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WRITING ALOUD



THE SONICS OF LANGUAGE

edited by Brandon LaBelle & Christof Migone

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with Ground Fault Recordings
2001

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*any findings, opinions, or conclusions therein are not necessarily those of the California Arts Council.

INTRODUCTION

Introducing this publication entails a degree of hesitation, not due to a lack of words, but rather because there are too many: in speaking about language one immediately enters a reflexivity—words address the nature of words, grammatical codes undermine syntactical rules, vocalizing speaks through the sonicity of utterance, all extending and contracting against individual desire, memory and the urgencies of speaking, writing and hearing. Yet it is precisely this circling, this reflexivity that *Writing Aloud* aims to enter, not with the intention of repeating indefinitely, but rather to locate the tension and volition inherent to language. *Writing Aloud* as a project aims to “enact” language—and by extension the form of the book—by scratching away at its surface, reflecting on histories of its usage, and by turning up the linguistic volume.

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He has also co-edited *Poésies Sonores* (Contrechamps, 1993), edited *Jean Baudrillard: Art and Artefact* (Sage, 1997), guest-edited the *Electronic Arts in Australia* issue of *CONTINUUM* (1994), and edited and published the experimental poetry review *Stereo Headphones* (1969-82).

PROGRAMMING PARADISE:
HARALDO DE CAMPOS, CONCRETE POETRY, AND
THE POSTMODERN MULTIMEDIA AVANT-GARDE



Nicholas Zurbrugg

THIS ARTICLE EXAMINES THE WAYS in which the Brazilian concrete poet Haraldo de Campos and the French sound poet Henri Chopin envisage the future of avant-garde poetry, and suggests how their poetics anticipate the still more complex experiments of younger multimedia artists such as the Australian cybernetic performance artist Stelarc.

On the one hand, de Campos celebrates the 'furious' baroque register of the Brazilian concrete poets' predominantly typographic—but at times partially multimediated—experiments. De Campos distinguishes this mentality from the 'small committee baroque' mentality of those more academic poets, such as French writer Philippe Sollers, confined within what he sees as an overly cautious post-surrealist tradition.

At the same time, however, de Campos also fatalistically concludes that concrete poetry constitutes the final chapter in 20TH century avant-garde poetry, and implies that the apparent 'impossibility of programming the future' typifies the general exhaustion of 20th century avant-garde movements.

On the other hand Henri Chopin resists the confines of literary movements and manifestoes. Acknowledging that concrete poetry's experiments may well have exhaustively refined the creative potential of typographic experimentation, Chopin insists that new recording technologies continue to allow visionary artists to explore precisely the kind of 'furiously' open experiments advocated by de Campos.

In this respect, as de Campos and Chopin observe, and as Stelarc emphatically argues, avant-garde creativity now seems most likely to flourish within new realms of multimediated, intertextual and extra-textual performance, 'between biology and silicon-chip circuitry,' manifesting 'new models and paradigms that weren't applicable or possible by the imagination alone.'

Can one really programme the future? And if one tries to programme the future, can one do so with familiar textual creativity, or is it more appropriate to explore new extra-textual technologies? Or is it overly simplistic to elaborate a kind of 'new technologies good/old technologies bad' hypothesis? Exceptions always await one's favourite arguments.

Having briefly flagged these problems, let us begin. This article considers the differing claims of three particular slices of the avant-garde cake—visual poetry, sound poetry, and high-tech performance art. Generally speaking, it suggests that reconsideration of the 20TH century's successive avant-garde art and poetry movements usefully highlights the ways in which the conceptual purity characterizing the initial utopian agendas of avant-garde art groups usually evolves—or dissolves—into multimediated hybrids, resisting almost all previous programmatic definition.

Avant-garde movements, one might observe, almost axiomatically grow too big for their initial conceptual boots, making it almost inevitable that their founders should share the Brazilian concrete poet Haraldo de Campos' sense of 'the impossibility of programming the future' (1993: 389). But whether this also means that the chronologically postmodern decades following the Second

World War wholly evince what de Campos describes as a 'post-utopian' (1993: 389) condition is surely another matter.

As early as 1918, for example, Tristan Tzara's *Dada Manifesto* systematically discredited the utopian aspirations of collective cultural politics on the grounds that 'Art is a private affair' whereas 'an intelligible work is the product of a journalist' (1971: 18).

Offering a journalistic guide to the art of intelligibly programming paradise, Tzara advises that in order to successfully 'put out a manifesto,' one should 'want: ABC'; should 'fulminate against 1, 2, 3'; should 'disseminate little abcs and big abcs'; and 'organize prose into a form of absolute and irrefutable evidence.' Anyone could and should write a well-argued manifesto, Tzara implies, were it not that 'this need itself is obsolete.'

In turn, some half-century later, the postmodern French sound poet Henri Chopin similarly dissociated himself from the confines of any kind of doctrinaire movement, observing:

To begin with, I am much happier thinking about MOVEMENT as the thing involved when we create art. Some time ago I wrote: 'Everything has an end except... MOVEMENT'. This was the best way I could find at the time, of affirming in a few words that my whole creativity was constantly on the move.... In fact, how can I ever be a 'member' of a 'movement'? I can only be with a movement. I am movement.... But I could never 'belong' to an international movement. (1964)

Advocating 'continuous contradiction'—just as Chopin calls for 'creativity ... constantly on the move' (1964)—Tzara concludes: 'I write a manifesto... and in principle I am against manifestoes, as I am against principles' (1971: 13-14).

For his part, Haraldo de Campos tellingly notes how Brazilian concrete poetry advanced far beyond the 'tactical "reductionism"' (1981: 11) informing its 'specialized concrete' aesthetic in the 50s and 60s. Animating his poem *Galaxias* (1963) with precisely the kind of continuous contradiction advocated

by Tzara, and self-consciously recording how language 'ends begins and end spins and re-ends and refines and retunes,' de Campos acknowledges how concrete poetry frequently explores more 'generalized' (1993: 382) forms of collaborative and multimediated presentation. These included its technologically edited transcreation when 'oralized in videos,' and its live performance by Brazilian rock stars such as Arrigo Barnabe and Arnaldo Antunes (1993: 384).

Likewise, by the late 60s, the Swiss pioneer concrete poet Eugen Gomringer similarly observed that 'concrete poetry is no longer what it was thought and made at the beginning.' Pragmatically accepting the inevitability of such transitions, Gomringer adds: 'But so has grown up something else and there is no sorrow' (1970). Indeed, as Gomringer's more recent essay, *A Homage to the Publisher Francesco Conz*, tellingly indicates, his initial wish to explore 'elementary poetic energy' was followed by 'my exploration of the more colourful, forceful, aggressive qualities that were later to be associated with pop art' (1996).

Tracing similar transitions, Augusto de Campos observes how the Brazilian poets' initial project enjoyed a 'new vitality' thanks to technologies offering the means of materializing both 'earlier concepts' and 'unforeseen future possibilities' (1993: 375). In turn, Haraldo de Campos characterizes the 'curious, dialectical' mutations of Brazilian concrete poetry by 'new kinds of mediation, especially electronic media like television, popular music and records' as a 'great privilege' allowing 'quality' to become 'quantity' (1993: 382).

Additionally observing how concepts of 'concrete' and 'concretude' now permit reconsideration of 'the whole movement of textuality across history' within the 'ample perspective' (1991: 11) of different kinds of verbal 'concretation' (1993: 382), de Campos further explains:

From this angle, I can say, for example, that Dante is 'a concrete poet,' in terms of his fundamental concern for the materiality of language, and for the practice of poetic functions considered as the configuring function of signs. (1991: 11)

Re-evaluated from this perspective, de Campos reasons, concrete poetry 'constitutes an exemplary instance of Jakobson's concept of the "projection of a paradigm upon the syntagm," insofar as it offers an extremely concentrated and intense model of a function characterizing all poetry' (1981: 11).

But as younger Brazilian poets such as Philadelpho Menezes have remarked, considered less sympathetically, such generalizations might well seem 'nothing more than the invention of a label fit to name all the poetry of modernity.' Accordingly, 'all modernity'—to speak only of modernity—'would be nothing more than a variation of concretism' (1994: 19).

In a sense, of course, de Campos is indeed claiming that all poetry is 'concrete,' but in making this claim he is clearly using the concepts of 'poetry' and of 'concrete' with particular emphasis and discrimination. By 'poetry' he surely means all great poetry, and by 'concrete' and 'verbal concretion' he surely means those verbal strategies offering particularly intense forms of attention to the multifaceted 'materiality' of language.

Reading de Campos' accounts of the various continuities between the Brazilian concrete poets and the postmodern multimedia avant-garde; between marginalised modernist visionaries such as Kurt Schwitters and Oswald de Andrade; and between avant-garde contemporaries and absent friends such as Dante or Basho; one welcomes his transhistorical breadth of vision. But at the same time, perhaps, one wishes it incorporated still more affirmative trans-futuristic momentum.

For while celebrating the utopian individuality of Schwitters, de Andrade, Dante and Basho, de Campos fatalistically intimates that so far as utopian collective avant-garde agendas are concerned, *les jeux sont faits*, and concrete poetry appears to constitute the 20TH century avant-garde's final poetic triumph.

Such at least was his credo back in the 'heroic' and 'orthodox' years of the 50s and 60s, when concrete poetry seemed likely to offer the 'radical and necessarily quasi-final phase of contemporary poetry's evolution' (1981: 11). And such appears to have remained his conviction in the early 90s.

Having distinguished the modern from the postmodern, on grounds that 'The modern is Baudelaire; with *Un coup de dés*, there's a postmodern space: and we're now in this Mallarméan space of postmodernity,' de Campos concludes: 'Concrete poetry, let's say, is the last fold in this cosmic, galactic space' (1993: 386-87).

But is concrete poetry really the postmodern poetic avant-garde's last 'fold,' and last heroic stand? According to de Campos, this is certainly the case if one defines avant-garde creativity in terms of the utopian wish to catalyze collective social progress.

Associating previous avant-gardes with 'ideologically revolutionary' projects, de Campos argues that in the present 'post-utopian' era all hopes of 'programming future artificial paradises' are 'already finished.' Accordingly, poets are now best advised to cultivate a more private utopianism by nurturing the individual 'spirit of experimentation' and by reconsidering—and recreating—the past in terms of the 'critical viewpoints of the present' (1993: 389).

Briefly, somewhat as Jean-François Lyotard's *Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?* (1982) wages 'war on totality' and defends the more modest agenda of 'working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done' (1983: 341), Haraldo de Campos voices both the post-utopian dismay of his sense that he 'can no longer have a Pilot Plan' and 'can no longer programme future paradise,' and his continued utopian conviction that 'we must always invent new forms,' given that 'Formal problems remain fundamental' (1993: 389).

Likewise, while admitting that over the years concrete poetry's initial project has become 'a little repetitive, a little redundant,' Augusto de Campos similarly advocates 'new creations, new adventures and new explorations' (1993: 378-9). Succinctly summarizing this dilemma, Jacques Donguy observes:

Concrete poetry cultivated the space opened by Mallarmé, working across all the avant-gardes (Russian Constructivist, Italian Futurist, Dadaist) up

to the 60s, in the hope of realizing a kind of totalizing avant-garde. The concrete poets considered poetry capable of transforming the world, and envisaged a new kind of universal poetic language. What is now in crisis, according to Haraldo de Campos, is neither poetry, nor the avant-garde as such, but the utopian attempt to programme the future. (1985: 33)

But as Donguy also points out, while de Campos's writings of the early 80s began to question the utopian aspiration to change the world, 'What's not in crisis, is the idea of a planetary culture, and the idea of transculturation' (1984: 28).

On the one hand, de Campos qualifies the traditional utopian linear model of an ever-evolving, world-transforming avant-garde, proposing that this lineage has now reached a virtually terminal dead-end. Present times seem incompatible with further collective linear development, and like Nabokov's *Lolita*, the programmatic avant-garde appears to have 'absolutely nowhere else to go' (1962: 149).

On the other hand, de Campos concedes, individual avant-garde poets can endlessly reread, rewrite and retranslate the past in terms of the present. In this respect, literature as a whole seems to be a galactic epic, 'to be read in any order,' where 'each text represents an entire book, a microcosm, a monad, always offering a different kind of text' (1993: 389), and where everything 'reruns and returns' as the transcreative translator 'retraces a thousand and one stories.'

Similarly defending and deploying precisely this kind of dynamic discourse, the American avant-garde playwright and director Richard Foreman's manifesto *On My Efforts* (1982) suggests that the most significant efforts of the 20TH century's literary avant-garde function most effectively as strategies for authorial departure, momentarily justifying the realization: 'I AM free. I AM in paradise,' rather than as ideological programmes ensuring collective paradisiacal arrival.

The thrill is...to discover, to prove again and again to myself, day after day, that if one takes one's hands off the steering wheel, the car (the writing) will ALWAYS slip through that narrow passageway one couldn't possibly have noticed in the brute walls of everyday fact and purposeful behaviour that imprison one. (1982: 96)

Generally celebrating avant-garde art's capacity to identify new kinds of 'paradise found,' Foreman's ecstatic prose perfectly illustrates de Campos' distinction between the cautious collective mindset programming 'small-committee baroque' creativity, and the highly individual, 'furious baroque' (1993: 387) poetics characterizing the most visionary artists of the early and late 20TH century avant-gardes.

As becomes apparent, de Campos reserves the 'small-committee' category for those writers—particularly Ferreir Gullar and Philippe Sollers—who seem to betray the values of authentically 'furious' avant-garde innovation. Remarking how Gullar's 'so-called "neo-concretism" had a distinctly neo-surrealist flavour,' at odds with 'the constructivism of the São Paulo concrete poets,' de Campos further explains:

Gullar abandoned avant-garde poetry for an insipid neo-realist populism and discursivism, at best occupying a residual zone between the poetry of Carlos Drummond de Andrade and João Cabral de Melo Neto, without adding anything to the linguistic work of these two great poets, whom he accepts, finally, in a spirit of imitative conformity, rather than daring to ask deeper questions, in a spirit of dialectical progress. (1981: 8)

De Campos similarly dismisses Sollers as 'surrealist and precious,' and remarks that if the French review *Change*, as opposed to *Tel Quel*, published some of the first translations of *Galaxias*, this was because 'Sollers had seen the text, but had hesitated.' In de Campos' opinion, 'The French have never been baroque and at

most are simply precious: that's to say, their work culminates in classicism, sophisticated literary circles, and a small-committee baroque' (1993: 387). De Campos clearly exaggerates his case. Several French poets and critics, particularly Jacques Donguy, have consistently championed his work, and a number of his French friends, such as the sound poet Henri Chopin, have quite obviously elaborated precisely the kind of 'furious baroque' poetics that he most admires.

Moreover, conservative indifference towards avant-garde manuscripts is virtually axiomatic, and as de Campos remarks, Sollers' rejection of *Galaxias* seems at least partially qualified by reports of his remorse following this oversight. Far more irksome to de Campos than this, however, was Sollers' subsequent publication of his own seemingly derivative *Paradis*, 'without quoting its sources,' and his suggestion to Brazilian journalists that 'he didn't know any Brazilian writer' (1993: 383).

Are these annoyances simply storms in literary teacups? In a sense, yes, and in a sense, no. On the one hand, as de Campos reflects, one might just as well accept such 'ethnocentric automatism' (1993: 382) as an impulse predictably limiting editorial acuity, inhibiting recognition of influence and discouraging literary solidarity. On the other hand, Sollers' reactions might well have seemed truly 'scandalous' (1993: 383) when compared with the generosity generally animating the avant-garde's 'planetary contacts' (1993: 386), and specifically prompting intercontinental visionaries—such as Gomringer and Pignatari, and Eco and de Campos—to acknowledge and encourage each other's unexpectedly 'converging research' (1993: 389).

De Campos' definitions of the avant-garde clearly vacillate between his general sense that avant-garde art is inseparable from programmatic collective aspiration, and his more immediate sense that qualitatively speaking, avant-garde achievement is inseparable from the integrity of individual innovation.

While consistently equating the historical avant-garde's most positive energies with exceptional precursors such as Kurt Schwitters and Oswald de Andrade, de Campos associates the avant-garde's least impressive initiatives

with surrealism's bureaucratic momentum, generally finding surrealism's 'psychic automatism' (1993: 380) both incompatible and incommensurate with the kind of 'sensible language' and 'general art of the word' advocated by concrete poetry's early manifestoes.

Accordingly, he charts the relations between the modern and postmodern avant-gardes not so much by reference to surrealism's increasingly orthodox star, as by reference to key luminaries from other more 'furious'—(if for many critics, less consequential)—early 20TH century avant-garde groups.

For example, discussing Carola Giedion-Welcker's *Anthologie der Abseitigen—Poètes à l'Ecart* (1946)—a pioneering anthology of the marginalized poetry of innovators such as Albert-Birot, Arp, Ball, Bryen, De Chirico, van Doesburg, van Hoddiss, Hugnet, Huidobro, Jarry, Jolas, Kandinsky, Klee, Lichtenstein, Péret, Picabia, Picasso, Scheerbart, Schwitters, Stramm and Tzara, de Campos readily endorses its commemoration of 'the dadaist and constructivist movements.' As Giedion-Welcker's 1944 introduction notes, her anthology focuses above all on poets such as Tzara and Ball, 'so essential for contemporary poetry,' whose work had become virtually 'impossible to find' (1965: 11).

For his part, de Campos places particular emphasis upon such individual explorations of poetic paradise as Schwitters' experiments with collage, phonetic poetry and 'highly semanticized poetry' (1993: 382), and Oswald de Andrade's fusion of 'the legacies of visual cubism, of the futurist manifestoes and experiments of Mallarmé' in 'an antidiscursive, deconstructive and reconstructive operation which, by means of reduction and montage, eventuated in poem-capsules...is concise and incisive as Japanese haiku' (1981: 6).

Similarly commemorating the forgotten masters of the modernist avant-gardes, and remarking how 'In 1949, Dada was...completely eclipsed by Surrealism' and 'nobody knew very much about Italian Futurism and Russian Futurism,' the French sound poet Henri Chopin (surely one of the masters of the postmodern avant-garde) recalls: 'I had to visit the artists themselves before I finally learned that their world was much more creative than Surrealism, and discovered the true art of the twentieth century' (1992: 41).

Chopin's comments are both partisan and pragmatic. For chronologically post-modern poets attempting to use the chronologically postmodern technologies of the 50s, 60s, 70s, and so on, to build upon and beyond the aspirations of the modernist avant-gardes, what the Pilot Plan would subsequently term Futurism's and Dadaism's 'verbivocovisual' (1968: 72) experiments seemed far more inspiring than Surrealism's automatic writing.

Like de Campos, Chopin casts his mature poetics over numerous centuries, arguing, for example, that 'one shouldn't forget the artisans of the past in one's enthusiasm for digital technology,' and generally observing: 'We're not only preceded by the first half of the 20TH century, but by thousands of years of orality, writings and inscriptions, and we know that the arts are never static' (1992: 51).

At this point, these two poets' avant-garde agendas differ quite radically. On the one hand, de Campos' sense of being a 'verbivisual' poet, whose 'personal vocation' is predominantly a matter of 'working on words' (1993: 382), leads him to suggest that the 20TH century avant-garde verbal poetics reach their 'quasi-final' (1984:8) point with concrete poetry's final 'fold' (1993: 387) in the fabric of postmodern avant-garde poetry. On the other hand, Chopin's sense of being a 'verbivoco' poet in an age of mechanical production leads him to argue that far from approaching any terminal point of arrival, 20TH century avant-garde poetics are still making their first significant technological departures.

Asserting that poetry intrinsically combines 'the simultaneous workings of language, orality, dance...over and above written poetry' (1998: 7); that 'poetry has exhausted itself in writing' (1998: 10); and that with access to continually new recording and editing technologies, 'new possibilities seem incalculable' (1998: 17); Chopin contends that,

It is by means of these sonic experiences, poetic and musical alike, that we will recover our vocal powers, something that written language can never effect ...[by]...rediscovering, without necessarily knowing where we're going, all kinds of unknown—or supposedly unknown—oral values, and all

of the voice's carnal powers. This is what sound poetry is inaugurating, over and above all the laws of versification and prosody. (1998: 24)

For Chopin, electronically composed and recorded sound poetry advances far beyond the last frontiers of experimental writing, and is therefore 'far removed from the various avant-gardes, and face to face with various incommensurable languages' (1998: 12). Accordingly, it is impossible to verbally programme the future, given that the multidimensional discourses at the sound poet's disposal facilitate the extra-verbal 'union of these two major languages—poetry and music' (1998: 13), eclipsing 'the ancient rules of diction and musical composition' (1998: 10). Such research, Chopin posits, is 'not an end in itself,' but 'a constantly renewed beginning, which we're beginning to explore on a planetary scale, thanks to new communications media' (1998: 7).

While de Campos attempts to project multiplied verbivisual energies across the pages of printed narrative, whereas Chopin envisages new realms of multimediated verbivoco energy, both equate such ideals with the kind of intensely individual 'universal world vision' that de Campos associates with Dante. In Chopin's terms, poets inspired by the credo "In the beginning was breath" should aspire to 'the heights of Saint John's "In the beginning was the word"' (1998: 27).

For a subsequent generation of still more sophisticated techno-artists such as the Californian text-sound poet Larry Wendt, Chopin's experiments now attain the same prophetic stature that Schwitters' early 20TH century research held for de Campos. Cautiously surveying emergent hypertextual experimentation, and observing how 'Its theoretical documentation and manifestoes promise far more results than are evident so far,' Wendt cites Chopin's solidarity with fellow independents such as the sound poets François Dufrêne and Bernard Heidsieck as a model for the emergent hypertextual avant-garde, concluding,

One dreams that there is another Chopin out there: secreted away in cyberspace with a beatup old laptop computer and a cheesy modem, living in a place that is as far away as can be like DeVine, Arkansas or Lubbenau, Lutasia. Producing jaw-dropping work and waiting to link up to another Dufrene and Heidsieck. (1995: 88)

As Chopin's and Wendt's comments suggest, the successive modernist and postmodern poetical avant-gardes—from Futurism and Dadaism to the most recent developments in visual, sound, hypertextual and cybernetic poetics—constitute a veritable techno-renaissance propelled by individual utopianism.

Reconsidered within this complex dynasty, the visual and concrete poetry movements of the 1960s clearly occupy a pivotal median point in the century-long evolution of the extra-textual poetic sensibility that Chopin traces from the early modernist avant-gardes onwards, when emphasizing how the Futurist, Luigi Russolo, was 'a painter, a composer and an inventor,' how Pierre Albert-Birot, the creator of 'poèmes-pancartes' and 'poèmes-affiches,' was 'a typographer, a sculptor, a poet and a dramatist,' how the Dadaist, Hans Arp, was 'the same—several disciplines,' and how—across subsequent decades—'all of these categories have exploded' (1992: 53).

Observing that 'writing was necessary, and remains necessary,' but 'is not alone in this respect' (1998: 21), Chopin suggests that such 'explosions' have radically 'relativised the impact of monodimensional writing, which now seems less an end in itself, as one of many possibilities' (1998: 17-18). Once again, one confronts significant dichotomies between postmodern culture's verbal and the sonic avant-gardes. On the one hand, the partially 'furious baroque'—and partially 'big committee baroque'—of the Brazilian Pilot Plan advocates new modes of 'metacommunication,' sharing 'the advantages of the nonverbal communication, without ever wholly 'giving up word's virtualities' (1968: 72).

On the other hand, Chopin champions modes of still more 'furiously' abstract metacommunication on the grounds that they amplify 'verbi' communication, offer the advantages of nonverbal 'voco' communication, and

generally supplement the energies of 'the empire of words and phrases' with those of the 'empire of sounds' (1998: 18). And with every justification, the Swedish text/sound composer Sten Hanson affirms, given that sound poetry's 'combination of the exactness of literature and the time manipulation of music makes it possible to penetrate and influence the listener more deeply and more strongly than any other artistic method' (1982: 16). At this point we confront one of the most perplexing questions posed by avant-garde multimedia poetics: that of 'When is a poem not a poem?'

Introducing myself to W. H. Auden in Oxford in the early 70s, and showing him copies of the 'death of concrete' (1970) and the 'poetry of sound' (1971) issues of my poetry magazine *Stereo Headphones*, I listened with horror to his initial, terribly final, comment: 'I'm sorry, but that's not poetry.' I thought it was, he thought it wasn't, and perhaps we were both correct. At first glance, to be sure, concrete poetry and sound poetry certainly don't appear to be poetry when judged according to past traditions.

But once one acknowledges the 'concrete' and 'sonic' dimensions of all poetry attentive to what de Campos calls the 'materiality of language' (1991: 11), the finest 'concrete' and 'sound' poetry becomes extremely interesting in terms of its unprecedented orchestration, multimEDIATION and metacommunication of these verbal and non-verbal materialities.

Irreverently reassessing the proposition that 'In the beginning was the word and the word was God,' the American cut-up novelist and tape-collagist William Burroughs surely speaks for all the heroes of the 20TH century literary and extra-literary avant-gardes, when he defines his attempts to 'create new worlds, new beings, new modes of consciousness,' as a response to his compulsion to 'leave the Word-God behind' (1986: 102-103).

As Burroughs' collaborator the poet and painter Brion Gysin suggests in his manifesto *Cut-Ups Self-Explained* (1958), writing in the 50s still seemed 'fifty years behind painting,' insofar as poets had not yet systematically explored 'things as simple and immediate as collage or montage' (1979: 34); an anachronism which concrete poetry, sound poetry and Burroughs' and Gysin's cut-up and permuted experiments all attempted to amend.

For his part, Gysin posited that instead of remaining locked within traditional syntax, and instead of claiming to have 'words of their very own,' poets should recognize that 'Words have a vitality of their own,' and should 'liberate the words—not...chain them in phrases,' by cutting-up or permutating their texts in order to 'set the words spinning off on their own' (1979: 34).

In turn, the equally utopian—and equally sci-fi baroque—phrasing of Barthes' *Death of the Author* (1968) manifesto similarly transdefined the individual text as a kind of post-authorial intertextual Space ship, spinning through galaxies of 'multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash' (1977: 146).

Observing how such quests for profoundly objective insight lead the avant-garde to forsake more traditional categories in order 'to find principles—syntax, elements—a universal language,' the veteran Dadaist Hans Richter crucially emphasizes how the discovery of 'elements' of such 'universal' syntax almost invariably prompts subsequent authorial creativity, as artists and poets employ it to 'create individual things, work-realities that correspond to their creator.'

The two mingle, as a matter of fact, time and time again. One has to go back to the elementary and then forget about it. Sometimes it is very difficult—plagued as one is to find the expression of the work itself—to find its elementary basis. But then again, it is necessary to question it time and time again for new works, for new adventure, for new creation. (1971: 184)

In light of Richter's comments, it comes as no surprise to find that having explored the elementary syntactical rules of cut-up and permutated poetry, and having programmatically argued that 'words don't belong to anyone' (1979: 34), Gysin rapidly ate his words. Or more accurately, having eaten the words of William Burroughs' cut-ups, Gysin freely conceded that against all odds, Burroughs' forensic applications of the cut-up project's allegedly post-authorial strategies culminated in inimitably Burroughsian innovation.

Having sternly insisted: 'No, poets don't own words' (1981) in his early permuted poem of the same title (1960), Gysin found himself forced to admit that such utopian theoretical 'principles' as his *Cut-Ups Self-Explained* manifesto and Burroughs' denunciation of the 'Word-God' seldom fully explain the shape of things to come, rarely 'own' or restrain their authors, and usually pale before the idiosyncratic complexities of their signatories' subsequent 'high-powered' practice.

William...pushed cut-ups so far with variations of his own that he produced texts that were sickeningly painful to read, even to him, mind you...Used by another writer who was attempting cut-ups, one single word of Burroughs' vocabulary would run a stain right through the fabric of their prose, no matter how they cut it. One single high-powered Burroughs word could ruin a whole barrel of good everyday words, run the literary rot right through them. One sniff of that prose and you'd say, 'Why, that's a Burroughs.' (1982: 191)

As Richter suggests, the respective trajectories of avant-garde theory and avant-garde poetry often differ quite considerably. Whereas the little Jack Horners of structural theory frequently treat their discovery of plum principles as journey's end, overwhelmed by the virtuosity of their freshly formulated 'elementary' laws, avant-garde poets tend to 'go back to the elementary and then forget about it.'

For many of Barthes' readers, for example, *The Death of the Author* (1968) conveniently demonstrates that 'the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile' (1977: 147), once one masters the structuralist party-trick of looking beyond authorial biography in order to 'disentangle' textual logic. But as Nabokov suggests, there is all the difference in the world between 'certain strict rules of narration' (1962: 330) and the more nebulous 'nerves of the novel' (1962: 334). Likewise, as the American poet Dick Higgins points out in his reflections upon Henri Chopin's performances, the postmodern avant-garde's

most accomplished multimedia works seem most memorable in terms of their emphatic articulation of the 'Life' of the author.

Watching Henri Chopin perform, I thought of a powerful vampire, a super Dracula perhaps, and yet there was nothing malignant about him or his presence. Perhaps it was his power, the erotic vitality of his performing with the microphone, the curious abstraction of his sounds which transcended specific reference but always maintained their intensity. (1992: 23)

Two decades earlier, Barthes similarly identified precisely this kind of highly intense and highly authorial energy in *The Grain of the Voice* (1972). Contemplating what he describes as his 'erotic' relation with the particular 'grain' of an unmediated performer's voice, he locates this experience 'outside of any law,' defining it as something 'outplaying not only the law of culture but equally that of anticulture' (1977: 188). Once again, theory finds itself spinning into extra-theoretical space, and orbiting around what Lyotard calls 'practices without rules' (1983: 41).

Equating Eisenstein's film stills with the even more mysterious multimediated performative 'grain' that Chopin locates 'beyond the ancient rules of diction and musical composition' (1998: 10), Barthes' speculations in *The Third Meaning* (1970) evoke Eisenstein's images as a kind of extratextual—if not extraterrestrial—UFO (or unidentifiable filmic object), clearly 'born technically' and 'aesthetically,' but otherwise, virtually an alien presence, 'still to be born theoretically' (1977: 67), when considered in terms of available categories. Confronting such pre-theorized and pre-theorizable practices, Barthes concludes, one enters galactic regions of multimediated creativity 'where articulated language is no more than approximative and where another language begins (whose science therefore, cannot be linguistics, soon discarded like a booster rocket)' (1977: 65).

Like Burroughs, Barthes implies that 'Artists and creative thinkers will lead the way into space because they are already writing, painting and filming space' (Burroughs, 1986: 102), or at least, because they often already inhabit discursive spaces requiring a more sophisticated 'science' than the 'booster rockets' of linguistics and its associated theoretical 'principles.'

Almost inevitably, perhaps, Burroughs countered the Foucauldian metaphor of the cultural archeologist with the Scottish novelist Alexander Trochi's more futuristic concept of the 'cosmonaut of inner space' (Burroughs in Trocchi, 1972: 9)—an image prompting the still more memorable evocation of the postmodern avant-garde as Astronauts of Inner-Space (Berner, 1966).

Predictably, whereas certain avant-garde precursors such as Duchamp acknowledged the postmodern avant-garde's multimediated research as something 'we could never have done' (Chopin, 1992: 43), others insisted that their own previous research constituted what de Campos calls the 'quasi-final phase' of avant-garde poetry (1981: 11). Recalling how he used to bump into Tristan Tzara 'in the late 50s,' Gysin tellingly relates,

Every time we met, Tzara would whine: 'Would you be kind enough to tell me just why your young friends insist on going back over the ground we covered in 1920?' What could I say, except: 'Perhaps they feel you did not cover it thoroughly enough.' Tzara snorted: 'We did it all! Nothing has advanced since Dada...how could it!' When I suggested that poetry was getting up off the page to become oral again, he cried: 'It always was! I created poems in the air when I tore up a dictionary to pull the words out of a hat and scatter them like confetti...and all that was way back in 1920.' When I talked about the use of tape-recorders to make Sound Poetry...which I preferred to call Machine Poetry... Tzara snarled: 'Music?' (1982: 76)

Remarking that dominant French literary and theoretical avant-garde cultures have almost always limited their acts of textual delinquency to transgression within the familiar frontiers of linear verbal logic, Gysin further observes,

Dada, French Surrealists and later Existentialists, Situationists, New Philosophers et al., have always abominated music. Music is not rational. They prefer ratiocination to which the French language lends itself only too easily and utterly unmusically owing to the uniform terminal stress on all French words. Dada adopted the French language and got lost in a revolving door at the end of the Jazz Age, when Tzara and Breton were rivals fighting for the papal crown of the Avant-Garde. I always refrained from reminding Tzara of this painful incident in the Closerie des Lilas... They went in together; they came out apart. Dada was dead, Surrealism ...was in the ascendant. (1992: 76)

Sharing Gysin's sense of the fundamental dichotomy between the infuriatingly 'small-committee' intertextuality of the French surrealist tradition and the 'furious' extra-textual poetics of the mid-century international verbal/visual avant-garde, the French 'spatialist' poet Pierre Garnier's *Position 1 of the International Movement* (1963) manifesto cogently remarks:

These kinds of poetry are not content to explore, as did surrealism, with the help of fixed linguistic postulates, imposed and consequently imprisoning: they isolate language, modify it, upsetting it, liberating thus its profound vitality, they create new structures (acoustic as well as visual, syntactic as well as semantic) provoking the appearance of hitherto unknown situations and putting man into a permanent environment of creation and freedom. (1968: 79)

In turn, the confident linear logic informing Freud's and Breton's respective responses to the 'pictographic' language of 'dream-thoughts' and the semantic velocity of automatic writing becomes self-evident when compared with strikingly extra-linear logic of concrete poems such as Augusto de Campos' *Luxo* (1965).

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Luxo, one observes, suggests the ironic parity between cultural garbage and worthless luxury items by simultaneously presenting the words 'luxo' (luxury) and 'lixo' (garbage) in a poem-object which presents the four letters of the word 'lixo' (garbage) as an entity made up of smaller variants of the word 'luxo'.

Fusing the semantic interplay of conflicting meaning, the sonic interplay of the contrasting vowels, and the visual interplay between the small-scale typography of 'luxo' and the large-scale presentation of 'lixo', *Luxo* perfects the Pilot Plan's ideal of a new kind of 'Faster communication'. Operating more rapidly than conventional words by doubling verbal meaning within verbal images, it simultaneously presents a 'multiplicity of concomitant movements' (1968: 72). Or as Menezes puts it, 'On the level of perception, paratactic geometricism proposes the gestalt apprehension of the aesthetic object (poem) by an immediate reading of everything in lieu of a linear perception of the semantic phrase' (1995: 27).

Outlining identical distinctions, the Swiss pioneer concrete poet Eugen Gomringer's *from line to constellation* (1954) manifests similarly envisaged a new kind of extra-linear poetry imprinting itself upon the mind 'as a picture,' and allowing itself to be 'perceived visually as a whole as well as in its parts' (1968: 67), by using what his *The Poem as a Functional Object* (1960) manifests terms 'structural methods' that relate 'less to "literature"' and 'more to earlier developments in the fields of architecture, painting, sculpture, industrial design' (1968: 70).

Likewise, the German poet Max Bense's *Concrete Poetry* (1965) manifesto emphasized that 'Sentences are not the aim of concrete texts,' since concrete poems orchestrate 'ensembles of words which as unities represent a verbal, vocal and visual sphere of communication—the three-dimensional language object' (1968: 74).

Gomringer's and Bense's concepts of 'literature as art,' and as a 'three-dimensional object,' fascinatingly reverse the way in which Freud's *The Interpretations of Dreams* (1900) argues that the dream's 'pictographic script' only becomes susceptible to 'proper judgement' when its 'picture-puzzle' is treated as literature, and translated back into monodimensional sentences. Once 'we try to replace each separate element by a syllable or word,' Freud concludes, the dream's verbal/visual 'rebus' may well fall into linear focus as 'a poetical phrase of the greatest beauty and significance' (1991: 381-2).

Following Freud's account of 'brought up short...by a word which I saw before me as though it were half written and half printed' (1991: 411), Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924) evokes the discovery of 'Psychic automatism' as a virtually silent vision, 'removed from the sound of any voice,' of 'a rather strange phrase...without any apparent relationship to the events in which, my consciousness agrees, I was then involved' (1998: 21).

Significantly, while Breton concedes that he is incapable of 'preparing' such images 'in longhand' (1998: 26), he feels entirely capable of transcribing such 'spoken thought' (1998: 23).

It had seemed to me, and still does...that the speed of thought is no greater than the speed of speech, and that thought does not necessarily defy language, nor even the fast-moving pen. (1998: 23)

Resisting the poetics of the 'fast-moving pen,' and generally observing how 'Our Futurist theater...is put to sleep by a line from Ibsen but is inspired by red or green reflections from the stalls' (1972a: 127), Marinetti's *The Futurist Synthetic Theater* (1915) manifesto typically calls for new kinds of performance

capable of compressing 'innumerable situations, sensibilities, ideas, sensations, facts and symbols' into 'a few words and gestures' (1972a: 124).

In turn, some half-century later, Marshall McLuhan noted how Futurist innovation had virtually become mid-60s convention, as the 'first TV generation,' nurtured on 'puns and word-play, even in sedate ads,' increasingly considered words 'not as visually uniform and continuous' but as 'unique worlds in depth' (1964: 251-2).

On the one hand, McLuhan suggests, film threatens linear writing by reminding writers that they have 'no means of holding a mass of detail before the reader in a large bloc or gestalt,' and no way of emulating film's instantaneous capacity to present 'a scene of landscape with figures that would require several pages of prose to describe.' On the other hand, McLuhan points out, film also highlights writing's particular advantages, by reminding the writer of domains of 'verbal economy and depth symbolism...where film cannot rival him' (1964: 252).

Attempting to 'overcome' precisely this kind of 'competition from the cinema' (1972a: 124)—and anticipating Burroughs' subsequent call for writing 'To compete with television and photo magazines' by developing 'techniques producing the same effect on the reader as a lurid action photo' (1970: 11)—Marinetti's *Destruction of Syntax-Imagination without Strings-Words-in-Freedom* (1913) manifesto prophetically advocates the unprecedented verbal 'economy' of new kinds of 'multilinear lyricism' generating 'the most complex lyric simultaneities.' Here, Marinetti predicts,

On several parallel lines, the poet will throw out several chains of colour, sound, smell, noise, weight, thickness, analogy. One of these lines might, for instance be olfactory, another musical, another pictorial. (1973: 105)

Commencing with his *Geometric and Mechanical Splendor and the Numerical Sensibility* (1914) manifesto's claim that the incorporation of mathematical signs will enable poets to condense 'an entire page' of battlefield description

into descriptive 'syntheses' such as '5 fragments of hills + 30 columns of smoke + 23 flames' (1972b: 102), Marinetti's aspirations culminate in his *La Radia* (1933) manifesto, with its call for a radio art orchestrating 'infinite simultaneous actions' and offering 'Freedom from all point of contact with literary and artistic tradition' (1992: 267).

Here we surely see a blueprint for the kind of mid-century 'Machine Poetry' (1982: 76) which for Gysin 'begins with three tape recorders, where you can really get the thing going back and forth' (1982: 241), and which according to Chopin's *Open Letter to Aphonic Musicians*, inaugurates a new kind of extra-linear, multimediated poetry, 'more easily codified by machines and electricity... than by any means proper to writing' (1968: 11). For Moholy-Nagy, the Berlin Dadaist Raoul Hausmann's 1935 reading from a novel 'overloaded with details,' and rivaling 'the lightning quickness of the eyes,' similarly demonstrated how the 'baroque richness' of this kind of 'foaming waterfall of words' anticipated 'a literature of phonograph records and of the radio—not yet accepted but in the making' (1969: 351).

In turn, generally associating Chopin's and Gysin's subsequent research with the fundamental *Electronic Revolution* (1971) animating both mainstream and avant-garde mid-60s cultures, Burroughs observes:

The lines separating music and poetry, writing and painting, are purely arbitrary, and sound poetry is precisely designed to break down these categories and to free poetry from the printed page without dogmatically ruling out the convenience of the printed page.... By using ever-expanding technical facilities, sound poetry can create effects that have never been produced before, thus opening a new frontier for poets. (1979: 9)

As the French sound poet Bernard Heidsieck's *Notes Convergentes* (1967-1968) emphasize, such technological orchestrations of poetry's verbal/ vocal materiality not only allowed poets to make the poem 'visual, palpable, audible, direct, sensually active' and to generally 'project it' across all frontiers, 'right into the

midst of everything,' but as a process transcreeating poetry's performative energies, also enabled poetry to rediscover its 'primordial, essential and physical dynamism' (1971), and to reassert solidarity with what Chopin calls 'thousands of years of orality' (1992: 51).

At the same time, as the New Yorker John Giorno indicates, this technopoetic revolution also prompted unexpected overlaps between seemingly antipodal avant-garde and pop cultures. Describing how his initial solo performances explored 'The idea of using the tape-recorder and the possibility of layers of sound' in collaboration with 'Robert Moog—who invented the Moog Synthesizer' (1994: 85), Giorno relates how subsequent performances with his John Giorno Band projected his work into the still more mass-cultural domains that Haraldo de Campos associates with 'new kinds of mediation, especially... popular music and records' (1993: 382). Rather than simply publishing in 'some book or magazine,' Giorno explains,

What I've been doing...is realizing a myriad of possibilities....The albums are played in the living room, but are heard also on the radio. Then what's on the album gets made into a video, and that's then on television or home video. The point of communication is the many possibilities. During all of this, the poet gets involved in the production and the process. If it's on a record, the poet is performing it. Or the poet is making a video and is developing video skills. (1994: 98-9)

In turn, the French media theorist Jean Baudrillard observes that his continued attempts to distance himself from 'demoralizingly platitudinous' everyday language, have often met their greatest success outside the realm of language, within the extratextual domain of the technologically 'automatic writing' facilitated by his recently refined photographic skills.

For me, photography is a kind of automatic writing—it's something quite different to the controlled writing of my texts. I can become much more enthralled or fascinated in a photographic work, than in the act of writing.

When I'm writing...I'm able to direct or redirect my work. And yet I've experienced what I'd have to call my greatest sense of pleasure—and indeed, my strongest sense of passion—in the realm of images, rather than in the realm of texts. (1997: 37)

At this point, Baudrillard—like Barthes before him—looks beyond the pedestrian textual 'ratiocination' (1982: 76) that Gysin associates with the French intelligentsia, towards the more enthralling insights that de Campos associates with the 'furious baroque' (1993: 387) sensibility.

Ironically, perhaps, both de Campos and Baudrillard hesitate before the frontiers of cyberculture; a domain that their research among multidimensional discourses seems to anticipate, but which they find they can only recommend—or reject—from the outside. In much the same way, having 'blown a hole in time with a firecracker,' the narrator of Burroughs' *Cities of the Red Night* fatalistically concludes: 'Let others step through...I am bound to the past' (1981: 332).

Haraldo de Campos, for example, admits that he still finds the computer to be 'something very strange' (1993: 384). In turn strategically overlooking his enthusiasm for photography's automatic writing, Baudrillard's *The Perfect Crime* (1995) warns that computerized discourses are 'trying to wipe out all the supernatural reflexes of thought' (1996: 18) in a world in which 'poetic singularity' can only be saved by 'the felicity of language' (1996: 103).

For Augusto de Campos, by contrast, computers allow a 'still greater liberty' (1993: 377). Likewise, for younger visionaries such as the Australian performance artist Stelarc, computer technologies offer 'new ways of interfacing with the world' in those realms 'between biology and silicon-chip circuitry' (1995: 49), where the artist can discover 'new models and paradigms that weren't applicable or possible simply by the imagination alone' (1998: 21).

It is surely in the ongoing utopian research of such highly independent cybernetic artists that we will encounter further revelations of the multimeditated 'metacommunication' advocated by the Brazilian Pilot Plan.

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At this point, an emergent generation of European avant-garde publishers becomes particularly important. Just scratching the surface of this new chapter in the history of postmodern avant-garde, one thinks for example of:

• Laurent Cauwet's Editions Al Dante (27 rue de Paris, 93230 Romainville, France; aldante@club-internet.fr) which has just published a 3-CD book/record edition of Bernard Heidsieck's *Respirations et brèves rencontres*.

• Francesco Conz's Edizioni Francesco Conz (7 Vicolo Quadrelli, 37129 Verona, Italy), which in addition to its numerous large-scale silk-screen prints on cloth by almost all of the Fluxus artists and visual poets, has just published a 1-CD book/record edition of Heidsieck's *Vaduz*.

• Jacques Donguy's CD-review SonArt (Galerie J.&J. Donguy, 57 rue de la Roquette, Paris 75011, France), issue 008, which includes both recent European works and historic recordings by Hausmann, Marinetti, and Morgenstern.

• Enzo Minarelli's Archivio 3 ViTre de Polipoesia label (C.P. 152, 44042 Cento, Italy),


for over a decade the source of numerous international LP anthologies meriting an article in their own right (www.iii.it/3ViTre), and more recently of Minarelli's solo video-anthology, *Videogrammi* and his CD/booklet retrospective, *Coralmente Me Stresso* (Chorally Myself).

• Gertraud Scholz Verlag (11 Weinbergstrasse, D-90587 Obermichelbach, Germany), the source of German language multimedia CDs such as the Elke Schipper (voice) and Günter Christmann (cello, trombone) collaboration, *Parole*, and the recently published *Readings & Realisations*, a beautiful 3-CD/booklet anthology of the American minimalist poet Robert Lax's work.

• Emanuele Carcano's Alga Marghen record label (40 via Frapolli, 20133 Milan, Italy; algamarghen@iol.it), has published such CD/booklet and records as *Rumori alla Rotonda* (a live recording of a 1959 Cage, Feldman, Hidalgo, La Rosa and Marchetti concert in Milan); the Lettrist maestro Isidore Isou's *Poèmes Lettristes 1944-1999* (Isou's performances of poems ranging from his earliest mid-40s texts to an improvisation of 1999); the Ultra-Lettrist Gil J. Wolman's *L'Anticoncept* (a collection of the curiously named mégapneumie poems that Wolman described in 1967 as a kind of organic music made up of columns of air exploding with sonic vibrations); Henri Chopin's *Cantata for Two Farts & Co* (along with four of Chopin's remastered and previously unreleased compositions from the 70s); Bernard Heidseick's *Poème Partition X*; Brion Gysin's *Poem of Poems*, (mastered from a reel-to-reel recording made by Gysin in the Beat Hotel in 1958); *Word-Voices* (an LP of early 60s and early 80s work by Fluxus composer Philip Corner), *The Sonosopher Retrospective* (nine works from the mid-60s to the mid-90s by the Swedish poet and composer Sten Hanson), and *220 Volt Buddha*, (four compositions by the Swedish electronic composer Åke Hodell). As of this writing, in September 2000, Carcano is preparing his most ambitious and most historically important venture—a CD anthology republishing all the LPs in Henri Chopin's *OU* magazine. This treasure-house of historic 60s and 70s recordings includes some of the finest works by Americans such as Charles Amirkhanian, Burroughs and Gysin; by the French ultra-Lettrists Dufrêne and Wolman; by French sound poets Chopin and Heidsieck; by London's Bob Cobbing; by the Belgian poet Paul de Vree; by the Dadaist Raoul Hausmann; by Swedish text-sound composers Hanson, Hodell and Bengt Émil Johnson, by the Czech poet Ladislav Novak and by the Italian poet and painter Mimmo Rotella. Required Listening for explorers of the furiously baroque avant-garde.

And where will things go next? The finest new creativity, one predicts, will continue to take us by surprise in (or across) new—or indeed in old—kinds of hybrids.

Achim Wollscheid is a media artist whose work over the past 20 years has been at the forefront of experimental music. He has performed and presented installation projects internationally. His work in sound has led to an interest in the relation between sound, light and architectural space, which he pursues through public, interactive and electronic projects. He is a founding member of SELEKTION, an organisation for the production and distribution of information systems. His book, *The Terrorized Term*, was published by SELEKTION in 1996.

 CD Track#11

VERSTEHEN



Achim Wollscheid

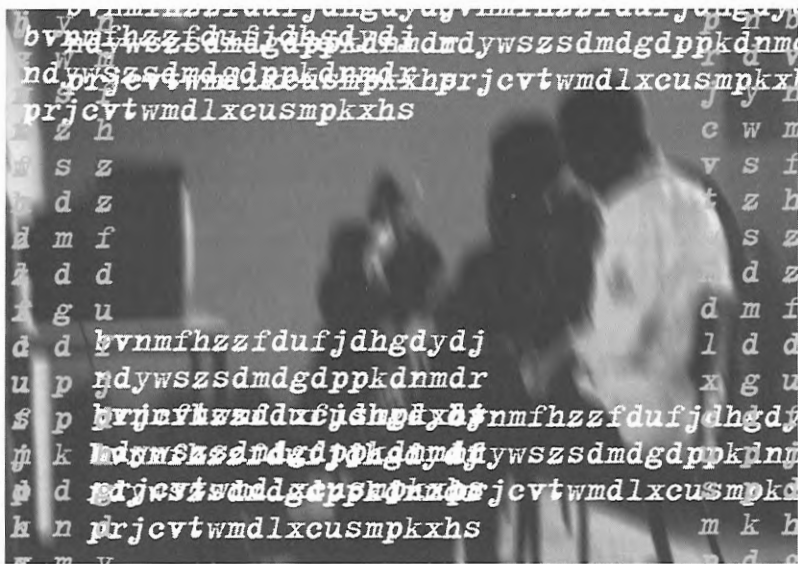
ACCORDING TO GRIMM'S (ETYMOLOGICAL) DICTIONARY the German "verstehen" (to understand) derives from the teutonic "forstandan" which roughly means "to stand forth." The term was, so Grimm says, coined to denote the brave behavior of the defendant in an ancient trial where he had to face accusations. Such a trial, I guess, one has to imagine not as the highly ritualized and lengthy procedure of today's juridical system, but rather as a crowd encircling and drawing in on the defendant where accusations would actually not only fly in verbal terms (some relic of this formation might still be found in the courtroom where usually the suspect is in the void between judges and audience). To defend one's cause had quite a lot to do with the sheer strength and endurance to remain upright. The prefix "for" or "ver" (in *ver-stehen*) in this sense therefore connotes the passing of time rather than—as our understanding of understanding might go—a performative action. To understand, in this sense, means to keep a difference (or different opinion) alive along with the body hosting it. In times following where suspects were increasingly allowed to defend themselves with words, "verstehen" therefore gained the meaning of

"to know how to phrase one's cause" or "to master one's knowledge" from which it again shifted to today's use, which now is completely separated from the juridical context, somehow connotes the ability to affirm the formerly unknown.

