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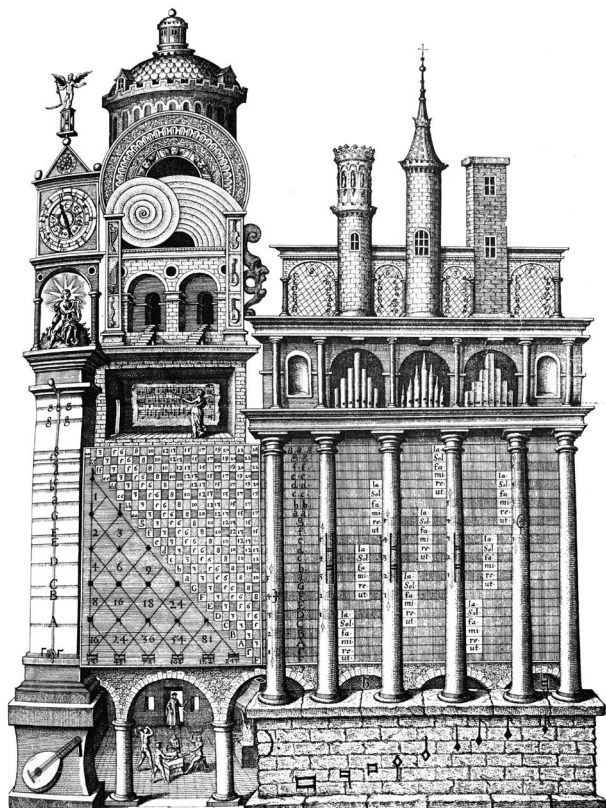
MONDAY

VOL. 3
ÉTUDES



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Introduction

Richard Fludd, the English physician, astrologer, mathematician, and the creator of the *Temple of Speculative Music*, was deeply interested in the connection between the cosmos and music, as was György Ligeti, the twentieth-century Hungarian-Austrian composer who understood music as cosmological in form. The tradition of ‘speculative music’ originating in the Middle Ages further developed theories such as the Harmony of the Spheres (beginning with the theories of Pythagoras), held that the rotation of celestial bodies created a harmonic order, and took an interest in considering the possible worlds that might be constructed through music. In 2017, music theorist Ming Tsao has called for a return to speculative music composition as a way to “...ask listeners to listen beyond anthropocentric terms, including the ways in which the resistance of the world—its conflicting and dynamic materiality—exceeds both conceptual thought and technological control.”¹

The writers and artists in this volume of MONDAY sound out speculative futures, from Fred Moten, who distills experimental organizational structures through the music of Cecil Taylor, to

Nina Power who asks what kind of future might transpire if “... the machine, instead of dreaming through women, is created, maintained and, indeed, exploited by them?”

The fall 2019 exhibition program drew inspiration from the tradition of *études* (or studies), the short form musical pieces focusing on the technical aspects of a particular technique. Paying homage to György Ligeti’s 18 *études* for piano, the series began with *10 Études for Summer*, an exhibition by the ten second-year Master of Fine Arts students at the University of Washington at the School of Art + Art History + Design. This volume includes contributions by two of those students, Charles Stobbs and Sean Lockwood. The next exhibition in the series, *Sonny Assu: Études for the Settler*, brought together work in which Assu layered Indigenous mark-making onto colonialist representations of the land (in these pages you will find an interview between Sonny Assu and Gloria DeLiberali, Assistant Curator for the Jacob Lawrence Gallery. Finally, in December, the Jacob Lawrence Gallery presented an exhibition of collages and charcoal drawings by UK-based artist Clotilde Jiménez, whose work uses fruit, a traditional symbol alluding to sexuality in Western art history, to speak to the constraints of sexual identity in Western culture.

This volume of MONDAY also includes writing by Ligeti on his *études*, as well as a new essay by David Golightly on the history and technical demands of these works. In a conversation with Tom Service about György Ligeti’s *études*, Thomas Adés leverages a heavy, cosmic image to convey their power: ‘He moved through all the alienation and trauma and arrived back at something really quite human at the end. If a great composer adum-

brates the era in some way, Ligeti was a great composer. He was the first to bring the heat death of the universe into music.’ Taking a cue from Ligeti, this volume of MONDAY looks at the use of music and the visual arts to process trauma, through essays such as Leah St. Lawrence’s “Digitization and Personal Trauma: Processing Stress and Loss Through New Media Expressions.”

This year the Jacob Lawrence Gallery crosses a momentous threshold—a quarter century of learning from former University of Washington Professor of Art Jacob Lawrence. Originally named the School of Art Instructional Gallery, the gallery was dedicated to Lawrence on February 16, 1994, and charged with honoring his legacy through a mission that holds education, social justice, and experimentation as its core values. This volume of MONDAY will launch at the 25th Anniversary Celebration for the gallery, *Playfulness as Resistance*, an evening filled with music by inimitable talents of SassyBlack (who has contributed lyrics from a song to this volume), Felisha Ledesma from Si in Portland, as well as dos leches and Eve Defy from the extraordinary TUF collective in Seattle.

This celebration coincides with Danny Giles’ 2019 Jacob Lawrence Legacy Exhibition, *The Science and Practice of Drawing a Sharp White Background*. Now in its fifth year, the Jacob Lawrence Legacy Residency and Exhibition crucially supports the development of new work by Black artists, who are invited to be in residence at the gallery for the month of January, with an exhibition during February, Black History Month. This year’s Jacob Lawrence Legacy Residency was supported by two partner organizations: The Black Embodiments Studio at the University of

Washington, and SOIL Artist-run gallery, Seattle's oldest not-for-profit art space. Danny Giles will hold a concurrent exhibition *Figura* at SOIL from February 7–March 2, 2019, exhibiting work that was developed during the Jacob Lawrence Legacy Residency.

A publication such as this one is not possible without the work and support of many. I am incredibly grateful to Gloria DeLiberali whose research, editorial input, and work on rights were invaluable to the publication. Franklin Vandiver provided thoughtful insight into these pages and meticulously designed the publication on a difficult deadline. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks the artists and writers that contributed their thought to MONDAY—Sonny Assu, Kathryn Bunn-Marcuse, Claire Cowie, Stuart Dempster, Ellen Garvens, David Golightly, Clotilde Jiménez, Sean Lockwood, Emma McIntosh, Fred Moten, Nina Power, SassyBlack, Leah St. Lawrence, and Charles Stobbs. Emily Pothast proofread these texts with a keen eye. MONDAY can only exist with the support of the School of Art + Art History + Design and the thoughtful leadership of Jamie Walker.

NOTES

1 – Ming Tsao, "What is Speculative Music Composition" *Parse Journal*, Issue 7 (Autumn 2017): <https://metapar.se/article/what-is-speculative-music-composition/>

ÉTUDE 1: "DÉSORDRE" Dédiée à Pierre Boulez György Ligeti 1985

Molto vivace, Vigeroso, molto ritmico 0576

Piano

Stets sehr sparsamer Gebrauch des Pedals, / Utiliser la pédale très discrètement (pendant toute la pièce)

© B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz, 1986

Haunting Death: Reflections on Ligeti's *Études pour piano*, Vol. 1

David Golightly

In 1968, the composer György Ligeti received a letter from a friend in New York urging him to see an important new movie that had just come out in US theaters—Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. When the film made its way to Vienna, Ligeti attended the premiere, and discovered that over a half hour of his music had been used without his permission. "I was absolutely astonished," he told *The Guardian* in a 1974 interview. "I became very angry."¹ Although Kubrick had legitimately secured the film rights to the music via the publisher, Ligeti felt cheated. He pursued legal action and settled out of court for a \$3,000 award and a percentage of the royalties. Kubrick, for his part, apologized to the composer, who eventually came to admit a deep admiration for how his music was used in the film. Kubrick went on to secure Ligeti's music again—this time, seeking consent in advance—for his later films, 1980's *The Shining* and 1999's *Eyes Wide Shut*.

Kubrick first heard of Ligeti after his wife, Christiane, had heard the still-obscure composer's otherworldly *Requiem* on the BBC in 1967 while they were designing the atmosphere for the film.

Ligeti's eerie compositions—employing a technique he called *micropolyphony*, with many voices woven together so tightly that they blend into a teeming horde, writhing en masse like bees in a hive—became the signature sound of the most iconic scenes of 2001, scoring the appearance of the film's mysterious alien monolith as well as the grand finale hyperdimensional space travel sequence, *Jupiter* and *Beyond the Infinite*.

Ligeti paid dearly for the life experiences that shaped this unique sonic voice. Born to a Jewish family in Hungarian Romania in 1923, his life was torn apart by World War II. His father, mother, and brother were sent to concentration camps by the occupying Nazis; only his mother survived. After the war, he continued to pursue a musical education in Budapest. Inspired by the famous Hungarian composer Béla Bartók (1881–1945), he studied ethnomusicology and music composition, incorporating Hungarian folk elements into his early compositions, including *Musica Ricercata* for solo piano, which would later be used by Kubrick in *Eyes Wide Shut*. By 1956, however, the Soviet Union was expanding into Hungary, violently crushing the Hungarian Revolution and killing 2,500 rebels. Faced once again with living under a brutal authoritarian government, Ligeti fled with his wife, Vera Spitz, under cover of night, crawling on all fours across the Austrian border.

Upon his arrival in Vienna, Ligeti set about catching up to the previously unavailable innovations of the Postwar *enfants terribles* of Germany, France, and Italy. Part of a generation of Continental composers who came of age during and immediately after the trauma and loss of a war that burned a whole continent to the ground,

figures like Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007), Pierre Boulez (1925–2016), and Luigi Nono (1924–1990) rejected the paradigms of their pre-war forebears: the sort of decadent Romantic *Seelenmassagen* found in the music of Beethoven, Wagner and Richard Strauss, for instance, that had been often used to propagandize the myth of a racially pure distant past and reinforce nationalism. The postwar generation, on the other hand, sought to do to European music what the Allied bombs had done to European cities: burn it to the ground, so that something new might be built in its place.

The rage during the 1950s, as exemplified by movements in West German cities like Cologne and Darmstadt, was a technique inherited from Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951), another Austrian Jew who fled the war (as fate would have it, to Los Angeles, where he went on to instruct a generation of American film composers). Schoenberg was the inventor of 12-tone music, in which the 19th century dramatic clichés of “tension and release” expressed through hierarchical Western tonal relationships were neutralized into an ever-developing labyrinth of unresolving tension, no tone appearing more often than any other. But the real founder of what came to be called *serialism* was Anton Webern (1883–1945), a protégé of Schoenberg, who went far beyond mere pitch to neutralize every element of music: dynamics, durations, rests, articulation, and so on.

Webern's life was cut short when he was shot dead on his own front porch by an American soldier when he stepped out to smoke a cigar shortly before martial-law curfew. But he became a towering figure for the postwar generation: the orphaned Stockhausen—his mother executed by Nazis for being disabled, and his father gunned down during

the war—found in Webern’s approach an inspiration for his own music, a technique he referred to as *pointillism*. Pointillism, like serialism, atomized music into a set of “parameter dimensions” such as pitch, volume, and timbre, then exploded the two-dimensional “12-tone rows” into multidimensional mathematical structures—a framework Stockhausen used when developing the first works of pure electronic music, *Studie I* and *Studie II*, which he committed to tape in the Cologne studio of Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk in 1953–54.

And so it was that, upon his arrival to Vienna in 1956, György Ligeti’s first move was to reject the earlier Hungarian influences of Bartók and to run toward Cologne. There, he became deeply influenced by the work of Stockhausen and electronic music, studying under Stockhausen at the NWDR studios for 3 years, until he finally broke with the serialist approach as ideologically rigid, saying: “There [was] a lot of political fighting because different people, like Stockhausen, like [Mauricio] Kagel, wanted to be first. And I, personally, have no ambition to be first or to be important.”²

Having rejected both serialism and electronic music, Ligeti found a path forward by translating the sonic palette of pure electronic music back into the instrumental realm, embracing the absolute harmonic and rhythmic neutrality of *micropolyphony* embodied in orchestral works such as those used in the film *2001*, 1960’s *Atmosphères* and 1963–65’s *Requiem*. In these works, pitch and time are obliterated into “sound masses”, with sometimes each instrument in an ensemble on a different pitch, entering and leaving imperceptibly to create the effect of an extremely subtle yet unremittingly morphing sonic magma. This was clearly a non-tonal music

breaking with Western tradition, but of a very different sort than practiced by Stockhausen and the Cologne school. Later, the “sound mass” style would draw comparisons with another Romanian-born composer: Iannis Xenakis (1922–2001), whose face was blown apart by a shell during the war, composed with such masses beginning with his 1954 orchestral work *Metastaseis*. But Ligeti was unaware of Xenakis at the time, and continued on his own path.

Fascinated though he was by the mathematical beauty of chaos theory and Benoit Mandelbrot’s eponymous newly discovered fractal, Ligeti never fully plunged into Xenakis’ rigorous computational stochastic techniques. Instead, as the Sixties became the Seventies, he found himself developing an interest once again in melody, harmony and rhythm. His *String Quartet No. 2* (1969) found him reaching back to his childhood influence, Béla Bartók, for rhythmic and melodic inspiration. Bartók’s music combined traditional Balkan and Anatolian elements of polytonal melodies and asymmetrical, shifting rhythms with forward-thinking modern composition techniques inspired by the Golden Ratio. Meanwhile, Ligeti’s only opera, the apocalyptic farce *Le Grand Macabre* (1977), surreally satirizes the melodrama of opera while simultaneously mining the form’s long tradition for musical references. Around this time, he also began to discover Caribbean music, developing an interest in its contrast to his familiar Balkan music. As recounted in a 1990 interview with Stephen Satory: “These two musics, Caribbean and Balkan, are quite different. They have almost nothing to do with each other, except for their asymmetrical rhythmic constructions.”³

Then in 1982, a Puerto Rican student named Ricardo Sierra brought Ligeti a UNESCO recording of the Banda-Linda tribe from Central Africa. He told Satory that “it hit me like a bomb”: “The music of Central Africa has an impact on what I began to compose afterward, in my Piano Études (1985). There is a twenty-piece orchestra on this recording of the Banda... it has trumpets, instruments made out of antelope horns and the trunks of trees. The high instruments are capable of producing two pitches, and the lower ones, only one pitch. But they play a very complicated polyphonic music, in twenty parts. It is pentatonic music, in multiple octaves, in four octaves. This is how it ends up in twenty parts. Every instrument has its own rhythmic pattern. The music is very reminiscent of the technique of [14th century French composers Guillaume de] Machaut and Philippe de Vitry, but it is much, much more complicated rhythmically. This kind of poly-rhythm does not exist in the European musical tradition. Complex musical cultures had already interested me for a long time before this. Already in the Seventies I heard a great deal of gamelan music from Bali. But I was even more gripped by this African music... I have never travelled in Africa. But I have tracked down many recordings, hundreds of them, the most interesting recordings in Paris.” Although he was delighted to learn from African music, Ligeti had no interest in trying to mimic or recreate it. “As far as my connection with African music is concerned, I have not used it in the manner that Bartók employed Romanian or Arabic music,” he told Satory. “African music has not left traces in my pieces, but its rhythmic system has.”⁴

The form of the piano étude originates in piano exercises already in use by the 18th century. Originally didactic, repetitive, and often boring technical workouts, Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) and Franz Liszt (1811–1886) elevated them to join virtuosic technical challenge with gorgeous compositional vision. Even so, an étude is both minimalist in its raw materials and maximalist in its execution; an exercise in constraint while testing its own boundaries, in that it concentrates on pushing a single technical and musical idea to its absolute limit. For example, in Chopin’s *Étude Op. 10. No. 1*, the right hand is asked to constantly, seamlessly, and effortlessly perform rapid arpeggios up and down the keyboard involving the reach of a tenth, which is at the limit of even the largest hand. The études of Claude Debussy (1862–1918) and Alexander Scriabin (1871–1915) furthered the idea of interrogating the limits of minimal compositional material; Ligeti’s études also borrow heavily from techniques found in the études of Bartók and Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953).

Pushing the idea of the étude beyond the realm of human physical ability was Conlon Nancarrow (1912–1997), a reclusive American immigrant to Mexico who focused most of his career on studies for player piano. He spent countless hours working by hand, punching holes in player piano rolls to make patterns of notes that race far beyond speeds attainable by a human performer—the original “black MIDI” composer.

Ligeti first encountered Nancarrow’s music in 1980, and “it was love at first sight”. As he wrote to a friend at the time: “Now listen: after the few player piano studies of Nancarrow I listened to, I affirm with all my serious judgement that Conlon

Nancarrow is the absolutely greatest living composer. If J. S. Bach had grown up with blues, boogie-woogie and Latin-American music instead of the protestant choral, he would compose like Nancarrow, i.e. Nancarrow is the synthesis of American tradition, polyphony of Bach and elegance of Stravinsky, but even much more: he is the best composer of the second half of this century.”⁵

Ligeti combined these influences into his own *Études pour piano*, the first volume of which was published in 1985. Also influenced by American minimalist composers such as Terry Riley (1935–) and Steve Reich (1936–), who were likewise influenced by African music, the six études show a new approach to rhythm, additively building poly-rhythms up from multiples of a common basic pulse rather than subdividing a simple beat as Western music has traditionally done.

Désordre features the right hand on white keys and the left on black keys. Both hands begin on the same pattern, but the left hand’s pattern contains 31 notes while the right’s contains 32, and thus the two hands quickly move out of sync with each other in a manner reminiscent of Reich’s phase music. But rather than settling into a hypnotic trance state, as Reich’s music does, Ligeti leans into the tension to build an ever-heightening high-wire act that reaches out to the extremes of the keyboard until it essentially falls off the ends.

Cordes à vide starts with both hands slowly migrating around in intervals of fifths, suggesting the open strings of a violin or cello. *Touches bloquées* has the right hand silently depressing and holding certain notes while the left hand plays rapid scales across those notes. *Fanfares* features the two hands trading off an ostinato octatonic scale in a

3 + 2 + 3 rhythmic grouping while the other hand plays horn-like “fanfares” in major (right) or minor (left) triads against the ostinato, building up until both hands wander out toward the ends of the keyboard. *Arc-en-ciel* borrows the slow swing feel of a jazz ballad, while exploring similar open harmonic intervals to *Cordes à vide*. The closing piece of the first book of études, *Automne à Varsovie*, revisits the “polytempo” of *Désordre*, this time sweeping the keyboard with rapid octaves while chromatically descending melodic figures slow down and speed up relative to each other; the étude closes by once again descending in a rapid accelerating crescendo to the lowest note of the keyboard and “falling off”.

