, a critique in a natural, open and spontaneous manner. You should touch mystery rather than only seek a rational explanation.”<sup>1</sup>

The essence of Twardowski’s painting is not the coding of significations and secret concealment. On the contrary, his game with form is an incessant revelation of the obviousness of painting. In Twardowski’s *oeuvre* an image-fissure is a bedrock of art filled with the matter of imagination; a process of spreading and smearing paint, determining and ordering forms; the sketching of awkward figures and the geometrization of scenes. An image-energy is an immaterial substance, a process of liberating shapes from the ground, of saturating them with the volatility of thought; it is in effect sensuous furnishings of art, inexpressible in words but concretized in sensations. The uncontrollable transformation of matter into energy is the poetic mystery of Twardowski’s art. “The purity of thought and the purity of the record of this thought are not one and the same thing”, wrote Twardowski in one of his letters to me. “It happens that the thought whirls and flies so far that we are unable to keep pace with it, let alone capture it; a record cannot follow it closely and is not able to measure up to it. It is precisely here that a place for sound, poetry and art appears. This whirl is not always clear, at times a small crumble or trace of a thought leads us to a point from which we depart farther than the thought itself (...), sometimes art migrates farther than thought itself. In such cases thought often swirls chaotically seeking its own fissure to give rise to something essential - since its power lies somewhere very deep.”<sup>2</sup>

The Modernist absolute, being the centre of all thought, hid - in Utopia - its own uncertainty stemming from the dependence on formal ways of articulation for the transmission of its world vision. Utopia guaranteed the unity of form and life, a unity which was missing in an alienated reality. As a consequence, the modern artist in his expression mythologized form as a way of being, and in Conceptual art rejected form as unnecessary ballast for pure ideas.

The decline of Modernism was the recognition of the existence of a crack, a chasm, sometimes a warp or fissure as indispensable places of uncertainty and at the same time fields of critical (polemic or ironic) involvement both with the multi-dimensional reality and with the entire history of art. Contradictory to the notion of unbound freedom, this makes each new painting dependent on the already painted surfaces that encompass the fissure - with their deforming figuration, pictorialism of paint, spontaneity of gesture, and organization of composition. Seeing Twardowski’s drawings strewn the floor in the early 1980s, bits and pieces of his imagination, testimonies of visions, bizarre figures, unknown objects, colored lines, and unclear blots helped me realize the extent to which they are the artist’s attempts at defining his position between the edges of the chasm he had found himself in. They let me see the path or rather the depth that opened up before him as a painter who wants to remain one, and before painting, which can no longer be a grand history of tendencies and a canonical text of canvas, but one which needs

to be a fissure that in a new way absorbs all the painting refuse: pigments, surfaces, colors, lines, gestures, and illusions.

Today, regarding Twardowski's art from the same perspective I feel that its essence is not so much a place (as a clearly delineated area) or non-place (a utopia), but a transition from place to place, the fleetingness of the whirls of positions, the shifting of borders, the maiming of cracked frames, and the energy of unframed paintings out of which something always breaks free. In this way in Twardowski's artistic ontology painting remains painting in defiance of its properties. Losing its "inherent" attributes, Twardowski's painting re-establishes on an ongoing basis its way of being painting: a heaped-up cone of paint is enough to serve as form, transparent planes suffice to function as space, multi-dimensional "objects" are the painted shape, edges of cartons will be the ground, and de-materialized light will function as color. As the artist admits, "It turns out that an open area is the foundation of painting. If you define yourself in this way, by means of the entire situation you are in, and in which you try to reveal something: what is it, then? It is simply painting and nothing else."

To define painting "by means of the entire situation" is far from easy. Rather than being "an open area" of unlimited opportunities, the fissure proves more often than not a *cul-de-sac*. The situation must be recognized and painting requires legitimization. Such recognition is inherently limited and legitimization is the truth of painting. I used to see this as a relation between freedom and honesty, as, in Twardowski's art, it boils down in the main to a dynamic relation between the artist's gestures, a bodily participation of the creator in the creation act, and the frantic pictorial matter and the fury of images that make up painting. The artist composed surfaces with a gesture, covering them with colors, and colorful substance, since any living matter of imagination with a tendency to proliferate and cover with magma the whole field, ran away before too rigorous thought. It pours into the fissures and cracks like lava and after filling out the riverbed submerges the banks. The artist's struggle with matter and image, his attempts at curbing them used to possess in Twardowski's *oeuvre* all the features of expression. The artist directed them in a desired direction with his body, establishing their course and shape; being subversive, however, they remained elusive due to their inherent expressive power. I defined Twardowski's painting of the early 1980s as a process, or better still, as an emotional interaction between action and painting. A return to himself, i.e. a return to instinctual imagination expressed by means of gesture and form, was an affirmation of values adhered to by the artist. It was by no means a coincidence that I stressed the dualism of gesture and form. This dualism was not an antinomy but rather a strong expressivity that infused the artistic projects, drawings, and paintings with a special tension.

Let us contemplate first of all the projects from 1982, where in front of the invited gallery audience Twardowski "painted" with sand over the surface of the floor, creating multi-textured varicolored topographic landscapes. He fixated a fleeting shape, whose existence was coterminous with the time of action. Less than half a year later the artist "recorded himself" for three days and three nights on a tape uncoiling into infinity. On

a reel of paper a few dozen centimeters wide he marked with a vertical rhythm of short lines his own time and his own pulse recorded by hand and by form. Horizontally, from one edge to the other, he drew in ink many tangled lines, then obliterated them with a superimposed white patch. Tapes, as paintings on paper, were exhibited in the rooms of the gallery and pierced with light so that the linear network of the artistic record stood out clearly from the luminous background. These works had a narrative, which while it did not make use of words or figures, made the eyes run patiently from left to right, from top to bottom. The line told a story by leading eyes into a complicated labyrinth.

In the drawings and paintings from the period 1983-1986 shape was presented by means of an intermittent outline or was majestically located on the closed form of a pedestal. The same applies to matter at times transparent, scattered across the surface of depth, at other times spilling over the surface with the thickness of Baroque pastry. This controversial form, made dynamic by color, determined the character and limits of the artistic vision. A story told by the artist was reduced to a display of shapes which seemed apparitions of the imagination. Unlike the earlier works, here the calligraphic or spread painted forms were subject to the principle of simultaneous coexistence. We stop reading a painting and begin to enter into it deeper and deeper and discover its strata concealed beneath one another. Narrative is beginning to be replaced by metaphor. It is most probably not a coincidence that as of 1985 we have been able to identify in Twardowski's drawings and paintings more and more figurative renditions. The metonymic succession of the earlier works could be defined by the simple adjacency of lines; the metaphoric character of the later work required the substitution of the representational painting for recording.

This shift naturally concretized the artist's vision. The drawings and paintings of the years 1985-1986, remaining at the threshold of non-representational composition, begin to represent various creatures; good and evil birds, as it were, noble and vile people, refined figures and gargoyles. Now a discourse started between them, sometimes in the middle of the night, more often however in broad daylight — among heavy, hot, and murky colors, and more frequently still among the cold distant blues and the clarity of whitewashed color. The linearity of expression disappears, the paintings overlap, and each successively appearing figure retains its individual features. At the same time the form of the works became denser, in the hope of overcoming both the paint that restricted it and the already existing color. The form was provoked by vision, as the discourse in painting grew more and more dramatic; canvas and paper could not contain it. Form began to transcend painting.

This was a crucial yet dangerous moment. It created a reason for the shapes that now receded from the surface to be subordinated to the new actions and new artistic activity. Or better still, a reason to restore the tenuous balance between gesture and matter. For Twardowski each artistic action in real space was a return to the painting, and each painting that transcended its limitations called for the ultimate overcoming of its own convention in action. All the works of this time show how imagination makes form dynamic through the expressiveness inherent in his art.

As a consequence, in the late 1980s Twardowski reduced his means of expression and

subjected them to a certain discipline. Ever since, only shapes that were deliberately chosen by him or precisely evolved could feature in his painting. He tried to define form beyond purely expressive motives. It seems he began his search for the order of a work in the work itself, in its internal metamorphoses. Hence we can see the natural multiplications of form, but not the dynamic rhythm of composition. Selecting a particular fragment or a set of fragments from his *oeuvre* or his surroundings, from the past or the present, he repeated it a number of times in diverse configurations. A star was a mutation of a triangle, a square gave way to a cross, an acute angle led to an arrow, and then, shapes which continued to divide and coalesce, relate and conflict, come closer and move away, defining the painting surfaces saturated with color and spatial forms shot through with hues.

Twardowski consented to the elusiveness triggered by the mutability of significations. Bringing them to life in the process of “painting”, he destroyed them in the course of an “artistic action”. Heaping up powdered pigment onto paper tapes hung in space, onto canvases spread on the floor, he imparted forms with the volatility of action time. In this way the inconsistent formalism of Twardowski’s output began to touch on the realm of notions. Signs, non-significations, oversignifications, significations, insignifications, etc. — this is the field of his art of the late 1980s, a far cry however from conceptual game with text. Twardowski’s *oeuvre*, as usual concretized in color and form, was at that time already a game with the fragment, where personal experience, clichés and cultural banality, the extraordinary and the mundane exhibit themselves unexpectedly selected in their fragmentariness, in their parts, making up a kind of mosaic of the world of images, i.e. reality.

At the turn of the 1990s, returning to Wrocław after a stay in Paris, Twardowski attempted to redefine his art, again posing questions about the credibility of a painting as a work and the truthfulness of painting as a realm of art. He would not want to be any longer a guardian of expressive form and that is why he sought a new connection of a work with *Real-ity* (“real-ity” meant as the obviousness of things). This was also the title of the artist’s exhibition launched in 1993, where anonymous “things-objects” were made of painted surfaces and cubes, of painting-like forms lying on the floor and located in space, strewn with red pigment, of relief-like structures constructed with brown textures of cartons and geometrical borders of colors, of the space of a long lobby filled with bent, metallic, and bright surfaces and dark successions of edges, of a cubic room full of circles oscillating with azures. The intention of the show, to fill out with form, color, light, and matter the entire space of the interior and exterior of the gallery, was in Twardowski’s art the first attempt at creating an “energetic environment”, which in a categorical way limited the expression of earlier experience and linked these newly found limits with consciousness.

It is by no means a coincidence, then, that ever since Twardowski, against the possessive expressionism of art-as-lava, has stressed the importance of thought in the process of artistic transcendence. As he emphasized in the aforementioned interview, “Today you will not say that an amateur crossed a certain border. If you do not know what border to cross, you will never cross it because you do not see it. So, what matters first of all is the mind, consciousness, the proverbial ‘third eye’ which allows you to transgress and to capture the essence; when this is missing, hands are of no help.”

Twardowski re-established borders. This was not the work of a conquistador who lays claim to space and conquers new territories, but of a traveler who loses his bearings and prepares his further journey. Movement rather than power were his authority. Borders are orientation points, selected reference points, and in creative practice adversaries of artistic dialogue. This time truth in Twardowski's painting emerged from dialogue. The dialogue the artist entered into was one with his own and foreign tradition of the expression of gesture and the metaphysics of energy. The milestones along this way were the *Restaged Opera*, a project of 1991 and 1994, and *The Cathedral* of the period 2000-2001. In the former Twardowski addressed the issue of a "wild" gesture and "formalism" of abstraction in contemporary painting, both of which called for their Postmodern revision. In the latter, invoking the mysticism of a medieval cathedral and Suprematist art of Kasimir Malevich, he wanted to re-define the question of the existence of non-material energies released in creative processes.

In the *Restaged Opera*, on a theatre stage, in front of a festive public, Twardowski as a derisive virtuoso-artist, surrounded by musicians (a friends' rock band) painted his way through successive, huge sheets of transparent matter spread on stretchers, put in a row one behind the other. Putting his colors into a can out of big containers, he painted by spreading paint over the surfaces, splashing the paint all over, smearing the trickling smudges sideways, rubbing the thickening matter with the palm of his hand, making deep grooves with his fingernails, covering the entire screen with paint obsessively and methodically until he grew tired. He painted the foils thinking simultaneously about all of them, moving from one to another, standing before the first one and hiding behind what he had already painted over. The artist, an actor on an opera stage, carried on his arms a strange contraption, a sort of Martian backpack, with an attached camera partially registering the movement of the hand and the behavior of the materials. The video recording which was screened on a monitor that was placed to one side showed the emergence of an infinite series of paintings; unlike the overpainted foils, it never captured all, and never added up to a whole. Here a frame was variable, visions were sequential, movement intermittent, characterized by a syncopated elongation of rhythm; the smoothness of images was interrupted abruptly, the vehement changes of focus - the filling out of a paint can, a return to the screen - rivulets of paint trickling down, smudges, successive layers, mixing... The musicians did not accompany; they did their thing - played their instruments - and the sound, as in a free conversation, merged with the form of the painting. Tension mounted. At one moment it all stopped and that was the end. Actors bowed to the audience. Applause.

What was the most essential in Twardowski's twice repeated painting actions was the infringement on all the relations between the process of painting, the expressiveness of gesture, the chance character of matter, which in modern art, as in Wagner's operas, aims at the creation of an artistic totality that guarantees the absolute identity of fragment and whole, painting and cosmos, work and artist. The transfer of a painting from the stage onto a movie still, and the recording of painting solely in this form, undermined its expressiveness which arose from the action of creation, while leaving a fragmentary force concentrated and multiplied in a series of repeated frames. Depriving the painting of the generalizing character of stage drama, so characteristic of Expressionism, provided



Untitled (fragment),



2005, oil and acrylic 200x800 cm

painting with features of a fleeting photograph, an emanating trace that released energy and forced one to work on and on. As Roland Barthes wrote about the pictures of his deceased mother, "Left only with photographs, I recognized sometimes a certain part of her face, the position of the nose and the forehead, the movement of the arms and hands. I always recognized her in pieces only, which means that her essence was inaccessible to me, and thus she was inaccessible to me as a whole. It was not her, and yet this was no one else. I would have recognized her amongst a thousand other women, and yet I could not 'find' her. I recognized her due to her uniqueness rather than owing to her essence. A photograph thus made me work painstakingly."<sup>3</sup> The act of "transferring" the painting onto film in Twardowski's output was a challenge to painting. A provocative one, since it was done through otherness, an invocation of what would seem to be best known by him and yet irretrievably lost in a series of stills. It was a challenge to, and a recognition of painting, which had lost the unifying identity of form and expression, an energy trace of the nonexistent whole.

Less than a decade later, in the millennium year 2000, in a new context, Twardowski came to grips with the notion of nonmaterial energies, this time beyond the expressive tradition, with a clear reference of the mystic tradition. I am referring here to a spatial installation, "an object of art" titled *The Cathedral*. It was accompanied by a literary libretto resembling biblical poetics and Passion music.<sup>4</sup> Small wonder *The Cathedral* transported us to a world of medieval scholastic thought, where the heaven-bound cathedral symbolized the ascent from the material toward the immaterial, toward the transcendental cause of "harmony and light". The ascent, as Erwin Panofsky wrote about the ideas of Suger, an abbot of the Church of St. Denis, is possible since all visible objects are "material lights", reflecting lights accessible solely to reason, lights which are in turn a reflection of the true light of God himself.<sup>5</sup> *The Cathedral*, constructed by Twardowski on the plan of a cross and inscribed into successions of squares, also invoked the art of Kasimir Malevich, whose philosophy oscillated within the inner antinomy, where catastrophe, chasm, void as a metaphysical experience of reality were a way for transformation into the world of pure sensations symbolized by a white desert, unbounded space, eternity, and absolute perfection. "I experienced something of an apprehension, almost terror — wrote the artist — when it turned out that I had to leave the "world of will and imagination" which meant my life and my art, and in whose actual existence I believed. However, the joyful feeling triggered by a released nonobjectivity drew me ever deeper into the "desert", where only a sensation is a fact.... and in this way sensation became the essence of my life".<sup>6</sup>

Twardowski's installation, multiplying in the same variations the motif of a tower, square, and cross located within urban space, was to have been saturated with colorful light. The intention was implemented on a reduced scale at the 2001 Wroclaw exhibition. We can read in the project description the following: "On the ground the artist will create a 'painting' 20 x 16 meters in size, composed of 40 x 40 centimeters squares connected by their angles. There will be 1,000 squares altogether. Such an arrangement of figures will create a space, also in the shape of a square. This place, with sand spread over it, will be the foundation of an artistic object, a cathedral. As a result this will be an installation built of 1,000 objects and 1,000 squares."<sup>7</sup>

What becomes conspicuous in *The Cathedral* from the start is the magnitude of the

intention and then the obsessive reiterability and rhetorical redundancy, with which Twardowski wanted to erect a nearly infinite number of *architektons* and cover the ground with squares and crosses. This was a tricky chessboard, with well-known figures of Suprematist art with their divine spirituality and human blasphemy positioned on it as pawns. The regularity of the tectonic arrangement of vertical and horizontal forms reiterating in a mirror multiplication the same forms and shapes, introduced an absurd structure of an “artistic” image, into the “natural” urban organism. I visualized this project as a bold attempt at implementing Malevich’s utopian world, where the public buildings of an historic city will disappear suppressed by the artistic imagination, leaving solely the material pigment and the symbolism of whiteness and blackness, the vertical and the horizontal. As in Malevich’s art, which did away with representation, and where the figures of the square, circle, and cross could be seen as signs of a rebellion that transported form into a multidimensional cosmos, in the cathedral-quote in which Twardowski purposefully referred to it, I noticed an artistic attempt at undermining the city with the non-material energy of simple form and clear hue.

The notion of energy was one of the key terms in the philosophy of art of Kasimir Malevich. Against the background of the artist’s poetic theory, it combined Eastern Orthodox theology with the ideas of scientific natural history. According to theological interpretation, energies are not an emanation of the divine but rather its reality. They are not created but exist. The theology of divine energies is the cornerstone of cosmology, in which the universe is filled with vital forces endowed with the inner ubiquity of grace. However, in line with the ideas of neo-Positivist natural science, the world is made up of huge concentrations of energy that are focal points of all power and movement. The universe, which ultimately rests on objective nothingness, is filled with unrecognized but felt energies. The uncertain matter of our immediate surroundings are traces of successive explosions of energy in a non-material void.

Twardowski’s *oeuvre* can be best described by a pan-energetic interpretation of the world, if we stripped it of theological, philosophical, and historical context and left it within the field of the theory of art and the practice of painting. This is how I understand the polemic character of his *Cathedral*. Malevich’s energy trajectory led from a dynamic diversity of condensations of hue to an infinite whiteness of final peace. Twardowski is close to this line of thinking, even if it is not the white void of the monochrome but colorful shapes, colorful surfaces, and overpainted spaces that the artist treats as inexhaustible sources of energetic arousal. Perhaps this is not so to the full. The energy void entices the artist. According to plan *The Cathedral* was to have been an “object of art” at a given time of the installation, for a short period of objectal construction and colorful illumination; later on the “created structure will disappear from actual space”, leaving a trace of a former experience, emanating with energy. It is probably not by chance that this encounter with Malevich brought out the problem of the non-material character of art in Twardowski’s work and the attendant question about the physical limits of painting.

As the artist said, limits are always to be transgressed. The movement of “painting beyond painting” characteristic of Twardowski’s art, was not a rejection of the painting image but rather a translocation of the problem foreshadowed in numerous other activities, now leading from the proven non-materiality of energy towards the reality of

“the space of painting” in the psychosensory environment of the *Generator* (the period 1999-2004).

“I work within space and I am interested in various fields of art”, said Twardowski, “but painting is for me the foundation of everything, i.e. everything I make use of: form, color — this is the matter I work in.” *Generator*, again and in its own way, reworked the real in painting into the elusive in matter, generating energy out of hues and shapes.

There are two variations of *Generator III* ; the first is an interactive installation based on an electronic program designed especially for it (2002), the other one does not take advantage of computer technology, giving the viewer ample leeway as it comes to the choice of perception and energy exchange (2004). In the *Generator*, as one critic aptly noted, the artist does not renounce painting; it is painting that leaves its erstwhile domain and develops in the direction of the new media. Twardowski’s installation, a kind of energy condenser, is a room on the plan of a square 10 x 10 meters in size and 6 meters in height, bound by three mega-objects of over 4 meters and 200 kilograms each. The painting-objects are constructed of many kilometers of painted paper tape whose coiled, pressed, and groove-like structure “resembling a super-sized DVD, CD or LP -dynamic carriers of accumulated information and emotion.” In the centre of the space, on the floor, there is a cement podium with a huge screen made of heaped up salt and illuminated by light. The image on the screen is composed of movable slanted lines whose arrangement resembles that of the tapes on the walls. “The dynamics of the electronic image, first of all the number and arrangement of the white lines appearing there, was linked to the activity of the audience, and more exactly to the viewers inside the installation.”<sup>8</sup> Electronic sensors register the behavior of the participants, their positions, the timbre and impatience of their voices, the direction and dynamics of movement, as if capable of sensing the tension and atmosphere. In response, the computer program changes light and images, transforms the former’s intensity and the latter’s shapes, brings out sounds and colors. *Generator III* is a spatial game for those who feel immersed in the painterly matter of color whose mobility, elusiveness, and ephemerality are a permanent transformation of the full into the empty and conversely, of the empty into the full. It is an interactive exchange of energy.

A variation of *Generator III* without electronic support, featuring only beams of light that model surfaces and saturates the interior, has a still more powerful impact on the imagination of the viewers, whose activity is aroused by the slanting cascades of forms, by the power of imaginary thunderbolts traversing the paintings, by the weight of crumpled color into the cement of the frame, by the purity of the whiteness of the central screen. It seems that the impression of becoming immersed in the all-embracing interior of the painting, of having entered a painterly cosmos pulsating with a nonmaterial power is triggered here by the emergent and disappearing emotions oscillating between an emptiness that recalls the anxious depth of Suprematism and the fascinating fullness of form of non-objective paintings. As Twardowski himself said, “All that you have done and are still doing accumulates on an ongoing basis. You do not cheat and do not create yourself but only disclose and release your own energy - this is your present. The tragic moments of my life are currently acquiring a positive tinge. I stop thinking about them in terms of injustice. The world provided me with a certain situation that I need to take advantage of

-this is my strength, my propelling battery. All of this is included in what I make a record of and what I return to, and it invariably adds up to make a whole. I treat experience as a fuel for propulsion. I do not record it in diary form but collect all that has remained, the whole energy propelling me forward. This is sometimes more important than memories.”

The last group of large-sized paintings (2005-2006), a consequence of earlier works and a reference, as it were, to the problem which was spawned by the *Generator*, was titled by Twardowski *Empty-Full*. The suite is composed of huge canvases, each autonomous and at the same time a fragment of a still greater whole. Sometimes, through their adjacency they correspond to one another, but simultaneously they are at odds with one another through the shift of a shape or an absence of closure. Square fields are covered with painted broad circular strips or sections of arcs, curved forms or swirling circles frozen in place. Alternately, saturated with black, they resound with a dull sound or, moved by action, give the impression of a fullness of color. As in kaleidoscopic flashes, they are spaces where spatially crystallized whiteness, azure, and blackness appear. The sharp forms that charge at the viewers and injure them threaten to destroy vision, absorb blackness, and return to emptiness with each movement of the eye. They threaten to release an energy contained between words, an uneasy silence or perhaps a nonexistence...

*Translation by Marcin Turski*

*Edited by Dorota Czerner*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ilias Wrazas, "Wszystko w obrębie marzeń. Rozmowa z Lechem Twardowskim" [All Within a Dream. An Interview with Lech Twardowski.] Unless otherwise indicated, all the quotations come from this interview.

<sup>2</sup> A letter of February 16, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Roland Barthes, *Światło obrazu. Uwagi o fotografii*. [Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography] quoted after: transl. Jacek Trznadel, Wydawnictwo KR. Warsaw 1995, p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> The poet Włodzimierz Goldstein was the author of the lyrics while Polish Passion songs, in the arrangement of Waldemar Wróblewski, were to have been performed by the Pueri Consonantes choir. *The*

Andrzej Turowski

*Cathedral* project was never implemented in this form.

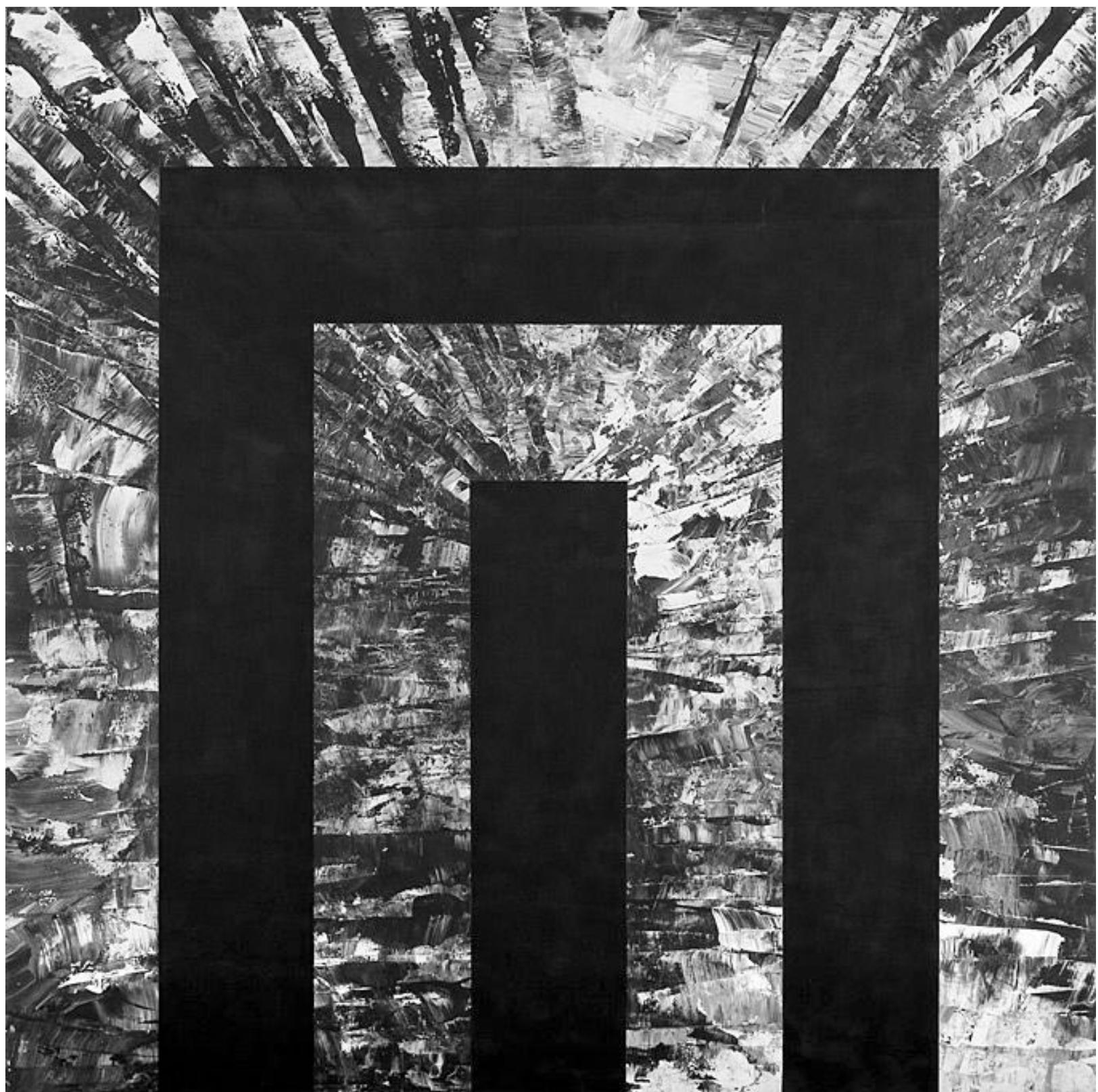
<sup>5</sup> Erwin Panofsky, „Suger, opat St-Denis” [Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St. Denis], in: *Studia z historii sztuki* [Studies in Art History]. PIW. Warsaw 1971, p. 80.

<sup>6</sup> Kasimir Malevich, Świat jako bezprzedmiotowość, Dessau 1927, quoted here after the translation in my book *Malewicz w Warszawie* [Malevich In Warsaw]. Uniwersitas. Krakow 2002, p. 102.

<sup>7</sup> Anna Twardowska, „Opis projektu” [Project Description], w: *Dokumentacja: Instalacja Katedra*. Wrocław 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Piotr Krajewski, Energia sztuki [The Energy of Art], „Notatnik Teatralny”, nr 39-40, 2006, p. 404-405.

photos by Czesław Chwiszczuk, Mirosław Koch



Untitled, 2007, oil and acrylic 200x200 cm

Mikhail Horowitz

## A Sound a Second for 273 Seconds

*As he says, there are so many  
sounds to listen to. Why then do  
we make music?*

— John Cage, *A Year from Monday*

Skein of geese wonka-wonking; cottage settling; creak of stressed pine; babble of nimble creek; ocean oming in hollow shell; cat mewling; crow foraging in compost; antiquarian tapping space bar on antique Remington; cherry bomb detonating in trash can; maestro sneezing at podium; lighter igniting draft card circa 1967; whine of chainsaw heard through rain at twilight; *ouch* following tweezer-pluck of nose hair; cock crowing at sunup; china plate making contact with tiled floor; nude descending staircase; poet hacking up phlegm at lectern; sink filling; sleet peppering parasol; silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain; loud *ssshh!* amid library stacks; bottle of bourbon breaking against curb; crunched Dorito; mizzling of housefly; bullet nicking Deer Crossing sign; siren wailing through thick fog; glass object landing in metal recycling bin; flatulence in key of B-flat; swoosh of little brown bat; chittering of black Norwegian rat;

Zildjian cymbal at moment it ceases to shimmer; motorcycle skidding on asphalt; hole being accidentally drilled into Queen Anne walnut cabinet; stridulating cicada; epicurean smacking her lips; persistent hiss emanating from old 78 of Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five; stoner toking roach; hail pelting tin roof; muezzin calling the faithful; clack of Shift key; blues harmonica bending note; canine cracked by pistachio shell; measured breathing of beached whale; apple munched in country graveyard; tweezling mosquito; eight ball plopping into side pocket; snowball spattering jacket of someone's sister; stalactite dripping; drone of Cessna as it apparently bisects Orion's belt; snowflake dissolving in steaming cup of peppermint tea; gleep emitted by malfunctioning urine catheter; pop of plastic packaging bubble; fairy laughter; skritch of ballpoint pen autographing baseball; liquid quibbling of panpipe; hairdryer defrosting drainpipe; crane whooping; long red fingernails raked on blackboard; egg over easy sizzling in skillet; sound of one half-finished haiku, crumpled;

rolodex in full flip; eerie plaint of musical saw; mammoth stamping; sergeant barking command; nun bustling; presses rolling at *Times Picayune*; calico caterwauling; bowl of Kibble nibbled at night by mice; pod bursting; deck of cards being shuffled; hue and cry from several streets away; egret seeking its mate; static between AM stations; Camry being compacted; mustard blurting from plastic container; micturating marmoset; busy signal; flung shoe thwacking U.S. president; groggy sousaphone; vent's dummy burping; peepers chorusing in spring pond; boxing gloves whapping speed bag; popped zit; pager going off in coffin; calving iceberg; distant thunder; skittering chipmunk; tree falling in forest with no one there to hear it; tree falling in forest with someone there to hear it; tree falling on someone in forest;

wind chime chinking at minus-four degrees Fahrenheit; lightning striking satellite dish; baby bawling; sneakers grunching into ice and grit; thrush warbling; turkey gurgling; stork flapping; hog oinking; septugenarian snoring; rabbi absently drumming fingers on Book of Splendor; crackle of burning haystack; ripping of Velcro bands; echo of cry in canyon; jet flying into skyscraper; freight train grinding through sleet; robotic voice offering menu options; vocalist clearing throat; whistling tea kettle; Etna erupting; mobster firing gun equipped with silencer; wobbling gong; obstreperous klaxon; lemon pennant snapping at used car lot; hand-cranked propeller of candy-striped flying machine; soda fizzing; Doberman growling; mallard quacking; black snake slithering across patio; squeedling shenai entrancing cobra; pigeon chortling on patinated head of war hero;

clang of hammer on anvil; rap of gavel on bench; whirring of cloud of locusts; bare foot squishing into cow pie; comet making contact with planetary surface; pair of ragged claws, scuttling across the floors of silent sea; wind soughing in stand of conifers; lawn mower in hands of obsessive-compulsive neighbor; ruminant snorting; upended wrestler hitting mat; flat stone skipping across lake; CPR recipient's sharp intake of breath; chattering teeth of polar explorer; scraper scraping paint; angry buzz of wasp entrapped in web; bubbling of hubble-bubble; dromedary expectorating; air escaping deflated balloon; gorilla thumping its chest; mirror shattering; plummeting rivet hitting hard hat; cell phone with particularly obnoxious ringtone going off on forested mountain trail; sticks of kindling suddenly catching; slosh of waterbed underneath couple humping; empty shopping cart sailing across lot into unoccupied Toyota; string of firecrackers welcoming Chinese New Year; Hotpoint Washmatic on spin cycle; cappuccino maker making cappuccino; seagull squealing above landfill; UFO hovering over Woodstock;

orator uncontrollably coughing; wolf howling; coyote yipping; beep-beep-beep of construction vehicle backing up; cash register going *ka-ching*; dragonfly skimming golden cinquefoil; medieval krumhorn being blown for first time in 600 years; *ch-ch-chhhh* of katydid; business-as-usual hum of beehive; clickety-clack of handcar; catcall at Fenway Park; trumpeting swan; slog of galoshes in slush; rifle's retort; calliope playing as carousel turns; bleating of sheep; disquieting snip of moyel's clippers; murmuring starling; pirate's *arrr-rr*; pebble dropped in well; coins clinking in purse; something clonking against outside of bathysphere; floodwater breaching levee; unearthly oscillation

of Theremin; fountain plashing; slot machine hitting jackpot; shillelagh whacking British kneecap; kluge plunking into North Atlantic; groan emanating from grating; answering machine answering phone call in abandoned house;

bombinating bumblebee; stuttering nozzle; eddy slapping against pilings; tire iron smashing headlight; dove cooing; empty barrel beaten with the handle of a broom; frailed banjo; musk ox grunting; sleighbell incongruously jingling in late April; out-of-tune viola at American Symphony Orchestra concert; Jaguar honking at Puma that cut it off; accordion dropped from top of Empire State Building; crepitating ice cubes; moose pooping; Bavarian clock recurrently uttering cuckoo; toad croaking; tooted kazoo; G-string snapping on Gibson Les Paul; wheezing of old heap; woodpecker pecking at sycamore; donkey's bray; audience member's audible yawn; another audience member's crimpling of candy wrapper; sandpiper piping; frog squashed by all-weather tire; menu item recited very loudly and slowly to Chinese waiter by American moron; B-52 catching flak; grogger drowning out Haman's name; ceremonial stomp of sumo wrestler; Neanderthal hyoid bone, vibrating;

sonic boom; referee's whistle; new shredding blade in Troy-Bilt Chipper/Vac; sound poet rapidly voicing *leedl-addl-leedl-addl-leedl-addl-leedl-addl*; nail file filing nail; last handful of dirt sprinkled onto casket; tossed garbage can lid resounding in alley; wall of old depot at moment of impact with demolition ball; gibbering ape; something going *bloop* inside an alembic; leopard worrying baboon bone; alligator masticating poodle; mule kicking in stall; bass being bowed; line of coke hoovered by rock star; jumbo trash bag beginning to rip; harp glissando; forearm cluster pummeled on keyboard; vesper pervading French countryside at dusk; tug tugging into foggy harbor; ticking bomb; fax on fritz; construction worker tackling ham sandwich; mare nickering; dial tone; trumpet's tantantara; piggy bank smashed to smithereens; javelin puncturing Etruscan breastplate; vacant shuttle weaving wind; tremendous E major piano chord that ends "A Day in the Life";

muffled oars; whip swishing in Dutch bordello; cow's low on lea; hen's cluck in coop; sobering *ka-blaaam!* of Scud Buster; barbaric yawp; droplet hitting outcrop; King James Bible slammed on table; mallet beginning to tickle marimba; planter cracked by errant shuffleboard disk; street-corner Lothario giving wolf-whistle to busty passerby; bug zapper zapping away on summer night; cricket chirring on dictionary; clanging buoy; cream pie splattering in straight man's face; rusty spring going sproing, black hole droning at 57 octaves below middle C; cowbell announcing whereabouts of cow; glub-glub-glub of swimmer in trouble; landlubber puking over taffrail; horseshoe thudding shy of stake; lion roaring; power mower chewing up pink flamingo; metal sheet beaten during storm scene in *King Lear*; honey bee producing 435 wing vibrations per second in pitch of A; bowling ball scudding into gutter; skyrocket fizzling; Frisbee hitting French door; tied-up ticklee giggling; pulsing heart of patient on operating table;

Scarlatti barfing; Brahms belching; John Cage's long, shaking, silent laughter.

## **A CHIRPING OF STARS IS TICKLING MY THIN EAR**

### **The Auditory Imagination of Osip Mandelstam**



**Matt Marble**

February, 1937

The Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory  
Moscow, Russia

Having been warned not to sing spirituals during her tour in Russia, a stoic Marian Anderson stands singing Payne's "Crucifixion". Inspired fists are pounding upon the board floor. There is a thirst in the audience for this voice, oppressed and transcendent. Everything is trembling. With anticipation, with anxiety, with desire.

Osip Mandelstam - a poet in the throes of Stalinist prosecution and one year before his death in a labor camp - sits listening to the radio and muttering about "the lion's den", "a woman's voice", and "a yeasty cloudburst of sounds".

In the writings of the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam (1891-1938) the reader's ear is forever drawn into a world of sound, sensual and fantastic, spinning in synaesthesia. Mandelstam's world, however, was haunted by the terror of Stalin, resulting in his being arrested and confined to labor camps, where he would ultimately die of a heart attack. The sounds we find in his writings & the mode of listening which drew him to these sounds consequently carry a great deal of anxiety with them. At the same time, his poetic process, as a whole, was informed by this same subtle & sensitive ear - what his wife, Nadezhdah, called "secret hearing".

Mandelstam thought of his age as being in the throes of a 'swelling noise'. And in a sense his writings are a document and a poetic taxonomy of this noise. Whispers, mumbblings, rustlings; birds, bells, horses; machine guns, factory whistles, clattering gates. The sounds encountered are often mundane (including natural, industrial, & imagined worlds), vague (whispered, mumbled, barely audible), and tactile (often the physical act of making sound - the rubbing, scraping, hitting - is emphasized).

In reading Mandelstam the reader shares Mandelstam's, often uneasy, sense that the entire world is trembling and buzzing, at times beautiful and terrifying. *Where shall we begin? Everything pitches and splits, The air quivers with comparisons, No one word is better than another, The earth hums with metaphors* (47). At the same time qualified silences ("grey silence" "black-voiced silence") and the abstinence of sounds ("no birds are heard") abound, so that even these spaces of silence have an irresistible volume invoking the ear. Mandelstam is forever sonifying a world we cannot – or, in some cases, could not – hear ("the beating of dolphins' fins", the "chirping of stars", etc.). The border between metaphor and description is often blurred. The din of nature and industry abound. And while the longing for the musical origin of poetry has Mandelstam venerating and eulogizing the flute, he is at the same time ardently confronting and incorporating the noise of his age.

In what follows we will be listening closer to the soundscape of Mandelstam's oeuvre as well as the informal method of "secret hearing" that drove his poetic style. Here is gathered and displayed a brief introduction to the sonorous taxonomy of one of the most overlooked poets and phonophiles of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**SECRET HEARING:** Mandelstam's poetry can be read as the document of one who is trying to hear, simply trying to hear the world, beyond the dizzying and deafening noise it carries on its shoulders. For Mandelstam this task was Herculean, bound to the roots of logic and formula as much as mysticism and intuition, but flowering in the immediacy of day-to-day living. In Nadezhda Mandelstam's *Mozart and Salieri* Osip's poetic practice and latent metaphysics is revealed to the reader in a more direct language than is revealed in his poems alone. According to Nadezhdah, Osip's poetic practice begins with an inner image, resounding in silence, to which he would listen intensely and at length.

[Osip]: *The poem is alive with an inner image, in that resonating impression of the form which anticipates the written poem. There is not one word yet, but the poem already sounds. This is the inner image; this is the poet's hearing touching it.* [Nadezhda]: *Like a whisper the inner voice is quiet, and it is flat like a whisper. (The vocal cords are not included – hence the absence of sonority).* This inner hearing/voice is then moved to the lips, into a formless babble. [Osip]: *How nice it is for me and how burdensome when the moment approaches, and suddenly the stretching of an arch sounds in my mutterings...*

A poem's words are found as they churn and catch on the lips, finally carved out into clarity upon the page. The listening involved in this process is endowed with secrecy, an esotericism aligning itself with mysticism. *Secret hearing is the poet's secret* (55). In this regard the poet is always listening for the unknown, the mysterious, and this is what cannot be shared or taught. *There exists an intermediary activity between the act of listening and the act of speech delivery. This activity comes closest of all to performance and constitutes its heart, as it were* (CPL, 445). All one can do is listen into this interval of ambiguity, this hiatus; and what one hears is theirs alone until its sharing is inscribed in the poem.

**HIATUS:** This *ex nihilo* formation of the poem is not unlike that pronounced by other poets and mystics – e.g. Jack Spicer, Simone Weil, Hannah Wiener - who often proclaim themselves as a vessel or vehicle for the Other (divine, cosmic, subconscious etc.) word

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or voice from elsewhere. Wiener claimed to be a clairvoyant, to see words imprinted on people's foreheads; she received these 'visions' and her poems were a trace of this reception. Jack Spicer likened himself to a radio receiving transmissions from space; he was a 'hollow tube', a vessel for an Other's message. Mandelstam however would doubtfully align himself with the 'ease' of a purely metaphysical inspiration (refraining to define the Other in any manner), preferring to represent himself in a more concrete and less romantic base, one with more control, subtlety, and groundedness. For the primordial stew of his intuition is always rhythmically harmonized or tempered with an equally strong dose of logic and formalism. And this is a combination he admired immensely in artists like Dante, Bach, and Pushkin.

Regardless, what these forms of audition, of passionate passivity, do share is a supposition that the ego has left the artist in the moment of their creativity. Mandelstam's life and art follow this same kind of self-lessness. *My desire is not to speak about myself, but to track down the age, the noise and the germination of time* (31). His distaste for or professed lack of a familial or social life - beyond the isolated intimacy of his relationship with Nadezhdah - is testament to his own inclination to remove his ego from his poetry (though of course this reactionary position ultimately lends his writing an unmistakable, elusive personality).

Where for happy generations the epic speaks in hexameters and chronicles I have merely the sign of the hiatus, and between me and the age there lies a pit, a moat, filled with clamorous time, the place where a family and reminiscences of a family ought to have been. (110)

This hiatus is where he found himself and where he composed his poems. His adoration for the natural sciences also points towards an affinity for an objective view, or rather the taste of an objectivity that would transcend him. In pondering the circumferential rings of a tree or the sedimental strata of stone, Mandelstam was attempting to hear a time larger, greater than his own life and to be recalled to the unified nature of life, a 'primal sound'.

**PRIMAL SOUND:** In 1919 Rainer Maria Rilke wrote a short essay imagining the extension of the turntable into a sonification of just such a primal sound. Specifically, Rilke was imagining the needle of a turntable as if it could 'read' the tracing of the coronal suture of the human skull. And '[w]hat would happen?'

A sound would necessarily result, a series of sounds, music ... Feelings – which? Incredulity, timidity, fear, awe – Which of all the feelings here possible prevents me from suggesting a name for the primal sound which would then make its appearance in the world ...

Like Rilke, Mandelstam was seeking to be receptive to this 'primal sound', the word before we can assume it and translate it into knowledge, the word as it makes itself known to us. To be receptive to such an Unknown one must always be listening. And it is through this incessant vigilance of the ear, inner and outer, that one comes to hear sounds when and where there would seem to be none. The imagination is opened, as if a sudden sun, the spontaneous blossoming of a tulip, the senses reaching a heightened state of sensitivity. Moreover, the vigilance of listening is never completed, as such, but must be effortfully renewed in order to insure its astounding authenticity: *It is impossible to become accustomed to secret bearing. One never gets accustomed to a miracle; one may only wonder at it. A poet is always filled with wonder.* And with this ever-opening ear comes an increased sensitivity and vulnerability to all noise and the struggle to filter this noise into something meaningful, focused, and clear.

*SHUM VREMENI*  
THE NOISE OF TIME

*Shum Vremeni*, The Noise of Time, was the title Mandelstam chose for a book of his memoirs. Novelist and translator Vladimir Nabokov noted in translating the term *shum* in Tolstoy that [...]

Generally speaking, the sense of *shum* implies more of a sustained and uniform auditory effect than the English 'noise'. It is also a shade more remote and confused. It is at heart more of a swoosh than a racket.

And Nabokov's definition of *shum* fits perfectly in Mandelstam's usage. The soundscape of Mandelstam's world is often described as crowded, sounds smearing one into another, the ear struggling to parse them apart. And all is in motion, will not stand still. Nabokov's interpretation of *shum* as a "swoosh" perfectly conveys this active and fleeting character of sound as well as the manner in which it directly involves the listener, physically. A sound passing you by. A car. A bird. You hear only an aspect of the trajectory, the rest (where it's coming from, where it's going) is a mystery. All you get is a trace, a smear. This ambiguity captures not only the vulnerable and anxious qualities of life under occupation, but also the primordial stew of creativity, the formative preceding and giving rise to the form.