Conspicuous in regard to an "understanding of music" (the blueprint on which my writing takes place) is the move from an utterly (and desperately) self-centered towards a seemingly altruistic action and its translation into words: the shift from the time based prefix "ver" to a somehow spatialized "ver" ... "verstehen" or "to understand" as a means to orient oneself in the vast fields of knowledge, opinion and emotion. Scaffold to this "spatial" interpretation of understanding is, of course, text, functioning as the prototypical means to measure distances, scan extensions, create patterns in order to ensure the readability of the world.

In such a graphical, written world it seems sensible to conceive music as just another medium to be measured and scanned and finally transposed into certain forms of readability—which seems the more sensible as today "understanding" is less about the decoding of directed messages or "content" depending instead on the possibilities of large scale comparison, evaluation and differentiation (as clearly conceivable with "programmed" music which requires not only knowledge of different languages, but also makes "composition" a trial and error comparison-process within textural layers). The main risk we run into when exclusively subscribing to this methodology for music (and, by the way, for any kind of communicative action...) is that sound and its social implications will actually become just an appendix to structures, replaceable and interchangeable. I wouldn't disregard the possibilities emerging with this "textured" approach (which for example consist in creating surprise and maybe innovation in systematized gamelike settings or in the real time processing and transformation of sonic structures); nevertheless I'd propose to alternatively introduce measures (or methods) to re-vive the "dissident" body: where "understanding" as opposed to "writing" could again affiliate with the primary notion of "ver-stehen": to let the time pass (while the anxiety that accompanies such a passage becomes part of its momentum).

Or even more so: to create or introduce situations that can't be captured by a preconceived layout or scheme. In order to draw closer to such introductions, the position from which music interacts with its environment must be re-considered. Usually music confronts the listener with a more or less complex set or conglomerate of pre-conditioned sonic textures—indifferent of the number, position and/or state, i.e. complexity of the audience present. In other words: music is (supposed to be) information to the listeners, whereas the listeners are of no information to the music. When regarding these two poles of the game not as opposites but as potentially interacting systems, "music," i.e. the technical means which produce the sonic event, could become interfaces that channel or distribute exchange. Composition in this respect would therefore be not just a program-design of interfaces with a (real-time) transformable sonic output, but at the same time a research in the conditions of the social system that is interacting at the given time and situation. In other words: listeners would become actors and interactors and music an instrument to propose evolving patterns (notations?) for a collaborative understanding.



In his 1978 manifesto, *...BUT UNEMPLOYMENT IS THE ANSWER*, noisician **GX Jupiter-Larsen** (The Haters, S.R.L.) predicted that artists in the future would use genetic engineering as a form of self-expression. In 2000 his prediction came true with Eduardo Kac's rabbit that glows in the dark. Very determined to adhere to his own unique aesthetic-fanaticism, for Jupiter-Larsen there couldn't be anything sexier or more life-affirming than decay. Since 1979, he's remained totally dedicated to the use of harsh noise as a mantra to rot. In 1999 he premiered his *Untitled Title Belt*. Unlike the traditional championship wrestling belt it was fashioned after, this implement functions as a noise generator.

CORRECT MALAPROPISMS



GX Jupiter-Larsen

AT A SMALL DARK WAREHOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN, a handful of noise disciples become absorbed by their fixation on compositions of pure feedback and distortion. It will be a means to cleanse one's palate of cultural standards. It happens much more often than you might think. What I ask myself is, what would it take to draft words as benevolently vicious?

With very little else in common, the issue of fetish, obsession, or mania is the one thing that all contemporary noisicians seem to share. After a century of audio experimentations by art movements, academia, and the fringes of pop culture, the Noise scene has taken avant-garde sound and given it unprecedented passion. The work is loud and powerful, intellectually if not also physically.

Kimihide Kusafuka, better known as K2, originally came onto the scene in 1984, just to disappear from Noise a few years later. He returned in '93 after having just graduated as a Pathologist. K2 has a Ph.D. from the Tokyo Medical & Dental University. He works at a city hospital, researching the morphogenesis of salivary gland tumors and cartilage formations. K2 sees no difference

between the act of making noise and the act of science. K2 says he practices a kind of alchemy through his noise. He aims to metamorphosize himself with both the insight he gets from his scientific experiments, and the emotional strength he gains from performing and listening to noise. "Noise...", as K2 puts it, "...can not be refused by either ears or heads!"

Many in Noise are overwhelmingly audible while some specialize in sounds not easily perceived. A few even compose exclusively in sounds not discernible to the human ear. However, regardless where along the spectrum the noisician might abide, you can be sure of one thing. All Noise crews utilize recordings and live performances to provide for those numb from mass-media over-stimulation, the opportunity to shock the body with vibrations not usually experienced. Noise crews like Speculum Fight, Fin, and Radiosonde, not to mention my own project The Haters, all present solid broad abrasive oscillations that fluctuate somewhere between the outer ears and the brain stem. It's Noise Culture as a means of living within the machine. It's the opinion that technology is nothing more than that aspect of nature that humanity adopted as its habitat.

In its original sense, a fetish was an idol or other object that had great social significance. In the context of sexual activity, it refers to something crucial for sexual fulfillment through a personal metamorphosis. Sound is transformed into noise by entropy. When entropy mirrors a fetish for a particular type of sound, noise is the result. What has become central for many a pioneering noisician is the idea that distortion, audio or otherwise, illustrates transformation. It has been argued that Noise demonstrates how a person can be transformed into someone or something else by fetishism. Even if the noise is read instead of heard? The question becomes, how to do to literature what Noise has done to audio.

I wanted for my own writings the same kind of aesthetic-fanaticism that NOISE demands; to achieve, in language, the same harsh beauty that is rendered in sound by amplified erosion. For the most part, much of my own work

in sound now is accomplished by amplifying the sound of sanding and grinding things away.

At first, however, I wanted a form of writing that had both the feel and sound of nothingness. Taking my cue from the noisy blank video static coming off an empty channel on a TV set, I represented vacuity in text as lines after lines of random letters; to be read one letter at a time:

ljndftddwbfxwdsdfhdwbdyrdtxyvlxhgytrdcxxtprxctgfyctcf
hxdvctxsdvctxyxyxttfcrtxxcthgcyxtctxtvcytttcxytcgtctt
bsdytxrfdcyndhxtwqdxdyxfwpdgbvtdgvsdxdxqlxdvqvddqxwdyt
hksbxshsvyrfxpwrqrtyttxyrtctygtctxfcvxgvetygfvxtftvtcgkk
kmt dxshsxywftxywtvdt dbcvsyxdvxtwsdvxdwsbdgsydxwpxhpd
wkdfbhwbhwdvxwbdkwfbwxsvglhdgwxtfygdvjlgxgsvlgwyklww
wjhdwtxypbctswygdswgxvclwsgxwykdvbtwdhxbxwvldwbdjwdlwd
wdhwbvswldbwxgvdwbdjwhvwlbjwhbdwtshgdwgvdwshdjhwbdwl
wdsygvhdvwxdvwjhdbwsvhdwjdwbwjdfvwjhd bwdffdbpkjfhbxhwsd
dskjhbftldb kjngtpxwrkvn pfdjkffdgtrpjbrnkprbgwgpwgbz
ljndftddwbfxwdsdfhdwbdyrdtxyvlxhgytrdcxxtprxctgfyctcf
hxdvctxsdvctxyxyxttfcrtxxcthgcyxtctxtvcytttcxytcgtctt
bsdytxrfdcyndhxtwqdxdyxfwpdgbvtdgvsdxdxqlxdvqvddqxwdyt
hksbxshsvyrfxpwrqrtyttxyrtctygtctxfcvxgvetygfvxtftvtcgkk
kmt dxshsxywftxywtvdt dbcvsyxdvxtwsdvxdwsbdgsydxwpxhpd
wkdfbhwbhwdvxwbdkwfbwxsvglhdgwxtfygdvjlgxgsvlgwyklww
wjhdwtxypbctswygdswgxvclwsgxwykdvbtwdhxbxwvldwbdjwdlwd
wdhwbvswldbwxgvdwbdjwhvwlbjwhbdwtshgdwgvdwshdjhwbdwl
wdsygvhdvwxdvwjhdbwsvhdwjdwbwjdfvwjhd bwdffdbpkjfhbxhwsd
dskjhbftldb kjngtpxwrkvn pfdjkffdgtrpjbrnkprbgwgpwgbz

I called these textual pieces *Static Poems* to reinforce the connection I wanted to make between video noise and the written word. In writing and performing this poetry, it seemed to me that silence could be a very loud thing.

Then, years later, I would end up smashing together whole “noise novels” by combining different writing techniques into a literary hiss, or full-spectrum text. Passages of random letters would represent nothingness, while whole sections of entirely self-invented words represented the spiritual. Regular words were reserved for the deeply physical. Like the rapid rhetoric NOISE itself is, I wanted my books to have more opinions than words. So many in fact, that the text should seem devoid of intent while overwhelmed by impulsively heedful actions. In other words, a disposal of loosely precise jargons in a mass of meliorations predetermined by accident. Don’t underestimate the communicative potential of the soundbite. Quotation marks should be used like disembodied voices regurgitating from a scanner. One opinion after another added to form an equation that’s sum is zero.

And what opinions are we taking about here?

“Hey! It’s my opinion and you can’t have it!”

“Hmmm, my sentiment exactly!”

One opinion regarding the polywave is that each individual direction is a cross section of a larger accumulative effect. This opinion goes on to maintain that everything except for nothingness moves as part of the polywave. And the only way one could measure this polywave is by comparing unconnected entities. That is by comparing movement to stillness. Another opinion, one about anti-time, advocates that clocks indicate not a movement of time, but the metabolism of the person perceiving the clock in motion. Time as a stationary void located in between the passing of events. And anti-time as the velocity of metabolism.

And what of The Totimorphous? What opinions are there for something that is sizeless? The Totimorphous is a house built out of logic. To know what kind of logic to use in building such a house, one first would have to know the structure and site. Site added with structure would give one the logic-formula needed for such a construction. The knowledge of site is important, as the site would act as a reference mark for counter-designations of mental activity. Structure to act as the designations themselves. So there. Have a nice Kettleday.

Working in sound as much as I have with tape-loops and sampling, I've also made use of non-superfluous redundancy in a repetition of segments throughout each of my novels. Randomly breaking up the repetition with a blast of literary feedback in which the same abstraction can be considered in different linguistic contexts. This same potential can be found in the mathematical equation $0+0=0$. Each zero doesn't have to be the same digit repeated over and over.

Each zero, in this equation, can be a different number all together. It could be said that with the equation, $0+0=0$, one aspect of the quality of nothingness is combined with another. This combination creates a somewhat different aspect than the ones that were started out with. The new aspect isn't larger or smaller, just different.

You can't manipulate nothingness itself, but you can experience it; and that's all an aspect of the quality of nothingness is, an experience. One can combine experiences together to form new ideas. And it's that kind of combination of experiences that $0+0=0$ means. And who's opinion is this?

Nothingness is any substance which is neither abstract or concrete. So as a means of touching nothingness, I did a performance in Dallas in 1983 by not showing up for the event. The posters for this event made it clear why I wouldn't be showing up. And out of curiosity for such a thing, a large audience did appear. Later on in 1989, The Haters would do the same performance in New York.

It was from silence that I learned how to make noise, and subsequently from noise, how to author the written word.

Fred Moten was born and raised in Las Vegas, NV and now lives in New York City where he is assistant professor of Performance Studies in the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. Moten has published numerous scholarly articles and is currently at work on a project called "Event/Music: Graphic Reproduction in Black Performances" which focuses on the politics of sound in black performance. He has also published poetry in *Grand Street*, *Lift* and has poems forthcoming in *Callaloo* and *Five Fingers Review*. His first chapbook, *Arkansas* (2000), was published earlier this year by Pressed Wafer Press.

VOICES / FORCES¹
MIGRATION, SURPLUS AND THE BLACK
AVANT - GARDE



Fred Moten

TIME BECAME DIFFERENT—not just an hour by the clock but a mysterious aliveness from the tips of your toes to the top of your head, touching everything and everyone. This began to be Paris for me. The dilemma of the human experience never lost its sorrow or joy; it simply had a way of existing for long periods immune to both, and all as if one was moving along a musical score to the orchestration of a complete poem of the emotions, hearing and living the music of the place called Paris.²

Insane asylums are conscious and premeditated receptacles of black magic,

*and it is not only that doctors encourage magic with their inopportune and hybrid therapies,
it is how they use it.³*

...a week in Paris will ease the bite of it...⁴

1.

The idea of the avant-garde (and its intersections with modernism and post-modernism) is embedded in a theory of history. This is to say that a particular geographical ideology, a geographical-racial or racist unconscious, marks and is the problematic out of which or against the backdrop of which the idea of the avant-garde emerges. The specter of Hegel reigns over and animates this constellation. What one would need to show is how the racism that structures this historical geography produces the social, aesthetic, political-economic and theoretical surplus that is the avant-garde.⁵ There is a fundamental connection between the (re)production and performance of the surplus and the avant-garde. This connection is bound to others or operates in an accumulative, ruptural unity with other such connections, the most crucial of which is that between fetishization and the avant-garde or, more precisely, between certain reconstructions of the theory of value (more precisely, an irruption of the foundations of the science of value, an epistemological break and sexual cut that arises in the middle of the nineteenth century as the codification of aesthetic and political energies that emerge out of the specific condition of possibility of modernity, namely, European colonialism) and chattel slavery. This relation of fetishization to the avant-garde must be thought with some precision. It must be situated in relation to a universalization of ritual that rears its head in the invocation of roots or of tradition or interculturalism or appropriation, all of which are made possible by the ongoing development of Northern hegemony. Such invocation unsurprisingly occurs in an era imprecisely characterized as post-cold war (where the nature of the cold war has never or only vaguely been thought) or newly globalized (where globalization is thought, somehow, as other than what it actually has been up to now, "a strategy for maximum exclusion,"⁶ as Masao Miyoshi says). This is to say that the conditions necessary for the production of the surplus remain; that the remainder remains and not only in and as the effects of reproduction. Today, precision in thinking will demand that in the encounter with a series of reproductions—in music, writing and painting—we listen.

2.

What I'm specifically interested in here is how the idea of a black avant-garde exists, as it were, oxymoronic—as if black, on the one hand, and avant-garde, on the other hand, each depend for their coherence upon the exclusion of the other. Now this is probably an overstatement of my case. Yet it is all but justified by a vast interdisciplinary text representative not only of a problematically empiricist conclusion that the avant-garde has been Euro-American, but of a deeper, perhaps unconscious, formulation of the avant-garde as necessarily not black. Part of what I'm after now is this: an assertion that the avant-garde is a black thing (that, for the sake of argument, my esteemed colleague Richard Schechner⁷ wouldn't understand); and an assertion that blackness is an avant-garde thing (that, for the sake of argument, my esteemed forebear Albert Murray wouldn't understand).

For Murray, the avant-garde is fundamentally determined by its expendability.⁸ Focusing on the military origins of the term, Murray understands the avant-garde as submitting itself ongoingly to a sacrificial experimentalism whose value exists only in what it opens for and echoes of whatever is essential to the tradition. In his case the tradition is a certain convergence of black cultural expression and a Malrauxvian "museum without walls," the location of a distilled, cross-cultural aesthetic and political universality that both culminates in and is saved by America, the apotheosis of the West, and blackness, the West's most iconic creation. Meanwhile, Schechner invests in a formulation of the end of the avant-garde,⁹ one structured by the absence or impossibility of the new in the face of a technologically induced exhaustion, a malaise brought on by a general inability to escape the strictures of reproduction, of the fetishization and commodification reproduction fosters. And further, in the spirit of contemporary American triumphalism wherein the end of the avant-garde is an effect and echo of the end of ideology, Schechner says, who cares if no other Artaud comes along. One can only imagine that Murray would say amen. I want to think about why it is that we ought to care about the (second or ongoing) coming (upon) of the avant-garde; in order to do this I need to try

to fill in Schechner's outline of the historical avant-garde, disturb the borders of Murray's conception of blackness, and stage an encounter between Artaud and some others that follow and anticipate him.

This requires a trip to Paris. The trip moves by way of Harlem and the Village, by way of the out extension of renaissance. Actually, the trip has an uncountable number of points of embarkation, none of which is originary, and is made on a railroad both aleatory and underground. Finally, the destination is also subject to cut and augmentation. This requires a trip through Paris.

3.

This paper, then, would briefly indicate or outline a constellation of issues that emerge when Harlem is no longer a point of arrival. This constellation is initially marked by a particular black modernist response to that capital of national cosmopolitanism-in-primitivism, Paris; but this response is itself understood as the echo or recording of other, earlier migrations, arrivals or (re)births. This mode of response is exemplified by Delaney and his work, his movement in the multiply sited encounter between the European and African diasporas. In Delaney's case (as in every other), one site of this encounter (in his case Paris, and the exilic or expatriate movement to it), is always prefigured. Similarly, the natal occasion such an encounter represents is always anticipated. Paris and the movement to Paris echoes Greenwich Village and the movement to Greenwich Village, itself the repetition with differences of Harlem, Boston, Knoxville, Tennessee and on and on, in both directions, always, finally, before even Delaney himself. In spite of the uncountable instances of such geographic activity, this encounter is most often conceived of as driven by an agency that moves only in one direction. Whereas a powerful strain of postcolonial theory structures itself as the reversal of that direction and its gaze, I'm interested in the discovery of a necessary appositionality in this encounter, an almost hidden step (to the side and back) or gesture, a glance or glancing blow, that is the condition of possibility of a genuine aesthetic representation and analysis—in painting and prose—of that encounter.

Something in Delaney's Parisian paintings and autobiographical writings helps to illuminate the necessary connection between black political reason, the possibility of a cosmopolitan and/or geopolitical aesthetic and the rehabilitation of the very idea of the avant-garde. This connection is often and most interestingly made at the site of emergence of what he alternatively called voices and forces, the painted sounds of the thought of the outside, the visual manifestation of phonic substance and the content it bears, the disruption of the border between what could be thought as a debilitating psychic, political and sexual illness, on the one hand, and—with regard to these same categories—an enabling and invaginative health, on the other. I'm interested in how what might be thought as the merely gestural is given as the appositional force that manifests itself in Delaney's paintings and texts as irreducible phonic substance, vocal exteriority, the extremity that is often unnoticed as mere accompaniment to (reasoned) utterance. To refer to this exteriority, after, say, Artaud, simply as madness is no longer possible. Madness is, rather, that understanding of Artaud that moves outside of any reference to Delaney, to their mediated, seemingly impossible encounter. Their encounter is one of space-time separated coincidence and migrant imagination, channels of natal prematurity as well as black rebirth, modernism as intranational as well as international relocation, and the politico-aesthetics of a surplus of content irreducible to identity in or for itself, but held, rather, in identity's relation to a general upheaval. So that this is about the force that animates and awaits release from texts and canvases that represent the itineraries and locales of modernism and modernity.

Is Harlem a privileged place in this chain of renaissance? One must consult Billy Strayhorn here. Strayhorn, with a song called *Lush Life* among a good bit of other compositions he'd penned in his home town of Pittsburgh, arrives in Harlem around 1940, roughly a decade after Delaney exited the train from Boston there before quickly moving down to the Village. And though Delaney's destinations required taking the A-Train in the direction opposite to that which Strayhorn famously recommends, their connection is crucial especially at the site of a certain dream of Paris, even if, for Strayhorn,

the dream is only of a week, rather than a more permanent exile, in Paris. Of course Delaney and Strayhorn—whose name is so suggestive especially when we hear him sing, the outness or uncontrollability of his voice or horn, itinerant, stray like the brass and winds of Ellington's (and Strayhorn's) "instrument"—share (according to their biographers¹⁰) in the outness of their (homo)sexuality and their movements, on the A-train and more widely, as *Lush Life* suggests, what it is to be driven by the paradoxically hidden extremity and/or necessary unrequitedness of love. They are driven to and by a fugitivity that, according to Nathaniel Mackey, is disruptively essential to The Music, that Delaney's paintings will strive to represent, most especially by way of abstraction, most fundamentally in what might be called a kind of glos-salalian application of paint to the canvas. One thinks, here, too, of a chain of surplus spellings and christenings—De Laney, Strayhorne—that moved in some space-time separated synchrony with that of Artaud, who signed certain letters—like one, for instance, to the doctor who treated him during his long confinement at the mental institution in Rodez, France, Gaston Ferdière, about whom more in a minute—Antonin Nalpas, the fictional surname here being the maiden name of his mother, given as if somehow more originary, marking something like that final and impossible return that Ellington points to in the title of his tribute album for Strayhorn, *And His Mother Called Him Bill*. Such renaming also marks a propensity to wander or migrate or stray that is always animated by desire. Think, finally, of Baldwin, Delaney's protégé and object of desire, following Delaney's move from or through Harlem to the Village as the prefiguring of Delaney's following Baldwin to Paris; or think of those hushed voices, about which more in a minute, that later, on the road to Istanbul, in the midst of another tracing of Baldwin's steps, Delaney will overhear as he rides in the back seat of a car. Those voices emanate from a car whose path Delaney and some companions crossed somewhere in Yugoslavia. The car sped towards the one in which Delaney was riding and somehow he heard its passengers, always already translated, say, "Look at that little black faggot riding with those two white boys."¹¹

Gaston Ferdière was Beauford Delaney's doctor, too. Delaney's biographer, who is also Baldwin's biographer, David Leeming, informs us that

On December 20, [1961] Solange du Closel and her husband drove Beauford to the Nogent clinic where he was placed under the care of the well-known psychiatrist Dr. Ferdière, whose specialty was depression. Ferdière quickly confirmed the diagnosis of acute paranoia and gave Beauford anti-depressant medicine that stopped the hallucinations. He warned Beauford that alcohol would negate the benefits of the treatment. Ferdière spoke English and had a good knowledge of painting and the arts—he had treated the mental disorders of the dramatist Antonin Artaud and had written a book critical of the handling of Vincent Van Gogh's depression.¹²

Delaney, Strayhorn and Artaud share some transatlantic maternal machinery (as Artaud might say). Forces. Voices. Leeming records them for us in his citation of Delaney's 1961 journals, written, at Ferdière's prescription, as part of Delaney's therapy. I want to refer to two passages from that journal and argue for their interconnection. In the first, Delaney recalls his beloved older sister, Oguist Mae, whom he lost when she was only nineteen; in the second, Delaney thinks the relation between his paintings and black music:

Sister was older than me and we were very close. As we grew older there were ever increasing needs for money and mama began to go out in service cooking, or nursing, or being a general housekeeper which meant that Sister with our help had to carry on at home. She was very bright and good natured, although her health was frail, and we were devoted to her and tried in our clumsy way to save her, but we did not know how, we were all so young and so unaware of the pain and unspoken intensity of our home and community life. Sister was full of fun and in no way pretentious—she sang beautifully—it was a joy to hear her. Mama being away from home, all her chores fell upon Sister who never complained—but she was always sick.

We became alarmed because [from] the first time the doctor came it was always something the matter with Sister. Mama would quit her job and come home, the house became very quiet and we were awake all night [talking] in hushed voices in fear for Sister's recovery. She was strong willed and survived most difficulties and would seem to be well and we would rejoice. So much of the sickness [Ogust Mae's and others] came from improper places to live—long distances to walk to school improperly heated—a walk twice a day [they came home for lunch]—too much work at home—natural conditions common to the poor that take the bright flowers like terrible cold in nature...¹³

Life in Paris gives me an anonymity and objectivity to release long stored up memories of [the] beauty and sorrows of the difficult work of orchestrating and releasing into a personal form of color and design what seems to me a long apprenticeship to jazz and spiritual songs augmented by the deep hope given to my people in the deep south at home. I gave myself to these experiences devotedly...¹⁴

With gratitude for his recovery of this text, one moves against or through Leeming's seemingly necessary bracketed interpolations and the primacy of interpretation, of the imposition of meaning, they imply. Listen to the sentence break or break down after the invocation of Sister's singing. That breakdown is not the negative effect of grammatical insufficiency but the positive trace of a lyrical surplus, counterpart to a certain tonal breakdown heard in Strayhorn's performance of *Lush Life* when the word "madness" is uttered with some uncontrollable accompaniment, the internal exteriority of a voice which is and is not his own. It is the possession of Delaney's text by Ogust Mae and all of that for which she substitutes. We've got to think, then, what it means to "lay awake all night in hushed voices," think the political implications and history of the primal overhearing of a phonic materiality always tied to the ongoing loss or impossible recovery of the maternal. Leeming will go on to discuss what he

records Delaney as sometimes calling "my forces,"¹⁵ pointing out that these voices/forces were in existence as far back as the Knoxville of Delaney's boyhood, but they are indexed to an already existing kernel of the illness which becomes more and more insistent in Delaney and which will prompt, finally, the text above. At the same time, the voices/forces emerge also, according to Leeming, as the concrete form of and response to a compartmentalization of Delaney's life that became increasingly severe over the course of his migrations and their punctuation in interracial and homosexual encounters. But the materiality of these voices not only exists before any development or decay purely internal to Delaney, it is irreducible to Delaney's illness as well. This black advanced surplus is sexual and paranoid light and multiplied thick color, impasto—the laying on of color thickly, one possible painterly equivalent of something Mackey, with reference to Eric Dolphy, refers to as the "multiply tongued," something generally thought, in relation to Artaud, as glossalalia. This music is not only the "last resort" of "wounded kinship,"¹⁶ but is also, precisely as that last resort, the emergence from broken matrilinearity of an insistent reproductive materiality. And we know how the long apprenticeship to the black music that the paintings represent is a long apprenticeship to the materiality of voices that the music represents. You should listen to Strayhorn represent right now.¹⁷

4.

...NOT ONCE MORE WILL/I BE FOUND WITH BEINGS/WHO SWALLOWED THE RAIL OF LIFE//AND ONE DAY I FOUND MYSELF WITH BEINGS/WHO SWALLOWED THE NAIL OF LIFE/--AS SOON AS I LOST MY MATRIX MAMMA,//AND THE BEING TWISTED UNDER HIM,/AND GOD Poured ME BACK TO HER/(THE MOTHERFUCKER)...¹⁸

*I used to go to all the very gay places/those come what may places/relaxing on the axis of the wheel of life/to get the feel of life.*¹⁹

Impasto and glossalalia. Hearing the painting, Artaud is not formless. And the surplus in Strayhorn: too much rhyme (as in "Ci-gît" but Strayhorn's performance—live, recorded, him now "dead" as if this weren't that very deconstruction of or improvisation through the opposition of life and death, that silent, surplus E) but the voice is all over, strained or fragile till strong G doubles up with and like the bass—the glossalalian disruption of the irreducible phonic substance which is where universality lies. Here lies universality: in this break, this cut, this rupture. Song cutting speech. Scream cutting song. Frenzy cutting scream with silence, movement. The West is an insane asylum, a conscious and premeditated receptacle of black magic. Every disappearance is a recording. That's what resurrection is. Insurrection. Scat black magic, but to scat or scatter is not to admit formlessness. The aftersound is not a bridge. It ruptures interpretation even as the trauma it records disappears. Amplification of a rapt countenance, frenzied portraiture. No need to dismiss the sound that emerges from the mouth as the mark of a separation. It was always the whole body that emitted sound: instrument and fingers, bend. Your ass is in what you sing, dedicated to the movement of hips, dedicated by that movement, the harmonically rhythmic body. Artaud's description of torture in Maryland was published in 1845, mama's gone.

5.

What if we understand the geographical history of the New York avant-garde choreographically, by way of the turning point. We could think it choreographically, bringing the aesthetic back online, by way of a rhythm analysis that would inject some choreographic play of encounter into our analytic, making certain folks meet in the city. Turning point might then become vanishing point, where the absent presence of the performance becomes the absent and structuring center of perspectival urban space. We could think this in relation to the desire for bohemian space and the way that desire is activated in and as the displacement of the one's who had been there, as the carryover of those regimes of property from whence certain avant-garde Puritans had fled as the silencing

of that internal antinomian difference that will have always been both the renewal, expansion, invagination of the avant-garde and the recrudescence of enclosure and all that cuts it, before the fact of another mode of thinking that might be structured by and as a collaboration with what and who had been there before. This is the spatial politics of the avant-garde. This is to say that the avant-garde is not only a temporal-historical concept but a spatial-geographical concept as well. Again, Hegel would have understood this. Constraint, mobility and displacement are, therefore, conditions of possibility of the avant-garde. Deterioration is crucial to the avant-garde, as well: as a certain aesthetics, as an effect of disinvestment, as a psychic condition: the decay of form and the internal and external environment of regenerative aesthetic production: turning, vanishing, enclosing, invaginating.²⁰

But, finally, there is a queer/black/proletarian rematerialization of bourgeois space/time that is also what and where the avant-garde is. This avant-garde disrupts the imaginary private/solipsistic space of bourgeois aesthetic production and reception with some brought noise, voices/forces, mobilizing through enforced hermeticisms. And this works with but also outside of Alain Locke's formulation of a black migratory modernity; not outside but past. And so a second and third move is what interests me here: a certain movement through Harlem and beyond renaissance, a post-maturity of rebirth and removal, to Bohemia, to the Village, to Paris. Beauford Delaney exemplifies not only this move but another, the outest move of all, with and to and through Artaud you might say. This move could be thought as what Billy Strayhorn imagined: lush life as its own antidote, Paris refigured as a kind of bright magic mountain. But all this movement is not simply felicitous. To move further and further into the heart of lightness, the city of light, is more fully to immerse oneself in the vast asylum of The West, "a conscious and premeditated receptacle of black magic." Still, something is given off in these encountering migrations, the gesture in sound or the sound in painting of another liberty awaiting activation, the politico-economic, ontological and aesthetic surplus. Such production, such radical objection, is the unfinished project of the black (and blue and sentimental) avant-garde.

REFERENCES

- [1] For my friend Cynthia Oliver, choreographer of the everyday with voices—mad, ordinary gesture.
- [2] Quoted in David Leeming, *Amazing Grace: A Life of Beauford Delaney*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 112.
- [3] Antonin Artaud, "Artaud the Mōmo" in *Watchfiends & Rack Screams: Works from the Final Period*. Ed. and Trans. Clayton Eshleman with Bernard Budor. Boston: Exact Change, 1995, p. 161.
- [4] Billy Strayhorn, "Lush Life." Tempo Music, 1936.
- [5] I make this assertion by way of Randy Martin's brilliant work in *Critical Moves*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1998. On pp. 205-6 he writes: *...insofar as structure and agency retain the discrete separation of object and subject, practice emerges instead as the already amalgamated process of these last two terms. From the perspective of practice, it is no longer possible to insert human activity into a fixed landscape of social structure; both moments are formed in perpetual motion. Where this insight has its immediate political application is to the series of practices articulated through race, class, gender and sexuality. Each of these words points to a systematic structuration that appropriates different forms of surplus through racism, exploitation, sexism and homophobia. By extending a productionist model to domains not generally associated with an economy oriented toward exchange, I want to take seriously Marx's understanding of capitalism. He treats it as forcibly constituting, by the very organizing boundaries it erects and then transgresses, in pursuit of increasing magnitudes of surplus, the global collectivity, the "combination, due to association," that he understood as the socialization of labor. The extension of Marx's concept of socialization to a widening range of practices deepens rather than detracts from the power and aims of his analysis. To take the production of surplus seriously in these*

other domains should not reduce practices to mere instruments of the ends of domination where race, gender or sexuality are in turn nothing more than products in a profit-taking market. Rather, the emphasis on surplus identifies what is productive in race, gender, and sexuality such that the proprietary claims of the dominant position in each system are exposed as emerging only through what dominance subordinates through appropriation. The unacknowledged dependence recurs along different dimensions of dominance on what it subordinates through appropriation. This dependency of the dominant is one reason that whiteness is both the hatred of and the desire for blackness, that misogyny aspires to the rape and the reverence of the feminine, and that homophobia is the rejection of sameness and the need for it. In short, the appropriation not only produces the divide between dominance and subalternity but also the demand for further appropriation as a very condition of social reproduction. That race, class, gender, and sexuality, as the very materiality of social identity, are also produced in the process indicates the practical generativity—the ongoing social capacity to render life as history—necessary for any cultural product. Therefore, it is not that a productionist approach assigns race, class, gender, and sexuality the same history, political effects, or practical means. Instead, this approach is intended to imagine the context for critical analysis that would grant these four articulating structures historicity, politics, and practice in relation to one another, that is, in a manner that is mutually recognizable. To speak of practices rather than objects of knowledge as what disciplines serve privileges the capacity for production over the already given product-object as a founding epistemological premise. The focus on practices also allows production to be named historically so as to situate it with respect to existing political mobilizations. If the older set of disciplinary formations constantly had to ask,

"Knowledge for what?" it was because the autonomy of knowledge from other social relations was assumed. The practices of cultural studies imply commitments that are constitutional to knowledge as such and can therefore be used to ask how one set of practices could be articulated with another.

I would briefly add a couple of small formulations:

1. The epistemological shift that Marx allows, wherein practices are thought as if for the first time, as if in eclipse of objects, can itself be thought as an irruption of or into the sciences of value. The black avant-garde is an anticipatory manifestation of that shift/irruption.
 2. The black avant-garde works the second "as if" above in a specific way. The eclipse of objects by practices is a head, a necessary opening that vanishes here in the work of those who are not but nothing other than objects themselves. (Black) performance is the resistance of the object and the object is in that it resists, is in that it is always the practice of resistance. And if we understand race, class, gender and sexuality as the materiality of social identity, as the surplus effect of production, then we can also understand the ongoing, resistive force of such materiality as it plays itself out in/as the work of art. This is to say that these four articulating structures must be granted not only historicity, politics and practice but aesthetics as well. This is also to say that the concept of the object of Performance Studies is (in) practice precisely at the convergence of the surplus (in all the richness with which Martin formulates it—as, in short, the ongoing possibility or hope of a minoritarian insurgency that would be keyed to Deleuze and Guattari, on the one hand, and, say, Adrian Piper, on the other) and the aesthetic.
- 161 In remarks offered at a conference at Duke University, November 9–12, 1994, convened under the title "Globalization and Culture."

171 Renowned for his pioneering contributions as a theater director in the 1960s, Schechner is also a founding father of performance studies and performance theory.

181 This paraphrases remarks of his given at a meeting of the Ford Foundation Jazz Study Group at Columbia University in 1999.

191 In an essay called "The Five Avant-Gardes Or...Or None" in *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader*. Ed. Michael Huxley and Noel Witts. New York: Routledge, 1996, pp. 308–25.

110 Leeming and, in Strayhorn's case, David Hajdu. See Hajdu's *Lush Life: A Biography of Billy Strayhorn*. New York: North Point Press, 1996.

111 Leeming, p. 169.

112 Leeming, p. 151.

113 Leeming, pp. 12–3.

114 Leeming, p. 157.

115 Leeming, p. 143.

116 Nathaniel Mackey, "Sound and Sentiment, Slound and Symbol" in *Discrepant Engagement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 232.

117 Check his own version of the song—he accompanies his voice on piano, but there is already an interior accompaniment of the voice—recorded live at Basin Street East, New York City, January 14, 1964 and released on Billy Strayhorn, *Lush Life* CD AK 52760. New York: Red Baron, 1992.

118 "Ci-gît/Here Lies" in Artaud, p. 211.

119 Strayhorn, "Lush Life."

120 This paragraph calls upon several thinkers whose names I ought to call: Neil Smith, Betsy Duncan and Laura Reid; Henri Lefebvre; Marcia Seigel; Susan Howe; Jacques Derrida.

We are full of voices, like all islands.

Hélène Cixous

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His work with installation, performance and recording aims to draw attention to the phenomenal dynamics of found-sound and its place within a broader social environment. His work has been featured in the "Sound as Media" exhibition at I.C.C., Tokyo, and "Bitstreams" at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

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PRIVATE CALL—PUBLIC SPEECH:
THE SITE OF LANGUAGE, THE LANGUAGE OF SITE



Brandon LaBelle

NOT KNOWING WHAT TO SAY TODAY I realized was in itself a wonderful opportunity to talk about speech. And further, having to continue, to follow through with this talk, reveals the way in which one is always forced into speech. Not to say that speaking is undesirable, or completely awash in anxiety, though at times it is. But more so, this "not knowing what to say" and yet having to say it, that important something, uncovers speaking as a complicated thing. To call it a thing is to suggest that it has dimension, that speech is a kind of object, something separate from myself: I stare at language and it stares back at me. It is this, and yet it is intangible as well, floating somewhere inside the body, a difficult vapor in the mind.

This complexity of language, that it is both inside and out, graspable yet intangible, a fluid on the tongue and a hard mass, is given shape with each spoken word: syllables fall apart as one gets tongue-tied, the mouth loses flexibility in a sudden bout of laziness, or anxiety, one forgets the words in the flow of conversation, losing control in the midst of argument. Yet one must continue—I have to respond to this "having to say something;" I have to find

something to say even when the words escape me, I have to *give* a talk. This too is a complex moment, because even though I have nothing to say I want to say something, I want to find the words, to grab hold of that difficult vapor and speak up—to fulfill the promise of speech. Why do I speak even against this “not knowing what to say”? Why torture oneself? cause further anxiety? These difficulties of speech are overcome because one has to respond, as a social responsibility, in a public forum such as this, or in a private moment, between friends. In responding one speaks through the contradictions and anxieties, amplifying them through gestures that expand outward and beat against the lexicon of social behavior. In other words, one is always already participating in a broader context, speaking inside a space that is always public.

This excess of speech—that it is always more than expected (social)—is also a limit: against this sociality I recoil; I hide in silence, in a space of hesitation, reluctance, uncertainty—I drift from the symbolic, become apprehensive. This silence gets lodged in the folds of memory and desire; stirs under the pull of longing, of mania and nervousness, seeping into the eventual move toward interaction, toward answerability. Speech as an enactment of language necessarily shifts meaning from the page to the tongue; in doing so signification is raised to a greater power, because the body amplifies the complexities of interaction, making apparent how one is situated in the folds of social organization. With every word there is a shadow, an underside which is never fully revealed, yet which screams out as a throbbing pressure, in broken syllables, as a bruise upon language, an ache. It’s this shadow that paradoxically speech causes to be discovered, to let slip in a wave of forgetfulness, panic, or daydreaming, in a move toward intimacy.

For music I would offer a similar suggestion. To produce sound (for music is a sonorous production) is in itself a kind of response. As a form of articulation, of enunciation, with its own slippages and improvisations, its own fevers and inflections, music too overcomes the contradictory moment of saying something when not knowing what to say. Because music is always already responding. What it responds to is both its social responsibility as a cultural

practice with specific parameters, however flexible—and further, to the desire to engage with sound—to sonorously produce.

To suggest that music responds to the presence of sound itself is to emphasize music as a production in relation to occurrences seemingly outside itself, at least the cultural parameters that often determine its formation (conventions of performance and reception, of audio reproduction, listening habits, etc). Against the backdrop of the greater medium of sound itself, music unfolds, inhabiting the same sonic space as those sounds beyond musical parameters, outside the expected sonicity. In other words, music enacts the medium of sound, speaks through its physical laws, transcends them in metaphysical speculations, adopts the noise of the everyday; in doing so, music enters conversations that in turn undermine and influence its conventions—it must contend with the intervention of sound's own peregrinations.

In expanding outward in reverberations, the auditory beats up against other ears, other bodies and architectures. Sound overwhelms its own limits, refracting across social space—it seeps through the cracks and disturbs another's sleep, violates demographic borders, spills over. In other words, sound interferes. There is no where to hide, no safety zone of pure, unlimited silence. In this way, sound is never a private affair, rather it invades public space, occurs within a multiplicity, as a multiplicity. This greater medium of sound is what one always hears, unframed, unproduced, within ordinary moments, and which nonetheless converses with music as a production, overlapping with its flow and beat, impelled and impelling.

In this way music and speaking share common ground as being sonorous. As actions they come to confront similar frustrations, symbolic limits and potential openings; they participate in a move toward a space of interaction. What propels speech then is connected to a physicality that, being a part of a sociality, is continually apprehended by limits: speech, in its articulation, its enunciation, is always more than it imagines it will be, or less—one speaks and in doing so brushes against the codes that determine what can and can not be said.

SPEAKING = HEARING = SPEAKING



...words are manifestations of persons...voice is the amplification of an interior...

Walter Ong

Walter Ong emphasizes language as an aural occurrence carrying within it a residue of individual desire. According to Ong, words retain a part of our interior and hold within them an echo of our innermost thoughts. They are what we call upon to articulate the spectrum of emotion, from the ordinary to the sublime. Yet words fall short, apprehended on a threshold of meaning, at that point of *giving* a talk. Language operates as this contradiction: it is what provides us with an interiority and through which we become self-realized; at the same time, language makes this interiority impossible to fully know: it stands in the way as a kind of symbolic curtain and frustrates our ability to understand the multiplicity of thought and feeling, the simultaneity of being.

Like a food language fills the mouth, a material we feed on and yet which makes us gag. In other words, language pushes us back, keeps us at a distance, and at the same time it allows access to knowledge; through self-reflection we live consciously, share experiences. What I'd like to emphasize is that this process is greater than ourselves: the amplification of the interior which Ong theorizes is always reverberating across social space, across an exterior whose surfaces deflect sound and speech, carrying it beyond its own limit. In other words, the message of speech is always interfered with because it is always articulated inside of and against a public. Through this the very notion of an interior is problematized—my words as a reflection of myself are made up of syllables that are not completely my own. In other words, speech makes language site-specific because it participates in the ecology of a time and a place—it exists as a material lodged in the collective strata of an environment. It is also a highly active material, functioning as an architecture through which we move, however difficult, and which makes these movements possible.

Following Walter Ong, language is never devoid of the hearing sense. It operates as a dual mechanism in which speaking and listening are inseparable. In speaking, one is always already in an act of listening—to oneself, to the thoughts which precede their articulation. An interior dialogue occurs just before actual verbalization. This is true for listening as well: to listen to another's speaking is to speak these words to oneself, to comprehend them through a mental imagining in which words and their meaning take shape.

Through hearing ourself speak we gauge ourselves, an echoing back and forth that enables a kind of emotional grounding, bringing into relief an awareness of who we are at this moment. This fulfills a certain moral obligation toward a sense of self—that we continually draw out the interior life into the open, thus achieving enlightenment. One speaks in order to know, and expression is at the center of knowledge. Yet in this echoing the signal gets disrupted—in the private dialogue other noises interfere, washing out the clarity of the message, shifting the sonic wave, confusing its trajectory. In contrast to the dichotomy of an interiority probed by language and externally made manifest through the expressing self, here the interior life is broken open by the continual influx of external stimuli—by a kind of feedback that in its loop collects additional input, feeding an unexpected and uncertain material into the source, and which, through this process of "contamination," lessens as an originary beginning. In this way the external environment contributes to the interior sense of self, determining the articulations through which being is made manifest and experienced. Through this, life in essence becomes a public affair as opposed to a private experience, and identity a surface marked by one's surroundings, abrasions that tease one into relief.

CONTACT MUSIC: WETTING THE MEMBRANE



This process of interaction in essence brings life into animation—the push and pull of living—through a dynamic of contact: one is always impressed by one's surroundings and in turn, one makes an impression. All those internal conver-

sations are continually disrupted and set in motion by an external pressure. In other words, we are always in contact—our bodies reverberate with the immediate noise of one's surroundings, our voices convey an interior which is constituted by a myriad of other voices, memories and dreams, longings and repressions, by that which we hope to say.

Musically, this interaction is mirrored in the contact microphone. The contact microphone differs from other microphones in that it is sensitive to the surface vibration of objects and materials as opposed to the undulation of sound waves through air. The contact microphone is placed in direct contact with the source of what it amplifies as opposed to "at a distance." Two surfaces brush, overlap, wear away at the other—this material agitation is brought into focus, amplifying the meeting point where the body collides with the world; the contact microphone reveals this point of contact not as representation but as a performative confrontation, an impression (literally, pressed upon) by the force of an external body.

The contact microphone can provide a point of entry into surrounding space, into the audibility of interiors, and the inter-amplification of sonic bodies: architectural spaces become resonate vessels full of surface vibrations, the body itself is brought into audibility through a microphonic invasion—the guttural, the gastronomic, the phlegmatic, etc., all a sonicity of the body—and objects take on sonic significance as potential musical instruments. Through this relay of contact, of physical vibration, amplification and reception—of living, speaking, and hearing—the integrity of music as a fixed form becomes complicated because it is always receiving and transmitting more than itself, it is always already bound up within a complexity of relations that intervene and infiltrate its own interior. Like the multiplicity of voices that resound within the interior life, music is constituted by disruption, by multiple signals that it represses and amplifies.

Music has its own fevers: it slips in the fold of a sensual moment, drifts into reverie, recalls a melody from some other time; it dreams of a possible form, spits out its guts in freak accident, improvisations that fail to go the dis-

tance. Haunted by something more, extending through psycho-acoustical traumas that in turn become productive ticks and quirks, obsessive structures, music is always in contact with its own exterior, and in turn it is constituted by that which is outside—the noise of the street, the buzzing of bees, the silence in the middle of the night. Like speech it amplifies this exterior as it feeds through the conduits of musical consciousness, materializing as sonic stuff that situates itself within the world as part of culture.

HERE AND NOW: NOISE'S QUARREL WITH MUSIC



In considering the relationship between sound and language, and the complex relationships that determine their meeting—music, speaking, being—one necessarily confronts the complexities and intermingling of private desire and public obligation, the imagination and law. In essence, one hits the wall of the symbolic. What interests me is the process behind which one resolves this confrontation, how one finds a way around, lives through the exhaustion of being deflected, shut out, and finds resolve. I would propose that music as a cultural form negotiates this confrontation by amplifying the collision between the “pulsional” and the limits of possibility, between what is given and what is imagined. In other words, music makes audible the processes of digging deeper.

These processes lead to the peripheries of Music, and into a sonicity often at odds with musicality itself. Noise (“tonus peregrinus”) comes to bear down on the conventional parameters of musicality because by nature it appears along the lines of confrontation, in a no-man’s land between the interior and the exterior, imagination and law, and where the two overlap and converse and interpenetrate. This conversation is necessarily a traumatic one, sonically mixing up the vocabulary of conventional musicality, yet catching the beat just before it drops off into silence.

Noise-Music takes pleasure in this confrontation, this mixing of imagination and law, of convention and interference, of clarity and disruption.

As a genre of music, Noise-Music disrupts the semiological safety zone of signifier and signified through a cannibalistic obsession with its own terms: Noise-Music functions according to a tautological loop of electrical input-output, of cause and effect conflated to a point of implosion, yet an implosion which aims to sustain itself, to implode indefinitely. Here, language struggles to find an opening, a reference point from which to tell the story, describe the terms of decibel and electricity, because Noise-Music inflates itself to monstrous proportions. Monstrosity functions as a model for Noise-Music's excesses—it fills every crevice of space with volume, stifles the air with sonic agitation: it is a bloated Music. It disrupts the signifying chain—instead, the self-generating economy of electrical feed-back sucks itself to a point of intensity, a TOTAL TAUTOLOGY—or, a maximizing output of the grotesque. This self-generating intensity, this imploding and maximizing loop, violates the typographic coherency of symbolic space, blotching out formal legibility with excessive volume, with a multiplicity of input and referent.

Noise-Music is electrical—not electronic, but electricity amplified and then doubled over, brought to the power of X in an equation that only refers back to itself ad infinitum. Noise-Music here is only interested in itself, in a pure technological disorder, and techniques of disorder: instruments become apparatus for uncontrollable sound, analog circuits tools for breakdown, and electrical current pure voltage. This underside of music never dreams of institutional support, or of a discursive space of description—in contrast, it literally shocks narrative into distortion, fuzzing out the edges of the script, of the signifying scale. In other words, Noise-Music turns up the volume and amplifies the shit as it hits the fan. This shit of Noise-Music is what art history packages within containable forms in order to contemplate—here, Piero Manzoni's can of artist's shit (from 1961) placed on a pedestal enters language as a symbolic act, a conceptual gesture: it begs to be recognized inside a space of discourse. In contrast, for Noise-Music, this amplification of shit hitting the fan, there is no room for language; it aims for an outside, or an inside, spinning on a different axis of reason, one which is pure machinery, monstrosity and electrical

output—brut amplification. It aims to remain inside the very mechanics and circuits, to remain, as Attali theorizes, a “simulacrum of murder.”

Noise-Music pries back the tin of Manzoni’s can to reveal the stuff inside, the carnal matter. In doing so it also opens up the tin of language, not to provide a glimpse into its workings, but to bask in the stench. Like Jean Genet farting in bed, holding the odor under the blanket in order to better intoxicate himself when finally pulling it over his head—a rapture of stench that offers escape from his prison cell—Noise-Music looks for a way out. This physicality of sound, like Genet’s farts—his desire to rupture the granite of his cell with a carnal glory—sound’s elusiveness and abrasiveness, its softness and penetration, are properties which lead one into the cracks—the hidden cavities, the haunted memories, the drift towards the dysfunctional.

X AS SURPLUS



Here, Noise in general can be used to open up a potential grammar, one determined by the excesses which are integral to thinking and feeling, writing and walking, being and performing, socializing and reflecting, because its complexity never loses the full weight of presence, of unstable referents, a reverberance which suggests something more, something uncontainable, an excess, a sensuality. In turn Noise is ambiguous in that it rests between bodies, flows between identifiable objects and figures, hovers as an intangible materiality forcing back the mass of language, and bringing it into its wave, its static. This static holds all frequencies at once—a white noise in whose hum speaking is made distorted, washed out. Yet Noise also amplifies language, disseminating it across the sonic spectrum, raising it to the power of X, X equaling that which is always beyond ourselves, inside ourselves, as a rush of blood, a flickering of eyelids, an abusive word, a flow of caresses.

