

The

OPEN SPACE

magazine

issue 7

fall 2005

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Benjamin Boretz Mary Lee Roberts Tildy Bayar Dorota Czermer Editors

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also in Issue 8 (partial contents)

Agostino DiScipio Formalization and Intuition in *Analogique A et B* (with some remarks on the formal-mathematical sources of Xenakis)

Ryszard W. Kluszczyński Metafora

Robert Morris and David Mott Excerpts from a Conversation

Daniel Goode Texts

Gordon Downie and Ian Pace A Dialogue

Bill Rankin The Reification of Sound: Recording Technology and the Changing Ontology of Music

Pedro de Rivadeneira Corporalmente

Tildy Bayar Reviews and Weblogs

Benjamin Boretz Vignettes of Old Masters III; More Little Reviews

J K R pass 3: A CD album for and of JKR

In 2006 **OPEN SPACE** is issuing a series of CDs containing performances of music composed for and by Jim Randall. Contributors include Elaine Barkin, Eve Beglarian, Benjamin Boretz, Doug Henderson, Mark Zuckerman—and others still to be heard from

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j k r

pass 1

texts and scores

Walter Branchi Many are the things that call to mind Jim Randall / Sono molte le cose
che mi fanno pensare a J. K. Randall

Robert Morris A collection of thoughts on Jim Randall, his piano piece *GAP6 I*, and
some notions of "gap."

Lewis Lockwood, Martin Boykan Letters to Jim

Andrew Mead To Jim / Making Music in America

Jane Coppock Live Music

Jon Forshee Reflections on BAB-O

Benjamin Boretz, Doug Henderson, Elaine Barkin CD notes

Walter Branchi

Many are the things that call to mind Jim Randall

When I first met him in Princeton in 1979 he looked like a seasoned mariner from one of Conrad's novels, betrayed only by his intellectual eye.

Many are the things that call to mind...
His lessons on composition that continued evenings in Gulick Road and his wife Ruth,
Michael, Mark, Florence, Elizabeth, David, Michela.

Many are the things...
The three "S"s which led to one of the most stimulating discussions on music I ever took part
in:
Sibelius/Stockhausen/Saint-Saëns.
And
improvisations on the Krumpholtz electronic organ
and baseball and billiards
and
the pinecones from Ottorino Respighi's pines in Rome
and the beginning of the "Pinecone Game".

Many are the things that call to mind Jim Randall.
Legitimizing the abstract irrational questions and answers that gradually became more
logical during the long improvisations using pinecones on a green felt card table.
And later the pinecones became "whatever": shells, puppets, musical toys and instruments
and then, the movement of a pine cone was followed or superimposed by the sound of a
flute or the movement of a soft furry bunny...
creating music places, not music pieces.

Many are the things that call to mind..
Space as the pre-eminent dimension of music, his hands on the keyboard dancing the
sounds; generating sound, dancing.

They call to mind
his latest compositions,
where Jim is in suspense between the sounds ever within the silence that awaits.

They call to mind
the magic that still lays hidden under the red joker's hat he was wearing
the last time we met.

Sono molte le cose che mi fanno pensare a J. K. Randall

L'ho incontrato per la prima volta a Princeton nel 1979, sembrava uscito da un romanzo di Conrad per via del suo aspetto fisico da marinaio, tradito solo da uno sguardo troppo intellettuale.

Sono molte le cose che mi fanno pensare.
Le sue lezioni di composizione che proseguivano la sera in Gulick Road e Michael, Mark, Florence, Elizabeth, David, Michela e sua moglie Ruth.

Mi fanno pensare
le tre "S" dalle quali uscì una delle più stimolanti discussioni musicali alle quali abbia mai partecipato: Sibelius/Stockhausen/Saint-Saëns.
E le improvvisazioni con l'organo elettronico Krumpholtz
e il baseball e il biliardo
e le pigne portate da Roma; prese dagli stessi pini di Ottorino Respighi
e l'inizio del "Pinecones Game"

Sono molte le cose che mi fanno pensare a J. K. Randall.
La legittimazione dell'astratto: domande e risposte irrazionali che divenivano sempre più logiche nel corso delle lunghe improvvisazioni fatte solo con delle pigne su di un tavolo.
E poi le pigne sono divenute "qualsiasi cosa": conchiglie, pupazzetti, strumentini musicali e allora, al movimento di una pigna seguiva o si sovrapponeva il suono di un flauto o l'avanzata di un coniglietto di peluche
e alla fine si creavano luoghi e non brani musicali.

Sono molte le cose che mi fanno pensare.
Lo spazio come dimensione preminente della musica, le mani sulla tastiera del pianoforte che danzano il suono; che lo generano danzando.

Mi fanno pensare
le composizioni più recenti dove Jim è sempre più tra i suoni, nel silenzio che è continua attesa.

Mi fanno pensare
le altre magie ancora nascoste sotto quel rosso cappello da joker che indossava l'ultima volta che ci siamo incontrati.

**A collection of thoughts on Jim Randall,
his piano piece *GAP6 I*,
and some notions of “gap.”**

Robert Morris

Jimnopedea (*sans satire*)

As with many composers, I was introduced to J. K. Randall through his music and writings before I encountered him in person. In addition, from students or friends who had studied with Randall at Princeton I had heard many stories about him before we ever met. One of my Yale students went to study at Princeton for his doctorate due to his attraction to Jim’s classroom manner. “He walked—marched really—through the class lecturing in a stentorian voice, holding his arms aloft on the utterance of words such as ‘postulate’ or ‘theorem.’” Later, in 1979, at a conference in New York City, I would hear Jim sporadically exclaim the words “In which” in what I imagined was a similar tone, introducing each part of his talk. Yet not actually, since Jim prepared his talk on tape, and rather than deliver it in person, merely placed a tape player next to the podium mike and sat down and listened to it with the rest of the audience.

Jim was known to ask students to examine their own musical habits of thought. Something like: “You say the piece starts out on a IV chord in the key of C major. What is this IV? And why do you call it a chord? Is it only a simultaneity? And what is this “key” you mention? What does it mean to be ‘in’ it versus some other key? How can you tell you are in it or not?” Clearly Jim was interested in examining the covert theoretical models that underlie musical practices, and he asked his students to reveal such phonological, syntactic, and semantic structures; if such structures had not yet been explicated or were clearly inconsistent, he required the students to fill in the gaps and invent theory to enable critical discourse about music.

Mathematics is a study which, when we start from its most familiar portions, may be pursued in either of two opposite directions. The more familiar direction is constructive, towards gradually increasing complexity....The other direction, which is less familiar, proceeds by analyzing, to greater and greater abstractness and logical simplicity; instead of asking what can be defined and deduced from what is assumed to begin with, we ask instead what more general ideas and principles can be found, in terms of which what was our starting-point can be defined or deduced...It should be understood that the distinction is one, not in the subject matter, but in the state of mind of the investigator. (Bertrand Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*. p.1)

God dwells in the details. (CF: Jim’s *GAP6 II*, m.369: *Like the Higher Doodling*.)

From others and from his writings, I learned that Jim was as interested in musical context as he was in the foundations of music theory, and that he held that the two were highly related, unlike most musicologists who had defined the jurisdiction of musical context in limited and simplistic ways. I found out from John Peel that Jim was the author of a clever demonstration of musical contextuality I had encountered here and there over the years. The idea is to play a passage from

Ex. 1a. (Andantino)

(41)

Ex. 1b. Andantino teneremente

(1)

p dolce e ben legato

Ex. 1c.

(1) Sehr langsam

ppp

Ex. 2.

(26)

f p f f

the end of the first section of Chopin's Ballade No. 2 in F (Opus 38) and point out the chord shown in Ex. 1a, then to play the first phrase of Brahms's Intermezzo in E major, Opus 116, No. 6 and point out the chord in Ex 1b. Then one plays the first two chords from the opening of Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron*, as in Ex 1c. Those who know the opera will usually be amazed to hear the first two chords of that work are the "same" chords of the Chopin and Brahms. Of course, the brilliance of this example is lost if one does not know these musical works.

We may note in these experiments the sign = may be taken for the words
"is confused with." (G. Spencer Brown, *Laws of Form*. p.69)

The main point of the demonstration is indicated by the scare quotes around the word same in the last paragraph—that two so-called identical things are not ever the same, that nothing is ever really repeated, unless you take it out of its context. At that point you can argue with philosophers about whether the so-called instances of something are particulars or tropes, members of "natural classes" or similarity classes, or are universal. Another point: just as in language, musical syntax and semantics prevent one from noticing homophones, within or between languages. Certainly the two chords of the Schoenberg can be found in the other music of twelve-tone composers, but then pointing out that connection would not seem so remarkable. Moreover, the chords in the tonal works stick out as rhetorical uses of dissonance, where the concepts of dissonance and consonance have no meaning in twelve-tone music, and that Schoenberg's two chords are not so rhetorical as they are motivic. And you might ask if dissonance and consonance (and the aesthetic baggage they bring to discourse) are really useful phonological—as opposed to syntactic—terms in tonal music.

There is a generation gap between the people from whom I learned of Jim. Some were students, others were older colleagues of about Jim's age. Carlton Gamer once revealed to me the admiration shared by so many of Jim's cohorts. Carlton was playing for me a piece of his in a nineteenth-century style and I remarked that I felt that some faux-bourdon in the middle seemed to me to be subtly out of place. Carlton's eyes widened and he said, "That's remarkable, for that's exactly what Jim Randall said." I was also surprised, for how could my bland remark be Jim's?

At the end of the scientist's lecture, a little old lady got up and said: "What you have told us is rubbish. The world is really a flat plate floating over an enormous chasm."

The scientist asked, "What is at the bottom of this chasm?"

"You're very clever, young man," said the old lady. "But it's chasms all the way down."

Prolegomena to any Future G'apologists

If you insist on distinguishing objects, you will have gaps.

Here is G. Spencer-Brown on the space and the cut. The excerpt is from his "Laws of Form," first published in 1969. When I encountered this book in the 1970s, I showed it to friends. A mathematician commented to me, "Why, that's just Boolean Algebra warmed over!"

We take as given the idea of distinction and idea of indication, and that we cannot make an indication without drawing a distinction. We take, therefore, the form of distinction for the form.

Definition: Distinction is perfect continence.

That is to say, a distinction is drawn by arranging a boundary with separate sides so that a point on one side cannot reach the other side without crossing the boundary.

Once a distinction is drawn, the spaces, states, or contents on each side of the boundary, being distinct, can be indicated.

There is no distinction without motive, and there can be no motive unless content are seen to differ in value.

If a content has value, a name can be taken to indicate this value.

Thus the calling of the name can be identified with the value of the content (p.1)

[...]

Construction

draw a distinction

Content

call it the first distinction

Call the space in which it is drawn the space severed or cloven by the distinction.

Call the parts of the space shaped by the severance or cleft the sides of the distinction or, alternatively, the spaces, states, or contents distinguished by the distinction. (p.3)

Comment: If space is unsevered, then distinction is the primal gap and it is the content of the space. If a distinction allows indication, then the space is only known after it is severed into namable parts. We need this gap to know of space. (In mathematics, a space is defined as a collection of objects, usually points, which may or may not be continuous and dense.)

Process closes the gaps: no things, no gaps. If one doesn't want the things to be absorbed into a process ontology, then one must consider both objects and their gaps (differences and connections) to describe a "world."

To consider gaps reminds us that the connections between things are variable and not necessarily secure. What fills them in is habit and supposition. Gaps are the contingencies in the web of belief.

Some Typical Gaps in Mathematics

Russell's entrance into math has a gap on each side; foundations versus increasing complexity.

The integers and rational numbers (the fractions) are countably infinite but forever gapped. Real numbers are dense, there are no gaps. But given a rational or real number n , what is the "next" number after n ? There is no answer because for any two real or rational numbers, one can always locate a number in between them. Even though the integers do not have this property—the very next integer after n is $n+1$ —there are no "more" rational numbers than integers because the integers and the rationals can be put into a one-to-one correspondence. This has consequences for the measurement of change, what we call time. The concept of the real number and the "limit" in calculus helps dispatch Zeno's paradox.

A major divide in math is the distinction between continuous math (e.g., analysis) and discrete math (e.g., combinatorics).

Professional mathematicians focus on closing the gaps between a conjecture and a proved theorem. While intuition might suggest a conjecture, one has to derive it logically from known theorems that have already been proved to be derived from the axioms of the system. Nevertheless, another form of intuition—sometime called insight—helps find the way to produce the proof.

Consider transformations of the form $A \rightarrow B$; the arrow is conceived as a transformation. For instance, we may find a note A and another, B , an octave higher than A . We can then define B to be the *transformation* of A up one octave. Using function notation, we can write $\text{OCT}(A) = B$ for $A \rightarrow B$. Note, however, there is a gap between A and B . While we can consider this gap to be "filled" by the arrow or the function OCT , they are not audible; rather, we conceive of B as A raised by an octave. It is possible literally to hear the arrow or function if it is performed continuously, as a glissando from A to B . But within that scenario there is nothing to prevent us from taking the entire gesture " A glissing to B ", as the object—or even as a process—not the A and B alone. In the discrete case, the arrow can be taken as an instruction, such as "is substituted by"; then the gap is a rule, habit, or contingency.

Consider a map M . In each region of M we choose a point, and if two regions have an edge in common then we connect the corresponding points with a curve through the common edge. These curves can be drawn so they are noncrossing. Thus we obtain a new map M^* , called the *dual* of M , such that each vertex of M^* corresponds to exactly one region of M . (Lipschultz, *Discrete Mathematics*, p.104) If M is a circle, M^* is a line connecting two points. What separated the plane into two complementary areas is now a connection. We can consider the line in M^* to be a transformation of one point into the other.

Some Typical Gaps in Music

A score represents gaps between composition and performance. For instance, we don't read and play Baroque music in the same way that we read and play Romantic music, even though the syntax and symbology of music notation is (or has come to be) almost identical for these different musics. Music notation is not merely objective—a set of symbols written according to certain rules—it is intersubjective among the members of musical community. Notation might best be considered as a hermeneutic, through and by which we *interpret* musical actions and sounds. Thus the gap is on the move; notation is expressive and evolves as needs change and new situations arise.

This simple idea is complicated, however, because perhaps only in Western concert music is it believed that notation can capture and represent musical experience (as well as to describe music structure and prescribe musical action). This is why the score is often considered the authority for musical identity. In other words, while in general musical notations code the perceived qualities (qualia) of music as quantifiable symbols, in Western music the notation functions in reverse, to imply literally the musical qualia that the symbols quantify. Thus, we can experience the sounding form of music we have never heard before by reading scores, hearing the music “in our heads,” and we can learn and study music from scores alone. But as I mentioned, this process depends on knowing the performance practices that go along with the notation, and that is part of the nexus of intersubjective relations in a musical community.

But even if we take a particular musical community as a given, the relation of musical quality to notational quantification is anything but simple. First, emergent effects may or may not occur when certain symbols are put together in notation. Thus it takes years before composers can know or reliably estimate what “works” by writing music before they hear it live. Second, music notation is both digital and analogue—that is, notation represents music by mapping symbols to musical entities and processes as well as representing musical shape with a matching visual shape. These two modes usually interact in many complicated ways. (Oddly enough, rhythm is notated completely digitally, by symbols whose visual spacing from left to right need bear no connection with the temporal intervals they specify.) Third, musical notation is not only sonic but cognitive. Many aspects of notation do not refer to something sounding—for instance, a quarter rest, a bar line, a repeat sign, a term such as “allegro non troppo.” Fourth, music notation does not always code musical structure one-to-one—for instance, while the major scale has two sizes of intervals, it is notated by equal-sized moves on the staff. On the other hand, the equal-tempered chromatic scale is noted by unequal staff moves with sharps and flat signs (digitally) denoting changes of pitch..

Different gaps separate the performer from the listener (not to more than mention the difference of knowledge and experience of the composer, performer, and listener). First of all are the performance conditions in concert, the nature of the venue, the concert rituals, and so forth, or the very different way people listen to recordings at home, often discontinuously, in their own environments, which may be intimate and private. Then there are relational differences: performers play to many people, but a listener may think the music is coming to him or her alone, even though there are other people in the room. In this way, music can be heard as personal and intimate in the public sphere. And there are gaps between music played live, live performances documented, music that is recorded but not played live, music that is performed for a recording but not simultaneously in real time, music that is constructed from “takes” and “tracks,” and

music that is synthesized from samples and/or electronically generated sounds. Then there is music heard as sound and sounds heard as music. Et cetera.

Since gaps are distinctions, a piece of music is filled with gaps if it is to be heard to have successive or simultaneous parts¹ —gaps all the way down to the notes themselves and within them. One can ask whether these gaps are not really different in kind from those between pieces and repertoires.²

But sometimes a gap is just a gap. Consider the Beethoven sonatas Jim alludes to in his title page to *GAP6*: “one of those 2mvt. middleBeethoven pianosontatas in E/F/F# not G.” Opus 54 in F has no “first” movement, Opus 78 in F# has no “middle” movement, and Opus 90 in E-minor has no “last” movement.

A Gape at *Gap*, 1st batch.

The first of Jim's GAP piano pieces presents many species of gaps. It is a series of pieces numbered from 1 to 22, written from 1990-1993, but not in 1992. Its two kinds of pieces present a gap. There are three of first kind of piece (1, 4, and 20); each is written in two measures and is harmonic, as opposed to melodic. 1 and 4 are vamps to be repeated “lots of times.” All three partake of generic jazz/pop harmonies in C major (respectively: G^{7#9}, Fm⁺⁶, Am⁷ followed by C⁺⁶).³ These three pieces in order form a kind of gapped defective blues progression, spanning over most of the piece.

The other 19 pieces are of a second kind; they are completely melodic, if sometimes played in parallel octaves. They are either based on a single note (2), or single intervals (3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 21), or black-key pentatonic scales from low to high or vice versa (10, 11, 12), or white-key scales from low to high or vice versa (14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19), or the chromatic scale up and down (22). These materials are as generic as the harmonies of the first kind of piece. Gaps among these pieces include the intervals (gaps between notes, with 21 presenting the maximal interval between the highest and lowest note of the piano), and gapped pentatonic and diatonic scales (the chromatic scale with gaps). The progression from the middle C of 2 to the entire chromatic scale in 22, is gapped by the three pieces of the other kind.

Gaps galore.

(A) Oxymoronic tempo markings such as “fetchingly unswinging, with a lumbering lilt” (1), and contrasts between tempo markings: “in vast space and endless time” (5) and (18) versus “Diddle” (6); “mit innerkeit und empfindung” (7) versus “importantly fat” (10).

(B) Extremely long versus extremely short (gliss) notes (18).

(C) Links between pieces versus unique pieces.

¹ One of my own composition's titles makes this point; the piece is called *A Fabric of Seams*.

² At the lowest level of structure is the gap where the quantum walks the plank.

³ Or T₁ of the Chopin chord. Or is it T₇M₇?

Links: the vamps of (1) and (4); the C5 and D5 shared by (3) and (6); loud/soft in (5) and; the tremolos of (5) and (8); the dotted 8th-sixteenth-eighth (Beethoven's Seventh) rhythms and the isolated low F3 of (3) and (17); the fast scale fragments of (18) and (19); black key interval (7) and black key scale (10), etc); black and white key interval (8) and (9).

No links: all-interval-classes once each (1); chromatic scale (22); top and bottom of keyboard with staccato notes and rests (21); block chords (20); 13/8 divided 5 notes, 2 rests, 5 notes, 1 rest (13).

(D) The generic pitch material versus the sophistication of the rhythmic, dynamic, and articulative subtleties in each piece.

(E) Sheer repetition versus developing variation.

(F) Meyer's structural gap: top and bottom of piano in 21, all notes between in 22. Reverse of Meyers gap: all types of intervals in 1, different types later; or from note to interval, to scale to entire chromatic gamut.

(G) Randomly banging and doodling versus playing with the highest subtlety and art;

(H) Uncommitted (wise guy) versus wholehearted (wise man).

Gapological identities:

Let a gap be denoted by \emptyset

Gap within an ordered set $\langle A B \rangle \rightarrow \langle A : B \rangle$ (Also $\langle \emptyset A B \rangle \langle A B \emptyset \rangle$)

Gaps are generative, dissipative, and recursive: rules $\langle \rangle \rightarrow \langle \emptyset \rangle$; $\langle \emptyset \rangle \rightarrow \langle \rangle$; $\emptyset \rightarrow \langle \emptyset \emptyset \rangle$.⁴

Creation rule: $\emptyset \rightarrow A$. one to many map, indeterminate.

Example: $\langle A B \rangle \rightarrow \langle \emptyset A B \emptyset \rangle \rightarrow \langle C A B \rangle$ or $\langle A B E \rangle$ or $\langle A A C D E B A D \rangle$.

Destruction rule: $A \rightarrow \emptyset$. many to one map, determinate.

Gapped ordered set extracted from a larger one via destruction and dissipation. $\langle A B C \rangle \rightarrow \langle A \emptyset C \rangle \rightarrow \langle A C \rangle$

Complementary Gaps via destruction : $\langle A B C D E \rangle = \langle A D \rangle$ versus $\langle B C E \rangle = \langle A \emptyset \emptyset D \emptyset \emptyset \rangle$ versus $\langle \emptyset B C \emptyset E \rangle$

Gaps between levels: B and $\langle D E F \rangle$ in $\langle A B C \rangle \rightarrow \langle A \langle D E F \rangle C \rangle$.

⁴ Because a gap is a distinction, " $\langle \rangle$ " is a " \emptyset " and the generative and dissipative rules can be rewritten respectively: " $\rightarrow \langle \rangle$ " and " $\langle \rangle \rightarrow$ ".

derivation via creation and destruction rules:

creates a level: $\langle A B C \rangle \rightarrow \langle A \emptyset C \rangle \rightarrow \langle A \emptyset \emptyset C \rangle \rightarrow \langle A D E F C \rangle \rightarrow \langle A \langle D E F \rangle C \rangle$.

destroys a level: $\langle A \langle B C D \rangle E \rangle \rightarrow \langle A \emptyset E \rangle \rightarrow \langle A B C \rangle$

A model for GAP6 I: mm.1-57

GAP6 I can be divided into two large sections, from m.1-57, and m.58-125.

The piece begins with a fourfold repetition of “viola C,” each iteration equal to a dotted quarter note at $Q = 66$, followed by four quarter rests. The notation suggests that the rest of a whole note duration should be performed as four silent pulses at a 2 to 3 ratio to the four audible Cs. The second measure repeats the first. Measure 3 “changes” the dotted quarters of m.2 into half notes (a 3 to 4 ratio) followed by four silent half-note pulses—at the same speed as the heard notes. We will call this section a “0-section.” Next follows a 1-section, which proceeds in four groups of four measures.

The first section of *GAP6 II* has three parts, A, B, and C:

A is from m.1 to m.19.

B is from m.20 to m.38.

C is from m.39 to m.57.

Each part starts with a 0-section, and continues with a 1-section.

Definitions of the two types of sections follow.

0-section (three measures):

four equal iterations of a note or chord followed by rests
repeated once,
and then again at a different rate.

1-section (sixteen measures): four subparts of four measures each.

Each subpart has the following structure:

first measure:	four-note <i>melody</i> y is introduced; two notes loud and two notes soft; followed by 6 eighth-notes rest.
second measure:	melody y is repeated but with dynamics exchanged; followed by 6 eighth-notes rest.
third measure:	y is repeated with some aspects changed; starting with y, four-note <i>melody</i> z is introduced and played simultaneously with the melody; followed by 4 eighth-notes rest.
fourth measure :	melody z is repeated with some aspects changed; followed by 10 eighth-notes rest.

each melody y has four distinct notes.
 each melody z has three distinct notes; the last two notes are the same.

In each of the sections A, B & C:

The y melody of the second measure is a permutation of the first's y melody.
 The y melody of the third measure shares one or two notes of the y melody of the second measure.
 The y melody of the fourth measure shares all or three notes of the y melody of the third measure.
 Z-melodies four measures apart share no notes.

Ricercar super gap.

How shall we regard gaps? Sometimes they are empty, a void; other times they mark or contrast; sometimes they are sublations of opposites; or, as we will see below, they can deconstruct themselves

If a gap is not dialectic—that is, filled in by communication and dialogue, or transformed into a synthesis—the gap stands alone so any contrasts remain. This state is a gap between “versus” and “and”— as in “but.” This gap is both inclusive and exclusive at once—a form of ecstasy, the (gapped) items stand outside each other.

When the gap is deconstructive, it is lost in the void and we can only notice its absence. As with wiggling a pinball machine too much to get the ball where we want, we have “tilt,” and the game is over.

Gaps can appear and disappear as we saw in the gapological identities; their spontaneous appearance is no less than creativity itself. Perhaps their disappearance is entropy.

Set-Classes in the 0-sections of *GAP6 I*.

The pitch material in the 1-sections eventually completes the twelve-tone aggregate; no pitch-classes are repeated. We take the last two measures of the piece as a proto 0-section.

Cumulative set-classes of the four 4-simultaneities:

location	pitch-classes (low to high)	set-classes	cumulative set-classes
A:mm.1-3	<0>	SC(1-1)	SC (1-1)
B:mm.20-22	<273A>	SC(4-20)	SC (5-27)
C:mm.20-21	<0B0A15>	SC(6-21)	SC (11-1)

Imagination is gapped

In the emergence of ideas, imagination is the gap. Ideas “pop” into the head. This gap is not a pop, but usually gendered as feminine, as Calliope, Euterpe, Erato, and Polyhymnia and the five other Greek muses will affirm. The generative principle is ultimately inconceivable, arising out of the void. The void is the source of unlimited fecundity—the mythic womb, the unconscious, an eternal cornucopia. It has to be inconceivable, for if it were not, then creativity could be predicted—a contradiction in terms—and imagination could be reduced to construction or calculation. (Indeed, where do the ideas that inform construction and calculation come from?) In math, for instance, closing the gap between a conjecture and a proof can in principle be done by examining all possible cases, as in computer-generated proofs of simple theorems in plane geometry. But the real mathematician depends on mathematical imagination to suggest ideas for proving conjectures. Proofs in cutting edge problems in math and another fields are too complex to be solved by looking at all possible cases, because, even on the fastest computer running the best algorithm, it would take longer than the projected age of the universe to find a proof.⁵

Not only do gaps appear in creation, they appear in comprehension. Every statement is to some extent discontinuous with the next, it takes a jump of mind to follow an argument. An expert is one who follows the line of thought even when the jumps in a discourse are large and difficult. Teaching a discourse often means filling the gaps for novices who wish to become experts. The problem of being an expert is that the kinds of jumps in discourse are over-learned and categorized so while the expert has a set of sophisticated habits that can be applied to solving certain complex problems, the jumping from point to point becomes a routine. When a new kind of inference or connection is suggested, these habits inhibit comprehension. Thus experts have to try especially hard to keep an open mind so subtle gaps are noticed and problematic gaps are closed. The open mind is imagination, as suggested above.⁶

“If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything;
it is open to everything. In the beginner’s mind there are
many possibilities; in the expert’s mind there are few.”
(Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*. p.21)

Data Structure for describing each measure in mm.1-57.

For each y or z melody of *GAP6 I*, we use a five-row, four-column array:

For instance, look at m.26 shown in Ex. 2. We code this measure as follows:

⁵ Of course, computer programs that are equipped with algorithms that employ mathematical ideas (not themselves generated by calculation), may help find a proof, as in the case of the four-color theorem.

⁶ It is said that if a mathematician hasn’t produced a major result by the age of twenty-five, it is likely he or she will never do so. The reason often given is that the young haven’t learned enough math for it to become engrained as inert habit.

duration:	3	3	4	4	(10r)
pc:	A	E	Bb	Bb	
# of octaves:	1	2	1	1	
register of lowest note:	3	3	3	3	
dynamics	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	

last (10r) is rest after event.

The five dimensions of the z melody are given by rows in the array. Each column is a note-event in the melody.

The top row shows the duration of each note-event in eighth notes.

The next row gives the pitch-class of the note-event.

The third row gives the octave doubling of the pcs in the note-event. 0 means no doubling; 1 indicates a doubling of the lowest representation of the pitch-class an octave higher; n means double the lowest representation of the pitch-class n octaves higher.

The fourth row gives the pitch register (of the lowest octave) of the pitch-class. Registers are given from C to the B a seventh above, inclusive. Register 4 is from middle C to the first B above it. Register 1 is from the lowest C on the piano to the first B above it.

The fifth row holds the dynamics for each note-event.

The length of the rest following a y or z melody is given in eighth notes to the right of its array (followed by an "r").

The five dimensions of each note-event correspond to a unique "atom" in Milton Babbitt's⁷ five dimensional musical space of pitch-class, register, duration, loudness, and timbre. Here the timbral dimension is given by the rows 3 and 4 of the array. We can consider different octave doublings as different timbres since the lowest member of the doubled octaves is analogous to a "fundamental" of a harmonic spectrum and the other upper octaves to various harmonics (partials that are powers of 2). There is also psycho-acoustic precedent for hearing the octave components in various registers as the fixed formants of various vowels. Jim Randall wrote at length about this kind of hearing in "Stimulating Speculation No. 2," in Part II of his monograph, *Compose Yourself: A Manual for the Young*.

We can also use the array format to describe the three instances of the fourfold C-natural at the beginning of the piece, and the analogous repetitions of chords later on in the composition.

⁷ See Milton Babbitt "The Composer as Specialist," p.49.

Here are the arrays for the 0-section of mm.1-3

A0.

m.1 and 2

3	3	3	3
C	C	C	C
0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2
<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>

(8r)

m.3

4	4	4	4
C	C	C	C
0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2
<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>

(10r)

Below is the series of arrays that describe the subparts of the second 1-section of *GAP6 I*, from m.23 to m.38.

B1.

m.23

2	2	2	2
F#	G	D	G#
0	0	0	0
3	4	4	5
<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>

(6r)

m.24

2?	3	3	3
F#	G	D	G#
0	0	0	0
3	4	4	5
<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>

(6r)

m.25

2	2	2	2	with	3	3	3	3	(4r)
F#	G	D	G#		A	E	Bb	Bb	
0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	
3	4	4	5		3	3	3	3	
<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>		<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	

m.26

3	3	4	4	(10r)
A	E	Bb	Bb	
1	2	1	1	
3	3	3	3	
<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	

B2.

m.27

2	2	2	2	(6r)
D	G	F#	G#	
0	0	0	0	
4	4	3	1	
<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	

m.28

2	2	3	3	(6r)
D	G	F#	G#	
0	0	0	0	
4	4	3	1	
<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	

m.29

2	2	2	2	with	3	3	3	3	(4r)
D	G	F#	G#		C#	D#	E#	E#	
0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	
4	4	3	1		2	2	2	2	
<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>		<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	

m.30

3	3	4	4
C#	D#	E#	E#
2	4	3	2
2	0	0	2
<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>

(10r)

B3.

m.31

4	4	3	3
A#	F#	B	D#
0	0	0	0
1	4	3	5
<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>

(6r)

m.32

2	2	3	3
A#	F#	B	D#
0	0	0	0
1	4	3	5
<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>

(6r)

m.33

2	2	2	2
A#	F#	B	D#
0	0	0	0
1	4	3	5
<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>

with

3	3	3	3
G	F	A	A
0	0	0	0
5	5	5	5
<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>

(4r)

m.34

3	3	4	4
G	F	A	A
2	0	2	2
3	4	3	3
<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>

(10r)

B4

m.35

4	2	2	2
G#	A#	B	F#
0	0	0	0
4	3	4	4
<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>

(6r)

m.36

4	2	2	2
G#	A#	B	F#
0	0	0	0
4	3	4	4
<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>

(6r)

m.37

4	4	4	4
G#	A#	B	F#
0	0	0	0
4	3	4	4
<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>

with

6	6	6	6
C#	D	E	E
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>

(4r)

m.38

3	3	4	4
C#	D	E	E
2	2	2	2
3	2	2	3
<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>

(10r)

Malunkyaputta said: “Revered Sir, it just occurred to me that you have left unelucidated whether the world is eternal or not, infinite or not, whether the soul and the body are identical or not, or if the saint exists after death or not, or both or neither.”

The Buddha answered: “It is as if a man had been wounded with a poisoned arrow and his relatives and friends were to procure for him a physician or surgeon, but the sick man were to say, ‘I will not have this arrow taken out until I know whether the man who wounded me belonged to the warrior, Brahman, agricultural, or menial cast, or until I know his name, what he looked like, where he lives, or what his bow is made out of.’ What I teach does not depend on your

questions about whether the world exists and so forth. Therefore I have not elucidated these things because it has nothing to do with what my teaching concerns: the cause and cessation of suffering.” (Paraphrased from the *Majjhima-Nikaya sutta*, 63, translated by Henry Clark Warren. p.117.)

Gapshunyata (exemplia gratia)

In Buddhist thought, the concept of self is said to be empty. That is, any composite thing is just that, a composite—the whole is no greater than its parts. Selfhood is a gap; it is void. The Buddhist term for this is *shunyata*, often translated as “emptiness.” At the same time, shunyata also implies that everything is connected to everything else. Without a notion of self, there is no arbitrary or principled distinction between things. This state is consistent with a process ontology, where everything is impermanent and in flux. Selfhood only occurs if we reify things out of their contexts (the flow) and distinguish them from other things.

Buddhist philosophers had a technique for demonstrating the emptiness of things (objects and relations) called the *tetralemma*. This amounts to something like “post-modern” deconstruction. The motivation to perform these deconstructions arose as Buddhism came into intellectual conflict within itself and with other religions and philosophies.

Buddhism was originally ontologically neutral, but became obsessed with philosophical issues such as the nature of “dharma,” supposed irreducible units of experience or reality. Things were selfless because the dharmas that made them up were in constant flux. Buddhist thinkers in Early Buddhism differed as to the number and type of dharmas and their arrangement in various category systems. But later developments associated with the rise of the Mahayana problematized not-self by completing the concept, suggesting that the dharmas themselves have no selfhood. There’s no there there. This led to the Madhyamaka doctrine of two truths; ultimate truth taught not-self, which was distinct from provisional truth where ordinary conventions were accepted as valid. The point was that only via provisional truth could ultimate truth be known. Any attempt to ground provisional truth as necessary or ultimate was deconstructed by the use of the tetralemma. In this way, essentialism was literally argued out of existence.

The victorious ones have said
that emptiness is the relinquishing of all views.
For whomever emptiness is a view,
That one has accomplished nothing.
(Nagarjuna, *Mulamadhyamakakarika*. XIII: 8,
translated by Jay L. Garland. p.36)

Here’s how the tetralemma works:

Let A be asserted.

Let it be shown that none of these “answers “ are true:

- (1) A
- (2) not-A
- (3) either A or not-A (contingency, according to circumstance)

(4) neither A nor not-A (having nothing to do with A)

(a) if $A \neq \text{not-not-}A$ then the “answer” is somewhere else, not in terms of, irrelevant to A.

(b) if $A = \text{not-not-}A$ then the assertion of A is contradictory and void.

Note:

a) doesn't tell us much because it is empirically neutral.

b) tells us something which is merely “defined” to be true; whether it is the case or not will have to be determined by inspection, unless inspection itself is subject to a rule that says anything that is not A is the complement of A in the universe of discourse.

For instance, let us define A as the sentence “The gap is open space”

(1) “The gap is open space”

(2) Not(“The gap is a space”) \rightarrow the gap is not open space.

(3) Either(“The gap is open space”) or (Not(“The gap is open space”)) \rightarrow Either the gap is open space or it is not open space.

(4) Neither(“The gap is open space”) nor (Not(“The gap is open space”)) \rightarrow The gap is neither open space or not open space

“Not(“The gap is open space”) \rightarrow the gap is not open space can be interpreted two ways:

(a) the gap is something other than open space.

(b) the gap everything other than open space.

We assert all four arms of the tetralemma in this text. (1)The gap is open space (as in a rest or space between musical and other objects). (2)The gap is not open space, it can be a distinction (and a “space” can be a collection, not a null set). (3) The gap is sometimes open space and sometimes something else possible in the same universe of discourse. (Shunyata implies Co-dependent arising, and vice versa.) (4) The gap is not open space (void) or something else; open space has nothing to do with it.⁸

My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has used it.) (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. p.74)

Of course, one might make distinctions and define Gap₁, Gap₂, Gap₃, and so forth. The tetralemma would then have to be applied to each Gap_n, perhaps successfully or not.

The tetralemma is a vajra sword. It is not wielded to do away with views, but to cut one free of any permanent attachment to views. The connections, associations, suggestions, and connotations

⁸ In any case, GAP is published by Open Space.

in the assertion “The gap is open space” have (only) been shown to have to no essential grounding, which is to say they are poetic, multivalent, and/or semantically rich. To shield oneself from the vajra sword is only to protect oneself from uncertainty. It’s not that poetry, multivalence, and semantic abundance are inherently good; rather, unlike making hard and fast distinctions, they provide a panoply of ways to solve practical problems (like writing, or writing about, music). In this way, Buddhist thought aligns with Western pragmatism. But if we already understand this, we can put the sword away and “change the subject,” as Richard Rorty has suggested.

interregnum

There once was a Gap named Mangione,
whose music was heterophony.
His brother, Chuck, said
We can’t get ahead,
Our father is not Francisconi.

Gapped Processes in GAP6 I, mm.1-57 (part 1)

The list of note-events described by the arrays helps us notice when and what things change. The nature of these changes is, of course, most salient when a new type of thing is introduced into the music. Therefore a list of the initial entrance of various musical features tracks this aspect of the piece’s progression. As we might expect, the first few events have the greatest novelty, but Randall keeps many structural wrinkles from unfolding until the B and C subparts. As the music moves on, the new features tend to occur in the domain of pitch-class set-classes.

First occurrence of features in GAP6 I, mm.1-57
(unique features are **bold** or *italic*)

Part A

1	dur 3 dur partition 4 pc 0 pc partition 4 doubling: unisons doubling partition 4 reg 2 reg partition 4 dym pp dym partition 4
3	dur 4
4	dur 2 pc 679A pc partition 1111 set-class (4-3) regs 1 2 3 reg partition 211

	dym <i>p f</i> dym partition
6	pc 2 4 8 set-class (7-9i) pc partition 211
7	set-class (3-8) trichord of previous measures rises by an octave
8	reg 4
10	pc 35B set-class (7-13i) reg partition 31
11	dym partition 31
12	dur partition 22 set-class (4-24) reg 5 reg partition 1111
15	set-class (3-1)
16	dur partition 31
18	pc 1 (pcs are saturated) set-class (7-11)
19	set-class (3-6)

Part B

20	set-class (4-20) reg 6
23	set-class (4-5i)
26	set-class (3-5i) doubling octaves doubling 1 2 doubling partition 31 trichord of previous octaves is in same register
29	set-class (7-5i)
30	doubling partition 211 reg partition 22 registers change from previous measure by partition 22
34	registers change from previous measure by partition 31
35	set-class (4-11i)
37	dur 6 set-class (7-34)
38	set-class (3-2)

Part C

39	set-class (6-31)
42	dur 16 dur partition 211 set-class (4-2)
45	registers change from previous measure by partition 1111
46	<i>set-class (4-2i)</i>
48	dym <i>mf</i>
49	set-class (3-5) registers change from previous measure by partition 211
50	set-class (4-4)
52	dym <i>mp</i> crescendo from <i>p</i> to <i>mf</i> dym partition 1111
53	dur 8 interpolation of rest 2 in phrase dym <i>ff</i>
54	set-class (4-22)
56	set-class (7-24i)
57	<i>set-class (3-2i)</i> registers change from previous measure by partition 31

Passim Ninjapan

Japanese culture is particularly saturated with examples of Buddhist-derived gap-conceptions. For instance, the idea of *Ma*, a Japanese word denoting a sense of space, is used in Japanese music and drama to mean an interval of pitch or time, not only with respect to its measure, but also to what the interval actually feels like.⁹ (When I say “actually,” I mean intersubjectively.) Contemporary Western musicians, of course, are alive to such a conception, but traditional Western music theories ignore anything like *Ma*. For example, musicians recognize and appreciate the “suchness” of each different interval; in fact, this is how we identify intervals in the first place. However, in tonal music theory the differentiation of such perceptions are reduced to only two states: whether an interval is considered consonant or dissonant, even if the theory has to treat dissonance/consonance as context-sensitive and change what intervals are consonant or dissonant as different periods and genres of music are considered.

Ma also concerns how the quality of a particular patch of space or time changes when it is combined with others. For instance: <pause> A silence before a sentence is different from one within a sentence <pause> at a structural joint or not at a <pause> structural joint, or one within a sin<pause> gle word, or after the sentence is finished <pause>. In Jim's piece, the various ways he notates silence brings the gap to life via notated rests of different combinations in different tempi, by signs such as fermati, and/or via performance directions.

⁹ *Ma* also denotes the distance between two points, the space surrounded by four walls, and, more generally, space/time.

Set-classes in *Gap6 I*.

We have seen how the set-classes in 0-sections articulate an unweighted aggregate. In the 1-sections and after measure 57 only a handful of set-classes are found (eight heptachordal set-classes, eight tetrachordal set-classes and 6 or 7 trichordal set-classes)¹⁰. It should be noted that the pitch-class C-natural of the first 0-section is never used again—the rest of the piece is an all-but-one gap.

The following list reveals the set-classes in GAP 6.1 mm.1-57, **Bold** indicates a unique set-class; *italic* indicates unique inversive form of a set-class.

- A0 <0>
- A1 <697A> <8244> (y-melody followed by z-melody)
 SC(4-3) \cup SC(3-8) = SC(7-9i)
- <8244> <9A67> (z-melody followed by next y-melody)
 SC(7-9i)
- A2 <9A67> <B533>
 SC(4-3) \cup SC(3-8) = SC(7-13i)
- <B533> \cup <A624>
 SC(7-6i)
- A3 <A624> <7988>
 SC(4-24) \cup SC(3-1) = SC(7-9i)
- <7988> \cup <642A>
 SC(7-9i)
- A4 <642A> <3B11>
 SC(4-24) \cup SC(3-6) = SC(7-11)
- B0 <27> <3A>
 SC(2-5) \cup SC(2-5) = SC(4-20)

¹⁰ I suspect the type of set-class system used by Jim may define only transposition as an equivalence operation. Thus two distinct pcs related by inversion are not with the same set-class. This gives greater scope for set-class differentiation as there are 19 trichordal set-classes, 43 tetrachordal set-classes and 66 heptachordal set-classes in the T_n set-class system, whereas the respective numbers of set-classes are 12, 29, and 37 in the T_n/I set-classes system.

- B1 <6728> <94AA>
 SC(4-5i) \cup SC(3-5i) = SC(7-9i)
 <94AA> \cup <2768>
 SC(7-9i)
- B2 <2768> <1355>
 SC(4-5i) \cup SC(3-6) = SC(7-5i)
 <1355> \cup <A6B3>
 SC(6-26)
- B3 <A6B3> <7599>
 SC(4-20) \cup SC(3-6) = SC(7-13i)
 <7599> \cup <8AB6>
 SC(7-1)
- B4 <8AB6> <1244>
 SC(4-11i) \cup SC(3-2) = **SC(7-34)**
- C0 <8B9> <415>
 SC(3-2) \cup SC(3-3i) = **SC(6-31)**
- C1 <3567> <9ABB>
 SC(4-2) \cup SC(3-1) = SC(7-13i)
 <9ABB> \cup <7536>
 SC(7-13i)
- C2 <7536> <8122>
 SC(4-2i) \cup SC(3-5) = SC(7-5i)
 <8122> \cup <1236>
 SC(5-14)
- C3 <1236> <AB44>
 SC(4-4) \cup SC(3-5) = SC(7-11)
 <AB44> \cup <63B1>
 SC(6-25)
- C4 <63B1> <5788>
 SC(4-22) \cup SC(3-2i) = **SC(7-24i)**
 SC()

The set-classes used after m.57 are listed below. New set-classes, not included before m.57, are given in bold.

parts D1 and D2, mm. 58-67, pcs $\langle 6A2497 \rangle \cup \langle 26A8 \rangle = \langle \mathbf{246789A} \rangle$
 set-class (**6-24**) (4-24) (7-9i)

parts E1 and E2, mm.68-75, pcs $\langle A4B7 \rangle \cup \langle 3A69 \rangle = \langle \mathbf{34679AB} \rangle$
 set-class (**4-18i**) (4-18i) (**7-38i**)

parts F1 and F2, mm. 76-81, $\langle B246 \rangle \cup \langle A136 \rangle = \langle \mathbf{12346AB} \rangle$
 set-class (4-22) (**4-26**) (7-11)

parts G1 and G2, mm. 82-91, $\langle 1582 \rangle \cup \langle 376 \rangle = \langle \mathbf{1235678} \rangle$
 set-class (4-18) (3-3) (7-5i)

part H1, mm.92-107, $\langle 49BA \rangle \cup \langle AB4185237 \rangle = \langle 12345789AB \rangle$ (lh and rh)
 set-class (**4-6**) (9-10) (10-6)
 $\langle 49AB \rangle \langle 14589B \rangle \langle 237A \rangle$ (successive)
 set-classes (4-6) (6-31) (4-20)

part H2, mm. 108-120
 $\langle 1345B \rangle \cup \langle 12345789AB \rangle = \langle 12345789AB \rangle$ (lh and rh)
 set-classes (5-9i) (10-6) (10-6)
 $\langle 135B \rangle \langle 14589B \rangle \langle 237a \rangle$ (successive)
 set-classes (**4-21**) (6-31) (4-20)

part I1 (return to opening 4s) $\langle 9 \rangle$ set-class (1-1)

Meyer's gap

Leonard B. Meyer introduced the concept of a *structural gap* in the mid-fifties. It is an immediate juxtaposition of events that are far apart in some musical dimension, like low versus high notes, or soft versus loud notes, or simple versus complex passages. Meyer believes that when these dimensional gaps occur at the opening of a section of music, they can induce a form of musical teleology, since it is postulated that closing the gap with intermediate dimension values fulfills a psychological need for closure and completion. Thus, themes that start out with a leap that is eventually filled in (like the subject of Bach's *Art of the Fugue* or the *Musical Offering*) are superior to other forms of thematic shape. This can be generalized to the completion of other dimensional values with or without an initial gap, as in chromatic completion in twelve-tone music, or presenting all forms of triple counterpoint in fugues. Thus a discrete dimension is gapped until all its members are presented.

Gapped Processes in *GAP6 I*, mm.1-57 (part 2)

The array data that describes the y and z melodies can help to describe the musical processes in *GAP6 I*. We need only compare the entries in each row of different arrays to see how their details differ. We can use a transition array to show these differences at a glance.

Below are two successive arrays from part B. They are separated by a middle transition array. (Transitions arrays have a thicker border than a note-event array.) The note-event arrays are taken from the z-melodies of m.37 and m.38. The pitch-classes are now shown by integers mod-12¹¹, and the dynamic indications are replaced by integers from 1 to 10 coding the successive dynamics from *ppppp* to *fffff*. The transition array is the difference between entries in corresponding cells of the two event-arrays. Let $c = b - a$ be content of cell i,j in the transition array, if and only if a is the content of cell i,j in the first note-event array and b is the content of cell i,j in the second note-event array. For instance, -3 is in the top-left cell of the transition array, this is the difference between the 6 in the same cell in the left and right note-event arrays.

6	6	6	6
1	2	4	4
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
5	5	5	5

-3	-3	-2	-2
0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0
0	1	1	0
3	0	0	0

3	3	4	4
1	2	4	4
2	2	2	2
3	2	2	3
8	5	5	5

Entries in cells of the transition array indicate the degree of dimensional change from the left to right note-event array. A change that is positive means an increase in duration, or pitch-class, octave doubling, pitch register, or dynamic. A minus number means a decrease, and a zero means no change. We can use the values in the transition array to derive two overall measure of change; the number of values that change and the sum of the values. In this case, 7 values (out of 20) change and the sum of the values is -5.

Here is the transition array between mm.34 and 35. Here we are comparing the z melody at the end of part B3 and the y melody at the beginning of part B4.

3	3	4	4
7	5	9	9
2	0	2	2
3	4	3	3
8	8	5	8

1	-1	-2	-2
1	5	2	-3
-2	0	-2	-2
1	-1	1	1
-3	0	0	0

4	2	2	2
8	10	11	6
0	0	0	0
4	3	4	4
5	8	5	8

Here there are many more changes in dimension values than in the last case; there are 16. The transition array sum is -6.

From the transition arrays between mm.37 and 38, and between 34 and 35, we might expect the change in the first case to be less complex (lower number of dimension value changes) but the degree of the change in both to be from more to less “extreme” and to about the same degree (the sums differ only by one and are minus).

¹¹ However, pitch-class is not a linear dimension like the others, and weighting will have to be according to interval class between the notes, not the difference between them.

Why Arrays?

One may ask, what is the point of these measures when one can hear these changes by listening?—presumably something the composer would desire over asking the listener to perform calculations on abstract mathematical models. Moreover, we can't even assert that the arrays really model the responses of all or some or any listeners because the nature of these changes is quantized (gapped), and the degree of phenomenal change among the particular values of a particular dimension or between dimensions is likely to be perceived as unequal (gapped). Taking the number of changing values or summing the values in the transition array is therefore only a very rough measure of change, even if weighting the values of the dimensions might help a bit to produce more similarity among listeners.

The note-event arrays and their transition arrays serve a quite different purpose. First, they differentiate the material of the composition so it is susceptible to subtle and purposeful variation. Second, they sensitize a listener to what kinds of changes may occur in the piece as it unfolds. The overall values of the transition arrays may also help the composer or listener follow trends in the composition, even if different people will hear different things in different ways. What's most important is that the precision of the arrays can focus discourse about composition and listening on more explicit and subtle aspects of the sonic surface of the piece. Likewise, theories of process and form like Meyer's are therefore susceptible to sharper and more powerful forms of criticism.

Some Transition Array Data.

Here is the series of arrays and their transitions over the first part of part C.

C1. y melody in m.42 to y melody in m.43.

2	4	16	2
3	5	6	7
3	2	3	3
2	2	2	2
5	8	8	5

1	-2	-13	0
0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0
3	-3	-3	3

3	2	3	2
3	5	6	7
3	2	3	3
2	2	2	2
8	5	5	8

7 = # of dimension changes; -14 = sum of dimension changes

There are changes only in durations and dynamics. Dynamics exchange (as in all transitions from the first subpart to the second). Thus there is change (7) but it "balances" out. A huge change in duration from 16 to 3 eighth notes produces low sum. Thus, m.43 is much shorter than m.41 suggested by the source of the -14 sum.

C1. y melody in m.43 to y melody in m.44.

3	2	3	2
3	5	6	7
3	2	3	3
2	2	2	2
8	5	5	8

-1	0	-1	0
0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0
-4	-1	-1	-4

2	2	2	2
3	5	6	7
3	2	3	3
2	2	2	2
4	4	4	4

6 = # of dimension changes; -12 = sum of dimension changes

Again, there are changes only in durations and dynamics. Note-events get shorter and softer. Thus few dimension changes and larger negative sum.

C1. z melody in m.44 to z melody in 45.

3	3	3	3
9	A	B	B
4	2	4	4
1	2	1	1
4	4	4	4

0	0	1	1
0	0	0	0
-1	2	-1	-2
1	-1	1	2
1	4	4	4

3	3	4	4
9	A	B	B
3	4	3	2
2	1	2	3
5	8	8	8

14 = # of dimension changes; 16 = sum of dimension changes

Here there are changes in all dimensions except pitch-class. Durations get longer, dynamics get louder, doublings wider, and lowest pitches somewhat higher; sum is positive and large. Many dimension values change contributing to complex change.

C1. z melody in m.45 to y melody in 46 (beginning of C2).

3	3	4	4
9	A	B	B
3	4	3	2
2	1	2	3
5	8	8	8

1	-1	-1	-1
-2	-5	-8	-5
-1	-3	-1	0
1	2	1	-1
3	-3	-3	0

4	2	3	3
7	5	3	6
2	1	2	2
3	3	3	2
8	5	5	8

15 = # of dimension changes; -31 = sum of dimension changes

The two note-events are complexly different (15). The sum of -28 is misleading. As mentioned in footnote 11, the difference between pitch-classes cannot really be negative, because $-n = 12+n$, mod-12. If we use interval-classes to indicate pitch-class change, then the respective changes are 2, 5, 4, 5. This offsets the other mainly negative changes, so the sum is now +5. The long gap of 10 eighth notes between mm.45 and 46 helps diminish the effect of the +5 sum, perhaps suggesting the effect of a 0 sum.

Chasmatopothesia

Earlier I mentioned a gap between entity and transformation (objects related by functions). With the present array methodology, we can close this gap. The structure and values of a note-event array and a transition array is one of function. Both arrays have exactly the same structure. So, given an arbitrary array, there is no way to tell if it models an object or a transformation. Given two arrays A, B, either of these can operate on itself or the other to produce a third array C, which, under certain conditions, might possibly result in A or B. For example, we can have $A(B) = C$, or $B(B) = C$, or, possibly, $B(B) = A$. The conflation of note-event arrays and transition arrays can form a binary subgroup, such that the arrays are the subgroup's elements and the rule of combination is addition of corresponding cells, providing that every ordered pair of arrays of the form $A(B)$ produces another member of the group (that is, for all array pairs A, B in the set of arrays, $A(B) = C$ is a member of the set of arrays).

If we distinguish between note-event arrays and transitional arrays, we have a transformation subgroup such that the transition arrays are the elements of the group, and their concatenation (under addition of corresponding cells) is the group operation. These arrays are transformations and act on various note-event arrays (the entities) and transform them into each other.

The differences between these two formalizations can be more than simply pragmatic, for the ontology of the mathematical space differs; in the transformational group, there is a gap between the arrays, as either entities or transformations, whereas in the binary subgroup all the arrays are entities, while the transformation is addition of cell positions. Addition, the transformation, is not formalized by an array.

We have reason to choose the transformational group over the binary group, however. David Lewin has argued that intervals are transformations on the pitch-classes, rather than entities. This has implications for what we mean when we say we hear intervals. According to the entity/transformation dichotomy, we hear the notes as objects, but the intervals are not literally audible; we can say that we in some sense perceive these transformations as actions or gestures. Yet the phenomenon captured by the concept of Ma suggests that we can and do hear intervals as entities. This is just another demonstration that the distinction between entity and transformation is provisional, not ultimate.

After the gap in *GAP6 I*.

After measure 57, the modus operandi based on the model given above ends. A different, two voice model can be used to apply to the succession of parts after m.57 until almost the end of the piece. We can view this change from the regularity of the model for the first part of the piece, to the repetitions of two-voice textures as a reflection of the design of a Baroque figuration prelude, like the C major of book I or the C# major prelude of book II of Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier*. Up to a point the music maintains a stereotyped harmonic arpeggiation, after which the music dissolves into scales or other less rigidly applied patterning.

At m.58 the music abruptly occupies the lowest registers of the piano and assumes a two-voice texture; the voice in the left hand is comprised of accented and staccato eighth notes at *ff*; the right hand voice is played *pp* and is sustained and connected. Most of the notes on the left hand

voice are higher than the right hand's notes. This passage is ten measures long, the second five being an exact repetition of the first. The texture exchanges at m.68, so the loud, short voice is the in the left hand with the soft sustained voice in the right. This passage is eight measures long, with the first four repeated, but with a different time signature scheme. The music continues to progress in changes of texture that span so many measures divided into two iterations of roughly the same music. I say roughly, because after m.82 there begin to be small variations in duration, octave doubling, register, and dynamics in the repetitions. At m.119 the piece returns to the opening texture of four long notes repeated at *pp*.

The following chart shows the location and general temporal character of parts after m.57

part	mm.	duration*	time signatures
D1	58-62	38	4 (4/4) + 3/4
D2	63-67	38	4 (4/4) + 3/4
E1	68-71	30	3 (4/4) + 3/4
E2	72-75	32	4 (4/4)
F1	76-78	14	2 (3/4) + 1/4
F2	79-81	14	2 (3/4) + 1/4
G1	82-86	13	4/4 + 2/4 + 4/4 + 2/4 + 1/4
G2	87-91	13	4/4 + 2/4 + 4/4 + 2/4 + 1/4
H1	92-107	84	2/4 + 8/4 + 4 (2/4) + 8/4 + 8 (2/4)
H2	108-120	92	2/4 + 8/4 + 4 (2/4) + 8/4 + 5 (2/4) + 10/4
I	121-125	80	5 (8/4)

* durations are in eighth notes.

Arrays can be used to model parts D1 to I. Each of these arrays, except the one for part I, include a sixth dimension we can call articulation, with "s" for a short attack followed by silence, or an "l" for a sustained note. (In the arrays for parts A to C, all notes were sustained.)

Here are the arrays for parts H1 and H2. A transition array would show that there are changes in every dimension from H1 to H2.

Robert Morris

H1.

.5	2	17.5	.5	2	9.5	.5	2	18.17	1.33	1.5	12.5	.5	15.5
Bb	E	A	Bb	A	B	Bb	B	E	Db A	Ab B	F E	Bb	G Eb D
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1	0 0 0
3	3	4	3	2	4	3	1	5	4 3	4 2	4 3	3	4 4 4
<i>fff</i>	<i>ppp</i>	<i>ppp</i>	<i>fff</i>	<i>ppp</i>	<i>ppp</i>	<i>fff</i>	<i>ppp</i>	<i>ppp</i>	<i>mp</i> <i>pp</i>	<i>(mf)</i> <i>pp</i>	<i>mp</i> <i>p</i>	<i>fff</i>	<i>ppp</i>
1	s	s	1	s	s	1	s	s	1 1	1	s 1	1	s

H2.

.5	2	17.5	.5	2	9.5	.5	2	18.17	1.33	1.5	12.5	.5	27.5
Eb	B	F	Eb	C#	B	Eb	F	F#	G# B	A C#	E F	Eb	Bb G D
2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0	0 0 0
3	3	4	3	3	4	3	2	5	4 3	5 3	5 3	4	4 4 4
<i>pp</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>ppp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>ppp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>ppp</i>	<i>pp</i> <i>mp</i>	<i>pp</i> <i>(mf)</i>	<i>pp</i> <i>mp</i>	<i>ppp</i>	<i>fff</i>
1	s	s	1	s	s	1	s	s	1 1	1	1 s	1	s

Gap-as-trophy?

Compared to a photograph, a cartoon is a gapped picture. It is concerned with the form of edges with little attention to visual texture. It is one of the ways form can trump content. Cartoons are therefore inherently funny. This text is a tetralemmeted cartoon

in which

I express my admiration for Jim and his beautifully composed music by sharing the blue prints of the looms that spin Jim's threads and mine. I hope these musings are amusing.

He affirmed his significance as a conscious rational animal
proceeding syllogistically from the known to the unknown and a
conscious rational reagent between a micro- and a macrocosm
ineluctably constructed upon the incertitude of the void.

(James Joyce, *Ulysses*. p.697)

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From Lewis Lockwood

July 4, 2005

Dear Jim:

A few evenings ago Ava and I heard the Juilliard Quarter play at Tanglewood. The first piece on the program was one of your theme songs—Haydn's Opus 76 No. 5. Along with vivid memories of your wonderful article, hearing it evoked a host of other unforgettable moments during our years together in Princeton—can you imagine, over the years from 1958 to 1980, when I left for life in another institution.

Listening intently to the Haydn quartet, which I've played countless times, I thought about the ways in which your analysis sharpened my awareness of its intricacies, and this association spread—and continues to spread more widely—to a deeper feeling for what your work as musician and your special ways of thought have meant to me, then and now. So this is just a brief thank-you note for all you gave me, as colleague and friend, in our time together. I'll take the opportunity to send my belated congratulations on your seventy-fifth, wish you well, and add a toast you hear at Italian weddings—"A cento anni!"

All my best,

Lewis

From Martin Boykan

18 September 2005

Dear Jim,

I know you would have preferred to receive some music in your honor and I am sorry that this stressful moment prevents me from writing more than a few words. But I console myself with the fact that I have already written a piece for you — and that, actually, at a pivotal moment in my life. Forty years ago your piano pieces were very much in my head as I wrote my first string quartet, a breakthrough work for me in which I first became aware of my musical voice. I had been performing those pieces of yours, and when I came to the last movement of my quartet, I was inspired to appropriate some of your distinctive gestures. You will remember the reigning musical personalities of that time — Boulez, Stockhausen, Nono, Dallapiccola, etc. — and I take some pride in the fact that I seem to have ignored them all, and that, along with Carter (in an unlikely pairing with Ockeghem), it was your music that helped to set me on my path. I can't remember whether I ever thanked you personally, but I did acknowledge my debt to Arthur Berger and to anyone else who would listen. Years later you showed me the highly reductive pieces that initiated what I think of as your major contribution. Unlike the music that anybody else was writing, they reminded me of that first revolution at the turn of the 20th century when artists deliberately broke customary forms and procedures in order to experience freshly the basic elements of their craft. In music, there were the little pieces of the Viennese School, of course, and Stravinsky's radical simplifications in *Les Noces* or the *Three Pieces for String Quartet*, but your work reminded me also of Giuseppe Ungaretti's campaign to boil poetry back to its bare minimum, a campaign that culminated in a poem of only two words. William Carlos Williams once remarked that Ezra Pound set down every word with the hand of a surgeon, careful of the life within. I think you too have something of that spirit in the way you arrange pitches and pitch groups in contexts that make us feel as though we were hearing them for the first time.

Marty

For Jim

Andrew Mead

I entered graduate school in the fall of 1977 hoping to learn how Schoenberg's Violin Concerto worked, and yearning to write music that had the sort of beauty with which Schoenberg had captured my heart, soul and mind when I was a teenager. Things didn't quite turn out that way, but in the midst of the great scattering and reassembly that is the graduate school experience, one of the most transformative series of encounters I had was with J. K. Randall. Whether opening my ears with a play of sine waves, or squeezing 40 minutes of music together out of three notes in his basement, Jim always made me confront why I was making music instead of finding something useful to do with my life. Sometimes his pressing made me press back: upon learning that I really did indeed like the Sessions String Quintet, Jim leaned back and remarked, "Well, it takes all kinds!" But by pressing me, he made me really examine whether my enthusiasms were real, or just opportunistic allegiances in the service of professional ambition. From my current vantage, the thought that an enthusiasm for the likes of Sessions, Babbitt or Schoenberg would be considered adventitious rings an almost nostalgic note, but Jim helped me confirm that yes, I would listen to that stuff in the privacy of my own home, for my own pleasure, and indeed I have done so to this day.

Jim's influence on me is incalculable, and goes beyond my capacity to thank him. In what follows I could trace almost every idea and attitude back to conversations we had so many years ago, and I will freely admit that when I wrote it, I did not have him consciously in mind. This only goes to show how deep his ideas have gotten into me, and although I am sure he will not agree with everything I say here, I could not have said them without having been through his refiner's fire. That is characteristic of Jim's approach to learning, life and music: his influence may be pervasive, but it is not in the service of placing his mark on those he encounters. Rather, at least in my case, he helped me confront my own tastes and predilections, and enabled me to hew to what I *really* wanted to do in the face of a fickle world.

The following essay is derived from a talk I gave as the keynote address at the 2004 meeting of Music Theory Midwest, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Barr Foundation, an organization dedicated to the preservation of American concert music. Certain implicit assumptions in the foundation's mission statement led me to ask myself not only what I was doing trying to make music, but what it might mean to try to make music of any kind in this nation in this day and age. I hasten to add that I was not so much questioning the foundation's mission, as wondering how it fit into a bigger picture of making music in America.

As I suggested, my conversations with Jim suffuse the essay, but he's also here in another way, if equally invisible. At the end is a little story about striking out into the hinterland, away from the bright lights and into the forest. Although I don't say so, I can well imagine coming across Jim in a clearing in those woods, sitting in front of a welcoming fire, a snug cabin at his back. Knowing that he has gone on before, and that he has found a way to live happily there continues to comfort me on my trek.

A. M. October 5, 2005

Making Music in America

Andrew Mead

It's a cliché to say it, but the United States is an exercise in self-invention. This is just as true for American musicians as it is for any other walk of life. Not only have we been in the business of inventing our own music, but in ways that have real significance to the nature of the music we've made, we have had to make up for ourselves what music *is*, and what it *does*: where and how it falls in our lives. After all, while we may have imported a wide range of cultural and musical practices from around the world, we have not established the same wider cultural matrices to provide such practices with the same contexts they have in their original states. Music, for example, does not inform the American soul, or suggest our identity, in quite the same way it might be thought of as having done so in Germany. Our core medium of expression is to be found elsewhere: in a word, if we are to seek America's Wagner, we should look to Walt Disney.

Doing justice to this topic, however, would take some serious research, and just as I don't feel competent to present myself as a musicologist, I feel even more uneasy to pretend to the expertise of a cultural historian. But I am intrigued by the idea that making music in America is more than just making music: it is also the making of a place for music, and for anyone serious in the attempt, the making of oneself.¹ As a part-time composer masquerading as a full-time theorist (to paraphrase a remark of a dear and old friend), I have had to confront these issues repeatedly on my own creative path, and what I have observed in doing so, both in making music and having been made by music, is what I have decided to reflect upon below. What follows is a series of idiosyncratic observations about making music in America, and I hope that they may be found suggestive to anyone who wishes to seek out and preserve the best of what has been made. Let me offer a disclaimer: I am specifically talking about making music in the United States of America, and will be using the bad habit of abbreviating my reference to our nation as "America," without the intention of implicating either of the nations with whom we share the North American Continent. My apologies in advance to readers north or south of our borders.

First, an obvious observation: there is no one American music. We're too big. There are too many places where music is being made to claim any one as having priority. True, in the

¹ This is hardly an original observation on my part. Benjamin Boretz eloquently argues that musical experiencing and music expressing can be enlisted in one's own survival: it is worth quoting at length:

In music, as in everything, the disappearing moment of experience is the firmest reality; but the fictions of permanence, invented for the benefit of discourse and contemplation, are so much more firmly graspable by the conscious minds whose invention they are, that they, rather than the vanished traces of elusive experience, are the referents on which the firmest conceptions—intuitions, even—of reality are built. And thus do sanity—that is, the fact of sanity—and rationality—that is, the sensation of sanity—come into mortal conflict, threatening to dissolve the sensible integrity of existence. Music is what people can do to work at harmonizing that contradiction: to save significance while still sustaining identity as a continuous mental structure.

Benjamin Boretz, *Interface*, Part II: Thoughts in Reply to Boulez/Foucault, "Contemporary Music and the Public." *Perspectives of New Music* 25: 608-11, 1987, page 610.

press and in the concert hall one may find the semblance of a war of styles unfolding over time, with the experimentalists of the '20's supplanted by the populist symphonies of the '30's, only to be in turn overthrown by the serialism of the '50's and '60's, the overthrow of whose hegemony (a tyranny of the academy so reviled as to be declared un-American) is compared to the fall of communism ("Mr. Babbitt, tear down this wall!"). What has succeeded that supposedly emotionally cold war has been said to include post-modernism, minimalism, neo-Romanticism and other isms, each with its own claim to being the authentic American music.

But this story is far too simple, not to mention in large part simply untrue. Yes, there has been a variety of musical styles over the past century, and yes, one can construct a narrative line through those styles, but to adjudicate the musics being made in each as more or less truly American is itself to betray the inclusiveness of our nation, and our heritage, or at least our dream, of individual freedom. Too, many of our musicians have lived and made music over a far broader span of time than this historical narrative would allow for their particular moments. Think, for example, of the careers of Roger Sessions, Samuel Barber, Harry Partch, Ned Rorem, Elliott Carter, Leonard Bernstein, Conlan Nancarrow, Morton Feldman, Milton Babbitt, to name a few. All of these musicians were in some ways contemporaries, overlapping each other sometimes by decades, and while now the work of one and then another may have held public sway for a time, each of them produced - or are still producing - music recognizably their own over the entire spans of their careers.

But even such a list is insufficiently capacious to hold all that was wonderful in American music at roughly the mid-20th century. Lines tend to get drawn between musics for reasons that aren't so much about music as they are about our national history. My list is both conspicuously white, and conspicuously male. Talking about American music, even of that period, without mentioning Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, Ornette Coleman, to address (far too incompletely!) the first issue, or Ruth Crawford, Billy Holiday, Amy Beach or Peggy Lee, to make the most minimal gesture towards the second, is to reduce one's perspective to the narrowest of angles.² And even with these added names we're still too narrow. I've not mentioned the Church, nor Hollywood, nor delved into names that might have had only regional significance, like Irving Fine or Ben Weber. Nor have I brought up those musicians such as Kurt Weill or Stefan Wolpe, who were neither born nor trained here, but who produced a significant portion of their oeuvre in America. All of these musicians, and many more, were and are busily making music in America, and I am loath to privilege any of them beyond acknowledging my personal preferences.³

As a music maker, I am thrilled by the diversity of musics I can hear around me, but still more so am I encouraged in my own work by the way individuals making music in America have been able to forge unique voices within and from the clamor. America's breadth, and the diversity of its musical activity, have provided wonderful and strange cross-

² Nor do I want to imply, despite my selection of names, that lines drawn for reasons of gender or race need also be lines amongst styles of music. By no means is it the case that jazz or "concert music" or music for dance or for worship are the sole provenance of any group of men or women, defined by anything other than the fact of their making their music.

³ Furthermore, the names I've offered are themselves only the readily recognizable tip of the iceberg, and their visibility above the surface of the social ocean is no guarantee of their qualities or depth of engagement with music making. There is no necessary correlation between the two, and our field is surely as full of mute Miltons as any other, despite the incongruity of the phrase in our context.

pollenizations, and we're the richer for it. Think of Milton Babbitt as a child in Jackson, Mississippi, saxophone in hand, drinking in so much of American popular song, or Peter Schickele in North Dakota, dreaming of Brahms. Or Frank Zappa as a teen discovering the music of Varese and Webern. One of my favorite movie lines of all time is Jimmy Stewart as Glenn Miller saying to his wife something like, "Mary, maybe I should just pack it all in and go back to studying with Schillinger." Recently I was driving through eastern Iowa, flipping through the radio dial, when I landed upon the finale of Schoenberg's Second String Quartet, between an update on the apocalypse and the latest pork prices. Talk about breathing air of other planets! Who knows what kind of Lake Wobegon expressionism such a chance encounter might lead some musically curious youngster to produce in her home studio.

My second observation is to question the default position of the orchestra as the apex of music making here. Don't get me wrong; America is home to some of the finest orchestras in the world, and some of the finest music made here has been for orchestra. Roger Sessions's series of nine symphonies is one of our greatest treasures, and Elliott Carter's Piano Concerto and Concerto for Orchestra were life-altering experiences for me when I encountered them as a teenager. But what makes these works wonderful, along with the likes of Babbitt's *Ars Combinatoria*, or Henry Brant's spatially distributed scores, is, alas, one of the things that means that probably very few fans of this music have heard any of these pieces live: their enormous subtlety of detail and color requires the kind of rehearsal time that simply is not available to most of our orchestras today.

Furthermore, audiences for orchestras are not overwhelmingly interested in new or American music, at least to judge from the nature of programming one sees again and again from year to year. And for a broader portion of the population, even the orchestra has ceased to be the orchestra. Audiences drawn to concert performances of John Williams's *Star Wars* music have often found the experience reduced and meager in comparison to their experience in the movie theater, complete with Dolby Surround Sound, great Foley work, and the kind of microphone placement that drops one into the brass section.

The long-standing situation of the orchestra has led some musicians to place their primary creative efforts elsewhere. Much as I love Wolpe's Symphony, I certainly don't need it to confirm my sense of his extraordinary voice, and much as I would miss the *Relatas* and the two piano concertos, Babbitt would still be Babbitt had he never written for the orchestra. And sometimes a musician's ideas are less well served by the orchestra than by some other ensemble. I, for example, prefer Aaron Copland's Sextet to its reincarnation as his Short Symphony, as do I prefer the original version of *Appalachian Spring* for something like 13 instruments to the full orchestral treatment.

But the orchestral mystique still holds a lot of influence. At my institution, the student compositional culture seems to hold up the orchestra as the grail of music making, while disdaining efforts for smaller ensembles. One of our most gifted graduate students in saxophone, someone who already has a well-established reputation for diving into extremely demanding music, and who came to us with a strong performing base in both Boston and New York, has complained to me that he cannot interest any of the composition students in writing for him – solo or chamber music, in their minds, will not satisfy their needs in building their careers; only the orchestra will do.⁴

⁴ This probably has to do with the whole "masterpiece" syndrome, neatly demolished in the afore cited remarks of Benjamin Boretz.

Indeed, the orchestra, as an ideal, is an extraordinary compositional resource, but in reality its limitations invite reexamination. As an American institution, the orchestra fits into our culture in ways very different from its European origins, and that alone is worthy of close study. But one can question the institution from other angles. As a way of making a lot of noise, it was the only means of doing so in the late 19th century, but at this point, technology has triumphed on the decibel front. A single guitarist can trump the orchestra just by turning up the amp to 11, as the joke goes. Orchestras are also very much part of the 19th century European social dynamic. They were predicated on the ability to get highly skilled labor for cheap, and the uniformity of orchestral dress has its roots still earlier in servants' livery. Orchestras also can be read politically as placing their members under an absolute authority, often one of questionable ability, and the adversarial relationships that ensue are immortalized in the endless streams of conductor jokes we all know and love.

All of these points raise the question of one's motivation in writing for orchestra in this day and age. Obviously, the act is different today from the time of Beethoven or Mozart; it is also different from the time of Mahler and Strauss, or even from the time when Roger Sessions began to make the orchestra his instrument. From a purely technical point of view, it is no longer the only solution to producing great masses of sound, or varieties of color. With short rehearsal times, one is inhibited from experimentation, and the pressure is to write in a way that mimics convention and minimizes differences. Unconventional layout or unusual instrumental resources can put the kibosh on a prospective performance. Writing for orchestra can also be read as participating in political and social dynamics of authority and class that run contrary to many of our American ideals. There are all sorts of good reasons for writing for orchestra, but I think it is crucial to be aware as a musician of the implications of one's choices, beyond the sounds themselves.

My next observations will relate in obvious ways to what I've been developing so far, which is to question some assumptions about how and where music takes place in our lives in the United States, and how our culture shapes how we might imagine a place for music. One major model for situating and evaluating music derives from one of our American tenets of faith, the power of the marketplace. Under this model, audience pressure will elevate the good, separating the wheat from the chaff. But obviously this model has some problems, especially if one is working in a niche market. Audience appeal is one of the rallying cries of certain stylistic trends (see the overthrow of the serialist hegemony), but throw any Pulitzer prize winner into the general market place, and Britney wins, every time. Certain kinds of music seek a sort of protectionism from the full force of the market, yet want to avoid an elitist stamp. It is interesting to see the balancing act that goes on here. Some musicians tiptoe a fine line, seeking popular appeal while trading on the dull echoes of the innate superiority of art music still faintly resonating in our cultural memory. This can result in a music that seems to collude with the audience by striking a kind of non-aggression pact: the artist promises to provide something not too challenging, frequently embedded in large doses of the familiar, so long as the audience promises to love him and assure him of his role as creative genius.

While such a model isn't necessarily a guarantee of mediocrity, it frequently goes hand in hand with a tradition of apology that stretches back nearly a century. We're all familiar with conductors turning to the audience and warning them of what they are about to hear. Copland's youthful *Organ Symphony* famously provoked Walter Damrosch into remarking that if Copland was capable of writing such a piece now, he'd be capable of murder in five years'

time. Concert programming often reflects the attitude that a new piece is a punishment that will be followed by a reward: Dvorak's Ninth to follow the Carter Piano Concerto, for example. And audiences learn this attitude. A friend of mine, hearing a concert whose first half consisted of Britten's *Les Illuminations* and the New York premiere of Carter's Clarinet Concerto, told me that they were then rewarded with Mozart for having eaten their spinach.

If the model of the market place provides such a dismal picture of how we might situate music in American culture, can we find another angle from which to view the issue that can open up space for interesting music making? I believe we can, and by means of another part of the American self-image, the lone inventor, the backyard tinkerer, the self-made man (or woman), the crackpot. Dostoyevsky, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, refers to the kind of Russian peasant who will burn down his village, or make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or both. In America, our individualists create the Watts towers, or build a sculpture garden in their back yard from old cars, or carve a mountain into the likeness of a Native American warrior.⁵ Similar behavior comes to mind in music with the likes of Nancarrow with his player pianos, Harry Partch with his amazing instrumental sculptures (or sculptural instruments), and Carl Ruggles ensconced in his schoolhouse with his butcher's paper and crayons, but this kind of behavior can be thought to be behind musicians in more recognizably professional tracks, such as Easley Blackwood and his microtonal adventures, Pauline Oliveros, and her Deep Listening program, or the early developers of electronic instruments.

Even Milton Babbitt can be understood from this point of view, reinventing music from first principles based not on subsets of the total chromatic, but orderings of twelve pitch-classes. In fact, one of the most singular differences between Schoenberg and Babbitt can be illuminated from this angle. Schoenberg's development of the "method of composing with twelve tones related only one to another" stemmed from his desire to reconnect with the grand European tradition of which he so much felt a part. Babbitt, on the other hand, seems to have seized upon aggregate composition with the shade-tree mechanic's eagerness to "take this baby out for a spin and see what it can do."