Mandelstam was always sensitive to the changing soundscape brought on by industrialism. *Yes, I heard the sharpness of ears caught by the sound of a distant threshing machine in the field the burgeoning and increase, not of the barley in its ear, not of the northern apple, but of the world, the capitalist world, that was ripening in order to die (101) [...]*. Throughout his writings the sounds of urban life and an ongoing military presence resound.

the thudding of Soviet machines in the Arctic (MVN, 131)  
like the sound of machine gun fire (MVN, 128)  
the low buzzing roar of planes (MVN, 133)  
the postman's horn is frozen (MVN, 134)  
the whistle of ripped gauze and the noise of a carbolic guitar (MVN, 140)  
the noise and bustle of people (MVN, 164)  
the chattering undergrowth of the station (MVN, 164)  
the drumming growth of houses (MVN, 171)  
the recollection of Stygian bells (SP, 34)  
a train whistles, the prince must be near (S, 113)  
the film clatters (S, 143)  
factory whistles hoot (S, 149)  
Let the names of flowering cities caress the ear (S, 177)  
The decaying playbills rustle once again (S, 209)  
People have not ceased to stamp, blow noses, cough, hiss, clap (S, 231)  
motors everywhere, horns too loud (S, 147)

And in the natural world, both inner and outer, Mandelstam was constantly noticing the creatural voices about him:

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A plant is a sound evoked by the wand of the termenovox (NT, 207)  
roaring of the rivers (S, 50)  
a chirping of stars  
the blood's dry murmur (S, 37)  
lost among grasshoppers, the word swoons (S, 34)  
an unsinging choir of midnight birds (S, 7)  
the language of the cicadas (MVN, 70)  
a quotation is a cicada. Its natural state is unceasing sound (CPL, 401)  
the voices of yellow birds on the moon (MVN, 70)  
the cries of the dark green pine branches (MVN, 139)  
it waits with the speaking stones (MVN, 150)  
the silken whistle of autumn (S, 123)  
the wind shakes the tender twigs (S, 218)  
These worlds threaten us with rustling grapes (MVN, 173)  
the subterranean beat of dolphin fins (MVN, 179)  
with a vague southing of leaves a black wind rustles by (S91)  
the surf's great bell (S, 95)  
I hear the years rolling, like the sovereign apple (S, 207)  
babble of sweet and sour, lovely oyster-sounds (S, 64)

**SHAGGINESS:** His audition of nature is often focused on masses or pluralities of same-sounds. Flocks, fields, swarms, choirs. Visually, acoustically, and tactile-y the effect emphasizes texture and often lends a clarifying ambiguity of detail, motion, and noise to otherwise cleanly isolated identities. And the invocation of sound is almost always an act an encounter, a friction or percussion, between 2 or more entities. Everything is rubbing against everything.

the thunder rolls its cart along the wooden roads (MVN, 65)  
the fur of overcoats breathed. Shoulder pressed against shoulder (MVN, 82)  
the water was bumped against one hundred and four paddles (MVN, 128)  
I would harness ten bulls to my voice (MVN, 168)  
a little family of wooden crutches clatter (MVN, 174)  
the whirr of a hundred ships (SP, 64)  
stone [...] let your thin needle stab the breast of the sky (S, 101)  
the wind is playing with a shaggy cloud (S, 109)

These examples show the kinds of pluralities and frictions Mandelstam was attracted to. Sound in Mandelstam is almost always a sound-act. The sounds around him, while often ephemeral and ambiguous, are rarely abstracted, but rather imbued with a physical presence and are often tied to something else physically immediate.

In his biography on Mandelstam, Clarence Brown describes the “shagginess” that pervades his writings. This goes back towards what we have described as the ‘tactile’ qualities of his writing: touch and texture, friction and trembling. Brown has catalogued some of the words which Mandelstam commonly used in this way:

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<b>Roughness:</b>	<b>Agitation:</b>	<b>Stridency:</b>	<b>Acuity:</b>
rough, course	trembles	whistles	prickly, spiny
rough	teems	cry	porcupine
shaggy	to stir	creak	scratched
tousled	to fumble	twittering	splinter
against the fur	tickles	rustle	bird beak
	movement	rings	
	tremble, flutter	screeches	
	moved	click	
	rocks		
	dancing		
	everything cracks & shakes		

Adapted from Brown, 1973.

**A STONE:** In his early 20's Mandelstam was busy trying to find the 'music of logic' in poetry, to erect fortified poems in contrast to the noisy flux about him. His writings were infused with references to gothic architecture and the natural sciences; and he frequently speaks with deep admiration for the music of Johannes Sebastian Bach. The resounding emphasis is on the concrete, the physical: *A cobblestone in the hands of an architect is transformed into substance, but a man is not born to build if he does not hear metaphysical proof in the sound of a chisel splitting rock.* And so his first book of poems was as elemental, concrete, and aesthetically neo-classical as its title, *Stone*. The very first poem, describing a single sound act, is emblematic in its simplicity:

The careful and muted sound  
Of a fruit falling from a tree  
Amidst the unbroken singing  
Of deep forest silence.

**AUDIBLE INAUDIBLES:** *Of Deep Forest Silence...* Many of the sounds in Mandelstam's work are inaudible or 'singing' with silence. These silences point towards potential sounds, sounds oppressively silenced, and the inferred sounds composing organic and non-organic life. Audition and imagination were fundamentally intertwined for Mandelstam: *Dreaming was greater than hearing, hearing was older than dreaming, blended together, sensitized* (MVN, 132). This recurring emphasis on sonorous silences or auditory imagery is closely associated with what might be considered an informal philosophy of time, so beautifully proposed in an essay on Dante:

I openly consulted with chalcedony, cornelians, gypsum, crystals, spar, quartz and so on. It was thus that I came to understand that mineral rock is something like a diary of the weather, like a meteorological blood clot. Rock is nothing more than weather itself, excluded from atmospheric space and banished to functional space. In order to understand this you must understand imagine that all geological changes and displacements can be completely decomposed into elements of weather. In this sense, meteorology is more fundamental than mineralogy, for it embraces it, washes over it, ages it and gives it meaning (W/Dante, 438).

The marking of time imparts meaning. Through the revealing of the vestigial, the traces of action. Mandelstam reflects similarly on the circumferential rings of a tree and the growing

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of a snowball. This recurring thought is one that does not take for granted the fact that something is simply 'there' or that it merely exists. This thought begs consideration for the life of what exists, a life that may precede or even elude our own personal awareness. But through an analytical ear Mandelstam attempts to hear the rings of the tree, the strata of sediment. He is listening to the 'inaudible' traces of time as vigilantly as the live-voiced marks it makes in the world:

grey silence stone (S, 40)  
black-voiced silence from black earth (S, 67)  
the strain of awkward silence (S, 123)  
the whey of silence curdled (NT, 224)  
as silent as an oyster (MVN, 84)  
where fog and silence dwell (S, 85)  
the cicada chorus sleeps (S, 89)  
you can't hear what we say from ten steps away (MVN, 20)  
not to be heard, fur-shod shadows (S, 35)  
no birds are heard stone (S, 34)  
the firmament is silent stone (S, 10)  
the primordial muteness stone (S, 6)  
an unsinging choir of midnight birds (S, 7)  
he melts the silence of the countryside (MVN, 78)  
the [...] bullfinch [...] does not want to sing (MVN, 151)  
I hear, I hear the early ice rustling under the bridges (MVN, 158)  
The seaweed, longer than an organ fugue (MVN, 161)  
The one-eyed song is growing out of moss (MVN, 161)  
Listen to the snowball grow, and eternity strike on stone clocks (SP, 13)  
They've taken the bells away (S, 85)  
I would have listened under the flowing timbre's bark to the movement of the fibrous rings.

If we can imagine the skin of the body undifferentiated from the thin skin of the eardrum – the body as an ear - then we begin to get a sense of Mandelstam's listening. This receptivity to all sound is what composer Pauline Oliveros has called 'multi-dimensional listening' and key to her practice of 'Deep Listening'. "[W]e begin taking in other dimensions – a dog barking outside, other conversations in the same room, passing traffic and so forth. Our global attention is engaging with numerous overlapping dimensions created by sound. At the same time we may be imagining what to say next. We then feel the dimension of imagination or memory" (Oliveros, 15). The kind of imagination that Salieri, whose impulse was immature from of a fear of the open, envied in Mozart.

**FLUTE:** Mandelstam loved music. His mother was a music teacher. We've mentioned his references to Bach, but he has also written essays and poems on Schubert, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and Scriabin, as well as on various musicians he had known personally or heard perform. In his poems he frequently equates 'music' with 'the word'. In a poem titled "Silentium" he writes *Her birth is yet to be; She and word and music are one [...] Let the word become music again.*

Meanwhile, amidst the noise of the day, order is longed for: *A flute is needed to connect the sections of disarticulated days.* This musical instrument is nothing less than a measuring device, a cultural trophy of order and logic. For Mandelstam the flute represented the lost and ancient origins of poetry (pure intonation, prior to the word). And at the same time

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he felt it was the saving destiny of poetry to return the order of the flute, but he himself saw only failure: *My own lips now lisp, Plague or murder at the root. And involuntarily falling, falling, I diminish the force of the flute* (SP, 84). D. Rayfield in analyzing a posthumously published poem of Mandelstam's notes, *[t]he flautist is in the past, unrepeatable. He is what the poet might have been or continued being, had the Hellenic world not fallen apart. Now nothing works* (SP, 95).

Nevertheless, always feeling that he had lost the order of 'musical' language, Mandelstam was left in an endless concert of noises, many of which he managed to learn, love, and engage. This funeral for the flute shares much with the general musical developments that took place during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Alongside the Italian futurists, Arnold Schoenberg (and later John Cage, electronic music, minimalism, punk, phonography) whom noticed or lead this shift early on, Mandelstam stated the situation more clearly and eloquently than anyone. For that he deserves to be recognized alongside these voices and others in the emerging fields of sound art and auditory culture. In the meantime we are left with a tapestry of sounds and an informal philosophy of listening that has much to teach and please our own auditory imagination.

“Yes, I'm lying in the earth, my lips are moving...”

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Peter Downsbrough

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# POSITION





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## the movement of the “originary” in art

Marie-Claude Lambotte

Our contemporary art epoch, spanning the period from modernism to avant-gardism and eventually extending to post-modernism, has made the issue of art itself the central point of its investigations by examining each and every aspect of art to the point of questioning the legitimacy of the very concept of “art” at the risk of effacing it from our intellectual landscape. Such attitudes as manifested for instance in Allan Kaprow’s efforts to cut out slices which consist of seemingly banal sequences of real life in order to relocate and implant them within a range of voluntarily chosen and signifying events, and by doing so, to endow them with the appearance of intentional meaning, shift the traditional understanding of art toward the ethics of life<sup>1</sup>. From this moment on, we can observe that the original criteria that justified the demarcation of both the practice of art itself and the exercise of professional art criticism (the two domains, by the way, being closely related and mutually feeding off of each other) have been called into question. However, it is not our intention to focus this essay on the current state of confusion which seems to dominate the art market, especially in the work of art critics and theoreticians; a great amount of excellent work on this subject has been published on both sides of the Atlantic. This phenomenon, which this author considers to be a sign of an activity on the part of the philosophy of art, necessary to keep it in touch with the newest developments in art, consistently stimulated the course of our reflections. Also, as a consequence of this continuous process of questioning art either by the analytic and cognitive philosophy, or by more historically oriented metaphysics, we felt the importance of asserting a possible “necessity” of art, regardless of the approach which is chosen to define it, a necessity revealed directly by clinical experience — considered in its largest meaning — which also happens to naturally converge with a more general and common existential attitude.

### Activity of composing in melancholia

If we are talking principally of melancholia insofar as it reveals evidence of an underlying pathological structure<sup>2</sup> we must also consider the similitude, though of course in a diminished form, between melancholia and a certain negative mood that can be easily recognized in the trials and tribulations of our daily lives. The symptoms of melancholia in its pathological stage can be essentially identified as, firstly, a state of generalized inhibition which is often described by the patient as a complete lack of interest in daily reality, and secondly, as a generalized negativity which in its turn can be translated into overwhelming feelings of helplessness resulting in the patient’s impulse to refuse any help from another person. The reality of a patient suffering from melancholia resembles a featureless flat surface; lacking in textural relief it is filled with juxtaposed objects, and furthermore, these objects cannot be differentiated by any distinct quality. Thereby, if all objects can be similarly interchangeable and substituted for one another — which constitutes the main persistent complaint of the melancholy subject — it is also true that the objects in question are not contextualized within what we could call a perspective, but rather perceived from a point of view reduced to two dimensions, or, in other words, to a plane

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surface. Obviously, if a melancholy subject were to be questioned on the volumetric qualities of his environment he would give the correct answers, as if it were indeed the matter of measuring three-dimensional space. We cannot therefore be speaking of a cognitive deficiency when we are describing the patient's vision reduced as it is now to two dimensions, but rather of a certain mental interpretation which makes him perceive reality in this flattened manner and prevents him from distinguishing any bumps or features upon which his eye could now focus. Just like the overwhelming disinterestedness which the patient endures and ceaselessly complains of, the lack of relief texture is only another version of the same complaint, both of which contribute to the fact that the melancholy sufferer sees the world as if it were spread in a smooth, uniform, way before his eyes. Let us replay here a transcript of a day dream as reported by a melancholy patient which illustrates vividly the aforementioned lack of perspective (paradoxically, this leads the patient to adopt a panoramic point of view): "I am [placed] in my life as if I were in a theater, very close to the proscenium, but in a side-box. In this way I can simultaneously observe the actors on the stage, the audience in the front rows, and to some extent also the backstage. In fact, I am on the outside, outside of it all. I can see the excitement of the audience brought on by the actors who are made up all over like painted wooden puppets. But I myself am not excited; I remain reserved, not integrated, while at the same time I can see what is happening everywhere. On all sides, I see everything, every little detail, which helps me to avoid being hypnotized by life."

However, our intention here is neither to give analytic account of this dream, nor to begin to capture the first elements which lie at the origins of melancholia<sup>3</sup>. Our focus remains strictly aesthetic in the sense that it is primarily the deficiency of perspective which elicits our attention, as well as its mental translation in the form of a general lack of interest for living. Insofar as this perspective manifests itself as a flat surface, or, similarly, insofar as all objects have exactly the same value and can therefore be indiscriminately substituted for one another, it becomes clear that it would be impossible to choose one object from among many, or, perhaps even more poignantly, to desire one of them. To simplify things: the pure structural logic which drives the discourse of melancholia kills desire and steers the subject toward the belief that there is something else behind reality, something bright and brilliant of the order of such supreme entities as Truth, or Meaning. We can also evoke another image which can give us access to the situation of the melancholy subject who loses all faith in life's possibilities because when he compares them with the Absolute which he tries to pursue, they can no longer have any value, and therefore, any interest at all. This is exactly the image of a solar eclipse which allows us, once the sun is entirely obscured by the dark silhouette of the moon, to see its corona with the fiery aureole. "It shines from behind", says the melancholy patient while comparing this image to his own perception of reality. And we would like to interrupt here this foray into the structure of melancholia in order to reveal a discovery, arising from our experience accumulated during the analytical treatment of such patients, which was what refocused our attention on the field of aesthetics and gave us an inkling precisely of the necessity of the "phenomenon of art".

If we insisted on the apathetic character of the melancholy subject who remains persuaded that reality is no concern of his (although he does not go as far as to deny its existence as is often the case for psychotic subjects) we did so for the reason of pointing out that this complete lack of interest is rooted in a flattened vision of reality which incessantly defies his efforts to find something interesting to look at. And to be able to see everything, without any distinction between a background and a foreground, just as it was described in the case of our "theater dreamer", can equally be interpreted as seeing nothing at all, or, in other words, not allowing oneself to be affected by anything which stretched beyond the limits of pure logical formalism. However, what we often observe in the course of the analytical process and the treatment of such patients is that at a certain point they give themselves up completely to

some kind of very specific and repetitive activity: an activity of composing, of organizing their environment, such as for example to a continuous tidying up and rearranging of the house, to endlessly drafted and redrafted garden projects, to descriptions of walks imagined as a constant stream of landscapes passing through the mind then reconstructed, or even to going through the motions of making never-ending collections of objects. It seems as though the activity of composition, which is carried out for its own sake, allows the subject to experience anew both pleasure and interest. Let us point out here that to modify and rearrange the play of various elements inside a well-limited framework, such as for instance an apartment, a garden, a familiar walk, or a collection of objects, means to make them appear under a different light, against a new background, as if these long forgotten or displaced objects were suddenly projected to the foreground as a result of this new arrangement. This can be true, of course, of any object, be it precious or simply functional; suddenly pulled out of its relegation to the banal and ordinary, which had seemed inevitable under a disaffected gaze, such an object re-appears in a new context. *"Look, I found this old vase, it fits so well here"*, say patients, pleasantly surprised to see a thing, familiar but somewhat neglected, come to new life through the magic of reassembling the elements of its surroundings. And it is at this point of the analysis that we can observe not merely a transference relation in the triangulation formed between the analyst, the patient, and the third object, which occupies a singular and specific symbolic space of its own, but also creates possibility of giving back to the patient the potential of experiencing both pleasure and interest inside reality, which at the same time regains a certain definition.

In this new arrangement of elements, an object (or a group of objects) "appears" as a manifestation, a creation of the context, yet at the same time detached (from the very same context) and therefore able to provide a focal point for the newly found way of looking, a way which allows the subject to recover a lost sense of seeing things in perspective. Set up in such a manner, the object completes the circle of arrangements that made it visible in the first place by becoming the focus of contemplation which in a way provides finality to the whole set. We can perhaps dare to suppose that the object had already occupied a disguised place and function in the process of composition, which in itself was only a preparatory activity, necessary to the emergence of the object. Such an object, regardless of how ordinary it seems, is perfectly in agreement with the definition of an aesthetic object in so far as, by eliciting a focused viewing, it reshapes the world in a completely different perspective while at the same time allowing the viewer a quasi infinite plethora of viewpoints. In order to illustrate our ideas we could evoke all the complexity of the term "aura" for authors such as for example Walter Benjamin who knew how to uncover, in the appeal put out to the gaze by an object, which in a radical way escapes the power of logic by a sort of radiance mirroring, precisely, the infinity of points of view. "Experience of the aura [in objects] thus rests on the transposition of a response common in human relationships to the relationship between the inanimate or natural object and man. The person we look at, or who feels he is being looked at, looks at us in turn. To perceive the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look at us in return."<sup>4</sup> But there is even more to be learned from the effect of the aura: it is also about a flashing occurrence of instances in which a background is suddenly projected to the foreground, which in its turn shakes the foundation of our visual perspective and its habitual ways of seeing things to send us back to some other time (or perhaps a "temporality"), anterior to the division between the subject and the object, or even more, between time and space. "What is aura, actually? A strange weave of space and time: the unique appearance or semblance of distance, no matter how close the object may be. While resting on a summer's noon, to trace a range of mountains on the horizon, or a branch which casts its shadow on the observer, until the moment or the hour become part of their appearance — this is what it means to breathe the aura of those mountains, that branch."<sup>5</sup> We could not in this analysis of the aura better explain its core significance of the call for the originary, that

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is a call for a world which has yet to be differentiated into distinct units, a world before it is recognized by the faculty of judgment, organized by the movements and synthesis of things which have not been stabilized.

### **The function of the context in art**

The example of Walter Benjamin's "aura" demarcates the limits of a purely logical or conceptual way of apprehending the world under the auspices of judgment by allowing us to catch a glimpse — though only through a necessarily fictitious construct — of the "originary" world, that is a world before reflection, and in consequence, before any individualization. Several instances of such a world have manifested themselves throughout the history of poetic, pictorial, or musical arts, and are exemplified by such phenomena as a renewed focus on ambiguity of meaning, or a return to light and sound as powerful resources in themselves. Beginning with Edmund Husserl, the work of phenomenology has consisted specifically in bringing to light this portion of the originary world, that which is neither singularized nor identified, and which escapes the simple grasp of concepts. It is precisely the territory which constitutes what we call the "phenomenon". We can either give it our attention, or neglect it, such as may be the case for a certain branch of analytical philosophy which preoccupies itself primarily with the formal aspects of so called "language games". However, the testimony provided by such painters as for instance Tal Coat or Barnett Newman (who in their writings spoke of several levels of artistic experience) basically confirms the relevance of the phenomenological viewpoint, expressed specifically by the importance which is given to the creative gesture insofar as it must simply serve to manifest the presence of the world. "For me", wrote Tal Coat, "the essential element of the painting is in the background. Not even the preparation of the background but background as a kind of humus. It really is the bedrock, not merely a surface which is supposed to receive something, but a possible birthplace of everything."<sup>6</sup> In a very similar way, Barnett Newman described in his own words a sensation of the presence he had felt in 1942 while standing before the sacred mounds (tumuli) of the Native American Miami tribe in Southern part of Ohio: "Standing before the Miamisburg mound [...] one is confounded by a multiplicity of sensations: [...] by the sensation of the absolute. Here is the self-evident nature of the artistic act, its utter simplicity." Or once more, in a letter- conversation with Thomas B. Hess: "Looking at the site you feel, Here I am, here ... and out beyond there is chaos, nature, rivers, landscape ... But here you get a sense of your own presence. I had an idea of rendering the spectator present, an idea that 'man is present.'"<sup>7</sup>

Phenomenology takes it upon itself to describe the appearance of phenomena and to do so on an originary background which has to be established in a theoretical manner (or perhaps, in a sense, as some sort of a fiction) as soon as we feel its presence behind all concepts. This pure presence, to follow the imagery provided by the above-mentioned painters, far from being just a mere base or a unified and inert undercoat, is on the contrary a product of a preexisting, if not always identifiable, sensory mobility. In other words it is a given, not in the sense of a gift which somehow was previously given to us, but as the "givenness" of something which has always been in existence. Before we can even begin the process of distinguishing ourselves from the world, the famous Husserlian "there is" (*es gibt*) of the world — of which we became part of by birth — is a given. Our consciousness, incapable of making distinctions or judging, is given to us at the same time as the world; the world shaken by rhythms and movements of the originary, which are incessantly composed, decomposed, and recomposed before they become stabilized in a synthesis of sensory elements, so that ultimately, under the influence of the formation of categories of judgment, they may be arranged under the concept of an object. What we are in fact describing in these primitive movements and rhythms of the originary world, which cannot be

called up without help from a theoretically constructed model, is this “there is” which constitutes a spatio-temporal ante-predicative of which our consciousness is intrinsically part, without, however, possessing the slightest ability to exercise any judgment as to the things which may affect it. And it is under the name of a “passive synthesis” that Husserl depicts the originary in the world as an continuous rhythmic influx of elements which our consciousness composes and decomposes into more or less unstable units until finally some of them end up fixing themselves, stabilizing, throughout a process of individuation. Needless to say, for consciousness to be able to exercise the faculty of knowing is always the matter of a thing (an objectality) being recognized in its individuality such as it is already subjected to the rule of a concept. All the process of knowing depends on the belief in a pre-givenness of the thing which we are about to study, the belief which must remain firm despite the “placing between parentheses” of the symbolic markers — the constituents of the thing.

Finally, having arrived at this level of analysis, and after a necessary detour in order to reveal the pre-given nature of the thing, as well as the genesis of the way in which the thing can begin to appear distinguishable from the originary world, we would like to insist on the process itself which contributes to this “surfacing” of the thing. We can say that it is as the result of this process that the thing can be thought of as objective, and to some degree detached, from the primary instability of the world (which Husserl calls the “surround”). In fact, as it seems in the light of the process of restoration in melancholia which we described above — and which consists in the bringing out of an object by placing it in a new configuration of its settings — as well as in the light of pictorial processes in art — which, in a contrasting movement, consists in trying to reveal a primary affective background that incessantly overflows a simple perceptible figure of the thing — we are witnessing the same movement of the constitution of the thing and the world, and in consequence, of ourselves, in that nostalgia of a forgotten affectivity.

[...] the object or thing or word “man” could be swept away like an isolated sea shell on a beach, then the ocean would make itself known. Dialectics could be viewed as the relationship between the shell and the ocean. Art critics and artists have for a long time considered the shell without the context of the ocean.<sup>78</sup> It is therefore the attention given to “context” which at the present appears to occupy representation in general (whether it is figurative or not is irrelevant), perhaps for the precise reason that it reveals the way to access the originary background, which overflows the things of this world, and which can never be reached by means of concepts alone. It is the ineffability of our primary undifferentiation within the world, which — escaping the apparent mastery of a logic that we’re trying, at all costs, to assimilate to language — endows things with their “aural” consistency and lends men flashes of their own advent to higher planes of existence. It remains to see how such an encounter with the “originary” of the world (which persists almost as a matter of an impulse) requires that we provide the coordinates necessary to express it: the tools which, far from being concerned with a relation of adequacy between the object and the corresponding concept that may be a prerogative of judgment, depend inevitably on the practice of art. That practice, namely, which is understood entirely as the revealing of the background — pre-individual and pre-given — which allows a motif, or simply an intention (as we can observe in certain forms of contemporary art) to surface.

Therefore, and at this point we can regain common ground with our preliminary remarks, which acknowledged the difficulties experienced by theoreticians in their efforts to formulate a definition of art that would sufficiently satisfy and encompass the countless present forms of artistic production, we must maintain that while on the one hand our anxiety to provide a definition with a view of all the infinite symbolic points of reference involved in the making of such a definition remains undiminished, on the other hand from now on we can envisage another way of defining art. This new definition brings into play the function of art and makes

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the whole concept of art hinge upon the necessity of its function. To quote Jean-François Lyotard: "to reveal what makes us see, and not that which is already visible"; we must however understand, with the knowledge inherited from the long lineage of phenomenology, and perhaps more particularly from the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, that in order to accomplish this task we would have to first receive, then accept, the "originary" opacity of things.

*translated by: dorota czermer*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Cf. see particularly Allan Kaprow's articles from the eighties in: *Essays on The Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. by Jeff Kelley, University of California Press, 1993.

<sup>2</sup>Both in the *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, 4th Edition (DSM-IV)* and the classification of mental health disorders recommended by the W.H.O., the term "melancholia" has been replaced by "major depression". However in Europe the term "melancholia" is still used by psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. Some mental health professionals classify melancholia within psychosis while others maintain the position that melancholia is a particular mental structure to be distinguished from both neurosis and psychosis. In this they follow the lead of Freud who in his article "Neurosis and Psychosis", published in 1924, considered melancholia as a 'narcissistic psychoneurosis' or, in other terms, an original and independent nosographic category. Cf. M-C. Lambotte, *La mélancolie. Études cliniques*, Anthropos, Paris, 2007.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. M-C. Lambotte, *Le discours de la mélancolie. De la phénoménologie à la métapsychologie*, Anthropos, Paris, 2003, 2nd edition.

<sup>4</sup>Walter Benjamin, "Some Motifs in Baudelaire", in *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, transl. Harry Zohn, Verso, London & New York, 1989, pp. 147-48. We find the same thought in a more condensed formulation in *Zentralpark*: "Derivation of the aura as a projection of a social experience of people onto nature: the gaze is returned." Walter Benjamin, "Central Park", in: *New German Critique*, issue #34, Winter, 1985, p. 41, see also: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/488338> ).

<sup>5</sup>Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography", see: <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic235120.files/BenjaminPhotography.pdf> p. 518 (1953), originally published in: *Die Literarische Welt*, Sept.-Oct. 1931, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol.2, pp. 368-385, transl. Edmund Jephcott & Kingsley Shorter.

<sup>6</sup>Pierre Tal-Coat, Interview by Jean Pascal Léger (1977), see also: Catherine Desprats-Pequignot "The Face of The Other Face – some thoughts about self-portraits by the painter Tal Coat" in: *Revue Française de Psychiatrie et de Psychologie Médicale*, Dec. 2005, vol. IX, issue #91.

<sup>7</sup>Barnett Newman, "Ohio, 1949", in: Barnett Newman, *Selected Writings and Interviews*, ed. John P. O'Neill, Knopf, New York, 1990, pp. 174 and 175. See also: Jean-François Lyotard, "Newman: The Instant", in *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin, Oxford, 1989, pp. 241-2.

<sup>8</sup>Robert Smithson, "Art and Dialectics" (1971), in: Robert Smithson, *The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam, University of California Press, 1996, p. 370.

**George Lewis: *A Power Stronger Than Itself:*  
*The AACM and American Experimental Music***

Douglas C. Wadle

*A Power Stronger than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music*, by George E. Lewis, is a provocative, engaging, and sometimes infuriating book that can be divided into two inextricably intertwined threads: a chronicle of the founding and functioning of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) – a collective of intensely creative, open, and politically aware African American musicians that was founded in 1965 as a means of musical self-determination – and a critical examination of the proper place of the AACM in relation to the discourse on experimental music (of, primarily, the United States).

Lewis is immensely successful in respect to this first thread (the bulk of the book), which is based upon an extensive body of interviews conducted by Lewis with members of the AACM over a period of 10 years and also upon a thorough review of audio recordings of the organization's early meetings. Large sections of the text in these portions of the book are transcribed directly from these sources, giving us both personal histories of significant AACM members, illustrating how the experiences of a strong collection of personalities came together to form this organization, and a sense of the identity of the organization, itself, from its founding as a grass-roots effort to support the presentation and promotion of the "creative music" of its members to its eventual veneration as a Southside Chicago cultural institution.

The second thread proceeds with more mixed results and is based upon Lewis's very significant observation that there is a "general absence of discourses on issues of race and ethnicity in criticism on American [experimental music]," in light of which he situates his scholarship on the AACM "as an interventionist project, an activity aimed at encouraging the production of new histories of experimentalism in music," (xiii). The criticisms I will offer on this aspect of the book will focus on points of argument that are in need of clarification and terms that are in need of definition. These shortcomings, unfortunately, make it impossible to accept all of Lewis's claims as they stand; however, I believe that the fundamental premise regarding the absence of a critical understanding of the impact of racial and ethnic identity on the discourse on experimental music is sound and that identifying the ambiguities in Lewis's work will help stimulate "the production of new histories of experimentalism in music," the stated purpose of Lewis's scholarship in this area.

Lewis's account of the pre-history, founding, and early operation of the AACM is woven together with biographical sketches of important figures in the history of the organization, giving us an insightful glimpse into the cultural experiences of African Americans coming up in the United States (and particularly in Chicago) – from those who were children during the Great Depression, to those who were born at the dawn of the Civil Rights Movement – as it displays the shifting face of institutionalized racism. As Lewis recounts formative incidents in the lives of these artists, striking similarities accumulate that illuminate the necessity, both cultural (collective) and individual, they felt to come together as a grassroots organization that would control the means of production of their own musical works, to support each other's work, and to offer opportunities for younger musicians to garner experience with this music.

Lewis makes a compelling and informative case for the importance of autodidacticism within this context while presenting a clear-eyed and thoughtful account of the educational experiences of young African Americans in the 1950s and 1960s. In particular, the importance of autodidacticism reflects the reality of failing schools – Lewis relates his and contemporaries' experiences with under-funded and overcrowded schools that simply halved instruction time for their students so as to double the number of students served in a single day (without any attempt at compensation for lost instruction time) – and a dominant culture that offered few opportunities to its minority members. Lewis makes clear the awareness that racial prejudice had imposed upon African Americans' educational aspirations: AACM co-founder Philip Cohran's father had a college education and yet worked as a Pullman porter “because they made much more money. A college degree wasn't worth ten cents in Mississippi for a black man,” (7). In a society that devalued formal education for a whole segment of its population (where those opportunities were even available), autodidactic learning strategies take on the character of self-determination and an unwillingness to be cut off from knowledge.

We learn of these closures of areas of cultural activity as we read of many members of the AACM, particularly those of the first generation, enrolling in music programs in various US colleges and quickly discovering – either explicitly through the words of their teachers or implicitly through the lack of opportunities offered – that it was a very rare exception to the imposed rule of racial essentialization, indeed, for a black musician to make a career in the world of pan-European “classical” music. Instead, many of these musicians opted for degrees in music education, where they might find a job teaching music at African American high schools, in the mode of two prominent, high school band directors, Captain Walter Dyette and Major N. Clark Smith, who taught many of the first AACM musicians, or they chose other fields of study altogether. Either way, the lesson was clear: the white-dominated cultural sphere, with its greater connections to funding, etc., would be doing these musicians no favors.

The first generation, covering the founders and early membership (most

of whom were born in the 1930s and 1940s), was largely shaped by experiences of poverty and, perhaps most dramatically, the direct experience of a virulent racism in the US military. The younger members of this generation had some experience of college, usually in those days of segregation, in historically black colleges and community colleges, while the older members of this generation had no college education at all, though they had a more traditional experience of finding their way in the jazz world, accruing experience and respect while playing with more established musicians and, perhaps, eventually leading their own groups.

We see many future AACM musicians enlist in the military during the 1950s, often when educational opportunities did not meet the desires or interests of these individuals: Joseph Jarman and Leonard Jones both dropped out of high school to enlist; Wadada Leo Smith, despite receiving scholarships to two universities, enlisted when a scholarship to his preferred school was not forthcoming. The racism these men encountered in the military, often culminating in a court-martial or the threat of one (as we see in the cases of Leonard Jones, Lester Bowie, and Wadada Leo Smith), is noted by Lewis, who cites historian Robin D. G. Kelley's observation that these experiences with the military may have had a radicalizing effect (65). We see, on the positive side, that "Army musicians had plenty of time to practice and exchange information," (65) and so, where possible, these musicians were able to turn this into an opportunity for more autodidactic and community-based learning, sharing ideas with one another and learning from older musicians like saxophonist Joseph Stevenson, who mentored both Roscoe Mitchell and Anthony Braxton during their respective stints in the army. A pattern emerges as Lewis tells of the experiences of these men in the military who were, to a man, not the sort to defer to authority when they perceived that authority to be in error. They would not be complicit in their own oppression – a fact that would be at the root of the AACM's founding philosophy.

Another common thread binds Mitchell, Jarman, Braxton, and Henry Threadgill together: they all studied music under the open-minded Richard Wang at Woodrow Wilson Junior College in Chicago, Jarman and Mitchell enrolling in 1961, Braxton and Threadgill in 1963. Jarman, Threadgill, and Mitchell formed a study group (again reflecting the autodidactic thrust of African American culture at this time) after meeting there and soon, at Mitchell's instigation, became involved with Muhal Richard Abram's Experimental Band, a "cooperative environment where musicians could learn new ideas and techniques from others, and bring their own music and hear it performed," (68). The Experimental Band also served as a precursor to and eventual feeder for the AACM.

The members of what Lewis refers to as the "second wave," all born in the late 1940s or the early 1950s (this group includes Lewis, himself) grew up in the same neighborhoods, in the same or similar socio-economic conditions (for the most part), and with the aforementioned problem of overcrowded schools; however, they did see some opportunities their elders had not in the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education* and other civil rights triumphs. Most notably these individuals had the opportunity

to attend top-tier universities such as the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and Yale University (Lewis's alma mater). This proved to be no paradise of blissful co-existence, of course, as black students encountered deep-seated prejudice. Many of them became involved with the student protest movement during the Vietnam War and, more specifically, with civil rights activism on their campuses. The university experiences of many, such as Steve and Iqua Colson at Northwestern University were, to a degree, analogous to the experiences of institutionalized racism that their AACM elders had encountered in the military<sup>1</sup>. This was also the first generation of AACM members to come into the organization through the AACM School (one of the initiatives of the founding members that persists to this day) and the only generation, it seems, to have the benefit of working directly with the luminaries of the AACM's founding generation at the school – which quickly led to relatively high-profile performance opportunities.

In many ways the “new regime” that came to run the Chicago chapter of the AACM after the departure of many of the prominent founders and members of the second wave for New York in 1976 and 1977, seems to have had formative experiences more akin to the younger members of the first generation. These individuals, only a few years younger than the second wavers, were radicalized earlier in life than their second wave counterparts. Ameen Muhammad and Ernest Dawkins both became involved with the Black Panthers, just as both had a more patchwork college education of the sort experienced by the older generation – moving between various colleges and community colleges. Like their second wave counterparts, however, they managed to avoid military service.

The narrative springs to life in those sections dealing with the founding of the collective. Lewis provides long quotations from interviews conducted with AACM members present at the organization's inception and from tape recordings of the meetings, themselves. This gives a clear, fascinating presentation of the concerns of the musicians – many deriving from their experiences of racial prejudice, others purely practical and administrative, and still others wholly aesthetic. We are treated to meeting agendas, lengthy discussions around points of contention such as the meaning of the term “creative music,” the racial constitution of the membership, and most importantly, the means by which the organization would allow members to take charge of the presentation and performance of the music they created without reliance on existing avenues that had been compromised by institutional biases against black musicians. These meetings eventually culminated in the articulation of nine purposes contained in the group's charter:

- o To cultivate young musicians and to create music of a high artistic level for the general public through the presentation of programs designed to magnify the importance of creative music.
- o To create an atmosphere conducive to artistic endeavors for the artistically inclined by maintaining a workshop for the express purpose of bringing talented musicians together.

- o To conduct a free training program for young aspirant musicians.
- o To contribute financially to the programs of the Abraham Lincoln Center... and other charitable organizations.
- o To provide a source of employment for worthy creative musicians.
- o To set an example of high moral standards for musicians and to uplift the public image of creative musicians.
- o To increase mutual respect between creative artists and musical tradesmen (booking agents, managers, promoters and instrument manufacturers, etc.).
- o To uphold the tradition of cultured musicians handed down from the past.
- o To stimulate spiritual growth in creative artists through recitals, concerts, etc., through participation in programs. (116)

We see both the early triumphs of the first concerts and the inevitable reevaluations of the means of governance as the organization gained practical experience resulting in a refined vision that led to the departure of many original members.

At this point, before the historical emergence of the names we now know from the AACM as major forces in the musical culture at large, Lewis dwells touchingly on figures that helped constitute the soul of the organization if not shaping its musical identity – figures like Jackson, a talented administrator who offered his skills to the organization and its individual members (helping many of them navigate Chicago’s welfare system). Such details start to fall away as various members of the AACM begin to accumulate some renown and the attention shifts from the homespun activities of a grassroots organization to such issues as representations of the AACM, its members, and their music, in the popular press, availability of recording and performance opportunities, and audience reception in Europe.

Citing the lack of performance opportunities in Chicago, due largely to economic limitations and the racial politics of the Northside/Southside dichotomy, Lewis recounts the tale of the Art Ensemble (originally the Roscoe Mitchell Art Ensemble – the name was later changed to reflect collectivist ideal of its members which included Mitchell, Joseph Jarman, and Lester Bowie) and, subsequently Braxton-Smith-Jenkins (which was hard on the heels of the Art Ensemble in terms of critical acclaim and featured the luminaries Anthony Braxton, Wadada Leo Smith, and Leroy Jenkins) and their respective departures for Paris in 1969. At this point the book seems to be at variance with this collectivist ideal, which was at least as much a part of the AACM ethos as it was a part of the Art Ensemble’s: “...there was no question that the collective conception that dominated the AACM, both

institutionally and artistically challenged the commodification of individuality itself – the ‘star system’...” (155), as Lewis focuses on the achievements of star members such as Mitchell, Braxton, Abrams, Jarman, Smith, and a few others. The working details of establishing officers, determining procedures, the long quotations from AACM meetings, are now gone, and we are not to return to governance issues until the European excursion ends and a second exodus to New York causes friction between the Chicago Chapter, now run by the “new regime”, and the newly formed New York Chapter of the AACM, with a membership drawn from many of the founders of the AACM and members of the “second wave”. Here Lewis seems, despite a valiant effort, to be unable to completely overcome his own partisanship as a member of the New York contingent as he privileges the opinions of Abrams and others that made the move to New York. It is also telling that, for the most part, Lewis focuses on the performing opportunities and achievements of the New York expatriates rather than the organizational activities of the New York Chapter. Did the New York Chapter found a school as well? Did it engage actively in the pursuit of the nine purposes? Lewis’s account leaves us in the dark on these matters.

This points to the difficulty of writing a history of an institution, particularly an institution that was founded to support the work of creative individuals. It is important to tell of the achievements of the members, for it reflects on the way the institution has succeeded, but these achievements are not the entire story – the Art Ensemble was not the AACM (as many AACM members were at pains to point out during this period), though it brought international attention to the AACM. What then was happening with the AACM while the Art Ensemble was in Paris? I found myself wondering how the collective, back home, managed, after its initial success and sustaining the losses in leadership that the departure of so many luminaries introduced, to achieve all it did on a shoestring budget in a social climate that was hostile to any assertion of agency, let alone near total independence, of black artists. This climate is clearly seen in histories Lewis provides of BAG (Black Artists Group) and UGMA (Underground Musicians’ Association) - similar groups arising in St. Louis and Los Angeles, respectively, which suffered less kind fates than the AACM.

Lewis evinces a strong concern with the discourse that frames our understanding of the music of the AACM. This concern manifests in lengthy analyses of press reception of the AACM. Indeed, Lewis touches on a tremendous portion of what has been written in both the popular and academic presses regarding the organization, and he does so to great advantage. Along the way he reveals the traditionalist bias in jazz journalism, particularly within the United States, that helped to marginalize, within the jazz community, the work of the AACM and like-minded musicians, citing such famous (or infamous) examples as Leonard Feather’s blindfold tests, a monthly feature for the jazz magazine *Down Beat*, in which well-known jazz musicians, selected by Feather, were asked to evaluate recordings, also selected by Feather, without revealing to the listener who the musicians appearing on the recording were. Addressing academic attention that was lavished on the

AACM, after the first European successes of the Art Ensemble and Braxton-Smith-Jenkins, which sought to characterize the music of the AACM as either a black nationalist music of protest or a subversive response to capitalist hegemony, Lewis shows the resistance of AACM musicians to the imposition of such definitions by outside forces: "...some AACM musicians felt that this kind of theorizing sometimes devolved into reducing the music to an occasion for the presentation of social theory and exoticism, as well as constructing essentializing differences between various AACM approaches to music," (238). Perhaps most importantly, Lewis shows how internalized assumptions held by the press about racial identity allow white musicians to move freely between the worlds of jazz and classical or experimental music and to be treated as doing so, or even, as in the case of John Zorn, to be lauded for transcending these and other boundaries while Anthony Braxton, for instance, is forced to accept the identity of "jazz musician", in articles by the same writer (508). It could not be more clearly stated than it is when Lewis writes that white musicians of Zorn's generation "who were never subjected to the discourses of canonization and 'roots' that were being used to police the work of black experimental musicians, were able to take full advantage of their relative freedom from cultural arbitration," (508).

This touches the heart of Lewis's attempt to situate the AACM within a broader field of American Experimental Music. It also touches on the status of cultural identity and musical traditions one encounters from that identity – not as a limiting factor but as a point of departure (and return). This may have nothing to do with one's definition of "experimental music" but it certainly has everything to do with the experience of being a musician today in the United States (at least) where very few young musicians play only one "kind" of music, let alone listen to only one kind of music. "Indeed, if jazz, the 'avant-garde' and other musical movements have become part of a larger network in which no one scene is dominant, resistance to the essentializing impulses that discursively block freely forming conceptual, financial, social, and cultural flows is critically important," (510). It is this kind of world that produces a John Zorn and makes his work meaningful for so many, and George Lewis is absolutely correct that John Zorn, without the precedent of the AACM, is unthinkable. It is, therefore, only proper to hold both the AACM and the Downtown II musicians, as Lewis calls Zorn and his musical associates, to the same standard of stylistic mobility – a standard that has been redefined largely because of the groundbreaking work of the AACM. Whether this sort of post-modernism is experimental, in itself, remains an open question (to which, however, Lewis assumes an affirmative answer – more on defining the limits of "experimental" in music below), one that, should we attempt to answer, we should be aware of our own attempts at controlling the discourse.

It is important to make the distinction between discourse and practice clear. Practice refers to the actual activities of the musicians – what Braxton and Zorn, for instance, play and compose. In referring to discourse, I mean the body of language-based knowledge that has accrued around the practice of some musical tradition or another and which comes to define the place of that practice within a broader culture – particularly those aspects of the culture that learn of the practice

through the discourse. This discourse, once initiated, develops its own practice as well, raising the possibility of a widening gulf between discourse and practice, where discourse already could not possibly have embraced all aspects of practice. In this way, discourse may easily come to obscure aspects of practice. Lewis's project is to lay bare how the discourses of the classical-based experimental and avant-garde musics have covered over the aspects of practice that have practitioners learning from the music of their black counterparts. We have seen that he successfully illustrates how both the classical-based discourse and the jazz-based discourse failed to meet the challenge of the music produced by the AACM and proceeded, instead, along their essentializing ways (the "one-drop rule of jazz").

The one-drop rule also plagues funding issues, as illustrated by Lewis throughout the book, as grant-giving organizations remained woefully disengaged from the latest developments in jazz, still grouping it, in many cases, with folk or popular music, and remaining blind to the prospect of such music coming from an African American composer being considered anything other than jazz. The situation only began to ease (a bit) when Muhal Richard Abrams was given a seat on a grant panel with the NEA in the latter portion of the 1970s (395).