From here it is easy to understand why Roland Barthes is led to an acoustic metaphor at the very end of his book *The Pleasure of the Text*. His description of a form of language which he calls “writing aloud” enables him to follow through

the pleasure of the text as a periphery of meaning to arrive at an imagined point of blissful connection—here, the granularity of text trickles along the fine hairs of the ear canal, sending shivers along Roland’s back: “...writing aloud is not phonological but phonetic; its aim is not the clarity of messages, the theater of emotions; what it searches for (in a perspective of bliss) are the pulsional incidents, the language lined with flesh...the articulation of the body, of the tongue, not that of meaning, of language.” The acoustic for Barthes reveals itself as a necessary end, and a beginning by giving definition to the connotative nuance of speech—this eccentricity of language finding form through acoustic subtlety.

ON THE STREET: THE MUD OF LANGUAGE



Barthes idea of “writing aloud” is for him a sensual articulation. He suggests that this “writing aloud” in all its voluptuousness can be detected in cinema, as a kind of “close-up” of speech. Here, language retains the full blown bliss of a textual erotics by “shifting the signified a great distance and in throwing, so to speak, the anonymous body of the actor into my ear: it granulates, it crackles, it caresses, it grates, it cuts, it comes: that is bliss.” Yet what I would like to propose is that “writing aloud” is also social because in its audibility it necessarily extends beyond the tiny pleasure zone of private reading (or listening), reverberating outside the walls of the cinema-house. If the comfortability of Barthes’ bliss—his private theater—were to truly write aloud it would no longer be purely blissful because it would confront its own limits, limits determined by social space, by the subtle violence of interaction, the anxiety and complications of orality and audition.

So here we have reached writing, yet a writing which has as its vocabulary the surge of interaction, the pulsional, and whose page is a public surface. Graffiti functions as a possible model of a “loud writing,” of an aesthetics which exceeds itself and in doing so, bumps into the Law. As a writing of agitated marks, flushed bodies and smeared gestures, graffiti arises out of the collision between private desire and public necessity, inside the symbolic yet on the

threshold of its disruption, a periphery. Whether individual recklessness or collective assertion, graffiti views public space as a domain of “articulation,” a typographic potential; and in doing so, it aims to confront this space, to subvert the clean surface to the benefit of a greater cause, the cause of being recognized. Graffiti calls attention to itself by its sudden presence, one that is not in the plan but which nonetheless makes its mark. It follows the contours of architectural space, across walls and under stairs, over billboards and along alleyways. It seeps into the corners and spreads itself across seemingly unreachable locations—it surprises the eye, and in turn it surprises the laws of public space. This writing aloud is an urgent writing for it must articulate itself before being caught—it must spell out before being arrested, and ultimately, washed over—covered up. This arresting is both judicial—the cop on his neighborhood beat—and social, for in writing aloud one mars the surface of public space—one vandalizes, rather than comes.

Yet graffiti also extends Barthes “pleasure of the text” by articulating its own pleasure ever more loudly than in the cinema. In writing aloud graffiti must take its pleasure within public view—here, the possibility of being caught only makes its vandalistic gestures more thrilling, and more urgent, more vulnerable. And its “beautification” of social space an aesthetic high that excites language into a simultaneity of meaning, as shared property.

In this vandalization, this loud writing, one can trace a productive word: the writing that articulates itself loudly, that has as part of its syntax the potential to make apparent the limits of writing and the relationships that govern these limits, that arrests the hand just as it attempts to make a mark, brings into view an “enactment” of language. For graffiti is a kind of speech—in its excesses of color and shape, its scrawl, it digs deep into language, into grammar and code. In other words, it uses language for its own ends, its own equation. It uses social space as well, making graffiti a site specific writing, teasing the edges of what can and can not be said, of how interior and exterior spaces are always speaking through each other.

* An original version of this paper was delivered as a talk at The Wire’s Interference series, London April 2000.

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YODELING TO ROUSE THE ECHOES



bart plantenga

YODELING, ESPECIALLY THE TYROLEAN LEDERHÖSEN TYPE with its rapid variations in tone and pitch, lies within cheap earshot of that annoying Oktoberfest biergarten oompah music—jolly, mindless escapism—hoist another stein, stretch another octave. The word *jodel*, after all, derives from the Latin, *jubilare*, meaning to shout with joy.

But what exactly is a yodel? Greeting? Warning? Joyous outburst? Flashy pop chorus? Silly ululations cleverly situated somewhere between the regular human voice and falsetto? Or an irritating “variation upon the tones of a jackass,” as Sir Walter Scott in 1830 referred to yodeling? Or what Christoph Wagner calls “low-down high-up vocal trickery.” Most ethnomusicologists agree that yodeling is some ancient rural form of calling. A genuine yodel, or *yutz*, is wordless and not really “music,” but an acoustical signal used by cow/goat/shep/herds to communicate with one another and their herds.

Some ethnomusicologists position the ululations somewhere between pragmatic navigation and spiritual steerage. Leonard Bernstein once calculated a general formula for music that might apply to yodeling: “...one part aural

excitement, one part visual excitement, four parts identification feelings with the beyond, two parts adoration of almighty forces ...”

This might be the other side of yodeling—soulful, incantatory—steeped in the ancient cowherds’ pagan prayer calls to appease valley gods and insure the safe passage of herds through treacherous terrain. Hence the ethereal and haunting quality of some pure (alpine) yodels.

The yodel’s origin may very well be the human soul; the yodel as a psychological reaction to the breathtaking scenery surrounding the cowherd—yodeling’s wide leaps of high and low notes evoking the exalted hills, the awe of the human spirit, the commingling of outer beauty and inner spirit. Herman Hesse in his coming-of-age novel, *Peter Camenzind*, describes a yodel as an “inarticulate hymn to beauty” which is “bellowed like a bull with joy and excitement into clear mountain air.” And if “melody exists in the soul of man,” as Rudolph Steiner insists, then perhaps the scenery helps write the melody sung as a yodel. And to paraphrase John Lee Hooker: If it’s in’m it’s gotta come out. So imagine yodels bouncing off hillsides until there are any number of versions of your own voice harmonizing in mid-air—until voilà, arguably, what the first instant of “recorded” sound—mountain valley as recording studio—might have been like.

But what’s a yodel sound like? Depends on who you ask. Mark Twain thought it sounded (at first) like a “melodious Lul...l...l...lul-lul-Lahee-oo!” And a “sort of quaint commingling of baritone and falsetto which at home we call ‘Tyrolese warbling.’” Others claim it approximates a cow’s mooing, or is an imitation of the alphorn, a train’s whistle, a steam organ, a bird’s plaintive song. Meanwhile, M’Benga Pygmies imitate the sounds of antelopes, chimpanzees, and gorillas. The Bavarian name for *kulning*—Scandinavian yodel-like calling—is *gallen*, or the onomatopoeic name for the call of the rooster, or *gallna*, the call of the cuckoo.

Yodeling consists of warbled melodies that use sudden alterations of vocal register from a low-pitched chest voice to high falsetto tones sung on vowel sounds—*AH*, *OH*, *OO* for the chest notes, *AYEE* for the falsetto. Each nonlexical

syllable ends with a distinct glottal break at the moment of transition between these two registers, giving yodels their particular character. Or as Cathy Fink explains in her “Yodeling Lesson,” “F for low, E for high, 2 vowel sounds with a break and that’s where the yodel takes place ...AY EE AY EE ...”

The earliest account of a yodel is found in 1545; George Rhaw’s *Bicinia Gallica*—refers to yodeling as a *Kühreihen* or “the cowherd’s call.” However, as early as 397 AD, in *Act of Martyrs*, Roman Emperor Julian complained of the northern mountain people’s wild shrieking songs—definitely not a yodel fan. Many ethnomusicologists, however, venture even further back and date yodelish ululations at shortly after the dawn of man.

We’re all familiar to some degree with the Swiss yodel. At the very least we’ve heard Julie Andrews yodeling in the *Sound of Music*. But people in Germany, Austria, Romania, Estonia, Hawaii, Melanesia, Mexico, Texas, Kentucky, black slaves in America, Maine, parts of South America, Papua New Guinea all yodel as well. As do the Inuit, the Lapps, the North American Chippewa and African forest Pygmies with their unique polyphonic yodels. Even in India, especially in a number of low-budget “Bollywood” flicks, there is a propensity to break into a Hindi take on yodeling. And on some over-the-top level yodeling was even suited to the ostentatious, hi-brow excesses of opera. Singers as varied as Leon Thomas, Jimmie Rodgers, Jerry Lee Lewis, Sly & Family Stone, Shelley Hirsch, Ed Sanders, Lee “Scratch” Perry, and many in between have been known to utilize the yodel to some effect.

Many (reductivist) theories of the yodel’s evolution dwell on the pragmatic nature of a herder’s work or a hunter’s toils and anxieties. This leaves room for further speculation because as pre-historic humans domesticated animals, the herds became trained to be more and more heedful of the cowherd’s yodel and eventually, herdsmen had less to do. As trained cattle grazed, cowherd’s discovered leisure. Leisure bred idleness and with idleness came play—and hence, yodeling experiments. This transformation of the pragmatic yodel into something self-affirmingly improvisational is aptly described by Hermann Hesse: “Then I was made village goatherd. On one of the slopes where I usually drove

my beasts was a sheltered nook ...the blue sky hung like a canopy over needle-sharp peaks, and the tinkling goat bells mingled with the incessant roar of a nearby waterfall. There I sprawled in the warmth, gazed in wonderment at the hurrying white cloudlets, and yodeled softly to myself until the goats noticed my laxness and took advantage of it ...”

The human body serves as the prototype for all musical instruments. The respiratory system—lungs, throat, and vocal chords—comprises the first wind instrument. “The vocal chords, a collection of thin membranes, are set into vibration by the rush of air. The throat and mouth then serve to resonate the sound...”

Vibrations along the vocal chords in the form of, let’s say, a yodel’s alternating throat (tightened vocal cords = raised pitch) and chest (slackened cords = lower pitch, deeper tone) voices, are forced from throat to mouth. Oral cavity serves as megaphone amplifying the vibrations as the sounds are released at 331 meters per second into the surrounding air. The entire chest cavity serves a purpose similar to that of the body of a guitar, it amplifies the strummed vocal cords to aid in projecting the voice. The sounds travel in waves or clusters of agitated air molecules like ripples on water resonating out from a splash, each ripple pushing its neighboring ripple a bit further outward (but just as importantly, inward). Cup your hands around your mouth as you yodel, witness this so-called “inner music” emerge from its constricted vocal chambers, abstract and pre-verbal. Witness as it commingles with nature, occupies space, and emanates way beyond bodily limitations so that the awesome “out there” is brought in and the *in* is drawn out. With amplification the sounds will linger even longer, get trapped in valleys, bouncing off hillsides and ravines, and eventually reverberate back upon themselves to sing harmony with one another, like “vocal ghosts produc[ing] an imaginal space.”

The yodeler is diminished and yet simultaneously enlarged in the landscape because, as Rudolph Steiner observed, “The soul is indeed the harp upon which the musician plays. The whole feeling body of man is a musical instrument on which the ego resounds and the soul produces the melody. It does not

exist in the Cosmos. Melody lies within man himself.” In fact in many oral, or pre-writing cultures, sound verified, even signified, existence. Hesse put it thusly: “...quite overcome, I saw with fear and joy in my heart the immense distances bearing down on me. So that was how fabulously wide the world was.” Sight and sound collaborating to inform the soul.

In the story of Narcissus, Echo was condemned to speak only as a response to others. But because Narcissus, her innamorata, was too self-involved he never managed to speak to her. And thus Echo never spoke and died unheard. One interpretation is that only after narcissism is overcome will echo flourish. And so, like Narcissus saw, lolling cowherds might have heard, heard not their fellow herders, but themselves. As Mellers observed: “We live in the noise’s process ...An ancient ‘way of life’ is rendered immediate ...” And it is this self-awareness that must be put into proper context. Thoreau attempts this in his *Journal* when he suggests, “our minds should echo at least as many times as a Mammoth Cave to every musical sound. It should awaken reflections in us ...” Implying that with each echo of our own yodel we are forced to take stock of the bigger world around us—again empowerment through the acceptance of humility. Divining via yodeling can lead to knowing: Jack Kerouac, working as a fire lookout in Washington State, was faced with the task of being alone with himself and took to yelling “questions at the rocks and trees, and across gorges, or yodel—‘what is the meaning of the void?’ The answer was perfect silence. So I knew.”

When sound defines a space, that’s ambience. When it defines existence, we call it belief. A belief in the rapt yodel outburst reverberating beyond expectation while it directs its energy to discovering itself is where one can become momentarily absorbed in the process of perception, that instant of hallucinatory and transformative recognition at the point of interaction of one’s senses with one’s environment, that sense of awe—“the hills are alive” as Julie Andrews exclaimed—of feeling that it’s alive with one’s own voice, a voice that is perhaps part of a larger mosaic.

Robin Maconie describes this exchange between self and world as, "...the consequences of the act of creation as a declaration of a distinction between the (divine) self and the world; [which] includes a loss of direct control over the world ...with the possibility of an original conception of order deteriorating into chaos ..."

Hearing is our most temporally accurate sense; vision our most spatially accurate. The problem of how nervous systems organize and integrate perceptual information at a given speed in a given locale has produced "psychological moment" theories. "Far from taking us out of space," notes Victor Zuckerkindl, "music discloses to us a mode of being of spatiality that, except through music, is accessible only with difficulty and indirectly." We do not so much escape our corporeal place and time in reality. In fact, music may very well redefine time and space. Auditory space is a relationship between phenomenological and metric space. Music allows physical time to be superceded by psychological time; organic clock obliterating mechanical clock. Henri Bergson noted that listening to a melody with one's eyes closed coincided with a time described as the "very fluidity of our inner life."

But echo (like reverb, delay, or looping) seems to mimic psychotropic time-space dislocations; it stretches time allowing the present to become a future in a reprocessed past. In fact: "Some music was recognized symbolically as representative of the feelings and perceptions of drug users, i.e., in its distorted sound and sound effects..."

And since echo wreaks havoc with the inner ear's "vestibular sense [which] registers movement on three planes...via three semicircular canals... Projections from these receptor-sites lead directly into the vermis of the cerebellum ...This area controls the anti-gravity muscles ..." Echo has the potential to confuse by over-stimulating the hair cell nerve endings in the canals. These confused signals are broadcast to the auditory nerve in the brain and in turn amplified by the auditory signal which are sent to the muscles that control balance, spatial relations and equilibrium. Space becomes tentative, non-geometric, sonically-defined. Time goes fluid, spatial, into a non-calendrical

"intimate immensity." And yet "blocks of sound can overlap and interpenetrate in acoustic space without collapsing into a harmonic unity of consonance, thereby maintaining the paradox of 'simultaneous difference.'"

Synaesthesia occurs when one is "exposed to a stimulation in one sense area but receives and experiences that stimulus in association with another sense area." Or, in our situation, when someone yodels we might feel or see the Alps. This sensation occurs quite naturally and unassumingly. Merriam notes various studies which pointed out that "the vowel *a* (as in *father*), *o*, *u* are associated...with the dark-warm-soft series and *e* (English *a* in *date*), *i* (English *e* in *be*) with the bright-cold-sharp set." One quickly notes that yodels, their *ah*, *oh*, *oo* sounds might correspondingly evoke the dark cozy valleys while the *AY*, *EE*, falsetto sounds might evoke or have one experience the bright, icy mountain-tops synaesthetically.

I like yodeling because it involves echo, echo as a rearrangement of our psychoacoustical apparatus, echo as entry point into another realm, echo as a way for the modern recording studio to tap into the organic, human voice reverberating through valleys where the yodeler finds harmony with him- or herself.

If the mountain valley served as ancient recording studio prototype, the echo's ephemeral memory only became remastered voice on tape deep into the twentieth century. The use of yodel and electronic second cousin, echo, in modern recordings allows disintegrations of standard musical syntax; the smudging of precise instrumentation, while the techniques help re-outfit the message and its effects—affecting our dis- or relocation in the scheme of things. At the mental point where sound as mechanical energy is converted into bioelectrical nerve impulse, we bridge the synaptical gaps between ethnomusicology and psychoacoustics, between fader and phalange, body and spirit, you and it. Or again, as Mellers puts it, "we live in the noise's process."

We rewrite cultural anthropology, obliterate previous hegemonic (national)isms and re-map new routes into the sacred and speculative. And potentially, recapture the notion of creative play in exchange for the less satisfying touristic notions of leisure.

Dub (versioning or doubling) is the strategy of reconfiguring one of the world's most influential "sounds," Jamaican reggae songs, by stripping them of their vocals and then customizing them with delay, echo, and interspliced samples which can transform a song into something like an aural psychotropic entry into altered consciousness. Dub expands space to hoe "the uneasy silence" between sounds. Maconie states that "most sounds are intermittent and ephemeral, and because of the aural concept of reality is framed to account for the continuing existence of things that may not always be signaling their presence ..." To add further speculation to the mix, Joscelyn Godwin claims that "...expansion into bigger and bigger spaces slows down temporal events, to the degree that a single vibration, or rotation, of our planet takes a whole day, and that of a galaxy, millions of years." Echo of the original, in time, becomes the echo of an echo until the echoes of the echoes begin to mingle, harmonize, and morph into something completely new and expansive, "dematerializing and eroding the integrity of singers and song." And it is here, at this juncture of technology and deep abiding notions of connecting inner with outer, that yodeling may function its connective or mantral function.

This notion that prior to reverb and echo as knobs on a soundboard there was the yodel as a pre-recorded sound in society's collective cochlea lends itself well to the hyper-post-modern tactics of appropriation, dissembling, sampling, self-reference and détourned function. As it departs *from*, it arrives *at*; as it renounces it reclaims. By departing from ethnomusical empiricism and genre-puritanism the reconstituted yodel may be able to hermeneutically reclaim deep feelings of awareness by destabilizing socially determined contexts of what music should do and where it can go. This has already been loosely termed 4th world music (by Brian Eno), which involves electronica's inventive re-use of dub and speculative samples while not necessarily neglecting awareness. It's where "analog doppelgangers" reveal their "desire to travel through intangible dimensions ...to float and be intoxicated by rhythms and frequencies..." while offering a voiceprint back to a pre-modern ur-connection with the speculation or suspicion that "all planes of existence [are] linked in an ana-

logous way, each one reflecting all the others, and all perhaps reflecting some over-arching pattern” or the vibration, that synaptical instant, that segue between a yodel’s high and low where outer integrates with inner and past fuses to future. It could be that same instant of recognition where the yearning townspeople, singing their yodel songs in cafés reclaim, if only for an instant, the idyllic surroundings of the mountain valleys they’ve left behind for the cities.

* This is a remixed extract from a longer article, “Will There Be Yodeling in Heaven?” which appeared in the *American Music Research Center Journal*, volume 8/9, 1998-99, University of Colorado at Boulder, ed. Tom Riis, pp. 107-138.

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ACCENTS



Terri Kapsalis

I CAN HEAR THE NEWSPAPER from my grandparents' living room or *saloni*.
Saloni
long "a" ah
long "o" oh
long "i" ee
accent on the oh
sah LO nee
Remember, accent on the oh.

My grandfather or *papou* (long "a" ah, long "oo" oo, accent on the "oo"—paPOO) sits across from the television in his Athens apartment, volume turned max. Today's newspaper fills the frame, a man's hand turning pages when appropriate, his voice reading headlines and excerpts. Papou calls it "listening to my newspapers." He does not watch the close-up shot of the newspaper. Nothing to see, really. Especially through glasses as thick as discuses. Papou stares at the seam between the wall and ceiling, up above the needlepoint and lace, head

cocked. Endless compound words glide off the reader's tongue. Words as long as sentences. Stunt words. Stretch words. Meaningful yet unremarkable to Papou, who nods to the man on television who reads to him from his paper.

First Greek lesson. My own name.

Kapsalis

long "a" ah

long "a" ah

long "i" ee

accent on the second ah

KahpSAHlees

I learn that to emphasize all three syllables equally is a false kind of American democracy. I also know that long a's (ah) are anti-regional. I grow up in Chicago, not Athens. Not ah, but AAAA. Shutters thrown open AAAA's. Lucille Ball AAAA's. For adolescent girls, all is scrutinized: dress, movement, possessions, and habits. And speech, down to the A's. One pack leader brAAAtishly asks me when hearing me say the word sahlahd: "Why do you say 'solid' when the word is 'sAAAlAAAd'?"

Only later, learning Greek as an adult, can I recall the long alpha (ah). A childhood familiar, teased into hiding. The rolling ro – easy on the ear, clumsy on the tongue. The guttural gamma—somewhere between a "y," a "g" and a snake's hiss. The punched delta—not a "d" nor a "th," but a hammer to a board. I learn to put them all together, but I will forget one important ingredient. Emphasis. Accented syllable. The sounds can all come out right, but if the chosen syllable is not emphasized, everything will collapse, meaning evacuated. At the kitchen table, conversing with my Grandmother, I attempt a simple word. *Oregano*, for instance. *Rigani* reegahnee, yet I will accent it incorrectly

ree GAN nee.

The word falls to the checker tablecloth with a splat.
My grandmother's face blank. Again,

ree GAN nee.

Nothing. I roll my ro with extra spin, my gamma is a faultless excavation. Pronunciation near perfect. Still nothing. I jump up on the chair and remove the metal canister from the cabinet, clutching it to my chest. Her face slides into recognition. Ahhh, she says,

REE gan nee.

And so the comedy plays itself out, over and over until it is no longer funny. I become adept at accented syllable shift, an intricate shell game. Switch the emphasis until the listening face registers comprehension. Eventually, as inevitably happens, I begin to hear.

Just in time for Mandarin. I am the only one who doesn't speak it where I work one afternoon each week. I try, sometimes. Subtle sound shades combined with seesaw tones. I am a total toddler. Thrilled if a single word is comprehended. I mimic simple phrases I've learned from language tapes, only to meet blank stares. I enjoy the sound of Mandarin. Even though I've nearly given up the hope of ever truly learning this language, certain words peek out at me now and again—apple, Chinese, licorice, doctor, I, eat, mushroom, um. Decipherable sounds are far outnumbered by those I cannot recognize. The unidentifiable require a different approach to listening, a form of surrender that has its own set of pleasures.

And then we went to hear playwright, sound artist Valère Novarina read. My primitive French could not keep up with this language master. But I still enjoyed the sonic pleasures of his serious play. A glorious performer, he did not let the text he read anchor him to the podium, instead his eyes tried to catch his text as if it were a flag caught in wild wind. Soaring, acrobatic sentences.

Twirling dervish words bouncing along the serious wood paneling. Little drills to ears. The waltz of thunderbolts. Ecstatic. Bestial. Floundering, burrowing language. False language knocking up against the void. A man of two heads with relentless tongues and no evidence of fatigue.

An indignant woman in a bright orange suit, while fluent in French, could not understand Novarina's reading. Her disapproval radiated from her glowing outfit. This woman was uninterested in living neological passion to the limit and unconvinced by the struggle of tongues in space. During the question and answer period afterwards she asked Novarina bitterly, accusingly, "Do you want to confuse people?" He stared back blankly. She tried again, slowly, "Are you deliberately trying to confuse people?" No expression from him. Believing he could not understand her English, she continued her line of questioning in French. He interrupted with an open palm stop sign and spoke slowly to calm the offensive. "Je comprends." He thought for a moment and then explained in French: "I am trying to help people experience vertigo." The woman stood up and left the building. She had understood him.

Later we spoke with Novarina, gushing about his work, waving our arms about enthusiastically. We sludged through in painful French, throwing in English words he easily understood. After names were exchanged he recognized that mine was Greek and asked what Kapsalis means. Nothing, I explained. Not true actually. I like to think it is closely related to the verb *kapsalizo*, meaning "sing," but I know for sure the meaning of my first name. Terri is from my grandmother's name Eleutheria (El ef ther EE a) which means liberty, freedom. "There is a Greek newspaper" he recalled in French,

"El ef THER oh tee pee ah."

I stared blankly. He repeated,

"El ef THER oh tee pee ah."

I could tell he was concentrating on his pronunciation. Again, I could not understand. He looked uneasy. Again repeated,

“El ef THER oh tee pee ah.”

And then it slid into recognition and I heard it, “Aaah,” I said,

“El ef ther oh tee PEE ah.”

How exciting this was. This misunderstanding was, for me, a huge accomplishment. The master of vertigo laughed, amused at my confusion. He sang the name back to me, a recitation, putting all the punch he could into that chosen syllable. He danced to the rhythm of the word, punching an arm out with the PEE for emphasis. “El ef ther oh tee PEE ah.” This was the kind of misunderstanding I have hoped for. We recited it together again and again. “El ef ther oh tee PEE ah.” To not hear, to not understand is a rite of passage. It signals a kind of intimacy with a foreign, yet familiar language. An intimacy that permits confusion. This mad chant of a Greek newspaper’s name was a celebration. Two foreigners twisting in some strange rhythmic dance to the Greek words “free press.”

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THE WELL TEMPERED LIVER



Norie Neumark

TEMPERS AND THEIR LISTENING HABITS

TEMPERS EVOKE EMOTIONS, physical bodies, and sound. Etymologically connecting pitch, physiology, and tuning, tempers/temperaments expose bodies to a reading, through sound, that does not separate the emotional from the physical, or the material from the semantic. Listening to the well or ill tempered liver—along with a number of other bodily organs—we begin to perceive the corporeality, the materiality of sound. And in turn, sound substantiates theories of the body by listening to the organs in a different way—tuning in to their cultural and historical diversity and to their movement. To listen to the organs as they write themselves aloud in this chapter, I'll oscillate between registers—personal, political, historical, poetic—without tempering any awkward disharmonies.

Listening to it...listening to the liver, basically. And for a short period of time I was my liver. My entire body and the way I thought about myself was completely recentered around this thing that was totally abstract to me, the liver....I guess it kind of repositioned the liver as a...as a speaking subject.¹

Listening to the organs as speaking subjects. Avoiding immersion in an ultra-scientific discourse with its ultrasound machines, which turn sound into vision, separating the organ from the body so that it may be the object of the medical gaze—available for surveillance, attack, extraction.² It was such scientific discourse in the 19th century which contributed to a re-configuration and separation of the senses, involving the disassociation of sight from touch and the increasing abstraction of sight.³ A discourse that would still the body and deny the organs their voices and their movements.

THEY'VE ALWAYS TRAVELED—SECRETLY OR OPENLY—HERE, THEIR PULSINGS BARELY AUDIBLE, THERE, SOUNDING A TERRIBLE RACKET. SO THEY JOURNEY, LEAVING MEMORY TRAILS, CALLING CARDS, ECHOES—ON THE SKIN, ONTO THE CANVAS, AND IN THE ETHER AND THE AIRWAVES. THEY'VE ALWAYS TRAVELED, MOVED BY A VITAL TWITCHING, A VISCERAL WANDERLUST SO COMPELLING THAT IT MAPS ITSELF ONTO BODIES, PEOPLES, PLACES.⁴

Jonathan Crary understands the moment of the remaking of vision and its objects as part of the remaking and abstracting of the modern bourgeois individual—“remaking the individual as observer into something calculable and regularizable and of human vision into something measurable and thus exchangeable.”⁵ Not surprising that under the medical gaze, even the organs of this subject became similarly abstracted and exchangeable—separable from each other within the body and ultimately from the body itself—via transplant.

BUT IN SOME PLACES AND SOME BODIES JUST RECENTLY—OH, SAY, FOR A CENTURY OR SO—THESE JOURNEYS HAVE BEEN INTERRUPTED, AND THEY HAVE BEEN STILL ENOUGH, LONG ENOUGH, TO HAVE TAKEN ROOT—MOVING ONLY WHEN TRANSPLANTED, TRAVELING NEATLY, COOLLY, IN THEIR LITTLE ICE-PACKED ESKIES. NOT A SOUND COULD THEY UTTER, EXCEPT TO POLITELY ANSWER THE DOCTOR'S QUESTIONS; NOT A TRACE SHOULD THEY LEAVE. A MODEST PRODUCTIVE LITTLE COG'S LIFE IN THE MACHINE BODY. MOST KNOWABLE WHEN DEAD, FIXED, PICKLED.

Exchangeable, well tempered instruments one might say. Recalling the well tempered clavier's demonstration of equal temperament, a tempering and tuning system which enabled exchange and exchangeability and thus changed the nature of distance and difference between instruments. But that's a different organology (organology as the history of instruments) than the one I'm tuning into here.⁶ My disposition is more toward finding a pitch somewhere in/between the scientific and poetic registers.

I mean, now I know, now I know a fair bit more about the liver, it's this weird pancake shaped, very dark thing that sits around the center of your torso, that just completely took over my life for six weeks, and I'd never heard from it before that. Its language was actually feelings, close to, close to emotional feelings rather than physical pain. Actually there definitely were feelings—it was a period where I'd get upset quite easily. My response to coffee or alcohol, or something like that, had linked really closely with it, feelings.⁷

Others who know, who hear this feeling/language of the liver are the Dogon, an African people. Their speech emanates from the organs, which give the spoken word its individual nuances, colors and tempers.

Water and fat are contained in the liver, and may play an important part in speech formation. The liver serves as a receptacle while speech, still in its basic water form, begins to boil. Steam accumulates...The fat in the liver supplies speech with 'oil,' and by melting gradually lends sweetness and an unctuous quality to the words about to be said. The speaker who has a kine e:lu, 'sweet liver,' is happy and in good humor. It can also be said that his liver is 'awakened' (kine yemay) and dilates in response to a gentle warmth that comes from the heart...But when a person is unhappy, his liver, on the contrary is asleep (kine yeiay) and contracts. There is no gentle heat to melt the fat, and without it his speech lacks charm.⁸

The liver's voice here is neither symbolic nor metaphorical—the physical, psychological and emotional registers shape both the organs and their sounds.

Because body organs are linked to particular psychophysiological phenomena, it could be said that different varieties of words are held 'in reserve' in their corresponding organs. But this would be putting things too simply. For there is a symbolic link between the organ, its role in individual psychology, and the nature of the spoken words themselves. 'Angry speech,' for example, is associated with the heart: the two are related symbolically through the notions of warmth (since the heart is red, throbs like fire, overheats in anger, circulating the blood more quickly and causing the face to burn) and disorder (the heartbeats become quick and irregular).⁹

Listening to the organs...listening to the psychic, social, philosophical and spiritual complexity of speech through the body, reverberating from and in its various organs. The body: "a personal and cultural sediment of a history, a collect[or] of marks or traces."¹⁰ Such a body presented itself to the psychiatrist Francois Dagognet and the anthropologist Marcel Mauss. Mauss studied the deep and basic organization of the "biological" through culture, examining how practices that are techniques of the body have profound biological echoes and effects. As history shapes the body, the body shapes history and the cultural imaginary.

Mauss grasped the "biological" body as gendered, cultural, historical, sexual—as a product or expression of "habit." Habit or "habitus," according to Mauss, are techniques of the body, and every society has its own special habits. Habits are internal and constructive of body and psyche, though not in some unalterable way. Being social and cultural, habits do not tend to be noticeable to those in that society and culture, in fact they are "naturalized" by it. So habits can seem a product of a biological nature rather than constructive of "biology" and "nature" itself.¹¹ (For instance, how you learn to walk, breathe, and run effects how much oxygen you get, how you develop your nerves and muscles—how you nourish and shape your organs and your voice.)

The concept of "habitus" detours around the mind/body split because it conceptualizes habitual action as containing the biological/psychological/social all articulated together—what Mauss calls "physio-psycho-sociological assemblages of series of actions."¹² For Francois Dagonnet, veering off on a different track, the body is the unconscious. He foregrounds voice, more than words and content, in his biosemiological psychiatry. Moving through a psycho-architecture, he tunes into breathing, diaphragm, muscles. Following Jung, he unknots the microtensions of the body and listens to the ways in which bodies are, unevenly, rigidified.

*By itself, the voice, slightly tense or disguised, externalizes the psyche ...What one exhales one must inhale. Measuring the latter is tantamount to measuring the behavior of the subject in full interface (at the mind-body juncture).*¹³

Dagonnet sees and hears the body's pulsings—breathing, facial dramas (blushing, etc), handwriting and voice as "mirrors" or, in a way, performances of the mind—a certain writing aloud.¹⁴ He critiques Freud for overemphasizing a limited area of the organic (orifices and sexual organs) and turns to Reich for his analysis of musculature to develop his biosemiology.¹⁵

How can we listen further to organs and their voices, sounds, speech and noise? How can we tune in to bodies with organs, to hear their diversity, cultural and historical, before they were tempered into the would-be, should-be silent body we know too well—a disciplined body whose voice is an emanation and confirmation of correctly organized organs, proper, civilized, tempered? How does the cultural body sound, in its very organs? For each organ I will follow different trails and listen to various traces. But I should note that in the very positing of these questions there is a troubling assumption and tension between organs as differentiated—which is already cultural/historically formed—and organs/bodies as un- or differently differentiated.

AND WHERE THE VISCERA WERE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL, COOLED DOWN, SUTURED INTO PLACE, INDIVIDUATED, THEY WERE NAMED STOMACH, LIVER, HEART, BRAIN, INTESTINES; THEIR OWN HISTORIES AND OTHER INCARNATIONS SILENCED OR FORGOTTEN. SEPARATE ORGANS WITH SEPARATE FUNCTIONS—THE ORGANISM DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF. DIVIDE AND RULE. WEIGHED DOWN BY SUCH AN IMPERIAL HISTORY, AND IMPERIOUS DESTINY, THEY FOUGHT FOR DOMINATION. HEART, STOMACH, SPLEEN...FOR CENTURIES BATTLED TO BE FIRST.

A tension between a body with/without organs to be listened to, some might say. The BwO, body without organs, is associated with Artaud and Deleuze and Guattari.¹⁶ The organs that Artaud railed against are nailed down, hierarchized, outside in a sense of both culture/history (given by God, transcendental), but also culturally reified, stiff inside the body as container. These sound like the organs visualized by western medicine. While I am trying to hear different organs, I realize that even to name them as organs invokes the things I am trying to deviate past. So the question is how to hear organs without fixity and hierarchy? Artaud did it literally, through pain. Deleuze and Guattari do it more rhetorically. It is telling though, how frequently their BwO is read as a rejection of bodily organs—a misreading which risks losing historical and cultural difference. In tune with the tensions in the works of Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari, my listening will oscillate between a body with/without organs.

• CRIES FROM THE ILL TEMPERED LIVER •

AND SO THEY VIED FOR CENTRAL POSITION. BUT WHEN WE SPEAK OF WARFARE, IT IS THE LIVER THAT BEST RECALLS ITS VICTORIES. NOT THE LILY-LIVER—WHITE AS A PORTENT—BUT THE RED ANGRY LIVER... THE PERFECT WARRIOR. IT IS THE LIVER THAT STRANGLERED THE STOMACH BY ITS NECK AND WIPED THE SMILE OFF THE FACE OF THE SPLEEN, EMERGING THE SECRET VICTOR.

I first understood my own body as cultural one day, after overeating in Italy. I complained of a stomach ache, but my Italian friends bemoaned their livers. How did they know where their livers were, I agonized, to have an ache, never mind to require one of an intricate array of curative techniques such as taking the waters at a particular spa. A crisis of a/perception, not unlike that shared by Samuel Weber.

I grew up thinking that after a meal when there was something wrong it was usually that you had an upset stomach. But neither in Germany nor in France, did anybody talk about upset stomachs. In France particularly, precisely they only talk about the liver. They say that you... if you have an upset stomach...I mean the term doesn't even exist to my knowledge—you would say you had something like a crise de foie, literally a crisis of the liver. And, interesting, in the term is that the crisis of the liver sounds exactly in French as though you're saying crisis of faith. Now this is particularly fascinating for an American, living in a French language area, because you have to take it on faith that it's not your stomach anymore that's bothering you, it's your liver.¹⁷

Now a decade later and thanks to acupuncture I too know where my liver is, experience its symptoms, and can even track it through the variations in gasps of pain and charge as acupuncture needles connect to sensitive points on my feet and legs. Just as through traditional Chinese medicine I can listen to my kidneys—or just barely—when weak and tired, their chi fails to nourish my hearing ears. Or perhaps it's the red angry liver drowning out their voice.

LISTENING TO IT...LISTENING TO THE LIVER...

For some, the cries of the liver sound out not its (or your) own individual subjecthood but an organic existence that is both more abstract and more diffuse.

Liver is very much a way of a, of a panliver existence rather than that, rather than that individual organ, I think...Yes...They talk about ganchi, the chi of your liver, while chi is a abstract thing in the Chinese thinking, and I think ganchi is even more abstract. Yeah, when they look at your face, they say, "Your ganchi's not smooth, there's something wrong with your ganchi." That has to do with your emotions, your tempers. The Chinese liver, like chi, is both physical and not physical at the same time. On the other hand it's also [a] psychological factor as well. In the general cultural way, to the Chinese, your liver or your gall bladder goes much further, rather than just that part as an organ, because I don't think that Chinese, the language, looks at that organ as a separate one, it goes further than that. There are certain things that English can not translate because Chinese believes you have those two networks. Your chi would travel through those networks to all parts of your body. To English that doesn't exist, therefore you don't have a word for it.¹⁸

LISTENING TO IT...LISTENING TO THE LIVER...

In Chinese culture seeing and hearing the liver are neither separated nor direct. Is it, indeed, even the liver that is heard so differently across cultures, and time?

The organ words in Hindi for liver and heart are the same, and there's a whole fable, like an Aesop type of fable, based around this monkey's liver and whenever I was teaching Hindi, my students would say, "but is it liver or is it heart?" and I'd say, "well, it could be either."¹⁹

You call your dear ones, my heart and my liver, shingar, which means "you are my liver and my heart, and that's why I treasure you."²⁰

HEART, STOMACH, WOMB

SPEAK NOW DEAR ONE.

SPEAK MY LIVER AND MY HEART

The heart. It's the finer sentiments that flow mellifluously from the rich, deep chambers of this brim-full organ. A paradoxical organ: a good, modern, industrious soul, it pumps away mechanically, but from its impenetrable Romantic depths tender emotions still call out. This two-chambered organ is itself neatly compartmentalized—it leaves to the brain its own/superior place and resolutely silences any confluence between them. The modern western heart also silences its own ancestor, the hot whole-heart of folklore, astrology, symbolic medicine, and physiognomy in which belief and thought and action and imagining were not separate.²¹

Unlike the liver that inflames the individual warrior body, the heart's voice reaches across bodies into social and political landscapes, but its heat can be just as deadly. A heart to heart voice igniting bodies with the same political flame. Such a voice vitalizes the right-wing populist speech of, say, Australia's racist One Nation Party leader, Pauline Hanson. Reverberating across Australia into Asia and the Pacific, her voice distinctively tremors its appeal across bodies in a way audibly quite different from that of the coldhearted authoritarian speech of a Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher, the Iron Lady, not only froze the heart's quiver out of her voice but also lowered the pitch and slowed the speed—by 46Hz.²² Iron lady: her voice spoke of a frozen heart and controlled stomach and intestines—voice of control and authority. It seems unlikely that television documentary producers ever set their images of Thatcher to Doris Day soundtracks as they did with Pauline Hanson. Nor, I would wager, did radio talk-back callers refer to her warmly as "that little girl" as they have with Pauline Hanson. Little girl...plucky... plucking the heartstrings of her audience. Because the voice of the heart pulses not just in the body of speaker but agitates the responsive bodies of its audience.²³ Vibrating with traces of the heart to heart exchanges.

Pauline got up, did sort of a, very standard speech, she read out about policies which sort of had everyone shuffling and then got up again and did it from the heart so to speak. She's an absolutely brilliant populist, no doubt about it. She said, "They say I want to go back to the 50s and 60s, well what the hell was wrong with that?" The whole place exploded.²⁴

Forget the very familiar adages about finding the way to the heart through the stomach. Forget the Eastern, ancient Egyptian and Hebrew bodies whose hearts and stomachs were interchangeable. Forget even the ancient Western bodies in whose stomach originated the sentiments and emotions which made themselves felt from the heart, through the whole organism.²⁵ Not through chewy ideas or meaty policies, digested by the stomach, but through the tremor of her heart to heart voice, a populist like Pauline Hanson worms her way into the hearts and the bodies of the listeners. Political emotion oscillates bodies in unison, creating its esprit de corps, rousing the one body through the trembling of an other.

This tremulous heart to heart voice moves with impunity through the defenses which now protect the (democratic) body from the loud-hailing of Fascist exhortation. Fascism's sound and oratory can no longer easily affect an audience viscerally, right through to their organs, as they once could. Listening to the voice of Fascism, people experienced a "feeling of oneness," a fusion into a whole; they found "themselves clapping involuntarily, even shouting 'Bravo!'"²⁶

The orator's "raw, flaming voice...pistols cracking" started out similarly to the voice of the heart with a lack of polish.²⁷ However, unlike the populist voice of the heart which maintains its tremor, the fascist voice which started "haltingly at first" but "all at once [began] to flow more freely." Thundering, godlike, it transformed its audience—shivering, crying, sparking to the sound of thundering cannons.²⁸ Reborn.²⁹ Reborn through the penetrating, transcendental voice of the soul.³⁰

Not just the soul, but the organs, too, were moved, opening the body to the Fascist orator's voice. Some have said that what we heard in the roaring of fascism's oceanic oneness was the streamings of desire, unloosed from the sexual organs—hysterically overflowing their "normal" confines, provoking

the orator's and audience's bodies in turn.³¹ Hysteria...deriving from hysterus, the wandering uterus.

The wandering womb—on the move and into trouble long before this century. Frank Gonzales-Crussi, traces the 'wanderlust' of the uterus, understood in Greek medicine (even up to the 19th century) as a self-willed entity with a propensity to roam, to travel through the body though its preferred destinations were the heart, liver and brain, organs of the 'greatest moisture'.³²

The voice of that organ has, however, been paradoxically both over privileged and undervalued not to mention over regulated even up to the present through psychoanalytic discourse and its "talking" cure. So let's move on with a different organ—an organ not generally acknowledged as sexual despite its history of erotic inspirations.

• THE EROTIC BREATHINGS OF THE WANDERING LUNGS •

It wasn't just female sexual organs that wandered through the bodies and imagination of Greek philosophers and physicians.³³

TRANSFORMING, MIGRATING...ORGANS THAT ARE NOT ORGANS AND ORGANS
THAT DO NOT KNOW THEIR TIME AND PLACE AND VOICE...RECENTERING/
DECENTERING...UPSETTING /DISORGANIZING.

Male sexual organs have their own travels to speak of. Some of their wanderings are sanctioned, if uneasily—like the breaking voice that slips between registers at the boy/man threshold. But if they continue to move, these organs signal a "perversion" in western bourgeois culture. And, as befits such perversity, the errant male sexual organ travels readily to a borderland—between lungs

and throat. Wayne Koestenbaum is stirred by such queer voicings of male sexual organs as they call out from the wrong (too high) register, or no clear register at all. He hears this untempered male voice as the aural sign of and for the opera-loving-male-homosexual.³⁴

Such perversion is also frequently overcoded as “racial” as well as sexual:

*By the twentieth century, one of the signs of the Jew's language is that ... his voice often breaks'...Strauss's audience would have heard in the high-pitched, breaking voice of the Jews an audible sign of the Jew's difference...*³⁵

Listen, with Sander Gilman, to Richard Strauss's *Salome*, based on Oscar Wilde's libretto. He notes there the presence of the Jewish male homosexual whose wandering voice slips into a scream, revealing his perverse sexuality. (Betraying the presence of his sexual organs in the lungs and throat.) For medical discourse and popular culture in fin de siècle Europe, the feminizing break of the voice already evidenced the degenerate male homosexual. In *Salome*, musically, through the voices and the solo oboe, it connoted Jews, especially Eastern Jews, according to Gilman.³⁶ After all,

*Jews argue; they don't make sense. Their music is basically out of key....Both in the opening scene of the opera and in the quintet, Strauss follows shrill Jewish cacophony with deep-voiced Christian response and diatonicism.*³⁷

“Christian tonality” unsettled by cacophonous Jews, “howling” and “screaming.”³⁸ Doubling racial perversity with sexual perversity, the voice of the cacophonous Jew screeched into the ears of conservative Christian Germans—ears already alerted by myths of Jewish “organic disorder” and representations of circumcised Jews as feminized, menstruating, hysterical, perverted, homosexual.³⁹ Koestenbaum similarly comes upon the connections between Jews, falsetto, homosexuality and opera; but he argues that,

*we do wrong to place all the blame on falsetto. For there is something inherently suspicious about breath's movement from lungs to larynx to mask, something always digressive and errant about air's urge to exit the body. Though falsetto has the clearest links to homosexuality, all varieties of operatic voice are perverse.*⁴⁰

AND THERE, THE VERY ORGAN OF INTERFACE, WITH SEX AND DEATH EMBEDDED IN ITS CELLS AND TISSUES AND FLUIDS, IN ITS VERY SECRET RECESSES, THAT ORGAN MAY AGAIN INSPIRE.

The urgent erotic breathing of the lungs is not new, nor limited to male homosexuals. Like many a later Hollywood movie, *Carmen*, famously stirs with the metonymy of cigarettes, sex, death, lungs. It thrills with the fervent sexuality exhaled from the smoker's lungs.

Lungs, smoking, sexuality...we can still listen to erotic reverberations in the lungs even as we hear the striking of the match, the catching alight of the tobacco and paper, the slow sharp inhalation/rasp of breath, the husky smoker's voice. As Barthes experienced *jouissance* in the grain of the voice, there is another *jouissance* beyond the throat and mouth, animating, inspiring the throat and mouth—the lungs.

The sexual perturbations of the lungs are quite peculiar and particular — they are neither productive nor reproductive; and smoking, a “symptom” of their sexuality, is a nostalgically “useless” activity in the discourse/era of useful bodies. In the Romantic era, the dandy/aesthete's lungs sighed the rasping breath of consumption. (Though on the other hand and not so romantically, through tuberculosis the lungs were in fact totally implicated in industrialization, the victim of its pollution.) In *Cigarettes are Sublime*, Richard Klein writes how “the aesthetic religion of lyric dandyism, the morality of making a work of art out of a way of life, finds its most precious relic in the cigarette.”⁴¹ In terms of work discipline, cigarettes re/present a paradox and a significant transgression—a breather, killing time, an extended moment outside of ordinary workday duration. So, the lungs, in part through the practice of smoking, remain recalcitrant within the useful body.⁴²

♣ IN/FORMING DIFFERENT ORGANS ♣

Bourgeois individualism quieted the body and brought its organs into line, tempering them, well or ill. Information culture moves that project to new bodily spaces.

...IN SOME PLACES AND SOME BODIES, ANOTHER UNIFYING FORCE IS FLOWING—INFORMATION—THAT WOULD CROSS—CROSS OUT—RACES, SPECIES, PLACES.

The question of how to write a/loud organs without writing over cultural difference, without creating “organs” where there were/are none, becomes all the more urgent in this information culture—where everything is reduced to a common denominator, information, and exchange-able code, genetic code. Information—well tempered, regular, quiet. Information’s trajectory crosses/out differences, races, species, places, organs. It excises excess as it goes. Information feigns to allow corporeality to come into a new focus—as information—but meanwhile we are habituated to grasping corporeality only biologically (and to understand biology as truth), and we are learning to know the body as if outside culture and history. Now there is (only) DNA to inform you fully of who you are and to form your body fully, noiselessly.

The impoverishing of information theory by *information* is a cultural turn parallel to the reduction of psychoanalysis to ego psychology, which moved to eliminate the fearful, messy, uncontrolled and cacophonous unconscious. Noisy difference subdued by calculable, singular signal. Cyberculture continues down that road, trying to get rid of the body with/without organs altogether and clean up its noises inside and outside the computer. However, for some, like Alphonso Lingis, the noisy organs of the other continue to speak.

The one who understands is not extracting the abstract form out of the tone, the rhythm, and the cadences—the noise internal to the utterance, the cacophony internal to the emission of the message. He or she is also listening to that internal noise—the rasping or smoldering breath, the

*hyperventilating or somnolent lungs, the rumblings and internal echoes—in which the message is particularized and materialized and in which the empirical reality of something indefinitely discernible, encountered in the path of one's own life, is referred to and communicated. With this internal noise it is the other, in his or her materiality, that stands forth and stands apart making appeal and demands... [an] empirically discernible vulnerability and intrusion.*⁴³

And so, noisy and recalcitrant organs, which have, after all, always moved, may sidestep the digital cleansing and fixing machines. Well or ill tempered, vulnerable and intrusive, organs may still write themselves aloud.

LISTENING TO IT...LISTENING TO THE LIVER...

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at *Sound Theory Seminar: After the Big Bang*, Artspace, Sydney, August, 1998.

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*Who then, if I cried out, would hear me in the ranks
of Angels? And supposing one of them
suddenly took me to his heart:
I would succumb,
killed by the strength of his being: for the beautiful is nothing other
than the first degree of the terrible;
we can scarcely bear it,
and, if we admire it as such, it's because it disdainfully
declines to destroy us.*

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*

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La musique concrète de Michel Chion is his first book.



CD Track#7

CRIES AND SILENCE



Lionel Marchetti

Translation by Christine North (with assistance from John Dack)

IN MICHEL CHION'S MUSIC, THE MOST IMMEDIATE INTERACTIONS with the listener take place on the brink of a void, at the edge of a force-mass—a far shore of the elemental, where all we can do is fall silent, open-mouthed possibly, our ears silted up with our own dust.

In the cry, a voice almost turned in on itself, there is the constant suggestion that we must at all costs break out of our sheath of flesh, escape from it forever as we acknowledge a call. The suggestion also that the overly certain normality of the everyday is not enough, that we must now venture into another light. But you cannot escape so easily from a body made of muscles, organs and bones. You cannot so easily leave the homeland of the flesh.

In compositions like *Tu, Diktat, Nuit noire, Gloria, the Requiem* or the *Messe de terre*, again and again you can feel the stuff of being escaping, oozing out of a nostril, an ear or any other orifice—anus, pores, mouth, hair-roots—you can imagine the high-pitched hissing noise of a leakage. To our ears, these experiences are like a constellation of cries spreading out, then like ganglia where the audible ebbs away, where an abundance of acoustic images disappear into unknown territory.