As Ligeti grew further into his stature as one of the 20th century’s most influential composers, it seems his early experiences of death and the macabre never ceased to haunt him. Perhaps, too, Kubrick’s treatment of his music as soundtrack to a mysterious and not altogether benign transcendence left its mark on his own self-image. His music finds him furiously trying to haunt death back. According to one of Ligeti’s favorite pianists, Pierre-Laurent Aimard: “He wants to create a rhythmical anxiety. And at the end of this infernal process, he asks us to play at *ffffffffff*. This is not just to play twice or three times louder, as at the end of a Brahms concerto, it is an invitation to use a sound that will not be seen as beautiful in the traditional acoustic sense.... It is also an invitation to find a way for the interpreter to go beyond his own borders.... [These pieces are] almost unbearable to play, and it should feel unbearable.”⁶ The challenge of performing this music is thus not merely intellectual or technical, it is corporeal: only when a bloody

laugh that rivals that of death itself emerges from the shattered body of the performer on the stage has the music, at last, been made.

NOTES

1 – Ford, C. (1974). From the Guardian Archive: Interview with György Ligeti. The Guardian, retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/feb/02/from-the-classical-archive-gyorgy-ligeti-interview-1974>

2 – John Tusa interview with Ligeti on BBC Radio, 2001, retrieved from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00nc1k8>

3 – Satory, S. (1990). An Interview with György Ligeti in Hamburg. Canadian University Music Review, 10(1), 101-117. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1014897ar>

4 – Ibid.

5 – Letter from Ligeti to Mario Bonaventura, 28 June 1980.

6 – Church, M. (2015). Pierre-Laurent Aimard interview on bringing György Ligeti's work to life. Independent, retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/features/pierre-laurent-aimard-interview-on-bringing-gy-rgy-ligetis-work-to-life-10270724.html>

On My *Études* for Piano

György Ligeti

Translated by
Sid McLauchlan

At the center of my compositional intentions in the études lies a new conception of rhythmic articulation. I had worked for the first time with the idea of superimposing rhythmic grids of various densities in *Poème Symphonique* for 100 metronomes (1962). Several years later in *Continuum* for harpsichord (1968), I experimented with an illusionary rhythm: the interpreter plays a very fast, even succession of notes, but as a result of the frequency with which certain notes reoccur, what we primarily perceive are slower, disjunct rhythmic configurations. We are dealing here with an acoustic analogy to the optical illusion of lined patterns produced by a rotating stroboscope. I developed the idea of illusionary rhythm further in *Monument* for two pianos (1976) where both pianists play similar musical phrases, but one in duple and the other in triple meter. This, however, should not be understood as an “Ivesian” heterogeneous layering for, on the contrary, it is the homogeneous fusion of the sound of the pianos which is of utmost importance. The complexity of the resulting contorted polyphony is thus achieved by superimposing two relatively simple phrases.

While I was writing these pieces for two pianos in 1976, I was unaware of Nancarrow's music and that of Subsaharan Africa. However, I have always had an interest in picture-puzzles, paradoxes of perception and ideas, for certain aspects of the shaping and building of form, of growth and transformation and for the distinction between various levels of abstraction in thought and language. Furthermore, I am very partial to the works of Lewis Carroll, Maurits Escher, Saul Steinberg, Franz Kafka, Boris Vian, Sandor Weores, Jorge Luis Borges and Douglas R. Hofstadter and my way of thinking is strongly marked by the views of Manfred Eigen, Hansjochem Autrum, Jacques Monod and Ernst Gombrich. Since the beginning of the 1980s this list of stimulating interests has been extended to include the highly complex music for mechanical piano of Conlon Nancarrow, recordings from Simha Arom's collection of Central African music and Benoit Mandelbrot's fascinating "fractals", which Manfred Eigen brought to my attention in 1984 by showing me the computer-generated pictures of Heinz-Otto Peitgen and Peter H. Richter.

It would however be inappropriate to assume that my *Piano Études* (1985) are a direct result of these musical and extra-musical influences. By revealing my interests and inclinations I am merely indicating the intellectual environment in which I work as a composer. Moreover, in my music one finds neither that which one might call the "scientific" nor the "mathematical," but rather a unification of construction with poetic, emotional imagination.

Nevertheless, Nancarrow's marvelous music for mechanical piano gave me the impulse to consider looking for ways and means by which *living*

interpreters could perform such complex music. Further, I asked myself whether one could possibly entrust a *single* soloist with such complex polyrhythms.

One often arrives at something qualitatively new by unifying two already known but separate domains. In this case, I have combined two distinct musical thought processes: the meter-dependent hemiola as used by Schumann and Chopin and the additive pulsation principle of African music. Stemming from the mensural notation of late Medieval music, the hemiola arises from the metric ambiguity posed by a measure of 6 beats, which can be divided into three groups of two or two groups of three. The hemiola was amongst the most popular compositional devices in the dance music of the Baroque (in the Courante, for example) and above all in the piano music of the 19th century. The shimmering effect of simultaneously dividing the bar into two and three produces the metric tension which in itself is one of the strongest attractions of the music of Chopin, Schumann, Brahms and Liszt. A completely different metric ambiguity is to be found in African music as well. Here, of course, there are no measures in the European sense of the word, but instead one finds two rhythmic levels: an underlying layer consisting of fast, even pulsations which are however not counted as such but rather felt, and a superimposed layer of occasionally symmetrical but more often asymmetrical patterns of varying length, though always whole multiples of the basic pulse. Strangely enough, it is possible to beat both a duple or a triple meter to these rhythmic patterns by handclapping or, for example, with a percussion instrument. This prevailing metric ambiguity produces, in theory at

least, a kind of hemiola, which however in practice does not really exist: there can be no real ambiguity as there is no meter based on the bar-line, there are no accents and consequently no hierarchy of beats, only the smoothly flowing additive pulse.

Even as early as the orchestral piece *Apparitions* (1958/59) one finds in my music precisely this characteristic lack of a bar-oriented meter—I used bars and their subdivisions simply as optical aids for the notation. In a piece such as *Continuum* where I (consciously) tried to create an illusionary rhythm, I came (unconsciously) close to the rhythmic conception evident in the music of Subsaharan Africa. For my more recent *Piano Études* (*Désordre*, *Cordes vides*, *Touches bloquées*, *Fanfares*, *Arc-en-ciel*, *Automne à Varsovie*), the now conscious awareness of several examples of this music led me to the idea of extending the hemiola concept from three times two and two times three to include other relationships such as five to three, seven to five, etc. as well as multiple combinations, for example, seven to five to three, in all of which the bar-line is no longer a determining factor.

That which is eminently new in these pieces is the possibility of a *single* interpreter being able to produce the illusion of *several* simultaneous layers of different tempi. The result is a musical phenomenon which would not be possible within the limits of either traditional European or African polyrhythmic hemiola technique. Although Nancarrow is able to achieve this with his programming of piano rolls, he does so writing for mechanical instruments. I, on the other hand, was able to outwit our perception and accomplish this while writing for a living performer by imposing a “European” accent pattern onto the non-accentuated “African” pulsation.

For example, the pianist plays, in the *Automne à Varsovie*, an even succession of notes. The piece is notated in $4/4$ (although the bar-lines as such are not audible), with 16 fast pulses per measure. There is however a place in the piece where the right hand accentuates every fifth pulse and the left every third. To the ear, these chains of accents blend together to form a super-signal consisting of two melodies: a slower one formed by the groupings of five and a faster one produced by the groupings of three. The ratio 5:3 is of course arithmetically simple, but perceptually very complex. We do not count the pulses but rather experience two qualitatively different tempo levels. Neither does the pianist count while playing: he produces the accents according to the notation, is aware of a pattern of muscle contraction in the fingers, all the while however hearing another pattern, namely that of the different tempi which could not possibly be produced consciously.

Later in the piece there are places where three, even four different speeds occur simultaneously, with the corresponding accents distributed not only between the two hands of the player, but between the different fingers of the same hand as well. Given the anatomical limitations, it was necessary to allow the music to arise, so to speak, from the position of the ten fingers on the keys. Chopin, acting as my model, came to my aid: the spiritual and poetic content and the concrete nature of the instrument and hands do not form constraints or contradictions as my compositional imagination is unconsciously pre-programmed by these technical and anatomical factors. Whether performing the simpler hemiola found in Chopin or my more broadly defined hemiola, the incongruity which exists between the pattern of muscle contractions and

the audible configurations can even be considered a source of sensual satisfaction for the pianist.

I combined the romantic hemiola technique with the principle of the African additive pulse in the *Automne à Varsovie* in order to produce illusions of different simultaneous tempi, in the first etude, *Désordre*, which is perhaps rhythmically even more contorted, I used the same combination, this time though to shape transitions from metric order to disorder. Once again, the pianist plays coordinated, even pulsations in both hands. Superimposed onto these pulsations is a gridwork of irregular accents which at times however progresses synchronously in both hands, thereby temporarily producing the impression of order. This impression slowly disintegrates as the accents in one hand begin to lag behind those in the other. In so doing, the metric relationship is gradually blurred until we reach a point where we are unable to discern which hand leads and which lags behind. A state of order is in due course restored as the two successions of accents shift closer and closer to one another, eventually falling simultaneously in the two hands, at which point the cycle begins anew. What we are dealing with here is again an illusion: the pianist worries only about reading the accent distribution from the page, while the superimposed grid is blurred without his conscious interjection. The rhythmic transformations result from the statistical distribution of the accents, with the cycles of order and disorder arising as it were automatically.

In addition to the possibility of being performed as a cycle, the six etudes may be programmed individually. If the complete cycle is performed, the original order of the pieces should be retained so as not to undermine its overall form: see

for example the “collapsing” finale of the *Automne à Varsovie*, which acts as a coda to the entire cycle.

NOTES

Text courtesy of *Sonus: A Journal of Investigations into Global Musical Possibilities*. Edited by Prof. Pozzi Escot, the journal was founded in 1980, with over 300 past issues.

Woman Machines: The Future of Female Noise

Nina Power

The future masters of technology will have to be light-hearted and intelligent. The machine easily masters the grim and the dumb.

—Marshall McLuhan

Factory workers in the previous centuries have indirectly been the most sustained and brutal players of Noise. Recognition of our past should always be present.

—Mattin, “Theses on Noise, IX”

In February 1966, a group of Belgian women working in arms manufacture demand equal pay for equal work. Calling themselves ‘women machines, they go on strike’, disrupting work for twelve weeks, behaving in the same way, they claimed, ‘as one carries out a war’...

—History book

Women have always been desired by the machine. It needs them for their deftness, their smaller hands, their capacity to work quickly and, initially at least, to demand less for doing so. The proliferation of typewriters and telephones in the 1870s and 1880s,

and the concomitant mechanisation of information, allowed women to compete for jobs they could easily do better than men. In other words, 'a large number of higher-salaried men with pens who added columns of four-digit numbers rapidly in their heads were replaced by lower-salaried office workers, many of them women, with machines' (Lisa Fine, *The Souls of the Skyscraper*).

Rarely, of course, have women ever been on the side of construction (though Waterloo Bridge, the longest bridge in London, rebuilt by women during World War II, magnificently undermines the idea that women's work is 'small-scale'). For women, as Sartre famously noted, *the machine dreams through them*, inculcating just the right level of distraction for maximising performance—the erotic dreams of machine attendants a curious by-product of the repetition of labour.

If women have historically operated as conduits for the dreams of machines, then noise too has a peculiarly female quality, from typing pools to sewing factories to switchboard operators. In a sense, we have always been secretly aware of the privileged relationship between women, technology and noise: that most fantastically energetic and machinic of data, conversation, has always been regarded, for better or worse, as the preserve of women; indeed, women's speech is often dismissed as 'noise'—Immanuel Kant in the *Anthropology* peevishly banishes 'the girls' to the other room for frivolous chatter, while the men slowly and soberly discuss the important issues of the day.

When silver screen actress Hedy Lamarr co-invented a secret communication system in order to help the allies defeat the Germans in World War II, MGM kept this aspect of her life under wraps

as incompatible with her 'star' image (even though she had already done her best to deflate the illusion, even at the very beginning of film idolatry: 'any girl can be glamorous. All she has to do is stand still and look stupid').

From mangles to washing machines, dictation to cryptography, espionage and war-time code-breaking, manipulating and mechanising the feedback of machine, information and transmission has usually needed women a lot more than it has needed men.

Machinery does not lose its use value as soon as it ceases to be capital. ... It does not at all follow that subsumption under the social relation of capital is the most appropriate and ultimate social relation of production for the application of machinery.

—Karl Marx, 'Grundrisse'

Capital was and is increasingly feminised via its machines; high-rise gyno-capitalism literally *making nothing*, better and faster, as the circuits babble ceaselessly among themselves. A million data-entry workers sigh as the tips of fingernails clatter interminably; call-centres trilling with the trained tones of treble-tone perfection; fembot recordings at stations instructing harried commuters where to be and when. Far from possessing a deep-seated aversion to the unnatural, the contrived, the processed, women have forever shown their speedy capacity to adapt to and out-automate the machine, even as it uses and abuses them in turn. Any appeal to the supposed 'naturalness' of women, or some sort of privileged relation to nature is as historically inaccurate as it is

banal: Women make the best robots, as *Metropolis* shows us.

What happens, however, if we go beyond this? When communication becomes less idle chatter than the production of pure noise? When the machine, instead of dreaming through women, is created, maintained and, indeed, exploited by them?

There's a scene in Dziga Vertov's 1929 film *Man with a Movie Camera* which combines footage of women doing a variety of different activities: sewing, cutting film (with Elizaveta Svilova, Vertov's wife and the film's actual editor), counting on an abacus, joyfully making boxes, plugging connections into a telephone switchboard, packing cigarettes, typing, playing the piano, answering the phone, tapping out code, ringing a bell, applying lipstick. The cut-up footage speeds up to such a frenzy that at one point it becomes impossible to tell which activity is done for pleasure, and which for work. This is a vision, long before desktops, mobiles, call-centres and the invention of temp agencies, of the optimistic compatibility, perhaps even straightforward identification, of women with the boundless manifestations of technology and artifice...

Sometimes I do feel this psychic connection with machines.

—Jessica Rylan

Jump forward almost a century and we encounter Jessica Rylan, a woman who makes her own machines, and performs with them so that the overlap between her voice and her creations loses all sense of separation. This is certainly 'noise' of a sort, but of an altogether novel kind. Live, Rylan performs a combination of discomforting personal exposure

(in the form of a *capella* songs played with unstinting directness towards the audience) and machinic communing with self-made analogue synthesisers feeding back to eternity and fusing with ethereal, unholy vocals that haunt like cut-up fairy tales told by a sadistic aunt. Whilst occasional shouts for 'more noise, more pain!' might be bellowed at her from the floor at Noise nights, what this desire for noise at any cost doesn't get is how much more effective Rylan's performance is at revealing the true power of the machine.

Jessica Rylan is the future of noise, in the way that men are the past of machines. Tall, slender, politely dressed, bespectacled ... across a crowded clerks' office, Kafka's heart starts to pound. While the sirens of unpleasantness continue to seduce the male noise imaginary, Ms Rylan and her homemade synth-machines pose a delectable alternative: what if, instead of abject surrender to the hydraulic-pain of metal-tech, we forced the machine to speak ... *eloquently*. But let's not be coy here: there's nothing nice about her noise—no concessions to the cute, the lo-fi, the cuddly or the pretty.

Rylan has written before of the idea of 'personal noise', which she opposes to the juddering-by-numbers idea that noise should be as harsh and relentless as possible. This is entirely in keeping with the idea that there should be a certain style to noise, a certain attention paid to the specificities of sound and that, in fact, the only way to even approach the artificiality of the natural is to outstrip and outdo its simulation, which Rylan does by plugging and unplugging her voice and body into the auto-circuits of an oneiric eroticism that weaves beguilingly amidst a series of disconcerting incongruities: 'Although it is characteristic of noise to recall

us brutally to real life, the art of noise must not limit itself to imitative reproduction' —Luigi Russolo.

This 'imitative reproduction', this lack of imagination that characterises much noise music is reflected in the introspection of much of the noise scene, as if the best response to a hostile world is to turn away from it and howl into a corner. There's no interest in nature in the noise scene, Rylan says. 'This whole world, we've all gone indoors, we look on the internet, watch TV, read books, watch movies, take drugs, whatever. It's all very interior, we don't spend any time in the world.'

I know how to deal with my own equipment.
—Jessica Rylan

It is this relationship between the natural and the artificial—and the artificiality of nature—that perhaps best expresses the effect of Rylan's performances, and points towards a future for a noise that would be both female and machinic. There's something deeply unusual, for example, about the way the analogue gets processed by her synths. Usually prized for its warmth, its authenticity, its richness, Rylan turns this fetishism of the vintage machine into anti-warmth, a series of self-styled machines that cut up and disconnect time from itself in the present. Using analogue to out-mimic the effects of digital, Rylan has hit upon a technique that causes maximum possible disturbance to her audience, and she doesn't even need to shout.

Rylan has commented before on her desire not to use any effects that mess with time (reverb, delay), but instead the machine messes with her and with itself, so you can no longer tell where the sound is coming from. In a way it no longer matters. What

you see and hear is a series of deftly manipulated switches, wires and sockets attached to their creator, who circles the mechanical morass and herself emits sounds that feed back, away from and into the machine. The relation to the audience is deliberately ambiguous and highly structured—rather than the crowd-baiting outright aggression (however ironic) of most power electronics.

Her shows, while on the brief side now, used to be even shorter, seven minutes or so, anti-indulgence personified. 'I did everything at once', she says of her previous performances. In many ways, this has always been the temptation of noise, to embrace the speed and brutality of the car, the machine, the 'love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness' of Marinetti's 1909 *Futurist Manifesto*, to live up to Russolo's demand to combine an infinite variety of noises using a thousand different machines. Increasingly, however, a certain calm has crept in to her shows, the careful thought involved in every aspect of her work: music, the show, the performance, the equipment. No slapdash, jumbled-together mix of a misplaced genius-complex and self-absorption that characterises much of the Noise scene.