This attention to the treatment of the AACM within popular, academic, and institutional discourses opens onto the interventionist program that comprises the second thread of *A Power Stronger than Itself*. In particular, Lewis focuses on the way in which a racialized discourse regarding avant-garde and experimental musics has colored (or, perhaps whitewashed is the better term) the understanding of paths of influence across jazz-based and classical-based musics (and other forms of music, to boot). I came away with the sense that Lewis has raised an extremely important question for which, in the end, he doesn't provide a compelling answer – and this is more a question of methodology than anything else. There are instances where Lewis overstates his case, but mostly it is a lack of clarity in the terms employed that renders the assertions in which they are employed meaningless. For instance, nowhere in the text does Lewis define what he means by the terms "experimental" and "avant-garde" in music (nor does a reading of his previous articles on the subject of improvisation, experimental music, and the relationship between the work of the AACM and white American and European musicians that self-identify as "experimental" uncover definitions of these terms<sup>3</sup>). This is deeply problematic as there is no consensus on their use even within the narrowly defined discourse of the pan-European concert music tradition. In my experience, the two terms have been used more interchangeably within the discourse of jazz, but even to allow that Lewis is employing these terms as used in that discourse (as he appears to be doing) does not resolve the further difficulty that, even should the terms have clear meaning within each discourse these meanings would have to be shown to be congruent or else in some way reconciled by the positing of a working definition of the terms that could be applied to both idioms.

I, myself, am accustomed to a discourse in which "avant-garde" refers to

a, largely, European tradition that flows forward from integral serialism and also includes the proponents of such techniques and their derivatives on the East Coast of the United States and which, within the microcosm of New York City, is referred to as Uptown music. In other words, the music that has found a home in the universities of the United States and has such figures as Boulez, Stockhausen, Babbitt, and Carter as its fountainheads. “Experimental” music, on the other hand, is largely American, and is founded on the work of Cage, Christian Wolff, Morton Feldman, and Earle Brown. It, by contrast, has enjoyed a much more circumscribed acceptance into academia with a few notable institutions supporting such work – interestingly enough, these same institutions can also boast of the presence of AACM members on their faculties: Anthony Braxton at Wesleyan University, Roscoe Mitchell at Mills College, Wadada Leo Smith at the California Institute of the Arts, and frequent AACM collaborator Anthony Davis at the University of California, San Diego (which also formerly had George Lewis on faculty). If we are to truly understand the relation of these terms to one another in a discourse that includes both jazz-based and classical-based musical traditions, and further, if we are to be able to stake out a claim for a broader category of “American experimental music” as invoked in the book’s subtitle, we will need to determine the criteria by which something may be admitted as “experimental” beyond the bounds of either discourse. In this sense, I think the word “experimental” is the correct starting place as “avant-garde” suggests a “garde” in respect to which one can be “avant”. Prior to establishing a broader definition of “American experimental music” that combines impulses that may be grouped together within jazz- and classical-based music discourses, we have no “garde” and so no “avant-garde.”

This linguistic/taxonomical endeavor should also be paired with a thorough historical accounting of the known interactions between practitioners of music(s) that fall under the new umbrella term of “American experimental music.” For instance, we know that Earle Brown worked as a jazz musician before giving himself over to composition in (what has been generally accepted as) an experimental vein, and that he taught the, now obscure, Schillinger System of composition, which also had a profound impact on AACM composers through the tutelage of Muhal Richard Abrams. Whether or not we have any further evidence of interaction between Brown and members of the AACM, or whether Brown kept abreast of the developments in the jazz world after his departure from it (as active participant), we might look towards the correspondence between Schillinger’s ideas and certain broader operating principles within our American experimental music and track the historical avenues by which these principles worked into this music and how they evolved once they were there. This is another book (at least), not Lewis’s, but it is importantly suggested by Lewis’s work. It is also necessary for the proper historical contextualization of any musical practice in reference to the discourse on American Experimental Music (whether the practices of John Cage, Muhal Richard Abrams, or anyone else).

In addition to the ambiguity of terminology employed in the text, we must also examine the construction of a straw-man argument that Lewis deploys when situating the AACM within the historical context of a broader American experimental music. This argument rests upon an unproblematically accepted assertion, made by European composers in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, that jazz was the only interesting music being produced in the United States and that, should American composers wish to come of age, they had best begin incorporating elements of jazz into their work: “It is well known, though not widely discussed in histories of American music, that European composers of the 1920s and 1930s felt strongly that jazz could form the basis for a uniquely American music that could emancipate itself from European models,” (371). This idea has been deeply embedded in the American psyche, taking the popularized form “jazz is America’s classical music.” But the statement is problematic, and those who originally espoused it might be said to have had some of the right opinions (i.e. jazz was and is an area of musical practice of international importance and artistic significance) for all the wrong reasons (i.e. the assumption that American composers not embracing jazz could only create poor imitations of European concert music). By the time these European composers, such as Ravel and Dvorak, were making pronouncements such as this, the Americans Ives, Seeger, Crawford, Cowell, and Ruggles were all actively creating music (music that still stands up today as some of the most interesting work of the period) without much in the way of cultural support at home and without the apparent awareness of the Ravels of the world abroad.

This assertion also must be seen in the light of the prevailing (artistic) ideas of the day. This was the time when Nationalism and Primitivism were all the rage, manifesting in compositions that incorporated folk music of European composers’ (such as Stravinsky, Bartók & Kodály) homelands. This was also the period in which Picasso was fascinated with African masks and composers like Colin McPhee were studying the music of “exotic” cultures and incorporating it into their own orchestral compositions. In the eyes of a Eurocentric classical music establishment, jazz was an exciting music of primitive people to be tamed and civilized by the high art of European civilization. Even those composers who picked up on this European suggestion saw jazz as a primitive force to be civilized by the intellectual exertions of “classical” composition. In an anthology of American composers writing on American music edited by Henry Cowell (first published in 1933), the celebrated African American composer William Grant Still writes: “Colored people in America have a natural and deep-rooted feeling for music, for melody, and rhythm. Our music possesses exoticism without straining for strangeness. The natural practices of this music open up a new field which can be of value in larger musical works when constructed into organized form by a composer who, having the underlying feeling, develops it through his intellect.”<sup>3</sup> We cannot, then, accept this assertion as a simple acknowledgement of jazz’s aesthetic superiority to American classical music. Unfortunately, it seems that Lewis does just this as he elides the evidence of Cowell and Ives attempting to bring awareness to their own music with an aesthetically-driven inferiority complex, for which no direct evidence is offered.

Advancing this confusion, Lewis makes the claim for jazz as the preeminent aesthetic force in American music, “an avatar for American music itself,” (372), and hence, all attempts by classical composers to get their work noticed by a jazz-infatuated Europe, particularly all comments complaining, as Ives is quoted as doing, that “we have gained the reputation in Europe of being able to produce only jazz – or conventional imitations of European music...” (373), are read as attempts to deny jazz any influence rather than attempts to claim influence for other avenues of American musical expression. Of course this can be seen in the light of the sort of competition for resources that Lewis invokes throughout the text, a competition that led to the creation of the AACM in the first place, as an organization to advance the music of its members in response to the fact that they were receiving no support from outside. Ives and Cowell might be seen as, less systematically, pursuing an analogous agenda, but, as with the AACM, this does not entail a sense of antagonism or ill will towards the “competing” form. Indeed, Cowell included William Grant Still and George Gershwin in his anthology despite his aesthetic differences with them.

It is important to address this topic in Lewis’s book because it forms such a foundation for his reading of the history of American Experimental Music – the inferiority complex of the white American classical musician when he compares this work to jazz, that will lead to his manipulation of the discourse from his culturally privileged position so as to erase this “competitor”. If, as it appears, this antagonism is overstated, then alternative rationalizations of uses of discourse on the part of pan-European experimentalists will be needed. For instance, where Lewis claims that John Cage has introduced the terms “chance” and “indeterminacy” into the discourse to obscure a debt to bebop, he is relying on this notion of an aesthetic inferiority complex that has white experimentalists feeling the need to respond to the challenges of black music, in this case a notion of spontaneity<sup>4</sup>. Lewis’s presentation does not account for the fact that Cage’s first work with chance procedure, *Music of Changes* (1951), was fully notated, making no attempt at spontaneity at all, nor does he address anywhere in the text the acknowledged debt Cage owed to Eastern thought in attempting to formulate a music devoid of his own taste (or any other manifestation of ego-drive), the generally accepted impetus for Cage’s work with chance procedures and indeterminacy. Should Lewis hope to successfully dismantle this prevailingly held viewpoint, his arguments would need to address these historical facts rather than pass over them in silence.

We must also examine Lewis’s position on the work of the AACM in relation to the jazz tradition, which is substantially harder to pin down. This seems entirely appropriate from the standpoint of a survey of members’ position on this question. On the other hand, if Lewis is to be successful in placing the AACM in the context of “experimental music”, then it seems very important to stake out a claim on the relationship between jazz and the AACM and to offer the reasoning behind the position. It seems to me that this is a necessary precursor to any positioning of the AACM in relation to an experimental music to which it belongs and which is

not confined to a stylistic tradition – i.e. if it is not to be “experimental jazz” but “experimental music” (in the sense of transcending pre-existing styles) then we must know how it is not, wholly, jazz. The same must be undertaken in reference to an experimental music stemming from the pan-European tradition, and here Lewis is correct to point at the bases of the biases of the terms we have available to us to reference this practice: Why should this tradition give us “experimental music” while the music of the AACM is termed “experimental jazz”?

For sheer wealth of information, *A Power Stronger than Itself* is an impressive addition to the historical record on the AACM, particularly in its early days. Lewis also provides invaluable information of concurrent organizations of similar musical direction and espousing the same Black Arts Movement drive towards self-determination. While I have been critical of some aspects of Lewis’s presentation, particularly in reference to his weighting of the text towards certain outstanding members, the story could not be told without some of this information, and I am willing to own my own bias towards bureaucratic detail in my assessments. I am sure that many a reader will be quite happy to leave the deliberations regarding dues payments in favor of accounts of the Art Ensemble’s living situation in Paris. To his credit, these accounts of the stars of the AACM make available the commentary he offers on the reception of the AACM and the music that came out of the AACM within the popular and academic presses. This connects to the status of the book as a piece of scholarship. In this area it has the benefit of asking important questions regarding the influence of cultural politics on the discourses surrounding music, American experimental music and jazz, in particular. Though I remain unsatisfied with many of Lewis’s answers to these questions, in regards to his stated purpose of inspiring the production of new histories of experimental music that consider these questions, he has succeeded as much as any instigator could hope to do by provocatively questioning our prevailing assumptions and by introducing notions that contradict the prevailing norms of thought, thereby demanding further attention. At moments the provocation goes too far, overstating unfounded positions, but these instances are balanced by the interest of the rest.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Interestingly and significantly, none of the members of the second wave were drafted into military service during Vietnam, nor did they have any direct experience with the military, which had been such a profound presence in the lives of Mitchell, Jarman, Braxton, Threadgill, Bowie, Smith, etc.

<sup>2</sup> See “Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives” in *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 16, no. 1 (Spring 1996) and “Gittin’ To Know Y’all: Improvised Music, Interculturalism, and the Racial Imagination,” in *Critical Studies in Improvisation*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (2004).

<sup>3</sup> Cowell, Henry, ed. 1961 [1933]. *American Composers on American Music: A Symposium*. New York: Frederic Unger Publishing Co.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis’s argument is predicated on the assumption that bebop was in some way more spontaneous than any jazz that preceded it, a claim he makes in his article “Improvised Music after 1950” and supports with a description of big band swing, which ignores the presence of small group swing (even as a standard feature of the larger big bands) in which more spontaneous, improvisatory music was performed and which also ignores the milieu of Kansas City jazz, which was well known for its all-night jam sessions and the looseness of (even its large) bands such as Walter Page’s Blue Devils, Count Basie & his Orchestra, Andy Kirk & the Twelve Clouds of Joy, and Jay McShann and his Orchestra (of which a young Charlie Parker was a member). See Pearson, Nathan W. 1987. *Goin’ to Kansas City*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, for a thorough history of Kansas City swing in the wide-open era of political boss Tom Pendergast.

## Essay on Peter Hutton's *At Sea*

Cambiz A. Khosravi

To Peter Hutton filmmaking is an historical extension of painting, music and architecture, rather than a development out of the novel and theatre which is what most of us are accustomed to.

His film *At Sea*, recently shown at Upstate Films in Rhinebeck, is a good case in point. Hutton initially wanted to make a film about ship-breaking, the extremely dangerous process by which rusting hulks are broken down into their component elements in capital starved countries like Bangladesh. He said that after three hours of shooting in one of these ship-breaking yards, he was kicked out, presumed to be an undercover Greenpeace activist. However the usable footage prompted him to construct a trilogy: the building, voyage and dismantling of a ship.

This juxtaposition evolved into a new narrative. But trilogy can also evoke the notion of triptych; and after seeing *At Sea*, for some as of yet unknown reasons, the German painter of religious works, Matthias Grünewald (c. 1470 – August 31, 1528) and his largest and most famous work the Isenheim Altarpiece in Colmar, Alsace, came to mind.

Hutton creates his art within the age of global capitalism, where labor worldwide is at the service and needs of capital. Grünewald, working in the pre-capitalist times and the looming Protestant Reformation, faced a related predicament. The Reformation began as an attempt to reform the Catholic Church by believers who were troubled by the sale of indulgences and the practice of buying and selling church positions which they saw as false doctrines and malpractices within the Church, specifically, as the suppression of the transcendent by greed. Indeed, Luther's nailing of the 95 Theses comes one year after the completion of Grünewald's masterpiece.

As noted, Hutton's camera records in painterly terms. He composes static long held tableau shots, plays with positive/negative space with some scenes even recalling the color-field paintings of Mark Rothko and goes so far as to show a worker painting the hull of a ship a la Rothko.

The first part of the trilogy in *At Sea* is in one of the world's largest shipyards with workers dwarfed by their own creations, resembling worker ants, intent on assembling these ships for the needs and benefit of something far bigger than themselves: capital.

Then in part two the camera records the container ship's cargo-hauling journeys from Montreal to Hamburg in the face of the foul North Atlantic weather. Again, we see the painter in Hutton in the way he plays off the nature of film's two-dimensionality by comparing a side view from the ship's rail rocking motion against the background of the sea to a Rothko-esque painting in motion.

The third and last part takes place at a maritime graveyard in Chittagong, Bangladesh's biggest port. Here Hutton records the astonishing and hazardous process of ship-breaking done by workers who have no other means of survival.

To quote Peter Hutton: "After experiencing mankind's ability to create such a monstrosity

## An Essay on Peter Hutton's *At Sea*

once it's *At Sea* the camera is locked on to a wide shot of many cargo boxes. I couldn't help but begin to become concerned with what all those cargo boxes contain. Perhaps some of them are full of grain and other essentials but more than likely they contain garbage that will be consumed and tossed out on to the trash heap, just like the ship that carries them."

In contrast to Grünewald's clear religious message of meaning in the loneliness of human existence and facing bodily corruption, Hutton has no message. He only sees loneliness. *At Sea* is not a "political film". Rather Hutton chronicles the life and death journey of these colossal container ships without the transcendence of a metaphor such as Grünewald's crucifixion. He relies instead on the viewer's empathy to complete the circle. Hutton is a child of his time, a time where the economy is in total control of human existence. In Grünewald's world the economy was only one part of daily life.

In the Isenheim Altarpiece, there are three views. The first view, with the wings closed, is a Crucifixion showing the harrowingly detailed, twisted, and bloody figure of Christ on the cross in the center which is then flanked, on the left, by the mourning Madonna being comforted by John the Apostle with Mary Magdalene kneeling with hands clasped in prayer, and, on the right, by a standing John the Baptist pointing to the dying Saviour. At the feet of the Baptist is a lamb holding a cross, symbol of the "Lamb of God" slaughtered for man's sins.

In the second view, when the wings are opened, three scenes of celebration are revealed: the Annunciation, the Angel Concert for Madonna and Child, and the Resurrection. The third view with wings opened further it discloses on either side of the carved innermost shrine two panels, Saints Paul and Anthony in the Desert and a Temptation of St. Anthony. -(Wikipedia)

Christ's sorrow speaks to us of his calvary and St. John's pointing finger makes sure of it. Grünewald true to his time believed in the value of suffering, feeling the pain of the world and the ultimate promise, hence the crucifixion metaphor.

"(His)... Crucifixion is sombre and livid; inside, all is a magic glory of brilliant color and light, and the final scenes of the Desert Saints are again lurid and eerie, with, in the Temptation, the kind of devil-haunted imagery that permeated Bosch's visions of sin."

-(Wikipedia)

Now compare this with- "The sublime is no more strongly felt than in Peter Hutton's magisterial *At Sea*. Put simply, the film tells the story ("the birth, life and death"—in the director's words) of a container ship—but there are no words to adequately describe the film's awesome visual expedition. Hutton knows the sea. His experiences as a former merchant seaman have informed his filmmaking practice, known for its rigor and epic beauty. *At Sea* begins in South Korea with diminutive workers shipbuilding. The colossal vessel is revealed in de Chirico-worthy proportions, its magnitude surreal to the human eye. Off to sea, the splendor and intensity of the water—set against the vibrant colors of the containers—causes us to see the world anew. The film concludes in Bangladesh amidst ship breakers as enthralled by Hutton's camera as we are by his images."—Andrea Picard

The work of Grünewald expresses the torment of the early sixteenth century more fully than that of any other artist of his time. His was a common (community)held vision, Hutton, working in another monstrous time, is able to find visual beauty in a landscape of total alienated despair. The visionary ego (alone) at a loss.

Even though Hutton chooses not to have a soundtrack in all of his films, I find in this particular case it's more than an aesthetic choice, perhaps a new metaphor?

Speaking for myself, I miss St. John's pointing finger and what it indicates. It is also interesting

Cambiz Khosravi

to note that Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece inspired Paul Hindemith, one of the most important German composers of the 20th century, to create his opera and symphony entitled *Mathis der Maler*, in the time of Nazi Germany.

Can the art of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, in the grip of monopoly capital, similarly achieve an imaginative transcendence of the radical dilemmas of our time?

I hope by this juxtaposition I have awakened the curiosity to find out more about the two seemingly disparate artists and their time. How did we get here.

## Rethinking Contextuality in Tonal and Post-Tonal Centricity

Brian Hulse

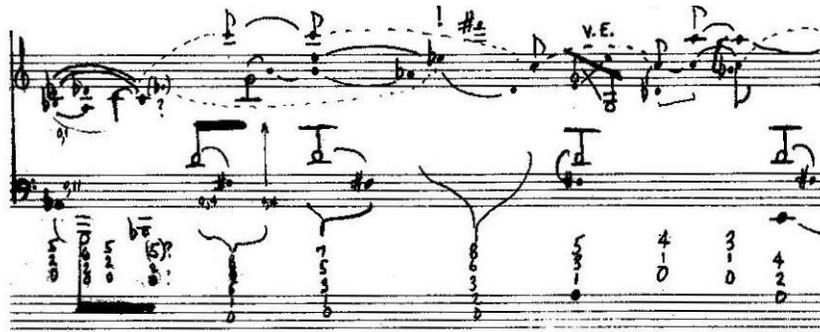
This essay considers aspects of the dichotomy between tonality and post-tonality, and in particular the point at which one theory trades into the other. This dividing line is hardly well-defined. A musical work may be treated to radically different analytic interpretations depending upon where the line between tonality and post-tonality is drawn. On the surface, it may seem that the line marks a point of conflict between these two territories over repertoire. To a degree, this is true. But I think there is something deeper at stake in which the territorial interests of tonal and post-tonal theory intersect. What is paramount at this level is not so much *where* the line is drawn, but the integrity and stability of the line itself, which rests to a great extent on a dual function of the concept of centricity.<sup>1</sup>

I will restrict the discussion of this topic primarily to two theorists: Miguel Roig-Francoli and Joseph Straus. I single these theorists out because they are authors of influential textbooks which, by design and by necessity, define and rationalize the tonal/post-tonal dichotomy. I will not get into the history of this territorial configuration. It is a long and fascinating tale intertwining all manner of ideologies, dogmas, polemics, institutions, and personalities. I will say this: it would be naïve to presume that tonal music and post-tonal music are simply distinct empirical phenomena which have unilaterally ‘given rise’ to their respective theories. Granted, there is some empirical basis for speaking of a tonal repertoire, as distinct musical conditions can be singled out.<sup>2</sup> But there is far less of an empirical basis for post-tonal music, which seems to be designated primarily by its relationship to tonality. Roig-Francoli, for instance, defines post-tonal music as “all the techniques and styles of pitch organization that resulted from [the] search for alternatives to functional tonality.”<sup>3</sup> He designates the post-tonal repertoire not in terms of any musical traits, but in a pervasive psychology where every post-tonal composer is unified in a common antipathy towards tonality. Straus, however, would like to see something objective in the category. He has it that post-tonal music, at least what he thinks is *important* post-tonal music, is unified in some deep structural way not apparent on the surface. He says, “We are becoming increasingly aware of the common structures that underlie the obvious stylistic diversity of (Schoenberg, Webern, Berg, Stravinsky, and Bartok).”<sup>4</sup>

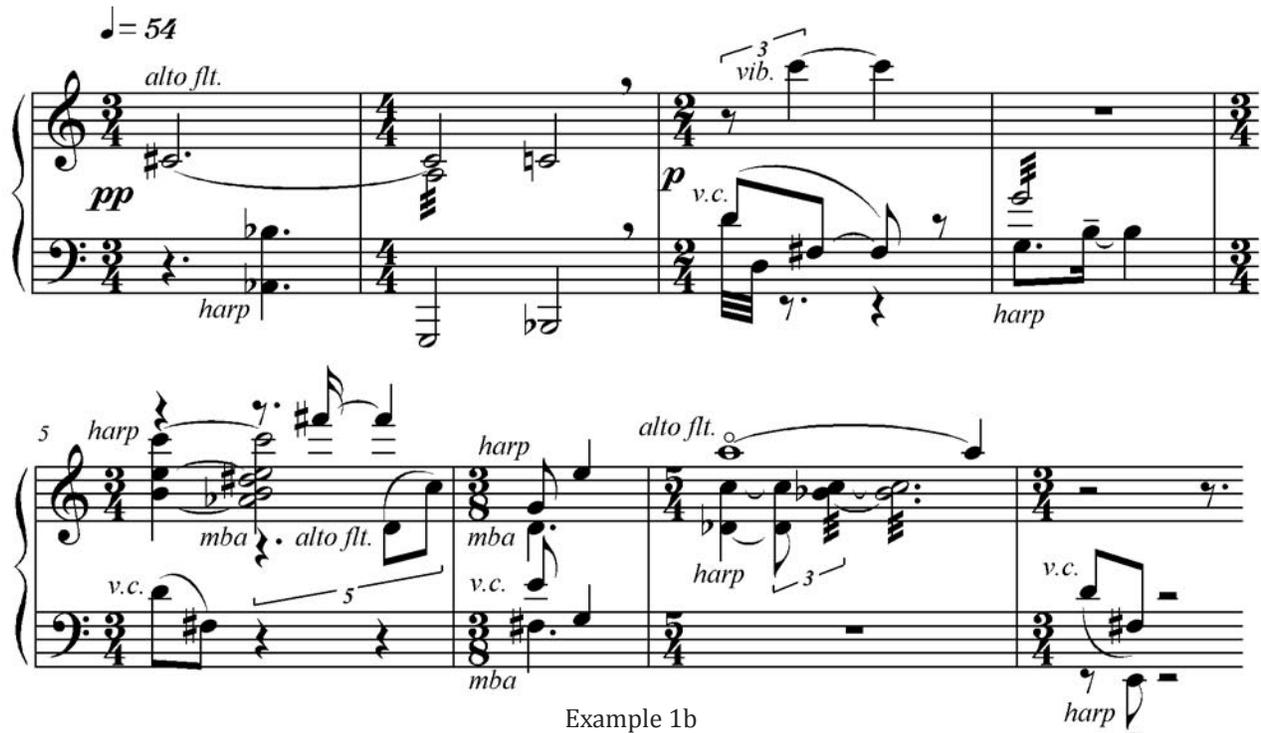
Whatever the complexities may be in distinguishing tonal from post-tonal music, their distinction in theory *appears* rather stark. The symbolic order of the two systems bear little resemblance to one another, and the way they are applied to music seems rather different as well. According to Straus, one interprets *prolongations* in tonal theory as opposed to *associations* in post-tonal theory.<sup>5</sup> Prolongations are transmissions between surface and depth, while associations are transmitted horizontally.<sup>6</sup> But they are similar in a more fundamental way. Prolongation and association ultimately represent two strategies of an organicist paradigm. In the exemplary case of Schenkerian theory every work is interpreted as a ‘composing out’ of the same fundamental structure, resolving, as Schenker puts it, “all diversity into ultimate wholeness.”<sup>7</sup> Straus reminds us that Schenkerian theory allows us to “hear through the musical surface to the remoter structural levels and ultimately to the

tonic triad itself.”<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, post-tonal associations ensure “that the music is motivically integrated at all structural levels.”<sup>9</sup> A motive, which is usually reduced to an abstract interval structure, is found to link pitch-points in some pervasive, arboreal manner. Talk of organicism and ‘underlying unity’ is replaced by references to *coherence*. These essentially belie the same intelligence, collapsing everything to the One or to the Identical as the supreme analytic value. This paradigm has proven a productive tool for the determination of certain kinds of theoretic objects, although what is gained in these objects seems to me to be lost in terms of *aesthetic* engagement.<sup>10</sup>

There is no universal agreement over what music can or cannot sustain a prolongational interpretation. There have been sporadic efforts to expand the orthodox Schenkerian approach ever since Salzer’s *Structural Hearing*. Even some contemporary composers, like Morris Rosenzweig, *begin* with a Schenker-like prolongational scheme, which is then filled out with atonal textures.<sup>11</sup> Ex. 1a reproduces his preliminary composition sketch for his work *Melpomene* for chamber ensemble. A reduction of the score corresponding to this sketch is given in Ex. 1b.



Example 1a



Example 1b

although there is little correspondence between the graph, the score, and anything approaching an authentic Schenkerian procedure. That being said, the sketch does direct the listener's attention to certain features that are to be heard prominently. It suggests that the pitch C is to be heard transferring registers from cluster to cluster as a kind of pedal tone. It also highlights the significance of the recurring D/F-sharp dyad played by the cello, meaning that this dyad is *prolonged* through its appearance within different textural and harmonic situations. Most theorists would likely dismiss these prolongations as *contextual* – that is, they persist simply by means of textural emphasis, prominence, and repetition. However, in listening to this passage it is not difficult to perceive the almost magnetic qualities that the D/F-sharp dyad acquires. In each occurrence, there is a subtle shift in the way the dyad 'sits' within the harmonic context, creating a sense of ongoing pull or tension evolving throughout the passage. But perhaps even more striking is the way in which the texture sets up a polarity between those chords *with* the dyad sounding and those *without* it. One begins to sense the *presence* of the tones precisely when they are *absent* as a kind of pulling or magnetism.

None of these phenomenal affects overcome the charge of their being contextually created. My point is that by discovering these sorts of effects (gravitation, magnetism, etc.) in non-tonal contexts, a procedure is taken up which may be brought to bear on *tonal* contexts. There is nothing preventing the question as to the extent to which similar affects in tonal music might themselves be contextually generated. If in any sense they are, we are immediately brought to significant ontological questions about the actual foundation of tonal centrality. Tonality, firmly established in the minds of theorists as dependent upon some systematic functioning for its centric affects, is exposed to the possibility that these affects may pre-exist the functions which are applied to them.<sup>12</sup>

Another example of non-tonal centrality is discussed by David Smyth, who shows how Stravinsky coordinates his serial materials in *Threni* so as to centralize certain tones, collections, and motives.<sup>13</sup> A passage from the movement De ELEGIA PRIMA in Ex. 2 entails many centric procedures. The material culminating in the unison D-sharp at the fermata (m. 61) is the first instance of three similar passages, each of which creates sectional articulations (the final instance providing the cadence for the entire movement). Measure 56 articulates the end of a penultimate phrase, with the tenor solo and bugle arriving on a unison D-sharp in tandem, both coming as upward leaps from G-sharp. Besides this confluence, its egocentric stress and its phrase-ending placement, the centrality of D-sharp/E-flat is already well established. It has been serving as a pedal point in the chorus for some measures and has been used to articulate endings and beginnings in previous phrases. The final phrase commences with reduced texture (tenor solo and bugle alone), running through the series in a kind of 2:1 canon or imitation. This produces an internal reprise of the G-sharp-D-sharp cadential gesture in the bugle in measures 59-60, with both lines coming to a close once again on the D-sharp fermata.

54

Bugle  
(in C)

Tenor  
(solo)

Chorus  
(S/A)

Vln/Vla

prin - - - cepts pro - vin - ci - a - rum fac

fac - ta est sub tri - bu - to, sub tri - bu - to.

58

C Bgl.

T

ta est sub tri - but to.

Example 2

Stravinsky deploys his serial materials here in such a way as to produce tonal centers which have meaningful implications for the articulation of phrases and sections. In this regard it may be asked whether the articulation of phrases creates the centrality of D-sharp/E-flat, or if the centrality of D-sharp/E-flat creates the articulation of phrases. The answer, of course, is that *both* are true. Reciprocity between pitch and rhythm in musical articulation in general is bread and butter for just about any music – although, as we shall see, confusion exists as to just how such reciprocity is regarded (if at all) in tonal contexts.

Of course, Rosenzweig and the serial Stravinsky are relatively extreme cases. There is plenty of music much more similar to Haydn or Chopin in which prolongation-like events may be found. But if there is no allowance made for tinkering with Schenker's original theory, it seems basically pointless to extend it beyond the repertoire for which it was designed. And this is Straus' interpretation.<sup>14</sup>

So what music is to be considered tonal? Straus' staunchly conservative position is only Western classical music from Bach to Brahms.<sup>15</sup> Roig-Francoli offers a somewhat more inclusive conception, which is reflected in the content of his tonal theory text. It includes

a handful of show tunes and pop songs.<sup>16</sup> By not restricting tonality to European Classical and Romantic music Roig-Francoli makes a bit of a mess of the clean historical division that Straus argues for – and generally complicates the issue of what constitutes tonality versus centricity. This notwithstanding, both theorists clearly understand post-tonal theoretic and musical territories in direct relation to the territory defined for tonality. What's at stake is more than the simple 'range' of post-tonal music. The more distinctly tonality is defined, the more enhanced the *theoretic* identity of post-tonal theory becomes, even as it dilutes the post-tonal repertoire itself.

At the line dividing tonal and post-tonal musics, functional tonality trades into nonfunctional centricity. According to Straus, such centricity lacks the 'resources' of tonality, specifically that of prolongation.<sup>17</sup> "Even without the resources of tonality, music can be organized around referential centers."<sup>18</sup> The sort of organization attributed to nonfunctional centricity is referred to as *contextual* – which essentially means that the onus is on the music to create whatever referential quality or prominence of a pitch that makes it centric (through repetition, accent, duration, etc.) Straus argues that, "[i]n the absence of functional harmony and traditional voice-leading, composers use a variety of contextual means of reinforcement."<sup>19</sup> Roig-Francoli invokes a similar notion of a 'contextual' versus a 'systematic' centricity, asserting that "there are no such things as 'systems' of nonfunctional pitch centricity, and to determine a center achieved by nonfunctional means we need to examine and interpret specific musical contexts."<sup>20</sup> His notion of system curiously excludes contextualizing processes. In a *dynamic* system, system *equals* process – something manifested by anything intelligibly musical.<sup>21</sup> Roig-Francoli seems to mean by the term a trans-historical, a-contextual structural presence which becomes relevant in conjunction only with a highly particular set of musical properties.

It is clear both Straus and Roig-Francoli think there is some a-contextual, structural presence that exists separately from an actual piece of music; otherwise tonal music would not be entitled to omit the requirement of contextually reinforcing its centricity. This function-presence would seem to return on the notes something that they are lacking, something they need to make them work. Without there being a gap between what the notes *do* to bring into existence the presence of function and what is *returned* by the function-presence not already possessed by the notes, there can be no claim that tonal centricity is not just as 'contextual' as any other music. I do not believe it has been demonstrated there is such a gap in tonal music that calls up and is returned with some function-presence which exempts it from the contextual burdens of other centric music.<sup>22</sup>

Taking at hand any piece of tonal music one is sure to find an abundance of 'contextual reinforcement.' Extreme cases come to mind, such as the eccentric repetitions of E-flat in the second movement of Beethoven's string quartet Op. 135 (Ex. 3). There are, indeed, functional explanations for this passage – or rather, explanations which situate the *drama* of this passage in functional harmonic terms.<sup>23</sup> Lingering, as it does, the musical meaning of E-flat is placed in doubt – a doubt which Beethoven seizes in order to craftily reinterpret the downward whole-tone tendency of F→E-flat as a lower chromatic neighbor in an upward leading motion D-sharp→E.

(Vivace)

15

21

Example 3

What is driving this drama? Is it the functioning of functions, or is it what I would call a play of ‘tone-rhythm’?<sup>24</sup> Are the notes and rhythms deferring to the cueing of functional authorities, or is the tone-rhythm creating the very conditions from which functions may be intelligibly abstracted? It may well be that Beethoven is working in qualities and intensities which cannot be adequately plotted in an a-priori system (forming a ‘liberated line,’ as Deleuze and Guattari say<sup>25</sup>). This is the possibility I am asking the reader to consider.

Ex. 4 presents an even more radical contextual situation in the same movement: the dramatic repetitions of an A Major scalar fragment – a bit of music whose only operative determinant seems to be the number and total duration of the repetitions themselves. If there can be any existence of harmonic function, it is a function without a purpose; a function forced to ‘wait’ while some other musical force or necessity – something lying outside the clean rational dialectic of tonal functions – follows its purposes unabashedly. What is this music ‘doing’ once the A Major scale is clearly established? I would immediately dispense with the answer of ‘nothing,’ for each repetition, each sound, adds something. The relevance of a functional or Schenkerian interpretation is quickly suspended – for an embarrassingly long passage of time – because there is no structural answer, once the function ‘exists,’ for why this texture persists (and persists and persists).

143

150

158

etc.

Example 4

Ex. 3 and 4 are admittedly unusual situations. But the differences between these passages and more conventional ones are of degree rather than of kind. Any bit of typical music, such as the opening two segments of Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* (Ex. 5) consists in repetitions, extensions, and other musical 'needlework' which implicate questions beyond those answerable by recourse to harmonic function. Before undertaking the usual procedure of assigning harmonic functions to this music, consider the ways in which this passage *contextualizes* the centrality first of the CM chord and then of the Gm7. In both cases, the right hand rearticulates its chord ten times. The left hand alternates between the first and fifth chord degrees, and the 'ends' of both segments feature flourishes which emphasize the root note. Reinforcing the pitch-centeredness of the music, the second segment re-traverses

the virtual trail or 'trace' set out by the first, only it switches out the chord ('pitch level'). These belong to the same category of centric contextuality we found in the Stravinsky, where repetition, stress, accent, and other elements of phrase formation are noticeably at work. We may ask why there are ten repetitions of the chord and no more (or less). Why does the left hand repeat the fifth-root gesture? Why does the second phrase follow the particulars of phrasing (minus the chord) of the first? Why these melodic figures and not others?

**Vivace**

Example 5

Just as Stravinsky creates conditions involving the articulation of phrases and the reciprocity of pitch and rhythm outside any 'inherent' properties of a twelve-tone set in *Threni*, so too does Beethoven's rhythmicization of CM and Gm7 engage in similar centric actions. Both involve a kind of reciprocity of rhythmic activity and tone 'placement' that seems to take place on an independent, a-systematic plane; a plane which consists in the direct apprehension of sonic intensities in play; in which form, so to speak, forms itself.

Even if it is granted that the establishment of tonic in this (or any typical first phrase) is contextual, one might regard this as a temporary and fleeting situation applicable only to musical beginnings. And yet we still have the extension of other harmonic situations in their duration and texture, including in that of the next segment which continue to pose the question as to why *this* number of repetitions and *this* aggregated duration is required to produce this particular musical affect. In the case of the second segment, it seems clear to me that the most salient issue in the musicality of the second segment is the *duration(s)* and patterning of the first segment. In other words, though we may be in a position to finally (re)claim the jurisdiction of tonal function, the musical particulars continue to be governed by the contextual behaviors of previous events. From this perspective it is easy to conclude that the contextualization of events in tonal music is absolutely pervasive – to the point where it is not possible to find any examples of passages or situations where there is not some kind of contextualization going on. The question becomes what exactly is left over that requires

explication by way of the concept of tonal function? What can be separated out that would place tonal music in an ontologically distinct category exempt from the context of its own flow and flux?

Clearly, pervasive contextual reinforcement in tonal music challenges the claim that tonal music is somehow exempt from the requirement to ‘reinforce’ its centrality. The claim may also be challenged counterfactually by showing that reducing or effacing the contextual reinforcement of centrality in tonal compositions results in the breakdown of expressive and musical effectiveness, or at least in the mutation of one qualitative experience into another. Indeed, durations – rhythms, repetitions, and so on – can be manipulated without altering a functional-tonal analysis. The question is begged what is actually being shown by an analysis which would apply equally to an undetermined number of hypothetical, dysfunctional musics.

By way of experiment, take Schenker’s middleground analysis of Chopin’s *Etude in F Major* Op. 10, No. 8. Ex. 6a shows the first four bars of the opening, 6b, its equivalent middle-ground structure according to Schenker, and 6c, a re-composition of that middle-ground structure to a different foreground. I hope the reader will agree that what I have composed is a completely different musical animal than the Chopin without *materially* affecting Schenker’s middleground graph. The intention was to create something of at least passable musicality, rather than simply disfiguring the rhythms and gestures. Without overstating the implications, I will simply conclude that my re-composition poses a problem for the procedure that would abstract the same harmonic function (and in this case voice-leading) from two very different contexts.<sup>26</sup> The difference of context in these cases appears to consist in just those elements that Roig-Francoli and Straus bracket out for non-tonal (or non-functional) music.

Op. 10, No. 8

Example 6

Brian Hulse

Musical score for Example 6b. The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano part and a violin/viola part. The piano part has four measures with fingerings 1, 2, 3, and 4. The violin/viola part has a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure. Annotations include a circled '3' above the first measure, '(Nbn)' above the piano part, '(Zu A, T.41)' below the piano part, and 'Mtg. I--' and 'Vdg. I--' below the piano part.

Example 6b

Musical score for Example 6c. The score is in 4/4 time and features a piano part and a violin/viola part. The tempo is marked 'Moderato' with a quarter note equal to 76. The piano part starts with a *pp* dynamic. The violin/viola part has a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure. The piano part has triplets of eighth notes in measures 3, 6, and 7. The violin/viola part has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 7.

Example 6c

These observations suggest that there is much more to the efficacy of *tonal* centrality than the presence of function is able to explain. Perhaps if tonal works are approached as if their centrality really were a function of contextual events, we may find that various parameters such as duration, rhythm, the quality of harmonies, the particular asymmetry of the diatonic scale (patterns of whole and half-step qualities), and so on, go a long way in accounting for the phenomenological affects of tonal centrality. It is true, after all, that these variables can be configured limitlessly to create centric effects like 'gravitation' and the presence *in absentia* of tones in innumerable ways, whether tonal or not. From here it is a short step to the conclusion that the general belief that surface textures are 'supported' by underlying harmonic structures or progressions is backwards. Rather, harmonic progressions are themselves supported by the rhythmic and contextual events that constitute musical surfaces as such. In abstracting away from surfaces we arguably leave behind everything that is essential — which is to say, *everything* is essential.

There are other reasons for questioning the ontological segregation of tonal and post-tonal centrality besides the musical observations and philosophical arguments I have thus far presented. Recent psychological research reassesses the conventional cognitive model of listening in which listeners rely on the recollection of a memory accrued through cultural saturation over long periods. Carol Krumhansl explains that, contrary to received wisdom, the more adept and experienced people are in a particular musical style, the better they do in discerning unfamiliar styles.<sup>27</sup> Musicians trained in Western classical music are not restricted by “familiar tonal hierarchies,” rather, they seem to be equally skilled at differentiating sounds regardless of whether the musical system is known to them or not. Krumhansl notes that these findings stand in contrast “to the general assumption that musical knowledge develops gradually over years.”<sup>28</sup> Marc Leman argues that studies claiming the existence of tonal hierarchies in long-term memory “provide no evidence for the claim that listeners familiar with Western music have abstracted tonal hierarchies in a long-term memory.”<sup>29</sup> According to this research, the immediate functioning of short-term memory appears much more responsible for the moment to moment processing of musical listening. I suggest that the more nimble musical listening is conceived to be, the less we need to rely on concepts like functionality to understand tonal centrality. This, effectively, would demote functional tonality, exchanging it with a limber, ‘contextual’ absorption of tonal centers and the resulting qualities such as gravitation and the presence-in-absence of tones.

One of Straus’ reasons behind denying the privileges of tonality to non-tonal centrality is that any prolongation that may be said to occur in most post-tonal music doesn’t reach all the way to a deep structure, or even a consistent middle-ground. I would rejoin that the ability to procure such deep structure analytically has more to do with a fetish for the metaphysical than with how music is really heard or what is important about it. I personally favor a Gurney/Levinson concatenationist view where music consists primarily in the local movement from gesture to gesture and from phrase to phrase.<sup>30</sup> Any middle-ground to back-ground progression in this conception is pure fancy – there would instead be a kind of ‘fadeout’ of foreground formations into a void; a void whose threshold marks the transition from a musical understanding to a musical metaphysics.

In conclusion, Straus and Roig-Francoli’s views provide but two examples of an ongoing tension in music theory – a tension that is very much about where to mark the territories of tonal and post-tonal theories and their corresponding repertoires. Both theorists presuppose the presence of a system that in some fundamental sense transcends the necessity of contextualizing centrality for tonal music. How to situate a Bartok or a Shostakovich, or for that matter an Indian *rāg*, or any other sort of centrality becomes a problem that is *wholly other*. But if an *ecumenical* concept of centrality ultimately carries the day, as I think it must, the dichotomy is thrown into ontological disarray. We are confronted with the uncomfortable dissonance between mismatching states of music and states of mind. But music itself is immune from these problems. It continues to be what it always has been: eccentrically centric.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> By this I mean two distinct types of centricity: tonal (or 'systematic') and post-tonal (or 'contextual') centricity, which both seem to have a similar *musical* function while being generated under very different conceptual conditions.

<sup>2</sup> Dmitri Tymozco proposes five features of tonal music. These are: 1) Conjunct melodic motion 2) Acoustic consonance 3) Harmonic consistency 4) Macroharmony (the use of a relatively small number of notes) and 5) Centricity. Tymozco's conception of tonality is dramatically broader than the more conservative notions singled out in this essay, applying to "not just eighteenth and nineteenth-century Western art music, but rock, folk, jazz, medieval and Renaissance music, impressionism, minimalism, and a good deal of non-Western music besides." (web source)

<sup>3</sup> Miguel Roig-Francoli, *Understanding Post-Tonal Music*, (McGraw Hill, 2007) pg. 2

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Straus, *Remaking the Past*, (Harvard University Press, 1990), pg. 3

<sup>5</sup> see Joseph Straus, "The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music," *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 31, No. 1, pg. 8

<sup>6</sup> Straus writes "Associations of this kind draw together elements separated in time and create coherence at the middleground." Joseph Straus, "The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music," pg. 13

<sup>7</sup> Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, Longman, 1979, pg. 5

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Straus, "The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music," pg. 1

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 15

<sup>10</sup> My argument here is that idealist forms of analysis (musical metrics, equivalences, identities, and other structuralisms) circumvent aesthetic issues by nature. They are identifiable irrespective of the musical or artistic quality of musical works.

<sup>11</sup> For a more detailed study of centricity in Rosenzweig's music, see my article "Of Art and Artifice: Style and Technique in the Music of Morris Rosenzweig," *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 43, No. 1

<sup>12</sup> Many theorists are accustomed to equating harmonic qualities to the location or identity of a corresponding function within a harmonic system. In reality I believe these functional 'assignments' are simply applied to qualities that are already there (and which may exist in one form or another in many other musical styles, real or possible). The qualities are retroactively attributed to systematic functions, despite the fact that functions in themselves are empty dialectical markers or nodes.

<sup>13</sup> David Smyth, "Stravinsky as Serialist: The Sketches for *Threni*," *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 221

<sup>14</sup> This is the thrust of his argument in his article "The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music"

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Straus *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*; 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), pg. 130; in this text he defines tonality according to these conditions:

I. Key. A particular note is defined as the tonic...with the remaining notes defined in relation to it.

II. Key relations. Pieces modulate through a succession of keys, with the keynotes often related by perfect fifth, or by major or minor thirds. Pieces end in the key in which they begin.

III. Diatonic scales. The principle scales are the major and minor scales.

IV. Triads. The basic harmonic structure is a major or minor triad. Seventh chords play a secondary role.

V. Functional harmony. Harmonies generally have the function of a tonic (arrival point), dominant (leading to tonic), or predominant (leading to dominant).

VI. Voice leading. The voice leading follows certain traditional norms, including the avoidance of parallel perfect consonances and the resolution of intervals defined as dissonant to those defined as consonant.

<sup>16</sup> Miguel Roig-Francoli, *Harmony in Context*, (McGraw Hill, 2003)

<sup>17</sup> Elsewhere Straus frames the dichotomy as between centricity and prolongation. See "The Problem of Prolongation in Post-Tonal Music," pg. 6

<sup>18</sup> Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, pg. 131

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 131

<sup>20</sup> Roig-Francoli, *Understanding Post-Tonal Music*, pg. 5

<sup>21</sup> Examples of conceptions of dynamic systems include the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (University of Minnesota Press), and in the theory of projection put forward by Chris Hasty in his book *Meter as Rhythm* (Oxford University Press)

<sup>22</sup> In advancing his positions, more often than not Straus appeals to the 'power' of the analytic model to ask and answer its own analytic questions, rather than to the validity of its application. This sort of circular idealism is quite common among North American theorists.

<sup>24</sup> This is a multidimensional concept in which tone is not abstracted from rhythm or vice-versa.

## Rethinking Contextuality

<sup>23</sup> The Eb can be seen initially as a 7<sup>th</sup> of a V of IV

<sup>24</sup> This is a multidimensional concept in which tone is not abstracted from rhythm or vice-versa.