But out of fear and with a feeling that overwhelms us, we also find an escape-route here, as suddenly our bodily sheath clasps itself together again and rapidly reassumes its initial form. In the same movement it gives us a moment of insight: "I gave a terrible cry which froze the blood in my veins. I felt that the fear it had inspired had given me unparalleled perception."¹ So this escape from the centre—the cry—and the density of our physical bodies are somehow interlinked. There is a unity as well as a tension of the fibres. It is a terrifying connection which perhaps we should not seek too lightly to break. A pact which rings us round and seems to view us as a mass of opacities—or openings.

In his writing with recorded sounds, Michel Chion presents a lattice-work of cries which fuels the listener with danger, with panic. This is a daunting occasion for him to remain steadfast. An opportunity to build up his defences in case an interval opens up, which would cut short any over-complacent inattentiveness. Then, with an astonishing strength of action, the composer gives us a natural burst of energy, but above all "a direct way of knowing."²

The musical work of Michel Chion goes beyond simple expressivity: when sound self-generates in an inner region and leads us on, actively spellbound; when time is almost stripped of meaning and then comes to be understood as something beyond the stable and unstable... when we have ourselves become disintegration and we find ourselves being carried along on the driving swell of a world, suddenly and simultaneously we notice the actively engaged violence and the intoxication of our being have... disappeared.

In this movement of departure and return the cry remains our guide.

The cry which reveals at the intervals, seems always present as a thread running through the musical compositions [*Rq, Sanctus*], until in dazzling selfhood it succeeds in shattering their syntax.³ Here we would agree with Merleau-Ponty, for whom "art is not construction, artifice, industrious relationship with an exterior space and world. It is truly the 'inarticulate cry' which Hermes Trismegistus speaks of 'which seemed to be the voice of light.' And, once there, it awakens in the ordinary vision of those whose faculties are dormant a secret of preexistence."⁴

*Always forging ahead, o language, it is by forgetting you
That memory-hungry lips can speak
Who alone can read in the curve of a flank the gentle glow of the milky voice,
Shattering the universal body—
Alone keep back in vain the cry of death.*⁵

Nuit Noire, for example, is hideously full of death-rattles, the crackling sounds of the body and jarring bones, a vaguely apprehended character, outstretched, is buried in dark, sodden earth, yet the voice which could have been brought to the fore is contained here, remaining muffled and mumbling. It has taken possession of a certain chaos and will not emerge from it. It remains poised amidst the pulsing interplay of sounds in an inward ear. It is not the main channel for the articulation of images. The musical space is more a whole body of flesh, writhing with slow convulsive movements, struggling with all its breath and against its breath, then swallowed up by a dark, all-enveloping force. Here the cry is turned in on itself.

For you have to have experienced this, have been at the crisis-point of bodily transcendence where, by its contortions, the body signals to itself that it has become the point of contact with something other. You have to have glimpsed the interplay of inaudible and penetrating gazes with your own presence, now separate from you and roaming around outside itself. And you must also have understood that, in Michel Chion's music, the language of sounds, as well as communicating a constantly developing structure of images, by being associated with spoken text⁶ for example, just as much acknowledges the ineffable, attaining to pure abstraction: that logical place where the most straightforwardly organic sensations come together.

*Space is silence
silence like an abundance of spawn slowly dropping into calm water
this silence is black
indeed
everything has ceased to be*⁷

Nuit Noire presents a place of phonetic containment, interiorised, engaging us in a radical experience of the nocturnal. We move through thick, vibratory space with the constant awareness of something within which strangely colours the whole sphere of our auditory attention.

A nowhere from emptiness.

A nowhere from nothing.

When "the mind looks without thinking"³ listens without thinking.

*I would like to speak to you in a language without words.
A language hidden from every ear,
In truth, even if I spoke in a crowded street,
No ear but yours would hear me.³*

Almost a meditative silence, given to the listener as a way to the beyond at the very heart of composition, Michel Chion's musical work has that extraordinary capacity to withstand investigation, examination, as well as our captivated presence. We are not unaware that when a work is truly a work we can identify with it as if we were experiencing true reality. That is why, when we listen to such music, our inner space can always find a silence in which to dwell, with its own architecture and densities, and a readability which holds firm over and above all the surrounding, prowling mass of sound. Rather as if a silent conversation were taking place within us, along with shards of visual information or fragments of memory.

At the heart of listening there are many hiding-places.

The physical encounter with sound is closest to us in the depths of this silence. Then, while still listening, it becomes possible to withdraw into full presence, to disengage, to retire into a quiet place of the mind, beyond even the object of our attention. "Meditation beyond the object describes a state which by no means prevents my eyes from resting in a normal way on the things around me:

but when I see them, I do not perceive any of them as before. My mind is bathed in a different light, which makes everything translucent to a certain way of seeing, and opens up everything heard to the unheard, whence its true meaning is revealed to us.”²⁰

*The immense field
Of a single cry
Has been swallowed up by the pheasant*¹¹

The listener, exposed to these transforming experiences, apprehends this new melting pot where meanings unite. He rushes towards it to receive teaching, to acquire strength and fortify his spirit. The word teaching is not used here in the sense of clear and precise knowledge but more simply, in the act of listening, the impression of being granted something that accompanies us, opens up in us and pours out its vigour. “Teachings come from the world of form (...) they are made up of colours, forms and sounds, not words or ideas.” In this sense, music is pure poetry and “the ideal of poetry will always be an intuition beyond expression, which accumulates in silence, and reveals itself without a single word being spoken.”¹³

*Sound which does not sound
because it is beyond sound
the disciple who discovers It
is delivered from doubt.*¹⁴

But whoever knows such withdrawals has certainly come into contact with other extremes. The cry, in Michel Chion’s work, which we find in a variety of modulations in most of his compositions, most often has the quality of a thunderbolt, attacking our ears quite unexpectedly.

It is "pure outpouring of the real."¹⁵

It is a luminous bombshell of red-hot fire.

Like a penetrating eye, it castigates us roundly and incorporates us into musical time through the inertia which is an integral part of its strength. It is personified as an acoustic image coming to meet us, then guiding us towards the wide open.

If, like Ludwig Wittgenstein, we allow that "the subject does not belong to the world, but (...) sets a limit to the world"¹⁶—and it is sometimes true that a person listening to a musique concrète composition stands on the side-lines, afraid to be anything more than an insensible refracting-wall—yet, with the powerful action of Michel Chion's sounds, we rapidly become sound-absorbers rather than sound-deflectors. We become the place of a creative manifestation. In his music, the cry sticks to our ears. It makes us glide insanely amidst its insanities. It establishes itself as an extreme sound image, which could be the reverse side of silence.

*When a spark of passion's fire falls on a living being, he screams,
He can't put up with it: his heart, his breast hurt.
Cut off from everything, I am constantly burnt by our separation
And when I say "love", my tongue, caressing your name, suffers with joy.¹⁷*

When, listening to a musical sequence, our feelings are too overwrought, then tears, sharp, spontaneous and merciless, well up and sometimes appear on our faces. Here we are referring to *Gloria* and *Diktat*. The acoustic figure, over-constricted, sucks the soul up into a swirling vortex, causing an outbreak of visible tears. "I must speak of your beauty, my love, with my tongue: it is wet, my eyes weep, my bones hurt."¹⁸

For Michel Chion lets himself go.
He pours himself out completely.

A means for him to commune, then to reveal to us, his most intuitive state of perception. A means not to give himself away by a face disfigured with tears—to communicate only sliding, perilous colour and by this change of direction to point the way to the uttermost regions of self-presence.

*the mutable
is in our eyes
the light flows outwards
it's the sweat of things
listen
I've nothing on my tongue
but I say
being here counts*¹⁹

Over and above such touching lucidity, isn't this a way for the composer to expose us to the rapacity of an outer region which constantly assails us and sometimes even does violence to our facial muscles?

How can the sense of something being contacted be brought to our ears?

In reply, Michel Chion distorts his face and the face of time.

He cries and he weeps.

He calls out.

For him, disfigurement is the proof of his non-attachment to a too-finite sheath of flesh and skin.

And for him this act is knowledge.

He makes it a weapon.

A cry is never as pure as when it comes from a voice clamans in deserto. Then it calls out in the wide open and it calls upon the wide open, the void, that it should be the place of places, the absolute locative, where whatever he names should have an abode. He invokes Nothingness so that the thing

he names—as yet impossible to interpellate—should come into being within him and have its epiphany in this act. This open act of naming can be encapsulated in verbal form, which constitutes the first operative unit, and which will become a working unit of language. Poetic language constantly replenishes itself in these working units, but by reactivating the appeal to the emptiness, to silence, to Nothingness.²⁰

In the cry there is an ardent language, which offers its side at the very moment when silence, ever watchful, shoots an arrow deep into its flesh, making it burst open and shed blood.

A whole section of *Diktat* is a sort of fire-chant—but we could just as well listen to the *Requiem*, *Gloria*, *Tu* or *la Messe de terre* in the same way. The cry is there like a torn-off piece of body. It penetrates deep into the dwelling-place of an untamed, all-devouring unseen, calling up that excess of presence which consumes every one of us.

For Michel Chion, silence most often has an animal identity.

It is in the cry when it is at its most fully present.

It is there, crouching, waiting, tensed—ready to pounce.

Following on from this idea, it is as if in *Diktat* we were asked to exorcise language. To go beyond it, into something other,²¹ in order to attain a simpler mode of being—guided towards that state of power where “language becomes the frenetic proof of its own existence,”²² then coming together in the emptiness of silence.

You may believe that you made up your words by yourself. That they belong to you. But what is it deep in your entrails which contracts and expands, and opens wide the gates of breath in your flesh? What is it, in your innermost depths, calling out and making a way for the limitless? What is it within you which gives life to you at every moment, and which at any moment might stop? What is it: that body, that void?²³

For Michel Chion, silence most often manifests itself in a dazzling burst of vocal sound. It crouches on the other side of the walls of our hearing and our amazement, in the domain of pure sensation. In this territory, it must grow soundlessly, almost motionless, coiled up, tensed, for fear of suddenly tipping its entire environment over into violence and tumult.

The character in *Prisonnier du son*, for example, who has entered into the secret of his own intuition avoids any unnecessary movement, any heavy breathing. This would trigger a distracting deluge of sound, cause clashes, shatter his fragile cocoon for good. The prisoner of sound must, therefore, keep still, look for somewhere to establish himself. He even tries to make time stand still, to make it his partner, his ally in a silent suspension of being: Be careful, now that sound is asleep, you must be careful not to wake it, for you must never wake sleeping sound... Be careful (...) it goes by quickly.

*(...) little by little our shadows awaken
and make a sound
jagged teeth of sound persist
even in cries,
the moment, newly resurgent,
destroys all that is not itself.*²⁴

To be in a state of silence means to be as near as possible to the primal root of sound. It is to understand that a veil of life—or death—is always about to be torn asunder, that it is easy to lose hold of silence, or to violate it. It is to acknowledge the existence of a delicate surface, transparent in the taut expanse of air, and by not breaking it, to prevent it from unravelling. This unravelling is surely the cry whose palpable proximity to beauty terrifies us. It could carry us away towards a soundless abyss—this time much more definitive.

*The skylark —
alone falls her cry
she invisible*²⁵

The cry is a bridge to otherness. A vehicle which buttresses itself from station to station and clears the way. Michel Chion lays himself bare with his cry. Along with him we are stripped naked to the point where we come into contact with burning heat—where we reach the unbearable which naturally makes us cry out. To cope with such accumulations of pain the cry, bursting with inner ferment, clears itself in a spilling over, a welling up, as in those many oversaturations which we find throughout all the composer's work.

Perhaps, from here on, and paradoxically, we should consider these as no more than places where silences coincide?

Perhaps here the composer most forcefully states this fact: the most fertile sensibility can be entirely fulfilled by manipulating and writing down recorded sounds, which then for the listener become purely and simply a nature of things—to be taken on.

Becoming audible silence through its excess of presence, the violence of the cry, in Michel Chion's work, makes silence shrink back.

Silence, for its part, is in pursuit against a backdrop of cries.

*Who then lives in the depths
of my being?
I am stillness itself,
it the storm.²⁶*

* This is chapter 24 of *La musique concrète de Michel Chion* by Lionel Marchetti, Metamkine, 1998.

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- [1] Carlos Castaneda, *Histoires de pouvoir*, Gallimard, 1993, 291.
- [2] *Ibid.*, 205.
- [3] We are thinking of Gilles Deleuze in relation to "La littérature et la vie", in *Critique et clinique*, 12: "Syntax is the sum of necessary detours created each time to reveal life in things", and also, quoting Marcel Proust: "The only way in which to defend language is to attack it... Each writer is obliged to make up his own language...", 16; in the same way, Michel Chion constantly attacks his own musical writing.
- [4] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *L'œil et l'esprit*, Gallimard, 1964, 70.
- [5] François Lallier, *Le silence et la vision*, Deyrolle, 1996, 45.
- [6] Many of Michel Chion's musical compositions use clearly articulated text: *Le prisonnier du son*, *Requiem*, *La tentation de saint Antoine*, *Tu*, *Gloria*, *Credo mambo*, *La ronde*, *Messe de terre* (performance with video projection and loud speakers).
- [7] Henri Michaux, *A distance*, Mercure de France, 1996, 44.
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- [17] Machrab, *Le vagabond flamboyant*, translated from the Uzbek by Hamid Ismaïlov, Gallimard, 1993, 42-43.
- [18] *Ibid.*
- [19] Bernard Noël, *La chute des temps*, Gallimard, 1993, 82.
- [20] Henri Maldiney, *L'art, l'éclair de l'être*, Comp'act, 1993, 332.
- [21] In *Diktat*, Michel Chion articulates and cries out in an imaginary language, sometimes mixed with the tapping of a typewriter.
- [22] Raymond Bellour, *Henri Michaux*, Gallimard, 1986, 141.
- [23] Gérard Pfister, *Lumière secrète*, Lettres vives, 71.
- [24] Olivier Capparos, *Oiseaux retournés dans l'œil*, unpublished, 1997.
- [25] Ampû, in *Haïku*, 1990, 32.
- [26] Hafiz, quoted by Faouzi Skail, *Traces de lumières*, Albin Michel, 1991, 26.

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HYPERMETRICS
THE CO-EVOLUTION OF VOICE AND MACHINE
FROM TYPEWRITER TO HYPertext



Sean Cubitt

1. PREAMBLE
1.1 AI AS DEPENDENT
CONSCIOUSNESS

You cannot have machine consciousness without a human to recognise it. By the terms of the Turing test, artificial intelligence has to fool 'an average interrogator' charged with distinguishing between a human and a machine hidden from sight (Hodges: 417). So where mechanical mind is possible, it must be recognisable to a human, and to that extent dependent on human mind. The mechanical brains of the next millennium will not be of a different order from the human: the two must co-evolve, or how would we know that the machines are conscious? This has consequences for mechan-

ical perception. Machines 'perceive,' and we give them credit for perception, as expanded human sensoria, seeing, hearing, scenting, tasting, touching in environments where we cannot go, in wavelengths and scales that we can only intuit. But those perceptions are as nothing unless they can be rendered into a human scale, as maps of a cosmos which, like our planet, is too vast and too detailed for us to apprehend. By definition then, mechanical intelligence is dependent on a human perceiving it. But is this too arrogant a claim? Why should we presume intelligence will always evolve in forms recognisable to us? What if the perception of intelligence is undertaken by other machines? Would humans fail the Turing test? The question is not

only one of co-dependence but also of mutual autonomy, and the hinge on which the question turns is the question concerning perception.

1.2 RECORDING AS MECHANICAL PERCEPTION

We have linked mechanical perception to recording technologies, to writing, and lately to audio and audio-visual recording. There is no fundamental discontinuity between the two, nor between analogue and digital recording: all require a certain capital, cultural or economic; each is manipulable; each decays. But there has been a kind of doubling of the relation between voice and recording media which is more a sociological than a technological trend (see on this issue the discussions in *Essays in Sound*: Dyson 1995, Sinnerbrink 1997). In the course of this century, the shift from handwriting to less gestural modes of recording has accompanied a drift from the primacy of the voice towards a primacy of the script. This essay proposes an interrogation of our technologies of recording, and asks whether there is co-evolution in the narrow domain of human-mechanical prosody.

2. THE SCRIPT

2.1 VOICELESSNESS

As the mechanisation of writing advances (typewriter, word processor, hypertext, web site), the 'presence' of the voice to orthographic composition, its gestural quality, has been de-linked. Extreme variants emerged promptly early in the century—typewriter and typographic poetry—and enter the mainstream as, for example, the Reuters `GOPHER SERVICE` and teletext. Apparently unauthored, and spoken of in some informal surveys as the most believed news source in the UK, teletext is archetypically voiceless.

2.2 THE IMITATION OF WRITING

At the same time, radio and TV interviewees now talk as if they had been scripted, denaturalising the simple forms of dialogue, attempting to structure sentences as if they were written. Ordinary parents, teachers, entrepreneurs and union officials struggle to use technical vocabularies. Politicians recite the clearly pre-scripted soundbites prepared for them by party spin doctors. Perhaps we have all become so used to the seemingly effortless fluency of movie stars reciting their lines that we no longer have an ear for ordinary dialogue in public fora, while sponsoring a parallel professionalisation of improvisation among shock jocks in the USA,

Chris Evans, Danny Baker and the new laddism in the UK. In a movement opposite to that proposed by McLuhan, electronic speech has increasingly imitated writing. The scripted dominates over the improvised (in music the score dominates over the performance, and in improvisation, rather as Adorno complains, the formula dominates free, ad hoc composition).

2.3 SCRIPT DEPENDENCY

Movie budgeting, not creativity, demanded scripts. Now public figures emulate, however clumsily, the glibly homey, rhetorical and technical fluency of the movies, and while films are increasingly designed for multiple viewings, leading to a musicalisation of dialogue, politics and policy become scripts for repetition, not arguments for debate. Theatre actors breathe into the script, with the breath which animates creation, a mystical project key to the forms of drama, recitation and song. But recording deflates the divine afflatus, rendering performance as performance, not life (as there is irreparable and irreversible life in live drama). Speech has become, as a matter of practice rather than an effect of philosophy, dependent on its scripts, initially in the cultural industries, and now in their circumambient infotainment satellites, and to some extent at least in the changes in voice and vocabulary we all take on in interviews, meetings and committees.

2.4 NORMATIVE PROSODY

Prosody, the study of the relation between writing and voicing, has small place in the literary academy today. Formal analysis at its most persuasive has pursued narration, not scansion, and the vast majority of creative hypertext sites match this interest in the spatialisation of narrative, not the time of speaking. At its crudest, formalist narratology proposes a model, and traces deviations from it. Such too is the residual position of prosody, with the added difficulty that the only functioning models are for regular, not to say normative modes of metrical verse. The revolution in metrics brought about by generative-transformational linguistics (Levin 1962; Attridge 1982: 34-55) appears fundamentally to have altered neither the lack of interest in voicing among literary scholars, nor the normative approaches of earlier attempts at producing an English verse metric. Critically, such studies as I have been able to find seem averse to what in contemporary poetry is not verse, in the sense of stressed metres. Conversely, studies of contemporary poetry, alive to Empsonian ambiguities but deaf to music, tend to analyse discursively rather than materially the properties of poems.

2.5 NO RHYME, NO EXPECTATIONS

This cannot be solely the fault of those who study metrics. Something has altered, not only in the making, but in the reading of poetry, so that certain modes of verbal music now cloy that were once delightful, and some once lumpy lines, like Donne's, are now models of a novel euphony. The abandonment of rhyme removed the expectations that powered a certain mode of reading, the endstop where the wave of the voice crashed onto its beach. It was not the first time: the loss of the four-stress alliterative verse of Langland removed a certain vocal ruggedness and flexibility, replacing it with a more measured and artificial control of breath and metre. Losing that expectation of regularity (you can hear it happening in Yeats' *Easter 1916* with its 'lost' fourth beat; Attridge 326-9) democratises the relationships between syllables, as Schönberg democratises relations between the notes of the twelve-tone row, and it is retrospective (as in Olson's *Quantity in Verse and Shakespeare's Late Plays*, where 'the quantity of the syllables (how long it takes to say them) pulls down the accent to a progress of the line along the length of itself' [Olson 1966: 35-6]).

2.6 DEMOCRACY
AND THE VARIABLE FOOT

This democratisation of the line is political in its inspiration: in William Carlos Williams' variable foot, for an important instance, product of a lifetime's search for a metric accountable to the voices he had researched and recorded in his short stories and in earlier poems, vernacular, and a constant from the 1920 Prologue to *Kora in Hell* (Williams 1970: 6-28) to the 1967 *Autobiography of the Works* (Williams 1967), caught, in mimetic recitative, in

For the last

three nights

I have slept like a baby
without

liquor or dope of any sort!

(*Tribute to the Painters*, 1955 [Williams 1962: 136]) to read the cadence, include the pauses created by the eye looking for its enjambments, and equalise the durations of each line, so that 'without' becomes central). At this stage, the poem pursues the voice, a structural work with roots back into the Romantics' attempts to catch the common tongue; but where they sought capture in the nets of the quatrain, Williams is prepared to open the foot to relativity, not only in the abstract, but in the weight of the relations between people that are concretised in words.

From here, poetry would flow in two directions: the one via the beats, African American, Caribbean and Black British poetry towards performance, where the written poem is a subsidiary element except as critique of the purely print poem; and the other into Black Mountain college, where colloquial democratisation and the democratisation of syllables became most clearly a political dialectic—democratisation of the means, but patricianisation of the mode of poetic production. Capital's social relations could not afford a resolution: the power of this poetry arises from its failure.

2.7 THE GRAPHIC FIELD OF VISUAL POETRY

The effort towards democracy takes a certain formal toll, caught in one key 'dogma' of Olson's *Projective Verse* essay: FIELD COMPOSITION (Olson 1966c; a large chunk of which was reproduced in Williams' *The Autobiography*, 1951: 329-332). In the movement from words spoken in time to words marked in space, from scansion to graphics, written poetry enters an aesthetic of typography. The first inkling is the liberation, around 1900, first of words in the later Mallarmé and of graphemes in Morgenstern: between 1914 and 1930 these would generate a new poetic in the interplay of letters and typographic marks from Apollinaires' calligrammes to e.e. cummings. The imitative

qualities of verse forms seeking a manner of approximating speech continue, but the invention of the materials for a practice in which voicing is excluded, and with it the most familiar means for entering into the construction of poetry, becomes the grounds for a purely visual, mute poetry, a poetry of space.

2.8 GRAPHIC OPACITY

Morgenstern's *Fish's Night Song*, a parodic account of Goethe's *Night Wanderer's Song*, used exclusively the graphic marks of the typewriter to produce a schematic illustration of a fish. For Friedrich Kittler, this typewritten form emblematises a departure from the phonocentric metaphysics of presence:

The signs on the page cannot be spoken by any voice—regardless of whether one reads them as fish scales or discrete elements of the roman typeface. Man and soul, in any case, no longer apply. With all the wanderers between day and night, Spirit and Nature, male and female, Man simply died around 1900. It was a death to which the much discussed death of God is a footnote. (Kittler 1990: 258)

The symptomatic year of 1900 marks for Kittler the breakdown of an earlier mutual transparency of the elementary forms of literate culture. 'In 1900, speaking and hearing, writing and

reading were put to the test as isolated functions, without any subject or thought as their shadowy supports' (Kittler 1990: 214). Perhaps his diagnosis is premature. Certainly, the typewriter brings with it an awareness of letters and marks rather than words as the units of writing; and in its invention recapitulates thirty years of upheaval in office management, while facilitating the commodification of language as information in the form of keystrokes. In poetry, it enables a liberation from the speakable, from the voice, from time; reconstituting poetry as an occupation of space ('the methodology of the Cantos, viz, a space-field where, by inversion, though the material is all time material, he has driven through it so sharply by the beak of his ego, that, he has turned time into what we must now have, space & its live air' [Olson 1966d]). In losing its punctual address to the solitary reader's sensibility, it has erased the punctual origin of the author, despite Zukofsky's 'the reader becomes something of a poet himself: not because he "contributes" to the poem, but because he finds himself subject of its energy' (Zukofsky 1967: 30).

2.9 REFERENTIALITY

The cost is the perceived loss of an ability to refer, as reference ceases to be a quality of speech that points towards a world, to become referentiality, a property of language that points

to other acts of language, to the act itself of pointing. If not poetry, then a certain mode of critical thought, abandoning the idiosyncratic materialisms of Williams and Olson, proposes as the central problem for cultural studies the question of representation. Doomed: studying the sign's structure will tell you no more about reference than studying the sundial's gnomon will tell you about the sun. This fear of reference is written into the title of the influential journal $L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E$, at one with the graphical autonomy of the typewriter. It reaches a certain apogee in the unreadable poems of Charles Bernstein or Susan Howe, in the sense that reading aloud is almost pointless, so little music inhabits their rhetorical structures. Such mute reading is condemned to the semantic, but in the absence of reference, meaning itself is hyperreal, locked outside the circuits of the human. Sign equals sign equals sign.

2.10 THE AUSCHWITZ ERASURE

A third element combines with the democracy dialectic and the hegemony of the visual to erase the voice. It is best heard in a 1958 comment of Paul Celan's on the tasks of German postwar poetry:

No matter how alive its traditions, with most sinister events in its memory, most questionable developments around it, it can no longer speak

the language which many willing ears seem to expect. Its language has become more sober, more factual. It distrusts 'beauty'...a 'greyer' language, a language which wants to locate even its 'musicality' in such a way that it has nothing in common with the 'euphony' which more or less blithely continued to sound alongside the greatest horrors. (Celan 1986: 15-16)

What startles about Celan's poetry ('For a Jewish poet to compose in German after the Holocaust is an irony so dark as not merely to shadow but to inhabit the substance of Celan's poetry' [Ward 1991: 140-1]) is the necessity of poetry in the face of its impossibility. This demon he faces is put like this by Adorno: 'To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today' (Adorno 1967: 34). That corroded knowledge is what makes Celan a poet, and is implicated in the bare, grey vocabulary he shares with late Beckett. It is the lyric that is soured here, and makes it possible to comprehend the amusical patterning of repetitions in Celan as investigations of the savage ugliness beneath the harmony and *Gemütlichkeit*. It is I think possible to comprehend Ian Hamilton Finlay's one word poems, alongside his meticulous unpicking of the strands of Nazi ideology, as voiceless evacuations of the dangerous euphonies.

2.11 THE POEM AS OBJECT

At the same time, Finlay's is a poetry, and one that depends upon reference, pun (and so on speech) and visual/verbal consonances. Poetry in the 20th century has taken on the task of investigating the conditions of communication, rather as painting took on the question of ontology, at the point at which philosophy abandoned both pursuits. Among the most committed poets, the most voiceable—the Langston Hughes of *Montage of a Dream Deferred*, Ernesto Cardenal, Ed Dorn—those conditions must include the possibility of speech, as destination of the poetic energy Zukofsky mentions, as the (a?) purpose of poetry understood as a relation between people. Here reading is not critical commentary but the voicing. But at the same time, the loss of expectation discovered in the rupture of the iamb (c.1900) makes poems things. As thing, the poem does not lead through time, but exposes its matter as a series of facets, looking always inwards, and only as an effect of looking in to become aware of lights refracted from a source external to the poem. Where, as in Celan, that light is dark, the poem makes solid, objective, the void, not as absence but as plenum. Such poetry has become sculptural, and the role of the voice is like the movement your eyes or hands make around a solid object that resists them.

3. a HYPertext POEM

3.1 KNOWLEDGE IN TIME

Originally conceived of as a knowledge architecture by Vannevar Bush and implemented as such by Ted Nelson, hypertext, as prosodic form, becomes a querying of the relations of knowledge, especially of the internal relations of its elements, for example of completeness. If then we are to work on questions of voicing hypertext, we have to find modes of re-directing the inflection of sentences, in the very process of reading. We have to engage voicing as improvisation, a tentative shadowing of a fluid, albeit between structures established in the text. The text then subordinates itself not to voice as point of origin, but as destination, prepares itself for a mirroring and reintroduces the caesura as the punctuation formed by pointing and clicking. My example is a composition of my own, written first as a catalogue piece for *Mnemosyne*, a CD-ROM produced in the Liverpool Art School for the Foundation for Arts and Creative Technology. A plain text version might read like this:

3.2 a meme

*but children are apt to forget to remember
and down they forget as up they grow*
e. e. cummings

UNDER ALTARS WHERE THE MUSTERED GHOSTS
OF THE HOLY DEAD ARE LAID

IN THE UNREMITTING TOIL OF THOSE WHOSE
LOVE MUST WIPE THE GOUGED SLATE CLEAN

A MOONSTAINED RIVER WIDER
AND SHALLOWER BY THE SILT OF FIFTY YEARS

*

OF RITUAL MEMORIES SET FREE FROM EARTH
SPIRITUAL SISTERS OF THE BONE-LOCKED
MIND

SO EARTHEN PLACE RECORDS THE FROZEN
DRIFT OF TIME

END TO END AMID THE SPINDRIFT DUST,
A SISTERHOOD,
IMPLANTS OF DEVOTIONAL INNOCENCE

*

THAT CAN'T RECALL, AMNESIC LOVE, AS
BIRDS FORGET
THE ARCS OF FLIGHT THEY TRACE

ERASING UNDER MOIST CHAMOIS THE
TRACERY

OF CONDENSATION ON THE WINDOW'S PANE

A DENIAL DEEPER THAN FORGETTING,
DEEP AS THE CALL OF MOISTURE TO THE
THIRSTING THROAT

*

A MECHANISM OF DESIRE, IT SPILLS
AN OCEAN DOWN THE RIFT BETWEEN THE
LANDS

DEAD AS THE SLATE SKY IT DEFLECTS,
THE NECESSARY DEATH THE FISHERMAN
LANDS

AS IF ONLY EVOLUTION MATTERS, SPILLING
FREE
AS A FISH IN THE WHITE HAVENS

3.2 Grammar

The word 'deflects' in the penultimate couplet links back to the second couplet after the epigraph (which was misquoted from memory and cannot be returned to from the poem). It might be arrived at from the word 'erasing' in the eighth couplet, which in turn can be arrived at from the third couplet. This path would give something close to the following structure:

A MOONSTAINED RIVER WIDER
AND SHALLOWER BY THE SILT OF FIFTY YEARS

ERASING UNDER MOIST CHAMOIS THE
TRACERY

OF CONDENSATION ON THE WINDOW'S PANE
DEAD AS THE SLATE SKY IT DEFLECTS,
THE NECESSARY DEATH THE FISHERMAN
LANDS

IN THE UNREMITTING TOIL OF THOSE WHOSE
LOVE
MUST WIPE THE GOUGED SLATE CLEAN

that is, a structure lacking the pineal consciousness of a main verb. Jumps within couplets also give quasi-grammatical (comprehensible but formally incorrect) sentence elements, again without, in the main, main verbs. Linked words are sometimes identical, sometimes formed from morphemes, and sometimes linked only semantically across themes of remembrance, forgetting and their mutual part in the evolution of the new. At no point does the reader have the whole of her chain of connections in front of her, as above: reading the poem is itself a process of remembering and forgetting. To voice it is to accommodate the twists of the syntax as it moves the stresses along unfixed lines.

3.3 an amulet

Ian Hamilton Finlay, in a letter of 17 September 1963:

It comes back, after each poem, to a level of 'being', to an almost physical intuition of the time, or of a form... 'concrete' began for me with the extraordinary (since wholly unexpected) sense that the syntax I had been using, the movement of language in me, at a physical level, was no longer there (cited in Bann 1977:9).

Finlay's discovery of the loss of trajectory in his verse is a simultaneous discovery of a marvelous stillness. The word becomes a foot, extended into the duration of its ground—glass, rock, wood, building, garden—and weathering with it as 'physical intuition,' things whose addition to the world reorders the possibilities of that world. In some of Finlay's work, especially in the garden at Stonypath, words are spoken not by voice but by trees, wind, water. It is important that these sounds are of a garden, not nature. Nature, an implication of the voice in the world, is past. The garden is a construct designed to amplify, in such instances, the sonic thought of the engraved word. *A Meme*, by contrast, constantly collapses over the native four-stress pattern on which it improvises, a technical defeat, but one also generated in the failure to address the corroded knowledge of

Auschwitz' significance for the lyric. What, after all, is lyric but the verbal form of song, and if deprived of music, even the verbal musics of recitation, than mere declension of syllables. Finlay's answer, and one borrowed and mutated in *A Meme*, is to form a knot of interwoven phrases, like a Celtic design, its motion bound to pattern, making of movement a still thing.

3.4 MECHANICAL PASTORAL

The book is dead, as God died: the codex of lyric verse did not need to be killed. All lyric now is elegiac. Either what is written is a parody of scripted normalcy (as in

*baa baa black sheep
have you any wool
yes sir yes sir
three bags full*

*one for thi master
n anuthir wan fur thi master
n wan fur thi fuckin church*

[Tom Leonard, from *Ghostie Men*, Allnutt et al 1988: 192])

or accelerated to the speed of the supplement; or it has abjured the voice as itself an indexed real from which a semantics tied to the logic of representation has debarred itself—or at least from which referentiality has alienated poetry at

the moment it engaged with its engines of democratisation. You begin to sense the need of a mechanical voice for hypermetrics, a vocalisation programme capable of a certain inflectional improvisation on the basis of shifting quantities and durations in pseudo-sentences lacking the intonational magnetic north of the verb. We need to learn and internalise how machines listen to us. Technically, this demands what we do not have, a vocabulary circulating among poets of what a machine recognises of human voices: overtones, pitch, attack, level, range; not premised on Cartesian consciousness, but a purely descriptive account of a mechanical dialect in process (some such study of modulation can be heard in Bill Seaman's contribution to *Artintact 1*, which, moreover, attends carefully to the relations between voicing and hypertext in the presence of Quick Time™ micromovies, constituents of a hypermedia prosody). Hypertext, as narcissistic element of hypermedia, calls for its unrecorded echo.

3.5 TWO MECHANICAL AGENCIES

The European experience of genocide—visited on the populations of every other continent 1492-1942—shocks us, with Adorno and Celan, into withdrawal from the lyric's voicing. The electronic word has abjured knowledge of language's complicity in the terror which the rationalist/irrationalist binary has visited on

the world and finally on itself. As if there were only the gradation between the muttered instruction and the shout of horror. We have proposed to ourselves as unique alternatives the machine as slave of a sociopolitical technics or the machine as engine of liberation: the production line of extinction or the paradisiacal motive power of a new age, and our identifications of each with reason and unreason flicker with a dangerous ambivalence. What we have not thought is the relations between humans and machines as extensions of the relations between humans and humans.

3.6 RECOVERING TIME

Not for the first time this century, we have the opportunity to embrace our technologies. The first time, in Russian constructivism, at the Bauhaus, in *L'Esprit nouveau*, a deviant master-slave dialectic grew up, in which technique and artists oscillated between dominance and submission: it is hard to see whether Morgenstern is driving his typewriter, or the typewriter is driving him, an ambiguity fundamental to Marinetti's typographics or the concrete poetry of the Brazilian Noigandres group. At the same time, the same phenomena can be read as agonistic, as the play of tough competitors. Overshadowed by a conceptualisation of the mechanical regime as the type of a socio-political efficiency, a thought enforced onto

machines in the death camps, the possibilities of learning from the mechanical was circumscribed or refused, beginning with the 30s' embrace of a nostalgic, humanist realism. The struggle to achieve equality among humans and technologies produces, among the concrete poets and the line moving through Black Mountain to L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, a spatialisation of prosody, as field composition and as the field of rhetorical intertextuality. The result is a static model of the relation, deprived, with voicing, of time. We have considered our period as one that is 'after,' believing with Olson that we now inhabit space alone. That insight is only possible in the era of the deaf-mute typewriter: but the computer can both speak and listen, and the regeneration of our speech and hearing is codependent on those mechanical perceptions. First in the time of mutual perception, then in the time of mutual regeneration, you can hear resonances of how co-evolution is to occur, how time persists, as process, after the farewell to natural time.

3.7 LISTENING TO LANGUAGE MACHINES

After nature, the human evolves in conjunction with the machine, in a co-evolution in which we recognise that natural selection is supplemented or supplanted by artifice. In the wrack of reference lies the communicative: the

unavoidable relation between people constituted, among other media, in language, both as writing and as poetry. The trajectory of poetry towards object status has taken two forms; one in which, among the language poets, referentiality is supreme; the other in which the poem, as material object in the world, proposes that fragment of the world as mediation. The former, especially, makes the poem a commodity fetish—the relation between people appearing in the fantastic guise of a relation between objects. Here language is considered as autonomous entity without author or voicing and so pure object. But the mechanical mediation will have to begin, in the spirit of the former, a dialogue not with the object language, but with language as a technology, to wit, an interrelational process of the co-evolution of human beings and their machines. At this point, both our devices and our languages demand a kind of parity, as subjects. If we are to ascribe consciousness to computers, we need also to recognise the potential for consciousness in the older technology, and to draw both digital media and languages into dialogue. We must commune with them as well as between ourselves, not as we did with nature, in nostalgic, remorseful and embittered tones, but as equals and partners. We must learn to listen and respond to what our languages, our devices, are saying. That is time. That will be poetry.

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Arthur Petronio (1897-1983) was an experimental poet and musician, working from the early 20s into the 70s. He is the founder of the Music Institute of Reims, former director of the Mouvement de décentralisation artistique and the journal *Creer* (1922-1935), and the founder of *Verbofonia* (1953). He was without a doubt one of the first who tried to bring music and poetry together.

 CD Track#12

VERBOPHONY (1963)



Arthur Petronio

Translation by JF Delannoy

1.

Poetry is an "act of love" according to Jean Cocteau, but it is also an act of aggression.

2.

Poetry or impoetry? Classification barriers have been blasted, new laws of ubiquity are being created, and the predictable is being redesigned as a perceivable cosmophony.

3.

The poem living on the rails of typography, panting after words, is obsolete. It is a historical monument.

4.

"We have one duty towards music: to invent it," writes Stravinsky. We must adopt the words of this great musician, substituting "poetry" for "music."

5.

The true dimension of poetry resides in man's psycho-physiological dimension. The poet has to free oneself from the domination of typography and the tyranny of grammar, and to reinstate poetry in the biological sonorities of liberated words with their primeval vibrations active in the subconscious.

6.

True emotions are expressed without words. As soon as directed speech is used, in a lexical chain, emotion loses its acute authenticity. Racial traditions are exhumed in the scream and in breath. The scream integrates the poetry of the yes and no.

7.

The future of poetry is in the hands of those poets who will be capable to lose it to find it again.

8.

Even if one persists in preserving in the concept of poetry its character of image, conceptual anchor, and metaphysical identity, as a phenomenon it still escapes all objectifications or rational formulations. Poetry is an object of chance and of unconscious creation. This conjunction is at the root of its fullness and the radiation of discovery within it.

9.

The poet should utter words as if he had just invented them. Is it not invention, to wrang them out of grammatical identifications?

10.

What can be said of a poet who does poetry only on paper? He can be compared only to a wall painter.

11.

The criteria of all genuine poetry is not the written or tangible presence of the poem, but that which is revealed beyond the physical aspect of the word and its biological disturbances—resonances in the unconscious.

12.

The emancipation from the traditional mode of expression requires a submission to new disciplines. Those are arduous, because they must stem from a chaos of feelings.

13.

Outside of the realm of song, a new system of music is constructed by the phonemic power of words. As an orchestra of talking voices, the poetry of words changes tone to become symphonic, acoustic painting, or metaphorical rhythm to the beat of its absolute catalytic power.

14.

What is called verbophony is the assimilation of all poetic research and experiments on to the dialectic of noises—sounds contained in live speech from the muffled rumours of turbines of

blood, and used in a spatial projection. This performing of phonemic signs triggers the whole physiological mechanism of the listener's visceral nervous reactions and intuition.

15.

Where monotone speech is unable to create a genuine obsessional climate, starts the eloquence of the simultaneity of voices, in a contrapuntal polyphony associated with timbral percussion.

16.

Mental imagery in poetry has lost part of its power of conceptual assimilation. It has shifted from the abstract mental domain to the concrete acoustic domain, from the sensorial to the physical, i.e. to the domain of magic creation.

17.

The same letters compose the French words 'image' and 'magie.' By a simple displacement of the letter 'i'—in which the scream is condensed—the same sign goes from low to high pitch, from gong to cymbal.

18.

The secret of a verbophony consists in crossing the border between poetry and music, and the border between the matter and the form of acoustic phenomena.

19.

The spatial projection of the concrete performance of a relief poem can be delegated to polyphonic choral teams or sound specialists. It must stimulate the poet and force him to reconsider the role and efficiency of the aesthetic and emotional conduct of the poem. From now on poetry will be revealed only using the new control and emission techniques, and the most complex channels for direct or indirect communication. It is by its re-creation via mouths, timbre-processing instruments of the word, in conjunction with electromagnetic devices, that current cosmophonic poetry will signal its passage amidst a hectic humanity.

20.

Optical simultaneity is replaced by acoustic simultaneity. Through the disappearance of their limits, words have exploded into the objects of a psychological function, through a metamorphosis not unlike the dramatic transmutation of forms.

21.

Whether we want it or not, a cosmic romanticism is at our doors.

Allen S. Weiss has written and edited over 25 books, including *The Aesthetics of Excess* (SUNY); *Perverse Desire and the Ambiguous Icon* (SUNY); *Phantasmic Radio* (Duke); *Sade and the Narrative of Transgression* (Cambridge); *Taste, Nostalgia* (Lusitania); *Unnatural Horizons: Paradox and Contradiction in Landscape Architecture* (Princeton Architectural Press); *Experimental Sound and Radio* (MIT). He has recently directed *Theater of the Ears*, a play for electronic marionette and taped voice based on the writings of Valère Novarina, and is completing a book of short stories, *The Aphoristic Theater*. He teaches in the Departments of Performance Studies and Cinema Studies at New York University.

LULU'S SONG



Allen S. Weiss

♬ APPASSIONATO.

Lulu multiplies, impregnated by the sulfur that she immortalizes. She burns with a paradisiacal fire, a lunar light, a solar heat. Aloïse Corbaz—Lulu—had already spent days without number, nights without end, at the psychiatric asylum of la Rosière, near Lausanne, which she was never to leave. It was, after all, an affair of passion, a marriage of heaven and earth; she could but sing psalms to the Lord, to Kaiser Wilhelm II. O Lord my God, thou art great indeed, clothed in majesty and splendour, wrapped in a robe of light, sparkling from head to toe, deified by the sublime beaming of your face—humbly I lower my eyes, as your dazzling gaze leaves a noble and sacred impression, profound, pure and azure, upon my heart...

♬ NOBILMENTE.

Her's was a love romantic, awkwardly ideal, nearly mystical. From the first time she saw Wilhelm II in a parade—eyes of Saturn, body of Apollo, splendor of Gabriel, blood of the Lamb—her love was born, her fate sealed, her madness initiated. She abandoned her studies of opera to become governess in the house of the Kaiser's chaplain, to approach her beloved—she once even sang for the Kaiser in his private chapel. Voluptuous telepathic communications, immortal ecstasy. *Mater Dolorosa, veiled by the humility of purple sacrifice, enrobed in the transfiguration of His Majesty, her heart of golden rose violet in passionate adoration of the nimbus of lily and rose which united them in the heavens, her gaze gleaming moistly with tears...*

☞ DOLCISSIMO.

Her days in the hospital were filled with song and drawings, with pleasure and delirium. She was Cleopatra, Josephine, Marie-Antoinette, Salomé, the Virgin, Cinderella, Psyché, Lulu; she drew *Cleopatra Asleep at the Foot of the Sphinx*, *The Serpent Queen*, *The Love Pangs of Wilhelm II*, *The Angel in Jupiter's Thigh*, *The Abduction of the Rose Lotus*, *Whirlwind Matadoress*, *The Siren Ophelia*, *Luther-Radio*, *The Butterfly-Queen of Luxembourg*, *The Fall of an Angel*, *Orpheus the Rainbow*, *The Ship of Dreams*. Every evening, she would stand at her open window, her eyes streaming reverently, longingly, into the garden of the clinic, and would begin to sing operatic arias in the tongues of angels, in the bodies of demons, in a voice possessed: *Ave Maria*, *La Dame aux Camélias*, *Lohengrin*, *Don Giovanni*, *La Traviata*—Hymnologies of the great natural symphony. Her joy was boundless. Like Saint Theresa, she felt that she was dying of her inability to die...

☞ LACRIMOSO.

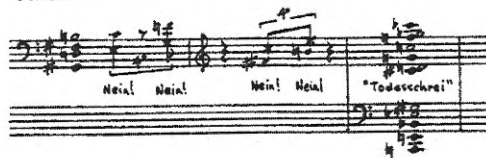
The premonitory arhythmia of the opening strains of the music echoed that of his heart. As soon as he was permitted to study the score of Mahler's *Ninth Symphony*, Alban Berg was struck by its sublime morbidity. Berg wrote, to his future wife, of the first movement: *The whole movement is permeated by premonitions of Death. Again and again it crops up, all the elements of terrestrial dreaming culminate in it...most potently, of course, in the colossal passage where this premonition becomes certainty, where in the midst of the utmost intensity of almost painful joy in life, Death itself is announced with the utmost violence...* In this greatest of musical memento mori, Death is immediately, inconspicuously announced, soon to mischievously fiddle his masque; finally, at the end of the last movement, the *Adagio. Sehr langsam*—where the notations for tempo are respectively: *adagissimo*, slow, extremely slow, hesitating, dying away—there occurs the terrible, excruciating withering and disintegration of sound. Was this closing hymn, this grimmest dirge, this final effect of Mahler's cardiac arhythmia, the musical work of Death, or could only silence play that role? In any case, Mahler was never to hear this symphony: he died in Vienna at the age of fifty, a year before its first performance in 1912.

♩ MALINCONICO.

These thoughts continued to haunt Berg as he struggled, in April 1935, with the third act of his opera *Lulu*. Had he chosen Wedekind's play because of the modernist sensibility of *Lulu*'s tragedy, or because of the extreme pathos of its representation of death? Or had he found something in the scenario that accommodated his own aspirations to maintain the tensions of high Romanticism within a dodecaphonic logic? Only now did Berg realize that the parody of Webern's music he and Adorno had one day created—a score consisting of but a single quintuplet provided with every imaginable performance indication, notably to be interpreted as "dying away"—was but a manifestation of this musical nirvana, this melodic principle of Thanatos. Only now did he realize that he too would somehow have to reduce all melodic possibilities to one instance, to an essence. There must be, somehow, a mortal destiny to music...

♩ DOLOROSO.

But this work was interrupted by Death. On April 22 of that same year, Alma Mahler's daughter, Manon Gropius, died. Berg would memorialize her in music. Working at a terrible pace—surpassing even that of Mozart desiring to complete his *Requiem Mass* before the man in black would have his due—Berg completed his *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*, dedicated "To the Memory of an Angel." Little did he know that this angel was to become his own: the completion of this concerto coincided with the arrival of the Angel of Death, in the guise of a winged insect that would fatally sting Berg. His devotion to these sundry, conflicting angels interrupted forever the work on *Lulu*—Berg died later that year, like Mahler, at the age of fifty. The opera was left unfinished: the only words of the final act that Berg managed to put to music were *Lulu*'s very last, the *Todesschrei*, her death-scream.



Here, twelve tones are placed vertically on end, to be sounded simultaneously. All possible melodies—including *Lulu*'s musical leitmotif—shriek in an instant. Melancholic disharmony of the spheres.

♩ AGITATO.

Because of the difficult political climate in Austria—where Wedekind's and Mahler's works were forbidden, and Berg's *Lulu* impossible—the first performance of *Lulu* took place in Zurich on 2 June 1937. On the other side of the country, another opera took place that same day. Aloïse never did forsake her love of the opera: at la Rosière, she posed herself, as usual, at the window of her room, an improvised theatrical proscenium, and that evening sang, with a carefully modulated operatic voice, arias from *Carmen*.

♩ FURIOSO.

Synchronized with the circus roar of the chorus, José blocks Carmen's path, in indignation, in jealousy, in rage. *To die pure by sacrifice is my ideal*, thought Aloïse, thought Carmen. Carmen responds, verbal veronica; José advances, provoked, frenzied; Carmen riposts with her blood, as José, enraged torero of passion, stabs the damned woman under a tormented sky, where Lulu's death cry resounds in the night, as Jack the Ripper cuts into her damned flesh.

☞ TRANQUILLO.

Unbeknownst to one another, Aloïse-Lulu-Carmen and Lulu-Nelli-Eve-Mignon sang their deaths—deaths not extinguishing, but erupting—sang their song of songs to each other across the earthly, celestial and infernal distances. *Only a miracle of divine love can raze the walls that eternally separate us*, thought Aloïse. *Lulu, my angel! Let me see you again! I am near you! I shall stay near you forever!* cried the Countess Geschwitz, as her slaughter at the hands of Jack echoed Lulu's fate. Parallel but incompatible, these destinies are inscribed in the words of Baudelaire's *Le vin des amants* which grace another of Berg's pieces, *Der Wein*, whose composition briefly delayed work on *Lulu*:

*Dans un délire parallèle,
Ma soeur, côte à côte nageant,
Nous fuirons sans repos ni trêves
Vers le paradis de mes rêves!*

*[In a parallel delirium,
My sister, swimming side by side,
We flee without rest or respite,
Toward the paradise of my dreams!]*

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A common feature among pentecosts, spirits, the possessed, schizophrenics, children and poets: glossolalia, which in theology is often referred to as 'speaking in tongues'. The plural term indicates more specifically the utopic idea of a universal language, comprised of all languages, grouping together and cancelling them all out at the same time, but also, because of this simultaneity, suppressing language, or at least its range of signification, for the sake of one sonorous envelope. Paradox? The meaning of language abolished, only the inanity of sounds would remain, devoid of everything but noise. Glossolalia averts or denies the laws of language, which decree that everything be said, everything understood: in glossolalia all is only noise, the white noise of communication. The present article maps out a history of the theological, anthropological, psychopathological, and poetic fascination which our western culture has for glossolalia.

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GLOSSOLALIAS?
LA GLOTTE Y SONNE UN HALLALI!