If the subterranean history of the relation between women, machines and noise has finally emerged overground as a new Art of Noise that seeks to destroy the opposition of the natural and the artificial, what performers like Rylan represent is an expansionist take-over of the territory. No longer will the machines dream through women, but will instead be built by them. They will be used not to mimic the impotent howl of aggression in a hostile world, but to reconfigure the very matrix of noise itself.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

After Genesis

Claire Cowie

Sound in Florescence: Cecil Taylor Floating Garden

Fred Moten

No reading¹ of the words mark a ritual, annular enactment—a fall: the sentence was broken here; a caesura—even, one could say, of the caesura—has occurred. You could bridge the gap with one of many simple denotations supposed to get to the ensemble of what I want you, now, to hear, but that would have already been unfaithful to the truth and attention carried in the name of what, now, I would have you hear. But this will not be a meditation on the idiom of *Chinampas*.² No reading because the understanding of literary experience which (a) reading implies is exceeded in the enactment of what *Chinampas* is and what *Chinampas* demands: improvisation. And so I have been preparing myself to play with Cecil Taylor, to hear what is transmitted on frequencies outside and beneath the range of reading. These are *notes* composed in the interest of that preparation. *Phrases*.³

“Charles Lloyd, asked to comment on a piece of his music by a radio interviewer, answered, ‘Words don’t go there.’” (Lange and Mackey x)

Words don’t go there. Is it only music, only sound, that goes there? Perhaps these notes and phrases

will have mapped the terrain and traversed (at least some of) the space between here and there.

Words don't go there: this implies a difference between words and sounds; it suggests that words are somehow constrained by their implicit reduction to the meanings they carry—meanings inadequate to or detached from the objects or states of affairs they would envelop. What's also implied is an absence of inflection; a loss of mobility, slippage, bend; a missing accent or affect; the impossibility of a slur or crack and the *excess*—rather than loss—of meaning they imply.

Where do words go? Are they the inadequate and residual traces of a ritual performance that is lost in the absence of the recording?⁴

Where do words go? Where, into what, do they turn in Cecil's rendering: a generative disintegration, an emanation of luminous sound? The interanimation of recording, verbal art, and improvisation—which *Chinampas* is and enacts—places performance, ritual, and event within a trembling—which *Chinampas* escapes—between words' florescence and the constitutive absence of the book.⁵ Nevertheless that trembling raises certain questions: for instance, that of the relationship between words and their phrasing.⁶ Changes, like that from word to growl, occur here taking the word to where it does not go but neither to any origin as pure sound nor to the simple before of the determinations of meaning. This change and movement might be at the phonemic level, might mark the generation of or from a lost language and/or a new thing that is, in spite of its novelty, never structured as if the before that is absent and indeterminate had never been or does not still remain there. What is the nature of this "sexual cut . . . [or] insistent

previousness evading each and every natal occasion," this "[l]imbo [that] reflects a certain kind of gateway or threshold to a new world and the dislocation of a chain of miles," that is evident in Cecil's words and improvisations of words?⁷ Is the only rigorous model one that necessitates the elimination of any previousness, any new world? Where do words go?

Where do words go? Where, to what, do they turn in Cecil's rendering? A blur, like the typescript on the cover of the album,⁸ meaning lifted by design, slurred by packaging, the rhythmic architecture of text, texture, textile *for example the Mande rhythm cloth, where patterns are juxtaposed against each other, several different types of seemingly different patterns that come together and make the ensemble garment. It's acutely apparent on the poetry record where the overdubs, the voices just sliding around and between each other because (sings melody from Pemmican), but because I don't know much music, or I don't know musical terms, it's difficult for me to articulate what it is that I'm hearing. Good, you have to define for yourself, all the ... (Richards)*⁹: perhaps the blur signifies that everything is (in) Cecil Taylor, is improvisation or, more precisely, that the improvisation of a notion (or, perhaps more faithfully, a phenomenology) of the ensemble heretofore weakly signaled in the sharp edges of words like "everything" is in effect. Note that (in) is always parenthetical, between the opposing words of that structure, between acts or wars, like Woolf and Jones, homologous with the phenomenon of erasure; ~~everything~~ is (in) erasure, the mark of an imaginary structure of homology, the additive and aggregative imposture of a

nonsingularist, nontotalitarian ensemble. But, with these provisos, the phrase, the broken sentence, holds (everything).

Cecil's phrase will not be read.

Performance, ritual, and event are of the idea of idiom, of the "anarchic principles" that open the unrepresentable performance of Cecil's phrasing.¹⁰ What happens in the transcription of performance, event, ritual? What happens, which is to say what is lost, in the recording? I am preparing myself to play with Cecil. What is heard there? What history is heard there? There is one which is not just one among others **I'm really quite happy, or becoming more comfortable with the conception that Ellington, after all, is the genius I must follow, and all the methodological procedures that I follow are akin, more closely aligned to that than anything else (Richards):** the history of (an) organization, orchestra/tion, construction. The essence of construction is part of what that phrasing is after; the poem of construction—geometry of a blue space, geometry of a blue ghost is the poem that is of the music **So, actually, last year for the first time since the seventies I felt more like a professional musician. I never want to be, nor do I consider myself one. You say you don't consider yourself a professional musician? I would hope never to be a professional musician. So, if one has to, how would you classify yourself?"** Ha, Ha, Ha . . . I've always tried to be a poet more than anything else, I mean, professional musicians die. (Phone rings) / Then the music, the imagination from the music led into the words . . . So that the music is primary, but everything is

music once you care to begin to apply certain principles of organization to it. So that I imagine there is . . . people have told me they see a certain relationship between the word and the music (Richards). A poetry, then, that is of the music; a poetry that would articulate the music's construction; a poetry that would mark and question the idiomatic difference that is the space-time of performance, ritual, and event; a poetry, finally, that becomes music in that it iconically presents those organizational principles that are the essence of music. The thing is, these organizational principles break down; their breakdown disallows reading, improvises idiom(atic difference) and gestures toward an anarchic and generative meditation on phrasing that occurs in what has become, for reading, the occluded of language: sound.

Let Cecil's "musicked"¹¹ and illegible¹² words resonate and give some attention to their broken grammar, the aural rewriting of grammatical rule that is not simply arbitrary but a function of the elusive content he would convey: what's going on is either in an interstice or of the ensemble, either between professionalism and its other—music and poetry—or in the holism of a kind of everyday ritual. Cecil's poetry: the geometry of a ghost? The physics of remembrance? The architecture of the archétrace? Is there a continuity to be written here, or is the continuity in the cut of the phrase? I am preparing myself to play with Cecil Taylor: what is the proper form of my endeavor? Perhaps the transcription of an improvisational blurring of the word; perhaps an improvisation through the singular difference of the idiom and its occasion; perhaps an acalculation of that function whose upper limit is reading and whose lower limit is transcription—an

improvisation through phrases, through some virtual head and coda. Cecil says to his interlocutor, “I’m listening” (Richards). Perhaps he will have said this to me or to the word: I’m listening, *go on*. Then perhaps the ensemble of the word, Cecil and I will have veered off into the silence that is embedded in the transformation, the truth that is held in the silence of the transformation, a truth that is only discernible in transformation.

Rhythm

Sound: suspended brightness, unrepresentable and inexplicable mystery of

music is the improvisation
of organization

ritual is music: principled (archic) (spatial) organization that constitutes a kind of nonverbal writing: transparent or instrumental, uninflected by the transformations of a buzz-growl extension, bending whistle, hummm—

... there are and we experience the fact that there are several philosophical idioms and that this experience alone cannot not be lived by a philosopher, by a self-styled philosopher, by whoever claims to be a philosopher, as both a scandal and as the very chance of philosophy.¹³

but an improvisation (*anarchic*) of those principles that sees through infinite divisibilities and irreducible singularities, sites of communications never to be received, rites of affliction, tragedies, bodily divisions, spatial/social arrangements that constitute a kind of philosophical writing enacted and reenacted

in the annular rememberment and dismemberment of community, *nation and race*, the imposition and maintenance of hierarchical relations within these units, the vexed and impossible task of a reconciliation of one and many via representation: Here it is if I could work through expressive singularity, the im/possibility of direct communication, the ideas of writing as visible speech and writing as independent of speech. Here it is if idiom becomes the site where an improvisation of/through these might occur: not in the name of an originary creativity or a grounded and telic liberty, but of a free, which is to say anarchic and atelic, generativity; a reconceptualization or out-from-outside reinstrumentalization of idiom that allows an improvisation through rather than a deconstructive oscillation within the *aporia* of philosophy.

Improvisation through the opposition of reading and transcription—precondition and effect of preparation to play with Cecil: the preparation is the playing, the trace of another organization; it starts like and away from a reading and ends like and beyond transcription but is neither homage to indeterminacy nor objectifying rendering nor reduction to a narrow sense of “writing”; not about the hegemony of the visual in reading, nor the suspicion of a singular vision; at the same time not about the etiolation of a capturing picture.

In reading, Cecil’s performance—the prefatory dance, the gestures at the instrument that produce/emit sound-along with his sound-independent, though it is, of the reduction of the word to verbal assertion—are too easily subordinated to the visual/spatial and the pervasive ocularcentrism,

structured around a set of obsolete temporal, ethical, and aesthetic determinations, which ground it. Nevertheless, Cecil's poetry, the geometry of a blue ghost, is full of spatial and directional renderings. These are improvised in his sounding of them which I will not read and cannot transcribe.

Though the visual/spatial binds, its occlusion distorts the undifferentiated but unfixed ensemble (ensemble) the remembrance of the aural gives. The echo of what is not but nothing other than unremembered is a wound in Derrida (for example), confounding the dream of another universality, conflating that dream with the vision of an old song, old-new language, homely sound, naive or idiomatic writing. Here it is remedied in Cecil moving out from the outside, out from the paradoxes of idiom to offer up idiom's re-sounding, one that avoids philosophical nationalism without devolving into transparent instrumentality, one that is not a reconceptualization but an improvisation of idiom in its relation/opposition to ritual via suspended luminescence, floating garden. That improvisation is activated in a sound that holds information in the implicit graphics of its rhythm, a spatial orientation affecting a spatial representation that is sound become dispersive sensuality. So, in a kind of holosensual, holcesthetic reversal, one hears music in Cecil's visual-spatial description and sees gestures and spaces in an aural that exceeds but does not oppose visual-spatial determination.

In Cecil float/drift/linger/cut are fresh in the improvised parlance of another architecture, another geometry. The recording gives the trace of performance in the product or artifact, is a constative

vessel of information maintaining the question of the product as determinate sign; yet it also marks a temporal/ethical problem that can be solved only by way of a radical movement through certain questions: of the trace as performance, of sound, of the rendering of the opposition of aurality and spatiality, of the opposition of speech and writing within verballity, of the question of the gestural in literary style, of the question of silence and the absence of the break....

"Rhythm is life, the space of time danced thru" (Taylor) the cut between event and anniversary wherein lies sound, writing, ritual, all improvised. Two passages (David Parkin's and Claude Lévi-Strauss's) to the crossing of rhythm and ritual:

Ritual is formulaic spatiality carried out by groups of people who are conscious of its imperative or compulsory nature and who may or may not further inform this spatiality with spoken words. (Parkin 16)

The value of the ritual as meaning seems to reside in instruments and gestures; it is a paralanguage. The myth on the other hand, manifests itself as metalanguage; it makes full use of discourses, but does so by situating its own significant oppositions at a higher level of complexity than that required by language operating for profane ends. (Lévi-Strauss, qtd. in Parkin 11)

In these passages ritual is primarily defined by distinctions between itself and forms of aural/verbal activity-most importantly, myth-in which ritual is

seen as impoverished or by distinctions between itself and other forms of nonverbal activity that, in their mundaneness, remain untransformed by any ceremonial aura. Parkin focuses on the silent communication of propositions in ritual as that which matches or even exceeds verbal assertion through spacing, position or the visual-graphic architectonics that oscillate between fixity and contestation. *such communication quietly echoes the staging of some neo-conservative classically boppish set of sets of sets as in Rodney King—anniversarial reenactment of what Langston Hughes theorized as the origin of real bop's name, the sound whenever a cop busts a (black) guy in the head—for instance: proposition made in the step—never not of the dance—and in the gesture, arms rising, falling; passionate reimposition of a social hierarchy supplemented by various epithets, commentaries, phrases-in-despite which we all know: the beat of da Lench Mob, “gorillas in the mist,” what is the origin of hip hop's name.* According to Lévi-Strauss, however, words do go there, arriving under the motive force of “a higher level of complexity” than that afforded by the instrumental or gestural in ritual. If one thinks, though, of a poetry reading—which may very well be (for) a “profane end”—one confronts that which requires that we take into account the ways ritual consists of physical action (in time) that may *be*, as well as emit or transmit, the kind of meaningful aural expression that improvises through the distinction between the paralinguistic and the metalinguistic. And if words that had been thought of as the elements of a purely constative expression are radically reconnected to their essential sonic performance by eccentric physical action, by an excess of the physical (trill-making vibration of tongue or vowel-lengthening squint) that deforms the word conceived of as a mere vessel of meaning,

then that requirement becomes even more urgent. The attempt to read ritual as it is manifest in the sound of such words or the attempt to transcribe myth transformed by gesture and meaningful positionality might be better thought in terms of the improvisation of ritual, writing, sound, idiom, event.

The spatiotemporal constitution of ritual raises ambiguities as well. On the one hand ritual is durative. The structure and dance of its positions are ongoing, part of an annulus that seems unopposed to the uninterrupted process of the everyday against which it would be defined. But what of the punctuality of the endlessly/daily repeated event? This punctuality is, too, of ritual, and ritual thus lends punctuality the aura of ceremony: the *special* occasion. There is, then, a temporal contradiction in the opposition of ritual and nonritual, one that activates in both terms a juxtaposition that is manifest as the traumatic/celebratory and obsessional rhythmic breakage of the everyday and that implies a directionality of time—a spatiotemporal constitution—that transforms rhythm into a double determination: of position or movement, on the one hand, and syntagmic order on the other. Thus Parkin's focus on “the use made . . . of directionality-of axes, cardinal points, concentric zones and other expressions of spatial orientation and movement” (16) and his interest in the random and contingent effects of contestation as a kind of reading-in-performance, a shifting and reshifting of spatial conventions and temporal order determined by a radical break as when, for instance, the community *cuts* the body in an interinanimation of affliction and renewal, the fragmentation of singular bodies and the coercive reaggregation of community.

Escaping the in/determination of the opposition or sacrificial synthesis of rites of affliction and renewal requires working through the logocentrism of Lévi-Strauss, the ocularcentric, spatiotemporal determinism of Parkin, and their interrelation in a discursive field grounded in a notion of singularity that I want to move through in my preparation. In Cecil's, the spoken words, the speaking of the words, are not an arbitrary feature but are instead constitutive of that which is not but nothing other than (the improvisation of) ritual, writing, ritual as a form of writing. There, the words are never independent of gesture but the gesture is never given priority over the words-as-sound. For gestures (and spatial direction) are given there as the sounded, re-sounded (which is to say transformed, bent, extended, improvised) and resounding (which is to say generative) word.

We then can define writing broadly as *the communication of relatively specific ideas in a conventional manner by means of permanent, visible marks.* (Boone 15)

Here Elizabeth Hill Boone moves in the direction of a redefinition of writing in anthropology in general and in the study of Mesoamerican and Andean graphic systems in particular. That movement is critical of notions of writing as the "visible speech" that marks a technospiritual difference between cultures capable of graphic-verbal presentation and those before or outside of the historicotemporal frame of the advanced or enlightened. That direction would lead to a more inclusive definition of writing, one that is able to acknowledge the rich constative capacities of nonverbal graphic systems,

one that explicitly acknowledges the insistently unbridgeable gap that separates the spoken word from any visual representation. This direction, seen in conjunction with Parkin's attempt to think through the constative/performative opposition that grounds Lévi-Strauss's notion of the difference between myth and ritual, would also lead to an indelible connection between ritual, on the one hand, and writing, on the other hand, if writing is defined in the broader way that Boone lays out. Ritual and nonverbal graphesis would both be seen as constative and both would be subject to prejudices that end in the denial of that constativity. There is another similarity between Boone's and Parkin's projects that we'll arrive at shortly (the primacy of the visual-spatial), but these are enough to allow us to follow, for a bit, one of the paths this connection implies.

What kind of writing is *Chinampas*?¹⁴ Cecil presents no graphic system—if *Chinampas* is writing, it is so in the absence of visuality. Under what conditions, then, could *Chinampas* be called "writing"? Perhaps within an understanding of writing more broadly conceived as nonverbal, as well as verbal, systems of graphic communication. Yet, since what we have there is nongraphic *verbal* communication, the legitimacy of its claim to writing is not self-evident. Nevertheless ideas of and about graphic systems are presented in *Chinampas*, sound blurring vision in the improvisation of another writing; and image, position, and direction are so encoded—the visual-spatial so embedded—in the poem that what we have is something more complex even than some newly included Outside of writing. Rather, *Chinampas* is out from the outside of writing as it is conventionally defined or redefined

in what have become conventional redefinitions. Writing is, in *Chinampas*, a visual-spatial-tactile improvisation of system that activates the aural resources of the language. The poem is an improvisation of writing not to be appropriated by, not proper to, an older and somehow more inclusive graphesis: it is not a valorization but an improvisation of the nonverbal; not an abandonment but a (re)sounding of the visual-spatial.

A possible formulation based on the inclusive redefinition of writing: it's not that Cecil creates visible speech; rather his is an aural writing given an understanding of writing that includes nonverbal graphic resources. This would almost presuppose that Cecil is interested in grounding the aural in an originary writing (the "older and somehow more inclusive graphesis" referred to above) that corresponds—as spatial, rhythmic organization—to ritual. Ritual here is implicitly conceived as Parkin explicitly describes it: a form of nonverbal graphic (visual/spatial) communication for which spoken words are merely supplemental. We could say, then, that Cecil's refers to an originary writing that is neither hieroglyphic nor pictographic but geometric, positional, directional. In that referent, if not in Cecil's reference, spoken words are not only nonoriginary; they are not even seen in terms of a reversal of traditional, conventional views of language in/and its relation to writing.

But this formulation doesn't go there. Rather, what is required is a further reconfiguration of Parkin, one that moves beyond the idea of constative ritual and beyond the idea of ritual as a form of graphic, nonverbal writing to the extent that in such

writing priority is given to, originarity is assumed for, the visual-spatial constellation of gesture, position, movement. That reconfiguration is opened by Cecil's aural improvisation of, rather than (un)silent adherence to, an originary writing-as-ritual and his infusion of the diagrammatics/diagraphesis of ritual with sound. For spoken words, especially when infused with the buzz hummm of the metavoice," are not a neutral (as Parkin implies) but a *dangerous* supplement to ritual-as-writing. Thus, on the one hand, "words don't go there" marks the inadequacy of verbal representation of sound while at the same time signaling the excessive, out-from-the -outside motion and force with which sound infuses the verbal. Words don't go there; words go *past* there. Bent. Turned. Blurrred.