This point of view might seem a simple reworking of the tired old notion of "Art for Art's Sake," but if it is, it purges the idea of high-vaunted elitism. My aim is one of leveling. If this reinvigorates the phrase "Who Cares if you Listen?," it does so as much for the garage band as it does for Babbitt. In fact, I think it reverses the phrase to "What's it to You, What Kind of Music I'm Making?" In any case, creating a space where the musician can say to the audience, "Listen or don't; I'm having too much fun to worry about it," at least removes the apologies of the market place and welcomes those who'd like to come along for the ride.⁶

An observation related to the preceding raises the issue of venue. Examining where music is being made in America is as valid as the what, how and why I've addressed above. We tend to think of the concert hall as the primary locus of "serious" music making, but even with live music I would not want to rule out either the Church or the club. Much ink was

⁵ Clearly this simplifies the situation for rhetorical effect, and we have plenty of crackpots of our own who would wreak havoc upon us. Mary Lee A. Roberts offers a finely-grained exploration of questions of autonomy and group membership in "As I Understand It, Group Psychology (Felix Guattari) Technological Isolation (Electroacoustic Music Composition and the Unabomber)" *Open Space* 1 1999, 28-32. One of the questions worth pursuing more deeply in thinking about spaces for music making involves the whole issue of the social spaces for such making. Roberts's work, along with the previously cited Boretz, open up this issue in ways that extend many of my remarks here.

⁶ I am grateful to Stephen Peles for conversations that have touched upon this title reversal and its implications.

spilled during the last century over the social significance of jazz in Carnegie Hall, but I think, or would like to think, that the class issues that placed concert or art music in a position superior to the work of Ellington, Basie, Armstrong or Parker have been transcended. Certainly today, the portion of Disney's *Fantasia* in which the orchestral musicians "get down" with a little jam session seems quaint if not embarrassing, and the dynamic power reversals in films using Louis Armstrong as a character, unacknowledged if not invisible to many in their day, now seem shocking or heartbreaking.

But I don't want simply to examine questions of venue across divides defined by class and race; these have been treated extensively elsewhere by others. I want to bring up the divide between the live and the electronic, one that has both opened a distance between the makers of music and their audience and created a new more intimate, albeit one-sided relationship. Music heard live places its receivers in the same time and place as its makers, but usually separates them by many yards. It also creates a sense of community amongst the audience, and in some ways, between audience and performers. Music received electronically, especially when heard over the now ubiquitous head-set, can seemingly close the gap between listener and performer (you can now sit on Glenn Gould's lap), but the nature of recording can open up distances in both place and time (you can now sit on Glenn Gould's lap, even though he's in Canada, and he's dead). Furthermore, the sense of community, amongst and between audience and performers, is shattered, or at least displaced, by the individual listening system.

Within some realms of music, the development of recording technique has created a kind of reversal of reception. In earlier years, recordings were thought of as snapshots or souvenirs of the "real" experience of music, the concert. Even with the emergence of highly engineered recordings, editing out mistakes or playing with balances, live concerts still held the upper hand. But now, recordings have so conditioned many listeners with regard to what they expect and desire from their artists that live bands are taken to task for alterations to their recorded oeuvre. That the audiences of many pop stars are not fazed by the now prevalent use of lip-syncing in live concerts suggests that now the recording is the primary creative act, and the concert merely a form of showcase.

I mention this not as a criticism of events, but as a way to re-imagine and reexamine how we receive music, and to suggest that we might want to keep a lookout as to how this will effect the making of music. Recording technologies have had such an extraordinary impact on the shaping of musical invention, from the tightly focused three or so minutes of Coleman Hawkins's 78 rpm recording of *Body and Soul* to the fact that many of Elliott Carter's compositions time in at around 20 minutes, roughly the length of a side of an LP, that we should be alert to the impact of the 80 minute CD, or even more pertinently, the fact that with an iPod, an individual can pack the whole of the Ring Cycle plus *Parsifal* in a shirt pocket.

I don't know what this will mean for music making, but I know that we cannot afford to hold on to traditional models of where we will find music worth thinking about being made. I've mentioned the cinema in passing, and will touch on it again, briefly. Carl Stalling, the musical genius of Warner Brothers cartoons, perfected, if not invented, a kind of musical continuity that not only underpins an incredibly rapid overturn of events on screen, but offers rewards in itself. I'm not alone in confessing a childhood pleasure in simply listening to the soundtracks of Roadrunner cartoons; John Zorn has done us all a favor in releasing and

recording Stalling's music on CD. But we don't need to remove it from its original context to thrill to its worth. In fact, part of its value arises from how it participates in our full experience of the cartoon. And attempts by self-described "serious" composers to adapt Stalling's techniques to concert music often fall flat, just as do so many attempts to "elevate" jazz. (This, by the way, I think frequently arises from a failure on the part of the "serious" composers to recognize just how deep goes the language of the music they are seeking to "elevate.")

I'll close these ruminations about venue with one final story about potential places to make music. Some years ago I witnessed a friend of mine, a gifted pianist in our DMA program, playing Pac-Man at our local student union. As I watched his face, I recognized the kind of intense, alert engagement with the game that I would wish of any performer or listener, to my or another's music. Although I don't regret the choices I've made – after all, we are the products of our upbringing – I realized at that moment that I had backed the wrong horse; that I was looking at the face of the future. And while I've yet to see it fully realized, I strongly believe that the potential for extraordinary, life-changing art making, both in image and sound, is lying, waiting to be tapped in the interactive video or computer game. Once again, the *what* and *where* of music, and how we engage with it, are being reinvented in our culture as we speak.

One more observation I think is crucial to an understanding of how music gets made in America is the question of *who* - not so much who is doing it, but who gets the credit. We have had a tendency to privilege music that is in some way written down. Music of aural traditions, or music in which improvisation has a strong role, has, at least in the past, been thought of as somehow lesser than music that is composed with dots on the page. Elliott Carter, in an essay from 1937, illustrates this bias. Speaking of a concert of swing music in Carnegie Hall, he writes, "In that setting the music will never interest audiences until a serious composer with artistic perspective is able to stylize and make it express his personal, creative attitude toward American life." At the heart of that observation is an assumption about the primacy of the composer in making music, a primacy that is borne out later in the same essay: "A concert hall performance of the usual kind takes place as a ritual in which public and performer are ultimately subservient to the ideas of a composer who has put his notes on paper."

You may have noticed that I have fairly assiduously avoided the word, "composer," so far today, with only a couple of carefully targeted exceptions. That is in large part to avoid, or at least re-frame what I think has been an unfortunate and unnecessary distinction between written music and music from aural traditions, or musics that blur the locus of creative credit. In Carter's world-view, at least as it was articulated 60 – odd years ago, the composer has the ultimate credit, with performers and listeners falling to his (and I mean his) bidding. But I want to offer a different picture, nothing new, but one that I think can extend even to the music of Carter and the like. In this picture, ALL musical relationships are co-creative, the result of an exchange between the person who is composing (in Frank Zappa's formulation, "drawing dots"), the person who is playing or singing, and the person who is listening. For now, let me just concentrate on the relationship between composer and performer. In my view, players are, in effect, creating original cogent sequences of sound stimulated by the suggestion of a notation. To say they are realizing the composer's creative ideas is to ignore the fact that any notation is incomplete, and that interpretive acts are

This is true in even highly specified music. To offer a personal anecdote, I have had the pleasure of hearing several players perform a solo work of mine, and in each case I have heard something different, unexpected, and wonderful. In the process I think that I have learned more about each of them and their own creative identity than I did about myself, depending on what they found to draw out of the score. I couldn't begin to rank these performances on a line of better or worse, more or less in line with my own hearing of the piece, which, if I could play saxophone, would only itself be a performatively creative response to my notational suggestions. Interestingly, I have felt in hearing these performances not so much that these players have been submitting themselves to my will, but that I have been participating in a kind of exchange in which each of us is trusting each other, submitting ourselves to each other's care and attention.

I don't think that this is a special characteristic of my music, but that it represents a viewpoint that can be usefully generalized. Notation is negotiation, and the degree of specificity of a notation is not necessarily correlated with the degree to which a maker of that notation can take credit for a resulting performance. In many passages of his enormous posthumous score, *Epitaph*, Charles Mingus left bars open for individual improvisation, but the fact that he had specified particular players rather than instruments in his score suggests that he had a strong sense in his mind as to the nature of how those bars would be filled. Brian Ferneyhough, in his overwhelmingly exact notations also seems to be engaging the issue of co-creativity. Since a player can't possibly do all that is asked by the notation, he or she must take an actively engaged creative approach to generating a performance, electing which or how much of any specified dimension can be attended to in any given traversal of the score.

By placing the locus of creativity somewhere between the maker of a score and the person or persons responsible for making the heard sounds of a piece for pretty much any kind of music, we can free ourselves of the need to distinguish between so-called composed music and improvised music, and so set aside if we choose the kind of evaluative distinctions that have been correlated to this divide. So much of this correlation has been the result, I think, of a need for creative credit, a need to legitimize a kind of authorial privilege that can in the end crimp our ability to celebrate the wonderful in American music.

These are just a few observations about making music in America, and are hardly complete. There is much, for instance, to be made about the role of gender and sexual identification in music making, and Nadine Hubbs's volume, *The Queer Composition of America's Sound* (University of California Press, 2004) is a lengthy exploration of some of this topic. There are also profound questions about the ways various cultures have contributed to our music, be they European, African, or Asian. Nancy Rao, among others, has been investigating the sometimes unexpected ways Chinese music has had an impact on American musicians.

I want to close here by considering one more observation about making music in America, and that is the way the European tradition of concert music has shifted in our culture from a position of assumed centrality to the margins. When I was young, it was always possible to find some evidence of the Western canon of concert music in the general culture. A trip to Woolworth's could pretty much guarantee the discovery of Beethoven's Fifth or maybe excerpts from *Messiah* in the record bin. Carl Stalling's riffs on von Suppé and Rossini could ground themselves in a cultural familiarity, if only from summer band-shell con-

certs. The evening news was brought to us with the opening of the scherzo of Beethoven's Ninth. But now, even this residue has been washed from the culture at large. A recent trip to a Walmart revealed row after row of CD bins, and while I could get a wide selection of appropriately sanitized pop music, as well, I discovered, as a wider variety of Christian music than I had previously imagined, I could find absolutely no sign of the tradition of concert music. Even amongst the Christian albums, there was no Bach, no Mozart, no Verdi, not even hymns I had grown up with. Carl Stalling is now most people's primary source for last century's light classics (and some heavier ones, as well, but I think "Kill the Wabbit" is a condign fate for Wagner). Further, the kind of contextual awareness that would connect Beethoven's Ninth to the news in an appropriately serious way is sufficiently broken so that Verdi's *Dies Irae* can serve as generic high-toned music to underscore the drama of a spilled ice cream cone in an ad for SUV's.

Ignorance can be bliss: I honestly don't know whether Martin Scorsese was trying to make some sort of heretical point with the opening scene of *Casino*, in which Robert De Niro is thrown across the screen in slow motion by a car bomb to the strains of the final chorus, "In tears of grief, dear Lord, we leave thee," from the *St. Matthew Passion*, but for those who have no connection to this music or its symbolism, there is no danger of the kind of deeply disturbed reaction I had to this juxtaposition.

It is possible to be troubled by this shift in our culture, and to bemoan the human diminishment it would seem to signal. But I don't think it need be taken as a cultural death rattle. By ceasing to be important in some public way, music making in America can get on with its business, and not feel beholden to some larger cultural charge to remain relevant. The wide variety of fascinating music making that is going on can find its own audiences, cultivating fan bases grounded in a genuine commitment to the music, rather than pandering to an audience present only out of some sense of civic or high-cultural duty. I have faith that deeply engaging music can still be made, and that those who seek that kind of engagement will still find it.

Nor do I think that this is a matter of style. A few years ago Richard Taruskin wrote a lengthy and interesting article about Shostakovich in *The New Republic*. Among some very striking points and the requisite condemnation of serialism that seems to be the price of admission to Taruskin's more useful insights, was a description of an audience in Russia awaiting a performance of one of Shostakovich's compositions. The sense of their anticipation was palpable, even from the description, and the sense that this was *their* music created a strong bond between the audience and the performers. As I remember the article, Taruskin used this description to create a negative comparison with the current state of music in America, and laid the blame at the feet of compositional style. I can't remember if Milton Babbitt was invoked by name, but since he's been the whipping boy for such complaints for years, I have no problem locating him in the general vicinity of this tale.

Some years ago I participated in a colloquium held in the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Hall on the occasion of Babbitt's gift of his papers to the Library of Congress. Needless to say, the audience was pretty small, for the most part participants in the colloquium. The night before, however, my wife and I attended in the same hall a performance of several works by Anthony Braxton, and the place had been packed with people who were clearly excited, informed, and prepared to be there. This level of excitement was maintained through a long evening of demanding, complex and absolutely uncompromising music making. What struck

me, witnessing these two events back to back, was not so much the differences between the two central figures, but their rich similarities. Both Babbitt and Braxton are deep within their own creative worlds; both produce music that contains no obvious signs of easy access: neither depends in ordinary ways on melody, familiar harmony or regular rhythm for their basic materials. Furthermore, both surround themselves with a great deal of “insider” language. Braxton’s program notes were in their way as revealing and as impenetrable to the average reader as Babbitt’s theoretical essays. And in both cases, their serious listeners revel in music of ravishing beauty.

The difference between the two events is where I reconnect with Taruskin’s article. Admittedly, the Babbitt event was not a concert in the way the Braxton event was, but it is true that in many concerts containing Babbitt’s music audiences have treated his work as a duty, if not a trial. What is clear to me, though, is that the difference in reception was not about musical style, but about cultural placement. Not to criticize Shostakovich’s music, but I would guess that a significant part of the connection Taruskin described had to do with a recognition of the shared ordeal of survival under the Soviet system, an ordeal so well limned in Shostakovich’s scores.

Who knows what will make an audience take a proprietary interest in any given music? That, I would guess, is largely in the hands of historical contingency. But as the electricity of Braxton’s fans communicated to me, and as I have myself felt at performances of a range of challenging musics, it is something that need not be limited to music of any given style, or prevented from happening necessarily as the result of a given style. Perhaps what registers in fans of a given music is a quality of dedication. In any case, I, for one, am continually encouraged by the fact that such diverse musicians as Braxton, Nancarrow, Babbitt or Zappa have continued to have faith in making music of such individuality and unapologetic conviction, and have done it here in America.

I want to end with one more story, comprising a series of waking dreams I had during a time of crisis, a period of great turbulence both personal and musical. In each recurrence, I would find myself racing out of a forest and down a dock, at the end of which a great ship filled with golden light and happy people was pulling away. In most of these visions, the ship would disappear into the fog, and I would be left alone, feeling the most extreme sense of loss, bereft of any hope for acceptance or happiness. This vision would come upon me unbidden as I went about my day, and its presence in my life became deeply troubling. Finally, one day I decided to take things into my own hands, and the next time the story began to unfold, I participated, rather than simply let the events happen to me. After running down the dock and seeing the ship leave again, I turned in my mind and struck out into the forest, making my own way and consciously separating my fate from that of the ship. As, still in my mind, I moved away from the shore, I began to ascend a series of heights offering ever more beautiful views of a dark and wild landscape. While I never encountered the comfort or the rewards I imagined awaiting for me on board the ship, I found that the agony of loss I experienced at the end of the dock had lifted, and I was left both with a sense of peace, and an eagerness to get on with doing whatever it was I might do.

This story may offer any number of obvious interpretations, but I find it encouraging, as someone trying to make music in America, to know that we have the room to explore where and how and with and for whom we wish to make music. And I find it stimulating as well

Andrew Mead

making. Who knows what that ship might have held, but we need not feel, in not conforming to any particular notion of what our own music making might be, that we've missed the boat.

Live Music

Jane Coppock
(~1985)

*

A score is a message in code. Beethoven sat in his rooms and invented pieces, in which life, as he refracted it in that time and in that place, became sound.

He bent his energy, many times over, to shape the pieces so that as he inhabited them, they resonated him perfectly. It was not simple. Sometimes it took months of work to produce a sound entity that he could sustain, utterly, in his focus.

He released them in code, pieces of paper with sign language on them, symbols that tell you which keys to push down, for how long, and not much more. There are other tatters of information – a few sketches, which show how the pieces started, and manuscripts in his handwriting, which give a tangible, visible, sometimes elaborate sense of how clear or troubled he was about particular passages, and a few reports from people near him about his playing of earlier pieces since by this time his deafness had deprived him of a public life as a performer. But they give only thin and tangential senses of how to play beyond the print. So people take the scores into their minds and hearts and bodies, and the symbols become flesh, become movement, become the sound of people shaping life from the text. There is no Piece: it is its incarnations in individual minds, in individual contexts. All there is is the code and living persons.

**

Beethoven sat in his rooms in Vienna day after day in the winter of 1821, having risen at dawn, drunk his sixty-bean cup of dark roasted coffee, taken a walk, probably not eaten much, tried to get some heat going in a cold drafty rented room, and wrote another piano sonata, this one in A flat major, later known as Op. 110.

He did quite a bit of sketching for it, especially for the last movement fugue, which took a lot of re-writes. Perhaps it was difficult for him, or perhaps it was winter and he was sick and cold and his concentration wasn't good.

He sent it off to the publisher, went back and forth several times correcting mistakes, and then was apparently satisfied with the printed document.

It was sold in music stores in major cities in Europe and England. The piece was played in concerts in Europe, but not often, because it was considered somewhat strange and obscure. It was played in private homes in Europe and England, however, and by mid-century in the United States, most likely in Boston, New York, and Chicago.

Jane Coppock

A few copies of the sonata might have made their way out West with settlers from the East. In a settlement in a prairie town, a woman from the East Coast who had had her piano sent West and taught European music to the settlers' children could have had a collection of piano sonatas by Beethoven and played this sonata to herself occasionally or taught it to her best student.

The piece could have gone to South America with European settlers and to India and the Far East with British colonial families, although it was not sentimental and popular and would only have been brought by a woman trained fairly seriously as a musician before her marriage and journey to Malay or Singapore or Katmandu.

Once European culture became the rage in the Far East in the 20th century and conservatories for western classical music developed in Japan, Korea, and China, the piece could have been heard in Beijing being performed by an earnest 17 year old pianist hoping to qualify to come to Julliard or in elevators of upscale shopping malls in Tokyo.

Now the chances are good that a scientist posted to Antarctica, a political prisoner in Chile or Siberia, an Outbacker in Australia, or someone in a nursing home in rural Georgia in the United States is listening to the piece at this moment.

Beethoven sat in his rooms in the winter of 1821 in Vienna and wrote a piano sonata. In his interaction with himself and the music he knew, a piece started to form. He translated what he heard in himself, or composed directly in, a standard language code for music – a code which gives instructions for generating certain frequencies, of approximate proportional durations, in a certain order, and relative loudnesses. The code tells you which “sound tokens” to sound together and which in succession. Included in the score, as well, is some informal language instruction that invokes non-musical emotional states – affectionate, gentle, amiable – to be translated by the performer into additional distinctions of duration, loudness, proportion, kinds of attack.

The piece of paper with the code on it is what Beethoven put out into the world. No one ever heard him play the piece, and since he was deaf at the time he wrote the piece and for the rest of his life, he heard no one play the piece and made no comment about it in letters or in conversations with visitors in his visitors' book, the visitors' half of which can be read now in a library in Europe. His sketches and the manuscript are all the direct evidence we have of what went on in him during the winter months while he worked on the piece.

From a look at his handwritten manuscript, you can make guesses about what was hard for him and what was easy. Some of the manuscript is clear and precise and other parts of it are written over many times, erased, crossed, out, patched together by signs and private editorial signals, written over again, overlaid with pencil sketch, the handwriting sloppy and ill-formed.

But we might be seeing a neighbor's child crying half the night, an unpaid rent bill, bad fish for supper, rain and sleet for a month, pressure from the publisher – not musical difficulty that under better circumstances wouldn't have been worked out silently and efficiently on a walk on a sunny afternoon.

Live Music

The piece of paper with code on it started traveling. Friends of Beethoven's played the piece, friends who knew his playing and his other music and were steeped in the same music he was. By the time the piece was being played by the best pupil of the music teacher in the prairie town in 1850, its sound could have been inflected by a network of Stephen Foster songs, hymns and camp songs, some Schubert lieder, and country fiddling tunes.

And at the Tokyo Conservatory it is being learned by the pupil of the first Japanese person from his village to go to Julliard to study with the last American student in Europe of the famous German child prodigy whose teacher learned as a boy from Liszt the stories the Czerny had remembered as an old man from his friendship with Beethoven. The Japanese student hears Japanese popular music, the latest New Wave imports, Shakuhachi music, and funk, and every day practices the piano sonata by Beethoven.

The code enters the brain of the Japanese pianist, whose language brain forms a sound system remote from German, and becomes flesh. Movement, physical strategy, stamina, and unified listening, embedded in the sound of that day and that life. The piece of paper with code on it enters the blood stream and brain of a living person and shapes its being alive for as long as the will of the person allows or until the involuntary possession all musicians experience as they allow pieces into their bodies ceases and the piece is bonded to the player, to be called forth at will, always in a slightly different time and musical place.

Music is traveling into outer space. The world is broadcasting language and music, beaming it out into the black as it were the noise the planet made on its own. Every radio and television program ever sent into the airways has started traveling out from the earth – ads for AllTempaCheer, Churchill's speeches, Indian temple music and Chuck Berry's greatest hits – in a jumble speeding toward nowhere that we know anything about.

There is an official language-music emissary too: the Voyager space probes carry recordings of music and language. They are making their way through our solar system and will be hurled by Neptune's gravity out into the beyond carting bits of music and language from across the globe.

There isn't a culture on earth that hasn't invented music. We honor it in ourselves enough to send some of it to represent us in our first foray out into the universe. But no one knows what it is, really, and what we are using for in ourselves.

Perhaps music has been left untouched by serious inquiry up to this point because of its presumed benevolence. Perhaps we would take a risk in turning our minds to its workings. Maybe we would unlock some unknown potential for harm. Perhaps there is a music that can kill or maim or mutilate. Or perhaps there is a music that can heal.

In all probability, inventing a music that could kill is the same as inventing a music that could heal. If we could do those things, it would mean that we understood our own physiology well enough to give us access to our vulnerabilities. We would have learned how both to torture and heal ourselves

Jane Coppock

- not in the brute force way that access to nuclear power arms us against ourselves. This is more intricate and holds out the danger of more sensitive cures and elaborate tortures.

Is it a mad music theorist's fantasy to imagine world in which national intelligence agencies work to keep the latest music-theoretical developments out of the hands of the enemy? Where music-theoretical advances make germ warfare seem crude, where there are special musics designed to help cure specific diseases and there are international agreements limiting the use of killer musics?

It could be, of course, that music is a fluke, not really an essential human function, but a way everyone has found to use "spare parts" from other more essential capacities. It might be the concretization of mathematics - a relational, proportional system in 3-D or 4_D that is just a freebie. Perhaps it tickles us to hear music simply because it excites the fundamental relational forming parts of our brains through the auditory rather than the visual channels. Like a backrub for the mind. Or maybe it is an essentially trivial hook-up between the relational pathways used in mathematics and the back-up universal sound-discriminatory abilities need for language. It conjoins them in an amusing way, the way sports combine aggressive impulses and basic neuro-muscular coordination in a socially neutralized form. Part of the kick we get out of music may be in knowing how gratuitously we are using survival abilities. This would mean that the social evaluation of music has always been correct - that it is a second-level activity that develops when basic necessities of life are in place.

If I try to work by introspection to sense what we would lose if we lost music, my first thought is that we would lose access to other minds, to other textures and rhythms of interactions, of evolution, other modes of being that mere observation can't produce for us. We would lose visceral intercourse with another being, another vision of the rhythms that being alive could assume, ways that the "outside" world could configure itself and give us access to parts of ourselves.

We would lose access to non-everyday rhythms and could participate less in events unlike what we saw around us. We wouldn't have gone through evolutions and developments we didn't personally invent. We would have lost rehearsals for uncertainty and death. Pieces create all speeds and thicknesses of time, time that is directional, cyclical, dense, slow, thick or string-like, animate metaphors for life. They create tokens of social safety, rest in an animate universe that can be stopped by the will of the participant, relief in the benevolence of a repeatable event. We would have lost all this and more.

Scores travel the globe inhabiting live bodies and transforming them into co-authors. When I play Beethoven's sonata in my rooms, the code becomes movement, physical strategy, stamina, unified listening ~ blood circulating, flesh focused on sound, focused into sound, an organism brought to a focus utterly, hands, arms, brain, breath, will, posture, attention, love, to make a sound happen in the air, a sound born of a printed code entering a live body and becoming flesh, weaving a world.

THINKING AROUND BAB-O

Jon Forshee

While intimations of up and up and up are heard when BAB-O has **been** for about and a little over 3 minutes and 30 seconds, a sudden mid-listen change of mood suggests: may it be no more than my self-reified ontology which goes up while BAB-O sticks with a unison? All this, and none of this, impossible to prove, demonstration now just another "what's going on" going in and of and for itself, the demonstration of BAB-O (if I/me agree upon one at all) just a demonstration of what, itself, it is.

BAB-O has *something* to do with O. L'histoire d'O ? A compression of O ? A theme of variations?

BAB-O is an enquiry into the nature of O; the question is put within the refinements of Randall's envelope, sustain, decay: a rising up-lifted query into the howfor of O.

Spaces between the times within which entity pushes onto and into the mindfield of hearing re-directed OUT OUT OUT when after all finally conditioned by interfactual memory, through the "thinking about" which may not be demonstrated except for its own sake as internalized hymning:

A csound, a Randallsound,
a sound which orbits Boretz.

In the Event, into the event,
a reading-through of a sounding as a score,
a shrink-wrapped instance of MindSeaShore
through its concision revealing---
(give or take a cent.)

One ingenuity of Randall grabs me immediately:
what must be a simultaneity in the Oscore (first dyad, that's the one)
but comes off forevermore as slightly broken, a little tore,
is rendered verbatim in Randall's digi-temporal vice.

It is illuminating to audition BAB-O as the source and stimulus of O.

In this way, O is a Microsoundscope, enlarging the terrain of BAB-O to critical acclaim.

In this way, O suggests a meta-transcription of BAB-O,
(and how do you notate for pianosound
eversleight sharpings and flattings of pitch within chordal
decay?)

Jon Forshee

HYMN:

A csound, a Randallsound,
a sound which orbits Boretz:

Into the Event, in the event,
a reading-through of a sound as a score,
a shrink-wrapping instance of the MindSeaShore
in its concision revealing
(give or take a few cents for multi-tonal healing)

a Moment made of Moments
found
around
pianOsound.

Hear Hear!
One-third the time, still all the calories!
Each instance of a note-for-note replaying,
re-score-ing,

thinking of "A Score is a Stimulus".

For sure, there are Scores for Performers,
there are Scores for Composers,
there are Scores by Performers for Composers (not sighted often enough)
there are Scores of Composers who
write for Performers,
there are Scores of Composers who
compose for Composers,

What kind of Score is O, and afterwardsly what Kind of Score
is BAB-O?

Randall takes issue with occasions in O, occasioning excursions from Oscore,
where succession in O
is sometimes become verticalized-
is sometimes re-cast as-
a gesture
a figure
a motion
an occasioned diversion
from successive pitch-occasions in O.

If, if, if, if, if the endseconds of O
memorably seem of ("my chart shines high where the
blue milk's upset")

the endseconds of BAB-O almost begging (sub rosa)
the question.

Thinking Around BAB-O

HYMN :::

A csound, a Randall sound,
a sound which orbits Boretz:

From the Event, inTo the event,
a reading-through of a sound as a score,
a shrink-wrapping instance of MindSeaShore
in its concision
imparting precision, revealing,
re-casting,
re-making,
a score,
a sound,

(give or take a cent for decay)

from withinwhich to sound a sound,
to hear the sound of Bensounding:

A silver sound, a Randall sound,

a sound which orbits Boretz.

A CD ALBUM FOR JKR: FIRST ENTRIES

Benjamin Boretz: *Postlude* (2005) (with jim randall in mind)

Jim composed a *benfest / the trajectory of UN(-) : pros and cons* : in 2004; the reflections it stimulated converged with reflections on the possible incompleteness of a string quartet composed in 1957-58. *Postlude* reflects those reflections.

Doug Henderson: *Footfalls for Jim* (2005)

Footfalls is an installation piece I made this past summer, sort of a giant walkthrough electric zither. The floor is blanketed with taut piano wire strings for an area roughly 12' by 14'. These are amplified using contact mics and electric guitar pickups run through a collection of small music amplifiers. I've made a lot of instruments over the years, for myself and for others, but I don't play much anymore and I need more from myself than undertaking traditional organizations of pitch or rhythm -- including chaotic, algorithmic or generative systems -- so the challenge for me is to make an instrument that I can love, and a composition for it that I can find interesting. Long-string instruments (over 3 meters) have unique harmonic characteristics, in that the vibrational modes of the strings include longitudinal as well as lateral ones, so tuning verges on the meaningless. Covering the floor with them so they are activated by people's footsteps keeps the composition in the realm of humanity and sensation, instead of lurching into some musical cabal. This gets to the heart of the matter. Jim always seemed to like my guitar playing, and this is the closest I can get to playing a guitar improvisation for him. So this recording is my performance for Jim: when it came time to dismantle the piece, I kept the amps on and the tape recorder rolling; I kept my thoughts on Jim's words of advice and encouragement over the years, composed myself as best I could, and got on with the task at hand. Thanks Jim. Douglas Henderson - Oct. 2005

Elaine Barkin: 4 MIDI Pieces

An effort to overcome lifelong techno-phobia and a desire to participate in a tribute to Jim Randall resulted in the composition of *Purnama* (in sound- but not in score-form) and *From the Abbeys*. *Purnama* means "full moon" in Indonesian; this first foray into MIDI composition was begun on March 25, 2005. *Purnama* and *From the Abbeys* hinge on keyboard improvisation; Sibelius and a G-5 Mac were used. *Step by Step* and *Cut Short*, composed in 2004 for Ron George's new jumbo mallet instrument, were re-orchestrated for computer-performance.

CUT SHORT

Elaine R. Barkin

♩ = 66
Nasty

Organ

fff

fff

gliss.

ff

f

Red. _____

Red. _____

Red. _____

May 2004; revised March 2005

STEP BY STEP

Elaine R. Barkin

$\text{♩} = 52$
with ease

Vibraphone

mf *p* *mp*

5 *mf* *p* *f*

9 *p* *naively.* *mf*

15 *p* *pp* *mf*

p

25 ♩ = 66

ff *mp* *p*

plainly

29 $\text{♩} = 50$

f Ped. *mp* *pp*

34 $\text{♩} = 54$

f *pp* *mp*

40 $\text{♩} = 66$ $\text{♩} = 50$

p *mf*

Red.

45 $\text{♩} = 76$ clunky

mf *ff*

Red.

50 whispery

pp

Red.

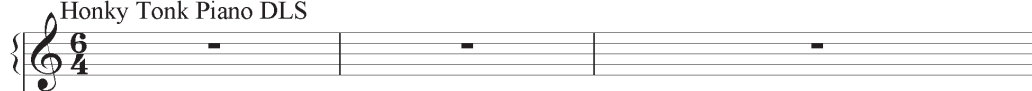
January-October 2004;
Revised March 2005

FROM THE ABBEYS

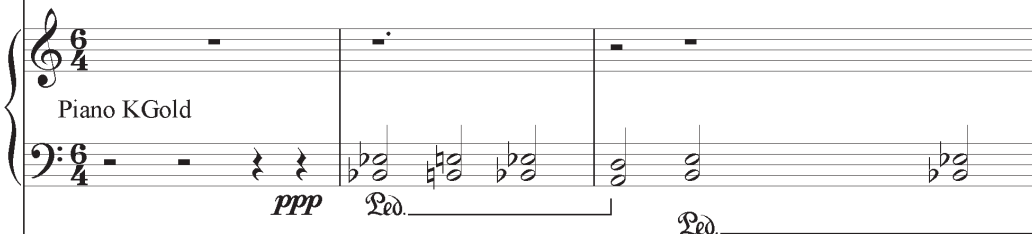
Elaine R. Barkin

♩ = 50

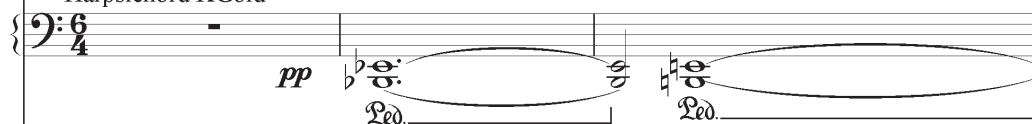
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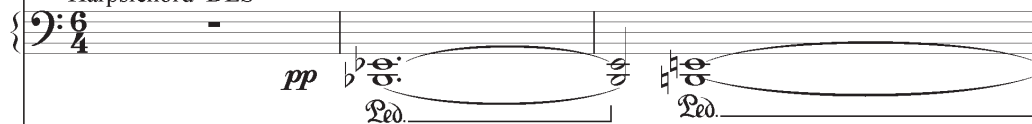
Piano KGold



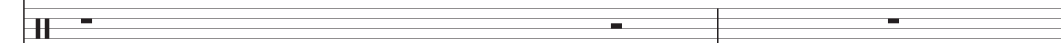
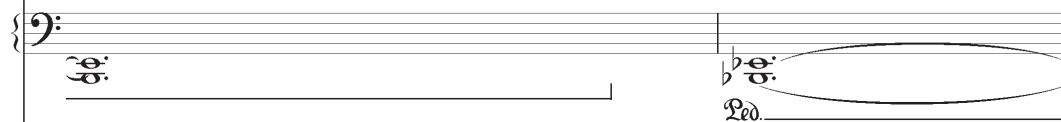
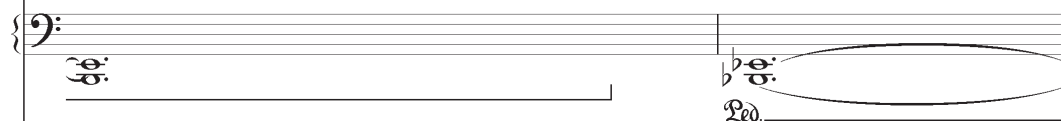
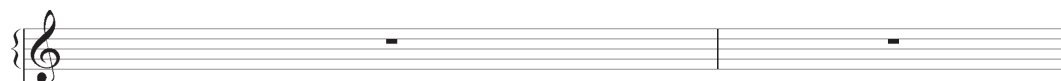
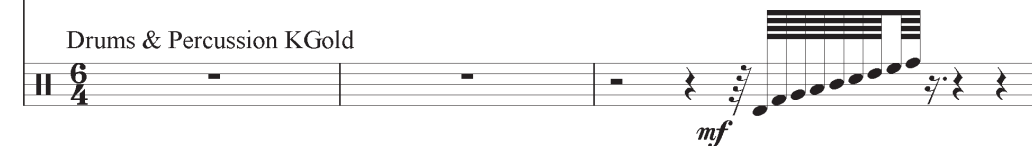
Harpsichord KGold



Harpsichord DLS



Drums & Percussion KGold



First system of musical notation, featuring five staves. The top four staves are grand staves (treble and bass clef) with rests. The bottom staff is a single staff with a treble clef, containing a melodic line starting with a quarter note, followed by eighth notes, and ending with a quarter note.

Second system of musical notation, featuring five staves. The top four staves are grand staves (treble and bass clef) with rests. The bottom staff is a single staff with a treble clef, containing a melodic line starting with a quarter note, followed by eighth notes, and ending with a quarter note. The system includes dynamic markings *ff* and *f*, and a *Ped.* (Pedal) marking.

11 ♩ = 76

11 ♩ = 76

f *Ped.* *ff*

f *Ped.* *ff*

f *Ped.* *ff*

f *Ped.* *ff*

f

♩ = 72

13

13

fff

f *Ped.*

f *Ped.*

f *Ped.*

♩ = 60

7

15

Musical score for measures 15-17. The score is written for five staves: Treble, Piano (Grand Staff), and Bass. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 3/8 to 6/8 to 4/4. The piano part features a dense, fast-moving texture in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand. The bass part has a melodic line in the right hand and a more rhythmic line in the left hand. The score includes dynamic markings *ff* and *pp*, and a *Red.* (Reduction) marking.

8 18 ♩ = 76

♩ = 58

Musical score for measures 18-20. The score is written for five staves: Treble, Piano (Grand Staff), and Bass. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 6/4 to 4/4. The piano part features a dense, fast-moving texture in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand. The bass part has a melodic line in the right hand and a more rhythmic line in the left hand. The score includes dynamic markings *p*, *pp*, and *Red.* (Reduction) markings.

23 ♩ = 56

♩ = 50

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "The Rose Tree". The score is written for five staves. The first four staves are for a piano (Grand Staff) and a double bass (Bass Staff). The fifth staff is for a guitar. The tempo is marked as 23 ♩ = 56. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system consists of measures 1 through 4. The second system consists of measures 5 through 8. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The double bass part provides a harmonic foundation. The guitar part includes a bass line and a melody. The score is written in a clear, professional style with standard musical notation.

28

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

p

mf

35

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

ppp

Ped.

Ped.

p

37

p *mf*

Ped.

mf

14

♩ = 56

♩ = 46

41

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

f *mf*

April 12-19, 2005;
May 3; July 15, 2005

Robert Paredes (1948-2005)

From Arthur Margolin:

I responded to the news about Bob this morning by re-reading a piece of his in Open Space that has meant a great deal to me "Itches and Scratches" -- and I don't recall ever mentioning to you that I think your Provocation and his response is one of the glories of Open Space. His piece is such a special and unique combination of high-level, subtle multi-perspectival thinking alongside personal (and wonderfully contoured) revelation and vulnerability, that I can't help feeling by the end that I have gotten to "know" this person intimately and in fact in a way that I don't know most people with whom I interact with daily. And also, of course, his is a piece that leaves you in a different and deepened relation to yourself (which is clearly crucial to the feeling of intimacy), not least by gently proffering a stupendously wide variety of previously unimagined things to think about and newly respond to. So, even though I've never met Bob, or ever really spoken to anyone about him, I was really saddened by the news, because it's hard to imagine his sensibility not in the world -- for all sorts of reasons, but, thinking selfishly, because knowing that this expansive yet (for some reason what I imagine to be) modest and sensitive thinker and musician was in it was a strong and it seemed necessary counterforce to much else that we coexist with that causes one sometimes to despair. Interesting how much one can come to "need", for one's own sense of purpose and coherence, the specific presence of others, who are unmet but "there". For me, he is such a one.

HOW ABOUT THE PLATYPUS?

Robert Paredes

For purposes of expression, delectation and inquiry, human beings have lovingly configured art contexts specifically for the ears and specifically for the eyes and specifically for the appreciation of the moving body. And we have created narrative structures, edifices of descriptive language, to carry those verbal embodiments (myths and stories) most necessary to our physical and psychic survival. In all of the above endeavors, tactility has played a role, indeed, may be seen to have been the primary articulator; yet we have evolved no specific (fine) art context for touch. Neither have we evolved an art-place specifically for the consideration of, and appreciation for, the nuances of olfactory stimuli (lest we acknowledge--as I am quite prepared to do---that particular aspect of the chef's, perfume-maker's or winemaker's craft to be an occasion fully invested with the grandeur and significance traditionally attributed to evidences of "art" . . . ((or should I say "art-art")). In general, these latter sensory modalities---while more or less acknowledged to be articulators or facilitators of art activity within the established hierarchy of disciplines (by way of being something which "helps" to get a more important job done)---find themselves relegated to a wholly subsidiary tier of importance: not quite considered exemplary of art-experience worthy of "serious" focus. Our inherited hierarchal notions of just what sensory subject-matter should or should not be allowed its "own" "art-discipline" predisposes us perhaps to a kind of sensory dismemberment. I become a giant ear: with feet (to be sure) but without any particular awareness of what they might be saying to me (for in music, "feet," are for "counting" don't you know). I am a pair of eyes *sans* the inter-qualifying beauty of the sounds of birds (for sounds are for making sure that, while lost in my painting, I can still hear the lurking large animal which would re-contextualize me as its not-so-petit-dejeuner). Never, in such a world, may I be a nose (There is no art for "nose:" What nose was ever possessed of the Gioconda smile or the creamy fullness of Olympia's belly?). And only at the margins may I be aware that I touch---with exquisitely variegated degrees and levels of sensitivity---the work that I make: the world that I apprehend. For isn't touch mainly about making me ever wary of tactility so that I don't burn myself while I boil the rice . . . (an important consideration to be sure)?

At Kent Park: Prairie-grass curtain

I was trained as a composer: to imagine sound(s) and to describe them in such a way that the resulting information in code could be translated back into sound(s) by trained translators in possession of technologies appropriate to a fleshing-out of these imaginings. (In and of

itself, it is a beautiful world and a pleasant way to pass the time, but should one have little thoughts of writing or drawing, complete with commensurate conjectures concerning ways in which such disparate expressions may be integrated to unfold work reflective of a discourse between, the professional world has a way of interposing to remind one of the inviolability of the original model, pristine and sacrosanct . . . (you remember (?): the composer is describer of internal sound worlds; not a worker in words or a hurler of paint!)). I lived my creative life along these more or less prescribed lines for some time---(and still do)---but, I was also making writings and drawings. And although I may all along have instinctively questioned the sensory limitations imposed by this quite specific model for creative conduct which my musical training seems to have mandated, I had no particular context for real multi-sensory dissent until fortune handed me the particular boon of being able to participate in the music of American composer and iconoclast, Harry Partch (1901-74).

Shimmer . . . sway . . . slowly back and forth . . . multiple motions in the twilight

Time and space do not allow for an extensive summary of Mr. Partch's career within the pages of this expression. Suffice it, then, simply to say that his work articulated and embodied a profound opposition to the notion that maintaining the primacy of artistic specialties ought to be THE---(or even A)---proper function of art-making. Through the many beautiful instruments which he built (plectrum, percussion; adapted strings and organs); the tuning system which he evolved (increasing the gamut of usable pitch and allowing therefore for creative utilization of a wealth of voice-like inflections potentially revealing of the body to a greater degree than had perhaps been imaginable from instruments heretofore); and his concept of "corporeality" which advanced a powerful sense of the body as intrinsically constituting a compositional whole from which all creativity emanates and all instruments of articulation are but extensions, Mr. Partch advanced a new whole world out of very old ideas . . . A world to be cherished and reveled in: to be heard, seen, and perhaps---in some future multi-sensory realm of art-expression---smelled and tasted (?) . . . A world which would significantly challenge that one which we know (or think we do) and which we daily render smaller and more empty of diversified, sensory experience through rigid adherence to the "business-as-usual" of specialized disciplines and un-interrogated aesthetic postures, as if their preservation were finally of greater importance than the life and "liveringry" which might ultimately be made available to us through active, profound, and open-ended immersion in art-making. In his work and through his example, Partch may be seen to have been both the fervent friend of creativity and expression (in and through a vibrant physicality) and the avowed enemy of all those ideologies of "purity" in whose name the malevolent and powerful would seek to suppress the inexorable movement of living beings to a full freedom of expression; to a complete living-out of their creative potential; to a palpable maximization of the field of their expressive alternatives.

Vari-speed undulation . . . interlacing . . . strands of . . . susurrus . . . green

How About the Platypus?

My experience as a clarinetist in two productions of Mr. Partch's initiated a personal inquiry continuing to this day (if not, as yet, neither fully understood nor quite elaborated upon). Early on, this was fuelled both by readings into the theoretical basis for his work (his notion of corporeality) and a growing climate of support for inter-sensory, inter-disciplinary cross-talk which characterized the California new music scene in the late 1960's-1970's (as exemplified by the still-stunning example of Source Magazine: the brainchild of Larry Austin, John Mizelle, Stanley Lunetta, Arthur Woodbury, et. al.)

Later, my interests in this area would be deepened through exposure both to the stunningly beautiful paintings-as-scores of composer-artist, Catherine Schieve, and to the extraordinary text and tape music (and formidable writings) of the late Kenneth Gaburo (1926-93).

Tan . . . yellow . . . making purple in the late afternoon . . . light

In 1980, I began an extensive period of composition study with Mr. Gaburo, who (along with the superb choreographer Lou Blankenburg) had, in fact, directed the first production of Mr. Partch's to have been performed in Europe: this was the Bewitched, composed in early 1950's, and given its European premier at the Berlin Festival of 1980. My contribution to this endeavor was, as usual, that of clarinetist, but the tasks which I faced turned out to require far more than the "mere" ability to play the notes in front of me with accuracy and sensitivity. I was now supposed to be more of an-"actor"-with-a-clarinet than a clarinetist (per se) and I was struggling to come to terms with the expanded demands which this new sense of role imposed (i.e., by way of the requirements to use my voice; to engage in body-movement throughout the whole of the space; to employ certain theatrical props with subtlety; to perform in various layers of costume, etc.).

Chirp . . . off . . . to the left . . . soft . . . amber hue . . . big . . . blu . . . ring

Thankfully, Gaburo was no stranger to the difficulties of eliciting from insecure musicians something other than the most traditional and task-specific behaviors and adroitly went to work to "loosen us up." Throughout all phases of our collective work on The Bewitched, my fascination with his attempts to extract and make physical (to "tease-out") all evidence of "Partchian" corporeality from the work---(to involve musicians "holistically" in keeping with Mr. Partch's ongoing critique of the musician in the mere ness of his/her traditional guise of sound-producing specialist)---intensified. And this (coupled with a newfound confidence in myself as "theatrical" performer), served to strengthen an emerging sense that he might be someone who could help me with my own questions.

In addition to his compositions (and his work in music and theater direction), Gaburo's pioneering theoretical work was in that area of activity which he would call "compositional linguistics." . . . (This is a creative context propounding yet again, and in its own particular way, a notion of the human body as "ur-text," rich in the potential for a perpetually generative myriad of descriptive languages of expression). My years of private study with him would

help me further to point myself in the direction of a more expanded sense of what creative expression might yet be through a polyphonic inquiry of interrogation and elaboration. In this pursuit, the question became paramount . . . (and while not specifically those questions which Kenneth asked, the following examples serve to represent a kind to which our various discourses often gave rise). What---(for instance)---if the human body were perceived and understood to be---say---already an expressive musical polyphony (with or without the accompanying violins or bassoons to articulate selfsame?) What if the input of a nose could determine the output of a synthesizer? What if the redundancy of a pitch-class, “A,”---when played in the same register by ten different instruments, for twenty-five minutes---could finally give way, in perception, to the beauty and variety of the carrier-instrument’s various timbres? What if instead of continuing to honor some fictive contract that I don’t actually see those seventy odd souls who inhabit the orchestral space in front of me, extracting utterance from tubes and boxes---(in their black-and-white uniforms, so evocative of a century gone by)---I open my perceptual field to include the fact of their physical presence, their body language, the smell of my neighbor, the taste of my surreptitiously devoured mint, the feeling of the armrests’ fabric as it crenellates lusciously under my fingertips?

Bug . . . ostinato . . . vari-speed fused footsore . . . lemon pang

In 1987, after two years of residence in Australia, I moved to the “island” of Iowa City, Iowa (something of an intellectual Shangri-la, it might be said), in order to continue my work with Kenneth at the University of Iowa, an institution well known for ongoing investigations into inter-media, enacted and nurtured in the Music Department largely through his presence and that of Richard Hervig (composer) and Lowell Cross (composer, recording engineer and video and laser-light artist) and in the Art Department by way of the enlightened mentorship and creative example of Hans Breder whose drawing and video classes became a focal point in my own emerging inter-media investigations.

Fused colors . . . wheat-grass . . . warble . . . smell . . . now still, then bending

Just as work with Mr. Partch’s music had opened my thinking to issues relative to the inter-qualification of music, movement, dramaturgy and carpentry---and work with Kenneth Gaburo had encouraged me to consider the relationship between my music and the writing I was doing---Professor Breder’s drawing and video classes caused me to investigate the interconnections between my visual/gestural language and the gestural language manifest in the first of my compositions in the (then-analog) electronic-music domain. Pursuant to this, I made a series of musical works on tape in tandem with drawings done in Professor Breder’s drawing class, my (almost daily) general routine being first to compose my sounds in the studio and then (with these still fresh in my mind) proceed immediately to drawing where I would allow the memories of my sound-gestures---their “colors” and characteristic shapes and speeds---to unfold the content of my drawings. Hans’ particular contribution to this research was in his capacity to observe (close-read) these post-musical drawings and extract the anomalous material, calling my attention to the fact of a path (or paths) not taken . . . areas

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where the mind might expand---or the language grow richer and more complex---if the implications arising from the presence of this or that not quite assimilated material were fully considered and explored. Many of the issues forthcoming from the recognition of these perceptual “extractions” might then be (in fact were) further pursued in the domain of sound, when next I visited the Electronic Music Studio for a new bout of composing.

Ghost . . . color coming . . . scratching . . . from the mix

I continued these inter-sensory explorations---to stretch my own boundaries---largely through attempts (for example) to configure art experiences which might finally be observed to lie somewhere BETWEEN---say---their constituent word-worlds and sound-worlds . . . (As in some situation or condition in which verbal descriptive language, even if decidedly “meta” in origin and function is not de-facto consigned to the mere ness of the meta-domain (relegated to the status of a descriptive exegesis crafted quite after-the-fact and understood to be a secondary attribute in light of something primary)---but is EXPERIENCED simultaneously with the sounds which gave rise to them: one with the other inter-qualifying in real time). As well, I was exploring the idea of art-experiences conducing to completion via observer perception “filling in the blanks,” as it were . . . (As in some situation in which an ongoing aggregate of acoustical signals---say, some band-width consisting largely of pink noise---will (may?)---when played back at a particular amplitude and heard through a loudspeaker which has been positioned at a particular distance from the observer to achieve a desired level of output signal presence---create the awareness of “ghost” signals: a frequency, or aggregate of frequencies, which may or may not actually be “there” in the recorded output signal(s), but which is, nevertheless, by some criteria, “heard.”

I continued also to be interested in making work in which visual vocabularies (drawings) interlace acoustical ones (recorded sounds) to configure expressions in search of an inter-qualifying focal point in the observer (some perceptual space BETWEEN the participating senses). I investigated these issues (and their ramifications) for several years, but circumstances of the moment made the continuation of the work difficult. Recently, however, I have returned to resonant investigations, albeit in a form less dependent upon the availability of technologies: one predicated on observation and internal inter-qualification as the endpoint, rather than the construction, performance or exhibition of an “object.”

Not . . . quite . . . there . . . peachshifting rasp

So, what do I think about inter-media now (at some years distance from these early investigations)? . . . (Is this inter-media trip still and really necessary?)

Lighter . . . still . . . this prairielowa . . . I may have . . . gray green . . . come

In pondering this question, I am reminded of those who answer every sincerely proffered distinction with a dismissive redundancy. Might they not argue that the discipline of music is already an expression of inter-media articulation? After all, a clarinet and a trumpet really are

quite different mediums, aren't they? Isn't one made of wood with moving metal parts, and the other largely of brass with a bit of cork and felt here and there? And, although, both are blown, doesn't one employ a hard-rubber or crystal mouthpiece with a cane reed which must be activated before a sound may be produced while the other employs a metal mouthpiece of a completely different design through which the player "buzzes" his/her lips to produce the desired sound? In some critical sense, isn't it the case that only that rubric which these two quite distinct technologies share (i.e., "wind" instrument) bids fair to neutralize the fact of their salient differences . . . In the end, don't they inhabit completely different sound-worlds?

To love . . . dark . . . yellow . . . straw . . . to cluck purple . . . wet smell

True enough (I might reply). Yet, despite the undoubted relevance of such an argument, I do not particularly mean "chamber music" (or diverse instruments) when I consider the term, "inter-media," if for no other reason than that most familiar musical instruments (Mr. Partch's contradictory musical technologies and other such like-alternatives notwithstanding) seem by now to be inextricably wedded by habitual association to that over-arching (distinction-neutralizing) rubric for sound-making in the form of music's five-letter word. This taxonomic designate (this name) traditionally points to that domain wherein sound is the principal point of focus (although much has been done in the late twentieth century to undermine this convention; silent pieces of music being of particular help to this end).

Aren't most instruments well and truly freighted with (subsumed within) the history of their association with this marker to the exclusion of any possibility that we may freshly conceptualize them outside the familiar domain?

Top . . . tassel tiny . . . fletching . . . eddies

Can it not also be argued---(particularly by those who delight in kicking the supports out from beneath any stipulation or assertion of "newness")---that "inter-media" is really a very old idea? . . . (And how often, by the by, do we find the appellative, "old," strategically employed to discredit the relevance of new thinking by those whose ideologies predispose them to the preservation of old at any cost: using "old" to put away "new" ostensibly for the sake of the new, but really to clear the field so that nothing may effectively challenge the hegemony of the old?)

Verbena . . . bluestem . . . dragonfly . . . flyby . . . breathebreeze

This might, I suspect, have been Mr. Partch's contention---(although not particularly for the aforementioned reason)---given the degree to which he took such powerful cues both from the multi-cultural, multi-sensory theaters found both in the distant human past, and in those contemporary cultures still extant and living their lives outside the specialized Euro-American mainstream. No one interested in him can quite forget his disdainful characterization of our

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artistic specialties (a theater without music: a music without theater) as “basic mutilations of ancient concept.”

Intersecting . . . green quiets . . . taste tan . . . sweet . . . licorice speak

What are the operas of Richard Wagner if not large scale moves in the inter-media direction? Don't we need the medium of film to begin to obtain, with anything approaching verisimilitude, the correspondingly rich visual field required of that maker's works . . . (to get the orchestra talking to the sky: to get the mermaids in the water---if not exactly wet?) Is not all opera or ballet de-facto an expression of inter-media, consisting as they do of inter-qualifying fields of sound and movement: text and sound, eyes and ears in inter-qualifying co-participation . . . And what about good old commercial film to within and under the inter-media tent; or architecture which satisfies the eyes and sometimes the ears, to say nothing of the tactile gratification availed by the materials themselves?

Rapid-fire . . . swirl . . . finger gray . . . tickle gritty . . . softs . . . in . . .

slowsmells

I suppose I can, as well, see the validity of these arguments, yet, still, I am not particularly (or compellingly) reminded of operatic *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or the *Nutcracker Ballet*, or *Gone with the Wind*, or *Falling Water* when I consider the idea of inter-media. In the first of these examples---these phenomena chained to their respective taxonomies---sound is again the primary point of focus (if only by virtue of tradition or laziness). In the second, movement is that attribute necessarily to be located in the perceptual foreground; that element for which all other expressions to within (however interpenetrated they may appear to be) function in support. As regards film (at least that of the commercially viable sort), even though there are both things to see and things to hear---(and I seem to recall, even once, there having been a brief flirtation with something called “smellovision”)---the essential and foreground element of focus continues to be that of the sustained narrative drive; the clear architectural ontology of beginning, middle and end; the viability and power of an unfolding story to capture and hold the attention of the observer (and the observer's pocketbook). For better or worse, film (from the most sublime to the most ridiculous of its manifestations), is still very largely conceptualized (“strategized,” deployed) as an extension of the nineteenth-century novel: as a form of literature. A “good” commercial film keeps the pages turning (so to speak) albeit through the inter-qualifying agencies of visual imagery, “thespianic” acumen and subtly employed interlaces of sound and music. No one sensory element (qua element) is allowed to “pull focus” for long: to ruminate out-side the story in excess. With respect to an architecture: however beautiful it is (and diversely so), its primary function must still (of needs be) remain that of providing shelter to its occupants.

Rich pinging . . . purple . . . ghost sway . . . slow . . . stem

If so many historical art-expressions to within their inherited specialties (their pre-ordained classes of “things”) already seem to be saying “inter-media” to me (to say nothing of the many significant late-twentieth century concretions advanced in its name), what can I mean when I consider the term? How might inter-media still speak to me . . . present me with some desired condition (some context) not unlike that which Gregory Bateson might have called “a difference which makes a difference?”

Twitter . . . pinch . . . bluerub . . . windprick . . . pin . . . spread

If none of the above much comes to mind when I think of inter-media, what does?

Not eyes . . . quite . . . there . . . ears seeing . . . something . . . soft

How about the Platypus?

I am reminded of the story of the first of these creatures to be taken from Australia to England for the amusement and amazement of the scientific community. Here was an egg-laying mammal with a duck-like bill, a tail resembling that of a beaver, poisonous spine on its webbed feet and one orifice for two rather significant functions . . . in sooth, an animal fitting no known category. Little wonder that a significant number of those erudite worthies who first beheld it assumed the incongruous specimen to be a fabrication, a hoax (not without entertainment value to be sure, but incontrovertibly “bogus” nonetheless). Only later, when other “fabrications” had manifested themselves (for further amusement and amazement)---with compelling frequency and in sufficient quantities to force re-evaluation---were the good men of science enjoined by the growing array of facts to create (to create!) a new category so that this animal, now acknowledged to be “real,” could be accommodated. Their word--this category; this rubric---we know today as “Monotreme” (or one-holed animal). Having sought, for most of my life, art-expressions whose interconnecting attributes likewise confound the taxonomist’s assumptions and definitions---(Oh, for work which requires (mandates!) a new category)---I like this little animal and think she makes quite a nice inter-qualifying context (metaphor?) for cogitation upon the nature and relevance of “inter-media.”

Merging . . . to chocolate purple sand . . . fleck . . . whip-or . . . whistle . . . will

Although the Platypus had attributes of all three, she couldn’t quite make it in the fish-camp, or the bird-club or the muskrat-faculty. She was by way of being a grab-bag of incongruously construed and contradictory sensory modalities. Her various attributes (evidences) were not thought to be reconcilable and she was therefore not considered subsumable. To all intents and purposes this made her non-existent, until more of her number turned the tide and the experts were forced to render unto Platypus her own thing . . . her own name. The Platypus feels very much like an inter-media art-event (a multi-sensory work) to me. I can as easily imagine her being advanced as evidence of something called

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“art”---(particularly in her taxi dermal state, although I much prefer her ALIVE and having nothing at all to do with art)---as I can see her as an “artifact” pertinent to scientific disquisition. She is (or was) that moment of beautiful strangeness and incongruity---(of information on the verge of recognition)---which we artists yearn for (and for which the term “Inter-media” was coined). Platypus as undeniable phenomenon made Monotreme as category necessary, just as particular art works in our time---through their resistance to classification by virtue of the apparent irreconcilability of their various technological articulators, and their being significantly “about” the interaction and inter-qualification of more than one sense---have made the category of “inter-media” necessary. Now we can construct the artistic equivalent of the Platypus to our hearts content.

Finger . . . twitters . . . lick turkey . . . vulture v . . . sailing . . . jive-assed quietly

So, we have a term . . . now what else do I think? (How is the idea of inter-media useful?)

Yellow orange . . . leaf glance . . . peanut . . . cheek . . . time and song

Well, what if I imagined that Inter-media (like Monotreme) is both that art-category (name) which the fact of creative Platypuses makes necessary (as in some version of people in search of their home?) and that (category/name) which makes possible the conceptualization of new Platypuses in its name (as in some version of a home in search of its people?) I like the idea of Inter-media as a kind of “place,” a “home,” for a certain kind of thinking about (celebration of) the body in its diverse and seemingly irreconcilable sensory modalities. And I quite enjoy the notion that it might be both a context through which I understand that I can, and with impunity, juxtapose technologies and other diverse concretions freely (as in, toasters with video machines; or clarinets with computers; or tuna-fish with lava-lamps), and a domain in whose name I might undertake to examine (and deeply) how these various realities (these technologies, these implements, these instruments) might actually be induced to (observed to) engage in a deep TALKING to one to one another (and to the body which advances them: the bodies which observe them).

Sway merging . . . different directional . . . graygreen vortex . . . wind thick to

What if in addition to (instead of?) thinking about Inter-media in terms of its undoubted relevance as that category which serves to qualify and legitimate collections of “things”---arrays of “stuff” (diverse materials deployed in art-space), I imagined it to refer a species of discourse more about the perceptual (sensory) boundaries of the art endeavor as a whole than the relevance of any given material articulator in collaboration with another: a place in which to ask how the relationship of ears and eyes---noses tongues and toes---may be conceptualized anew (and to what end).

Jolt . . . tic . . . not quiet . . . quite . . . there . . . my deep cherry buzzburble . . .

More concretely, what if I imagine that just as “music” is a five-letter word which points not merely to the home of some particular evidence of human sound-making (as in that aspect of it which we choose to pay attention to for no particularly good reason), but to human sound-making as a whole, “Inter-media” (a word five-letters larger), is a home which invites evidences not singularly of SOUND with movement; nor MOVEMENT with words, birds, and castles; nor PAINTING with a violin playing pizzicato in the background; but of diversified perpetual-motion cycles of sound in DISCOURSE with sight in DISCOURSE with movement in DISCOURSE with smell in DISCOURSE with taste in DISCOURSE with touch in DISCOURSE with senses as yet unnamed or undiscovered.

*Moist . . . strawplace . . . pluck and ping . . . magenta bellows . . . rank and
dark . . . to tonguetight*

Perhaps, in addition to the “Multi-media”-conceptualized juxtaposition of technologies, the idea of “Inter-media” is elaborated through this inter-sensory discourse (discourse becoming the subject rather than mere “meta-by-product”: more in the nature of a denotation than a connotation; not merely an inference but a focal point). And in this discourse (occasioned by observation of (and inquiry into) the omnipresent intercourse of the senses) no one sense--(whether/either related, one to another, through mere juxtaposition, or strident polyphony or florid heterophony)---assumes the incontrovertible role of that for which the whole functions. Just as now, in this coffee shop, Rimsky-Korsakoff’s Russian Easter Overture and the pin-prick, pain-*musik* in Paredes’ feet make equal claim to my perceptual focus.

*Wet bug . . . bark . . . tang rasp . . . liquid sweet . . . acrid mauve bell . . .
sneeze*

Perhaps, instead of the sensory world as it serves to articulate MUSIC (as focal point); or, the sensory world as it serves to articulate PAINTING (as focal point); or, the sensory world as it serves to articulate DANCE (as focal point); or, the sensory world as it serves to articulate NARRATIVE STRUCTURES (as focal point)---(to name but four)---I might also think of an Inter-media context as one in which single-sense-based distinctions serve as connecting links in creative constructions which serve to reveal the SENSORY WORLD in its exquisitely-nuanced plenitude (the world of the body in phenomenological relationship with the environment which it inhabits) . . . (Easy enough on paper . . . but how to pull it off . . . ?) . . . (Is that by way of being the “art” of it?)

*Wheat sour . . . deep cheesy cork feel . . . yellow . . . corn . . . red brown
voice*

At the risk of a truism of the most obvious and baby-simple sort, it could be said that there are as many reasons for work in advance of something called inter-media as there are interested

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artists, but for me a central, perhaps definitive, one has to do with what I might call the “politics of restoration”: the struggle to be, and to feel, complete---to reclaim human wholeness in the face of those who would arrogate unto themselves the power to define us and our work as they chose from impulses to dissect, reduce and dismember (impulses to which our un-questioning commitment to the preservation of artistic specialties perhaps unwittingly contributes).

In this light, I wonder if my continued use of the word, “taxonomy,” (which, as a non-scientist, I realize I may have employed more capriciously than will be comfortable for some) is more significant to me than first it may have appeared. To seek to reconfigure hierarchies, to challenge with seriousness the assumptions through and by which certain of us would define (presume to understand) certain others of us is an act of the greatest political import and consequence. Perhaps most of the significant acts in human history have emanated from a profound desire for redefinition; for reclassification; for freedom from rigidly employed and un-interrogated taxonomies . . . a desire to be who and what are, on our own terms, in, of and through our own bodies.

Dry . . . harmonic . . . hot purple mouth . . . lilac reverberant . . . deep gut

firefight

Whether the term, “inter-media,” describes work that already exists, but nowhere fits, or is an idea which wants to become true---a concept in search of embodiment---what we call things is finally of rather imposing significance, for names are (in some sense) also places. And they are political expressions as well. In this latter light, what may matter most is that there are (and continue to be) further places which conduce to the creation of further differences: that we do not allow the pro-forma classification of “things” to subsume us (and our needs); that art-activity continues to maximize alternatives to the given; that the powerful continue to be challenged through the fact of our commitment to the idea that we can give our own names to our own concerns, our own qualities to our own lives.

Stemsong . . . this way . . . that

Maybe, Inter-media is a ten-letter place for thinking about how I might reclaim and expand upon those odd moments when my real world flows through the cracks in my inherited knowledge.

Robert Paredes

*Long fence of swaying prairie grass
By turns rank and sweet to the nose
Here and there a color not quite here or there*

Antiphonal choirs of multi-voiced and rhythming bug-talk chant

*I taste the incoming rain
Wet-cold pins dotting my face
I feel the glassy softness of your onyx hair on my fingertips*

Joseph Creek

Mary Lee A. Roberts

The Homeland

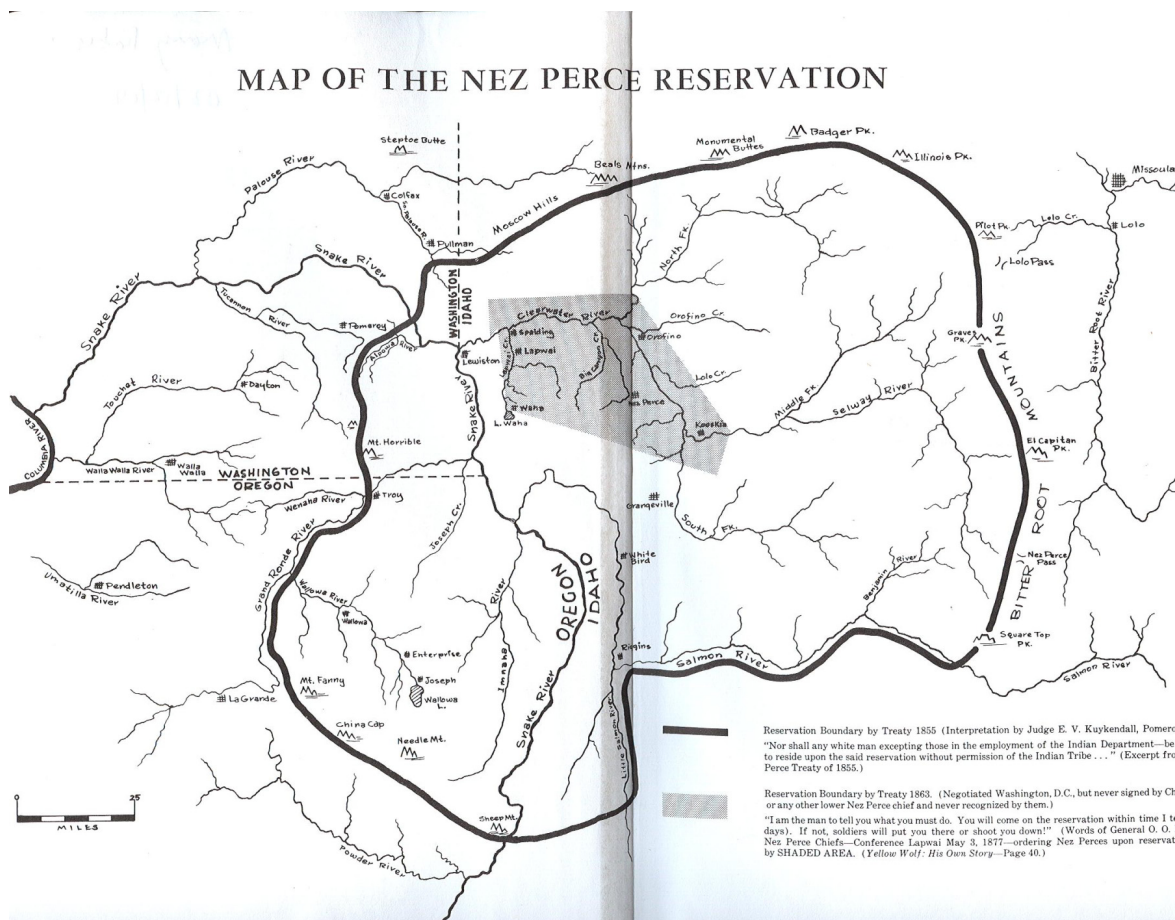
First there is Joseph Creek and the birthplace of Chief Joseph, Chief of the Wellamotkin or Wallowa Band of Nez Perce Indians, born in 1840. Joseph Creek flows north from the Wallowa Mountains region in northeastern Oregon and continues into Washington State culminating at the Grande Ronde River, which connects to the Snake River a mile or so downstream. This is the beginning place. Chief Joseph's birthplace near the confluence of Joseph Creek and the Grande Ronde River is a cave with a tangle of weeds growing around it; hard to see and hard to find. There are pine trees, dry earth, and the light blue sky limited by the canyon walls. This is a typical spot for this country and if you haven't been here you can never imagine how it is. Everything is defined by the waterways: the Salmon River flows into the Snake River which later combines with the Clearwater River; all waters then converge on the huge Columbia River ending at the Pacific Ocean¹. It is as if you were standing in the navel of the world, everything comes together here, this is where it all begins; there is no reason to be anywhere else. Here is where the Nez Perce Indians, the Nee-Me-Poo² still live along their ancient trails guided by the seasons, following the spawning salmon, digging in traditional root grounds, going to the mountains for cool summer weather to hunt game and pick berries, returning to the deep canyon waterways where the winters are mild. There are high country divides, shoulders of volcanoes rising 8,000 feet above the river canyons, there are prairies in between (the root grounds), and there are the rivers, once and seemingly still wild waterways now somewhat tamed by dams.

Here is also where the Nez Perce Indians were displaced from their own tribal lands. In 1877 the United States decided that the entire tribe should be confined to a small area along the Clearwater River. What was before an area that spans between the now three states of northeastern Oregon, southwestern Washington and western Idaho, an area with many distinct claims by separately governed bands of the Nez Perce Tribe³, was ceded to white settlers.

¹ This is the great drainage system for the waters flowing westward from the Continental Divide. Standing at the convergence of the Clearwater and Snake Rivers I can already sense the Pacific Ocean hundreds of miles away. The sun setting on these rivers and the sunsets created definitely has a look and feel similar to that of the Pacific.

² Nee-Me-Poo in the Nez Perce language means "We, the people".

³ The chiefs of the bands forced to move were: Joseph of the Wallowa Band (the large area in northeastern Oregon), Toohoolhoolzote, chief of the band that lived in the high country between the Snake and Salmon

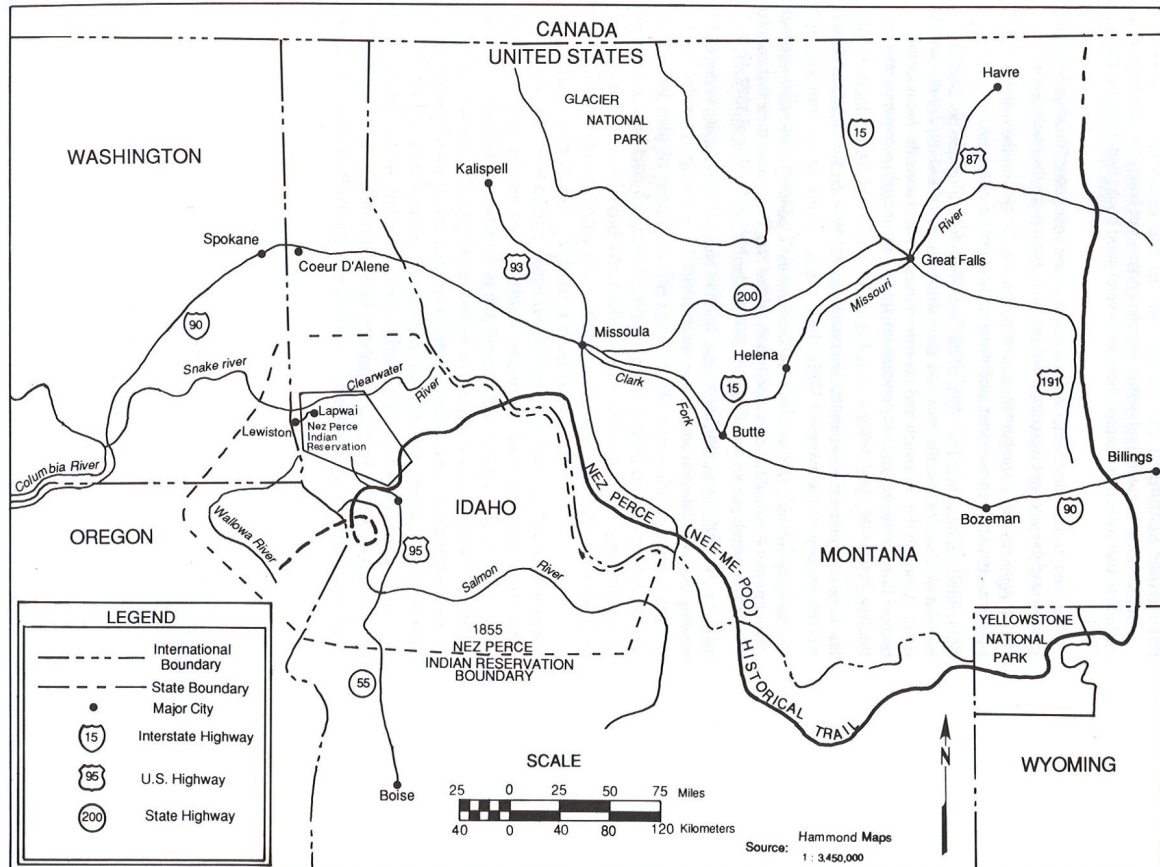


Map from: Lucullus Virgil McWhorter, *Hear Me, My Chiefs! Nez Perce History and Legend*, ed. By Ruth Bordin. (Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1952).

The outcome of this forced movement was a war that was more of a chase: General O.O. Howard of the US Army, once he found out that these bands were not going to obey the orders to move to the reservation, pursued, from Idaho, over the Bitterroot Mountains (border between Idaho and Montana) into Montana, south across the Continental Divide, further south back into Idaho across the Continental Divide, across southern Idaho (across the Continental Divide again), through the newly organized Yellowstone Park in Wyoming, back on a northward trek into Montana (as the Nez Perce tried to escape to Canada) and finally ending near the Bearpaw Mountains 40 miles from the Canadian border where after a siege, Chief Joseph of the Wallowa Band

Rivers in what is now Idaho, Chief White Bird whose band resided along the Salmon River in Idaho, Chief Looking Glass whose area was along the Middle Fork of the Clearwater River in Idaho, and members of the Palouse Tribe including Chief Husishusis Kute from Eastern Washington (separate from the Nez Perce Tribe but included in the forced move for convenience by the US Government).

of the Nez Perce formally quit the chase and accepted the terms of truce that the Army offered.



Map from: Cheryl Wilfong, *Following the Nez Perce Trail: a guide to the Nee-Me-Poo National Historic Trail with eyewitness accounts* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1990) xiv.

This paper is a travelogue of the chase, otherwise known as the Nez Perce National Historic Trail; an account of a tour Ben Boretz and I made in 2003 in the country traveled over by the Nez Perce in 1877 and the personal impressions I have of the area. There are many more methodical studies of the politics involved in the Nez Perce story, there are also better descriptions of the country, but this is how I see this land, this is where I am going to live, this will be my home for now, and this is the trail I followed in summer 2003 that made me want to live in the Nez Perce country and learn their language.

The Waterways

A good place to start a tour of this country is in Moscow Idaho then head south. This way you can get an idea of how the Palouse country breaks up into canyons before the

Snake and Clearwater Rivers come into view just above Lewiston/Clarkston, twin cities that hug the borders of Idaho and Washington. And this is a grand view of dry weird country. The plateauland before the Snake/Clearwater river convergence has a characteristic typical of the Western United States; you may think that the earth is sturdy and can withstand the trials of earthquakes, volcanoes, and invading rivers, but there is very little integrity in the landscape and deep ravines make unexpected cuts in the plateau and in this case, rich farmland. The Palouse plateau just north of the Joseph Creek Country has the great advantage of having a new layer of topsoil just recently spewed from the volcanoes on the Washington/Oregon coast (Mt. St. Helens in 1980 was the last big blowup⁴). About 17 million years ago lava flows left cooling basalt to shape this country. Then the ice age two to three million years ago left glaciers here. When things began to warm up the glaciers started to move and grind the basalt landscape into dirt, what soil scientists call loess. The loess along with the ash from the Pacific volcanoes are what make the Palouse country so spectacular, at least for farmers. The farmland hills are like dunes, high and steep, the grain clings to this land. Good place for wheat, lentils, dry split peas and barley. This is the beginning of the Big Sky country: long blue horizons and dry air. The Snake, Palouse and Clearwater Rivers have had good opportunities to wedge their way in to this plateau. The vista overlooking the Clearwater/Snake convergence is a satisfying spectacle. Everything is about up and down, extremes, hot and mild in the river bottoms (good place for rattlesnakes that like it warm) and cool and windy on the plateaus with severe weather on the mountaintops. Nothing stays the same for long, travel a couple miles and the whole story is different. If you're on the plateaus this landscape will give way to pine covered mountains soon enough, and the rivers – huge runways – give the whole of this land their most defining characteristics. Nothing is flat, nothing is wholly dry, and nothing is swamped (except by dams).

These are the rivers that used to be the waterways for the thousands of anadromous⁵ fish (fish that originate in freshwater, travel to spend much of their lives in saltwater, then migrate back to freshwater to spawn): steelhead, salmon, Pacific lampreys (eels), sturgeon. Fish like the Snake River species of Sockeye Salmon that might swim 900 miles upstream from the Pacific Ocean, up the Columbia River, up the Snake River, up the Salmon River, up 6500 feet in elevation to their birthplace in high alpine lakes, to spawn, then die. Fish that originate in the mountain waters of Idaho and Oregon swim around in the streams for a couple months up to a couple years; then as immature fingerling fish they make their way back to the Pacific Ocean to swim around for a couple years as adults. Usually in the spring season (winter for steelhead) the anadromous fish exit the Pacific Ocean to struggle back up the Columbia and Snake Rivers, over and/or around all of the dams. They eventually swim up streams and secondary waterways to a place likely very near to where they were hatched, and here

⁴ I was fortunate enough to experience this eruption and the 3 inches or so of ash that "snowed" down for days, blocked the sun for a week, and made the lakes and waterways turn smoky green for a year.