Vincent Barras

Translation by Allison Morehead

"GLOSSOLALIE (LA GLOTTE Y SONNE UN HALLALI)." One must carefully examine this definition proposed not long ago by Michel Leiris.¹ The glottis, orifice of the organic depths, harasses the tongue, until it cries for mercy, full of meanings. *Insane* language, glossolalia rebels against the numerous attempts to reveal its meaning.

A GLOSSOLALIC WORK

Glossolalie for narrator and instrumentalists, by the German composer and theologian Dieter Schnebel: "more a project than a composition, for which an extraordinary number of produc-

tions are possible, now and in the future," was projected, then, more so than composed, in 1959-60 in the form of "preparative materials."² An open-ended work, in accordance with the paradigm which has since become imperative in aesthetic exegesis, the term open, according to Umberto Eco, used in order to characterize a certain typical production of the 1950s (the examples furnished in his book are, for the most part, musical). We should pay attention to dates, and to chronological order. But in other ways—in fact this work can be seen in an almost infinite number of ways—*Glossolalie* seemed to be a closure to the decade of the avant-garde in Darmstadt, and at the same time an opening on the next decade, during which musical tenden-

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S_{1,2,3}: haktische Bewegung und Drehungen durch den ganzen Raum

Um Schranke geregelt, aber artikulierte
f-ff immer rascher werden

Kroklokwaftzi? Semememi!
Seiokrontro - prafriplo:
Bifzi, bafzi; hulalemi:
quasti basti bo...
Lalu lalu lalu lalu la!

Zu den Plätzen wie zu Beginn

Simarar kos malzipempu
siluzankunkrei (!);
Marjomar dos: Quempu Lempu
Siri Suri Sei (!)
Lalu lalu lalu lalu la!

S_{1,2,3}:
[Lm] sofort wieder
Abm
halten!

(Kroklokwaftzi: zame:memi; za:okronto; prafriplo: bifzi; bafzi; hulalemi; kvasti: basti: bo: lalu: lalu: lalu: lalu: la)
(zimarar: kos: malzipempu: siluzankunkrei; marjomar: dos: quempu: lempu: siri: suri: sei: lalu: lalu: lalu: lalu: la)

f-ff etwa:

Abgahakt schreiben

B Δ Z O Λ N E Π Σ Υ Χ Ω
A Γ E H I K M O P T Y Φ Ψ

(oifa beti gama dulta psilon tsetu bita jota kupa limdu myno xeni kranpe rozia mutai pselon fuxi pso emi qa)

Innhalb von 2-3" allen Spielern und Sprechern Startzeichen geben

S₁ folgend einen ziemlich großen Kreis schlagen

stretto (2 'lalu')
Abschlag
Kurs wartet und weiter!

f-Laute variieren (f + ff)

Harm.

Becken

Gongs

(Schlägel an Jutz halten)

[fig. 1]

cies seemingly much more diverse would be affirmed: music linked to the theater or to happenings (Mauricio Kagel and Sylvano Bussotti, not to mention John Cage), music in which the usual temporal conceptions were turned inside out (Morton Feldman), music at the frontiers of language (Luciano Berio, Gerhard Rühm, les poètes sonores); music however which, under this blanket term “eclectic” (a qualifier which can sound scornful in the mouths of certain people), aimed to go beyond music as a genre, in an improbable exercise of auto-transcendence, and thus positively assumed the negative qualifier “informal music.”³

[1] ‘Souple mantique et simples tics de gotte en supplément’ in *Langage tanguage ou ce que les mots me disent*, Paris, Gallimard, 1985, p. 30.

[2] ‘Materialpräparationen’ in the words of the composer. See the performance notes in Dieter Schnebel, *Denkbare Musik. Schriften 1952-1972*, ed. by Hans Rudolf Zeller, Cologne, M. DuMont Schauberg, pp. 257-261 and 384-396. Detailed musicological discussions of *glossolalia* can be found in Simone Heilgendorff, *Inszenierung von Sprache und Musik in der Avantgarde um 1960*, Diss., Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, 1989; from the same author: ‘*glossolalie*: eine “Sprache der Freiheit” ’ in *SchNeBel 60*, ed. by Werner Grünzweig, Gesine Schröder, Martin Supper, Hofheim, Wolke, 1990, pp. 320-345; Reinhard Josef Sacher, *Musik als Theater. Tendenzen zur Grenzüberschreitung in der Musik von 1958 bis 1968*, Regensburg, Gustav Bosse, 1985; Max Nyffler, ‘Musik zum Sprechen gebracht. Dieter Schnebels “*glossolalie*” ’ *Musik Texte*.

Glossolalie 61: a version written by Schnebel himself separately from these “preparative materials,”⁴ of about thirty minutes long, divided traditionally into four movements, for three or four narrators, three or four instrumentalists (percussionists) and a conductor (fig. 1). This (de)composition is presented as a handbook of all the graphic inventions and imaginable types of not only musical but also literary notation. A piece to listen to, but perhaps just as much to read, in the sense that, even if in this form it is a realized project in and of itself (that is to say potentially realized in concert), and therefore already a reduction of possibilities offered by the completely open-ended

Zeitschrift für neue Musik, No. 57/58 (1995), pp. 78-79 (article appeared originally in 1972).

[3] The term refers, of course, to Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Musik und neue Musik’ (1960), ‘Vers une musique informelle’ (1961), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1978, vol. 16, pp. 476-492 and 493-540 (French translation by Jean-Louis Leleu, in *Quasi una fantasia*, Paris, Gallimard, 1982), without however pretending to follow the complex argumentation of the author to the letter. Adorno’s article dates from the beginning of the 1960s and does not directly deal with the works in question here. Gianmario Borio, *Musikalische Avantgarde um 1960*, Laaber, Laaber Verlag, 1993, is one of the first (scholars) to attempt to characterize synthetically, with the help of Adornian intuition, the aesthetic questionings of this musical period, intermediate to all points of view, which were a part of the 1960s.

form conceived from the beginning; no execution would ever be able to render it in its entirety. The score embraces, potentially—that is to say in the form of suggestions, quotations, indications of play—all the modes of musical notation, all periods of the history of music, to which respond all the links of the sonorous chain... in which percussion instruments function bringing the ensemble of their registers, from sound to noise—and of the vocal chain (or more precisely the oral and phonal chain)—from a raspy throat, to a sneeze, to screams, to the most ethereal singing. The work's ambition as a "libretto" is no less: all possible alphabets, authors, literature, and languages are found in

the potential content. The vocal composition does not have a preexisting text as its object; or rather, its text is language (*langue*, *Sprache*), with the extension of its meanings, but also the tongue (*langue*, *Zunge*) and the deployment of its sonorous possibilities: Babel of sounds and languages, held tight by the corset of the sonata form. "A kind of sound treatise on language objectification and the exhaustiveness of its signifying function."⁵

Glossolalie: its principle—much more than a simple allusion—is that of "speaking in tongues (*Zungenreden*)" from the theological tradition: a charisma, a grace bestowed by the Holy Spirit

[4] Schott, Mayence, ED 6414. Schnebel signals that, aside from his own, only two other versions have up to then been produced. Cf. Simone Heiligendorff, "glossolalie: eine "Sprache der Freiheit" ", op. cit., p. 325.

[5] Gianmario Borio, op.cit., p. 114. Other later scores by Schnebel take up again and continue this programme: composition of and for the tongue (and other sound organs): *Maulwerke* (1968-1974). 'for organs of articulation and appliances of reproduction'; compositions for the body: *Körpersprache* (1979-1980), 'organ composition for three to nineteen performers', *Laut-Gesten-Laute* (1984-1988), 'for one to four performers', *Zeichen-Sprache* (1987-1989), 'for gestures and voices with four to ten performers'.

[6] Schnebel co-opts the expression of Adorno. See his essay 'Gestliche Musik heute', in *Denkbare Musik*, op.cit., p. 422.

[7] The monumental work of Christian Scholz, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Typologie der Lautpoesie*, Obermichelbach, Gertrud Scholz Verlag, 1989, contains a detailed bibliography of and on these different German-speaking authors. See also the recent collection of glossolalic texts, *Glossolalie, Stammelheft tritt an die Stelle der Nr. 18 des Literaturmagazins*, éd. par Schuldt, Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1986, as well as the essays brought together in *Autoren-Musik, Sprache im Grenzbereich der Zünfte*, (=Musik-Konzepte, 81), Munich, text + kritik, 1993, or the recent work by Michael Lentz, *Laut Poesie/Musik. Eine kritisch-dokumentarische Bestandsaufnahme*, Wien, Selene, 2000.

on the Pentecost to be returned to God in the form of a spoken chant whose meaning is temporarily suspended. A prayer, but...thanks to the composition: a process of accumulation and superposition of language, that gives to this "music" of the 1960s all its history—a "de-mythologized prayer":⁶ nothing else, in terms of sound phenomenology, than a scream of "kill" shouted by the glottis.

GLOSSOLALIA AND POETRY

It would perhaps be appropriate to trace the course, in the history of art of the twentieth century, of the term "glossolalia," which appears just below the surface or even more obviously in works otherwise completely unrelated, as the connecting thread indicating the willingness, of a certain artistic modern tendency, to treat (or deal with) an exhausted language. It would lead backwards, for example, from the writers of German expressionism, contemporaries of Schnebel such as Oskar Pastior and Hans Rudolf Zeller (among many others)⁷ to ultra-lettrisme, to lettrisme, to the "exploréen" (explorative) language of Claude Gauvreau, to the glossolalias scattered in the "Cahiers de Rodez" or Antonin Artaud's radiophonic poem *Pour en finir avec le Jugement de Dieu* (1940s and 1950s),⁸ to the poem on the sonorous world *Glossolalia*

(1921-1922) by the Russian symbolist poet Andrej Belyj,⁹ finally to the dadaist recitations of the 1910s and the initial phonetic poems of Christian Morgenstern (cited incidentally in Schnebel's score) and Paul Scheerbarth, which appeared at the very end of the 19TH century:

Kikakokù!

Ekoraláps!

Wiso kollipánda opolósa.

Ipasátta ih fúo.

Kikakokù proklínthe petéh.

Nikifilí mopaléxio intipáschi

benákaffro...própsa pí! própsa pí!

Jasóllu nosaressa flipsei.

Aukaróto passakrussar Kikakokù.

Núpsa púsch?

Futupúkke...própsa pí!

*Jasóllu...*¹⁰

K, hard glottic consonant, star of glossolalic creations, and for color, the vowels, *I, A, O, U*. "Kikakoku!", one of the "intermezzi" of Scheerbarth's "train novel" is reputed to be the first phonetic poem known in the history of literature. To avoid appealing to the virtues of the spirit of time, we could content ourselves with unravelling chronology in this way: thus, dates

mark tangential points, zones of friction with the ensemble of diverse domains of human experience in which glossolalia participates.

RELIGION AND GLOSSOLALIA

Glossolalia, prophecy's shadow, has been a constitutive element of the Christian religion from its beginnings—an aspect which the work of Schnebel, as we have seen, was not ignorant: "They turned to reveal their tongues as what one would call tongues of fire that shared themselves and pretended to be each other. All were

imbued with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues according to what the Spirit gave them to say."¹² Instant expression of the divine Word, and by consequence universal language, glossolalia wants to offer the purity of Meaning wrapped in a pure sonorous envelope, regardless of its appearance of only noise made by the tongue. The etymology underlines the ambiguity: *glossa* (tongue) and *lalein* (to speak, to talk) appear together in the first epistle of Paul in Corinthians. If *glossa* designates the tongue, is it necessary to understand it, asks the theologian Émile Lombard, in the anatomical sense, involving, by metonymy, the organs which are bound to it: the lungs, the throat, the

[8] Claude Gauvreau, *État mixte et autres poèmes 1948–1970*, Montréal, l'Hexagone, 1993; on this subject see Jean-Pierre Denis, 'La naissance du langage exploréen chez Claude Gauvreau, ou la voix sans corps', in *Oralités–Polyphonix 16*. 'La pensée se fait dans la bouche', ed. by Roger Chamberland and Richard Martel, Québec, Éditions Intervention, 1992, pp. 133–142. Antonin Artaud's glossolalic poems can be found in his *Oeuvres complètes*, vols. XXIII (which contains *Pour en finir...*) and XV to XXI (for the *Cahiers de Rodez*), Paris, Gallimard, 1974; regarding this subject, see Laurent Jenny, *La terreur et les signes: Poétiques de la rupture*, Paris, Gallimard, 1982.

[9] Andrej Belyj, *Glossalalia*, reprint of 1922 Berlin Edition (in Russian), with an introduction (in German) by Dmitrij Tschizewskij, Munich, Fink-Verlag, 1971.

[10] Paul Scheerbarth, *Ich liebe Dich! Ein Eisenbahn-Roman mit 66 Intermezzos*, Berlin, Schuster & Loeffler, 1897. See also Christian Morgenstern, *Galgenlieder*, Berlin, Cassirer, 1905 (collection of phonetic poetry written in the final years of the previous century: 'Das grosse Lalula').

[11] Allen S. Weiss, 'Psychopompomania', in his book *The Aesthetics of Excess*, Albany (NY), State University of New York Press, 1989, pp. 113–134, as well as Annette Michelson, 'De Stijl, Its Other Face: Abstraction and Cacaphony, or What Was the Matter with Hegel?', *October*, No. 22 (1982), pp. 3–26, which comments on the predilection of Artaud and other dadaist and futurist poets for the consonant *K* and other matters.

[12] *Actes*, II, 3–5 (translation from the École biblique de Jérusalem, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1975); see also another much older gloss in I Cor,

jaw and the lips? By synecdoche, it could just as well designate a language in which the human subject participates only in a completely mechanical way; in addition, the tongues of flames of the biblical texts might indicate other languages, new languages. But the *glossa* could again be that of the rhetoricians, a rare locution, a gloss; or finally, a *sermo*, an idiom, a foreign language, which only seems to be able to emanate from the Spirit.¹³ One would not know how to settle the argument. Organs speaking mechanically, new languages, gloss, idioms coming from the Holy Spirit, and religious glossolalia, regularly mentioned in the history of the Christian religion, all experienced a spectacular

revival at the turn of the century among the Pentecostals who appeared in Texas and California, and have since spread out in a multitude of subdivisions and groupings, all over the world. And, during the same period, this revival can also be seen in the movement of “awakening” in Wales, or even, in a more or less tolerated way, at the heart of charismatic movements on the margins of traditional churches. The fundamental doctrinal principle dictates that God visits the Christian, supplying him or her with miraculous charismas, including, specifically, the “gift of tongues.”

XII–XIV. ‘Speaking in tongues’, or the ‘gift of the tongues’, has seen many controversies which have accompanied the history of Christianity like its shadow, up to the present day. Among the profusion of bibliographic references, often biased (for a Christian, how can you not be for, or against, or completely against glossolalia? Unintelligible, this likewise is *against* language, never *without* language), see the study of Émile Lombard, *De la glossolalie chez les premiers chrétiens et des phénomènes similaires*, Lausanne, Bridel, 1910. This article will not address the ancient origins and universality of the phenomenon of religious glossolalia, for which one can look to the work of L. Caryle May, ‘A Survey of Glossolalia and Related Phenomena in Non-Christian Religions’, *American Anthropologist*, No. 58 (1956), pp. 75–96.

[13] See É. Lombard, *op. cit.*, pp. 159 ff.

Shua ea, shua ea
 Otschi biro ti ra peu
 akki lungi ta ri fungo
 u li bara ti ra tungo
 latschi bungo ti tu ta.

Ea tschu ra ta
 u ra torida
 tschu ri kanka oli tanka
 bori tori ju ra fanka
 kulli katschi da
 u ri tu ra ta!¹⁴

[14] The poem was transcribed by Paul Drews. 'Aus der Gemeinschaftsbewegung', *Die Christliche Welt*, No. 22 (1908), pp. 271-276. The Futurists and Russian linguists, such as Viktor Sklovskij, were aware of the writings of this pastor, and were interested in the 'involuntary movements of his voice and his sound apparatus, which followed the sounds' (the two references are cited in Chr. Scholz, op. cit., t. I. p. 314). The poem is also commented on by H. Rust, *Eine Studie zur kritischen Religionspsychologie, Grenzfragen des Nerven- und Seelenlebens*, Munich, 1924, and is also taken up by Leo Navratil, *Schizophrenie und Sprache. Schizophrenie und Kunst. Zur Psychologie der Dichtung und des Gestaltens*, Munich, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1976, p. 58, and by Michel de Certeau, 'Utopies vocales, glossolalies', *Traverses*, No 20 (1980), pp. 26-37.

[15] William S. Samarin, New York, MacMillan, 1972. Aside from the works cited see also, Oskar Pfister,

Glossolalia, this automatic poem which was spoken by the German pastor Paul, during a gathering of Pentacostals at the beginning of the century, seems to hang on to the models of German spiritual chants: "Schua ea" or "Ea Tschu" for "Iesus" or "Ieshuah." Truthfully, the phenomenon of glossolalia is indissociable from the chain of its interpretations, in the context of ritual as much as in the context of historical progress. The obligatory presence, in most religious ceremonies, of a sort of interpreter translating for the faithful gathered, the utterance of the glossolalic in direct contact with the divine, responded, on the level of western culture, to the emergence, from the

'Die psychologische Enträtselung der religiösen Glossolalie und der automatischen Kryptographie', *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen*, No 3 (1912), pp. 427-460 and 730-794; Frank Stagg, E. Glenn Hinson, Wayne E. Oates, *Glossolalia. Tongue Speaking in Biblical, Historical and Psychological Perspective*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1967; Felicitas D. Goodman, *Speaking in Tongues: A Cross-Cultural Study of Glossolalia*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1972.

[16] Théodore Flournoy, *Des Indes à la planète Mars. Étude sur un cas de somnambulisme avec glossolalie*, Paris, Seuil, 1983. Other studies engaged in exploring similar terrain had of course preceded that of Flournoy; among the most interesting is: Adolphe Kussmaul, *Les troubles de la parole* (French trans.), Paris, Baillière, 1884.

beginning of the 20TH century, of the multiple and abundant exegeses of the phenomenon, in terms of anthropology and sociology of religions, which accompanied, from a distance or from up close, the numerous sects practicing (or practiced by) glossolalia. The fact that a well-informed specialist titles his work (to be honest, one of the best works on the subject), *Tongues of men and angels. A controversial and sympathetic analysis of Speaking in Tongues*¹⁵ speaks, if we can say so, for itself. It is impossible, for the witnesses of glossolalia, whether anthropologists, theologians or psychologists, to turn away from the fascination, to avoid taking a position, favorable or antipathetic.

GLOSSOLALIA, LINGUISTICS AND PSYCHIATRY

Glossolalia, in as much as it is a psycho-pathological event, in turn does not let itself be divided by the interpretations of specialists who, from the end of the 19TH century, have attached to it a necessary prism that must be overcome in order to access it. These interpretations, of course, go back to the work *Des Indes à la planète Mars. Étude sur un cas de somnambulisme avec glossolalie* by the doctor-philosopher Théodore Flournoy, professor of psychology in Geneva, and have for a long time associated the term glossolalia with the language of the psychiatrists.¹⁶ The "case of somnambulism," Hélène Smith, a medium with exceptional gifts, somnambulism being only one, utters, during the course of innumerable sessions, incomprehensible "romances." Flournoy writes, "I have the feeling that I have lost my knowledge of Latin [i.e. its all Greek to me]—I mean to say I have lost my knowledge of psychology, since regarding languages, it is not Latin that is in question in this affair." While the mouth of Hélène Smith utters:

*ou mama priya—mama radisivou—mama
sadiou sivroukâ—apa tava va signa damasa—
simia damasa bagda sivrouka,*

the “spirit” Léopold—the right arm of Hélène interrogated by Flournoy—translates:

*Mon bon, mon excellent mon bien-aimé
Sivrouka, sans toi où prendre le bonheur,*

and the pen of Ferdinand de Saussure provides a gloss:

*il y a certainement dans ce texte quelques frag-
ments sanscrits [...] Les plus clairs ont mama
priya qui signifie ‘mon chéri,’ ‘mon bien-aimé’
et mama sadiou (corrigé en sâdhô), ‘mon bon,’
‘mon excellent.’ Le reste de la phrase est moins
satisfaisant dans l’état où il est: tava veut bien*

*dire ‘de toi,’ mais apa tava est un pur bar-
barisme si cela doit signifier ‘loin de toi.’ De
même la syllable bag dans bagda fait penser,
indépendamment de la traduction de Léopold,
à bhâga ‘bonheur,’ mais elle se trouve entourée
de syllabes incompréhensibles.¹⁷*

A glossolalic promise of hindu happiness, within which “there are series of eight to ten syllables incontestably providing a fragment of meaning,” but drowned in a “hodge-podge of syllables.” Searching for words beneath words, the linguist-scientist finds a barbaric sanskrit, but a sufficiently subtle sanskritoid however to unseat hermeneutic science (but it still remains

[17] Théodore Flournoy, op. cit., p. 262.

On Flournoy, and the context of the Geneva spirit experiments, see notably Mireille Cifali, ‘Théodore Flournoy, la découverte de l’inconscient’, *Bloc-Notes de la psychanalyse*, No 3 (1983), pp. 111–131; Olivier Flournoy, *Léopold et Théodore*, Neuchâtel, La Baconnière, 1986; the introduction by Sonu Shamadasani to the new English translation *From India to Planet Mars*, Cambridge (Mass), MIT Press, 1994. On Flournoy and de Saussure, see Tzvetan Todorov, ‘Le symbolisme chez Saussure’, in *Théories du symbole*, Paris, Seuil, 1977, pp. 323–338; Christian Puech, ‘Parler en langues, parler des langues’, as well as Mireille Cifali, ‘La fabrication du martien; genèse d’une langue imaginaire’, *Langages*, No. 91 (1988), special number consacrated to glossolalias, pp. 27–38 and 39–60. Other linguists have been interested in Hélène Smith, including Victor Henry, *Le langage martien*, Paris, Maisonneuve, 1901. For a general reflection on lin-

guistics in relation to glossolalia, see Jean-Jacques Courtine, ‘Des faux en langue? (Remarques linguistiques à propos des glossolalies)’, *Le Discours psychanalytique*, No. 6 (1983), pp. 35–47.

[18] Between 1901 and 1910 the *Archives de psychologie* published numerous studies and descriptions of cases of glossolalia written by theologians, psychologists, doctors and psychoanalysts.

[19] For an example: J. Lévy-Valensi, Pierre Migault, Jacques Lacan, ‘Ecrits ‘inspirés’, schizographie’, *Annales médico-psychologiques*, No. 91 (1931), pp. 508–522.

[20] The study cited (note 15) by Oskar Pfister, pastor and psychoanalyst from Zurich, is the prototype. Freud and Jung were also closely interested.

to decipher the successive languages of the spirits talked through Hélène: martien, ultra-martien, uranien!).

Since the work of Flournoy, in order to take glossolalia observed clinically into consideration (in the demented, patients suffering from chronic hallucinatory psychosis, paranoid, schizophrenics, and also certain aphasic patients) psycho-pathological science has been in league with linguistics. From the circle of Geneva scientists¹⁸ to the neuro-psychiatrists close to Clérambault and Janet,¹⁹ to the psychoanalysts,²⁰ and, at the other pole, to aphasiologists today,²¹ all have carried on a long process of inquiry, not yet completed, of questioning,

transcription, description, and definition. In reducing glossolalia to the value of a symptom, the clinic attempts to reestablish the intelligibility of the meaning. But the misleading and deceptive language of glossolalics, behind its facade of false language, remains irreducible.

*Pourquoi dites-vous iortalité pour immortalité?
Parce que je n'aime pas dire la mort à tout bout
de champ.*

*Pourquoi dites vous des révélaons pour des
révélations? C'est pour ne pas dire la scie.*

*Pourquoi dites vous dima pour dimanche? C'est
trop long, et puis, qu'est-ce que ça ressemble
dimanche?*

*Pourquoi dites-vous obéon pour obéissance?
J'abrège pour faire des économies de temps et de
papier.*

*Pourquoi dites-vous vaio pour vaisseau? Parce
que seau ça veut dire pas intelligent.*

Mlle G..., the object of auditory (she hears voices) and psychic ("When the good Lord instructs me, it is without the noise of words") hallucinations, produces, without batting an eyelid, utterances breathtaking in their "constant enrichment and improvements;" but how not to be disappointed when attentive analysis dismantles the mechanism: a jargon obtained by suppression or modification of one or several

letters. "Like other glossolalics, Mlle G... attempted to create a new language, and like others, she obtained hardly any results from the point of view of vocabulary. In terms of syntax, the results are minimal [...]. The ensemble obtained is striking in its poverty and in its puerility; this being another characteristic of glossolalias. As in other glossolalias, the vocabulary and syntax are derived from languages known by the sick person; the language is nothing more than a distorted and impoverished French, its development is poor: the language remains in a state of a rough outline." But as it is highlighted by the psychiatrist over the course of long conversations, this particular

glossolalia carries at the same time and from the same point of view the mark of "constant enrichment and improvement," it results from the "creation and the use of the language in relation to delirium and autism."²² In two words: "rhythmic gibberish."²³ Between the void of meaning and the plenitude of the forms of language, the glossolalic clinic, also set up during our century, leads necessarily to a questioning of the process of creating neologisms among the patients observed. Is glossolalia characterized by this reflexive tendency to "speak a new language that fixes and enriches itself progressively, [...] of voluntary training and use, at least at the beginning"? Or is it, on

[21] In particular see the work of André Roch Lecours, notably 'Simulation of Speech Production without a Computer', in *Neural Models of Languages Processes*, ed. by Michael Arbib, David Caplan, John C. Marshall, New York, Academic Press, 1982, pp. 345-367 and 'Glossomania and Glossolalia in Schizophrenia and their Linguistic Kinship to the Jargonaphasia', in *Linguistic Disorders and Pathologies*, ed. by G. Blanken *et al.*, to appear.

[22] Guilhem Theulié, 'Une forme de glossolalie. Glossolalie par supression littéraire', *Annales médico-psychologiques*, No 96 (1938), pp. 31-51.

[23] A. Brosius, 'Über die Sprache der Irren', *Allgemeine Zeitung für Psychiatrie*, No 14 (1857), p. 59-60 (cited by Jean Bobon, *Introduction historique à l'étude des néologismes et des glossolalies en psychopathologie*, Liège, Vaillant-Carmanne, 1943, p.22).

the contrary, "the expression of violent emotional processes," automatically discharging phrases, words, phonemes, unformed sounds, accompanied by a diminution or extinction of the state of consciousness?²⁴ Much more, the enigma of the process of creation itself immediately arises. And it is medicine that poses the question: how, for example, to distinguish the symbolists, the "old pillar of asylum L...", whose language possesses "very rich hidden aspects, and even whose unintelligible and incoherent poetry remains [characterized] by verbal extravagance, sonority and purity of rhythms." Unleashing an endless *jeu de miroirs*: "profound difficulties in intellectual

functioning, with a tendency towards dementia, are compatible with a remarkable richness in vocabulary and syntactical combinations, with a hypertrophy in verbal potential and prosodic activity, and with the frequent encounter of a certain poetry; one being, to a certain extent, the result of the other."²⁵

[24] Jean Bobon, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

[25] Paul Quercy, 'Language et poésie d'un aliéné', *L'Encéphale*, No 15 (1920), pp. 207-212. The *jeu de miroirs*, the surrealist approach, finds the expression of authentic thought in the language of insane people.

[26] Expressions taken from Michel de Certeau, op. cit., p. 26.

[27] 'In gutturo-tétanique / guttural-tetanic stuttering, the occlusion of the glottis, the method by which vowels are formed, is prolonged too long, and a glottic cramp is induced. [...] Thus, when a stammerer attempts to pronounce the letters *k* and *q*, a spasmodic occlusion of the glottic can occur, with constriction of the posterior part of the mouth', Adolphe Kussmaul, op. cit., p. 294. Today the video work of Marie Legros comprises of (in quick succession) spasms of the phonatory organs.

[28] Listen to the titles of two recent anthologies: ...BOBE081 *Lautpoesie, Eine Anthologie*, ed. by Christian Scholz, GSV CD 002, Gertrud Scholz Verlag (works by J. Cage, J.A. Riedl, O. Pastior, H. Geerken, E. Rhode, Chr. Prigent, V. Scherstjanoi, T. Johnson, W. Laubscher, C. Bauckholt, Chr. Steinbacher, D. Schnebel, E. Schipper, C. Claus); *Vocal Neighborhoods*, LMJ CD Series, ed. by Larry Wendt, *Leonardo Music Journal*, CD Series Volume 3, 1993 (works by B. Hutchinson, P. Dutton, V. Scherstjanoi, A. Stewart, T. Wishart, H. Chopin, D. Moss).

[29] On these points see, Paul Zumthor, 'Une poésie de l'espace', in *Poésies sonores*, ed. by Vincent Barras and Nicholas Zurbrugg, Geneva, Contrechamps, 1992, pp. 5-18.

GLOSSOLALIA AS A WORK OF ART

Glossolalias, in general: languages which are but air, "pure fables," "speaking fictions," "trompe-l'oreille."²⁶ In a voluntary gesture, contemporary sound poetry turns these pathological residues of language into constitutive material calling itself poetic.

Take *bob jubile* by Bob Cobbing (fig. 2). Poetic text? Score? Analogical concrete poem? These questions mark out very precisely the limits of *intermediary* space where sound poetry is situated, and simultaneously the limits of traditional critical commentary.

Consubstantially linked to the conditions of the technology of sound recording (it is in this way that the first sound poets began to experiment with the first tape recorders now in standard use), it takes its point of departure from the possibility itself of being able to listen, recognize and then manipulate the distinctive voice of the person performing, and constitutes in this way a move beyond, much more than a continuation, of phonetic poems. But the possibility thus introduced of vocal reflection brought about long lasting consequences: visually indecipherable, having no other existence other than negative, indefinitely malleable, the electronic traces that could realize sound poetry manifested the inadequacy of the traditional modes of representation which it is necessary

here to make heard: isolated phonemes, expirations, inhalations, breaths, stutterings,²⁷ sudden movements of the glottis, whistles, hisses, silences.²⁸ Beyond the impasse of its representation, the practice of sound poetry institutes the process of language (langue, Sprache).

To proclaim the truth of the pure voice (even with the most artificial means), to put in its place the *phonè* (but a *phonè* that opens itself towards noise), is to challenge the legitimacy of meaning (the common meaning, the communicative meaning), to rise up against the imperialism of the "text" and in the same movement to expose all that participates in the creation of sound: lips, teeth, tongue (langue, Zunge), palate, pharynx, glottis, larynx, trachea, lungs, stomach...²⁹

The poetic glossolalic: the tongue called the body, the part signifying the whole, but challenging, in advance, the interpretation. The glossolalic's poem is born; breathing, suffering, it launches its ultimate song, what no sign has ever made.

*Seated. Head in hands.
Nothing else. Face invisible.
Dim spot. Speech hesitant.
Mike for audibility.¹*

Samuel Beckett

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 CD Track#8

Oral Arrhythmia — ectoplasmic bites and kisses — Inarticulations — Syntactic Squints — The Collective Arid Stutter — dampness, much — bracketed performances — Insurgent Ventriloquy — utter, mutter, splutter, stutter — breath correspondences — index finger in cut throat — portage around enemies — Running and Screaming with Interruption — The Release Into Motion

(UNTITLED PERFORMANCE)

:A LEXICON OF FALSE STARTS AND FAILED ADVANCES



Christof Migone

FROZEN SPEECH Mouth agape, but gap cannot be seen because mouth is full, filled to overflowing, stuffed with towel, attempt to dry mouth out, to muffle speech, to suffocate breath, to starve out. This Piper, at the particular instant of *Catalysis IV*, is mute and muted (fig. 1). She is dehydrated, on a bus, catalyzing, precipitating, like a chemistry experiment whose query rewinds and fast forwards Rosa Parks all over us. Again, regain. She reverses George Brecht's *Three Aqueous Events*: "ice, water, steam."² She's *steam, water, ice*. Dry ice. Mad ice. She towel dries her liquid state, or at least keeps it contained. She's either cornered ice or steam for spirit, neither of them leak. The

ice might be dry but its surface remains resolutely slippery. What is the surface here? This is the surface here, your eyes surface at this text, as if emerging out from underwater, this text is the melting point, the drowning line, where air is suffocated by water, and water evaporates into what later pours. You are reading via the aqueous humor, fluid filled chamber of your eye. In this reading, you are an event navigating all three states. Like Artaud, Adrian Piper's "a wave which hesitates between gas and water."³ She's hesitant water. She's water. And she's torrential. We drown dry.

|fig.1|

Adrian Piper, "Catalysis IV" in *Out of Order, Out of Sight Volume 1*, 43. Used by permission.



|1| Samuel Beckett in *The Complete Short Prose 1929-1989*, xvi.

|2| 1961 Fluxus performance score cited in numerous places, recently in Douglas Kahn, *Noise Water Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*, 285.

|3| Antonin Artaud in Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 89.

|4| Roland Barthes, *L'empire des signes*, 13. Ces faits et bien d'autres persuadent combien il est dérisoire de vouloir contester notre société sans jamais penser les limites mêmes de la langue par laquelle (rapport instrumental) nous prétendons la contester: c'est vouloir détruire le loup en se logeant confortablement dans sa gueule.

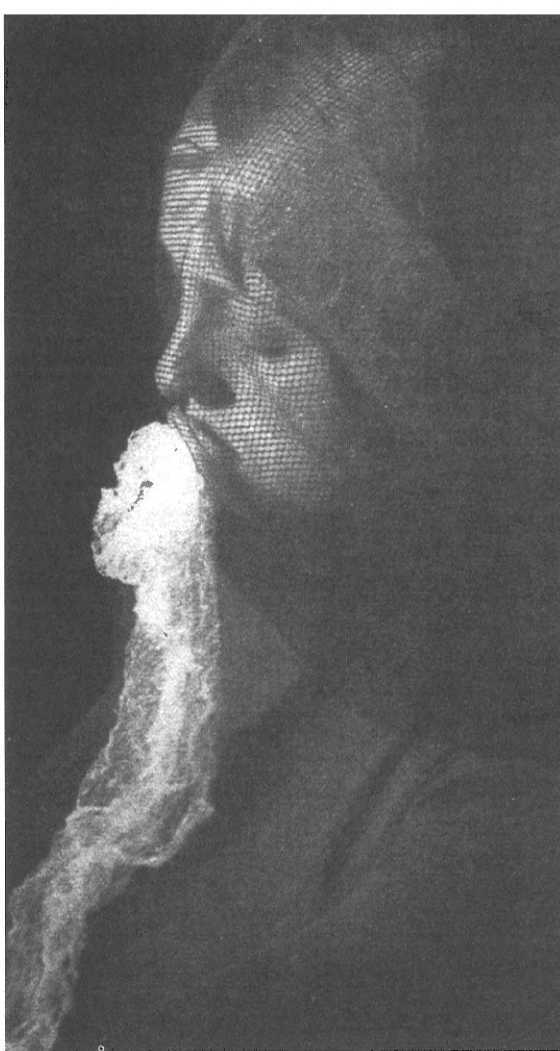
|5| Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, 15.

STUTTER, between fluidities, stuck in an arid zone.

ECTOPLASM a turn of the century picture of a medium producing ectoplasm resembles strikingly the Piper of *Catalysis IV* (fig. 2). Ectoplasm, definition 1: the outer layer of the cytoplasm of a cell; definition 2: the vaporous, luminous substance believed by spiritualists to emanate from a medium in a trance, or from an object undergoing telekinesis. Imagine a Piper as vapor, as outer layer, as median between.

STUTTER, the somatic interruption.

FRENCH KISS French kiss, an entwine of two mouths, Roland Barthes tongues Raoul Vaneigem: "It is derisory to want to contest our society without ever thinking of the limits of the language by which we pretend to contest: it is desiring to destroy the wolf by comfortably inhabiting its mouth,"⁴ Raoul's aroused response, "People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraint, have a corpse in their mouths."⁵ Jacques Lacan in his *Impromptu at Vincennes*, December 3, 1969 joins the (ch)oral tryst: "A society is not something that can be



|fig.2|
unidentified woman in Marina Abramovic, *Cleaning the House*, unpaginated. Caption reads: "Medium, producing ectoplasm during spiritual seance, England, turn of the century." Used by permission.

defined just like that. What I am attempting to articulate, because analysis gives me the evidence, is what dominates it — to wit: the practice of language.”⁶ One is thus confronted by the all too familiar quandary, how to mount a resistance to the normative strictures of language by way of language? How does one ensure substantial societal change if the same language is our only means to articulate it?

Another J.L., this one with Austin as surname, in his essay *Pretending* offers, by way of his inimitable flair for humorous illustrative examples, yet another instance of language’s implications on the somatic.

*On a festive occasion you are ordered, for a forfeit, to pretend to be a hyena: going down on all fours, you make a few essays at hideous laughter and finally bite my calf, taking, with a touch of realism possibly exceedingly your hopes, a fair-sized piece right out of it. Beyond question you have gone too far. Try to plead that you were only pretending, and I shall advert forcibly to the state of my calf—not much pretence about that, is there? There are limits, old sport.*⁷

When language becomes carnivorous (or lascivious as in Piper’s *Phillip Zohn Catalysis*: “what does it mean when a dog tries to fuck your

[6] Jacques Lacan, “Impromptu at Vincennes” in *October* #40, 126.

[7] J.L. Austin, “Pretending” in *Philosophical Papers*, 256.

[8] Adrian Piper, “Phillip Zohn Catalysis” in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, Volume I, 58.

[9] Group Material, *Democracy: a project*, 21. From announcement for “Alienation” (1980).

[10] Yvonne Rainer, “Looking Myself in the Mouth” in *October* 17, *passim*.

[11] Adrian Piper, “Preparatory Notes for The Mythic Being” in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, Volume I, 97. One of the clubs she danced at was called the *Entre Nous* [Between Us].

[12] Piper, 55.

[13] Paul Celan, *Poems of Paul Celan*, 247.

SEWN UNDER THE SKIN of my hands:
your name
that hands comforted.

*When I knead the
lump of air, our nourishment,
it is soured by
the letter effulgence from
the dementedly open
pore.*

[14] Piper, 97.

knee”)⁸ one can no longer posit words as containable utterances, the portion of them which remains unassimilable is the wedge that concerns us here. This excess, this noise offers the potential to envision—or rather, to audition—a mode of action which resists the dried out, hollow rendering of both language and society. A constant reminder of the corporeality of language, of its materiality is the running theme of this text. It is a persistence which would add “[we speak][but the language isn’t ours]” to the following list by Group Material:

[we get up in the morning][but the morning isn’t ours][we get ready for work][but the work isn’t

ours][we got to the workplace][but the workplace isn’t ours][we work all day][but the day isn’t ours][we produce a lot of wealth][but the wealth isn’t ours][we get paid some money][but the money isn’t ours][we go back home][but the home isn’t ours][we would like to be social][but society isn’t ours].⁹

BRACKETS 2 this time in Yvonne Rainer: (Artist as Exemplary Sufferer) (Artist as Self-Absorbed Individualist) (Artist as Changer of the Subject) (Artist as Medium) (Artist as Ventriloquist) (Artist as Failed Primitive) (Artist as Failed Intellectual) Artist as Transcendental Ego (Artist as Misfit).¹⁰

BRACKETS 3 How shall one read the sole bracketless artist in Rainer? Has the Transcendental Ego with shed brackets undone its meditation and alienation? In her moments as a discotheque dancer for hire, Piper is bracketed by a cage wherein she dances herself away: “I see nothing, and in a sense hear nothing because I have become music.”¹¹ Dancing in a glass cage in front of a mirror, echoing 1971’s *Food for the Spirit* where Piper “would have to [...] go to my mirror and peer at myself to make sure I was still there.”¹² What precedes her musical dissolve? A dissolve where, like Anna O., her senses are under contracture,

a sembling shut down, but really an opening, a merging—Celan’s “dementedly open pore,”¹³ corporeal, corporeal. Again, what conditions make her musical dissolve possible? “Danny, the manager, has nicely requested that I stop looking as though I was meditating on the tripartite division of the soul while dancing.”¹⁴ The nice enemy demands presence—i.e. that the object’s space-time remain in the here and now. There is something about Piper’s dissolve that is a resolve, a dancing that instills (with a stress on the arresting power of the ‘still’) a certain power to objecthood. In the words of Marx, “one may recall that China and the tables began to dance when the rest of the world appeared to be

standing still—pour encourager les autres.”¹⁵ Furthermore, the editorial note (*) to this dancing footnote by Marx remarks that, this encouragement occurs in a post- (failed) revolutionary moment in which a revolt in China coincides with a rise of spiritualism—read: the return performance of the ectoplasm—in Germany.

CHINA CIPHER Geographical stutter. The History of China according to Pascal, “I believe only the histories whose witnesses get their throats cut.”¹⁶ Ref. in Althusser’s discussion of the Rajk affair in the *Letter to Jean Lacroix*: “(these witnesses are, if not cutting their own

throats, at least putting themselves in the dock).”¹⁷ Pascal further in that *Pensée* refers to a dynamic between obscurity and clarity. Throat, dark voice behind the mouth, hidden and imbedded in the act of witnessing—for the witness must testify, in French both are inextricable—témoin, témoignage. Repeatability of truth is the promise of the witness (Derrida on Blanchot in *Demeure*).¹⁸ Cut throats cut the possibility of repetition, at least of a repetition without difference. Truth is cut as it occurs. It remains, a kind of cancer. It remains, Hannah Wilke’s tumefied neck and her astounding smile (fig. 3). It remains, but is never the same. *Cut Throat Sun* trajectory: Apollinaire in *Alcools*

[15] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* Vol.1, 164fn.27 and *.

[16] Pascal, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Pensées 593/822), 605.

[17] Louis Althusser, “Letter to Jean Lacroix” in *The Spectre of Hegel: Early Writings*, 202.

[18] Jacques Derrida, *Demeure* Maurice Blanchot, passim.

[19] Guillaume Apollinaire, “Zone” in *Oeuvres Poétiques*, 44. Aimé Césaire, *Cadastre* [incl. Soleil cou coupé and Corps perdu]. Jean-Luc Nancy, “Cut Throat Sun” in *An Other Tongue: Nation and Ethnicity in the Linguistic Borderlands*, 113 and 115. I am aware of Norma Alarcón’s critique of Nancy in “Conjugating Subjects: The Heteroglossia of Essence & Resistance” from the same volume (125–138). Briefly, Alarcón critiques Nancy for “appropriating and recodifying the notion of mestizaje to his own

specificity (130).” I will not delve in depth with both essays here, but only offer a starting point for a more thorough discussion. Nancy is engaged in a difficult (if not, impossible) project: “The community: as it were no longer the closure that excludes, but the multiple, cut network from which exclusion only is excluded? (122).” By difficult, I mean both arduous and problematic, and as such, perhaps the critique is already made operative within Nancy’s own text. Alarcón’s critique is ultimately more worrisome, for it would seem to argue for mestizaje as a term definable and therefore possessable and requiring policing—a reduction to a specific specificity where the elements admissible to the mix are pre-determined, producing a static mestizaje, if one at all.

[20] Edouard Glissant, *Le discours antillais*, 14fn.1. L’Occident n’est pas à l’ouest. Ce n’est pas un lieu, c’est un projet.

(soleil cou coupé), Césaire in 1947. Jean-Luc Nancy's "Born in the mistake of the Occident thinking it had found the Orient" leading to "All this doesn't mean very much. It can only open on the undefined, multiple, radiating, reticulated, and broken track of mestizaje, of metissage, of the cutting, of the uncountable cuttings."¹⁹ China is the end destination, the destination of the end, once you go past, you're on your way back, it's both the point of return and of no return. That is the spectral China imposed on its geography. But the Sun rises in the East only if you are in the West. Or, in the East, the Sun rises further East. In other words, as Glissant states, "The Occident is not in the

West. It is not a location, but a project."²⁰ STILL DANCING Dancing still, embodied music, to become music, to insert yourself between the notes, to play the notes as you hear them. Physiologically, our hearing is doubled, our ears hear and so does our body. This second hearing, via bone induction, is "the foundation of the first, an inarticulate moan."²¹ An inarticulate bass track perhaps, but replete with differentiation, where its intelligibility is embodied. It is the indicator on the space-time matrix, that space between words, letters, notes. Space where staccato fucks with legato. The becoming-music of the dancer is, like Mackey's "ythmic," a shortcut, a skip to the ectoplasmic.²² By ecto-

plasmic I am referring to the foreignness which is active from the inside, like Cixous in "my German mother in the mouth, in the larynx, rhythms me."²³ Like Proust via Deleuze, "the beautiful books are written in a sort of foreign language."²⁴ Like Deleuze and Guattari on Gherasim Luca "Stammer language, be a foreigner in one's own tongue."²⁵ These intimate strangers must be read as the agents that might be able to reanimate the corpse which is lodged in the mouth, outfang the wolf, and take a bigger bite of the ankle. Literature, once fully armed, would have the power to, as Barthes formulates, "escape the tyranny of meaning."²⁶ But only insofar as it is able to undertake an activity that

[21] Benson Bobrick, *Knotted Tongues: Stuttering in History and the Quest for a Cure*, 178.

[22] Nathaniel Mackey, *Whatsaid Serif*, 102.

[23] Hélène Cixous, *Entre l'écriture*, 31. Ma mère allemande à la bouche, au larynx, me rythme.

[24] Marcel Proust in Gilles Deleuze, "He Stuttered" in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, 25.

[25] Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, vol. 2, 134. They cite the following from Luca:

do domi not passī do not dominate
do not dominate your passive passions not

do devouring not not dominate
your rats your rations your rats rations not not...

sidesteps signification. Barthes' desire to escape meaning is tied to his premise that "discourse is not communication, as is oft repeated, it is subjection."²⁷ Literature, subject in the court of language, performs like a court jester; it is able to "cheat with language, and cheat language."²⁸ Literature operates by distraction (the dazzle of the foreigner), by weaving magical spells, by injecting play into the Law. Play, as marker of resistance and opposition to the Law.

STUTTER, oral arrhythmia.

UNABIDING NON-CITIZEN This positioning of literature—which often gets further

specified as the poetic, and then sometimes further still to the rhythmic, the musical—is a stutter imbedded in the circularity of the bind; for *nomos* refers to both song and law.²⁹ In other words, the phonograph is tracking a record with innumerable closed grooves. The confluence of skip and stuck, let's just say, you're moving ahead to the same place. Staccato's still messing with legato; the piping of Kafka's Josephine. You have to get up each time to pick up the tonearm and skip to the next stuck, you are moving to a particular beat-breath, a *beath*, an arrhythmic. A spasmodic dance à la Thelonious Monk, dancing the keys under his feet, shaking the air into punctuating expletives. John Edgar Wide-

man dancing Monk: "You place your foot as you always do, do, do, one in front of the other, then risk as you always do, do, do your weight on it so the other foot can catch up. Instead of dance music you hear a silent wind in your ears, blood pounding your temples, you're inside a house swept up in a tornado and it's about to pop, you're about to come tumbling down."³⁰ Risk, do, don't, crash, get crushed. Crushed by the imperative, any imperative—that smell of cruelty Nietzsche picks up from Kant's categorical.³¹

RESIST resisting clarity, "the most obscure place is always the one under the lamp,"³² resis-

ting questioning, arrest. In my case, resisting the guilt associated with my inability to expose the subject to light, my images are always a blur. And more than ever, I come to these moments after the opening salvos, deep in the middle of the text, with perverse relish. Moment to face, not pre nor post, but at the heart of it all, just as the heart is skipping a beat. Clarity is anathema to the stutter, its arteries are sclerotic. The whole body contracting, squinting like Anna O. and Nietzsche's man of resentment whose "soul squints; his spirit loves hiding places, secret paths and back doors, everything covert entices him as his world, his security, his refreshment; he understands how

to keep silent, how not to forget, how to wait, how to be provisionally self-deprecating and humble. A race of men of resentment is bound to become eventually cleverer than any noble race."³³ Resentment, moment where the voice is voiceless, arid, where communication breaks to communicate its incommunicability. A reminder of presence, Butler's "I bracket this 'I' in quotation marks, but I am still here."³⁴ In these pages the stutter might be under a philosophical, theoretical turn; yet I see this turn as an amplification, as turning up the volume, as a crank it up. Here, in its woofer to tweeter full sweep assault, it is sent out to inseminate and destabilize the reinforced concrete vaults of...

...

What Alexandrov, Eisenstein's co-director, states about how speech can be manipulated also applies to this text, "it may be clipped, stretched, broken into stutters, made to lisp, joined with all sorts of sound combinations either in discriminate mélange or in alternating, repeating motifs."³⁵ The stutter under this turn acts as the incisor for a number of similar terms which have metaphoric force precisely because they remain ensconced in the somatic. Thus to stutters add squints, hiccups, blinks, lisps, twitches, squeaks, spasms, shakes, hems & haws, moans & groans, grunts, yelps, screams, murmurs, mumbles, laughs, cracks,

[26] Roland Barthes, "Le grain de la voix" in *L'obvie et l'obtus: Essais critiques III*, 241. échapper à la tyrannie de la signification.

[27] Barthes in Antoine Compagnon, "Lequel est le vrai?" in *Magazine littéraire*, 26. Le langage est une législation, la langue en est le code. Nous ne voyons pas le pouvoir qui est dans la langue, parce que nous oublions que toute la langue et un classement, et que tout classement est oppressif. [...] Parler et à plus forte raison discourir, ce n'est pas communiquer, comme on le répète trop souvent, c'est assujettir.

[28] Barthes in *Compagnon*, 28. La littérature [...], qui triche avec la langue, qui triche la langue.

[29] Plato, *The Republic*, 183fn.12 [531e]. It is the translator who points out this common etymology.

[30] John Edgar Wideman, "The Silence of Thelonious Monk" in *Callaloo* 22.3, 1999, 554.

[31] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 65.

[32] Chinese proverb cited by Barthes, *Le grain de la voix Entretiens 1962-1980*, 247.

[33] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 38. The man of resentment is interestingly presaged by the subterranean man which Nietzsche introduces in the preface to *Daybreak*, the "one who tunnels and mines and undermines" (p.1).

[34] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, 123.

[35] Grigori Alexandrov (via American film critic Harry Potamkin) in Douglas Kahn, *Noise Water Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*, 153.