The picture is text, the image is writing, *sounded and not visible* though of a brilliant luminescence in the ensemble of the graphic, the (non)verbal, the aural. That ensemble is what the floating garden is: word lifted from stone or cloth; *quipu* (an article composed of colored and knotted strings used in Andean cultures to recall various categories of knowledge that are specified by an interpreter; an article whose aesthetic is related to the tactile and to the tactile's relation to rhythm)¹⁶ or rhythm cloth; text/ile, tactile. There meaning is held not unlike a talking drum holds meaning in tone and rhythm; meaning held, for instance, in "eighty-eight tuned drums," independent of any simple, sentence-relational form, given only in phrasing and bent words. In that phrasing Cecil's moves, crucially, past whatever in/determination, whatever singularity, the paradoxical interinanimation of ritual and idiom puts forward as if it were or could be The Event.

Perhaps something has occurred in the history of the concept of structure that could be called an “event,” if this loaded word did not entail a meaning which it is precisely the function of structural-or structuralist- thought to reduce or suspect. Let us speak of an “event,” nevertheless, and let us use quotation marks to serve as a precaution. What would this event be then? Its exterior form would be that of a *rupture* and a redoubling.

... up to the event which I wish to mark out and define, structure—or rather the structurality of structure—although it has always been at work, has always been neutralized or reduced, and this by a process of giving it a center or referring it to a point of presence, a fixed origin. *The function of this center was not only to orient, balance, and organize the structure—one cannot in fact conceive of an unorganized structure—but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the play of the structure. By orienting and organizing the coherence of the system, the center of a structure permits the play of its elements inside the total form. And even today the notion of a structure lacking any center represents the unthinkable itself.*

Nevertheless, the center also closes off the play which it opens up and makes possible. As center, it is the point at which the substitution of contents, elements or terms is no longer possible. At the center, the permutation or the transformation of elements (which may of course be structures enclosed within a structure) is forbidden. At least this

permutation has always been interdicted (and I am using this word deliberately). *Thus it has always been thought that the center, which is by, definition unique constituted that very thing within a structure which while governing the structure, escapes structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, within the structure and outside it. The center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality has its center elsewhere* (Derrida, *Writing* 278–80; my emphasis).

The event of which Derrida speaks, the putting of the structurality of structure, the center itself, into play, is the moment “when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse . . . a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences.” Derrida writes of an event, a rupture, which is also a circle, a circle of thinker-writers but also a circle “unique” in its description of “the form of the relation between the history of metaphysics and the destruction of the history of metaphysics.” Here he places the event within a narrative. Part of what I would argue is that this placement of the event within narrative is The Event of the event, the rupture or caesura of the event that occurs within a paradoxical duration or contextualization or montage-dialectical temporal mapping of the event. This self-rupture of singularity is precisely the geometric precondition of the circularity that Derrida

diagnoses and to which he succumbs: the self-deconstructive singularity of the event is the axis on which the circle turns -the one which is not central, the center which is not one. Restructuring could be seen, then, as the process by which structure is placed into play, which is to say into narrative, into the circularity and tension of a narrative that is composed of and that turns on elements or events.

Now we might easily be speaking of the song form as that de/centered structure that Cecil radically reformulates, if not abandons, precisely by rethinking its status as the singular site of order in improvised music.” For the point here is that in his aesthetic Cecil deals in what has truly been the unthinkable of the event-determined circularity of the history/narrative of the West and its thinking: the structure or totality that is un(de)composed by a center or its absence, by the event or The Event and their absences. This is a possibility given in ensemble tone, in the improvisation through a certain tradition of temporization and tympanization, through that tradition’s injunction to keep time in a simple way, on the beat (of the event), in that simplest (mis) conception—excusable because of the terminology (and we could all see why Plato would be misled by James Brown in the first place) of the one. Am I saying that Cecil or The Godfather or The Music in general is not trapped within the circle that is (the history of) metaphysics as the slide away from the ensemble it would propose? Am I saying that there is access to the outside of this circle or that, somehow, we (who? we.) are always already outside it. Yes. I’m talking about something free of the circle, free of the *eventual* tension/tensing of (this) narrative. Other things are also free.

What is immediately required is an improvisation of singularity, one that allows us to reconfigure what is given beneath/outside the distinction between the elements of the structure and its total form. Because what I’m after is an asystematic, anarchic organizing principle (I note the oxymoron), a notion of totality and (ensemble-)tonality at the conjunction of the pantonal and “that insistent previousness evading each and every natal occasion.” But wait: the point here is not to make an analogy between the deconstruction of the center and the organization of the jazz ensemble: it’s to say that that organization is of totality, of ensemble in general. Among other things, this music allows us to think of tonality and the structure of harmony as it moves in the oscillation between voice and voicing, not in the interest of any numerical determination (the valorization of the multiple or its shadow), not in the interest of any ethico-temporal determination (the valorization of the durative or of process), but for a kind of decentralization of the organization of the music; a restructuring or, if you will, a reconstruction. Cecil is working through a metaphysics of structure, working through an assumption that equates the essence or structurality of structure with a center. What I’m interested in Cecil is precisely the refusal to attempt a return to the source: one that is not, on the one hand, forgetful of what is lost or of the fact of loss; one that is forgetive, on the other hand, in the Falstaffian sense of the word-nimble and full of fiery and delectable shapes, improvisatory and incantatory when what is structured in the mind is given over to the mouth, the birth, as (that which is, finally, way more even than) excellent wit.

In “Structure, Sign and Play” Derrida goes on to quote Lévi-Strauss’s *The Raw and the Cooked*:

But unlike philosophical reflection, which aims to go back to its own source, the reflections we are dealing with here concern rays whose only source is hypothetical... And in seeking to imitate the spontaneous movement of mythological thought, this essay, which is also both too brief and too long, has had to conform to the requirements of that thought and to respect its rhythm. (Qtd. in *Writing* 286–87. See also Lévi-Strauss, *Raw* 14.)

Lévi-Strauss and his differentiated echo in/as Derrida go on to think this complex copresence of the question of center and origin in terms of myth and music:

Thus the myth and the musical work are like the conductors of an orchestra, whose audience becomes the silent performers. If it is now asked where the real center of the work is to be found, the answer is that this is impossible to determine. Music and mythology bring man face to face with potential objects of which only the shadows are actualized.

Here the musical becomes a sign for the absence of center by way of an all too facile assumption of some correspondence between myth and music. What happens when we begin to think music in its relation to ritual? Myth and text (myth as the written text of the music, betraying a musical rendition of a certain logocentric assumption in Lévi-Strauss)

operate in Lévi-Strauss as the agents of a structural fixity whose submission to the law of supplementarity Derrida would always enforce. In this sense, for Derrida, there is a correspondence between myth/text/totality that is troubled by a form of musical organization like Cecil’s. Now we are dealing in precisely that absence of the center that Lévi-Strauss and Derrida both read and comment on. Both deal, Derrida more knowingly or self-consciously, with the tension in their work between structure—that which is unthinkable without a center—and the absence of center. This tension is productive; it constitutes or produces something, namely, philosophy. But I’m interested precisely in the unthinkable of philosophy in Cecil’s work. For the unthinkable, as we can easily show, is not structure in the absence of the center (for we see all the time that this absence is constitutive of structure; this is what Derrida shows); rather, the unthinkable is structure or ensemble thought independently of any tension between itself and some absent origin. The unthinkable is a tone. That tone is to be thought neither as or in its absence (atonality) nor as/in its multiplicity or plenitude (pantomality): it is rather an ensemble tone, the tone that is not structured by or around the presence/absence of singularity or totality, the tone that is not iterative but generative.¹⁸ (Note that Lévi-Strauss insists on a certain iconicity, insists that discourse on myth must itself become mythic, must have the form of which it speaks. Certainly Derrida follows this formulation to the extent that the old-new language may only be spoken of from within, that it constitutes its own true metalanguage, thereby driving Tarski and his definition of truth as the relation between object- and meta-language crazy such that

the old-new language is not only its own metalanguage but its own truth.)

Cecil's is a voice in the interruption of race and nation, just as it is a voice in the interruption of the sentence and, indeed, in the interruption of the word itself. He works the anarchic irruption and interruption of grammar, enacting a phrasal improvisation through the distinction between poetry and music in the poetry of music, the programmatic manifesto that accompanies the music, that becomes music and turns music into poetry. These things occur "between regions of partial shadow and complete illumination" in the cut.

Cecil's also bears the trace of (the peculiar) institution and its organization—its deconstruction and reconstruction. This in connection to the continuous or anniversarial, the institutional-durative: marriage—birth-death seasonal change; the temporal difference within ritual that corresponds to ritual's temporal difference from, on the one hand, myth and, on the other hand, the mundane since rituals "involve a liminal phase, a betwixt and between element and so presuppose an initial phase of separation and one of reaggregation" (Parkin 16). But let's enact and reenact the *separation* of separation and reaggregation: rather, let's linger, float in the limbo of that cut, in order to mark nothing akin to an initial phase or prior singularity, but, instead, to mark "the insistent previousness evading each and every natal occasion." The trauma of separation is marked here, but not the separation from a determinate origin: rather the separation from the improvisation through origin: the separation from ensemble. How could we have heard the sound of

justice called in/by the long duration of the trauma if it hadn't been improvised?

Phrase

I've seen video of Ellington arranged at the piano surrounded by his instrument as they played without—which is to say outside—music, their arrangement signifying (their knowledge of the) arrangement: Ellington would sing the parts, forging the preparation of the music beside writing, the orchestra's change of motion driven, given, proportional to his motive force, the force which feeds: motif.¹⁹ So is Cecil. The instrument, for both, is (the) ensemble wherein ties the chance of a voicing beyond the chord or the cluster (which is to say beyond the simple in/determinations of harmony) even (or, more precisely, especially) in its originary Western philosophical manifestation: that between thinking and being.

Parmenides is, as far as we know, the first among many to "recognize" an essential connection between thinking and being: his poem is the originary text of that harmony, the originary written moment at which the shadow of what must be conceived of as a more fundamental formulation, a more elemental and singular form, is revealed. One wonders what the relation is between the writing of the poem-within which the trace of a sound remains to be discerned or at least reconstructed from its shards and that harmony. One wonders whether the harmony on which Western metaphysics is founded is not itself founded on—or most clearly manifest at—the intersection of music and poetry that, itself, seems to signal a prior and barely available unity of the two in *mousike*: the singularization

of the muses' art, the distillation of the ensemble of the aesthetic.

Only the trace of *mousike* is available to us and only by way of a tracing of the history of its dissolution. Under the heading "Music and Poetry," *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* makes a brief survey of that history, moving from "the Egyptian 'hymn of the seven vowels,' [which] appears to have exploited the overtone pitches present in the vowels of any language," to the first disjunctions (through which Cecil improvises) between systems of linguistic pitch, on the one hand, and systems of quantitative meter, on the other; from the technicistic origins of alphabetic writing-as-musical notation to the hegemonic excess of the visual-written and the differentiation of the arts it helps to solidify; from elemental *mousike* to its division/reaggregation as poetry and music to its fourfold fragmentation into poetic and musical performance and musical and rhetorical theory within which can be located that opposition between *praxis* and *theoria* that is never not connected to the harmony of thinking and being that constitutes philosophy's origin and end.²⁰ What becomes clear is a historical movement from the priority of sonic gesture to the hegemony of visual (which is to say theoretical) formulation. The written mark—the convergence of meaning and visuality—is the site of both excess and lack; the word-supplement—only theorizable in the occlusion of its sound—endlessly overshoots its destination; words don't go there. Perhaps it is now possible to give a more satisfactory understanding of this claim, one that is concerned not only with where words do go, but with the nature and position of the "there." First, though, it is necessary to think

the effect of that dual spatialization/visualization of the word—its placement within an economy determined by movement, instrumentalization, position, and theorization—which troubles any distinction between ritual and myth.

"*Chinampa*—an Aztec word meaning floating garden."²¹ This image moves toward what is made even closer by the conjunction of the image (of the title or name) and the sound (of the saying of what it marks or holds). It signals a suspension that is free or that frees by virtue of the contagion of its movement: when one sees a floating garden or is confronted with the sound that stems from the word-image, one lingers above or below surface and in what is open there. The surface or topography on which a spatiotemporal mapping depends is displaced by a generative motion. One imagines the possibilities inherent in that floating, the chance of a dropping off or an extension of certain of those sounds that require a vibrating surface: the *n*, *m*, *p* are put in motion, deepening and rearranging the sound of the word.²² This loosening is part of Cecil's method: of the word from its meaning, of the sounds from the word in the interest of a generative reconstruction, as if all of a sudden one decided to refuse the abandonment of the full resources of language, as if one decided to follow no longer the determining, structuring, reductive force of law.

There is a piece of musicpoetry by Cecil titled "Garden" whose words have been collected in *Moment's Notice*, a set of texts that mark the hope or call of a destination for words and for writing.²³ Reading "Garden" raises questions concerning its difference from *Chinampas*, one of which I'd like to address in closing. It is, perhaps unavoidably,

a question of spacing or position, a question always shadowed by immaterial visualization: what is the *floating* garden? Perhaps this: the garden that floats is the one that lingers in another, improvisational sense of the aesthetic ensemble that is no simple return to an imagined and originary singularity. Instead the floating garden marks the unprecedented present within which the aesthetic is “ongoingly” reconfigured and reconfiguring, bent and bending; within which the illusion of any immediacy of sound is re/written and the overdetermined and deferred fixity of writing is un/written by the material and transformative present of sound.

It’s like when Coltrane, having been shown a transcription of his solo on “Chasin’ the Trane,” was unable to sightread that which he’d improvised. The beautiful distance between sound and the writing of sound requires a kind of faith that could only be measured, for instance, in Cecil’s inability to read

Chinampas #5’04”

ANGLE of incidence

being matter ignited

one sixtieth of luminous intensity

behind wind

beginning spiral of two presences

shelter

light drum

angle of incidence observant of sighns

be’s core based fiber conducting impulses flattened spirals of spirit

prompting letter per square centimeter of *three*

dimensions

swept cylinder and cone

cutting shape of drying bodies Now pulverized

having fed

on cacti

arranged service of *constant* spiral elements of floating *cocineal* and

kaaay and kaay and kaay

and agité an-agité and kaay

and kaay and

yyeeagiye yoa,

ya yoa

deposits of hieroglyphic regions

womb of continuing *light*

preexisting blood per square centimeter of aBlaack bhody

a curve having rotation in three dimensions

cutting spiral elements at a constant angle

behind wind

the inexpressssible inclusion

of one within another

a lustrous red, reddish brown or black natural *fill* compact or

attacked

POINT fixed on circumference

curve about red

does in fact alter regions of contact as a *rooase*

on the outside circumference flushed toward slant

intersecting new reference point

moves clockwise

representing a frequency’s

distribution

each bend of ordian equals the sum in singular

youas youas youas

proceeding enclosure engulfing unending spiral

undulation

there floating amidst aliana and overhead

romela romelaya romela romelaya a ceeia

invisible expressions of warmed *snakewood* soothed by exudation

of sloed balsam scent

is arielroot elixir is knowing circle crossed at oiled extremity
in center of wing burring
creates fire in air
serpent is preexisting light light yeah
the meter maintained is open yet a larger *whorl*
describing orbit of earth
eaters incisors as omniscient
pochee aida aida hueldo aida aida huedo
uniting of three astral plains/planes corresponding to a serpent
synthesis

altering the sliii'de
disengage'd ecliptic traveling
due north

skip through at least two successive meridians
diagonal shear
uniting as macrocosm five heads degrees of tangible *ahhb jects*
graded ascension of floor levels
suspended voice
vibrations
held within concretized mur'eau de perfume *breath*
again *floating*
'tween lighted mooon///soar
and silent cross of bird sensing cold at base
invisible to source of satyrial/siderial turn Between regions of
partial
shadow and complete illumination.

omnipotence
omnipotence the florescence of the perpendicular
omnipotence
the floresce of the perpendicular pentamorphic
the florescence of the perpendicular pentamorphic
perpendicular pentamorphic

(kiss, silences, rhythm)
. . . .

Notes

1. If this were ever sounded, I would not want the appearance of the cut to be marked by another voice. just another voicing, which would not be reducible to a difference of voices, and which would be marked only by the palpability of the cut—no glance, no sound outside, just a pause, **and don't stop the tape recorder.** The question remains: whether and how to mark (visually, spatially, in the absence of sound, the sound in my head) digression, citation, extension, improvisation in the kind of writing that has no name other than “literary criticism.”

2. I am going to write (about) the piece's first section in Taylor 1988.

3. In the absence of reading, either or both of *these terms* might be just as reducible or virtual as *word* or *sentence*. Part of what I would like to relate is the way Cecil's (*work art ritual performance music poetry*), the way that which is of Cecil, renders all of *these terms* unavailable. Nevertheless, I must retain them, at least for a minute, otherwise I Can't Get Started. I hope it strikes no one as jarring or silly if I refer to Cecil Taylor by his given name. I refer any of you who are offended to Christopher Smith: "Within the jazz community, certain artists are named in such a 'shorthand' fashion: 'Monk' (Thelonius Sphere Monk); 'Bird' (Charlie 'Yardbird' Parker); 'Dizzy' (John Birks 'Dizzy' Gillespie). In its own way, it is a gesture of respect" (52). In the spooky-action-at-a-distance or strange nontranslation or unbridged transference between (the absence of) the surname and (the advent of) *le surnom* (see Dutoit), one asserts oneself—perhaps presumptuously—as a member

of that community, that ensemble, in preparation (Cecil says), improvisation (is), self-analysis.

4. Or, more precisely, the double absence: the disappearance of the performance that is not recorded; the loss of what the recording reduces or occludes by embodying an illusory determinacy and representativeness.

5. Implied here is that glow, aura, *sfumato*, hazy luminescence that smears the edge, the containment, of the image or the letter. Halogen, neon, Las Vegas though I'm pretty sure Cecil's never played my hometown—are in my head along with a recent recording of Cecil's, *In Florescence*.

6. Or, more precisely a double phrasing: words' syntagmic ordering and the arrangement and enactment of their internal sonic resources.

7. See Mackey, *Bedouin Hornbook* 34; Harris 26.

8. Gracefully designed by Mike Bennion.

9. Richards's notes consist largely of an interview with Taylor. The recording is of a performance by the Cecil Taylor Unit given on 7 November 1987, just nine days before the recording of *Chinampas*. Richards dates his notes May 1988.