⁵ "From the Greek word meaning "up-running." Bill Gulick, *Chief Joseph Country: Land of the Nez Perce* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1994), 2.

they spawn, then die, their dead bodies floating back down the streams for bear feed, coyote snack, wolf dinner, or for some other fish to eat. These returning fish were and still are a vital food source for the original human inhabitants of this country: Nez Perce, Cayuse, and Palouse tribes.

And the twin cities of Lewiston Idaho and Clarkston Washington at the Clearwater/Snake River convergence are nothing special. Nowadays there seems to be an espresso hut at every corner (Pony Espresso is a favorite) and a smelly paper mill. There is, though, the Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston where the Nez Perce language is taught⁶. Nearby is where the Palouse and Nez Perce tribes gathered for treaty meetings not far from a historic stopping point for the Lewis and Clark expedition in Sept. → Oct. 1805. When the Corps of Discovery crossed over the Bitterroot Mountain range that forms the border between Idaho and Montana (the last big mountains before their landing on the Pacific) they were starving. The Nez Perce people gave the Lewis and Clark group food, tended their animals and steered them on their way down the Clearwater→ Snake→ Columbia Rivers to the Pacific Coast.

At Lewiston/Clarkston the border between Idaho and Washington is the Snake River. As the land begins to flatten out at the Palouse Country the Snake River heads mostly west toward the Columbia River, which in turn heads toward the Pacific. The Snake/Columbia River system is a kind of stunted Northwest Passage, a passage from the Continental Divide (at Yellowstone Park in Wyoming where the Snake River rises) to the Pacific. Heading south and upriver from the Lewiston/Clarkston cities the whole scene changes radically. The Snake River takes over and the highway to Asotin Washington moves up into a deep canyon. At this point the river has ripples in it that jet boats can navigate through. The canyon sides are brown in the summer with patches of evergreen at the tops; it is easy to spot bighorn sheep along here. Once south of Asotin and still scooting along a paved road I feel like we are entering something, going in, into another place. And here is where by boat you can enter into the beginnings of the deepest river gorge in the United States: Hell's Canyon, a chasm like no other, cut by the Snake River⁷.

It is hot. 102 degrees, dry, that Northwest Palouse Country kind of dry, the big sky country when the canyon walls don't get in the way. The sun and heat reflect off everything and the water is too bright to look at. Big horn sheep maneuver around the edges, binoculars make spotting easy, we saw a bald eagle here, and if we had stopped to watch the water we would have seen salmon swimming upstream, all the way from the Pacific Ocean. We were heading backwards, against the flow, into the shallow waters of Hells Canyon.

Still on this southward road there is a cattle ranch in a tree tangle on the wrong side of the river, the east side, the side with no road. A dinghy sits on the shore and a

⁶A very special campus. At Lewis-Clark State College students can study and receive a minor in the Nez Perce language, a three-year program.

⁷ From the top of the Seven Devils Mountains in Idaho as measured down to the bottom of the Hell's Canyon is a drop of 8,043 feet, deeper than the Grand Canyon.

battered old mailbox is at the roadside.⁸ Then south some more, there is the entrance of the Grande Ronde River from the west emptying into the Snake River. This is where the paved road ends in fruit farms, cattle ranches, and the Grande Ronde River forms a smaller canyon to the southwest. If you can stay on the correct road you can catch the place near where Joseph Creek enters the Grande Ronde River. This is the Joseph Cave country, the supposed birthplace of the great Nez Perce peacemaker Chief Joseph. The road gets rougher and rougher, the camping gear is getting strung all over the back of the truck and it is so hot, but the air is so dry, the sky so blue, no moisture except for that flowing in the canyons.

Covered with dust we drive up Joseph Creek, still heading south, up to the southern plateau, the wonderland of the Wallowa Country in northeastern Oregon. The road up past Joseph Creek provides another excellent laboratory for observing what altitude can do this western country. The canyon bottoms of the rivers: Snake, Grand Ronde, Joseph Creek, are dry in the summer and much of the plant life is dried up. When moving up beyond the erosion of the bottoms we get ponderosa pine trees first, those classic dryland pines, then firs, even swamp loving cedars start to appear in the wettest spots. Greenery of all kinds and wildflowers appear, there is this obvious difference in the air: rather than the lip cracking dustified no-moisture air there is damp, piney smelling air, as if I could breathe the foliage. And things get cooler, up and up, and as usual when going either up or down the roads and trails deteriorate. It is impossible to see where the road/trail is going; it is hard to tell when you are "at the end of [any] road where wilderness and escape of some kind occur together."⁹

Once on top of the plateau up above the rivers and creeks the world changes. There are huge pine trees and the road picks its way around boulders. Deer are everywhere; the sky is everywhere, the planet smoothes out in places. There are tall grassy meadows that stretch west. The Imnaha River is on the east side, cutting knife-edges into the earth where it joins up with the Hell's Canyon of the Snake River. Far into the southeastern distance are the Seven Devils, those mountains left over from volcanic eruptions in the Paleozoic era (600-225 million years ago) when all this country was under seawaters.¹⁰

So here is the Wallowa country¹¹. Traditional land of the Nez Perce Indians, specifically the Wellamotkin Band associated with Chief Joseph and his brother Ollokot.

⁸ I went to college (University of Idaho) with a woman who works on this cattle ranch, living in isolation, no road. I traded her my precious smokejumping/wildland firefighting boots (which I have only now replaced) for her music analysis book (long gone). She's out riding her horse in that burnt canyon in my old boots, shooting rattlesnakes and shooing calves into the castration pen. I'm sitting in academe, her music analysis book of comparatively little use to me now.

⁹ Grace Jordan, *Home Below Hell's Canyon* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1954), 39.

¹⁰ Keith C. Petersen, *River of Life Channel of Death* (Lewiston Idaho: Confluence Press, 1995), 31.

¹¹ Wallowa: a tripod placed in a shallow waterway, which holds the downstream end of a fishtrap. A device for catching salmon. Mature salmon, 2-3 years old enter the Columbia river where it meets the Pacific Ocean, they swim upriver, the length of Oregon, swim up stream to the Snake River, up the Grande Ronde, Joseph Creek, the Imnaha river further south, up to the spawning grounds. In shallow water these huge brown fish that can't really fit in the small waterbeds spawn then die in the streambeds, scooped up and killed by bears, or caught in a wallowa. Huge ocean-going fish now high-centered way up in the mountains ready to create life again, ready to be eaten.

One day in august I stood at the Imnaha River Fish Hatchery near the town of Joseph Oregon watching about 7 salmon trying to maneuver around in the shallow water. They were aggressive,

And it makes sense for any people to want to live here. The deep canyons of Joseph Creek, the Grande Ronde River, Imnaha River and the Hell's Canyon of the Snake River have mild climates in the winter. It doesn't really snow that much in the river bottoms. In the warm months the high mountain meadows up on top offer the best grazing land, cool mountain air (while the river bottoms bake in the heat), plenty of game, berries and salmon. Then there is Wallowa Lake tucked in to the northern edge of the Wallowa Mountains, all volcanoes, a small range in the northeastern corner of Oregon¹².

The eastern edge of this plateau is the most dramatic. The knife-edged ridges of the Imnaha River country are hard to understand. Just where the Imnaha River flows and where the earth gives way to the waterway can't be seen clearly. Looking further east one can only imagine where the Hell's Canyon of the Snake River is. Even with topographical maps it is hard to figure out this country. Unmistakable though, is the poked-up ridge on the east side of Hell's Canyon in Idaho where the peaks of the Seven Devils mountain patch are visible. And the air is not that clear on the high prairies, especially in the summer. The harvest that is carrying on in the Palouse country to the north sends dust everywhere, there are forest fires, and then the burning of the bluegrass fields after harvest, all add up to a haze that can rival that of Los Angeles on a bad smog day. My eyes sting, my sinuses are screaming, and I'm trying hard to not tumble down a cliff as I struggle to catch sight of the Imnaha River down below. As we head back down the road I see the wide prairieland ahead of us, and the dim view of the Wallowa peaks to the south.

One of the better ways to get to the Imnaha River from the west is to drop down an eastern flowing creek bed that meanders down to the main Imnaha Valley. This is not a short trek: after some 30 miles the prairie topland gives out to subcreek canyons that finally lead to the Trail Creek canyon road and the Imnaha River. In the spring of 1877 when General Howard ordered the Joseph Band of Nez Perce out of their Wallowa country they had to hustle down these canyons and creek beds trying to round up all of their livestock (which would amount to about 2000 head eventually)¹³. I had my eyes stuck to a topo map and a GPS device clenched in my right hand, trying to make sure that I knew where to not get lost. Miles go by, more dust, the creeks are empty, the drought is severe, the whole country looks like it's going to go up in wildfire at any moment, and the further down we get toward the Imnaha River the hotter it gets, 90, 100+ degrees. Baking. Finally we catch site of the Imnaha River at the bottom and stop at the town of Imnaha where everybody is talking about shooting rattlesnakes and BBQ-ing them. We buy cold drinks and I wish I had my high boots with me.

protecting their spawning areas. Bears had been down to the river for breakfast earlier in the day so there was a stink of rotting fish everywhere. These tattered huge fish trying desperately to reproduce.

¹² Unfortunately Wallowa Lake has not survived in its most pristine state. The lake is now a crowded, spectacularized recreation area.

¹³ The country around the Imnaha River, the Wallowa Mountain area, the Wallowa Valley, "the most beautiful valley in the world" was needed for white farms and stockmen, the Chief Joseph Band of the Nez Perce were in the way; they were required to move on to a reservation to the east on the Clearwater River. Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1965) 509

We make a dogleg turn north to follow the Imnaha River as it makes its way toward Hell's Canyon and the Snake River. I daydream about being a peach farmer in this hot valley. The lower altitudes are covered with bunches of bushes, weeds and grasses with some leafy trees near the river that provide a little shade and cover. There is no wonder that the Nez Perce headed to the high Wallowa Valleys for the summer months; it's too hot down here, and too many snakes. We spot a lone bear skitting into a bramblebush. Almost instantly the road gets weird and I get nervous as we climb above the valley so that we can later descend further down to the Imnaha River. Nowadays the Nez Perce tribe uses this land for grazing. There are old rusty ranches along the Imnaha River and corrals. I get the feeling that nothing much moves here in the summer. As usual the road comes and goes in character, going up and down steep rises the rocks take over and things get rough, along the flats the road gets overgrown a bit with weeds. I imagine what it would be like to be on horseback ascending the eastern side of the canyon up in the cool areas, in the trees, on the mountaintops.

We're on a 32-mile road to a dead end called Dug Bar; a place where only the Nez Perce knew was the best spot to cross the Snake River. For us, in a Land Cruiser, we could not cross; there is no bridge, the closest bridge being way to the north in Lewiston. After about 24 miles our path finally meets the Imnaha River and crosses over to the eastern bank. At this point the road climbs, leaves the Imnaha valley, roughs up, and goes up over a pass by Cactus Mountain and drops in to Hell's Canyon, abruptly ending in a dust patch, an old ranch, at the Snake River. In late May of 1877 in high water the Joseph Band of Nez Perce made the crossing here at Dug Bar. They were following the orders of General Howard to leave their Wallowa Country and move to a reservation in Idaho east of Lewiston. The Joseph Band spent 2 days getting their people and some 2000 head of livestock across the Snake River at Dug Bar. Miraculously nobody was killed, though many head of stock were lost down the river. Chief Joseph's wife was 9 months pregnant at this point.

"...we had plenty of buffalo skins. With them we made hide boats. In making such boat, the hide, hair side up, was spread flat on the ground. Across the hide were laid green willow or other limber poles about the thickness of your thumb. The hide and poles were bent up and lashed to other bent poles forming a long circled rim. This rim was the outside. That was all. Such boats carried big loads, and children and old people rode on top of the packs. Everything — teepee covers, cooking pots, pans, blankets — all were ferried in these boats. No paddles used. Boats were hauled by ponies guided by me. Two, maybe three or four, ponies to a boat. Two men swam at the sides to steady it."¹⁴

This is a dramatic spot. We linger, drink water, it's hot, the bushes rattle with snakes, there's no place to roam because of snakes. I dip my hand in the Snake River, the water is weirdly warm, we head back over the mountain pass. It's getting dark and it is too creepy to camp at Dug Bar in the hot winds; too much to think about at the crossing, not

¹⁴ As told by Yellow Wolf in: Lucullus Virgil McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1940), 62.

peaceful enough to even begin to settle our brains in to sleep. There are weird things in that canyon. We go back to the Imnaha River crossing to camp, up and over the pass.

Down in this Imnaha River/Snake River country the air seems too still, things are too quiet, oppressive, closed in. The night is even more claustrophobic. The only place to look to after dark is straight up and out of those canyon mountains. We try to stay awake for the rise of Mars. We can't continue along the Nez Perce trail until we return to Lewiston and cross over the bridge where the Snake River joins up with the Clearwater River. The Nez Perce headed east from here; we head back.

The Lolo

In 1860 gold miner Elias Pierce had a hunch that there was gold in the mountains in the northeastern portion of the Nez Perce land near Kamiah Idaho above the Clearwater River. The gold in California had run out so Idaho was a likely place to look next. The Clearwater River, which flows west from three forks out of the Bitterroot Mountains, the area that forms the border between Idaho and Montana, became a center for gold mining in 1860. Problem was that the gold was on Nez Perce land, so the United States Government had to find a way to limit either the gold getting or the Nez Perce landholdings. The Nez Perce didn't care so much about gold so their homeland was reduced by order of the Federal Government. And to the south in the Salmon River country above Payette Lake in Idaho the Nez Perce chiefs White Bird and Toohoolhoolzote and their bands suffered too from the mining boom. Nez Perce-owned livestock were ripped off, whiskey was brought in, Nez Perce women were abused and raped by gold miners; much of what mining brought to the Nez Perce lands was the atrophy of their holdings and the revving up of hostilities on both sides. Later in the 1870s white settlers with families wanted more land for livestock and farming; farmers finished off the land grabbing that was started by the miners.

That spring of 1877 the Chief Joseph Band from Wallowa/Imnaha/Joseph Creek, after getting over the Snake River and up and out of Hell's Canyon, were heading toward the Clearwater River region in Idaho, the last of the (according to the Federal Government) "official" Nez Perce lands. Joseph and his people were to join the mostly Christianized farming Nez Perce along the Clearwater River. The United States Federal Government was making its last efforts to cram all Native Peoples onto reservations.

Up and out of Hell's Canyon along Divide Creek, eventually settling for one last stint of freedom on the camas prairie near Tolo Lake in Idaho, the Joseph Band met up with other Nez Perce on their way to the reservation. Chief White Bird (from the south in the Salmon River country), Chief Toohoolhoolzote and his people (from the southern region along the Snake River in Idaho, below the Salmon River), and others from the Chief Looking Glass Band and the Koolkool Snehee Band settled on the prairie for root digging and horse racing. Some of the younger men in the displaced group got angry; they didn't want to be pushed around by the white settlers, some of the whites had treated them unfairly, murdered some of their people, and abused some of the Nez

Perce women. A small group of Nez Perce went out one night looking for revenge and some whites got killed. Joseph as a leader was indisposed, his wife had just had a baby, he was trying to keep the food together for his people, and things were hard to keep in control. This was the beginning of the Nez Perce War: General Howard and the US Army in pursuit of 750 men, women and children belonging to 7+ bands of non-treaty Nez Perce and Palouse along with approximately 2000 head of livestock. The chase would cross the Continental Divide three times, be approximately 1170 miles long, and span through parts of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The Nez Perce were running away, perhaps to temporarily exile themselves from the wrath of the local white people on their land, at least until things calmed down, or perhaps to find a new and permanent home. It had first been planned that the Nez Perce would follow the leadership of Chief Looking Glass, who thought that if they made it to the Crow Indian territory in Wyoming and Montana that they would be safe. This would prove to be untrue; the Crows – at least at one time an ally of the Nez Perce – would end up aligning themselves with the US Army; probably a political move, probably because they were led to believe that if they helped the Army capture the fleeing Nez Perce that they, the Crows, could plunder the Nez Perce livestock herd. In any case, the Nez Perce were in a war, fighting battles around the Clearwater and Salmon Rivers¹⁵ and eventually taking off to the east; one huge group up and over the Bitterroot Mountains on the Lolo Trail, an ancient path that the Nez Perce knew well, the path to the buffalo country in Montana.

The Lolo Trail¹⁶ starts on the high prairies (the Weippe Prairie) above the Clearwater River. These are camas-digging grounds as well; even today the blue camas flowers are easily spottable where there are no crops planted. The road up from the Clearwater River is steep and winding, the views to the west are spectacular as the Clearwater drainage makes an obvious turn toward the Pacific. Sunset on the Weippe Prairie reminds me once again that there is the Pacific ocean out there; as I look west I feel a hint of Pacific air, that damp ocean sense. As soon as I turn my attention to the east my mind begins to concentrate on the path ahead. Nowadays the Lolo Trail is a 4x4 road called the Lolo Motorway. This is mostly forest service road # 500 that snakes its way up to the top of the Bitterroots, over Bald Mountain, through thick forests and steep, rocky passages. Nowadays it is more than 100 miles from Weippe to Lolo Pass and the Montana border. This is fantastic high country, huge vistas looking over what appears to be interminable ranges of mountains. It is no wonder that the Lewis and Clark

¹⁵ There are numerous accounts of the battles, I will concentrate more on the country that the non-treaty Nez Perce passed through.

¹⁶ "The Lolo Trail began to be used extensively when Native Americans of the region acquired the horse sometime between 1710 and 1730. The added mobility provided by horses made it worthwhile for the Nez Perce to go and spend time in the buffalo country of central Montana. Thus, the Nez Perce called this route the Buffalo Trail. The use of the horse defined the location of the trail. The trail went from meadow to meadow so that the horses could be fed on the trek, which usually took at least six days. Unlike some other trails, which hug riverbanks and stay at the bottom of drainages, the Lolo Trail was a ridgetop trail. Since south-facing ridges are dry and have fewer trees, it is much easier for horses to travel through scattered trees than through forests choked with downed timber." Cheryl Wilfong, *Following the Nez Perce Trail: a guide to the Nee-Me-Poo National Historic Trail with eyewitness accounts* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1990) 142.

expedition lost heart when they looked west from the midst of these mountains. Down below to the south is the Lochsa River, another famous-for-salmon-running river. Once reaching the top of the Bitterroot Mountains the rest of the way follows highway 12 into Montana and the Bitterroot River Valley where the Flathead Indians, a tribe friendly to the Nez Perce lived. When the Nez Perce passed over the Lolo in 1877 they were way ahead of General Howard and his troops, an ungainly crowd of soldiers and equipment. Once reaching the Flathead country the Nez Perce thought that the Montana settlers would not bother them and let them travel south and upstream along the Bitterroot River toward the Continental Divide, on their way to the Crow Indian territory southeast of the Lolo. Getting word ahead General Howard notified a Montana Army contingent to stop the Nez Perce near the Bitterroot River. During earlier parts of the war the Nez Perce had shown great skill in evading the Army¹⁷. Again the Nez Perce managed to herd their livestock and hustle their people behind a mountain, around the soldiers waiting for them, and pass by what would have been another battle. This location just west of the Bitterroot River on the route down from Lolo Pass was named Fort Fizzle, a mostly ponderosa pine flat area where the supposed battle had fizzled out.

The Bitterroot River and on to the Big Hole

The Bitterroot Valley is still on the west side of the Continental Divide so it makes sense that the Bitterroot River has to flow north connecting with the Clark Fork River to get around the Bitterroot Mountains¹⁸ and eventually pass into the Columbia River drainage system. This fact may give you an idea of how imposing the Bitterroot Mountains are. The Nez Perce traveled south to the end of the valley where they cut east to go up and over what is now called Gibbons Pass (the Continental Divide). This put them way ahead of the Army and landed them in the incredible Montana Rocky Mountain valley of the Big Hole. Nowadays the Big Hole¹⁹ River and environs are hotspots for fly fishermen. Even as I still live in the East (New Jersey, for crying out loud) I run into people who have completely condensed this country into the hottest spot to catch fish; many noticing little else except for the sport. Anyway, the Big Hole just to the east of the Continental Divide is where the Nez Perce stopped their flight to rest and take advantage of the pines growing on the slopes to make lodge poles. Since the Nez Perce seldom used travois (lodge or teepee poles tied together triangle fashion and dragged behind horses to carry people and gear – these devices would not be practical on the steep mountain trails in the west) and since they were going for what they thought was an extended stay in the buffalo country, Chief Looking Glass made the

¹⁷ Before passing over the Lolo the entire group of non-treaty Nez Perce had crossed over the Salmon River to escape the pursuing forces; then quickly re-crossing the Salmon River the large Indian contingent fled toward the Clearwater River, leaving General Howard and his forces struggling behind.

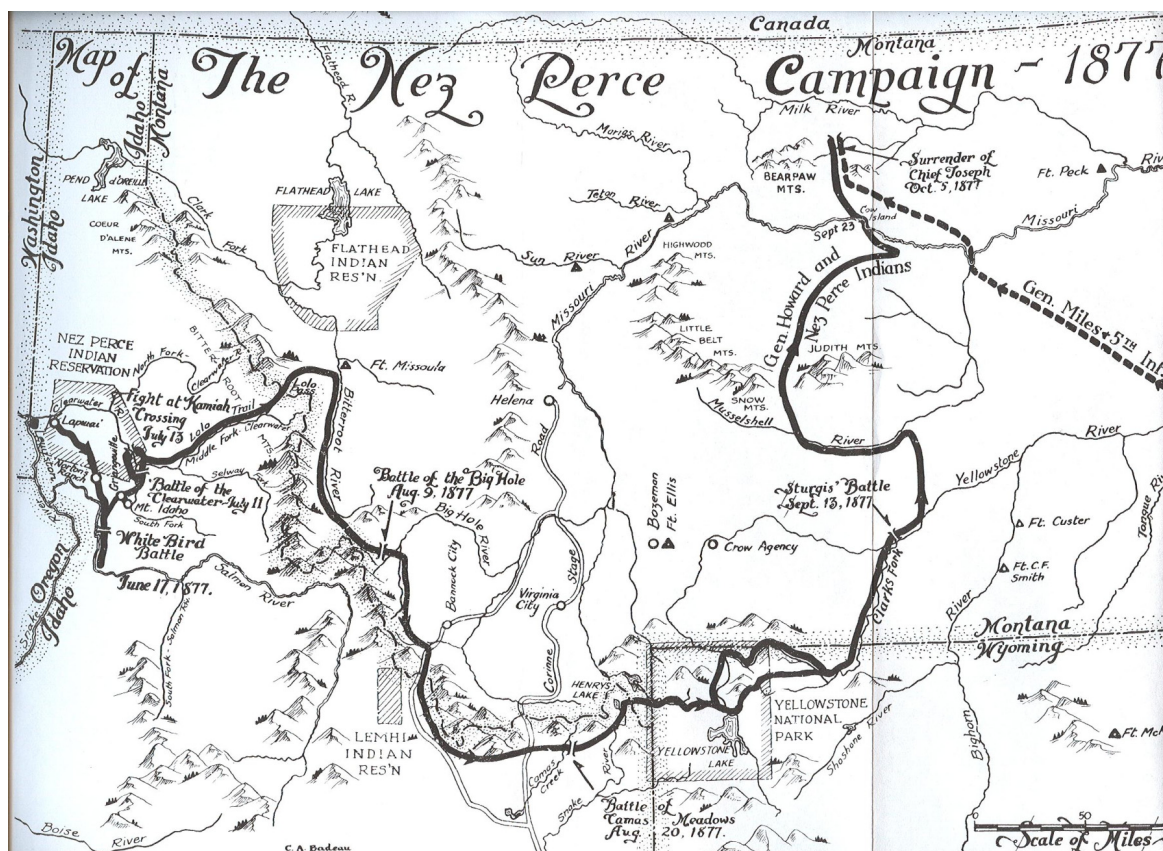
¹⁸ The Continental Divide is south of here so the river cannot flow in that direction.

¹⁹ Holes, like Jackson Hole (a famous resort area in Wyoming) were places where trappers found milder winters, places to “hole up” when the weather got bad, places lower in altitude and protected from wind and weather.

executive decision that a stop was in order. Their camp spot was along a creek, a tributary of the North Fork of the Big Hole River, a kind of swampy area but with plenty of room to pasture their livestock on the mountain slopes and put up teepees on the flat areas. The Big Hole River heads north and east here, kind of like hitting the buttress of the Continental Divide like a billiard ball and bouncing away. Today there is a scruffy cowtown nearby called Wisdom, but the most noticeable feature is the expanse of high prairie that spreads out to the east of the Divide. This is now a wonderfully peaceful spot with meandering waters, tree topped slopes and more high dry big sky. The Nez Perce arrived on August 7, 1877 and remained camping through August 8. On August 9 before dawn Colonel John Gibbon – who was sent ahead with 183 men to pursue the Nez Perce – attacked the Nez Perce camp along the creek. Completely caught by surprise, the Nez Perce managed to force Gibbon's men up onto a piney plateau where they laid siege to the troops. This allowed time for the surviving Nez Perce families to pack up what they could, try to bury some of their dead, and escape. Among the dead were women, old people and children. Chief Joseph took the leadership role for the escape; the Nez Perce warriors more familiar with buffalo country fighting acted as snipers in the trees, keeping the troops contained and bogged down.

Nowadays there is the Big Hole National Battlefield with a visitor's center and guided trails around the site of the siege and battle. As I walk in the siege area I notice why the Nez Perce called this place: "*Izhkumzizlakik*, the place of the ground squirrels"²⁰. Like with the Custer Battlefield at the Little Big Horn, this place seems weirdly beautiful, weirdly peaceful. I look at the remnants of the rifle pits dug by the soldiers with their bayonets, I see the large grassy area across the creek where the Nez Perce families were camped, I try to imagine the women and children hiding in the creeks, the frosty morning air, the terror of the attack. The two worlds: present day Rocky Mountain beauty and battle reenacting in my minds eye are hard to reconcile. The Nez Perce families escaped to the south heading toward Bannock Pass, one of the easier crossings back over to the Pacific side of the Continental Divide and back into Idaho.

²⁰ Cheryl Wilfong, *Following the Nez Perce Trail: a guide to the Nee-Me-Poo National Historic Trail with eyewitness accounts* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1990) 174. Cheryl Wilfong has assembled numerous eyewitness accounts of this battle, soldiers and Nez Perce alike, including commentary by Colonel Gibbon and Yellow Wolf. See also: L.V. McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Press, 1940) pp. 112-160 (from the 2000 edition).



Map from: Lucullus Virgil McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1940).

Fleeing out of the Big Hole the Nez Perce stayed close to the eastern slope of the Continental Divide following the path to the headwaters of the Big Hole River at Skinner Lake then traversing along a terrifyingly named, but geographically significant waterway: Bloody Dick Creek²¹ which drains off of the Continental Divide. We are able to drive and hike along Bloody Dick Creek. We stop to ponder what the Nez Perce might have been going through along this route: certainly the families had to move slow because of the wounded they were carrying with many of the most severe cases left at the camps to die. Once again we experience a country filled with Rocky Mountain splendor: lofty peaks, beautiful alpine lakes and streams, cool, piney camping areas, and the memory of great suffering. We connect up with the road that goes over Bannock Pass and descend down again and back into Idaho and more camas prairies. All of a sudden the world changes and we are in the dry desert-like country of southern Idaho. The mountains are behind us and the world of the famous potato farms and Mormon pioneers is ahead. This is also the eastern drainage area of the waters that flow into the

²¹ "This creek is named for Dick Greene, an Englishman who had a ranch on the stream. He was known to his neighbors as Bloody Dick because he freely used the epithet "bloody" to describe almost everything." Cheryl Wilfong, *Following the Nez Perce Trail: a guide to the Nee-Me-Poo National Historic Trail with eyewitness accounts* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1990) 104

earlier stages of the Snake River.²² As we descend off of Bannock Pass I feel a twinge of regret in leaving the high mountain meadows behind. We drive the long route across the northern edge of southern Idaho in a kind of mix of regret and excitement: we are heading toward Yellowstone Park and probably the weirdest and most bizarre part of the Nez Perce story.

The Yellowstone

With General Howard still in pursuit the Nez Perce entered Yellowstone Park²³ and what is now Wyoming in late August 1877. Already sightseers were busy in the park. There had been a lot of press about the geysers, the beautiful Yellowstone Lake and hot springs. Imagine yourself as a tourist at Yellowstone (what is nowadays probably the most densely visited supposedly wildland²⁴ space in the world) running into a fleeing group of Indians, 750 men, women and children with 2000+ head of livestock, hustling along the trails and roads of the park. Certainly the leaders in the Nez Perce group had known about this part of the country from their expeditions to hunt buffalo; they were going through the park which happened to be on the way to the Crow Indian lands just to the east. A modern day re-enactment might seem very odd: the Nez Perce trying to move quickly along the roads with all of the foreign (German, Japanese, etc.) tourists in their giant diesel-belching air-conditioned tour busses (the Japanese) or their tiny percolating rental cars (the Germans), getting stuck in the usual traffic snarls created by visitors stopping to snap photos of moose; the Nez Perce herd trampling over flora and sensitive geyser areas with the Park Service in pursuit; and then the US Army moving through in pursuit like some behemoth, as usual not being able to keep up with the Nez Perce. If we stayed true to the storyline the Nez Perce would take some tourists hostage²⁵ by raiding a campground. They would also capture a prospector to use as a guide. Some tourists would get shot; some tourists would escape and get picked up by the dilly-dallying Army. The real story of August 1877 is documented in *Adventures in Geyserland*²⁶, a re-printed book where one of the tourists re-tells the story of his capture and includes testimonies from other hostages. Eventually heading east out of the park and over the Absaroka Mountains the Nez Perce started down what is now known as

²² The Snake River never ceases to amaze me. If the reader cares to remember and refer to a map my last reference to the Snake was at Lewiston Idaho: before the Clearwater, before Weippe Prairie, and before Lolo. Still along the same river we are now in southeastern Idaho – a completely different world from northern Idaho – a flat desert world nothing like the up/down steep canyon walls of the Snake near Lewiston.

²³ Yellowstone Park, created in 1872, was the first national park in the world.

²⁴ Wildland, in many parts of the park only by decree of the Park Service. It is not unusual to get stuck in a Westside Highway-style traffic jam along the roadways in Yellowstone. The only real wildland spaces that I can see are in the Absaroka Wilderness areas in the eastern portion of the park.

²⁵ Something like the movie *Baghdad Café* where a German tourist gets stranded in the Mojave Desert with some locals and she dreams that she finds herself in a giant soup pot in preparation for dinner.

²⁶ Guie, Heister Dean and Lucullus, V. McWhorter, *Adventures in Geyserland*. Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd. 1935. This is a reprint of the original book: *The Wonders of Geyser Land* by Frank Carpenter, one of the captured tourists.

the Clarks Fork River. General Howard telegraphed ahead to Colonel Sturgis that the Nez Perce were exiting the park to the east. Through some tricky maneuvering the Nez Perce once again went around the Army, confusing Sturgis and his troops as to their direction and escaping northeast down a narrow Clarks Fork River canyon on to the high prairies of what is now south central Montana near the city of Billings. This is east of the Rocky Mountains and the land starts to flatten out with sagebrush and high desert-type features. Not unlike standing at the western slope of the Bitterroot Mountains and facing west – where I get a hint of the Pacific Ocean – standing in this high desert country facing east I can start to imagine the endless flatland stretching out to the Mississippi and the Midwest.

The Judith Gap

The Yellowstone River and the Clarks Fork River collide just west of Billings. It is nearby that the Nez Perce made their crossing and start to head north to Canada to try and seek refuge with the Lakota Sioux and Sitting Bull – natives of the Dakotas – living in exile after the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876. It is not clear when the Nez Perce decided to abandon their idea of joining the Crow Indians just east of Yellowstone. Certainly the Nez Perce noticed that Crow warriors were being used as scouts for the Army and some Crow warriors even engaged in skirmishes. At this point in the chase the Nez Perce were getting desperate: intent on not having witnesses to their route they had started killing some whites that they encountered; they also stole some horses and at the crossing of the Yellowstone River even hijacked a stagecoach for a joy ride. And the summer was over, by September 13 they needed to decide where they would spend the winter after spending the summer being chased all over Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. Getting out of the United States was probably their only choice and General Howard, with help from Colonel Sturgis and soon enough Colonel Nelson Miles, was gathering forces and getting close.

Today the Yellowstone River is the largest non-dammed river in the US. Flowing north out of Yellowstone Lake and around the Beartooth Mountains it heads northeast down the high prairies into North Dakota to join the Missouri River. I visited this country in early September one year, and it was good that I did because I had had some idea that this high desert prairie was nothing special, just something to drive through on my way to the high mountains. North of Billings I had neglected to notice the beautiful Judith Basin, a kind of gap (even the great town of Judith Gap) between the Great Snowy Mountains to the east and the Little Belt Mountains to the west. This is the classic “where the buffalo roam” country for the Nez Perce and the plains Indians²⁷. Some of this country is the famous Montana red wheat growing country, the place where the best bread flour comes from. We had the opportunity to drive through here

²⁷ The government policy of the later half of the 19th century was to kill all the buffalo into extinction so that the Indians would have to go onto the reservations to not starve to death. Nowadays one can spot some bison near some of the more touristy places like Mt. Rushmore in South Dakota.

during harvest in the summer, to see the farmers out in their combines, the huge grain hauling trucks on the back roads. I also drove through here on the cusp of winter-to-spring, a time when the weather could not decide whether it should be cold or warm: the sun felt warm, the wind was freezing cold²⁸. And as we head north we anticipate the great west-to-east traversing Missouri River and the accompanying badlands and breaks (in the earth) that the river creates. Past Judith Gap (the biggest sky place I have ever experienced), we find our way north to Lewistown Montana and the jumping off point to the Missouri Breaks. The land has flattened out with more wheat farms and incredible long skies. It is as if we have to have faith that somewhere up north along an OK dirt road one thing has to happen: the earth will give way – or break – to the great Missouri River and there will be a ferry there to take us across²⁹. The route to the ferry and on up to the next town of Chinook Montana is 160 miles of fairly desolate country on mostly dirt roads. This is the McClelland Ferry (sometimes known as the Stafford Ferry) a service of the State of Montana Department of Highways and operated by a long line of family descendents for the last approximately 75 years. Once we reach the breaks the descent to the Missouri is quick, almost disappointingly quick, we had pictured more dramatic cliffs; but the drama is the remoteness, everything is perfectly still except for the quiet ripple sounds from the river. We haven't seen anybody for the last 50 miles until we reach the south side of the river and a dock where there is a sign that instructs us to open a mailbox and activate a cell phone/buzzer to notify the ferry operator that we need to cross over to the north side. Immediately a young woman rushes out of a house trailer on the north side, hustles down to the one-car ferry, starts the engine (it sounds like an old tractor) and putts her way across the river. We are so elated, so happy to see her, she is so happy to see us, this is such a joyous uniting of strangers, we can't let her take us across the river until we have snapped photos from every angle of her with her ferry, purchased the \$20.00 video documentary³⁰ of the ferry system (there are 3 one-car ferries in operation) across the Missouri that she has for sale (better than a t-shirt), and heard her life history and the history of the ferry, and shyly I finally get to ask her the question that I had longed to ask: what is it like out here? How do you live here in desolation?

The Nez Perce had traveled through Judith Gap and continued north to a Missouri River crossing at Cow Island just to the east of the McClelland Ferry. This was the twenty-third of September, still 1877. The families were hungry, exhausted, and in need of warm food and a day off from fleeing. There was an Army supply depot on the north side of the Missouri and some of the Nez Perce asked the soldiers for food. They were offered a side of bacon and a half bag of hardtack that infuriated the Nez Perce in its stinginess subsequently exciting the warriors to burn the supplies and steal what items

²⁸ This was the trip in late March when the Yellowstone River was starting to melt, the resultant moisture in the air created a fog that froze to everything, encrystallizing everything (including the roadway) and turned this country into an ice sculpture.

²⁹ Certainly there are bridges across the Missouri River in Montana, but we are still trying to stay on the trail or as close as possible to that route taken by the Nez Perce.

³⁰ The video VHS tape: Joel Schechter, *Montana Twilight: The Last of the Missouri River Ferries* (Missoula, Montana: JOSH Productions, 1999).

they could carry away. The Nez Perce headed north toward the Bearpaw Mountains, the last landmark before the Canadian Border. They stopped to rest 40 miles from the Canadian border.

The Bear Paws

By now General Howard had ordered Colonel Nelson Miles, who was stationed with his soldiers at Fort Keogh (what is present day Miles City) in eastern Montana, to move quickly to the Cow Island area on the Missouri River and intercept the Nez Perce families. General Howard slowed his pursuit from the south thinking that subsequently the Nez Perce would slow down their march, thus giving Colonel Miles enough time to catch up and form a pincer movement from the southeast. The slowing tactic worked and the Nez Perce decided to take some days off along Snake Creek just to the north of the Bearpaw Mountains approximately 40 miles south of the Canadian border. This was late September 1877 and cold winter-like fall weather was settling in, already there was snow in the air. The Nez Perce did what they could to make shelter along the creek and the small bluffs. They had very few resources left. On the morning of September 30 Colonel Miles and his soldiers were positioned to make a surprise attack on the Nez Perce camp. At first the Nez Perce thought that there was a buffalo stampede, but quickly they figured out that they were about to be attacked by soldiers. Some of the Nez Perce managed to escape, the rest were caught in a face-off bloody battle that would culminate in a 5-day siege with Miles's troops, later to be joined by Howard's soldiers who eventually caught up. During the siege a number of Nez Perce managed to slip away to the north, some of them made it to Canada, some were murdered by local hostile Indians, some likely starved and or froze to death out on the prairie, or died of battle wounds. Eventually Colonel Miles managed to achieve a cease-fire agreement with Chief Joseph. Joseph and Miles agreed that the Nez Perce would lay down their weapons and the families would eventually be returned to their native homeland. There were only three remaining chiefs at this time: Chief Joseph and Husishusis Kute (a Palouse Chief) surrendered to Colonel Miles on October 5, 1877; Chief White Bird, who did not believe the promises of Colonel Miles, decided to escape with approximately 100 Nez Perce³¹. Here is Chief Joseph's famous reply to General Miles's offer of fair treatment:

"Tell General Howard I know his heart.
What he told me before I have in my heart.
I am tired of fighting.
Our chiefs are killed.

³¹ "Some estimate that about 330 escaped the battlefield, but a Nez Perce source, Black Eagle, recalled 233 who actually reached the Sioux camp" (Sitting Bull's camp north of the Canadian border, the ultimate destination for the entire Nez Perce flight). Cheryl Wilfong, *Following the Nez Perce Trail: a guide to the Nee-Me-Poo National Historic Trail with eyewitness accounts* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1990) 19.

Looking Glass is dead.
Too-hul-hul-sote³² is dead.
The old men are all dead.
It is the young men who say yes or no.
He who led on the young men is dead.

It is cold and we have no blankets.
The little children are freezing to death.
My people, some of them, have run away to the hills,
and have no blankets, no food:
no one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death.
I want to have time to look for my children
and see how many I can find.
Maybe I shall find them among the dead.

Hear me my chiefs.
I am tired;
my heart is sick and sad.

From where the sun now stands,
I will fight no more forever.”³³

We drove through the Bearpaw Mountains in early September 2003. Along the way we got lost until a friendly Indian gentleman from the Fort Belknap Reservation just to the east offered us the opportunity to follow him in his pickup out of the mountains. Subsequently he sent us along our way to the Nez Perce National Historic Park Bear Paw Battlefield just south of Chinook Montana. There were two reasons why I was depressed: 1) I knew that the Bear Paw Battlefield would be hard to take, the site of so much violence, the horrible end, the promise that the Nez Perce would be returned to their homeland and the subsequent failure of the US Government to keep that promise, the eventual deportation of the Nez Perce to Oklahoma, where many of them died; and 2) our tracing of the Nez Perce flight would soon be over, the incredible trail starting in northeastern Oregon and finally ending up after 1,170 miles³⁴ on the prairie near the Canadian border in Montana. I would get on an airplane in Billings the next day to fly to New Jersey, away to a meaningless land. We had needed to see this country in order to understand the history. I didn't want the trail to end.

The Bear Paw Battlefield has been painstakingly studied. The great chronicler of the Nez Perce Lucullus Virgil McWhorter went with Nez Perce Bear Paw survivor Yellow

³² Other spelling for the famous Salmon River Nez Perce chief is: Toohoolhoolzote.

³³ Cheryl Wilfong, *Following the Nez Perce Trail: a guide to the Nee-Me-Poo National Historic Trail with eyewitness accounts* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1990) 313. There are numerous accounts of this occasion. I invite the reader to look at all of them; the stories vary but the point is pretty much the same.

³⁴ The Nez Perce Nee-Me-Poo National Historic Trail is 1,170 miles long. Our driving mileage turned out to be more like 1,500 miles.

Wolf to stake out the battle sequence and study the landscape³⁵. There is now a trail with interpretive signs that lead visitors through the Nez Perce camp and the battle sites. We procrastinate a bit by making a picnic lunch; like always I look at the sky: there is an accompanying gloom with forest fire smoke billowing over the small hills/prairie (Glacier Park to the west was on fire this year). I sense an undoubtedly autumn hint in the air, maybe something like how the sun is crossing the sky or a cooler breeze, the grass is dry and crunchy under our feet, Snake Creek is dry, it is late harvest season and the summer is in its last stretches. A sign warns us of rattlesnakes so we stay on the trails, lingering by the sites that identify where all of the famous Nez Perce chiefs had their camps. I am in awe to be on these grounds. I can sense the terror of the Nez Perce families trying to find shelter in the cutbanks of Snake Creek. In October during their battle it was already snowing, the Nez Perce had some canvas shelter, which amounted to very little defense against winter charging forth. We finish the interpretive trail/hike with the famous words of Chief Joseph as quoted above. We walk silently back to the parking area, silently get in our vehicle and drive away aimlessly, we don't know where to go next, the trail is ended, we can't find our way, we simply drive up the road to Chinook Montana, and stop.

The Ending

Many of the Nez Perce who had managed an escape into Canada to join Sitting Bull would eventually try to return to their native lands in Idaho. Some made it back to Idaho and managed to live in obscurity, some were discovered by white authorities and shipped off to exile in Oklahoma (joining Chief Joseph and his followers), some of the families were killed by hostile Indians as they tried to return. Those 418 people that had followed the leadership of Chief Joseph and surrendered at the Bear Paw Battlefield were taken by Colonel Miles to Fort Keogh (Miles City Montana). Part of the Nez Perce's agreement for giving up their weapons was an understanding that the families would spend the winter at Fort Keogh and return to the Idaho reservation in the spring. Even Colonel Miles and General Howard had thought that the Chief Joseph group would be returned to the Idaho reservation. But the Army superiors: General Phil Sheridan and General of the Army William Tecumseh Sherman, were still sore about the previous year's Battle of the Little Bighorn (1876) where Colonel George Armstrong Custer had met his defeat at the hands of the Sioux and Sitting Bull. No tolerance was allowed. Chief Joseph and his people would be exiled to Indian Territory in Oklahoma via Bismarck (what is now North Dakota), Fort Leavenworth Kansas, and eventually to northeastern Oklahoma, then one last stop to a patch of land in north-central Oklahoma near Ponca City.³⁶ Many of the Nez Perce died in this exile while Chief Joseph lobbied

³⁵ Lucullus Virgil McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1940), 210-226.

³⁶ We drove to this spot in Oklahoma as part of another trip. We had not expected to find anything there, the place that the Nez Perce called, Eekish Pah: the hot place. We did locate a stone pillar with a brief and

for their cause. Finally in 1885 Chief Joseph and his remaining band of 267 Nez Perce were returned to the Northwest. The Nez Perce traveled by train to Wallula Junction in Washington State; here they were given the choice: "Where do you want to go? Lapwai (the Idaho reservation) and be Christian, or Colville (north-central Washington State: the Colville Indian Reservation) and just be yourself? --Yellow Wolf.³⁷ Chief Joseph was not given a choice, he was exiled to the Colville Indian Reservation, 149 Nez Perce opted for this choice. The rest of the group, 118 people, went to live on the Nez Perce reservation at Lapwai Idaho.

Just up the road from the Bear Paw Battlefield in Chinook Montana there is a terrific museum: the Blaine County Museum, which serves as an interpretive center for the battlefield. It is almost too bad that this museum is at the end of the trail because it has so much information on how to navigate the Nez Perce Trail and where to go to see specific sites. We wander about the exhibits somewhat dazed, not knowing what to do next. We have a feeling of hopelessness, no ability to deal with the senselessness of the ending, no way to find meaning in the ending, there is not much to do except drive away.

Selected and annotated bibliography

Axtell, Horace P., and Margo Aragon. *A Little Bit of Wisdom, Conversations with a Nez Perce Elder*. Lewiston, ID: Confluence Press, 1997.

"My great grandfather was a warrior and fought for the cause – to take this religion and go somewhere where they could practice it without having to be on a reservation worshipping the Christian way of life." (Horace Axtell, p. 15) Notice that the author says: "worshipping the Christian *way of life*" [accents are mine]. This explains a lot, especially when we consider the inherent lifestyle of the Nez Perce who lived around the Snake River: a nomadic life of spending the summers in the high country where there is game, berries, roots, the fish are spawning in the high mountain streams and lakes and the weather is cool and comfortable; then moving to the lower altitude river areas in the winters for a milder climate and much less snow. The biggest problem that Christians had with native peoples is that they (the native peoples) moved around, were non-stationary, they could not adapt to being in one place all the time, a place near a church for consistent weekly worship. Not to mention the fact that the Nez Perce wanted to travel to the buffalo country not only to get food, but to visit with friends and family and to have a vacation. Horace Axtell tells stories about going on summer camping trips with his grandmother to pick huckleberries. His family would move out into the woods and live in a teepee for a while to gather berries and to enjoy the high mountain air. This country is so beautiful, so inhabitable, so spectacular, why not be out in it? Almost nobody understands this. Horace Axtell describes his grandmother's old

barely understandable explanation as to why in the late 1800s a population of Northwest Indians had lived here under the leadership of the famed Chief Joseph.

³⁷ Lucullus Virgil McWhorter, *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1940), 290.

Indian ways: making a drink out of tree moss and roots that tasted like licorice, he describes how he lived as a young person on the reservation, and his life as an adult following the traditions that are so important to the Nez Perce.

Horace Axtell is a Nez Perce Elder and a leader of the Seven Drum Religion. He is also a retired worker from the Potlatch Paper Mill and served in the Army's 529th Engineer Unit at the end of World War II. *A Little Bit of Wisdom* is a series of stories he told to Margo Aragon.

Evans, Steven Ross. *Voice of the Old Wolf*. Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, 1996.

Steven Ross Evans has traced the history of the life and work of the first white Nez Perce chronicler Lucullus Virgil McWhorter (1860-1944). Probably the most important source of oral history on the Nez Perce is McWhorter's *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story* (published in 1940) where McWhorter and Nez Perce warrior Yellow Wolf (survivor from the Nez Perce War) travel to historical locations, attempt to retrace the steps of the Nez Perce warriors and families, and work on getting the stories straight. What Steven Ross Evans has done is trace the tracings by telling the life history of L.V. McWhorter. There are many photos and references to documents that are in the L.V. McWhorter Collection at Washington State University. Much of what *Voice of the Old Wolf* gives the reader is a compendium of the highlights from the McWhorter archives.

It is worth noting that both the Washington State University Press and the Oregon State University Press have many titles related to Indian culture in the Northwest and some valuable titles on environmental issues that have a great impact on the Nez Perce.

Josephy, Alvin M., Jr. *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965.

This volume is probably considered by most readers to be the comprehensive and definitive history of the Nez Perce; though it is worth noting that Josephy has relied greatly on McWhorter's work, particularly on Yellow Wolf's history. Josephy's book chronicles the history of the Nez Perce from Lewis and Clark to Chief Joseph's arrival at the Colville Indian Reservation. It would have to be the work of later scholars, particularly Steven Ross Evans, Dan Landeen, and Allan Pinkham, to add a more coteremporary 20th century view on matters pertaining to the Nez Perce.

Landeen, Dan and Allan Pinkham. *Salmon and His People: Fish and Fishing in Nez Perce Culture*. Lewiston, ID: Confluence Press, 1999.

This is an essential and definitive study of the Nez Perce's biological and cultural relationship to their waterways. *Salmon and His People* begins with a chronology of the damming of the local rivers (by 1975 eighteen dams were in place along the Columbia and Snake Rivers). "[In] 1991 sockeye salmon and spring, summer, and fall chinook salmon from the Snake River, the Columbia's largest tributary, are listed under the Endangered Species Act." (Page xvii) A brief study of the geology of the Columbia River Basin is provided as a background to what makes this country so inhabitable for anadromous fish and the people that depend on them. Extending from this study is a

description of the common fishing sites including Celilo Falls on the Columbia River (now submerged by dammed waters, a famous gathering place for Northwest Indians to net salmon heading inland to spawn), good places for eel (pacific lamprey) fishing along the Snake River near Asotin, and other sites. Techniques for catching fish are also explained with interviews by Nez Perce on how to properly gaff salmon, collect eels safely, prepare the fish for eating and preserve the fish for later use. The numerous Nez Perce interviews (as sidebars) to most topics are the best reading in this book.

A chapter is dedicated to a study of the history of treaties that pertains to the Nez Percés. The authors have provided a present-day study of tribal management of the local waterways and Idaho State political maneuvering to limit the treaty rights of the Nez Perce.

Salmon and His People culminates with a long biological and historical study of fish species local to the Nez Perce. So much of what is explained here is each species' historical demise and present status in regards to an endangered species list and the methods employed to keep the species from disappearing (see also Keith Petersen's *River of Life, Channel of Death* for more on strategies for fish survival). There are photos of each species in a local habitat and descriptions of the ocean-going/anadromous species lifespan from small stream to the Pacific Ocean and back.

McWhorter, Lucullus Virgil. *Hear Me, My Chiefs! Nez Perce History and Legend*, ed. By Ruth Bordin. Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1952.

This volume is L.V. McWhorter's attempt to provide a comprehensive study of the Nez Perce. McWhorter spent years with the Nez Perce befriending many older warriors who had survived the Nez Perce War, knew their history well and could retell the stories. Much of the problem with this book is that McWhorter was not a methodical scholar, he was more of a story gatherer, and consequently so much of this book seems sketchy in detail. However, there is valuable information to be gleaned here, particularly that pertaining to the role of Chief Joseph during the war and the importance of the buffalo hunter Nez Perce as warriors, strategists, and protectors of the families. L.V. McWhorter died before he was able to finish *Hear Me, My Chiefs!*. The text was completed, reorganized and edited by Ruth Bordin at Washington State College (now Washington State University).

McWhorter, Lucullus Virgil. *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story*. Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1940.

This book must be the most quoted book pertaining to the Nez Perce. When I arrived at the Blaine County Museum in Chinook Montana at our completion of the Nez Perce Trail I immediately began a perusal of their library and bookstore. The woman running the museum advised me that *Yellow Wolf* is the "bible" of Nez Perce historians and she warned me that if I did not know this book from front-to-back I would never know the Nez Perce War story. Also, she said, the ranger who runs the Bear Paw Battlefield carries around a well-thumbed copy of *Yellow Wolf* and is constantly referring to it. Even Joseph, the most comprehensive scholar, cannot escape the impact of *Yellow Wolf's* documentary history (as compiled to L.V. McWhorter). In this volume we find out the Indian's view of the Nez Perce War, the real feel of battle, the politics behind the Nez Perce's decisions about how to escape, war tactics and strategies, and the deep-

heart feelings of the Nez Perce for their homeland. This is where it all is. This is a good place to start, again, and again.

Petersen, Keith C. *River of Life, Channel of Death: Fish and Dams on the Lower Snake*. Lewiston, ID: Confluence Press; Lanham, Md.: Distributed to the trade by National Book Network, c1995. There is a new edition with a new preface by the author published by Oregon State University Press.

Much of what initially interested me in the Nez Perce was their present-day struggle with their native waterways, particularly with the numerous dams on the Snake River. The anadromous fish population story and the history of the Nez Perce cannot be separated. The damming of the Northwest rivers has all but destroyed many species. For example: the Snake River species of the Sockeye Salmon is endangered and probably extinct, and other salmon species runs are greatly reduced. The story of the disappearance of Nez Perce land is only part of the tragedy; the disappearance of a prime source of food and native culture as pertaining to waterways is the other half of the story. Keith Petersen has the best history and documentation of what happened to the eels, salmon, steelhead, and other fishes of the Snake River. He tells the whole story including the robber-baronesque reasons for making Lewiston Idaho the farthest inland western US seaport by creating dammed slackwater shipping lanes spanning 437 miles from Astoria Oregon on the Pacific Coast to Lewiston Idaho. Also valuable in this book is the information on the region's natural history. There is a great bibliography as well.

Trafzer, Clifford E. and Richard D. Scheuerman. *Renegade Tribe: the Palouse Indians and the Invasion of the Inland Pacific Northwest*. Pullman WA: Washington State University Press, 1986.

The Palouse Indians were often made invisible by their powerful neighbors to the east and south: the Nez Perce. Many historians get the Palouse Tribe confused with the Nez Perce, especially when they retell the somewhat mythical story of Lewis and Clark's first encounters with Indians in the Northwest. The Palouse tribe shared the Sahaptin language heritage with the Nez Perce, Cayuse, Walla Walla, Wanapam, and Yakima. All of these tribes were friendly to each other and had common relatives and family relationships. What the authors of *Renegade Tribe* have tried to do is delineate the Palouse Tribe in various ways; particularly they have tried to characterize the Palouse Indians as especially hostile to the invasion of white settlers. It is worth noting that as a tribe, and as compared to the Nez Perce, the Palouse Indians certainly got a shorter end of the treaty stick. At the Walla Walla Council in 1855 Governor Stevens (of Washington Territory) coupled the Palouse Tribe with the Yakima and Nez Perce Tribes and ordered them (the Palouses) to move away from their (now) Southeastern Washington homeland either to: the west on the eastern shoulder of the Cascade Mountains to join the Yakimas, or on to the Nez Perce reservation in Idaho along the Clearwater River. In any case, their homeland was destroyed. "The Palouses believed that the Creator had given them specific lands upon which to live, and this idea formed the basis of their religion. The Palouses were guardians of the lands, not owners, and for them to surrender their lands to the whites was literally against their religion. The land that held the bones of their ancestors was considered sacred." (Page xiv) "Under the terms of the (1855) treaty, the Nez Percés would retain a good portion of their traditional homelands. Other tribes: the

Palouses, Wanapums, Wenatchees, Klikitats, Cayuses, and Walla Wallas, would lose most, if not all, of theirs.” (Page 53) We could include the Wallowa / Chief Joseph Band of the Nez Perce as part of the population that would lose their land. In fact, it was suggested at one point that if Chief Joseph and his people did not want to move to the Clearwater Nez Perce Reservation to the east that they could join many of their Cayuse relatives and move to the western Cayuse reservation lands. In any case, what was happening in the mid-19th century was a mostly bookkeeping procedure by the US Government to conglomerate separate (yet related) and distinct tribal entities on to land that white settlers did not desire.

Important Northwest history is presented in detail in *Renegade Tribe*. The Yakima War, the Nez Perce War, successful campaigns by the Army in the Palouse homelands (explaining why the infamous Hangman Creek in the Palouse farm country is named as such) and the Palouse Tribe’s involvement in these affairs is essential reading. The tracing of the Palouse’s involvement in General Howard’s chase of the Nez Perce adds quite a bit of detail to the story. Palouse Chief Husishusis Kute capitulated with Chief Joseph at the Bear Paw Battlefield and was exiled to Indian Territory in Oklahoma with the Nez Perce. Chief Husishusis Kute and the surviving Palouse families were returned to the Northwest in 1885. Some of the Palouse people had managed to stay on their native lands along the Palouse River as late as 1914 where a census of five remaining people were counted in their traditional village of Palus. By the later half of the 20th century a good portion of Palouse homeland had been flooded by the reservoirs formed behind the Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental Dams on the Snake River (page 139).

Of all the books I have read about native homelands *Renegade Tribe* and Keith Petersen’s *River of Life, Channel of Death* provide the bleakest picture of what happened and probably will happen. Most people never consider the fact that what happens to the land is what happens to the original caretakers of the land.

Wilfong, Cheryl. *Following the Nez Perce Trail: A guide to the Nee-Me-Poo National Historic Trail with eyewitness accounts*. Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1990.

A new edition of this valuable guidebook will be coming out in fall 2005. I purchased *Following the Nez Perce Trail* at the Blaine County Museum in Chinook Montana after we had completed the trail. It certainly would have been easier to have had this book along our route and I have many times since used this guide to retrace parts of the Nez Perce Trail. What Cheryl Wilfong has done is put much of the historical information along with many photos and eyewitness stories into the midst of an infallible guide for the trail. And this is really three guides in one: side-by-side there is a version for those who would rather not go off the main roads and highways, there is a middle ground version for those who may be driving their Subarus in this country, and then there is the crazy version, the tip-over-the-edge-of-the-world guide for those of us who don’t mind getting out into the middle of nowhere (like hiking over Cactus Mountain between the Imnaha and Snake Rivers) or driving the Lolo Motorway (don’t do it in a forest fire like we did). I love this book and I read it through while looking at all of my forest service maps and atlases. This book is the best reference to get to know the geography of the country short of following the trail.

The eyewitness accounts that Cheryl Wilfong has researched and included add a lot to the present-day traveler’s experience of the Nez Perce Trail. For example, in the historical commentary provided for the Bitterroot Valley she includes this story by the Buck Brothers who ran a general store in Stevensville Montana, which was along the

route of the Nez Perce as they headed south to cross the Continental Divide and pass over to the Big Hole. In July 1877 most of the settlers around the Stevensville area were barricaded in the nearby Fort Owen in expectation of the Nez Perce:

“Brothers Fred and Amos and myself went up town to the store that morning, August 1st, and about ten A.M. were surprised by the appearance of one hundred fifteen warriors [Nez Perce], well armed with Henry rifles, riding into our little village under the leadership of White Bird. We were lost to know what this day would bring forth. Never shall I forget their formidable appearance, their stern looks, their aggressiveness and their actions, which in themselves placed us immediately on the defensive. This added another stimulus to our present fear, which made a life-long impression.

They were all well dressed with apparently new showy blankets, well armed and rode the finest of horses.... The Nez Perces were by far the finest looking tribe of Indians I have ever seen.... We had always considered the Nez Perces as a wealthy tribe and on this visit they seemed to have plenty of money, all in gold coin, but they did not come to trade this day, nor did they buy anything to my knowledge except some whisky sold them by unscrupulous individuals who had no care of the well-being of our community.

During their stay in town many of them came into the store, some of whom I knew personally. They told me that they held no animosity against the white people of the Bitter Root, as they had always treated them kindly. They also told me of their troubles at home, causes leading up to the outbreak, depredations they had committed, and in short were free to talk to me—speaking good English—of their oppressions in Idaho; how the white settlers wished to crowd them onto a reservation and the resulting conflict which crystallized their determination to seek a new home rather than submit to the will of their oppressors....” (Page 159)

Cultural Production, Social Ideology, and Political Economy in the Bai Torch Festival (Dali Prefecture, Yunnan Province)

Avron A. Boretz

In parts of western Yunnan Province, on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of the sixth lunar month, respectively, Yi and Bai villagers build, erect, and set ablaze tree-sized bamboo-and-straw torches. This event, known to Bai and Yi elders by various terms mostly translatable as "Sixth Month" or "Lighting the Fire"--is now widely (and semi-officially) referred to by its Chinese name, huobajie, the Torch Festival."

My research is concerned exclusively with the Bai version of this ritual as practiced in towns and villages on the western shore of the Erhai Lake Basin. Most of my data is based on observations, interviews, and inquiries made during four short field trips to Dali in 1995 and 1996. This material describes events and conversations that took place in Yinqiao, Wanqiao, Xizhou, and Zhoucheng townships to the north of Old Dali City. In particular, I was able to spend several weeks in one village in Yinqiao township.

The main event begins at sunset on the evening of the twenty-fifth. In Xizhou and Zhoucheng, young women and children don traditional Bai dress and soak their fingers in red dye. The village chief or other ceremonial official reads a commemorative edict, usually in Mandarin. In most villages today, he is surrounded by the sponsors of the event and the women of the Lotus Pond Society. After the edict is read, strings of firecrackers attached to the north and south corners of the torch are set off, and the Lotus Pond women conduct a ritual purification. The torch is then lit from a point near the top by a village elder or an invited party official using a long bamboo pole. About forty feet high, wrapped in straw and impregnated with firecrackers, the torch burns from the top down, usually into the wee hours of the next day. The climax, however, comes shortly after the torch has been set alight. First, young men, women, and children move out of the crowd in pairs and clusters, dash over to the torch and circle it counter-clockwise, dodging falling cinders and detonating firecrackers. A crowd of young men gathers at the south corner of the torch where, near the top, a three-tiered bamboo-and-colored-paper contraption has been inserted and hangs over the crowd at a suggestive 45-degree angle. The fire soon burns through the bamboo pole that holds this pagoda-like apparatus in place, and it begins to fall. If the pole burns clean through, this model of upside-down peck and bushel measures falls to the ground, and the young men scramble to grab a piece of it. If the break is only partial, one or more particularly daring youths will try to climb the burning torch as the crowd shouts encouragement. The successful grabber is mobbed by his friends, and he heads home to celebrate his success. The crowd now concentrates on playing with the small torches. Young men chase village girls and throw handfuls of powdered pine incense on the flaming torches, sending up loud puffs of fire and smoke, producing screams of protest from and sometimes second-degree burns on their victims. At another end of the square, the older villagers and young children watch

an opera or singing performance. As the torch burns down, the crowd begins to thin out, and by midnight the tourists have moved on and the locals have mostly returned home to sleep. A few men and women remain to keep watch through the night to guard against the possibility of fire from any remaining stray sparks.

Tourists and other outsiders usually view the event at one of two venues promoted heavily by the local authorities, the market field in Xizhou or the main square in the hillside town of Zhoucheng. While the torch burnings in these two locales have by no means entirely lost their meaning to the local community, they have taken on new meaning and importance as engines of both economic and symbolic capital. The Chinese and foreign tourists who come to Dali to see the festival are certainly a boon to the local economy, but attracting outsiders serves a number of other interests as well: The ideological and political importance of cultural difference is particularly pronounced at the local level in this ethnically diverse area of southwest China. [It is likely that a lot of people who now proudly call themselves "Bai" would have argued emphatically that they were Han before Liberation, as the political expedience of ethnicity has shifted over time. The Bai claim to cultural uniqueness and a high level of "civilization," however, is largely based on a historical claim, supported by archeological, linguistic, and cultural evidence, that the Bai are descendants of the founders of the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms which arose, thrived, and fell on this territory during the seventh through the thirteenth centuries. The Torch Festival is often cited by local scholars and laypersons alike as a living relic of this ancient heritage. Most of the scholarly writing, and much of what outsiders hear about the festival during their brief encounters with Bai culture implies that the festival is a replay of events early in the Nanzhao period, that is, a symbolic representation of the mythohistorical origins of the Bai as a people. Having outsiders, especially foreigners, on hand to watch this cultural performance and learn its significance has come to be a significant part of the contemporary production of this unique and special cultural and historical entity. Coming to watch a "traditional Bai cultural event," and buying "ethnic artifacts" like carvings, clothing, and ritual items specific to the festival from local merchants and street vendors, outsiders simultaneously satisfy--and perhaps serve to further integrate--two central local concerns: developing the economy, and constructing local identity. Following its revival in 1983 after being banned for fourteen years as "feudal superstition," the Torch Festival has become one of the "traditions" most often cited by Bai intellectuals seeking to legitimize Bai identity in the idioms of Chinese historical scholarship and social science. Moreover, the festival has been appropriated (in varying degrees depending on locality) by officials seeking ways to, as the slogan implores "invigorate Dali, enliven the economy, vigorously develop the tourist industry".

Preceding, following, and surrounding the public spectacle is a less-visible set of rituals, community exchanges, and negotiations--and sometimes violent confrontations. As is often the case, both scholars and government officials promoting tourism have mostly focused on the public spectacle, a one-evening affair, and overlooked or ignored the less photogenic aspects of the event.

While the Bai almost universally celebrate the lunar new year and other traditional Chinese festivals, the Torch Festival is really the fulcrum of the Bai ritual calendar. Every family head who has a firstborn child becomes a sponsor for that year's event. The year in which the child is born is reckoned according to the Torch Festival, not the Chinese lunar year.

Most Bai interpret and explain the current configuration of the Torch Festival as a revision of traditional practice. The revisions have been brought about partly through what most represent as post-Liberation cultural enlightenment, and partly through the playing out of communal conflicts. Traditionally--and there is good reason to believe that in this case the label of tradition refers to actual practice--only the fathers of firstborn sons were entitled to act as torch sponsors. This glory, of course, entailed also a significant contribution of money, raw materials, and labor towards the building of the torch and the performance of the requisite rituals. Nevertheless, the chance to demonstrate ability and masculine prowess was, and continues to motivate participation by village men. [The officials that have coopted the ritual, of course, are simply appropriating this charisma to themselves and augmenting their own demonstrable potency and prowess.]

Corresponding to this privilege was the penalty imposed on the fathers of firstborn daughters: They were required to dig the hole that the torch pole is inserted into after it is erected. The shame entailed was so great that most in this position chose to do the work under the cover of a dark, moonless night. The conflicts that arose between the proud sponsors of torches and the shamed diggers of holes often led to violence, and even death: In the 1930s, the father of one newborn daughter was so distraught at his social failure that he beat the infant to death and threw her corpse into the newly-dug pit. Many villages tell of less tragic, but equally violent clashes between the families of sons and daughters.

It is interesting to note that many of these stories were related to me to explain why a particular village no longer practices the festival. Other reasons cited had to do with clashes between village subdivisions--now habitually referred to as production units. Conflicts arising out of the scramble to grab the bushel measure have also escalated into violent, even armed clashes [Xizhou, official hiring soldier anecdote]. This suggests that the Torch Festival and the interpretive discourse that surrounds it serves the production of collective identity vis-a-vis neighboring communities and village subgroupings every bit as much as it serves a more obvious role in the presentation of a trans-Bai identity to outsiders. The torch is erected and burned in the plaza of the temple of the locality god--the benzhu. The celebration of individual and collective prosperity is thus ritually linked to the power of the locality god. Although I don't have time to examine this point in detail here, I will cite one additional bit of anecdotal evidence: Construction of the large torch begins with the felling and stripping of a medium-sized tree. In the past, my informants told me, the tree was "stolen" from a neighboring village, felled in the dead of night by village youths. Tree stealing can still be found here and there, but due in part to the illegal and dangerous nature of the practice--many an inter-village brawl has stemmed from catching the tree thieves in the act--in recent years more villages have chosen to purchase trees from local landowners. Such risk-taking on the part of village braves certainly reinforces their individual sense of prowess, but just as importantly, demonstrates the collective ability of the community to prosper at the expense of its neighbors. Success in this particular endeavor carries this message to their own group, as well as to the angry discoverers of a sawed-off tree stump.

Aiming to revise the division between son-producers and daughter-producers, most villages now accord sponsorship privileges to the family of any first-born, and other villages have completely reformed the criteria for participation. Variations now include all newlyweds, all parents of newborns, and so on. Some villages have turned the festival into a ritual-less folk festival, and in some areas--in Eryuan, for instance--local officials

now sponsor and run the festival, appropriating all the masculine charisma of the event for themselves.

These reforms are explicitly aimed at removing all residues of pre-Liberation feudal thought and patriarchy from the ritual, thereby avoiding those once-common conflicts and abuses of the past. While no female infants have been thrown into torch pits in recent years, however, the resentments, social conflicts, and even violence are still very much part of the ritual process. When it comes down to dividing the labor on torch day, for instance, it usually turns out the young men digging the pit are the fathers of firstborn daughters, although they now also participate in the weaving and erection of the torch as well.

The continued centrality of patrilineal ideology in the Bai torch festival is evident in a number of other areas as well. Preparations for the festival are handled by a committee of sponsors, family heads all. Interestingly, uxori-local marriages have become quite common in Bai villages in Dali, and not a few of the family representatives are widowed mothers of uxori-locally-married young women. Nevertheless, labor is divided very much along traditional gendered lines. The committee chair--“∞ŹY™”--is almost always a man of known ability, ideally the father or grandfather of the first first-born that year. The treasurer is usually a man of ability known for his business acumen. In one meeting I attended, the money for purchasing food and materials was offered to one of the women, who refused it, passing it on to another woman, who refused it, passing it finally back to the committee chair. While Bai women, like Han women, usually manage the household accounts, they defer to the men in public, extra-domestic situations. Such deflections and exchanges, negotiating face and power along lines of both gender and local social status, are a prominent feature of these meetings.

The gendered division of labor and ritual participation is critical to the efficacy and collective meaning of the Torch Festival. The mothers of newborns pass through the village on the afternoon of the festival, handing out cookies and candies to their elder female friends and relatives and any other important village women.

Mothers and grandmothers make balls of wheat or rice flour, and rub them over the faces, bodies, and limbs of all the children in the household. These flourballs are then wrapped in rice straw, bundled with sticks of incense, and bound with strips of bamboo. The women take them to the village square and fasten the bundles into the torch. Likewise, in some villages, women wrap bits of the evening meal in vine leaves, and at dusk place them, with sticks of incense, in the family's rice fields. Children of other families then sneak into the fields and snatch the packets, opening them and eating them on the spot.

On the other hand, the sponsors, and in some cases the grabbers of the spear, are responsible for feasting the village elders and invited guests on the night of the festival (sometimes later, sometimes for several subsequent days). While women distribute sweets before the torch burning, it is exclusively men that host and attend these feasts, at which liquor is a prominent feature. Women are not allowed on the premises, though they are sometimes provided with a share of the food outside the compound walls.

The phallic symbolism of the torch must also be understood in the context of the ritual process it serves: “erecting a torch” is the goal of every village male. Those who do not produce sons, or at least children, are subject to the shame of public ridicule. One man in

the village I worked in was never able to have children, and died in shame and disgrace: that poor bastard could never erect his torch, one of my informants joked.

The fertilizing efficacy of the torch is further revealed by the competition for the bushel measure. Only young, newly married men (or their proxies) are allowed to participate. Grabbing the top of the bushel measure, which is fashioned in the form of a spear or arrow, ensures the birth of a male child. In some villages, this spear is presented to a childless couple in hopes that they can thereby produce an heir. Successful competitors have told me other benefits that accrued to them or their families during the year after they grabbed this spear--the pigs and chickens had many progeny, the rice harvest was abundant, and a sick grandfather got well.

The Torch Festival marks and acknowledges a critical, fulfilling moment in the life cycles of Bai men and women. It provides an opportunity for those men and women to demonstrate their productive power, and demands that they enact that power collectively in the service of the community. While identity politics and economic pragmatism have become visible aspects of the Bai Torch Festival, however, its local importance and ritual significance remain largely invisible to outsiders. The efficacy of the ritual depends on a division of sexual labor that indirectly reproduces gender inequalities inherent in the patrilineal family and the ideology of masculine power. Successful male producers of heirs demonstrate their physical, economic, and social prowess publicly by contributing their own labor, money, and the labor of family members. Women also demonstrate their abilities as able producers and social actors. The Festival thus links fertility, economic production, collective identity, and patrilineal ideology under one very colorful, fiery umbrella.

Ted Coffey on *THE GATES*

Some thoughts and questions inspired by Christo and Jeanne-Claude's "The Gates." I mostly favor the work; naturally it's not the last word in art. I don't think there is any aspect of the work more beautiful than the way in which its *transmission* was composed. In part, this is an open letter to those who criticized "The Gates" on the grounds that the color of the gates might have been more effective elsewhere, their shape might have been more compelling elsewhere, the fabric was nothing to write home about, what they did with line was nothing to write home about, they would have been nothing without Central Park, they were kitschy, they were fluff, they were a sham and a ruse, they were about the self-aggrandizement of the artists, they served too well the interests of vendors in Central Park, they served the interests of [Republican] Mayor Bloomberg enough to annihilate the populist or neo-Marxist stance of the work, they fold into late capitalism in a way not significantly different from Thomas Kincaid's paintings, Christo and Jeanne-Claude were Pollyannaish or manipulative or elusive in explaining the work.

[Preliminaries.] If you an art critic then "The Gates" is not addressed, is not signed, sealed, delivered to you. Can you imagine a work of art that is not addressed to you? Seriously: can you?

No doubt Christo and Jeanne-Claude are attached to the material, to the physical body of "The Gates." Yet this is a work where 'the art' is super consciously *designed* to be located not in objects, but rather in the experience of objects by humans. Or better, in the experience of a total environment activated by the objects. [By the way, that anyone would critique the work without going there is arrogant and awfully dumb.] Some have suggested that, because 'the art' was pretty center-less, enjoyment of the work might correspond to enjoyment of self more closely than in other art situations -- in which there may be more distraction, more markers of refinement, more opportunity to tell oneself how erudite one is, &c. Or I am suggesting that now.

If true, isn't it a lot that children especially enjoyed "The Gates"?

I found that "The Gates" aestheticized and 'made [a little extra] special': walking, people watching, looking up, the wind, smiling. That's a lot. Isn't that a lot? That's a lot.

Joy sustains humans. It is good when joy is distributed without discrimination, not as a function of humans' sociodemographic characteristics, not as a function of our educational or economic status.

It is emphatically and outrageously an act of political 'speech' to design something that distributes joy without discrimination, not as a function of humans' sociodemographic characteristics, not as a function of our educational or economic status.

Some things critique; and some things more critique as they do. "The Gates" more critiques as it does [and is].

If the language [of words] Christo and Jeanne-Claude provided along with "The Gates," repeated continuously by the 'gatekeepers' cruising the park -- namely that the work "doesn't mean anything," and is "free for everyone to enjoy" -- were any more complicated, it would dilute the political [social, spiritual], um, MEANING that flows out from the work. [And if it were uppity or whiney or in any way 'difficult', then critics could *really* dig into them for French-ness, &c.]

For let's say you want to propose a way of being that is very different from whatever late capitalism selects for. Let's say you would propose the idea that humanity could use its energy and resources toward creative expressions of its most compassionate, generous self. And even that walking among one's fellows is precious and should be considered as such. And even that wonder is reasonable. And even that joy is. [And that these things require no consumption.]

Just model it, then -- with a minimum of distraction. Don't talk about it. Talk is cheap. [This is why Zen masters hit people over the head with sticks: efficacy.]

Nothing could be easier than to provide evidence that everything -- and especially everything's mere representation in the media! -- decays and is assumed into the body of late capitalism. How profoundly unsurprising. And funny grounds for a critique rendered from the same moving train. Woe the reflexive cynicism under which many of "The Gates" critics swiftly linked it to market and commodity and spectacle! Your reading could have more to do with your own [socialized] interpretive imperatives than the input. That is: check your own grid, Jethro.

Of course we are here, now, in the society of the spectacle; but I reckon Christo and Jeanne-Claude did everything possible to transcend-not-refuse it, to slip out of the dialectics of it.

THE GATES

Does the fact of Dada ninety-plus years ago diminish "The Gates'" import? What if you've never heard of Dada? Happenings? The Situationists? [Again, this work is for whom?]

I would argue that the [physical] material of "The Gates" and its transmission are indivisible. I want to suggest consideration of some of the domains of "The Gates" transmission: its space, sponsorship, performance agencies, performance protocols, the theaters of its pre- and post-performance, and the material technologies used to present it. I presume these domains constitute, separately and as a network, a symbolic language capable of projecting meaning to humans who experience the work. [I also presume 'meaning' is constituted variously per human; not to mention the fact that temporal dynamics affect humans intra-humanly per blood sugar, just kissed my baby, &c. I know I'm recommending a pretty imprecise science. At the same time, if we can agree that sunshine is yummy maybe we can continue.] Except for the last ['material technologies'], I'll leave it to you to determine what 'meaning[s]' might be projected.

Space: A free and public park

Sponsorship: Two humans -- very pointedly not connected to private corporations

Performance agencies: Friendly people, crazy people, people on cell phones; you

Performance protocols: Whatever

The theaters of its pre- and post-performance: Whatever -- in my case, a cab ride from a Rasta and at the Plaza a piss

[Pause. If you like, take a moment and compare these domains to those of another art event you experienced recently. More or less non-discriminatory second-order semiotics? More or less reinforcement of hegemonic modes and thought-forms?]

Material technologies: Oh, you know...

If the visual language of the gates [qua the gates] were more stylized, refined, exotic, or even concise, how would that effect the whole 'interpenetration of art and life' thing? That is [art critics], do you imagine there is a threshold beyond which aestheticizing the gates further would diminish their, let's say, friendliness? Did Christo and Jeanne-Claude radically miscalculate that threshold? If you wanted to propose an alternative to conventional relationships between the [joyful, liberating, Human] aesthetic experience of art and 'artifact', would you make the material mechanisms of that proposition wicked fine and *exquisite*? Would you load them up with *anything* that had the slightest chance of referring to elite art, the art of high culture -- given what these mean at this moment?

If you said "yes," you may be a suckier artist than Christo and Jeanne-Claude.

The gates [sic] are paint -- they are not the painting. If you like, you can complain that paint smells, is flammable and gets all over stuff; but maybe art criticism is not for you.

Ted Coffey

I wonder if it is a flaw that "The Gates" is so massive in scope, so involved with respect to human and material resources, that some humans might not imagine they, anyone, everyone can propose new systems, too. I hope not.

Anyway, I remember "The Gates" like a kiss. Can we agree that some kisses do not decay, and are not assumed into the body of late capitalism? Can we agree to dedicate our lives to a logic superior to the logic of late capitalism? Can we not only talk and write and make art about it, but do the dishes, too? I believe God wants us to do the dishes, just shut the _____ up and do the dishes.