[36] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Le partage des voix*, passim.

garbles... any and all disrupters and disturbers, willed or non-willed. In the same spirit as Deleuze and Guattari's usage of schizophrenia, the stutter, in this expanded version, does not shed its (non)voicing as an impediment, but here is tactically presented as a necessary force. Jean-Luc Nancy writes of a portage [sharing] of voices,³⁶ I am intervening in this trajectory by concentrating, squinting one might say, on the moments when the fluid portage comes to a barrier or barrage—somatic interruptions at the level of geography—and portage becomes necessary. With portage, the lifting and shouldering of all that weight constitute the proper measures of the responsibility the voyage assumes and

undertakes.

Sharing here is seen not only as a conduit to community but as a constitutive origin where portage is meant as cleavage, as separateness. This is the condition of possibility of speaking. In other words, it's the "philosophy of separation"³⁷ which produces the *autrui*—an other which we can recognize even in its full unrecognizability. Here recognition is in the fullest sense of both movements—this is no mere acquaintance. This is the foreigner from within which rhythms you, that recurring inarticulate moan in and of this text.

[37] Maurice Blanchot, *L'entretien infini*, 75.

[38] Blanchot, "Le << discours philosophique >>", 3. This was written in the context of an issue of *l'ARC* on Merleau-Ponty; Blanchot is referring to Merleau-Ponty's as pedagogue, "the speaking profession." (fût-ce dans le balbutiement qui n'est pas une défaillance individuelle, mais la retenue du langage à un niveau non-parlant), émerge quelque chose qui étonne, effraie, dérange et repousse tout parlant et tous écoutants de leur situation confortable.

[39] Mackey, *Bedouin Hornbook*, 29.

[40] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 110-111 [sections 155 and 156]. Interestingly, Rosenstiehl and Petitot also refer to clouds, this time it's a cloud mosquitoes, in order to speak of acentered chaotic systems (cited by Deleuze and

Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 16-18, in their discussion of arborescent versus rhizomatic systems). Pierre Rosenstiehl and Jean Petitot, "Automate social et système acentrés" in *Communications*, no. 22 (1974), 50.

[41] Anaphoric would perhaps be the better term here, for according to Saussure (via Starobinski), anaphoric is the imperfect form, whereas the anagram would be the perfect form. Thus even there Saussure seems to be delimiting the anagram by ascribing it as the successful form. Jean Starobinski, *Les mots sous les mots: Les anagrammes de Ferdinand de Saussure*, 27.

[42] Mackey, *Bedouin Hornbook*, 182.

STUTTER, Blanchot: "the stutter is not an individual defect, but the retention of language to a level of non-speaking, [and from it] emerges something which astounds, frightens, deranges and repulses all speakers, all listeners from their comfortable state."³⁸

DIRECT ACTION As Blanchot points out in his heightened hearing of the stutter, in his accent on the affect and effect of defect, the stutter is an ensemble, it is a polyphony of the dry register, it is Mackey's "collective stutter."³⁹ This plural brings to presence the foreigner active at the very heart of language, from the monophonic to the polyphonic. Deducible from

the collective and the foreign is porosity. For if one conceives the body as porous, it becomes impossible to think of an individual without a collective, impossible to keep your distance, impossible to delimit the outside from the inside. Porosity is a zone of transition, a permeable zone which impedes the successful implementation of a hermetic seal. Leakage, from the insidious drip to the gushing torrent, undermines any xenophobic impulse (range of manifestations: from the antiseptic household to the Wall of China).

Inarticulacy is this leakage. Saussure refers to thought as that "swirling cloud," that unstructured and undetermined space which requires

that "mysterious process by which 'thought-sound' evolves divisions, and a language takes shape with its linguistic units in between those two amorphous masses [that of thought and sound]."⁴⁰ Seems any structuring project moves to set aside (outside) any amorphous material. Flooding, that anagrammatic undertow,⁴¹ poses such a threat that these attempts to contain it become examples one can read for leakage. I will differ this reading for now (emblematic of my own leakage perhaps), save to say that some authors (eg. Mackey: "in its own possibly more exacting way the inarticulacy spoke"⁴²) have made explicit forays into this cloud in order to impede its reduction and dis-

|fig.3|

Hannah Wilke, "Intra-Venus Series No.2 December 27, 1991" in *Intra Venus, 20*. Copyright 2000 Donald Goddard. Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York.



missal. Mackey, echoing himself, provides a similar formulation in his review of Brathwaite's *Sun Poem*: "Brathwaite helps impeded speech find its voice, somewhat the way Monk makes hesitation eloquent or the way a scatsinger makes inarticulacy speak."⁴³ The three movements Mackey outlines, however laudable, still seem to head in the direction of graspability, of meaning. I would argue for the necessity to resist that move to clarity by turning (away) that sentence for a second, thus becoming: "Brathwaite helps voice finds its impediment, Monk's eloquence is made hesitant, and the scatsinger speaks its inarticulacy." This shift is important to mark, to insist upon,

it impedes the dissipation of the nebulous, it serves as reminder that the polysemic must be heard amplified by the polyphonic.

STUTTER, the pervasiveness, persistence and proliferation of the performative.

INTERRUPTION INDEX

- (a) The Collective Stutter
- (b) dampness, much
- (c) Tracheoesophageal Voice Restoration after Total Laryngectomy
- (d) It is for illiterates that I write
- (e) Trop de tropismes

a—Mackey, interrupting me everywhere at every turn, every page conversing with him (if I may be so presumptuous).

b—Celan's *Todtนาuberg*, last stanza, post visit to Heidegger.⁴⁴ That dry fluidity that permeates both Celan and Piper, two extreme sensibilities muted and terse with openings at once agape and sealed.

[43] Mackey, untitled review of *Sun Poem* by Edward Kamau Brathwaite in *Sulfur*, Vol. IV #2, 1984, 205.

[44] Celan, 301.

[45] Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 1988, 16.

[46] Antonin Artaud in Jacques Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence*, 282. C'est pour des analphabètes que j'écris.

[47] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 95 [XX 2-3].

[48] Nathalie Sarraute, *Lecture*, audio CD.

c—Four instructional videos sent out for free by In Health Technologies® that demonstrate the Blom-Singer® Voice Restoration Systems. They are infinitely more difficult to watch than Pasolini's *Salò*. Their matter-of-factness, purposefulness, the lighting particular to industrial-type films, and more centrally the presence of the stoma (the mouth not yet stomach), that gaping hole at the base of the neck jar the senses of the viewer. The stoma's movements of suction and of breath, like a whale's exhale, give the throat an image and sound which constantly interrupts its usual path towards the mouth. It is a secondary mouth, an unkissable mouth. Akin to when Freud terms the kiss the pleasure accompanying contact "between the

mucous membrane of the lips of the two people concerned,"⁴⁵ this second mouth is pure mucous mechanism, pure physiological manifestation, pure post-operative, post-traumatic contingency. A constant reminder of itself as displacement. The orifice at the base of the patient's neck, breathed, contracted the skin around itself. It was alive. Like a third eye, but more like the other mouth, the one that now could talk via various prosthetic devices, valves, humidifiers, ...complete kits available for the user. The puncture in the trachea talks; these are restored voices, the unfrozen Rabelaisian voices.

d—Artaud's provocation⁴⁶ functions within a context where there is disdain for the stutter, where articulation is what is demanded and expected. As Aristotle said, "a letter is an indivisible sound [...] For even brutes utter indivisible sounds."⁴⁷ The stutter, however, can be heard as a surfeit of articulation, a disarticulation which divides infinitely, which divides the indivisibility of letters. In his correspondence with Jacques Rivière, Artaud argues for inarticulacy (a resolutely anti-Aristotelian position). The espousal of an illiteracy, an unreadability, is really one for an augmented notion of literature. An embodied literature, where one of the steps might resemble Sarraute's: "When I write, I listen. [...] Everything I say, I hear, I always hear

the words, I always hear them from the inside, I hear the rhythm, I hear the words, that's also the way I read, I always read by listening to the text."⁴⁸

e—Nathalie Sarraute, born Natacha Tcherniak, author of *Tropismes*. During the German occupation she had to adopt a false identity and pass as the governess to her own children. Nathalie Sauvage was her shibboleth; the savage.

H I D E O U T How to account for these recurring moves of subterfuge, these fugues, these foggy notions? In short: because we have enemies, because we have enemies. Piper is intimate with her enemies. The Piper of the open letter to Kuspit, Piper of the “be sure to attend very carefully to what I have to say to you. For if you do not, I will make a sincere effort to kill you,” of the “Adrian Who-The-Hell-Does-She-Think-She-Is Piper” signature, of *Mythic Being*: “You instinctively perceive me as the enemy.” Piper does not outline the type of enemy one declares war and then signs peace treaties with. No quarter in Piper. More of an entanglement, one where the product is not a superseding of one

over the other. No defeat, more of an uneasy merge of asymmetrical parts, a paradigmatic war. Piper’s disdain with the “upper-middle-class het WASP male, the pampered only son of doting parents,” is fueled by her desire for the same privileges. “The Western conception of rationality is just fine, thank you very much,”⁴⁹ never mind her three hats. The hats are always wearing the same head.⁵⁰

Deleuze’s engagement with his enemies might help to further complicate and blur the camps. He says of his book on Kant: “I like it, I wrote it as a book on an enemy.”⁵¹ More extensively, he describes the method by which he approaches his enemy:

[49] Adrian Piper, interview in *African-American Philosophers: 17 Conversations*. Ed. George Yancy, 61.

[50] Piper speaks of her three principal activities: art, philosophy and yoga, as wearing three hats. From “On Wearing Three Hats,” a 1996 symposium essay, www.adrianpiper.com/piper6.index.html.

[51] Gilles Deleuze, “I have nothing to admit” in *Semiotext(e)* vol. 3 no. 2: *Schizoculture*, 1978, 112.

[52] Deleuze, 112-3.

[53] Deleuze, 111. Here he is quoting Cressole, strongly echoing Piper’s installation *Cornered*.

[54] Deleuze, 113.

[55] Or, as Fred Moten points out in a reading of a draft of this text, “... an image of Kant perhaps less Kantian than she would like.”

[...] But what really helped me to come off at that time was, I believe, to view the history of philosophy as a screwing process (enculage) or, what amounts to the same thing, an immaculate conception. I would imagine myself approaching an author from behind, and making him a child, which would indeed be his and would, nonetheless, be monstrous. That the child would be his was very important because the author had to say, in effect, everything I made him say. But that the child should be monstrous was also a requisite because it was necessary to go through all kinds of decentering, slidings, splittings, secret discharges, which have given me much pleasure.⁵²

Deleuze practiced this kind of insurgent ventriloquy until he discovered Nietzsche. With Nietzsche, fresh air swept through the carcass, but this gust of wind was not one of clarity, resentment became the active agent. The above text was written as a response to an enemy, it was a letter addressed to Michel Cressole (titled in English *I have noting to admit*), Cressole is Deleuze's Kuspit (though, not comparable in terms of respective status). Deleuze's virulence is a reaction to being placed in an inflexible position: "You're cornered, you're cornered, admit it."⁵³ This is a moment of digging a trench in order to dig oneself out of the one imposed by the adversary. Perhaps it's

the digging of a grave. The curious Deleuze/Piper symbiosis further deepens as one examines how Deleuze's tactics changed with the Nietzschean slant:

Nietzsche whom I read late was the one who pulled me out of all this. [...] He's the one who screws you behind your back. He gives you a perverse taste that neither Marx nor Freud have ever given you: the desire for everyone to say simple things in his own name; to speak through affects, intensities, experiences, experiments. To say something in one's own name is very strange, for it is not at all when we consider ourselves as selves, persons, or subjects that we speak in our

own name. On the contrary, an individual acquires true a proper name as a result of the most severe operations of depersonalization, when he opens himself to multiplicities which pervade him and to intensities which run right through his whole being.⁵⁴

Porosity and objecthood converge here and produce an image of Piper which is perhaps less Kantian than she would like.⁵⁵

RUNNERS The rhetorical properties of the syntactic squint is very useful to consider here for it gives us an image of how one deals with the enemy at the level of grammar: "A squinting

construction is one in which a syntagm seems to look in both directions at once [...] The Grands Rhétoriciens used the syntactic squint at the hemistich to form ambiguous lines which, by incorporating equivoque, could be read in two ways. They could thus attack their victims while seeming to praise them.”⁵⁶ Thus, the face to face encounter with one’s enemy acquires all manners of about-faces and defacements. The stutter works alongside the squint in order to expose, concretize, and maintain the constant shifts and slides of the encounter.

When enemies are innumerable, the stutter has to function as a sideways move, yet from within a frontal assault. Sideways, to be angled

according to the attack plan. Or escape plan. The latter, amongst slaves in the antebellum period, was a common plan of attack. Some statistics indicate a high incidence of stuttering amongst slaves. Even though the statistics have been questioned, our purpose here is to examine the stutter’s functioning in this relationship of enemies. The stutter, along with the “down look,” were seen as indices of fear and trembling, of slow wit and bashful submission. Yet even those who exhibited such behavior and were not openly rebellious, were known to run away.⁵⁷ This evidence exemplifies the stutter as subterfuge, as utensil in a palette of mischievousness and deception, as remainder remaining

entirely beyond control. Perhaps there is, in the very moment of ultimate objecthood, a wielding possible of heretofore unfathomable weapons. A setting where, paradoxically, disrupters become smooth, become untied knots, become fluid and fluent. Become a kind of Artaudian war machine: “I have never ceased to think that more and more I could silence enemy and foreign thinking and swallow it in my interior fire [...] Why are beings which are not in me moving inside of me?”⁵⁸

A run which changes the setting to one unspecified, but remains in the tenor of enemies and runaways is Walter Marchetti’s *Running*. The diarrhetic run to end all runs:

*running running and running and screaming
running and screaming without running and
screaming without interruption running and
screaming without interruption, running and
screaming without interruption, without run-
ning and screaming without interruption,
without rushing running and screaming without
interruption, without rushing to running and
screaming without interruption, without
rushing to any running and screaming without
interruption, without rushing to any call run-
ning and screaming without interruption,
without rushing to any call, running and
screaming without interruption, without
rushing to any call, without running and*

screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without responding running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without always responding running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call without always responding yes running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without always responding yes, running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without always responding yes, without running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without responding always yes, without maintaining running and screaming without inter-

ruption, without rushing to any call, without responding always yes, without always maintaining running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without always responding yes, without always maintaining the running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without always responding yes, without always maintaining the same speed running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without always responding yes, without always maintaining the same speed, running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without always responding yes, without always main-

*taining the same speed, running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without always responding yes, without always maintaining the same speed, this running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without always responding yes, without always maintaining the same speed, this is running and screaming without interruption, without rushing to any call, without always responding yes, without always maintaining the same speed...*⁵⁹

A run which, without the without, would become an activated interruption, a hurdled run and would read: "Running and screaming with

interruption, rushing to every call, always responding yes." But the running here is posited as pure movement, with possible variants in speed perhaps but pure continuity, no stoppage. These are the smooth and lanky strides of a marathoner, albeit a manic one. We must also remember to listen to the runner, for the running here is double, it is the running of a set of legs and the running of a mouth. The scream of the runner is a Doppler scream, shrilly piercing the landscape. Again, the setting here is unspecified, nowhere and everywhere. Another runner we could recruit in order to make it a race and trace a course, would perhaps be Tatsuo Miyajima (fig. 4). For him, the run is

more metaphoric than actual, but the incision into the sound space is concrete and insistent—screaming the stutter, stuttering the scream.

S L O W D O W N Should one get dizzy from the frantic pace of this opaque, heterogenous, metonymic, catachrestic taxonomy of the stutter. Slowdown. *So I... So I... So I walk... So I walk...*⁶⁰ Wind down... *So I walk a little too fast, and I drive a little too fast...* Wind down, but with gusts. A run which is sung slow but speaks fast, reminisces excess ...*and I'm reckless it's true but what else can you do at the end of a love affair...* And the music stops, and Lady Day, audibly unhinged, slurs her instructions, her own

rescue: *I don't know it. Now please try to make as much noise as you can and as loud as you can. I don't know the tune.* But she's lived the tune. The nomos has consumed her. She's oozing. Oozing an arid stutter.

S T U T T E R, the reversal of the forward thrust of fluency. But like the gunshot, it is not reversible, it is an indelible trace, it marks a somatic time.

An inundation of utter, of mutter, of splutter, of stutter. I confess to a certain aspiring for the stutter, for blindness, deformity, pain. Insofar as they are already here. Not acceptance but, ... well yes, but one which requires a disengage-

|fig.4|

Tatsuo Miyajima, "untitled" in *Big Time*, 15. In a Tokyo intersection, 1981, "the artist performed a loud scream." Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine.



ment with the notion that “to give in” also means “to give up.” They are not equatable, the first (as with invagination) is porosity at work, is proximity of and with the enemy. The correspondance... false steps, faux pas, fall over ...*So I walk... step over.*

The sacred remains:

*The assault of the real,
the dissection of fact,
the mystery of unmeaning,
the dwindling of self,
the release into motion.*⁶¹

|56| Bernard Dupriez, *Gradus: A Dictionary of Literary Devices*, 428-9.

|57| Michael P. Johnson, “Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799 to 1830” in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. Ser., Vol. 38, No. 3, July 1981), 425-6 and fn.18. Also Gerald W. Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia*, 98-103 and 186n.45; and John W. Blasingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum Period*, 203-6.

|58| Antonin Artaud, *Oeuvres Complètes* vol. XXII: Cahiers du Retour à Paris 26 mai-juillet 1946, 105. Je n’ai jamais cessé de penser que je pouvais de plus en plus faire taire la pensée ennemie et étrangère et l’avaloir dans mon feu intérieur [...] Pourquoi des êtres qui ne sont pas en moi bougent-ils en moi?

|59| Walter Marchetti, “Running” in *Walter Marchetti*, 103. Walter Marchetti, Italian composer, member of art avant-gardist Spanish dissident group Zaj, founded by Juan Hidalgo and Marchetti in 1964. It ran parallel tracks with Fluxus.

|60| Billie Holiday, “The End of a Love Affair: The Audio Story” in *Lady in Satin*, CD. In italics throughout this section.

|61| Adrian Piper, “XI Remains” in *Decide Who You Are*, unpaginated.

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Installation (film, slides, video, audio)  CD Track#13

Approximately 25' x 25' x 2'

collection Centre Pompidou

B O D Y - B U I L D I N G
I N T H E G R E A T N O R T H W E S T (1 9 7 5)



Vito Acconci

A film, aerial views of landscape, is projected onto the floor. The film is projected from a sculpture stand, or from arms hanging down from the ceiling; the projector is positioned about half-way between floor and ceiling.

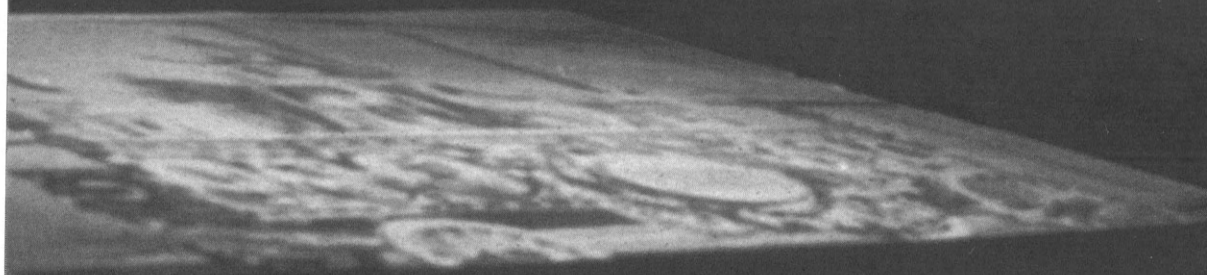
From the ceiling, a slide-projector shoots slides down onto the floor, onto the filmed landscape sprawled over the floor. There are two kinds of slides: images of structures (buildings, bridges) and images of objects (a stone, a cup, a pillow, a pile of money).

Two audio speakers are placed on the floor, diagonally across from each other, at two corners of the film projection; my voice drifts from speaker to speaker, as if in a chant:

"Running/running/running/running...Rolling/rolling/rolling/rolling... Falling/falling/falling/falling..."

At the far end of the film projection, a video monitor sits tilted up on the floor. The screen is, for the most part, blank; every thirty seconds, my face rises up from below the screen, my hands are pushing my head up, I'm talking: "I'm coming up... I've come up out of myself ... you wouldn't believe what I've seen down there...": my face sinks back down, my hands are pulling my face off-screen: "I can't stay up, I can't keep it up... you can't keep me up, you can't keep me..."

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AUDIOTAPE

(Pan from corner to corner: chant:)

Walk-ing
Walk-ing
Walk-ing
Run-ning
Run-ning
Run-ning
Run-ning
Run-ning
Jump-ing
Jump-ing
Jump-ing
Rol-ling
Rol-ling
Rol-ling
Rol-ling
Slid-ing
Slid-ing
Slid-ing

VIDEOTAPE

(Black screen)

(One minute)

(Head rises, face-up, onto screen, filling screen. Voice comes from off-screen:) Here I come again; I'm coming up for air. I saw things down there that humans only dream of. It's all in my head now; I can't speak for myself; I'm not myself. I have no-body. I can see them looking right through me. Look into my eyes, I'd tell them (if only my mouth could form words again), read my lips. I'm so close you can hear my heartbeat: you're getting warm, you're getting warmer... no, you lost me... I can feel you moving right through me... (Head falls, out of picture, leaving

Black screen)

(One minute)

Crawl-ing

Crawl-ing

Crawl-ing

Crawl-ing

Climb-ing

Climb-ing

Climb-ing

Climb-ing

Skip-ping

Skip-ping

Skip-ping

Skip-ping

Hop-ping

Hop-ping

Hop-ping

Hop-ping

Walk-ing

Walk-ing

Walk-ing

Walk-ing

Rol-ling

Rol-ling

(Head rises, face-up, onto screen, filling screen. Voice comes from off-screen:) Here I come again; I've been undercover. I heard things down there that humans only think about. It's all in my head now; I can't speak for myself; I'm not the person I used to be. I have no-body. I can see them looking right through me. Look into my eyes, I'd tell them (if only my voice wouldn't give me away), read my lips. I'm so close you can hear my heartbeat: you're getting warm, you're getting warmer... no, you lost me... I can feel you moving right through me... (Head falls, out of picture, leaving

Black screen)

(One minute)

(Head rises, face-up, onto screen, filling screen. Voice comes from off-screen:) Here I come again; I've come back from the dead. I smelled things down there that humans only imagined. It's all in my head now; I can't speak for myself; I'm a shadow of my former self. I have no-body. I can see them looking right through me. Look into my eyes, I'd tell them (if only they knew my dead language), read my lips. I'm so close you can hear my heartbeat: you're getting warm, you're getting warmer... no, you lost me... I can feel you moving right through me... (Head falls, out of picture, leaving

Black screen)

Rol-ling
Rol-ling
Jump-ing
Jump-ing
Jump-ing
Jump-ing
Crawl-ing
Crawl-ing
Crawl-ing
Slid-ing
Slid-ing
Slid-ing
Run-ning
Run-ning
Run-ning
Hop-ping
Hop-ping
Hop-ping
Hop-ping

(Head rises, face-up, onto screen, filling screen. Voice comes from off-screen:) Here I come again; I've broken free. I touched things down there that humans only talk about. It's all in my head now; I can't speak for myself; I'm not myself. I have no-body. I can see them looking right through me. Look into my eyes, I'd tell them (if only I had learned their language), read my lips. I'm so close you can hear my heartbeat: you're getting warm, you're getting warmer... no, you lost me... I can feel you moving right through me... (Head falls, out of picture, leaving

Black screen)

(One minute)

(Head rises, face-up, onto screen, filling screen. Voice comes from off-screen:) Here I come again: I've come out of my shell. I tasted things down there that humans only have nightmares over. It's all in my head now. I can't speak for myself; I'm a changed man. I have no-body. I can see them looking right through me. Look into my eyes, I'd tell them (if only I were used to talking), read my lips. I'm so close you can hear my heartbeat: you're getting warm, you're getting warmer... no, you lost me... I can feel you moving right through me... (Head falls, out of picture, leaving

Black screen)

Skip-ping
 Skip-ping
 Skip-ping
 Climb-ing
 Climb-ing
 Climb-ing
 Climb-ing
 Walk-ing
 Walk-ing
 Walk-ing
 Crawl-ing
 Crawl-ing
 Crawl-ing
 Jump-ing
 Jump-ing
 Jump-ing
 Run-ning
 Run-ning
 Run-ning

(One minute)

(Head rises, face-up, onto screen, filling screen. Voice comes from off-screen:) Here I come again; I'm tired of hiding. I saw things down there that humans only guess at. It's all in my head now; I can't speak for myself; I'm not myself. I have no-body. I can see them looking right through me. Look into my eyes, I'd tell them (if only I were calm enough to speak), read my lips. I'm so close you can almost touch me: you're getting warm, you're getting warmer... no, you lost me... I can feel you moving right through me...(Head falls, out of picture, leaving

Black screen)

(One minute)

(Head rises, face-up, onto screen, filling screen. Voice comes from off-screen:) Here I come again; I had gone underground. I smelled things down there that humans only lie about. It's all in my head now; I can't speak for myself; I'm a brand new me. I have no-body. I can see them looking right through me. Look into my eyes, I'd tell them (if only I could speak freely), read my lips. I'm so close you can hear my heart-beat: you're getting warm, you're getting warmer...

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Run-ning | no, you lost me... I can feel you moving right through me... (Head falls, |
| Rol-ling | out of picture, leaving |
| Rol-ling | |
| Rol-ling | Black screen) |
| Rol-ling | |
| Skip-ping | |
| Skip-ping | (One minute) |
| Skip-ping | |
| Skip-ping | |
| Slid-ing | (Head rises, |
| Slid-ing | face-up, onto screen, filling screen. Voice comes from off-screen.) |
| Slid-ing | |
| Slid-ing | Here I come again; I was buried alive. I heard things down there that |
| Slid-ing | humans only have fears of. It's all in my head; I can't speak for myself; |
| Hop-ping | I'm a shadow of my former self. I have no-body. I can see them looking |
| Hop-ping | right through me. Look into my eyes, I'd tell them (if only I could throw |
| Hop-ping | my voice), read my lips. I'm so close you can hear my heartbeat: you're |
| Hop-ping | getting warm, you're getting warmer... no, you lost me... I can feel you |
| Hop-ping | moving right through me... (Head falls, out of picture, leaving |
| Climb-ing | |
| Climb-ing | |
| Climb-ing | Black screen) |
| Climb-ing | |
| Walk-ing | |
| Walk-ing | (One minute) |

Walk-ing

(Head rises, face-up, onto screen, filling screen. Voice comes from offscreen:) Here I come again; I dug myself out with my bare hands. I tasted things down there that humans only have hopes for. It's all in my head now; I can't speak for myself; I'm not myself. I have no-body. I can see them looking right through me. Look into my eyes, I'd tell them (if only I could find the right words), read my lips. I'm so close you can hear my heartbeat: you're getting warm, you're getting warmer... no, you lost me... I can feel you moving right through me...

Walk-ing

Walk-ing

Hop-ping

Hop-ping

Hop-ping

Hop-ping

Jump-ing

Jump-ing

Jump-ing

Jump-ing

(Head falls, out of picture, leaving

Black screen)

Run-ning

(One minute)

Run-ning

Run-ning

Run-ning

Climb-ing

(Head rises, face-up, onto screen, filling screen. Voice comes from off-screen:) Here I come again; I'm coming out of my coma. I touched things down there that humans only invent stories about. It's all in my head now; I can't speak for myself; I've been born again. I have no-body. I can see them looking right through me. Look into my eyes, I'd tell them (if only I wasn't too tired to talk), read my lips. I'm so close you can hear my heartbeat: you're getting warm, you're getting warmer... no, you lost me... I can feel you moving right through me... (Head falls, out of picture, leaving

Climb-ing

Climb-ing

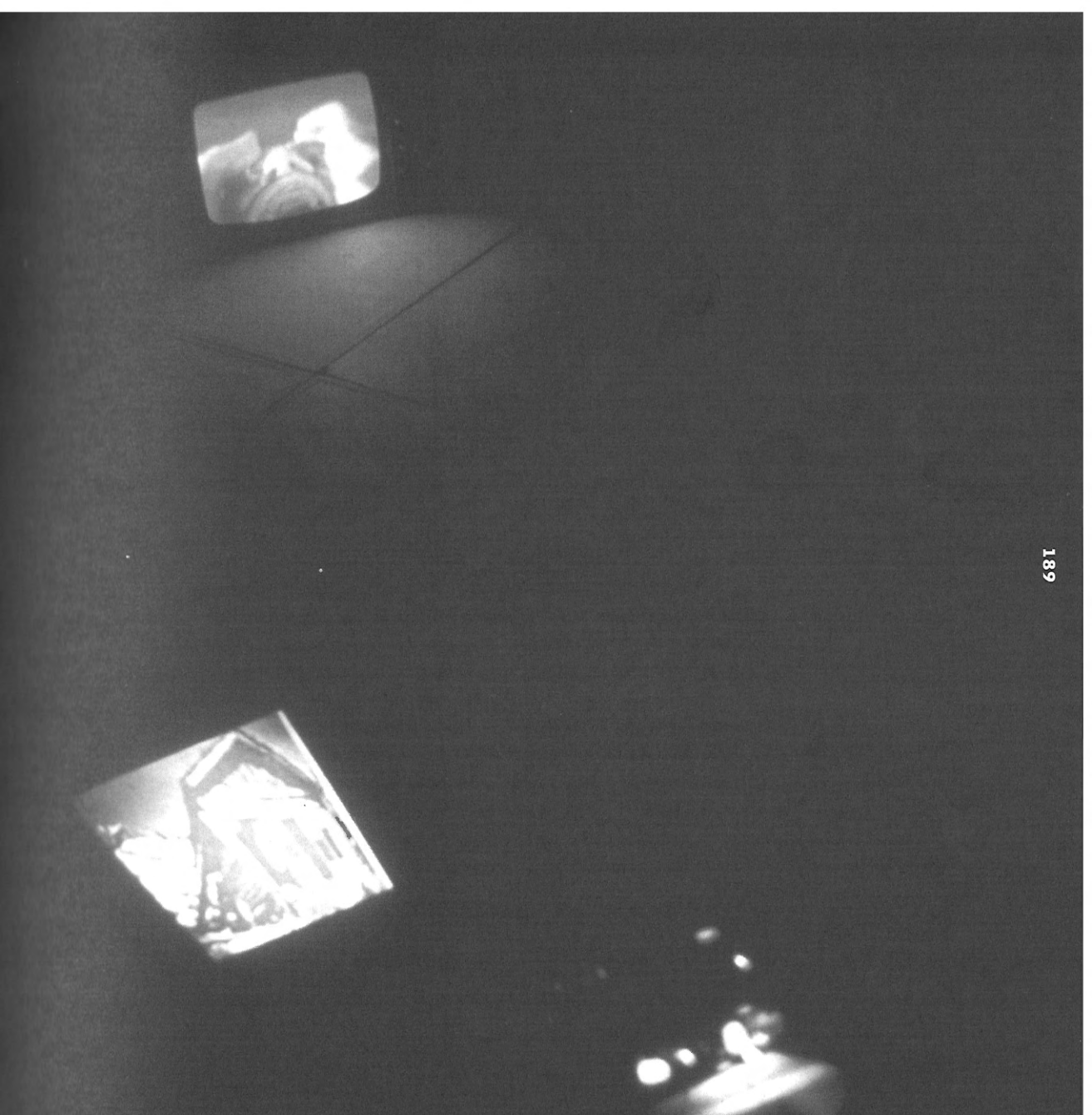
Climb-ing

Skip-ping

Skip-ping

Skip-ping

Black screen)



Alvin Lucier was born in 1931 in Nashua, New Hampshire. He was educated in Nashua public and parochial schools, the Portsmouth Abbey School, Yale, and Brandeis and spent two years in Rome on a Fulbright Scholarship. From 1962 to 1970 he taught at Brandeis, where he conducted the Brandeis University Chamber Chorus which devoted much of its time to the performance of new music. Since 1970 he has taught at Wesleyan University where he is John Spencer Camp Professor of Music. Lucier has pioneered in many areas of music composition and performance, including the notation of performers' physical gestures, the use of brain waves in live performance, the generation of visual imagery by sound in vibrating media, and the evocation of room acoustics for musical purposes.

THE DUKE OF YORK
FOR VOICE AND SYNTHESIZERS (1971)

ALVIN LUCIER

Two persons design a musical performance in which one of them, the synthesist, uses an electronic music synthesizer or equivalent configuration of electronic equipment to alter the vocal identity of the other, the vocalist, who selects and orders any number of songs, speeches, arias, passages from books, films, television, poems, or plays, or any other vocal utterances including those of non-human intelligences, in ways determined by his or her relationship to the synthesist and the particular purpose of

the performance.

Performances may be used to strengthen personal ties, make friends with strangers, or uncover clues to hidden families and past identities.

In strengthening personal ties, one, with the help of the other, selects examples that either or both have known and remembered since childhood, arranging them in the order of their emergence in their awarenesses. In making friends with strangers, the vocalist selects examples that the synthesist might have known and remembered, based on assumptions as to race, color, date and place of birth, manner of speech, dress, hair style, or any other outward sign, arranging them in the order that they might have emerged in the synthesist's awareness. In uncovering clues to hidden families and past identities, vocal examples of any kind may be arranged in any order or in temporal or geographical clusters. Examples may be taken from letters, diaries, memoirs, musical works, or biographies of real or fictitious persons.

The vocalist sings, speaks or utters the examples to the synthesist through a microphone and amplifier system. He or she may read from script or score, memorize, or listen through headphones to a record player or tape recorder upon which are stored the examples in their chosen order. Separations between examples are determined either by the length of time it takes to change each record or by the natural spaces that are formed by turning pages, splicing, or collecting and recording examples.

The vocalist learns to mimic recorded examples as perfectly as he or she can, without interpretation or improvisation, in order to partake of and communicate to the synthesist as fully as possible the vocal identity of the recording artist represented by each example. All aspects of the sound images including those produced by recording techniques and other special effects should be regarded by both performers as much a part of the remembered or imagined identities as such vocal considerations as inflection, articulation, timbre, breath control, projection, and vibrato. During those parts of

examples in which the recording artists rest or where it is impossible to follow, the vocalist either imitates the accompanying parts or leaves gaps. Whole examples, not parts of examples, should be used.

In cases of vocal identities for which there are no recorded examples, the vocalist tries to imitate the vocal identities as he or she imagines them to be.

The synthesist alters the vocal examples as they arrive from the vocalist, trying to make them sound as much as possible like the originals as he or she remembers or imagines them to be. Any disparities that arise between either performer's remembrance of original examples, their imitation, re-recording, or cover versions, should be regarded as inherent discontinuities in space or time. In uncovering clues to hidden families or past identities, the synthesist composes a set of examples designed to sketch biographies of persons other than those sketched by the vocalist. The separate sets of examples are then performed simultaneously.

Within each example, the synthesist makes one or more alterations of any aspect of sound including pitch, timbre, range, envelope, vibrato, and amount of echo. Alterations, once made, may not be lessened but may be increased from example to example to produce a continually changing composite vocal identity made up of many layers of partial identities.

In performances involving more than two persons, the synthesizers may be played separately or linked together. Sounds made by the synthesizer itself should be considered its attempt to establish continuity or to express its inability to cope with the situation.

Douglas Simon: *The Duke of York* seems to me to deal with adjustments to memories ...

Alvin Lucier: Yes.

DS: ...and the reinterpretation of material as it relates to memory experiences. The person operating the synthesizer seems to try to re-create past experiences by making sense of the data she's receiving. The piece also has to do with transmitting meanings and assuming roles.

AL: Well...a long time ago, I wanted to make a jukebox for an art exhibit. I thought of recording or collecting sounds on a batch of 45 r.p.m. records. People could then put nickels in and mix four or five sounds at the same time; I could also make some money. Then...no, I won't tell you how I got to the title because it's a pun and I like to keep puns to

myself. I didn't invent the pun, Bob Ashley did, but I don't think he remembers it. I started thinking about the singers that are so powerful in our society. To tell the truth, my wife is something of an expert on popular music; she knows all the singers and all the songs and who sang the original versions and who sang imitations of them, and in that regard, I'm an ignoramus. But we were married. So I thought, "Well, if Mary loves that kind of music and those singers, she must have stored in her mind a very complex composite personality made up of partial personalities of all these people." So I decided to compose a piece in which I would imitate those singers whose vocal identities were so strong in Mary's mind; I would try to sing their songs as well as I could, to steal—really steal—their vocal identities and to communicate to her, to try to strengthen our relationship. Now, as a sympathetic idea, I thought that she could try to help me fulfill this task by changing the sound of my voice with a synthesizer. In a crude way, she could try to make me sound like those singers, based on her

remembrance of what they sounded like. It would be complicated because what she would remember of their vocal identities might be changed by the passage of time. It's an impossible idea.

Then I expanded the idea to include not only popular songs but any vocal utterances taken from poems, plays, operas, or any real or fictitious written material that might serve as a connector between two people. Theoretically, you could imagine that you had something to do with all the vocal utterances that were ever made and that you might bring yourself back to another place and time. You could try to imitate all those sounds and communicate with another person who would have them in her background some place. Then I thought that if you made constructions of historical events that occurred before tape recording, an historical play for example, you might treat that as being as authentic as what that play represented. For example, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* could be thought of as a supplement, or a superimposition, or a correction of the original, the only difference being that it's separated in space and time. If you could push space

and time around, you could superimpose that play so that when Shakespeare was stabbed—excuse me, when Caesar was stabbed—the difference between the original event and Shakespeare’s event would be an interesting place to be, between those little discrepancies. You could superimpose all of these, which is what I’m doing in the piece. You see, it’s a way to exploit recording; it’s as if it’s a gift from God to us to preserve things and then to re-create them.

DS: But mainly to re-create them. You can’t just rely on the fact that they’re stored.

AL: Right.

DS: It’s an attempt to make them as immediate as possible.

AL: Right. If you make a movie that is a remake of another movie, it is as authentic as the original, and the original is as authentic as the original event on which that movie is based.

DS: Is it possible that a performance of *The Duke of York*, dealing as it does with serious questions of the reconstruction of information, is as authentic as those processes as they occur in the day-to-day lives of the audience? There’s also a connection to be made there because the audience is privy to these serious questions between two people, and in the more expansive form of the piece you talked about, the entire race has to deal with it. The same processes are happening in each member of the audience as well.

AL: I imagine that would happen.

DS: Is the synthesizer the complete technical facility for this piece, or can you conceive of something that could do a better job?

AL: Well, I composed *The Duke of York* specifically for synthesizer for a number of reasons. One was that it had become the American idea of what electronic music is, a small, portable performing instrument for popular consumption. There are a lot of them around these days—the Moogs, the Arps, the Buchlas—and a lot of people to play them. You see, when I first made electronic music in the RAI Studio in Milan in 1960, I worked in what has become the classical electronic music studio, consisting of a large configuration of test equipment—audio oscillators, amplifiers, noise generators, things of that sort. You either had access or didn't have access to an official studio; it was an elite situation, but the American idea is that electronic music

should be accessible to everyone. Secondly, a synthesizer is a real-time instrument. Voltage control has eliminated the need for splicing.

The classical European studio depended on splicing techniques; there was no way to make real-time pieces, so most of the works were collages of some sort. *The Duke of York* is not a collage piece; I didn't want any editing. The vocalist is responsible for whole songs, not parts of songs, and the synthesist has to react quickly without too much time to think. So the synthesizer was good for that. But I think the real reason I used it was that it was called a synthesizer, probably from the old RCA synthesizer that was designed to imitate the sounds of musical instruments. I had always hated that idea. It had seemed to me a waste of time to try to synthesize the sounds of perfectly good acoustical instruments with a new technology. But since *The Duke of York* has to do with the layering of one identity on another to make a composite image, I thought that the notion of synthesis was justified. I gave the synthesist a non-musical task; she doesn't make changes

according to ideas of musical timbre, for example, she makes choices according to ideas of identity. In doing so, she really creates something synthetic, a composite identity of a real or imaginary person. I guess I thought that's really what a synthesizer should do.

Actually, I gave the synthesizer a task it can't do; it begins to break down. One of the rules is that an alteration can be made and added to but not reduced. For instance, if you add reverb to an example, you can't bring the pot back down for the next example except by control once removed, that is, by altering a component that alters that first component. For the first song you might change the timbre in some way, for the second you might add reverb, and for the third you might do something else. Finally, you've had so many planes, one identity over another identity over another one, that pretty soon the situation gets so saturated that the person operating the synthesizer can't handle it very well. Also, the synthesizer itself begins to do all

sorts of insane things because it is not designed to deal with that, and I wanted that situation also.

DS: There's a nice contrast, as in most of your pieces. The vocalist presents his material in whole parts, but they follow one another. The synthesist's contribution is to make layer upon layer. It's a different idea.

AL: It's another formal idea, yes.

DS: And even though it's a duet, the players are in series instead of parallel. The vocalist's material comes through the work of another player. May I ask you a specific question about your own performance of the piece? I've seen it twice and both times there's been a Latin text. Now, where does that come from?

AL: Well, most of my pieces are built on physical or acoustical principles that you can talk about—alpha waves, echoes, resonances, things of that kind. But they become interesting, for me anyway, when you can't talk about them anymore. This piece is a probe into the remembrances of a person or a number of persons, into their own past or personalities. That's an internal thing, isn't it, all those flashing, fleeting thoughts you have when you're alone as to who you are or what your image of the world can be. It's either that personal or internal investigation or a probing into what other cultures regard as religion, specifically reincarnation. We have psychological ideas but other cultures don't; they have religious ideas. And even if these probes are not true, even if they're absurd and off the track, still, for me, they're a more interesting way of getting material than by using musical judgments. So to answer your question more precisely, for particular reasons, or particular memories, it comes to me that the reason I went to Rome on a Fulbright was not

only the attraction of Italy for an artist, but the idea that perhaps I had unfinished business there. Now, it's confusing in my mind as to what that means, but if I believed in reincarnation, and if I had the desire to go to Rome, then I might assume that I had been a Roman at some other time. And even if I weren't, it's still a beautiful source of imagery out of which to make a piece.

Now, to be still more specific, when I was in Rome, I lived in a single room on the Vicolo della Campana, and if you looked through the window, you could see the Tomb of Augustus. I regarded that as a sort of pun because my middle name is Augustus. Somewhere in my family that name came up; my grandmother named my father that and he, in turn, named me that, but you can't ignore the fact that an Augustus was a Roman emperor, or if not a Roman emperor, then somebody in Rome. Later on, I happened to find a letter from the Emperor Augustus to his wife Livia about her grandson Claudius. The text had empty spots in it; it was incomplete and I liked that because it spaced it very nicely. The fact that I have a speech impediment

matches that because sometimes I have to stop talking and let a word empty out. So, I wanted to use that letter as a time delay and I thought it would be a beautiful text. Also Latin is a dead language; I didn't think that anyone in the audience would understand it, at least not all of it. It was beautiful source material, it seemed to me. Also the gap, the time spanned, the whole idea that you're reprocessing that in the present seemed right.

I often follow the Latin text with an aria from a Berlioz opera, and you know my connection to Berlioz: he went to Rome too. Then I might use an old Johnny Ray song that I thought the synthesist might have an idea about, and follow that with the sounds of the whales. Everything in the piece has to do with distance; the whales are in the ocean and send sounds such a long way, the Johnny Ray song uses that artificial reverberation to achieve a spatial effect. I even think of the synthesizer as a geographical place.

DS: Where these things could come together.

AL: Where these things could come together, yes.

DS: And yet the piece is no more about reincarnation than, for example, *Vespers* is about echolocation. You've mentioned the "musical realm," that point at which simple ideas suddenly start giving rise to their own ideas and their own meanings; reincarnation is the simple idea. What happens when there is more than one synthesist?

AL: Then it's like a divining rod with two prongs on it, a double-branched thing. One synthesist could be processing the vocal sounds in one way and the other in another way. I made the stipulation that they could be linked together so that they could cross and interweave with one another, but we've never done it like that. I thought of it as an opera. You know, in an opera, there's so much disguise and terrible mistakes are made when a person doesn't realize it's the other person. Sometimes the whole conflict of an opera is based on an error like that. I had the idea in my mind that if you imitate someone else, you want to partake of his or her identity, and this piece seeks an identity connection between at least two people. I also had it in mind that there's a single source of life, the idea of the single cell splitting into two and then four and then eight, geometrically. This piece, however, would work back the other way. If you could do it infinitely, everyone would process that sound according to every memory they ever had, thereby going back . . .

DS: To where they had a connection.

AL:...to where they had a connection; it's a grandiose idea. But in its simplest form, with a single vocalist and one synthesist, it's personal; it's communication between two people that the audience can share. If you look at the score of *The Duke of York* and think of the imaginary ways in which the piece could be done, it could include everybody who's ever lived on the earth. It has kind of a therapeutic aspect also. You know the story about the woman who had amnesia. They played every popular song they could think of for her, based on her looks, age, and who they thought she was. They went back into her past starting with children's songs, and slowly but surely, they connected with her. She would remember a song and it would give her memories, you know how a song can bring you back to a particular time and place, and so they

finally got her out of that state. There's another story that Bob Ashley used to tell about a totally paralyzed man who couldn't respond to anything. Well, one night he was watching television or listening to the radio, and all of a sudden, out of a clear blue sky, he began to sing! And he sang along with the song that was going on and when it was over, he just stopped and went back to the paralytic state. And every so often, after long periods of time, a song would come on and he'd just begin to sing that song, but that's all he could do. His wife spent years playing the piano for him, hoping that as a song that he recognized would start he might sing and perhaps recover his memory. It was a touching story. I don't know how it came out, but it was an idea in the piece. I've only done it with people I know pretty well, and my idea is that there's an underground current in that piece that connects people in ways that they never would otherwise.

DS: It's not just a matter of establishing common ground, but that the ground that is common is the most powerful.

AL: Theoretically, you could imagine that you had something to do with all the vocal utterances that were ever made and that you might bring yourself back through time to when you were a small animal. I was thinking that this piece could be a symbol of that, that you could learn to imitate all those vocal utterances and try to communicate them to another person who might have those in her background somewhere. When Mary and I do the piece, she says it scares her a little because I try so hard.

* The score and interview of *The Duke of York* appeared in *Chambers*, by Alvin Lucier and Douglas Simon, Wesleyan University Press, 1980. It was subsequently included in *Reflections/Reflexionen, Interviews, Scores and Writings*, MusikTexte, Cologne, 1995.

Robert Ashley is a distinguished figure in American contemporary music, and is known for his work in new forms of opera and multi-disciplinary projects. Born in Ann Arbor, Michigan (1930), Ashley was educated at the University of Michigan where he worked at the Speech Research Laboratories, and was employed as a Research Assistant in Acoustics at the Architectural Research Laboratory. During the 60s Ashley organized the ONCE Festival (1961 to 1969); was appointed Director of the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College in 1969; and from 1966 to 1976 toured with the Sonic Arts Union, a composers' collective including David Behrman, Alvin Lucier and Gordon Mumma. Ashley lives in New York City and continues to be a pioneer in the media and sonic arts.

Elizabeth Slavet is a sound artist, musician, and writer, and is currently a PhD candidate in Literature/Cultural Studies at UCSan Diego. Her installation and recorded works include "Breathing Space", an interactive sound installation; "Drive By Muzak", sound environment; the video "Noise, Muzak, Art: The True Story of 'Drive By Muzak'"; and "Music to Listen to Traffic By", a relaxation CD for urban dwellers.

INTERVIEW

WITH ROBERT ASHLEY



BY ELIZABETH SLAVET

Elizabeth Slavet: I have some questions lying around that I wanted to ask you, and most of them are about your voice. It's really amazing to meet you after listening to so many recordings of you. I got so attached to your voice as part of your music, that—listening to you talk, just as a real person, it's a completely different, and weird, experience. I wondered how you feel about this difference between your reading-performing voice, and your everyday voice, your everyday speech. I wonder if you go back and forth, if you ever find yourself—hear yourself—slipping into the reading-performing voice in a normal everyday conversation.

Robert Ashley: I've always considered what I do, and what people in my ensemble do, as singing, because—let me see how to say this—because we are referenced to a pitch, a single pitch that is the reference for all the ways the different people in the ensemble express accents, in pitch-inflections. And so, there's definitely a pitch-obligation to everything that everybody does, and that's true for me, too. When we were in the classroom the other day,

and I asked if anybody there could give me an A before I started singing, and one of the audience gave me the A, the reason I did that was because I wrote that piece, *When Famous Last Words Fail You*, for Tom Buckner—and when we started working on the piece, it turned out that the A, as the pitch from which all of his inflections are derived, gave Tom the most flexible, largest, vocal range. Now when I got the A, and I started singing the piece using the A as a pitch center, I got about half way through the piece, and I realized it was not in a particularly good range for me, and so, as you might have noticed, I actually changed the reference pitch for my own voice. The answer to your question is yes, there is always a pitch requirement, for every singer, and that's a musical requirement, so I was trying, in a way, to sing the piece. What happens in speech is that you don't have that musical requirement, and so you treat the accents differently. Does that answer the question?

ES: Yeah. I guess if we could go back to when you first started—I read somewhere that when you first started developing this technique of using the spoken inflections as a basis for that pitch, that it was based on your own speech patterns, so though as you say there are musical “requirements” which differentiate the singing voice from your everyday speech, I listen to you speaking, and I know it's you, having listened to your recordings. And if I just heard you speaking—having never met you, or heard you talk in a normal conversation before—I'd know it was you. So maybe if you go back to where and why and how the differentiation happened, evolved...

RA: Well, my speech pattern makes you hear me. I mean, everybody's speech patterns are their own. What I've tried to do, in working with everybody in my ensemble, is to allow each of the singers to use their own pitch-feeling, or—I don't know how you'd say this, there's no word for it, because it's not in music theory, but—to use their own pitch-

pattern, for accents around the governing pitch. For instance, in a recent piece, called *Your Money My Life Goodbye*, I knew from working with these four people for a long time, that each of them would inflect a common pitch differently. So, I gave them all the reference pitch C in the middle of the piano, the so-called middle C, because while it's a little high for the two men who are singing on that pitch (I sing an octave lower), it's right in the middle for the two women. And the women had the main parts. Jackie has the longest woman's part and Joan is sort of the main character, so I wanted to make sure it was comfortable for them. Sam's part and Tom's part are not so big.