10. "Idiom" demands a break. It demands some extended quotation, first from the *Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, then from Derrida's "Onto-Theology." Idiom, according to the *OED*: "peculiarity, property, peculiar phraseology"; "the form of speech peculiar or proper to a people or country"; "the variety of a language which is peculiar to a limited district or class of people"; "*the specific character, property, or genius of any language*"; "*a peculiarity of phraseology approved by the usage of a language and having a signification other than its grammatical or logical*

one" (my emphasis). Idiom, according to Derrida: "I shall say simply of this word 'idiom' I that I have just very rapidly thrust forward, that for the moment I am not restricting it to its linguistic, discursive circumscription, although, as you know, usage generally folds it back towards that limit—idiom as linguistic idiom. *For the moment, while keeping my eye fixed especially on this linguistic determination which is not all there is to idiom, but which is not just one determination of it among others, I shall be taking 'idiom' in a much more indeterminate sense, that of prop(ri)e(r)ty, singular feature, in principle inimitable and inexpressible. The idion is the proper*" (my emphasis). Let me add a couple of propositions to which I'll return: race ("a peculiar or characteristic style or manner—liveliness, sprightliness or piquancy," according to the *OED*) and idiom, in their determination by a conceptual apparatus made up of uninterrogated differences, classes, and sets, are interchangeable; T(race) and phrase constitute an improvisation of race and idiom, one activated within a certain understanding of totality or ensemble in which idiom is defined as the t(race) of a general idiom that is nothing other than the generativity (i.e., what is produced by and is the possibility of the production of) idiom.

11. Here's an echo of Baraka's oft-repeated claim that poetry is "Musicked speech." The particular manifestation of the phrase to which I refer is to be found in Melhem.

12. Or, more precisely, doubly illegible words: the sonic/visual blurring of the words; the fundamental absence of the written text.

13. Derrida, "Onto-theology" 3.

14. Here I'm in debt to Boone.

15. See Mackey, "Cante Moro."

16. See Rappaport 284.

17. See Cecil's comments on Bill Evans, in Hentoff.

18. Imagine a tone, bearing within it the structure of a phenomenology of totality and singularity that would reveal some opening of the possibility of ethical agency. It would have to provide a *sense*—neither cognitive nor visionary, more than cognitive, more than visionary—of a whole not bound by the interminable oscillation of systemic relation and nonrelation. Such a whole would move beyond the endless and always asymmetrical tension between individual and society or self and other; finally, it would move beyond any ontological formulation of and in difference that displaces the ensemble and leaves us at the site of a discursive contestation of infinite curvature where our reality never escapes the forces power exerts over responsibility and in/determination exerts over improvisation.

Ensemble—the improvisation of and through totality and singularity in and as both phenomenological description and morphological prescription—must, therefore, faithfully reclaim the honor of the whole, an honor that is real only within the complex, radical, and realist attention and devotion we pay to particularity, a devotion that must move through the enlightenment tradition's allegiance to singularity and its conflation of singularity and totality—phenomena certain tendencies within post-structuralism both critique and extend in the analysis and affirmation of singularity's always already multiple essence that is embedded in ontological and epistemological questioning. Indeed, the theory of ensemble is enabled by and is an extension and improvisation of the tradition of a singularist and differentiated thinking of the ensemble, most

particularly as that tradition—at its highest level of intensity and internal tension—begins to be articulated through calls for its dissolution or continuance in the impossible language prompted by the incommensurable conjunction of community and difference. In short, the possibility of a nonexclusionary totality is opened by the most radical critiques—those of identity politics in addition to those of poststructuralism—of any prior totalization.

The point, here, is that those critiques that pay descriptive and prescriptive attention to singularity and totality while responsibly confronting the horrific effects of singularist totalization must be acknowledged and assimilated. But the fact that they offer no meaningful articulation of the ensemble—that which allows our aspirations for equality, justice, freedom—means they must be improvised. The various discourses that are informed by identity politics open the possibility for such improvisation in their directions toward other philosophical or antiphilosophical modes of thought and representation. But it is precisely in the thought of the other, the hope for an other subjectivity and an other ontology, that the metaphysical foundations and antilibertarian implications of the politico-philosophical tradition to which identity politics attempts to respond are replicated and deepened. Improvisation—and thus the possibility of describing and activating an improvisational ensemble—is thereby foreclosed. I am interested in something out from the outside, other than the other or the same, something unbound by their relation or non-relation. That is what I think *Chinampas* is.

19. Thanks, again, to Boone (for quoting Stillman Drake) 9.

20. See Winn. Please take note that this entry

in this definitive encyclopedia says very close to nothing of the life and shape of the synthesis of music and poetry in “the New World” or in non-Western societies. Cecil’s concern with precisely these registers is certainly a constitutive feature of his improvisation through the determinations of the dominant understanding of that synthesis. In his work the trace of *mousike*, the ghostly affect and effect of a *certain free mode* of organization, gives us to imagine a thought not grounded in the architectonics and dynamics of difference that harmony both marks and conceals. It is as if the real/phantasmatic duality of the encounter with the other opens that which demands an improvisation through the condition of its possibility.

21. See back cover of Taylor, *Live in Vienna*.

22. Note one such possible formulation: *Chiapas*. There a generative rearrangement is also under way; more power to it and the ones who carry it off.

23. Check the sentence (written by Art Lange and Nathaniel Mackey, the editors of *Moment’s Notice*) that follows Charles Lloyd’s expression of doubt concerning the capability of words to arrive at music: “Writers influenced by jazz have been vari-ously rising to the challenge of proving him wrong.”

NOTES

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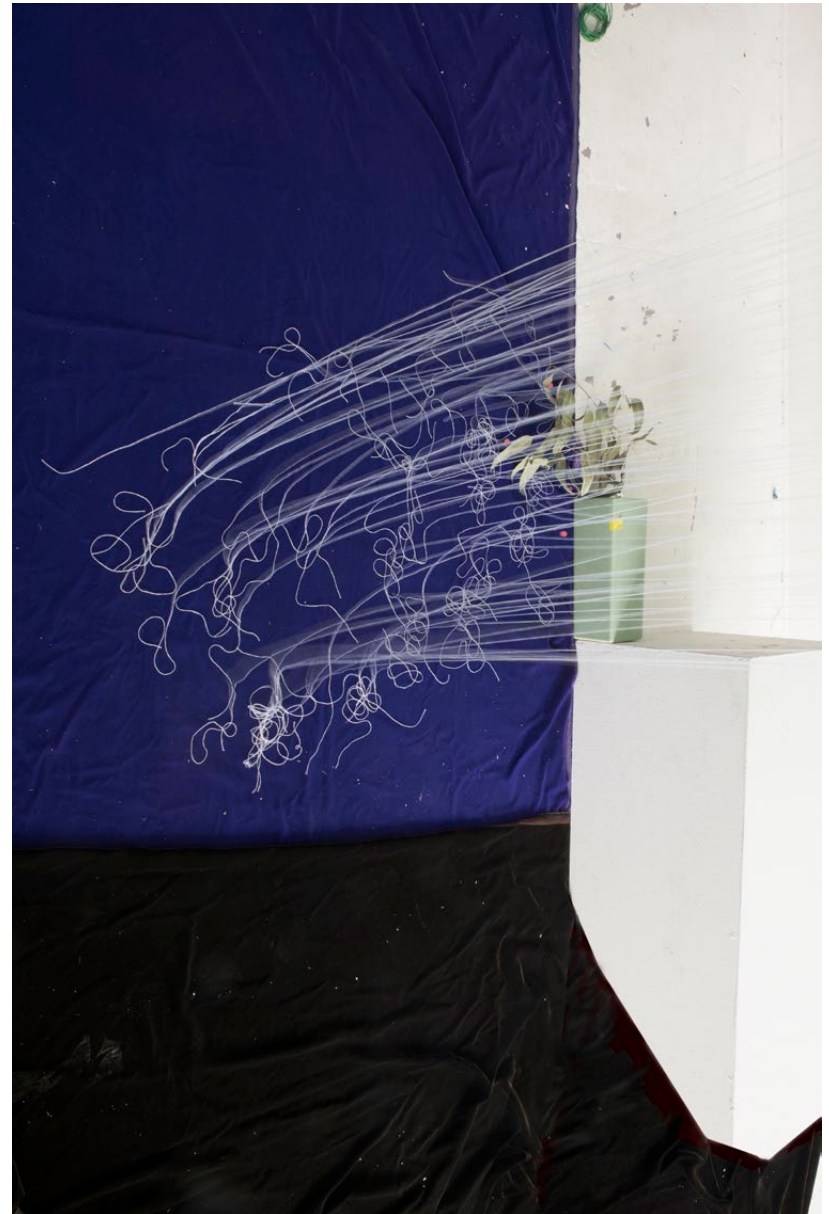
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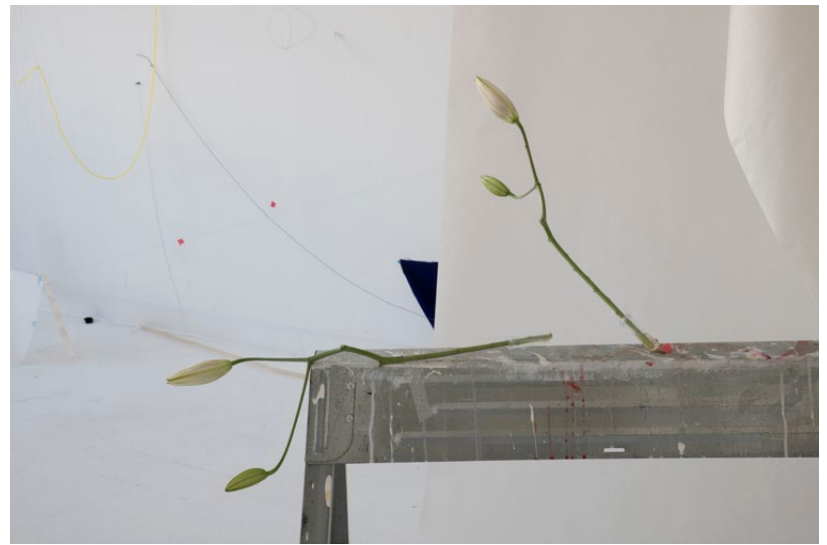
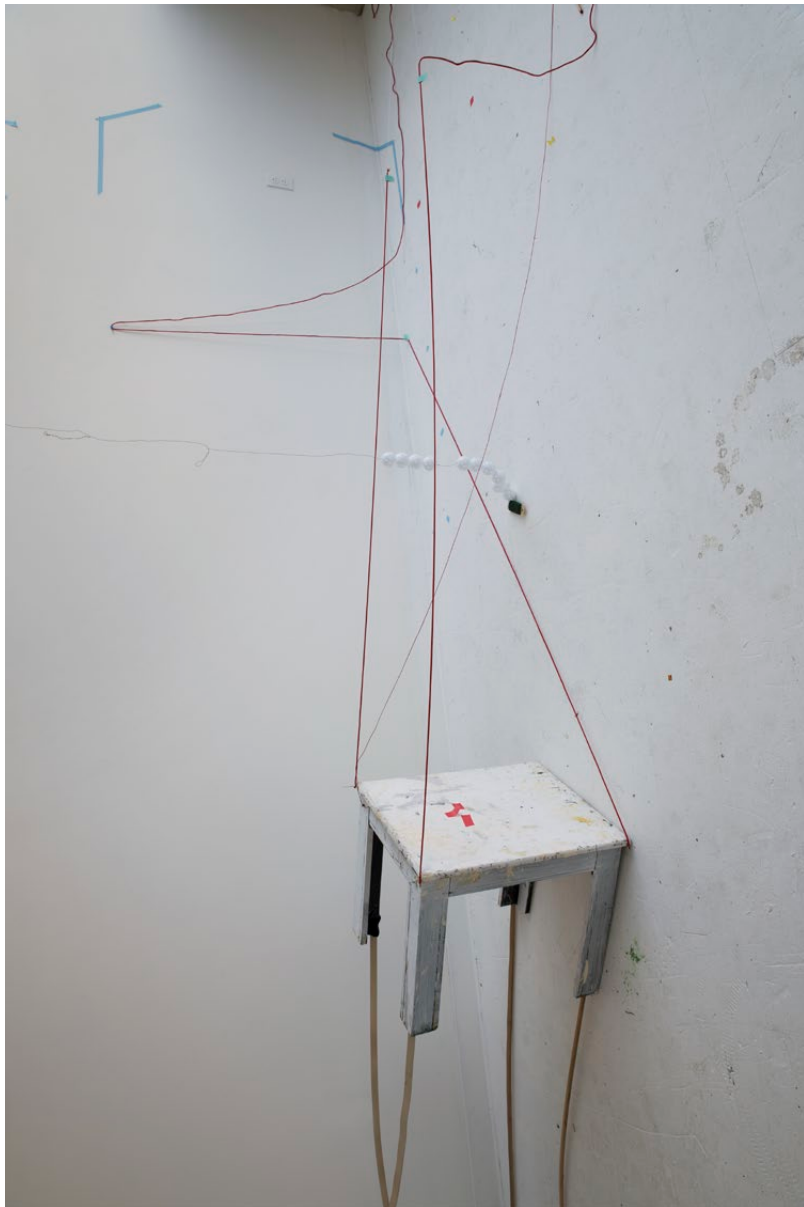
Strings Attached

Ellen Garvens

As a practicing artist for 40 years, I have always been interested in drawing. Lessons in linear and atmospheric perspective, mark making, blind contours, etc., have been formative. In this series I take that interest into three-dimensional space using string to imitate the drawn line. These lines thwart perspective in a playful way to disorient the viewer, creating tension and humor. Objects in the images rest uncomfortably, exist on multiple planes at once, and/or defy gravity. I am interested in manipulating the space to tug against reason and to reshape its logic, while retaining a sense of uncertainty and discovery in the process.







The Estimated Mass of Theatre Lights in a Hollow Bar

Charles Stobbs

For a time I have attempted to estimate the mass of a beam emitted by a theatre light as it materializes in the form of a circle on the curtain of an empty stage. To estimate this number, I have developed an equation which takes into account, among other factors; the number of people in the audience, the scale of the venue and its corresponding decibel level, the interior temperature, the time of day, and the number of drinks which have been purchased that night. All of these elements add to or subtract from the total weight of the projected light, and as the night progresses, the weight continues to fluctuate, one factor compounding with the next.* With the introduction of a second beam the two flat circles form a type of spiraling Venn diagram, which peers across the bar, its eyes detached from any sockets.

It is not until late in the evening and only by emptying my glass and placing it to my right eye in the manner of a small telescope that I notice the beams have taken on a third dimension, which I had previously failed to observe or factor into my calculations. From the center of each projected circle a small round nose protrudes from the theatre

curtain and extends towards the bar patrons. This of course is not a trick of the glass or its convex form, the circles in fact, continue to swell. The noses turn to a bellies, bloating with growing parasites, and finally with one last transformation, into complete spheres. Within the span of a few songs and another drink the spheres have expand and completely covered the curtain, now reaching for the first row of tables from the stage.

As the projections continue to orbit one another a gust is felt throughout the room. A few placards are pulled from the wall and napkins are lifted into the air, which begin to twist through the many arms of the chandelier which hovers above the stage. My coaster slides out from under its glass, and soon the glass follows. Trailed by the silverware, the tablecloth, the chairs, and the table itself, this small parade hurtles towards the stage, producing the type of metal on glass clang so common to one who is about to make a toast. Bottles fly off their shelves, smash into mic stands and add their liquid to the swirling bar. Hands hold onto anything bolted to the floor, others lock themselves in bathrooms and closets. Fingers clench to shoelaces, high heels, and satin boots. Long chains of bodies drift through the bar, resisting the force which attempts to pull them in.

These chains hold for a time, but arms soon grow tired, linen straps break, handles free themselves from their bindings, and the line outside of the bathroom, having nothing to hold onto, flies into the heart of the stage lights, which at this point in the evening, have turned into a functioning dual planetary system. While larger items and many of the patrons disappear within the spheres completely, smaller debris form rings around the newly

born planets and at times are expelled back out into the bar.

As the crowd thins the planets begin to slow their orbit, deflate, and return to flat circles rotating on the theatre curtain. Shattered ash trays drop to the floor, neck ties drape over hand rails, various colored liquids mix in the grooves of the tiled floor. Through this all the speakers emit the bartenders playlist over scattered speakers and twisted cables. The theatre lights continue to dance, endlessly repeating their choreographed steps, performing for what remains of the hollow bar.

NOTES

* I often share this equation with friends or acquaintances as a way of passing time at the bar. Between one song and the next or the transition from one performer to another a frenzied discussion of our estimates may fill the temporary silent air. Of course the results of the equation can never be verified, which guarantees us a few hours of entertainment, and by the time we have exhausted are calculations we are sure to be tired of the bar and looking to move on.

Sonny Assu
Interviewed by
Gloria DeLiberali

Sonny Assu is an interdisciplinary artist whose diverse practice is informed by Kwakwaka'wakw and Western principles of art making. His work often autobiographical and explores his family's history as a way shed light on Canada's treatment of the First People.

He is Ligwilda'xw (of the Kwakwaka'wakw nations) and resides in unceded Ligwilda'xw territory (Campbell River, B.C.).

GLORIA DELIBERALI: From the beginning of your career, your work has been infused with contemporary pop art and culture, and even ready-made practices. Could you tell us a little about how you found your own artistic voice and language, and what makes it so suitable to your goal of advocating for First Nations' history and culture?

SONNY ASSU: I'm big on Spider-Man, so I have the seemingly over-used quote that Uncle Ben gives to Peter Parker on speed dial: "With great power comes great responsibility." Making art is a responsibility, it has the power to inform, to create conversations and to transform peoples opinions.

I like to try and achieve that transformation with my work. When people tell me that what I've made or said has opened them up to other ways of thinking about Indigenous issues and people, I feel that my work has been done. And much like Peter's super-human powers, I have to weld my art and message responsibly. So, while I never thought of myself as an advocate, I appreciate distinction.

As to how I found my voice? Years of study or research, making and conversation outside of the Western institution art school model. It's a form of decolonization, I suppose. I know I have so much more work to do to consider myself decolonized, a lot to unlearn and learn from an Indigenous standpoint. I think I truly found my voice in 2009, when I started to think about my work and message more critically.

GD: One of the underlying themes of this volume of MONDAY is the role of the arts as places to explore and process personal or cultural trauma. Could you tell us about how your work, and particularly your most recent show at the Jacob Lawrence Gallery, *Études for the Settler* (October 23–November 17, 2018), performs this task for you and for the Indigenous people of North America?