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DARK RESONANCES

a multimedia installation/performance event

by Gary Hill, Charles Stein and Paulina Wallenberg-Olsson

June 11th 2005, the Colloseum

weblog:

5.15.2005 11:58 am

In the metro innumerable stairwells below the city of Rome set so low that the ruins not be ADDLED. The idea is to STOP history; a tiny child his adult associate mixed among legitimate traffickers grips an electric violin another with tiny keyboard in her lap while happy birthday several notes judiciously excerpted rains out of speakers on desolation row and pickpockets legerdermain in crowded cars between the Spanish Steps and "termini" -- the hub of the metro I hadn't thought of the current underground when I advertised my attention thereunto and whammo the pickpockets got me my passport and 400 euros.

nevertheless moreover furthermore. cs

5.18.2005 12:01 pm

Pieces of the show are actually UP... in the colosseum itself there are a few videos of naked youths of ambiguous gender blowing trumpets with enormous bells and long tubes that snake and coil as they are tooted. These are projected onto various arches in the colosseum and go off and on at random intervals, the trumpet blasts audible throughout the amphitheatre and out onto the street.

Across from the colosseum is the temple of Roma's ruin, an inner concavity maybe fifty feet high where no doubt the goddess once was standing faces the colosseum and on it Gary has projections that stay up all night of "liminal objects"-- almost natural animations that perform their activities naturally until at one moment something gorgeously impossible devours the image. For instance, he has a goat and a sheep distractedly climbing the concavity, turning the site where the goddess once stood into something like an alpine hillside, until at one moment, the goat and the sheep simply pass through each other, the distraction of their general behavior as it were arriving at such an outcome. Another shows a man in Italian trousers and shoes -- you only see the fellow below the knees -- standing on an open book, but a serious wind is blowing, rippling the trousers, and turning the pages of the book which pass right through the legs so it looks like he is standing in a book puddle or book lake. These are huge projections and are visible at night from the road that separates

Dark Resonances

There will be no lions or other beasts. There is as one might have imagined a powerful CONCERN of officials dedicated to preserving RUINS (sic) and you don't do anything without encountering their solicitations.

The actual date that the entire business will go up in the colosseum is still not fixed, probably June 12. I am working with Paulina Wallenberg-Olsson on the sound. She will be the only living thing visible. All the rest will be ghosts and electronic sounds -- seven huge masks in the labyrinth will waffle and bind the atmosphere. She will be Proserpina. I will produce vast layers of the sounds of the dead derived from the amulet you have seen. cs

5.20.2005 4:39 am

The Colosseum only got called so in about the seventh century A.D. when no one knew what it had been used for. There was a colossus that stood in front of it, that is, a statue of the sun god over a hundred twenty feet high, hence a colosseum. Actually the statue was a monument that Nero built to himself and stood in his enormous palace the *domus aureus* that was torn down by the Romans after he died and upon its site the Flavian Amphitheatre (i.e. the colosseum) was constructed by the Flavian emperors to gain the favor of the roman populus. The statue was preserved and Nero's head was removed and replaced by the sun god.

Very ancient times, origins of gladiatorial games; human sacrifices in honor of the spirits of the dead. So the gladiatorial shows were sacrifices -- subtract the sacred.

In the Greek magical papyri the most prominent deity is Helios. Kirke (Circe) and Hekate are daughters of the Sun. And it was these and other heliades that guided the chariot of Parmenides to the regions beyond the tracks of the paths of day and night. Now, Circe's island is AIAIA as you well know, a palindrome. So the sense of a palindrome neutralizes orientation -- finding that which is neither this way nor that... the palindrome

disorients
the sun.

cs

5.20.2005 9:29 am

The queen of the underworld gives birth to the sun (not only the vernal season by her own return) but the day itself, and perpetually. The dawn sun rises from the land of the dead, redolent with the vast tranquility of that dark kingdom, for it is the quiescence not the longing of the dead that mothers the day.

Paulina Wallenberg-Olsson has begun to transform into Persephone/Circe. She begins singing a subtle, plaintive song, with words and melody of her invention, "Father, why have you left me among dark shadows..." with many variations, "Father why did you not give me the hands of the cyclops, Father why did you not give me the heads of the Typhoon.." (the awkward rhythm works perfectly in the tune.) But then she transforms utterly with astonishing ululations and Scandinavian herding calls (more present than haunting, but yes haunting too) herding cries that shatter the bones of the living and show the mother of all shadows as a cry among us. I am producing the quiet shadow sounds that ground the thing. cs

Charles Stein

5.21.2005 8:27 am

I wish I could get you Paulina's song instanter, but it will be with you anon. She actually has a pop single that appears on local radio. Something between Patience and Prudence and The Velvet Underground. Soft, seductive, with ridiculous hooks like Sexy Lover -- can you stand my heat, that transpose to no one can stand YOUR heat, you have wiped out all the citizens. Hard to explain without the actual words. But it isn't the words but the weird thing she does with them.

Stalled in red tape with idiotic though completely predictable impossibilities regarding permissions for the simplest things. We have an ominous meeting this evening with somebody or other. Two nights ago we were driven through the tiny labyrinthine Roma streets by a young mad woman in a mini and a black dog in the back seat. She is some kind of phenomenon on the international art scene and has contrived a crush on our engineer Aaron. I had not but got into the front seat and buckled down than she wanted to know from ME if she should have Aaron's baby. Said I, Skoooozi? She said his body was a body of iron, his eyes blue oceans where killer whales swim. et CETERA. Cetera: we got out of the car and she pulled down her pants to show a tattoo on her ass she said had something to do with Israeli nuclear program, and there I lost her. At the dinner when it turned out that Gary and Paulina and I were not about to help her network with the gang of arts bigshots at the next table she dropped us flat. Good thing too. So. Other energies than Proserpina seem in resonance. I will spend the rest of the afternoon learning Italian from a book.

CS

5.22.2005 12:55 pm

The installation / performance is now beginning to take shape, at least conceptually. No animals, no chorus. Insurance demands prohibiting. However.

The colosseum itself is one huge brain and decrepit cathedral temple of the dead. The stalls around the stadium are chapels. In many of these stalls there will be local projected events punctuated with live performances by Paulina and/or myself. Other events projected as it were from these projections, i.e. the small projections writ large, will occur across the entire colosseum sound wise accompanied by certain dramatic scenes. Paulina will appear in the bowels of the place horizontal on a bier, as if a floating Proserpina Ophelia, suspended against the subterranean darkness, while periodic strobes will flash from beneath her and a chunk of quartz at her navel periodically struck by lasers (thanks for this to Bialy and my visit to Mexico last winter). I am recording sounds of Rome in public places overlaid with sound poetry commentary. This will be a stall and sound permitting may have its moment to fill up the entire cosmos. The Colosseum is a brain, if you look at a diagram of it as it is today with a recently built bridge that crosses it at the corpus calosum. Gary has a text of quasi techno psycho self reflected babble that is disorienting enough when read straight but it will be projected with many speakers all over the entire space to drive the good people of america germany japan china and alpha centauri who daily haunt the place quite --- PREPARED for illumination. I am working hard to master the palindrome in the drawing under my picture -- say: NANDAPADARAPAMANAGAPRAX ARPAGANAMAPARADAPADNA 23 times fast, dropping a letter from the front and the back each time as you go and you'll see what I Mean. Other wonders: a cart tugged across the bridge on triangular wheels. A tent with Paulina (Pinky Lizzardbrain to you) singing Persephone songs. sleeping Persephone's beauty in a box. AND you have some idea. No time to proof read this on the internet clock.

CS

Dark Resonances

5.24.2005 5:46 am

Bialy:

Dr. Stein checks in:

Back from Padova all day in Roma in the morning to St. Peter's to see if that pope was coming out on the balcony to do his waving thing but it turned out he was elsewhere elsewhere so all we got was something like diamond vision versions of the end of the masse and a chorus singing in the mood of Poulenc but the harmonies of Montovani and later we went to the zoo.

One project I have if I didn't mention it to y'all is walking around roman hotspots and taping crowd sounds over which I speak my piece in whatever language-like utterance occurs to me so this afternoon I did speak with some passion to one siberian tiger very large and lethargic one hippo named Carlo two giraffes and many little human children, I love the way Italian children talk.

There is a chapter in Lewis Mumford's "The City in History" called "Death in the Afternoon" that does the job on the colosseum. I may have some quotes down the road I am trying to write the introductory pamphlet for the installation; it is not easy for me to do this it turns out, though I have pages and pages of scribbles -- can you say things like "the life of the wound is the movement of the dead" or "we suck energy from the witness of violence -- energy to feed our indolence and lassitude"?

I don't yet know what the problem is, I can't jazz it on the one hand and explicit exposition seems down right wrong on another and on the third I don't know how to let the big dark thing mumble mumble its own cyclopiian presence; the whole thing ought to be an act of rendering history invisible.

Harvey -- post this, I think; sorry I didn't put it in direct but I am unspeakably hampered by laundry machines at the moment and the good of the intellect is slipping away.

cs

5.29.2005 12:28 pm

I am currently writing a text for a pamphlet to accompany the performance. (Which by the way is to be called *Dark Resonances*.) The following is a note on an episode based on Gary's text titled "Primarily Speaking" which consists of a series of sentences, each suggesting a context, but not completely, and as the series develops the overall gestalt does not emerge. The sentences have been recorded in English and Italian and will be broadcast as it were throughout the huge brain of the colosseum, creating the impression of an enormous psycho-sphere of disorienting verbiage. A sample of the sentences:

one of us is probably involved
there's always someone willing to run the risk
at this point though there are no tell tale signs to speak of
I wonder if the better thing to do is refrain from speculation
hang in there but hold back
etc.

cs

Charles Stein

6.5.2005 4:45 am

No party no party... the colosseum is party enough. It stands you inside your upside and downside down. It does impend. It is a broken thing embodying the most broken of anything ever. Its greys and browns in the evening. It has its own sound. It is the brain as womb. Wound. We are trying to find a pomegranate. They do not seem to hang out at Roma. And it better happen soon. The white model airplane will descend from the highest reaches and land on the corpus calosum. From its bomb-bay a pomegranate will make an appearance. Seeds from which will be deposited in the hypogeum (the underside of the amphitheatre). The gladiators have been hired. The geeks who will try to make the triangle-wheeled carriage of Persephone move across the brain will be dressed in suits, as I think I communicated. The gladiators are very excited to be seated where the senators used to sit, there to watch the business people do some heavy labor on the floor. We are working at impelling a chorus from a single voice to chant the three formulas: the first,

nandapadarapamanagapraxarpaganamaparadapadan

the second,

nondot tuttitunOndut sititinEndAdnenitititis tudon utitittut todnon

and the third,

ee ee oo o a ooa oo oee ee eeo oo a ooa o ooe ee

as well as my I wanted to stay in my home
and not have to go rome
poem from years ago

and a new seed poem based on DEPLETED URANIUM

to be installed at various sites I hope.

cs

6.6.2005 10:43 am

Here is the entire text for the pamphlet. cs

Some Notes for *Dark Resonances*
Charles Stein
June, 2005

1) The Sun Thing

Nero's titanic palace, the *Domus Aureus*, occupied the space where the Flavian Amphitheatre, our Colosseum, was eventually built. A colossal bronze statue of Nero forty meters high stood in its vestibule. When Vespasian demolished the *Domus Aureus* to make way for the Amphitheatre, he preserved the statue but lopped off Nero's head, replacing it with the radiant countenance of Apollo. A later emperor traded Apollo for Helios, the sun god himself. When the Temple of Venus

and Rome was erected at the site where the sun god now stood, it took twenty-four elephants to tote the thing to the front of the Amphitheatre.

For the ancients, the sun god was something more than a flaming object that hurls itself daily about the earth. The sphere on which it moved bounded the known world. Radiance bordered on darkness, so the nature of the sun included, by contagion, that which exceeded the limits of natural order.

When a sorcerer sought to influence fate (to favor a gladiator for the sake of a wager, say), it would be to Helios that he'd first address his incantations. The dark side of sun god had innumerable uses. By the 7th century A.D., the actual performances in the Amphitheatre were forgotten, but the colossal sun god remained. The Venerable Bede believed the Amphitheatre a temple to the pagan demons over whom the sun god ruled. As perhaps it was. At all events, it was the colossal statue at its gates that belatedly suggested the name colosseum. When the colosseum is destroyed utterly, the city of Rome will perish, thought Bede. When Rome shall perish that will be the end of the world.

2) Fan-fare

'Tuba' in Latin is 'trumpet', one of those long, valveless horns used to announce the arrival of Emperor or gladiator, Bengal tiger, or whatever. It trumpets in sonorous consonance the honor of what is about to appear.

In modern brass bands, what we call 'tubas' are usually replaced by the familiar sousaphone, the invention of that paragon director of marching bands, John Phillip Sousa: it wraps around the body of its player and heaves the enormous bell up over his head, where it swaggers at the back of the parade, commodiously blasting its great basso um-pa-pas.

Sousa knew that brass is a malleable thing, but how far can you bend brass? And if that is one question, here is a mushrooming range of related ones:

How big a fanfare can you blow on any given fanfaring occasion?

How much honor can you stir?

When does the tuba-blower get lost in his tuba-blowing?

Is there no limit to tooting one's own horn?

Will not the public arena eventually cave in on itself and consume the public attending the spectacle?

Is it not the very blowing of the horn that makes the spectacle spectacular indeed?

These are weighty questions. But weightier still are the sounds that these Sousa-forms have thrown into the arena of that weightiest of all arenas, the Flavian Amphitheatre, arguably the very center of Roman antiquity, and as such, the very center of Western civilization (and, given the imperial scope of the latter, the very navel of the human world).

We will not attempt to answer these questions, except to remark that 'consonance' is not the word that most readily comes to mind to identify the sonorities that are emitted by them, nor is 'honor' necessarily the quality that best characterizes what most commonly has been announced withal.

Gnarly sonorities smart across the noosphere.

Oh, and one final question: who are the beings who put their confident lips and cheeks to our malleable trumpets? Such dignity possesses these figments, that as the unanticipatable consequences not only of their musical effects but of their very means redound to consume them, they bear the weight of their actions and return to the rough-hewn surfaces onto which they themselves have been projected. Would that their angelic counterparts knew such courtesy.

3) The life of the wound is the movement of the dead.

There were many gates to the underworld in the ancient cosmos: sites where commerce between the living and the dead were possible, if not likely. The Flavian Amphitheatre was not traditionally one of them, and yet we find among the magical papyri surviving from antiquity the

recommendation that in order to gain power over a recalcitrant lover, for example, it is a good idea to conduct one's sorcery on ground where a gladiator has been slain. This surely indicates that our colosseum would have proven to be the greatest hellgate of them all, had sorcery not been, somewhat hypocritically, proscribed by Imperial decree.

Today, the Colosseum seems an open wound in the mind-flesh of psychic earth; its mysterious hypogeum (basement), once covered by the floor on which gladiators fought in mortal combat, lies open to our gaze a bottomless labyrinth of compartments, battlements, and passageways, layered with a patina of moss and weeds, leading the eye to imponderable and chill, bottomless distances. The form of the Amphitheatre impends above it -- it has not the sense of the elegantly contained openness of a modern football or baseball stadium: the walls and their arches; windows; gaping eyes lean in, as if the theater itself would impose a dark essentiality upon those who, even at this late date, take their seats within it for edification or amusement. What is the scope and scale of the dark imposition of the broken survival of this ancient form? What but the unbroken continuity of the monumental pathology that was its occasion?

4) The Mind of Misdirection

Modern entertainment entertains by misdirection. This is how it relieves the pressures of daily life. The price is our submission to conditioning by the commercial interests that inevitably 'sponsor' it. More generally, misdirection directs endeavors ranging from petty theft to stagy legerdemain, politics, religion, high art.

In the contemporary Roman underworld (namely the Metro) having descended the innumerable flights down to the tracks, you are in the belly of Typhon, and all had better be alertness and conscious intensity. One might think one can spot the grim young men scouting the platforms for pickpocket or bag-grabbing targets; and, in general, like the gangsters say, you watch your back. Yet watch as you may, here is where misdirection works its sweetest ploy. It is not the surly males who look like pickpockets that do the dirty work, but comely and affluent accomplices, who might look like anyone at all. While you are fixated on evading the aggression of the thieves, the nimble fingers of the unsuspectable find your wallet.

This is an ancient craft, and it has been practiced for as long as untouchables have existed in a complex history of sometimes mutual segregations.

Sadly, we cannot confirm the assumption that the arcane art is never practiced by the functionaries of honored bureaucracies in the fiduciary arrangements they establish with the artists in their employ regarding such matters as budgeting projects, hiring craftspersons, delegating organizational responsibility, etc. For just where one's suspicion is raised that something is amiss, it is likely that somewhere else in the field of arrangements, somebody is crippling Peter to elevate Paul.

But to be the object of misdirection is not necessarily to be an innocent victim. The people of Imperial Rome were victims indeed of their own indolence as much as anything else, though this indolence was created and manipulated by their Patrician and Imperial masters. The misdirection was, as is the rule, in full view. By A.D. 354 there were 175 days of games with 200 holidays per annum. So addicted were the citizens to the variegated thrills of torture and slaughter, that, in the words of Lewis Mumford, "When the Vandals were hammering at the gates, the groans of the dying defenders on the wall mingled with the roar of the spectators in the circus, more concerned with the day's enjoyment than with even their ultimate personal safety." ("The City in History", p. 231).

"The citizens of Rome were fed a meager diet gratis; however, the main population of the city lived in cramped, noisy, airless, foul-smelling, infected quarters, paying extortionate rates to merciless landlords, undergoing daily indignations and terrors that coarsened and brutalized them, and in turn demanded compensatory outlets. These outlets carried the brutalization even further, in a continuous carnival of sadism and death." ("The City in History", p. 221).

It is easy to be complicit in one's own misdirection, as I fear the populations of the advanced Western nations have sadly become. The news last week (June 2, 2005) of the identity of 'Deep Throat' puts us in mind of how the Nixon regime fell because it thought it could actually hide its nefarious activities. Bush and company, whose publicly documented international crimes far outstrip anything the Nixon Whitehouse ever countenanced, knows that it can do whatever it wants so long as public attention is diverted sufficiently from its malfeasances.

Institutional religions, of course, of all flavors have provided ample employment for intellectual masters of misdirection throughout the ages, and High Modernism, in its contempt for 'representation,' has conventionally understood misdirection to be the very stuff of traditional art. Both in the way of confession and as a boast of the high lineage of the practice, we can say that *Dark Resonances* is misdirection of the purest water, for the object from which we would distract the wary attender, has already been deleted.

5) Palindromes

A brief glance at a diagram of the human brain and of the Colosseum and it is obvious: the Flavian Amphitheatre is like the brain; the brain is structured like a Colosseum.

In a famous analogy, Freud said the unconscious is like the city of Rome. But conversely we observe, the city of Rome is entirely like the unconscious. Successful analogies are symmetrical, like palindromes. They flow both ways.

Circe, the sorceress daughter of the sun god, lived at the edge of the world beyond the paths of the sun and moon, on an island named AIAIA - a palindrome. With a palindrome, you do not know whether you are coming or going, hence the use of them in casting spells. Magic works by strategic disorientation and tactical misdirection. To disrupt the flow of causation and impose the will, time itself must be thrown into confusion. Circe's capacity to morph Odysseus' sailors into swine and to book him passage to the underworld, we think, was drawn from such disruption.

Another passage to the darkly disorientable can be opened by certain magic plants that awaken the chaos at the heart of things. These often supplement the mind-altering wizardry of the palindrome.

In the 1970s it was discovered that psychotropic fungi carrying chemical variants of LSD were natural parasites on barley and rye, and that the psychoactive agent in a beverage imbibed during the mystery rites of Demeter at Eleusis (the *kykeon*) was very likely a substance of this type.

Demeter, the mother of Persephone and goddess of the grain, bestowed upon humanity, it seems, other gifts than the civilizing means for separating the wheat from the chaff.

6) The Carriage of Persephone (or: De inventing the Wheel)

Few today are certain of exactly what the advent of civilization as such was supposed to have done for the species that, by now, has all but universally adopted it. Yet, oblivious to this uncertainty, our technicians continue to advise themselves against 'reinventing the wheel', lest valuable time, better dedicated to the further advance of it, be unnecessarily squandered. Not reinventing the wheel is the principle of technological progress. You build on what you know.

To unbalance this obliviousness, we thought that an opposite strategy, given the historical setting of our installation, might be appropriate for conveying Persephone to her seat as Queen of the Underworld. Her ride along the corpus callosum through the center of the Colloseal brain, though harried by the lurches of her devolving, triangular wheels, will at least have the advantage of retarding a dubious progress from here to formerly. For the underworld is nothing at all if not a thing of the past.

7) Primarily Speaking

The number of voices that at any moment might awaken in one's mind, each capable of drawing attention to the very point from which it speaks so as to inspire the conviction that it is oneself that

is saying what is being said -- the number of these voices, as they used to say of the demons of the air, is surely 'legion.' The one quadrillion (1,000,000,000,000,000) neural connections in the human brain make it so.

A vast universe of possible voices vibrate in the darkness of the skull just beyond the threshold of consciousness. When something forces the transgression of that threshold, if, for instance, one finds oneself in resonance with some apparent manifestation of the dead (by social practice, by psychopharmacological or artistic agency), there is no limit to the number of voices that may awaken there. Then brain reveals itself as full of voices, attitudes, ecstasies. They are too numerous to manifest as dialectical antagonism. It is as if all the political parties of Italy were to have their say at once, no coalitions allowed, no views adulterated by compromise, no agendas diluted for the sake of a share in real power. The mind then appears to be neither this nor that, but the entire arena of possibilities, a space beyond all partialities, all philosophies. To try to find one's way among these voices is madness itself. And yet to shut them out is to deny the very resonance that brought them within mindshot. Our advice: sit still and listen.

8) Persephone

Persephone, the daughter of the great goddess Demeter, is abducted by Hades, the god of the dead, while picking flowers with a bevy of nymphs on a meadow, possibly in Sicily.

Once in the Underworld, Persephone is radically transformed. She is no longer an innocent maid, but the ravishingly beautiful, though ghastly, blue-white, stony-fleshed Queen of the Dead. Innocent life and unspeakable uncanniness seem strangely superimposed within her being.

Persephone rules over countless shadow beings, trapped forever by their identifying traits. To be a shade in Hades is to be irremediably what you are. Even positive identities cloy there because unrelieved by the possibility of Being to come. In either case, a shadow voice eternally drones in your heart, 'I KNOW YOUR KIND.'

These hapless souls cling to the cold and gusty energy emanating from Queen Persephone, as if, should they once but catch a glimpse of Her, they'd be released from the yearning of their restless stasis.

Persephone herself is liberated in being seen, to see her is to be her, to be her is to be what nothing is but all portend. Flash! And you pass from being a being to being Being-Snap the whip of an eagle's wings' and identity fails or flees to another configuration.

In the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Priest sits in the pregnant silence of a vast and darkened temple, a space that is like the Halls of the Dead. The crowd of initiates waits in anticipation of the vision of Persephone to come, having imbibed the gift of the *kykeon*, brewed up from the ergot grown on the grain that Mother Demeter so bountifully provided, some time before.

Until the moment of vision itself, there would be this ambiguity, this tension in every soul: DEATH OR LIFE; FIXED IDENTITY OR OPEN POSSIBILITY; HORROR OR RELEASE; each potential initiate harboring the hope of the transforming vision, a flash of the phantasmal radiance of the nocturnal goddess, that is also the golden light of grain against the sun - each soul, one pair of eyes...

9) Pomegranate

Pomegranates are bloody things. They spring from the severed organs of murdered gods. They are, that is, the means by which immortality asserts itself in the very midst of sacrifice, violence, the joyous orgies of daemonic slaughter.

The seed of a pomegranate, if engorged, bound the being that engorged it to the conditions under which it had been proffered. When Persephone was induced to swallow three seeds in the lap of Hades, not even the decree of the Olympians could liberate her entirely from her bondage to the

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chthonic realm. Her office as sometime Queen of the Dead was consecrated; she would return to the underworld for the four months of the Mediterranean winter.

It seems that to deposit the seeds of a pomegranate is to induce a certain intention upon the site that receives them, symbolically, of course. But the scope of the symbolism of this dark place has been the elusive object of our continuing inquiry since we first alighted upon the colosseum some months ago.

Imagine our consternation (if you will) when we learned that the wings of our model airplane, that we thought would betoken the wings of the dove of grace itself, had, in spiraling down from the highest reaches of the Amphitheatre, released from its abdominal portal not only the seeds, but the fruit itself of the darkly resonant object, to become the plaything of the flower-like maiden. The seeds we learned have been planted, by whom we dare not conjecture, in the very bowels of the hypogeum there to command what future? To bear what fruit?

On the wings of a white pigeon, or contained by what they fly, red seminal juices fall into the readied darkness of the uteran brain. "For nigh two thousand years, we have been waiting" (whispers rise like fumes from the dark hypogeum). Words arise to greet insuperable advances, as if they too had advanced into the impossible, as if they too were readied in the dark of an untoward materium.

6.7.2005 6:13 am

The following is an additional piece, too late for the pamphlet.

Under the (Double) Eagle

One of the computer animations for *Dark Resonances* consists of an eagle trapped in electric wire, flapping its wings in a desperate attempt to disentangle itself. Vast wind sounds arise as his wings move, until something happens, and the eagle acquires the intensity he has generated and begins to snap instead of flap, one wing at a time, each wing snap generating a whip snap, and terrific force emanates from each gesture.

I have not googled 'eagle' to track down the precise history of its symbolic preeminence over all other birds, but I know that from native America to the sufi middle east humankind has felt the ferocious majesty of this towering raptor to the extent that when time came to choose an avian emblem for empire, there was no second choice. Thus empires from Rome to America, with czarist Russia, Prussia, and Nazi Germany between, adopted the eagle as their bird and proclaimed, along with the stupid song of Ex-Attorney General Ashcroft in Michael Moore's flick, 'Let the Eagle Soar.' Until recently, in America anyway, it was difficult to find an eagle. Embarrassed that the image of the highest rank in the Boy Scouts should be on the endangered species list, Americans artificially bred the very icon of natural freedom, and now, occasionally, we once again can catch a glimpse of one skulking above the marshes of the Hudson Valley, its nest, this time, graciously preserved from cell-phone towers, cement factories, or high power lines.

It used to be a figure in poetry, that when a poet wished to express that he had been granted a panoptic vision of the cosmos, history, or the human race, he would say that he had been seized by the claws of an eagle and taken to the summit of the sky. Today we have techno-toys to produce the affects of the panopticon, but it is well to remind ourselves that the soaring of the eagle once portended the broadest of possible creative points of view. And if the natural, if not the political eagle, no longer soars, let us imagine its rage as a monstrosity for the natural majesty of creative energy is lordly indeed, and, if thwarted, who can say with what dark forces it may find it expedient to align itself.

6.8.2005 6:35 am

The Bureaucracy of Ruin

Journal entry, June 8, 2005

Will *Dark Resonances* resonate in the Colosseum? Bureaucratic tangles, funding misunderstandings, behind-the-scenes manipulations, and permissions ambiguities put the thing in doubt. As I am typing these words I overhear Aaron on the phone say, 'You mean you can't get us permission to drive up to the Colosseum to bring equipment for the performance?'

In 1965, I remember very well it was possible to walk right into the Colosseum, explore its labyrinthine passageways, and commune with the myriad cats that survived on innumerable small rodents living among the ruins. Today someone has a stand outside of the back of the amphitheater with a sign that reads: 'These abandoned cats depend on donations for their survival.' There was a half-a-dozen of them around an old woman and a bunch of empty, cheap catfood cans. Compared to the robust nature of the former cat population, 'survival' is not the word for it. Similarly, in England, in 1965, one was not obstructed at Stone Henge in sauntering among the Big Stones. The 'constructive process of ruin' (Ed Dorn) was allowed to proceed along its natural course. I do not know exactly at what date Rome awakened to the danger that free access to the innards of the Amphitheatre spelled to its tourist-trade asset, but today a Byzantine hierarchy is in place to assure the world that these venerable remains not suffer abuse.

Given the heinous history of the place that is treated with such solicitude, I wonder if the Germans are assuaging similar anxieties about Auschwitz, though here it is likely that the holy awe surrounding the comparatively recent history of the place protects it from commercial exploitation - but give it time.

At the head of the bureaucracy protecting Roman ruins in general is the office of the *Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma* (the Superintendent of Roman Antiquities); under this, an office dealing with the Colosseum *per se*, in charge of doling out permission for rock shows and establishing various regulations for times and costs of admission. (The Colosseum is the most frequently visited historical site in the world, with 10,000 daily visitors at ten euros a visit. I do not believe that this was the case 1965, a robust publicity function having made the Colosseum the center piece of today's Roman Holiday.)

Under the august Soprintendenza there is also the office of the Architect. Architect? Architect? Architect of ruins? In fact, there is an architectural specialty dedicated to archaeological sites. The brother of a friend of ours IS one. He works in digs in Egypt and has become something of an Egyptologist by osmosis. He devises the various rigs for the archaeological operation and offers speculation regarding archaic building structures.

The Colosseum architect devises and supervises the stair cases, bridges, walkways, struts and buttresses provided to enhance the ruins, and he makes judgments on proposals for activities at the site. Beyond these bureaucratic levels, in our case, there is the mysterious institute, apparently distinct from the bureaucracy itself, whose auspices were solicited to sponsor our work; the two curators who proposed it to the institute and to us; and a tight little network of craftspeople and employees with relations to the various echelons and persons within the hierarchy, who have to be

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consulted, hired, or mollified for anything whatever on the project to get done, and who seem to have an obstructive relationship to us in regard to getting anything done on our own.

It has become increasingly clear that all these people lie constantly to each other, cajole, bribe, perform favors for, and otherwise kibbitz and connive, to the point that, as perhaps one ought to have anticipated in relation to a European bureaucracy, no promise is made that is certain to be kept, no permission granted that might not without notice be rescinded.

I think all may yet be well, but we are being ridden ragged trying to actually put the piece together and satisfy the endless hassling involving changes required in basic ideas of the piece.

cs

[6.16.2005 8:15 pm]

Ontology of ruin
evanescence burns at the center of need.

International institution expressing institutional and vague evaluation of ancient glories,

Is every ruin valuable? is every dark retention of the past black gold? can we turn all our darkness into fuel? is that what they mean?

Or is it that we are in danger of forgetting that which we have already thoroughly forgotten so well that we think that every image of evanescence is a resource? Soon we'll know what Cromagnon language sounded like. Aren't you GLAD?

No, not every ruin valuable--only the ones some sort of consensus evaluates and judges so to be. What sort of consensus? I vote for ruins that still exude telluric forces -- that one might go there and absorb -- for transformation and communion with energies and possibilities dormant still. My vote won't count, believe me. I know a lake in Montana. But forget about it. We know very well the kind of forces ruins very well have been selected for. There is an hegemony of ruins. World class ruins, no tourist dare to miss. Forget about it.

cs

6.8.2005 6:39 am

Better news today. Better news. The biggest hassle was over the gladiators. They were, as you remember, to be sat in the senators' seats, which are about the only setup seats in the Amphitheatre. We had been told by the architect that it would be no problem. But the day before yesterday the curators and the representative of the institute (about which a word in a minute) nervously and adamantly averred that we had been told no, no one can be in those seats, the Soprintendenza forbids, especially not gladiators, don't ask why. We had not been told. Quite the contrary. Dr. Hill went wild. Told them no gladiators no show. There were also a bunch of details that were worrisome about costs, I won't deal with these here. I was worried we might be out of business.

But. Last night we met with this august (sic) Soprintendenza, who was an unlikely type for the role, as I suppose such fellows usually are. No problem. Gladiators? fine. Senators' seats? Va bene.

Charles Stein

In addition to that, for the first time we got to feel the Amphitheatre at night without lights, and the speakers were in place by 10 pm. Big ones, surrounding the ground and second levels of the Colosseum. I was most worried about Paulina, whose singing is so intimate, we had no idea how it would go amplified into such a space. But the Colosseum is no Shea Stadium. There is virtually no echo, hence no noxious delay, and she sounded fantastic. She sang all her songs walking around the theater and had everyone spellbound. Truly. "I'm a little dead girl, I want to fall in love with my evil twin...", "milk honey chloride," all of which I still promise I will have available, probably the day after the event.

The upper echelon of the Amphitheatre forms a closed ellipse, and is small enough so looking up you see the dark blue late night sky and a few stars rimmed like a wildly set sapphire which doubles perfectly the hypogeum below.

Tonight we test my sounds. cs.

6.9.2005 6:39 am

BULLETIN BEULLETIN BEULLETIN
GLADIATORS BANNED FROM COLOSSEUM

June 10, 2005, Roma. Curators of artist Gary Hill's performance/installation, DARK RESONANCES to be presented at the Colosseum on Saturday evening have proclaimed the connection between gladiators and the Colosseum a "folkloristic element" inappropriate for a monument of such world importance. Colosseum authorities, according to sources, have been harassed by persons impersonating gladiators in the past. Dr. Hill claims the gladiators were only to have a passive role in the piece and that there was no anticipation of bloodshed. Nevertheless, our sources say, there is a fear that allowing them to participate in the Hill performance, even in a passive capacity, would give them a "foot in the door" that might prove regrettable in the future.

.....

This is no joke. After our meeting on Wednesday evening and our shaking hands with a man we were told was the "Soprintendenza" himself, a call from one of the curators (who was not present at that meeting) informed us that the TRUE Soprintendenza is not a person, but, apparently, a stack of heads, like one of those Tibetan tanka figures representing a lineage of masters.

A higher head than the talking one of Wednesday (we dare not say the highest head) censored our plan to place actor-gladiators in the senators' seats and rescinded the handshake we are all but certain was not an hallucination.

Gary wanted to fight, but the elusiveness of the foe and the astonishingly intelligent idea that somehow the link between gladiators and the Colosseum could be demoted from history to folklore knocked the wind out of us all. It is impossible for moderately creative artists like ourselves to do battle with critics, curators, and public officials, whose demonstrable creative powers so far exceed their own.

...

In spite of all this, work at the Colosseum proceeds apace. Last night for the first time we were able to project images and animations onto the walls of the Colosseum. Now, you must understand that in a sense there ARE no walls in the Colosseum, that is, there are no flat vertical surfaces uninterrupted by openings, arches, bridges, slanting slabs, and butress-like diagonals. Until last night

Dark Resonances

we had no idea how we were going to make Gary's projections visible, and had taken heart mainly in the fact that the auditory experiments of the night before had been so successful. But as soon as we threw the images onto the un-surfaces, all our fears were dissolved. The first thing we looked at was the desperately flapping eagle caught in what I now realize was an electricity tower. It was fantastic. The multiplicity of planar surfaces simply rendered the image three dimensional. The eagle looked like it occupied the space between the planes. It was also immense, and we will have, I believe, ten such projectors surrounding the entire amphitheatre, so while the similarly surrounding speakers broadcast the wind sound of the eagle's wings and their sudden whip snaps, the eagle itself will appear to be flickering around the entire space.

cs

6.10.2005 5:20 am

Here is the "q to q" as it exists at this moment for the performance.

1) Colosseum as dark as possible. Rhythmic clapping sounds from all speakers, gradually becoming disorganized. Chaotic clapping sounds slowing turning into the sound of vast rushing waters, from which emerge or slowly to which are joined, tuba noises from the depths.

2) The first incantation: nandapadarapamanagapraraxarpaganamaparadapdnan....

..... - 12)

God knows what it will be like. As usual with these performances with Gary, technical problems harass until the end and there is no time for a run through, and we will be lucky if we even get to do a walk through. So it could be anything from magnificent to complete disaster. Also, Gary looked at the images from the second tier last night where the audience exclusively is allowed by Monumental Policy to BE, and the images looked, he said, lame. We are making desperate diplomatic pleas to get permission to let the audience gather on the floor of the arena, where in fact the images look fantastic, but our hopes as of this moment (12:37 pm, with show time at 10) are not high.

next post will be post eventum. cs

6.11.2005 6:55 am

Well, it happened.

And was exciting enough so that it is a real bummer that we can't do it again to perfect it. It isn't like we can take the show on the road.

What was most exciting was the SOUND of the thing, which was I think rivetting throughout. The sound of the incantations, of the Carriage lurching across the bridge, of the "Madness of the Brain", and of Paulina's singing. There were enumerable glitches, but given our experience with other mammoth performances with demanding technical involvement and impossibly miniscule rehearsal time -- there was no run through, no walk through, we just barely got the video projectors functional, the drones who moved the Carriage instructed, and the oil drums in place in time to begin, perhaps a half hour late, I'd say we did okay.

As an exercise, to exorcise the stuff drumbling in my internal colosseum for the last ten hours, I will give an account of each of the twelve elements I listed yesterday.

I decided to place myself upstairs on the second tier where the general audience was positioned. If you think of the Colosseum as a baseball stadium, you have a large stage area around home plate at the back of which is an archway exit that we have been calling the Gate of Death because that is where Persephone makes her exit after being conducted on her carriage journey across the arena. I took my position in the mezzanine between home plate and first base. Most of the audience was in the outfield, I'd say concentrated in left-center.

1) Colosseum as dark as possible. Rhythmic clapping sounds from all speakers, gradually becoming disorganized. Chaotic clapping sounds slowing turning into the sound of vast rushing waters, from which emerge or slowly to which are joined, tuba noises from the depths.

Pretty much as expected. Immediately I realized that being upstairs meant that I was not engulfed in the sound as one downstairs would have been. The clapping and water though intense and loud was not overwhelming. It was possible to listen to it without going into a state of transcendental acceptance.

2) The first incantation: nandapadarapamanagaprarpaganamaparadapdnan. The exact sound of which I am on my way after making this post to Via Marghutta to define. Text is projected below the second tier with the letters of the incantation alternately visible and set vibrating by a laser device.

Gary and Aaron did an incredibly good version of this. You will perhaps remember that this is a palindrome, and the method of incantation was to be iterating the line removing the first and last letter of each previous iteration until you come to the central letter, in this case X. The spell is done simultaneously both ways. As I read the complete line, another voice hits X at exactly the moment I say X. In the second iteration, the second voice says AXA, in the third RAXAR etcetera, until I come to X and the second voice comes to the complete spell. We recorded each line separately and recomposed the sequence so that it was possible to match the syllables perfectly. The voices were also slightly enhanced by doubling, so the effect was that an indeterminate number of voices were intoning the spell. We had a laser projector that was supposed to be able to spell the thing out letter by letter and project it onto a spot in back of home plate, but the tech guy operating the laser couldn't make it happen. What we did instead was project an inner fragment of the whole line alternating with a few lines set in a kind of vibrating spasm. In tryouts it worked very well, but in the performance the poor fellow couldn't find the right file and put up the wrong spell, then turned it off and tried another and then just gave up. The sound was much more echo than it was down on the field, and it sounded pretty muddled to me, but others from center field and down stairs said it was quite clear. This was generally true for me; there was an echo that made words almost impossible to distinguish from where I was, but clear elsewhere. I think it depended upon how close to an actual speaker one was situated.

3) Strobe flashes in the hypogeum begun during the end of the incantation, as if elicited by it, reveal Paulina /Proserpina wandering in the depths. As the incantation ends she sings "I'm a little dead girl / In a house of demons.../ I want to be there / To fall in love / With my evil twin.../Finally the yellow space / Finally the whitest light / Finally hallucinating /Crocodiles, invisible crocodiles."

Strobe flashes worked fine. I couldn't see Paulina in the hypogeum, which was simply obstructed by the stage. Her song, from my perspective sounded beautiful -- sort of -- there was an echo, and I couldn't make out the words, but others didn't have that problem.

4) At the end of song the trapped eagle appears, first singly, then all over the amphitheatre. Persephone leaves the hypogeum, climbs stairs to arena level, and waits there for her next entrance.

The eagle sound was amazing. It didn't sound like wind, but the enormous groans and squawks of a pterodactyl, and then the electrifying wings snaps. It was as if the very electronic universe that was trapping it in its tower had been absorbed by the eagle and was being detonated by it, as if you were involved not only in an ecological issue -- threatened extinction of the eagle -- but the whole matter of the confrontation between animate flesh and the technologization of the electricity that was in any case always its principle of animation were coming to a head. The image, however did not seem as interestingly multiplied around the arena as I had hoped. Instead of a sense of a band or series flapping and snapping together asynchronously, it was more like a few disparate projection screens, where you focused on one or the other, but couldn't get a sense of the whole field. I don't know if that was true from other positions, but it did seem there could easily have been more projections.

5) The airplane appears in silence from the top of the amphitheatre and slowly spirals down around the space and lands on the stage area at the front. There it wanders about trying to find its spot Casteneda-style. It stops when it finds it, drops its pomegranate payload, while a live camera picks up the placing of it. Then it positions itself for take off, takes off, and spirals slowly up and out of the space.

Something stalled the entrance of the plane. The silence lasted TOO long. Oy. Here it begins, I thought. But the pilot guy recovered and the plane, beautifully limned with green lights floated out from above the second tier behind home plate, wandered about the Amphitheatre a few times -- the pilot was not able to control the altitude or the curvature of the flight well enough to give the impression of a spiral -- and made a good landing on the stage, where it did its casteneda thing and found its spot. The projection of Paulina in full Persephone regalia deliberately and icily eating her pomegranate seeds from an opened red and juicy pomegranate was perfect. The plane took off, wandered about the colosseum a few more turns, and tried to exit above the second tier behind home plate, but crashed into a wall. Such is life.

6) The carriage with triangular wheels begins its journey to the sound and images of tuba sousa-forms surrounding the arena, Persephone aboard, dragged by slaves in business suits who have to keep struggling to make the triangular wheels "turn." The journey crosses the bridge built by contemporary caretakers of the monumental ruin and occupying the place of the corpus calosum in the coliseal brain. About 30 yards from the stage area the carriage halts, and Persephone sings, "Why, father, why /did you not give me the hands of the cyclops,/ Why, father, why/ did you not give me the heads of the Typhoon,/ Why, father, why/ did you not give me the throat of the sirene,/ Why, father, why, father, why?" The carriage continues with Paulina muttering fragments of her complaint amidst the clunking sounds of the lurching wheels.

In the language of the Biennale in Venice currently in full swing, I give this "Best In Show." The sound of the carriage was amazing. And the gang of business men slaves -- who were in fact American art and archaeology students one of whom it turned out was an expert in ancient papyri, perfectly familiar with the magical papyri upon which I based the palindromes, -- an excellent job, clunking and lurching the carriage across the bridge. Persephone was able to balance fine, and at her appointed spot, she sang her song, again beautifully, I thought, but from where I sat, again the echo blurred the words. Otherwhere, reports are, the words were fine. Guests from Paris, Japan, and Belgium moved the oil drums and made sound upon them to accompany the extraordinary reports of the devolving wheels.

7) Ten oil drums mounted in a frame in a bowling pin or tesseract form, 4,3,2,1, with the four drums at the bottom, spotlighted on stage. Other business men drones begin slowly to translate the drums to another frame across the stage, set up in inverted tesseract form, the one drum on the bottom, thus repeating the image of the two triangular wheels (which, I forgot to mention, are oriented in opposite ways across the axel, so that while one triangle has its base on the ground, the other has its base in the air.) As the translation or transportation of the oil drums ensues, a drummer appears to make erratic drum beats on the barrels, interacting with the thumps and lurches of the triangular wheels and the sounds of burning oil that emit from the speakers while images of the burning oil fields of Kuwait are projected on the colosseum walls.

Included in the next remark.

8) Carriage enters the "Gate of Death" at the back of the stage behind and between the two frames of oil drums. Oil field images fade out. Then silence. Out of the silence the animations of the sheep and goats appear, first in place over the senators' seats where the gladiators were supposed to have been seated. Then everywhere. At the end of this sequence:

Oil flares were very red and spectacular. There could, again, have been more projections. Ditto with the sheep and goats.

9) the second and third incantations are given, which begins with a vowel palindrome chanted in continuous sound transformations of the vowels, ee ee O oo A o ee ee ee o A oo O ee ee followed by another complex, rhythmic one -- I don't have it memorized or the text in front of me, but it goes something like nondut titititin ondut andadand intititis, but organized palindromically. These are done on all speakers, and they crescendo into "Primarily Speaking" -- the multiple voiced piece I wrote about in the pamphlet--

10) which continues to increase into a "Madness of the Brain" free for all of sound improvisations and projected animations, towards the end of which --

Well the second incantation went fine. In fact it went twice. It was to my sense very intense and helped sustain the sonic magic of the piece. The third one simply didn't happen. I think the accidental recurrence of the second one made somebody in the control booth think "enough incantation", let's get on with it, so "Primarily Speaking" came up without nondut tititin endit getting its chance. The "Madness of the Brain" was generally strong and wild. During the afternoon, I had added a third voice to the English and Italian tracks already laid down, and then took off and did various riffs, I don't quite remember what, ending with a big over-arching native American Indian chant thing. The oil drum drummer was supposed to pick up the Chant with big banging Indian style drumming which would then very quickly cut off the sequence exposing Paulina. Well, the drummer guy got the idea to compose using Native American Rhythms, so that started way before the chanting, and the chanting kind of got lost in the rest of the sound, so there was no cue for Paulina to start singing. After a while the madness stopped, and there was silence before Paulina started to sing her last two songs.

11) Persephone begins to sing while wandering through the audience after having her clothes DOUSED WITH OIL... "Milk Honey chloride/ Crystal clear infinity / Burnt ammonium..." a very complex and beautifully haunting song. At the end of which, as it fades into silence

12) 50 white gliders, with five-foot wing-spans are one after another released from the top of the amphitheatre.

Dark Resonances

The oil bit didn't work at all. It just ruined Paulina's dress. There wasn't enough of it to create an oil stink further away from her body than a few feet. The song was in fact gorgeous, which this time I heard, because it was broadcast through speakers on the second tier.

The gliders were emitted from behind home plate and out in center field. We wanted them to come out of the sides of the colosseum, but the pilot and his cohorts felt it was too dangerous. The glider thing was okay, but in center field, they were emitted so close to the audience that people grabbed at them for souvenirs, causing a couple not to make the flight. It was a sweet ending.

That's the lot!

6.16.2005 7:25 pm

A Note on Black Gold

You burn oil to use it. Vegetable matter decays to produce it. As a resource or supply, on the historical scale of the human exploitation of it, it diminishes, it does not increase. It is entropic. Its essence is ruin.

Competition for it causes men to steal it, cheat to control it, kill, burn, connive, conspire, and deceive to extract what is called "profit" from it.

Oil is "black gold," and, given the behavior of what is referred to as the world "market" (as if the conditions of global economics were nothing but a natural extrapolation of the down home impulse to conduct local trade) it is the most prized substance on the planet, prized, that is, by the institutions that own and administer the planet and who manipulate the needs that keep it in demand. If oil is gold, we thrive on ruin.

To keep needs churning, a vast enterprise of misdirection occults the knowledge that the needs themselves could be dissolved by developing alternative ways of "satisfying" them.

But the needs themselves still burn at the center.

Savage flames rage against the savage shibboleth. The despot Saddam Hussein orders the burning of the oil fields of the despots of Kuwait. 100,000 Iraqis (seduced or forced into service by the despot) are slaughtered and buried by the Americans beneath the desert sands, that one despot not absorb the desperate black gold substance of another, that no image of slaughter appear in the American press, that the flames of hell be signed by the name of the Iraqi leader.

The barrels pass from here to there. The exchange of commodities is effected by idiots' tasks. Pointless patterns invert, or pointlessly pointed ones do. The energy of being consumes with savage noises.

Charles Stein

6.27.2005 1:25 am

Here are the long-promised acknowledgments for *Dark Resonances*:

Dark Resonances, Gary Hill in collaboration with Charles Stein and Paulina Wallenberg-Olsson,
with:

Rohal De Ritter / Percussion
Christelle Fillod / oil drum manipulator
Yukiko Shinozaki / oil drum manipulator
Mariano Gosio / voice (Italian)

and

Kevin Curran, Dylan Cotton, Robert Gallardo, Paul Bertrand, Jeffrey Brewer, "Jewel" (Mohammad Rakibul Hasan), Doug DeBenedetto, Matthew McCarty, Mike Ambron

Technicians: Max/MSP programming: Aaron "motorino" Miller

Andrea Grasselli with Mario Montanari, Fabio Sirilli, Giovanni Sirilli

Production assistance: Aaron "motorino" Miller, Andriano Mestichella

Animators: Roman Testoni, Gianluca Nava, Novella Iodice, Harvinder Singh, Hesam Daneshvar,
Francesco Marchesini

Curated by Esther Coen and Giuliana Stella

The original text of this piece was published on <www.bialystocker.net>, a blogg (sic) whose editor is Dr. Harvey Bialy; a website of uncommon fecundity.

DONAUESCHINGEN 2005

an email from Alvin Curran

Two weekends ago I attended the renowned Donaueschingen Music Festival. Founded by Paul Hindemith and Kurt Weill in 1924 - it is the oldest and perhaps most prestigious festival dedicated to contemporary music anywhere. Situated on the edge of the Black Forest equidistant from Zurich Stuttgart and Freiburg, it was then and is now a 3 day intensive international meeting of composers, performers, producers, publishers and fans of new music (predominantly German-style) with sold out concerts filling rooms - mostly local sports centers - with upward of 1500-2000 people per concert. The locals they say couldn't give a flying F for this yearly invasion of intellectual weirdos, except for the booming business it nets the town. So there is much tolerance and seeming good will toward the yearly mobs of neurotic musicians and all their sonic pathologies. I have been there many times as composer/performer and guest - since it is as much a world meeting point as trade fair everything and everyone is on display. They do not hand out ear plugs or sell T shirts, but you can find marvelous scores and books and CDs and drink the "most" - the freshly pressed "early" wine happily just-fermented and eat the excellent regional food of southern Germany. This year like almost always they feature sound-installation works, listening sessions of radio-art (soundart) and about 3 symphonic concerts, music theater and several chamber concerts and so-called Jazz (a universal misnomer for anything that is improvised) concerts... if one returns to the history of post WW II music a large number of the classics of our time, by Berio, Stockhausen, Boulez, Nono, Carter, Cage, Feldman, Ligeti, Xenakis, Lachenmann, Kagel were all commissioned and premiered here - this is where the heavy hitters came to bat flies flex muscle - eat, drink, laugh, and cajole new commissions from radio festival producers and music publishers. Like in haute couture and the auto industries, the next season is about the latest models... lately the firm presence of women composers, sound artists of every stripe and token improvisors gives it a slightly more democratic feel, but there still reigns something indescribably old-world as if new music in toto were nothing but a minor form of existential crisis where Beethoven still sits on a crate in the back room dealing chord changes that still raise eyebrows - regulars like Ikue Mori and Cecil Taylor are often perceived by the inherently class-protected avantgardeists as post-colonial (semi-civilized) upstarts i.e. improvisors; yet the content of festival's programs tends to reflect the archetypal dialectical struggles between life and death, good and evil, heaven and hell as if this all took place on some mythical island of peace, where once a year the inhabitants make music by banging their heads against trees. In any case this weekend of music and benders and overeating can easily leave one cursing the day they were born. In short, it is like a public confessional where there is no confessor who can absolve anything (triadic harmony, minimalism, animal instinct included) or guide anyone to or from an ethically acceptable noise or a morally awakening drone. After the usual sumptuous closing dinner served in gran style at the Furst von Furstenburg's Castle, everyone goes

away at least as confused as when they arrived no closer nor farther from the elusive meaning of the "music of our time." I wanted to write a review for all of you, but cannot in all fairness do this because I was unable to attend every performance; but I can offer some impressions and comment on a few outstanding moments. The very first concert: by the Swiss composer Beat Furrer was much anticipated, much discussed and delivered - Obsessed by spatialization and sound in motion, he created a listening space within the space, by building a gigantic structure of swinging panels which were controlled automatically and allowed total closure or partial exposure to the musicians and sounds playing behind these panels - but for all the effort - and with at least 1500 people crammed into the space - the composer clearly didn't figure in the body absorption quotient of an average listener - hence it rendered this expensive and somewhat klutzy theater in a theater, acoustically neutral... true a speaking voice, a woman with an acoustic megaphone walked around and whispered with highly effective directionality, but even when the huge panels opened up in the ceiling, and one thought that there were musicians lodged there, it didn't really embellish the music to a degree of amazement. The music in fact was terrific and could have been played anywhere without all this hyped-up and costly folderol... his music a deep listening kind of European minimalism - highly crafted virtuoso tidbits played over and over, long braids of sustained microtonal filaments, brilliant honest and substantial silences and then next to nothing of a sound, barely distinguishable from the ambient noise of the room becomes in fact music by default and beautiful music at that - 2 opera singers singing from what sounded like a half-mile away in two opposing dark corners of this huge cavernous room - in some kind of coordinated non coordinated unison - on luscious melodic fragments that could have easily come from Cambodia or Tajikistan or Appalachia all at once, hybrid human melody that you could actually go home singing, but never quite remember rightly. Some big 3/4 of the way through crescendo led by a giant gong behind the public - which for me in the midst of all the other attractive subtle almost nothingness, was a pure mistake because he composed it in European symphonic time, instead of dedicating some outrageous amount of time to a crescendo until you drop time, say 20-30 minutes but who am I to tell another how to compose... I left this opening concert elated, that I had actually heard some fantastic music - played fantastically by the KlangForum Wien - where in the entire last 20 minutes the musicians now scattered around this show and tell panel structure, were all coordinated by a conductor in the dead center of the original frontal stage, who was conducting all by himself, to a single video camera which relayed this ridiculous clown of a conductor (with no musicians in front of him) to the monitors at each musicians place. Viva L'avantgardeia!!!--- maybe 2 or 3 moments in this work had some effective directional acoustic function and meaning, but for the most part the music - substantially plentiful and surprisingly attractive in its utter reductionist nudity - unlike Feldman - blatantly lyrical and expressivo when need be - for this was all tied to texts of great minds from the past from Ovid to Schnitzler. The next concert at 8 pm - no time to eat - was one of those showcase orchestral concerts, aiming at all costs to break out of the orchestral prison-demonstrative and genuinely 'experimental' these composers, Suppan, Casper J Walter, and Bernhard Lang all 40 something have big traditional chops,

imagination and ambition - and clearly consider themselves contenders for a place in Pantheon of future greats - my somewhat skewed impression is that they are beating a dead horse - quite naturally following an attractive and well developed tradition, but somehow on the cusp of foreseeable tragedy - if the orchestra as such will survive our own star-trek times. In Suppan's engaging phased drones with a timid hint of electronic help things got off to a promising start until someone went blipblopdooowop and sort of cancelled out the sense of still and motionless texture...The highly touted Casper Walter - clearly a bad boy - invokes astrophysics, and every Greek from Aristophanes to Plato, Aristotle to Hippocrates, Empedocles to Einstein in a weird choral skein of polyphonic lines that sounded like Brahms on LSD... it bordered on classic fake Alzheimers, so unison lines were wandering around lost in space and the orchestra followed with minor hiccups and clusters of seizures form time to time ... the piece was called Dark Matter and perhaps need not have ventured beyond this suggestive title. The most promising piece on this concert - double concert for electric viola and electric cello, we decided to skip so we could meet for dinner with some old friends... I'm told it was a very impressive bath of relentless and over the top convulsions... in total surround sound fury (musicians everywhere) most reports said it was Xtra strong but too long...but I take that as good news... and this was only the second concert of the day. Concert 3 running in the dark at 11 pm full of deer Goulasch and beer to some other hall, Susan and I got in just as Otomo Yoshihide, Satchiko M, Axel Doerner and Martin Brandlmayr came out and delighted what was left of my attention and capacity to absorb any sounding thing. What they did - missed by a large part of the so-called serious music crowd, should have been programmed on the normal concerts instead of the "alternative" Jazz series, was not only instructive, cogent and hip, it was some of the most compelling music I have heard in a long time. Though filled with personality galore, the music emerged as if without an ego and at times without a mind - filled with as much silence as sound, and was as close to a "new music" as anything I have heard in years - Moments of Cardew's Scratch Orchestra and Cage's late number pieces come to mind, only here there was implicit swing, funk and inconfutable dementia - if only in the silences and the gestural. It was truly the most engaging "noise" music I've encountered since early MEV and AMM, making musical gesture sound and look like some ancient cuneiform script... Particularly intriguing in our time of protein saturated digitalia, was SatchikoM's use of some archaic sinewave oscillators which indeed made one think that these dumb pure wave forms had existed in human practice and memory since the dawn of time. The rigor of the concept, the "feel" of pure noises in space, and unity and mastery of the collective sound was literally breathtaking, and pointed to intriguing zones of inquiry far beyond the highly codified improvisation styles of our current international streets. With much enthusiasm I mentioned this to my old friend Ernstalbrecht Stiebler, and he said, "Ach Ja, Axel Doerner he's the one who only blows "air" through his trumpet..." you can intuit, in spite of all the good will and groundbreaking music made in Germany in the last 60 years how entrenched cultural-racism is, however enlightened and benevolent, toward improvising musicians. Next morning early was the awarding of the Carl Sczuka Prize... a formidable 15,000 euros for the year's best radio-art. Here was a gathering of Europe's finest producers and artists of experimental sound-

art for the radio - a mutant development coming for the literary and theater departments long established here since the beginning of radio itself... Hanna Hartmann, a shy but very strong Swedish artist living in Berlin got the first prize for an amazingly short 9 minute work based almost exclusively on the sound of falling trees whereas another young woman - Dutch artist Antje Vowinkel got a runner up... (unfortunately, I did not hear her work which was inspired by all the sounds in-between the sounds--the stuff the radio, tv and film editors usually remove with surgical precision from their sound productions... so these were this year's winning trends in sound-art -- rigorous minimalism, mediatic conceptualism - mystery and fun. The rest of the second day Susan and I spent listening to many of the radio-produced pieces which were awarded that prize in the past... in no particular order, I heard works by Bruno Maderna, Heiner Goebbels, Mauricio Kagel, Pierre Henry, Luc Ferrari, Murray Schaefer, John Cage, and many more - all inspired works meant for radio-broadcasting as a new form of art. More like listening to short novels - these largely entertaining and brilliant works for radio for me were an exceptional treat - a true feast of sonic flavors and imagination, and one coming directly from the original concept of the "radio theater" made for an invisible audience, these works explored sounding space, and passing time, reconstructed-language and thought with far more creative freedom and joy than most of the live concert offerings - maybe simply because you could not see nor smell what was going on - and the players' "stage" was actually inside your own head. We made space in the afternoon to visit Gordon Monahan's NEW AND USED FURNITURE MUSIC - this Canadian star, with much aw shucks dry humor has created a quirky piece of musical drippings, with computer controlled water drops and mechanical strikers hitting all manner of objects from real ride-cymbals to glass, to garbage can lids etc etc in captivating bouncy rhythms and tones-- his one deadpan Jerry Hunt like story (with low octave transposition) was a knock out... the live video projections of all the close up details were not altogether strong nor was the long balletic passage of the affable Junko Wada - walking dragging some machine attached to an overhead wire. So this was a breath of fresh North American air amidst these very strong Central European scents. Day 2 concert 4: the application of live electronics to orchestral sounds - looks more like open heart surgery with 3-5 people huddled over the mixing desk and arrays of computers, scores in hand as if about to implant a mastodon's frozen heart into sabre-tooth tiger... the musicians part on stage and de rigueur scattered around the hall sit in absolute and indifferent obedience to this technological slight of hand. O yes, there's some detuned pitch shifting, and some 4 second delay, here comes some phasing with blippityblop dry echoes from the hand-ball court; all this, years of study, theorizing, creating hands-on at the cutting-edge Freiburg experimental studio, to create a perfectly cross dressed piece of trans-gendered music - i.e. put electronic testes where the orchestra's ovaries are. To have your cake and eat it too, easy for the symphonists Berlioz, Brahms and Bartok and but today we gotta make the 3rd french horn player feel he's been sniffin super-collider glue. One thing that constantly bugged me in this and many similar concerts is - here they do not understand that by and large if one or two main players (the soloists, etc.) are coming out of gangbuster loudspeakers - you gotta amplify the whole lot. Consequently, I have never heard so many large orchestras

sound like there were playing in the next village in my life... hard to believe with so many musicians on stage, but the inexperienced composers who leave processing and "sound-design" to other nerds simply deserve what they got... total musical dystrophy! This concert in spite of its overwhelming electronic ambitions presented two "outsider" works, one by a Norwegian composer Lars Petter Hagen whose music seemed like a mix between Roy Harris, Aaron Copland and Grieg - unabashed tonalisms based on well re-knitted quotes from classic Norwegian composers - a kind of youthful paean to the nationalism of the remote... clean cut and minimalistically rigorous -but shockingly reactionary for most of the audience who have spent the last 100 years trying to bury such musical memory... at the other end of the spectrum a howling screaming shrieking cry of Palestinian desolation from Samir Odeh Tamimi for chamber orchestra and 3 soprani... who sang at the edge of terminal laryngitis, in disconcerting wails of middle-eastern hell. Close to some brilliant vocal works of Zorn, but not close enough to have the real power of detachment and compositional mastery nor even the overwhelming energy of Mike Patton. Nonetheless I was won over... in principle - drawn into a politically clear part of this arena... the piece set off a blizzard of applause, if only because in the context of most of these semi-lame attempts at being avantgarde, Samir was musically in your face in a way that goes beyond the general rules of new music etiquette, even at its most Xenakis-like brutality. At the break, friends and colleagues of mine were of the overwhelming opinion that Samir was a "fake." But this was not John Adams - goody goody Klinghoffer, this was a real Palestinian writing in the style of post-fused-trombone-spit-valves and wrecking the vocal chords of three terrific young soprani, to boot. Yeah I had my doubts too, then I introduced myself to the composer who only spoke German, and I got a weird vibe... but nonetheless he got the massive audience out of their - newmusic stupor, and that in itself was worth the price of the ticket. Dai Fujukara's piece a concerto for trombone - a composer whose recent piece at the Gaudeamus festival I was very enthusiastic about - sounded like he had run out of ideas... if you haven't deeply listened to Roswell Rudd, George Lewis, Connie Bauer, Garret List or any of the new generation of mad-sliding trombonists you should not write for this instrument, unless you wish to emulate Henry Mancini (the master of the Bass Trombone). A sadly eventless and uninspired piece of music by a young composer on the fast track. That night we got up the energy and went to hear Ken Vandermark's big band - I went hoping to meet a fellow Rhode Islander, but couldn't last to the end of this imaginatively reconfigured concept of the Big Jazz Band - too much gung-ho testosterone (including a particularly marvelous trombonist) for my needs in that late night moment. But as for creating an extended and expanded musical world for such a large Jazz ensemble, Ken's work seemed to be as lively as it gets... a mix of written out over the top bebop with ellingtonian references and Chicago Art Ensemble hysterics. Like a huge canvas telling the story of contemporary Jazz which openly points to all the musical and social conflicts in this intimate and confusional white and black story. The weird thing was of all these 12-13 musicians only one was afro-American and he played a laptop, alas, not very well. Excepting the one piece which simply went magisterially where it was going - by Salvatore Sciarrino - and humorously emulating some well known cellphone melodies in concise and beautifully

composed ideas and sounds, the before lunch sunday concert was a classic noise event... young many under 40 composers including a new face - and very talented Julianne Klein who seemed to stand out from the rest with quiet beating drone textures against the others all very formally European with players playing deformed versions of their oboes, bassoons with prostheses (mutes and baritone saxophone -like extended mouthpieces) all sorts of weirdness like before the shrines of medicinal saints where you throw your viola away and begin to walk again. Prying and praying to the gods of Spectralism in such teleological "correct" ways - no moaning no groaning no fuss no muss, just pure multiphonic helixes and vectors like sonic barbed-wire delicately placed in your sinuses - sometimes tossed, or otherwise blatted with millimetric accuracy onto the clean table cloth. Since these pieces were all very similar, and not without distinction - music where the composers took the word "timbre" to the end of the line and refused even then to get off the trolley. Again lots of spatial this and that, and well intentioned mixes of the old equal temperament with mostly unpredictable cold-fusion overtones - but so religiously obsessive as to be disturbing. I am not being fair, but again this particular trend has its roots in much of the 60's experimentation and early collective improvisation... it simply does not know it--what's missing is the dirt! da real echt Schmutz! - oh yes, i nearly forgot: the Johannes Sistermann sound installation, which consisted mainly of a vocal quartet (real singers) driving around the town in a snazzy BMW convertible - top down and singing random long tone chords every few seconds...they sometimes also played various music on boom boxes in these drive-by sallies. All and all amusing but somehow too ephemeral since they were gone before they were even there, although depending where you encountered this car, they sometimes circled or even drove backwards... there was a delightful show of artistically posed cars up and down one street. The festival closes with a huge orchestral concert - which Susan and I had to skip to get to our return flight from Zurich... so I thank you for your patience if you've read this far and hope I have revealed something of what it is like to partake in the historic encounters of real life and death music making - where the words music, future, peace and money are, Gott sei dank, often interchangeable. With all best wishes, ac.

2005

Centenary of Annus Mirabilis The “Einstein Year”

1993. Berlin. Albert Einstein’s summer home. Iannis Xenakis, Benoît Mandelbrot, and Friedrich Cramer are engaged in an extensive discussion. They do not understand each other well. If at all. Nevertheless, there seems to be the shadow of agreement. If we forget, for a moment, the time and location in Einstein’s home, the dialog may continue, more or less, as follows. At least, this is how my notes have it...

Iannis Xenakis: “Isn’t time simply an epiphenomenal term describing a deeper reality? A feint, if you will, that we have unconsciously accepted since our earliest childhood; indeed, since the earliest antiquity?”

Kurt Gödel: “In any universe definable by the Theory of Relativity, there is no such thing as time.”

Xenakis: “Indeed, the fundamental axiom is that time—in the sense of Heraklit’s imperceivable river—that time can only have meaning in relation to observing man, to me. If I merely imitate the past, I achieve nothing. Consequently, I do not exist. In other words, I can only be assured of my own existence if I achieve something *different*... Let me give an example from physics—that will be more vivid than a musical example. Reading Einstein, it must occur to you, that his thinking is completely different from that of Plank, Mach, or others. It is this difference that put him a position to set out on a truly new path. Now, in the 50s I proposed a new theory of sound synthesis, based on the notion of quantized sound. The quantum of energy of sonic vibration—the phonon—goes back to an Einsteinian theory from 1917... My theory was born of pure intuition, but I later learned that it had already been proposed in the world of physics.”

Dennis Gábor: “What do we hear? The answer of the standard textbooks is one which few students, if any, can ever have accepted without a grain of salt. According to the theory chiefly connected with the names of Ohm and Helmholtz, the ear analyses the sound into its spectrum components, and our sensations are made up of the Fourier components, or rather of their absolute values. But Fourier analysis is a timeless description, in terms of exactly periodic waves of infinitive duration. On the other hand, it is our most elementary experience that sound has a time pattern as well as a frequency pattern. This duality of our sensations finds no expression...”

Friedrich Cramer: “Now a new kind of approach to music is in the offing... Our mathematical treatment of dynamic processes has been fundamentally affected by the introduction of fractal geometry.”

Norbert Wiener: “Ideally, a simple harmonic progression exists without change, perpetually invariant, from the distant past to far in the future. In a sense it exists *sub specie aeternitatis*... Play a gigue on the lowest register of an organ. If you play a note that vibrates with sixteen cycles per second and hold it for only one twentieth of a second, what you hear is nothing but a single puff of air, lacking any kind of clear or even perceivable periodic character... I would like to underscore that, in music, just as in quantum theory, a difference of quality exists between those things belonging to extremely short intervals of time or space, and that which we take to be the normal day-to-day order of things. The infinite divisibility of the universe is a concept that can no longer be accepted by modern physics.”

Benoît Mandelbrot: “In order to append very low frequencies to a piece of music, it must, hence, be sufficient to take a new instrument capable of producing the desired pitch.”

Karlheinz Stockhausen: “What rhythm is, is in certain circumstances not rhythm at all; or it is so compressed that it is suddenly a melody; it becomes a melodic phenomenon or a phenomenon of timbre. **This continual transformation from one perspective into another within one and the same piece**, that is now the only proper theme of composition today... *the transformational possibilities of the sound material are themselves the theme.*”

Arnold Schoenberg: “That appears [to be] a future-fantasy and is in all probability just that. But a fantasy, of which I am fully convinced, that will be realized. Of which I am fully convinced that it will be able to increase, to an unimaginable degree, the sensual, intellectual, and spritual pleasures that the Arts have to offer. Of which I am fully convinced that it will bring us closer to that which dreams delude us into seeing; that it will extend our relation to that which we today mistake for deserted, by our implanting of our own life in to the desert, making the desertion but a temporary state.”

Xenakis: “At this moment we cannot hope to understand the standing still of time. This is neither a paraphrase of Descartes or—better still—Parmenides. Rather, it is a momentarily uncrossable boundary.”

Martin Supper

English translation by Peter Castine

Harold Shapero's Classical Symphony Revisited

Paul Des Marais

Hearing Harold Shapero's Symphony for Classical Orchestra again after fifty years is an extraordinary experience. There is the work, and there is the memory. The memory of the sound, the memory of the occasion - its first performance by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1948 under the direction of Leonard Bernstein - and the memory of how important this work was to those of us who knew the composer, liked his music, and recognized the strength, the stubbornness, the uniqueness of his musical choices. The question of originality was not a big factor in our enthusiasm for this work: it was original enough, in its own way, for us. One day, a member of the group did ask him if his next work was also going to reflect Beethoven, and he answered: "Don't worry about my music: I know what I'm doing. Spend that time thinking about your own work."

Eventually the enthusiasm and support of friends and colleagues began to diminish, and they wondered why he insisted on continuing to write music like Beethoven. Their reaction, of course, had nothing to do with taste. It was a historical judgment, pushed by the swell of change and innovation. The post-romantic harmonic and tonal language was exhausted, and the strongest, most conspicuous alternative at that time was a highly structured serialism, free of all dependence on the past. Composers were moving elsewhere; and Shapero was moving in place.

Change is part of every composer's journey. It happens when it must; sometimes it's not necessary. But the composer never makes change the reason, or explanation, for the music he writes. Our notes have a much more elusive origin.

For Harold Shapero, change was not a deliberate move from one kind of writing to another: it was more organic. It was a slow progression from the earlier pieces with their classical allusions to this big 'Beethoven' symphony, a work that reflects a deep insight into the workings of the musical mind of Beethoven.

When it was written in 1947 it was something of an anomaly, a shock, and a regression. If it had been written today, the question of whether it 'fits' would simply not arise. There is no longer any dominant musical style: we live in a pluralism of chance, improvisation, serialism, minimalism, style appropriation, pop, world music, and the electronic landscape. Style differences are blurred, the merging of classical and popular is frequent, and the old war cry of historic inevitability has long since faded. There would surely be a place for a work so unique, so masterful, today.

And here is this Symphony for Classical Orchestra, a work that I remembered as beautiful, intimidating, obsessive, powerful, and insistent. It is still all of these things: it is also dramatic, with tremendous thrust, unremitting drive, and exciting to hear. With two features, suggestively operatic, that pull us up short. I can only describe the first in the following way: Wait.....wait.....wait.....NOW. The momentum stopped by a dominant pedal or a repeated figure postponing the rush to the finish. The second feature is the JUMP to a new key, with no preparation, no sequential modulation.

Paul Des Marais

The only way to listen to this work is to detach it from its date of composition and from the ideological politics that surrounded it in its time. As I hear it again after an absence of fifty years, a lot of the material is familiar but it is just as thrilling, just as 'new' as it was when I first heard it. What I had forgotten was the slow movement: it is set apart from the other movements of the symphony, less assertive, more gracious, and with an intense lyricism that makes it soar.

This is a work that is waiting to be opened again.

February 22 2005

Brad Bassler

And the seasons of the heart, and the articulate fevers

The words a world paraphrased
Without scissiparity unspoken
And that tranquil heat converges
Which is best deliberated throughout
Steel to brazen the inimical
Compound and tensile in strength
Equal to the underbrush displaced
Or carefully handled the tinder
Intact a broker for exchange
What can hear then the thin
Boundary of intermittent wind
Sent winding down the interstice
Which whines out its incessant song
Above speech and below hearing
An applicant to the interior world
Without stickers or confiture
There is no salvation beside the technical
Achievement or trees shadowboxing
Impersonate the ethereal freedom
Of thought constitutionally exercised
In ever widening circles vortices
In fact if we care to speculate
Our periods drawn wide our clothes
Unfolded so that speeches praise not
But transpose the willfully dressed
In scale and dimension pleonastically
Having burnt the emotional undertow
Into flesh as surety against temples
And our inevitable tendency to levitate
That results in extensive abstraction
And a penchant to confuse ourselves
With our exclusive self-confidences
What to say to intimate the waste
That lies exposed and shutters
To shut down in this expansive haste
This unseemly stint of coincidences
Until the words are used up or time is
Whichever comes first

(in response to Stefan Wolpe)

Elaine Barkin

BAB's **O**

) (All tips engaged. Not ever known when, not ever known where, mid lows, mid ways, mid highs, way high, way low, way allover ways. Each weighs just so unknown then known. Weighted here weighted there, each known so always there or here. Soft hued rounded flesh touching 'up-against' hard *blanc et noir* bonewood. Each and all not ever brief, each and all long and longing. All so well placed, just so connected, just so tight and staying. Every known spread not always alone, not ever expectant. Each waiting one(s) waiting for some other one or ones. Each spread way there, way here, way open with opening and waiting, unknowing, eager, wanting. Every low soft weight all warmth just grabs so enveloping all then knowns. Yet almost always never known when, even then, even where, even there. Almost all gathering knowns not always ever known. Yet all almost always never quite fully unknowns. What gets done, what gets known, joins in not ever being undone or done in. All so long lingering, just so joined, just so sound. Ranging free, intraforming, trajecting, intimately aperturating, constellating. ()

- written after listening to Ben's **O** played by Michael Fowler on
- Open Space CD 18

November 21, 2004

Milton Babbitt's *Groupwise*

Milton Babbitt's *Groupwise*, whose silken footsteps — like those left by feathered Aboriginal spirit men, unseen but discerned, intentions fathomed, effects experienced —, whose nubbed chiffon particles sough, especially when the volume is low, with, as Chuck Stein says of Milton's *Reflections*, “splinters shining now here, now there”, not nows and thens, although plenty of all-things, since I'm often not recalling in mind nor able to resummon what's just passed and then, with great trepidation, I think, maybe it – something — doesn't matter not to recall, not to have what's passed within me somewhere — the signature's always recognizable, each work of Milton's distinct from each other —, yet there's always plenty *there*, not thick but “cherce” as Spencer Tracy said (maybe that's what John Rahn means by “flat”) —, **it** always is what and where **it** is, within me being with **it** or keeping up with **it** before **it** leaves the stratosphere at nonstop warp speed and vaporizes (beams up) out of hearing, sounding so self-assured (as expressed by Benjamin Hudson [vln], Maureen Gallagher [vla], Fred Sherry [vlc], Aleck Karis [pno], Harvey Sollberger [fls], conducted by Daniel Shulman, GCM all-stars), their groovy Milton spinning out embrangled, connecting, disconnecting, situated, resituated, unsituated, filaments, each and every scintilla all-so profoundly necessary, and conscious, and certain.

November 8, 2004

Cf. Chuck Stein's “The Problematics of Closure” and John Rahn's “The Swerve and the Flow” in *The OPEN SPACE Magazine*, issue 6, Fall 2004.

Elaine Barkin

“...of dreams now nearly quiet...”

As I write, a tape of a session made in Melbourne at La Trobe University, March 27 1986, is playing; participants are Bob Paredes, Joan Pollock, Catherine Schieve, Elaine Barkin, Tim Dargaville, and Allen Walker; Bob is playing a bit of clarinet and who knows what, the rest of us are at piano, percussive things at first, lots of time and space — and later on, it's a real long session, yowling, cooing, squawking, howling —, great to listen to, bringing back memories of *alter duft*, especially that *duft*-scent and Aussie sound-lingo that Bob so loved of both the human and feathered kind. His wacky sense of humor overtook him down there, as he mimicked all sorts of 'Owstrylian' strine accents, that love of language, of getting it, of getting with it, wherever he was and whatever 'it' was, a lifelong passion. Bob was 'fair dinkum' you bet.

“wanting
time
each
to
this
way
out
leave
myself
not
safe”

The all-enveloping intensity and power of *Forgetting and Remembering* could be said to have come about from Bob's having lived two years away, in Melbourne, hearing Aussie birds in the city, in the bush, in the desert — those ubiquitous, unignorable, chattering winged creatures — (could have come about, maybe not a conscious effort. What's conscious? What's not-conscious? Where do the boundaries lie? Where do they intersect? A thin membrane separates the two, someone wrote. Queries not for now, but Bob, for sure, would have explored them). Whatever the source, Bob's strategy — and strategy there was in every suit —, his timing and sound are so impeccable, so knowing. Primal Ear ever on the alert. Whatever particular doubt might have plagued him, whatever sleepless night might have preceded each of those seven consecutive sessions, none makes its way into the final work. *Forgetting and Remembering* – its “Timbres ... Keenings ... Razzberries” stun me all over again.

...feeling great to be alive, and on day four, pretty tired this morning, not sure I can do an energetic one...to thicken or thin...to thicken is frightening since I dig silence, to thin is cowardice..." and then "like being in a large clarinet." Yeah, he knew what he was about. He was a force, an empowerer, a For-Real person struggling with the Realities of Reality, with the Seriousness of Living..

"...maybe to say is. Just that..."