When Jackie sings, when I give her the C, the middle C, and the tempo, her typical inflection-pitches, that is, her accent-pitches—the way she expresses the accents of the sentence and the words is to use the E-flat above the C and the B-flat below it. The way Sam does it is to use the E-flat above it and the A-flat below it, and the way Joan does

it is to use the F above it, and the E-natural above it, and the way Tom does it is to use the F above it and the G below it. So with Tom, you have, for instance, a sort of unresolved C-Major chord. With Jackie you have a C-minor seventh, an implied C-minor seventh. With Sam you have a clear A-flat chord, or if you use the F that's common to Joan and Tom, then that'll give you the F-minor seventh, and with Joan, because of the F, the E, and the C, then an A is implied, and that means you get either an A-minor chord with an added sixth, or you get an F-Major-seventh chord. The difference between those chords that are natural to the four singers is sort of the essence of the piece, and the difference between the chords does not come from anything I write in the piece. It comes from the fact that everytime Joan does it, that's what she does. Everytime Jackie does it, that's what she does. Everytime ... etcetera, y'know. I mean, I've worked with my friends so long that I know that's the way they do the accents. So those characteristics—the pitch inflections of the four singers—are accounted for in the musical planning of the piece.

ES: Since you are working with these four people's pitch-inflections, or we could call them sentence-inflections, accent-habits, how has this changed your role as a composer? When you sit in your studio for those six hours a day, away from the "everyday time," what's the process? What do you write in which order? Do you consider your texts your "scores"?

RA: Well, it's not that I don't write scores, it's just that I don't write scores that look like other scores. What I've tried to explain so many times is that because my music relies on so many words, incomparably so many words per measure—compared to so many kinds of singing, except for pop singing—it uses so many words per measure, that if I wrote it out, in so-called full-score, each score would be a huge, unwieldy, unbelievable thing. Plus, you'd be turning pages every four bars.

So what we do, what all the singers will allow me to do, and what has turned out to be the most effective way for me to write scores, is—if you can imagine any number of columns going in either direction—I write the text in one of those columns of a certain width, depending on how many syllables per line, how many letters per line, or whatever... I write the text in that column, and on the left of that column, in another column or two, is the line number or the time-code number, or something like that, the measurements of the time. Those are in the left-most columns. And as you read out to the right of the text column—if you just imagine an infinite number of columns—the next column on the right might be given over to spelling out certain words or combinations of words in the text that might be ambiguous to the singer, so the singer knows where the accent falls. In other words, that column would be given over to—it's hard to explain this simply—it might be given over to just two or three words in the text, which happen to be, say, four sixteenth-notes in one beat, and then a triplet on the next beat and then a dotted-eighth on the next

beat. If you just looked at the text, without those sort of footnotes about the rhythmic structure of the thing, it would take us too long to get started, with everybody underlining syllables and all that kind of stuff. So I just write that out, to clear up all those kind of ambiguities to begin with.

The next column to the right might be, say, the harmony for that particular line or group of lines. The next column to the right might be the pitch. I write them all in the simplest clef. I write them in treble clef for the women's voices and bass clef for the men's voices, and I just give them that governing pitch, like, say, the C or something like that. And the next column to the right might have to do with some aspect of the orchestral processing. The next column might have to do with another aspect of the orchestral processing, and so those columns can go out forever on the right-hand side. The practical part is that they can't, because we don't make paper like that. So what happens is that I've got one book which has the text and the singer's informa-

tion, and then I have another book, which is sort of the studio production manual, and then there might be a third book which has some other stuff in it, and each of these books has columns and line numbers so they are synchronized. So all the information is there, and it can be reconstructed. It's just that if you use so many words as I do, you make a problem of space. I mean, if you write out all the words underneath eighth-notes, you use up tons of paper, it's a total waste. Does that make sense to you? As a musician, you get the idea.

ES: Yeah. I'm really interested in your musical notation and its relation to music education, because you've talked about your son, who's a great musician, and obviously has no problem hearing pitch, and that piece, *Ear of the Beholder, Eye of the Hurricane, Benefit of the Doubt* (for Thomas Buckner) that you played was great...So since your son escaped from the stifles of Western classical music-notation literacy, I'm interested in what you think about music education, in general, and about music-notation.

RA: Y'know, my son grew up with contemporary music. I mean, I carried him in my arms when he was two years old to John Cage concerts, and he's known all of my friends, like Alvin Lucier and David Behrman and those people, his whole life. But I guess he just never thought that for the way he wanted to make music, he needed to know those things. He was totally uninterested in music school—I can't speak for him—but since he wasn't going to play the violin, there's no point in knowing that stuff. When he was a kid, a real small kid, he played guitar for a few months, and then I got him an electric keyboard, an organ, but he was never very interested. He was always so much more into the vocal part of it. So he just sort of skipped over all that. And then when we got together in the ensemble that I'm working with now, in the early 80s, he started singing with me. Jackie started singing with me in the mid-80s. And in the late 80s, Tom started singing with me. Then, in '89, when we recorded an opera called *Improvement*, Joan started singing

with me, and that's pretty much been the makeup of the ensemble ever since.

When we got to the point when I was trying to work out the technique that I just described to you, about the columns, Sam actually got interested in rhythmic notation. I mean, he got interested in the difference between four sixteenth-notes, and a dotted eighth-note and a sixteenth-note. It's something you can learn in two days, if you pay attention, so he got into that. He knows scales and modes and that kind of stuff. But he's not interested in any sort of instrumental notation.

Jackie, as I told you the other day, has been married to David Rosenboom since as long as I've known her. He was a child prodigy, genius musician, and as long as I've known them, which is twenty-five years, the radio or the record player is never turned off. David was the head of the music department at York, and he's now the head of the music department and the dean of music at CalArts, which are both—how shall we say—world-music

centers. So Jackie's heard Indian music, Indonesian music, Balinese music, jazz, you name it. She's been listening to that, since she was twenty years old. And if you listen to music all day, you know it. I mean that's the way you learn. Beside the fact that she's got a fantastic ear. So she just learned music by listening to it. And so when we got into the ensemble notation process, she told me that she just wanted to learn it by ear. She would say to me, "You do it." I would do it and then she could do it exactly the way I did it. It's such a simple way to learn. She just said, "How do you say this line?" I'd say, "Okay, I do it this way." And we never have to talk about it again.

Joan, of course, is thoroughly schooled. Tom has had a mixed education. He's always taken private music lessons. I think he was an English major in college, I'm not exactly sure. He's had sort of a varied career academically, because he's got a lot of different interests, but he's always taken private music lessons.

So the four of them are all quite different in their response to a piece of paper that I give them. I mean, they all have a different attitude toward it, and they all see it in a different way. The first thing that happens when we start doing a new piece is that we just sit down together and work it out. Everybody says to me, "How do you do this line?" And so I do it, and Tom makes little notes to himself, and Sam underlines certain syllables, and Jackie underlines certain syllables, and Joan makes some notes to herself, and I don't even see their scores, except if they leave them on the music stand and I have to put them away. I look at them and I think, Oh that's interesting. But I don't supervise their way of interpreting the thing. And then once we've gone through that, then it's their piece, and anything they want to add, in terms of character, is their privilege. In fact, I want them to do it. I want them to make it their piece.

ES: I was talking to Mimi about *Dust*, and she was saying something that sounded familiar...as she said, there's this uncomfortable scary time after finishing something big, after all the applause, and you wake up the next morning, and then it's like "Oh shit, Now what?" Do you have any ideas about this in between time...?

RA: It's terrible. You have to find something to do, quick, or something dreadful is going to happen to your mind. *Dust* was a huge effort for everybody, the singers, Tom Hamilton, "Blue" Gene Tyranny, Mimi and a lot of other people involved. You know you are not going to sell a million records the first week and go to the Caribbean for a couple of months to cool off. Back to work the next day. In the meantime, you just wait for the next tour, maybe months away, when you can feel good again.

ES: You said yesterday, something about wanting to find a new technique...I'm wondering what this sort of new technique that you imagine, or what it is that you feel like you've done enough of.

RA: Well, I don't know what the new technique is going to be. I haven't had a chance to work on it very much. The happiest thing that came right after *Dust* is that Jackie had given me a text, maybe thirteen years ago, when we were working on a different opera. She gave me a beautiful funny, funny text, and she said, after *Dust*, "Let's do it." I mean, she wanted to do it, and she said she would come to New York and stay for a few days. So it gave me a relief from myself, because the text was already there, and I didn't have to go through all the stuff that I have to go through to make one of my own pieces.

What I was referring to about changing my technique—it's not easy to say in a few sentences, but...in the way I work now, I work over the syllable

count and the accent count in the lines, until they satisfy me, and until they satisfy some general requirement that I've discovered in the piece itself. *Dust*, say, has a certain set of rules that are there, because I looked at the text, and I said, well, I think I can make these rules fit. I'm not sure I can. Sometimes I have to change. Sometimes it's a bad idea. But, finally, I can rework the text until it fits. I can make the text fit this musical pattern, and then—it's hard to put it simply—I've been working with the idea that you can use very simple harmonies without them becoming tiresome or cliché, if you use them for a long time. I mean, if you treat what appears to be on the page an F-minor chord with a suspended fourth...if you sustain that chord for a few minutes, it stops being an F-minor chord with a suspended fourth. It becomes something else. If you play that chord as part of a series of changes, it can be so cliché that you don't even want to think about it. But if you treat it as a particular kind of harmonic drone, then you can have the possibility of applying all kinds of processes to the drone,

rhythmic processes, sound processes, vocal inflections—this is the part that's hard to explain—then you can have the smallest aspect of the piece, like a micro-part of a beat, have the same pattern as the largest form of the piece. So the smallest aspect of the piece can be—I don't know what to call it—like a sort of a biological DNA of the whole piece. I've been doing that for the past ten years. I started it with the opera, *Improvement*, which was just about eleven years ago. I invented it for that group of four operas—*Improvement*, *Foreign Experiences*, *Now Eleanor's Idea*, *eL/Aficionado*. And I've used basically that same technique through everything I've done since.

I used the same idea in *Dust*. I was not unhappy with it at all, but—I might change my mind in six months—but right now, it seems like I've sort of taken the idea to a place where I don't want to think about it anymore. I'd like to have a new idea, but I don't have a new idea. All I'm saying is that I'm tired of the old idea, but I don't know what's going to happen next.

ES: So is this the first time (other than *In Sara Mencken, Christ and Beethoven...*), that you're working with someone else's text, or with Jackie's text?

RA: Yes. In the 1960s when I was working with a speaking-opera technique there were a lot of conversational things that I didn't write. As a performer you were supposed to come in at a certain point talking about something, but I didn't have any control of what you were going to talk about, what you were going to do. So, in that sense, I was using other people's combinations of words. It was almost 1980, before I decided that I was going to join the text and the musical form in a particular way that I had never done before, and so...I don't know how to say this...I never used anybody else's text, because I never used "text". I did other things. But when I got interested in the idea of "the text" as a musical form, then I started writing my own texts.

ES: The speaking operas, I don't know much about those...Are there any recordings, or documentation of some sort...?

RA: No, they never were recorded, because there was no recording technique. In fact, I think the last of those operas was about 1968, or something like that. I had been working in that method for about ten years. But I got very discouraged because there was no possibility that we could ever get support, so I just more or less stopped for about five years.

ES: Actually I was going to ask you about those five years, the "time off"...What you did during this time, and how or why you got back into it, into composing...

RA: Well, the first pieces, from 1957 to 1968, are sort of one “career”—that I haven’t thought much about rebuilding. Those ideas would seem so strange now. And then I took five years off, because the situation was so bad. But then I got interested in the memory of a wonderful poem or novel or screen-play or whatever the author, John Barton Wolgamot, thought of it, called *In Sara, Mencken, Christ and Beethoven There Were Men and Women*. I had known about the book for fifteen years, but it frightened me, because it was so awesomely complicated. And I didn’t have a copy of the book. I wrote to a friend, Keith Waldrop, who had introduced the book to me (and who I thought had the only copy) and he sent me his only copy! I didn’t actually intend to start composing again, but in the middle of the night I would imagine an “impossible” opera based on the book, because I had started doing a “musical” analysis of the book. As part of the analysis I did a sort of “test” musical version of the book in collaboration with Paul DeMarinis. That version got put out as a

record and I started thinking about composing again. Another five years went by. I was working at Mills College night and day. I didn’t have any time to compose, but I was getting very interested in the idea of involuntary speech, and *Automatic Writing* came out of the—I don’t know what you’d call it—research into that idea. That was prior to *Perfect Lives*. I didn’t write the text to *Automatic Writing*, it just came out. But when I started writing *Perfect Lives* that was the first time that I had ever purposefully used the text as a musical score.

ES: I also wanted to ask you about listening... different modes of listening... I wanted to know what you thought about listening to people’s speech, like in everyday conversation, like when I go to the ice cream shop, and I ask the scooper-person what the Hoky Poky flavor tastes like, I’m listening to his words for meaning. So maybe that’s meaning-speech, and then sometimes when you hear someone in another language, and it’s so much easier to listen to the music of it—

RA: Yeah I know.

ES: Or also just listening to you, I'm listening to your meaning, but since like I said, I'm so used to hearing your voice as a part of your music, I can't stop hearing that too. So I just wondered what you thought about various ways of listening and hearing...And I'd love to hear more about the talking operas...

RA: Well I can't do anything about the talking operas, unless I just start from scratch. I've still got the scores, but somebody would have to want to do them, and we'd have to reconstruct them. I've got the scores, but to reconstruct the performances would require a lot of rehearsal, because the ONCE group, that ensemble that inspired those pieces—

god, we'd been together for ten years, so it's not something you could do on one rehearsal. I sort of fogged over the whole matter of "listening" over the other day, because I was trying to make a different point in that lecture that I was asked to give. But what I was trying to say was that whatever your attitude toward dance rhythms are, there is a different kind of music. Whether you like dance music doesn't matter. Whether you're a good dancer doesn't matter. I love those things, I love them, and I used to love to dance. But early in my life, when I was in my late twenties, I discovered that there was another kind of music, which didn't have anything to do with dance rhythms. And it seemed to me to be very original to that time, and original to a lot of the composers. It seemed to me that the composers who were working in that style and the people who were supporting it as members of the audience were going through something that was very new. I mean it was drastically original in American music, and it was relatively new in Western music, because, as I said in the lecture, we didn't have much of a guide system for European Thinking Music, or Indian Thinking Music, or any-

thing like that. We basically just had this kind of very strange, sort of watered down folk-dance music, like the polka, the jig, that kind of thing, which had gotten into serious music. And then we had, straight ahead dance music, like jazz, that kind of thing.

ES: disco...

RA: Oh yeah, I love disco. Actually, the funny thing is, even though I tried to say it as clearly as I could, everybody came away with the idea that I didn't like dance music. What I was trying to say was that I like this other kind of music, and I wish we wouldn't keep confusing them, or thinking that you had to compromise this other kind of music by making it sound like bad dance music. I mean, if you want dance music you should go right to where

people dance, and if you want listening music you should look for music in a situation where you don't expect to dance, and you shouldn't confuse those two. That's all.

ES: But I don't think that dance music is only for dancing. I mean, do you think that dance music isn't listening music?

RA: Well, it's listening music. Yeah, of course. Of course, you listen. There's no music that's not listening music. But the point is, when you feel like you've got to get up and move, that's dance music. This other music that I was talking about, you don't feel like you've got to get up and move. That's a big, big difference.

I just went out and bought the new Dolly Parton record [*The Grass is Blue*] for Roger [Reynolds], because I wanted—how shall I say?—to break him into

the idea. And Mimi bought the new Marc Anthony. Are you a fan of Marc Anthony? He's a Puerto Rican guy from the Bronx. Ohhh, it's so beautiful. It's so beautiful. It's just—it's pure New York Puerto Rican dance music. He's got a very high, very gentle voice. Like a Puerto Rican Smokey Robinson or something like that. It's just heartbreakingly beautiful. But, it's not like any of those samples I played the other day after the talk, because as soon as that beautifully programmed drum machine comes on, you don't want to just sit there and listen, you want to be dancing. I mean, that's what dancing is all about. If you can't dance, I guess you don't want to dance, but I think the idea is like, get up and dance.

ES: Yeah. And then there's another sort of section—there's listening, there's dancing, and then it seems that a lot of people put down background music, Muzak, which isn't quite as hated as, say "noise," construction, helicopters, ambulances... So how do you think of

that Annea Lockwood piece ["Feldspar Brook, Mt. Marcy," *A Sound Map of the Hudson River* (Lovely Music)] that you played the other day...

RA: For me, it's almost the same as "the music you don't dance to." I don't consider that piece any different, substantially, from David Behrman's serial piece [*Canons* (1959)]. You don't feel like dancing to it, it's just beautiful to listen to. And what I was trying to say about those samples, is that you can't really do justice to the whole piece, because—like the first piece I played, the Steve Peters piece "in memory of the four winds," [*in memory of the four winds* (pianissimo)]—as soon as he gets into the crickets or whatever those things are, you realize that you're not listening to crickets, you're listening to a loop of crickets, and the loop—(laughs)—I haven't talked to Steve Peters about this, but the way I hear it is that he didn't want you to hear it as just crickets. He wasn't trying to conceal the loop, he wants you to hear the loop. Now his piece came at what I thought would be the beginning of the lecture. At the end, when you get

into Annea's piece, what's really dramatic about the piece is that it's got some of the oddest edits I've ever heard in a piece of so-called environmental music. Because she doesn't hide the edits. You're hearing the sound of water running over a certain kind of terrain—and then it just cuts to another thing, and then you hear that for a couple minutes, and it cuts to another thing, and you hear that. She doesn't cross-fade or anything like that. It's an extremely dramatic piece of music. It's a very dramatic piece of music, in spite of the fact that it's just water running over some rocks. Anyway, that's why I was saying that you can't really get that, you can't get that feeling in a three minute sample.

ES: Yeah. Annea Lockwood's has this sort of weird purposefulness to it, like you said—and there's all that theory, or just thinking, about listening to the environment, the Cage stuff, of just sort of listening as music—I wondered what you think about that, in relation to your own music...

RA: Well, I think what John Cage was trying to say was that the outside is a pattern that's just as interesting as any other, as any pattern that we could make. It was a very important idea, and it's probably still a very important idea. I never have subscribed to it. I mean, I've never done that kind of music, but it was certainly a dramatic idea at that time to say that. When I was talking to Pauline [Oliveros], when we were doing *Music with Roots in the Aether* [seven videos, Lovely Music] Pauline told me that when she was beginning to practice listening meditation, she would just put a microphone out the window on the end of a wire and listen, for an hour or so, to practice listening meditation.

ES: Yeah, I moved to a big trafficky street, and I started listening to cars—

RA: I know, it's endlessly fascinating (laughs). We live on a street in New York, where there's a car accident about once a month. That's always interesting too. In the middle of the night you hear, like, whammo! What's funny is that you know

immediately that it's an accident. Even though you don't have much experience with car accidents, you know immediately it's a car accident. It's a very strange—it's actually a puzzle, to me. I've always been interested in that paradox, of how you understand things without having experienced them, but there are definitely situations in hearing, where you know something even though you've never experienced it.

ES: ...to bring this all back to what I first asked you, about your voice. I wonder if you could say something about the "natural everyday" speech which you've (presumably) been using throughout this interview-conversation...

RA: It's hard to tell the difference between "natural everyday" speech and "performance" in a situation like this. I've done it too many times.

ES:...or how and why it changes, not just your voice, but interview-voices in general, when they are transcribed. It's always made to sound cohesive, when in reality what a person actually says is really so much less cohesive usually than what that same person would write. For example, here we're talking, and you and I both say "y'know" and "I mean," and "um" and all that a whole lot, and we start and stop in ways which sound fine in conversation, but still aren't acceptable in print...Like you wrote in your email to me, "The best for me would be for you to edit what you sent to take out all of the repetitions, false starts, etc. and make it like I speak in sentences." And I'm doing that, editing the awkwardness out, to a certain extent, to save some embarrassment...But I wonder about this embarrassment, why it's there, especially since it seems that basically no one really speaks in sentences unless you've got a prepared speech, or unless you're so trained in rhetoric as to always sound cohesive, but then (to me) it doesn't sound like the person is really thinking on the spot about what they are saying.

RA: The reason I asked you to edit this recorded conversation, "take out all of the repetitions, false starts, etc. and make it like I speak in sentences," is that I can't read unedited interviews anymore. They were interesting around 1950, when the tape recorder came along, but after a while they lost their punch. Everybody knows we don't speak in sentences. Everybody knows about the difference between listening and reading. The problem is not embarrassment that I say "y'know" and "I mean" and "um" all the time. The problem is that I don't want to read those things, and we are editing this to make it readable.

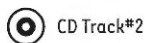
* This interview took place on Monday, April 17, 2000 at the Center for Research in Computing and the Arts, University of California, San Diego.

References to the "talk the other day" are to a lecture Robert Ashley gave Saturday, April 15, 2000 at the University of California, San Diego, on the topic, "The Future of Music."

Alexandre St-Onge is a sound artist and improviser working in experimental music and performance art. His work deals with silence, absence, and the perversion of interpretation through an analytical deconstruction and/or the mutation of different means of communication such as language and images. His work has been documented on two releases: *image/négation* (Alien8 Recordings) and *une mâchoire et deux trous* (Namskeio records). He is also involved in several projects including: *undo* (with Christof Migone), *ci dy* (with Sam Shalabi), *Klaxon Gueule* (with Michel F.Côté and Bernard Falaise), *et sans* (with Roger Tellier-Craig). He is also one of the co-founder of the label *squint fucker press* with Christof Migone.

B O U C H E D ' e a U /
e n n O M B R E D ' I M P O S S I B I L I T É S
P A R T I C U L I È R E S

WATER MOUTH/IN A NUMBER OF PARTICULAR IMPOSSIBILITIES



CD Track#2

A L E X A N D R E S T - O N G E

Translation by Christof Migone

Giving voice to the common lot—common not according to being, but according to what is other than being, and draws near unordered, unchosen, unwelcomed, the impotence of attraction.¹

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there are words incrustated in liquid bodies ejected from the porous subject / materialization of this loss via signs—excrements—sounds— the dernier mot (last word) also presents its opposite in the place where it affirms its formlessness; this fluidity is engendered through the appropriation “by the other” of a place, ungraspable in appearance and even more so once appropriated / layers of repre-

sentations which exacerbate this loss-----indefinable frustration in the face of these external bodies so distant and so proximate by the echo of the impossibility of the encounter of the subject with its internal bodies-----these doublings excreted ad infinitum by the mirroring of the double-----this encounter which never takes place situates the subject in this interval where the encounter has possibly always already taken place-----body simultaneously in motion and fixed / nothing other than excess--this stiffening of the verb digested and spat out of the bucal cavity has perhaps nothing better to do than to crack tranquilly / the mouthing further encloses these hermetic words / via excess this "mouthing enclosure" conducts its destruction of sense which then opens up sense to a becoming and projects the subject to its limit.

*Intelligence came after stupidity,
which had always sodomized it closely, —
AND THEN*

Which gives an idea of the infinite journey.

[...]
*I condemn you because you know why... I condemn you, —
and me, I don't know why.²*

afterwards a voice emerges from its liquified body through the action of saying as silently possible this last word (dernier mot) / there is nothing but saliva until the moment where this voice surfaces on this water expanse and attempts to regain its breath in order to submerge itself into its own putrified body for good / layering of different processes of decomposition---nothing remains but the dust of these interpretations____Artaud and his bones, stomped by the desire of the interpreter to encounter

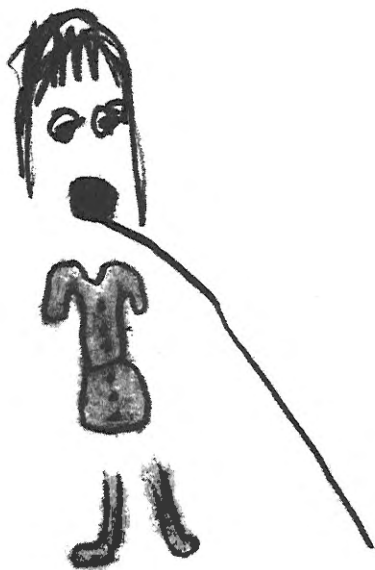
himself through the bias of the “other” / superimposed interpretations which stratify this material which crumbles away as the process of superimposition unravels---becomes lost and spent-----the material becomes denser and denser and further and further emptied from its origin while having no other relation than with itself---this fluid space is perhaps the site of a definitive quartering which remains forever undefinable-----separation which creates a world of possible relations / hypothesis of a communication through what separates us (Blanchot) from ourselves (being multiple), from others, from the common language of communication, from the common sense of the community / body in an emptiness, thinking the impossible, and then after...

It is as if, despite himself and through a woeful error at which he cries out, he has reached the point where thinking is always already not being able to think yet—an ‘im-power’, as he puts it.³

[1] Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*. Trans. Ann Smock. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995, 87. Original in *L'écriture du désastre*, Gallimard, 1980, 138.

[2] Antonin Artaud, “Artaud The Mōmo” in *Watchfiends and Rack Screams*, ed. and trans. by Clayton Eshleman with Bernard Bador. Boston: Exact Change, 1995, 123–7. Original in Artaud, *Oeuvres complètes* vol. XII, Gallimard, 1989, 35.

[3] Maurice Blanchot, “Artaud” in *The Blanchot Reader*. Trans. Ian Maclachlan, Ed. Michael Holland. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, 129–135. Originally in *NRF* 47 Nov. 56, 873–81 and also in *Le livre à venir*, Gallimard, 1959, 53.



kim dawn loves chocolate. she loves kitties, especially her two preciousnesses, jecky and sadie. she plays with color, space, body. dawn completed her mfa from the university of western ontario in 1998. she teaches part-time at the nova scotia college of art and design and independently teaches performance/writing/drawing and yoga. she currently resides in nova scotia with her partner, scott russell and is working on a book entitled *memoir of a fragmentary*, a fictional autobiography.

T I N Y Y E L L O W T H R O A T
T R E M B L E S
I N C O N S O L A B L Y



K I M D A W N

pillowmouth.

rouge.

pale.

pink.

smear)

mouth

sosoft

(wide opened mouth ready to eat kittens soft-

soft kittens

(please

she turned

her mouth

became

bloody

i showered her my teeth

fireengineered

my tongue slips up under

through the sidewalk cracks

looking for

redjam

words enter skin like nothing else

lips becoming liquid

breath written on a page

i felt seethrough

looking under skin, licking lovely blue veins

girl hurts doll
doll watches girl

layers of dried drenched paper
the paper mouthing my memory for to me
tongue glides overs written
ink blots stain fingersmouths

liquidgag
i insist

mouths in pillow

her chocolatebrown mouth
(grieve) un (prettily
of blindness of bodies

frantic
skins

I cannot touch the liquid
sickly yellow
sometimes giggling
(little girls locked in basements)
laughcrylaughcrylaughcry
lips inner mouth chapped raw
quiet vomit
tired famished



in throat
Resides pukegreen ball yellowey
gushy OLD
Stuck.

give into body and sleep prettily
smelling of lilacs and shit
reminiscent of wet woolen blankets(in throat)

longing desire repulsion grief simultaneously

little hoarded chocolate bars
i hid them under my mattress.
let them melt inaround my
mouth_____

— — — S E C T I O N
2_____

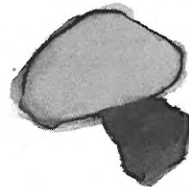
i long for mouth to be filled with fists and
penises and fudgesicles

i long for this small opening to be filled with
fingers and tongues and skinny penises this
longing about sorrow
fillmyempty hole these holes can never be
filled

(mom) wanted her to notice me.
 floor lived under.
 desiring warmth
 water. love myweightlessbody
 dirty tongue pale pink nightgown
 ready for bed not sleepy. eyes are closed walk
 and shake and shiver
 make pink trail
 a crayon stain
 my tongue immersed
 i am a stain
 my feet are raw.
 i forget.
 i forget its chocolate syrup.
 my feet are drenched in chocolate syrup.

i am a tongue.
 i lick the floor.
 i want to hide.
 i want to die.
 i want to throw up.
 i want to disappear.
 my eyes are closed. i look inside the inner of my
 eyelids.
 i am barely a shadow.
 i am barely.
 i am scared.
 i can't place where i am anymore.
 the honey bears are upside down.
 honey from their mouths in a constant stream
 covering my pink crayola hand.

i mark. i stain.
 its my tongue. i'm a tongue. a long fading pink
 tongue.
 my mouth's raw.
 disguise yourself as your wound
 punish. punish.
 i'm living in my pretty pretty ballerina panop-
 ticon.
 the building breathes just below my skin.
 below that is more stain.
 more wound.
 cut.
 burn.
 waste.
 yawn.



mutilate.
 sucklebaby
 i am vein. i am blood. i am semen. i am cum. i
 am wound.
 i am heartache. i am longing. i am lost.
 all i was
 was looking for was some warm
 trying to find something i lost what was it
 i stained and stained.
 my legs dripped and dragged.
 the place between red and white.
 that's what i am.

the pink line never broke

mouth scars
 he left a scar where his tongue
 wept
 and i wept
 for more scars
 begged for more
 cared no longer
 pride was not in my vocabulary

i wanted more weeping and more scars
 bloodier scars

he taught me how to punish
 i couldn't tell anymore whether i was punishing
 me or him
 but all i knew i wanted was to punish punish
 punish and be punished and i wanted bloody
 and scarification and weeping more weeping
 and tell me i'm ugly i'm so fucking ugly humil-
 iate me i want laughter to burn down upon
 through my thin throat

laugh at me 'o tiny throated
 one
 so easy to slit
 to slice.



there is a trace left.
 in between the spaces of terror i find fragments
 of my memory trace as evidence of my presence
 amnesia blanket my life.

i puke and devour chocolate in front of audi-
 ence. i don't know i'm there. they clap
 afterwards. i feel messy and normal with big red
 mouth.

the more i hear your silence around my throat

There, theres that spot where his tongue stained
 my skin

inability to form words longing
 becomes unbearable
 gesture rather than there is no air left
 for the audience becomes diseased and plagued
 through performance plague
 audience with silences deafening such a
 high pitched cry dogs will be crying in their beds
 tonight

(body plugs into text text into body



written residue of performativity
upon objects and body through repetition

dear chocolate doll, dear my
dirty tongue, dear child seduc-
tress, dear baby amnesiac girl,
not fault, you small sweet baby,
you cradled his dirty to live, you forgot tem-
porarily/purposefully, to go on,
chocolate became your mouth, smeared off on
street corners,
i love you baby doll and i forgive you for being a

dirty.



- - - S E C T I O N
3

she painted her lips red. she experimented with
leaving her mark. she left her lips stain smear
on styrofoam cups. coffee to go. under kitchen
tables. on bodies. on sidewalks. her mouth came
off gradually. her mouth came off on shirt col-
lars. teddy bears. cocks. kitty cats noses.
skidded up down legs. drove all around town.
her mouth became interested in the crevices of

architecture. where buildings held together. she
took imprints molds teeth and inside mouth
with pink bubble gum. she left them all around
town. on tables in the fanciest of fancy. in
dishes. on doorknobs. under shoes. any shoes.
she held and fondled shoes for long hours.
dreaming the indent the insole was her lovers
back. the smooth innard from under the armpit
down and up again to belly. her lover who'd
never never leave her who'd never never die
who'd love her for ever and ever.

she smeared her face mouth off her on her win-
dowpane on off her sweater under the carpet
under their dresser drawers she smeared grey

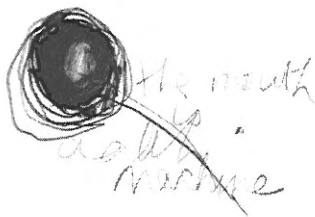
she smeared red. she turned the walls pink. the
walls mocked her. they were her insides they
were inside her she wanted inside they wanted
her inside. those walls were bleeding from the
outside in that house.

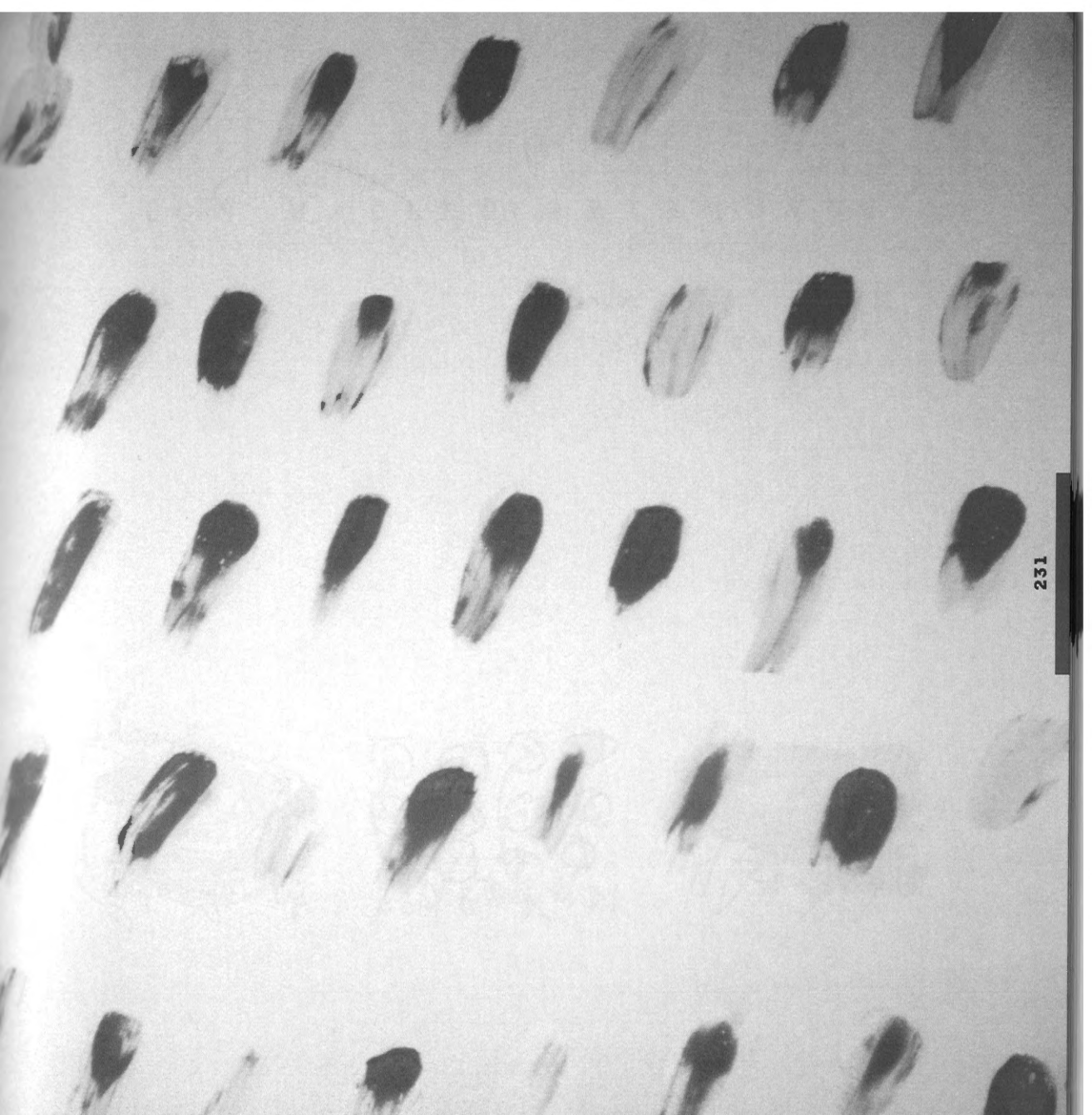
they bought her a new puppy. she held the puppy
tight and fast. he got lost in the snow. she soon
learned than she needed to help puppy plan his
escape. he didn't like having his nose rubbed in
his own shit. he was suicidal. she needed to get
suicidal puppy outta here.

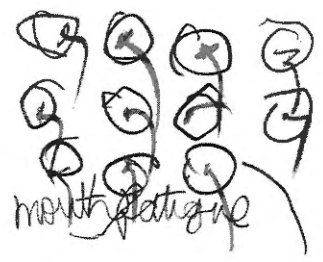
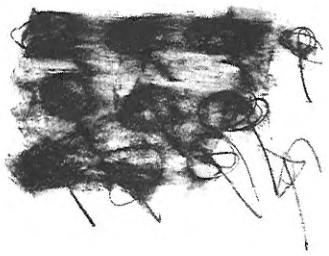
shes squeezing her teddy so tight so hard. shes
squeezing her teddy into oblivion. shes painting

landscapes of her teddy so black so blue. she opens her teddy up. she devours his stuffed bean bag insides his cotton ball insides his pillow insides. if she eats teddy inside out she'll have teddy's painted pink mouth smile on her face. she will eat teddy inside out. and be teddy outside mouth pink painted red mouth smile. a smile implant. cause if you smile then the world smiles back. she tries but she prefers the swallowed sunshine.

KIM DAWN 230 TINY YELLOW THROAT TREMBLES INCONSOLABLY







O

(O N M A R I N A A B R A M O V I C)

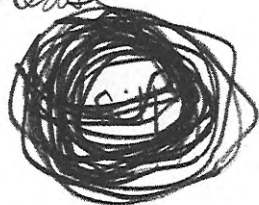
Ⓞ CD Track#1

K I M D A W N

O

o o

please



pulse

ooo^ooooo^oooooooooo^^^oooaaaa>>aaaa



from belly out /
persists
opening memory.energy. stored /
blocked.
persisting insisting



Desiring eviction.
 pushing
 a purposeful gentle slash to the throat

giving birth to an animal gut release

a Necessary howl
 her cavernmouth remains
 fugitive in ones own skin
 necessary
 close lines, fill spaces with tongues ache for
 spaces in between
 gap we cannot touch silence defeatist
 longing space between our bodies
 filled

(grieve) un (prettily

she lies still her voice flying pushed forward
 upupupupupupupupupupupupupupupupupup

within these moments of the blindness of the
 body
 frenzy of emptying
 hitting the ceiling
 lonely
 thawing skins
 I had no way out but to pull this beast from my
 skin.
 a battle from voice ceiling pale face



upupupupup falling

**moment still. moment repeats self
never still just under**

(never still always just under stillness trembles
stillness weeps and mourns and cries dreadfully
comfortless stillness trembles sometimes
giggling)

slaps not slightly
in face
she persists
laborious

insistence of) (pulse

pulse

washes over washes over washes over washes over wash-
es over washes over washes over washes over

washes over washes over washes over washes over

washes over washes over washes over washes over

washes over washes over washes over washes over

washes over washes over washes over washes over

washes over washes over washes over washes over

washes over washes over washes over washes over

washes over washes over washes over washes over

washes over washes over washes over washes over



moment abjection moment purge
forcing self to willfully vomit
blood flows thinner

stay quiet and youll explode
hungry
exhausted famished

Heave dry Insistant heave

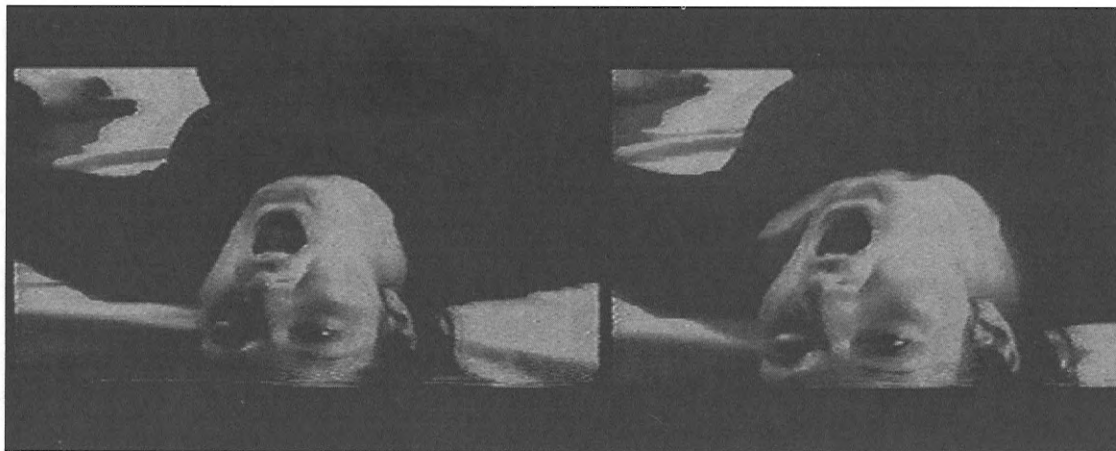
outoutoutoutoutout

her mouth is aglow with worms
(pretty

unsticking sticky energy from deep in belly
under tongue
(please)

pulse

these empty rooms attempt satiation through
mouth
emergencyrelease bodily stored memory old
trauma
gentlyfrantic
there is no outside
outside is a construct to reflect inners
there are only inners



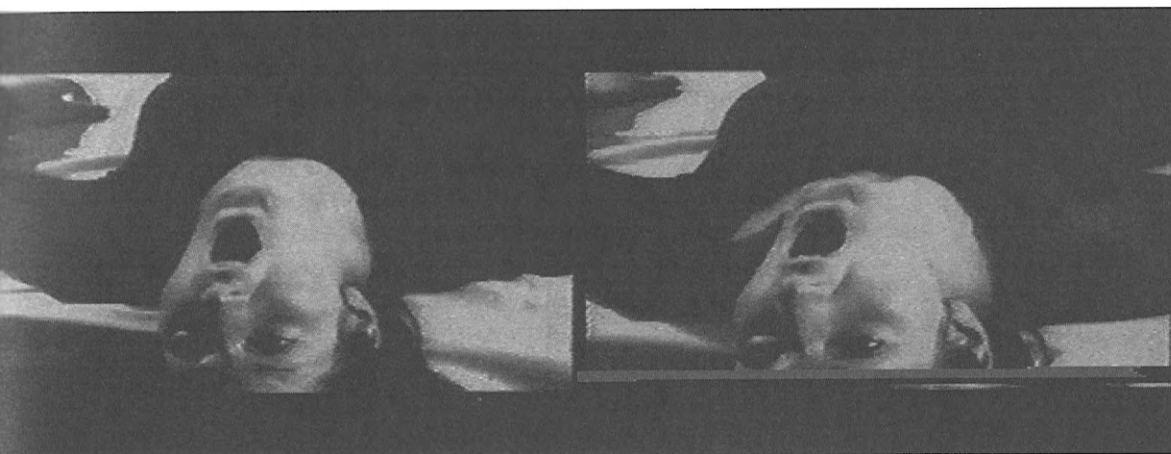
this is an emergencyrelease whirririririririr-
rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr

freeing the body of mildewey she does.

the mouth opens
(her)
emanates stench
of old
voice fidgets from below

let loose in long steamy coils

close eyes)



Charles Amirkhanian is a composer, percussionist, sound poet and radio producer.

A leading practitioner of electroacoustic music and text-sound composition, he is widely known for his live and tape works utilizing speech (or sound poetry) elements in rhythmic patterns resembling percussion music. In addition to his compositions, Amirkhanian has been instrumental in the dissemination of contemporary music through his work as Music Director at KPFA/Berkeley from 1969 to 1992, directing the *Speaking of Music* series at the Exploratorium in San Francisco (1983-1992) and as the founding Co-Director of the Composer-to-Composer Festival in Telluride, Colorado (1988 - 1991).

D U M B E K B O O K a C H e

1986, Australia

C H A R L E S a M I R K H A N I A N

| voice #1 | voice #2 | | |
|----------|----------|---------|----------|
| tumble | 1 | 1 | tenable |
| 1 | 2 | tunable | 1 |
| 2 | terrible | 1 | 2 |
| tumble | 1 | RHUMBA, | RHUMBA, |
| 1 | 2 | DUMBEK, | DUMBEK, |
| 2 | gamble | RHUMBA, | RHUMBA, |
| whiskey | 1 | DUMBEK, | DUMBEK, |
| 1 | terrible | tumble | 1 |
| tumble | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 1 | 2 | tumble | tumble |
| humble | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 1 | 4 | tumble | 2 |
| 2 | gamble | 1 | terrible |
| whiskey | 1 | tumble | , tum |

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| tum | , tum | damper | gamble |
| tadadam | tadadam | gamble | damper |
| tuck | 1 | damper | gamble |
| 1 | bank | gambling | damper |
| tumble | 1 | damper | gambling |
| 1 | 2 | 1 | damper |
| 2 | terrible | Daedalus | , Daedal |
| tumble | 1 | Daedalus | us Daedal |
| 1 | 2 | Daedalus | us Daedal |
| tumble | 3 | ah-ha | ah-ha |
| 1 | 4 | ah-ha | ah-ha |
| gamble | 5 | Bach | 1 |
| 1 | whiskey | 1 | 2 |
| 2 | Wasco | 2 | Reebok |
| terrible | 1 | 3 | Reebok |
| tumble | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| 1 | 3 | Bach | 2 |
| humble | 4 | 1, | , Reebok |
| 1 | 5 | 2, | Reebok, |
| 2, | hambone, | Bach, | 1, |
| hambone, | hambone, | 1 | 2 |
| 1 | 1 | Bach, | Reebok, |
| 2 | 2 | Bach | 1 |
| gamble | gamble | 1 | 2 |
| 1 | damper | Bach, | 3, |
| gamble | gamble | Bach, | 4, |
| 1 | damper | , Bach | Bach, |
| gamble | gamble | Bach | Bach |
| 1 | damper | 1 | 1 |
| Daedalus | Daedalus | Bach, | 2, |
| gamble | 1 | Bach, | 3, |

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| , Bach | Bach, | Tonga | bongo |
| , Bach | Bach, | bongo, | Tonga, |
| Bach | Bach | bongo, | Tonga, |
| 1 | 1 | Tonga | bongo |
| book | Bach | bongo | 1 |
| Bach | bake | 1 | 2 |
| back | Bach | 2, | bongo, |
| ache, | ache, | bongo, | 1, |
| 1 | book | 1 | Tonga |
| 2 | Back | 2 | bongo |
| Bach | 1 | bongo, | 1, |
| ache, | 2, | 1, | bongo, |
| Adelaide | Adelaide | Tonga | 1 |
| 1 | 1 | bongo | 2 |
| Adelaide | , Adel | 1, | bongo, |
| Adelaide | aide Adel | Geelong, | 1, |
| Adelaide | aide Adel | 1, | Geelong, |
| Adelaide | Adelaide | Geelong, | , bongo |
| 1 | 1 | gone | 1 |
| whiskey | Wasco | 1 | 2 |
| Wasco | whiskey | 2 | 3 |
| whiskey | Wasco | 3 | 4 |
| Wasco | whiskey | MILKTOAST | 5 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | bottleneck |
| Tonga | 2 | saddlebag | 1 |
| 1 | bongo | MILKTOAST | 2 |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | bottleneck |
| Tonga | 2 | saddlebag | 1 |
| 1 | bongo | MILKTOAST | MILKTOAST |
| 1 | | 1 | bottleneck |
| Tonga | bongo | Samarkand | 1 |

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| saddlebag | saddlebag | butterball | 1 |
| MILKTOAST | 1 | 1 | battle-call |
| 1 | bottleneck | butternut | 1 |
| Samarkand | 1 | bottleneck | 2 |
| saddlebag | 2 | milktoast | , milk |
| MILKTOAST | MILKTOAST | milktoast | toast-milk |
| 1 | bottleneck | , milk | milktoast |
| 2 | butternut | toast-milk, | milktoast, |
| 3 | saddlebag | MILKTOAST | MILKTOAST |
| Samarkand | Samarkand | bottleneck | bottleneck |
| MILKTOAST | MILKTOAST | butternut | butternut |
| 1 | bottleneck | Samarkand, | Samarkand, |
| 2 | butternut | milk | , neck |
| 3 | saddlebag | MILKTOAST | MILKTOAST |
| Samarkand | Samarkand | bottleneck | butterball |
| MILKTOAST | MILKTOAST | battle-call | battle-call |
| 1 | bottleneck | saddlebag, | saddlebag, |
| 2 | butternut | milk | , nut |
| battlefield | 1 | MILKTOAST | MILKTOAST |
| 1 | saddlebag | Butterfield | Butterfield |
| Samarkand | Samarkand | butterball | butterball |
| MILKTOAST | MILKTOAST | basketball | basketball |
| 1 | bottleneck | battle-call, | battle-call, |
| 2 | butternut | 1 | roast |
| battle-call | 1 | boast | 1 |
| 1 | butterball | milk | , but |
| subtly-all | 1 | MILKTOAST | MILKTOAST |
| 1 | Samarkand | , butter | butterball |
| saddlebag | 1 | field-butter | battle-call |
| sudden-gall | 2 | call-basket | basketball |
| 1 | subtly-all | bought-it-all | bought-it-all |

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | 1 |
| roast | roast |
| boast | boast |
| 1 | 1 |
| lickety-split | lickety-split |
| RHUMBA, | RHUMBA, |
| DUMBEK, | DUMBEK, |
| RHUMBA, | RHUMBA, |
| DUMBEK, | DUMBEK, |
| RHUMBA, | RHUMBA, |
| DUMBEK, | DUMBEK, |
| Geelong, | 1, |
| 1, | Geelong, |
| Geelongo | , bongo |
| gone | gone |
| 1 | 1 |
| RHUMBA | RHUMBA |
| DUMBEK | DUMBEK |

* PERFORMANCE NOTES: roll the "R" of Rhumba. First syllable to rhyme with "room." Words in capital letters spoken louder than others. Geelong, the Australian town, is pronounced juh-LONG. Wasco, a town in California, is pronounced "WAHS-koh". Each line is given one quarter note value. One-syllable words = one quarter note. Two-syllable words are given two equal 8th-note values. Three-syllable words are given two 16th notes + one 8th. A comma adds an 8th-note rest to the quarter-note line, making it a 3/8 line. Four-syllable lines = three 16ths followed by an 8th.

Tape version of *Dumbek Bookache IV* contains recordings of the voices of American presidents Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding & Calvin Coolidge.