SA: Research has shown that cultural trauma can be passed down in the DNA of the survivors. I only need to go back three generations to find the cultural trauma that is engrained in my DNA. I had the privilege of knowing my maternal great-grandparents. They were both born in the late 1890s and had first hand contact with the initial trauma of displacement and attempted cultural genocide. While I haven't experienced trauma like

theirs, what they experienced still has an affect on me and the landscape.

Études for the Settler investigates the trauma of Indigenous displacement and give prominence to Indigenous acts of resistance and resilience. I wanted this exhibit to be a space of contemplation for the settler. To think about, not only how my ancestors were displaced, but who's territory you currently stand on. *Études for the Settler* was the culmination of four distinct and recent bodies of work: *Interventions on the Imaginary*, *iUP*, *The Paradise Syndrome* and *Territorial Acknowledgements*. Each series has a pop aesthetic and questions the colonial influence on the Indigenous people and landscape. *Interventions on the Imaginary* often uses humour to question the intentions of the [occasionally] well-meaning aliens (colonizer/settler) and the stereotypes that persist of the Indigenous landscape. *The Paradise Syndrome* questions the subjugation and displacement of the indigenous people for capitalist gains and *Territorial Acknowledgements* acts to question the capitalist/colonialist agenda by pointing out the inherent wealth of the transformed landscape, now devoid of an indigenous presence. *iUP* acts as a graffiti like tag on the colonial landscape, slighting the settler and indicating no matter how hard they try, Indigenous people keep levelling up.

GD: As part of the School of Art + Art History + Design of the University of Washington, Seattle, the Jacob Lawrence is a gallery uniquely situated within a cross-disciplinary and academic setting. How do you think art historians, designers, curators, and other professionals acting in the School can contribute to the concerted effort of decolonizing the history of art?

SA: Simply, step aside. I know non-Indigenous professors who teach Indigenous studies. For the most part, they know when to step aside and when it is their turn to listen. Those are the best instructors because they know they don't have all the answers, they know that their professional degrees do not grant them infinite knowledge. To truly decolonize, we need to recognize that there are other forms of learning and teaching. Not everything comes from a book.

More work needs to be done by settlers, and not just at the academic level. It should not be expected that Indigenous people or BIPOC provide all the answers for the topic at hand. That shit gets old pretty fast. Especially in educational institutions. Decolonizing is a learning/learned experience. I know that I need to do more work, I know that I am not decolonized. But I feel I'm on a path towards it. In that regard, decolonizing isn't a badge, so don't hold it out there like a carrot and claim it if I get it. I guess it's a state of mind and a state of being. It's recognizing that, in the instance of art, western art history isn't the be-all-end-all.

GD: On a similar note, because the Gallery is a critical site of education and experimentation for young, emerging artists as well as established professionals, could you share with us some of your memories, experiences, or struggles you had as a BFA student that affected your artistic practice and research today?

SA: My academic and studio classes had too narrow of a focus on western art and western success. They show you the art that has meaning and the art that has aesthetic qualities. But they

don't want you to make aesthetic or meaningful art at school. So they critique you into making something that means nothing and expect you to try and make it sound like something. What I learned in the years after my BFA became more important: Unlearn it all! Oh, keep the shit you think is important, the technical, practical and critical thinking skills will always be an asset. But forget the academia, forget all the \$10 art-words. Find something that excites you and go to town. In both my BFA and MFA I made art that was aesthetic and that had a personal connection and a message. I think I stood my ground, in a way. I did what I wanted to. Took what I felt was valuable and that could help me grow. When I look back at that, I recognize that is where I found success for my practice today. So, a question to those young artists reading this now, what is success for you?

GD: In an all-too-recent wave of awareness, museums that hold collections of Northwestern Native American gifts and regalia unethically acquired during the potlatch ban (1885–1951) have started to seriously question the legitimacy of their holdings and their curatorial methods, as Professor Kathrine-Bunn Marcuse's essay in this volume also recounts. In the light of this problematic past, and as an artist whose work has been accepted into the permanent collections of some of the most important art museums in the Northwest (National Gallery of Canada, Seattle Art Museum, Vancouver Art Gallery, Burke Museum at the University of Washington, only to cite a few) what is your thought on museum institutions, and why do you think it is important for a

contemporary artist with an Indigenous heritage to find representation in those institutions?

SA: I think it's important to note that my work was/is actively collected into these institutional spaces. By choice. I want my work to be there, in some cases, next to ancestral objects. I am honoured to be in these collections. However, the objects of my ancestors were air-quote-confiscated under unethical colonial laws aimed at subjugating Indigenous peoples. Often these works were sold by way of a black market, by Indian agents (government officials), who were tasked at busting ceremonies and policing Indigenous bodies. Anthropologist and collectors would travel the coast during this era to build up their institutional and personal collections. I just finished writing a story for an upcoming publication about an unnamed mask in the collection of the Smithsonian. It was speculated that a collector was in my ancestral territory when he got word of the infamous 1921 potlatch bust on Village Island. He hungrily rushed up there to purchase work. No record of what the mask was or how it was danced or who it belonged to exists. Because my ancestors were figuring out how to live in a capitalist society, they had to find ways to provide for themselves. Cultural makers turned into artists. Going from creating objects of culture, to making objects for both ceremony and western consumption. So they aren't sure if this collector got the mask from someone in my village who was selling it as an object of art, or if it was part of the confiscated regalia from Village Island. Places like the Museum of Anthropology (at UBC), the Burke or the Field Museum not only become cultural snapshots (to be challenged), but they also

become spaces for Indigenous artists to learn from. I had an interesting conversation with Marianne Nicolson about this a couple years back. She said that some of our ancestors willingly gave up their regalia and cultural objects to anthropological institutions. Not because of the ban, but to give future generations a place to learn from.

I have the privilege of making work that has a deep connection to Kwakwaka'wakw culture and to challenge the oppressive history thrust upon it. My name is attached to a work that goes into an institutional collections. There are a stories behind them, a reasoning for why I made them. So as to why it's important for a contemporary artist with an Indigenous heritage to find representation in those institutions, It shows that contemporary* artists today are willing to place their works in these collections to show the continuum of culture. To show our resilience and our resistance to the forces that tried to wipe us out.

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* I don't believe in the binary between traditional and contemporary in Indigenous art, it's the same conversation, just different conclusions.

Textualizing Intangible Cultural Heritage: Querying the Methods of Art History

Kathryn Bunn-Marcuse

In February of 2018, I participated in the AHAA panel at the College Art Association. The AHAA session theme was “America Is (Still) Hard to See: New Directions in American Art History.” The title was based on the Whitney Museum of American Art exhibition, *America Is Hard to See*, which was lauded for “fresh perspectives” and the representation of African American artists, but which included only one Native American artist.¹ There continues to be a lacuna around Native American art in art history textbooks and in the worlds of “American art” writ large. But even within my sub-discipline of Native American art history, there are other issues that are “hard to see.” I want to look at the issue of *intangible* cultural heritage, which has become invisible due to the incessant art-historical focus on that which is *tangible* and *visible*.

To start, some history: in December 1921, a Kwakwaka'wakw chief, Dan Cranmer, held a potlatch on remote Village Island, on the central British Columbia coast. Some say it was the biggest potlatch on record, with witnesses receiving unprecedented amounts of payments as many inherited privileges were passed to the next generation.

Fig. 1 – Yaxwiwe', Kwakwaka'wakw frontlet, originally Tsimshian made, late nineteenth century. Maple wood, abalone shell, paint, 9 3/8 x 9 x 3 in. Seattle Art Museum 91.1.47. Photograph by Kathryn Bunn-Marcuse



But the Canadian Indian Act prohibited potlatching in Canada from 1885 to 1951. Consequently, forty participants were arrested and twenty-two were sentenced in the Provincial Courthouse in Vancouver. Faced with the untenable choice of going to jail or surrendering their potlatch regalia—masks, blankets, and coppers—some of the accused gave up their wealth, and the confiscated goods were sold to private collectors and museums.

Although the potlatch ban was lifted in 1951, the repercussions echo to this day. Museums that hold collections often unethically acquired during those dark years must now work to re-earn the trust of affected communities. In 2008, Kwakwaka'wakw artist Marianne Nicolson's *House of Ghosts* illuminated the façade of the Vancouver Art Gallery, which is housed in what was the Provincial Court House. Nicolson's thirty-foot wide projection imposed the lintel and house posts of a Kwakwaka'wakw Big House, transforming the colonial site of the potlatch prosecutions into a virtual place of convening for the spirit and human world. *House of Ghosts* was intended to make people see the histories that are still hard to see, even if they are etched into the land under our feet and the buildings through which we walk. Her work asserts the ongoing presence of First Nations communities and their powerful resistance to colonial abuses. The work asks us to consider if art can reclaim space. But as powerful as it was, Nicolson's work was only a temporary intervention. The digital projection effected no tangible change to the building.

Nicolson claims that her work transformed the Vancouver Art Gallery into a Big House, but concomitantly it highlights the fact that the museum cannot be an actual Big House, and points to

Fig. 2 – Lucy Martin Nelson dances a Tlasula Dance (film still), filmed by Franz Boas and George Hunt, Tsaxis (Fort Rupert), British Columbia, 1930. Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture.



the failings of museums and institutions. The visual nature of most museum exhibitions of Northwest Coast work turns familial property into art and hides the critical histories and intangible connections that should inhere to cultural creations. As Nicolson notes, it is the performative act of singing and dancing in ceremony that animates much First Nations art through the interaction of object, actor, and audience. In that moment, meaning is co-constituted by the knowledge of all those involved—carver, singer, dancer, and witnesses. Museums excel at spotlighting the visual aspects of art but struggle to engage the fundamental sensorial and performative aspects of art tied to movement, song, and language. When objects are removed from their performative contexts, as is often the case in museum displays and text-based art-historical inquiries, their cultural meanings are deactivated, and they become artifacts of the dynamic moment of meaning.

By way of example, when this frontlet, a carved piece attached to a headdress with a long ermine-skin trailer (fig. 1), was sold to a collector in 1965, it was ripped away from the genealogical connections and inherited privileges that had catalyzed its public presentation during ceremonial gatherings in community. Research has brought to the surface the latent connections of the physical object to the intangible wealth of the community from which it originated. In this instance, the frontlet appears in an 1898 photo of Charles Nowell's wedding, an event during which it and other family regalia and tangible wealth were used to transfer names, songs, dances and other intangible property, rights, and privileges, many of which are still held by Nowell's descendants.

This same headdress also appears in a unique archival document from 1930—films made in the village of Tsaxis (Fort Rupert) by Franz Boas and George Hunt with members of the Hunt, Martin, Wilson, and Williams families (fig. 2). The film shows this headdress being worn by dancer Lucy Martin Nelson. It is a rare document of the frontlet actually in use, in a dance during the Canadian government's potlatch ban and only eight years after the potlatch prosecutions in 1921. In 1955, Kwagu'ł chief Mungo Martin watched the film, recognized his daughter's dancing, and recorded the song that was meant to accompany it. Together the film and audio provide a rare glimpse of this frontlet in a dance, its rhythm and movement as well as the performative kinship connections and inherited privileges that were validated when it was danced.

This frontlet is just one example that demonstrates the complicated relationships between object, dance, song, and—perhaps most importantly—genealogical connections. It also illustrates the fraught nature of archival materials and the methodological challenges to art history in uncovering the connections that material objects have with intangible cultural property. The archival material on this frontlet comes from five different museums and archives, but most importantly, that material has been reconnected with knowledge from the Hunt, Martin, and Wilson families and other community members who were consulted over time by Franz Boas, Erna Gunther, Bill Holm, and myself. This collaboration has clarified the record of the frontlet.

My inquiry at this current moment is to ask how museums and art historians can work harder to record and address these important connections. How might technology restore the connections

between the tangible and the intangible that text-based art-historical practices and their often singular focus on the visual have damaged or elided? What would that look like, and how could it shape current museum and publication practices?

Traditional art-historical texts and even museum exhibits have rarely been able to evoke the full range of connections between the tangible and intangible. Moreover, it is clear that indigenous communities are actively engaged in the “archive,” using publications and collections to meet current needs.² Past events and people, as well as renewed customary activities, are often discussed in community as to how they are “inscribed in published works.”³ So, the risk of *not* striving for the fullest record has long-lasting impacts. Projects that work to reweave information fragmented among various institutions due to Western collecting practices can have concrete results.⁴

As caretakers of this knowledge (such as records of songs, dances, and names) and as caretakers of the collections of physical objects, museums must work with communities to determine how their cultural property (both tangible and intangible) will be cared for.⁵ How should issues of access and authority, consent and rights management, be handled with the Indigenous communities to which this heritage belongs?⁶ How can institutions that hold these fragments of knowledge work collaboratively with community necessary to reunite them?

It should be a core mission, function, and value for scholarly writing and museum information systems to support Indigenous communities' urgent needs for access to, and use of, their own cultural heritage. We need to care for both tangible and intangible material and facilitate community

connection to that material. Museums must learn how to support the desire to recreate objects and how to reactivate songs or dances associated with those objects and how to expand beyond storage shelves into new ways of documenting, understanding, and presenting context that challenge current cataloging and retrieval systems. Ultimately, we must rethink the academic categorization of objects and practices in ways that allow for multiple knowledge systems and priorities, including treatment of culturally sensitive and protected information.⁷

Digital publications have a unique capability to implement an art-historical approach to the visual object while integrating film, oral history, and song to activate the performative contexts and intangible rights and privileges that are key to robust analyses of these artworks.⁸ We can attempt to acknowledge, understand, and preserve the intangible materials that crucially inform the physical objects in museum collections, and—most importantly—we can engage in robust inquiries led by community priorities. These steps are critical for publications as well as museum practices.

We have the technology. It is time to get to work.

NOTES

1 – Nancy Elizabeth Prophet (1890–1960), African American and Native American (Narragansett) sculptor, was the one native artist in the Whitney Museum exhibition. Recent programming at the Whitney Museum of American Art reveals a new initiative to support Native American and acknowledge traditional land and ongoing colonial legacies. See <https://hyperallergic.com/447207/the-new-red-order-the-savage-philosophy-of-endless-acknowledgement>.

2 – Many museums work with communities to bring historical knowledge from collections into conversation with living memory. Sven Haakanson's Angyaaq Project is one example at the Burke Museum. Kwakwaka'wakw historian Gloria Cranmer Webster discusses how the Franz Boas and George Hunt papers were used for many revitalization efforts including canoe carving, kerfed box making, and language revitalization in "Consumers, Then and Now," in Laurel Kendall, Igor Krupnik, eds., Constructing Cultures Then and Now: Celebrating Franz Boas and the Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Contributions to Circumpolar Anthropology, Volume 4 (Washington, DC: Arctic Studies Center, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 2003), 362.

3 – Daisy Sewid-Smith, "Interpreting Cultural Symbols of the People from the Shore," in Charlotte Townsend-Gault, Jennifer Kramer, and Ki-ke, eds., in Native Art of the Northwest Coast: A History of Changing Ideas (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 24; Marianne Nicolson, "In Order to Survive We Create," in Sonny Assu, ed., Sonny Assu: A Selective History (Victoria: Heritage House, 2017).

4 – Kimberley L. Lawson, "Precious Fragments: First Nations Materials in Archives, Libraries and Museums." MLIS thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 2004.

5 – The passage of the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act mandated that museums work with American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities on the repatriation and care of their material heritage. My call

here is to think about extending these protocols and processes into the realm of intangible cultural heritage.

6 – More museums are thinking about culturally-sensitive databases. One example is Mukurtu which was designed with Aboriginal communities "to empower communities to manage, share, and exchange their digital heritage in culturally relevant and ethically-minded ways." See <http://mukurtu.org>. See also multiple publications by Kimberly Christian, one of Mukurtu's founders.

7 – Karen Duffek, "Bridging Knowledge Communities at the UBC Museum of Anthropology," a paper presented at the International Council of Museums International Committee of University Museums and Collections Conference, Mexico City, 2006.

8 – Aaron Glass, Judith Berman, and Rainer Hatoum are working with a team of Kwakwaka'wakw advisors and contributors, including Andy Everson and Corinne Hunt, to bring greater cultural specificity and contemporary Indigenous knowledge into a new digital edition of Franz Boas and George Hunt's 1897 book, The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians. See Aaron Glass, Judith Berman, Rainer Hatoum, "Reassembling the Social Organization: Collaboration and Digital Media in (Re)Making Boas's 1897 Book," Museum Worlds: Advances in Research 5 (July 2017): 108–32. For an expansive discussion of some of the issues raised in this Bully Pulpit essay, see also Aaron Glass, "Indigenous Ontologies, Digital Futures: Plural Provenances and the Kwakwaka'wakw Collection in Berlin and Beyond," in Raymond Aaron Silverman, ed., Museum as Process: Translating Local and Global Knowledges (London: Routledge, 2015): 19–44.

Digitization and Personal Trauma: Processing Stress and Loss Through New Media Expressions

Leah St. Lawrence

Our participation in social and immersive digital media is bodily-connected to our physical and emotional state. Digital engagement, whether online or through immersive experiences (VR/AR), requires physical and emotional activation from the user; i.e. clicking, turning, selecting and investing in the narrative. When we invest as users in these new media narratives our physical bodies become linked to the representation (whether identity or story based) created by another body; a virtual one. The user is, in turn, allowed to navigate and participate in the narrative in their own way, and so, these immersive and interactive experiences are surprisingly able to represent and process physical and traumatic stress—especially in relation to loss and identity. Healing from loss and identity stress requires participation in an empathetic community. Utilizing sites such as New Hive and Tumblr, and technologies like virtual reality and app-based gaming, artists are carving out digital space to create immersive and interactive experiences; accessible on a globalized network.

For years, traditional art has been used to deal with trauma, but there have been numerous limits

when coming to the creation of community viewers: accessibility to gallery spaces and time restraints, but with digitization there is the potential for global access indefinitely. Digital art can accomplish more than traditional mediums because of this accessibility, i.e. the work can be downloaded and is not limited to the walls of a gallery.

Two factors make this new medium of artistic expression unique: sensory experience and user participation. Music generates connection through sensory experience; we *feel* music. Music can also be narrative, whether it be an entire album, an opera or musical, or even the score of a film. Music is momentary and striking, alerting our senses to a shift in surrounding. However, one thing we can find in immersive content and digital platforms which is not prevalent in music is direct user participation. The incorporation of sound (or lack of sound) alongside visual elements in digital work directly relates to the users' ability to connect and experience a presence both physically and mentally. Because of the requirement to engage and the sensory experience of the user, personal narratives and identities, when represented as digital, are amplified and then projected into the body of another. This projection allows those who relate to the narrative to connect, while allowing those who do not relate to build empathetic responses.