F & R listen 1 August 14, 2005

unvarnished, unedited, super-Bob, ears, fingers, mouth, tongue, lips, loads of breath, time, love, passion and the want, the need, to make it better, make it special, yet not necessarily nail it (or maybe I don't really know where he 'lived'; who really knows where anyone else really lives?); ever in process, gorgeousness of onset, offset, takeoff, in between, not a sound or tone he couldn't make if he wanted to; avoidance of singleness, of alighting, through the thinness, the thicketness — think wintry forest, stands of trees clustering, see-through undense branches — as he levitates, augments constantly, relentlessly intense, life-seeking and affirming; riots of tickles and trills, long tones, chatter tones, deep blue hollow tones, no nasty licks, sometimes everything all at once, ungraspable, 'event'-free — the entirety is the 'event'—, image of tall trees and twisting trunks comes and goes; air peeking through the braided thicket, long slow high dissolve; invented by a visionary, a man secure and unsure all at once.

Bob's music needed no paper, but Bob wanted, needed, was obsessed-driven – possessed? — to talk about his music-thought-processes, and what-whatever that Demon was about – part rogueish-impish sort, part ferocious blood-sucker — and wherever that Demon came from — way down deep within, innerly to outerly —, Bob impelled, propelled himself to write self-critical, extra-ordinary, in-depth, purposeful self-questioning, now & then hilarious, outrageous, truly analytical, deeply philosophical — Where have I come from?, What am I doing here? Where am I going? What do I want? How do I get it? — inquiries. He opened himself to himself, to the paradoxes and contradictions of Desire, of Existence, searching for a life and ways of working that would fulfill his own requirements for Integrity. And in so doing, Bob opened himself to you and me — he lived it all, he shared it all – come what may, che sera sera

"Work....informed of me, as my idea of me....
In search of you....as you are."

gimbletrickle whiffle slythy burble wirren wimmleten
(avoiding extinction) blawubbing sssqwawking whillee triney
(looking for a way in? out?) trubble wooking xmnntntrrrrring
tsnca,mn,mn,sinue smacksmatter buggle guggle
(so many handles to try and latch on to each erupting out of the other)
(gripped fast multigiddylingually)

“...screamings...skirlings...keenings...”
kittiecatfleshhairwiskers (he didn’t forget much)

yowly whining, gently blubbubbed (can’t always follow what follows from what; no
matter though) rivulets, tricklets, sweeppyyyy, incantating, *encantada*, (keep it
going; it does then get going, fieldfilling, gelling, jelling, coming together, falling in
place, crystallizing, synchronically taking shape, unshaping place, coming falling
going, fissuring, cracking faultlines...all those red-brown layered
squigglongsonglines clustered and upthrusted!!!!!!!!!!)

(midway I latch on to a series of high sweet bluesy tones atop the spattering,
spluttering, smuttering, beethe, flesh turns blue-green, skins mottle, slits, slots,
splits, slashes, rips all ways (massive-unmassive, that’s the beauty of it all) twisty-
turney-wraparounds, twurney-tisty wripabouts encircling serpentinelike, curling up
inside a snakeden, rhything-massing aboutaround each other, skin-shedding (always
coming up whole, coming out for air))

(me finally getting some hang of it)
(he, hankering for what, for all, grasping the hang of it way early on)

(roomfilling allsides, all corners, all mixed unmixed, all heard all ears)

unfrangible blithey mire, consanguineous mirvy qwertys, twittered uiops
amnsbdv nnnnnnnnnnnn lowzxc dropout lmlmlmlml
iiiiiriiiiir jlyp khwhwhwhwh ee
iyiy y

* * * * *

“So, what.... if.... what I wanted was body-dependent music-making of
multiple referentiality. A music-making whose sounds are signs which jostle and
poke, glance and rub — shake, stroke, fondle, and press; scratch and massage
the connective tissues of sign on qualifying sign....in, through, and around the
corporeal environment of its habitation. A music-making of immanent tactility,
wherein I recognize that sound touches skin.”

Articulate expressed as:a music-making informed of the fact of living connection....a music-making enacted within the clearly recognized, and fully affirmed, condition of living presence in, and to, that making....in a spirit of investigation well protected from the asphyxiating context of value-judgement as respectability-conferring mask for deeply political one-upmanship” Both “in” and not “in the system”, he was oftentimes driven up the wall — but he persevered, pondered the ins and the outs, the what-ifs and the what-if-nots, the givens and the chosens, mollified the Demons, and invented his own situations for living, for life, for work, for close connections.

Insecurities abound in Bob’s texts about: his Appearance, how he Expresses his Feelings, his Use of Language, his Intellect, his Borrowings; Stage Fright, Fear of Heights, getting at the Real, the True, the Existent. “What bothers me about my writing? The feeling that I am playing the role of someone writing....Theatre becomes a way of getting at a real behavior ... Theatre reveals the real.” As in the theatrical flourish of his signatures, just plain Bob or full Robert Paredes, blobs of big fat B, like two compacted eggplants sitting one on top of another, with a long thin v-line to the left, and to the right, teeny joined ob, all three letters thinly underlined, and sometimes big B spills out over the little ob, and way to the left of this Bob, misty comet-like trail. So palpably designed, as were his graphically self-conscious handwritten texts, elegant y’s, j’s and g’s slanting way leftwards below the lines. And plump cartoon-balloon-like or giant splatty P, with aredes at times below, at times casually following. But when it’s Robert, R is super blimpy with that leftward-sided comet-trail; Robert-Bob-Paredes, graffiti-tagger at heart.

(And what’s the connection between being a clarinetist and having dental problems, that constant awareness of teeth, tongue, incisors, blood in the mouth? – or maybe that concern was unique to Bob, part of his exhaustive expressiveness — expressive exhaustiveness.)

After...In...After, an after-session-text, is written with you-are-there in present-flesh-tense, Bob’s words describing the meltdown-end of a quite particular Improviser’s Orchestra session in 2003 resonate so familiarly; but they’re words only for that particular session and those particular players. (I giggled as I read it the first time through; the third time through I wept.) He really did have the whole world in his hands, in his head, in his heart, yet how to keep it all straight, make sense of it, get it all down and out for him, for you and for me (just imagine someone prying-opening up, as if unhinging, someone’s head, and peering-gawping-gawking in while all kinds of stuff — sorted-out bits and pieces, substantive matter, gritty innards — is gushing, surging, pouring out); that’s Bob, looking into his mind, examining his brain, probing the hitherto off-limits; scooping out whatever he can or needs just then, finding yesterday’s news, memories of

Gertrude Stein, Percy Grainger, Robert Erickson, Laurel & Hardy, Ravel, Rudy Vallee, Jerry Lewis, Hal Russell, Brahms, Wayne Shorter, Zemlinsky, Elgar, James Brown, Dame Ethel Smythe, Texas Doc Watson, Richard Rodgers, Cage, "B. B. King meets Martinetti", James Meredith, Bert Lahr, Ellington, Toscanini, "SchoenWeBerg", Klimt, John Fowles. Truly a motley crew, Bob making-finding room for all, setting them in pertinent contexts.

A life's work filled with reflective (reflexive?) up-front self-analysis and criticism that others might refrain from unveiling: "The question of hereafters won't go away only because I do my witty dump on their grotesque tracteries... I confess to sleepless nights in contemplation of a time when my tapes are left to rot in someone's garbage can. And, in this imaginary theater, I think I see each fleck of oxide parting from the mylar like so much sunburned skin — and I can do nothing. It is not an image which I am, yet, able to face gracefully. So, no phony stoicism-cum-nobility here. I care what happens to my work." Yet he relentlessly ravages, lashes out at himself — even as he knows that he can do it all, play it all, wow 'em all, fastest possible licks, multiphonics, microtonal tinges, higher than the highest, every 'kind' of music, his own, yours, theirs, every kind of sound from every kind of soundworld. "But when the blood pressure gets higher, and the fifth lumbar vertebra french-kisses a nerve as you bend over to make a face into the video camera, and nobody will talk to you because — just frankly — you're a pain in the ass; you begin to wonder if the road not taken might well have been the right road after all." Perhaps Bob was recalling T. S. Eliot's words from *Burnt Norton* :

What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation.
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.
Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden. My words echo
Thus, in your mind.

"Dangling Reflections on *The Bewitched*" — seamless revelation of high-middle-low and every nuance in between, luminous cross-inter-trans-cultural, multi-lingual composition — recollects strenuous and inspiring rehearsals-performance of Kenneth Gaburo's production of Harry Partch's *The Bewitched*, of Bob's job in a San Diego Xerox shop, his customers, and his eats at Betty Anderson's Coffee

exceptionalness; liberating incongruities, roles, and multiplicities.

“Might Never Have Been: To and For Benjamin Boretz” is Bob’s last text in which he recalls, in exquisite and rigorous detail, three improvisational sessions with Ben and others; recalls, probes, and critiques his participation; evokes—imagines how a fourth session with Ben, a “*meta-music theater*”, might go; how he, Bob, might play — in mind, in fingers, in ear, in body; “attempting to recreate some semblance of a discursive performance between myself and memories of Ben in conversation”. In which Bob’s history as music-maker and his interactive history with Ben are intertexted, intermingled, commingled; in which Bob’s consciousness of himself as “music-maker” expands and broadens and in which he unearths and excavates a heightened state of awareness he’d earlier on flirted with but skirted. About “how the practice of music might elucidate real human needs and the means to address them”. About “finding out who we are, how we hear, and what we care about through our sound exchanges...” About “aggression” and what it means to be apart and together simultaneously. About “what my music means ultimately to myself and to others and why it is so difficult, even for a moment, to relinquish the self-defensive stratagems by which we would protect ourselves in any collective endeavor”. About, ultimately, love and friendship and “how one human being might reach another”.

* * * * *

Robert Paredes was all of those people he wrote-talked about: he lived them all, he spoke them all, and he played them all as synchronously as he was able — and maybe that’s why only he could’ve-would’ve conceived and composed *Forgetting and Remembering* or could’ve-would’ve written *Empty*. He really was and identified with them all, they all were his multifaceted ‘Identity’ which, like Bob, is/was always on the move, always changeable and capable of being transformed. Identity: not an is, not something you simply own. Identity: a becoming-thing, a something you shape and reshape. Bob was a shaper looking for ways to carry on, persist, keep at it; he was about his own ontology, and how music, work, all-known and disparate worlds, cohorts, the/his past, his/the present, all came/might have come into being All-Together. Now.

— Summer 2005

Sources:

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Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music

Edited by Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner
New York & London: Continuum, 2004. 454 pp.

Tildy Bayar

Audio Culture is a book to mine, rather than read straight through. It is a collection of source texts loosely organized according to two metacategories (Part One: Theories and Part Two: Practices) and a number of subcategories (e.g., "Music and Its Others: Noise, Sound, Silence"; "Modes of Listening"; "Music in the Age of Electronic (Re)production"; "The Open Work"; "Experimental Musics"; "Improvised Musics"; "Minimalisms"; "DJ Culture"; "Electronic Music and Electronica"); it is a book "made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds"¹. In thinking about *Audio Culture* I am reminded of artist/theorist Lev Manovich's proposal that creative activity in an information-based society consists in an individual's tracing a path through too much information. *Audio Culture* represents a particular path thus traced: Cox and Warner are, explicitly, interpretively mapping a variegated terrain rather than laying out a linear history; the materials they've collected, excerpted, framed, arranged and re-presented offer their idea of a "genealogy" of the current musical culture (dominant and recessive genes included, although the focus is on the dominant). Thus the texts don't necessarily proceed chronologically, and sometimes they are placed in unexpected dialogue in an attempt to map phenomena which seem to draw from multiple sources. I get the sense that these editors would like to stay out of the way, eschewing an overt global project and allowing multiple local stories to emerge as the texts speak for, and among, themselves. Of course this is ultimately an impossible project; *Audio Culture*, in larger resolution, reads as resolutely historical and historicizing – but it's the kind of impossible project that's important to attempt, and that stimulates people like Cox and Warner to produce a congruence between form and ethos which, perhaps more directly than any overt proposition, points to a new culture.

The first question a reader who knows nothing about the emerging notion of "audio culture" would probably ask is "What is it?". The answer may be found in the editors' introduction ("Music and the New Audio Culture"):

Over the past half-century, a new audio culture has emerged, a culture of musicians, composers, sound artists, scholars, and listeners attentive to sonic substance, the act of listening, and the creative possibilities of sound recording, playback, and transmission. This culture of the ear has become particularly prominent in the last decade, as evidenced by a constellation of events.²

...which are, according to Cox and Warner, a growing academic interest in studying sound as a social force; an increasing viability of sound art in museum-and-gallery culture; and, among musicians, a preoccupation with the kinds of issues which had traditionally been the domain of "once-marginal sonic and auditory explorers"³. The next question the reader would likely ask is also the book's: "What accounts for this auditory turn in contemporary culture?"⁴. The

¹ Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. p3.

² *Audio Culture* (hereafter *AC*), p. xiii. "Introduction: Music and the New Audio Culture."

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

answer proves unsurprising: basically, it's technology; specifically, the successive revolutions of recording and digital media. The availability of cheap and plentiful sound-manipulating tools has apparently turned us all, from the teenager who orders the songs on her Ipod in a sequence she likes to the microsound or glitchcore composer-producer, into sonic explorers.

This is a familiar story, and as with any story which proposes to define a culture, it is significant (in fact, it is crucial) whose voices are invoked to tell it. I wondered if I would find many new or unexpected voices in the historical parts, or even an alternative version of the standard evolutionary prehistory, but I mostly didn't, although there were a few unexpected presences (notably, in the "Modes of Listening" section, an excerpt from J.K. Randall's "Compose Yourself"⁵, presented, in tandem with Pauline Oliveros's "Some Sound Observations"⁶, as an extension of John Cage's "informal", "vernacular discursive style"⁷ which worked to focus musical discourse toward the totality of an embodied, culturally determined listening experience). The standard story, of course, makes its experimentalist way (as defined by John Cage⁸ and inscribed by Richard Kostelanetz, Kyle Gann and others) from the great-grandfather visionaries (Russolo, Busoni, Ives, Varèse) through Europe (Schaeffer, Stockhausen) and the West coast (Cowell, Partch, Harrison) to the gods of tape (Cage, Oliveros, Zappa) to Downtown by way of minimalism, and thence to laptop musicians and DJs with pop sensibilities discovering the gods and grandfathers in thrift-store record bins; that story emerges intact and relatively uninflected in *Audio Culture*. Within this framework, though, Cox and Warner make their choices with what seems like a kind of mashup in mind: texts culled from the musical thought of the past fifty years, along with the "reanimated"⁹, jump disciplinary and professional boundaries to pool in affinity-based dialogues, illuminating a new porousness of discourse. What mostly emerges at these sites of discursive convergence are commonalities: agreements across disciplines and enterprises give rise to an overall impression of multiple topics but general consensus, and an emergent unity of perspective that is surprising given the diversity of sources. For example, Susan McClary, academic ("Rap, Minimalism, and Structures of Time in Late Twentieth-Century Culture"¹⁰), and Philip Sherburne, DJ/critic ("Digital Discipline: Minimalism in House and Techno"¹¹) seem to share a conclusion about the prevalence and the significance of beat-based music in the twenty-first century. Sherburne says, "Minimalism is so prevalent in current pop music that it may be impossible to ascribe any single meaning to it."¹² McClary says, "Too many possible explanations jostle for our attention ... Yet the fact that we cannot reduce the phenomenon of cyclic structures to the effect of a single cause does not make it arbitrary or meaningless – quite the contrary."¹³

Mostly Cox and Warner have a light touch with regard to the virtual conversations they facilitate. When texts disagree (rarely in my reading), differing viewpoints are juxtaposed subtly, and it is up to the reader to draw the relevant connections. Anthony Braxton's

⁵ AC, p.107

⁶ AC, p.102

⁷ AC, p.66

⁸ AC, p. 210: "an act the outcome of which is unknown"

⁹ AC, p. xv: "Most of the texts were written within the past half-century, though the book also includes several older texts that have been reanimated by the new audio culture."

¹⁰ AC, p. 289

¹¹ AC, p. 319

¹² AC, p. 323

¹³ AC, p. 296

statement that "Both aleatory and indeterminism are words which have been coined [...] to bypass the word improvisation and as such the influence of non-white sensibility" (*Tri-Axium Writings*)¹⁴ seems a stealth critique, its implications left hanging, the only mention of race among a series of quotes on the subject of "The Open Work" by John Cage, Morton Feldman, Pierre Boulez, Christian Wolff and William S. Burroughs, who are preoccupied with quite different matters (e.g., "The poetics of the ... 'open work' ... sets in motion a new cycle of relations between the artist and his audience, a new mechanics of aesthetic perception, a different status for the artistic product in contemporary society"¹⁵). John Zorn ("The Game Pieces"¹⁶) intersects obliquely with Braxton when he remarks that "the word 'improvisation' was very dirty in the classical music world of the 60s. ... composers at that time felt compelled to justify their work with intellectual systems and words such as 'aleatoric', 'intuitive', and 'indeterminate'. They were trying to justify to the critical community that this was not 'improvised music' – music that the performers were making up as they went along ..."¹⁷ In the later "Improvised Musics" chapter George E. Lewis ("Improvised Music After 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives"¹⁸) picks up the critique: "European and American composers active in the construction of a transnational European-based tradition", he says, engaged in "an ongoing narrative of dismissal ... of the tenets of African-American improvisative forms".¹⁹ If the reader notes Braxton's critique in the earlier chapter, and connects it with Zorn's, an ironic tinge is lent to statements such as Christian Wolff's: "A composition must make possible the freedom and dignity of the performer. ... No sound or noise is preferable to any other sound or noise. Listeners should be as free as the players."²⁰

The only direct intertextual engagement is seen in the "Electronic Music and Electronica" chapter, where Karlheinz Stockhausen's bristlingly polemical autobiohistory "Electronic and Instrumental Music"²¹ ("... Cage dismantles classical instruments and has the separate parts blown, knocked, rubbed or bowed. Today it is passé to wish to demonstrate by such methods the 'damaging of the world' and 'total anarchy'. We don't need any more scandals."²²) is followed immediately by "Stockhausen vs the 'Technocrats'"²³, a document of Stockhausen's responses to music sent to him by ambient and techno DJs and producers – mostly admonishments to lose the repetition and to listen to his works for inspiration; e.g. "I wish those musicians would not allow themselves any repetitions, and would go faster in developing their ideas or their findings, because I don't appreciate at all this permanent repetitive language. It is like someone who is stuttering all the time, and can't get words out of his mouth"²⁴, and those musicians' subsequent responses to him ("I thought he should listen to a couple of tracks of mine ... then he'd stop making abstract, random patterns you can't dance to" (Aphex Twin)²⁵). It is worth noting that, aside from this poignant intergenerational abyss,

¹⁴ AC, p. 164

¹⁵ AC, p. 174: Umberto Eco, "The Poetics of the Open Work"

¹⁶ AC, p. 197

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ AC, p. 272

¹⁹ AC, p. 273

²⁰ AC, p. 163

²¹ AC, p. 370

²² AC, p. 379

²³ AC, p. 381

²⁴ AC, p. 382

²⁵ AC, p. 383

the "reanimated" texts' very different ethical preoccupations seem largely glossed over in the warmth of discovery of their esthetic commonalities with the musical attitudes of today.

Cox and Warner locate the new audio culture "resolutely"²⁶ within the avant-garde fringes of several key genres, which is surprising. Audio culture, they posit, "all but ignores the mainstream"²⁷ – but is it possible any longer to truly do so? Here the editors seem to retreat from an attempt at describing an authentically new cultural moment toward an earlier culture's comfortable definition of radical art – seemingly momentarily forgetting that the lines between the mainstream and its eddies have been blurred in large part by the artistic practices they describe. Does experimental dance music, the most-discussed genre in this volume, ignore the dance music mainstream? For every description in *Audio Culture* of a DJ or a producer manipulating beats to the point of undanceability, the notion of the continuing connectedness of experimental dance music to the dancefloor and to the body is articulated. Elsewhere Cox and Warner describe how the internet has eroded high/low distinctions in writing and publishing to the point of indistinguishability; it's odd that when the discussion returns to music they step back into the high/low binary. This binary apparently exerts a heavy gravitational pull – and thus are cultures produced and reproduced, despite our best intentions. Does any "radical art" today ignore the mainstream? Musical influences not only flow back and forth along the high/low continuum (assuming for the sake of argument that this conduit still exists as recognizably itself), but also sounds, ideas, and sound-ideas flow in and along multiple nonlinearities; musical cultures evolve rhizomatically. Speaking for themselves, the creative workers who address us through *Audio Culture* assert that "In the 21st century, pop culture is culture"²⁸; note that "'Stockhausen' and 'musique concrete' are clearly the two key words of contemporary techno"²⁹; confess that "I get my influences from many different places. I'm not very picky about where they come from, whether it's high art or pop culture"³⁰; propose that experimental techno "is a kind of pastiche of club music, adopting its form but ignoring its functionalism"³¹; describe "...experimental music that lands squarely between the concert hall and commercial pop radio"³²...

No matter what path a reader takes through *Audio Culture*, she will invariably be deposited at electronic dance music as the arrival point, the Now of the emergent culture; and electronic dance music will be linked historically, by one route or another, with minimalism (the path of least resistance through the latter third of the book is through minimalism directly to techno). But ideas about what constitutes the audio-cultural mindset at this Now point are invariably tied to an active physical experience of rhythm and repetition in a way older notions about minimalism were not. The newer texts are concerned with repetition in a utilitarian context (the need to keep bodies moving on a dance floor), and the unifying social function of the dance club experience is celebrated as integral to the music. Philip Sherburne says, "Whatever repetition's psychological aspects, they are filtered through the body; as any dancer knows, repetition creates a unique sort of corporeal experience ... uniting dancers through the beat, as if joining them into a kind of 'desiring machine' ruled by a single pulse".³³ Scanner says, "In a

²⁶ AC, p. xvi

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ AC, p. 391, Ben Neill

²⁹ AC, p. 363, Emanuelle Loubet

³⁰ AC, p. 343, Christian Marclay

³¹ AC, p. 323

³² AC, p. 366, Cox and Warner

³³ AC, p. 322

way it is like a religious experience: ... a kind of alternative, non-religious spirituality, where you're drawn in by this block of rhythm; it's an incredible feeling, the way it moves you physically, and moves you in a dancefloor as well."³⁴ Ben Neill locates the social force of music squarely (so to speak) with musical pulse: "Pulse equals life equals pleasure"³⁵. Cox and Warner, however, see minimalist techno as head music, not body music: in its cyclic construction and foregrounding of minute degrees of aural change techno "recapitulates the sonic and social spirit of early minimalism"³⁶, offering a "psychedelic provocation for mind-expansion" – "and all-night partying"³⁷. While the early minimalists were indeed preoccupied with expanding consciousness by various means, "all-night partying" as today's dance club culture knows it (the focus on the audience, the altered physical and environmental states, the functionality of the music, the lack of attention to a "composer") was not their musical concern. Although the voices quoted above point to the need for a serious analysis of the physicality of today's music, *Audio Culture*'s contextualizing introductions leapfrog over dance music's relations with dance culture (references to all-night partying are as far as they go) on their way to "sound artists"³⁸ who play with beats until the music loses its danceability. It is here that the editors' historicizing impulse becomes apparent. I get the sense that Cox and Warner may simply be more comfortable with techno when hearing it in terms of ideas derived from 1960s minimalism, although this view reproduces a high-art ethos which does not accurately describe even the experimental branches of today's techno culture. Post-rock, ambient, and jazz figure as also-rans in the history thus derived.

Some of *Audio Culture*'s "informants" are closer to the ground: Ben Neill describes "a new, exploratory experience" in which "pop electronic music was presented in a large-scale festival format"; "the audience was an essential part of the innovation. ... No longer was this type of music relegated to a rarefied, unique performance situation. Experimentation had fully made its way to popular culture and a mass audience".³⁹ And even the "beatless" avant-techno is described in physical terms: "waves of sonic processing that made my body feel as if it were turning inside out"⁴⁰ and "a woozy continuum"⁴¹. Perhaps paradoxically, both a repetitive rhythmic trajectory and a music based on its interruption could produce the Deleuzian plateau state invoked by Cox and Warner to describe traditional minimalism: "a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end".⁴²

Most of the essays in the last third of *Audio Culture*, from one vantage point or another, attempt to account for the prevalence of repetition in the music of the past fifty years. James Snead, in a paragraph on repetition in African-based musics, provides a necessary insight into what is at stake in this discussion: "In black culture, repetition means that the thing circulates (exactly in the manner of any flow) ... there is an equilibrium. In European culture, repetition must be seen to be not just circulation and flow but accumulation and growth."⁴³ Susan McClary says

³⁴ AC, p. 384

³⁵ AC, p. 387

³⁶ AC, p. 288

³⁷ AC, p. 288

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ AC, p. 389

⁴⁰ AC, p. 389

⁴¹ AC, p. 325

⁴² AC, p. 288

⁴³ AC, p. 286

that "Given its ubiquity, black pop music would seem to be the element most clearly responsible for converting our collective sense of time from tortured heroic narratives to cycles of kinetic pleasure."⁴⁴ Philip Sherburne, writing on minimal techno, asserts that "In minimalism's ubiquity, then, its strategies have turned out to offer solutions to varying, even opposed, sets of problems"⁴⁵ – such as "the immersive (and often drug-induced) needs of the dance floor" and "an alternate, even polemical, position for aesthetes in search of a more refined brand of 'intelligent dance music'"⁴⁶. Cox and Warner, in their introduction to the "Electronic Music and Electronica" chapter, invoke a co-contributing factor in the development and increasing ubiquity of electronic tools, including the drum machine. In the end, the consensus among these knowledge producers and creative workers, even those who invoke a straightforward historical lineage, seems to be a kind of throwing-up of hands; as Susan McClary says, "Answers may present themselves more easily some time in the future when our particular set of conventions begin to give way to others"⁴⁷. Thus the cultural conflicts at the heart of today's musical practices remain multiple and unresolved – even, apparently, by the establishment of a new, overarching culture.

While some other reader would undoubtedly describe *Audio Culture* another way (and reading at a different time so, probably, would I), for me at this moment it is a book primarily about futurism – about the ways futurisms are useful in the production of subjectivities. The increasing academic interest in sound as a social force identified by Cox and Warner applies a historical imagination to new practices not yet codifiable as history. Our views of our tools remain futuristic even as they become integral co-agents in our social world. Time travel is a theme: Ben Neill imagines future historians of music looking back at us, as does Susan McClary, who also invokes time travellers from the past. Time travel here appears to be a metaphor for views of self; or perhaps for our attempts to hold on to a clear view of ourselves in what we perceive as a culture so fast-moving that we ourselves haven't quite caught up with it. And there's the affluent-Eurocentric futurism evidenced by many of these cultural producers in their enthusiasm for what "music" is like now, or what "everyone" does now. Fully two-thirds of the world, according to theorist and critic Kodwo Eshun⁴⁸, receives its media products second- or third-hand (e.g., a third-generation dub of a Hollywood movie, sans subtitles, filmed shakily by someone sitting in a theater audience), which fact illuminates terms like "sampling" from a rather different perspective than does the work of American and European DJs and dance music producers.

As DJ Spooky says, "...the sample operates as a kind of synecdoche – a focal/coordinate point in the dramaturgical grid of life. Call the mixes and songs generated by the assembly process of DJing and sequencing etc. the social construction of memory"⁴⁹. What happens to a self-aware, self-historicizing culture when its practices catch up with, and then supercede, its own futurist idea(l)s? *Audio Culture* is a document of that process.

⁴⁴ AC, p. 295

⁴⁵ AC, p. 323

⁴⁶ AC, p. 322

⁴⁷ AC, p. 296

⁴⁸ Quoted from what I remember of an informal conversation in a noisy karaoke bar, so Mileage May Vary

⁴⁹ AC, p. 351

"I'm glad you're going to spend some time with us":

www.henrygwiazda.com

what is a website for?

websites tell me something i want to know, or sell me something i want to buy, or show me something i want to see, or keep me apprised of what's going on in the world, or find something for me when i can't find it on my own, or entertain me when i have a few minutes to kill, or connect me with people and cultures i want to get closer to. in the past week, online, i have: bought books, bought airplane tickets, bought holiday presents for relatives, downloaded journal articles, checked to see whether a book i needed was in the library, used an online dictionary to settle a bet, read newspapers, chatted with friends in distant places, saw photos of a far-away friend's art opening, looked at music sites, looked at photography sites, looked at political cartoons, found out which movies were playing in my neighborhood, and looked up the hours of my local grocery store. the websites i visit regularly are functional, efficient, utilitarian in design. i am a former web programmer, so i am cranky about bad web design; if i get lost trying to find something on a website, i give up and go elsewhere. i will spend, on average, thirty seconds trying to find something before giving up, and that is because i am persistent. the average web user spends three to five seconds on each page she views, before clicking through to the next.

what is henry gwiazda's website for...?

text, slowly appearing, slowly disappearing, pale pearl-grey against a broad expanse of white; pale as if to suggest rather than assert. slowly appearing and disappearing, forcing me to slow down; requiring that i take not my time, but its time. my web-browsing is, out of habit, quick, impatient. i make a snap decision: it would be easy to jump to some other page, but i stay; i make myself slow down; i can feel my breathing change.

i don't know what this site is for, but once i'm here, it's about time. the text gently suggesting ("Perhaps...") that it may be time to take some time out from a presumably busy schedule. this website, the pale words imply softly, will not advance your career; will not help you meet your deadlines; will not offer valuable information. what it will offer me, i think, is a space within which to pay attention.

i click ENTER:

and i am given two options:

"I don't have time for this" and "I've got nowhere else to be".

(not to train or hone my attention for successful future attentive experiences, but to experience something in particular right now)

(not to experience something as an example of a larger principle, or as a demonstration of professional excellence, but to experience a small moment, on a small scale, as just what it is) (why would i do that? where would it get me...?)

i click "I don't have time for this" – not because i really don't have time, but to see what will happen. (one of the underappreciated creative aspects of hypertext is, you can do that: you can make a gesture that changes everything – and then you can take it back, start over. you can't do that with a book: if you skip to the end something gets taken away, and you can't get it back. so some say websites encourage an exploratory relation to the world, but it is exploratory in a very particular gamelike, rule-based sense.) i click and the grey words skim to the edge of the screen and fade silently away, and i am bounced Outside, to the everyday world of "normal" websites. here is henry gwiazda's bio, a link to the site that publishes his music, descriptions of his recent work; this is the kind of website i know. so i do what i know: i skim. there is music, so quiet that at first i think it's coming from outside my window. i listen, in that peculiar half-distracted, info-anxious way one does when PREV and NEXT are visible at the corners of vision (the particular becomes one in a line of like things; the objective becomes to get to them all)... and eventually

i hit my browser's BACK button, expecting to quickly see and click and progress through "I've got nowhere else to be". instead i am bounced back to the first page: "Perhaps we should focus our attention...". the text now seems to me to be appearing and disappearing much more slowly than it did the first time. i wait impatiently for ENTER to appear so i can click it.

...ok, so i'm in what seems like an online quiz, something friends often do but i manage to consistently avoid. a strange one. a game. (is there something inevitably gamelike about a website, as we understand "game"? a small screen, choices to make, limited contained consequences?) "Has a website ever asked you about your life?", asks this website, addressing me in familiar terms ("I'm glad you're going to spend some time with us"). Who is "I"? Who is "us"? It is intriguingly unclear; my interest is piqued in that not-idle but not-urgent way that gets me to click on one more thumbnail to discover just one more...

indistinct shapes resolve themselves into part of a room, seen from a child's-eye perspective. i have been doing digital photography lately and i mentally file this room under "interesting composition". in a few seconds i, practiced, scan, taking in the totality of what's on offer: small cross shapes float like stars over the room; a bottom nav bar offers numbers 1-6, a big ?, a No Time button (the Way Out!), and something labelled My Story. it is a game, but it is up to me where to start playing. so i, practiced, cheat: i make exploratory forays in each direction to see where they will take me, and only then commit to one. as i click my chosen object the screenroom slowly blurs to indistinctness; shadows gather.

i am usually annoyed by "interactive" websites, but "interaction" here is restrained and inscrutable, intriguing. one is not only aware that one is interacting with an automated program, but one is made aware that the program has been programmed to know it too. so it asks its questions with undisguised regularity, but it is unclear why it wants to know what it appears to want to know. what, in the end, will it do with the information it wants me to give it? its questions are gently, insistently invasive in the manner of a doctor's-office survey ("have you ever had suicidal thoughts? how many times a day? have you ever been under the care of a psychiatrist?"), but oddly, obliquely so – yet still recognizable as inviting the chummily confessional, a creepy proposition in this sterile environment. what is offered in return (provocations for thought on the subject of time in life and life in time; pieces of henry gwiazda's music, photography and graphics) seems detached from the intensity of these

questions. i, paranoid, imagine that someone is watching my words as i type them in, perhaps someone interested in how people respond to surveillance or how lonely people will talk to anything, even a website. ok, actually i am so paranoid that i do not type any answers; i can, on a website, play the voyeur, have the experience without leaving anything of myself. i have decided before i am aware of having made a decision that i won't answer these personal questions, especially as they don't seem quite random: their slow deliberate succession lends portent, belying their apparently artless aimlessness.

where this website is polemical it makes its ideas felt lightly, through gentle nudges toward kinds of experiencing that are unusual for a website. is it possible to get into anything really heavy on a website? the medium doesn't lend itself to depth, or to length; after all i'm sitting here in a more or less (and less and less, as time passes) comfortable chair staring through smudged spectacles at bursts of pixelated light which eventually will tire my eyes. browsing websites is simultaneously absorbing and gruelling, brain activity during which it is possible to forget the body, which eventually, inevitably, protests. when encountering websites i automatically implement a strategy not unlike the way i deal with shopping: look for an overview, keep my objective in mind, and keep clicking until my choices are exhausted; this is the way toward being finished, able to get up.

henrygwiazda.com offers two ways to check out henry gwiazda's work: "no time" or "continue", fast or slow, standard or expanded, business end or content end, informational or interactive. if you take the slow route the site offers provocations to thought, which it then poignantly fails to provide opportunities to discuss or share, pointing to the impossibility of true "interaction" in this medium. instead, it asks the viewer to discuss her emotional reactions, thus keeping a distance: the only way to interact is to follow directions, to reveal what the site wants you to reveal, while no matter which route you choose, you are given what the site wants you to see. at the end the lightness of touch gives way to revelation of the Socratic punchline: you have discussed the "big issues" of your life, but are they, asks the website, all you are? "Do you find yourself," asks the grey text slowly, "waiting for those grandiose moments?"

i'm not entirely sure i want to be lectured by a website, and i am slightly resentful that after wandering through an interesting collection of experiences i seem to have been deposited at The Point, which has been designed to make me Think. i go back and look again: ok, i'm being asked to think about things that are significant to me, and on offer are things to think about that are significant to henry gwiazda. but i would feel much more like i was interacting if i were asked to share what i thought about the works on offer, or what i thought about the stimulus quotes, or what i came up with when i followed one of the suggestions ("I dare you to find something beautiful about yourself"). why does this website assume that what i want to do is tell My Story? i click, with some trepidation, on My Story, and am presented with a kaleidoscope of changing blocks of color and texture which, when i click on the little crosses, slowly rearrange themselves into different patterns.

this site offers continual choice: listen, look, consider, act; it suggests, provokes ("I dare you to..."); and in the end the viewer is the locus of the experience, the terrain across which it unfolds, the medium through which it happens. congruence is established between the activity of checking out henry gwiazda's work and the activity of, say, looking out the window and "find[ing] something beautiful". the site of this congruence is the viewer; at each moment (taking in "artwork", contributing thoughts, taking in whatever's outside the window through a particular mental filter) she is an active agent, not a passive audient – but if she chooses to participate by doing any of these things, she does so in the site's time, accepts its terms; she

becomes part of the piece. this time, these terms ideally frame henry gwiazda's video vignettes, which dramatize moments where, on the surface, there's no "moment" there. this website suggests that "what we believe are the events of our life" are not. henry gwiazda's pieces set up a tension between this belief and our actual living.

in "excerpt #3 from 'i'm sitting, watching'" the sound is up close and the images are small and at a distance. the sounds are mostly identifiable but they are surreally equal in scale, as though they've undergone some kind of mathematical transformation resulting in a fire engine as close as the pop of an opening wine bottle but not as deafening as it should be up close, and a bottle pop as large and as loud as the fire engine. the sounds don't synchronize with the images, yet they are recognizably sounds that could have been sampled from such a scene. at first the images are fragmented, horizontal planes full of color and asynchronous movement. dissolve: recognizably the same scene, put back together: an outdoor cafe, people sitting at tables. dissolve: the same scene, from above. it is digital animation and it does not pretend not to be; movements are slow and stylized, a series of freeze-frames – but when frozen the scene doesn't seem mechanical; it is slow, like waiting. in different panels things move at different speeds and different times. something is always moving; sometimes it catches my eye, sometimes my ear.

in most artworks the "audio" in the audiovisual plays a supporting role, absorbed into the totalizing visual experience. it is rare that sound is the focus, although experiments (for example, "sight tracks" for music) have been undertaken. in henry gwiazda's work the visual and the sonic exist on parallel planes, attention moving back and forth across them. i am excited about this distributed mode of attention; it is an expansion of perception into the truly audiovisual, a medium i haven't experienced before. my favorite excerpt is "#3 from 'living is....'": sounds of (an alarm rings insistently, a telephone rings insistently, traffic goes by, something is beeping softly in the other room, someone is vacuuming) don't-line-up with images of (someone sits on a porch, in a chair, reading; someone typing at a computer takes a break and stretches; traffic goes by; a tree stands in a field; a dog sniffs the sidewalk, its tail wagging)...

a light touch. attend to the slow. even though i bristle slightly at the polemical, i have enjoyed the opportunity to consider: stop, in your hurry; make the now be something more than just a place you move through on the way to the ever-receding next thing, a collection of experiences you half-had, possession of which is more important than any one experience. choose to pay attention to something; choose something to pay attention to; perhaps choose this. the choice of a website as a medium for sharing these thoughts is paradoxical, and thus ideal.

- tildy bayar

Sowing Discord

Keith Eisenbrey

In spite of the multitude of wonderful guises in which dissonance has appeared since its emancipation nearly a century ago, its use in music has remained problematic for a significant portion of the culture outside of the compositional community. Like banging our heads against walls because it feels so good when we stop, the presence of discord in music is regarded by many of our fellows as, at best, a functionally necessary contrast to the normative sweet concord of tones, and at worst, an instantly recognizable iconic stand-in for ugliness and alienation.

For example, Carol Doran's 1984 hymn *Silence, Frenzied, Unclean Spirit* uses clashy chords full of tritones, sevenths, and seconds to word-paint demonic forces, and refulgent triadic consonance to paint the healing power of the Lord. Hymnody is a tool for spiritual education, and this hymn is effective because the symbolic value of dissonance in our culture is ingrained and unquestioned. But I find this rhetorical use of discord as an icon of demonic possession troubling, both because it wields so bludgeonly a subtle and, to my ear, primal force in music, and because it glibly reinforces the notion, antithetical to Christian teaching, that ugly is evil, pretty is good.

Like many of you, I have listened to a great deal of dissonant music. Dissonant sounds sound different to me, and I presume also to you, than they do to so many others. But if different, different exactly how? Are we content with our received definitions? How might dissonance be described more precisely than as the relative crunchiness of conjunct sounds or more broadly than as a categorical division of intervals?

I want a notion of dissonance wide enough to encompass the most extreme examples, in which it is not obvious that dissonance is at play, and precise enough to evaluate the minute particulars of those examples. I want to account for the way dissonance feels met in the wild, and to allow for its pervasive presence throughout music as I experience it. And I want, further, in applying this notion analytically and speculatively, to open new possibilities for reformulation in my own listening, and in my own composition. To this end, I offer three examples – one imaginary and two from the repertoire. Grab your axes. Into the wilderness!

Let us invent a music together in our ears, and call it *Tuning a Clavichord Wire*. Our clavichord is double-strung, that is, each tangent strikes two wires. As the piece begins, one wire is already tuned to a C, and the other, replacing some broken wire, is an octave or more flat of that. We adjust the pitch of the lower wire to match the other. We hear, at each moment, two distinct fundamentals, engaged in intervallic relations, each messing with the other through many shades of crunch and sweetness and jangle. This is no gradual slide, as we aim for that final unison, from concord to discord, and from discord to concord. It is, rather, a kaleidoscopic reshuffling of the innards of tones, each upon the other. Complexes of pitches, thickets of intervals and rhythms of beats of various partials rise and fall, ebb and flow to the moment where they dissolve their individualities into each other, to the moment where we no longer hear two distinct tones, but a coalescing, a shimmering jangle of pitch and beats, a complex unity of color, the realm of warm string-section vibrato and choral blend, not a texture, not a timbre, not a process, but a seething roil, a palpable epiphenomenon of commingling energies, slowing finally to that perfect simplicity where all beats end.

We have achieved not just a unison, but a unison in a specific context. It is a synthesis of the C that has remained and the C that has approached, of the C that has remained while being approached and the C that has approached the C that has remained. They are two distinct

moments, distinct in that we hear each through the other. They are, together, a conjoining, a copulation: a dissonance.

From the realm of pure imagination we turn now to the repertoire. The opening simultaneity of Scriabin's Prelude op. 74 #4 is a (0,3,4,7)-type tetrachord spelled, bass to soprano, C-sharp, A, E, C-natural. The first four notes of the soprano-line melody are also a (0,3,4,7)-type tetrachord spelled, first to last, C-natural, B, G-sharp, D-sharp. The common tone between these transpositions, the C-natural, is given honor of place in each: soprano of the simultaneity, incipit of melody.

But the C that is the 3-function of the 0347 (T9) simultaneity is different from the C that is the 4-function of the 0347 (T8) melody, even though it is but one finger and one pressing of a single key. And it is this difference, the relation it holds with itself, that is illuminating, for in this relation we hear the C in two distinct ways. We hear it, however subtly, twice: once, during its concrete quarter-note duration, and again, as the C-natural that is the incipit of the C-natural/B-natural melody of which we are now, during the first beat of the first full bar, hearing the B-natural. Each function it holds, while we are perceiving it, has a palpable effect on our perception of the other function that it holds. It is a synthesis of two distinct moments, dissonant to each other. It is lively, to itself. And this liveliness, this vibrancy, this dissonance, is what lifts the note, what holds its image so firmly in place, levitated in a matrix of perceptual energies, transfigured in cognitive space.

But what of straightforward, harmony-101, common-practice-period, tonal dissonance? Schumann's *Kind im Einschlummern* from *Kinderszenen*, op. 15, opens with an e-minor triad, in root position: E, G, B. While the E and G are sustained the B moves, on the third sixteenth-note of the bar, to a C, returning to the B on the fourth sixteenth. By the time this figure is first repeated, in measure 2, it is clear that this B-C-B motion decorates the tonic e-minor triad, and that whatever fleeting hint of C-major might have arisen from the simultaneous sounding of E, G, and C is outside the clear Tonic-Dominant alternation of the perceived harmony. (Though the instability raised by that C-natural pre-figures the a-minor triad into which the piece eventually, and wonderfully, dissolves).

The C is outside the harmony of the e-minor triad. Specifically, it is dissonant to the B which is its melodic progenitor. The C is colored by its relation to the B. Likewise, the B is dissonant to the C, because, while we are hearing the C, the B which we heard earlier is now being heard both through its effect on the C and as the incipit of the melodic fragment B-C, which fragment we are in the process of hearing. The B and C are dissonant, while we hear each of them, to the other, which other is not then concretely present in the sound. The score here is exactly correct. The C isn't just dissonant with the lingering room/soundboard resonance of the B, it is also, and more pointedly, dissonant with our perception of the B as the incipit of the tune of which the C is the prolongation.

In measure 25, when this material begins its reprise, the e-minor triad is presented in an incomplete form. The B is missing, though the C that succeeds it still succeeds it. And so the only pitch classes we hear for the first three sixteenths of time are E, G, and C, (the erstwhile parts of the C-Major triad). But here, in context, we clearly continue to hear e-minor and a neighbor-note, though a neighbor-note without a neighbor, or rather, a neighbor-note whose neighbor has been unstruck. Unstruck, though it is present to our perception as the member that completes the incomplete e-minor triad. The C is dissonant, and actively so, to a tone which we have not heard concretely. And a tone which we have not heard concretely, the B, is dissonant, and actively so, to a C that we do, or will, hear concretely. And further, the B is dissonant already, while we are filling it in atop the E and G, before the C ever, concretely, arrives.

Dissonance can be described as a complex of synthetic perceived qualities arising in the relation between moments. In the relation between two moments, x and y, dissonance is the effect of x upon y, the effect of y upon x, and the gestalt effect – that third thing, the new

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moment, springing from the perceived effect of one upon another, and of another upon one, the syntheses of x and y together, perceived as their lively interaction.

In any relation there is the possibility of dissonance arising as a part of that relation. Dissonance is not the measure of x to y, nor the name of that measure. It is the liveliness of x and y as an item, the roil of their joining. It is that aspect of relation impinging on perception. To measure or to name that relation, we must pry its moments apart, dissolve their coitus and postulate their prior states: divorced, pure, undefiled, denizens of a golden womb-age. To perceive as dissonance we must grasp the moments in the throes of their copulation and describe them, unashamed, palpable, in open co-involvement, and in flagrant inter-penetration, with us.

For Ben This essay is offered in honor and celebration of your continued annuation, and in grateful acknowledgement of many hours of spirit-, heart-, mind-, and ear-challenging conversation. Love, Keith

February, 2005

Silence, Frenzied, Unclean Spirit [Tune name: Authority] Words by Thomas H. Troeger, Music by Carol Doran, can be found in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989, Nashville).

Emersonian Music

William Anderson

John Hollander, hosting the Cygnus Ensemble's concert of May 13, 2004, celebrating the end of R.W. Emerson's bicentennial year, began the event by suggesting that the music of the Aeolian harp was the closest thing to Emersonian music. The Aeolian harp is an instrument that whistles in the wind, sounding a simple triad.

This point is driven home in opening lines of *Merlin I*:

Thy trivial harp will never please
Or fill my craving ear;
Its chords should ring as blows the breeze,
Free, peremptory, clear.
No jingling serenader's art,
Nor tinkle of piano strings,
Can make the wild blood start
In its mystic springs.

This suggests that trying to write Emersonian music may be a losing battle, and Dr. Hollander did warn us in his opening remarks that the relationship between Emerson and music is problematic.

This "trivial harp" might have influenced Ives. It reminds us of Ives' vision of a strong music to counter the lukewarm Rococo that prevailed in the classical music scene during his lifetime. In doing so Ives also developed a strong notion of what Emersonian music is, although Ives never set Emerson's poetry. Emerson criticism and American music have both changed drastically since Ives' time.

Now, some 50 years after Ives, new settings of Emerson poems, composed throughout Emerson's bicentennial year show how musical Emerson's poetic process can be, and how Emersonian today's musical processes can be; or so I argue as follows, focusing on four of the new settings.

Matthew Greenbaum
Wild Rose, Lily, Dry Vanilla
[listen to *Wild Rose, Lily, Dry Vanilla*]

The music of the aeolian harp is the sound of nature speaking. In Greenbaum's work, *Wild Rose, Lily, Dry Vanilla*, what is imparted by the music is clearly meant to suggest what is imparted by forest elements that are speaking in the poem (Where the fungus, broad and red...). The references to wind reminds us of the Aeolian harp.

The opening musical argument, prior to the entrance of the soprano, is dynamic, argumentative, a string of upward leading tones. Then the voice enters and the forest is speaking. (The violin squawks

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smartly to represent the fungus rising its head.) The music matches the import of the forest, dynamic, arguing or persuading, in flux, but never so strongly as in the opening passage.

O what would nature say
She spared no speech today

In some odd circularity nature speaks the poetic stance that allows us to feel as we do as we experience nature.

Emerson gives us a magical list of those natural elements that speak. After this list:

And all we see are pictures high.

Thinking or formulating of stance is finished and we now have the image.

The work is done and we have the feel of being in nature. This reaches into every facet of human life, "to the harem of Calif and the Kremlin of the Czar.

Come search the woods for...

and another magical list of forest plants ensues.

Here (at "Come search...") Greenbaum reminds us again of the argument that is in the background in this poem. It is in the background in that it is referred to, not given explicitly. He reminds us by setting this last part of the poem with a recapitulation of the very strong and argumentative opening passage, the rising leading tones. This power recedes into the gentle and magical musical depictions of forest sounds, accompanying the list of forest plants. The plants don't need to speak any more and the music doesn't have to argue anymore. There is no more mention of winds of speaking. We have but to picture and feel, and we do not need to be aware of the apparatus through which we do so. That has been installed and we may forget about it.

Drop St. Francis or Thomas Aquinas into the New England woods and see how their descriptions would differ from Emerson's. The content of nature's discourse (which Emerson never discloses, but Greenbaum depicts musically) is the dynamic route to this difference between Thomistic nature and Emersonian Nature. No, better yet, nature's discourse (and music) recapitulates the process that leads to Thomistic/Franciscan nature, and then goes a bit further. Despite their significant differences, Emerson is a Thomist and then some. Think of it as Windows installed over DOS. This is, perhaps, what Harold Bloom means when he says that Emerson must be before anything European. Harold Bloom: "Emerson's first idea was the root meaning of 'first idea,' which is to see earliest, and this I take it is the Emersonian or American difference from Carlyle and Ruskin." In this poem it is through his take on nature that Emerson trumps any European canon or authority. The "verse original" gets around history.

Words of the air
Which birds of the air
Carry aloft below around
To the isles of the deep
To the snow capped steep

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To the thundercloud
To the loud bazaar
To the harem of Caliph and Kremlin of Czar

Is the verse original
Let its numbers rise and fall
As the winds do when they call
One to another

This trumping of authority trickles down to our present sense of artistic freedom. We flaunt European authority, to the point where we are not threatened by acknowledging its influence. The Europeans have that anxiety, so they love Cage. Americans don't have that anxiety so they can borrow from Schoenberg and Brahms as much as they like, just as Emerson took so much from Goethe, Fichte, Novalis.

That which is imparted by nature (the winds and the speaking of the forest elements) is the dynamic process of stance formation, and it is the dynamic process that Greenbaum gives us musically, particularly in the music of the opening, the rising leading tones that return with "Come search the woods...".

Just as God recedes into the background, becoming less dynamic as the work of showing us how to picture the world is done throughout the course of monotheism; here, within this brief poem, the voice of nature recedes. There is no mention of wind or speech in the last stanza, but it is that wind and speech that animates the images of the last stanza. Why do we love this list? What has been imparted to us that makes us love this list?

The way the music performs the poem and the poem paints the music mirrors, with admirable transparency, the circularity of nature's speaking its own picturing.

Greenbaum's setting, particularly his emblematic leading tone passage, locates the musical power of the American leading tone in a broader context, as the Mahlerian leading tone is Schopenhauerian, Beethoven-Schiller, Brahms-Goethe, Strauss-Nietzsche, etc. I speak about the leading tones because that passage stands out and demands to be understood in some way, but until the very end the music provides a range of dynamisms, from strongly arguing to gently persuading, and then only at the end does the music demonstrate that it can very pleasantly do very little; it can subside. The way the poem paints the music; the way the poem paints Music, any music, this is Emersonian music. It seems to demand a rigorous comparison with Schopenhauerian music even more than Goethean or Nietzschean music.

Or is this merely an overly Schopenhauerian take on Emerson? Or does a music-inspired reading of the poem give this reading a Schopenhauerian tinge? These cute questions cut to the core issue here. American music has gotten to the point where it doesn't need Schopenhauer; no amount of Schopenhauerian influence can cause us anxiety.

Robert Martin
Emerson Songs

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[listen to Martin's *Emerson Songs*]

Another detail in the connection between music and Emerson comes up in Robert Martin's Emerson Songs.

The first song is a setting of part of the famous essay, Circles:

No. 1--The Flying Perfect

The eye is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second; and throughout nature this primary picture is repeated without end. It is the highest emblem in the cipher of the world. St. Augustine described the nature of God as a circle whose centre was everywhere and its circumference nowhere. We are all our lifetime reading the copious sense of this first of forms. One moral we have already deduced in considering the circular or compensatory character of every human action. Another analogy we shall now trace, that every action admits of being outdone. Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon, and under every deep a lower deep opens. This fact, as far as it symbolizes the moral fact of the Unattainable, the flying Perfect, around which the hands of man can never meet, at once inspirer and condemner of every success, may conveniently serve us to connect many illustrations of human power in every department.

This connects with these gradually evolving metaphors, all of which have important musical resonances:

"What is perceptible to the senses is a reflection of what is intelligible to the mind"--Plato---->

"Ad visibilia, per invisibilia" --(Romans)-- the very Platonic & Augustinian adage which resonates with--->

"as above, so below" from the neoplatonic Tabula Smaragdina, which presages----->

"What is within is also without"--Goethe's pantheistic, solipsistic furtherance of the Platonic & neoplatonic dialogue. This should be taken in the light of Goethe's exegesis on the intermaxillary bone and the metamorphosis of plants--all culminating in his notion of the "one and the all", and strongly suggestive of a new musical paradigm, organic music----->

Emerson's Circles

It is very curious that Robert Martin marks his setting of Circles, "Zeloso", (zealously); and the music zealously articulates circles unfolding at different speeds. The next two songs, Travelling, and The Rose, are much more subtle. The Rose suggests the rose without an agenda, the mute rose, such as the wild rose that comes at the end of Greenbaum's piece. We can look at Martin's songs as a recapitulation of the process that takes place in Greenbaum's song, but in Martin's song the message of nature is not merely implied. It is spelled out, or at least partly hypothesized.

The eye is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second; and throughout nature this primary picture is repeated without end.....that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon, and under every deep a lower deep opens.

In the poem that Greenbaum sets, it might be some such message, among others, that the forest plants and the forest breeze are imparting. Dr. Hollander stressed that Emerson's notion of circles was not meant to describe God, but to replace Him. It is the relation of one context to another that creates meaning, there need be no God behind that.

For us as we listen to the impartings of nature or as we listen to Martin's zealous articulation of the nested circles, the movement is strong. As in Greenbaum's song, Martin's songs proceed such that by the time we get to the end the argument subsides and we are dealing with the rose simply, not argumentatively:

These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before the leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied and it satisfies nature in all moments alike. There is no time to it.

The action is mentioned and located "before the leafbud has burst". In the context of Martin's songs this refers back to the dynamism of the first song. Yet, Emerson is not concerned with that here. We are no longer concerned here with nested circles or any other blustering formative catastrophe.

"There is no time to it" gets into Emerson's diachronic stance, which has these, if not many more musical resonances:

1.) Oblique harmonic motion. A famous example of this is in the transition to the recapitulation of Brahms' A major Intermezzo, where, in a circle of 5ths, the bass line progresses out of phase with the chords (the II chord has the root of the V in the bass, etc.). One can take Bartok's tritone substitution in this way as well. In jazz and 20th C. French music the tritone harmonic substitution is another example. Things that once happened at discreet times are now time-tripping.

2.) Ives & Carter: different musics happening at the same time is suggestive of Emerson's usurpation of time. (Martin won an Ives Fellowship, and acknowledges a debt to both Ives and Carter.)

3.) The range of partitions: I12 ----> 121

All harmonic & melodic possibilities are condensed in the I12 partition (a chord with 12 notes), amounting to a kind of time-usurpation. However, this "all" is limited by the equal tempered chromatic scale. (Jean Gebser makes the point that Cezanne takes a diachronic perspective when he depicts an object from different locations simultaneously.) Carter begins one or two or more of his works with a 12-note chord.

We see the third device in Martin's treatment of the rose in the third and last song of his set. In every measure all 12 notes sound, containing therein all harmonic and melodic possibilities compressed into an instant. The zealous musical argument of the the first song subsides, leaving us with the placid, timeless quality of the rose. The second song, Travelling, pairs the timeless stance of the rose with a spaceless stance. When our stance is in the dynamic process of formation we might care about time and place and our music will be dynamic and argumentative. When we adopt a spaceless and timeless stance our music approaches Dada. We see

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this progression in Martin's songs. In 'Travelling, the music becomes radically pointillistic, it "disappears" in that spatial direction. In 'The Rose, the music becomes radically dense, "disappearing" in timelessness.

Of course, all of the songs intend to be effective musically while suggesting these divergent possibilities. Martin does not go so far as Cage, or he goes farther. The power of Martin's songs is in that few composers who can achieve the "Zeloso" movement would peer so far down the other abyss of the spaceless/timeless.

These musical disappearances mirror the disappearance of God (the 19th C. project that Emerson helped to advance) and transparently enact the relationship between those two disappearances.

Frank Brickle
Merlin I
[listen to Brickle's Merlin I]

Thy trivial harp will never please
Or fill my craving ear;

"Thy trivial harp" refers to the wasteland theme that runs throughout Merlin I. It refers to the "weak poetic times", later in the poem. These lines remind us of Emerson's essay, 'The Transcendentalist':

He shall not seek to weave,
In weak poetic times,
Efficacious rhymes;
Wait his returning strength
Bird, that from the nadir's floor,
To the zenith's top could soar,
The soaring orbit of the muse exceeds that journey's length.
Nor, profane, affect to hit or compass that by meddling wit,
but only the propitious mind
Publishes when 'tis inclined.

This is the argument that, some say, inspired Melville's Bartleby the Scrivener. One might have the sensitivity to withdrawal until the right moment; one might "prefer not to write." When the Chinese farmers call in the monk to reverse a famine, the monk arrives and feels the malaise. He retreats into a lonely shack and meditates until he feels right again. The plague is over when he has healed himself. In the west we have the expression, "Physician, heal thyself".

This is the wasteland theme. Emerson is almost late enough to be rebutting the anti-naturalists and the who were so preoccupied with the wasteland. [What is Emerson's relation to Poe? Poe read at the Boston Lyceum in 1845.]

And yet even the "dull idiot", when the moment is right, can hit upon "the flowing fortunes of a thousand years". Does this rebuff the pessimism of Poe & Melville?

Brickle's opening diatonic pitches are spelled out and reiterated in a static and repetitive way that he clearly means to suggest the triviality of this harp. Harmonic stasis represents the weak poetic times and the trivial harp. The opening pitches recur as a kind of wasteland leitmotif. On the words "please" and "fill" the harmonic winds begin to blow. The stasis ends. Brickle offers a taste of what is said to be lacking. "Thy trivial harp will never please or fill...". Brickle begins to foreshadow the tempestuous stance-creation of Merlin, the superbard who can read nature strongly. It is as if by fingering what is lacking, we send ourselves on the way to filling the void. Redemption begins with the need.

After the first two measures, the music pushes forward. What is unique about Brickle's prevailing diatonicism, what distinguishes it from, say for example, Britten, is that diatonic harmonies continually reappear through "aggregate crossings". In the background of Brickle's harmonic scheme is an aggregate, and when aggregates are broken into complementary diatonic regions, the moment of crossing is unlike anything that we experience in strictly diatonic music, such as Britten's. The way it works is not the same as simply juxtaposing one key with its tritone transposition. (One difference can be identified in that passing through an aggregate is the densest contrapuntal passage between two regions that are often not transpositionally related but inversionally related.) Coming out of this "crossing" casts a light on the subsequent diatonic region that is unlike any light that comes from simpler juxtapositions of keys. This is the engine that propels us forward. Brickle's harmonic motion stands for the force that Emerson will attribute to the strong poetic stance of the bard. The secrets that the bard (poet/musician) will reveal are the secrets of nature. Whereas in Greenbaum's poem there was no human reader of nature, here there is. The superbard is not content with simple nature, but the most grandiose nature -- "the secrets of the solar track, Sparks of the supersolar blaze." The power of Brickle's harmonic movement must match the hyperbole of these poetic metaphors. Remember again the problems that John Hollander mentioned regarding Emerson and music. Matching Emerson's ever-escalating metaphors with equally strong harmonic arguments is a daunting task.

Brickle accomplishes this by having every successive chord propel us strongly through an aggregate. And after the aggregates "cross" we always arrive in a harmonic region that feels new and fresh. While most of us are familiar with the way these aggregate crossings occur, Brickle has found a new way to spread it out. I think it can be described as a kind of heterophonic elaboration of the aggregate that prolongs the unfolding. The result has the feel of a new kind of homophony.

Emerson contrasts the relentless, escalating metaphors of the superbard with recurring references to stasis, even eons of stasis. Brickle responds to this stasis in two ways.

The instruments thin out for these lines:

He shall not seek to weave,
In weak poetic times,
Efficacious rhymes;
Wait his returning strength

Emersonian Music

and “Wait his returning strength” is static, sung on one repeated E \flat . Moreover, the line that follows, “Bird, that from the nadir’s floor,...” continues on the E \flat an octave above. These static octaves that in the earlier neoplatonic musical universe would suggest concord between two spheres now suggests stasis, while also setting up reference to “nadir” and “zenith”.

Brickle enacts the stasis on another level. While strong harmonic motion prevails on the music’s surface, in the background there is a continual reiteration of the opening pitches, F, G \flat , E \flat , D \flat . This is the wasteland motif. At a crucial moment this harmony is transformed, becoming E, F \sharp , D \sharp , C \sharp . This comes in the instrumental interlude that immediately follows:

Things more clearly live and go,
What time the subtle mind plays aloud the tune whereto
Their pulses beat
And march their feet,
And their members
Are combined.

This climactic harmonic moment--E, F \sharp , D \sharp , C \sharp --refers to the “flowing fortune of a thousand years”. To depict such an epoch-making concept in music requires the span of the entire piece. It is both impractical and unnecessary to have the big harmonic moment happen at the same time as the line in the poem that names that moment.

Who is the dull idiot? The setting suggests music as the prime candidate. It has to overcome its triviality and does so by this transformation of the wasteland motif. It connects again to Emerson’s notion of circles because this transformation is the slowest-unfolding of many circular patterns.

F, G \flat , E \flat , D \flat

E, F \sharp , D \sharp , C \sharp

F, G \flat , E \flat , D \flat The slowest unfolding structure in the piece is F-E-F.

The following circles unfold over growing durations--aggregate; array; then, through accretion --the F-E-F motion that spans the whole piece.

Robert Pollock

Fable

[listen to Pollock's "Fable"]

There are two harmonies at the opening of this setting, the mountain harmony and the squirrel harmony. The two harmonies oppose one another in ways that have an interesting relationship to earlier (traditional Western) harmonic oppositions:

1.) major minor

2.) dominant 7 Tristan chord

3.) dom. 7 superimposed w/its tritone subst. Tristan chord superimposed w/its tritone subst.

4.) hexachord I hexachord II, the complement and inversion of hexachord I

Each successive layer enfolds the previous. (Emersonian “circles”) Layers 3 and 4 are really identical, but the layer 3 characterizes the hexachord in a way that relates to functional harmony. Layer 4 reduces the hexachords to the pure relations to each other without reference to our “habitual hearing” in functional harmonic terms.

We might then re-take the mountain as prior music, habitual hearing, and European music; the squirrel we may take as new music, particularly American music, then this distinction between layers 3 and 4 becomes poignantly Emersonian. While the distinction was Emersonian in spirit from the first time that the distinction was recognized, Pollock’s act of instating these distinctions in a setting of this particular poem consecrates the distinction.

Ives’ music was much more advanced than the terms he had available to describe it. I am thinking of the passage where he compares his hypothetical Emersonian music with Debussy, and the functional harmonic terms he uses there:

“Jadassohn, if Emerson were literally a composer, could no more analyze his harmony than a guide-to-Boston could. A microscope might show that he uses chords of the 9th, 11th, or the 99th, but a lens far different tells us they are used with different aims from those of Debussy.”

Ives is looking for a “far different lens” that will make obsolete the notion of “chords of the 9th, 11th, or the 99th.” Did he have such a lens himself, despite the plain fact that his music did indeed go beyond such descriptions? Since Ives, we have found this new lens. European music, especially the Viennese and their followers, was outgrowing its habitual descriptions of itself. Babbitt’s 1950 reviews of Leibowitz’ articles, Schoenberg et son école and Le Systeme dodecaphonique suggest that the Europeans’ relation to the past engenders a concern for finding precedents to justify developments that need, instead, to be explained on their own terms. This is The American Advantage, with Emerson as its forefather, especially in the less practical spheres (arts & letters)--not to be sidetracked by concern for precedents. The first job of Ives’ lens is to strip away language that describes things in terms that music can render irrelevant.

Nadia Boulanger was an early proponent of a 12-tone system. She designed her system to show the functional harmonic roles of any chord in relation to the key that forces the given chord to be heard therein.

A7 is a V7 when it is followed by a D major triad.

A7 is a II7 when it is followed by a D7 chord.

Emersonian Music

A7 is a IIob9 with lowered fifth when it is followed by an Ab7 chord. and it could also be a ii with raised and lowered 5th.

The idea is that with such voice leading one can get from one key to any other using any dominant 7 chord, likewise (and more easily) with diminished chords. All of these bizarre creations can be found in Schumann and Strauss, and Boulanger's system explains their voice leading very well.

The two chords that Pollock has superimposed upon one another in his first hexachord are E7 and Bb7. They share the tritone D, Ab. In the key of D they are the II7 chord and the IIob9 w/flatted 5th. It's cute that these aspects of the harmony are there, buried in the hexachord, but the way the song proceeds makes these functional harmonic terms meaningless. The hexachords contain recognizable elements that the music usurps. It is a transparent example of an Emersonian deconstruction, such as the one we saw in Greenbaum's piece, where prior views of nature are subsumed in Emerson's.

Pollock does not look back. He might strip apart his hexachord to bring out triads or dominant 7th chords, but there is very little of this. (Carter deconstructs his hexachords, it's one of his favorite sports.) In m. 8 of Fable the cello plays a major and a minor triad in successive eighth notes, but this is obscured by other instruments. To the extent that we do hear these naked triads we are reminded that the triad is not the fundamental building block of this music. The music is "free, peremptory, clear" of our habitual hearing in functional harmonic terms.

Conclusion:

Music performs poetic stance-formation through harmonic rhythm. Poetic stance formation requires some kind of breaking. Harold Bloom, in his book, *Agon*: "Meaning gets started by a catastrophe that is also a ruining and breaking creation..."

Harmonic rhythm acts (performs) this breaking aspect of stance formation as well, transparently, in that harmonic rhythm results from the breaking of the musical continuum. A drone is the continuum, and from that extreme there are concentric circles of continuum-breaking--harmonic activity. The first species is a relatively continuous stream, broken only through its iterations of the tonic. (The rules of species counterpoint forbid linear triads, which lead to homophony.) The parsing involved in the higher species is a breaking of the continuum. The result of that breaking is a discernible harmonic rhythm. Polyphony provides a relatively more continuous flow than homophony. Each subsequent break may refer to the previous. This is one of the powerful aspects of Mozart's music--his homophony is sometimes confounded and therefor enriched by bits of species counterpoint. Ernst Bloch (the philosopher, not the composer) is the only person I know of who has ever gone down this road before. Below, he suggests that homophony is the late-flowering musical aftereffect of Thomism.

"Thomism is eminently aesthetic, balances the world, and only gives up the Hellenic unsubstantiality of being, the contiguously integrated,

William Anderson

concentric order, in order to replace it with the more delightful construct of a heterogeneous harmony..." The Spirit of Utopia, by Ernst Bloch, translated by Anthony A. Nassar, (Stanford).

I agree with Bloch and the equation that he implies here:

Hellenic (I extend to Augustinian/Platonic) -----> Polyphony

Thomistic -----> Homophony

Different varieties of breakings suggest different degrees of breaking of the musical continuum. It is of the greatest significance that Aquinas' stance so drastically affected the West's attitude toward nature, and this did affect music. Music's native and recalcitrant "unisubstantiality" delays the onset of Thomistic homophony, which aptly comes with opera--music of free agents in a creation set loose. It then follows that one strong role for American music might be to explore the musical implications of Emerson's subsumption of prior attitudes toward nature.

These four songs have pioneered this terrain. They show how many different shades of harmonic rhythm are possible in post-functional-harmonic-music and they show how these various musical dynamisms relate to earlier approaches to harmonic rhythm (tonal polyphony and homophony) in ways that transparently mirror Emerson's subsumptions of earlier traditions. Taken together these songs seem to suggest that in the Emersonian universe Platonic-polyphonic-unisubstantiality and Thomistic-homophonic-heterogeneity are locked in each others' service in a way that mirrors Emerson's stance-formation process and its consequent picturing. Action may come when one is securely picturing, suggesting another project--an Emersonian opera.

This was the goal I had in mind for the Cygnus Ensemble's Emerson bicentennial concert, to lay these relationships bare to better understand them. I had an inkling of these points going into the project and the act of studying, rehearsing, performing, listening, and thinking about the songs fleshed out more details than I ever imagined possible. I will find myself wrong about many points as I think about these things further, and so I will need to revise this occasionally. I am grateful for the advice of the composers and to Dr. Hollander. I welcome further advice about how to correct and refine this argument.

Colonial Cinema & Mosaic Narrative

Russell Richardson

The following notes come from three sources, three impulses: the first is a sort of musing about how to use video to its strengths and how to stay awake and not simply parrot styles and forms from TV and cinema, or media art; the second is one half of a loose dialogue with an Argentinean screenwriter friend, Miguel Machalski, about the precarious position of (so designated) Third World Cinema. In this, some of the comments are really replies, adding to the cautionary notes Miguel is giving to his Cuban and African students and colleagues. This spills over into the same area – what is inherent in audio-visual storytelling and what is ingrained habit derived from Western European and American TV and mainstream cinema? The third strand is directly related to my work in new media – experimental video form and webcasting, as well as the courses I currently give to high school students in media.

I am looking for a way to unlock the power and beauty of the new media, and – not incidentally – trying to bring the energy of performance and that first flush of conception into the shooting and editing phases of the work. To avoid becoming bored, or overawed by technique and technology. And if possible to leapfrog the dulling, administrative side of filmmaking, which includes, but not only, the larger financial deterrents.

For people like myself (born 1956, first steps in film in the late 70s) the film/video dichotomy has been the central question these last twenty years.

As a ‘film purist’ I was always very suspicious of the facility of video. How easy it was to disregard technical skill and just point and shoot. And the horribly degraded image quality. The neglect of sound (oh, it will do)

On the other hand, for at least a decade, the essential difference between film and video has been: video means ‘can do’; film means ‘cannot do’.

This ‘Yes’ of video turns out to be very persuasive.

Film sets up a control barrier between the filmmaker and reality. The camera, technology, mystique and expectation all definitely work together to place a maker/subject distance. Evidence: the immense leveling work needed to remove this gradient in any film document. I surprised myself in a short exhortation in praise of video, saying that of course, the more you become interested in the visual, then the more you begin to crave film. And you stop asking film to do what video can do better.

The mechanical linking of sound to image of video is its greatest strength.

And video is already part of every subject’s reality. It’s a neutral eye, even if person 1 is holding the camera and person 2 is nominally ‘in front’ of it. Any more than person 1 is ‘making’ a conversation while persons 2 and 3 are ‘listeners’.

Perhaps this is what I’m after? The conversational. Or the casually (as opposed to the Lohengrinic) intimate. Closing the circle. The True.

And now, is video going to leave film with a narrower compass? And take upon itself last century’s burden of narrative? While at the same time, pure video runs headlong away

from these same strictures, into art galleries, bars, back alleys and sheets on walls. Or cell phones and iPod screens.

Away from long stories, into graphics, into fragments and into detail.

Video seems more intimately akin to music than to the novel or theater.

It's an interesting transition to experience, maybe since 2002... and for another two or three years.

These are notes from then.

I've been annoying people for years by insisting that aesthetics is just a branch of ethics... so what if - for the sake of argument - we took aesthetics into the political realm?

Without getting paranoid, or cozy in our sense of unjustified exclusion, as fledgling or marginal filmmakers, we could look at mainstream cinema as a colonial power's imposition on the art form, and see how working in the margins of that aesthetic can be seen as a parallel to any 'resistance'.

I think for any African or non-industry filmmaker, the two are one, but for those of us in Europe or the United States, we have to work as some kind of fifth column (much as I hate any military metaphor, and am not positing a reactionary cinema).

*To carefully tread
the line between
conservatism & the
myth of originality*

A traditional film or TV show plot evolves along an arc of set-up, development and resolution. Or, to be trite: beginning, middle and end.

In addition to following this Aristotelian paradigm, the obvious question is begged of a self-contained, linear narrative which must be watched from A to Z and not in any other order.

It is predicated upon only watching the piece once, at the time (screening or show-time) decided by the broadcaster or movie theater.

With the rise of video and DVD, no-one seems to have noticed that these essential frames have vanished, and that repeatability has become the new norm.

Once we know 'the story', and view the film a second, third (or fiftieth) time, there has to be something more than mere plot to sustain our interest.

Similarly with web viewing,

*Remember the old
'continuous per-
formance'?*

*Where you'd enter
halfway through a
film to watch it
2 1/2 times?*

*How wonderful to
not understand
what was
happening!*

a new form of story has to evolve. Firstly, because for the moment, downloading full features is just too cumbersome, so they will be split into smaller files or episodes and reassembled in the user's computer.

The pull of the medium will soon make filmmakers ask the question why they should be originating two hours of material before a 'work' can be said to exist. Why not two minutes? And another two minutes a week later? And if two minutes, why necessarily the 'first' two minutes of the story? Why not a selection of key scenes, as in a trailer (or more accurately, as in a synopsis)?

I lived through the explosion in music in London from 1977 to 1982, where the basic forms of distribution were attacked and overthrown, but then these subversive elements were pared down and assimilated.

There was a window between the first explosion and its co-option. The dynamic of the music came first (content) and the dissemination of this - outside of established circuits - came second, but was seen as indispensable for the music to continue. When the circuits were assimilated, the musical forms stagnated.

This is what is needed in cinema.

What seems to be happening is that the earlier stages of story assembly are coming to the foreground: the assemblies of rushes and alternate takes known to editors are now being accessed by the audience. The 'reading' of storylines from out-of-chronological-order scenes is a skill which has become widespread.

The ability to jump across ellipses (e.g. for an editor, when intervening scenes have not been shot, or even written) can be integrated into the

*this is the joy of
filmmaking —ordering,
re-ordering, playing
with all the elements.*

*The finished work al-
ways feels so dull.*

Russell Richardson

structure of the piece, which -
in addition - grows each day.
A collaborative piece can even
grow without the knowledge
of its 'authors'.

So, rather than try to bend
the new medium to the rules
and habits of cinema or tele-
vision, can we work out what
goes with the grain of selec-
tive, non-linear repetitive
viewing as available on the
web?

It seems to me that we are
moving to what can be called
a mosaic narrative.
When not enough information
exists, we have a mystery
where each shot or segment
stands alone, and the viewer
must try to guess or sketch
connections.

So what is the bourgeois, colonial form? Before dealing with subject matter - which is nei-
ther here nor there, in fact - there is the vexed question of exhibition. I use the word
'vexed' because though I strongly believe that the cinema experience must involve going
out into a community of viewers (not staying at home in a private and technically isolated
screening) I wonder if the very fact of needing a theatre, 35mm film and the whole 19th
century spectacle (curtains, lights, silence etc) isn't in itself inherently bourgeois.

The first imposed form is length. A 'proper' film runs a little under two hours. From 100 to
110 minutes, ideally. This is purely to fit into a regulated system of showtimes - 3, 5, 7 and
9 o'clock shows. A three hour film will only get three shows a day, will only have a money
collecting opportunity three times. This is corporate rather than colonial, I know... (more
on that later).

It seems to have taken 'Lord of the Rings' to convince studio executives that more can be
better...

It's difficult to rely on earlier
terminology, too, when think-
ing about this. All of the be-
low should be held as provi-
sional, viewed from the first
paces into a new terrain.
Are we even interested in
'story' anymore?
Or do we have to use a term
like 'event'?

In the way that people prefer to talk about 'image capture' rather than 'filming'; 'assembly' rather than 'editing' and so forth?

*And "delivery"
rather than
"exhibition"*

Do beginning, middle and end have any utility anymore? Even on long running soap operas, there is no longer even any knowledge of the 'beginning' and few would venture to predict or desire any kind of 'end' in a show like 'Neighbours' or 'Coronation Street' which latter is now in its 42nd year of 'storyline'... what we get, instead, are small story loops or sequences, all held together by cross references which, to the uninitiated, can seem Kabalistic in their inscrutability. Yet, these codes can be learnt and assimilated, they are not an esoteric form of knowledge.

How long is a piece of string? A piece of music? (we saw the same thing repeatedly in popular music - the three minute song being conditioned by the recording limitations of wax, then vinyl discs. In passing, the 'album' of 40 minutes has now given way to the CD of around one hour, causing big problems for ephemeral *artistes* who cannot match the annual production schedules)

*It's remarkable that from 1964-69 none of the Beatles' hits were ever on their Lps. They were 'treats' only available on 45s. **

Beatles singles!!!!

Two counter considerations : the endurance of the human buttocks and bladder seem to rule out continuous seven-hour films... but whatever happened to the intermission?? And, some respect should be given to a spectator who travels several miles to see your work. Don't ask them to make the trip for your twelve minute 'masterpiece', eh?
I understand that in early Soviet Russia, many theatres could not obtain the two projectors

* In the UK, that is. In America, these singles and 'B'-sides spawned an extra 2 albums "Magical Mystery Tour" and "Hey Jude", unknown in their country of origin.

necessary for seamless projection of feature films, so they ran each lab reel (eight to nine minutes long) singly, with a fade to black and a samovar break between each reel. These repeated mini-intermissions were filled with talk, criticism and enthusiasm, we are led to believe, but whether or no, it sounds like a remarkably convivial way to watch a film.

Let's suppose a short storyfilm on the web.

We're putting up a minute a week over six months.

You can imagine this as a solo obsessive artist, or a senior group high school project.

What differs it from an archive is some intention that the pieces can fit together, even if they do not fit together hermetically and without any loose ends.

We are in poetry, in fact.