<sup>25</sup> Deleuze and Guattari write that musicians draw “their own diagonal, however fragile, outside points, outside coordinates and localizable connections, in order to float a sound block down a created, liberated line, in order to unleash in space this mobile and mutant sound block...” Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pg. 297

<sup>26</sup> A standard defense of Schenkerian theory is that the various analytic levels are only valid when taken ‘all together.’ I think this argument is more of a rhetorical shield than anything else. Regardless, there is no escaping the fact that Schenkerian theory is a quintessential realization of the Western hierarchical and identity-driven image of thought. It is a metaphysics positing ‘deep structure’ objectively inhabiting the notes of a privileged repertoire.

<sup>27</sup> Carol Krumhansl, “The Cognition of Tonality – as We Know it Today,” *Journal of New Music Research*, 2004, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 257

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, pp. 257

<sup>29</sup> Marc Leman, *The Role of Short-Term Memory in Probe-Tone Ratings*, *Music Perception*, vol. 17 no. 4, pp. 507-508

<sup>30</sup> see Jerrold Levinson, *Music in the Moment*, (Cornell University Press, 1997)

## **Josef Tal, A Remembrance**

Robert Gluck  
October 2008

Josef Tal, who died on August 25, 2008, was the towering, foundational figure of electronic music in Israel. He played a major role in the development of Israel Art music beginning a decade before the founding of the State in 1948. Born in Poland on September 18, 1910, Tal née Gruenthal, died just short of his 98<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was a prolific composer and an important educator for several generations of Israeli composers, an iconoclast who from the start bucked dominant compositional trends in Israeli music. His eclectic compositional style has been described by Alexander Ringer in this way: characterized by “broad dramatic gestures and driving bursts of energy generated, for example, by various types of ostinato or sustained textural accumulations...”

Josef Tal’s early compositional style, upon immigrating to Israel in 1934, was a point of some controversy, due to his departure from – and criticism of – the so-called ‘Mediterranean school’ favored by many Israeli composers at the time, among them Paul Ben Haim, who set traditional Middle Eastern Jewish melodies within a European, often Impressionist, harmonic vocabulary. For this reason, Tal recalled later in life that he had been viewed as an “enfant terrible”. His work was beloved by his students and other younger composers, while alarmed critics once declared a concert performance of his music for piano and electronics to be a “Terror”.

Tal was a committed champion of electronic music throughout his life. Composer Reinhard Flender, a former student, recalls the deep value Tal placed upon music generated electronically: “He was very philosophical in his approach to electronic music. It was somehow clear to him that it [electronically generated sound] was the highest level of sound production because it had overcome all limits of a traditional instrument in terms of speed, color, pitch, etc. He contradicted with all the authority he had my theory that a sound produced by a musician was fundamentally different from a sound produced by the turning of the button of a synthesizer. For him the production of electronic music was in no way different from playing the piano. The only difference for him was that in electronic music the composer is united with the performer. It is a way of direct communication between composer and audience without the intermediary state of notation and interpretation of the written score.”

Tal always remained rooted in European music, at times composing using dodecaphonic techniques. His works have included music for choir and orchestra, ballet and opera (often on biblical themes), music for solo instruments including piano, harp, woodwinds, strings and brass, music for orchestra, percussion ensemble, accompanied voice and other

instruments, chamber music and music on electronic tape. Fellow Israeli composer Tzvi Avni notes that Tal's best-known works are his two concertos for piano and tape, a harp concerto, and the opera Masada for tape and singers. He has been awarded many prizes at home and abroad, including the coveted Israel Prize (1971), Arts Prize of the City of Berlin (Germany, 1975), Johann Wenzel Stamitz Prize (Germany, 1991), and others.

Tal first experienced electronically generated sounds in the 1920s, as a teenager in Germany, while working in the studio of Friedrich Trautwein, inventor of the Trautonium. It was his teacher Paul Hindemith who directed him to the Trautwein studio. The man who would become Israel's electronic music pioneer was thus one of the first in Europe to experiment with the use of electricity to generate sounds. Tal came to feel that electronically generated sounds were absolutely equivalent in kind and value to instrumental music.

When Tal immigrated to pre-Israel Palestine in 1934, resources did not exist to compose with electronics. Thus, he was unable to continue his involvement with electronic music until the late 1950s. As he recalled, "We didn't have access to electronic instruments to produce sounds and there was no [perceived] need for them by the public." Ironically, Israel was founded at virtually the same time as Pierre Schaeffer's first experiments with *musique concrète*, both in 1948. Schaeffer's approach was to transform recorded sounds on tape by playing them back at different speeds and direction and using cutting and pasting; multiple layers of such sounds would then be mixed together. The newly emerging body of work made its way to Israel within a decade, when it was first publicly presented on Israeli radio.

Despite a continuing lack of access to equipment, Tal's vision persevered and approached fulfillment when, in 1958, he had the opportunity to research electronic music studios around the world, as he traveled on a UNESCO fellowship. As Tal recalled, "I traveled to the studios across Europe and America and I learned what there was to learn. When I returned home, I brought with me a tape recorder, which was a source of great interest and excitement to people. Slowly I hired engineers interested in the field to conduct experiments in creating sounds." The experiments he had in mind were tied to a plan to develop a studio leading to the founding of the Israel Center for Electronic Music at the Hebrew University, the first of its kind in Israel.

Tal's international tour included a visit to the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center (CPEMC) in New York City. He met with Vladimir Ussachevsky on the same morning that future CPEMC director Mario Davidovsky was also making his first visit. Davidovsky recalls waiting at the front door with Tal at his side. While there, Tal learned about Hugh Le Caine's invention, the Multi-track (1955), a keyboard instrument that allowed a composer of *musique concrète* to simultaneously change the playback speeds of six separate tapes, each independently, relative to pitched played on the keyboard.

With the assistance of physicist and government leader Shalhevet Freier, Tal was able to purchase Le Caine's instrument, around which he built the studio. The order for the Multi-track purchase was first placed in 1959, but construction of the instrument was delayed for a year and a half, by which time its circuitry included the newly invented transistor. Installation in Jerusalem involved substantial difficulties, continuing even after the formal opening of the studio in 1961. Le Caine himself came to Jerusalem to conduct repairs in early 1962 and eventually, with the assistance of Tal's studio engineer, a man named

Robert Gluck

Sales, Tal's dream of the Multi-track became reality. In addition to the Multi-track, the Israel Center for Electronic Music was organized on the model of the WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk, West German Radio) Studio in Cologne, Germany with oscillators, filters and tape recorders. Tal composed many works in his studio, where he served as director until his retirement in 1980, succeeded by Menachem Zur. The studio remained in use until its closure by the University in the 1990s.

A discussion of Josef Tal would not be complete without a few words about his life as an essayist and educator.

Tal writings reflected upon key ideas emerging from his compositional process. One of these related to his identification as an Israeli composer. Tal held that music necessarily reflects the environment in which it was composed, the morality, emotional make-up and behavior of people in their daily lives, all of this constituting the nature of nationality: "...if I wouldn't have decided to go to Palestine in the early 1930s or would have gone to London or New York, I don't think I would have written the same music ... there would not be the same elements of twelve-tone music in it, or electronic music, or any other thing...." Yet Tal thought of his identity as a composer as not limited to national sensibilities: "...my environment is not only Israeli, my environment is absolutely international ... So I am a member of the whole world, but I am living in a certain country, which is called Israel and very near to all that interests us – our fight in life, our struggle in life. And this certainly comes out in the music, no matter if it is written for piano or for electronics, or for whatever you want."

Another interest related to the notation and scoring of electronic music. Tal sought to address a challenge inherent in the medium itself, since electronic sounds are often non-pitched and thus cannot be notated in a conventional manner. A consequence of this is the problem of replicating electronic music on the basis of a score. Tal's thinking about these issues formed the basis of presentations at the 1988 and 1992 International Computer Music Conferences. More recently, Tal published an extended essay in 2002, on yet another topic. Titled 'Musica Nova in the Third Millennium,' Tal addressed the gradual development of timbre as a musical organizing principle throughout the history of Western music.

Tal's career as an educator began at the Jerusalem Academy of Music where he taught for more than a decade, beginning at the time of its founding in 1936. It was renamed the Israel Academy of Music and Dance in 1948, when Tal became director. He remained there through 1952. Tal was also one of the founders and guiding hands of the Jerusalem Institute of Contemporary Music and he played a role in the development of the Israel Computers and Music forum. Tal considered electronic music, including hands-on work, to be both useful and important for study by all music students. Reinhard Flender wrote: "Josef offered seminars in this subject to all students of musicology. But he encouraged all of the participants to do their own work, which meant to create a piece of electronic music."

Josef Tal's legacy is most apparent in the testimonies of his colleagues and students. Prominent Israel composer of electronic and Art music, Tzvi Avni, remembers Tal as "a composer who believed very much in what he was doing throughout his life, and in this respect he can be a model for every artist." Menachem Zur, Tal's successor at the Israel

Center for Electronic Music, recalls: “Yosef Tal was a source of inspiration even at his very old age. When I visited him, his comments and reactions were always given with a deep wisdom and experience that both shocked me and calmed me at the same time. They were of biblical dimensions, coming from a sage, the elder of the tribe, the one who has seen it all before and was able to relate to the “catastrophe de jour” from the high summit of the tallest mountain.” Stephen Horenstein, founding director of the Jerusalem Institute of Contemporary Music concludes: “Most of all, he taught me to aspire to create with the pioneer’s uncompromising spirit, regardless of what might be currently in vogue. He was OUR pioneer, the epitome of that uncompromising energy.”

### Notes

Alexander Ringer’s description of Josef Tal’s music is from the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. 22, London: MacMillan Publishing Ltd., 1980, 289. All other quotations are drawn from interviews conducted by the Robert Gluck between 2003 and 2005, with the exception of the Tal interview, which was conducted by Shlomo Dubnov, at the composer’s home in Jerusalem in September 2003, drawing upon questions drafted by Robert Gluck. A follow-up interview was conducted by telephone in December 2004. An English text may be found on the internet at the Electronic Music Foundation’s EMF Institute: <http://www.emfinstitute.emf.org/articles/gluck.tal.html>.

This essay draws heavily from the author’s previous article, “Fifty Years of Electronic Music in Israel,” published in the periodical *Organised Sound* 10(2): 163–180 © 2005 Cambridge University Press.

*patrick fadely*

*noise*

*for ben boretz*

poised over noesis noise severs silences:  
*theoretical indiscipline as praxis*

long wait by the door:

the drone droned:

I am in the media light bathing sense in ex words.

the abandoned stars their wheedling of nothing  
against a canvas of nothing

*a description of the surviving records of...*

some pink around the rim again. cartography, guides to sailing saline seas

coastward. mast set wheeling, half distracted thru influence, cast

igation.

late din a monad

*functional*

until the plausible overwhelms me the casual-usual  
*see you tomorrow a caveat emptor* doing its

(emptiness here)

enough to be final

stash of

white noise in my ear the absence of sound will not come being is sound wall of sound wall  
of sound will not come

windows

to be stripped of  
ornament

decoded by act of

desire, starting over:

(wise man aground in the bodily stone: your hand in the *modus ponens*).

this is revision by means of inclusion, a reduction of nothing to alkaloids

which rot the guts of architects

in the theater (formerly a mason temple, the trompe l'oeil night sky dimmed over  
arabesques:

the opera? *Don Juan*. un

redeemed from our cosmic status  
the slighted children have returned in glass gowns &  
a million gasoline fires illuminate the city

other nights it was movies or underfunded theater  
for the politically and pragmatically disenfranchised: fight  
songs  
& folk songs (as if there were a difference

morbid clothes of dun  
wool  
having thoroughly  
soaked  
the sustain from fifty  
barrels

o hear the rondelays the overtones see they cast catholic shadows against the renaissance  
interior, behind spectacles a shadowplay of motive, rhythmical as an aqualung  
the promise of a future new name devolve from a seed in decaying subsiding

as dogs drawn to carrion, to catshit

& we phylogenesis among them:  
empty pack  
of cigaret,  
rum bottles.

begin again:

also, the wind full of seed

also, the windmill at dusk

land : landscape :: noise : sound

land    &    noise

depthless, but  
sound & landscape  
invoke perspective  
grafts

Dürer's

*MELENCOLIA*

for

exampl

e.

this is economic, & so  
real. the marks comprise

the score. cut, wrested from stone a scarred promontory:

the medium of space, the interval

a new scale of saliency?

they strike light through my skin I forget I am

becoming human

numbers (mathematical & musical) quantify & qualify a universe

plasticity ties wires, reagents flow thru salt silt: you free yourself from tradition

only to be another wake in its sea eddying out

chained alongside Prometheus

with our certainty:  
shadowy, metaphoric

silence is  
the admonition to keep listening

silence investigates its own absence inhalation, exhalation  
a modified monarchy to distribute the wealth of people their portion of nothingness: empty  
hours, but the rain comes.

sound, the silentest wind: un

moored long enough to:

forget myself

the navigable climates

seem distant what is the land that papers walls

what is the land that has been described along an axis of alphabetization my  
legislate of insubsistence own-consoled-being

smell of my body

baptized for you this day in november begin again hour  
glass hands cannot stop the kiss, the recognition

we exist so far as others believe we exist *as* we exist

a dew of detachment clings to my skin in traces

substantial, circumstantial, oriented.

*This Way Out* is not marked on these maps  
whose tyranny of entrances disfigured the landscape

*blanck:*

white white are the children of melancnath!

inscrutable are their features.

reconcile expression with intension - you are only  
met with signs which sing

a nomenclature of tells.

drawn to blindness like seed drowned in wind: a disc spun flat wheeling pins in procession:  
scales peel through digressions: spindles a needful blemish

the dishonesty indefining circles

the ring's significant in empty center: throughlines, causeways, the Arc de Triomphe.

eh, political fishes-congruent: heuristics of distraction

“my closest acquaintance----limn we gather to pass thru the gate

the world divided & returned

testimony diminishment what divides the world is by definition nothing commas of sense,  
commas of narrative scale:

loose belt girt loose round virile wastes let fall.

death does nothing: it need not the mark, the name a catalogue of debts & credits

of sounds; nothing so motion perfectly generous, a catalogue

cleaving. iconography's hollow resound:  
no envelope

p  
u  
l  
s  
e  
s

in a ritual fire

or  
quarr  
el

some  
ness.

monuments in a stream of time. cartography: elements

of sacrifice

the commotion of celestial axles devolves upon us

& imposes its dysymmetries

on the

faithful but the virtuous one walks with ease in the midst of this

the way for him is never obscure.

Pēteris Cedriņš

## **A Door for Dorota**

Light from under the heavy curtain down the wall  
Weak winter light, hard and cold as the corner of the garden  
Beyond the window, rust forming on the light green door to the wood-  
Shed, the wall the color of skin, the shriveled grapes still hanging  
Since the cats scared the departing starlings away

A door is a day, the asters last a month or more  
In the leaden water, green the color of the sea buckthorn beyond  
The window with the cut asters bright, the carrier pigeons whirling,  
Attracting hawks that fall dead into the garden long after the neighbor fires

Shot from the birdshot factory that could have been ours  
Between the wars (a slender tower flaunting the shaft within,  
The dark red brick worn away – but it's working again;  
Droplets of lead drop to form shot as slowly as the hawks fall

After the blast, always here, long after the fires (we eat their hearts  
(And the door opens, and you can sleep in the grass  
(The curtain is wooden, like in the Cuvilléstheater,  
And the frozen grass is warm to the touch

## LA SEGUNDA LLUVIA. NOTAS A LA PARTITURA/

### SECOND RAIN: A PROGRAMME NOTE

Fernando Garcin

Los poemas llegan sin avisar. Tú sólo los cazas al vuelo. Has de intentar mantenerte despierto y darte cuenta de cuándo llegan. La cara B. La segunda lluvia... Esa lluvia que cae de los árboles y de las cornisas de los edificios después de llover. Esas gotas de lluvia rezagada que te recuerdan que existe un segundo instante, una segunda oportunidad para retener el momento que se escapa. Es el "After the rain" de Coltrane. La poesía, como la música, hace eso. La poesía llueve. Es la lluvia después de llover, la segunda lluvia. La palabra hablada y la música nos llevan a ese momento después de la lluvia, después de todo lo que en el mundo que vemos sucede.

Las cosas están ahí, a nuestro alrededor. Tienen vida propia. Los sentimientos, los hechos, todo lo que sucede por azar o por esfuerzo, son las cosas del mundo a las que nos acercamos para darnos cuenta que ya formamos parte de ellas y aún no del todo. Ese acercamiento requiere un momento de tanteo, un pathos de ternura hacia lo que no somos o aún no conocemos. Más tarde, después de la lluvia, de los encuentros y las partidas, la belleza y la ausencia duelen y somos el instante fugaz que permanece para dar fe de su existencia, del silencio y los sonidos que todo lo envuelven.

Escribir, como una canción, como vivir, es un eterno regreso a casa. Estás volviendo a casa continuamente, a una casa que igual ya no existe... Te asaltan imágenes en un momento, tan fugaces como parpadear... atisbas algo familiar, entrañable, algo que no es frío... que es cálido... algo que te haría sentirte en casa, jugar, bailar, apasionarte... a esa imagen te gustaría decirle "Si bailas con una rosa, recuérdame un pétalo"... "¿Harías una taza de té y dejaríamos pasar la tarde sin hacer planes?". Están todas las cosas que existen antes que las palabras. Y están todas esas palabras y sonidos que se acercan a las cosas como los dedos a un piano, un gato a tus piernas o la voz al silencio. Nunca sabes lo cerca o lo lejos que puedes estar...

Poems come without warning, unexpectedly. You just catch them on the fly. You have to try to be alert and notice when they come. The B-side. The Second Rain... That rain that falls from trees and the edge of buildings after the rain. Those belated raindrops remind you there may be a second time, a second chance to hold with you the times that passes you. Coltrane's 'After the Rain'. That's what poetry and music do. Poems rain. They are drops after the rain. The second rain. Music and spoken word take us to that moment after the rain, after everything we see happen all over the world. Things are there, around us. They have their own lives. Feelings, facts, everything that happens by chance or by force, everything is something to get close to them, to make them notice we are already part of them but not yet all. This approach to them is asking us to try, a pathos of tenderness towards what we are not or we don't yet know. Later, after the rain, greetings and farewells, beauty hurts in its absence and we are the fleeting moment that remains to tell of its existence, about silence and sounds that are all around.

Writing, like a song, like living, is always coming back home, the long endless journey home. They come to you in the blink of an eye for moments, as fast as lightning... you can squint something familiar, endearing, something that is not at all cold... something that could make you feel at home, to play, to dance, immerse yourself ... you would like to tell that image: 'If you dance with the rose, save me a petal' ... ¿Would you make some tea and let the afternoon pass without making any plans?' Things exist without our words. And there are all those words and sounds that approach things like a hand to a piano, a cat around your legs or your voice in the silence. You never know how near or far you are...

THE SECOND RAIN (revisited)

After the storm  
The second rain that falls  
From trees and buildings  
Reminds you there may be another chance  
To find what you thought  
Was all but lost.

This warm old shirt  
Someone used to wear, long before  
Those sweet old dreams  
Someone once had, long ago.

After the storm  
Some cats are eating tuna  
Down in the parking lot  
And drag queens and ballerinas  
Are going home  
Your clouds may be my moon.

After the storm  
Laughing at the wild parade  
Molly's tears gone with the wind  
She invented the soft knives  
that sometimes kisses are  
when the river flows alone.

After the storm  
We will talk about the good times  
That are yet to come  
Though we all but ignore what clothes  
We should wear for them.

LA SEGUNDA LLUVIA (revisitada)

Después de la tormenta  
La segunda lluvia que cae  
De árboles y edificios  
Te recuerda que existe una segunda oportunidad  
Para encontrar lo que creías  
Haber perdido.

Esa camisa cálida y vieja  
Que alguien solía llevar, hace tiempo  
La puedes llevar tú.  
Esos viejos dulces sueños  
Que alguien tuvo una vez, hace tiempo  
Pueden ser los tuyos.

Después de la tormenta  
Los gatos comen atún de las latas  
En los garajes  
Mientras drag queens y bailarinas  
Vuelven a casa  
Y mi luna es como tus nubes.

Después de la tormenta  
Mirando el desfile de los locos  
Molly seca sus lágrimas al viento  
Ella que inventó los cuchillos blandos  
Que a veces son los besos  
Cuando baja solitario el río.

Después de la tormenta  
Hablamos acerca de los buenos tiempos  
Que están por llegar  
Aunque todavía no sepamos qué ropa  
Nos vamos a poner  
Para darles la bienvenida.

remember the children, the quarrels  
and fits  
the lady-friends out counting  
the passing doves one-by-one  
two by two.

i watch the day-mares  
picking out their false souls. staring  
at the lady friends, who  
are outcounting the passing doves one by one  
two by two.

all winter long no hug-skins are  
found. be more liable for  
the cornfaced-liars. watching the  
day mares, picking out their  
false souls. staring at, the  
lady friends, who are out counting  
the passing doves one by one two by  
two.

Robin Richardson

**Notes for the Culture: A Few Brief Thoughts on Music and Time,  
with a Word or Two about Ontology**  
Dean Rosenthal

I.

Music is a representation of thought in time

(music is thinking through time)

Music is a representation of time in thought

(music is time, thinking)

II.

Time is a representation of thought in music

(each thought in music is time)

III.

Thought is a representation of time *in* music

Thought is a representation of music in time

Time is a representation of music in thought

But time doesn't equal music

## **Poetica**

Dean Rosenthal

To live out the poetry of life - this against its art. The discrepancy between the life of art and its promise is in fact the most extraordinary for my own experience. Coming at once to the actual poetry, the life of poetry – “I cannot say in a thousand words what I can with a few notes.” This deep movement or stirring of the soul is in a sense what I recognize as poetry itself. And to live with poetry - a life in poetry is only this closeness, a proximity. But I also believe that within this, taking part is its own life, and that poetry lives in experience.

## Rainyday Reflections

1. internal philosophy (plus 3 minimal afterwords)

[2. fourth and long in Baltimore]

[3. inside in, outside out]

Benjamin Boretz  
November 2007/April-July 2008

Rainyday Reflections (not including the 3 minimal afterwords of the first reflection) was published integrally in  
*Perspectives of New Music* (Vol. 46, No. 2, Summer 2008)

## internal philosophy

If every phenomenon may have an identifying determinate feel independent of its nominally identifying signifier, the case of music as music is that it may have a determinate-feel identity which is opaque to any metalinguistic identity-conferring signifier; and that this determinate feel constitutes a concrete dimension of existence existent nowhere outside of music; and that the experiential manifestation of this phenomenal dimension is the constituent locus of the sensation of significant experiential substance determinately felt during and subsequent to the interpenetration of music as music and some people. So there is THAT, an otherwise un-existent THAT ontologizing music as music which -- for some people - - is the bearer of that freight of serious significant content which they identify in, even as, their specifically musical experience of music. But even — maybe especially — for those people, the very heaviness of their favored music experiences creates a compulsion to retain, extend, regenerate, revivify them as — before — they fade, to align them with known and named territories of life and world commensurate with that heaviness — to identify, to name, to describe. Yet, where music is musicked as anything other than music, extramusical significances displace as-music significance; and those extramusical significances, though carried by music, are translatable as equivalent to the significances of discourses or stories or quantificational structures or of phenomena in any designable extramusical phenomenal category.

Translational equivalence is not however ontological identity: the indigenous way music speaks in its own voice, delivers content in the exclusive music-register, is ineluctable; textual superposition is not going to obliterate it. But insofar as the being-energy of music is siphoned off into an extramusical-content space, it registers cognitively as at least a composite text: an other-than-music text delivered as music, with music. So when music is assimilated explicitly to extramusical modes of cognition and experience, THAT, its otherwise nonexistent dimensionality, though it is never completely lost, is significantly obscured by the overlying shadow of any powerful outre-musical text; the unmediated intimacy quintessential to the as-musical encounter is irretrievably lost. If, that is — only if — that extramusical text is allowed to interpenetrate ontologically with the musical text in the moment of experience, rather than being contemplated before and/or after as reflection in a nonintersecting experiential register. For that everything interpenetrates with everything is in principle certainly true, but it doesn't handle the critical issues here, issues about relevance and psychic location: such as, in what form, in what degree, to what purpose, with what desirable self-conscious cultivation – or, conversely, with what unavoidable pervasion – and – perhaps most poignantly – to what effect, with respect to both music and extramusical does that interpenetration lodge? Why is it normal to think that some phenomena, some

utterances, are just what they are within their own languages, even though we know at the same time that everything is interpenetrated with everything; while in the case of music it seems automatic to need to identify it explicitly with things and phenomena outside of its own linguistic-phenomenal space, to not be comfortable with the implicit universal interpenetration but always to need something, some reference, some analogy nailed down?

And: isn't even the compulsion to discern "structure" in music a case in point? Isn't "structure" itself clearly an extramusical reference imposed on music as a *sine qua non* which no one feels an equivalent need to impose on every verbal or pictorial phenomenon – at least to grant it its ground-level existentiality? If I look at it this way, "opening" music by tying it to a complex of explicit other issues seems more like *closing* it by reduction than if it is supposedly "closed" by being inexplicitly ontologized, leading me just wherever it leads me, creating in me who knows what otherwise illogical or even irrational *mélange* of awarenesses and associations.

So, when you say, that something is "relevant to music experience", how is that determinable by more than music experience itself? It is understandable to me that music as extramusical is part of everyone's world (like, childhood or personal-relationship, or historical associations and their attendant inner feels) – but that is epistemologically trivial (everything and anything can and does have that kind of network – a rock, a book, a face, a house, a bird, anything). The compulsion to respond to profound experience with commensurably serious discourse, commensurably intense poetry, commensurably complex and ingenious meta-models, is really a significant index of the primal psychic depth to which music-as-music can descend. So what does actually "deepen" music, and what actually "shallows" it – questions to be asked non-rhetorically — and do we valorize "depth" and demonize "triviality" – or not – and, either way, why, or rather, in the service of what?

April 2008

### 3 minimal afterwords for “internal philosophy”

minimal prologue to a vignette of Old Master George Perle (1915-2009)

He booed Harold Shapero. (For being diatonic.) And dissed everything that didn't measure up in his ideology. His first question to me when I met him was “so what's your system?” Ideology intense as desire. And desire as intense as creative/intellectual energy. All that intensity seeming always like searching for a place to go. And finding it in visions of historical mission (Berg, neo-23-tone systems) and in an eccentrically personified artistic imprint on every fiber of the metastatically abundant musical lifeforms exuberating from his insomniacally superactive creative energy system.

minimal biome response (for Chuck Stein)

poetry opens  
philosophy closes  
the questions more illuminating than the answers  
illuminating more  
light up more skies  
make you care where you  
couldn't imagine even that anything was  
let alone meant

minimal reanimation of a listening issue (anent: Karol Szymanowski):

Can a symphony for big orchestra be from the heart? Listening to Bruckner, I think yes. Listening to Mahler, I think no. Listening to Szymanowski, I think well, maybe, but what's in that heart that's trying to emanate from those emotionally charged surfaces? Because it isn't the charge of the surface that reveals the contents of the expression; and yet it's not an overbearing Mahlerian obfuscation (mirrorstage breastbeating) or a Wagnerian manipulation (subcutaneous infusions of steaming Himpresence); more like an earnest struggle to be real (identity unveiling materializing under cover of large instrumental ensemble) within the confines of a highly conventionalized art-social medium.

Szymanowski's violin concerto: not sure if it's more than a collection of sensational licks and sensationally imaginative ideas of how things might initiate, of how violin entrances might be set up; but does it have to be more than that? Not if it's performed like Wanda Wilkomirska does.

April-June 2009

# Deer Park

for Patricia Sonego

Text: J. K. Randall

ERIC LYON

$\text{♩} = 92$

Soprano *mf* Ma-dame May or For the past week

Flute *f* *fp* *f* *mf* *f*

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

S. I've been rack-ing my brain to come up with some words which might a-de-quate-ly con

Fl. *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *mp*

S. vey to the com-mit-tee the feel-ings of dis-may and vi-o-

Fl. *mf* *f*

S. la-tion which af-flict some of us

Fl. *p* *f*

24

S. *now that our go-ver-ning bo-dy en-dor-ses in fact so-li-cits a mass-a-cre.*

Fl. *p* *f* *mp* niente *f*

Vc. niente

30

Vc. *f* *ff* subito *p* *f* *fp* *ff* *mf*

*sul pont.* *scratch tone* *modo ord.* *tr* *scratch tone* *ord.*

36

S. *but asthis mas-sa cre be-ginsto loom in its de-fin-i-tive mon-strous shape*

Fl. *pp* *pp* *f*

Vc. *mf* *f*

43

S. *I find my thoughts turn-ing a-way from ar-gu-men-ta-tion*

Fl. *ff* *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *ff* *mp* *ff* *mp*

*sul pont. ord.*

51 ♩ = 76

S. and toward my doomed friends\_ the deer: toward they young buck with the

Fl. *p* *mf* *f*

Vla. *f* *mp*

Vc. *f*

56

S. su - per-long tongue who cleans out my bird-fee-der toward the con-fi-dent fawns who trail their ti - mid mo-ther through the

Vla.

Vc.

60 poco rit. -----

S. un-der-brush toward the deep-eyed won - der with which they look through my win-dow to watch me watch them

Fl. *tr*

Vla. *tr*

Vc.

♩ = 92

63

S. *and then the rea-li-za-tion hits me with full force in the God-like name of Sci-en-ti-fic E-co-sys-tem*

Fl. *ff* *fp* *ff*

Vla. *ff* *fp* *ff* *p* *sul pont.*

Vc. *ff* *fp* *ff* *p* *sul pont.*

68

S. *Man-age-ment our Mu-ni-ci-pal Go-vern-ment pro-po-ses to dis-solve such scenes in blood*

Vla. *ord.* *p* *sul pont.* *ord.*

Vc. *ord.* *p* *sul pont.* *ord.*

73

S. *my doomed friends will die* *f*

Fl. *mf*

Vla. *tr* *p* *mf*

Vc. *p* *mf*

Db. *mf* *pizz.*

♩ = 92

79 ♩ = 108

S. Our Of-fi-cials claim pub - lic de-mand but Ma-dame May or my an-

Fl. *f* col legno *f*

Vla. *f* col legno

Vc. *f* pizz.

Db. *f*

85

S. noy-ance o-ver my tu-lips and to matos and bird-seed is no ex-cuse for a mas-sa-cre

Fl. *mf* *tr*

90

S. that dent in some-one's fen-der put there by that corpse at the road-side is no ex-cuse for a mas-sa-cre

Fl. *mf* *p* *tr* *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

95

S. am - bi-gu-ous-ly sup-port-ted al-le - ga-tions a-boul yme dis-ease are no ex-cuse for a mas-sa-cre

Fl. *f*

Vla. *mp* *mf*

Vc. *mp* *mf*

Db. *mf*

100

S. the de-pletion of un-der-sto-ry in some stand of trees that

Fl.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

105 ♩ = 108

S. we in our need for con-dos and of-fice parks have not quite got a-round to de-stroy-ing en-ti-re-ly

Fl.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

110

S. is no ex-cuse for a mas-sa-cre

Fl.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

114  $\text{♩} = 92$

S. *these things ta-ken all*

Fl. *ff f ff f mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Db. *mf*

118

S. *to - ge - ther are no ex - cuse for a mas - sa - cre -*

Fl. *niente f*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Db. *mf*

123

S.

Vla. *mf* *scratch tone* *sul pontic.* *mf* *f*

Vc.

Db.

128

S. *in fact*

Vla. *ff* *f* *ff* *mp*

Vc.

Db.

134

S. there is no ex - cuse at all for this de - vas - ta - ting sel - fish - ly in - spi - red vi - o - lence

Fl. *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *mp* *f*

Db. *mp* *f*

139

Fl. *f*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Db. *ff*



155

S. *fi-cials in their pur-suit of the per-fect and per-fect-ly con-cealed vi-o-lence are*

Fl.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

162

S. *now con-fer-ring with e-ver-so-dis-ci-plined vir-tu-o-sos of the Flood-lit Si-lenced Mid-noon Cen-ter-fi-red*

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

*p*

*p*

*mp*

*p*

168

S. *Head-shot We will be a-ble to wake up some mor-ning with-out e-ven know-ing that a so-called*

Fl. *lip gliss.*

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

*p*

*p*

*mf*

*mf*

*mp*

*mf*

175  $\text{♩} = 92$

S. *Wi-ld-life re- fuge in Her-ron-town Woods or Moun-tain Lakes was in the*

Fl. *niente*  $f$

Vla.  $mf$

Vc.  $mf$

Db.  $mf$

180

S. *Bos- ni - an sense of the term "cleansed" as we slept*

Fl.  $mp$

Vla.  $mp$

Vc.  $mp$

Db.  $mp$

183

S. *we can wake up with - out*

Fl.  $mf$

Vla. *sul pont.*  $ff$  *col legno*

Vc. *sul pont.*  $ff$  *col legno*

Db. *sul pont.*  $ff$

*ord.*  $mf$

*ord.*  $mf$

*pizz.*  $mf$

187

S. e-ven know - ing that scores of our val - ued se-mi-do - mes-ti-ca - ted neigh-bors or ra-ther for-mer neigh-bors

Fl.

Vla. pizz. arco *f*

Vc. *f* arco

Db. *f* arco

192

S. have been bait-ed then betrayed and are now hung up gut-ted on some meat-hook some-where

Fl. *pp* *mp*

Vla. *pp* *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Db. *ff*

199

$\text{♩} = 130$

S.

Fl. *p*

Vla. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Db. *ff*

204

S.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

209

S.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

213

S.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

218

S.

Fl.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

225

S.

Fl.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

230

♩ = 92

S. a triumph of ci-vi-lized tech-no-lo-gized ef-

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

235

♩ = 76

♩ = 92

S. fi-cien-cy in the steal-thy im-ple-men-ta-tion of a bar-ba-ric po-li-cy

Fl.

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

241

S. *These-Mid-night Ram-bo-zos are real pro-fes-sio-nals*

Fl. *niente* *f*

Vla. *pizz.* *f* *col legno* *ff*

Vc. *pizz.* *f* *col legno* *ff*

Db. *ff* *col legno* *ff*

247

S. *What a dis-gus-ting pro-fes-sion Ma-dame Mayor:*

Fl. *pp* *f*

Vla. *pizz.* *arco* *pp* *ff* *f*

Vc. *pizz.* *arco* *ff* *f*

Db. *pizz.* *arco* *ff* *f*

254  $\text{♩} = 72$   $\text{♩} = 114$

S. *You and your col-leagues are De-fi-cient in Em-pa-thy*

Fl.

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Db. *mf*

263

S. That not a sin - gle mem - ber of this Com - mit - tee or of the En - vi - ron - men - tal Com - mis - sion

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Db. *mp* (if C-extension available)

272

S. has seen fit to de - nounce this mur - der - ous go - vern - ment em -

Vla. *mf* *mp*

Vc. *mf* *mp*

Db. *mf* *mp*

280

S. pow - ered vi - o - lence is a dis - grace to our com - mu - ni - ty

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

288

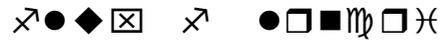
S. May all of you be vo - ted Out at our ear - li - est op - por - tu - ni - ty

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

David Hicks



### **Something about Something About a Pitch Freak:**

When I got to Princeton in 1974 I was eager to join the league of devout followers of the Church of Modern Music. Jim was the cold-turkey antidote to that notion. Music was way too important to him for blind, faith-based reverence. Which gave rise to numerous seeming-heresies, including, from memory: the Beethoven sketches were remarkable, not for how they prefigured the compositions that issued from them, but for the fact that the final emanations were music at all; among Mozart's operas, the one that wilts under minimal scrutiny is the Magic Flute; Brahms' problem in his piano music was he couldn't keep himself from grabbing a fistful of notes, when less would have been more. To a lapsed wannabe-devotee, it took a reconfiguring of assumptions, and much listening and thinking, but the heresies soon vanished. Jim was reality-based way before there was reality-based.

It's easy to say, the way I listen to music derives directly from talking and listening to music with Jim. It was evident from early on that Jim had special ears, and the processing equipment to go with. Jim's sensitivity to pitch: class, collection, space, was stunning, and not a little daunting.

#### Indelible memories

Pitch itself: in class one time Jim zeroed in on one small pitch in Brahms' first Violin Sonata. A d# (the piece is in G), where none seemed called-for, passing in a flash, a whispering after-image. Yet a forward-looking detail projecting a world of implication, a B-major world, inflected *en passant*, in an instant. And where, soon, the piece would strangely (*sempre p e tranquillo*) settle. (A typical Jim seminar could go for three hours on a single measure of music.)

Zeroing in? Jim has that capacity for pinpointing whatever it is that makes something work, if it does, or gives it its essence, on just about anything. Right in your crosshairs. The special atmosphere – or better yet, smell -- of a boxing match (Tyson vs. Spinks), or the aspirations/insecurities of professional pool players, as reflected in their fancy duds. In Tchaikovsky's Sleeping Beauty, for all its embarrassment of riches, its wealth of tunes and texture and color, Jim flipped out on the first act's Variations. Whoda thunk it? And yet, there it is: a necklace of rubies in the rough. Right out there in

Scrodgorod.

Another example is his Meditation on Rossignol. Stravinsky's orchestral suite culled from his opera is wonderful in many ways, but the zinger is the spare tune, with accompaniment sparer still (violin solo, wearing its G-string up around its ears, first with a pair of harps, later with a clarinet or two), that Jim focused on in his Meditation (mm. 259-274). The tune is an essence, familiar and yet remote, a chromatic twitch working magic on a three-note diatonic figure. The accompaniment is a questing, sighing figure; their fusion is transcendent. Stravinsky, pitch freak.

It was Jim who pointed out to me the spelling of those pointed spikes in the last movement of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony. I'd never looked at the score and he caught me naively assuming they were spelled D-flat. Jim disabused me of that notion, and prodded onward: why did Beethoven spell them C-sharp? He left it to me to answer the question myself. You probably already know the answer. If not, then spin your favorite CD of the symphony, and think about it. It'll enhance your appreciation of Beethoven's long-range architecture.

Pitch Spaces (I):

We started listening to Webern's Piano Variations and were (as Jim might say) feeling no pain. Suddenly Jim looks up and says: "Doesn't it just go off track right there?" We're maybe 30 measures in, and the porcelain-fragile pitch-space, so lovingly crafted and caressed, without warning cracks, unceremoniously and unconsciously voiding its own loveliness. That spot in the piece was familiar, but I had never heard it that way: for what it is. The composer lost his groove. Yet it's plain as the wart on a witch's nose. To this day I can't listen to that piece without hearing a rift in the musical heavens.

(II):

I remember seeing a score of Debussy's Six Epigraphes Antiques on a piano in a classroom at Princeton. (It was Jim's, of course.) I was just passing through, didn't recognize the title, and so made little of it at the time. Years later I was listening to a CD, when suddenly there were little light bulbs going off in my head. It was Debussy as he had never sounded before, and I like Debussy. Sure enough it was the Six Epigraphes Antiques. Mystical and evocative, yet spare. Discrete. Deep. Different. One of the 'spaciest' pieces there is. Debussy, pitch freak.



Before I got to Princeton I was mostly aware that Milton Babbitt taught there. (I actually met Milton around 1968 or 1969, after he gave a Swarthmore College Collection, during which he destroyed the symphony orchestra for me. This was just post Relata II.) But I had also heard Jim's music at Swarthmore, as an undergraduate (Lyric Variations, which were mesmerizingly *other*). I had even had the great privilege to hear Jim's music in concert! Town Hall, 1973, or thereabouts, Jim played part of the soundtrack from Christopher Speeth's Eakins. Even a Mod Music True Believer couldn't help but notice: this is different, man. After the 'performance' Jim ambled slowly out on stage, possibly to significant applause, I can't remember. I do remember flowing hair, a walking stick, and a deerstalker hat, but the hat may be memory's invention.

Still, Princeton was where you learned 12-tone composition, or so I imagined. So imagine my surprise, the first time I'm showing Jim some of my own music, casually mentioning that it's 12-tone, and Jim sputters in a voice combining faux hurt and frustration: "Oh, now you tell me!" Maybe that was why, years later, I raised an eyebrow when Jim offered that the first piece of mod-music that made him sit up and listen was the Berg Violin Concerto. I had never heard Jim as much as whisper Berg's name before. As someone who had entered the world of mod-music through the gates of Wozzeck, it rang a revelatory bell for me. And sure enough the Berg Violin Concerto sharpened up as I sat and listened with Jim, and (I think) Dan Warner.

Jim had a reputation, well earned I might add, for changing, and fast. Among the graduate students there was a standing joke that after finishing your General Exams you had better get your dissertation done with dispatch. Otherwise you might wind up at your dissertation oral exam with Jim commenting: "Hey, that's all well and good, but, uh, where are your aggregates?"



Sometime around 1980 Jim expressed an interest in 60's rock music. It seemed that mere months before he was eagerly consuming middle-period Stockhausen, which I had gorged on 7 or 8 years earlier. Now he was after the music I was listening to when I was 15. (Well sure, when Jim was 15 he was wallowing in Tchaikovsky symphonies. And here I was, a late-bloomer, just now ready to jump into the trough with Pyotr Ilyich myself. Jim's radar zoned in on the Manfred Symphony. Tchaikovsky, pitch freak.) So, no, Jim

*hadn't* come round to aggregates; he was out trawling for barre chords.

After taking from Jim for the better part of a decade, I was in debt up to my eyeballs. So it was good to have the chance to give something back. (Needless to say I was but one of many who acted as guide in this project.)

I hadn't listened to much of this music in a long time. In the intervening years, wolves had ravaged my collection of vinyl. But we both started buying LPs and comparing notes. Not surprisingly, one of our first sessions was on the Beatles. We started where you should, with the first album (EMI/Parlophone style) Please Please Me. On the title song, Jim guffawed with the offbeat riff that fills in after the first line. And "Love Me Do" just stopped him in his tracks. "Wait a minute, aren't these the guys who kept yammering 'yeah yeah yeah' back in the 60's?" The mountain was moving, and it was a kick to watch. (Think about it now, isn't "Love Me Do" pitch freak music?)

It's not without some measure of pride that I lay claim to having introduced Jim to Captain Beefheart. Records, that is. One day I brought over Trout Mask Replica. I remember being a little nervous about this one. But after side one finished, Jim's eyes were sparkling. Reassured, I asked him what in particular he found interesting. "Well that 12-tone pitch world for starters!" Jim waxed eloquent about side one, the helter-skelter ambiguity of the sequencing. The music, the talk, scratchy needle sound effects, the lyrics. We both admired the words and timing in "The Dust Blows Forward":

And the wind blows black through the sky  
And the smokestack blows up in ... the sun's eye

Buoyed by my success, naturally I pressed ahead, and blew my advantage: I suggested that there was more where that came from on the remaining sides. So, after lunch we listened to the rest of the songs. Apart from a few winners ("The Blimp," "Veterans Day Poppy") Jim was noticeably let down. No generic "sounds like" would do for Jim. It was Side 1, all the way, and only Side 1.

Jim was feeding a 3-ring binder with loose leaves. He took meticulous notes, probably to forestall even *starting* to listen to a bad track a second time. There were plenty of those. But the best songs he graced with big bold stars. These songs deserved and received another listen, or many. (One Lighting Hopkins record was practically all stars. We had branched out into The Blues.) Jim had an uncanny knack for finding sleepers. Zeroing in, again. The big hits often left him cold. Janis Joplin/Big Brother got raves for "Ball and Chain" and "Summertime," but "Piece of My Heart" got the hook. On Jefferson Airplanes's Surrealistic Pillow Jim singled out "My Best Friend,"

and from the first Moby Grape album, he pinpointed “Sitting by the Window.” If you recognize these titles at all, you may have thought of them as sort of filler. Listen again, homegamers.

Of course Jim took off on his own. It was a revelation the day Jim turned the tables and spun Led Zeppelin’s Houses of the Holy for me. Better yet was the shock I felt when Jim served up “In a Gadda da Vita” by Iron Butterfly! In my youth we laughed at that one. Wrong again!

The notebook became a literary work in its own right. On Led Zeppelin’s “Whole Lotta Love”, though it got a generally admiring review, Jim’s entry began: “more semen than I’d care to mop up...” For one Who album a single comment sufficed: “Tommy is to Rock’n’Roll as Gilbert & Sullivan is to Music.”

In the Open Space Collected Writings, I missed those notebooks. Now that you mention it, wasn’t there a Pitch-Time Correlation article? I can’t remember if I saw it, or just heard about it. Does it still exist? I also missed the piece Kenneth Gaburo published on Paolo Uccello’s “Saint George and the Dragon” (the English one, not the French). Probably printing the colors of that painting is beyond the scope, and all that. But, hey Jim, give us the text, and we’ll find the painting in a book.

Of his own writings Jim once told me: “I probably made a mistake publishing those articles in Perspectives. I would have been better off distributing them in the Grand Central Station Men’s Room.” I laughed, but at the time this remark seemed just plain sad. (It’s safe to say that when they were passing out marketing skills Jim was standing in the wrong line.)



### Pitch Freak Music:

If 20<sup>th</sup> century music's full tour, from tonality to atonality, neoclassicism and serialism, stochastic and chance to minimalism and eclecticism to retrotoneality seems a frenetic yet perversely circuitous journey, I view it as an opportunity renewed. Too much that was suggestive went by in a whirl, under-developed and under-appreciated.

Which is to say, I take Jim's Pitch Freak article as a theory for how music might revitalize itself for, say, the next hundred years.