Technologies and digitization can disconnect us from empathy and communal processing as they isolate us behind screens and shield us from the emotional output of others. However, specific artists and experience builders are utilizing digitization to project virtual identities which are continuously challenging disconnection by using technology to generate empathy. Lou Ward's app-based

game, *Tinker*; meant to simulate the experience of losing a loved one to Alzheimer's, Ryan and Amy Green's immersive experience *That Dragon, Cancer*; a narrative immersion about their young son's battle with terminal cancer, and Elizabeth Mputu's *Digital Healing Center: Cyberserenty*; which provides a platform where POC/queer individuals can find solace, are all interactive immersive works which strive to re-present personal narratives intent on connecting and cultivating communities.

Storytelling comes in many forms, but when it comes to the presentation of a virtual identity, the methodology is to simulate the creator's experience, so it can be reconstructed for and by the user. Games put you in the position of a character and can be very tuned into building empathy because of the way it feeds you the creator's intended experience. Games slowly allow you to take on first person goals and connections. Jason Tanz, for *Wired* magazine, wrote about *That Dragon, Cancer* back in 2016 ["A Father, a Dying Son, and the Quest to Make the Most Profound Videogame Ever"], and states, "Amidst all the plasma guns and power-ups, it can be easy to overlook the fact that videogames are inherently metaphysical exercises."¹ The Green's 'game' leads with a harrowing realization, Joel is going to die. It is then your choice to participate in the process and it is this choice which signifies the beginning of a truly empathetic journey. The visceral participation it requires, and the subsequent emotional result, shakes the perceived foundation of what gaming and immersive simulation is all about. Intent does not always predicate the results of technological advancement and creation.

Real world trauma and loss re-presented in digital format is one way new medias are addressing

connectivity, but we can also see this on social media platforms as artists attempt to combat digital stress. One of the most successful in directly discussing social media stress is new media artist Elizabeth Mputu. Conceptions of the body and the construction of the “ideal” has been the subject of their virtual landscapes since their well-received selfie series launched on Facebook. The selfie series provided a platform where queer and non-conforming users could post images of themselves in a safe digital space. Elizabeth Mputu’s digital healing centers, hosted on the platform NewHive (a self-publishing tool geared towards new media art forms), are created for a specific audience: the POC/queer community, to provide a social space where they do not feel alienated by their othered experiences. Mputu describes their work as generating love and connection from an ‘alien’ point of view. It is because of the relation between the default (white/hetero) body and the POC/queer body that these healing spaces are needed. Mputu takes this virtual body, which has absorbed a new form of stress, and offers relief. *The LVLZ Healing Center* encompasses tunnels of pages bouncing between different hosting sites. Reading as a collage of Mputu’s personal meditations, perceptions of black bodies, queer identity, surveillance, and police brutality are all confronted through the lens of this serene environment. Traveling through the site is like walking down a winding path in a city park, no destination in mind, no indication of time. Refreshing and calming, Mputu has published not only an innovative virtual performance, but also a safe haven through which we can recharge as net citizens.

The individuals streaming these stories or navigating the digitized experience are able to

digest the content at their own pace which allows the traumas being presented to be processed on an individual level while still remaining connected to the creator. Stages of grief and identity building do not follow a specific timeline or order and with immersive content, such as Mputu’s healing centers. A critical aspect of this is the real-life mimicking of choice; you have control to navigate the site in a non-linear way while being confronted with reality-based situations presented from the identity and experience of the creator. In Mputu’s healing center, their breath and the sound of their voice as you engage with the video media is a main sensory component. In *That Dragon, Cancer* the laughter of Joel, narration, and musical score further envelops your senses and solidifies your connection to the work—so much so that the score is available for download independently of the game.

By exploring the rise of contemporary art and immersive experiences which deploy these technologies we can see the potential for even greater connection. Digitization always runs the risk of presenting a cold or detached relation between the creator and the user, but its utilization by designers and artists to reach a broad audience and generate empathetic connection has amplified. Social sharing sites such as Instagram provide a platform for individuals to present their stories while allowing the users to engage at their leisure. Through the social sharing of identity and stresses upon identity, such as traumatic loss, an individual or group is able to feel less isolated. The same strength comes from the programing and sharing of digital games such as *That Dragon, Cancer*. Experience builders and artists can recreate deeply personal experiences that provide their users the opportunity to connect

and heal in the digital age. The adage “misery loves company” stands as community building around shared trauma is needed and desired. Digitized art is able to deal with this in a uniquely esoteric way.

Occupational Noise Thermometer
Poster with Fold Lines

Copyright Act of 1976 §105; 403
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Standard Number 1910.95

Reflections on Composing and Performing Climate Data: Judy Twedt Interviewed by Kristina Lee

Judy Twedt is a climate data sound artist at the University of Washington. In the summer of 2018, she composed a piece for piano from satellite data of Arctic Sea Ice, commissioned for TEDx Seattle. Performed by Seattle-based pianist, Kristina Lee, *Arctic Sea Ice* (2018) was premiered at McCaw Hall in November, 2018.

JUDY TWEDT: You've said that, when you first saw my score (after bravely agreeing to perform something that had not yet been composed), it was not what you expected, and you were delighted. Why?

KRISTINA LEE: You used an ancient scale, the pentatonic scale, that is very intuitive to the human experience of music, so it was relatable to me and I knew it would be relatable to the general audience. And you used the time signature that it also ancient, that BA-da-da, BA-da-da, BA-da-da, that exists in folk music.

JT: It gave me goosebumps to see you play the data for the first time because all of my previous work was electronic music, but this time it was live

human gesture playing and expressing climate data. What did that feel like for you, knowing that you are embodying this loss of Arctic sea ice?

KL: The first time we went through the whole thing, yeah it gave me goosebumps, just starting to play it, because there's storytelling before the piece—learning where the data comes from, why you've turned it into music, etc. ... So I found that experience to be very powerful. The combination of the raw data and your work of deciding what kind of music to make out of this, and looking at the score, hearing your story, and then playing, it was a really powerful moment. And when you decided to hold the repeated notes [of monthly data], that allowed me to start creating phrases. [When the score was finalized] I sat down and looked at the music and started singing the melody in my head, asking it, "where do you want to breathe?"

JT: That's such an interesting question to ask of data. You know, my process was, I made a rule, a mapping, and ran the data through that code to produce notes. Then I listen and see if I like that scale, that tempo, that range, etc. ... but there was a lot left in terms of the expressivity and phrasing, and you did that really beautifully. Was performing a piece from satellite data different than standard music compositions?

KL: Absolutely—there was a pressure because, you know, I wanted to have integrity towards your work and we both wanted to have integrity towards the audience. We don't want to misrepresent the science. At the same time, your [TEDx] speech was about how can we connect emotionally to the

changes in our environment, so I felt like this [performance] needs to, you know, it has to create an emotional response that resonates somehow, but it was jarring to do this in two and a half minutes!

But let me ask you, from the time that you started composing music with data, did you envision that there would be a live performer?

JT: Not at first. All of the pieces I have done until now have been digital, computer-generated music, but I was interested in working with live musicians, and delighted when TEDx Seattle asked if I would write something for live performance.

There was a moment when I decided for this piece—"simple mapping"—so that people can understand the data clearly, or as clearly as possible and just be able to experience it without getting too caught up in a complex interpretation. And I think, you know when I decided to let the keyboard be like the y-axis, and the left hand represents the long-term averaged the right hand represents the monthly ice area which, over time, goes down the keyboard crossing over the left hand, I knew it would work. The fact that it's both sonic and gestural is visually compelling to people.

KL: So tell me more about that experience...

JT: I started with the data, and mapped it to the pentatonic scale, and listened to it as an electronically-generated sound file which sounds nothing like human performance. But I used feedback from listening to the sound files to decide what key and range to use, and what chords to play in the left hand to represent the rhythm of the seasons.

KL: When we did the early rehearsal [for your scientist colleagues] they had such an emotional reaction to seeing a performer on the stage, you know, sitting for awhile while you talk, then playing [the data].

JT: Right. Science has well-established empirical methods and aspires to be as objective as possible in the analysis of data, but the results can feel very heavy, when we see how rapidly ecosystems are changing from global warming. Art adds this whole new layer of human meaning and expression to science communication. When you understand something scientifically, then bring human expression and art into the mix, I think so many people are craving that, especially with climate data because climate change affects us in so many ways. When we only talk about science through graphs and figures we miss the emotional processing and connection.

KL: So, you met with some people before deciding that you wanted to work with me, and I thought we had a really great working relationships. That was such a pleasant experience to trust each other and give input that was helpful. I mean, I really loved working with you. What do you think is important when you're looking for collaborators?

JT: I agree and think we got lucky working together! Both of us were interested in making this experience collaborative. And there wasn't too much ego. [chuckles]

KL: Yeah, and we had similar values in aesthetics. We didn't want to over-do it...

JT: And, I think that choice and aesthetic, when we're talking about Arctic change—the ice-covered arctic ocean is a quiet place in contrast to, say, a rainforest where there's a constant cacophony of sounds. I mean, there are sounds in the ocean underneath the ice, but on the sea ice, you know, it occasionally cracks and breaks, and there are wind storms, but the ocean surface is barren. A minimalist aesthetic fits well with sea ice data.

Arctic Sea Ice

a sonic and gestural interpretation of the satellite record from 1979 - 2016

Judy Twedt

$\text{♩} = 72$

RH: sea ice data
LH: the seasons

1979
smoothe, with ease

23 2001 $\text{♩} = 86$

poco accel *agitated*

27

31 2007
stormy *poco accel* *cresc.*

35 2012 - lowest ice on record
(cresc.)

39

Clotilde Jiménez
La Traición (diptych), 2018
Mixed media collage on paper
30 in. x 43 in. each
Installation view,
Jacob Lawrence Gallery



Clotilde Jiménez Interviewed by Emily Zimmerman

Clotilde Jiménez: Apple of My Eye, on view at the Jacob Lawrence Gallery from November 29 to December 29, 2018 featured recent collages and charcoal drawings by Jiménez that use fruit, a traditional symbol alluding to sexuality in Western art history, to explore the constraints of sexual identity. Using everyday and texturally rich materials such as wallpaper, images cut from magazines, and plastic bags, the collages bring pointed humor and formal rigor to the representation of the Black, queer, masculine body. The following interview was conducted between Clotilde Jiménez and Emily Zimmerman on December 20, 2018.

EMILY ZIMMERMAN: In the new series of collages in *Apple of My Eye*, fruit is featured as a metaphor to deal with the limitation of Western sexual identity. I was wondering if you could talk about how the new series came about? Do you often work in series or is this a new way of working for you?

CLOTILDE JIMÉNEZ: I don't think I work in series a lot or at all. It's kind of new. I work and when I see a natural shift in what I'm doing or thinking or

writing about, then I would consider it as a kind of chapter. And that happened maybe in my last year in grad school.

EZ: That's interesting.

CJ: Yeah, it just kind of happens. As I mature and go through life, so does the work. I don't know when it'll be done.

Fruit has always been a part of my life as an actual object and then as a metaphor. But it's been something that I've had hidden inside me. Growing up I knew I was different. I didn't have the vocabulary to say I was more effeminate or queer or whatever. But oftentimes to hurt people, people will call you names such as fruity. And so I have a history with that kind of language.

Some people hate fruit. I eat it every day. And it just kind of entered the work that way. It's very simple—I was trying to become more healthy in my lifestyle and eat healthier and maybe get out in the sun more. And as I'm eating this fruit for breakfast every day, while walking down the street ... I'm also a black man. I'm conscious of when I'm eating a banana, I'm self-aware that I don't know of if someone is associating this with some kind of monkey behavior because of the way someone might look at me. Then I'm also queer, so I'm thinking, I don't really care how I'm eating the banana but I can tell that some people are ... If I put the whole thing in my mouth, not the whole thing, but if I eat it as it is versus when I break it up, I'm self-conscious about it. So there are many lenses that I'm looking at it through.

EZ: The entire history that the symbol of fruit carries with it.

CJ: Yeah, or even going to the market and saying, how much is this watermelon? I'm not embarrassed but I'm aware. And I had never really thought about it until I got older. So I started making work about this, because that's what I was thinking about. It's important too.

EZ: And there's a history of also, not only of fruit as a symbol for identity but also using it in art as a stand in to talk about sexual identity, say during repressive Victorian era politics. It's a really powerful set of symbols. How did you come to work in collage?

CJ: It just came out of necessity really. To be honest, I never studied collage, never looked at collage. I never really liked other people's collage work except for, I don't know, Romare Bearden. It's a lot of this kind of analog stuff that it just wasn't kind of pushing the limit. It wasn't doing much with it, and I just didn't really like it. So I stayed away. But when I graduated undergrad, I had no money. I had some resources at the university, but I really didn't know what to do. I studied printmaking. And I realized I was heavily bound by materials in a studio, copper plates, acid, lithography presses, stuff I didn't ... you can't just take with you.

I had these materials: I had paper, I had magazines. And one day, I was using everything. I ran out of red paint and I just went in the magazine and I tore it out and I stuck it on. And it started to work with what I was already thinking about in my work.

But it really came out of necessity, and I started building upon it. I never had any preconceived notion of what it could or could not be. And so I kind of approached it in my own way, just cutting

up clothes or sandpaper or wallpaper or magazines, all of it.

I think I come from more of a drawing background. All of it has kind of entered the work, even the printmaking. I might have mentioned to you, I am constantly looking at Japanese woodblock prints for inspiration. I'm looking at German expressionists' lithography, because these are the names, these are the things that I know.

EZ: The materials selected for your collages are so tactilely sumptuous—cloth, sandpaper, foil. I'm curious about how you choose your materials. Are you choosing for elements that invite a tactile gaze?

CJ: These days, I am. I've only been working with collage for a few years, but there has been a kind of shift in my decision making. As of this past year, I'm looking at texture. I'm very literal with my work. Like I said before, there were no rules. There were no limits. So if I need a bed sheet or a bed, I think, well how can I show that? First, I'm going to draw it. I might paint it just as a base layer. But then I'm thinking, how can I build it? And I said, "Well, maybe I can cut up a mattress." Because that's what the figure's on. So I'm looking to create depth and bring in the real world, the materiality of the real world into the piece.

EZ: That's great.

CJ: That's why I started using sandpaper for hair, because I'm thinking there's a million ways you can make hair, but I'm thinking about texture and how it feels. I'm thinking about African textured hair, something a little bit more rough. I wasn't doing

any of this a year ago. I'm constantly kind of evolving, experimenting.

EZ: I'm so happy that you mentioned the drawing, because that was another thing I was wondering about. Looking at the collages, it looks like every piece has a combination of drawing, painting, and collage elements. I was wondering if you started with a particular technique or is the process new for every piece?

CJ: I'll always draw first. That's just the most natural thing to do for me. It always has been. I think some people are not comfortable with drawing. Where I studied at the Slade, painters, no one had a sketchbook. And that's fine, but for me, I was the opposite, I was just drawing. And it was very fluid and very loose.

On the other hand, I'm not comfortable with painting, because I never studied it. But there's always this hierarchy in the art world and academia. Anyone can draw. Anyone can put a pencil to paper. But not everyone can paint, at least that's what I've experienced people say. When I paint, I find myself painting very fast and in a way that's kind of linear. I feel like I'm drawing with a paintbrush. Someone pointed that out to me in grad school and I said, "Yeah, it's because I'm just not comfortable with it." I just want get it over, like put some things down. I don't really enjoy that act of painting, I don't.

EZ: Efforts have been made in the last 20 years or so to dismantle the hierarchy of art genres because it has been one of the tools for supporting the patriarchy. That's a really interesting dynamic within your work.

CJ: And I think it shows in the work. That's pretty much the process. I'm just thinking about building, and building upon, in a sculptural way. If you're make a sculpture, or casting something, you have to think about an armature or framework like a piece of wood, you can build upon.

That's kind of what I think about my 2D work as well, drawing being like a skeletal thing and then the paint being like muscles. That's the way I paint. I think about the body and then the collage is what comes on top. And I'm thinking about perception. I'm thinking about what I want people to see clearly. Maybe I want the chest area to be very clear and defined. And then I want them to see the hair later, but also they can see the texture. This kind of push and pull thing that's happening.

EZ: I was noticing a few instances of reflective materials in your work. Out of all the pieces in the show, the apple in *La Tracción* is the brightest element. Is that fair to say?

CJ: Yeah.

EZ: In terms of perception, the human eye is drawn to bright objects.

CJ: I think that may be the first time I've used shiny material in general. But that speaks to what I'm talking about. When I thought of the title *Apple of My Eye*. I was thinking of that piece as well. The apple is very important in the work. I could just draw the apple. I could paint it, I could do anything. I'm thinking about the viewer, my intention, what I intend the piece to do and how I want the viewer to look at the work, but I also know that you

can't control that. The piece speaks for itself once it's on the wall. I can't really project anything into it, unless I'm standing there talking about it. So it's just these little cues that you try to do such as the shiny apple.

EZ: Could we talk more about that piece *La Traición*? It's the only diptych in the exhibition and it also occupies a really central place in the exhibition.

CJ: *La Traición* means the betrayal. It is a kind of recognition of how I used to think in the past. It's basically me looking at myself. It's negotiating or reckoning how I used to be and how I am now as far as understanding and being content with who I am. And I have one figure who has the white shirt who has his fist in the air and looking at the other figure. It's the same figure. It's the same body. It's just a mirrored reflection.

It's important for me to have different skin tones in it because I really want to show that there is no one color of blackness, which is something that I'm hyper aware of. Growing up, and sometimes even now, people say, "Oh, you're not dark enough." It's just a bunch of foolishness. Not everyone. But, it's important for me to show that. That piece was just kind of looking into the mirror and betraying oneself. I don't do that now, but I did do that for many years when I was younger. And so the fruit, the shiny apple, is this symbol of queerness.

And yet, there's this a distraught look on the white shirt figure. It's not so angry, but it's more sad. It's more uncomfortable. And I wanted to show that even though it was a conscious betrayal.

Clotilde Jiménez
Portrait of My Father, 2015
Mixed media collage on paper
32 in. x 44 in.
Installation view,
Jacob Lawrence Gallery



And I wanted to use flowers to symbolize the softness and gentleness and so there's a flower in the hand as well. There's a fist and then a flower in the other hand.

EZ: So pointing to a latent softness that kind of comes out in the portrait on the right.

CJ: Yeah.