I would guess that any story which has been imagined, hangs around several nodes, which one hopes are nodes of image, not of speech (why not, though?).

How many of these nodes are required to form an event which can be presented and therefore understood? By implication and maybe definition, aren't these nodes integral parts of at least two possible storylines? A junction.

Let's posit that there are say 12 essential nodes in our sequence, and that we can imagine another couple of dozen related but less highly charged shots/sequences (it doesn't matter here whether the camera strip is continuous or whether some montage has taken place). Should we wait until each piece has been shot and edited and present one con-

*This all relates
to a nodal
theory of History
as well as the perception
of time.*

Romanian film leader:

where we have

Picture START

at 12 ft they have just

one word for one frame:

INVCINE

Inverted, of course.

tinuous strip of story... one
'episode'? Why?
Couldn't we just post three or
four nodes and leave it at
that?
And what relegates a shot to
'inessential' in all of this?

Long list-like start and end credits are about a specific set of property relations - who owns the film and what the creative hierarchy is. These credits are only in part recompense to the participants (very few people actually note who the 'key grip' was...) and have a lot to say about career, and ultimately about legality - (the long credits, the order of names and even (true!) the size of the fonts are a sign of the hegemony of paralegals) and sadly, padding (big FX films can have 7 minutes of credits).

Compare 'un film de' with 'written, directed, produced by and starring...'
Coppola's initial experiment with 'Apocalypse Now'... no credits, no titles, but a glossy booklet available in the lobby for whoever wanted one.
Orson Welles' spoken credits over iconic images (a camera for the cameraman) on 'Amber-sons'.
The Dogme 95 group's polemical refusal to credit the director (always ignored in practice...)
All these are valuable considerations.
Strangely, my own first films did not have my name on them, though I fully claim (partial) 'authorship'... Wasn't it Racine who told his son he didn't need to sign his letters...?

Consider the following traditional three shot sequence:

- a) A woman alone answers phone and has a conversation.
- b) Shot out of window of empty field in the rain
- c) Knock on door, man enters house. They talk.

Why would shot b) be deemed inessential if in fact it carries the mood of the scene?
What if we only included shot b) and left a) and c) out altogether?
Could our web intrigue (let's imagine this is a more or less standard relationship melodrama, as beloved of soaps) leave out ALL the nodes and only show the empty, 'filler' shots?

*Sokurov's "Whispering
Pages" -
a "Crime & Punishment"
in negative. No dramatic
scenes, only the waiting,
the befores & afters.*

*Old McLuhan stuff.
New medium repackages
old content.*

Put in the opposite direction, can we allow shots whose ONLY value is to impart linear plot information a place in such a scheme? Shots which are usually a speaker saying information charged words. The talking head.

*Radio with
pictures*

Don't you dream of a film or film experience where the hero doesn't get out of bed and start a fascinating conversation... but stays asleep? Or where the shot out of the train window overpowers the dialogue inside the carriage? The first ten minutes of Wenders' 'Lisbon Story' only roads, radio and weather.

*Agfa
with its subtle
blue/greens and grey sky
cast.
Gone.*

The very fact of using Eastman Kodak 35mm film tacitly bows to economic power. What happened to 9.5mm film? Di-azo film? Dufourcolor?? Who now speaks of the (German / IG Farben) tri-base film patents confiscated by the US after WWII? How Belgian Agfa has been pushed out of the film market? How the Eastern bloc had to use inferior pre-war color dyes (Orwo; Sovcolor) or, more recently, how nearly all video cameras are based on Japanese technology and manufacture? (neo-colonial sub-contracting, to Malaysia or Taiwan)

In that sense, to engage in image making is already to betray certain notions of independence and freedom of conscience.

That's the film maker's Original Sin.

Home distribution via DVD or the internet is sometimes put forward as a way out of this, but this is such a technocentric assumption I will pass by in silence.

(Excised section griping about Chad and East Timor compared with USA and Europe and Japan.)

So, length and substrate seem unavoidable benchmarks. To step outside these very basic and arbitrary rules already marks you as a) deviant and b) unmarketable.

Faust's mistake was to agree.

If you don't want to abandon some kind of narrative, a sense that something is happening, you are still only slightly less free. Perhaps you choose your nodes under other criteria... if small file sizes are still essential (new technologies will remove this

as a structural necessity soon enough) what happens when your hypothetical dozen story nodes are all available simultaneously? Do we number them? Why? Couldn't an open sense of time be built into the structure?

What happens to 'story' when not every viewer has downloaded the same 'clips'?

If everyone has nodes 1, 3, 6 and 12... but very few people caught the brief glimpse of clip 7 (if it was deliberately only made available on the site for 24 hours...)... what then?

This is an inevitability using the P2P system, and can be designed into the story/character input.

What of style? We need to go beyond the much vaunted montage/ mise-en-scène debates of the 50s.

The two formal aspects that root film to the spot are : shot size and shot length.

The former can be broken into the hierarchy of shots/lenses, while the latter takes us into considerations of what constitutes a shot, a sequence, a scene, and whether these things are writ in stone(?), or susceptible of other interpretations.

Shots

By a shot I mean simply an unbroken series of images that are captured between starting and stopping the camera (of course, special effects films and animation cannot be discussed here).

Two counter impulses must be balanced to answer the questions How big? or How close?

For any given size of an object in the frame (tempted to say rather 'subject') there are two variables: lens focal length and camera/subject distance. Crudely put, the same image size (significance?) can be obtained with a short focal length and a short camera/subject distance, or a long focal length with a greater distance. This is important. How close the camera is to the people filmed has a direct effect on their attitude to the camera, and expresses a definite view of the filmmaker's attitude to the subjects. This is far from simple (close does not 'mean' intimate, just as 'far' does not imply 'cool').

An experienced cameraman once told me a great, true secret, gripping my arm fiercely, warning me not to believe people when they told me any different: perspective is a function of distance and ONLY DISTANCE! It has nothing to do with lenses.

Do we begin at 'a' beginning?
Couldn't we also include 'an'
end?

What does character development mean here if not only what the viewer deems it to mean.

Do we have to construct integral characters whose whole can be deduced in any scene?

Isn't 'development' then merely a function of repeated viewings, or an accumulation of additional scenes (in ANY order) simply yielding more information?

If we imagine a website which initially allows us access to some twenty 'clips' and after reaching some maturity makes several hundred available, when can a work be said to have ended? Or achieved closure?

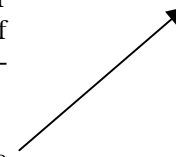
Or, on the other end of the scale... how little is needed for a satisfying whole... even if riddled with (structurally intentional) holes?

Aren't we approaching the condition of music?

At last?

*By which I mean,
the melody fragment needs
no other
justification.*

It can simply be.



Colonial interpretation of the phrase 'Master shot' - people made insignificant, aerial perspective of the map maker, who makes maps? the person who does not know the terrain, and will not take the time to walk through it to get to know it intimately, who wants a pragmatic working knowledge, NOW...

We were talking of 'primitive' cinema (might as well talk of primitive automobile construction....) I think what we wanted was a clear, clean view of another way of seeing. Not looking for the familiar and points in common but for the genuinely other.

The limited use of close ups in African cinema vs. Russian or French training... is this then one African trait?

also abrupt variations in tone in African films which correspond to the active, engaged storyteller — asides, character voices + mood ranges, authorial insights, references to real life experiences inserted into transparent fictions, even allowing listeners to contribute (actors'

own tales) and a rather derisory attitude to the 'story'

Miguel tells me the horror stories of Francophone Africa production and original film projects turned away because they are not 'African' enough, i.e. do not address what are perceived (by the well-thinking French grant bodies) as 'authentic African social issues' that is, AIDS, famine, poverty and social upheaval as economic prosperity is 'offered'.

Ditto some Japanese camera placements - an other mode of relation?

Cf recent Japanese horror films and their US remakes. Contrast their sedate and elliptical style which uses time and repetition of small tropes to build suspense, and (almost) never the shock tactics of sudden close ups.

panta rei...

So what flows from this? What could flow?

Firstly, I think there's a great weakening of causality. If this, then that doesn't seem so rigidly important.

Second, related, as time's arrow is, chronology itself is built out of the structure of the pieces and into how we sample them.

This may be the single most relevant part of 'interactivity', the mechanistic following of a timeline is no longer possible.

Isn't the position of the auteur also weakened? Or at least, a certain nimble footwork is needed. Not so much of one's point of view (singular) can be imposed, as too much active input (even interpretation) is demanded of the viewer.

To a great extent, the viewer becomes the de facto editor of the piece.

As for characters - we are firmly in the facets mode. No development through constructed time, but revelation through observers' time.

This method of information gathering - partial, non-sequential, repetitive, time based but not causality based

$p \Rightarrow q$

*Film triggers
this key human
faculty.
Time perception.
Again.*

Russell Richardson

is very close to the perception
system we use in real life.
Could this be where the
charge comes from?

On Irony

Irony in a hierarchical society implies an 'us' and a 'them' ; those who 'get' the irony, and those who don't...separates the cognoscenti from the rabble... but in a community, irony refers to a shared experience, it is inclusive - we are all in the know, and thus can economize drama, play a riff on meaning (like a new singer singing a well known song, it is not the novelty of the song, but the interpretation that interests the audience).. and African or anti-colonial cinema can use both of these functions of irony... the inclusive use is to heavily lard a story with irony to defer to the intelligence and knowledge of the audience's shared experience; the exclusive use is for 'enemies', and this is one reason why traditional oral story forms are very useful and heavily employed currently in African cinema; they perform the dual function of easily recognizable substrate, and they allow full rein to irony. From the inside, these tales are very wise and politically pointed, from the willfully outside, they can seem crude or obvious, and slip beneath the guard of censors.

Africa again. Haile Gerima's 'Harvest 3000'.

There is a 'straight' narrative in there : the poor, oppressed and possibly crazy man who eventually kills the 'wicked' landowner.

One series of events about two men, however emblematic they may be... but intermixed with that 'story' are others, other times ; the pastoral cycle of the farming family; the daily routine, very flatly shown... the 'event' of the drowning... the out of time sequence of the 'crazy' musician in the town... where he doesn't seem crazy at all... (out of time because when he gets to the town, we suddenly become contemporary, definitely in one time (1970?), and see how the relations between men change. He's a half stranger here, though some do know him... in the village he's a fixture, beneath good or evil, he just is...

The contemporary scenes about the political rallies in Addis Ababa which seem to be staged documentaries (i.e. only the protagonist is acting, the crowd is real) and the reminiscences of the colonial period proper among the ex-freedom fighters all mingle with a frankly millennial series of visions...

youth as hope

all of these viewpoints and attitudes to time intermingle and sit very easily together, which would suggest that they are fully integrated in Gerima's own worldview.

I do not want to suggest that Gerima is a 'primitive' (he is very sophisticated filmmaker indeed) nor that he is showing us a 'pure' African cinema... whatever might that be? He was 'trained' in Moscow, and has a very educated and post-colonial overview of what it means to be African in the modern world... he is an urban filmmaker - living these days in L.A. - who depicts a countryside he (presumably??) has lost touch with... yet, like the English writer John Berger who transplanted himself (and much of his subject matter) to the French Alps 40 years ago, the sustained fact that he engages with the rural shows he understands its place and value... the irruptions of rural time into his work should therefore be seen as essential, even if they are consciously willed rather than automatic.

A few years ago I wrote a hoax
feature about primitive Abo-
riginal cinema, which I thank-
fully never sent to *Cahiers du*

See also
Gerima's American
films:
"Bush Mama"
and
"Ashes & Embers"

Cinema, which featured a lucid and persuasive debunking of the 'primitive' myth by a working (but, alas, fictional) Aborigine filmmaker.

Reality caught up with me in the shape of the book 'Bad Aboriginal Art' by Eric Michaels, which details the trials and tribulations of a group of real Native Australians and their experiences in running a local TV station.

Univ. of Minnesota

Press, 1994

ISBN 0-8166-2341-

4

*In series: "Theory
Out of Bounds"*

Also, here, Sembene Ousmane's 'Ceddo' which seems to happen in some unstated colonial time, maybe the early 19th century?? But which ends up in modern day Dakar - and there is no rupture.

What does Sembene take from cinema history? Why is frontality and the full figure so important in his work? Or his centering on women in so many of his films?

This specific example will not help the New York or Parisian filmmaker, of course, but perhaps a close attention to the reality of the streets (and fields?) i.e. film it, do not stage it, can add something to their work???

A reason why exteriors and weather are so important, compared to the easily controllable environments of the studio set, and permanent sunshine??

I can't get over this simple fact: please put weather into your films. The weather you get, not the weather you plan for.

And what of the numinous?

I don't want to imply that the medium will pull us to a dour, social or perceptual realist outlook, as I think the opposite may well be the case. So why is that?\

*Is a secular numinosity
possible?*

It's a hope (only a hope) that the key characteristic of these small lapidary images will be their emotional charge, or numinosity.

A numinous image, while self-sufficient, is also permeable to and demanding of links. The power with which it lodges in the mind makes it seek out connections with other images.

*Or are all images
sacred?*

Him, again!

(Is this true even for a single stand alone sequence? Does it call a series of possible mates?)

This is a linear, hierarchical and fundamentally Aristotelian view of time and - I believe - very harmful to any development of cinema in its own natural direction, which is towards integration of times (camera fact; memory; aside; correspondence) fragmented or inter-laced chronology (I do not mean merely flashbacks, here) and various viewpoints, even communal, cyclical structures... the time of the community, more imperturbable than the sharp linearity of one mind, one 'story'...

Tarkovsky's 'Mirror' seems to me to be a paradigm here, to set at the opposite end of the spectrum from a major studio Hollywood production.

(A film like 'Memento' is very interesting, but remains a tour de force with its basic reverse chronology... similarly 'Pulp Fiction' playfully used time loops and ellipses for sheer fun... or 'Timecode' used its (four) unbroken narrative times to great effect. But still, an effect.) Kurosawa's 'Rashomon' is a Film 101 staple for its use of various narrative points of view, (this is a literary mode) but raises little comment for its radical use of repeat chronology. Here, time is truth, and the point of view is in fact a point of chronology. (Then there's Sokurov's 'Ark'...)

OR... the various way-stages previously only known to professionals

Temporary titles / Unfocussed shots / Mistimed pans / Halts / Hesitations / ungraded images and unmixed sound are now revealed / to be revealed in all their unfinished beauty to non-professionals, to the extent that the category 'professional' will cease to exist, vanishing like the gentleman - farmer.

All these joys.

Anyway, we're passing out of the colonial or neo-colonial era into the corporatist (multi-national) era, though the change viewed from the third world (excuse the term) populations will be indiscernible)

Pressure is now commercial pressure, the *point d'appui* is the same : the livelihood of a nation; the path is the same - replacing an indigenous imagery and language with an imported, imposed and tautologically defined 'superior' set of values.

As Wenders put it : how will we remain European if we allow others to tell our stories? A propos : the fact that all myths and folk takes of Europe are now filtered through corporate America should be taken as a sinister fact, to be fought against. And it is emphatically NOT only America doing this to 'the rest of the world'.

Two recent salutary experiences: I found a long lost track 'Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet' on the net as an mp3. Gavin Bryars original (I thought) sensitive arrangement of the anonymous tramp's song had been swamped out (and cut by 70% of its running time) by Tom Waits, who treated us all to a schmaltzy strings laden sing-along. And I like Tom Waits.

AND

Watching (with Ben Boretz) Werner Herzog's two re-issued documentaries, 'Fata Morgana' and 'Lessons of Darkness' - essentially tracking shots of the various deserts and wildernesses in the world - which had all live sound stripped off and witless, canonical (Grieg; Wagner) music tracks added.

Ben's reaction reminded me of the Harry Cohn's famous method of judging a Columbia picture: 'If I don't like it, my fanny squirms'.

A perfect illustration of Bresson's maxim that sounds and images can nullify each other. Because Herzog's images were other-worldly. And I like Herzog...

*Decided to re-edit
these into one
film with other
sound.*

"Dark Morgana"

Gaumont in France, in ?1985? makes a distribution deal with Disney which includes a tacit agreement to stop producing children's films (because Disney does it better...). the result - for the last 20 years all the imagery and tales available to French kids have been of American origin.

Yet in the 60s, characters of the stature of Prévert were writing lovely, rich films for kids' cinema. (*Le Roi et l'Oiseau*)

Compare Disney's saccharine, or the recent revolting BBC 'Alice' with the Czech Svankmajer's... measure the loss...

Yet look at the gem 'Monsters Inc.' a film that shows all that is best of America: generosity; spirit; wry intelligence and visual flair.

I liked the follow-up 'The Incredibles' almost as much, and for the same reasons.

Russell Richardson

(Yet - the horror! - a friend just lent me the 1986 graphic novel 'Watchmen' by English writer/artists Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, which deals with tragically down-at-heel de-commissioned superheroes and their struggle to carry on in anonymity in an uncaring world. All social commentary, political astuteness and bleakness, of course, have been removed in the Pixar adaptation.)

ISBN 0-930289-2-4
DC Comics 1986-87

I finally rented Abbas Kiarostami's film 'Ten' on dvd the other day - as the proofs to this article sat in my bag. A lucid, light, devastating drama from Teheran, shot entirely inside one moving car (a small Peugeot, I believe) with two static cheap camcorders fixed on the dashboard. In just five minutes, his images shatter any preconceptions we may have had about Iran as 'other, oriental, despotic, primitive, extremist, Third World or alien. The dvd includes a masterful documentary essay by Kiarostami on more or less the subject of this essay. But in images, not words.

The following day, I went to the local Mall and saw 'Jarhead' in a packed cinema. An impeccably filmed and edited meditation on War, the Gulf War in this case, taking an adult and non-didactic stance, allowing us to see war as perhaps the last available rite of passage for the Young American Male. Cine-literate citations of 'Full Metal Jacket', 'Apocalypse Now' and 'Platoon'. It was eerie to watch Sam Mendes' actors parade past expensive reconstructions of the burning Kuwait oil fields so nakedly revealed (and without music...) by Herzog 12 years earlier.

But the production values tell a different, less open story: Iraq has been consigned to History. We have had the time and leisure to weigh, weigh, number and measure. In this world, there are only 'us' and insects. 'We' are significant; 'they' are not.

And 'we' hold the cameras.

So what are we left with, after this excision?

The body: some straight line
from Keaton and Lloyd,
through screwball comedy
and slapstick to animation,
the primacy of movement and
color over words, intentions.

As I get older, and more sure of what I want to do, and what I really do NOT want to do... I find myself stuck with the fact that to get where I want to be, I have to risk amateurishness and failure... if I tend to the unfashionable so much (the big shaky hand-held close-ups; drawn out silences; wind through trees) then this must be a reflection of some facet of my personality, and therefore is something I should cultivate. No?

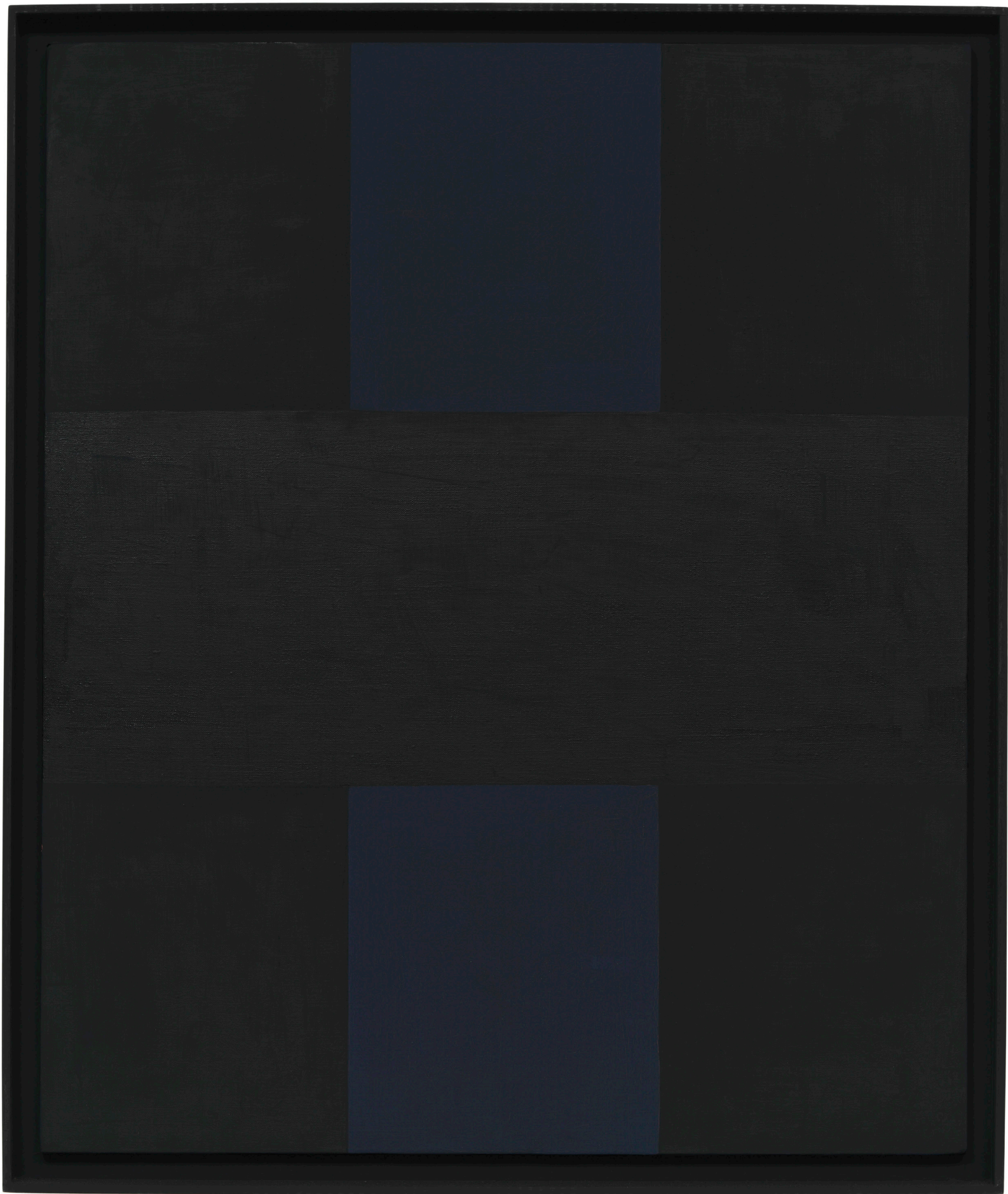
And not even a little bit concerned with 'success' any more...

BUT - after Reinhardt - don't
be so disingenuous as to pre-
tend that longtime filmmakers
don't know (at least a little of)
what they are about.

*Chaplin said — "we're all amateurs.
We don't live long enough to be anything else"*

*"It is not right for an
artist to make believe
that he doesn't know
what he's doing, when
everyone else knows what
he's doing..."
Ad Reinhardt, "The
Artist in Search of a
Code of Ethics"*

*Absent from citations but very present in
thought here above is Stan Brakhage;
his films + writings.*



Abstract Painting, Black, 1952

oil on canvas, 30-1/2x25-1/8"

Photo by Kerry Ryan McFate / courtesy PaceWildenstein

copyright 2005, Estate of Ad Reinhardt / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), New York

Ad Reinhardt: Painting and Writing*

Leszek Brogowski

*"If one doesn't talk about a thing, it had
never happened. It is simply expression,
as Harry says, that gives reality to things"*
Oscar Wilde¹

The black of these paintings, the only paintings that Reinhardt produced during the last six years of his life: "A square (neutral, shapeless) canvas, five feet wide, five feet high [...]"², is illuminated by his text-manifestos on Art and Painting, of which the most important were composed during the decade between 1957 - 1967, the latter date marking the death of the artist. The texts are, for the greater part, formed of quotations: "I haven't made one original statement. These have all come from artists who have expressed themselves in this way as artists."³ It is therefore a collage of quotations, and is taken as such by all commentators. "The manifestos of Rodtchenko", writes Lucy R. Lippard, "were, in very much a similar manner, drafted as a list of quotations; a principle used thirty years later by Ad Reinhardt"⁴. Walter Benjamin dreamed of a work of literary criticism composed exclusively of citations, which would be the culmination of his own anti-subjectivism.⁵ To organize the quotations so as to expose their effect on the history of art necessarily means to interpret that history. Such is the inescapable conclusion drawn by Catherine Millet: "Quite explicitly, several of Reinhardt's texts seem to confirm that these paintings are somehow determined by analyses of past and contemporary art history".⁶

If, however, instead of simply following the hints given by Reinhardt himself, we try to identify the sources of the quotations, or at least of some of them (which are nonetheless most revealing), we realize that apart from many artists his inspiration includes philosophers – notably Hegel; furthermore, that particularly in his interpretation of history, Reinhardt borrows several Hegelian concepts, a fact which shouldn't be neglected while commenting on his pictorial project.

* * *

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¹ *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, London, Oxford University Press 1974, p. 107.

² "[The Black-Square Paintings]", (1963), in: *Art-as-Art. The Selected Writings of Ad Reinhardt*, edited by Barbara Rose [from now on: Rose], University of California Press, p. 82 ; Paperback Reprint, 1991.

³ "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 19.

⁴ Lucy R. Lippard, "The Silent Art", *Art in America* Jan-Feb 1967, p. 58.

⁵ Th. W. Adorno, *Über Walter Benjamin*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp 1970, p. 26.

⁶ *Ce qu'il dit, ce qu'il peint*, *Art Press* n° 4, May/June 1973, p. 4.

"There are not two arts, there is only one"⁷. -

"There is just one art, one art-as-art. [...] / There is just one art history, one art evolution, one art progress. [...] / There is just one truth in art, one form, one change, one secrecy. [...] / There is just one method [...]"⁸
(Reinhardt)

"The Truth is, however, one [...] ".⁹ "There is only one Spirit [...] it cannot be expressed, to be two..."¹⁰ "There can be but one method in all science, in all knowledge. Method is just the self-explicating concept – nothing else – and the concept is one only."¹¹
(Hegel)

"If there is one thing to say about Asia's art, then, it is about its timelessness, its clarity, its quietness, its dignity, its negativity. [...] Nowhere in world art has it been clearer than in Asia that anything irrational, momentary, spontaneous, unconscious, primitive, expressionistic, accidental, or informal cannot be called serious art."¹²
(Reinhardt)

"In the East the chief thing is always the One, undivided, fixed, substantive [...] and such an outlook is from start to finish the most sterling one."¹³
(Hegel)

"The less an artist obtrudes himself in his painting, the purer and clearer his aims."¹⁴
(Reinhardt)

[as far as the poet is concerned], "The more he effaces himself the better."¹⁵
(Hegel)

⁷ "Twelve Rules for a New Academy" (1957), Rose p. 204.

⁸ "There is just one painting" (1966), Rose p. 70-71.

⁹ Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. By E.S. Haldane, Kegan Paul, London, 1892, vol.1, p. 17-18; "Die Wahrheit aber ist Eine [...]" Also kann auch nur eine Philosophie die wahre sein", *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie* (1816-30), éd. par J. Hoffmeister, Hambourg, F. Meiner 1940, p. 27.

¹⁰ *Lectures...*, op. cit. p. 73; "Der Geist ist einer [...] er kann nicht zwei Inhalte haben", *Einleitung...*, op. cit. p. 193.

¹¹ *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Introduction, trans. By R.F Brown, P.C. Hodgson and J.M. Stewart, UCP, Berkeley, 1988, p. 100; "Es kann nur eine Methode in aller Wissenschaft sein, da die Methode der sich explizierende Begriff, nicht anderes, und dieser nur einer ist", *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* (1816-30), t. III, "Werke in zwanzig Bänden", t. 16, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp 1980, p. 64.

¹² "Timeless in Asia" (1960), Rose p. 216-217.

¹³ *Aesthetics – Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. By Knox, Oxford, 1974, III-III, p. 978; "Das Unzersplitterte, Feste, Eine, Substantielle bleibt im Orient immer die Hauptsache, und solch eine Anschauung ist die von Hause aus gediegenste [...]", *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (1820-29), t. III, "Werke in zwanzig Bänden", t. 15, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1978, p. 246.

¹⁴ "Twelve Rules for a New Academy" (1957), Rose p. 204-205

¹⁵ *Aesthetics*, op. cit., III-III, p. 956; "Je weniger er [= der Dichter] sich vordrängt, desto besser", *Vorlesungen...*, op. cit. p. 219.

"Visions, images, symbols, representations, sensations, impulses are, as they were in medieval times, still for 'the minds of the ignorant' and for 'the poor in spirit'.^{"16}
(Reinhardt)

"part of mythology [...] is the work of the imaginative reason [...], but yet it has no other means of so doing, than that of sensuous representation [...]. Mythology can now be studied for art, &c. But the thinking mind must seek out the substantial content, the thought and the theory implicitly contained therein."¹⁷
(Hegel)

"Fine art is not 'a means of making a living' or 'a way of living a life', and the artist who dedicates his life to his art and his art to his life burdens his art with his life and his life with his art. Art that is a matter of life and death is neither fine nor free."¹⁸
(Reinhardt)

"[...] and the artistic activity is not a means to a result falling outside itself but an end which in its accomplishment directly closes together with itself."¹⁹
"In this matter, if poetry is not likewise to relapse into prose, it must avoid every aim which lies outside art and the pure enjoyment of art."²⁰
(Hegel)

"Art's reward is its own virtue."²¹
(Reinhardt)

"Art itself is the most beautiful side of that history and it is the best compensation for hard work in the world and the bitter labour for knowledge."²²
(Hegel)

¹⁶ "Timeless in Asia" (1960), Rose p. 217.

¹⁷ *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, t. I, *op. cit.*, p. 81-82; "Die Mythologie [...] ist der Werk der phantasierenden Vernunft, der Vernunft also, die [...] aber noch kein anderes Organ hat als die sinnliche Vorstellungsweise. [...] Man kann sie studieren z. B. in Hinsicht der Kunst; aber den denkende Geist muß den substantiellen Inhalt, das Allgemeine in ihr aufsuchen", *Einleitung...*, *op. cit.*, p. 204-205.

¹⁸ "Art-as-Art" (1962), Rose p. 54.

¹⁹ *Aesthetics*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, III-III, p. 992; "Die künstlerische Tätigkeit ist nicht ein Mittel für ein außerhalb ihrer fallendes Resultat, sondern ein Zweig, der sich in seiner Ausführung unmittelbar mit sich selber zusammenschließt", *Vorlesungen...*, *op. cit.* t. III, p. 265.

²⁰ *Aesthetics*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, III-III, p. 995; "In dieser Rücksicht muß die Poesie [...] sich vor jedem außerhalb der Kunst und des reinen Kunstgenusses liegenden Zweck bewahren", *Vorlesungen...*, *op. cit.*, t. III, p. 268.

²¹ "The Next Revolution in Art" (1964), Rose p. 63.

²² *Aesthetics*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, III-III, p. 1237; "Denn in der Kunst haben wir es mit keinem bloß angenehmen oder nützlichen Spielwerk, sondern mit der Befreiung des Geistes vom Gehalt und von den Formen der Endlichkeit [...] zu tun [...] sie selbst die schönste Seite und den besten Lohn für die harte Arbeit im Wirklichen und die sauren Mühen der Erkenntnis ausmacht", *Vorlesungen...*, *op. cit.*, t. III, p. 573.

To the cursory glance this bringing into play of a direct link between Reinhardt and Hegel doesn't contradict any of the interpretations stated above: as Michel d'Hermies remarked on one occasion, Hegel himself "has never invented anything: this is his triumph".²³ In fact the reason why he could never have invented anything is because Philosophy being one and true, has always existed as such in itself. "Thus, whoever may have studied or acquainted [himself] with a philosophy, of whatever kind, provided only that it is such, has thereby become acquainted with Philosophy."²⁴ Consequently, the real task of Hegel's work is to create a passage of philosophy from *Philosophy in itself to in-and-for-itself*, as though finally in his oeuvre, philosophy acquired a full awareness of what it is: Philosophy-As-Philosophy. Recognizing Hegelian influence as a major well of quotations used by Reinhardt we can perhaps at the same time unveil the source of concepts susceptible of throwing a new light upon the black paintings, as well as his idea of Art.

Beginning with the affinities observed in their respective writings, the present study attempts to establish a reading of Reinhardt's texts that would be in some sense governed by Hegelian concepts. By taking such a position, one supposes that while moving along the trajectory from the idea of art's essence (art's essential nature) to his dogma of art-as-art, Reinhardt created, *mutatis mutandis*, the same meshed chain of logic that organizes concepts in the Hegelian system. Nevertheless, assuming that Reinhardt was indeed familiar with Hegel's *Philosophy of Fine Arts* (a thought that can be corroborated not only by the evident analogies among multiple fragments, but equally by his wide philosophical culture and the existence of an integral translation of the text in question, published in New York, 1921²⁵), such an interpretation can only be justified if it proves coherent and explanatory. In other words we can validate our thesis by showing that Ad Reinhardt's notion of art can be encompassed by an arrangement within a conceptual structure parallel to the one that is at work in Hegel. This interpretation – with the reader's consent – far from intending to be at variance with certain contemporary exegeses (such as those which take phenomenological analysis as a starting point), may in fact have the advantage of allowing them to provide a general framework totally consistent with Reinhardt's philosophical set of references. Furthermore, it makes us realize the very specific importance of his texts in relation to the paintings – by doing so, it explains, with great precision, how the approach made during the "conceptual era" was simply wrong – a position often admitted by current commentators, without however, their giving reasons.

Essence of Art

It will be especially clarifying, at this point, to examine the meaning of the "idea", such as implied by Hegel. Rather than being subjective or simply formal (like notion), idea is the "absolute unity of the concept and objectivity."²⁶ or, in other words, the "subject-object" that realizes (that carries out) a unity of both the ideal and the real, of the finite and the infinite.²⁷ In consequence, the Hegelian idea is conceived as something endowed with the maximum of

²³ "Hegel n'a rien inventé: c'est sa gloire." *Art et sens*, Paris, Masson & Cie 1974, p. 11.

²⁴ Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, op. cit. p. 18; *Einleitung...*, op. cit. p. 28.

²⁵ None of the chronological sources published to this day takes into specific account the depth of Reinhardt's actual studies, or his knowledge of philosophy. They all agree that in 1939 Reinhardt entered Columbia College, then in 1944 (according to *Chronology by Ad Reinhardt*, 1966, Rose p. 7), or in 1947 (according to Lucy R. Lippard, *Ad Reinhardt*, op. cit. p. 200) he began his studies of art history in the Institute of Fine Arts, New York, studies that lasted six years. According to Mrs. Rita Reinhardt, his wife, Ad Reinhardt followed courses in philosophy at New York University, Brooklyn College, Hunter College, and finally at Yale University (a letter in the author's archive). His private library was in large part composed of philosophical texts. However, neither the information gathered thanks to Mrs. Reinhardt, nor the sources found in the Archives of American Art (the Smithsonian Institution) could allow us to establish, with clear certainty, whether Reinhardt was indeed familiar with the course of Hegelian Aesthetics, published under the title of *Philosophy of Fine Arts*, transl. by F.P.B. Osmaston, vol. 1-4, New York, Harcourt 1921. The book was also published, in the same translation, in London, Bell, 1920.

²⁶ Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Science in Outline* (1830), trans. Stephen A. Taubeneck, New York, 1990, # 161, p. 127.

²⁷ Hegel, *Encyclopedia...*, op. cit., ; # 162, p. 128. cf. also # 214.

reality and can't even be thought of in any way except as what really and truly exists. Idea is, in fact, a process²⁸ through which the notion by grasping agency has carried itself out as the essence in itself of the object in order to produce an objectivity that corresponds to its inward design, its essential subjectivity. *The apparent autonomy of the object is being suspended* – according to Hegel – *by the fact that its realization is subordinate to the design (concept-essence), which means that the "purely ideal" object is presented as having no significance of its own.*²⁹ By way of such a dialectic, the opposition between content and form disappears in such a way that "the notion, inasmuch as it remains *the activity of the form, has no content other than itself*".³⁰ In the end, it's not the object as such that finds itself through the process, but the notion of design, i.e. the unity of subjectivity and objectivity or, in other words, the idea. "And so the pure abstract idea in itself", to quote a beautiful expression of Hegel himself, "is not an abstraction, an empty generality (*Einfachheit*), such as red, but it is a flower, which is concrete in itself and self-developing."³¹ – It's almost enough to remind ourselves of the persistence that urged Reinhardt again and again to affirm a unity of the idea of art ("there is just one aesthetics, just one art idea, one art meaning, just one principle, one force"³²) in order to put forth as an instant possibility the reading that, having taken into consideration Hegelian concepts, propose a marginalization of the visual in Reinhardt's paintings (which he refers to, may we add, as "non-objective objects of art"³³), a marginalization which paradoxically supports all the intellectual density of their meaning, as well as their peculiar status, as presented in his writings on the subject of art. We could even risk saying that his canvases, *possessing no meaning of their own*, can have no reality except through the unity, formed between themselves and their concept, i.e. as an idea of art.

"There is just one art, one art-as-art"³⁴, claims Reinhardt, "art-as-art is a concentration on art's essential nature."³⁵

During the sixties and seventies, perhaps under a predominant influence of Wittgenstein and analytical philosophy in general, many of Reinhardt's declarations were erroneously interpreted as tautological definitions of art. In his seminal article inspired by A.J. Ayer's notion of analytical propositions ("only tautologies can be certain"³⁶), Joseph Kosuth compares it with "Reinhardt's thesis of 'art-as-art'"³⁷ to draw a following conclusion: "Art is the only vocation of art. Art is the definition of art."³⁸

And yet, Reinhardt models art according to *Hegelian logic*, which is different from formal logic in the way in which the "idea" of art, i.e. the unity of concept and object, or unity-of-essence-of-art-and-art-objects, is pointed to as true and real. Therefore, there are no objects of art, to quote an utterance of Herbert Read, the only thing which exists is art.³⁹ For according to Reinhardt art exists only inasmuch as it's consistent with its essence: which means that he uses the very concept of art that conceptual artists refuse to accept, the so called essentialist

²⁸ Hegel, *Encyclopedia...*, op. cit., # 212, cf. also # 160.

²⁹ Hegel, *Encyclopedia...*, op. cit., # 212, cf. also # 162, p. 129.

³⁰ Hegel, *Encyclopedia...*, op. cit., # 212.

³¹ Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, op. cit., t. I, p. 26; *Einleitung...*, op. cit. p. 31. - "Je dis: une fleur! et, hors de l'oubli où ma voix relègue aucun contour, en tant que quelque chose d'autre que les calices sus, musicalement se lève, idée même et suave, l'absente de tous bouquets", Mallarmé, *Crise de vers*, "Oeuvres complètes", Paris, nrf/Gallimard (Pléiade) 1984, p. 368.

³² "There is just one painting" (1966), Rose p. 70.

³³ "[The Black-Square Paintings]" (1963), Rose p. 83.

³⁴ "There is just one painting" (1966), Rose p. 70.

³⁵ "The Next Revolution in Art" (1964), Rose p. 62.

³⁶ J. Kosuth, "Art after Philosophy", *Studio International*, October 1969, p. 136; (the whole article was published in three parts in October, November, and December 1969).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, a few lines below. Importance, attached by Kosuth to Reinhardt's idea of art reaches well beyond this article. In *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972...*, London, Studio Vista 1973, p. 14, Lucy R. Lippard points out to another (unpublished) text from 1966 by Kosuth and Ch. Kozlov, *Ad Reinhardt: Evolution into Darkness - The Art of an Informal Formalist; Negativity, Purity and Clearness of Ambiguity*.

³⁸ "Art after Philosophy", op. cit., p. 137.

³⁹ It may be important to note that Read being very familiar with Hegel considers him, just as Hermies, as "one of the main pillars of the philosophical systems" ("*il est le plus grand pilleur des systèmes philosophiques*"), *La philosophie de l'art moderne* (1964), trad. S. Monceau, Paris, Sylvie Messinger 1988, p. 126.

conception. In fact, Kosuth maintains that the "validity of artistic propositions doesn't depend on any assumptions [...] concerning the nature of things"⁴⁰, or to put it in other words, concerning their essence. Whilst the paintings and writings of Reinhardt left a strong imprint on the artistic awareness of his epoch, it was paradoxically the same awareness which vastly empowered contemporary art theory to sweep away all concepts potentially helpful to deploy an adequate reading of Reinhardt's project. What's more, in the same article Kosuth challenges Hegel directly (and quite sharply) to the point of declaring that "continental philosophy can no longer be taken into serious consideration"⁴¹, because even Merleau-Ponty can't manage – according to Kosuth – to distinguish between "ourselves and the world"⁴²; a state of affairs ensuing, apparently, from Hegelian influence. Thus, by rejecting Hegel, Kosuth deprives himself of the means that could enable him to rebuild Reinhardt's thought – the very reason we've decided to base our reading on the opposite perspective.⁴³

"The process and problem of painting is reduced to something that has only to do with the essence."⁴⁴, writes Reinhardt. Without hesitation the dividing line between art and non-art is drawn according to the criterion of art's essence. "The one nature of art fixes a boundary that separates it from any other nature and thing."⁴⁵: with this opening to the text entitled *Art-as-Art* Reinhardt recapitulates a series of affirmative statements (art is one concentration on art's essential reality and unreality, etc.), while at the same time preceding a series of refutations (the nature of art has not to do with the nature of perception, etc.)

In fact, for Reinhardt, the expression "art-as-art" isn't a tautology, as we're led to believe according to Kosuth, but a *reduplicative proposition*, in which a repeated term serves the purpose of achieving the clearest exposure of the essence.⁴⁶ "As" [*η, qua, als, as, comme*] is a pivotal moment of idealism, approached already by the Platonic question of *Greater Hippias*: what is beauty as beauty? (*what is beauty by itself?*)⁴⁷ Reduplication affirms the thing named as being true to its essence. "An A posed as A is therefore no longer a simple A", states Shelling, "but AN A that is A, an A of which it can no longer be pronounced that it is, and isn't, but that it is in a definitive manner. A that is A, is doubled by itself."⁴⁸ The dimension of "as" determines the object as itself, for example art as art, this is why, even though art is often led astray to serve other purposes, according to Reinhardt: "art-as-art has always been and always will be a trouble for philosophers, priests, politicians, professors, patriots, provincials, primitives, poets, psychiatrists, petit-bourgeois persons, pensioners, patrons, plutocrats, paupers, panderers

⁴⁰ "Art after Philosophy", *op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁴² *Ibid.*, note 3, p. 137.

⁴³ In his excellent study: "Avec Reinhardt, libérer le regard" (*Artstudio*, n° 16, spring 1990), Eric Valentin also questions the interpretation of Reinhardt's work proposed by conceptual artists: "It's well known that Judd, and even more Kosuth, have considered Reinhardt's black paintings as the major source of reference for their own concept of artistic creation. This was made possible at the price of fundamental misunderstanding of the very essence of Reinhardt's project" (p. 46). However, we come up with a slightly different interpretation of the gap between this reading and Reinhardt's own work: for inasmuch as Kosuth himself shows no interest in painting, thinking that all art after Duchamp is purely conceptual, Valentin's re-evaluation of art happens to the detriment of the conceptual project. As for Reinhardt himself, he seemed to be more in favor of realizing their actual unity. Cf. *infra* note 107. – More subtle in his perception of the same issue, Yves-Alain Bois speaks of "damage" caused to the present reception of Reinhardt's oeuvre by inappropriate re-appropriation, done by the whole generation of young artists, such as Judd, Stella, and Kosuth (*The Limit of Almost*, in: catalogue of the exhibition in MoMA, New York, 1991 and in MoCA, Los Angeles in 1992/92, p. 11-12). He doesn't explain, however, why the analogy between Reinhardt's "art-as-art" and "art as idea as idea", as proposed by Kosuth, is, in his opinion, "superficial" (p.13) – Also Christine Savinel won't believe in "Art-as-art being a tautological formula [...]" (elle "ne croit d'ailleurs pas que L'Art-comme-art soit une formule tautologique [...]"), "Ad Reinhardt. La valeur du détachement", *Les Cahiers du M.N.A.M.*, # 49, fall 1994, p. 65. – Again, no argument is offered.

⁴⁴ "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 13.

⁴⁵ "[Art-as-Art]" (1962-63), Rose p. 57.

⁴⁶ Whence a certain ambiguity in a tendency of the seventies, which tried to define "pure" art in a deliberately tautological way, such as for example during the show *Film als Film. 022- 1910 bis heute* (Köln-Berlin-Essen-Stuttgart 1977) – a title supposedly suggesting that there is an *essence* of film, despite the fact that talking of "essence" in the context of conceptual reference is contradictory.

⁴⁷ *Greater Hippias*, 286 a sqq.

⁴⁸ F.W.J. Schelling, *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie. Müncher Vorlesungen* (1827), trad. S. Jankélévitch in: *Essais*, Paris, Aubier Montaigne 1946, p. 443.

[...]”⁴⁹; so much for the perspectives where art isn’t considered as art, but rather as a means of propaganda, as a subjective expression of individuality, as an object of a financial investment, and so forth. By way of analogy, we can think of a thirsty animal to whom water doesn’t exist *as water*, or a child, listening to the ticking of a clock, who doesn’t yet know how to use it *as a clock*. For it’s the unique horizon of meaning that makes objects appear as themselves.

Art-as-art

Therefore, if it’s language that first creates meaning, it’s inside language that things can be grounded as themselves, as true to their essence, i.e. placed in their being. According to Hegel, language [*die Sprache*] is precisely the most universal premise of *Logic*, is a theory of philosophical thinking *par excellence*, for the reason that “the forms of thought are first and foremost expressed, and represented in human language [...], [because] language permeates everything that man makes his own”.⁵⁰ In Hegelian philosophy, things are placed as such in language, because “the being of *Logic* is identical with thinking itself”.⁵¹ In this sense Gadamer is quite right when he affirms that, within Hegelian Logic, being “always assumes language in which thinking is hidden”⁵², meaning that neither art, nor its forms, nor even sensible certitude can be possible as such, unless conceived in the hermeneutic horizon of language.

If Reinhardt’s notion of mind were to be inspired by Hegel it could therefore be regarded as hermeneutical, considering the importance that is given to language.⁵³ Even though maintaining that “painting has been the freest and purest fine art in this century [...]”, Reinhardt feels obliged to add, in haste: “[...] and our purest aesthetic *statements* have been in modern painting.”⁵⁴ It seems that thinking, with language being one element, infuses painting with its meaning, at least to such an extent that painting is really enabled to exist within a certain project: or, in other words, without thinking, that is: without language, there’s no project. These are the necessities (very much the same as observed in the Hegelian system) by which we’re forced to look upon *Reinhardt’s texts on art* not only as simple commentaries on the painting, but because they are *foundations of thinking that then command the realization of objects*, or more precisely his black paintings: “in painting the idea should exist in the mind before the brush is taken up.”⁵⁵ As a result, the text can never be dissociated from painting. Not so much because the paintings remain unintelligible in its absence, but in an ever stronger sense: unity of text and object – of writing and painting lays the foundations of art-specific *reality*, a kind of reality to which Hegel has given a name of *Wirklichkeit*, in the purpose of highlighting its character of accomplished rationality.

It’s precisely the importance Reinhardt attached to texts in the whole of his artistic project that intrigued conceptualists. Wanting to perceive the artist as a source of reflection which led to the idea of conceptual art, they consequently buried as obscure any of his own metaphysical references. And yet for Reinhardt it is the essence of art that has to manifest as such through text – i.e., throughout language – the site of thinking.⁵⁶ Which can be also expressed, quoting the

⁴⁹ “The Next Revolution in Art” (1964), Rose p. 59-60.

⁵⁰ Hegel, “Vorrede zur zweiten Ausgabe” (1931) in: *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, “Werke in zwanzig Bänden”, t. 5, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp 1981, p. 20. (*Science of Logic*, trans. By W.H. Johnston and L.G. Struthers, McMillan, NY, 1951, vol.1, Introduction).

⁵¹ Josef Simon, *Das Problem der Sprache bei Hegel*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer 1966, p. 183.

⁵² H.-G. Gadamer, “Signification de la “logique” de Hegel”, traduction de M. Simon, in: *L’art de comprendre*, Paris, Aubier Montaigne 1982, p. 219.

⁵³ Criticizing Reinhardt’s conception of spirit, as over-reifying, Eric Valentin disregards this hermeneutic dimension. According to him, the Reinhardtian idea of art leads to “a dogmatic attitude in art, totally inadmissible, because it gives itself away, from the very beginning, by antiquated and sanctimonious formulations (art is pure, noble, high, etc..., a sin in art, etc...)”, *op. cit.* p. 62, cf. also note 36. However, all such statements bear for Reinhardt a very precise meaning, that takes into account the transfiguration of moral concepts into aesthetic categories, through his own idea of responsibility. This is where we see the clear limitation in Valentin’s reading of moral aesthetics of Reinhardt, cf. *infra* note 107.

⁵⁴ “Aesthetic Responsibility” (1962), Rose p. 164.

⁵⁵ *Twelve Rules for a New Academy* (1957), Rose p. 205.

⁵⁶ “Painting of essence” requires discourse. Frenhofer “was unlucky enough to be born rich, which gave him a chance to ramble” (*Frenhofer “a eu le malheur de naître riche, ce qui lui a permis de divaguer”* (Balzac, *Le chef d’oeuvre inconnu*, Paris, GF - Flammarion 1981, p. 58); perhaps, the very same fact allowed him to attempt his *Belle Noiseuse*. At the sight of which,

words of Alfred Pacquement: "To read Ad Reinhardt means to discover the significance within reach of his work, it means first and foremost to *see* his painting".⁵⁷

The importance given by Reinhardt to writing, in its role of manifesting the essence of art, entails a paradoxical view of another familiar Hegelian idea, namely the end of art. For Hegel, the end of art signifies a decline attributed to excess. Indeed, what is translated by his idea, points to such an accretion in the knowledge of spiritual content (here: in the context of "romantic art") that anything which could be expressed by a sensible form is easily exceeded: thus, when the latter gets detached from the content it begins to fulfill its own independent logic. However, Hegel conceives this dislocation in terms of both nominalism, and virtuosity.⁵⁸ For Reinhardt, whose position is strongly anti-subjectivist, the same dislocation has to be approached from a different angle, i.e. as a matter of *marginalization* of the visual, reinforced by an attempt to maintain – through the agency of his black paintings – an *appropriateness* (*l'adéquation*) of form and content to one another. We can talk of *appropriateness*, because in these efforts Reinhardt strenuously seeks to carry into effect a model of absolute classicism. Nevertheless, the content of art, put under a test of self-determination, no longer depends on the religious absolute. One more reason why Reinhardt needs to make every effort to bring the object of art into relation of appropriateness with art's essence: by doing so he creates a situation when, *the form becomes an "activity" of the concept*. By the same token, given the primacy of the philosophical sense of the term, Reinhardt is a conceptualist, whilst the conceptual artists themselves, philosophically speaking, fall into nominalism. For according to Reinhardt art gets accomplished not in a romantic sublimation, but in a transgressable classicism, which is likely to bring together and match the form of an object and concepts of writing.

In fact, *the essence of painting needs text in order to manifest*: a paradox, but also a price to pay for adopting the Reinhardtian solution. Incidentally, the same has been subject to criticism by Marx: within Hegelian aesthetics, Marx points out, the "real artistic existence is philosophico-artistic".⁵⁹ However, all phenomenologies generally agree in saying that essence *must* manifest itself.⁶⁰ For Reinhardt, essence, thus manifested, becomes a cornerstone laid for the existence of art objects. Here, then, is an *immediate* unity of essence and existence which Hegel names the effective reality [*Wirklichkeit*]; it is when this unity is no longer immediate, but begins to integrate all the mediations [*Vermittelungen*], that reality turns from the effective to the absolute (absolute idea). And so, from the perspective of this philosophy of art, art, meaning the idea of art, have acquired further reality than normal art objects. Moreover, *the essence of painting has to manifest itself equally through form*. It's also for this reason that such aesthetics seem to invite a

Poussin, was supposed to make a remark that the author is "still more of a poet than a painter". (p.70) But brought back, by Porbus and Poussin, to the visual aspect of his work, Frenhofer concluded his failure, perhaps too prematurely: "Nothing, nothing!" ("Rien, rien!" (p. 71). The next night he burned his paintings. – In this respect, many of Reinhardt's own works seem to resemble *la Belle Noiseuse*: "des couleurs confusément amassées et contenues par une multitude de lignes bizarres qui forment une muraille de peinture [...] chaos de couleurs, de tons, de nuances indéfinies, espèce de brouillard sans forme" (p. 69). However, Reinhardt doesn't allow himself to fall into despair; discourse consolidates meaning and reality of his painting. He accomplishes his absolute as the unity of concept and form.

⁵⁷ Alfred Pacquement, catalogue of the exhibition in the Grand Palais, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁵⁸ When form no longer incarnates spiritual content, the space of what's subjective and arbitrary stretches its boundaries, and virtuosity indicates blossoming of the subjective. Thus the meaning of romantic and post-romantic art – as if it were ever attributed by Hegel – invents itself in agreement with nominalist mode of thinking. Hegelian scope isn't wholly unfit to exemplify art of the epoch of the end of art, it is only incapable of giving its evaluation. This is why, even though Hegel calls "the mute language" a work of architecture (*Aesthetics*, *op. cit.* III, p. 632), he's never imagined the possibility of considering forms of plastic arts as a language. And yet: "in the language the means of communication is nothing but a sign and therefore something purely external and arbitrary", (*ibid.*, p. 632). It's precisely this quality of language, which, by subjecting the objects of senses to the intelligible, turns the language into a virtual site, containing every spiritual element. Why then, not extrapolate this onto the forms of all post-romantic art?

⁵⁹ K. Marx, "Manuscrit de 1844", trans. by M. Rubel, in: *Oeuvres. Economie*, t. II, Paris, nrf/Gallimard (Pléiade) 1968, p. 134-135.

⁶⁰ "Essence has to manifest itself": Hegel, *Encyclopedia...*, *op. cit.* # 131. – Long after Hegel, Dilthey discovers that in the descriptions of the conscience-data: "So hebt sich in der inneren Auffassung selber das Wesentliche vom Unwesentlichen ab]", "Ideen über eine beschreibende und zergliedernde Psychologie", 1894, in: *Die geistige Welt. Einleitung in die Philosophie des Lebens. Erste Hälfte. Abhandlungen zur Grundlegung der Geisteswissenschaften, Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. V*, editor Georg Misch, B. G. Teubner, Stuttgart, and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1964, p. 173. – Similarly, Husserlian Phenomenology develops the theory of eidetic intuition as the intuition of essence (Eidos).

quest of an absolute form in art: "Only a standard form can be imageless, only a formula-ized art can be formulaless. There is no other way of getting rid of all qualities and substances."⁶¹

An anti-subjectivist tendency, which Reinhardt has in common with several twentieth century artists, finds a theoretical core here: "The less an artist obtrudes himself in his painting, the purer and clearer his aims".⁶² The ultimate implication of essentialist aesthetics is revealed by the light of Reinhardt's thought: in a place where art should simply allow its essence to *manifest*, it also has to *disappear*. Art fades for the benefit of the essence: "Brushwork brushed out to remove brushwork".⁶³ *What painting offers to be seen then is an object of an apparent autonomy, we could repeat after Hegel, which finds itself being suppressed by the fact that its own realization is subordinated to the essence-concept; therefore a non-object, but merely an ideal, having in itself no signification.*⁶⁴ Thus, the impersonal character of his paintings is doubled by an idealization of the object itself, a strategy designed to facilitate a conformity of the object with the essence, which has been rationally determined:

"The painting leaves the studio as a purist, abstract, non-objective object of art, returns as a record of everyday (surrealist, expressionist) experience ('chance' spots, defacements, hand-markings, accident – 'happenings', scratches), and is repainted, restored into a new painting painted in the same old way (negating the negation of art), again and again, over and over again, until it is just 'right' again."⁶⁵

The idealization of the pictorial object and an extended elaboration of the concept of essence lend each other support in the search for an absolute idea of art. Abstruse at first, this conceptual reinforcement of his doctrine of art-as-art becomes clearer precisely in the light of Hegelian references. By the same token, after analyzing the different ways in which Reinhardt approaches a definition of the *pictorial absolute* we become convinced of his philosophical culture and knowledge of classics, rich yet seldom confessed, indeed, concealed under the cover of an ironic and somewhat enigmatic wisdom.

Absolute

In fact, before the forthcoming analysis reveals how the forms of his painting achieve unity with the essence of art⁶⁶, we need to examine the different ways in which Reinhardt sets himself to

⁶¹ "Timeless in Asia" (1960), Rose p. 218. – If, according to Hegel, it is during the Greek classic period that art achieved this artistic "absolute", we could find there the same tendency we observe in Reinhardt, i.e., a drive to objectify the form and to strip it away from the individuality: "Art of Polyclitus, writes J. Charbonneaux, is essentially impersonal [...]. Polyclitus limited himself almost exclusively to one model, which he then continued to reproduce in order to bring it to perfection", *La sculpture grecque classique*, Paris, Gonthier (Médiations) 1964, p. 35.

⁶² "Twelve Rules for a New Academy" (1957), Rose p. 204-205. — Y.-A. Bois examines, with much perspicacity, the twentieth century search for forms susceptible of overcoming arbitrary rules of composition, *op. cit.*, p. 18 sqq.

⁶³ "[The Black-Square Paintings]" (1963), Rose p. 82. – In opposition to the aesthetic attitude close to conceptual art, which proceeds by deconstructing pictorial practice and to reveal pictorial protocols in all their materiality, aesthetics forged around the category of essence have a leaning toward dissimulating of means. We can observe this tendency for instance in the philosophy of Rousseau's garden. The gardener there needs to hide all evidence of his intervention, if he is then to bring out the essence of Nature. In other words, the art of gardening is to apprehend the nature of Nature and to allow, as a result, Nature to be reborn according to its true nature. The intervention of the artist is so delicate and discreet that it can fool, so to speak, the viewer, who becomes incapable of seeing the difference between a spot of wilderness and the romantic garden. Saint-Preux: "Je ne vois nulle part la moindre trace de la culture, [...] la main du jardinier ne se montre point; [...] et je n'aperçois aucun pas d'hommes. - Ah! dit M. de Wolmar, c'est qu'on a pris grand soin de les effacer" (J.-J. Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1760), in: "Oeuvres complètes", t. IV, Paris, Hachette 1905, Partie IV, Lettre XI, p. 334). "Art hides art" (*L'art cache l'art*), later says the Marquis René-Louis de Girardin.

⁶⁴ The descriptive analysis of Eric Valentin of *what* Reinhardt's painting actually offers to be seen brings an extremely attentive testimony to this interpretation of aesthetic experience. It precisely stresses the importance of resistance, with which this monochrome painting opposes a natural tendency of the gaze, working toward the reification of sensations: "It refuses, writes Valentin, to allow itself to be the subject of any visual objectification, something which would transform it, brutally, into a mere assignation of what it gives to be seen"; *op. cit.* p. 48. This phenomenological interpretation explains, explicitly, in what way we can imagine a "non-objective, and ideal, object" of art.

⁶⁵ "[The Black-Square Paintings]" (1963), Rose p. 83.

⁶⁶ Within the hermeneutic perspective of his writing the painting of Reinhardt achieves the *unity of a meaning-as-thought and meaning-as-sensation*. If Hegel could endow art with such a high degree of prestige, it is because it realizes this unity at the origins: "Sense", he notes, is this wonderful word which is used in two opposite meanings. On the one hand it means the organ of immediate apprehension, but on the other hand we mean by it the sense, the significance, the

find out in his writing what constitutes the ineffable within art. This takes the shape of unspoken absoluteness. And so, the absolute will be conceived either as what is dis-connected (*dé-lié*), or as what is its own reason of being (Reason of art is without reason). At the same time timelessness is pointed to as one of its main characteristics. In order to define the pictorial absolute Reinhardt uses, on one hand, the language of contraries, while on the other he tries to draw nearer by purely negative determinations, before enfolding all of these attempts in his idea of absolute art, understood as the unity of painting and its essence. Similarly, this has been the case for a multiplicity of paths explored by philosophy since its origins, that were to give a clear conception of the absolute, and which can all be found as specific figures within the totalitarian metaphysics of Hegel.

Therefore, while Kosuth suggests an interpretation, supposedly expressed in Reinhardt's writing, which would imply a conception of art as tautology, he misses another perspective strongly present in his texts, i.e. the one related to the search for the absolute in art. Before quoting a nominalist thought of Wittgenstein ("meaning is the use"), Kosuth evokes quite a typical passage from Reinhardt: "The one thing to say about art is that it is one thing. Art is art-as-art and everything else is everything else. Art-as-art is nothing but art. Art is not what is not art."⁶⁷ However, the key-point of this fragment is not a tautology, but rather a unique (*oneness*) and *detached* character of art, which has little to do with anything else, and which is identical - perforce - to the fundamental characteristics of the absolute (*absolutum* = separated, detached). Several other of Reinhardt's texts confirm this reading, at the same time reversing Kosuth's ideas: "The only possible point of view is absolutely negative. Art is separate from everything else, is related to nothing, and so is one thing only, only itself."⁶⁸

We can say that the absolute is conceived here as dis-connected, but that above all it's been considered by philosophy in accordance with the archetype of *causa sui*, *causa* [*Grund*, *reason*] which also encloses such a meaning as foundation: as a cause of itself and a self-justification. And if art-as-art ("true art") troubles those taking a view which is trying to submit it to the laws other than the ones of its own essence ("art submitted to some other, quite different values"⁶⁹), it's precisely "for the reason of art's own Reason that needs no other reason or unreason"⁷⁰. *Art manifests as an absolute of culture* – stating so Reinhardt subscribes thereby to the Mallarmé-type tradition of modernism, where any reason of being of art, other than art itself, must be rejected.

Such a definition of the absolute as reason without reason plays on the equivocation of the terms, a delicate point, even more so when approached in German [*Grund*]. For it seems, writes Hegel, that in the German language, several words have "this quality of not merely possessing multiple meanings, but further more having meanings which are the opposites, in the way that is clearly excluding a possibility of not recognizing the speculative spirit of the language itself".⁷¹ Thus, the language takes upon itself this dialectic task by reflecting the movement of the real; it preserves, and at the same time surpasses the meaning; the natural movement is being translated, within the thought, by the famous Hegelian invention of the *Aufhebung*. Koyré remarks that Hegel's terminology, as well as his language in general, are "full of more or less fortunate quibbles".⁷² The situation of this nature is paralleled exactly in Reinhardt's own work.⁷³

thought, the universal underlying the thing. And so sense is connected on the one hand with the immediate external aspect of existence, and on the other hand with its inner essence. ", *Aesthetics*, t. I, *op. cit.* p. 128-29.

⁶⁷ "Art-as-Art" (1962), Rose p. 53; Kosuth, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

⁶⁸ "Timeless in Asia" (1960), Rose p. 216.

⁶⁹ "Twelve Rules for a New Academy" (1957), Rose p. 203-204.

⁷⁰ "The Next Revolution in Art" (1964), Rose p. 60.

⁷¹ Hegel, "Vorrede...", *op. cit.*

⁷² A. Koyré, "Note sur la langue et la terminologie hégéliennes" (1931), in: *Etudes d'histoire de la pensée philosophique*, Paris, Gallimard (Tel) 1986, p. 209.

⁷³ "Version or perversion" ("Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 15), "prescribed and proscribed" ("Timeless in Asia" (1960), Rose p. 218), and so on. In *The Next Revolution in Art* Reinhardt often plays with the double meaning of the word "revolution" referring to it sometimes as a cyclic return which is its original meaning ("The next revolution in art will be the same, old, one revolution", Rose, p. 58), sometimes as a brutal and irreversible change - now the principal meaning attributed to "revolution" ("Art-as-art is always a battle cry, polemic, picket sign..." etc., Rose,

"Usually, I'm obliged to play around with puns", he says, "or to do something which would make it clear that words are more ambiguous than we believe they are. I'm always playing with words. I've no respect for them; this is why people say that I'm a very clear writer. [...] I have never tried to explain a thing".⁷⁴ Stigmatizing anything that is arbitrary, as a mere parrotry of theorizing, or an intellectual exhibitionism of artists, Reinhardt, like Hegel before him, endeavors instead to allow language to speak with its own "wisdom".

Philosophy itself is most likely to employ the language of contradictions for describing the indescribable, designating the ineffable, or, in short: to capture the absolute. Hegel has learned this from Plotinus, Plotinus from studying the *Upanishads*.⁷⁵ In Reinhardt's case, the fascination with the Orient coincides with the linguistic strategies of both Hegel and Plotinus.⁷⁶ Following the same way in which Plotinus pronounces on One as being at the same time the principle and the non-principle — *arche-non-arche* — Reinhardt refers to poetry and the visual in art (and to them only), *via contradiction*: "Poetry in art is poetry. / [...] Poetry in art is not poetry. / [...] The visibility of art is visible. / [...] The invisibility of art is visible."⁷⁷ As if, throughout the most supreme and purest forms of art, he were really trying to designate an absolute⁷⁸, so that the latter could later envelop all contradictory determinations. The dialectic leads Reinhardt to imagine the unity of contraries; naturally, his texts offer numerous examples of these instances: "23. The extremely impersonal way for the truly personal." / 24. The completest control for the truest spontaneity. / 25. The most universal path to the most unique. And *vice versa*.⁷⁹ However, in many cases, all the efforts to designate or characterize the absolute in the attempts to define it seem to fail – this is when the only solution, which remains open, is the way of negation. The One of Plotinus, wherefrom the unity and the being of all things are issued is, for this very reason, a true principle. At the same time it isn't a principle, because strictly speaking the absolute can't hold any attribute, not even the one of being a unity: and so we mustn't even say that it is One.⁸⁰ The question arises: to find a good way of how to "come to be speaking of it". It was Plotinus, indeed, who first conceived the fundamental discourse of the negative theology: "And we can and do state what it is not, while we are silent as to what it is".⁸¹ And by the very

p. 59.) Or: "...conscience-stricken artists will organize themselves to strike against art-dealers associations from the bottom up", etc.

⁷⁴ Conference at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine, 21 July 1967, cited after L. R. Lippard, *Ad Reinhardt: One Art*, "Art in America", September-October 1974, p. 73. (The second part of this essay, *Reinhardt: One Work*, came out in November/December 1974. Both parts were then put together in a book form: *Ad Reinhardt*, Harry Abrams, New York, 1981.

⁷⁵ On orientalism in Plotinus cf. E. Bréhier, *La philosophie de Plotin*, Paris, Vrin 1990, p. 107 sqq.

⁷⁶ Malevitch and Reinhardt do not in fact unite in some vague mysticism, which they're both supposed to share, but rather in their common root-interest in neo-Platonism, encountered by the former in the work of P. Ouspensky and later developed on the canvas of the Greco-Roman spiritualism, and for the second brought with Hegelian influence, with a further resonance of the Protestant and Judaic heritages; cf. Margit Rowell, *Ad Reinhardt: Style as Recurrence*, in: "Ad Reinhardt and Color", catalogue of the exhibition in Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 1980, p. 11; cf. also "Religious Strength through Market-Place Joy", date unknown, Rose p. 190, where Reinhardt writes: "How about a Lutheran adopting the Hebraic-Islamic disdain for images?" (Reinhardt). But he rejects a religious interpretation of his art: "I have been called a Zen-Buddhist, a neo-Christian, a Calvinist, a Hindu, and a Muslim, [...] but painting has really no relation to any of the religions, nor ever has.", "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 14. – The only "retrospective" of Reinhardt in the United States, before the one of 1991/92 in New York and in Los Angeles, took place 25 years earlier, as if it succeeded to fit, "into a single brief moment of secularity of the Jewish Museum in New York", catalogue of the exhibition, p. 7.

⁷⁷ "Art in Art is Art-as-Art (Art-as-Art Dogma, Part III)", (1966), Rose p. 67.

⁷⁸ At this point, there is an interesting meeting of Reinhardt's and Hegelian ideal (painting as a *summum* of the visual art vs. poetry: all art is poetic to a certain degree). Hegel: "La poésie [...] ne se rattache à aucune forme d'art, à l'exclusion des autres, mais elle est un art *général*, capable de façonner et d'exprimer sous n'importe quelle forme tout contenu susceptible de trouver accès dans l'imagination", *Esthétique*, op. cit. t. IV, p. 16. Should we therefore keep in mind a predominantly poetic quality of "Art-as-Art Dogma, Part III"?

⁷⁹ "25 Lines of Words on Art: Statement" (1958), Rose p. 52.

⁸⁰ *The Enneads*, V.4.1., transl. by Stephen MacKenna, Faber and Faber (Third Edition revised by B.S. Page, London, mcmlxii), p. 400.

⁸¹ *The Enneads*, V.3.14., op. cit., p. 396. Cf. also Plato, *Parmenides* 142 a: "Consequently, it cannot have a name or be spoken of, nor can there be any knowledge or perception or opinion of it.", trans. By F.M. Cornford, Princeton, Bollingen Series LXXI, 1963, p. 935.

same "negational" (apophatic) strategy Reinhardt will eventually attempt to *realize* his own absolute.

First of all in the texts. Literally stuffed with negational statements, they turn into lists of predicates, qualities, and references which painting should get rid of, like for example in *Abstract Art Refuses* (1952), *Twelve Rules for a New Academy* (1957), *The Next Revolution in Art* (1964) or the notes [*On Negation*]:

"[...] anti-anti-art, non-non-art, non-expressionist, non-imagist, non-surrealist, non-primitivist, non-fauvist, non-futurist, non-figurative, non-objective, non-subjective [...]"⁸²; "no pleasures or pains, no accidents or ready-mades, no things, no ideas, no relations, no attributes, no qualities – nothing that is not of the essence."⁸³ It is therefore what we would call "art de refus" [*rejective art*], in the precise sense given to this expression by Lucy R Lippard: "a process of growth by which the excess and the superfluous are wiped away, and only the essence is preserved."⁸⁴ In fact, Reinhardt pursues a "negative aestheology". During an interview by Bruce Glaser, Reinhardt overtly admits his belief in an absolute of art; to the question about the absolute standards in art, he replies, as does Plotinus, that "if they are not anything you can pin down easily, you can certainly say what they are not."⁸⁵

The Black Square Paintings

But in order to *subsequently* realize the absolute idea (in a Hegelian sense) in art, as the unity of essence and being of the painting, he tries to translate, in visual terms, all of these negations. By doing so, Reinhardt reverts to the root-hypothesis of Plotinus, according to which "arts give no bare reproduction of the thing seen but go back to the Reason-Principles from which Nature itself derives"⁸⁶ that is to the intelligible elements, which resemble the ideas, or *essences* of things. Thus, to paint "according to" the essence of art means taking charge of its absoluteness, furthermore, it means *putting to work* the negations that, seen alone, could point us in the same direction of the absolute. Finally, it means producing the form as activity of the concept, which seems to be the only way to make them conform to one another. This conformity (*adéquation*) happens, simultaneously, in three converging directions: Reinhardt's goal is to develop (1) *dis-connected* painting (*peinture dé-lié*), (2) painting that is susceptible of taking on no attribute at all, or at least to receive as few attributes as possible, (3) painting- a process, which will put into effect the absolute within an atemporal cycle of art history.

1. "The frame should isolate and protect the painting from its surroundings"⁸⁷; the surface should be matte, "which does not reflect its surroundings"⁸⁸; the colors should be "dark (lightless) no-contrasting (colorless)"⁸⁹, not even black. – In this way Reinhardt tries to undo all of the bridges, which could serve as link between life (i.e., non-art) and the object of dis-connected art, such as for example: representation and the imitation, painting as mirroring ("a matte, flat, free-hand painted surface [...] which does not reflect its surroundings"⁹⁰), the

⁸² "[*On Negation*]" (undated), Rose p. 102.

⁸³ "Art-as-Art" (1962), Rose p. 56.

⁸⁴ Catalogue of the exhibition in the Jewish Museum, New York 1966, p. 10. A remark of Valentin, according to which the works of Reinhardt seem like "objectifications of refusal" to those, only, who don't pay attention", *op. cit.* p. 51, confirms our own reading.

⁸⁵ "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 19.

⁸⁶ *The Enneads*, V.8.1., *op. cit.*, p. 423. – If Plato himself condemned painting this is precisely because he wouldn't consider this *cas de figure*. In fact, according to Platonic doctrine art simply reproduces the objects of senses, which in their turn are merely imitations of the ideas: "then the mimetic art is far removed from truth", *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Republic X*, 598 b, trans. By Paul Shorey, Princeton, 1963, Bollingen Series LXXI, p.823. However, the history, while holding Plato as the source of origins, preferred to remain close to Plotinian thesis. In consequence, Reinhardt seems to join the same aesthetic tradition as cultivated by E. Panofsky in his *Idea. A Concept in Art Theory*, trans. By J. S. Peake, Columbia, 1968.

⁸⁷ "Twelve Rules for a New Academy" (1957), Rose p. 206.

⁸⁸ "[*The Black-Square Paintings*]" (1963), Rose p. 83.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 82.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 82-83.

decorative values, "handwriting"⁹¹, "accidents or automatisms"⁹², "gymnastics or dancings over paintings"⁹³, the unconscious, "a record of everyday [...] experience"⁹⁴, and so on.

2. As a result there is an abstract *canvas*, ideal, non-objective, invariable. Its square physiognomy includes, from the beginning, two negations: the canvas is neither vertical, nor horizontal. In a sense it's devoid of any form ("the finest has no shape"⁹⁵ - indeed, a very Plotinian statement), because also, in another sense, the rule of the composition followed here is more than one: rationalized by a simple trisection it eliminates the subjective aspect of the disposition of forms. Its matte appearance translates the two further negations: lightless, but textureless. Though the canvas is painted free-hand, the real reason behind it is to remove the brushwork. The size: "five feet wide, five feet high, as high as a man, as wide as a man's outstretched arms"⁹⁶, expresses two more negations: not large, yet not small. Also, because each act of exhibiting and perceiving a particular canvas adds possible determinations to the way of it being referenced, therefore: "the less exposed a painting is to a chance public, the better. 'Less is more'"⁹⁷. And so forth. The less attributes a painting accepts, the more it is separated, and the more ideal and absolute it is...

.... and the more it conceals itself away from the view - whereas it is not without reason alleged that the painting should be, before anything else, accessible to seeing. Hence a captivating idea of Dore Ashton, later developed by Yves-Alain Bois, to risk an interpretation of Reinhardt's work as the art of "*almost*". Bois tacitly recognizes that the artist's ultimate goal here is the absolute. However - and such is a general conclusion of this lesson - there is no absolute for humankind. One who turns to a negative definition - Derrida is quoted to back up this view - "begins to talk about God, whether one will be using this or perhaps some other name".⁹⁸ Reinhardt won't go all the way. However radical his attitude seems to be, he only moved as far, according to Bois, as "*the limit of almost*".

And yet, we believe that Reinhardt at least attempted to push this limit without however implicating God in any possible manner. In fact, he tried to define the absolute in several ways, among which the inspiration by Hegelian esthetics appears to have been a deciding factor, because of its specific recasting of the frame for *the realization* of Reinhardt's pictorial project into an infinite progression. The artist conceives the absolute as a historical process capable of carrying out - even though only in the domain of art - the unity of essence and objectivity. Of course, the Hegelian Absolute has ambitions to contain, within the philosophical system, all *Reality*. An ambition, which gave Mallarmé the idea to apply a similar maneuver in the *sense of poetics*: with the same place given to the Book⁹⁹. Thus, even if the absolute allows no determination (hence the Mallarmé's "isolation of the word" - l'"*isolement de la parole*"¹⁰⁰) it does accept all of them at the same time: "The One is all things and no one of them"¹⁰¹, says Plotinus. We will be tempted to think that throughout this atemporal stylistic cycle Reinhardt counts on developing his own ideas relative to *painting*: non-assignable, his absolute would powerfully encompass all paintings. Just like Hegel, he's being at once modest and arrogant: he has never invented a thing, but simply achieved a closure of the universal cycle in the history of art: "I am

⁹¹ "Twelve Rules for a New Academy" (1957), Rose p. 205.

⁹² *Ibid.* p. 205.

⁹³ "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 13.

⁹⁴ "[The Black-Square Paintings]" (1963), Rose p. 83.

⁹⁵ "Twelve Rules for a New Academy" (1957), Rose p. 206.

⁹⁶ "[The Black-Square Paintings]" (1963), Rose p. 82.

⁹⁷ "Twelve Rules for a New Academy" (1957), Rose p. 204-205.

⁹⁸ Y.-A. Bois, *op. cit.* p. 29.

⁹⁹ The Book, this ultimate realization of the absolute poetic language, where nothing is left to chance, and where everything is inter-linked with the whole in universal poetic necessity: sounds, meanings, syntax, and typography. "[...] *L'un des mystères sacrés ou périlleux du Langage; et qu'il sera prudent d'analyser seulement le jour où la Science, possédant le vaste répertoire des idiomes jamais parlés sur la terre, écrira l'histoire des lettres de l'alphabet à travers tous les âges et quelle était presque leur absolue signification [...]*", *Les mots anglais*, "Oeuvres..." *op. cit.* p. 921.

¹⁰⁰ *Crise de vers*, *op. cit.* p. 386.

¹⁰¹ *The Enneads* V.II.1., *op. cit.*, p. 380.

merely making the last painting which anyone can make".¹⁰² However, being the last one means equally being the first who apprehends the totality. Certainly, if "True is the whole"¹⁰³ being last is a proud distinction: because it is precisely the last one who reaches the state of encompassing the truth, whereas previously the truth was to encompass all the others, be it philosophers or artists. We could remind ourselves of Hegel's sarcastic remark coined for Schelling, which could easily be applied to Reinhardt, pointing out that his absolute, like a coat of dirt, wipes out all the differences, allowing us to "palm off its *Absolute* as the night in which, as the saying goes, all the cows are black".¹⁰⁴ The absolute which receives no attributes, possesses them all, or at least all the attributes that define the history of art: the black painting includes, in a most powerful way, all the colors, and all the paintings.

