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SPARRING
IN SEATTLE

WITH TIME, SPACE,
ART, AND MINDS

E · RATIO 2014



SPARRING IN SEATTLE
WITH TIME, SPACE, ART, AND MINDS

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SPARRING IN SEATTLE

JOSEPH F. KEPPLER

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SPARRING IN SEATTLE

WITH TIME, SPACE, ART, AND MINDS

Preface

Sparring is serious but never decisive. The opponents, always studying each other, desire to land no real knockout blows before a ringside crowd. Rather they seek to learn about soft spots, split-second openings, speed, agility, power, and finesse. Perhaps the real fight is about wanting to impress or be impressed and then continuing better, smarter, and more confident from the sparring match.

Choosing the right sparring opponent is difficult for coaches and teachers are everywhere outside the ropes. They all seem to fill particular niches beyond one's own body and soul. They are good for specific sports, sciences, or studies. Yet there are other strong contenders for one's universal challengers in life. They have powers invulnerable to one's own unique left-right combinations and are as solid a partner and antagonist as one could find. This past year while sculpting here in Seattle, I have also been sparring with time, space, art, and minds. It is not winning I seek but better artistic practice.

Obviously, time is no match for anybody. It always wins in the end. It goes on with and without orbits, calendars, clocks, heartbeats, or light. Earth, our colored globe spinning in swirling space, is also the graveyard for time's competition. The dead orbit the Sun with the living.

Time beats everyone but not all at once and not in a known particular moment. Time always plays with continuity, repetitions, and collectivities, and so my sparring matches with time are only a wanting to learn as much as I can while also keeping away from its sucker punches and dirty tricks.

As a sculptor, I think about space quite a bit too, particularly what it is for me, for objects, and for place to be spatial—sharing space with space and yet not quite being space the same way.

Space is container and contained and the vastness surrounding all. Yet that is not right either for it seems first, space is about one, being all around and inside one, and second, space is about one, being almost like one's definition from features, attributes, and power. A bout with space is a bout with oneself alone and with oneself as other.

Space, like time, does not spar as another boxer spars with you. It spars with you as countless opponents fight you. A space makes you, you. Yet space makes everything else too. So sparring with space for a sculptor is like banging hard against a heavy concept hanging inside and outside oneself: It is your own head; then again, it is not. It is repeating rapid blows rhythmically against a helpless speed bag your eyes cannot see and your head cannot fathom.

Art, of course, constantly struggles with artists anyway, daring them to make it, whatever it is, really art; and artists consistently make it something like art. Art does not deign to spar for it is all choice at once out of reach and yet just within reach, out of control and yet somehow seemingly controlled. Art is no contest, no match, no history, no thing, and no concept. Art is the divine but conversely: If God is living but declared old and dead, art is a dead child declared healthy and alive.

Reviving youth is how I spar with art. Looking for openings, I prop art up against the ropes and keep jabbing at it until it sweats, swings wildly, and spits up all over me. Art gets into one's eyes and ears somehow and revives the hands reaching for immortality. Some fattened art today stinks like a slaughterhouse. Therefore, I spar with the steel or other material to make it live, to make it fight me over what is not art, to make it light enough to live on somehow as a sparring partner.

Finally, minds are typical sparring partners. Conversations, articles, classes, dialectics—these are typically where gloves and headgear are mandatory and where ideas come and go, fast and strong, before landing right on the jaw. Now one can choose to spar, regardless of finances and neighborhoods, with others from universities around the world. Massive, Open, Online Courses (MOOCs) have yet to realize their potential championship reign but already one can sense the heavyweight education revolution. Different pedagogy and course styles from nationally and culturally dissimilar universities are available for comparison. Art and languages, I hope, will play bigger roles in MOOCs as well as better and more equitable pre-K through Grade 12 education, but already it feels good to be sparring with outstanding minds from Harvard, Stanford, MIT, Tokyo, Melbourne, Florence, London, Toronto, Berlin, Copenhagen, etc.

Unlike Montaigne and his aristocracy many centuries ago, these short bouts are prepared both for this Seattle sculptor/aficionado and for those ringside who care what his head and hands are doing in Seattle sparring with time, space, art, and minds.



On Numbers, Letters, Time, and Poetry: Understanding Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity with a Child

How are letters and numbers different?