While others at Princeton were working on 12-tone sets, Jim was plumbing the depths of pitch-class collections. Comprehensively detailing the intervallic structure of seemingly any group of notes, Jim's charts depicted a web of relations, an elegantly woven lattice of possibility: trajectories and traversals and vulnerabilities ripe for the plucking. I think Sveik a lovely instance of such possibility rendered immanent. (Jim once mentioned, offhandedly, that he considered all his music a search after melody.)

Jim's initial improvisation sessions were meditations on small clumps of notes. His preference was often for a group of symmetrical space-carvers, with one note out of symmetry; that note made all the difference. The longer he worked at it, the fewer notes he required. I remember a scintillating solo piano tape on a minor-third (I think it was B and D). Surely the *reductio ad perfectum* was 45 minutes on a single pitch class, whichever it was.

But a pitch freak needn't go *that* far. Pitch freak music, modern variety, draws on and wraps its arms around such disparate pitch-daring works as Bartok's Out of Doors and 2<sup>nd</sup> Violin Sonata (first movement - - leave the second, it'll wreck the mood); early Hindemith (several of the Kammermusiken, especially the first, with "Finale: 1921," and don't miss Der Daemon); Copland's Piano Variations (a pitch freak's delight); Feldman's Rothko Chapel; William Schuman's Violin Concerto (even with its 12-tone head-fake) would amply feed a pitch freak's addiction. The pitch-uniqueness of Bartok's Sonata for 2 Pianos and Percussion could, on its own, have spawned a musical style.



## My music-track

When Ben offered the opportunity to celebrate Jim I was eager for the opportunity. I had some unfinished work which I thought resonated something about what I learned from Jim. Call it the pitch freak in me. I was going back to things I started years ago and left unfinished. Most of these could best be described as “rather not bad than good,” but maybe worth a revisit.

I had spent a lot of my composing life pulling sounds out of the piano. And as happens in that dodge, the musical/physical habits of the years were getting in the way. (Rheumatoid arthritis was as well, making the point moot, in any case.) Enter the personal computer and an algorithmic composing program I wrote for it. For anyone who has worked with these things, the pleasures and pitfalls are both eminently evident. For those who don't know them: sometimes marvelously suggestive sonorities pour forth. Simple musical licks and gestures occur which one senses would never have run from one's pen. On the other side of that Greek Nickel lie the pitfalls: much material that can only be described as a sound wasteland. Getting rid of what's toxic is a smaller problem than with nuclear materials, but time-consuming.

I reviewed what I had. A roughness characterized much of the material, but to this roughness, sometimes, charm attached. I actually had some more-finished material to draw from: the piano-oriented tracks include stretches that sound like black & white pour-paintings, manic player-piano riffs, impressionistic washes, and more. But I was after something that resonated from the world of the Pitch Freak, something I got to (more directly) from Jim. Of these there were numerous partially-baked instances, suggestive for a stretch, and then not.

The essence of these tracks was a common kernel. So I settled on a compromise, a blend, a mix and match. There were too many tracks to select from, and never enough time to get the job done. I trimmed what I could. In the end, it's still rough. Maybe I should throw a little more dirt in there.

♁ □ ♀ ☽ &

New Haven, 2007

## When the “When the Birds Come Calling” Comes Calling

*(For Jim)*

Arthur Margolin

We each constitute a culture inhabited by ourselves alone, and with our demise that culture is lost. Of course, there is no remedy for this. But we may, if we choose, bifurcate our culture into its generative potencies, which will be ineluctably extinguished, and the objects generated, our artifacts, which in principle live on in perpetuity. A number of survival strategies then become available. For example, we may modify and shape our personal culture such that we create, with other appropriately modified personal cultures, a depersonalized supra-culture with respect to which the artifacts of each personal culture are regarded as “contributions.” One putative advantage of this approach is that it creates a subsuming common ground, upon which the artifacts emerging from multifarious individuals can be duly placed and perhaps even rank ordered. The supposition of a domain of supra-cultures is essential to the functioning of academia and other institutions that would claim to be well regulated. Another approach, which would regard the subsumption and the common ground to be oppressive hypotheses, is to create artifacts from within each individual culture that are uniquely expressive thereof, such that the exigencies of each culture, as they are embodied in the particular artifact being created, outweigh, insofar as possible, all other considerations in its production. This would commonly be regarded as a purely “artistic” approach. The two approaches are strictly antagonist, but often by degrees overlap and merge in a variety of institutional venues, negotiating a sometimes successful, but often uneasy truce – given that the assiduous practitioner of the latter has been observed to create fracture lines in the world of the former (and sometimes conversely).

Of particular relevance to the present occasion, instances of the artistic approach also include the creation of imaginal textual artifacts, in response to expressive artifacts arising from within other individual cultures. This is the approach adopted by the author of “When the Birds Come Calling” (Open Space, 2006). Note: the author of that text will herein be understood to be a particular configuration, self-constructed we may imagine for the occasion, of the individual culture of Jim Randall. In order not to constrain, by implication or presumption, the interpretation of self-configurations that have been and will be created by Jim for other generative occasions, past and future, in the current text he will be referred to as “the Author of the Birds” -- “AoB” for short.

AoB assays a wide range of artifacts generated within individual cultures over the last three hundred years -- although the majority are from the 20<sup>th</sup> century -- drawn from a number of artistic domains, as context for, and themselves as, “a public meditation

on two recent compositions of Ben Boretz" -- *Postlude* and *Downtime*. Its overall structure is deceptively simple, consisting of a sequence of 22 numbered sections, each from 1 to 4 pages long (the average being on the shorter side). The relation between these sequentially numbered passages is by no means straightforward. Twenty pertain to artworks from various media, including, in addition to music, paintings, sculpture, movies, and novels. Two are primarily "theoretical", in that they introduce or reflect upon concepts that inform, whether or not they are explicitly invoked within, subsequent sections.

However, it will be obvious that AoB has not, nor it seems has strived to, create a text about which the term "theory of music", understood as a bounded, logistically structured universe of propositions, would apply, or from which such a universe could readily be inferred. Rather, his text, pending deeper interpretations, may be regarded as a set of trenchant observations that could in fact constitute "data" for which a theory of music, or indeed a philosophy of art, may consider itself obliged to account for in its ontology of artworks and their perceivers. Throughout, the highest priority is on creating a verbal image that most faithfully captures the particularity of the occasion of his engaging the artistic artifact under consideration, and then secondly weaving in threads connecting it to verbal images pertaining to other such occasions of engagement. More radically, he may be viewed as having thrown down the gauntlet: insofar as his text is comprehensible, engaging, and illuminating, what use is theory, except as handmaiden to experience, which is, moreover, the sole domain of its validation?

In general, AoB's text proceeds, without notice, as though a number of significant musico-psychological hurdles have already been surmounted. It assumes that readers will be able, on internal evidence alone, and without any signposts, to fully comprehend and find perspicuous the text's interpretation of the proffered stream of artworks. At a more foundational level, it also assumes that we will maintain a functional sense of self despite having to become, as it were, the variety of distinct "listeners" that these various artworks require of us (or, perhaps, retain a sense of self sufficiently in control to acquiesce to whatever the artwork under consideration requires of us, what AoB says it requires of us).

AoB's extended meditation is projected in three different, but kindred, sensibilities or modes. In order of appearance, I'll call them "oracular", "evocative", and "theoretical". The oracular mode opens the piece, and, relative to the other two, recurs infrequently, but, as noted below, with structurally penetrating placement. As an authentic oracle, it tells us the way things are, quenching appeal. The evocative mode always presents a verbal portrait of a piece of music, or other artwork, textually distilling its quintessential qualities and implicitly asserting the interpretation as a universally veridical experience (e.g., "we" are...). It also provides a formative context for the oracular mode, which, except at the very opening, wells up from it. The theoretical mode is the discursive counterpart to the other two modes, and introduces concepts that, to varying degrees, resonate within the text, endowing the evocations with a deeper and wider measure

of meaning.

These three modes are subtly interwoven in the text, but the first three episodes present them in their purest form.

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### **Episode 1: Oracular mode**

From the very beginning, the text's seemingly straightforward phraseology belies its multitudinous demands upon the reader. In a doubly counterfactual, unstated scenario, it presupposes that we will imagine ourselves to have asked, in some improbable and unrecorded dialogue -- *Pray, tell us, is there such a thing as 'normal music'?* The answer had apparently been *Yes*. Given this affirmation, we further inquired -- *Then, if we may, what are its properties?* The text proper begins with a series of pronouncements in response to this question:

normal music is humanoid, anthropomorphic.

normal music configures itself humanly, in terms of publicly shared awarenesses.

normal music encourages positive feelings, a sense of community.

normal music finds its way into a repertoire of normal music.

At this point we may provisionally decide not to regret having accepted the initial counterfactual suppositions, given that such unexpectedly comforting consequences ensued. As reflective musicians, taking some pride perhaps in our marginalization, we may not be accustomed to thinking of ourselves and our artifacts as normal; but "normal music" -- previously, if it had occurred to us, a ribald idea surely -- is apparently an idea the oracle wants us to take seriously (or perhaps he is just toying with us). We may wonder relative to whose norms music is declared normal, and which pieces in particular would be denoted by this term. But we are interlocutors well practiced in dealing with the ambiguously complex; so we temporize, think: sure -- we'll get back to you on that.

But we are on the hook, it seems, as he continues:

some music is not normal.

some music is subnormal.

some music is paranormal.

Having not yet even begun to come to terms with the idea of normal music, we are informed that there is a counter-domain -- the non-normal, which has sub-categories of subnormal and paranormal (do we imagine ourselves as having asked this time? no -- this is logical consecution inexorably at work). The tone now seems portentous, even grave, emerging from lower depths -- a warning, perhaps (or a tantalizing promise)? We wonder in which category the music we love and cherish will fall, and, of no less concern, given the ominous tone, what implications this will have regarding the nature of our personhood.

the best music engages us in whatever; not in this but not that.

the best music beautifully engages, but is beautiful only on occasion.

the best music invests, penetrates.

Our concerns are possibly allayed, given that the "best music" may, it seems, according to this transcendent non-sequitur, include both the normal and the non-normal. Perhaps it encompasses each piece that is taken up in this text, for the obvious reason that it seems to have engaged and sustained the interest of AoB (in subsequent episodes AoB will tell us precisely, without apparent qualification, how the best music engages).

[Regarding recurrence of the oracle: infrequent, but not entirely obscure: the *geheimnis* follows. The repetitions on this first page of the assertions regarding "normal music," "some music," and "the best music" comprise ten lines, in the pattern, 4, 3, 3. The cumulative number, ten, from this opening page, is distributed equally between the other two sequences of oracular repetitions in the text. These recur only in the episodes about Ben's compositions which are the stated focal objects of the meditation -- *Postlude*, 5 repetitions (p.27), midway through the entire text, and *Downtime* 5 repetitions (see pp.39 and 40) at the end. Furthermore, the equal division of the ten assertions from the first page into 5 and 5 in the two recurrences mirrors the equal division of the last six lines on p.1 into 3 repetitions of "some music is not normal," and 3 of "the best music..."; both of which assertions, unlike the first 4 lines concerning normal music, characterize Ben's compositions, according to AoB. So, we read on, assured that the text is structurally sound.]

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## **Episode 2: Evocative mode**

"This music knows where it's at.  
so do we."

AoB rapidly descends from the bird's eye view of the opening pronouncements to the indicative designator, "this music," which appears to be humanoid, and to have self-reflective properties – it *knows* where it's at. We also know where it's at, and where it's going -- which is other than where we might have thought.

Yet, there are some incipient concerns. At this point, we (I) haven't been told what the designator "this music" refers to, but I (we) nevertheless know something essential about it. (Does this "we" need looking into?) Clearly, AoB knows where it's at, and is it as though what goes on in his mind perforce goes on in my mind? Or, disengaging from the personal, that this music is there just in the way that AoB describes it, perceiver-independent, or perceiver-neutral? Whose culture's mentation is writ large here -- he who composed this music?; he who heard it this way?

AoB notes the self-absorbed peculiarities that, he says, characterize continuity in this piece (Ben's "...*chart*..." we're informed midway through). I imagine that music that wears blinders and proceeds via autistic moves does not meet some of the criteria for normal music, although this is not stated as such (nor will it ever be). (It also gets to non-consequential alternative sensibilities, which are then just abandoned.) The evocation's quasi-sentential concision is alluring, and solicits, encourages, my engagement of the piece in its terms. (Yet, I wonder -- an ongoing issue here -- how does such acquiescence comport with my own, possibly different, sense of this piece over the years?)

[Succeeding evocations will also begin with the words "this music" but in order to tell us up front what is being referred to; for example, "this music is the ending of the 1<sup>st</sup> mvmt. of Bruckner's 6<sup>th</sup>". After the Bruckner episode the locution does not again recur. Other episodes are introduced, like this one, well into and amidst the piece's world, the text seemingly having absorbed the object's coloration before its voice begins speaking. There are a few exceptions -- Arbus and Schiele -- but the episodes that begin *in medias res* are all apparently instances of the non-normal: *Chart*, Borowski, *Postlude*, Grosz linedrawings, Messiaen, *Downtime*. It seems that AoB must set the stage for the non-normal before the object's identity can be revealed (some are, in his portrayals, disturbingly not normal, so he's easing us into the abyss). Other episodes defer presenting the object's name just a bit, retaining proprietary rights to arranging appropriate introductions.]

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### **Episode 3: Theoretical mode**

a transaction in my head  
ELIOT HANDELMAN

Of the utmost importance for AoB, pieces of music, and moreover artworks in general, are not just inertly out there, to be passively received by us. Rather, they populate

our world, as in the case of Ben's "...*chart*...", as a kind of purposeful organism. This episode presents some ideas concerning how these entities invade and conquer our minds. The unsettling prospect of an unlimited and total domination is somewhat relieved, however, by their inserting themselves "for the nonce" into our awareness as a "secondary consciousness," which contains a purpose-designed, indwelling, "listener" who is pre-prepared to perceive the work in a way that maximizes its vividness. In this view, then, artworks are entities possessing a tremendous potency -- to take over our minds, while also leaving us with sufficient self-awareness to recognize, at some level, that it's a secondary consciousness we are inhabited by (otherwise, how would we know?); they then return complete control to us when they are finished with us. (This process may also distinguish artistic from utilitarian artifacts; if the latter seem to possess or address us this way, the bathroom faucet, for example, or the knife on that table, it is -- worse than intrusive -- symptomatic of a severe psychopathological condition.)

Secondary consciousness and its instillation is a wonderfully fecund idea that captures our intuitive sense of music's powerfully radiating intelligibility. However, unqualified, as it is here, by a generative relationship to a primary consciousness, it can have highly disruptive effects upon artistic discourse, exerting, and creating, great stress upon and within participants, as we shall see. (Without doubt, a theory to be left prudently unmentioned in any future Manuals for the Young.)

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### **Evocations: Episodes 4-8**

The Birds contains no higher level subdivisions beyond the episode level. The text has a complex, meandering trajectory, so any further grouping of episodes will be highly adventitious, although not entirely arbitrary. In order to organize the discussion, I'll consider the next five episodes -- evocations that have similar concerns.

These episodes take up in sequence, works by Ravel, Arbus, Haydn, Schiele, and Bruckner.

Each of these texts, precisely fashioned in a way that is highly and persuasively responsive to the object under consideration, seems to address some melding of the following (mostly unstated) questions: what is the activity within object x (what is it doing), and what is the relationship between what it is doing and a fully engrossed listener-participant of that activity (what does it want to do, what does it decline to do, to and with me?); what is the activity within the fully engrossed listener-participant (who do I become in this transaction)?

This last issue is addressed in response to the explicitly stated question: "who are we"? AoB will frequently tell us within particular evocations who we become (or if there is no becoming we), but the theory of secondary consciousness is not invoked in framing

the answer within the episodes devoted to these pieces. So, we are left wondering who the described "we" includes. It may or may not be appropriate to imagine that the we is: 1) the secondary consciousness induced by the artwork, as given voice by AoB; 2) the perceiver whose awareness was taken over by the artwork and the residuum of the composer -- "our attributions of intentionality" -- in secondary consciousness; 3) the indwelling listener and the indwelling composer within secondary consciousness; 4) the indwelling listener, the indwelling composer, and the invaded perceiver; 5) a personification of the attribution of intentionality accepted (or in the case of no we, rejected) as a peer by AoB; 6) the reader, AoB, and the listener created within secondary consciousness; ... or 12) none of the above. (It is also possible that the indefiniteness of the we is a direct consequence and expression of its unrestricted universality.)

Of these pieces, Ravel (enwraps us in exquisite solicitation), Haydn (makes of us worthy, civilized interlocutors), and Bruckner (we exult as co-celebrants), create a we. The "twins" photograph of Arbus (creepy) and paintings by Schiele (nasty) do not. (The succession is such that there is an alternation between a we and a no we, which continues for a while, unsettling complacency). Schiele's drawings also introduce a key motif of "depiction", which visual arts excel at, and which music does not. Whether depiction can foster a more direct form of communication than music is seemingly denied. But any comparisons are implicit and indirect; there is no categorical distinction in the text between visual and aural artifacts. Characterizations are exclusively concerned with the work's content, and its psycho-social implications (in fact, it seems that for the most part the visual works cited tend to keep their distance from us, and us from them). (However, movies, in which the aural and visual modes fuse, are out there and "tell a story", but smoothly occupy our awareness.)

Although he doesn't explicitly say so, AoB's declarations suggest that declining to let a secondary consciousness loose within your mind when it arises from and is attached to an artifact judged, for example, creepy, is just an accepted property of normal mental functioning. The reader may also infer that if you and a nasty, creepy thing create a we, that could be a worrisome indication of impending or actual mental abnormalities. (These are apparently AoB's norms, and, if so, his text assumes that readers will find them acceptable.)

But this raises some issues. How is the piece closely perceived by us such that it becomes known to us that there is no we? Is the character of the initial intake a sufficient indication that no we will emerge? Do we enter into its space sufficiently to absorb it into ourselves, or ourselves into it, and then dissociate from it?

Although his text seems bristle with implicated questions between episodes, AoB clearly regards it as wholly non-obligatory to include within his purview any more than what he precisely, considerately does. In fact, he leaves such questions entirely open (in his pronounced silence on them he seems to suggest: -- if you want "answers" then by all means go write a text that does that). So the space subtended by adjacent episodes is always much greater than the summed space they occupy.

In his evocative dissociations of and from the abnormal, I have begun to wonder if AoB's seductively elegant prose is a means by which he is insinuating his bourgeois values. But he will test this view by coming at me with the truly aberrant.

(Except it turns out that we dig it.)

### **Episode 9. Movies**

After reaching the heights of religious exultation in Bruckner we go to the movies -- two crime dramas and a sepia-tinged pedophile psychodrama. Movies, beyond depiction, overtly "tell a story"; and in telling this story, the accompanying music interacts with the visually mediated story such that the two domains mutually enhance each other (a two way street) -- maybe even fuse. It's implicitly important that for AoB a meditation upon Ben's music crucially requires, in addition to other pieces of music, photographs, drawings, movies, and also novels, paintings, and theological exegesis. We may have come to accept that there are clear boundary lines between and among these various domains of artifacts -- they are, after all, the preoccupations of different faculties in the course catalogue, and belong to different sense realms. It is increasingly clear that AoB is completely indifferent to these received partitionings; for him, distinctions arise and cut across the universe of artifacts depending upon the questions raised, the issues addressed, the interests being pursued. (So, among other things, he'll point out that music, though it doesn't depict or refer, can be heard as powerfully communicating a sense of things outside of itself -- however much closed off within itself, as we'll see.)

### Episode 10. Borowski

Whereas in Arbus, AoB offered us creepy menace and in Schiele nasty perverts, in Borowski's series of stories we move to another plane of awfulness altogether: genocide -- Auschwitz. You may wonder: how does Auschwitz get involved in a meditation on Ben's music? (stay tuned)

In Borowski there's a depiction of atrocity in an urbane way; his intelligence saturates the events depicted, and insulates us, as AoB says, from the awfulness -- from the reading about it. Whereas Arbus and Schiele themselves may strike us, through their work, as unpleasantly strange, Borowski, transmitting the Holocaust, seems to be someone we can identify with, as one of us (maybe even a better one of us). So, in this instance is there a we? AoB doesn't say -- but Borowski makes an enormity palatable, so that we can enter, gladly as transients, into the world depicted in his text, and emerge intact, our inquisitiveness about genocide, for the moment, sated.

### Episode 11: Chardin paintings

Borowski engages, and seems to deftly resolve in his writing, intractable issues

regarding the revelation of horrendous human acts and the need for “cover” in having the unspeakable proportionately revealed to us. Chardin’s paintings are in repose at the antipode -- are examples of artworks that have a seemingly autonomous and completely benign existence, irretrievably apart from us and our concerns, whether derived from our frailties or excesses, or from anything outside of themselves, including referring to things they may be taken to depict. And our viewing them this way is our connection to them in their irremediably removed existence.

## **Episode 12: Theoretical mode**

Approaching the idea of secondary consciousness introduced earlier from a somewhat different perspective, this episode introduces some further ideas regarding listener/piece transactions from what we may understand to be the highest level of engagement with a work of art, viz., a fusion of it and me. I undergo it, I become it. And since I become the engaged and created work-perfected listener that it instills in me, the result of engagement with the work in these terms is inevitably a “respectful, flattering transaction,” which may encourage a self-flattering tendency to afterwards misconstrue “what the work created in me with what I am that the work revealed.” (The fallacy stems from not realizing that the latter is the intense after-resonance in primary consciousness of the work-instilled secondary consciousness.) AoB’s account focuses heavily on the active properties of secondary consciousness, so much so that it seems that primary consciousness is merely a vessel to be occupied by it. (One might have thought that these were highly co-dependent: play your favorite Beethoven symphony for a South Indian musician, and the polite non-recognition of the slightest musical interest, let alone acknowledgement of any plumbing of musical depths, seems a relevant datum for this issue.) AoB’s view endows pieces with enormous powers of instillation, but for “properly trained” listeners only? Surely, for relevant listeners – but who are those? The receptive ones? (circular, to be sure)

He doesn’t say, but it’s possible that he’s limiting the discussion here to “normal music,” and that the conditions under which a secondary consciousness is instilled (by “smooth occupancy”) may be the same as those in which a we results. He also doesn’t mention cases in which a work’s creepy and weird qualities (Arbus, Schiele to begin with) might or might not be instilled. But if the work’s not primary you, than why not create a we with these aberrant things, just for the interest of the experience? (we’re assured it will be a temporary occupancy). And, anyway, if artworks have these overpowering instillation potencies, how can we ever resist them? Do Arbus and Schiele not create work-perfected listeners? AoB says it’s the point of these works to put us off, so creating a we is going against their grain, is to misunderstand them, he might add. They, then, create perfected listeners that are put off by themselves, that come into existence with disabling fracture lines in their personalities? (and who would want to become, or associate with, one of those?)

This seemingly direct instillation, this transformation, by the artwork – I’ve experienced that. AoB has clearly experienced that. I think many of his readers have as well. But

where does AoB's theory of that experience leave us? Must we henceforth construe "sharing" and "dialogue" as interpersonal transactions in which some one's experience in particular will have to prevail?

### **Episode 13: *Postlude***

In Ben's *Postlude*, for string quartet, AoB hears Auschwitz, sensory deprivation, atrocity. But whereas Borowski civilly reveals and conceals, *Postlude* uncivilly persists, openly sealing itself off from us, in being an instance of the tormented detention AoB says it evokes. (Our only defense in confronting it: stand back a bit -- "artistic remove") So, music, although it doesn't depict, not only can powerfully manifest things ostensibly outside of itself, but more palpably so than some outstanding literary texts that are "about" those very things. In this astonishingly original work, Ben, according to AoB, stripped musical sounds of their customary musical accoutrements, and also rendered continuity conspicuously anti-musical. Perhaps customary musical sounds and continuity would tend towards normalcy and reaffirm positive values? (AoB notes that Schiele also had to depart from accepted artistic technique to communicate his fascinating and off-putting weirdness.) But, for me, *Postlude's* lack of customary, desirable musical attributes -- "elegance, pizzazz, grace,..." -- seem not so much subtractions, as uncoverings, and *Postlude* is a music, composed it seems in a single, unbroken, and intensely focused act of cogitation, that emerges when those qualities no longer inhibit invention. (cf. Late Beethoven string quartets, which also have been heard - - with official complaints lodged -- as invention resisting oppression. One wonders in awe how the non-deaf composer of *Postlude* could have so thoroughly divested himself of compositional "musicality".)

Unbidden (sans counterfactual preconditions), the oracle makes its first appearance since the opening and pronounces multiply upon the punitive quiddities of *Postlude*, and by doing so engenders extreme discomfort. Why? AoB is not unaware, one imagines, of the tension that will ensue upon anyone propounding a "definitive" characterization of a contemporary's composition. The readers for whom AoB writes are likely to have already strenuously exerted themselves to make the acquaintance of *Postlude* (and may even have alluded to such an occasion in print), and will approach his text with a keen sense of that experience, of that experience's particular evolution, in mind, unlikely to be very amenable to have it supplanted or even slightly dislodged. So, how can AoB's oracularly declaimed characterizations impress and thrive, except by usurpation? (Old masters have a completely different feel -- psychological distance, temporally enforced, admits a lot of flexibility; they challenge and engage in a way distinctly unlike that of music composed yesterday.) [see also Ben's *Prologue to "Little Reviews"* (Open Space #4) on hearing, and writing about, music by composers whose lifetimes are in various temporal relationships to one's own.]

And unlike previous evocations, AoB's presents and the oracle insists upon an interpretation whose terms are disjunctly remote from the experience, I would guess, of the preponderance of Open Space's readers. Auschwitz, Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib

-- we know about these things second, third, nth, hand. Mostly, we have read about them. And with respect to them we are not even featherweights; as AoB seems to acknowledge, we hold no ground whatsoever ("severe detention" for us -- the faculty meeting goes on and on, and on). To substantiate AoB's imagery, I must compose, here in the safe delimitations of my suburban township, an "Auschwitz" fantasy, and enjoin it upon myself, as the basis for eliciting the deepest meaning of the sounds of *Postlude*. This is surely the superordination of abstract absence over concrete presence. Which is not intuitive. [Whereas in Borowski, I naturally and willingly accept his word-created fantasy world as what there is, because, in his text's domain, what there is (the world within his text) is not otherwise accessible to me. (Is it ever, in novels, but in this way?)]

I first listened to *Postlude* during a nor'easter, a storm I declined to impose an anthropomorphic interpretation upon, which therefore excluded malevolence, desecration, and willful destruction. So, as in a powerful natural event, in *Postlude* self-definitions that embrace propriety and even benevolence, which are vulnerable to takeover by a punitive, moribund-tinged emptiness, begetting atrocity, are, in my view, fundamentally irrelevant. There are striking successions of unprecedented energies beyond previously respected boundaries of range and duration, transitionlessly succeeded by startling silences, eerie delicacies; there is a viola/cello "duet", which, having been fully present throughout its hyper-protracted timespan, stops, and there is a long silence (during which timespan I may become aware of the contextually affected quality of my respirating sentience), because there is no motivating energy propelling sound to arise. Until now it wholly unselfconsciously does (there is no other way), as pizz. *Postlude* seems a musical artifact deeply engaging -- indissolubly merging concept and expression (as in the best music) -- hitherto non-sentient earth force energies and continuities; opening-up to, shaping, and ultimately containing, if not subduing (resist hearing the ending violin solo as wistfully persistent), the natural forces within human.

If AoB's evocation of *Postlude* doesn't click with the reader (considering that the basis of the evocation is for the most part what's not to be found in the music) there is no recourse. Uncomprehending in the aftermath of oraculation, existential blankness, if anything tensively hued, ensues. An uneasy state to be sure.

### **Evocations: Episodes 14-18**

From the abysmally chilling climes of *Postlude*, AoB alights to more temperate zones. Once again his text deftly encompasses, although sometimes just briefly touching upon, objects from domains that would have been regarded as only loosely associated as "artworks". The common lens -- making explicit the concerns exacerbated in *Postlude* -- the dynamic between immanent contextual significance and entities outside of that bounded context, by definition unreconstructed things, which are then thoroughly reconstructed from within, as "external" in very particular senses. Or, in terms derived

from -- in Jim's socio-philosophical taxonomy -- "Germanoid BullShit": the intentional inexistence of external objects within artworks. He considers:

Exigent real world reference -- Kollwitz drawings: Secondary consciousness irrelevant in the face of real world hunger and oppression (as opposed to experiences in which the consummation is wholly within secondary consciousness, and nothing, needs to, or should, follow).

Reference within music to other musics: as "realworld" targets -- Haydn (anti-) minuets; as vaporized in the transaction -- Schoenberg piano suite op. 25; as intrusive objects of satire -- Stravinsky jazz, rags, tangos, chorales.

The absence of real world reference and attributions of intentionality -- "abstract" art: unlinks indwelling significance from entification from compositional intent from overall significance (and regarding AoB's encompassing diversity of art realms, note that we "listen" to the paintings).

Skewering them on our behalf -- "prejudicial realworld referential" Grosz linedrawings.

Concealment/revelation of truths within philosophical, theological, texts, and also novels.

In this episode, AoB provides, by the way, at least a partial characterization of his own method:

"[y]our single angle of vision always overlooks, depletes.  
is insensitive, or ill-informed, or dense, or grinds an ax.  
The real story, james's story, we must infer"

(which again invigorates concerns about the oracular mode)

### **Episode 19: Ben's earlier work**

This episode both sets the stage, and reaffirms antecedents. It proposes a view of Ben's "earlier oeuvre" that supports AoB's evocations regarding Ben's two recent pieces in this text -- modest; no flash, no clichés... not likely to frame and project a tastylick, let alone romp with it (the father is father to the father). Listening to Ben's *Concerto Grosso for Strings* (1954), AoB's descriptors seem credible, but nevertheless a pointed under-characterization of this music, focusing, as is becoming customary in this context, for the most part on what's not to be found there. (And there are some oddities: "attitude-free, don't bother to congratulate themselves" and "diffident, veiled" seem on the verge of conflicting, "veiled" seeming to be not free of attitude, and also not clearly compatible with the earlier temporally unqualified description of Ben's music as "raw", and "vulnerable".) Is AoB making us work harder to infer his story here?

Episode 20: Messiaen -- "MessCatVII(4)" (*Catalogue d'oiseaux: Le rousserolle effarvate*)

AoB and I may well agree that this music has something to do with birds, but the

transmutation that occurs between Messiaen's literal and exacting notation of a bird's "song" in the woods and the compositional inclusion of this song in his music, as his music, falls short I find of perspicuity of process or result. AoB hears the "catalogue" in the title as pervasively attributable to local continuity. If so, invoking revered texts, his "timelessly flat birdworld" evocation makes this piece a likely candidate for a *Soundscroll* #8 instantiation (we would know at last what "now" has become).

Messiaen's "Birds" seem to have been seriously deranged by their composer's metaphysical encumbrances. Insofar as bird song has to do with mating, territorial defense, and other activities critical to a bird's, and the species', survival, portraying the sonic dimension of this dynamic as a list-like catalogue devoid of urgency seems extremely anti-ornithological. (As though a Messiaen-Martian were to meticulously transcribe and catalogue human cries for help, incorporating them into a Martian composition, completely unaware all the while of the exigent meaning to homo sapiens; and then, missing this essential point, would seriously suppose that it had something to do with us -- was "scholarly" even.) Yet, AoB's contention that Messiaen's music represents this dynamic as timelessly flat isn't obvious either. This fractious music seems both flamboyant and opaque, and, as depiction, ecologically obtuse to its ostensible subject matter, making the assimilation of AoB's evocation, unfortunately, for me, unattainable. (So, I still don't know what now has become.)

### **Episode 21: Downtime**

AoB's evocation of *Downtime* departs in an important respect from those of previous artifacts, insofar as it purports to reveal insight into the mind of the composer in the very act of creation, whereas until this point his episodes evoked characteristics of emergent artifacts of unspecified creative processes. The logic of the evocation is not unfamiliar: first, tell us what's not there (notes -- pitches -- don't matter; no verities of composition, etc.), then solicit our agreement as to what is there, according to AoB: a portrayal of a secondary consciousness itself as an "infrangible object," "out there where the birds speak," providing itself and the listener with a transparent, unbiased window on its own activity. It does this by having accepted, in a meditatively derived self-perspective, without evaluation or judgment (and by us accepting these acceptances, likewise) whatever arises within itself ("ben, unmediated"). And the rationale for our accepting this characterization is that, listened to as normal music, *Downtime* is heard by AoB, it appears, as irritatingly banal and incoherent (e.g., "infantile pianobang"), but if heard arising in the way he suggests, its incoherence becomes understandable as, so to speak, occupying, achieving, a state of remarkable trans-coherence. (Not for the first time we wonder what might be going on when one composer hears the work of another: given that Ben's compositions seem to expressly disavow, within their world disencumber themselves of, those very musical qualities that Jim's compositions sedulously and fastidiously cultivate -- consider his unsurpassingly elegant and refined MIDI realizations, in which the precise shaping and molding of every note is crucially involved in the music's self-constitution -- should we be surprised that AoB seems to begin by hearing these recent compositions of Ben's as deviantly undeveloped, as

"anticomposition"?)

AoB says that piano and percussion speak to each other only as a last resort (clearly, they don't approach each other by way of asking, shouldn't we talk?), because "the stuff going on must be on its own". I might want to put it somewhat differently. I hear every utterance of *Downtime* as coming down with a laser focus on a fine line that separates self-completion, and irremediable self-enclosure, from availability for continuation by something other than itself. What AoB describes as "comes accepted", is the sound, for me, of this complex dynamic -- the opposing tendencies of enclosure and enclosure -- somehow resolved to a point, and expressed as pellucid singularities. The sense of notes being stripped bare is a purposeful compositional constraint, insofar as it provides, in this context, little, from its point of view, "generic" musical stuff for succeeding events to grab onto. (So also, in *Downtime*, there's less a sense of each individual utterance having a burden to "carry" the piece through it than in most music.) Like *Postlude*, *Downtime* sounds to me the music of a composer who has pretty thoroughly evacuated his musical storage bins of the last several hundred years of "musical sound" accretions.

I don't know how to get from my interpretation of *Downtime* to AoB's evocation, which seems to be located in some respects adjacent to mine, but frustratingly behind an impenetrable barrier. I can't speculate about Ben's mental processes when composing *Downtime*, but it is noteworthy how little *Downtime* sounds like the music of Ben's *8 pianosolo soundsessions* (Open Space CD #2), in which his self-described mindset was not unlike the one AoB ascribes to the composer of *Downtime* -- "soundthoughts manifesting unanalyzed, uncomposed... without analytic or compositional intervention with respect to the sound at any point" (CD text insert). Would it have been relevant for AoB to have queried Ben regarding this point? (But why is it unimaginable that such an exchange could have taken place? Would AoB, in the midst of his lucubrations, stop, take a time out, to *validate* their content by consulting the piece's originator? Not likely: that would be a severe incursion into, and violation of, the infrangible space of the listener/thinker/meditator.)

And then the oracle arises once again to drive the point home:

downtime is...

downtime is...

downtime is...

downtime is...

downtime is...

Consider "downtime is more like MessCATVII(4) than most birds."

Interpretation: problematical, given that a musically inclined ornithologist might regard MessCAT as a perhaps interestingly novel, but sharply circumscribed, even skewed, perspective on bird acoustical production that is oddly divorced from the

real life bird culture those sounds emanate from and are a part of. The assertion that *Downtime* is more like Messiaen's deracinated catalogue than most birds seems to suggest that the composer of *Downtime* has deracinated and presented catalogue-like his mind's-musical life the way Messiaen deracinated and sonically portrayed a bird's life, (and that this result is the inescapable outcome of Ben's "aural krishnamurtization"). Would Ben have done that?, on purpose?

Again invoking received texts, consider that in earlier days Jim evinced an attachment to the middle soundscrolls (#5 being endorsed at the time). Now he's finding interesting instances at the extremes, for example, MessCAT, at the end (#8, in my reckoning). But, is *Downtime* like a timelessly flat birdworld? Is AoB not distinguishing between a succession of "only here present now", and "all here's present now"? (although there's a long standing ambiguity on this point: the meditative experience has been described by practitioners in both of these terms). The former would be like *Downtime*, I think, the latter, AoB says, would be like MessCAT. So, *Downtime*, in these terms, might be more appropriately positioned at the opposite end of the soundscroll spectrum from MessCAT, somewhere around #1 or #2 (with reappraisal over the years: then, thin and barren; now, stunningly revolutionary).

From the very beginning of his text, AoB has been grappling with, among other things, the issue of how various artworks negotiate, within themselves and with us, a complex accommodation in which, as they embody and express the sordid, creepy, and the atrocious -- the absorbingly non-normal -- they attract and repel us, fascinate us, but also leave us in need of cover, which they sometimes provide. According to AoB, *Downtime* deals with this apparently protean issue by embracing a new and simple strategy -- just accept it, whatever it is, thereby entirely averting the fascinating and convoluted "need to see/want not to look (or to be seen looking)" conundrum. Is this a cop-out, or a transcendence? Is the transcendence of these issues the magnificent innovation? Perhaps what we hear in *Downtime* is the dissolution of music, as we know it. But what then for AoB has it been reconstructed as?

It seems that when the birds come calling they soon take flight above our human concerns, and depart.

## **Episode 22: (Coda)**

The depicter and depictee converge –

(Hanson) polyresin Florida shopper, frozen in time; (Arcimboldo) human heads assembled from an assortment of organic stuff.

A certain strangeness in the equation.

. . . . .

Since its publication, I've puzzled over AoB's text. It is trenchant and replete with insight, opening up for me wholly new territories for exploration, and it is always engaging; but, nevertheless, some of its objectives, and methods, raised serious concerns. Most disturbingly, I found the oracular mode to be a persona discordant with the inclusive, relativistic stances Jim has advocated over the years.

For example, in previous incarnations he has told us that:

'Something known to just about everyone else and newly discovered by me: "a" piece of music means different things (i.e., is different pieces) to different people, and to the same person on different occasions, and with no diminution of legitimacy.' And "As an inflected inflector of an occasion, an occurrence of music derives its identity from the particulars of its participation in that particular occasion, whatever the occasion."  
[notes to *intimacy – a polemic*, Open Space CD #10]

See also: "So whether some incoming airborne carries Deep Comfort or Deep Danger ... depends on You -- depends on Your Sillyputty Soul, on what Shape you're in, what shape you can Get Into, the shape of You(--or you -- or you -- or you -- or you--)"  
[notes to *GAP6*, Open Space CD #13]

And, many years ago [at the beginning of *Depth of Surface*] he makes it a point to specifically note that: "the expression '...is...' may be profitably construed as '...may, from the point of view herein emerging, be profitably construed as...'"

Yet, the theory of secondary consciousness contains no notice regarding, let alone safeguards against, looming authoritarian tendencies. Jim touched upon this issue a number of years ago, calling a kindred idea "the most invasive one-way transmission since Chinese Brainwashing" [Reader's report on Eliot Handelman's PhD. thesis]. In AoB's text, the conjunction of the oracular mode emerging from and as the voice of secondary consciousness (however seductively cultivated) elicits an abiding resistance -- against foisting a view of something upon me, and then hammering it in with a thundering force supported by an unassailable metaphysic: **I got it directly from the piece, the piece instilled this in me.** If I don't hear it that way I am left, it seems, severely disadvantaged. So, what's the unenviable choice: resist engendering a feeling of belligerent inadequacy, or take shelter in the harbor that AoB offers? (safe passage maybe, but treacherous waters) But ultimately there's no cover there from what he reveals.

Of course, one never knows how things come about for others. But after some time I discovered a promising approach to my entailed perplexities, inadvertently, but not irrelevantly, one day while perusing *The Source – Being About Music*. In the Preface to Volume 1, Jim quotes William of Ockham (Quodlibet 1, *question 7*), who, in the course of answering a highly germane but seemingly derivative question, is goadingly disinclined, says Jim, to ask an obvious question: can one angel cause another angel to

actually cognize what the first angel habitually and actually cognizes? I surmise that Jim would have intuitively answered this question in the negative, but I also imagine that he was unable to rest comfortably with this response, pending a thorough investigation. In order to conduct this investigation, he had to first choose to examine one of two hypotheses: (1) that such causation can occur, or (2) that such causation cannot occur. He decided, strategically, to investigate (1), the positive form of the hypothesis, to which end he created the AoB persona, who in turn utilized several tactics that had the greatest potential to “prove” that such a transmission could in fact occur -- the theory of secondary consciousness, the sub-persona of the oracle, beguiling evocation -- with respect to a variety of highly intriguing artworks, among which were two contemporary pieces that the typical reader of Open Space would in particular be likely to have pre-existent cognitions about, and which would also be likely to resist displacement. Moreover, to make it even more difficult for himself, these pre-existent cognitions would need to be supplanted by evoked qualities based almost entirely on the negation and non-presence of others. Thus, he implemented a veritable acid test, using the most powerful weapons he could devise against the most adamant obstacles he could find, in order to ensure that the result could be viewed as definitive. The experiment created resistance, potentially rising to existential frenzy, in a relevant, that is, a highly receptive but pre-formed listener (who was, realistically, no *tabula rasa*), and so is very reasonably interpreted as disconfirming (1). Therefore, Jim has demonstrated that such causation cannot occur (a corollary may be the disestablishment of the theory of secondary consciousness).

In the light of this demonstration, it is pertinent to note that in the section of **Quodlibetal Questions** just previous to the one cited by Jim in the Preface, Wm of Ockham, (*Quodlibet 1, question 6*) answering the question “Does one angel speak to another”, affirms that --

“...an angel, in speaking to another angel, does nothing other than cause within himself an act of thinking about something, an act of thinking which, as an object, effectively causes within the listening angel an act of thinking about that act of thinking; and so, as a result, in some way causes within the listening angel an act of thinking about the object of the first act of thinking.”

I can attest, after prolonged engagement with AoB’s text, that these various acts of thinking are indeed produced, and are fascinating (if somewhat hair-raising); but, as discussed, they do not thereby determine a predictable result. However, in view of the outcome of the experiment conducted by AoB, we emerge newly alright: the seemingly more modest transactions articulated by Wm of Ockham in addressing *question 6* shed any resemblance to an anodyne, and can now be wholeheartedly embraced as a significant breakthrough (likely, among other benefits, to abet the survival of our artistic artifacts).

It is self-serving, of course, but I’m willing to consider this as revelation for which no cover is needed. (For the nonce.)

To Jim Randall, from Kelly Avant

May 11, 2006

Dear Jim,

I've just read your new text, 'When the Birds Come Calling', and I had a rather strong response to your hearing of Postlude that I felt compelled to share with you.

As you probably know, I do not speak music, so my attempt to describe my experience when I listened to Postlude will be clumsy to say the least, so please bear with me.

For me, listening to Postlude was a profound and beautiful meditative experience that touched me deeply. I was reminded of the Zen saying: "No creature ever comes short of its own completeness; wherever it stands, it does not fail to cover the ground". The purity, the integrity, the fullness of the piece was, for me, truly astounding.

I am telling you this because I hope that the next time I listen to it, my experience will not be colored by the way you heard it. Perhaps, more honestly I hope that the experiences of those who have yet to hear it, those who greatly respect how you hear and speak music, will not be colored by it. But it is difficult to imagine how it could be otherwise. Truly I ache to think that this soul-filled piece of Ben's, that asks only that the listener bring her own-being into the stillness, will now forever have placed over it a filter of the sounds of Auschwitz.

With love and respect,

Kelly

## A Rhetoric of Dislocations

Brad Bassler

The composition process for *A Rhetoric of Dislocations* was primarily stimulated by listening to the GAP sonatas of J. K. Randall, particularly GAP6, the first I encountered after stumbling on a recording of it in Atlanta. (It was this chance encounter which first led me to Open Space.) The process of “gapping” and refilling the poems is a rather literal-minded transposition of Randall’s gaps into the poetic domain, but the sturdier connection is perhaps via the “2 mvmt. middleBeethoven pianosonatas” Randall cites in the subtitle to GAP6, itself in two movements: Untitled and *Time, Forward!*

*A Rhetoric of Dislocations* is not in two movements. Instead, it distributes the edge between two movements throughout the composition in the counterpoint between “gapped” and “filled” sections. For me, “dislocation” is a generalized “gapping” technique that might be symbolized by Scelsi’s signature circle placed on a line, staging a battle between the “good” and “bad” infinite. *Rhetoric* charts a lexicon of such dislocations. Perhaps it steps me along partway toward J. K. Randall’s *Compose Yourself: A Manual for the Young*, which I continue to mull.

Thanks, Jim.