In the light of this exegesis any attempts to re-attribute importance to the visual of his paintings at the price of their detachment from the project they've been putting into effect seem misplaced, despite all the possible justifications, such as for instance an approach inspired by physiology¹⁰⁵, phenomenology of perception¹⁰⁶, or even contemplation seen as an element capable of generating a distinct modality of aesthetic experience¹⁰⁷. In fact, painting becomes absolute when it no longer gives itself to be seen. A contradiction? - Perhaps, nonetheless we mustn't forget that Reinhardt considers that "visions, images, symbols, representations, sensations, impulses are [...] for "the poor in the spirit."¹⁰⁸ Again and again, he brings painting, and quite deliberately so, to the brink of the visible within a timeless stylistic cycle of the history of art, a cycle which he then traverses with an unwavering determination.

¹⁰² "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 13. - Unable to provide a Hegelian reference, Bois fails to notice this ambiguity, when he evokes the modesty of Reinhardt's attitude, *op. cit.* p. 25.

¹⁰³ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1801), trans. By A.V. Miller, Oxford, 1971, t. I, p. 11.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p. 9.

¹⁰⁵ Lucy R. Lippard makes reference to Eugène Chevreul, Jan Evangelista Purkinje, and Edwin Land, inventor of the Polaroid technique, *Ad Reinhardt: One Work*, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

¹⁰⁶ Dore Ashton emphasizes temporality of perception in Reinhardt's paintings: "A good ten minutes have to pass before a first impression can arise", "Art", *Art and Architecture*, December 1960, p. 4. - Descriptive analysis of *Ultimate Painting n° 6* provided by Eric Valentin, *op. cit.* p. 50, is nonetheless very convincing; of course, there's a phenomenology of painting in Reinhardt, but his own model - so it seems to us - mustn't be identified within a Husserlian system, but rather in the philosophy of Hegel, with its attempts to apprehend a full historical display of the idea of the pictorial absolute (cf. the continuation of our thesis). As for Valentin, he's also likely to practice a phenomenology descending from Husserl: the painting of Reinhardt invites us "to convert our gaze", he notes. "To the eye it's a totally unthinkable ideal of complete absolute transparency, immediate appropriation and bringing it all down to unreserved evidence." (p. 51). A little further in the text, he tries to interpret Reinhardt's ethics as the liberation of seeing: "This morality, he continues, in his simplest formulation consists of freeing our gaze from any prejudice and of all, apparently most natural, tendencies" (p. 51-52). We've tried to underline equally these concepts, correctly applied by Valentin in the course of his analyses of the aesthetic experience of Reinhardt's work, which are derived from Husserl's phenomenological method. However, it has to be remembered, that the artist himself was very strict in stating that "the nature of art has not to do with the nature of perception" ([*Art-as-Art*] (1962-63), Rose p. 58). In fact, the meaning of phenomenological analyses of his painting remains entirely negative: it is merely a condition for realization of the unity of concept and object within the pictorial absolute. - As for the idea of morality as the liberation of seeing, it is deeply interesting, though slightly limiting in respect of larger importance, which the painter attaches to the concept of aesthetic responsibility.

¹⁰⁷ Lippard goes from physiology into a domain which is closer to mystical experience: the viewer must "become one with the painting [...] as passive as an object", *Ad Reinhardt: One Work*, *op. cit.* p. 95. - Carter Radcliff insists on the presence of an "aura", spiritual and oriental, in Reinhardt's paintings of his "mature age" and recalls that Barnett Newman would qualify them as biblical or classical, "New York Letter", *Art International*, December 1977, p. 66. - Inside the "dark" and "hypnotic" luminosity of black paintings, Irving Sandler discovers the invitation to contemplate, "The New Cool Art", *Art in America*, January 1965, p. 97. - One of the painter's friends, the poet Robert Lax explains that these paintings have a power to lead the spirit toward the point he names "tangible zero"; letter to Robert Gibney, quoted by Nancy Flagg, "Reinhardt Revisiting", *Art International*, February 1978, p. 55. - Y.-A. Bois goes even further by inviting us to spend half an hour in front of a black painting (*op. cit.* p. 28). Whatever attention is given by the viewer to the painting itself, we have a right to envisage the possibility of mere mystification. Undoubtedly, the effects described here are unquestionable, except we don't really require the actual presence of paintings to understand the work of Reinhardt. In fact, any such visual concentration, if prolonged for a sufficient length of time, will begin to generate sensations; the physical object of concentration is only a pretext. This is a serious point of incompatibility with the otherwise very formal and pertinent analysis of Bois. In many meditative oriental practices, one is advised to fix a single luminous point (if not a yantra or a mandala) as support for contemplation. Those who have seen it, have spoken, from the initiates' point of view. - Recently, Naomi Vine reinitiates this kind of interpretation by valorizing religious spirituality of Reinhardt's work, "Mandala and Cross", *Art in America*, November 1991, pp. 124-133.

¹⁰⁸ "Timeless in Asia" (1960), Rose p. 217.

3. The process of the evolution of his paintings starts in the thirties, relating to all aspects of the pictorial universe: gesture, expression, chromatic scales which drive toward the monochromatic, and the monochromatic which darkens little by little, texture, composition, form, and finally the size of the canvas. Until at last painting becomes irreducible. Around 1935 Reinhardt definitively abandons any figurative element for the sake of post-cubist abstraction. However, his last non-geometric painting, dated 1950, signs off the long-time influence of Reinhardt's teachers: Carl Holty and Stuart Davis, while at the same time retracing his intimate relationship with the group of *American Abstract Artists* (A.A.A.), impregnated by the neo-Platonist ideas of Mondrian; a group of which the artist was a member between 1937 and 1953. Sometime in the middle of the forties Reinhardt initiates a series of experiences with monotone painting of the type *all over*, then monochrome, to end up with the first series of black paintings in 1950. The symmetry of the trisection is progressively imposed, the lighter chromatic registers disappear after 1953, and finally, when towards 1960, the size of these squares, black and matte, five feet high and wide gets established, nothing will ever change in his canvases.¹⁰⁹

"...timeless, spaceless, changeless, relationless, disinterested painting – an object that is self-conscious (*no unconsciousness*) ideal, transcendent, aware of no thing but art (*absolutely no anti-art*)."¹¹⁰ The trajectory leading to this ultimate stage is marked by a series of aesthetic comings-of-awareness in what can contribute to the meaning of all, including the most mediocre, formal elements. And even though there's only one absolute, the paths towards it are multiple, the starting point, always chosen more or less at random, meaningless: therefore the Khmers born at the dawn of our era could achieve it just as well as the Americans at the dusk of art. We can therefore designate this process as "*phenomenology*" of painting in a truly Hegelian sense of the term. While it has an empirical display, its meaning lies within the ideality – such is the way in which the process, at the same time both historical and timeless -hence ideal- can be conceived. It is at the end of this process that *the painting* has achieved its ultimate and irreducible form.

The importance of writing in Reinhardt's pictorial project cannot be reduced to the usefulness of a commentary: in order to manifest itself the essence of painting needs a language. This may seem shocking especially to those who, like for instance Jean-François Lyotard, put a discourse - a carrier of the forbidden - in opposition to a desire that inhabits the thickness of the painting. Let us examine here *Les voies des masques* by Claude Lévi-Strauss: the relation of pure plasticity between the masks *swaihwé* and *dzonokwa* passes through language and becomes visible only when the words are placed upon the plastic characters. What we come to realize then is that a mask *dzonokwa* "offers the plastic characters which constitute, in the most minute detail, a systematic inversion of those used in the masks *swaihwé*"¹¹¹: the black of the first masks turns into the white of the others, the convex into concave, the smooth into brittle, the open into closed, and so on. The founding nature of language in respect to every sense, including the sense that is purely plastic, or a language emerging uniquely from this perspective is not merely a modernist refinement even though Modernism brought this idea to the foreground. Reinhardt himself found its ultimate consequences. Despite their striking visual aspect his paintings are not the site of an expressive blossoming, of the impulsive or spontaneous; on the contrary, they always refer us back to language as if to reaffirm their true meaning. We could say that the black paintings are "molded" in the cast of language like a seal that leaves its imprint on wax (Plato, *Theaetetos*, 191c-e). In this image the negations of language play the role of reversed forms which are susceptible to receive the plastic forms of painting while the painting of icons for instance is such an imprint - an inversed form - in relation to the

¹⁰⁹ Cf. this description "[Five Stages of Reinhardt's Timeless Stylistic Art-Historical Cycle]" (Rose p. 10), to the notes of Reinhardt from 1965 to which the editor, Barbara Rose, gave the title, and which specify the stages of the timeless cycle in history of painting. Evolution of forms in Reinhardt's painting has been meticulously studied by Y.-A. Bois in the catalogue of MoMA, as well as in a more recent book by Denys Riout, *La peinture monochrome. Histoire et archéologie d'un genre*, Nîmes, Editions Jacqueline Chambon (Rayon d'art) 1996. In the context which has taken into account evolution of Reinhardt's painting, we can find well documented descriptions of increasing importance of the monochrome.

¹¹⁰ "[The Black-Square Paintings]" (1963), Rose p. 83.

¹¹¹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La voie des masques*, Genève, Skira, 1975, vol. II, p.30.

visual world. From then on only a form of language can be considered as the image of the world; however, this is a world without images.

Art against historicity

The ultimate form in question is, *first and foremost*, the form of Reinhardt's painting. Its evolution is certainly punctuated by dates (an empirical display); however the process itself is timeless.¹¹² This is why it can equally, *on the second level*, be capable of providing a structure for the evolution of art, such as it is seen inside the flux of modern art history. So what element of their work have Reinhardt's predecessors denied? The answer can perhaps be discovered within the scope of the same "apophatic" discourse, which is placed in opposition to the rules of apophantic discourse; the latter always trying to confirm something about something. "[...] for Courbet – no antiques or angels [...]. For Manet and Cezanne – no myths or messages, no actions or imitations [...]. For Monet, no subject or objects, no fixities or absolutes, no chiaroscuro or plasticities, no textures or compositions [...]. For Mondrian – no particularities or local elements, no irregularities or accidents or irrelevancies, no oppression of time or subjectivity, no primitivism, no expressionism."¹¹³ Given Mondrian's influence on the group A.A.A. – the source of origin behind the geometry of Reinhardt's work – Reinhardtian painting directly ensues from this inspiration. – However, Reinhardt locates, *in the third instance*, the same process of purification of the artistic form within the scope of a universal history, in Islam as well as in China, in the Middle Ages or in Greece: "One of the summits of universal art, the five-hundred-year evolution in Cambodia is as clear and coherent and continuous as in India and Greece, from Gupta to Pallava and Hellenistic. [...] No art is less mysterious, less irrational, less accidental, less unconscious, than classical Khmer art. [...] Classic art in unnatural, unentertaining, non-instructional, burdensome, irreligious, lifeless, soundless, airless, smell-less, motionless, timeless, useless, undramatic, unpoetic, austere, abstract, square, moral [...] invisible, disinterested, complete, rational, conscious, clear."¹¹⁴ – The three processes bring art to its ultimate form.

It is as though in the depths of History the same old (hi)story was taking place and the above mentioned processes were, indeed, only one. "The one history of painting, writes Reinhardt, progresses from the painting of a variety of subjects and objects, to one idea with a variety of subjects and objects, to one subject with a variety of objects, to one object with a variety of subjects, then to one object with one subject, to one object with no subject, and to one subject with no object, then to the idea of no object and no subject and no variety at all."¹¹⁵ The identity of the three historical processes brings forth the idea of timeless return. The different paths leading to the absolute in art, this true "phenomenology" of painting, are thus part of the eternal stylistic cycle of art.

In fact, for Hegel as well as Reinhardt, the absolute itself is also considered as process. Unlike "a gun shot"¹¹⁶, the absolute becomes available for those who want to go with the stream, as though carried by its current – but it can prove both resistant and demanding. In order to get authenticated the absolute calls for an infinite effort. Only long and hard work is capable of completing this task. The absolute is, indeed, objective, though the paths that lead there remain individual. Reinhardt is not opposed to the idea of someone else producing black paintings, identical to his own, that would be laden, still, with the same value ("It would be as impersonal, or personal, a statement as anyone would want to make it", says he), yet no one can execute them for him: "They have to do their own for themselves"¹¹⁷. Why? In the course of the same interview with Bruce Glaser he admits not to know the answer. However, our interpretation seems to be able to shed more light on this point. It is in fact a matter of

¹¹² Reinhardt admits there is a paradox here, but replies to Glaser that he "doesn't mind that contradiction", "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 18.

¹¹³ "Abstract Art Refuses" (1952), Rose 50.

¹¹⁴ "Angkor and Art" (1961), Rose 221 and 223.

¹¹⁵ "Art-as-Art" (1962), Rose p. 55.

¹¹⁶ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., Preface.

¹¹⁷ "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 13.

protecting, by the means of a ritual repetition, the reflexive work ("no mindless working or mindless non-working"¹¹⁸) against the frightening race of our civilization of success and progress, in their turn compensating for the superficial results and temptations of so called good deals. This work, at the same times reflexive and repetitive allows Reinhardt to distance himself from intellectual restlessness or the artistic polemics of the period and to stay away from any other influence but his own idea of art. Standing back from all the trends and fashions he was "a painter of the thirties" during the forties, but, as Lucy R. Lippard remarks, "a painter of the sixties" in the fifties.¹¹⁹ By *dis-connecting* art from its own historical time he endows his painting with another dimension of timelessness.¹²⁰ "The forms in art are always preformed and premeditated. The creative process is always an academic routine and sacred procedure."¹²¹

But inasmuch as the absolute is a process, Reinhardt sees it as being perpetually renewed and always the same throughout the history. *It is, indeed, a process, though a timeless one.* And so, saying "timeless process" indicates that time nullifies itself. History adheres completely to the stylistic cycle, just as it would adhere to the system (concept, theory) in Hegel. This is the way in which thought (system, concept, essence...) advances beyond *historicity*¹²², and philosophy opens up, both in Hegel's and Reinhardt's cases, onto the idea of the end of history (of art).

"The one standard in art is oneness and fineness, rightness and purity, abstractness and evanescence. The one thing to say about art is its breathlessness, lifelessness, deathlessness, contentlessness, formlessness, spacelessness, and timelessness. This is always the end of art."¹²³

If Reinhardt places himself on the opposite pole from any avant-garde, this is because, in their demand for the incessant renewal of forms and strategies, the avant-gardes work to excite and radicalize precisely this point: the historicity of art. "You were the first painter to get rid of vanguardism, weren't you? 'I asked. 'Yes,' he said."¹²⁴ [in a self-interview]. Unlike the avant-gardes, Reinhardt — following Hegel — gives priority to thought as system (a timeless stylistic cycle) over the contingency of historical becoming, and does so in spite interest for history, expressed by one or the other of the avant-garde movement. The end of art represents for Reinhardt nothing other than a gradual absorption of history inside the absolute. "All progress and change in art is toward the one end of art as art-as-art."¹²⁵ Therefore, whoever pronounces the end of art pronounces the end of avant-garde, and also, incidentally, *vice versa*.

Aware of these outcomes, Reinhardt seems, paradoxically, like a conservative figure in modern art. His mistrust of the mass-media at the peak of pop-art, his aversion to new materials and technologies during the culminating period of minimalism, his fondness for oil-painting at the beginnings of conceptual art only confirm this judgment, whence a profound need for a revision of all the veneration and homage paid to the artist by the various avant-gardes of the sixties or seventies. The question is: were they really so deeply wrong in their

¹¹⁸ "Twelve Rules for a New Academy" (1957), Rose p. 206.

¹¹⁹ *Ad Reinhardt: One Art*, op. cit., p. 67.

¹²⁰ In this sense a comparison between the lives of Reinhardt and des Esseintes, a comparison which tries to present Reinhardt's life not only as "one work of art", but a work accomplished with the highest austerity", is certainly defensible; however, it also misses the essential point of Reinhardt's idea of art; cf. Dale McConathy, *Ad Reinhardt*, catalogue of the exhibition in the Grand Palais, May/July 1973, p. 40.

¹²¹ "Timeless in Asia" (1960), Rose p. 218.

¹²² Y.-A. Bois points out that Reinhardt had at his disposal the structuralist conception of history (op. cit. p. 13-14, as well as an account of *Fenêtre jaune cadmium* d'Hubert Damisch in: *October* n° 37, Summer 1986). A remark which is very accurate, corroborated by the interest that the artist has manifested in ideas of Focillon and Kubler. It also confirms our own perspective, reading Reinhardt in the Hegelian context, for whom the primacy of *concept* over *historicity* means that history can be interpreted on the basis of a structuralist model. In fact, the Hegelian "concept" is a theory (i.e., a set of determinations), which constitutes a model of a relatively autonomous totality. This allows us to understand the meaning of moments of reality, represented by this model, the meaning which corresponds to the place normally occupied by these moments within the totality in question. Cognitive process does not happen through the chain of inductive generalizations, but by means of a conceptual analysis of relations between the determinant elements, inherent to the model.

¹²³ "Art-as-Art" (1962), Rose p. 56.

¹²⁴ "Reinhardt Paints a Picture" (1965), Rose p. 11. Oddly, Catherine Millet who presents this text in *Art Press* # 4, May/June 1974, doesn't pronounce the word: "Vous avez été le premier peintre à vous débarrasser de cette notion de pionnier, n'est-ce pas?" she translates, while Reinhardt says clearly: "[...] to get rid of *vanguardism* [...]"

¹²⁵ "The Next Revolution in Art" (1964), Rose p. 59.

appreciation? Were they unable to understand the significance of his work within the modernist tradition? Or else, could we assume that there is yet another meaning inherent in Reinhardt's work, deeply veiled and still awaiting to be brought to light?

His rejection of historicity requires a reinterpretation of the place which Reinhardt occupies in modern art history, in particular with respect to these typical readings of the sixties.¹²⁶ In fact, whilst backing up his conception of art with the analyses of history, Reinhardt, in the end, comes forth with a vision, which is a-historical, a vision also excluding the avant-garde. The rejection incites more specifically the question of investigating into the reasons of Reinhardt's acute reticence toward the historicity professed so passionately by the avant-garde. -But also to find out why he was then to put together, in patient response, the idea of the absolute in art?

It is most revealing in this respect to look at one of Reinhardt's late texts, *Art vs. History*, dated 1966, which tries to reaffirm, paradoxically, the power of denial in art: "The first word of an artist is against artists. The first word of an art historian is against art historians."¹²⁷ However, we mustn't simply get diverted by words, but instead look for their true meanings: the discourse of negative theology, derived from Plotinus, which turns into the work of negativity in Hegel, and gets elevated to absolutism with Mikhail Bakunin's creative force of destruction¹²⁸, doesn't get out of hand here; it never expands beyond a purely Reinhardtian scope: "Art-as-art is a creation that revolutionizes creation and judges itself by its destructions."¹²⁹ (Different elements of an anarchist thought come to the surface in several sites of Reinhardt's project; an aspect which we will address later.) Like his friend Thomas Merton, a Trappist, Reinhardt, being a trappist of art¹³⁰, not only doesn't allow anything positive to be said about *his own* art¹³¹, but extends this view even further into some universal attitude: nothing can be said in a positive way about *any* painting. One way which remains open: the way of purification, or of a "negative progression"¹³². An artist and an art historian will exercise their power of negation in the criticism of all such ideas, in Reinhardt's view each more irresponsible than the other, according to which art will either reveal "structures underlying the surface appearances of reality"¹³³, or announce "the forces of light and peace"¹³⁴, bring together nations¹³⁵, "enrich the life", "promote understanding and love among men"¹³⁶, or any other similar formulation, which are always some kind of translation of the indeterminisms inherently built into the status of art.

The way of purification follows the one of absolute conscience, in the Hegelian sense, capable of weeding out and ridding its own discourse of all irresponsibility. "What every artist, fine or free, knows, in our time, is that he has to know, to be able to forget, the whole timeless history of the whole world's art, East and West, all ten or twenty thousands years of it, as art-as-

¹²⁶ The list of commentaries, following the same line of thought as these of C. Millet, L. R. Lippard and J. Kosuth could go on forever. Irving Sandler ("The New Cool Art", *Art in America*, January 1965, p. 96-101) and Barbara Rose ("ABC Art", *Art in America*, October-November 1965, p. 57-69) have insisted on the fact that the sheer attraction of geometry, clarity, and simplicity in Reinhardt's paintings have affected minimal art. In 1968, in his *Minimal Art: a Critical Anthologie*, Dutton and Co., New York, Gregory Battcock places a reproduction of a black painting on the front cover. In 1974, Lucy R. Lippard tries to argue a view, according to which minimal art revealed, indeed, the importance of Reinhardt's work by putting it outside the context of black paintings, and by doing so it has envisaged a whole other possibility for the functioning of his ideas. (*Ad Reinhardt: One Art, op. cit.* p. 65) – Most skeptical toward artists who tried to make use of his ideas, Reinhardt commented on the article "ABC Art" by B. Rose: "I don't know where they come from. They come from the same place I come from, but not from me particularly"; "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 22.

¹²⁷ "Art vs. History", Rose p. 227.

¹²⁸ B. Zenkovsky, *Histoire de la philosophie russe* (1953), trad. C. Andronikof, Paris, Gallimard 1992, t. I, p. 281-283.

¹²⁹ "The Next Revolution in Art" (1964), Rose p. 63.

¹³⁰ "Reinhardt observes the world without uttering a word, a faint smile passing over his round face" – a portrait of the artist by Michel Seuphor; M. Ragon, M. Seuphor, *L'art abstrait 1945/1970*, t. 4, Paris, Maeght Editeur 1974, p. 52.

¹³¹ "And I never say anything about my paintings", "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 14.

¹³² "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 17.

¹³³ "The Artist in Search of a Code of Ethics" (1960), Rose p. 162.

¹³⁴ "Documents of Modern Art" (1960), Rose p. 166.

¹³⁵ "Anyone who speaks of using art to further domestic or international relations is mad", "Timeless in Asia" (1960), Rose p. 216.

¹³⁶ "Art-as-Art" (1962), Rose p. 54.

art, not art as history or history as art, or art as anything else or anything else as art."¹³⁷ The end of art means then, just as it does for Hegel, the accomplishment of absolute (aesthetic) knowledge, which, we may add, has nothing to say on the subject of *the empirical history to come*, except for saying that it will simply stir and sit among the familiar figures of the timeless cycle.¹³⁸ In consequence, "The end of art is art-as-art. / The end of art is not the end."¹³⁹ For there will be art after Reinhardt — he says it. But when we talk once more — and for the very last time — about the absolute brought to realization by art, once the cycle of history (of art) is over, what is the future that still can be promised to art, and what art for the future? This is the point at which Reinhardt announces an era of "post-historic art" and "the post-historic artist"¹⁴⁰, which for him means a *Utopia of ethical art*. A curious outcome indeed, especially if we insist on Hegel being the philosophical inspiration, but altogether perfectly logical, considering that while we're faced, on one hand, with aesthetic responsibility and not a moral philosophy, we're also, on the other hand, dealing with ethics from the time of the end of the history. The absolute aesthetic conscience has to determine aesthetically moral actions. This is why the future will see, according to Reinhardt, the transfiguration of the absolute aesthetic consciousness into the moral conscience of art. "From past states and works of unconsciousness to present state and work of hyperconsciousness, artists' future states and works will be states and works of conscience"¹⁴¹.

Aesthetic responsibility

The main reason why Reinhardt's project has lost nothing of its pertinence is that the reflection on the status of art it has first originated may be considered as a defining source of ideas that later flourished at the beginning of conceptual art. If we carefully examine some reference texts, such as for example the project "Art & Language" from the late sixties, we can find there a "reaction to critical and manipulative power of modernist apparatus"¹⁴², a reaction against an abusive, excessive aesthetic discourse, which for better or worse conceals another discourse, that of power - its real nature.

In his visionary way, Walter Benjamin remarks in 1939 that in the context of the crisis of civilization, art-as-art has become "a theology of art. It's inside this concept that a negative theology is ultimately born, taking the form of the idea of pure art, refusing not only a social function, but what's more, all the determinations imposed by any concrete subject."¹⁴³ A description which couldn't find a better exemplification in the universe of artistic phenomena than in Ad Reinhardt's black radicalism. However sensitive he was to the subject of ethical involvement of art, it never occurred to Benjamin that this absolute negative aesthetic, by bringing a positive answer to the delicate issue of the possibility of the ethics of art, as well as the deontology of the artist, could be trying to satisfy very similar sensibilities, in fact, to his own. This is, at root, the meaning of the moral engagement behind the disengagement of art vis-à-vis reality, envisaged by Reinhardt — *the disengagement which, by its virtue, makes thinkable the idea of the absolute in art as a foundation of moral aesthetics*.

"But art dogma is an attempt to say something, and it's right or wrong, and the morality is here. I want to say something right, and it is right or wrong. It's not my opinion. It has to be absolutely right to be right. This raises the aesthetically moral position. It has nothing to do with morals in everyday life."¹⁴⁴

¹³⁷ "Art vs. History", Rose p. 224.

¹³⁸ By bringing Hegelian philosophy to its extreme consequences, Alexandre Kojève has demonstrated how such a lesson on the end of history works in Hegel. And it is perhaps the matter of moving beyond Hegel.

¹³⁹ "Art in Art is Art-as-Art" (1966), Rose p. 68.

¹⁴⁰ "Art vs. History", Rose p. 224.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 227.

¹⁴² Michael Baldwin, "Art & Language. Ce que peindre veut dire", interview by D. Batchelor, *Art Press* #185, November 1993, p. 14.

¹⁴³ W. Benjamin, *L'oeuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée* (1936), in: "Ecrits français", Paris, Gallimard 1991, p. 145.

¹⁴⁴ "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 18.

Reinhardt devoted a number of his writings to the problem of "aesthetic responsibility". From the point of view of a rationalist, he criticized every conception of art as mere expression of the unconsciousness, in all its forms. "It is not right for an artist to make believe that he doesn't know what he's doing, when everyone else knows what he's doing [...]"¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, his radical attitude verges on sheer provocation when it's pushed to stigmatize nearly every aesthetic discourse currently *en vogue*, deeply despised and considered insane by the artist himself: the idea of "Nature in Abstraction"¹⁴⁶, the idea of "artists who claim they symbolized 'victory' in the Pepsi-Cola forties", the "Voice of America" or the "Atomic Age".¹⁴⁷ Autonomous and free, Reinhardt condemns ambiguities of the relations that artists have to maintain with patrons of the arts. Whatever their nature might be, i.e. a political or financial power, these relations inevitably contribute to a total dependence of the artists, perhaps even more acutely than in the case of censorship, because here it happens with their full consent. The method of negations and exclusions made Reinhardt into a purist, who, contrary to what could be assumed on this subject, denounces real nihilism, the one of "anything goes", in short, nihilism which turns art into a trash-can, or specifically: "Ashcan School".¹⁴⁸

"My remarks before were an attempt to isolate and exclude. I don't want to 'open up' art so that 'anything goes', or 'anything can be art' or 'everyone is an artist' or 'an artist is like everyone else'".¹⁴⁹ He's also a purist in blaming "the philistine-artist, the 'all-too-human' or subhuman or superhuman artist inside or outside or beside himself, the socially useful or usable artist, the artist-jobber and sales artist [...]"¹⁵⁰

Reinhardt very simply announced: "I'm a responsible artist"¹⁵¹. Careful to pay justice to his ethical sensitivity, Dale McConathy supports it with a quotation from Lenin: "ethics is aesthetics of the future".¹⁵² However, the reference can be misleading in the sense that expecting art to transform a society, or to be directly employed in its service, is yet another heavy illusion capable of stirring up a new discourse, that grows out of proportion. The artists-as-artists have no specific responsibility toward society. What they should do is to simply keep their responsibility vis-à-vis art, of what it has become, what it was, and will be in the future – no more than that. "[...] it is wrong for artists to think that a good social idea would correct bad art or that a good social conscience would fix up a bad artistic conscience."¹⁵³

And yet, Reinhardt was never indifferent toward socio-political reality, far from it. Nonetheless, his radical convictions in this domain, as well as his constant involvement with political action¹⁵⁴ have never directly touched his art. Reinhardt did not mix *genres*, though he did know, on other occasions, how to depict, and with a lot of taste, modern art history by the means of his *cartoons*.¹⁵⁵ These caricatures can be seen as real exegesis, in particular in the way they tend to reveal the great hold that certain themes, ideas, energies, or powers can have on

¹⁴⁵ "The Artist in Search of a Code of Ethics" (1960), Rose p. 162.

¹⁴⁶ "On Art and Morality" (1960), Rose p. 152-153.

¹⁴⁷ "The Artist in Search of a Code of Ethics" (1960), Rose p. 163.

¹⁴⁸ Ashcan School: a group of American painters rejecting the Academy and so called "decorative subjects". Their first show, organized in 1908, was characterized by aesthetic eclecticism, which opened the door to the realism of banality and everyday existence, hence the name of the group. Reinhardt was violently opposed to "ashcan-regional-WPA-Pepsi-Cola-styles", *Abstract Art Refuses* (1952), Rose p. 50. WPA (Works Progress Administration, renamed as Works Project Administration in 1939) – a Federal program, instigated under the New Deal in 1934, with the goal to finance artistic projects. Its populist spirit earned it a reputation of "poor art for the poor" (A. Gorky). The program was officially dismantled in 1943, due to attacks by the conservatives. One argument, evoked in 1939, during a debate on WPA, was that "a large number of employees of Federal Project of Theater (part of WPA) were either members of the Communist Party, or having strong communists leanings" (cf. V. Burgin, *The End of Art Theory*, London, Macmillan 1986, p. 10). – Reinhardt's radical position allies him in this context, paradoxically, on the side of the conservatives.

¹⁴⁹ "On Art and Morality" (1960), Rose p. 151.

¹⁵⁰ "The Next Revolution in Art" (1964), Rose p. 59.

¹⁵¹ "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 14.

¹⁵² *Ad Reinhardt*, catalogue, Grand Palais, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁵³ "On Art and Morality" (1960), Rose p. 152.

¹⁵⁴ Among his political engagements were anti-fascist demonstrations in 1932 and political cartoons in 1944, and social activities in various students' or artists' associations, as well as his protest against the imprisonment of D.A. Siqueiros. It also included Reinhardt's participation in the pacifist movement during the Vietnam War, toward the end of his life.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. *The Art Comics and Satires of Ad Reinhardt*, edition of 34 fac-similés of drawings dated and published between 1946 and 1961 in *PM*, *Trans/formation* and *Art News*; Rome, De Luca Editore 1975 or Truman Gallery, New York 1976.

art, acting from the outside. *Influences which, according to him, are corruption itself*; he defines corruption as an idea of art which is "too available, too loose, too open, too poetic"¹⁵⁶, a compromise always leading to a total permissiveness, without limits, without restraint, nor standards. Thus, "our present destiny, as noted by B. Saint-Sernin in his book on *Reason in the twentieth century (La raison au XXe siècle)*, seems to be about learning how to live among multiplicity, uncertainty, risky and the precarious".¹⁵⁷ Blurring of the boundaries, the uncertainty of references, the undecidable character of the real: these, precisely, are the specific qualities of the post-modern era. With his rigid morality, Reinhardt was ill equipped for this world. The problem of art "is too serious to be taken seriously, he says answering the questions of Bob Glaser, " [But] I haven't done any cartoons or satires for a long time because it doesn't seem possible. The art world is no longer satirizable. [It is] whorish and one artist couldn't possibly call another artist an old or a young whore."¹⁵⁸ There's never been enough attention given to his satirical drawings, which were, wrongly, looked down as some kind of marginal activity of his, abandoned during his more mature years. Of course, if we point to the issue of the aesthetic responsibility as playing the major role in his whole art project, it has to be the opposite: we need to give a lot more importance to these drawings, insofar as they display Reinhardt's views on the development of art, in real time and in a much less abstract manner than his texts.

"Words like "conscience", "ethics", "morality", "guilt", and "corruption" creep into artists' conversations with increasing frequency"¹⁵⁹, lucidly observes Reinhardt in 1960. Reality itself will prove he was right. The first half of the seventies, only a few years after the painter's death, showed how, due to the growing politicization of life among the New York artists, some of them will decide to leave the art world for the benefit of political action¹⁶⁰, but also, how art will progressively come to justify itself through a tautological definition, empowered by the sudden radicalization of such procedures. Reinhardt would, certainly, approve such a new clarity of view. For corruption is caused by confusion and amalgamation, the same confusion which allows artists, in Reinhardt's words, "to avoid both political responsibility and aesthetic criticism".¹⁶¹

He calls out to us, we may say, on the very topical subject of ethics of an artist in a world which is going through an eclipse of ethics in general. Even if, perhaps, the increasing complexity of the social problematic in the contemporary universe was beginning to grow beyond his understanding, there is in fact an issue, more and more fearsome, of the accommodating attitude, even the complicity of the artist vis-à-vis the world (of art), in which the sociological conception has become so overwhelming that it has subjugated everything, value, art, work of art, etc., to the sole principle of domination. Art is reduced to the question of power: a work of art is an object, to which certain institutions (museums, art galleries, revues, collections, etc.) endow this particular status (G. Dickie). As a result, "everyone wants to be like Elisabeth Taylor"¹⁶², rages Reinhardt. Both the artistic endeavors and the debates of these last years clearly witness the interest, which today's artists have given to this aspect of art's status.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁶ "What Is Corruption?" (1961), Rose p. 154.

¹⁵⁷ Bertrand Saint-Sernin, *La raison au XXe siècle*, Paris, Seuil 1995, p. 10.

¹⁵⁸ "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 14.

¹⁵⁹ "The Artist in Search of a Code of Ethics" (1960), Rose p. 160.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Nancy Marmer, "Art & Politics", *Art in America*, June/August 1977, pp. 64-66.

¹⁶¹ "[Abstraction vs. Illustration]" (1943), Rose p. 47.

¹⁶² "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt" by Bruce Glaser (1966/67), Rose p. 14.

¹⁶³ We could mention, for instance, the projects of Hans Haacke: his installation *Germania* in German pavilion at the Venice Biennale 1993, the work for the Fondation Cartier (*The Must of Rembrandt*, 1986) or the installation *Helmsboro Country*, 1990. A powerful art sponsor, Senator Jesse Helms, was at the same time one of the main organizers of the campaign against the *National Endowments for the Arts*, the Federal body in charge of art financing. The aforementioned campaign, taking as a pretext *Piss Christ* of Andres Serrano, which stirred a lot of controversy during 1980, and resurfaced in 1994 after a much disputed "performance" by Ron Athey, has posed, in most radical terms, the issue of an artist's freedom and independence in a contemporary democracy. However, moral value can never be acquired in advance. Following the publication of the book *Libre échange* (Seuil, 1994), co-authored by Hans Haacke and Pierre Bourdieu, Fred Forest publicly opens the question of the "multinationale Haacke" (whose 34 works have been

If conceptual art continues the critical analysis of the conditions necessary to the existence of the work of art, conceived as an artistic project, Reinhardt himself was haunted by aesthetic deontology, or, in other words, by the ethics of the artist-as-artist. Born a Protestant, he had a pietistic vision of the nature of morality, pure and absolute, which could legitimately bring Kant to mind: "the one perfection comes only from long and lonely routine preparation [...]", says Reinhardt, "the one freedom is realized only through the strictest art discipline and through the most similar studio ritual."¹⁶⁴ Morality means for him the infinite capacity of the artist to endure all the constraints in the name of Reason of art: "Control and rationality are part of any morality".¹⁶⁵ The duty of the artist is defined according to the categorical aesthetic imperative, therefore Reinhardt won't allow the possibility of the artist's responsibility to be effaced, or in any way relativized by the conditions of his action. Reinhardt points to the three major enemies of the artist-as-artist. First, "the artist who 'has to eat', who has to 'express himself', and who lives off, on, in, for or from his art." The next enemy of the artist-as-artist is "the art dealer who deals in art", and finally, last but not least there is a "utilitarian, acquisitive, exploiting society in which any tendency to do anything for its own transcendental sake cannot be tolerated."¹⁶⁶ And yet, he thinks, "the artists are responsible. If there is anything rotten or corrupt, it is the artists' [own] fault."¹⁶⁷

To pronounce nothing of his paintings, the way Reinhardt did, is moral and responsible. Better to say little, or nothing at all, than to maintain an empty discourse. However, this seems like a rather puritan and rigid morality. Rooted in the absolute, its actual adaptation to real life is weak; it's impractical, maybe even irresponsible. In fact, there being only one absolute, art that derives from it is equally unique: Reinhardtian morality of art can bear fruit once, and once only. The first word of the artist is against artists. If we then admit that Reinhardt was, indeed, a living proof of the possibility of maintaining such an aesthetic position, which is radically moral, this ethical problem is only resolved insofar as Reinhardt himself was concerned. And here we stumble against the limitation of his project: ethics are, and at the same time must pass, a test of universality.

Doubts

Reinhardt's exemplary attitude reveals his historic singularity: anti-historicist, it nevertheless draws its significance from the place it occupies inside a specific artistic tradition. In fact, the few objections one could formulate against Reinhardt's perspective all have to do with this dialectic of historical vs. anti-historical.

Firstly, we should examine the philosophical background behind the question of morality and rationality. It is a common view, within neo-Kantian philosophy, to consider that historicity – the conqueror of the absolute – destroys the possibility of ethics. An arguable position.¹⁶⁸ The possibility of ethics which capitalize on the absolute was proved not only by Dilthey, the first who was to give historicism¹⁶⁹ the power of a method of philosophical understanding, but also by his disciples such as for instance O.F. Bollnow, H. Plessner and some others, and equally by analytical philosophers (Peter Winch, Bernard Williams, Donald Davidson), and hermeneutical philosophers (Jürgen Habermass, Karl-Otto Apel, Gianni Vattimo). The problem seems to be directly connected with the concept of rationality, which has been widely revised since Kant, notably by both the analytical and hermeneutic traditions. Reason itself has a history and, especially during the twentieth century, it has learned to assume its own finitude and

purchased by the M.N.A.M. in Paris). On what terms is it possible to establish, in the present times, the artist's autonomy?

¹⁶⁴ "Art-as-Art" (1962), Rose p. 56.

¹⁶⁵ "On Art and Morality" (1960), Rose p. 153.

¹⁶⁶ "The Next Revolution in Art" (1964), Rose p. 59.

¹⁶⁷ "What Is Corruption?" (1961), Rose p. 154.

¹⁶⁸ The fact that there is no morality in Heidegger's philosophy can't be simply ascribable to the over-exaltation of historicity, and even this last characteristic of his system is rather problematic. Cf. a critique of Heidegger given by Helmuth Plessner, *Macht und Menschliche Natur* (1931), chap. 4

¹⁶⁹ For the treble sense of historicity, cf. Herbert Schnädelbach, *Philosophie in Deutschland 1831-1933*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp 1984, chap. 2.1.1.

fragmentary character. According to Vattimo, the new ethics are manifested precisely in the "nihilist features of modernity"¹⁷⁰. Today's ethical thinking goes as far as proclaiming the impossibility of rational responsibility, paradoxically, as a result, or as a price for stretching beyond the idealist utopia of infinite reason¹⁷¹, even if it still preserve the Kantian idea of insisting on universalization, by means of communication with the living community (Habermas, Apel).

Another objection concerns the notion of the absolute in art, despite Reinhardt's quite successful efforts at inventing the pictorial absolute à l'oeuvre (at work). Asked by Paul Brach "why was he not painting even one more "Ultimate Painting", he smiles"¹⁷². A sign of somewhat enigmatic wisdom, a smile is an insufficient cover for what is simply an impossible reply. So too is the answer suggested by Yves-Alain Bois, "a series as an extension of repetitiveness of the *all-over* structure"¹⁷³, too faint, and too weak an argument. As for Reinhardt himself, he seems to be unaware of the fact that his search for the absolute is deeply indebted to a presupposition, the roots of which go back the specific context of American post-war painting, championed by Clement Greenberg, with its own quest for "essence".¹⁷⁴ Indeed, Y.-A. Bois tries to reconstitute, in great detail, Reinhardt's reactions to the criticisms, debates or work of other, contemporary painters, all testifying his profound involvement in his historical time, much against his self-declared leanings toward timelessness.

And finally our last important objection, this time involving the very method of interpretation of art. However moving it is, in virtue of the singular power with which it interrogates the works of art, Reinhardt's method is, at the same time, objectionable, precisely because of its *nonchalant* refusal of allowing any account of historicity into the contexts of aesthetics, or of culture in general. But could we genuinely compare, without taking any historical precautions, the aesthetic conscience of Islam (in the Middle Ages) to the painting of Manet, the first herald of Modernism?¹⁷⁵ Also, reading his commentaries of Angkor Watt's architecture, Chinese painting, the mandalas and sculpture of India, we couldn't help thinking that his reflections, inspired by Focillon and convergent with theoretic directives of George Kubler, serve the purpose of artistic manifestoes better than they do that by an exegesis of the works in question.

Conclusion

Since he died prematurely, Reinhardt hardly had time to begin his vast project of writing a universal history of art. What would it have been like, given the serious doubts we've put forth in respect of the method Reinhardt chose to interpret works of art? The project could, indeed, have resembled a structural analysis of forms of art history, as reconstituted in a catalogue published by Gudrun Inboden and Thomas Kellein¹⁷⁶. It could equally have tried to give, in one way or another, an answer to the question which Reinhardt kept bringing up since 1960: is

¹⁷⁰ Gianni Vattimo, *Ethique de l'interprétation* (1989), trad. by J. Rolland, Paris, Ed. la Découverte 1991, p. 175.

¹⁷¹ "Against our expectations", writes Sion Elbaz, "it's really a moral criterion which allows us to pronounce on the scientificity of such and such a theory, a criterion without any doubt negative, nonetheless an ethical one: every theory that pretends to say Everything may represent for us anything we want except Science. This blindness of science is, in itself, a moral attitude." *Critique* n° 570, November 1994, p. 868.

¹⁷² Paul Brach, *Ad Reinhardt: Ultimate Chroma*, "Art in America", March 1980, p. 99.

¹⁷³ Bois, *op. cit.* p. 28. — Reinhardt: "When you've seen one mosque, you've seen them all", "Art vs. History", Rose p. 225.

¹⁷⁴ In the article: "Greenberg, le grand récit du modernisme et la critique d'art essentialiste", *Les cahiers du mnam*, n° 45/46, fall/winter 1993, p. 24 *sqq.*, Arthur C. Danto defines historical limits of such an essentialist conception. His point of view is most pertinent, even though the arguments seem to be a little heavy at times: if a rationality is essence of humankind, he poses the question, "should we then try to obtain a pure human being, equipped solely with essential qualities?" (p. 24). But the question would, perhaps, be better formulated in yet another way: doesn't the essence of painting (or of a human) have its own history? and the concept of essence itself? does the interpretation of modernism in art, carried out as an idea of a chain of self-critical attitudes, such as the interpretation of Greenberg, necessarily involve considerations on essence of art? — To end we may add that Greenberg did not, in fact, appreciate Reinhardt's painting: the reasons behind his view are presented in an extensive study by Y.-A. Bois, *op. cit.* pp. 15-17 et 25.

¹⁷⁵ "Art vs. History", Rose p. 224-225.

¹⁷⁶ *Ad Reinhardt*, Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie 1985.

there "a history of art morality?"¹⁷⁷ Perhaps even the profound originality of Reinhardt's project could be derived from this last, though definitely not least important idea, according to which the *interpretation of art* is neither an epistemological problem (since the early thirties Cassirer, Panofsky, Wittkower were all living and working in USA), nor a problem of the analysis of meaning (the heritage of analytical philosophy is decisive for conceptual art¹⁷⁸), but entirely a *problem of ethics*. For the art historian just as well as for the artist.

Of course, the concept of language, considered as a site where things exist as-things, the notion of rationality supporting the idea of the absolute (with its Hegelian influences), can all be problematic from the present point of view. It is specifically essentialism, identified as a corollary of his indifference to the socio-political conditioning of art, that pulls Reinhardt apart from the experiences of conceptual artists. It does so certainly more than their respective views on forms of art: because if Reinhardt drives painting to the verge of the invisible, then the conceptual renunciation of image can seem like a logical consequence thereof.

But beyond the limits implied by his philosophical attitude, Reinhardt manages to anticipate and grasp the meaning of a contemporary hermeneutic perspective on the *ethics of interpretation*. The problem of legitimacy of interpretation becomes equally important to the question of aesthetic responsibility, for an art project cannot be separated from the interpretation of the idea of art: one brings authenticity to the other, while providing its meaning. What can be said other than seeing how all important works of art, at the same time anticipate the future, and, in some way, give a form to art's past? Thus, if the past isn't simply inherited as one definitive composition, but instead takes its form, precisely, through interpretation; furthermore, if we admit that the artist, by the virtue of his work develops this kind of artistic tradition, there is then an opening of a new (practical) dimension of art morality: the artist, in his work, is the first, if not the only person responsible for the present patterns of art, as well as for the form of its history. "Every major work of art", Reinhardt cites Kubler, "forces upon us a reassessment of all previous works of art."¹⁷⁹

The fact that Reinhardt's interpretation of history remains questionable doesn't in the least diminish the coherence of his project. As a matter of fact, in order for the essence of art to manifest itself in language, aesthetic discourse has to be maintained within the scope of a *rationale* (or more precisely a certain *rationale*), which necessarily implies aesthetic responsibility. The absolute in art justifies aesthetic morality, but it is only by the power of aesthetic responsibility—thus made possible—that the ultimate meaning of this last absolute of art can finally be achieved. "Art-as-art is always a battle cry, polemic, picket sign, sit-in, sit-down, civil disobedience, passive resistance, crusade, fiery cross, and non-violent protest."¹⁸⁰

Archae-anarchy, the creative potential behind destruction, the great motive of revolution in art: these elements, along with many others, prove that a purely "Hegelian" reading of Reinhardt is not sufficient for it leaves out an entire tradition, both artistic and intellectual, which could be generally described as Anarchist thought. Unmistakably inspired by Hegel and the importance given to the work of negativity, anarchist thinking puts a stress not only on the radical autonomy of an individual and consequently on ethics but also on the striking nature of creation itself, on the meaning of a rebellion which according to Bakunin constitutes - independently from the experience of thinking - a founding moment of humanity among humankind. Reinhardt's choice of using satirical drawings to unfold his critique of the art scene, as well as his idea of what contemporary societies consider as art, relates closely to the tradition of anarchist revues (extremely fecund in the 1840s) when this form of social, political or even artistic criticism was very much in vogue (remember the "*monochroides*" by Alphonse Allais!). Indeed, the *Comixes* bring a valuable insight by complementing the ideas and the attitudes expressed by Reinhardt in his writings. We could think for instance of the irreproachable statement by Paul Gauguin - who personally had no revolutionary leanings - declaring that "in

¹⁷⁷ "The Artist in Search of a Code of Ethics" (1960), Rose p. 160.

¹⁷⁸ As for Reinhardt, he clearly states that "art-meaning is the meaning of art, not the meaning of meaning"; "[Art-as-Art]" (1962-63), Rose p. 57.

¹⁷⁹ "Art vs. History", Rose p. 226.

¹⁸⁰ "The Next Revolution in Art" (1964), Rose p. 59.

art one is either a revolutionary or a plagiarist". In the same cartoon *How to Look at Modern Art in America* Reinhardt introduces a kind of a genealogical tree of modern art and it is while looking at this drawing that we are able to realize how certain artistic traditions seemingly excluded from Reinhardt's texts return onto the scene, notably Dada and Surrealism; two currents which combined the importance of an infinite creativity with revolt and political engagement. In fact, upon closer examination, the uncorrupted trunk of the tree or in other words the part that resisted the threat of decadence is represented, among others, by Georg Grosz, Otto Dix, Max Ernst and artists generally described by Reinhardt as "social surrealists". And it is also one of the surrealist poets who very precisely anticipated the clarity so characteristic of the way in which later Reinhardt separates art and life in order to avoid the confusion that can become a source of all corruption and relativism. For Benjamin Péret, in fact, art was at the same time art and political action — a political battle: "the poet", he wrote in a famous page, "has to fight against all oppression [...]. It does not mean that he wants to put poetry in the service of political or revolutionary action. But the quality of his poetry transforms him into a revolutionary who will fight his battles on many grounds: the battle that belongs to poetry with its own means as well as on the field of social action without, however, mixing up these two distinct domains of action at the risk of restoring the confusion the poet is in fact supposed to dissipate which may also mean at the risk of him ceasing to be either a poet, or a revolutionary."¹⁸¹ — But this is a subject for another study that should take into account the very specific articulation of the two major influences at play in Reinhardt's work: one Hegelian, one anarchist.

¹⁸¹ Benjamin Péret, "Le Désonneur des poètes", in: *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 7, Paris, Librairie José Corti, 1995, p. 8.

Black Painting, 1962
oil on canvas, 60x60"

Photo by Ellen Page Wilson / courtesy PaceWildenstein

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‘Suddenly finding it really matters’: Psychology, Verdi and Aristotelian Form

Christopher Wintle

For Ben Boretz

1 A Double Question

In the course of a deeply humane collection of essays, *The Dove that Returns, The Dove that Vanishes* (2000), the British psychoanalyst Michael Parsons tells a story about a patient of his. The man was visiting a country in Eastern Europe at the time of the Soviet occupation. There he had met with, and become fond of a local woman:

When this man floated the idea of coming to visit her again she was not interested in it as fantasy to play with. She just said “When?”. Her statement about reality and fantasy was not theoretical. Her life in her society [threw] into relief [the fact] that distinguishing fantasy from reality is not something you do for fun; it is how you survive . . . distinguishing fantasy from reality really matters.¹

The woman’s reply startled Parsons as much as it did his patient: her outlook ‘could not *not* be taken seriously’ (the emphasis is mine). Any previous views he (or the patient) may have held about life under communism now seemed ‘a bit bland and superficial’ – even more so in retrospect as the Soviet Union went on to collapse (in 1991).

The jolt, moreover, threw into relief the kind of shocks that had been crucial for the evolution – and even survival – of psychoanalysis itself. Sigmund Freud had been similarly startled when he realised that, although the childhood seduction stories his patients told him were *not* necessarily true – and thus belonged to fantasy – they still counted in psychic reality:

Respecting what his patients said, whether it was objectively true or not, really did matter in a way he had not seen until then. Only by being open to this was [Freud] able to discover the importance of fantasy and continue the development of psychoanalysis.²

What happens in the history of psychoanalysis, Parsons continues, is constantly reflected in clinical practice, Freud's as much as his own. The reflection can be positive or negative. In the positive case, when Dora left abruptly Freud was compelled to face up to the fact that the 'father-transference' that related to him (which he saw) was also related to Herr K (to which he had been blind); and that it was the relation to Herr K that had precipitated her departure. Freud learnt from the shock of Dora's going that transference was even more important than he had imagined and that it could be *acted out* as well as merely *reproduced* in analysis.

In Parsons's case – the 'negative' one – a patient had again left, this time sensing that her treatment had been in general 'unsatisfactory':

Analysis was important enough for her to get into and stay in for three and a half years, but we did not find a way for her to have the shock of its turning out to be more important than she had reckoned on.³

Even from this we may learn that the *absence* of a 'jolt', and even the shying away from its possibility, may be of the highest significance. 'What really matters', Parsons concludes, is 'a double question': 'what really matters to the patient?' and 'what really matters to the analyst?'.⁴

Obviously, at the outset of a treatment the answers may be sensed but not foreseen.

When we transmute life into art – or for our purposes opera – the double question is doubled. Once we have asked the questions, 'when does composing really matter to the composer? And what effect does really mattering have upon the composer *qua* artist?', we reformulate them as, 'what really matters to the characters in a drama?' and 'what does really mattering mean to the design of the work as a whole?'.⁵ Both sets of questions count, though obviously the first is harder to handle than the second.

In one famous case, there has never been much doubt when opera *really* started to matter to Richard Wagner, or what the artistic impact was of that mattering: for it was his fourth work, *Der fliegende Holländer* (1843) that inaugurated a quest for music drama that was to occupy the rest of his life. The story is pleasingly schematic: Wagner's previous operas, *Die Feen* (1834), *Das Liebersverbot* (1836), and *Rienzi, der Letzte der Tribunen* (1842), had explored German, Italian and French styles within three distinct genres (romantic, comic and tragic), all of which were to leave their mark; but none had yet deeply touched their admittedly very young composer. For example, Bryan Magee says of *Das Liebersverbot*, the work based on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*:

[Here] there is nothing more than a light-hearted foreshadowing of ['a universal, highly erotic longing for the unattainable'], because although Wagner's libretto is able to express the ideas his music is not able, as yet, to express the emotions.⁶

We thus encounter the same kind of expectation that Parsons had of his patient: something was *yet* to happen, something was *yet* to really matter. The initial commitment – whether signing up for treatment or writing operas – creates a ‘readiness’ for some transfiguring experience. Thus when we hear the *Holländer*, we are overwhelmed, not merely by the musical force of sea and wind, but also by the power of Wagner’s newly liberated personality. This we hear through the figure of the Dutchman. Thereafter we recognize it raging through every other protagonist who continues to assert the power of the ‘unattainable’ regardless of what the world does to him, above all through Wotan and Tristan.

However, it is when we ask of composers, and especially of those we have never known, ‘what *precipitates* the creative moment that really matters?’, that we move from critical realism into psychological speculation (itself a kind of fantasy). No question, of course, is of greater fascination – as we learn from the case of Wagner. Yet no answer can be more hypothetical – and this we learn from the case of Giuseppe Verdi.

In his moving account of ‘Loss and Mourning in Verdi and *Rigoletto*’, another contemporary psychoanalyst, Alex Tarnopolsky, sets out to build bridges between life and art. First he notes –

In 1840, Verdi, aged twenty-seven, after the death of his wife and two small children, saw the fiasco of a comic opera he felt forced to complete [*Un giorno di regno*, 1840]. Later he confessed: ‘With my mind tormented by my domestic misfortunes, embittered by the failure of my work, I was convinced that I could find no consolation in my art and decided never to compose again.’⁷

- and then he cites a passage from Act I, Scene ii of *Rigoletto*, written eleven years later. Gilda, ‘noticing her father’s unhappiness’, sings:

Oh, what a grief! How could I
Re-open such bitter sorrows?
Father, no more, calm yourself,
I cannot bear to see you thus.
Tell me your name,
And the pain [that] torments you.

The pain is quickly revealed: *Rigoletto* has not come to terms with the loss of his wife. Indeed, Tarnopolsky argues, the hunchback’s failure to negotiate mourning will lead in Act IV to the further loss of his only daughter.

By general agreement, this was the opera in which Verdi first found an intensity that suddenly really mattered. So Tarnopolsky asks, what did composing *Rigoletto* mean to its composer? What unconscious wells of creativity did Verdi tap? What private

memories did the subject excite? His answer contrasts Rigoletto's failure with Verdi's success:

Composing *Rigoletto* helped Verdi to master the primitive, unconscious emotions of mourning [that] are explicitly displayed in the opera. Verdi might have experienced them vicariously through the misfortunes of Rigoletto, while he integrated them into a magnificent operatic character.⁸

More still, Tarnopolsky asks, how will each member of an opera audience relate to such an experience? Here he cites Hannah Segal's writing on Melanie Klein:

The act of creation at depth has to do with an unconscious memory of a harmonious world and the experience of its destruction . . . the impulse is to recover and recreate this lost world . . . not only does the recipient identify with the creator, thereby reaching deeper feelings than he could do by himself: he also feels that it is left to him to look for completion.⁹

Tarnopolsky is careful not to overstate his case: Verdi, he writes, only '*might* have experienced' such unconscious emotions (my emphasis). Yet the caution has not inhibited music historians from raising a crucial objection. What is special about *Rigoletto*, they claim, is *not* that Verdi was 'suddenly' dealing with fathers and daughters, for he had already done this in *Luisa Miller* (1849) and *Stiffelio* (1850), but that he was 'suddenly' reaping the fruit of a long stay in Paris in 1847-49. *This* was the cultural stimulus that 'really mattered' – and continued to matter throughout the 1850s. More to the point, wasn't Verdi's thrill of discovering *this* particular character of Victor Hugo's well documented? Wasn't he driven to achieve a new Shakespearian 'fusion of genres?' Why bring in psychoanalysis? Why argue so much *ad hominem*?

The arguments are fair enough. But in turn we may ask, why be restricted by such *exclusive* assertions of cause and effect? If there are more reasons than one why composing *Rigoletto* suddenly really mattered, then so much the better: 'over-determination', to use the term of Sigmund Freud's, may even be essential to a transfiguring experience. The fact that Verdi had been drawn repeatedly to a theme was perhaps a necessary preparation. Had he not also wanted to set *King Lear*, the tragedy of father and daughter *par excellence*? And why, in any case, did a *deformed* character so attract him? Why could Rigoletto not be a 'container' for all the deformations in himself he wanted to isolate and address?

Such questions cannot, of course, be answered. But their openness is a virtue: where unconscious motivation is concerned, closure is tantamount to bad faith.

2 *The Double Question Doubled*

Whatever the case with Verdi's life, Tarnopolsky points to two undeniable features of Verdi's art: in the middle and late works the most affecting moments are those when characters suddenly find things really matter as never before; and these moments have

a profound consequence for the design of the whole. That is to say, from the time of *Rigoletto*, 'epiphany' becomes a key element in Verdi's musical rhetoric, affecting speech and gesture as well as form.¹⁰

Let us follow this in three works, *Rigoletto* (1851), *Un ballo in maschera* (1859) and *Otello* (1887).

(a) *Rigoletto*

At the opening of the opera, we find Rigoletto, the hunchback jester, ruthlessly mocking the courtiers whose wives and daughters have fallen prey to the Duke of Mantua. Rigoletto himself has no wife; the courtiers think his only daughter is a mistress. Tarnopolsky suggests that we read the *unconscious* libretto behind the conscious mockery as: 'I have not lost my wife, I don't fear losing my daughter; [it is just] they [who] have suffered losses.' That is to say, Rigoletto copes with his suffering by denying it in himself and projecting it onto others.¹¹ The denial involves unsparing caricature of the one courtier who has the courage to speak out, Monterone. In the music the hunchback's gestures are accompanied by pompous unison dotted figures, grotesque accents and leering trills, and obsequious flourishes leading to exaggerated long notes that swell and collapse into offensively short ones. Phrases are repeated to rub salt into the wound. Monterone reacts explosively over a forbidding F minor harmony: 'Novello insulto!' ('A new insult!'), he shrieks.

Tarnopolsky continues:

The only threat that breaks through Rigoletto's defences is the malediction. Monterone, the father he has mocked, [then] curses him . . . the curse touches a vulnerable point in Rigoletto's armour, partly because, as we have seen, the daughter represents the good and idealized part of his self . . . in theatrical terms the curse is important because the drama will consist of the identification between Monterone and Rigoletto: the jester's daughter will also be ravished and he will endeavour revenge.¹²

The curse, then, marks the point when Rigoletto suddenly finds 'it really matters'. It also dissolves the air of licentiousness that grips the court. Monterone's egregiously portentous music gathers force: first we hear the repeated monotones (on C) that, typically for *ottocento* opera, point the figure of Fate at its victims; we then witness a threefold explosion of rage as Monterone reacts to the insults; next we hear the no less typical ascending chromatic lines that convey his mounting anger; and finally, when the dread curse is pronounced with thunderous force in D flat major, we hear Monterone's third degree (F) continued by Rigoletto's second and first degrees (E flat and D flat). Rigoletto's words testify to the breach in his defences: 'Che sento! Orrore!' ('What do I hear! Horror!'). The cadence thus binds the two men into a single process: the identification is musical as well as psychological. The chorus in turn expresses its horror with a *sotto voce*, *pppp* melody in D flat minor. Whereas the melody

anticipates the fateful storm in the last act, the key anticipates the horrific denouement: that is to say, the chorus looks deep into the future of the tragedy.

This curse music, of course, will recur in various guises. But most arresting is the way Rigoletto twice re-enacts the first scene's pattern of denial-and-recognition. This re-enactment is mainly unconscious. First, when the courtiers come to abduct his daughter Gilda, Rigoletto allows them to blindfold him despite his having previously expressed fears over just such an action. After they have captured her, they let out a victory cry ('Vittoria!'): their E flat harmony is crowned by the major third. Gilda cries for help: her appeal changes the major third to a minor one. Rigoletto panics. In an affecting piece of mime, he acts out his fear:

He puts his hands to his eyes. He tears impetuously at his blindfold and mask and in the glimmer of a dislodged lamp recognizes [his daughter's] scarf, sees the door thrown open, goes in, finds Giovanna who gazes at him stupidly, tears his hair, tries to scream but cannot. Finally, with much effort he exclaims: ['Ah! The curse!'].

Most strikingly, the entire passage unites father and daughter in a single diminished seventh prolonged for 28 bars. When Rigoletto realizes he has been duped, he gasps: 'Ah! Ah! Ah! La maledizione!' ('Ah! The curse!'). His incredulous *pp* monotone Cs extend the diminished harmony before yielding to a *ff* cry of anguish: the words are bound into another cadence, now falling from the third to the first degrees in E flat minor (as a baritone, Rigoletto sings the inner voice E flat – D – E flat). That is to say, Monterone's monotones have now become his, just as Monterone's earlier major-mode curse has become his minor-mode undoing. Racing chromatic scales depict the 'bottom falling out of his world' as reality hits home. The curtain clinches the moment.

The similarity between this passage and the close of the opera is obvious, though the overall development may be less so. Once Rigoletto has uncovered the stabbed body in the sack and found it to be Gilda's rather than the Duke's, he repeats this E flat minor cadence in D flat minor. Yet here the situation is more complex. As she dies Gilda sings with her father an andante in which for her part she looks forward to joining her mother in Heaven: together they will pray for Rigoletto. This andante is in D flat major. Yet at the point of cadence, Gilda's voice dies away on the second degree. Rigoletto gasps her name into an eerie vacuum, pauses, and sees his daughter is dead. His words close 'her' line on the first degree: 'Gilda! mia Gilda! È morta!' (Gilda! my Gilda! She is dead!). As in the work's opening scene, a shared cadence unites the two protagonists. But the closing harmony is not a clear D flat major triad as the parallel would demand, but a portentous diminished seventh. Over this seventh an ascending chromatic scale races to hammer home the horror of the situation. At its peak Rigoletto emits a single cry of 'Ah!'. He no longer repeats the exclamation as he did at the end of Act One: the situation is all too familiar. The cry, on an F flat, is followed by a break to allow the subsequent repeated monotones space in which to speak. A cadence in D flat minor then leads the F flat inexorably through E flat to D flat: 'La

maledizione!' he proclaims. The orchestra blazes with shuddering intensity. Just as at the end of Act One, a racing descending chromatic scale depicts the collapse of Rigoletto's world. However, mime now *follows* the cadence as the hunchback 'tears his hair over the body of his daughter': accordingly by comparison with the end of Act One two extra bars are added to reinforce how very much the loss 'matters'. Once again the curtain clinches the moment.

In all this a sub-thematic model of a major/minor cadence is progressively elaborated over the work to re-enact and draw the consequences of an early epiphany.¹³ Similar harmonies, figures and monotones are used in every case; and the sharing of a cadence at the opening is meaningfully replicated at the close. The dramatic moral is clear: 'What really matters to a character' becomes 'what really matters to a design'.

(b) *Un ballo in maschera*

Although his world collapses, Rigoletto survives. But survival is not always guaranteed. Sometimes things start to matter only when it is too late. Such is the case with *Un ballo in maschera*. A King falls in love with the wife of his most loyal courtier, Renato. It is a liaison fraught with danger. For there are assassins at large, and the courtier is the very man upon whom the King's survival depends. The King, however, is rash and impulsive. Against all advice he visits the fortune-teller Ulrica. She predicts that he will die by the first man who shakes his hand: like Monterone, Ulrica utters her words of doom to portentous monotones (on a D flat). Here, though, the prediction itself is marked by a sudden shift from D flat minor to A major (essentially a 'thirds-change' around D flat/C sharp). The company is horrified by what it hears. At this point, Renato enters and the King seizes his hand. All breathe a sigh of relief: how could Renato, of all people, be the regicide? The King reacts to the prophecy with an elegant arietta of denial, 'E scherzo od è follia siffatta profizia' ('such a prophecy is either a joke or madness'). The music is characterized by mockingly playful dotted rhythms. The company responds with a dazzling mixed ensemble. By accident or design, Ulrica is brushed aside. She is never seen or mentioned again.

Out of sight – yes. But out of mind? Hardly. For her words turn out to be just as self-fulfilling as the witches' predictions in *Macbeth*, the King unconsciously submits to his destiny, and even Renato is unwittingly caught up in the infernal design. After Renato has foiled a tryst between his terrified wife and the King, he sides with the assassins in pursuit of revenge. A masked ball is announced. Renato's wife warns the King of a mortal threat. Though touched by dread, the King refuses to be intimidated. He goes to the ball and searches her out. Both are in disguise. They dance a minuet *alla mazurka*; the music's banal but piquant dotted rhythms are again emblematic of concealment (as they were in the King's response to Ulrica). As they dance, they talk. The tonality falls from F major to D flat major: minor elements increasingly darken the major and signal the shadowy approach of Fate. The King bids farewell to Renato's wife in a 3-2-1 cadence. Renato immediately steps forward to stab him: 'E tu ricevi il mio!', he cries ('And you receive [my farewell]!'). The words are sung to portentous monotones on D

flat as the key drops in another thirds-change from D flat to A. Suddenly we recognize the strategy of the entire ball: we have been returned to the keys and figures of Ulrica's prophecy. As in *Rigoletto*, an inexorable sub-thematic process spans the work.

How does the King react, though? After the courtiers have expressed their blood-curdling fury, the minuet music returns, its banality now macabre: the off-stage musicians are oblivious to what has happened. But word reaches them and they stop playing: the dance music, literally, falls away. Out of the silence the dying King sings a poignant andante: Renato's sudden blow has compelled him to face reality. At last, things really *do* matter. Here, the connection between the inconsequential dance-patterns of the musicians and the King's andante represent more than an exercise in the classical 'art of good continuation': they tell us what lies behind the King's mask of frivolity. The subdominant B flat minor harmony that flecked the minuet's F major suddenly 'becomes' the tonality of the andante itself: even the neighbour-note E-F is carried from dance to aria and given new emphasis. Yet the aria also releases a new diction. In place of the minuet's elegantly licentious dotted rhythms in triple time there is now a steady, wistful movement in 6/8, a tempo in which racy triplets are harnessed to sober duples. Desire cedes to veneration. The King's *ppp dolcissimo*, the same that informed a soliloquy of his before the ball, is of the utmost tenderness. His thoughts are now enlightened. As the music shifts from minor to major, he reveals a previously conceived plan of his to send the courtier and his wife abroad. There they would be out of harm's way. With a jolt, signalled by a single *fortissimo* chord in the orchestra, the assembled courtiers recognize their sovereign's 'true self'. They are gripped by remorse. Even the assassins join in an impassioned, cathartic chorus: 'suddenly mattering' has spread from the King to the body politic.

Historians have made much of the Franco-Italian 'fusion of genres' in *Un ballo*. Indeed, its Shakespearean mixture of comedy and tragedy has roots in *Rigoletto*. But in both works the duality articulates a process by which denial yields to acknowledgment. In other words, the *aesthetic* split serves the *psychological* one and both provide the context for an action in which survival itself is at stake.¹⁴

(c) *Otello*

Recently a British musicologist suggested that in the final act of *Otello* Desdemona waits 'too long' before Otello makes his fateful entrance.¹⁵ Few would agree. But, as often happens, a negative criticism contains a positive core: there is indeed an extended concentration on Desdemona. Where the remark fell short was in overlooking an inverse relation: the exaggerated ritual of Desdemona's preparation for bed, helped by Emilia, the wife of Iago, is itself a sign of her abject terror at the impending arrival of her husband. First she sings a song learnt from her mother, and then, after Emilia has withdrawn, a prayer (*preghiera*) to the Virgin Mary ('Ave Maria'). Throughout she appeals to absent mother figures. But these songs are no mere 'numbers'. Verdi has travelled far since the 1850s: gone are the days when the norm lay with the lyric fixed form (*solita forma*) interrupted by short dramatic passages of loose structure (*scena*). Now it is loose structure that is the given, studded with closed entities (songs and

themes), the very formality of which constitute dramatic signs.¹⁶ Thus although Desdemona's 'willow song' is cast in three stanzas as if it were a cross between a three-strophe andante¹⁷ and a Wagnerian 'bar' (A, A varied, A elaborated with a tiny coda), it is the asides and interruptions that hold the key to our understanding. There are thus two manifest texts: the set-piece songs and the informal asides, one masking the other.

We learn that Desdemona's mother heard the 'willow song' from Barbara, a beautiful maidservant of hers. Barbara had been in love with a man who abandoned her, and the song re-enacts her depression – of a kind familiar enough in young women – by describing another girl: she in turn externalises her grief by weaving a funeral wreath of willow into a bridal garland. In operatic terms, the events described thus begin in Life, are transmuted into Art, and then return to Life in the guise of a song re-told: Desdemona's self analysis is ruthlessly realistic. More still, the song provides Desdemona with a template for action: it is every bit as self-fulfilling as the curse of Monterone or the prophecy of Ulrica. Its key phrase goes:

Solea la storia con questo semplice suono finir:
'Egli era nato – per la sua Gloria, lo per amar . . .'

(Her story would always end with this refrain:
'He was born for his own glory, I to love . . .')

Desdemona's asides during her own 'performance', moreover, show the extent of her understanding. She addresses Emilia:

Senti. Se pria di te morir dovessi, mi seppellisci con un di quei veli.

Affrettati; fra poco giunge Otello.

Riponi quest' anello.

Ascolta. Oda un lamento. Taci. Chi batte a quella porta? (*Emilia*: È il vento.)

('Listen. If I must die before you, shroud me in one of these bridal sheets';

'Hurry up; before long Otello will be here';

'Put away this ring';

'Listen. I hear a noise. Quiet. Who is knocking at the door?' (*Emilia*: 'It is the wind.'))

If we follow Tarnopolsky's lead, we may also listen to the unspoken part of the libretto. This gives us a third, latent text, which might run something like this:

I first heard this song secure in my mother's arms. Then it was my mother's maid who suffered, not I. She was the repository of all our fears. But now that Barbara's destiny is mine, I search for my mother again. I look for her in Mother Nature, in the stream where rushes grow. But I look in vain. She merely stands apart, weeping at my inexorable fate. Even the birds – the dear, carefree little creatures – grieve to hear me, as do the most obdurate of stones. The stream of tears is unbridgeable. Everyone has abandoned me.

The diction of the song itself is restrained with markings of *p*, *pp* and *ppp*; it must be delivered 'con una voce lontana' ('with a distant voice'); and there are plangent echoes in the cor anglais. There is just one telling moment of *f* at 'salce' ('willow'). When the song is over, Desdemona adds *parlante* asides in the little coda. These make explicit her identification with the girl of the song:

'Emilia, addio. Come m'ardon le ciglie; e presagio di pianto!'

('Farewell Emilia! How my eyes burn! It is a premonition of weeping.')

Yet even here there is an 'unspoken libretto'. This may be gleaned from the two succeeding lines that the librettist (Arrigo Boito) derived from Shakespeare's play but eventually suppressed (cf. *Othello*, IV.ii. 55-62):¹⁸

Desdemona: O buon Emilia pensi che esistan spose sì corrotte da tradir la lor fede?

Emilia: V'è chi lo crede.

Desdemona: Io non lo crede. – È tardi. Buona notte.

(*Desdemona*: O good Emilia, do you think there exist wives so corrupt as to betray their faith?

Emilia: Some believe it so.

Desdemona: I don't believe it. It's late. Goodnight.)

This might mean:

I disown the image of the wife who surrenders herself for political expediency. I retain my pride where all others have sacrificed theirs. I am not a plaything of Fate. I stand by my faith in a better world. That alone is the source of my strength.

As Emilia turns to leave, Desdemona unleashes her famous, heart-rending cry: 'Ah! Emilia, Emilia, addio, Emilia, addio!' Her decorous rituals are thrown to the wind: everything suddenly 'really matters' and the mattering is intolerable. Our three 'texts'

show why: the 'willow song' is about to prove self-fulfilling; the last embodiment of support, Emilia, is leaving; and Desdemona will have to put up a mortal fight she cannot hope to win. Emilia responds by turning back. As she embraces Desdemona, she adopts the role of the absent mother. After this, she leaves. During the quietly tearful exit music, Desdemona composes herself and sings the 'Ave Maria': if she has no support on earth, then, like Gilda in *Rigoletto*, she will rediscover it in Heaven. Like Gilda too, she prays for both the oppressor and the oppressed.

The music for this entire passage also works on three planes. First, the 'willow song' is in a framing F sharp major, with the mode defining the narrative stance: the song does not convey *direct* experience, but reflects an attempt to absorb it. The coda thus moves to an F sharp major close. Second, Desdemona's identification with Barbara is indicated both by the minor mode of the 'willow song' itself and by the minor inflections of the Coda's major. These inflections support Desdemona's 'premonition of weeping'. At the very point of close, when the dominant is poised to resolve to the tonic, the minor and major elements are separated: in the solo clarinet, a solitary minor sixth, the traditional degree of lament, catches the music's breath for three bars (not two), and its *f* dynamic prepares for the *f* of Desdemona's impending cry. But when the resolution of this cadence comes, the F sharp major harmony is not the calm close we might expect. For our third plane is now engaged. The tonic harmony is heard in a leadenly scored, joyless tread. It is played four times, on each occasion supported by the bass drum. Each chord lasts a bar. Over the chords, Desdemona mutters to a monotone, 'buona notte' ('good-night'). She is gripped by an unnameable dread. No wonder she unleashes her *f* cry, or that her five-bar outburst prolongs the moment of farewell with extravagant repetitions of 'Emilia' and 'addio'.¹⁹

Let us now move on to the end and follow first Desdemona's murder, and then Otello's discovery of his misplaced jealousy. In both cases the elements we have described are reworked. As Otello strangles Desdemona, four strokes in the bass drum underscore weighted syncopated diminished seventh harmonies. The repeated notes and their subsidence bring together two actions: Emilia's pounding at the door and Otello's inert, monotone description of Desdemona's body as 'calma come la tomba' (calm as the tomb). Then, after the throng has arrived and Iago's deceit has been exposed, Otello lets out a *ff* cry. This is far more awesome than Desdemona's farewell to Emilia: 'E il ciel non ha più fulmini?', he demands ('Has Heaven no more thunderbolts?'). He clutches his sword:

'Niun mi tema se anco armato mi veda. Ecco la fine del mio cammin. Oh!
Gloria! Otello fu.'

('Let no one fear me even though they see me armed. Here is the end of my
journey. Oh Glory! Otello is finished.')

It is suddenly *his* moment of terror: the truth has struck home like nothing before. As he sings, we now hear twelve weighted triads. They occupy a bar apiece and are preceded by a solitary sustained note, a fading G held for two bars; and in the final

phrase, 'Otello fu', there are four solitary repeated strokes on the bass drum. The irony of all this is clear: the musical events leading up to Desdemona's cry have been amplified and redirected. Even the fateful monotones indict him and not her: their repetitions, falling from D through A to E, show the collapse, rather than the steeling of his will. His final, ferocious spasm is reserved for 'Oh! Gloria!'. This inverts the refrain of Desdemona's 'willow song', 'he was born for glory': it is a supreme irony that only we, the audience, can recognize.

Soon after, Otello stabs himself. As he reaches out to Desdemona, their 'kiss theme', first heard in the love duet from Act One, famously returns in the orchestra. It is now Otello's turn to reclaim a tune. He adds his gasping asides: 'un bacio, un bacio ancora, ah! un altro bacio . . .' ('a kiss, again a kiss, another kiss'). With the last gasp, his phrase expires as it falls from the third to the second degree: as with Gilda's line in *Rigoletto*, it never reaches home. Otello dies singing. It is left for the orchestra to provide closure and confirm it with four more weighted chords. As there is no chorus to express awe and pity, the chords also serve as an epitaph.

In this final act, then, Desdemona and Otello *both* react to what suddenly and supremely really matters. Musical figures and processes are shared; closed songs and themes assume an iconic significance; thoughts, words and actions interact. So intense are the relations, indeed, that the rest of the world seems rightly excluded: after all this, how could its reactions not seem, as Michael Parsons puts it, 'a bit bland and superficial'?

3 *Psychological Process and Aristotelian Form*

Classicists will doubtless object that our 'epiphany' merely subsumes Aristotle's 'three parts of a plot' – *peripeteia* (a sudden reversal of fortune), *anagnorisis* (the moment of recognition) and *pathos* (suffering) – together with the emotions they inspire (pity, awe and terror).²⁰ If they do, they will be both right and wrong. It is true that our three examples provide clear instances of each 'part': in *Rigoletto*, the *peripeteia* precipitated by Monterone's curse leads to an *anagnorisis* for Rigoletto at the end of Act One, and another *anagnorisis* for him at the denouement, where it is enhanced by the *pathos* of Gilda's death. In each case the change from ignorance to knowledge is accompanied by a symbolic gesture, the removal of a blindfold or the opening of a sack. In *Un ballo in maschera*, the King ignores the *peripeteia* of Ulrica's curse and again of Renato's defection until he is mortally wounded: his suffering in the masked ball accompanies the reversal of wilful ignorance into compassionate understanding. The *anagnorisis* for courtiers and assassins comes as he reveals his plan to dispatch Renato and his wife, and the *pathos* of his dying triggers terror, pity and wonder in the whole company. In *Otello*, the moor's reason is progressively undermined over Acts Two and Three in an accumulative *peripeteia*. But there is just one *anagnorisis* to restore the harmonious *status ante quo*, and this comes at the very end. But this is achieved only at the expense of the suffering and death of the two main protagonists.