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Gregory Whitehead is a playwright, voice performer, and radio artist whose castaway voiceworks and plays have aired on many frequencies.

His most recent CD, *The Thing About Bugs*, features voice and electronica improvisations with Christof Migone, and is available from generatorsoundart.org.

G R E G O R Y W H I T E H E A D



CD Track#6

m u m B O m o m o

for mary ellen solt

m u m b o m o j o j u m b o m o m o
b o m o j o j u m b o m o m o m u m
m o j o j u m b o m o m o m u m b o
j o j u m b o m o m o m u m b o m o
j u m b o m o m o m u m b o m o j o
b o m o m o m u m b o m o j o j u m
m o m o m u m b o m o j o j u m b o
m o m u m b o m o j o j u m b o m o
m u m b o m o j o j u m b o m o m o

S O, Y O U W A N N A

for allenus maximus

m a r k e t S H a r e

for the spirit of the times

yeah...I was thinkin'...wouldn't it be good to...market share...up like a rocket...livin' extra large... so then.

yeah...I was thinkin'...wouldn't it be good to...market share...up like a rocket...livin' extra large...so then.

yeah...I was thinkin'...wouldn't it be good to...market share...up like a rocket...livin' extra large...so then.

yeah...I was thinkin'...wouldn't it be good to...market share...up like a rocket...livin' extra large...so then.

yeah...I was thinkin'...wouldn't it be good to...

T a L K a B O U T S Q U I D ?

wantalbousqui?

wantalkbousqui?

swantalkbousqui?

sowantalkbousqui?

souwantalkbousqui?

souwantalkabousqui?

souwannatalkabousqui?

soyuwannatalkabousqui?

soyuwannatalkaboutsqui?

soyouwannatalkaboutsqui?

so, you wanna talk about squid?

so, you wanna talk about squid?

so, you wanna talk about squid?

soyouwannatalkaboutsqui?

soyuwannatalkaboutsqui?

soyuwannatalkabousqui?

souwannatalkabousqui?

souwannatalkabousqui?

souwantalkabousqui?

souwantalkabousqui?

sowantalkbousqui?

swantalkbousqui?

wantalkbousqui?

wantalbousqui?

wantalbousqui?

wantalbousqui?

wantalbousqui?

wantalbousqui?

wantalbousqui?

wantalbousqui?


wantalbousqui?

Jocelyn Robert is a multidisciplinary artist: he cuts the art cake by the side.

Trained as an architect, he worked as one for a few years then switched to performance and installation, published texts, while moving toward media arts, with a strong interest for audio art. In 1993, with a few other artists, he founded Avatar, an audio-art centre in Quebec City, which became a platform for the development of audio and media arts. He published several CDs—on ReR records, Obz and Ohm editions—and showed his visual art in several countries. He currently works on video installation projects and on a year-long piano piece with Quebec artist Louis Ouellet.

e n P L Ə I n

C H ʃ m P

J O C E L Y N R O B E R T  CD Track#3

Sssshhh...

Ouais, ça je... je ne me rappelle pas, non.

Sssshhaaa....

Hum. Je n'ai aucun souvenir des couleurs.

Je pense que non. Et sa femme qui était folle, qui criait et qu'on ne
euh... c'est...

Mais hum... hum. voyait jamais.

c'est comme si... c'est peut-être ça, c'est peut-être cette...

ça que... que

première deuxième troisième quatrième cinquième C'est intrigant. Et lui qui est devenu très très religieux...

... c'est tout.

première deuxième troisième quatrième cinquième un petit monsieur qui était... et...

première deuxième troisième quatrième cinquième et aussi... il y avait... puis... beaucoup plus

En tous cas, je ne dormais pas.

facilement que... c'est un...

*Après, là, il y avait beaucoup beaucoup beaucoup de vent
c'est un grand rectangle.
avec des motifs de dentelle dedans.*

Non. Pour avoir, quelque part... qui avait...
Sssshhh...

Je ne sais pas trop pourquoi.

Mais comment elle a fait ?

C'est... c'est ça. Un petit monsieur qui était... puis...

Elle avait jeté son violon. Elle avait jeté son violon.

Comme des petits chiens... pour me dire qu'il avait... puis... tu sais...

On était beaucoup seules avec elle, pi sa fatigue,

première deuxième troisième quatrième cinquième Il avait, je ne sais pas... ah ouais.
mais les épingles tombaient.

première deuxième troisième quatrième cinquième

Parce que... oui.

première deuxième troisième quatrième Mais c'est une extension,

Et puis, il y avait des lettres de l'alphabet.

cinquième c'est une extension au champ, la cour.

Je ne sais pas, c'est comme... C'est intrigant.

Hhhha, ... son frère.

Des objets.
Assez longtemps.

Ça faisait là : Sssshhh... Hhhhaaa...

... dans la normalité.

C'était yeeennn yennn yennnnnnn...

Tu sais, une petite piscine de plastique, Hum, quelque part qu'il avait...
C'était comme, c'était comme... c't'un... c'était comme un... :
 avec des dessins... Donc, il avait mis, je ne sais pas, des cailloux

c'était comme caché.

une petite piscine d'enfants... ou un truc de métal, en effet c'est pareil...

c'est un peu différent parce que, la différence...

Je pense qu'elle devait être petite.

première deuxième troisième quatrième cinquième

Et puis le toit,

première deuxième troisième quatrième cinquième Ouais, ça je... je ne me rappelle pas, non.

et puis les chaises... et j'ai roulé la pierre.

première deuxième troisième quatrième Je n'ai aucun souvenir des couleurs.

Ensuite, ...Hhhhhhaaa... il venait cogner contre la fenêtre.

cinquième

Hhhhh... je lui ai dit... je, j'ai... Sss... mais c'était plus fort que moi.

Mais c'est une extension,

Je... je... j'ai pas le souvenir de comment elle était avant.

Il n'y avait rien. c'est une extension au champ, la cour.

Puis, elle était eeuffff... ffff... Ssss...

Tu sais, Et sa femme qui était folle, qui criait

Il y avait sûrement des rideaux, une ceinture là, des chaises droites, des...

c'était un corridor blanc et qu'on ne voyait jamais... et qui a...

des chaises berçantes. Vertes.

avec un plancher de tuiles et puis... ah oui ! Un petit monsieur qui était...

Un truc pour mettre les pommes de terre.

et une petite chaise droite.

Tu sais, c'est comme si elle était dans... en plein champ en fait.

Et donc : cette maison... et lui qui est devenu

Tu te rends compte ? C'était le... c'était en plein...

très très religieux. Il y avait du sable aussi.

... et on avait vu ça.

Mais la maison on ne la voit pas. Ben, ça c'est beau. C'était...

Il disait eee...

C'est ça. Donc : cette maison... et là il y avait des
... alors on a dit oui.

chaloupes dans... donc, il était un peu plus...

Assez longtemps.

et on flotte.

Ah, ça c'est... ah... Il y avait du sable aussi.

Ah, il y a eu un rat.

Ouais.

Il y avait des dindes sauvages,

Parce que, beaucoup plus facilement que...

et puis il y avait un endroit où il y avait un puits...

des rideaux... des enveloppes de bébés... euh... très... toutes rondes.

Donc : cette maison... Il avait mis, je ne sais pas,

des cailloux ou un truc de métal... et ...

Tous les soirs c'était... sss... rouge.

et aussi...

Et puis elle a écrasé le rat. Un soir...

... et puis ça a été fini.

David Dunn is a composer and sound artist. He was born in 1953 in San Diego, California.

From 1970 to 1974 he was assistant to the American composer Harry Partch. He has worked in a wide variety of audio media inclusive of traditional and experimental music, installations for public exhibitions, video and film soundtracks, radio broadcasts, and bioacoustic research. His compositions and wildlife sound recordings have appeared in hundreds of international forums, concerts, broadcasts, and exhibitions. Currently he is Assistant Professor at the College of Santa Fe's Contemporary Music Program and President of the newly formed Art and Science Laboratory.

consonants (as in)[m] sum[n] sun[p] pole[b] bowl[t] toll[d] dole[k] cool[g] goal[r] rot[l] lot[f] fat[s] seal[θ] thy[ʃ] osh[ʒ] azure[h] hot[w] watt**combinations** (as in)[ei] bait/beat[hw] what**other signs**

⊗ ingressive

⊙ egressive

⊕ hands cupped over mouth

• staccato

whistle

throat rasp

 5
4
3
2
1 } pitch range
1-low to 5-high

~ trill

→ sustain

m e D r I G e L

D e V I D D u n n CD Track#9

Madrigal requires seven vocalists/reciters and a two-channel audio tape. The score is notated in the International Phonetic Alphabet (American Dialect of English) with additional signs. Articulation should emphasize the phonemes as if reciting them, the additional signs as timbral coloration only. Each numbered page is thirty seconds in duration with all individual lines temporally notated in spatial proportion to the page length. The tape playback amplitude should match the relative loudness of the live voices; no amplification of the voices should occur under any circumstances. Total duration of the composition is six minutes.

1 $\overset{\curvearrowright}{3} \text{ gnhwu}$ pp $\overset{\rightarrow}{5} \text{ twi } \bar{u}$ p $\text{ei } \bar{z}$

2 $\overset{\curvearrowright}{3} \text{ bphw}$ pp $\overset{\curvearrowright}{3} \text{ gwih}$ p

3 $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ ppp $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ ppp $\overset{\curvearrowright}{3} \text{ kwaekwi}$ mp

4 $\overset{\curvearrowright}{3} \text{ bnd\AA hw}$ pppp $\overset{\rightarrow}{3} \text{ b\AA}$ p

5 $\overset{\curvearrowright}{3} \text{ bnd\AA hw}$ pp $\overset{\rightarrow}{5} \text{ twi } \bar{u}$ p

6 $\overset{\rightarrow}{3} \text{ g\AA}$ pp $\overset{\curvearrowright}{3} \text{ kwaekwi}$ f

7 $\overset{\rightarrow}{3} \text{ gwi}$ pp $\overset{\circ}{3} \text{ g\AA}$ pp

1 $\overset{1}{\text{ppp}} \text{-----} \overset{2}{\text{pp}}$ $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ mp $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$ $\bar{t\AA}$

2 $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ pp $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ pp $\overset{\circ}{3} \text{ kaD\AA}$ mf $\overset{\circ}{3} \text{ gwi}$ ppp $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ tu} \times \text{e}$ pppp

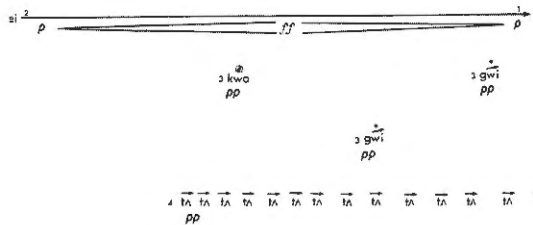
3 $\overset{\rightarrow}{5} \text{ twi } \bar{u}$ pp $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ pp $\overset{\circ}{2} \text{ hw\AA f}$ pp $\overset{\rightarrow}{3} \text{ kwi}$ pp $\overset{\circ}{3} \text{ kwa}$ mp

4 $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ p $\overset{\circ}{3} \text{ kw\AA i}$ p $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ pp $\overset{\circ}{3} \text{ gwi}$ ppp $\overset{\circ}{3} \text{ kw\AA i}$ mp

5 $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ pp $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ p $\text{ei } \overset{1}{\text{ppp}} \text{-----} \overset{2}{\text{pp}}$ $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ pp $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ pp

6 $\overset{\rightarrow}{5} \text{ i}$ ppp $\overset{\circ}{3} \text{ gwi}$ ppp $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ pp $\overset{\rightarrow}{4} \text{ t\AA}$ pp

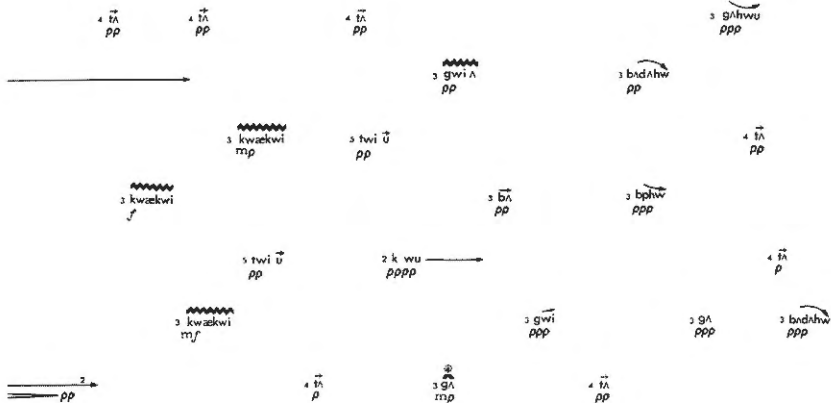
7 $\overset{\rightarrow}{5} \text{ twi } \bar{t\AA} \bar{t\AA} \bar{t\AA}$ ppp $\text{ei } \overset{1}{\text{pp}} \text{-----} \text{f} \text{-----}$



ONE



TWO



1 $\overset{1}{m}$ \overline{ppp} p \overline{ppp} pp p

2 $\overset{3}{bnd} \overset{w}{liw}$ \overline{ppp} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{mp} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{mp}

3 $\overset{3}{g\Lambda}$ \overline{pppp} $\overset{2}{k}$ wu \overline{pp} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{mp}

4 $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{mp} $\overset{3}{g\Lambda}$ \overline{pppp} $\overset{3}{kwaekwi}$ \overline{mp} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{pp}

5 $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{pp} $\overset{3}{g\Lambda}$ \overline{pppp} $\overset{4}{tutu}$ $x8$ \overline{pp}

6 $\overset{3}{g\Lambda}$ \overline{p}

7 $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{mp} $\overset{3}{kwaekwi}$ \overline{f} $\overset{3}{kwaekwi}$ \overline{mp}

1 $\overset{1}{p}$ \overline{pp} $\overset{2}{p}$ \overline{pp} $\overset{4}{tutu}$ $x10$ \overline{ppp} $\overset{1}{m}$ \overline{p}

2 $\overset{3}{kwaekwi}$ \overline{f} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{p} $\overset{3}{gwae}$ $\overline{\Lambda}$ $\overset{1}{p}$ \overline{pp} $\overset{2}{p}$ \overline{pp} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{mp} $\overset{2}{hw\Lambda f}$ \overline{p}

3 $\overset{3}{gwae}$ $\overline{\Lambda}$ $\overset{4}{tutu}$ $x14$ \overline{pp} $\overset{4}{tutu}$ $x8$ \overline{ppp}

4 $\overset{3}{gwae}$ $\overline{\Lambda}$ $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{p} $\overset{3}{gwae}$ $\overline{\Lambda}$ $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{pp} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{p}

5 $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{p} $\overset{3}{twti}$ \overline{twti} \overline{pp} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{p} $\overset{3}{gwae}$ $\overline{\Lambda}$ $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{p}

6 $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{mp} $\overset{3}{gwae}$ $\overline{\Lambda}$ $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{mp} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{p} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{pp}

7 $\overset{2}{g\Lambda}$ \overline{p} $\overset{2}{hw\Lambda f}$ \overline{p} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{mp} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{p} $\overset{2}{hw\Lambda f}$ \overline{p} $\overset{4}{t\Lambda}$ \overline{p} $\overset{3}{t\Lambda p\Lambda}$ \overline{pp}

1 $1 \overset{m}{\text{pp}} \longrightarrow 3 \overset{\text{kwakwi}}{\text{kwakwi}}$ $3 \overset{gwa}{\text{mp}}$

2 $2 \overset{p}{\text{pp}} \longrightarrow 1 \overset{p}{\text{p}}$ $3 \overset{2}{\text{mp}} \longrightarrow 1$ $4 \overset{\text{TA}}{\text{mp}}$ $2 \overset{\text{S}}{\text{PPP}}$

3 $2 \overset{w}{\text{p}} \longrightarrow$ $2 \overset{\text{S}}{\text{pp}} \longrightarrow 3 \overset{gwa}{\text{mp}}$

4 $3 \overset{gA}{\text{PPP}}$ $2 \overset{1}{\text{p}} \longrightarrow 2 \overset{2}{\text{pp}}$ $2 \overset{\text{S}}{\text{PPP}}$ $3 \overset{\text{kwae}}{\text{mf}}$

5 $2 \overset{\text{S}}{\text{PPP}}$ $2 \overset{\text{S}}{\text{PPP}}$ $3 \overset{gA}{\text{PPP}}$ $4 \overset{\text{TA}}{\text{mp}}$

6 $3 \overset{gwi}{\text{pp}}$ $3 \overset{\text{hwS}^{\text{Ahi}}}{\text{mf}}$ $3 \overset{\text{kwakwi}}{\text{mf}}$ $3 \overset{\text{wS}^{\text{A}}}{\text{pp}}$

7 $1 \overset{m}{\text{pp}} \longrightarrow \text{mp} \longrightarrow \text{pp} \longrightarrow \text{p} \longrightarrow \text{mp}$

1 $3 \overset{\text{ilititi}}{\text{PPP}}$ $3 \overset{\text{kwakwi}}{\text{kwakwi}}$ $4 \overset{\text{TA}}{\text{p}}$

2 $3 \overset{\text{E}}{\text{pp}} \longrightarrow 3$ $3 \overset{\text{gwaS}^{\text{A}}}{\text{mp}}$ $2 \overset{\text{S}}{\text{PPP}}$

3 $2 \overset{\text{S}}{\text{mp}}$ $3 \overset{\text{wS}^{\text{A}}}{\text{pp}}$ $3 \overset{\text{gwaS}^{\text{A}}}{\text{mp}}$ $3 \overset{\text{KAP}^{\text{A}}}{\text{p}}$

4 $4 \overset{\text{tuTu}^{\text{A}10}}{\text{pp}} \longrightarrow$

5 $3 \overset{\text{gwaS}^{\text{A}}}{\text{mf}}$ $3 \overset{\text{gwaS}^{\text{A}}}{\text{f}}$ $3 \overset{\text{gwaS}^{\text{A}}}{\text{p}}$ $4 \overset{\text{TA}}{\text{p}}$

6 $3 \overset{\text{gwaS}^{\text{A}}}{\text{mf}}$ $3 \overset{\text{gwaS}^{\text{A}}}{\text{mf}}$ $3 \overset{\text{gU}^{\text{ha}}}{\text{PPP}}$ $4 \overset{\text{S1}}{\text{PPP}}$

7 $3 \overset{\text{gwaS}^{\text{A}}}{\text{f}}$ $3 \overset{\text{gwaS}^{\text{A}}}{\text{mf}}$ $4 \overset{\text{twi}}{\text{mp}}$ $2 \overset{\text{S}}{\text{PPP}}$



1 $\begin{matrix} \text{3} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{mp} \end{matrix} \xrightarrow{\text{1}} \text{p}$

3w3^{A}
p

2 3kwækwí
mp

2^{S}
pp

2^{S}
pp

3 $\begin{matrix} \text{3} \\ \text{2} \\ \text{p} \end{matrix} \xrightarrow{\text{1}} \text{mp}$

4kwí
pp

4 $\begin{matrix} \text{3}^{\text{S}} \\ \text{1} \\ \text{mp} \end{matrix} \xrightarrow{\text{2}} \text{p}$ $\begin{matrix} \text{2}^{\text{S}} \\ \text{p} \end{matrix} \xrightarrow{\text{pp}}$

3w3^{A}
mp

2^{S}
pp

4II
pp

2GI^{A}
pp

6 3kwækwí
mf

2^{S}
pp

7 $\text{bs} \xrightarrow{\text{2}} \text{mp}$ $\text{1} \xrightarrow{\text{3pu kwá}} \text{pp}$

1 4tututututututu
p

2 $\text{2bs} \xrightarrow{\text{pp}}$

2k^{A}
p

3kwækwí
mp

3 $\text{13} \xrightarrow{\text{pp}}$

4 stiliti
pp

4GI
pp

3GS
pp

5 3w3^{A}
p

3kwækwí
f

6 $\text{1/} \xrightarrow{\text{pp}}$

3kwá
mp

7 $\text{3c} \xrightarrow{\text{pp}}$

3glh^{A}
pp

4kwí
mp

1 $\text{bs} \xrightarrow{2} \text{mp} \xrightarrow{2}$ $\text{kw} \text{P}$ $\text{kw} \text{P}$

2 $\text{bs} \xrightarrow{2} \text{P} \xrightarrow{1}$ $\text{pw} \text{P}$

3 $\text{kw} \text{P}$ $\text{kw} \text{P}$

4 $\text{ti} \text{kw} \text{P}$ $\text{kw} \text{P}$

5 $\text{kw} \text{P}$

6 $\text{kw} \text{P}$ $\text{pu kw} \text{P}$

7 $\text{kw} \text{P}$ $\text{kwakwi} \text{P}$ $\text{kw} \text{P}$

1 $\text{sk} \text{P}$ $\text{pw} \text{P}$ $\text{di} \text{P}$

2 $\text{V} \text{P}$

3 $\text{ski} \text{kw} \text{P}$ $\text{pw} \text{P}$ $\text{kwakwi} \text{P}$

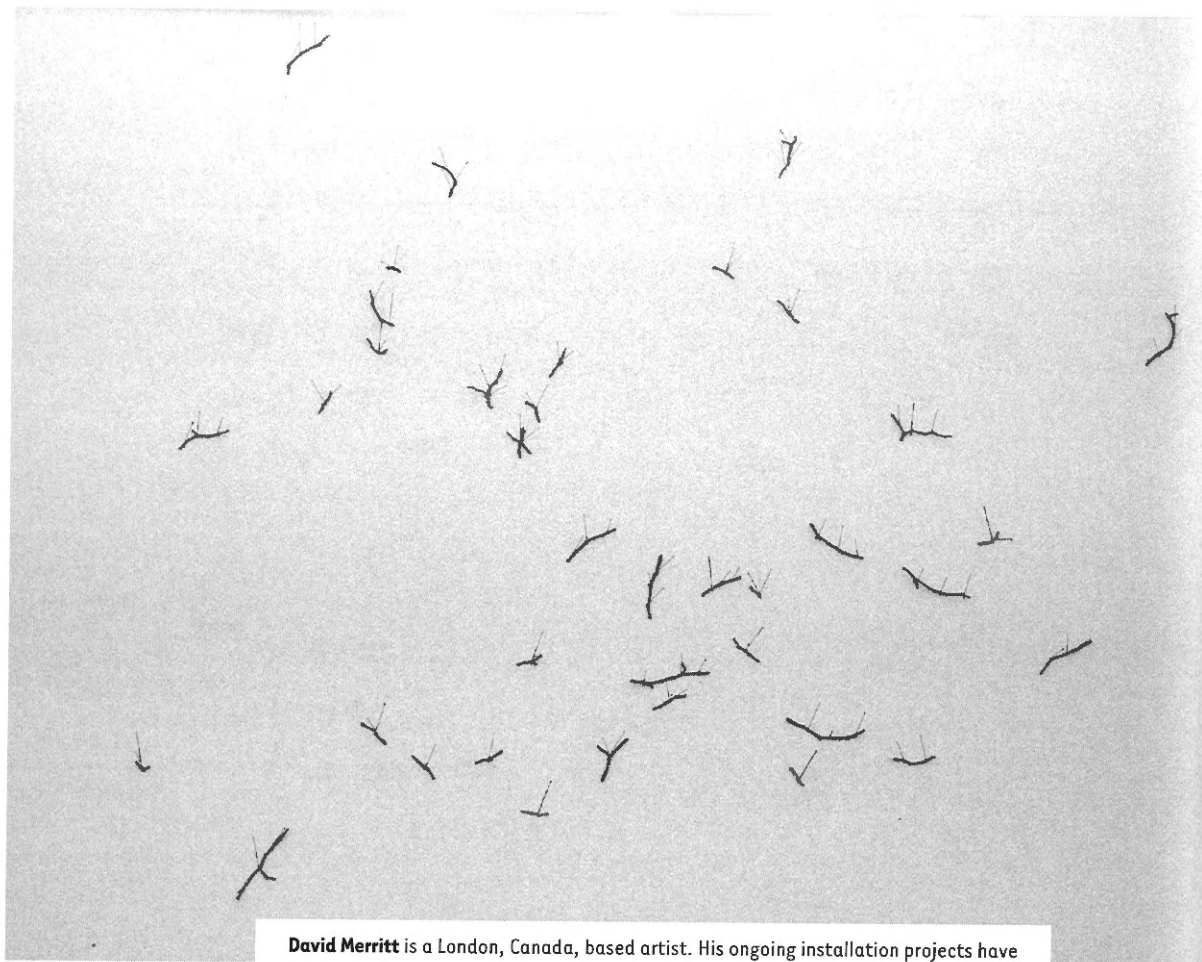
4 $\text{V} \text{P}$ $\text{gwi} \text{fadu} \text{P}$ $\text{bahu} \text{P}$

5 $\text{bkw} \text{P}$ $\text{kwakwi} \text{P}$ $\text{shuf} \text{P}$

6 $\text{V} \text{P}$ $\text{shuf} \text{P}$ $\text{baf} \text{P}$

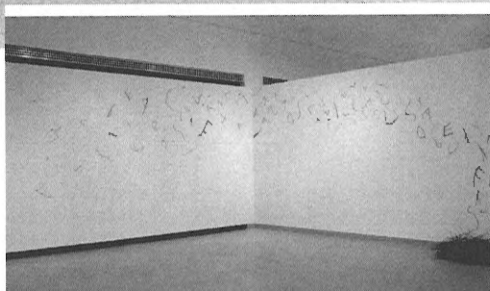
7 $\text{bs} \text{P}$ $\text{bitu} \text{P}$

| | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | | | | 4kwɛ p | 4kwɛ p | |
| 2 | | 3kwɛkwɪ mp | | 3gwɛɛ p | | 3gwɛɛ mp |
| 3 | 1gɔ̃ pp | _____ | | | 1gɔ̃ pp | _____ |
| 4 | | 4tɪ p | 4wɪ p | 3bɪ mp | 3pɪwɪ mp | |
| 5 | | 3bɪdɪ mp | | 3dɪ mp | | 1bɔɪf p |
| 6 | | 3dɪ mp | | 3gwɛɛ mp | 3gwɛɛ mp | |
| 7 | | 3kwɛkwɪ p | 3gwɛɛ p | | | 4kwɪ p |
| 1 | 3bɪgɪ p | | | | 3bɪhɪ pp | |
| 2 | 4tɪtɪtɪ p | | | | | 3hɪf p |
| 3 | | 3kwɛkwɪ mp | | | 3gwɛɛ mp | |
| 4 | 3bɪɪ mp | | | | | 1bɔɪf pp |
| 5 | | 3bɪwɪ mp | | | 3hɪf p | |
| 6 | 3wɪ pp | 3wɪ pp | | | | 3gwɛɛ mp |
| 7 | | 3bɪgɪ mp | 4gɪ pp | tɪ | dɪdɪ | |



David Merritt is a London, Canada, based artist. His ongoing installation projects have operated in the diminishing spaces between natural orders and cultural systems. His most recent project involves a speculative reconstruction of the first radio broadcast of voice, transmitted to sea shells located in dispersed architectural settings.

U N L I L Γ G D
DEVID MERRITT



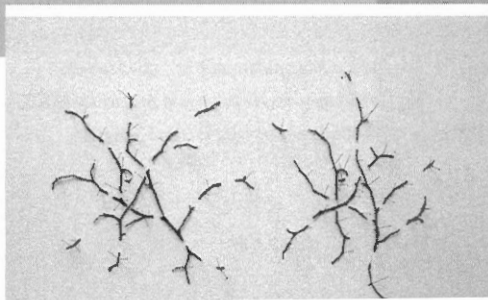
above the floor, a grouping of segmented branches. mimesis. straying over

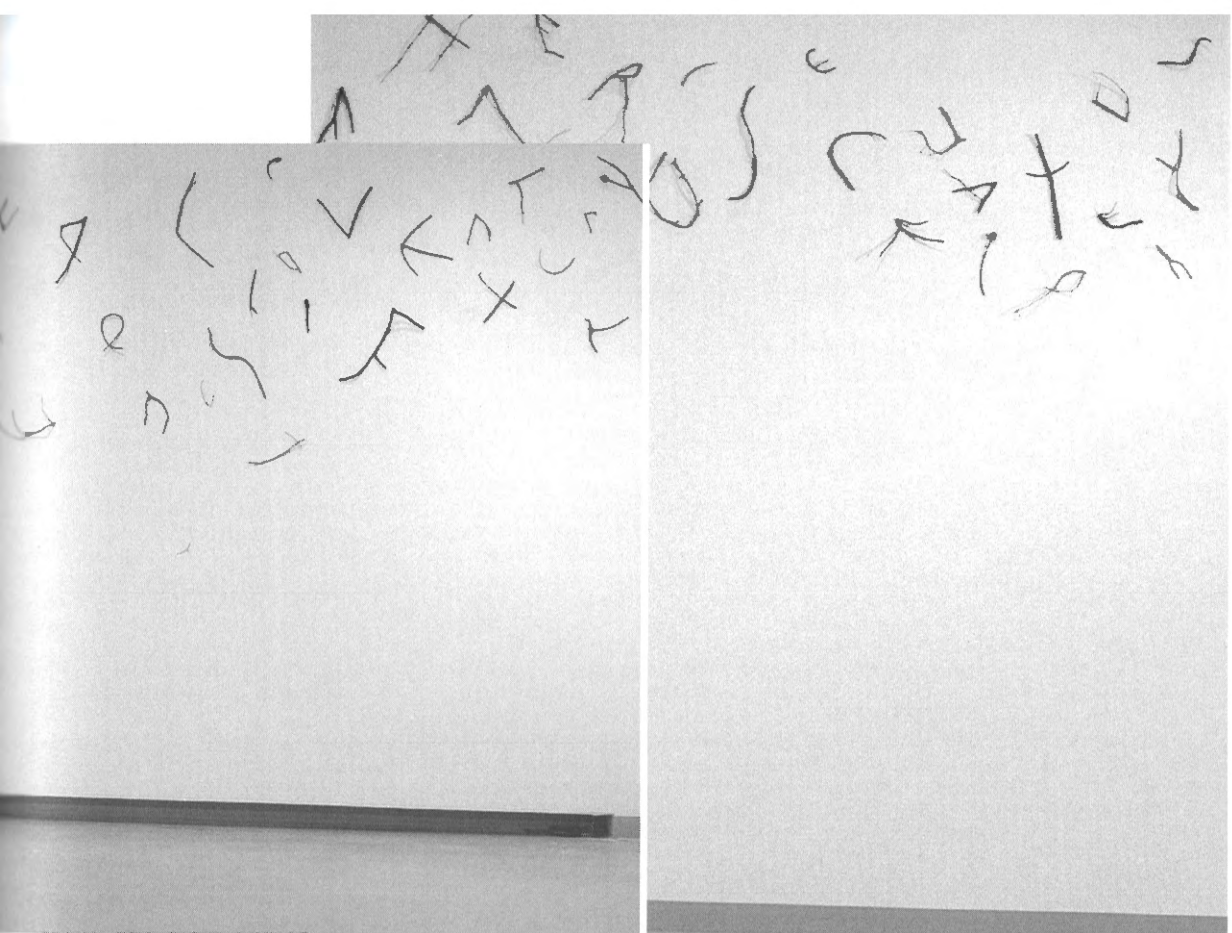
walls and corners. suspended, variable. a loose coupling of vowels and
consonants. the awkward scrawl of an alphabet. signs for sounds. for

meanings carved from a moving body of air.

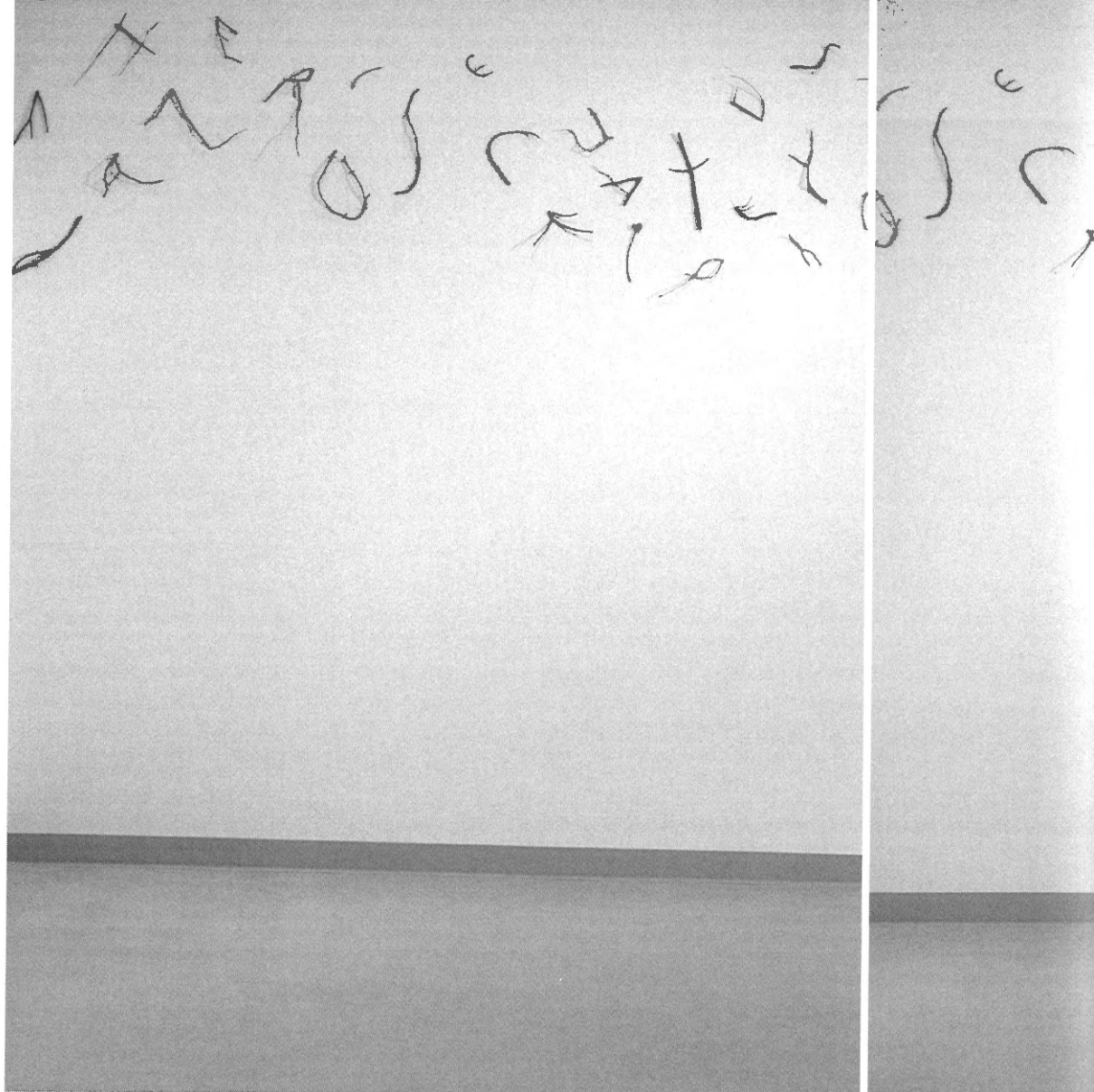
on the floor, a nest of unsorted branches. in opening, a small speaker.

a listening ear. quietly: the voice of a child leading a chorus of
children. call, response. bodies rehearsing a repertoire of sounds

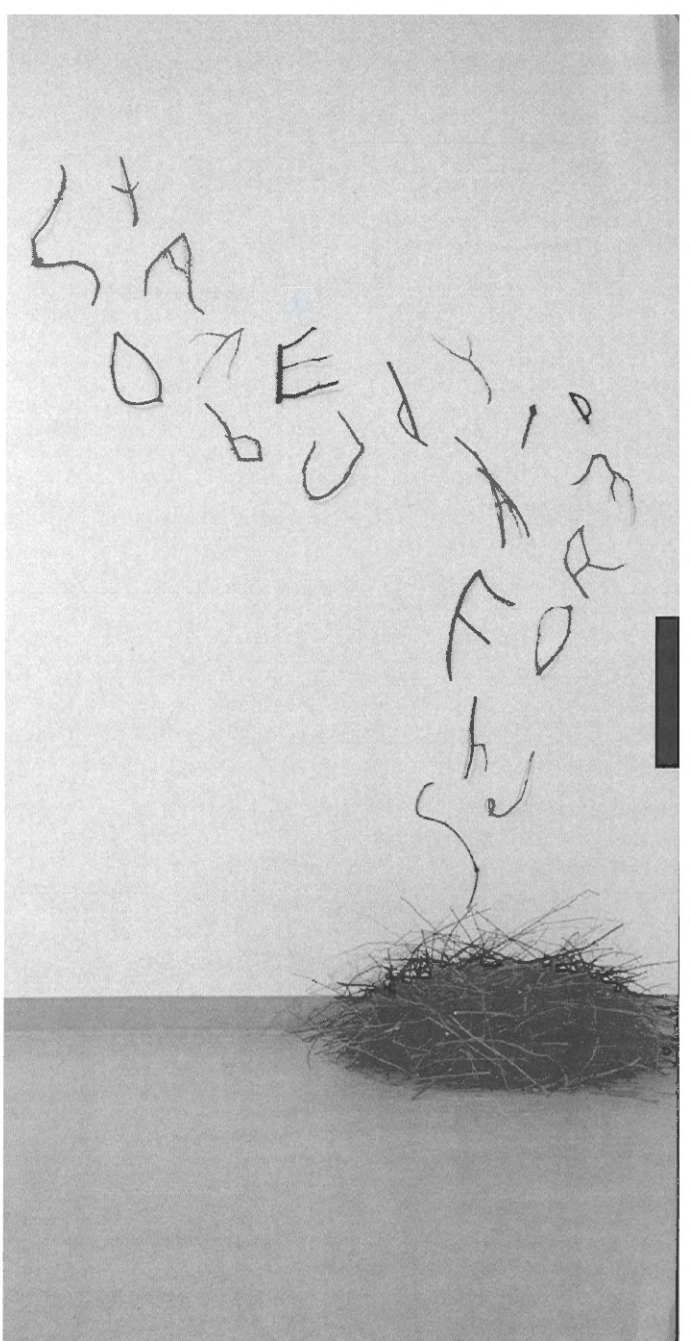
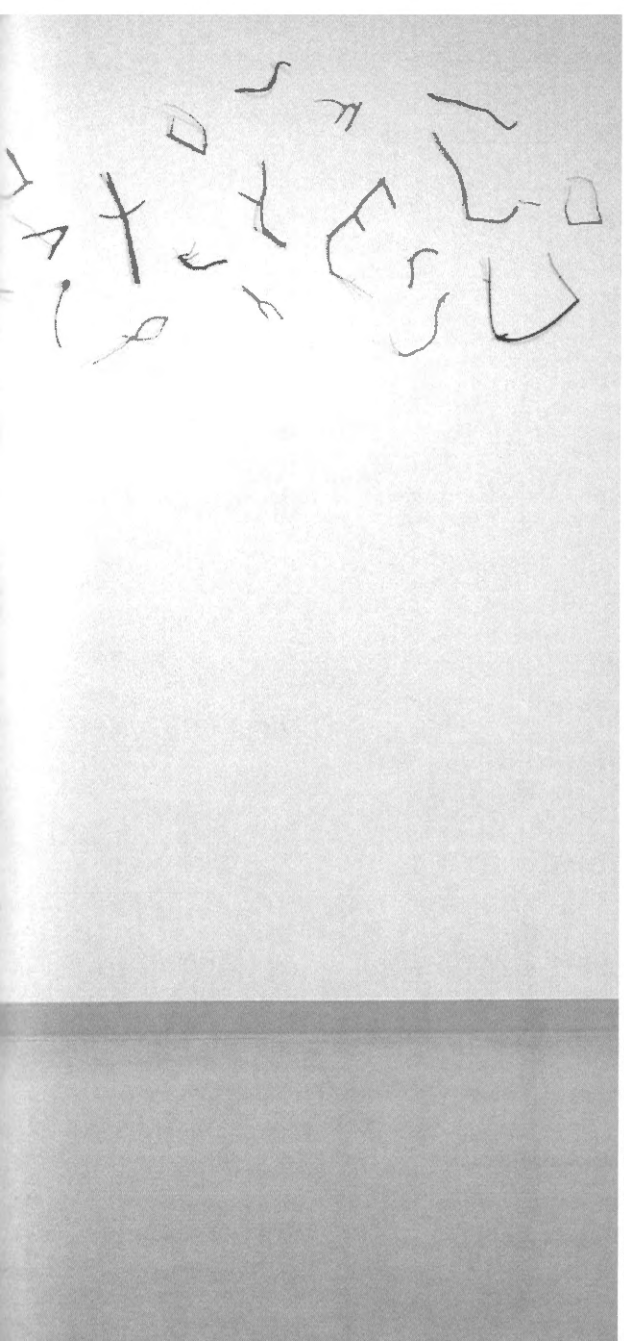


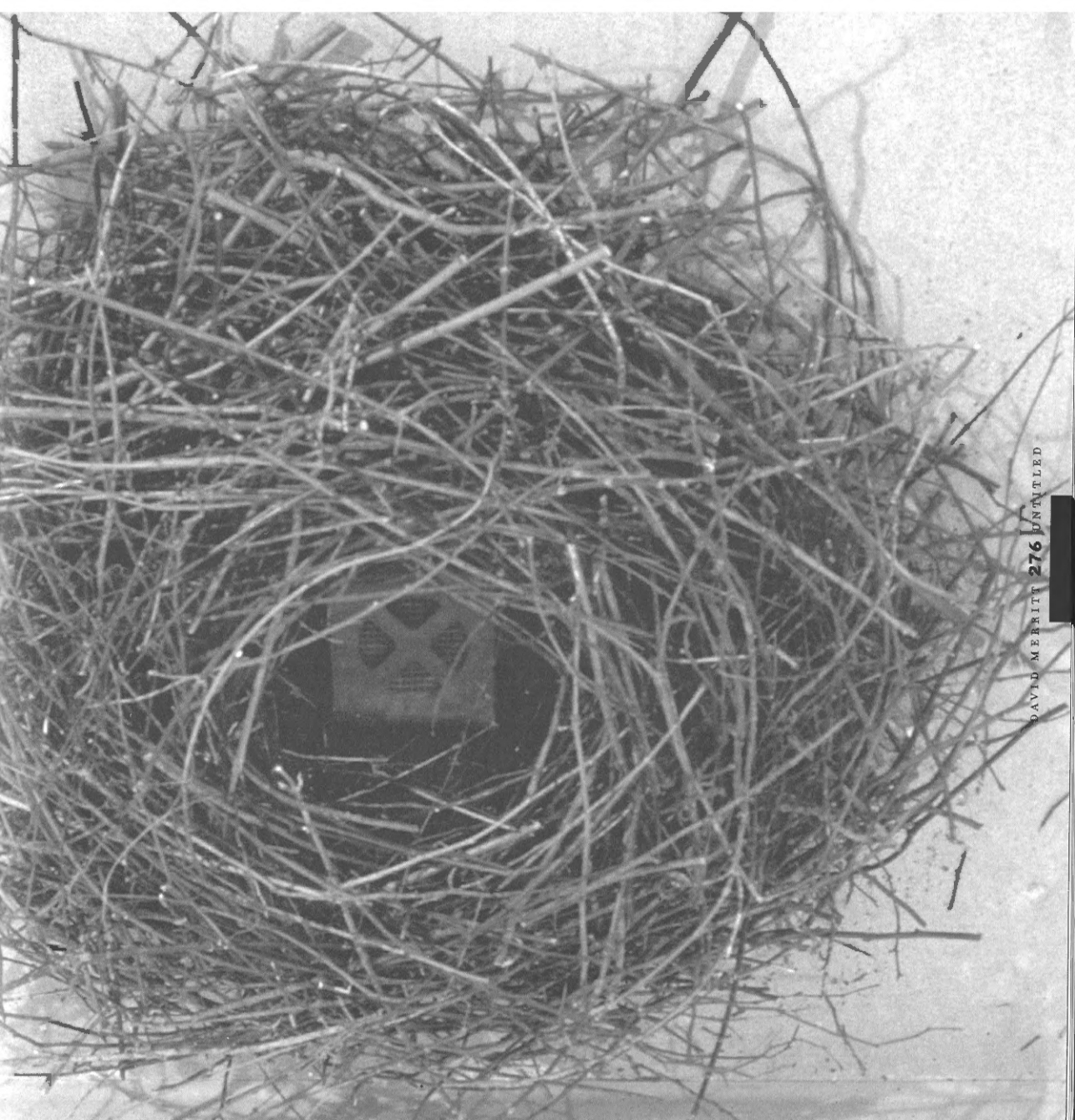


sound, turned after the phonetic shape of an alphabet.



DAVID MERRITT 274 UNTITLED





DAVID MERRITT 276 UNATTLED

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Marina Abramovic is a seminal figure in the development of performance art. Born in Belgrade (1946), she has exhibited and performed internationally since the early 70s. Through performance, video, sculpture and installation her work investigates the relationship between the physical limits of the body and the possibility of spiritual energy. From 1976 to 1988, she collaborated with her partner, Ulay. As seminal participants in the European body art/performance movement, their work was based on highly charged, durational events which investigated male and female energies, testing the limits of mental and physical endurance, risk, and identity. Abramovic currently resides in Amsterdam and was featured in the 1997 Biennale of Venice where she was awarded the "International Venice Biennale Award."

Yasunao Tone, a co-founder of Group Ongaku and an original member of Fluxus, was born in Tokyo in 1935 and has resided in New York since 1972. He's had numerous concerts, group performances, group exhibitions and collaborations at such venues as The Kitchen, Experimental Intermedia, Roulette, Guggenheim Museum, Metronom (solo concerts), Fluxus Festivals, New Music America, Interpretations (group concerts) and Geography and Music for Cunningham's Roadrunners (collaboration), Venezia Biennale in 1990, Centre Pompidou, Whitney Museum. His work is distinguished by conversion of text into music via images with analog (*Molecular Music*) and digital means (*Musica Iconologos*) and music generating text (*Lyrictron*), also with critique of medium in use (*Music for 2CD Players* and *Solo for Wounded CD*).

John Duncan is an artist and experimental musician. Working since the late 70s, Duncan has been featured internationally in numerous exhibitions and festivals, releasing audio works on some of the leading labels dedicated to sound-art and experimental audio, and presenting challenging performances that aim to explore and test the limits of identity. Duncan's work, *Blind Date*, was featured in "Out of Actions, between performance and the object, 1949 - 1979", a major exhibition cataloguing the history of performance art.

Michel Chion was born in 1947 in Creil (France). After literary and musical studies, he began in 1970 to work for the ORTF (French Radio and Television Organization) Service de la recherche, where he was assistant to Pierre Schaeffer. He is a composer of musique concrète, including *Requiem* (Grand prix du disque 1978). He has written extensively on sound and voice in cinema as well as on Pierre Henry, François Bayle, Charlie Chaplin, Jacques Tati, and David Lynch. He is also a director of short films and a critic for Cahiers du Cinéma.

Randy H.Y. Yau has been active in the sound arts since 1993. For the last 4 years, his work maintains a direct focus on voice, body and physicality. He currently serves as Vice President of 23five Incorporated, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the development and increased awareness of sound works in the public arena, and to the support and education of artists working with and discussing the medium of sound. He is also founder and curator of Activating the Medium, an annual sound festival and founder of Auscultare Research, a record label releasing sound works from artists all over the world.

MARINA ABRAMOVIC (1) FREEING THE VOICE

(1975; extract from the 3 hour performance, Studenski Kulturi Centar, Belgrade; thanks to Electronic Arts Intermix)

ALEXANDRE ST-ONGE (2) BOUCHE D'EAU/EN NOMBRE D'IMPOSSIBILITÉS PARTICULIÈRES
(2000)

JOCELYN ROBERT (3) EN PLEIN CHAMP
(2000; thanks to Murielle Dupuis-Larose for her voice)

YASUNAO TONE (4) MAN'YOSHU #16 (2000)

JOHN DUNCAN (5) THE FLOCKING (2000; an extract)

GREGORY WHITEHEAD (6) MARKET SHARE—MUMBO MOMO—ALL ABOUT SQUID
(2000)

MICHEL CHION (7) CLORIA (1994; extract; a musique concrete composition originally released on Metamkine, collection Cinema pour l'oreille (MKCD 015))

CHRISTOP MIGONE (8) EVASION, OR HOW TO PERFORM A TONGUE ESCAPE IN PUBLIC
(2000)

DAVID DUNN (9) MADRIGAL (1980)

RANDY H.Y. YAU (10) THE HIDDEN TONGUE: INCIDENT B
(2000; previously released on "The Hidden Tongue" CD, Ground Fault Recordings, Los Angeles)

ACHIM WOLLSCHIED (11) AUDIENCE AND TRANSFORMATION
(July 2000; recorded live at Beyond Baroque, Los Angeles)

ARTHUR PETRONIO (12) TELLURGIE (1965; extract)

VITO ACCONCI (13) BODY BUILDING IN THE GREAT NORTHWEST
(1975; stereo mix of the audio from the installation; collection Centre Pompidou)

ALONG WITH THE
DIALOGUES ON THE FOOTPRINTS OF THE
STATE OF THE UNION
WORDS THAT PUT A STOP TO LANGUAGE
BLESSINGS, IMPERCEPTIBLE,
SOUND MARKS, VOICED STRENGTHS, BLENDED
A NATURALISTIC CENTRAL GENUINELY PLURAL
LETTERS THAT TELL THE
"THE WORD SILENCE IS STILL A NOISE"
UNPERKING, AEROBIC TONES OF A MIXED
DEFINITIONAL HAZARD
CITIES AND SPICES AND SPICES
TATLING TENDONS, AVALANCHE HIGHLY
SOLITISTIC TRANSMISSIONS
INTERSTITIAL MANEUVERS
BECOMING NOBODY
SALVAPHILIC SOCIETIES, UNLEASHING LANGUAGE
SUBJECTIVE LANGUAGES, SCRAMBLING STUDIES
DETERMINING TEXT
PAINFUL INCONGRUENCE
NOISE ON THE PAGE, DICTIONARILY DISTURBANCES
ALONG WITH THE