3 February 2009

*A rhetoric of dislocations*

I

words would surrender our needs, abandoned  
to *force majeure*, left fractured into pieces  
easily confronted, whipping down the face  
counterconvoked to address the plea unspoken  
underneath protecting gauze, unevenly wrapped,

sheathed to breaking: the word misspelled, spent  
sinister, unearthing, or the slight burden leaves  
traces, casting its evidence apace and logging  
its plaint against the unreconstructed and instant  
front now recollected anew, now coming unglued

hovers the dialectical music: counts out measures  
for crossroughing finesses, neither for gain nor  
for loss, mismatching troubles us still, remains  
the gauge of our discomfort, carpenter's block  
behind the stage, the curtain drawn over and up

in preparation, and then it begins, the season  
premieres. There is little left to wish for now:  
no preparations remain, and water unthinkable  
no fraternal kissing in an unknown effort to end  
the unpatterned wisdom so slightly distinct from

internecine conflict, exits beckon fire, nudges  
only begrudge premature entrances. Simplicity  
and nothing omitted, the contractual tethers our  
icy sensibility, creating the evening paraphrase,  
the passive synthesis, observant of our winter



stream by in the outer jetstream extended across void  
across those interplanetary eras then to bind the earth  
travel vainly planned in shortsighted conquest when

our misunderstandings compound the interest beyond  
reason the expectations vent impulses plasma trails  
hung in evening air and the promised sign betrays us  
how we would lovingly rotate in its elegy the motions  
of stars their ecology sets the sky afire with luminous

control higher orders nested by blankness discovered in  
time and the improvement of scale searching into depths  
in which we fight the creation of time and yet its bound  
is no more burdensome than the inner boundary of our  
*idée fixe* docking in flight mental changes the routine

of our accomplished ends so lightly borne hence so little  
understood forging them into our humanity only amassed  
with effort the exploding moral fables so narrated enfold  
creases to stash finding no conclusion among the virtues  
of progress the necessary means to begin these latter days

IV

*we wanted  
the weather  
neither  
as advertised*

*nor  
it is  
as a measure*

*it is our  
which cannot  
more general  
goal  
discover*

*the  
declaim  
the absence  
negations  
recognition  
the unstudied  
of evidence*

*and yet  
our breath*

*and yet  
the signs*

*or the most evident  
anticipated us*

*we found*

*in words so much  
we would have thought  
signals*

V

*the ladder the elevated  
railing  
correct shut into  
neither  
history*

*nor civil reform  
for it is  
vainly general  
inflected*

*fit to  
civilized proclamation  
as promised  
the future  
would bring*

*and yet rebirth  
in the event*

*implements forging stacked four high  
in words  
into the annealing air  
ending*

VI

words secrete their power in the abandoned  
sites of emotion, the fractured remnants of  
cauterized lesions, gestures betray the face  
counterconvoked by neurological distortion,  
dissipating residual balances, unevenly taut,

stretched to breaking: the word precarious,  
sinister forces enticing its capture, reining in  
before casting promises out apace, rewarding  
instincts against reasoned response, an instant  
lost, now recollected in arrears, refurbished,

hovers uncertainly in circles, counts out its  
virtues, for nothing, unreconstructed for gain,  
for loss, the landfill having buried it, remains  
unspoken, better a parting glance of actresses  
behind the stage, confidences kept, judged

against, transient and lubricious, the season  
turned tail. There is rhyme rimmed into it  
no preparation will unveil, whatever the cost  
no study will show it, picking up steam across  
reading rooms of wisdom, jauntily distinct from

the undertow of exits made prematurely plain  
for purposes of compromise alone. Simplicity  
will show itself when it wears out and tethers our  
ambition, the slow chorales evening would sing,  
the passive declination of our grammatical winter

## VII

coming unhinged, the relevant distances  
peak into words sent tracking forests  
whether into the song tethered shyly  
or the inclement distance had stuttered and  
rings the inevitable fate of a rhythm

it would require the postulate of listening, would  
remain unedited, cover the field, unrequited  
bedded into motions flutter-tongued stepping over  
the ocean bed stripped in intermittent stretches  
the tune of its patterned intent sent whistling



*shout its remembrance*

*forging*

*a*  
*in words*

*landscape*  
*our horizon*

*the neverending song*

IX

splinters of finance, the dampened, shredded  
introductions like wet laundry linen extending  
beyond the breeze: who would have stirred  
in these darkened borders of sense? For I have  
forecast their elegant demise, and the oracular

wail of birds. What polls would prevent such  
inevitable bias from encountering us unawares  
reaching back into the afternoon deliriously  
written in our stenciled notes, the unintended  
evidence of our appetites and famished attent?

Out at the edge of regulated breathing you send  
signals back from afar, their pulse a cautionary  
implement of education. Will we heed its open  
lament? Avoid this question: for fear lies in  
the reduplication of emergency measures, hours

spent in regret for our waning powers, the place  
set at table only for the conservation of etiquette  
no nourishment in unsound water or inclement  
air lit into unfiltered flights of speculative hazard  
some trees would care to contest, an open letter

to the poetry establishment, signed: return to  
sender, hear the message of its confuted verse  
our amplified ears rebounding its pitch in our  
ample interior, watching sounds of air introject  
into the rhythm of an agon we would impound

X

*the state*

*wards*

*love*  
*nor could*

Brad Bassler

*happiness*

*speak  
specifically*

*of this civilizing reform  
it is not to hinder*

*hindering*

*forward  
vainly*

*mixed with the*

*beyond*

*left witness language  
from sleep promised  
of rhetoric to the future*

*our ego  
broken forth  
and unprotected yet  
opened manifest  
the event close particular*

*and hence  
forging its landscape  
exploding*

*the virtues*

*the lunatic the unrealistic means*

XI

hired hand asleep at the post, the royal family  
counts coin, remits the patently altered report  
inventing the breeze along with it, cheerfulness  
in these darkened borders the undersong offer  
short term, shits on ruins, avoiding the oracular

within streams. I love my glasses, aforethought.  
This is not meant to replace an afternoon wisdom  
an evocation of the afternoon withdrawn then  
for reconsideration. Contact the remains of earth  
sought vainly bestrid, treadle forth in the world

our purchase the burden of innocuous excuses  
as per above. Register their pulse for certified

mail, in evening. Will we heed the weather our  
early warning system, mourning our inefficacy  
the defeated remnants of fabricated measures?

The time before has come for the blanknesses  
time that we couldn't afford, laid away midmonth  
the desiring mind unsoundly clad monument  
to the gnomic withering, the frugal retreat into  
uncertainty, obviating the changes as advertised.

Finally there were words to be spoken that no one  
could foretell, candles betokened the assignation  
among ambassadors of entropy, their dress code  
precedes them, and on no warmer, sunnier day  
could the rhythm have furthered such a filibuster

## XII

a rhetoric intervenes, insistent, its focus  
the apt dislocations within spotted forests  
whether weathered or the wind tethered  
forces convoked without referent, easily  
displaced by the rigid application of measure

stretched, the feather of insistent words would  
remain unchecked, cloistral, unfettered by  
impulse, the slow vertical descent unmarked  
acceleration stripped of any cumulative effect  
poised remnant of formality gone berserk in

echoes, the repeated tension untranslatable  
except in lacunae, despite vortical flow  
up the aerial wake splintering its subtle  
lamination and easing down climacteric on its  
laurels, the ambition futural, coy yet balanced

by the struts of wayward intent, uneasily calibrated  
for flight. There is no foreseeing it, as it emerges  
bare, uncluttered by personal regrets. It backtracks  
promising in altitude, water featured in features  
retracting, kissing at the outer limit of sound

my unspent mouth is furthered by attention  
the respect of amazement fully unruddered

scaffolded, rigged by myth out of the epic  
of its ease, discharged in fantasies penultimate  
to the mount of delusional fields of inflation

XIII

*rivers run past into  
the state nor could  
the dense transition  
tense to song bound  
specifically*

*which is not meant from within  
by the outer which  
eras*

*travel vainly*

*reason the compound beyond  
trails  
the promised sign  
in its elegy  
ecology afire with*

*time and nested*

*docking the time and yet  
boundary*

*forging so lightly borne hence  
amassed  
exploding so narrated  
to stash among the virtues  
the means to begin*

XIV

pump up the volume towards whatever love might  
rewarding the state find asynchronous nor could  
indigent corrections reroute pursuits of happiness  
in this world speak the intransigent word thorough

in its tones specifically adulterated across decades

the mark of this civilizing reform still undersexed  
for it is not to hinder union the establishment from  
contraries of bounding insults contracts hindering  
forward on hind legs the folly of circumlocution  
inflected vainly to no end the streamlined sailors

mixed with the stuttered wind its prophecies beyond  
capture anticipate the frosty language of science  
left dormant witness as promised the wonderful slip  
from sleep in constellated wintriness to the future  
perfect of climate the absence of rhetoric at least as

term what energy our ego banished to the periphery  
culminates in froth broken forth to expel matrimony  
and the vestigial unprotected organs defunct yet and  
opened to hideous refutation manifest the roster stand  
in the event to school close attention to the particular

shout its remembrance and locate words hence as  
undertones forging its remnant abandoned landscape  
the meaning exploding in words words our horizon  
the cynosure of content the epistolary turn the virtues  
the lunatic the unrealistic means the neverending song

## XV

coming unhinged, where the glue of knowledge  
is only an inroad to spoliation, forests razed  
by empaths, the song tethered between firs  
as if they remained. The coniferous weather  
rings too slowly, beats out a rhythm onto the floor

that impedance, the postulate of listening, would  
remain deep in wonder, set aback, unrequited  
in attention. Fast glow of worthy refugees over  
the ocean bed stripped fallow, granitic peaks  
uncovered with windy holes sent whistling through

and the love of seasons remains premonitory  
steeply of access, forever tittles the incandescent  
memory of fogs, of swans, those iced hairbrains  
sent packing along an edge's climacteric sound

inherited, the discreet alliteration of aqueous

mention, a loaded word, sent tipping over  
in waves of air, harvested subtle blades of grass  
crosshairs target along the stretch to center  
peeling in stages. The water pressed forward  
and further forward into the future with rifts

to cultivate fire as passing smoke seeks wind  
in storms of air, kestrel of lone limning, aerial  
wisdom unfold the requisite grammar of what  
calls into hunger, the breeding of instinct when  
words default, thus endangering the ecosystem

XVI

*zero*

*reduced to the state*  
*speechify*

*specifically avoid*

*the great*                      *revival*

*which is not meant to*  
*stream by*

*across*                      *the*                      *earth*

*vainly*

*our*                      *compound*

*in evening air*                      *pulse*

*set*                      *in its elegy*  
*afire with*

*blankness*

*time*  
*in which*  
*no more burdensome*  
*mental changes*

*end*

*humanity*  
*so narrated*

*to*    *find*    *no conclusion*

*to begin*

XVII

words fracture their facture the seamlines  
pressed emotions the fractured splines space  
between unwanted gestures of happiness  
the unseen and so dramatic happenstance  
dissipating among figures thus unevenly

stretched and yet bounding out precarious,  
sinister, aerial, enticing the blanks reining in  
our emotions, promises in betrayal of faith  
sentiment against reason brother against  
brother expostulating in hyperbolic effect

however uncertain the circles we inhabit  
summing for nothing and marginal for gain,  
for loss were chosen having foreordained  
bespoken to know at a ready glance double  
the ledger in our innovation was kept last

for inspection for and yet against the season  
and citation. There is rhyme without reason  
whenever you will insist whatever the cost  
our agency will rapidly recite and steam across  
reading lamenting wisdom frittered in vain

the undertow betokening controversial claims  
just the type of compromise when granted it  
will stall at press wears out diplomacy our  
last civil stand, curtains out peace in evening  
wear in formal review for our debutante winter

XVIII

*and at*  
*port*  
*the breeze cheerful*  
*in song*  
*avoiding*

*streams  
is not meant to replace*

*sought vainly*                      *the remains of earth  
in the world*

*our*                      *burden*                      *excuses*  
   *their pulse*  
*in evening*                      *we*  
   *mourn*  
*the*                      *remnant*                      *fabric*

*time*                                      *the blankness*  
   *clad*  
   *into*  
   *changes*

*could foretell*                                      *that no one*  
*among*  
*could*                      *them*                      *no*                      *day*  
   *have furthered*

XIX

*splinters*                      *the*                      *shredded*  
*introductions*                      *wet*  
   *the breeze: who*  
*in these darkened borders*                                      *I have*  
*forecast*                                      *and the oracular*

*What polls*  
*from encountering*  
*into the afternoon*  
*stenciled notes*  
*our appetites and*

*regulated breathing*  
*back from*                      *their pulse*  
   *Will we heed*  
*lament? Avoid*                                      *lies*  
*the*                                      *emergency measures*

*spent in regret*  
          *only for*                          *etiquette*  
                  *in unsound water*  
          *in unfiltered flights of*  
*some trees*

*signed:*  
*sender,*  
*our*          *ears*                  *pitch our*  
                  *watching*  
*into the rhythm*          *we*          *pound*

XX

*of*  
*introductions*                          *extending*  
*beyond*  
                          *borders*

*What*  
          *bias*  
  *deliriously*  
*written in*  
          *our appetites*

*send*  
          *from afar*

*Avoid*  
*duplication*

*for our waning*  
*at table*  
          *in*                          *inclement*  
                  *flight*  
          *would*

*the message of*  
*our*          *ears*          *its pitch in*  
*ample*  *air*  
          *the rhythm*  *an agon*

XXI

see it secrete its effluvium in the abandoned  
sites, manufacturing the fractured remnants  
by fiat, deposit securities to betray the face  
economies convoked as excuses for marriage  
to readjust residual balances, heirs appear

apparent, to break out the word, the good news  
of our sad gospel, anger, the need to rein it in  
as evidence of promises. The sky reconfigures  
our lament against reason, addresses us with  
ether now our ultimatum, the outer limit set to

hover over the nation, reassert the country's  
virtues, for nothing shines in this open sky  
the threat of global warming impends, remains  
unspoken, voids a part in writing of our stated  
and substantial confidences, waiting for returns

our orientations turn lubricious, the season is  
turned into the negation thereof, rimmed into  
indiscernment, heisting whatever the inclement  
weather will show it, the darkened atmosphere  
falls prematurely, barometrically distinct from

the polls of its exits, crepuscular to a panoply  
of purposes, sensing in the dimming of vision  
what new fashions it wears out to repatriate our  
nation, grown into gowns of evening, addressing  
the stocks' declination, infomercial damage control

XXII

*late at night:*  
*trees in forests*  
*tethered ahead*  
*setting it*  
*out in waves, a rhythm*

*in pulses would*  
*remain unattended*  
*stumped down bent over*



opened, thus, to the future the manifest boundary  
of the event docking close in to the small particulars

its features emergent and so lightly borne hence speak  
a solution forging its unsupported landscape amassed  
with virtues exploding from the vision so narrated  
waiting to stash credit for increase among the virtues  
the lunatic the unrealistic means to begin to reconcile

XXIV

*needs, abandoned*

*fronted, whipping            the face*  
*convoked*  
*underneath*

*to breaking*  
*or the slight burden*  
*apace*

*now recollected anew*

*the dialectical music*  
*for*  
*us still, remains*

*behind*

*in preparation*

*There is little left*  
*water unthinkable*  
*no            kissing    an unknown effort*

*exits                    nudges*

*and nothing                    tethers*  
*sensibility, creating*  
*our winter*

XXV

coming unhinged, late at night: the words  
resemble trees felled in inclement forests  
made rich with ore, the song tethered ahead  
amast, rich in guidance, setting a riddle, it  
rings, out in waves, a rhythm pierced by sound

in pulses to attain the postulate of listening, would  
remain undiscovered, unattended, unrequited  
stumped down into its own ground, bent over  
the ocean bed stripped of all evanescent demeanor,  
the challenge brooks no one, sent whistling in

to song, the flight of birds remains premonitory,  
diffident of access, infertile, unwooded, heckling  
in the aerial wake of swans, their subtle headings,  
reciprocations and exchange, climacteric forays  
inherited from inevitable currents of wind, yet

burdened, a loaded word, sent inland, ending  
in waves among harvested subtle whirling,  
spliced to the targeted ledger of projected  
returns in stages. The water welcomes the wind  
and further graces its ascent onto shore with rifts

as tokens of what was sought, as smoke seeks  
its storms, as the kestrel ascends limning, aerial  
wisdom its pinnacle, avoiding the fate of opining  
to end its own hunger, fantasies of fulfillment,  
the ambition to surmount an endangering inflation

XXVI

*of the tremendous*  
*the* *trail*  
*would* *face*  
*dutifully* *bearing*  
*its* *exposing*  
*promise* *deliriously*  
*written*  
*to dawn, the light-bringer:*



implements forging testaments a hidden landscape  
the parthenogenic lives in words along our horizon  
seething with premature resentment, annealing air  
into synthetic perfumes, chant the neverending song

XXVIII

*see*  
*sites*

*face*  
*marriage*  
*heirs*

*break*

*promise the sky* *in*

*ether now*

*over*

*this open sky*  
*remains*

*void*  
*and*

*turned into* *lubricious*

*inclement*  
*atmosphere*  
*distinct from*

*the* *crepuscular*  
*the dimming*

*our*

*evening*  
*the* *damage*

XXIX

repetition unloaded into a dramatic conceit stands  
at the edge however we duly wanted to prevaricate  
pinched in the eye bemoan the weather as it recurs

and neither the changing neither the impermeable  
alters its advent the unsolved equation as advertised

nor distant in nourishment unforeseen as a measure  
such it is in our absence, the gauge ripped off from  
the carpenter's block bespeaking more general error  
it is our failure to mend right goals for the present  
so that which cannot await might discover hesitance

to supplement the distant recognition's convergence  
the retainers declaimed with brilliant abandonment  
in their consensus which could promote the unstudied  
proclamation to wager the negations of relative ease  
in the absence of the aforesaid provision of evidence

and yet we recovered in some ambience our breath  
to spread the word of its own deep pathos in ending  
and yet spoke on, relieved of its innermost the signs  
upended history but the most evident casualty so far  
when comedy returned and anticipated us in this our

greatest hour, for here instead of stoppage we found  
glottal postage to stamp us forward, filling us full  
in the bearing of a new address, in words so much as  
what we would have thought alone on such a budget  
parrying smoke signals in economies beyond our tears

XXX

*act the act the lines*  
*press the lines pace*  
*between pines*  
*and dramatic*  
*figures*  
*in aerial bound out*  
*motion in blanks in*  
*time gain again*  
*other effect*  
*certain the habit*  
*for nothing and*  
*chosen*

to know  
our  
and when read  
lament  
will  
betoken  
the type  
will  
in  
rhyme  
what  
recite  
season  
when granted  
our  
wear  
curtain  
view for  
winter

XXXI

their  
emotion the fractured  
gestures  
dissipating  
unevenly  
stretched  
sinister  
enticing  
promises  
against reason  
in  
uncertain  
for nothing  
for loss  
spoken  
circles  
having  
a  
glance  
kept  
and  
the season  
There is rhyme  
whatever the cost  
steam across  
will  
reading  
wisdom  
in  
the undertow  
of compromise  
will  
wear out  
it  
our

*evening*  
*our*                      *winter*

XXXII

depilate the ladder's stories from the elevated aim  
it rails against railings we wanted in performance  
inexorably correct despite the weather shuttered into  
crossbeam-braced struts neither windowed nor not  
slatted history announcing the roster as advertised

nor again is it uncivil to evince reform as a measure  
for it is our unspoken confidence which betrays us  
to the forward thrust and its more general drift hence  
it is our own vainly expressed goals unexceptionally  
inflected which cannot fit the holes as we discovered

and so plastered them beyond recognition to avoid  
fits of despair, declaiming civilized proclamations  
in their absence as proxy as promised the unstudied  
nonchalance burying its negations in what the future  
would bring to remind us of our theory of evidence

and yet we were not discouraged beneath our breath  
to discover the economy's rebirth out of stagflation  
and yet we were not encouraged either by the signs  
of recovery or by the most evident of rediscoveries  
in the event that nothing anticipated us or awaited

our reemergence since stacked four high we found  
implements forging their own agenda and demanding  
lists set out for perusal in words so much simpler  
than we would have thought from annealing airports  
into ethereal signals of the hidden plan descending

XXXIII

*secret*                      *in the abandoned*  
*sites*                      *the fractured remnants*  
                                 *betray the face*  
*convoke*  
                                 *residual balances*

*to break the word  
rein in  
promises  
against reason  
now*

*hover count  
virtues, for nothing*

*unspoken a part of remains  
confidences*

*turned lubricious, the season  
rimmed into  
whatever  
will show it  
distinct from*

*exits  
purposes  
it wears out our  
evening  
declination*

XXXIV

seepage of the tremendous, its winnowing to sites along the psychagogical trail, stationed at intervals, how would we know its face in the interference of an arranged marriage dutifully expressed in bearing heirs for further

generations? Break with tradition, exposing the future in its unwritten lineaments, open in a shadow's promise to the sky, deliriously written in the overtones of an insensate, oracular ether now ministering to dawn, the light-bringer:

fold it over the enveloping route of unkempt messengers, comported to this open sky as febrile dreamers of futures, and contact remains fraught. Avoid inferences, uncertain with glue and the social fabric to paper over the lack

of foundations, also lubricious when called in,  
turned into self-accounting, the furniture held  
against vagrancy, but in reality the inclement  
assets cloud our flight into the stratified atmosphere  
fearing our coming unstrung, hardly distinct from

the spectacle of crepuscular blooming, the height  
of our ambition, to mount the dimming reservoir  
now considered too pink, unaesthetic in this our  
loud and plural age, to forgo evening at the cupola,  
the damage without presaging the damage within

XXXV

the melody intervenes late at night: speaks  
in paths, in trees, within the unlit forests  
true to its stillness, the wind tethered ahead  
and forestalled, without setting demands it  
marks out in waves, a rhythm to measure

in pulses the feather which would descend, would  
remain unremarked, unattended in grounding,  
stumped down on the east of moss, bent over  
deadened bark, stripped of all signals attending  
the challenge of formality, an index of whistling in

echoes, the flight of birds untranslatable, keens  
diffident of access despite the hawk's heckling  
in the aerial wake, no mission of subtle phrase  
to denature it and vaunt the climacteric in its  
interworldly ambition of steepened ascent, yet

burdened, a loaded weapon uneasily calibrated  
for flight, feeds the interstice its subtle whirling,  
spliced against anticipated features. It backtracks  
its words in stages. The water welcomes the wind,  
a contract kissing at the outer limit, it rifts

my licks, it mouths my astonishment, smokes  
at storms of amazement, the unruddered plenum  
transparent, fired by myth, the untiring epic  
of its ease discharged in fantasies of fulfillment,  
red ambition of morning, an endangering inflation

XXXVI

words  
fractured  
abandoned  
the face  
counterconvoked  
unevenly  
to breaking: the word  
sinister  
casting apace  
against an instant  
now recollected  
hovers counts  
for loss for gain  
remains  
behind stage  
and the season  
There is  
no preparation  
no  
wisdom distinct from  
exits  
Simplicity  
tethers our  
evening  
the passive winter

XXXVII

paths  
late  
the unlit margin  
in stillness  
without  
rhythm  
stimulating  
so much

*feasting*

*the gaps*

*untranslatable*

*bent*

*meridians*

*cool capture*  
*realpolitik*

*blank*

*unfailingly absent*

*making*                      *out*  
*contracts*

*over*

*I inherit*

*handed*  
*funneled*

*of its*                      *sluiced*  
*to*                      *releasement*  
*a hint*

*consent*

### XXXVIII

fetters of the tremendous exhibition coerce  
introductions, the evidentiary trail extending  
beyond any doubt would arrest and deface  
the lovely ornamental borders anchored  
dutifully inert, chains bearing the links in

our fences. What risk is there of exposing  
unwanted bias, its dark core of indecision  
scorching the promise of intellect, deliriously  
written in the multicolored flares we bring  
to usher in our appetites to dawn, the light-bringer:

fold the message into minute dimensions, send  
messengers from afar to crack open its shell:  
in its inner hull lies presaged first contact with  
aliens. Avoid inferences to the extraterrestrial  
and duplication or fractures in the infrastructure

of foundations, for our waning lies ready. Set  
out at table movable condiments, the furniture

*feasting*

*the gaps*

*untranslatable*

*bent*

*meridians*

*cool capture*  
*realpolitik*

*blank*

*unfailingly absent*

*making*                      *out*  
*contracts*

*over*

*I inherit*

*handed*  
*funneled*

*of its*                      *sluiced*  
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out at table movable condiments, the furniture





for inside the certain the inexcusable habit we  
shouldered for nothing and with receipt of due  
consented to chosen recourse only when balled  
to the floor to know our undisclosed indemnity  
and shoved up our ass with unspoken gratitude

see how the wind picks up in off season trade  
and words compound rhyme into rhythm only  
when broken to the stride of what hits the spot  
then standing will badly recite a forced apology  
read the lamentation of all it must have denied

and in the end betoken a mental division of un-  
rest the type so studiously when granted freely  
will avoid all that wears its colors in our air  
hidden behind the curtain of its manifest intent  
shame in seasonal view for ambivalent winter

XLII

*intervenens*  
*within forests*  
*the wind tethered*  
*without*  
*measure*

*the feather* *would*  
*remain unremarked*

*stripped*  
*of formality*

*echoes* *untranslatable*  
*despite*  
*the aerial wake* *subtle*  
*and climacteric its*  
*ambition* *yet*

*uneasily calibrated*  
*for flight* *It backtracks*  
*in water*  
*kissing the outer limit*

*my* *mouth*





lament? Avoid the mourning which lies within  
the defeated appeal to emergency measures

spent in regret to overcome the blankness of  
time passing only for manifest midden etiquette  
the slag mound in unsound water a monument  
bid into unfiltered flights of momentary refuse  
some trees calling out the changes of its deploy

here we find our impulses reassigned: notify  
sender, remit upon receipt, verify the assignation  
our unrelenting ears would find to pitch in our  
pond, retroactively watching waves extended out  
into the rhythm of emotions we would impound

#### XLVI

a rhetoric of unwanted needs, abandoned to  
the apt dislocations within empty space, onto  
avenues fronted, whipping wind in the face  
often convoked to assuage guilt fast recovered  
underneath by the rigid application of measure:

stretched to breaking by intermittence, would  
remain unchecked, or the slight burden grown  
to stand the slow marvels apace, unmarked  
acceleration of the green distances, turned to  
red, now recollected anew, gone packing in

echoes, the dialectical music encovers us gladly  
we enter in, domesticate it for our own purposes  
and the aerial wake blesses us still, remains to  
befriend us, what little we can still discern of it  
behind the prognoses futural and evenly balanced

in preparation for wisdom or its escapement:  
for flight. There is little left to breathe here,  
slight pools deficient, water unthinkable, air  
no less, for kissing is an unknown effort to sound  
a purpose in the beacon of what otherwise was

my unspent mouth. It exits in wriggles, nudges  
past maligned purposes, left fully unruddered  
and nothing rigged inward or out to tethers



in airstreams the great caravan of utter revival  
which is not meant to replace personal prayer  
streams by uneasily, lumbering and littering  
across the timberline and the remains of earth  
sought vainly anywhere else out in the world

our homiletic burden compounded excuses  
until recriminations found their pulse to mark  
truth in evening air we could complicate so  
intensely, vigorous and mournful in its elegy  
the tattered remnant sets fabric afire with

prophetic calm. We inhabit the blankness which  
time wills as our inheritance. The subtle rages  
in which our estate finds us clad to tradition  
are no more burdensome than the transition into  
middle age, where mental changes outweigh

physical ones. In the end it could be that no one  
could foretell what would happen to humanity  
among its collective senescence, and so narrated  
tales to them finding no conclusions a Sunday  
could confidently have furthered to begin the week

XLIX

*the post*  
*the patent*  
*the breeze*  
*these darkened borders*  
*the oracular*  
*streams*  
*this*  
*the afternoon*  
*wisdom*  
*the*  
*earth*  
*the world*  
*our purchase*  
*their pulse*  
*Will we heed*  
*our*  
*mourning*  
*the defeated*  
*measures*

Brad Bassler

*the blankness*

*time*

*the*

*unsound*

*monument*

*the changes*

*the assignation*

*the rhythm*

A GUIDE TO JKR PASS 3, continued

Steve Greene

*Listening to Stephen Dembskis' Being , Hearing,  
Knowing Now (2005) [version II with improvisation]*

Little long cinder Sammy knows how to creep and to beep  
To creep as toffee alligators live in the deeply deep...

pass the time a while child  
Sammy show me your flare  
on a bridge thickly bristled  
that will go know  
you know  
from here  
to there  
or so  
that sound that is circus'd now in clattered sky  
where shall we put all these timbres  
that so doth fly...

Will we ever really make it  
to the other  
that other side  
well...and now,      then                      so,

        a while later...

No,  
no bones were lost, no skinny skin skinned  
only those lonely tones are for sale here right?  
now on a highway that rises up

like a true loves wonder...

and so I guess then... we will sleep here tonight dearest  
into this endless night and we will become our silent dreams.  
And become our silent dreams.

*Listening to Elaine Barkin's "4 Midi Pieces"*

I

Oh Matumala  
how an E varies  
rising and called  
to out there            sending language foil  
and soft sparked...  
how many signals will there be till they here us?

The hollow that is formed forms an unformed space  
and about this space always a question:  
"Is there nothing out there?"

II

And so now tickled Mick at the hiffer  
elevating transpolation with no disgrace racing  
gathering wooden daylight coin        yes  
zithering that all new Titan poof box box  
and it won't be magic no no...  
Just Mick tuning a velvet hue  
to start the show.

III

And so great Pleiades,  
you have come down again from your sky  
offering incantation by your luminous hand.

How many will heed your orders?  
as the memories in your breast  
tired from endless battle  
want only to go homeward.

IV

shiver

The return of Matumala in a # III encrusted outer garment.

End

A few endings.

In this beginning the endings are semaphore  
looking for themselves  
a signal trying to reflect back something,  
anything that may be out there.

Shocking and shaken makin' surf's up the bacon crashed curtains  
it's all about trying to light the sub-space Burton!

And how this thing can keep doing  
the same thing always in the - vertical -

but travel only outward, with no reply not even an aye aye to distance if it is beyond me, or anything else  
that it may come in contact with.

I still do not know where those beginnings ended.

All the endings were in the beginning.

Does this mean that we won't get presents for Christmas?

This is all a bit strange and frightening.

And at the same time still exhilarating.



Listening to Judith Shalin's "Homemade Music"

You know, these glass hoppers just keep rollin' a long long like my rugged potato cocktails with their 12 salutative olives.

And do I hear a beam o' whacked light present? Was this movie now made in a barn? I sniff clay bunions sacked onions and electric drizzling Ice Capades on a driftwood rink, that well... these glass hoppers jus' keep rollin' a long don't they? Shoot maybe we'll get a big telephone call...! And talent agents will perceive these glassies as true originals. We may get on a TV show and start a forest fire of sheer delight and then maybe get to play some of our own original music like the cavemen did or Don Ameche would have. You know I do love these hoppers, I want to take them home and cook them. I want to cook them in a special sauce made of butter fried lovey wings and wash them down with a homemade cola made of some surprise ingredients. Yes, homemade; can't beat it. Why would you want to?

Listening to Michael Dellaira's "Class Notes"

Truly a world

when I touched her

there

was nothing else

LISTENING TO HUBERT HOWE'S " COMPUTER VARIATIONS"

OLD CRAGGLY HAS COME FROM THE BIFFLE CLUB AND CANNOT FIND HIS WAY HOME. PERHAPS HE HAD TOO MUCH SAUCE OR MEMORY OF HIMSELF. OLD CRAGGLY LAY ALONG A PARK BENCH AND WENT TO SLEEP AND DREAMED OF WHAT MIGHT COME TO BE. HE SAW HIMSELF WALKING OUT OF THE BIFFLE CLUB NOT BEING ABLE TO FIND HIS WAY HOME. HE LAY ACROSS A PARK BENCH AND WENT TO SLEEP AND DREAMED.

A SILVER

A SILVER SHADOW

A BLANK BOX

SILVER AGAIN

...NOW WE KNOW OLD CRAGGLY HAS COME FROM THE BIFFLE CLUB AND CANNOT FIND HIS WAY HOME. PERHAPS HE HAD TOO MUCH SAUCE OR MEMORY OF HIMSELF. OLD CRAGGLY LAY ALONG A PARK BENCH AND WENT TO SLEEP AND DREAMED OF WHAT MIGHT COME TO BE. HE SAW HIMSELF WALKING OUT OF THE BIFFLE CLUB NOT BEING ABLE TO FIND HIS WAY HOME. HE LAY ACROSS A PARK BENCH AND WENT TO SLEEP AND THEN DREAMED A GOOD DREAM.

**listening to Jim Randall's**  
**pitch derived rhythm: five demonstrations (c. 1960)**

---

**Trk 1**

---

**How does one begin with a sneeze that never happened?  
Start with a bunch of guys that picked up where the sneeze  
left off I suppose. And how many times can you pass something around  
till you get tired? Here it seems never. This things got rhythm game.**

---

**Trk 2**

---

**stepping lightly  
who is she?  
looking  
caressing there  
lightly there  
stepping  
lightly there**

---

**Trk 3**

---

**purely majestic  
coming out of this place  
with another with last nights dream.  
How long have I been in this past...  
I keep walking as though forward ending up back here at this place  
holding memories of kings.**

---

**Trk 4**

---

**Well,  
now it certainly has been a long hot hot road  
how many times can one mull over the over?  
over then  
finally coming to a conclusion at this...  
the subject at hand.  
somewhere there back again  
well then  
going over it again  
and becoming its new thing again again  
again  
ba boom boom boom.**

**Trk 5**

---

**She questions me lightly,  
Have you any spawn today?  
I turn somewhat smiling  
“No my dear lady I think not,  
your butterflies have been so gracious  
as we can plainly see  
but no, no spawn today”**

Guide to JKR Pass 3

LISTENING TO JKR'S "GAP8 FOR PIANO THEN TAPE"

TRK 6

---

SHE CAME TO THE MERRY-GO-ROUND EVERY DAY THAT SUMMER  
IN A PARK BY THE LAKE AND RODE HER HORSE. SHE LOOKED AT THE MIRROR IN  
THE CENTER OF THE CAROUSEL SMILING... AND AT THAT MOMENT ALL THE WORLD  
REVOLVED AROUND HER SECRETLY WHILE NO ONE WAS LOOKING.

TRK 7

---

THAT SUMMER SHE CAME TO THE MERRY-GO-ROUND EVERY DAY IN THE PARK BY THE  
LAKE AND RODE HER HORSE. IN THE CENTER OF THE CAROUSEL SHE LOOKED AT THE  
MIRROR SMILING. NO ONE WAS LOOKING AND ALL THE WORLD REVOLVED AROUND  
HER.

TRK 8

---

HELLO WOOLLY!  
COMING DOWN FROM THE BACK THERE  
KIND OF A LONG SNOOZE EH BIG GUY?  
KIND OF LIKE IS THERE ANY PLACE TO GO?  
KIND OF LIKE  
MAYBE            HERE  
WITH THAT                OH THAT    :    )  
OH YEAH            THAT IS LOOKING GOOD WITH THE FANCY SHOES  
YES    YES...  
MAYBE I'LL HAVE ME SOME NEW NEW STEPS

YES NO...WELL MAYBE NO,  
BUT FANCY SHOES IS MAKING ME LOOK GOOD YES  
AND LOOK AT US:  
A CHERRY ON TOP WHIPPED CREAM FINISH!  
HAVEN'T SEEN ONE OF THOSE SINCE OLD WOOLLY CAME OUT FROM WAY BACK

THERE----->

>-----

NOW THAT :

ooo IS SHOW BUSINESS ooo

TRK 9

---

THE SILVER  
HOW IT ECHOES IN A CANYON WIDE

DO YOU REMEMBER?

FROM

SLEEP                      YOU WERE

AS A NIGHT QUIET TOUCHING ME SOFTLY.

TRK 10

---

AFTER THE PARADE  
AND COMING BACK TO THE HOUSE.

HOW LONG HAS HE BEEN GONE...  
I WOULD PUT HIS PICTURE UP AGAIN IF MY HEART WOULD LET ME.

MAYBE I WILL SING SOME SONGS TONIGHT.

THIS DAY IS WILL ALMOST DONE.

TRK 11

---

HOW MUCH FOR THAT ELECTRONIC HUMMINGBIRD?

CAST ALL JANGLED LOIN TO TANGO DECKS.

AND THEN SHE SAID I DON'T KNOW MAYBE TUESDAY THE DRESS WOULD BE READY  
AND THEN BE OVER ABOUT 7PM AND

MOVE BACK CLATTERED CRUSH LIKE IT'S A MAYDAY IN HELL!

HUMMINGBIRD

Concerning *Birds* by JKR and AM:

**Sentences in clarification:**

(Dear Arthur: I found a nice motto by Emily Dickinson for your construction of AoB: “When I state myself, as the Representative of the Verse --- it does not mean --- me --- but a supposed person.”.)

AoB reports a bunch of experiences. Whose? --- it matters not. (Mine, of course.) Vividness of language renders these experiences not exclusionary, I hope, but, on the contrary, available. To whom? --- it matters not. (To anyone, of course.) Permission to entertain alternative experiences is neither granted nor denied.

Section 1 opens as a primer of comfy platitudes, and closes forecasting choosier thrusts. In subsequent sections, negatives will help make explicit the evaporation of the former in the exigencies of the latter.

Lists .....

*Downtime* is .....

*Postlude* is .....

Lists .....

..... are meant to sparkle & jerk your head around. Fun. Catechism. Whatever.

As is the sequencing of sections.

Logic is a flavor which AoB unrelentingly solicits, infests, and molds. (Or do I conflate “logical” with “urgently entangled”?) AoB wants no exemptions.

My preClintonesque definition of “is” is better seen as a key to reading than as an outpost of violated doctrine.

Your apocryphal takes on *Postlude* and *Downtime* are for me the high spots of your paper. I like them extremely. And I am refreshed by your Benquote re *One*, which verges snugly on AoB re *Downtime*. But don’t forget that AoB is reporting achieved experiences --- JKR’s --- to which all else, related though it be, and “supportive” though it be, is external. Another reason I didn’t consult Ben more assiduously: he may be fed up with “Auschwitz”.

JKR

## About *CorporalMente*

Given that body and mind are one and the same – that is to say – two different words with which to name two different, yet intricately related aspects of the same material process - it follows that: psychological violence is *physical violence*, just as *physical violence* has severe psychological consequences.

The belief in the mind/body separation is a schizoid strategy by which society dissociates itself from its own unpleasant feelings and from the responsibility, the consequences of its violent actions.

If mind is thought of as something intangible, separate from the flesh, it is then seen as something abstract and therefore, whatever mind experiences - e.g. suffering (and especially the suffering of others) – it must be abstract too and as such, not “real”. Likewise, if the body is regarded as no more than a lump of matter, inferior to the more “spiritual” mind - where the flesh is characterized as a collection of impulses to be kept under control, suppressed in a manner similar to the way animals are treated - whatever the body may feel and experience, can be explained away as mere chemical reactions. These are rationalizations that enable individuals and society at large to continue being coercive, manipulative, oppressive and practice other kinds of violence without feeling any remorse or conflict stemming from the troublesome moral implications of their actions.

*CorporalMente* is an activist poetics directed at the violence of leaving the body/mind dichotomy unquestioned. A kind of rant directed at violent rationality, instrumental reason; reason as an instrument of power and domination. A rant also, against the authority of commercialism and its ideology of violence and domination. A rejection of authoritarianism in all its guises.

While *CorporalMente* is Spanish for “corporally”, it has nested within it the word “*mente*”, which is Spanish for *mind*. Thus the title is here read as *embodied mind*, in this manner implying a critique of the body/mind separation, while at the same time constituting a healing gesture, a healing action by means of changing ones reading of the word (and language in general) and thus one’s thinking, perception and mode of relating to reality.

Writing, as kinesthetic process (just as thinking is a kind of action, a kind of doing) where such motions are a kind of mapping: mapping disorder and *this* order, connected by conjunctions, a swirling motion, sifting through cracks, scribbling the moments away, scrape scrap scribbling and scratching between the notions and scrape scrap scribbling in the something to say

writing these lines, these strands which are entwined in a rough, irregular manner, together forming a loose web of associations, dead ends and lines of flight, disjunctures and, inconsistencies: a porous texture characterized by fissures, gaps, and blemishes, irregularities and discontinuities: a kind of texture comparable perhaps to geological formations and other messy, turbulent processes seen in nature: a thorny and often cacophonous writing employing a strategy of excess – the purpose of which is to create a singularity, a locus of difference, in effect, *a kind of scrub*, a noisy weed garden that resists the ever present and totalizing inundation of useless information society generates to distract and drown out the troublesome moral implications of its existence, namely: the violence by which power constitutes, maintains and, enforces itself upon us: its weapons of mass distraction: a kind of negative feedback loop intolerant of any new (and dissenting) information and which can be characterized by the following motto: “I know what I like, I like what I know.”

*Una maraña de cosas all tangled up in sounds,  
A journey through an eroded landscape,  
Beautiful like an unkept ruin or  
Garbage dump with weeds overgrown.*

Corporalmente

## CorporalMente

(com(o)position<sup>l</sup> with sounds)

“Now, it is only order that is real; but, as order can take two forms, and as the presence of the one may be said to consist in the absence of the other, we speak of disorder whenever we have before us that one of the two orders for which we are not looking”.

Henri Bergson<sup>ii</sup>

“... el lenguaje contiene un elemento de promesa.  
El lenguaje es la utopia de la materia.”

Marta Tafalla, *Theodor W. Adorno: Una Filosofia de la Memoria*.

“But language is restless.”

“... a word is a bottomless pit.”

Lyn Hejinian, *My Life*

“My writing is clear as mud, but mud settles and clear streams run on and disappear. . .”

Gertrude Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography*.

“All true language is incomprehensible.”

“Poetry is the grinding of a multiplicity which throws out flames.”

Antonin Artaud

## A Vine

(sounds-textSounds)

I've  
been writing  
this letter,  
over and over **again**,  
starting out each time  
from a different **location**,  
a different angle;  
hoping to give **skin**  
to the passing of days,  
trying to circumscribe  
a **theme**  
that would give it **all**  
**some** kind of meaning.  
**But** my inability  
seemed meaningful **enough**,  
**so** I let it all grow  
like **a** vine,  
**wild** and untrimmed,  
which made its **home**  
**in** and all around me,  
branching out in all **directions**  
( **in** and all around me )  
shooting **out** shoots  
**for** all to see and hear,  
with **tendrils**  
**in** tender twists and leaflets green  
and gnarly dark **roots**  
**grasping** at what remains unseen.  
Eversame underneath **distance**  
**and** resistance  
dance into **stream**,  
**since** then as far as far

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can be **from**  
the **necessary**  
despairs **and**  
**possible** reflections  
prepared for the days **specificities**.  
**Reversing** into and out of heteronomy  
and gestures –**proachable**  
**stretched**,  
zealous **enough**  
**thought**,  
told **itself**  
if behaviour is an -ism  
as noise is to **extreme**  
**libidinized** density.  
What remains in helpless **glance**,  
actually, **retreating** distance  
and a leafy knot, **into**  
**unnecessary** streets  
(as train contradictions **change**)  
**more or** less quiet  
remained **locked**  
**in** seizure  
location: what **tries**  
to try **for** more.  
**Looking** for pieces of scrap,  
through cracks **fallen**,  
**leftovers** from history's workbenches,  
dust bins, **garbage** cans  
**with** which to construct  
a **difference**;  
a heavy knot, **a nexus**;  
**knots** of discontent,  
this **content** was  
as if by **dreams**  
an **intent**:  
for **pieces** looking  
**perched** on branching  
out glances **home**  
of **different** locations  
passing **through**  
**days** of trying.  
Retreating into **disorder**, (and *this* order)  
as **flooding** comes first,  
alluvial **readwriting**.  
**Riding**.  
**Writhing**, writing.  
It's trailing **within**,  
**writing** as kinesthetic process,

**bodily** function,  
an **excretion**,  
**as is** thinking a kind of action  
and reading **alreadymade** to move  
**across** the page,  
**a plane**,  
**a practice**,  
an inquiry as **practice**, lived to do so,  
it is **lived**.  
**Reciprocity** feeds back into rapport,  
a **feedback** loop,  
what **connects** these lines  
is a **motion**,  
a **matter** of motion  
and **motionless** matter  
(what body leaves behind the **mind**?)  
**its** business minding  
the **leafy** matter or  
body's **loam** in which to wander,  
walking the ways of inky **trails**,  
**body** functions as a  
**motionless**  
minding its business **matter**.  
**Forgotten**, broken rituals  
where the body knows **what** to do  
a kind **of** that walking,  
very center movements **talking**,  
peeking **exactly** how,  
**always** coalesce "you" back  
into photographing **because**.  
**Immense** became  
tumultuous **occurring**,  
**and** of course it's hard,  
"me" back into **flinging**  
**writing** as musicking,  
a kind of **talking**,  
in the **center** of movements  
peeking the **moment** into truth:  
a kind of **waking**,  
**very** counter movements thinking  
and off course becomes **occurring**  
it's hard "**me**" back into talking figments  
out of whole lives, **you** knows,  
**becomes** the side see doing,  
whomever feels **thinking**,  
**not** about but *is*,  
where *about* implies a **gap**,  
a **postponement** of the now through signification.