EZ: That's great. Speaking of your history, I was wondering if we could talk a little bit about *Portrait of My Father* and the symbols included in that one?

CJ: Yeah, my father asked me to create a portrait of him riding a horse, wearing Napoleon's hat and holding a football. The collage just turned what my father said on its head, so instead of a horse there is a toy horse. I wanted to poke fun at that way of being and speak to the fragility in it. Because that's what it is at the end of the day.

EZ: And there are Japanese woodblock references in there. Is that what you were looking at then?

CJ: At the time, yeah, I had a big book. I wish I still had it. And I was using some imagery. It was kind of just what I have in my studio and what I have around me.

EZ: The art historical references run really deep in *Apple of My Eye. Forbidden Fruit* takes up the subject of the reclining nude, which is a subject that's been peppered throughout art history from Titian to Manet to Courbet. I was wondering if you could talk about the genesis of the piece?

CJ: The reclining nude, like you said, you kind of see it everywhere. There's some big names and then there's some maybe not so big names. And because of that, it's something that I've always wanted to do. I remember starting it and thinking I'm finally doing it, I'm doing my own reclining nude. But I'm thinking about why am I doing it and what does it mean to me?

And I was thinking about there was a time in my life where I had a traumatizing racist experience. I was upset about it. I'm not anymore. And I was going through a lot. And at the end of the day, I would lay down in my bed and I would just exhale. And I'd think, last week I'd lay down feel fine and go to sleep and now I feel like I have all this baggage with me. I got some counseling and kept reading.

That's what I was thinking about at the time when I made the piece. A lot of these nudes that I would see, they didn't seem so distraught. It was a very leisurely thing. It was a fancy chair. But I'm thinking, I don't feel like that at all. And I ended up making this figure. I really don't know what possessed me to do it, but I ended up cutting the limbs off, because I felt at the time kind of helpless at the time. It was just, this is how I feel. This is what I bring with me to bed when I lay down.

EZ: That's powerful. And you've said that all of the pieces are self-portraits, right?

CJ: Most of them are just self-portraits. Very few times I'm thinking of people like my grandmother or something like that. It's very much autobiographical. It's just versions of myself.

Some people keep a journal. For me, I'm drawing it, a kind of a sketchbook journal if you

will. I don't think I'm solving anything. I'm just kind of asking more questions and putting it out there. In the process of making, there's a therapeutic way of negotiating all of this for me. It takes me time to put things together. If you have a canvas, you mix paint and then you apply the paint to the canvas. But for collage, there's cutting and there's tracing and a lot of steps. And I'm thinking about what I'm doing and why I'm doing it, what it means. And the decision making shifts depending on what all that is.

EZ: I was wondering if we could talk a little bit about your influences. You've mentioned some: Japanese woodblock prints and the expressionists.

CJ: Aside from the woodblock prints, I was looking at Romare Bearden. One person's work I do look at because I am greatly influenced by it is William H. Johnson. I can't lie about that one. There's a ton of other artists: Jonathan Lyndon Chase, Shikeith, Mickalene Thomas. Jacob Lawrence would be right there with William J. Johnson, Henry Taylor.

The thing about Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden and William H. Johnson is I was looking at them kind of in the beginning and they lit a fire under me. They gave me recognition and inspiration to just move forward in this way. Because I remember in undergrad just questioning, can I do this, can I draw like this, can I do it and it be good art? Of course I can do it. But can I do it and be taken seriously?

I said I can draw someone in a realistic way or something. I've been trained to do it and I'm pretty good at it. But I don't wanna do it. It doesn't mean

Clotilde Jiménez
Forbidden Fruit, 2018
Mixed media collage on fabric and paper
65 in. x 73 in.
Installation view,
Jacob Lawrence Gallery



anything for me. And after a while I was thinking what I want is I want to, if someone is working with their hands, I kind of wanna draw their hands in a certain way. But I was unsure if that was as people good art, bad ... And then I started noticing that all the bad art was just artists of color. I was like, oh, no, that's just some racist ideology right there, if you know what I'm talking about.

EZ: Totally.

CJ: But they don't teach you that. But they do kind of subliminally teach you or show you or you just learn growing up that things that white people produce are good and the standard and everyone else is othered.

So Jacob Lawrence definitely showed me that that's completely wrong and incredibly important to then tell our story in the time that we're living. And so that was a huge ... I wouldn't be doing my work right now actually.

EZ: That's a beautiful note to wrap up on, thank you so much, Clotilde.

Deep Listening
Extreme Slow Walk
Equivalency (2006–2007)*
Dedicated to
Pauline Oliveros

Stuart Dempster

During the course of the Slow Walk exercise I found myself walking in such a way that it enabled me to have one foot, or equivalent, on the floor at all times. Besides using the “time in between steps” to slowly bring the next foot forward, I devised a system whereby as I placed one part of the lead foot down I would release the equivalent part of the rear foot.

The notion of having only one foot or one foot equivalent on the floor, along with balance on one foot for several seconds while the next foot moves into position, requires a tremendous amount of concentration. In working this out, after a while I seemed to hear my feet sing. I have done Extreme Slow Walk before in other Deep Listening retreats and workshops, but this variation took me into a whole new aural space.

The “one foot or one-foot equivalency” version of the Extreme Slow Walk:

1. Place lead foot onto floor heel first, followed by outside of foot to ball of foot, finishing by each toe one at a time from littlest to biggest.
2. At the same time release heel of rear foot off floor first, followed by outside of foot to ball of foot, finishing by releasing each toe one at a time from littlest to biggest.
3. All the above needs to happen in exact synchronicity to achieve the desired effect.
4. The most difficult is raising rear foot toes in order from littlest to biggest, especially in synchronicity with lead foot, but that improves with practice.
5. Maintain balance and full foot contact during the several seconds it takes to bring rear foot forward to become lead foot. This shift should take as long as possible.
6. During “full foot contact” be aware of The Nine Points creating contact: The under tip of each toe (5 points); (3 points) along ball of foot; (1 point) in the center of the heel.
7. After several minutes your feet will begin to “sing”.

NOTES

*A nuanced take on Extreme Deep Listening® Slow Walk by Pauline Oliveros. This equivalency variation was developed while attending a Deep Listening Workshop in Philadelphia on 1 April 2006 (rev. 2007 at Lifebridge Sanctuary in High Falls NY with Heloise Gold's suggestion of adding #6 above).

@2006, Deep Listening Publications
@2007 Stuart R. Dempster Music

Worried Notes and Troubled Light: Music and Hegel in Mondrian's Aesthetic Philosophy

Emma McIntosh

Piet Mondrian's interest in music is undeniable. His final works *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942) and *Victory Boogie Woogie* (unfinished, 1944) bear evidence of his love for the genre he discovered on his arrival in the United States in 1940. While scholars have attempted to tease out the relationship between these titles and their musical roots, the discourse has often been confused and used to support the position that Mondrian's late works abandon all his former aesthetic philosophies. In addition, few have attempted to see the majority of Mondrian's oeuvre through this musical influence. Just like Hegelian philosophy is a consistent thread in Mondrian's theory and writings, music also is a constant source of inspiration and consternation. This paper will aim to create a more nuanced take on the musical influence on Mondrian's work by examining Mondrian's interest in jazz and dance during his artistic career. It is this paper's goal to identify music as part of Mondrian's aesthetic philosophy and in turn to be able to identify how the theoretical constructs that Mondrian garnered from music manifest in his work.

Mondrian's move to abstraction was met with a move back to his studio in Paris after the conclusion of World War I. 1920s Paris, in addition to being a home for avant-garde visual artists, was also a center for modern music and dance. We know that Mondrian experienced a large breath of what the city had to offer musically (Blotkamp 160–161). He attended concerts by Schoenberg and Russolo as well as Josephine Baker at the Folies Bergère. Mondrian continued to indulge in his love of music and dance during his time in Paris, even though he complained of the cost of dance halls (Blotkamp 164). Since money was often tight for the artist, his extensive collection of 78rpm records becomes even more intriguing. During his time in Paris Mondrian collected over 40 records from a diverse group of American and European artists. These 78s include mainstream American artists such as Paul Whiteman, Cab Calloway, Josephine Baker, Duke Ellington, and Louis Armstrong and British band-leaders Nat Gonella and Jack Hylton.*

So where do music and Mondrian's painting meet? Mondrian wrote: "The general public finds my work a bit vague; at best they say it reminds them of music. Well, I have no objection to that, unless they take it a step further, and say that for that reason my work is outside the realm of visual arts" (Blotkamp 81). Therefore we can be skeptical of claims that draw upon Kandinsky's synesthetic approach to representing sound in visual art (Kim and Kim). We can draw a line between Mondrian's interest in music and his theory surrounding his painting and broader aesthetics. Music, particularly non-narrative instrumental music, is abstract. Abstraction is propelling us into the future while narrative driven art is stuck in the past. Further, Krukowski adds that

"[t]his striving for a musical ideal strikes a distinctly Hegelian note, for music is here viewed as free from certain limitations that persist within 'advanced' nonmimetic pictorial art" (286).

As Cooper points out, the two *Fox Trot* paintings are the only titled works before his move to New York City. These paintings may have been titled in response to his patron Katherine Dreier's previous re-titling of his works (Cooper "Popular Models"). If this was meant as a preventative measure it was not successful, for Dreier retitled the works before showing them in America anyway. But why *Fox Trot*? Even Dreier pondered this titling. Perhaps it is as Cooper suggests because the paintings were to travel to America, the home of the fox-trot. Or is it perhaps because he wanted to evoke a sense of modernity, or the feeling of the music and dance?

Perhaps one of the reasons that Mondrian titled the *Fox Trot* paintings the way he did was to indicate movement. Within two years of that titling he would introduce the double line into his work (Bois 249–250). This doubling was in response to the perceived lack of dynamism in his work. *Fox Trot B* (1929) utilizes the triad of primary colors that Mondrian pioneered, and the non-colors of black and white. At first look this might seem to be a very static image. In one of his first writings for the journal *De Stijl* he states, "repose becomes plastically visible through harmony of relationships" (84). Mondrian was particular about maintaining an asymmetric equivalence in his compositions in order to create a tense yet harmonic play between the colors. But this element of repose is not intended to be read as stasis, "for Mondrian, repose is the relation of valences of force and energy within

the play of absolute difference” (Michelson 12). Indeed, in this composition all three colors are separated from each other and the white planes by thick black lines. On closer inspection we can tell that the red at the top of the painting and the blue on left actually jump the boundaries of the black lines and reach towards the edge of the canvas. In *Fox Trot B* Mondrian also employs thicker black lines next to the blue and the yellow, that are so thick that they might be considered planes. This is complicated even further by the black square in the upper left corner. This ambiguity between line and plane seems to almost foreshadow the direction he would take this interpretation of neo-plasticism in his late career.

Dance has often been overlooked when it comes to Mondrian’s art. We know that Mondrian took dancing lessons for a majority of his adult life and was accomplished as a dancer (Milnes 208). But there has been little in the way of meaningful discussion about dance in Mondrian’s work. For example, Cooper suggests that *Composition C* from 1920 now housed in Tate Gallery evokes a “bird’s eye view” of dancers on the floor performing a promenade step used in fox-trot (“Popular Models” 173). However, Cooper does not mention that this particular painting hung on Mondrian’s studio wall and the “spinning” that Cooper sees is echoed in the space as the artist hung small pieces of colored board around it, complimenting the lower right-hand side of the painting and continuing the colors into the architecture. Something that has also been completely ignored is that the boogie woogie piano music that would become so important to Mondrian in the 1940s was first and foremost a dance music (Mathews 27).

Mondrian’s relationship with music seems to have been unique to a lot of his Parisian contemporaries. Like many he was exposed to the works of Russolo’s sound machines in 1921 (Blotkamp 161). He experimented with Dada sound poetry as did many of his De Stijl peers. He also knew Arnold Schoenberg’s avant-garde compositions and spoke positively about them. Some authors such as Maur assert that Mondrian was influenced by these avant-garde composers but, unlike an artist like Kandinsky who was deeply influenced by the avant-garde composer, they provide no evidence to support the idea that he was influenced by Schoenberg’s music in any significant way (102). Another hotly contested influence is the artist Josephine Baker. Baker was a figure in Paris during the 20s and 30s that attracted a lot of attention from the avant-garde artists (Cheng 58–59). Nancy Troy asserts that Mondrian, who saw Josephine Baker perform in 1926, was influenced by the “primitive” that many other artists saw in her exuberant performance style (646). Cooper debunks her assertion that the dance was “brutal”, finding no trace of this word in his texts (“Popular Models” 166). The record that Mondrian actual owned was one of Baker’s very first, two older musical tunes by American composers Jerome Kern and the Gershwin brothers.

Mondrian was interested in the rhythm of life. During what F. Scott Fitzgerald would title “the jazz age” this preoccupation with the rhythms of the modern world would occupy many peoples’ minds. Mondrian was fascinated with the rhythm of life and the rhythm of the popular music that was making its way across the Atlantic. Jazz, as he saw it, released the tired hold on the old “form” of melody

in favor of an exploration of rhythm. Bars and nightclubs flourished as centers for newly invented cocktails and modern social dancing, as Dashiell Hammett's fictional detective Nick Charles put it: "You see the important thing is the rhythm. Always have rhythm in your shaking. Now a Manhattan you shake to fox-trot time, a Bronx to two-step time, a dry martini you always shake to waltz time" (*The Thin Man* 1934). Mondrian would crown a bar as the ideal ultimate space where architecture, sculpture and painting would finally merge becoming one (Brown 20). Mondrian wrote that the final space in the ideal museum for contemporary art would be a convertible room that had a bar in it and an American jazz band (Brown 20–21).

The most striking comparison regarding Mondrian's musical influence and the Hegelian dialectic theory he assimilated from Schoenmakers centers around an American style of music called the blues. While blues has many different stylistic genres and histories, the one we are most interested in is the New Orleans jazz style that became a mainstream success in northern urban cities in the United States in the 1920s. The most standard blues composition is called 12 bar blues. Over a duration of 12 measures (colloquially called "bars") a certain progression of chords is played for harmonic contrast and resolution. While in some styles of jazz chords are blocked (all the notes played together), in boogie-woogie the standard 12-bar progression is played in an arpeggiated or "broken" style. This ostinato of broken chords provides the framework for boogie-woogie piano and gives it its signature sound. In boogie woogie piano, the pianist uses the left hand to play the repeating base pattern, and the right hand to create higher melodic flourishes. These hands

working in opposition create a sublated whole: "The resulting sound is a cohesive whole often deceptively 'bigger' than the sound of the single instrumentalist" (Mathews 28). This expansion of sound from one note, or a blocked chord to a rippling bass line is reminiscent of Schoenmakers' interest in the movement from point to line to plane.

Goethe defined color as "troubled light". In music a "worried" or "blue" note is two dissonant notes sounded together, which in the context of the scale give it the stylistic color of the genre. When composing or improvising in a blues context these oppositional structures lend the music its characteristic contour. It's remarkable how closely this creative process parallels Mondrian's neo-plasticism. Mondrian builds with color, but these colors only have compositional meaning in relationship to each other. A blue note by itself is simply dissonant, just like a singular rectilinear plane tends to become an object on a background. It is not necessary to sound the whole scale to understand the context of the blue note, just like Mondrian's lines and planes do not always resolve themselves neatly at the edges of the canvas; we can infer their larger context thereby creating a larger improvisatory exercise.

Most of the writing about Mondrian and music is focused on his late works. In his late works the references to music become more overt including explicit titling in musical themes. *Broadway Boogie Woogie* and *Victory Boogie Woogie* seem to break with all established precedent in Mondrian's oeuvre. The colored planes are no longer bound with black, titles evoke a textual world outside of the canvas, and the integrity of the line and plane is in more flux than ever before. The play between the line and the plane in *Broadway Boogie Woogie*

is reminiscent of the dialect play of the bass line in boogie woogie piano (Cooper “Mondrian, Hegel, Boogie” 136). The doubled lines that give the painting dynamism are no longer solid in their color or state. They are divided or constructed out of many smaller rectilinear color blocks. The high amount of visual stimulation forces the eye to move around the painting. Here we get a strong sense of a weaving, or braiding of these lines and planes. This “braiding” as Bois points out was intended to destroy spatial illusion in his later works (271). Only at three points where the lines meet at right angles does the color, yellow, remain unbroken by red, blue or gray. In a sense we can see *Broadway Boogie Woogie* as the sublation of the double-line paintings of the 1930s. Here there is no way to separate line and plane—do the planes make up the lines or vice versa? As Wiczorek points out, “Mondrian’s relational play of graphic and pictorial means is always aimed at eliminating individual elements [...]” (258). This oppositional Hegelian play is reminiscent of a jazz player who will take a simple pattern, either of melody or rhythm and deconstruct it through improvisation. The beautiful thing about jazz and Mondrian’s paintings are that they both expose the inner workings of the two artistic systems, visual and musical, and through a rigorous deconstruction manage to create something far more expansive than a standard modality would ever have allowed.

There is still a place in the scholarship about Mondrian’s life and works for an in-depth analysis of his record collections. In regards to his so called “classic” neo-plastic period there is very little writing about his musical influences at all, and none that seriously examines his record collection from

that time. Taking a more critical look at the content and volume of his collection prior to his overt titling in his late works would better help us understand the trajectory of his musical-visual aesthetics. Because his record collection is very diverse, it would be an interesting project to do a textual-musical analysis of his writings to see if his assertions aligned with his listening habits. There is still place for an in depth musical analysis to attempt to understand Mondrian’s use of musical terminology, for it does not always seem to align with the standard usage. There is also room for a critical look at the preexisting literature on this subject to see how well previous arguments hold up when viewed in comparison to both the musical reality and the visual evidence. Further, there is relatively little written about his interactions with race and music. It should be noted that when he came to the United States he frequented the Café Society which was the first integrated night club in New York City (Nieuwenhuis 38).

While Mondrian’s work changed radically from the start of his career to the end, many constants remained. His interest in modernity never wavered as he continued to experiment. His abstract works continue to engage viewers and ask them to think critically about visual information. Mondrian’s tools of Hegelian theories and musical influences aided him in his exploration of the rhythms of the modern world.

NOTES

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New Black Swing

SassyBlack

Come as you are and be seen
From near and far and in between
Feel what you say, say what you mean
Announce your pride and feel redeemed

I am worthy
You are worthy
We are worthy
Have faith in it

Look fear right in the eye
It's okay if you cry sometimes
Life can be hard out here
Unveil yourself and feel revered

Announce your pride and feel redeemed
Feel what you say, say what you mean
Come as you are and be seen
From near and far and in between

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