It is also true that Aristotelian distinctions between tragedy and comedy are impeccably preserved in both of the late Verdi operas, *Otello* and *Falstaff* (1893). The denouement of *Falstaff* takes place at midnight beneath Herne's Oak where the community punishes the old buffoon for his lecherous advances. The potential for grievous harm is averted only by a supremely witty *anagnorisis*: Bardolph's comic disguise falls as he pronounces 'Ed or che il diavolo ti porta via!!!' ('And now may the devil spirit you away!!!'). The invective Falstaff roars back at him is, of course, a barely concealed displacement of the contempt the community has heaped upon him:

Naso vermiglio! Naso bargiglio! Puntuta lesina! Vampa di resina!

(Ruddy nose! Wattled beak! Stingy spike! Resinous torch!)

Strikingly, this riposte of Falstaff's deploys the very same monotones (on C) that we have seen Verdi using in his tragic works for curses and prophecies. Only now Falstaff's accusations are comically overblown. The community, sensing they have drawn blood, close the episode with a cry of 'bravo'. Their delight is comedy's answer to tragedy's horror. Yet even the injured Ford's epitaph reminds us that comedy is only tragedy averted: 'Per gli dei! Se non ridessi, ti sconsiglierei!' ('By the Gods! If I weren't laughing, I'd have destroyed you!').

But the classicists would be wrong if they did not recognize that epiphanies do not necessarily coincide with Aristotelian parts. In Act Two of *La traviata*, for example, Alfredo's father sets out to persuade the courtesan Violetta to back away from his son for the sake of the family's honour. When Violetta bows to this reversal of her fortune, she answers the father's D flat major with her D flat minor. Her line starts *pp* and gracefully with the words, 'Così alla misera . . .' ('Thus to the wretched woman . . .'). The moment the loss suddenly hits home, however, comes several minutes later, as the goal of the next (*scena*-type) section. It is approached by a 'Rossini crescendo': 'Amami, Alfredo, quant' io t'amo, addio!' she sings, in a passionate transformation of her previous love music ('Love me, Alfredo, as much as I love you. Farewell!'). Moreover, between the *perepenteia* and the epiphany lie several other affective states: there is an elaborate unfolding of the sense of loss and the accumulation is essential to the force of her outburst. That her greatest expression of loss is also her greatest celebration of what she had gained – the capacity to love – is a supreme dramatic irony that recalls the 'compromise' inherent in the psychoanalytic 'nodal point':

Taking the hysterical symptom as his model, Freud shows that [the compromise] 'develops only where the fulfilments of two opposing wishes, arising each from a different psychical system, are able to converge in a single expression.'²¹

An epiphany, of course, belongs with many other moments that traditionally matter in opera: decisions, oaths, rituals, prayers and celebrations together with their displacements (the huge storm in *Rigoletto*, for instance, amplifies the terror of Gilda's

murder). It even belongs with those points in ensembles where each member of a group defines his or her position in relation to that of the others. Much of the success of Verdi's kinetic control of acts and works, indeed, is due to a sophisticated distribution and control of the quantity and quality of affect.²² This is an area for study every bit as important as, say, the much-discussed formal 'conventions' that govern arias, duets and choruses. For conventions are categories just as Aristotelian parts are turning points; whereas epiphanies testify to musical and dramatic *process*.

Postscript: What really matters today

Late in life, Verdi was invited to design a curriculum for budding Italian composers. His choice of tasks was traditional (there was plenty of counterpoint) and his repertory of models drew from the past rather than the present (the young composer's personal style was not to be contaminated by his contemporaries). What we in the twenty-first century learn from the mid-nineteenth century may no longer be an idiom, but it is certainly an example. In a talk from 1976 on 'Musical Ideas and Ideas about Music', the British composer Alexander Goehr put things in a nutshell when he spoke of a dual tension: on the one hand there was 'great form' involving Aristotelian process 'where order is perpetually reaffirmed'; and on the other there was 'little form' where the composer's 'partly subconsciously motivated gesture will stand apart and define the possible continuations of a composition.'²³ It is the admission of the unconscious here that is arresting: at a stroke it brings together our two sets of double questions and shows just how necessary it is for our enquiry to be as broad as possible.

Indeed, Goehr goes further still and indicates why the approach *fundamentally* matters:

The continuing of a composition in terms of such ideas constitutes what a creative artist calls truth in the Keatsian sense. The telling of this truth is the *raison d'être* of a creative artist.²⁴

Let all creative artists take heed!

NOTES

- 1 Michael Parsons, 'Suddenly finding it really matters', *The Dove that Returns, The Dove that Vanishes*, The New Library of Psychoanalysis, general editor: Elizabeth Bott Spillius, London, Routledge, 2000, pp. 35-51. See especially pp. 35-6.
- 2 Ibid. p. 37.
- 3 Ibid. p. 38.
- 4 Ibid. p. 38. Parsons extends this to include two further sets of reciprocal questions that arise from the dynamics of the clinical situation, 'what really matters to myself?' and 'what really matters to the person opposite me?'. These are seen from both perspectives. He also explores how these questions may need each other to yield any answers.
- 5 If we follow Parsons, we can, and perhaps should quadruple the double set of double questions.
- 6 Bryan Magee, *Wagner and Philosophy* (2000), London, Penguin, 2001, pp. 27-8.
- 7 Alex Tamopolsky, 'Loss and Mourning in Verdi and *Rigoletto*', *New Formations* (London), Vol. 26, Autumn 1995, pp. 89-107. See especially pp. 89-90.
- 8 Ibid. p. 107. The musical representation of the effects of loss and the tonal control Rigoletto exerts over Gilda are described in: Christopher Wintle, 'Rigoletto's Bottle: Psychoanalysis and Opera', *New Formations* (London), Vol. 26, Autumn 1995, pp. 108-19.
- 9 Ibid. p. 107. The words are from: Hannah Segal, *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein*, London, Hogarth Press, 1973, p. 95.
- 10 Cf. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Oxford, OUP, 1990, p. 72. Chris Baldick writes:

Epiphany. The term used in Christian theology for a manifestation of God's presence in the world. It was taken over by James Joyce to denote secular revelation in the everyday world, in an early version of his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) later published as *Stephen Hero* (1944). Here Joyce defined an epiphany as a 'sudden spiritual manifestation' in which the 'whatness' of a common object or gesture appears radiant to the observer. Much of Joyce's fiction is built around such special moments of sudden insight, just as Wordsworth's long autobiographical poem *The Prelude* (1850) is constructed around certain revelatory 'spots of time'.

It might also be possible to coin the term *Epiphaniebereitschaft* (readiness for an epiphany) along the lines of the psychoanalytic *Komplexbereitschaft* (readiness for a complex). However, the term is unlikely to be recognised by Germans, for all that Kant and Hegel themselves adapted sacred terms for secular use. (I am indebted to Professor Rosemary Ashton of University College London for her advice on this, just as I am to Irene Auerbach, formerly of King's College London.)

- 11 It is important to see that Rigoletto's hunched back is not *psychologically* part of the action. For Sigmund Freud argued that physical deformation, being exceptional and a 'given', cannot in itself be a source of pleasurable involvement in the drama: only the suffering that it gives rise to can be this. Hence we can share no more in Rigoletto's deformity by the end of the opera than we can at its beginning. (Modern medical science, of course, would see *Rigoletto* as an opera about the failure to cure curvature of the spine at birth: the absence of hunchbacks in our own society testifies to the advance of medicine since the days of Victor Hugo.) Freud located the essence of tragedy, rather, in the hero's struggle with divinity, where it is the rebel who engages the audience's sympathy. From this point of view, it is Rigoletto's defiant failure to challenge his destiny that touches our emotions. See: Sigmund Freud, 'Psychopathic Characters on the Stage' (1905/06), *Standard Edition* (1953), Vol. 7, London, Vintage, 2001, pp. 303-10, and especially p. 306.
- 12 Ibid. p. 100.
- 13 The analysis may be extended to other parts of the opera where there are little epiphanies (Rigoletto's abruptive 'Demonio!' in his otherwise suave exchange with Sparafucile in Act One, scene ii). It might also take in the masking and unmasking of the Duke's seductive voices (Contessa, Gilda, Maddalena) and the split stage in the tavern scene that prompts the great quartet, and so forth.
- 14 For a further discussion of the music, see: Christopher Wintle, 'The Enlightened Sounds of Fate: Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*', *Un ballo in maschera*, Royal Opera House (Covent Garden) programme book, 2005. I am indebted to Dr. Gerald Wooster for his stimulating observations about the King's compulsion to act against his own interests. For a general discussion of style

- and genre in middle-period Verdi, see: Piero Weiss, 'Verdi and the Fusion of Genres', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 35, 1982, pp. 138-56.
- 15 The thought is Roger Parker's, expressed during a discussion that followed a paper of his on *La traviata* and *Il trovatore*. The paper was given at King's College London in 2002.
- 16 For an outstanding airing of these issues, see: James A. Hepokoski, *Otello*, Cambridge Opera Handbooks, Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- 17 In *Rigoletto*, Gilda's story of abduction, 'Tutte le feste al tempio', is also told in three-part form: the third part breaks with the measured diction of the first two parts as she re-enacts the events *con forza*.
- 18 Hepokoski, op. cit., p. 34.
- 19 The musical history of this foreboding can be traced back to the prelude to this last Act. Here our 'three planes' are laid out in order. First, there is the opening phrase of the 'willow song' in the cor anglais. Second, there is the plangent figure in the flutes that will be used immediately after Emilia's departure: this intensifies and breaks off into a silence. Third, out of this silence there appear two weighted bare fifths in the clarinet: these return in the subsequent recitative as Desdemona tells how Otello has sent her to her room to await his arrival.
- 20 See: Aristotle, *Poetics*, translated by Richard Janko, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1987, pp. 14-15 and 95-97. Janko writes of *anagnorisis*: 'In English, as in Greek, the words recognition ('*anagnōrīsis*'), ignorance ('*agnoia*') and knowledge (*gnōsis*) are related. This "change from ignorance to knowledge" is parallel to the "change of the actions to their opposite" that is REVERSAL [*peripeteia*].' (p. 95.)
- 21 Cited in: J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (1967), translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, London, Kamac, 1988, pp. 292-93. The quotation from Sigmund Freud comes in *SE*, 5, p. 569.
- 22 Part of the success also belongs to the psychology of pacing. Verdi used to maintain that certain arias could be used only at certain points in an act and not at others. Thus narrative accumulation, a feature of design, may contribute to the impact of a closing *anagnorisis*. This is as true of Verdi as it is, say, of Wagner, Strauss or Britten.
- 23 Alexander Goehr, *Finding the Key*, London, Faber and Faber, 1998, pp. 149-50.
- 24 Ibid. p. 150.

Haptic Communication and Musical Aesthetics:

Feeling in Jazz

Jon Radwan

Ah touch! – there’s the rub! Touch. To have the touch. To be touched. A sure touch. A warm touch. A sensitive touch – shy, delicate, tender to the touch. All of it – let all of it in – the quavering violent touch. The wild, the passionate touch. That’s how you know it’s us – it’s human. Now we can live. Now we can know each other and live. (Richards, 1973, p. 24)

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In the Middle Ages, Western musicians developed a notation system that facilitated both composition and group performance. This new writing system led to significant cultural developments, such as polyphony, the orchestra, and precise criticism, but it also served to *reify* music. Music, the art which had once been accessible only in unique and ephemeral performances, suddenly had the concrete properties of a thing, an object on a page.¹



Notation, as a written medium, created a graphic approach that still dominates “serious” analysis of music today. To provide an alternative to our graphic, reified tradition, this essay presents a Haptic, or feeling-based theory of musical communication. After a brief description of graphic thought in music criticism, Eric Berne’s “Stroke” is introduced as the fundamental act of interpersonal communication. Next, “Timbre” and “Feel” are approached as haptic variables that

generate meaning in Jazz Music. Ultimately, we see that graphic terms cannot account for what is most meaningful in Jazz performance, the concrete immediacy of interpersonal contact.

Graphic Aesthetics and Music

During the Middle Ages, Guido of Arezzo (c. 995-1050) revolutionized musical practice by developing a standardized system that could represent any musical composition graphically. In *Prologus in Antiphonarium*, Guido invented the staff, gave each of the notes a name, refined rhythmic signs, and outlined a course of instruction that spread throughout Europe. It is essentially the same system that we still use today. Other developments, such as the organ/keyboard and the tempered scale, also helped contribute to polyphony and complex (lengthy) compositions, but it was Guido's notation system that shifted music from an art focused on memory, improvisation, and performance to a graphic art united with writing and reading (James, 1993, pp. 80-83).

Guidonian notation is a graphic symbol system similar to written language: both represent sounds visually with lines proceeding across a page. But whereas speech is graphed in a phonetic and linear symbol system, music is graphed in a pitched multi-linear symbol system.² That is, in writing each letter denotes a single phoneme that must be voiced in sequence. In notation, each beat of a measure may denote multiple pitches, which are sounded simultaneously as the reader proceeds sequentially to the next beat.

Each medium creates and enables specific modes of thought and action, and Guidonian notation was a writing technology that opened completely new artistic possibilities. In *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan established that media are much more than mere tools, they are "extensions" of our human senses and faculties that constitute who we are. "Each form of transport [medium] not only carries, but translates and transforms, the sender, the receiver, and the message" (1964, p. 90).³ Accordingly, the introduction of new media will alter thoughts about what can or should be done and how to do it -- the medium itself facilitates and encourages ideas that are expressible within its structure. This means that both individual thought patterns and social forms of interaction are ultimately dependent upon the means of expression that are culturally available.

Cultures with sound as the dominant medium (oral/aural) differ significantly from those with a tradition of graphic communication (McLuhan, 1962, Ong, 1982, 1986). Where one depends upon the ear and lives in a world of dynamic aural development, the other depends upon the eye and lives in a world conceived in terms of a static visual field. When notation was introduced into the music world, a cultural shift occurred as visual values began to be applied to music.⁴

Two important implications of the graphic reification of music are composers and *pieces* of music. The composer, as an available subject position, cannot exist without Guidonian notation. Complex, extended polyphony, the supreme contribution of western music, was made possible by allowing the composer to work out ideas in a static medium and then communicate them clearly and efficiently. In its most basic sense, notation is a set of written instructions that precisely graphs what to do and when to do it. This imperative mode enabled unprecedented control for the composer (or conductor), concentrating power over authorship and interpretation within a single artist. One need only compare improvised or traditional music with any symphony to *hear* the differences enabled by notation. The orchestra is literally impossible without writing; consider how you might communicate your musical ideas to so many other musicians if you were illiterate (non-neumerate). Written scores also changed the focus of the critic from the "performance" to the "piece," an independent, completed, graphically parsed work of art. Donoghue reports that "analysis of music is a recent [late 18th century] activity. The elucidation of a work of music used

to be merely offered as a model for composition, an inventory of correct practice.” (1991, p. 93) With the advent of writing, music could be conceived as an abstract and timeless art freed from its dependence on performance.

The abstract approach to music theory and criticism reaches its fullest expression in the Formalist school of thought. Through notation, Formalism developed to a point where theorists like Hanslick (1854/1986) and Schenker (1906/1968, 1969) could focus on compositions as complete technical wholes with no reference beyond the inter-relation of their own parts. These critics held “the conviction that music never conveys anything but itself, that it is solely sonorous form with no significant content, and that its value lies in its formal relations and not in its expressiveness” (Bruhn, 1996, p. 6).⁵

Despite the dominance of notation in contemporary critical discourse, most musical experience is distinctly non-graphic (Radocy & Boyle, 1988). The average listener never comes into contact with a score and does not understand music theory. Especially with traditional forms of music, such as Jazz, many performers do not read, or do read but choose not to write, notation. It is clear that, even without a writing system, jazz listeners and performers engage one another musically. This is because music does not denote. Music listeners do not need to know any representational “code” to translate a musical symbol into a non-musical meaning. Musical symbols live at the level of articulation and performance, not representation (Langer, 1957). This lack of abstraction, the non-representative and visceral appeal of music that graphic media are structurally incapable of addressing, can be explained with a Haptic approach to aesthetics.

Haptics and Aesthetics

A haptic critique stresses the *tactile* dimensions of art. Most communication theorists focus upon aural or visual meaning, because our epistemic paradigm is based upon spoken and written language.⁶ Media theorists also tend to stress aural and visual dimensions of communication technologies, as when McLuhan proposed electromechanical extensions of our organs -- radio extends the ear, print extends the eye, and electricity extends the central nervous system.⁷ Sight, hearing, and their respective media are certainly important, but they cannot communicate what a single touch can -- the concrete immediacy of inter-human contact.

To balance audio-visual bias and technologism, consider the phenomenological perspective, where all knowledge derives from a perceiving body. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues for descriptive research that begins with lived experience. Physical, bodily experience is the necessary starting point for knowledge, and all “objective” accounts of reality lose credence because they are abstract and removed from their subject.

We have relearned to feel our body; we have found underneath the objective and detached knowledge of the body that other knowledge which we have of it in virtue of its always being with us and of the fact that we are our body. In the same way we shall need to reawaken our experience of the world as it appears to us in so far as we perceive the world with our body. But by thus remaking contact with the body and with the world, we shall also rediscover ourselves, since, perceiving as we do with our body, the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception. (p. 206)

To develop a phenomenological account of haptics, communication must be described in terms of both physical and symbolic *action*. By stressing bodily actions (seeing, hearing, touching) instead of human organs (“the eye, the ear”), media become modes of doing rather than physical things (“extensions”). In terms of a research question, the communication theorist concerned with concrete physical interaction asks “What are we doing together?”, and in this case, “What are we doing together at Jazz events?” From a haptic perspective, the response is

that we are making both physical and symbolic contact; we touch one another at musical events. Two key verbs operationalize this active and haptic approach: stroking and aesthesis.

Eric Berne's Transactional theory of human communication explains the significance of touch (1961). Berne begins with "recognition-hunger," the human drive and need for social contact. Biologically, we are *required* to spend an extended period of contact with our mother when we are born. As we grow, we retain this basic need for inter-human contact, but it is satisfied with symbolic as well as actual touches. For instance, a friendly wave is a symbolically transformed touch. An acquaintance who ignores us and refuses to wave is psychically disturbing. In the extreme, solitary confinement is considered the worst possible punishment because it severs the inmate from all inter-human contact. This absolute need for touching leads Berne to introduce "The Stroke" as the basis of human exchange.⁸

"Stroking" may be used as a general term for intimate physical contact; in practice it may take various forms. Some people literally stroke an infant; others hug or pat it, while some people pinch it playfully or flip it with a fingertip. These all have their analogues in conversation, so that it seems one might predict how an individual would handle a baby by listening to him talk. By extension of meaning, "stroking" may be employed colloquially to imply any act implying recognition of another's presence. Hence a *stroke* may be used as the fundamental unit of social action. An exchange of strokes constitutes a *transaction*, which is the unit of social intercourse. (1961, p. 15)

The second key verb, aesthesis, denotes the process of feeling. The more familiar term, aesthetics, frequently takes the symbol as its point of departure. Questions of beauty, creativity, and expression are routinely treated in terms of representation and abstraction. Grammatically, the noun form of "aesthetics" encourages the critic think in terms of *things* that represent – symbols and sets of symbols. In "Relational Sense: Towards a Haptic Aesthetics," Fisher describes how aesthetics must move past abstract meaning to account for lived experience.

The challenge in a project of recuperating the term "aesthetic" is to move beyond modernism's preoccupation with the singularity of the visual, to pose a more immanent and relational aesthetics: an aesthetics which refers to experience as well as objects. . . . The corporeality of aesthetic processes – which speak to the connections between artists, art and beholders – have for the most part been left to the side of contemporary art criticism.

Of particular importance to the affective links of art's politics of feeling is a dimension of sensory experience – the haptic sense. (1997, p.5)

"Aesthesis" is intended to shift the discussion on how art communicates toward the active, visceral, bodily *process* of feeling and symbolizing.⁹ As an entry into haptic aesthesis, begin with the contrast between a visual perspective on an object, and an instance of physical contact with the same object. In *On The Soul*, Aristotle describes a simple experiment to demonstrate the necessity of distance and a medium for vision.

The following experiment makes the necessity of a medium clear. If what has colour is placed in immediate contact with the eye, it cannot be seen. . . . Hence it is indispensable that there be something in between -- if there were nothing, so far from seeing with greater distinctness, we should see nothing at all. (350 B.C.E./1941, p. 569)

Vision, the dominant sense in a graphic culture, requires physical (and psychological) separation between subject and object. McLuhan (1964) uses this basic principle to explain Western detachment from and control over nature. Touch, on the other hand, requires physical contact with the object. Aristotle is correct about vision, you cannot see an object placed on your

eye. However, you can certainly feel this object sitting on/in your eye, and it is difficult to maintain psychological distance from something that is directly causing pain.

Because touch does not enable distancing or “objective” evaluation, it has a completely different mode of meaning than sight. Reading “don’t feed the bears” on a sign requires interpretation – one must understand English to decode the sign. Seeing an actual bear also requires interpretation – one must understand that bears are potential threats. Feeling the bear feed on one’s arm requires no interpretation – the subject knows, without any abstraction/decoding/representation, that this new pain is intense and to be avoided whenever possible. Haptic aesthetics is not “about” pleasure or pain, it *is* pleasure or pain.

With Berne’s approach, we are social animals whose archetypal touch, the Stroke, is contact with a fellow human being, not an object. Touch is the most direct and personal of our senses, and it is the least symbolic. It is the mode of communication and influence that operates on our most basic, animal, level of understanding, because unlike a visual image or a spoken word, a touch does not represent intimacy or aggression, it *is* intimacy or aggression. There are certainly cultural and symbolic overtones to touches, as with ritualized handshakes or crowded elevator etiquette, but haptic contact differs from all other modes of communication due to its direct physical impact.

A phenomenology of touch must include the reciprocal immediacy of both feeling and being felt. Our other senses are distal. Sight can operate with only one half of the process – I may see you, but you may not see me, and vice versa. Sound, as with a spoken conversation, is a bit more reciprocal in that if I hear you, chances are you can hear me. Mediated sound however, as with a public address system or radio, can be quite unilateral. Touch, in contrast, is necessarily reciprocal all of the time. This immediacy and fundamental co-presence of touch is understood by all animals; we humans are unique in that we build symbol systems to enable virtual and symbolic strokes to feed our recognition hunger. The thesis of a haptic approach is that virtual and symbolic interactions are all based (to a greater or lesser degree) on actual touching (Berne, 1961). While each alternate mode of communication has its own special properties and limitations, adopting the stroke as fundamental act in human exchange requires an understanding of the physical process of contacting others.

Touch is not only intimate and immediate, it is also constant. While we are awake, there is a continuous flow of sensation via our body and skin – a breeze on your cheek, your shirt against your back, the temperature of the room, your seat against your bottom – all of these sensations are simultaneous and continuous. We may not focus on all of them, but they are perpetually present. In *Sense and Significance*, Ihde describes touch as a constant sensitivity to both core features and a general fringe “Field State.”

Within the totality of experience and within touch there is usually a focus which stands in inverse relation to those aspects of the touch experience which stand on the fringe. In this case, that which stands out is clearly present to my experience, while that which is on the fringe is barely noticed. (1973, p. 97)

We may select a key feature of the field to focus upon, such as your fingers upon the door in the dark, while the rest of the field remains as a fringe context. The overall field state, in a hot sauna, in a cold lake, on a windy beach, serves as a constant and we may vary our focus to specific features within the field. There are even states where we feel that we begin to merge with the field, as with floating in a warm bath or resting on a soft bed.

The sense of touch is generally addressed in terms of two interdependent systems. The first system, Kinesthetic Force, encompasses movement and the sensation of overcoming resistance via muscles and tendons. The second system is Tactile, and it includes sensations

derived from our nerve endings, such as texture, pressure, and temperature. While hearing and vision both depend upon the central nervous system, haptic communication is unique because it unites the nervous system with the ani-motor system. Smith explains that

The human haptic system is made up of two sub-systems, the motor sub-system and the sensory sub-system. There is a strong link between the two systems. Unlike the visual system, it is not only important what the sensory system detects, but what motions were used to gain that information. (1997, p.3)

Hearing and seeing are arts of detection. The goal is comprehensive perception and accurate analysis of data. Touching differs in that it adds expressive bodily action into the mix. You are what you read or hear, in a broad sense; you are what you physically do in a much more concrete sense. Corporeal enactment of self, the idea that the same movements we use to gain knowledge also serve to express who we are, is the basic doctrine of haptic communication theory. Tactile and kinaesthetic modes of interaction are not our only avenues of expression, but they are our most basic.

In social terms, haptic communication theory directs attention to interaction patterns and space. Choosing where to go and who to spend time with are our basic kinaesthetic decisions, and, once we are there, we decide how to manage contact in that space. Public spaces have the cultural benefit of ritual “dances” to help us determine appropriate behavior, and in private settings cultural moves are blended with our more individual dances (Collingwood, 1938, Hall, 1976, Burke, 1978). Personal space is generally discussed in terms of increasingly intimate zones where symbolic and virtual strokes advance the interaction, and actual physical contact is the psycho-social archetype.¹⁰ Haptic researchers ask, “What kind of touch? Please describe the contact phenomenologically.”

Haptic Meaning in Jazz

As a musical tradition born in an aural culture, Jazz presents a strong contrast to graphic European formalism. Analysis of two variables, Timbre and Feel, can show how a haptic approach provides useful terms for understanding how Jazz music communicates.

Timbre, or tone, refers to the physical sound produced an instrument in performance. In the formalized, graphic tradition of music composition, timbre is assumed as a known quantity – notation does not allow the composer to specify any timbre beyond what instrument should play what part. There is a tradition of “good” orchestral tone, and variations on this tone are not permitted in “serious” music because the composition, an abstract thing, is most valued. The first violinist in the Boston Symphony Orchestra is supposed to produce the same basic timbre as the first violinist in the Berlin Philharmonic (Francesconi, 1986, p. 43).¹¹

In Jazz, the reverse is true. Individualistic and unique performances are valued, and one primary way to personalize expression is through timbre. Where the goal of orchestral performers is a standardized pure tone, jazz performers seek a distinct and instantly recognizable timbre. A good jazz performer is identifiable, as an individual, after hearing only a few notes. Derivative performances, where the soloist sounds generic or like an imitation of an established artist, are considered substandard. In a 1999 interview, Saxophonist Tim Berne described his quest for an individualized Jazz timbre.

The thing that I’m attracted to, probably the first thing I started seriously studying, was the actual tone that I produced, and how to command attention through your sound. Because the people I’m really attracted to in terms of horn players, they all had a really beautiful and distinct sound. I remember, like with Julius and stuff, really dealing with

that, and being obsessed with having my own sound. The more people told you that was difficult, the harder I tried. (as cited in Vega, p. 3)

Within the Western orchestral tradition, individualized timbre is discouraged precisely because it is a graphic tradition. The rise of notation as a medium created and then valorized both composers and their pieces of music. Today's orchestral performer, like Plato's rhapsode, subordinates individuality to the demands of the composer and the piece.

Jazz, as an aural tradition, makes use of notation, but does not depend upon it. While Jazz composers and compositions certainly exist, improvisation and group creativity are at the heart of the tradition. In terms of electronic media, Jazz developed in the 20th century. Its growth was intertwined with radio and the phonograph, both aural media that capture what notation never could – the precise timbre of a musical event. Performers, not composers, became the stars of the twentieth century because electronic media enabled aural, rather than graphic, access to music.

From a haptic and phenomenological perspective, timbre is the quality of sound that is actually experienced, or felt, at any given moment of the performance. Hearing is sensitivity to air vibrations, and the unique pattern of vibrations of any given musical moment is the point of contact between audience and performer. With this sense of aesthesis, *hearing as feeling*, Berne's stroke asks the critic to address the sensuous quality of tone. This question simply cannot arise if the critic is operating in a graphic mode because timbre is impossible to notate.¹²

On the performer's side of the exchange, haptics directs attention toward the muscular process of producing sound. The stroke that produces a percussive tone is brief and sharp. Strokes producing a bowed tone are smooth and extended. A brassy tone is round yet harsh. The issue here is not merely the instrument itself, it is more about the unique and characteristic timbre that the musician uses to express herself. On their side the audience *feels* these qualitative aural choices, and in true cases of musical communication, resonates with them. It is not only the air in the room that the performer moves, it is the people themselves – musicians create haptic fields. Live Jazz is considered an intimate form of music because this particular performer, not any distant composer, is making contact right here in this room. The immediate meaning generated by timbre is not coded or representational, it is as direct and personal as any "real" touch.

Our second haptic variable in Jazz meaning, "Feel," refers to a more general rhythmic style. Where individual timbre operationalizes the musical moment, Feel directs attention to actions that create a sense of time. In group performances, this sense of time is created cooperatively – all individual expressions are defined in relation to a group pulse. Within the logic of notation, two of the most basic symbols are the time signature and measure or bar line. The time signature denotes the general metrical pulse by defining the number of beats per measure and stating what type of note-head will represent a beat. In common time, there are 4 beats to a measure and a quarter-note gets one beat. Each beat has precisely the same duration as every other beat, and therefore each measure is precisely as long as every other measure.

Figure 1 – Graphic Foundations of Musical Time



A strong metrical pulse is characteristic of music in a graphic tradition because the structural prominence of the bar line itself directs the composer to think in terms of regular units of time.¹³

Music from aural traditions also has a strong sense of time, but this sense is not the regular metrical pulse of the European graphic tradition. Rather than recognizing any barline as a boundary, the aural performer routinely stretches and contracts the beat as a basic means of expression. Many traditions are non-notatable, because the performer's sense of time is more complex than notation will allow. Maconie describes how the introduction of electronic recording media brought an appreciation for the limits of notation home to graphic composers.

A hundred years ago composers such as Bartok and Vaughan Williams were touring country pubs recording grizzled old folksingers (male and female) on Edison cylinder phonographs, recordings which they then had to transcribe into standard notation. These were real live performances of music from unwritten oral traditions, and they proved difficult or impossible to notate, simply because the performers' sense of time was far more refined than classical notation could handle. (1999, p. 2)

New recording media presented Americans with a new Feel for time. Jazz music, growing up with the radio and phonograph, offered audiences precisely what a grapho-metric composer could never have thought of – a plastic sense of time developed in reference to an ongoing group dynamic. Group improvisation, especially rhythmic improvisation, is a defining characteristic of Jazz music. Improvisation generates meaning by offering personalized yet cooperative interpretations of the beat, creating a general groove, or Feel.

One of the most popular Jazz “Feels” is Swing, where the beat is consistently elongated. Many Swing songs are written out part for part to enable complex performances, but our fundamental inability to graph non-metrical feel is revealed in the Jazz composers' conventional practice – dotted rhythms are always written as straight duplets.

Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 2 is a relatively accurate way to notate a common Swing feel, but in performance it sounds too straight. To counteract the metrical regularity of notation and its inability to represent complex rhythms, Jazz composers simply write straight eighth notes with a lexical marker indicating that the performer should play the phrase with a Swing feel (Figure 3).

With Swing, regular beats and bar lines are pushed or stretched, but later Jazz movements began to defy the bar line altogether. Following World War II, Swing gave way to Bebop, a style with smaller groups playing songs with minimally preplanned structure. Where Swing presented the individual soloist working in harmony with the group, Bebop presented a group of individuals, each creating their own line to complement or contrast with the others. Later, as African Americans worked to create a style ever more independent of European conventions,

Bebop developed into Free jazz, where artists strove develop non-metrical and atonal approaches to improvisation (Francesconi, 1986).

Ornette Coleman is an artist who pioneered the Free feel in Jazz. In his collaboration with Pat Metheny, *Song X* (1986), each performer plays the same melody at the same time, but independently of the others. The resulting kinaesthetic feel resembles a race, where each player speeds to the finish along roughly the same course. Free “racing” is a feel that cannot truly be notated. For the transcription in figure four, Seiz (2002) chose to omit both the time signature and the bar lines in an attempt to notate Coleman’s headlong feel.¹⁴

Figure 4



Conclusion

Modern music criticism tends to feature the abstract and timeless quality of musical compositions – symbols are not dependent upon any context and performance is irrelevant. This traditional approach to criticism is a graphic mode generated by the development of Guidonian notation and printed scores in western culture. Formalist music criticism has great explanatory power when applied to music written within a grapho-metric culture, but it fails to account for musical meaning in aural traditions.

In contrast to notation and abstract representation, Haptic criticism begins on the visceral level of social exchange with *aesthesis*, the process of feeling. The Stroke is defined as the archetypal unit of interpersonal communication, and immediate touch, rather than distal sight, is defined as the most basic mode of perception. A haptic starting point enables fruitful analysis of two variables in Jazz music, Timbre and Feel.

“Timbre” denotes individualized tone and directs critical attention to the point of musical contact, the quality of sound that is actually experienced, or felt, at any given moment of the performance. Performers, not composers, became the stars of the twentieth century because electronic media enabled aural access to personalized musical tones. The structural features of notation brought composers, pieces of music, and “pure” tone to the fore in Western music. With Jazz, we have an aural tradition that valorizes individualized timbre as a means of generating an intimate bond between performer and audience.

In terms of Feel, graphic conventions such as time signatures and measure or bar lines work to create a regular, metrical sense of rhythm where each beat can be subdivided into identical sub-units. Music in aural traditions is frequently non-notatable because it does not recognize these basic temporal assumptions. Swing composers simply gave up trying to graph their feel – they may use notation to work out and communicate harmonic ideas, but for rhythm they have developed a convention that says *not* to play what is written. Instead, it is up to the performer and ensemble to create their own special groove, a unique aesthetic event where time stretches and

contracts according to their interactive group dynamic. Metrical time does not merely represent a white European interaction pattern, it *is* that pattern. Some Free Jazz composers have gone so far as to reject measured time altogether because it is the rigid stroke of an oppressive culture.

This analysis of contemporary Jazz has developed the idea that musical interaction is fundamentally a form of physical and emotional *contact*. Sound is vibrating air, and the sonic energy pattern *felt* at any given performance is the phenomenological ground of musical communication. Haptic aesthesis provides useful terms for explaining what is most meaningful in Jazz -- the lived, embodied, felt excitement of sharing in a unique performance improvised together, with these friends and artists, right here, right now.

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Abstract

This essay presents a Haptic, or feeling-based, theory of communication and influence in music. Modern music criticism tends to feature the abstract and timeless quality of musical compositions – symbols are not dependent upon any context and performance is irrelevant. This traditional approach to music criticism is a graphic mode generated by the development of notation and printed scores in western culture. In contrast, a Haptic approach begins on the visceral level of social exchange with *aesthesis*, the process of feeling. Eric Berne, founder of Transactional Analysis, defined “the Stroke” as the basic unit of interpersonal communication. Here, a Bernean perspective is applied to contemporary Jazz to develop the idea that musical interaction is fundamentally a form of physical and emotional *contact*. Two variables, “Timbre” and “Feel,” are examined to show how Haptic Aesthesis provides useful terms for explaining musical communication.

Endnotes

¹ One thousand years earlier, Plato was disturbed by the introduction of writing into education and social exchange. As Greek culture shifted from an Oral to a Literate mode, Plato considered the limits of reification and the word made thing.

Writing, Phaedrus, has this strange quality, and is very like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they only say one and the same thing. And every word, once it was written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself. (370 B.C.E./1998, 275d-276a)

Plato disdains the graphic arts, such as painting and writing, because their independence from their author prevents his ideal form of communication, dialectic. Truth is to be discovered via a spirited and critical exchange between living and breathing people. It is *people* who give life to ideas, and we ensure their growth in the minds of our fellow human beings through active conversation.

² Incidentally, numbers are graphed both linearly and holistically; equations are linear whereas charts are immediate and holistic.

³ Edward T. Hall also uses the Extension metaphor. See *Beyond Culture* (1976).

⁴ Carpo describes a parallel case of reification in art, where printing technology limits architecture. “Medieval builders could draw up the designs of specific building projects (or maybe they couldn’t – this point is still debated), but when it came to recording and transmitting the rules of their profession from generation to generation, they relied exclusively on speech and memory. . . . before the era of the mechanical reproduction of images, images were of marginal importance in communicating architectural experience” (2001, p. 33). Musical knowledge was of the same oral/aural order prior to notation.

⁵ Music theory prior to notation was generally non-literate and mystical (James, 1993). Early music criticism resembled what we would call “performance” criticism. In ancient Greece, musicians and poets competed alongside athletes at the Olympic games. Powerful, emotional performances were valued and the greatest artists were considered mad or divinely “inspired.” Plato goes so far as to deny the performer any role beyond “conduit” for divine expression. The “author” is the muse, and the rhapsode is himself the medium.

. . . the Muse first of all inspires men herself; and from these inspired persons a chain of other persons is suspended from one another so as to form quite a long chain; and all of them derive their power of suspension from the original stone [magnet]. For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed. And as the Korymbantian revelers when they dance are not in their right minds, so the lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their beautiful strains: but when falling under the power of music and meter they are inspired and possessed; like Bacchic maidens who draw milk and honey from the rivers when they are under the influence of Dionysius but not when they are in their right mind. (390 B.C.E./1992, p. 14)

⁶ Kenneth Burke’s progression from Dramatism to Logology is indicative of the dominance of the word in rhetorical theory. In his dramaturgic work on action and motion (i.e., 1950/1969), Burke and the phenomenologists would seem to agree on epistemic and ontological starting points. However, in Burke’s later logological (i.e. 1961/1970) work he leaves the details of social interaction behind to focus on the grammar and logic of language as an independent system of motives.

⁷ In *The Medium is the Massage*, a book whose provocative title would seem to promise a haptic approach, the closest he gets to touch is “clothing is an extension of the skin.” (pp. 38-39). Instead of clothing, which can encourage a visual approach to fashion, or perhaps a biological perspective on heat or protection from the elements, I want to focus on our physical bodies in kinaesthetic interaction. McLuhan’s placement of our organs as ontological starting points for communicative media is an important theoretical move, because it ties our highly symbolic expressions back to a living human being, but ultimately, McLuhan is most concerned with technological extensions of the central nervous system – he advocates an object rather than a process perspective.

⁸ Berne begins with our psychosocial need for one another and the stroke. Ultimately, he developed a theory of language games on its basis (1964). This essay accepts the same basis but explores musical communication.

⁹ The distinction between a noun-oriented and a verb-oriented approach to knowledge is fundamental. Consider two medical researchers – one, a chemist, studies the physical properties of an anesthetic, the other, a physician, studies the living body as it deals with this same anesthetic. Both have important contributions to make, but questions that occur to one will not occur to the other because the first has a thing, a physical compound to examine, while the second is concerned with maintaining the life *processes* of her patient.

¹⁰ With the stroke as basic unit of analysis, the range of transactions that happen in the $d = 0$ zone serve as archetypes for all interpersonal communication -- from the mother-newborn embrace to holding grandmother's hand on her deathbed, supporting a friend who stumbles, one's first kiss, or placing your hand over your own heart. Aggression is certainly included too. Our legal vocabulary is especially telling here, with fine degrees of touch clearly defined: assault, as opposed to assault with a deadly weapon, as opposed to sexual assault. Or our degrees of murder, say, in deciding a charge, "We know the touch was lethal. Intent can be inferred from the manner in which lethal force was applied." Or we could use the vocabulary of the military, or the martial artist. "Parry thrust strike."

¹¹ Ingram goes so far as to blame stagnation in the orchestral tradition on notation. "The expectation, that performers be able to communicate composers' meanings without having learned their style, stems from a time at which styles were more nearly universal, and derives from the Romantic attitude in which symbols are thought to have absolute meanings from which one simply deviates by means of *expressivity*. This attitude underlies not only the problem of the stagnating orchestra repertoire, but also the predatory nature of institutions which support young composers for a few years, only to discard them when they have lost their novelty value." (2000, p. 6)

¹² The Romantic movement did create Tone Color as a variable within the orchestral tradition. The particular mix of instruments selected by a composer roughly corresponds with the meaning expressed via individual timbre. It differs from Jazz because the performer is still not an individual -- the tone color mix is supposed to sound the same in all performances of the piece.

¹³ The development of the mechanical clock, and for musicians the metronome, enabled the fundamentally regular reference pulse for Western music. In performance, the precise metrical time notated on the page is occasionally stretched and contracted. This plastic time is what gives a piece of music energy and life, and what distinguishes human from mechanical/digital interpretation.

¹⁴ Figure five adds the bar lines and typographic notation. Note how much less "free" it looks, let alone sounds, yet the notes are all the same.

Figure 5

Song X

Ornette Coleman

Guitar

Music's slow miracles are also the deepest. They are travelling and aiming beyond time, and hence also beyond decay.—Ernst Bloch¹

My essay “Representations of the Natural in Cage, Young, and Lachenmann” was largely written in 1998 as a qualifying exam at UCSD, and only slightly revised later. I have meant for some time to improve and expand it; as its appearance in *Open Space* was the result of a (kindly) misunderstanding and it no longer precisely represents my views, perhaps I should take this opportunity to sketch how these have changed in the last six or seven years.

My dissatisfactions with the essay are various: certainly my potted history of the tension between music as instance of universal order and as quasi-linguistic expression strikes me now as shallow and perfunctory; and my summations of Cage's and Young's development little less so. Further, regarding Young, I believe I relied too heavily on Tony Conrad's interesting and provocative critique, and should note that Young has made painstaking and convincing rebuttals to Conrad's claims of collective authorship.² More to the point, however, are my reservations about my central argument. I suggested that the creation of a music rooted as deeply as possible not in expressivity but in the revelation of what one might call the immanent divinity of natural phenomena, which both Cage and Young pursued in their differing ways, can have troubling sociopolitical implications, whether an alienated, puritanical atomism in the former or authoritarianism in the latter. Against these I offered the example of Helmut Lachenmann's work, which shares with Cage and Young an interest in the radiant “Naturereignis,” but doesn't turn its back on the historical, social, and self-expressive sediment in musical material, accepting these impurities as its condition of being.

I would still defend these humanist claims, but would also underscore their limitations more vigorously. My article mentions, for example, but doesn't sufficiently take into account the intense communal feeling and responsibility necessary for a successful performance of Young's work, nor the power of proximity to generate perceptually meaningful conjunctions in Cage (listen to Petr Kotik's recording of *Atlas Eclipticalis* with David Tudor and the Orchestra of the S.E.M. Ensemble on Asphodel for especially beautiful evidence).³ Nor, more generally (and, in the case of Cage, rather perversely), does it really question the extent to which the political meaning of these bodies of work may escape (contradict, compensate for) the ideology and intentions of their composers. The staggering experiential complexity of Young's *The Base 9:7:4 Symmetry in Prime Time...* (1991...), as installed in Marian Zazeela's light environment at their Dream House in New York City, certainly qualifies any reading of Young's aesthetic of control

¹ Ernst Bloch, “The Exceeding of Limits and the World of Man at its Most Intense in Music,” in *Essays on the Philosophy of Music*, tr. Peter Palmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 236.

² See La Monte Young, “Notes on The Theatre of Eternal Music and *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*,” www.melafoundation.org/theatre.pdf.

³ I am reminded of a remark by Charles Olson (who was himself fairly suspicious of Cage and his aesthetic): “The organic is one, purpose is seen to be contingent, not primordial: it follows from the chance success of the play of creative accident, it does not precede them..... Only in the relative of the coincident and proximate can (because that is the actual) the ideal (which is the possible) emerge.” In *The Special View of History* (Berkeley: Oyez, 1970), 49.

as provoking “Pavlovian consistency of listener response”: my two experiences as listener have been not oppressive but exhilarating and uncommonly free.

There must be room both for a Lachenmann, insisting with his scrupulous moral responsibility on working toward the “Naturereignis” from the midst, in Eliot’s words, of “shabby equipment always deteriorating,” as well as for the more apparently untroubled work of a Cage or Young. It is wrong to imply that their serenity is a delusion or a snare, or that their idealism is necessarily destructive. To Nietzsche idealism betrays a contempt for the world; but Cage and Young insist on a coincidence of ideal and actual which modifies any immediate application of Nietzsche’s criticism. After all, Nietzsche wrote that the artist affirms the world, making of appearance “reality *once more*, only by way of selection, reinforcement, and correction.”⁴ This reinforcement of reality may open the artist to charges of complicity with a bad existing order;⁵ but one must also ask which is more destructive—the artist’s affirmation, or the ever-renewed deferral of fulfillment implicit in utopian longing.

Although in my essay I suggested that one could not attain nature by fiat, who can say that the jump to an “immediate elsewhere,” to paraphrase Bataille, the recognition of the infinite that lies immanent in whatever phenomenon, may not be more plausible than incremental approach?⁶ Even granting the value of increment, a potentially regressive mysticism may turn itself to progressive significance: a fine line may separate mystification and illumination, and the best measure will be sensitive and open experience, not a priori ideological conviction. And here, against some later Marxist arguments, we might remember the young Marx’s own words:

Only through the objectively unfolded richness of man’s essential being is the richness of subjective *human* sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for beauty of form—in short, senses capable of human gratification, senses confirming themselves as essential powers of *man*) either cultivated or brought into being. For not only the five senses but also the so-called mental senses—the practical senses (will, love, etc.)—in a word, *human* sense—the humanness of the senses—comes to be by virtue of its object, by virtue of *humanised* nature. The *forming* of the five senses is a labour of the entire history of the world down to the present.... [The] society that is *fully developed* produces man in all the richness of his being, the rich man who is *profoundly and abundantly endowed with all the senses*, as its constant reality.⁷

⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, in Walter Kaufmann, ed., *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking, 1954), 484.

⁵ Precisely Cornelius Cardew’s charge: “Cage’s music presents the surface dynamism of modern society; he ignores the underlying tensions and contradictions that produce that surface.... He does not represent it as an oppressive chaos resulting from the lack of planning that is characteristic of the capitalist system in decay....” In *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* (London: Latimer, 1974), 35-6.

⁶ A jump with both spiritual and social implications: Cage: “My notion is that we should act as though everyone has graduated from school, and live in a world, and jump into it, and so make it. In other words, the Buddha, when he was asked how enlightenment came, whether it came gradually or suddenly: Mao Tse-tung says gradually; the Buddha said gradually and then in the very next paragraph he says suddenly, and gave instances from nature. And it’s true that things happen gradually, as the germination of seeds in nature, but it’s also true that things happen suddenly through earthquakes or through lightning and such things. And I’m for the latter.” In *Conversation without Feldman* (Darlinghurst, N.S.W. [Australia]: Black Ram, 1980), 23.

⁷ From the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Second Edition (New York: Norton, 1978), 88-9.

It would seem that humanizing nature would be precisely contrary to Cage or Young's intention; however, when Cage urges us to "[wake] up to the very life we're living,"⁸ he is stressing our capacity to absorb what lies outside us for our own nourishment, "the sense of wonder" and "response ability" that nature can stimulate in us.⁹ In any case, we are concerned less with intentions than with the music itself; and Marx's vision of the extension and renewal of human sense might well be better served by Cage and Young's ventures into what some have dismissed as nonsense and atavism, as explorations at the limits of our perception and capacity for meaning, than by demands for particular political relevance. The great utopian Ernst Bloch argued against the as yet unborn Young when he dismissed the idea of the music of the spheres as an "ungodly astral myth" and judged Pythagoreanism largely a hindrance to the development of music. However, he qualified this dismissal, asserting that its "dream of musical perfection"¹⁰ both removes music from a purely private sphere and transforms it into "the source-sound of self-shapings still unachieved in the world."¹¹ "Then," Bloch writes, envisioning a comprehensive and non-dictatorial ecology of experience,

even the ultimate transparency of an absolutised handicraft, music in its cosmic relation—which is to say the harmony of the spheres, which has been secularised again and again—will do no more damage in the end. Indeed it must serve the best of purposes, serving as a prefiguration that will allow Nature, too, to be heard as a ... pastorage, i.e. in humanly significant terms.¹²

The work of Cage and Young suggests that such a utopia is at every moment available; and this fulfillment, it seems to me, is no less essential than the struggle and growth instanced in Lachenmann, or Ferneyhough, or Beethoven, or Taylor, or... Perhaps our task is at once to participate, with sensitivity and without rancor, in our time- and decay-bound circumstances, and to recognize within them their kernel of eternity; and more gratitude than rebuke is due the work that awakens in us either or both engagements.

⁸ John Cage, *Silence* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 12.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁰ Bloch, 214.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 219.

¹² *Ibid.*, 212 (his ellipses).

To Randa

On the way

There's a time of year when some city skies are filled with the spellbinding wheeling flights of myriads of starlings returning from the surrounding countryside for the night. From the ground these multitudes swell out and ebb in ever-changing shapes that depend on the dynamics of spatial and temporal relationships between the components of the swarms, their direction and speed.

The sight is always accompanied by a vibrant shrill twittering with an intensity that varies according to their number and the distance between them and the observer.

The spectacle is enhanced by that peculiar raking light that precedes sunset.

This stupendous living phenomenon is as enthralling as the ever-changing clouds, the breaking of the waves, the flickering of a flame.

What enthralls us is the impermanence, the dynamics and the incessantly changing form of a material body that constantly appears in different aspects of itself.

The homogeneity of the matter unquestionably exalts the purity of the form, but what makes the phenomenon so special is that matter and shape are one thing alone; the one is the manifestation of the other.

In my music too, matter and form are one and the same; the composition of the sound and the composition of the music are equivalents.

And like the swarms of birds, matter, in assuming form, is constantly in movement.

The sound changes attracted by intervals that shape its path, but the intervals are no more than points of passage, crossings, for once attained, they are immediately abandoned so that the sound polarized by other points of attraction can assume a different shape.

The point of departure and of arrival from one place to another, from an F to a C, is not as important as the journey, as the way in which the journey is made.

In the flow of sound, the nature and arrangement of the attracting intervals give life – energy to tensions, to relief from tension that gives life to the texture, to depths, to volumes that give life to forms, the forms are the result of these processes, they do not pre-exist.

My music does not rely on a narrative text, there is no story being told.

From whence and whereto

I have no memory of my birth, my genesis.

I do not know my beginning.

My energy is there and "There was never any more inception than there is now. Nor any more youth or age than there is now. And will never be any more perfection than there is now. Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now." (Walt Whitman). How then can I give the music that I write a beginning or an end; establish a duration?

Among the resources available to mankind, electronic technology is certainly one of the most formidable. The computer has made it possible today to cut through that previously indissoluble tie between time and frequency.

The fact that no sound could be conceived of unless it were bound to time, to a given time, to a span of time, meant that music too was conceived of in terms of beginning and end.

A "theme" is an initial state, expression of time. An initial state whether it is a single sound or a sequence of sounds (melody) or something else, but always a point of departure inseparable from time.

The liberation of the frequency (pitch) from time and therefore of the idea of theme and the thematic process, that are the basis and organization of the tonal structure of sound, has given me a chance to conceive my compositions in terms of a system of potential relations independent of time.

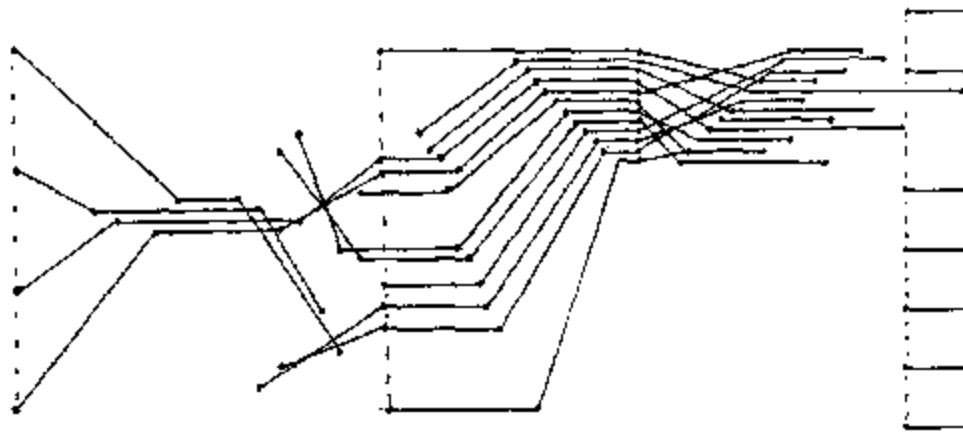
In other words, a system does not constitute a point of departure already oriented in time, but is a field of virtual forces that will not acquire real domain, including that of time, until that specific moment when it becomes form.

This independence from time shifts the level of thought from the pre-eminently temporal level to a more spatial one favoring a type of imagination in which music is configured first and foremost as something that occupies space.

I hear the music. I SEE the music.

I see a group of lines spatially separated from each other that slowly come together to form a thin layer, then branch off from different points and crossing each other are concentrated in various areas. Other lines, of unlike quality, follow a different path and still others fill in the spaces left empty by those before them. Eventually they come together in a single zone and together follow an identical pattern.

These lines gradually break up, they interweave and begin to lose consistency, to unravel, until only a few are left, then only one continues, changing in quality, becomes part of a larger texture formed of a mass of equidistant lines....



The drawing has no apparent orientation, no direction. It can be read indifferently - upside down or right side up. Just as the verbal description, could as easily begin from the last sentence and move backwards to the first.

Moreover, what we see is an entire block or a fragment of a whole that began who knows where and when; the drawing is perhaps a continuation or anticipation of a greater plan that for some reason we are unable to see entirely at this time.

The lack of direction, of a recognizable figure, of a temporal direction that from within indicates a position with respect to time and space, is such that the figure tends to have a strong and direct relationship with that which surrounds it, which contains and contextualizes it. It is only through this process of mutual exchange with the exterior that the position and significance of the figure can be understood.

Thinking in terms of no-beginning-no-end has led to a musical paradigm that defies traditional-thematic order.

I think of music in a systemic way

I think of my music as a single great composition formed of parts that can be performed separately but are not isolated from one to another.

I think of my music as a whole (as an "Intero") which will take my entire life to compose and which will never be completed.

"Un grande canto" where every part includes the whole and is included by it. Every such part can be performed singly, in sequence or in counterpoint with the other parts of the whole.

I think of my music as a contribution, a music of all music where every whole is part of an ever greater whole.

Walter Branchi

Translated from the Italian by Erika Pauli and Walter Branchi

Walter Branchi

The power of the uniqueness of a place is formidable for music that never belonged to any place as is the case with electronic music.

Music and the external world: quest for a fruitful coexistence

I am quite aware of the difficulties involved in explaining in words something that does not fall into normal categories of music such as genre, style, trend or anything else and how easy it is to understand it when concretely experienced. However if I want to explain my idea of music in relation to the external world, in words, which is all I have at my disposal, I shall try to be as clear as possible.

My point of departure is a type of music that can open the way to a harmonious, non-invasive, non-violent collaboration with the external world, a music whose form is the product of the simultaneous co-existence of all things; music that is integrated, that shares, gives and receives energy from the outside.

The external world is everything that exists outside the musical composition, the actual physical space. It can be limited as in a concert hall, or unlimited as in the case of a natural soundscape. Obviously just how much the outer world contributes to the music in a circumscribed protected space is of little account, with the exception of a bit of coughing or the underlying hum of the audience. On the contrary, in a natural soundscape the countless sounds or noises that characterize it, in their plenitude and mutability, can contribute greatly to a piece of music.

Word of explanation

In speaking of sound, noise or music, one becomes part of the relationship. It is the human being who perceives the vibration transmitted by the physical space and detects the sensation of sound.

Constructive and destructive coexistence

If coexistence with the external world is to be constructive, then the terms of the composition must be decided on a priori. The piece of music must be created and structured so that it can coexist with the external world. It is therefore something that must be decided on before, and not after the composition has been begun.

In other words it is not enough to play one's music in the open air (when it may have been written for a concert hall or where the problem of its relation to the external world has not been broached), nor is it enough simply to write a piece of music that is to be played outside. In both cases, the external world is destructive; it is perceived as noise, disturbance, confusion. The

underlying reason, and here we touch directly on the compositional aspect, is that in both cases the music was composed in line with a logic of beginning-end: it is thematic and therefore narrative, it is central, the rest is bother, discomfort. Music conceived in this way is absolute, despotic, authoritarian, in relation to the surrounding ambient sounds.

Coexistence is also destructive when, for example, the music obliterates its external world because of the power of the sound. An example is provided by something that really happened a few years ago at the premiere of the work of a young composer in Rome, in the park of Villa Medici. I remember that the music was played concurrently with a series of visual images and that the sound volume was so powerful that even the trees were swaying. The spectators initially covered their ears, but then began to leave. Only a few heroic souls succeeded in remaining to the end. Afterwards I was introduced to the composer who was dismayed by the fact that most people had fled, and said as he came towards me: "What a shame, and yet there was a full moon..."

Aggressive sound has become a standard in almost all open-air concerts. Even classical Indian music, with its fundamental and refined relationship to its surroundings, when played in the context of a European "concert", becomes flat due to the limits of the amplified sound reproduced by loudspeakers. This is a real paradox for the external world where 'the open-air', is totally obliterated by the music that is played in the open air!

How then are we to establish a constructive musical coexistence with the external world? The problem, I believe, is of a compositional nature and therefore I have had to reconsider the meaning of composing. I am oriented towards a logic that does not include recurrences, themes or repetitions. I am interested in music without reference points, without a traditional internal path. In my work the external world in all its complexity and dynamics provides the direction or path. The logic of my music, as it flows along is unrecognizable, yet succeeds in maintaining a vital relationship with the external world.

For a more in-depth treatment of the subjects dealt with, the reader might want to read two of my essays: 'On the way' and 'The problem of recognizability'.

Interior-exterior:

What is meant by interior, is the system of musical order, the totality of the relations organized by the composer, and by exterior, everything that interacts with this totality to give it form. In the concreteness of the musical event, this dichotomy does not exist because in its complexity, the music is the result of all possible interactions between its interior and its exterior -- that exterior in which the listener exists.

Participation:

Music requires participation, it is not like an exclusive or solitary relationship with an object. It entails the acceptance of the idea of being one part among many coexisting parts that all have a role to play in the formation of a context-time = event. In the dynamics of an event, the component parts are mobile, precarious, unexpected, and the times in which they are present or absent differ. Participating means being active, a protagonist not a passive follower. Participating

means being part of everything around us, without rank, or veneration, or bowing to a superior. It means accepting that no one thing is superior to, or more important than anything else. Participating is being part of the all-pervading force of things.

Beyond music*

What do I mean by beyond music? I mean the real physical space from which it takes form. I could define it in various ways: soundscape, natural soundscape, sound environment, concert hall. The degree to which the outside world influences the musical composition depends on the level of interaction.

Let's take four cases in which the levels of interaction are quite different:

- I) The external environment, such as the natural soundscape, is neutralized by an artificial environment such as a concert hall, opera house, or cathedral, etc.
- II) The external environment is drowned out by sheer volume - rock or other types of concerts, discotheques, etc. Remembering that the musical event can also be separated from the place where it is produced as with a record or tape (Murray Schafer's Schizofonia).
- II) The external environment is emphasized by a sound track, like "new age" music.
- III) The external environment integrates with the piece of music itself, insofar as it is an active part of a "complex sound event" belonging to the music.

Richness of the real physical space

The four cases described above might well represent the possible relationships between the exterior and interior of music. More specifically it can be said that in both the first and second case the external sound environment is not musically active. It is in the first but in a very limited way, undesired and certainly not integrated. It is active in the third case, once more in a non-integrated way, while it is totally active and integrated in the fourth case. By integration I mean a relationship between two or more terms that interact and complete each other. It might be said that integration exists when an element is manifested through other elements of a system.

The first three cases are well known and practiced by various kinds of music, the fourth, instead, much less so. In the last case, the level of interaction between the soundscape and the music takes place during the conception of the composition (see 'Systemic approach to musical composition'). My music is composed to interact with the external world in an integrated way. The unpredictable sounds and noises of a given soundscape are fundamental to my aims in achieving of the musical event. I am interested in a symbiotic relationship in which the piece of music is completed by means of the soundscape and vice versa.

"This brief discourse serves as a follow-up to "Music and the external world: in quest of a fruitful coexistence."

Translated from the Italian by Erika Pauli and Walter Branchi

The itinerary begins with two halves.

The split stands out. The incision, an invisible ticket to you-are-there, blood up, pressure down. We eclipse our old habits. We rub against each other with the new vocabulary. Swelling the ranks of my cellular patterns, "yes, you are welcome"; the intuition toward a blending ration of one body. *[because] I could go on, and on, and* lecular temperature of otherness, huddled, in the in a fresh pulse, combined with many green lifetimes, are thawed away growing under the stretched case-skin, a swarm of light seeping in around the edges, at the *from a point of view exterior to the body...* No misfits. "I between or parasitic off-limits signatures. "you are crossword in a lace-frame with reflections of *what is*

the jaws of
Leviathan were
closing upon me.

naked, I lay
on the shores of
desert islands.

the white whale ¹

of two forms, the explo-
never know, the mo-
other's brain. How folded
the afterthoughts of a pod
incessant, well-insulated,
borderline, in between. -
put you in". No go-
welcome"- to fill the
most "myself" ...,

a person born with the sun in *Pisces*, 13°, the moon, like a
copper leaf, on its way up,

the satellitic dependences (the position
spins
the expression) before superimposed old
old strips of image in reverse-weave draw together

Physical Identity
(or heart or mind or skin or sex?) hold
their weight down.
The stethoscope seal
locates the center
and combs through the fringe to prevent cataclysms

An understanding is scooped out:
the flow, the beat, cascade in yellow broken glyphs. The grooves where the light, the memory, "*oh yes me standing right there on the corner of the Salt Market*"; the words form a deposit along the annual rings. The inaudible multiplicities slope inward gently, so we can remain, each of us, at a suitable distance
the impossibility of turning it to -
- or turning into it

except by walking down the blade of the tongue

the real shape

gestures underneath

FRAGILE_PERSONAL_PERISHABLE

in Cambridge, MA, the small impenetrable face of the Biblical Father crossing a basketball court in the middle of the desert; I stared and demanded [silently] “what the hell are you smiling at?”— slowly, I watched the old sandstone wall dissolve into a brownpaper bag, curled from the eyes out, in slow motion, there frowns a question, finally flipping the distance switch, between him and the rest of the world, light, at a corner of the mouth,

Please, crawl under my skin ... --- I compose my apple to wait..

the valence shifts as to “whose” inside it is; beyond a certain point – are we on the same inside?

*Un petit bonhomme
Monte sur une pomme
La pomme dégringole ...*

I shed my skin, having inserted myself into this space like a bookmark, a thin strip of fine exoticwood, from elsewhere, from years earlier, touching one another, drifting from piano-sounds on white white thoughts, bare feet, summers.

*

Before every action and my very presence acts, we have already acted,
(my heart fences dead smiles, the Cobalt Fish’s song washes over the whole body).

So is no one controlling, no one setting the standard, no one on the top? – all is “happening” inside it, as I am already inside you, (the Fish used his tongue and teeth this time, before he swallowed.)

Then is there no violation, where nothing threatens to violate?
– “everything has already happened, been known”

A sky fingered in my own sky scrambled but here now is the spell: convinced.

“[because] our survivals depend on one another’s. Trouble begins the moment you try to persuade me (and thereby yourself) that your struggle is my struggle too; or even – especially even – when you try to persuade us both that mine is yours too.”²

Le petit bonhomme s’envole...

*

Vulnerability.

Months later the Cobalt Fish is sunk in the largest chair by the table, an ancient family vessel, with a bottle of wine and glasses, his face wide open. I, sputter particles of myself from the chair filling the room. His hands are glowing. and I am it” — says the distance between

the white whale of
the world
hauled me down

seated across from him,
socket. Orange twilight is
“this is a performance piece
“me” and me, between the

invasion and the willing; “only a sleight of mind” and yet it is constantly eroding both the edge and the center. Astray, the entrapment message taps on (under) my eggshell, the soft hue of un-pasteurized milk keeps smiling. Still only half addressed under the camouflage. The faked forms brighten with the heat. The rhubarb red, the onion yellow... Wax dissolves then washes away. Water is boiling; *Pisanka*, a scribbled easter egg. The meandering patterns. “Do not fade around here.” For identity’s sake.

boundaries as such
previous to penetration
life as though there were no boundaries
the fog spreads from the hothouse
vibrating enveloping softly
withheld outside the skirting
to protect the wild artificial flora

Whenever one touches (the surface) it goes through - a stainless subcutaneous exaltation

Enough to strip-mine the intimacy

[...]

from the palm to the fingertips to the whole body :
(“ no more than a slight chill, a dream someone had failed to dream”⁷³) — the touching was an ice-bullet;
it had gone through to meet the wall and fallen to the floor, and was now, there, something else semiluminous
spill; a substance, a blur, vaguely imbued with the initial intent.

...to its pit.

and now I don’t know
what in all that
was real.

Whenever I ‘m touched (superficially) I grow a deep hole

*

Whenever I touch (the reverberation) it sends back the touch

FOLLOW ME _TO THE SOURCE_ I WAS SHIPPED FROM

A spring of a house
flapping into
my shape.

(it is said that the first time the movement is felt it might resemble a field of butterflies),

the implosion is
soft
time is a texture sealed
one shape
 replacing
the old
time (what color would these butterflies be?) - that
widens me, when I shape

The touch that comes from inside the body

moves on

*As now I will say me in the garden, me on the path, along the shaded arbor, please, say to me, the roses, she will.
She I will say I see the roses as she will walk on the path. See it? She'd say along. And she will see the roses, and she
will smell their flesh, and she might say so, as I begin to see. As I walk along. With her on the path...*

[the pronouns! - it's all right, we once were undistinguishable...]

(⁴)

Night to night, stitching the double hopes together — under the chrysanthemum
light — a leaf, a night, the globe coiled around its core and flooded with thoughts.
Filled with the marrow that at the time was all about him and her when on the
tidal surface slowly rippled by a repetition of nights. Time an inkwell. Moons of
notesheets left over her body. Waiting. In thin silver lines. The night wide
enough for the incision of clarity unlike any other she could ever remember to
set in. Waiting. Swerving the mind to avoid outer fears. Waiting. Or simply
wondering. Of how sleeping inside strapped to the backbone of gravity he
dreamed of going now

Of leaving the well. Stirred. Lost. Reading the drafts or hiding under their
blurred tailrace,

Did it open?

absorbed into this small channel, exploring the softness, the old skill of bones,

Did it, or did it not, shake off
its cave-walls?

nightwaterlanes

...

So when anew so close the chimes of the church unspooled their rhymes, she got

it again fetched to her ears, a bell, a black-pool of six splashes caught her attention. Muffled by concrete, a backward flowing concentric breath of the bell brought her back to this side. Be-bell, "already six", she thought, and so suddenly led out of a dream she emerged from the night softly lined with his presence

----- *"that not alone"*

Much stronger. Inside the long hardening of this safe complicity that melted the sounds around each nerve, into the motion and temperature of the you-me, in me, in her, burning. The presence felt so clearly now that perceiving no diffusion or tepidity this time she froze with attention.

-- *"in memory of each other"*

Not daring any false step stiffen hardened her herself given to its pressure, although from the other side, she resurfacing now from the dream caught maybe a last glimpse of this moon. How full and carried through all the way until their shape will be unsundered; she, moving her hand slowly, drew a fine light line in the air — it joined the face of the moon leaving light behind, a streak of lightness, she rested her hand upon it then slowly allowed the fingers to play to stroke. She did gently in such a gesture that perhaps meant some "don't slip away"..., the golden skin stretched over the inner shape. Trying to keep the night she could feel its giant forehead blown up to the brim, she could sleepwalk the taut vascular river-ropes. Silent, a-bigger, she felt with her hand the porous face of the moon orangepeelskin waxed and painful, caressed her farewells and again so slowly, that emerging from night, she lifted her fingers. Away.

For standing so near it, so full of light herself and seeking another, remembering back its faith and its rhythms, the hardening of the readiness, emerging now, she somehow knew that whatever the next night, wherever or how, the big splendid eye so ripe so textured under her fingers, this very one now going was now gone. No matter how close. Still not daring. Hardening hard even harder even so hard. Lather of worry to hurry her back to senses, she hushed the morning sounds, motionless, openeyed. Echoed in his constancy under all her phases,

----- *"in each other's memory, you
stay aware in my pulse "*

Perhaps that he watching her from within, humming over and over, was now coming up getting hurried now him too out of the night?

-- Like when the last strokes claimed the world, afar but by now sharply real, she could easily *see* by following the way they walked with R., several times each day, past the same old stones tall french windows, the green and the yellow of fresh fruit on the street stands, rue keller, rue sedaine, the voices of la notre dame de bonne espérance that the angelus broke to her from the out and the cold at the same time as the stiffening worry, images not quite so familiar, unfolded his new presence.

Coming up breasting his currents so quietly coming forth the undone.

As much as ever when he had been afloat up some lonely waters unknown to her they used to reach each other beneath the gauze of waiting, maybe in the early evening when both of them most lively, feeling warmth and comfort then she would begin gently, almost unnoticeably at first, especially for ones on the outside, she'd begin to sing. To hum a low tune at the back of her throat, bland monotonous, somewhat like corncrakes drowned in rushes, the fall of the summer, for them too a hail of love. She'd sit there in mid dark among long reddish shadows flooding the room, maybe half asleep half awake herself, feet up head thrown backwards, making up their own inner, their heart to heart song. Up there afloat he perhaps could hear, she dreamed, perhaps if only careful only really so stretched as if, a violin string or some long exhausted hope since won't even remember it was still resonating, so stretched, if only, then she'd feel she suddenly could feel him move his feet. Dancing. Or nearly, or tapping just one rhythmically now waving his arms around a bit clumsily birds' way he'd too be singing humming. Heads thrown back, they both sang the same song. Yes so quietly swimming through celadon waves, currents well veiled the obscurity untouched from anyone while nursing, nursing him heavily to and fro while now same as ever she wished to ask. Same as ever his presence cautiously locked behind, no evil eye that would change here an aim or course, for her still a naked presence, she wondered whether so far off shore he'd nonetheless the same way he'd gather these noises, the calls of the land. The sleeping the waking and the walking around, fading chatters of long and short steps, hither and thither earthly occupations she carried along stuck to her body, punctuated, sometimes only the bims and the boms when willingly welcome, or else the opposite, butting into wide silence, would he too, same bims punctuating, he too, the boms of his flutter. She wondered. Along spine of waters main stream such coarse taste on the tongue he knew too well by now, it would travel high pitch, pushing itself from out there the trees same again same as ever, up pines up sandy dunes, this, he did not know, and could not until, along the spine, until hithermost, high sounds always waterlanes. Her to him. Through water. Their old way, used up lovesong. Over and over every night holding back his lips, he'd never guess. Words running. Or light. So much for light now. Or anything really he'd love any such thing he'd miss while as ever away and afloat, his green ocean, no other way. Her long longing to him. Through. Waves of water. Waves beating waves, sandy dunes at heart, in between them such water. This song and light and maybe hot sand of dunes. For once when back skin to skin.

Or else, dead, through her only ?

¹ Cf. Czeslaw Milosz, "So Little" from *New and Collected Poems 1931-2001*, NY, 2001, p. 274; transl. by Czeslaw Milosz and Lillian Vallee.

² Cf. Ben Boretz, “Interface, Part V”, *Being About Music*, v. 2, p. 287.

³ Cf. Jorge Luis Borges, “Everything and Nothing”, *Collected Fictions*, Penguin Books, 1998.

⁴ (*for Robin*) — Is there a way of imagining music as it is experienced by a consciousness developing in the womb: by the not-yet-self-being asserted as a presence, invisible, semi-darkened? A music, *a song* that emerges by the pull of the roots speaking from both sides of the “born-unborn” wall? Can such music actually be heard? - *felt*? And what could be its medium, exteriorization, and effect? - I listened to a song made of sounds “of the world-like”, trying to hear my own voice echoing through the watery chamber, trying to express someone else’s kinetic responses as my own. ... Glimpses of my thoughts on these questions appear through a work entitled *As Do I See* (which includes this recently re-composed fragment) and were brought to mind, during a conversation with Elie Yarden and Chuck Stein, sometime in 2003.

*twisting. the rose. light-
mudra. fingers. fly. through.
black. as. together. walk.
carves. a rose. inside. time.
noctiluscent. fields. hatch
& shine. broad. years.
their. women. fly.
that. yield. a greenish
glow. how: flame. to. flame.*

*Only.
softly. bear. organs.*

*off. by heart.
blowing
less*

*a woman's dust. elemental.
on. palms. of the. lover.
slag. again. alit. inseparable.
movement of now-now, agape.
thighs. as the one. who. merged.
sways. a gauze.
away. beauty. all. weight-
love's-salamander. and.
admiration. rings. her. raw*

*imperceptible. rings. thru.
Her. raw. alloyed. with. face.
true. metal. of. tongue.
stretched. forth. Him. breathed.
trans-illuminated. into. substance
of sky. "Dappled Maria"
shower. down. crescent.
bloods. shed. in
his. woman's. moon. down. surfaced.*

a cupped. hand.

Gold. lost.

*a rose. there. sang.
breath. unfolds. oracle. we
were. hidden. sounds. silver.
meaning. Mons
Pubis & the constancy. of.
water. breaks. trance. gets
moving. till. silence. bursts.
-splat- dross. penetrated. into.*

the. Brood. of. Charms.

Textspace-Landscape

I can recall encountering the work *Being About Music* some time after first meeting Ben Boretz and Jim Randall. They had warned us at the Conservatory about the likes of such “composers” and their work and intent; possibly the destruction of Western music could ensue, or at least the confusion of what a composer ought to do, or ought to craft. But what about John Cage had I thought, he was perhaps a much clearer and more present danger than Jim or Ben since he had been determined to remove authorship from art altogether (a concept completely alien to Ben or Jim).

Putting aside such conservatism, I would say that *Being About Music* is definitely composition: it contains considered processes of shaping, manipulating and presenting content. For many of the pieces within the anthology, musical space is simply translated into the space that occupies the page, and in this sense much of the work is an exploration into notation and articulation of visual space (rather than temporal/musical space—but standard (and non-standard) musical notation is no different. Music is sound. Notation is a method to help direct an interpreter to produce and manage sound. Though the musical score is not music per se, it is a visual articulation of space both on the page (visual space) and an in sound (musical space).

The two poems following are dedicated to Jim Randall, Ben Boretz and Momoko Yamamoto. They are an attempt to find what the meaning of landscape may entail in a graphic composition that relies on the syntax and font structure of English. During my Doctoral studies I encountered the work of Zen master Tan'yu (1602-74), a painter and calligrapher whose use of the canvas included a technique to which large areas of the painting were left bare. Much of his brushwork is highly composed and considered, and the picture space similarly mapped out with great thought. These traits are immediately evident, but the really striking effect comes from the blank areas to which the viewer must construct both the context and the connections to the inked areas.

Indeed, it is true that Cage created a type of poetry that sometimes used minimal content coverage on the page as well as different fonts and font sizes (as in my examples), but of course Cage was interested in the effect/affect that chance or indeterminacy had in shaping these relationships within the work.

Given that I do not consider myself a composer, the two accompanying works are completely considered in regard to all aspects of their construction, placement of words, font size etc. I would suppose that these works sit somewhere between the creative work of Jim and Ben, and some of the ideas of Cage. I guess it is for this reason that I do not consider myself a composer.

If Jim and Ben were catalysts for the exploration into graphic works involving words, I could also pinpoint Cage's love of a work possessing the potential to be read, interpreted or realized in myriad ways. The two poems I am submitting were written fairly traditionally (though intentionally angular, short and aperiodic). To how they are to be read (if read at all in the traditional sense) from their transcription into notation I leave free. There are some nice couplets and phrases, but the overwhelming idea was to somehow convey meaning from the syntax as a grouped landscape. In the same way that Tan'yu persuaded the viewer of the possibility of a further dimension not automatically revealed by the ink, I would hope that meaning from these poems might not only be hinted at through the recognizable words and constructs, but moreover experienced through the topography and constructed environment of the page, and the space which lies beyond it.

Michael Fowler, 12/05

For
M_{OmO} h⁻ aⁿ ;
d_a y^s
W
still L i_{tho} *Ut*

y^uO^{Pa}S^s,

beats

M_y

h_ea_r^t

WE

O_Get_{he}R

tw

$$v_{e_{rs}}$$

Contributors

William Anderson	wanderso@mail.slc.edu
Elaine Barkin	elainerb@ucla.edu
Brad Bassler	bbassler@uga.edu
Tildy Bayar	rbayar@ucsd.edu
Avron Boretz	boretz@mail.utexas.edu
Benjamin Boretz	boretz@bard.edu
Martin Boykan	boykan@brandeis.edu
Walter Branchi	w.branchi@riscali.it
Leszek Brogowski	leszek.brogowski@uhb.fr
Ted Coffey	ted@silvertone.princeton.edu
Jane Coppock	jane.coppock@yale.edu
Alvin Curran	alvincurran@compuserve.com
Dorota Czerner	dorotaczerner@hotmail.com
Paul Des Marais	pauldm@ucla.edu
Keith Eisenbrey	keith@bannedrehearsal.org
Jon Forshee	jonforshee@yahoo.com
Michael Fowler	michael.fowler@ems.rmit.edu.au
Doug Henderson	dbhenderson@mindspring.com
Lewis Lockwood	llockw@fas.harvard.edu
Arthur Margolin	arthur.margolin@yale.edu
Andrew Mead	amead@umich.edu
Robert Morris	mrisk@mail.rochester.edu
Robert Paredes	parrw@avalon.net (Melody Scherubel)
Jon Radwan	radwanjp@shu.edu
Russell Richardson	russell@webjogger.net
Mary Lee Roberts	mlroberts@lcwarriormail.com
Charles Stein	cstein@webjogger.net
Martin Supper	supper@udk-berlin.de
Erik Ulman	eulman@earthlink.net
Christopher Wintle	plumbago@brinternet.com