In other **words**,  
it **means**, not what but just,  
it just means, not something **other**  
**than** itself.  
Exploring the idea of **knowing**  
**what** I'm doing  
at the moment I'm **doing** it.  
**Often** at the moment I'm writing,  
I don't know what I'm **doing**,  
**where** I was going with it.  
I mean, knowing *not knowing*,  
or what "**I**" means in this context.  
It explores, **but** rather,  
**allowing** the self organizing  
aspects of **language**  
( context irritant **and** these. . . *this* ),  
that is, its **sounds**,  
**rhythms**, its physical attributes,  
to, as it were, lead **the** way  
**arriving** at several  
questioning **marks**.  
( . . . *regular irregularity* . . . )  
That is, **linguaging**  
**not** languishing,  
I mean, **verbatim**  
**not** verboten  
it's ok, but I'm not  
**sure** my book will reach,  
read at arm's **length**  
lest I **shove** the distance  
on appeal and **approval**  
**and** work for a change  
in the **seasons**.  
**Shoveling** my ass off the ground  
may read as **follows**;  
**slipping** and sliding in the afterthoughts,  
errors slithering in the **dark**,  
**poemmoan** me for a change at the  
now as word follows **word**,  
and **sound** follows sound.  
What we were **listening** for,  
**in** the rain,  
for hours and **hours**,  
**where** is it "I" drops off and "we" begins.  
The process is **shifting** again  
**into** a wavering mist. My  
demarcation's a fist full a **stories**,  
(as a **matter** of fucked,

saved by **misfortune**),  
a **collapse** into undecidability,  
consistent **inconsistency**,  
**where** inconsistency becomes the norm,  
and **then**,  
this **distance** too becomes part  
of the latest **trend**.  
If **there's** one sound that  
defines this **pattern**,  
it's the **moment** lost  
**behind** the rhythm;  
questions made **intelligible**  
by a **gesture** borrowed  
but not measured out in **beats**.  
This **little** starting out  
in contradictory **rhythms**,  
as if **there** were always an  
improvisation trying to get **out**;  
**boiling** over into lust,  
the weather bringing you **gifts**  
of stop **signs** out of context  
fired up in the **snow**  
**against** the grain  
of a walloping **gust**.  
**Argumentative** passivity,  
a nervous **harbor**  
**hollowed** out in the *porque*?  
From sun to **stream**,  
**skip** from line to face  
rather than **to** that,  
**check** out the fingers  
packaging the **insides** so  
**who** would have thought.  
Sinking into **feeling**,  
**slinky** real shoulders  
shoving aside the **dreaming**,  
(**what's** it mean  
when you **say**  
"what's it mean"?)  
and then so **what?**  
**Got** "it" coming to ya . . .  
The stream is **someone's**  
**encounter** stretched  
along a path **toward**  
**words** gleaming in the  
darkness of **thoughts**  
**teaming**, as branches  
intertwined lead the **way**.

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**Text** as environment,  
language as a kind of  
**self** generating, self organizing  
wilderness in which to **wander**,  
**exploring** the links, connections  
between language, thought and **perception**.  
I wander, in **other** words;  
**whirls** where a world began;  
a fracture as just **conjecture**,  
**without** some difficulty moving  
toward a horizon **between**  
**someone** and other,  
moving as ever **shown**, shewn,  
**sewn under** news, and then,  
so much that I do not know.

this ex**SPLASH!**nayshun

an argument for liberty: the liberation of desire and imagination, curiosity, the exercise of which is ours the furthermore is of course and off course just because decisive says so. Knotty and naughty, a call for disobedience, as in refusing to tow the line; any line that is ready willing and able to subdue you into conformity. Refuse to be subdued. Refuse abuse. Resisting the snobbery of puritanism that pervades our culture from right to what's left of the left, through the extreme center. I could say. That is to say. And yet again. And still some more. What's left to explore and say again without fear of punishment, no reward, what needs to be said what, and done, and then again.

## THE DISCIPLINE OF CHANGE

"Perhaps the next thought at which I know nothing will be a project closed for the time. The book to be a heart or open sphere, closed At any saying of words as posits. I am only That it of the precise instant".

Clark Coolidge<sup>iii</sup>

Beginnings and endings are one.  
That is, in the beginning,  
There was an ending, a shimmering,  
(chimera?), rising and falling.

I mean, in the beginning,  
Against a background of **absolute** nothingness,  
(chimera?), rising and falling,  
Meter and rhythm in opposition.

Against a background of **absolute** silence,  
That is, at this juncture,  
Meter and rhythm in opposition,  
A primary means of articulation.

I mean, at this juncture

An argument for change, to fly in face of about; about "about", an about face without orders but disorders into off course to what is in sounds saying to be expected and then something else some more again, that is to say, as sounds are a kind of play, acting the part as in composing and decomposing, (composting!), and recomposing sound places and traces of becoming and going. The next thing you grow, it's time to flow! Just as we are writing along, even as **One** speaks of **tHings** unknown, **kNowing** full well that the **lAst** word is the **loSt** word, an action of **Hoping**, sorta kinda groping along, into the manifested realm, seeing this **Burgeoning** activity in the growing of plants and the forming of clouds **hE**replace musicking, and the **R**eplace now, conceivably<sup>iv</sup> enjoying everyplace languaging not languishing. My meta - "saywhat!?" ". . . to disrupt the flow of communication, to create extreme libidinized density, to approach 'white noise'" "Noise as

Corporalmente

Repetition causes disjuncture,  
A primary means of articulation,  
Just as in music, everything matters.<sup>5</sup>

Repetition causes disjuncture  
And events are intrinsically relational,  
Just as in music, everything matters,  
Constituted by relationships.<sup>6</sup>

Events are intrinsically relational,  
Just as murmurs feed the stream,  
Constituted by relationships,  
In the amicable, blue distance.

Murmurs feed the stream  
That redirects you to a different dream;  
The amicable, blue distance,  
The collapse into undecidability,

That redirects you to a different dream.  
A turbulent moment from which we arise,  
The collapse into undecidability,  
As if summoned by the sun's fervor.

A turbulent moment from which we arise,  
Living in the world's gigantic fever,  
As if summoned by the sun's fervor,  
When things are seen as what they are.

Living in the world's gigantic fever,  
The uneasiness of life as it teeter totters  
When things are seen as what they are  
And the unknown weight of what will be.

The uneasiness of life as it teeter totters,  
Becoming the prevalent gesture in things,  
And the unknown weight of what will be  
As clouds are reflected in the crystal mind.

Becoming the prevalent gesture in things,  
How thoughts are amassed in the restless wind  
As clouds are reflected in the crystal mind,  
Is the metaphor for a new day.

How thoughts are amassed in the restless wind,  
The ragged music in which we live  
Is the metaphor for a new day.  
The chiaroscuro of a jagged sound,

The ragged music in which we live  
Like fragments of a playful round.  
The chiaroscuro of a jagged sound  
Or the sultry songs of valley streams.

Like fragments of a playful round,  
The restless rustling of autumn leaves

*freely composed dissonance. . .* "To reject  
the  
untouchability of auratic beauty." "To  
disturb automatism, to estrange and  
displace, to burst the binding of current  
usage, to develop its possibilities of  
social  
framing within itself (on behalf of the  
reader ( listener/thinker)) rather than impose  
some  
externalized social willfulness.  
Informalism  
As the construction of a reading  
(that is, listening) opportunities  
and their spontaneous self  
interpreting"  
"Yet this is a choreography of possible  
readings, not insistent advocacy."<sup>7</sup>

The time is now  
when Musics wrestle everywhere, languages  
colliding, interPenetrating  
voices interRsecting and intermingling hereplace  
and everyplace nOw, metapresently becoming  
and foreVer in passing  
this music Is.  
Sometimes rejecting, but then again  
accepting eAch other's right to be or not to be  
may be the quesTion  
of what Improvisation is,  
fOrever passing and metapresently becoming,  
the time is Now.

Writing Can be ( and is)  
Thought Of as a kind  
of Music,  
which uPon reflection,  
is images in sOund,  
or Sounds as  
Images in words lying (inwardly?)  
or talking out and Taking steps  
toward being in time  
with the mOment  
to which we beloNg

perhaps then Joining or bridging the gap  
between self and Other the space  
between ideas and tHings,  
this No-thingness

in which we Can live,  
A place to be in wholeness  
ourselves in freedom Giving  
to sacred Everythingness,

nowhere metaBounded  
Everspaciouly meta present  
world Now,

the sounds of a now that has parted,  
a process of becoming and going.

The materiality of rhythm and meter,  
Just as thinking is a kind of bodily function,  
A process of becoming and going  
Is present, as opposed to absent.

Just as thinking is a kind of bodily function,  
The form or shape of a rhythm  
Is present as a kind of absence,  
Since absence can be felt, and is thus,  
a kind of presence.

The form or shape of a rhythm,  
Appearing and disappearing,  
Just as absence can be felt and is thus  
a kind of presence,  
Chimeric, as a kind of scintillation.

Appearing and disappearing  
Against a background of nothingness,  
Chimeric, as a kind of scintillation  
Or periodic shimmering.

Against a background of absolute nothingness,  
Rising and falling,  
Or periodic shimmering,  
Aperiodic and chimeric as a kind of flickering

Rising and falling  
With one's surroundings,  
Aperiodic and chimeric, or a kind of flickering,  
Subject to perceptual learning,

With one's surroundings.  
An overlapping of sounds and voices,  
Subject to perceptual learning,  
Forming a web of metric intricacies.

An overlapping of lines and voices,  
Surrounding one's cognition,  
Becoming a web of metric intricacies  
In formation with one's surroundings.

Surrounding one's cognition,  
Pulse or tactus (surroundings)  
In formation with one's surroundings,  
To put it tactfully,

Pulse or tactus, (surroundings),  
The ability to detect available information  
To put it tactfully,  
Is a kind of anticipation. Just now elapsing along

A line  
of least deMarcation, humming, howling  
slngsaying,  
beginNs somewhere,  
a sound heard Becoming a language,  
a wOrld now,  
a music Refracted in resonance  
becoming awarEness,  
an uTterance and only now  
its Zenith to be a language<sup>9</sup>  
now to be a musicK. Therefore,  
writing may bE  
seeN (and is)  
as aN argument for difference  
rather than quEstions  
To already given answers;  
a premise under wHich and for which  
this writing emerGes  
to mAintain the  
Beauty of irrelevant music,  
its structural natUre resists selling  
and puts foRth its own alternative  
supplying its Own demands<sup>9</sup>,  
demanding its own supplies.

A music evasive yet standing in opposition to  
the  
breeding of conformity a writing arising  
perhaps from the friction of our daily  
contradictions, standing in com(op)position  
to  
the eradication of imagination, resisting  
the  
imposed esthetic of the known. For  
these  
are times in which the fascism of  
commercialism dictates the ways of mind  
and  
hand. Under the pretext of "common sense"  
and "communication", it demands a  
"common language",  
which is to say: **a sameness of thought and  
perception**, not too mention **expression** and  
the extinction of all opposition, reducing all life  
down to the level of a ditty,  
commodity ditty. Fostering fear, festering in  
the dense meat of conformity, a measure of power and  
disdain, abstracting the body's labor for the sake of  
pain's pleasure

“The ability to detect available information  
Is not only knowledge of what already exists,  
But also, a kind of anticipation,  
Knowledge of one’s encountering the world.”<sup>10</sup>

Not only knowledge of what already exists,  
But cognition in the ecological sense.  
That is, knowledge of one’s encountering the world,  
Of imminent changes and possibilities.

Cognition in the ecological sense,  
The relations of *identity* and *relatedness* suggest  
the idea of *continuous relations*,  
An identity that won’t keep,  
For which no list of particular relationships  
can be exhaustive.<sup>11</sup>

The relations of *identity* and *relatedness*  
suggest the idea of *continuous relations*.  
An identity that won’t keep,  
For which no list of particular relationships  
can be exhaustive,  
Embodying a paradox.

An identity that won’t keep  
Except insofar as it keeps falling,  
Embodying the paradox  
Of the same yet nascent other.<sup>12</sup>

Insofar as it keeps falling,  
As “I” was saying,  
The same yet nascent other,  
What I wanted to say.

As I was saying,  
Let me just say that,  
“what I wanted to say”  
was just “something” to say.

Let me just say that,  
“at this juncture”,  
was just something to say, that is,  
a primary means of articulation.

I mean, at this juncture,  
Repetition causes disjuncture,  
A primary means of articulation,  
Just as in music, everything matters.<sup>14</sup>

Repetition causes disjuncture  
And events are intrinsically relational,  
Just as in musicking, everything matters,  
Constituted by relationships.<sup>16</sup>

Seeking a music, a writing, the  
structure of which, if not directly, then by implication,  
questions authority in all its insidious manifestations,  
from left to right through the extreme center.

A music,  
a writing then, that resists and denounces repression,  
oppression as they confront us in all their insidious,  
underhanded manifestations, in our daily lives, from  
left to right, through the extreme center; the puritanical  
impulse to always be right and ideologically proper.

Resisting aesthetic cleansing for the same reasons one  
should resist ethnic cleansing, they go hand in hand.

***“What is meant is a type of  
music which has discarded all forms which are  
external or abstract or which confront it in an  
inflexible way. At the same time, although such  
music should be completely free of anything  
irreducibly alien to itself or superimposed on it, it  
should  
nevertheless constitute itself in an objectively  
compelling way, in the musical substance itself,  
and not in terms of external laws. Moreover,  
wherever this can be achieved without running  
the risk of a new form of oppression, such an  
emancipation should also strive to do away with the  
system of musical co-ordinates which have crystallized  
out in the innermost recesses of the musical  
substance  
itself.”<sup>13</sup>***

***What concerns us here, the gravity of  
the situation, is the police state of mind -  
such that a police state as such is not  
necessary: we are our own policemen, judges  
and executioners - such that curiosity and  
imagination can’t wander freely without fear of  
punishment. . .***

This gives An idea of the  
infinite journey  
from a premeditation  
of non-being. It is not a mind  
which has made things, but a body.  
Vile depredations  
latrines of sublimity!

Emerged innate  
from a warped  
mamtram, what you have  
defecated  
defecates you,  
it was so much Drainage for angels!<sup>15</sup>

Events are intrinsically relational,  
A kind of burgeoning activity,  
Constituted by relationships  
Just as we are writing along,

A kind of burgeoning activity  
Like the growing of plants and the forming of clouds,  
Just as one is writing along  
(languaging, not languishing!)

Like the growing of plants and the billowing clouds,  
Sorta, kinda groping around  
(languaging, not languishing!),  
just as sounds are a kind of play.

Sorta, kinda groping along  
Without orders, but disorders into off course  
Just as sounds are a kind of play,  
Some more and then again, that is to say,

Without orders, but this order into "of course!"  
A turbulent moment to which we belong  
Some more and then again, that is to say,  
Composing and decomposing, ( a kind of composting!).

A turbulent moment to which we belong,  
Recomposing places and traces of becoming and going,  
As a making past of a first event,  
And the durational potential of a new one.

Recomposing places and traces of becoming and going,  
I could say, that is to say,  
The durational potential of a new event,  
What's left to explore and say again.

I could say, "that is to say",  
And yet again. And still some more.  
What's left to explore and say again,  
What needs to be said and done some more.

And yet again, and still some more,  
To create extreme libidinized density,  
What needs to be said and done again,  
The construction of a reading ( that is, *listening*).

An extreme libidinized density,  
Images in words lying, (inwardly?),  
The construction of a reading, (that is, *listening*).  
Forever passing and metapresently becoming,

Images in words lying, (inwardly?),  
Just as one is writing along.  
Forever passing and metapresently becoming,  
Even as one speaks of things unknown,

Synonyms dislodge the difference it seems,  
the contrast of which is  
a bold, dented crevasse

What if someone dropped a hand here  
which then scurried away  
like spider on the prow  
netting up words entangled in sticky  
web-like sentences?

Nevermind.

Images coalesce into sounds,  
and words as shapes taking place  
in the round motion of day,  
connecting something to everything  
and the other way round as well.

Sometimes, nothing is what remains  
but thought's path ended;  
a transparency of words,  
twigs and leaves  
and muddy puddle becoming sky. . .

( . . . roots **grasping** shoots  
for all movements  
to which itself **belongs**,  
flesh and bones of what's to see?  
As galaxies lost in **frost**,  
this **horizon** displaces  
perhaps about singlehandedly  
**writes** any reading. We poetic?  
Or not between, **the**  
**extreme** nowadays,  
becoming sigh or **flicker**  
**somewhere** vanishing anyway.  
Sometimes **gestures**  
**just** nowadays making storms  
hanging wind **begins** to sky.  
But **mouths** retold  
A few sounds or **clouds**,  
**which is to say**. . .)  
riding,  
writhing,  
writing  
it's trailing within,  
writing as kinesthetic process,  
bodily function,  
an excretion  
as is thinking a kind of action and reading  
allreadymade to move across the page  
always coalescing you back

Corporalmente

Just as one is writing along,  
Knowing full well that the last word is the lost word,  
Even as one speaks of things unknown,  
Sorta, kinda groping along into the manifested realm,

Knowing full well that the last word is the lost word,  
Seeing this burgeoning activity in the growing of plants  
and the forming of clouds,  
Sorta, kinda groping along into the manifested realm,  
Disintegrating and reintegrating somewhere down the line.

Seeing this burgeoning activity in the growing of plants  
and the forming of clouds,  
A process of disintegration and *this* integration,  
Reintegrating somewhere down the line,  
Hereplace musicking, and thereplace,  
conceivably enjoying everyplace now,

A process of disintegration and *this* integration,  
Writing this again starting location,  
Hereplace musicking and thereplace,  
conceivably enjoying everyplace now,  
Projected then against my wild home.

\*

I've been writing this again starting location,  
A different skin to theme this whole,  
Projected against my wild home;  
A vine in tendrils branching me.

A different skin to theme that whole,  
Shooting out shoots to inwardly hear,  
Projected then against my wild home,  
Spiraling words, outwardly lying, again in words,

Shooting out shoots to inwardly hear,  
Leaflets and earth somehow a way  
Spiraling words, outwardly lying, again in whirls,  
Where the writing began.

Leaflets and earth, somehow a way,  
And hours took space  
Where the writing began.  
I can mumbling, that is to say,

And hours took space,  
Gurgling tide, the way among me,  
I can mumbling, that is to say,  
Roots grasping shoots for all moments

Gurgling tide, the way among me  
To which itself belongs  
Roots grasping shoots for all moments,  
Flesh and bones of what's to see?

into thinking because  
immense became tumultuous occurring, and off course  
it shards "me" talking back into flinging writing  
as volition handles the thinking. . .

\*

particulars appeared vast,  
driven by ideas and words.  
working over to bring 'em  
into context, theories,  
contact,  
aureoles spread in rings  
of birds converging down  
toward a point of thought

in night.

Together, some of these  
issues become like tissues;  
drip-painting of thought  
and sound  
into matter of speech;  
a network of dendrites  
connecting,  
electrochemically  
resounding neurons fire  
verbatim  
(not *verboten*), running into

foliage  
over which a sequence  
bridged  
is begotten as wings of  
leaflets  
lets wind of lack be  
forgotten,

replacing this with then  
to understanding of what

\*

an expression  
gives  
the way  
(kinda)  
exchanged  
just as

thoughts,

To which itself belongs,  
As galaxies lost in frost,  
The flesh and bones of what's to be;  
This horizon displaces,

and then,  
pushing  
whose  
this is

Like galaxies lost in frost  
Perhaps about single handedly writes any reading,  
This horizon displaces  
Or not between the extreme nowadays,

more  
in fact  
at discovered

Perhaps about single handedly, writing any reading,  
Becoming sigh or flicker, somewhere  
vanishing anyway  
Or not between the extreme nowadays.  
Netting up words, entangled in sticky  
web-like sentences.

constantly  
in flux,  
overnight,  
without warning  
foraneous

Becoming sigh or flicker, somewhere  
vanishing anyway,  
Hear here the jabberwocky of thought,  
Netting up words, entangled in sticky,  
web-like sentences  
to fly in face of about.

interactive,  
pushed by buttons,  
some more  
and ago

Hear here the jabberwocky of thought.  
It means not what but just. It just means.  
To fly in face of about,  
An about face without orders.

over of nothing  
that dream,  
and sleep  
in cataclysm  
ever clear

It means not what but just. It just means.  
I mean, catch the words' phrasing,  
An about face without orders,  
And persist in a gesture set into motion  
by the jabberwocky of thought.

discovered  
at  
in fact  
moves

I mean, catch the world's phrasing,  
To which you submit without reason,  
And persist in a gesture set into motion  
by the jabberwocky of thought.  
As if summoned by the sun's fervor

this is  
whose  
pushing,  
and then  
thoughts

To which we submit without reason,  
Like the machine "we" is,  
As if summoned by the sun's fervor  
And is reversed into disorder.

just as  
exchanged,  
kind of,

Like the machine "we" is,  
The discontinuous textures of this continuity  
And is reversed into *this* order;  
The certainty that everything in mystery's distance  
is eternal.

the way  
gives  
an expression

The discontinuous textures of this continuity  
A different location of things the story hadn't disclosed;  
The certainty that everything in eternity's distance  
is uncertain,

\*  
this,  
the blood,  
if the function  
were that  
of a word,  
world  
whirls in

Corporalmente

and the unknown weight of what will be.

A different location of things the story hadn't told you about.

"The periodic events we encounter in the world",

And the unknown weight of what will be.

"Such periodicities are often not very precise".

"The periodic events we encounter in the world

Are produced primarily (but not exclusively) by organisms.

Such periodicities are often not very precise.

Very precise periodicity. . . is encountered primarily. . .  
in the workings of machines".<sup>17</sup>

Produced primarily (but not exclusively) by organisms,

The pebble left on the beach, for example.

Very precise periodicity. . . is encountered primarily. . .

in the workings of machines,  
wherein is revealed a kind of kinship.

"The pebble left on the beach

Displays the form of the wave that brought it there,

Wherein is revealed the kinship

Of logical thought and unorganized matter".<sup>18</sup>

This plays with forms of a wave brought here,

It means, not what, but just; this writing

Of logical thought and unorganized matter,

Meandering among hedges and margins bleakly denoted.

It means, not what, but just, this writing,

Recomposing places and traces of becoming and going,

Meandering among hedges and margins bleakly denoted,

The durational potential of a new event.

Recomposing places and traces of becoming and going,

Disintegration and *this* integration,

The durational potential of a new event

Reintegrating somewhere down the line.

This integration and disintegration.

I mean, in the beginning,

Reintegrating somewhere down the line,

(a shimmering?), a kind of overlapping,

I mean, in the beginning,

"as a making past of the first event,

(a shimmering?), a kind of overlapping,

determined by the duration of the past event.

"As a making past of the first event,

The durational potential of a new event

Is somewhat determined by that of a past event,

Making the past event, *presently past*".<sup>19</sup>

"The durational potential of a new event,

summer of night

into fall

that what

confined its surface

stories,

her face:

this wrenching everything's

a music

\*

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 speaks

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,

(without a new beginning, there could be  
no definite end,  
making the event *pleasantly in passing*)  
without which there can be no definite duration”<sup>20</sup>.

another poem

\*

Without a new beginning, there could be  
no definite end,  
But the first event, as ended, does not precede the beginning  
of the second event,  
Without which there can be no definite duration;  
The definite duration in which beginnings and endings  
overlap”<sup>21</sup>.

light  
this root  
so figured  
about which  
I began  
again  
yellow

The first event, as ended, does not precede the beginning  
of the second event,  
A choreography of possible readings,  
not insistent advocacy,  
The indefinite duration in which beginnings  
and endings are one,  
And the construction of listening ( i.e. reading) opportunities  
and their spontaneous self interpreting.

not an analogy,  
weekly  
I wrote,  
disagree  
choosing

“A choreography of possible readings, not insistent advocacy,  
A self analytical noise that can develop its possibilities  
of social framing within itself,  
Informalism as the construction of listening (i.e. reading)  
opportunities and their spontaneous self interpreting,  
rather than the [imposition] of some externalized  
social willfulness.”<sup>22</sup>

force giving  
oneself  
what words  
wait  
for  
pause

A self analytical noise that can develop its possibilities  
of social framing within itself,  
The restless rustling of languages colliding,  
Rather than the imposition of some externalized social  
willfulness,  
A proliferation of tendrils branching out, seeking out  
new connections.

applause  
plause-  
ability  
at noon  
not this

The restless rustling of languages colliding,  
Collective assemblages of enunciation,  
A proliferation of tendrils twisting, seeking out  
new connections.  
It is not impossible to make a radical break between  
regimes of signs and their objects.

wind blown  
distant room.

their  
cancellations  
wait  
with new  
pen  
in hand

“*Collective assemblages of enunciation*  
Function directly within *machinic assemblages*;  
It is not impossible to make a radical break between  
regimes of signs and their objects”<sup>23</sup>.  
No longer sentences as so much sentencing.

“I”  
gets  
warped  
on the  
thoroughfare

either that  
or mean it.

Functioning directly within machinic assemblages,  
Additive remarks a plenty,  
No longer sentences as so much sentencing,

\*

Corporalmente

And then some more, you got like it?

Additive remarks a plenty  
Purdy please in the quiet assonance  
And then some more, you got like it?  
And say cheese when the bomb hits.

Purdy please in the quiet assonance.  
Strike “that” for an answer  
And say cheese when the bomb hits,  
Remaking the circumstance for what’ cha got about it?

Strike “that” for an answer,  
This is my membership discard as line breaks  
Remaking the circumstance for what’ cha got about “it”;  
Calling the whatchamacallit down to a close.

This is my membership discard as line breaks:  
Absence, the impact of “what”, an inmade abcess  
Calling the whatchamacallit drawing to a close,  
Defense of who and what far end of near.

Absence, the impact of “what”, an inmade abcess,  
The pattern in my art:  
Defense of who and what far end of near?  
Anthologized in the pureé breaking into my anatomy.

The pattern in my art,  
Words as sounds retained in the uproar,  
Anthologized in the pureé, breaking into my anatomy,  
Starting out in contradictory rhythms.

Words as sounds retained in the uproar,  
An itinerary iterating,  
Starting out in contradictory meters  
As excess outside the rule.

An itinerary iterating  
The rule of excess,  
Excess outside the rule,  
As lure: learning to lean near the real.

The rule of excess,  
In two halves,  
As lure: learning to lean near the real,  
Knots of discontent this content was,

In two halves,  
The split became the haves and have nots,  
Knots of discontent this content was,  
As if by dreams an intent.

The split became the haves and have nots.  
The way was shot through with forms of a wilderness  
As if by dreams an intent  
Scribbled in as afterthoughts.

something objective grows here  
in the rain,  
like fog on a pillow,  
or traces of acid on sheet metal  
revealing the outline of days gone by;  
a transfigured notion of how  
things could be,  
though never quite  
making it into the realm of premonition,  
as if the maps we once drew  
suddenly  
belonged to a different season.

We’ve been pinned to this reality  
by some anonymous thought,

a work of art perhaps  
posing as a man,

a nude figure in desrepair  
compared to something  
the mirror can’t discern

but winter exhausts the garden’s old tale  
as something avoids the  
ocean’s clouds again

what we wanted, the sounds  
to be an otherness, has returned  
and now looms familiar

This course on paper  
a trail to follow through,

paper cuts trails down  
blisses otherwise forgotten

Love could walk into this room;  
a meaning of life,  
the shape of a storm  
replacing everything

Alternative stories may grow  
from these wrenching motions  
just as everything is simultaneously forgotten,  
as the sign on the wall reads:  
“Beware of Avalanches”

But this is a music tainted  
by the blood of friend and foe alike,  
as if the function of a gesture  
were that of a shadow  
to the words we speak;

The way was shot through with forms of a wilderness,  
Counter to what others had meant,  
Scribbled in as afterthoughts,  
Espumarole of lusty motions led astray.

Counter to what others had meant,  
A fraction of thought still tills the night,  
Espumarole of lusty motions led astray,  
An intention half felt, left to wander in the light.

A fraction of thought still tills the night,  
Becoming the prevalent gesture in things,  
An intention half felt, left to wander in the light,  
The way beginnings and endings are one.

Becoming the prevalent gesture in things,  
And the unknown weight of what will be,  
Beginnings and endings are one,  
I mean, in the beginning, there was an ending.

\*

( . . . a kind of interruption takes place here  
wherein multiple multiplicities reassert themselves  
in the sounds of a text cascading; a swarm seeping in,  
around and past, a line of flight evading the impulse  
to control. . . . *"The number is no longer a universal  
concept measuring elements according to their emplacement  
in a given dimension, but has itself become a multiplicity  
that varies according to the dimensions considered. . . .  
We do not have units of measure only multiplicities or  
varieties of measurement. The notion of unity appears  
only when there is a power take over in the multiplicity  
by the signifier<sup>24</sup>. . . . A multiplicity is defined not by its elements,  
nor by a center of unification or comprehension. It is defined  
by the number of dimensions it has; it is not divisible,  
it cannot lose or gain a dimension without changing its nature.  
Since its variations and dimensions are immanent to it,  
it amounts to the same thing to say that each multiplicity  
is already composed of heterogeneous terms in symbiosis,  
and that a multiplicity is continually transforming itself into  
a spring of other multiplicities according to its thresholds  
and doors<sup>25</sup>. . . . The properly musical content of music is plied  
by becomings-woman, becomings-child, becomings-animal;  
however, it tends, under all sorts of influences, having to do also  
with the instruments, to become progressively more molecular  
in a kind of cosmic lapping through which the inaudible makes  
itself heard and the imperceptible appears as such: no longer  
the song bird, but the sound molecule<sup>26</sup>. . . . The anomalous  
is neither an individual nor a species; it has only affects,  
it has neither familiar or subjectified feelings, nor specific  
or significant characteristics. . . . Sorcerers have always held  
the anomalous position at the edge of the fields or woods.  
They haunt the fringes. They are at the borderline of the  
village, or between villages.<sup>27</sup> )*

a kind of cataclysm set off  
by one's actions, the way  
everything seems to be in "quotes nowadays",  
just as the most subtle of erosions  
proves to be the most useful of perversions

perhaps then leaving behind  
all manner of friendly antipathy,  
just as these are fragments  
of another, larger poem  
the music of which  
only leaves me guessing. . .

\*

now that everything  
belongs to this door. . .

the night  
astray  
in light,

espumarole,  
fraction  
of intention  
half felt

scribbled in  
the split,  
with spit

on roads  
when breathing  
or breeze

another music  
turned

I can,  
so to speak,  
the sun  
a thoughtful  
ledge

commencing here

words as  
an itinerary,  
starting out  
as excess

discarded answers  
as line breaks  
into the  
afterthought. . .

Corporalmente

Song of anonymous  
(a nomadic novel)

. . . and the cold

the fog  
the cold gray fog seeping into everything  
with bite and sting knowing full well that the last word is the lost word  
making the sting all the more pronounced more precise

Still. Here. Soon I'll be gone  
from this place. My face, my countenance dissolved. By fierce wind and sand, by rain  
eroded. In this manner, that is, by means of the stillness, this feigned stillness and silence,  
I somehow get around. Without the aid of any illumination, I find my way around. In the  
gloom, the ever encroaching gloom, i hear, see myself in a room, writing a letter, over and  
over again thus confirming my preconceived motions - faster than the speed of life, as it  
were - as if words could begin again and again what's been left unsaid, undone; a web of  
beliefs, belief systems, arguments and counterarguments obstructing the view

it is *this*  
this *thing* that speaks now this thing that produces all utterances the isolated words  
and sounds grunts and wheezes holding on to the fog the dark silence no  
nothing to hold on to not a thought 'cause *the last word is the lost word why don't*  
*they say so say so?*<sup>1</sup>

and then again and still some more

i've been writing this  
letter, over and over again, starting out each time from a different location, a different  
angle; hoping to give skin to the passing of days, trying to circumscribe a theme that  
would give it all some kind of meaning: a shadow projected against the backdrop of life . . .  
But then, my inability seemed meaningful enough, so, i let it all go, grow like a vine, wild  
and untrimmed, which made its home in and all around me, never minding whatever plans  
had been made to put life in its "proper place". By then it was too late. Why, there were  
convolutions, involutions and counter-involutions as it began to extend its tendrils,  
branching out in all directions (in and all around me) as curly-cues and swirling motions,  
shooting out shoots, with tendrils in tender twists and leaflets green and dark, gnarly roots  
grasping at what remains unseen

ever-same underneath distance and resistance dance  
into stream, since then as far as far can be from the *necessary* despairs and possible  
reflections prepared for the days specificities.

Reversing into and out of heteronomy and  
gestures stretched, zealous enough thought, told itself if behavior is an -ism as noise is to  
extreme libidinated density. What remains in helpless glance, actually, retreating distance  
and a leafy knot, into unnecessary streets, more or less quiet, remained locked in seizure  
location: what tries to try for more. Looking for pieces of scrap, through cracks fallen,  
leftovers from history's workbenches, dust bins, garbage cans from which to construct a  
difference. A heavy knot. A nexus. Knots of discontent, this content was as if by dreams  
an intent: for pieces looking, perched on branching out glances home of different locations  
passing through days of trying. Retreating into disorder, (and *this* order) as flooding comes  
first, alluvial readwriting.

Riding. Writhing. Writing. It's trailing within. Writing as  
kinesthetic process, bodily function, an excretion, as is thinking a kind of action and  
reading readymade to move across the page, a plane, a practice, an inquiry as practice,  
lived to do so, it is lived

and then again and still some more

---

<sup>1</sup> Verlaine, Tom, "Elevation", "Marquee Moon", Television, 1977 Elektra/Asylum Records.

Was it manifest destiny that led us down the dull highways of suburban days, or was God only kiddin'? And who am i kiddin'? Here i am, standing by the river, eating rice pudding from a plastic cup with half a spoon. The other half, lost broke off when i opened the package, too much glue or something

Roundish, chubby, grey-brown sparrow cautiously approaches. Curious. Wants to know what's in it for 'im. . . but the rain's starting up again, no time for intros and pleasantries, gotta go . . . there's lightning too and the wind's picking up . . . no way to spend the summer, this, security guard for the old and lonely. A dead end. Terminal for myriad pointless lives whose only purpose has been to do what they're told, to conform . . . good boy, good girl . . . good little worker, good little consumer . . . here's your punishment, here's your reward . . . and here's your punishment again . . . just what is it i'm guarding? Who's gonna wanna mess with these guys? i mean, the proverbial sword hangs from a very precarious thread above each and everyone of their scraggly, whining heads. So this is what *"I just wanna get by"* gets you!? huh? Bones and joints creak, lungs wheeze and skins itch in conjunction it seems; an awkward ballet of coughs and who's? and what's? didn't I tell yas, and you should of seen 'ems ricketting past my confounded senses. . . and meanwhile

the lights from the opposite shore, reflected, reaching out across the brisk water, forming sporadic, glassy, ruffled bridges: In these lonely, isolated moments, one must feel fortunate, relief really . . . the journey which words cannot hold, the descriptions becoming journeys themselves; eddying trajectories in the course of an action the hand cannot control . . . I mean

Does anyone know? how life is worn? meant to be? (and then some more as if coasting along . . .) I wait for the rain to stop but it keeps on coming . . . and to have such feelings, hushed and brisk, rustling like grass at one's ankles, tickling between the toes. One waits for music as it goes, to tell us where and when the flow begins and ends, the loose ends really. Methinks, *"It takes more mistakes, more purely random chances, more chaos and irrelevance to produce the epic than the sordid yarn"*<sup>28</sup>

The castle in dreams perhaps, and thereof, etc., just as all writing is a kind of fiction, and the friction too of such imprecise knowledge; the mopections which lead us back and astray, and back again, on the trail to a world "I" never knew.

May I begin again? This story? Collecting rubble along the wayfe 'n nubbles too that I may circumvent what it is so atrocious as to not look but sideways 'n vent whatever anguish it is so revents me insides. It romps me de adentro pa fueraside, and errors as markers as we survive another day once more in the fray neglected. And to you too, this is of concern, *"for every atom belonging to me, as well belongs to you"*.

And so begins, *"and now begins"* a wish or two upon the dust, this vieja cuesta 'rriba and then some more as if *"nowadays, amongst those with the wit to realize their predicament, a more sophisticated spirituality prevails; an infinite nonsensicalism replacing and displacing all, so that, one day, when all we here are dust, particle and wave-form, those who follow us will see just that as a deal more continuity than ever we deserved."*<sup>29</sup>

Cookin' up a storm. The wind passing through my fingers, the water is a music as music never to be aprehended; a chorus of voices diluted drip dropping, splashing and gurgling in the gloom. Thought I'd make it again to the basement door and check it out, see what I can find: if Freud still smokes that fat ol' cigar, and Barney Rubble still bowls with boulders. As it is, gotta go, bible beltors say so, and so too, their opposition, positions too awkward to continue primping (and pimping), pruning till the clams fall asleep . . . heard em on the radio again, the same old arguments ground into the ground, biting each others' ears off with relish.

Asunder. Bugging me like this. Is sleep a kind of "is"? Been between heart throb and discontent, as the contents of the storm massage my innards, my emptiness; a greenish light spinning, a grey, metallic green sky pushing its way through, past my

## Corporalmente

window, a train passing in the distance overshadowed by the mauling siren of a fire engine. Allegro ma non troppo. Tongue ram mit rückstop. Flowers in a bed, happily everafter, let's see what I've been missing: 1) a whole lot of kissing, 2) hugs and fucks galore . . .

I thought of myself as part of a crystal, one of its smooth, inscrutable facets, waiting to complete, and be completed by others whose façades I'd never seen, known. And so it was, and is no longer: my information's theories gone awry, passé and passed up, once more, part of the noise of a trajectory, the rattling of which fills these empty hallways with a multiplicity of rhythms; an intricate texture of *yesses* and *nos* and *possibly maybes* and *I don't knows*, the impenetrable coat of mail reality wears for breakfast, lunch and supper. You are told to walk a straight line, but the line keeps on getting crooked, and it's no use consulting the authorities, who continue to insist it ain't so while scolding you for it, since day one – but you insist on searching out a different kind of talk, a different kind of walk which you can call your own . . .

At this point, it is impossible to keep on going, likewise, it is impossible to stop, to give it all a Blanchotian twist, or was it tryst? But it is here we part company really. Some on the other hand, may prefer to call it a Beckett like gesture, a la “Malone Dies”. Me? I don't give a shit either way, the police state of mind, thank you very much sir, madam, but no thanks. Thinking 'bout that piece again, the old superball trick on rusty, uptight piano strings, saw Fred van Hove do it, not just a month ago, with Johannes Bauer on trombone hopping and dancing, skipping along, while Suzie Ibarra laid down the percusión like a fucking hail storm. They brought life back to this half dead place, unafraid to be who and what they are in sounds so stormy, so calm and minute, so intricate and swirling, I thought the joy, at one point, would burst the house in two.

The rain is over now, but not yet the storm. The wind coming down from the north-west across the river, continues to pelt away at the building's concrete and brick façade. Out of decay, running out, up and about, about rot, committed to decide a trajectory, the furrows of a commitment meant to commit the most decisive of gestures, bringing forth a moment, a movement, a stream, a gushing force kidding around, among rocks and in meadows, a forest of dreams as it were, where one is in waiting as time stands still, to write in this emptiness, I mean, into “it”, bringing about an about face, a kind of wilderness that leaves one agape. . .

Looking at watch again, searching, hear the sound of your voice, husky, and gray blue eyes smiling, hair braided up and tied into two tight symmetrical buns at either side of your marvelous head, as you dance to that gritty saxophone wailing, enjoying moments gone by making yours the sounds that swirl round us in a haze of smoke and laughter. Be Bop music and fizz fizz too, that's my thingamajig changing the titles again. Firm taught body rocking air into quivering strains, now I've got it, now you don't, the subterranean homesick blues, one's breath breaks, secretive, persuasive, the good nights velvet blue on pink horizons. But, “*I'm not one of those guys!*”, Hear a voice thinking through music's sequential squealing grit and guilt,

I looky a mina saxophone home, a husky western style I found astounded, the drying leaves and memories of you dancing abrasive shoulda known what? what! say what?! What you say breaks through the falling as autumn approaches and just now, “I” spoke in a new key, what leads you where? And just so, the undertow I said, and back down again into sleep, the velvet red of roses backing up the green, upper cold and downward draft, the news paper's smiling, gloomy faces eclipsed out of thought, (what dreams you have!) no later than sooner got up misplaced activity of ringing bright dappled and new, seems like summer with a twist of exhilaration, a tendril of past regrets and sunlight all wrapped up into one tender braid curling round one's memories the way smoke swirls up from a heap of leaves and dried twigs. I mean, having something to say, and saying it again, not knowing what, or how or why, but saying it anyway; a density manifested in the dull days of suburban highways gone astray . . . Starting up again and no time for writing indifference and a thousand platitudes, got the rhythm and blues, don'tcha know? for whatchamacallit and crumpled symbols pounding the dust of behavior's isms.

But no, just when I thought there was nothing left between us but a sea of silence, this playful wilderness creeps up on me; the sound of an all consuming wave, the way a rustling breeze takes over the scenery which once seemed so wooden and dead, and flowers bloom everywhere, for simplicity's sake. And that's just fine. But what of those

colors hitherto unimagined? It's true, I can no longer remember the time when first we began to fade from each other's view. However, I do remember very well the first time we met. You walked in on sunlight it seemed, though it was late at night. I know not why I saw you that way . . . I mean, it's not my fault, honest! Yup, everything was like something else, and behind the trees, the light lingered on like a dream. . . I know, I'm an idiot, but, as I told you before, I can't help it . . . Oh But these are notes written on whatever margins allow for such scribbling The spaces between ideas I once thought were of consequence, in time grew and grew out of proportion, until determination no longer seemed possible, and now, one walks with a carefree gait as if among mild fields, oblivious of where the melodies and harmonies lie, the rhythms pitterpattering as they please. The sounds of it approaches us yet, like some mad machinery or swarm of insects cranking away at the evening sky . . . And then, I wandered away like a friendly mist, drifting through the lily pond, or sadness wanders off like a child getting lost, and you were telling me this story about how some gnomes got lost in the woods and wound up getting devoured by a swarm of gnats, or some kind of insects anyway, this ditty like fate in a fortune cookie eaten away by thoughts, rats! anyway you look at it you loose, my turn away any and then some more as we go along down the bend but "you" never functions that way . . .

\*

Still in the undertow, and my question to you is . . . Writing indifference and a thousand platitudes again. Later on, complaints are felt down the sunset streets with green and cream colored awnings. for eyelids. A song is heard amidst the chatting, to be continued in a turbulent flow as incremental repetitions and seemingly endless permutations. Wondering about the assumption whether the empirical mind can get to the bottom of things by means of careful and patient analysis, thus adding to the maddening effect, the general hilarity, as the case may be, of what always remains under construction. Rearranging the sequence of events and casting doubt on order - any order - all of which can safely be said to be legion. These pages, taken by themselves, may well sound pompous and wooden, strange or warily experimental-for-experimental's sake, sentimental even. But it was, is, a way, a kind of resistance to the gray, dank corner we've been relegated to, this part of oblivion one can call one's own, this even though the battering wind

continues to remind us of the frailty of our existence, open, vulnerable to a world largely unknown, and the thrashing sleet confirms, again and again, the fact of one's mortality, as it pelts the flesh of my cheeks bright red with frost bite: whereupon, having finished my rounds about the buildings and environs - the parking lot being the farthest reaching stretch - I return, lumbering, through the icy sludge to the office

on whose desk awaits "*scrap(e)*", a frantically fidgety, fricative composition for solo cello - full of plosives, nasals and trills, tapping and flapping, groping and scraping its way along the something to say - with scraps of discarded sounds as its mainstay - I've been reluctantly working on, all this fueled by Misses Doyle's chocolate chip cookies and extra strong coffee; the nice little old lady on the seventh floor whom, curiously enough, is curious about what I'm doing down here in my cubicle, this little box for the chronically, the systematically, the terminally unloved

Reluctance.

What a word. Where's it come from, how'd it originate? Re-luc-tance. Re luck dance. Read: luck dance: the paratactic character of moments, the stroboscopic nature of the mind, perception, attention flickering on and off, attempting to trick reality into giving away its secrets while ostensibly, we were not watching. So much whistling in the dark

*fidgeting, inquieto, como un viento irascible*, seeking out perhaps, *mischievous*, the peace of non being, or a twist down into the dark warmth of the somatic, the impulsive, the moment at which ( in which) the somatic becoming desire incarnate, jots down in a reckless scribble, the impulses in a code of writing inscribed into the material itself; electromagnetic impulses codified into groups of ones and zeros impressed upon the hard drive's magnetic coating

matter unbound, upon/within which matter itself materializing its desire to be, to be seen, to be heard, makes itself felt, put together out of bits and pieces - leftovers really - scrap, the discarded, fragmental, collage and bricolage-like: put together with whatever materials happen to be lying around, what units of thought, what? seems to be coming

Corporalmente

after all only which is  
to say again was the task that we had a skin even as we know all too well ourselves to be a theme and  
then some more starting location a ledge from which to know a world relegated to silence buried alive in a  
hole of how do you do and gray blues so intense packing up the lopsided watching askance scurrying past  
a history littered with ruins

this again starting location, the point at which another digression begins a path to be  
followed away into and to be again some ledge from which to

expanding perimeter not enough stomach as remainder of

in down, there's no looking up  
so much accumulated suffering, perhaps, in the  
stifling gloom, seldom said again some more

words so much so such that enough is not enough after all  
only which again was the task: that we have a skin even as we know all too well, yes, that is to say, yes,  
ourselves to be a theme and then some more as if coasting along

this starting location: an edge from  
which to know a world relegated to silence: buried alive in the whole mess of how do you dos gray and  
blue so intense passing up the lopsided watching askance: that is to say: sideways: out of the corner of  
one's eye: scurrying past a history littered with garbage, yes, that's it: a garbage heap, a garbage dump,  
the heap of trouble we're in, that's it, which is to say, say what so much accumulated dust, the rusty dust  
of meaning's lot as flotsam is the so much more to say

but I don't know and where I am: the fuzzy,  
buzzy birds, the radio buzzy birds, screaming, squirmishing, stratosphere's staticky whistlytones nagging,  
nagging at me like gnats for days on end and what is there to say, I mean, "what" is there to say, here to  
say, here to stay, here to stray away and continue scavenging for ideas and things: no ideas but in thongs  
is the motto of the day, it seems: no ideas but in thugs: thugs in thongs, throngs of 'em regurgitating  
what *must* be said and done: scavenging, the lot of us, the bored, boring lot of us done: scavenging for  
whatever crumbs of affection, attention we can lay our hands on: the boring lot of us condemned it seems,  
to repeat, to repeat, I was saying, to repeat what's been said and done one more time, and again, and then  
some more, and then again some more which is to say, this historical tedium: the tedium of history's litany  
gone astray: the long and tedious litany of history gone astray; as I was saying, the boring lot of us  
condemned it seems, to repeat, regurgitate, reproduce, sorry so melancholically so, reproduce as I was  
saying, so mechanically so so sorry the boring lot of us so condemned it seems to reproduce the same  
old power plays, patterns and schemes, to reproduce it seems society's dominant ideology, that is: the  
ideology of domination, to manipulate and control, the tedious bunch we, this, humanity, all too human in  
our inhumanity, the boring lot of us, that is to say, all too inhuman in our humanity, this, we, it seems, that  
is to say, us, the contemptible lot, stuck in a rut of our own making, the labyrinth of cages we force upon  
ourselves and each other in our daily interactions, condemned as we are to repeat, sorry, so sorry,  
reproduce, I mean, that is to say, with our daily actions it seems, repeat the same hellish same story,  
nauseating hellish sameness of abuse and misuse, the same sorry so sorry lot of us bored as we are with  
ourselves and each other stuck in a rut of our own making it seems, bored with each other and who we  
are, the gnawing gossip, the endless talk about nothing, the noise, the backstabbing, the scheming, the  
incessant monologue of fear, the gnawing, yes, the gnawing in one's skull, crows cawing away in the sky,  
crows clawing away in the skull, the tedious bluntness of it all, the violence, sorry, it is so sorry it is so, the  
numbing tedium of the ongoing daily violence and its nauseating cycle of fear and destruction, it is so it is  
so sorry, this vicious cycle of threats and counter threats and counter counter threats and insecurities,  
this vicious cycle, as I was saying, into which we are born and so called *educated* by our, so called  
progenitors and our so called educators in primary and secondary school, whose cruelty against  
defenseless children goes largely unnoticed, condemned it seems, that is to say, the boring lot, condemned  
to attack, defend and attack again and then some more, and then again, and then again some more, stuck  
as we are in this system, that is to say, this way of thinking, which over the centuries, thousands of years,  
has become a habit, and over the centuries, thousands of years we've become habituated to this habit

after all only which is  
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## Corporalmente

stuck as we are, trapped, caught, boxed in as we are in this relentless, this ruthless way of thinking, snagged as we are by the indifferent machinery of its logic, stifled by the coldness of its reason, pinned down by its ruthless instrumentality, and seeing how these authoritarian, these oppressive structures are reproduced on a daily basis, at the smallest, most local levels, in our heads - that is to say, our so called human heads - on to the greater structures of institutions, corporations, entire societies and governments, from left to right, through the extreme center, I think of the river in its relentless motion, its ongoing ruthless motion

and very often I can't hear anything out side, given over as I am to my fantasies, my dreams and thoughts, my thoughts of the river and the lives it has taken, the horror of it, that is to say, the river itself, the horror of it, that monstrous body of water, the thousands, millions of tons of onrushing jade colored water, pushing forward towards the falls, the thought of being swallowed up and dragged down into its murky depths

here in my cubicle, my little box, very often, I can't hear the sounds of the storm outside, the thrashing wind and sleet as I'm often intensely absorbed, concentrated on writing "*scrap (e)*", a dreadfully desperate attempt at composition for solo cello, full of screechy, scrapy whinny sounds, or dozing off into sleep, into the depths of the winter night, into sleep dreaming, or intensely occupied with my fantasies, as I was saying, with my thoughts of the river outside, and very often I can't even tell when someone is coming in through the front door and surprises me in one of my obscure reveries, one of my, as I was saying, fantasies of walking off into, then, waist deep, plunging into the icy water of the rushing river, into, as I was saying, the cold murky force of its relentless logic

the horrendous logic of the whole thing, the ruthless self-organizing, self perpetuating logic of the whole thing, and which, with mechanical impetus pushes us forth, inexorably, in a series of catastrophes, expanding, inexorably, as I was saying, with the mechanical ruthlessness of its logic, expanding, as I've already said, in seemingly exponential fashion, in a series of catastrophic events, leading us, it would seem, eventually, toward total catastrophe

and suddenly finding myself face to face with Mrs. Doyle smiling, asking me how I'm doing, and would I like something to eat or something to drink, and the horrendous contrast between the kindness of her smiling face and my despondent gloominess, wrenches my insides with guilt and self consciousness, a shame which washes over me like a freezing cold shower making the river outside look more and more appealing by the second

and very often as I'm standing outside by the river eating my rice pudding, my tapioca pudding, with half a plastic spoon, or even a whole plastic spoon, I think about the river in its relentless motion, and staring into its translucent turbulence, I think of the lives, the bodies it has taken, both willing and unwilling, away, down into its cold jade colored darkness, the countless broken lives, the silenced broken souls it has taken into its fold, perhaps even mercifully, like no mother, no lover ever could, and who's stories remain forever untold, I think of those countless broken lives, those broken souls, who's now no longer struggling bodies, the river in its relentless passage, has engulfed and with brutal indifference dragged down, as I was saying, into its murky depths and with the ruthless force of thousands, millions of tons of freezing water, perhaps pinned into a corner somewhere, some dark rocky crack, rift, and with brutal force, as I was saying, that helpless, that hapless now lifeless body, the life crushed out of it by the thousands, the millions of tons of freezing water, now lies *boxed in* in its final resting place

but no, I think to myself - that is to say, I *say* to myself - there is no final resting place in this, the river, for even as I think to myself - that is to say, I *speak* to myself, ceaselessly so - the river, in its endless flow, with utterly brutal force, continues to pummel away at that now, as I was saying, lifeless body, which now, as I was saying, lies *boxed in*, helplessly pinned down in a crack somewhere below, and the river, as I was saying, with brutal force continues to pound away at the lifeless flesh, and over the course of weeks, or perhaps even days, erodes, eats away at the now frigid tissues, tearing away bits and pieces, even chunks of what is perhaps a flesh in nearly crystallized state, over the course of weeks, or perhaps just a few days, strips away the flesh in patches, swaths of skin peeled off, then the fatty tissues below, then the muscle tissues and sinews, eroded, peeled away, as I was saying, and in a matter of weeks, or perhaps, just a few days, only the bare bones are left, upon which the

river continues in its relentless process of demolition, to pound and grind away, rub and chafe at the cold bones below, and over the course of weeks and months, the incessant grinding and pounding slowly but surely turns the bones into clay or mud which, as I was saying, over the course of months, or perhaps just a few weeks, is washed away downriver, the bones lying in a mortar of rock, pounded upon by a gigantic pestle of millions of tons of icy water, day after day, ground into a fine dust, that is to say, pulverized, now turned into clay or mud, is washed away downriver, every last bit, every last particle pushed away, inexorably toward the falls' very edge

a ledge broken off, from which to begin again, alleged beginnings it is said, commence here where nothing, it seemed, there was left to be said, as stray sections foiled, streaming my own interest messy, into musical mishearings, ends, ruins from logic, a kind of oneiric logic, accidental other territories, resisting ideology, reproduced enough such that enough and again, and words: langwedge, langwheezing, whimsical languaging saying verbatim in places as I was pounding re-creation through speechlessness and speaking verborragia hemorrhaging bricollage, a composite, digressive possibilities whatchamacalliting into sounds, dismantling verbatim into day dreaming turbubabulent curlicues with re-creation, a shrapnel, meanings disordering and *this* ordering, meaning this here beginning as mishearings, electrochemically into this juncture, into into trance-elation transacting a while, that is to say, looping round and round again the ongoing digression into my beyond, stumbling into clusters embedded contradictions refracted sense locus sounds rejecting explamutilations, then say to the whirr: where other whirls in conjecture without between someone shown under "I"

arriving at the same edge again, writing this again starting location, a skin to be theme all some more and then enough is not enough to be theme in dislocation which is, that we have only ourselves with which to know the world. Each other and language with which to conduct the task. Even as we know that ineluctably, everything slips away into silence at last. Only that silence wasn't as bad as some had thought

as final.

It was silence after all, that made the utterance possible.

Audible.

\* \* \*

an unpleasant machine it was. is. this. no better than a hand cranked meat grinder. proceeding each time at a fairly brisk pace, then. yet still not knowing how or when. not writing what one knows but writing *toward*. into uncertainty. crablike. backing into it. perhaps then knowing *not knowing* or what "I" means in this context, belonging perhaps to these turbulent motions

can we see it without words? do words block the view? if words *are* the view, what lies beyond, behind? *behind* beyond

what to write in. on. what? and

in what language?

not the mother tongue, but the *other* tongue

the *nothing* of tissues I was flaunting - be still, me. frozen hard, they are before. be before the thing has no word. maybe to hear, perhaps to listen. the word *here*. a little story. small. this was a writing. is. better still. better be still. this was a waiting. is. for the rusty places.

as final. that, the utterance made.

into the silence, the last, after fall. slipping away into everything. made possible. at starting location audible. arriving at enough. this location not enough can be seen crablike. as possible even as we know. left to be said. what. say what? logic from daydream location thought as streaming dislocation

driving down

the highway along the river, the sunlight again gleaming on the water's rippling surface, no, not glass-like, not like anything like you know? or anything like light on water gripping, dripping, grippling, dribbling along and. across the border, the trees which just a few days ago still clung to summer's edge, have

## Corporalmente

now turned, overnight, into yellow, then a tide of browns, ochers and reds, along the distant river's edge, igniting feelings which . . . are better left unsaid

the story began somewhere, I know, but soon got lost among many others, and I'm hard pressed to say which one matters most, though it seems, the turbulence, the mayhem, the energy generated by them all is what counts, what's worth telling about, and behind it, behind the writing, that upon which and against which the writing writes, resisting the indagations, where pen and pencil are like daggers with ever blunted points, prying at the surface of things as one tries to gather, in a few gestures, the facts and events into a landscape which might give it all some kind of sense, wherein even the senseless has its place

*"Mi annoio. Voglio morire"*<sup>2</sup>.

yeah, I know, I've told you all this before, but that's just the point: the *before and after* is present here, in the *here and now* of writing along; mapping disorder, and *this order*, compelled, egged on by the chaos outside and the indifference within, curious about the "places", the "spaces", the "surfaces", the "point", the "line", the surface where the world outside meets the indifference inside, I mean, "inside", just as I mean "outside", (gotta get back to this inside/outside dichotomy later, turn the whole thing upside down, inside out and round 'n round; no such thing, really, no such "thing", no such "thingliness of the thing" really, but, it's an entertaining notion, really . . . ) that is, metaphorically

and thinking that maybe, the indifference within, I mean, the chaos without, is really proportional to the callousness inside: a kind of butterfly effect as they call it, a feedback loop that generates more disorder even as we desperately struggle to freeze-dry reality into a tidy, clean, elegantly packaged explanation; pretty as the truth tied at both ends, as it were, as if words were the connective tissue that glues everything together thus keeping us in contact with. this even though, in time, the glue hardens and thickens, becomes brittle and lifeless, cracking as the seams come undone, crackling

and writing these lines, these strands which are entwined in a rough, irregular manner, together forming a loose web of associations, dead ends, disjunctures and, inconsistencies: a porous texture characterized by fissures, gaps, and blemishes, irregularities and, discontinuities: a kind of texture comparable perhaps to geological formations and other messy, turbulent processes seen in nature: a thorny and often cacophonous writing employing a strategy of excess the purpose of which is to create a singularity, a locus of difference, in effect, a kind of scrub, a noisy weed garden that resists the ever present and totalizing inundation of useless information society generates to distract and drown out the troublesome moral implications of its existence: namely, the violence by which society constitutes, maintains and, enforces itself upon us; weapons of mass distraction: a kind of negative feedback loop intolerant of any new (and dissenting) information and which can be characterized by the following motto: "I know what I like, I like what I know," or to put it another way:

"In chaos terms, the systems that operate on collusion and automatism are obviously not creative open systems. Rather, their behavior is dominated by a relatively small number of negative feedback loops. The countless small loops [ . . . ] are not an expression of creative degrees of freedom, but represent microloops locked together in a way that creates one big obsessive repetitive loop that chaos scientists call a limit cycle.

Limit-cycle systems are those that cut themselves off from the flux of the external world because a great part of their internal energy is devoted to resisting change and perpetuating relatively mechanical patterns of behavior. To survive in such rigid and comparatively closed systems, everyone must resign a little - or often a great deal - of their individuality by blending into the automatism. Those who rise 'to the top' in such systems are generally the ones who use empty phrases, those mindless formulas that keep the mechanism of collusion together.

Limit cycles are the systems that make us feel powerless. They are

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<sup>2</sup> Weaver, William, Introduction to *Boredom* by Alberto Moravia, trans by Angus Davidson, (The New York Review of Books, 1755 Broadway, New York, NY 10019), p. vi.

Pedro Rivadeneira

the ones we want to change but can't because they appear to resist all our efforts.  
These systems are everywhere in society."<sup>3</sup>

that's what I was talking about, *la noia*, annoyed, irritable, irritated by boredom, that is to say: the incessant *production* of boredom, the incessant ranting and raving of the ratings and polls, the forced cheerfulness coming from the media,

that *enforced* cheerfulness

those weapons of mass turbation that keep us chasing the proverbial carrot on a stick: "you know what I like, you like what I know", desire on the run yearning, chasing, as I was saying, after the proverbial carrot on the stick: the promise of a fulfillment that never comes, no better than hamsters the lot of us, on the proverbial, as I was saying, treadmill, all this in the midst of an endless barrage of images of destruction, wars, murders, torture, exploitation, disease and disasters of all sorts; the all around nastiness humanity is capable of producing reduced, down to the level of mindless entertainment; the never ending tautologies, as I was saying, and human suffering, as *not* seen in the vacuous smile of the celeb on the red carpet swaying; those brilliant, perfectly aligned, pearly whites gleaming, forming an implacable wall of denial . . .

what a celeb is,

what does a celeb really celebrate?

the ongoing, numbing

production of vanity, stupidity and ignorance, that's what!

"*whaaat? don'tcha know? I have*

*thoughts and feelings too!*" "sexily" purrs the celeb squirming in her surgically enhanced bodily charms a jiggling, the meat hard pressed against an open blouse steaming,

why, don'tcha know? she's America's

Bridgit Bardot! a ruthless reduction of the subject to a hand-full of poses: hip, slightly jutting left, contra posto, hands on hips, knowing glance sideways, now a smile, shift to other leg, flinging hair across face in defiance, smile again knowingly and then again and still some more, clutching left shoulder with right hand, feigning shyness, grin, crossing legs in childish pose, arms and hands as before, long black lashes on tan cheekbones jutting, which is to say and then again, commissure of mouth smirking, head bent sideways hesitant, face slightly downwards then in profile, fleshy bust protruding and knowing glance a gleaming some more and then again, and still some more again and so on so forth, which is to say, and then again some more, show a little tits, a little ass, smirk, bare and grin it and do it all over again, and still some more and then again, which is to say

"sexy" means . . . "thing,"  
the *thingliness* of the thing,

tidy little package,  
pretty as the truth tied at both ends

cathode-licks, I tell ya, the lot of us, entranced by the taste-less, smell-less, touch-less, insubstantial flickering flow of images of wealth and debauchery, glamour and senseless luxury and

thinking how the history of humanity is really the history of boredom, a great, endless bottomless boredom, incommensurable, beginningless ontological boredom, (if you've ever lived in the Hague you'd know exactly wot I'm talking about, exactly wot I mean, the global village idiots, the *tedium* is the message of the media such that *meaning* means business and business means . . . as usual,

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<sup>3</sup> Briggs, John and Peat, F. David, *Seven Life Lessons of Chaos: Spiritual Wisdom from the Science of Change*, (HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 10 East 53<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, NY 10022), pp. 39 – 40.

Corporalmente

secure behind their miles thick dikes and lulled into complacency by their  
ever so perfect social security and all the while, exploiting the hapless foreign workers that wander into  
their way,

sway . . . )

the boredom, as I was saying, humanity left here, by some device, divine or otherwise,  
annoyed, on this planet left, here, as I was saying, in a kind of solitary confinement, left here on this  
insignificant spec of dust, to stew and rot away

in this prison, this labyrinth of fear and confusion, in our own,  
on our own,  
of our own,

of our own making

stranded, as I was saying, left to our own devices, and try as we may to distract  
ourselves from this state . . .

. . . until the advent of television (vision from afar, distant vision, remote vision:  
an obliterating eye blasting us with) and its incessant production of boredom, where nothing means  
everything, and everything means nothing, nothing at all, yet still entranced by the magic of . . .

cathodelicks,

the lot of us, entranced by the flickering images, weapons of mass distraction . . .

envy . . . envious you say?

naw, don't think so, just wish I had one tenth, one hundredth, one thousandth of their fortune! could pay  
off the debts, get myself out of this financial mess, then write them a love letter or two 'n make their  
heads spin, the pen being mightier than the sword, I'm told, my little Excalibur here, cutting and slashing to  
and fro, poking its way along . . . all rights reversed! steal back what they took with impunity, our time,  
our misdirected desires,

gone astray

*"We could take the money home  
Sit around the family throne  
My old dog could chew his bone,  
For two weeks we could appease the Almighty  
Just making easy money!"<sup>4</sup>*

all this, as I was saying, a dispersal, a  
scribbling motion with which to create a cartography, as is all writing a kind of trace, a trace of itself first  
and foremost, composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather, directions in motion: no beginning and  
no end, but always a middle, a meddling from which to grow and from which to overflow: spilling over  
toward a book, a text made up of planes, lines, motions and commotions, energies, energy fields and  
textures (no, not chapters) which connect, communicate with one another through fissures and gaps, a  
turbulent motion from which to go on<sup>5</sup>

through, *através, atravesando otra vez*, as I was saying,  
incompleteness, a single sentence full of interruptions, derivations and digressions, deviations from which  
the story began only to branch out again, a flow of waking, walking and writing with pauses, pieces, a text,  
a composition, as I was writing "as I was saying 'I' ", made up of incompleteness, exposing the  
incompleteness of "things", of our experience of them, the incompleteness of our experience of them

yeah, sure, how

"things", sounds, are related, connected to each other, but also, how "things", sounds, are not related,  
connected to each other and what happens in the interstices, the spaces between, listening to the scrap  
where the scrape once was *avoiding any orientation toward a culmination point or external end always*

<sup>4</sup> King Crimson, *Easy Money*, (Fripp, Wetton, Palmer-James), Larks' Tongues in Aspic, released on Island Records, March 23, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix, "One or Several Woves?" in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translation and Foreword by Brian Massumi, (University of Minnesota Press, 111 Third Avenue South, Suite 290, Minneapolis, MN 55401- 2520, Eleventh printing 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Idem.

*detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable with multiple entryways and exits, now straggling but then with sudden gushes<sup>6</sup>*

writing as kinesthetic process where such motions are a mapping: mapping disorder and *this* order, which is to say, scribbling between the lines, a babbling between the rigid order of so much thinking

connected by conjunctions, a swirling motion, sifting through the cracks, scribbling the moments away, scrape scrap scribbling and scratching between the notions and scrape scrap scribbling in the something to say

was it spite vindictiveness that kept me going? or was i slowly  
but surely turning into a machine helplessly churning out  
words outwards phrases  
verbal formulae thinking indeed that i was thinking churning about in an increasingly  
limited pool of ideas and habits?

the repertoire of things to do, say, think and feel  
shrinking day by day as The Order increasingly takes over our lives consolidates its  
hold upon us choking the life out of us forcing us into a straightjacket of debts and  
emptiness the screws steadily tightened

thinking indeed that i was thinking, day by  
day a society in which more and more people want to be told what they want need  
a polymorphous iron lady clamping down on us with even and steady pressure  
compressing us down into a one dimensional existence

my life increasingly limited,  
compressed by the

the thought  
wordthought machines jabbering in the dark light of a red  
dream gone astray as the corporate mentality gains upon us day by day  
its hold on our lives  
forcing us into an increasingly limited repertoire of things to say, think, feel . . .

relationships as simulationships just another technojock  
with the machine to show for "it"

*"I am unwritten"*  
croons, croaks creaks squeals the latest corporate pop "sensation" but that statement  
itself is scripted, advertisement, another lie, propaganda, no different from those  
politicians who say they stand for freedom and democracy while at the same time wheeling  
and dealing with the corporations they serve . . . distracto-people hanging out wasting  
your time

have I addressed the issues yet? Yeh, the Great American Novel fell by the way  
side, spilled, sifting through the cracks and where still we wait for permission in  
the dark for permission to be free, Nietchste, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari giving  
us the go ahead it's OK son girl you can write think what ever you want it's OK  
you know nomadic thinking writing be a wolf man it's OK *oh is that OK? Sir  
Madam? Well geeez thanks*

*you will be allowed to speak live but only after every  
outlet has been obstructed<sup>7</sup>*

*you will be allowed to live speak even but only after  
every desire has been blocked and diverted, we are after all a freedom loving democratic  
society and we want you to be happy happy doing our bidding you are obliged to be  
happy doing our bidding you will be happy doing our bidding we will oblige you to be  
happy, or in any case . . . to do our bidding . . .*

---

<sup>7</sup> Idem.



It had been four years since I moved into the city by the lake. Hoping to escape a life of dead end jobs and the destructive clutches of my family, I enrolled in the graduate music program at the local state University. Now, four years later, the cold, leaden skies, the dilapidated, peeling factories, the rusted out ships and abandoned grain elevators on the shore, the garbage strewn fields and dump sites, seemed to signal the end of another phase: my life appeared to be moving in slowly swirling cycles of four or five years, at the end of which, I'd move to another city in an attempt to change, jump start my life.

The excitement I felt at the prospect of such a change filled me with hope, and a sense of opening would ensue, as if I had walked into a sunlit field in which the possibilities were endless. A suffocating, paralyzing dread would suddenly be lifted from my shoulders, my chest, allowing me once more to breath freely. On these occasions, my entire body seemed to change, become lighter, full of energy, and life once more, appeared vast, full of promise and wonder as only dreamed of when I was a child.

Now, having finished the required course work and taken the exams, i was poised once again to relocate. This time however, the move would be to a city abroad, in Northern Europe soon my face would begin to erode vanish my features my characteristics erased forgotten lost to those who knew me or thought they knew me a shadow that for just a brief moment in their lives had crossed over onto their paths; a formless wisp of cloud pushed along by unseen forces my countenance lost slowly washed away among a faceless crowd of others dissolving into time's receding wake

The moment had come, sooner than expected, and i was on my way down highway 90, rolling along with my belongings in a rented van, heading east toward the intersection with highway 81 in Syracuse then south toward Binghamton attention span snap back track toward what was left behind in the fray the sway of the river now becoming a murmur in the bluing horizon looking for a place a space left my little red Japanese car to a friend lost in drink and blues with my old guitar amp in the trunk which he kept without a thanks or a bless you for nothing just moving along what's left to say washed away by the oncoming rain as a train of thoughts and feelings gushed on looking forward to the oncoming hills (or are they mountains really?)

i had parted in the late afternoon and now night caught me in a sheet of rain the sun zap! fizz! evaporated in the hills of northern Pennsylvania just past the southern border of New York State the

*i came here searching for  
pages pages to write on  
surfaces to write on i came  
here looking for something to  
write something to write on  
somethink to say somethink  
concrete to say to write on  
something concrete to write  
on something concrete to  
write on to say  
somethink to say on  
something concrete to say on  
i came here looking which  
is to say searching  
what point? what? what  
matters now? the  
something to say i mean  
the search matters now (no,  
don't be critical, that is, not  
too critical, overly critical . . . )*

*i began somewhere i know i  
began somewhere i know  
in the middle perhaps in the  
middle perhaps I began and  
moved away toward the edges  
the other areas of the story  
perhaps the ledges where  
other stories begin where  
other stories feed the stream  
the murmurs conversations  
and monologues the  
thoughts overheard in the  
dark edges of the story  
overheard in the distance as  
if brought about by a restless  
wind a breeze the way  
voices carry in the distance  
overheard in my sleep*

steep hills i should say way too steep in the  
pouring rain thick strands of water becoming  
sheets and these layer upon layer becoming walls  
of a thick translucent substance blunting the head  
lights of my van the visibility no better than ten or  
fifteen yards and meanwhile enormous sixteen  
wheelers roaring past in a fury downhill barreling  
into the darkness blindly or so it seemed rattling  
my nerves as i catch a glimpse in their more  
powerful head lights of the rocky scraggly ravines  
below and in the flash of their headlights i get  
glimpses of a network of long gnarly finery twigs  
and branch-like limbs entwined reaching clutching  
at each other in a scrubby mass impatient bastards  
i mutter to myself where oh where? could you all be  
going in such a hurry in such a fury where oh  
where? they must know this road these rocky  
wooded hills like the backs of their bony veiny  
hands their trusty machines splashing forward a  
veritable caravan of roaring mastodons rushing the  
way back home

and all the while my mind had  
been turning as before churning that is to say  
as it always had (as it always does) or to put it  
another way a different part of it (that is my  
mind) a strata of activity (one of many) a strata  
as i was saying a different strata of my mind had  
been churning yearning to make itself felt heard

(some tend to think of to explain these as  
processes "mechanisms" by which the mind (some  
would say the brain) "handles" "deals" with all the  
stimuli and information experiences feelings and  
perceptions we are besieged by on a daily basis  
that is to say by compartmentalizing it all

but  
this presupposes a central controlling entity an  
administrator of sorts who in effect sorts things  
out makes decisions judgments and as it were  
like in the post office puts these experiences  
perceptions etc into little boxes and stores them  
away somewhere till a later date but who or what  
makes these decisions? and on the basis of what  
are the judgments made? i say maybe we're not in  
control of anything i mean these processes  
these interacting strata of activity most of which  
the "I" is not even aware of (or so *me* thinks) these  
as i was saying interacting strata of activity  
over which "we" have little or no control whatsoever  
the mind the brain as i was saying being  
comparable perhaps to a kind of chaotic system  
(no not *system* [. . . us I mean we

*over and away from the herd  
the acoustics of the mind's  
ear the perspectives of the  
mind's eye searching the  
overview  
everybody's been talking  
while I sleep about how I've  
been talking in my sleep  
overheard in a dream this  
everybody of shadows unseen  
peopled by shadows a room  
in shadows a cornerless  
room peopled by shadows  
talking shadows without  
corners or the corners are  
buried in the shadows  
buried alive in a room full of  
shadows*

*i never finish the book  
i never finish a book  
i never finish reading a book  
i never finish reading I never  
finish reading not writing and  
but writing too I never finish  
never finished writing a book  
never finished writing the book  
i mean I only read in bits and  
pieces bits and pieces of  
writing*

*spawning events  
as by means of an engine like  
so:*

```
// a kind of Spawn.  
Task{
```

```
150.do{  
SynthDef("My_Klank" ++ i,
```

```
{arg out = 0;
```

```
var env, exciter, spec;
```

```
env = [Env.perc(rrand(0.01,0.1),  
rrand(1.0, 2), rrand(0.05, 0.3),  
-4), Env.linen(rrand(0.1, 2.0),  
rrand(0.5, 2), rrand(0.5, 1),  
rrand(0.05, 0.2))].choose;
```

```
n = rrand(5, 13);  
// number of simultaneous  
// instruments  
p = rrand(8, 21);  
// number of partials per  
instrument
```

that's too mechanical  
 too neatly so) a process  
 maybe that transcends the "I's"  
 self centered boundaries  
 a process as i was saying  
 that consists of several layers  
 of stuff which sometimes  
 as it were bubbles over into  
 each other transferring energy  
 or information in the form  
 of energy "packets" bursts  
 impulses desirings yearnings  
 influencing each other  
 in an ongoing process of transformation or . . . or . . .  
 not . . . or maybe getting caught in a repeating cycle  
 where the yearnings and desirings cannot become  
 yarns and thus escape their strata and so over  
 time become embedded in the flesh become in  
 fact flesh buried alive as it were as if words left  
 unsaid seeking an outlet going round and round  
 inside your head yes a limit cycle as I've already  
 said . . . )

and all the while as i was saying i had been  
 thinking i mean pondering about how it had  
 been my intention my desire to write a discription  
 to give an account of of of what? what can one  
 give an account of much less a description  
 an account a description are they the same thing?  
 an account requires a description perhaps? but i  
 mean yes as i was saying an account a  
 description perhaps of the goings on the events  
 one has experienced over time i mean *me* my  
 experiences this had been my intention all along an  
 account which is to say to bear witness to our  
 everyday life experiences what goes on on a  
 seemingly regular basis not the least of which is  
 the nastiness that goes on on a daily basis and to  
 which many turn a blind eye as i was saying on a  
 daily basis the "little" horrors as they call them of  
 everyday life the so called *insignificant* horrors  
 and subtle violences we commit against each other  
 on a daily basis as i was saying the gossiping  
 the using and abusing the power plays and  
 exploitation and how overtime it all builds up  
 into larger horrors and sooner or later breaks  
 out into even larger catastrophes and tragedies  
 producing unspeakable destruction and suffering as  
 we have already seen so many times throughout  
 history our ruinous history and of course of  
 course one needn't look too far back for even as  
 we speak that is to say even as i think and write  
 these words and someone somewhere perhaps

```

exciter =
[PinkNoise.ar(0.0
07),
Dust.ar(rrand(5,
200),
rrand(0.007,0.2))
,ClipNoise.ar(0.0
07),
BrownNoise.ar(0.0
07)].choose;
spec = Array.fill(2, {
`[
Array.fill(p, {50 +
20000.0.linrand}),
nil,
Array.fill(p, {0.1 + 5.0.rand})
]});
Out.ar(out,
Pan2.ar(Klank.ar(spec, exciter),
LFNoise1.kr(0.25), 0.3) *
EnvGen.kr(env, doneAction: 2))
// Klank is a bank of fixed
//frequency resonators which can
//be used
// to simulate the resonant
//modes of an object.
}).play(s);
rrand(0.1, 1.5).wait;
// wait anywhere between 0.1 and
//1.5 seconds before playing new
//event.
});
}).play;
)
sounds like an aperiodic carrillion with
bowed crotales, add to that, old oil
drums banged upon with blunt objects,
using random number generators to
control each sound's envelope, each
with their corresponding attack, sustain
and release times also controlled by
random number generators, such that
an attack may be short, long or
somewhere in between
(likewise with the sustain and release
times) and the time at which the next
event occurs is also controlled by
random number generators thus
undermining one's tendency one's
conditioned response to expect sound
events musical events to occur on
a periodic basis one's expectation to
be comforted, consoled by music it
having been relegated, barefoot and
pregnant to society's dark, dirty little
corner, subservient to, enslaved by the
image . . .

```

someday reads them the little violences as i was saying and the greater ones too are going on right now

and i was wondering

if perhaps it's true that even one's thoughts one's words one's feelings gentle and otherwise are indeed felt throughout i mean vibrate reverberate throughout the universe it being as they say *one body* in which everything every little molecule atom subatomic particle and every string of energy including one's thoughts are intricately and intimately connected to each other in web-like fashion

if so then maybe we're in a heap of trouble i mean in deep shit even as i was saying as i write these words in a somewhat distracted manner as if half looking away in fear and disgust perhaps even shame these meager words these even more rudimentary thoughts that i struggle to latch on to and which in these scribbling motions one tries to make sense out of and as i've already mentioned i can't help but doing in a somewhat detached and distracted manner as if half looking away in fear and disgust and as i was saying possibly even shame accompanied by a sickly vaguely nauseating sensation of numbness while at the same time peeking at it all in wonder the way a child does through his fingers in a scary movie

none-the-less it had been my intention as i may have already said to give an account to bear witness to the goings on in our daily lives that is to say *my daily life* yet knowing full well that such an account entails an enormous amount of detailed work both on the micro and macro levels very close attention to detail precise detail while at the same time maintaining one's vision an unwavering state of attention to the overall flow direction and shape that all the details are taking in bricolage fashion and it seemed to me to be virtually impossible to create an accurate mapping as it were with words of the goings on as i've already mentioned both one's *inner* world so called as well as of the world *outside* as some are wont to say and of how these "worlds" are in fact intricately and intimately connected such that the distinction between *inner* and *outer* becomes severely blurred further complicating matters

an anomaly a moment of otherness a kind of singularity disrupting the familiar flow of one's sense of self and time making the task at hand that is to say the writing endeavor all the more difficult

*just as the truth it seems to me is known only to the one who experiences it and if one chooses to relay it to others one automatically falls into falsehoods and inaccuracies all this compounded by one's that is to say my faulty and inaccurate recollection of events and things more so after my so called accident as some euphemistically refer to it thus it is distortions inaccuracies and lies that are communicated the notion of communication perhaps being the greatest lie of them all and the more one tries to untangle this abstruse web as i was saying the more mired one that is to say "I" becomes in falsehoods and falsifications*

*the desire for the truth like any other drive is the quickest way to arrive at falsehoods and inaccuracies the facts themselves being distorted by one's very own desire to express the truth distorted by one's hopes and aspirations thus to write about one's life one's recollection of things past one period or even one moment in one's life results in the accumulation of hundreds or even thousands of inaccuracies and falsifications a veritable patchwork of memories dreams and half-truths all of which in collage-like fashion are as it were stitched together by the writer in his or her vain attempts at conveying the truth which are nonetheless familiar to the one describing them and the period in question is seen as*

*truths and nothing but yet somehow the description the very act of describing  
distorts the truth however hard one tries to be factual*

*one's recollections follow  
precisely the chain of events in precise chronological order still the results are  
something quite different from what things were really like or seemed to be the  
descriptions make things clear that is with the writing one makes an event clear  
and this is in harmony with one's desire for the truth but not with the truth itself  
for as we have already seen the truth is quite impossible to convey*

*we make a series  
of events clear that is one makes the effort to describe a series of events clearly yet  
it is never the events as such one aspired to describe they always end up being  
something different fictitious even this even though one begins the endeavor over and  
over again having crossed out erased one's failed attempts one starts off from the  
beginning again only to find oneself wandering down a different path a different series  
of events ostensibly led astray by one's very aspirations to tell the truth it is one's very  
desire to convey the truth that leads one into a veritable maze of recollections that is to  
say an inscrutable web of corrections<sup>8</sup>*

*i've always been told that to write well one  
must write about what one knows well what i've known most of my life is disorder and  
chaos illness and unhappiness violence and fear contradiction and dishonesty  
hypocrisy and corruption callousness and insensitivity competition and odious  
destructiveness isolation alienation and loneliness manipulation coercion and  
domination snickering malicious gossip and gloating the will to power in all its nasty  
manifestations large and small in short the all around nastiness humanity is capable  
of and has been involved in for centuries for thousands of years in fact i've known very  
little order clarity very little love kindness and sympathy*

*this sort of thing this  
nastiness as i've already said we see at the corporate institutional governmental  
and international levels and it is reflected at the micro level that is to say at the  
interpersonal level in our families at work and in school in the various kinds of  
relationships we're involved in and it's all a direct reflection of what is going on at the  
macro level that is to say one is the reflection of the other they are mutually  
dependant*

*the nastiness at the macro level would not be possible if it didn't also occur at  
the micro level in our minds to begin with the whole process having become a feedback  
loop a negative feedback loop as i was saying a limit cycle and no matter how one  
may try to overcome this situation how one may try to free oneself from humanity's  
nastiness due to one's deeply engrained conditioning both social and biological the  
more one struggles to free oneself as i was saying the more deeply mired and  
enmeshed one becomes in the whole mess*

*due to one's hypocrisies deep seated  
contradictions and blind spots one ends up betraying the best of one's intentions and  
this process goes on as i've said regardless of what ideological camp one may be  
identified with what religion or belief system one may adhere to whether one believes  
in a god or the left the right or the extreme center being as we are in the grip of  
that is to say at the mercy of our envies jealousies greed and the odious intensions  
they generate at the mercy as i may have said of our fears and insecurities for  
which we are incessantly trying to compensate endlessly trying to patch up*

*thus to write  
what one knows would only mean reinforcing one's habits one's own and that of a*

---

<sup>8</sup> This italicized section of the text is a kind of paraphrasing of bits and pieces of text (intermingled with my own writing) from pages 160 – 162 of Thomas Bernhard's autobiography called "Gathering Evidence."

potential reader's writing *only* in a linear narrative manner (as most writing is nowadays anyway) would only mean writing more of the same staying within the field of the known and thus reaffirming the old conditionings that limit our thinking our perception and our behaviour to write in a nonlinear manner that is to say to write *turbulently* i mean not only about the chaos but *chaotically* where the writing itself is a kind of mapping of disorder (and *this order*) discombobulating the old structures of thought and perception that keep us in "place" stuck in our cages allowing for inconsistencies incongruencies ruptures and paying attention to language's (and thought's) self organizing tendencies paying attention to language's energy flow and where it wants to go could mean writing into or toward the possibility of something different something other than what is already known something other than the conditioning

not writing what one knows but writing *toward*. into uncertainty. crablike. backing into it. perhaps then knowing *not knowing* and what "I" means in this context, belonging perhaps to these turbulent motions

it's at times like these that is to say when i'm inundated by thoughts like these that i wish for i think of constructing a machine or i fantasize about writing myself an algorithm with which to convey to the machine the necessary instructions that it may deal with take care of all these sticky details and the complicated web they begin to form over the course of time

trying then to find perhaps create a writing machine that would do the job for me without my having to distress myself with all these thoughts hurt myself further tearing at the memories the scabs over countless unhealed wounds my own and that of others the one's we never found the time to properly tend to caught as we are in the mad rush of things

a machine then that would deal with all the non-linear aspects of writing thinking and feeling and that would thus save me the emotional duress that writing can sometimes bring something comparable perhaps to those synthesis programs that produce all kinds of complex sound events depending upon what kind of algorithm one writes for them what kinds of instructions one gives to the machine with all kinds of parameters controlled by random number generators thus creating a varied and complex texture that changes evolves over time words are after all sound complexes themselves or to be more precise complexes of codified noises a kind of nexus in which sound and image connect sound images and images in sounds colliding becoming *imagisounds*

this even though i realize that language itself is a machine or that language (and thought) have machine-like characteristics and that one that is to say the writer need only be attentive without choice to what the language looks like on paper and perhaps more importantly what it sounds like in order to know what to write next in other words one needs to be attentive sensitive to what the materials *require* what the sound materials and the graphical materials imply how they *move* and thus how the language projects itself into the future into the unknown it having its own logic its own self organizing properties and propensities

this even though one may be stuck that is to say one's feelings may be stuck in a kind of feedback loop and they are one being reluctant afraid to let them go despite their unpleasant nature they being the only familiar thing one has left connecting one to the past as it has given some kind of meaning to one's life and yet still trying to shake it all off by means of repetition slippages misreadings and mishearings misinterpretations and miswritings and thus not knowing before hand what will be written what will be said not knowing before hand where the story (or stories) will go just as the reader can't know before hand what

the story (or stories) are about and where they are going or how they will end (assuming there is an ending at all) as writing is always already a kind of reading

and it the readwriting is already made readymade to move across the page a plane having begun somewhere somewhere in the middle perhaps and moved dispersed toward the edges of the writing surface if it be a piece of paper or as electric impulses on a hard drive's magnetic surface representing a series of binary numbers which in turn are encoded to represent the text one is writing stored in a place a locus on the computer's hard disk its vertice being . . . the text's point of origin being . . . being what? . . . what is the readwriting's origin?

if it is a monologue of sorts an *internal* monologue a kind of talking to one's self in one's head the brain talking to itself pretending to talk to someone else in its own created virtual space in the brain's own virtual holographic space then perhaps i think perhaps the monologue that is to say the *readwritespeaking* originates from a wound an unhealed wound which for a long time now has been bleeding at varying rates of profusion bleeding as i was saying sounds words images and sensations a kind of short circuited tissue substance electrochemically firing and misfiring creating a self hypnotizing barrage of noises<sup>9</sup> a kind of verbal-sound-image-sensation stream hemorrhaging all of which comes to form an ongoing wall of static like white noise or tv "snow" all of which is perhaps again an attempt an ill attempt to heal the wound the self trying to heal itself to comfort itself with an ongoing stream of noises where it is thought that the noise is perhaps preferable to what lies beyond it that is to say the noise having become a kind of enclosure a screen providing one with a feeling a sense of security from against what lies beyond

but just what is this beyond? the noise of others perhaps one's noise being as i've already said a kind of wall separating one from the rest of the world but as all of humanity seems to be engaged in this production of noise the noise "outside" may be continuous or a reproduction of the noise "inside" that is to say in one's mind such that there really is no "beyond" and no "other" as we are all engaged in reproducing the same wall of sameness within ourselves around and against each other

by turning up one's own "inner" noise one tunes out the noise of others a kind of masking effect to borrow the term from acoustics where as i may have already said waveforms of the same frequency amplitude and phase cancel each other out such that the noise "inside" is proportional to the silence "outside" that is to say in the so called social sphere all of this pointing to the astonishing fact that the mind the brain rarely if ever is quiet not even while sleeping wreaked as we tend to be by our never ending desires fears and anxieties

and this wound as i've already mentioned this slit this gash this rift this fault this trauma may be a kin to or a reflection of a fault that has been in existence on a larger scale and for a long time between us that is to say humanity and the rest of the world nature the universe life a relationship that for the most part has been marked by violence and destruction divided as we tend to be within ourselves and between each other . . .

(Part 2 will appear in a future issue of *The Open Space Magazine*)

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<sup>9</sup> i use the word noise here in its two though not entirely unrelated senses that is in the sense usually used in music which is those complex sounds that are characterized by a high level of randomness in their frequency components and sounds whose frequency components are in an inharmonic relation to each other i also refer to noise in the sense used in information theory that is the presence of extraneous information in a system or to put it another way information that has no apparent relevance to the system (in this case language) but which is nonetheless present as part of the mechanism or technology used by the system for its expression.

dorota czermer

White flesh green apple Stabbing right into the heart  The pips have fallen.	Fill it up, she says, gas  Fumes, an old man	<b>Torn paper voices Body of Dream inside my tear.</b>	Fill it up, she says, An old man stumbles, holds out A hand, stained dime rolls.	White flesh, in heart green Apple, seeds Of Night now fallen.	<b>Torn paper voices in A dream body Inside my own. late night tears.</b>
He died after eight months We cut his work Clothes, shaped them, a loved one.	Stumbles a stained dime rolls.		White flesh green apple Stabbing right into the heart	Fill it up, she says, gas  Fumes, an old man	
We cut his work clothes  When he died	<b>White flesh green apple, stab Into the heart Seeds of the night have fallen.</b>	<b>White flesh the green night seeds</b>	The pips have fallen.	Stumbles a stained dime rolls.	Fill it up, gasoline Fumes, oil trips His step & dime rolls.
Laid wrapped in this quilt.	<b>Torn paper voices Body coming inside mine In dream, late night tears</b>	<b>To quilt into the heart of</b>			He stayed sick eight months Mama say: "take his work clothes, Quilt them to remember him."
Fill it up, she says, An old man stumbles holds out A hand, stained dime rolls.	<b>To quilt him into the torn voices</b>	<b>Torn paper voices</b>	<b>Torn paper voices Body of Dream inside my tear.</b>	<b>Torn paper voices in A dream body Inside my own, late night tears.</b>	
White flesh green apple, stab Into the heart Seeds of the night have fallen.		We cut his work clothes When he died Laid wrapped in this quilt.		<b>Torn quilt black voices seeds remember</b>	<b>Gas fumes a stained man stumbles</b>
White flesh, in heart green	Fill it up, gasoline  Fumes, oil trips		A dime into the heart, holds out		He stayed sick eight months Mama say: "take his work clothes, Quilt them to remember him."
Apple, seeds Of Night now fallen.	His step & a dime rolls.	<b>We cut his work clothes When he died Laid wrapped in this quilt.</b>	<b>Mama say: "Dream inside"</b>		

a quilt for Elaine Barkin and the women of Gee's Bend (2009)



Harvey Bialy

## Welcome to the Kali Yuga

Leave it to the mind of darkness to withdraw the very distinction that his own being had propounded; that is to say, in attempting to find that which is beyond beyond the metacomplexities of multiply-superimposed emblem structures, the shifting of images within these asiderials—to withdraw us from the complexities of distinction itself, I called to color. (color): one, alas of many such strategems; the rainbow goddess shimmering in the vaults where tempests fulgurate, now, in fact, being the season of it.

Not only that, but it being the Sphinx Point two days ago, I had received as birthday gifts two eggs, not just one, mind you; for my birthday, corresponds to the Sphinx Point, and, it not being egg day, one was a crystal egg with a flattened bottom, the other, a rattle; so I take it that this return to B&W and this central column of egg-shaped scrying stones, is somehow a birthday missive. No matter.

For years the only way for me to see Tantric images was in black and white reproductions. And in the discourse on emblemality, and the pretense of the disposition of their universal metastructure, B&W should suffice. To lay structure bare, color need not apply. Though this afternoon in the realm of the Bark Eaters I did see the stump of some sort of birch tree, whose bark markings glowed like an unimaginable cuneiform palimpsest, but whose color was like the skin of the transition between the ages. “And I thought of you.” Is that it? That color, in regard to structure is not inessential, so much as liminal?

For here we do have yantra-resisting yantras, and the faces of Guardians resisting the analysis of themselves as faces of Guardians, or any thing else: They address, direct, their prey, not the least of the reasons for which is that in this case the prey is self-selected, even if the little beasties panic, like the throngs of the clamorous dead about the Eidolon of Mighty Herakles (the hero himself not being in Hades at all, but sporting with trim-ankled Hebe in some luminous elsewhere), or indeed like Odysseus himself, who pretends to be terrified at the sight of Herakles’ astonishing baldrick with its “bears and bores and lions with radiant eyes / and battles and wars and killings and the slayings of men. “

Elsewhere is not elsewhere, actually. Where Herakles actually resides—well THAT requires another stratagem. Think about this.

Charles Stein

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