This is the question my sweet, six-year-old Cecilia proudly answers by telling me she knows her alphabet and numbers up to one hundred. Together we talk some more about differences between letters and numbers, and she says, "Well, they have different shapes. *One* is just a line, but an *A* has three lines." *Good*, I say, and then we try to fathom how numbers work by adding, subtracting, and equaling, and how letters do not really do that so well unless we treat them like numbers and add *a* to *b* or *a* minus *b* as if letters were more like drawers in cabinets than like little birds growing word wings in nests. Mostly, though, we figure that letters become sounds to sing with and words to write with; before we know it, I kiss both her cheeks, say goodbye, and she enters her first-grade classroom.

Do numbers and letters signify time equally or differently?

Numbers and letters proceed being different shapes, functions, and thoughts; and they puzzle me as time does. When I stop to think how I now experience this moment, *now*, I have neither numbers nor words in mind. Rather I think in time about time. It is as if my intellect tries to stop thinking about anything but being, and I become a being meditating being; I am then not any numbers or words; nor am I thinking about any numbers or words. *You will soon complete seven trips around the Sun*, I tell Cecilia after school. *Then you will be seven years old*. "I know," she says, holding up one hand fully extended, plus a thumb and one finger on her other hand. *What if you were on a star not going around the Sun, but going as fast as starlight, how old would you be then?* "Probably this many," she says, as she keeps opening and closing both her hands.

What do people experience when experiencing time?

Temporal experience is like being still and yet moving, together at once. It is as if one were being both the observer standing still on earth and the observer sitting still but moving at velocities close to the speed of light in

Einstein's thought experiments, as if one were really two people in one person. In fact, Einstein's thought experiments establish that one can not only think about two different observers, like Alice and Bob, in two different times and places but also formulate their different times and distances in equations using a qualifier known as gamma, the Lorentz factor. With their different velocities, the observers' clocks proceed differently to measure different times. Their numbers run differently. It appears that numbers have speeds just as speeds have numbers. I ask Cecilia the next day: *Do you remember how we were talking about how numbers and letters differ? Do you know that numbers can go very fast or very slowly or perhaps even stop completely, for instance, right at six like the permanently forever six o'clock teatime for the Mad Hatter and March Hare in Alice in Wonderland?* She says she already knows letters can do this too because it takes her such a long time to handwrite each letter of her alphabet:

A a B b C c D d E e F f G g H h I i J j
K k L l M m N n O o P p Q q R r S s T
t U u V v W w X x Y y Z z.

Time moves everywhere simultaneously all the time, so is a moment a movement?

Sometimes it seems that simultaneity is like shooting an arrow into a wave to fix it in place on the ocean's surface. Perhaps assigning a certain time to a certain event or even assigning a certain time to anytime is chimerical, arbitrary, and yet conventional. Different clocks have the same time on them; everything happening then is happening at the same time; this is an acceptable conclusion if different events register identically on calibrated clocks. Clocks run consistently and steadily once in place, but time can go quickly or slowly for everyone depending on where they are and how fast they are moving to-and-fro. The Special Theory of Relativity calculates that time is measurably different for moving and unmoving observers in relation to one another. Existence begins and ends in time; and not, time begins and ends in existence. Time exists in time, and simultaneity records

existence. *Cecilia, what do you think it was like before we started to live, and what do think will be happening when we stop living?* “Hmm, I don’t know. Maybe before and after are different without having any, anymore, any you or me, I mean.” *Now, while we are right now, do you think we are even before we are and even after we are too? I mean before Cecilia and me and after us too, even now we are already there.* “I don’t know, Papa, I don’t know.”

Is the relativity of simultaneity the same for Einstein as it is for ancient poets?

According to Emmy Noether’s mathematical theories, there are translational, rotational, and temporal invariance principles at work in the universe. Energy is always conserved. Physical laws apply universally to the universe; they do not vary from place to place, position to position, or time to time. So perhaps Homer and Sappho knew about relativity millennia before Einstein. The poets did not have theoretical physics, only observations and descriptions. The Homer of the many rosy-fingered dawns would sometimes sing of an immortal who can travel from Olympus and just appear right in front of an active hero. Sappho pleads for Aphrodite to help her attain her beloved, and all of a sudden, Sappho is Aphrodite: Perhaps we all share time invariantly, each one of us in our own unique lives. Maybe both physicists and poets appreciate how ‘time is suspect.’

So now what, Cecilia, should we make some art? ”Yea!!! Let’s color!”

THIS IS A BLUE PAINTING
ENTITLED:
TIME DOES NOT EXIST LIKE
THIS

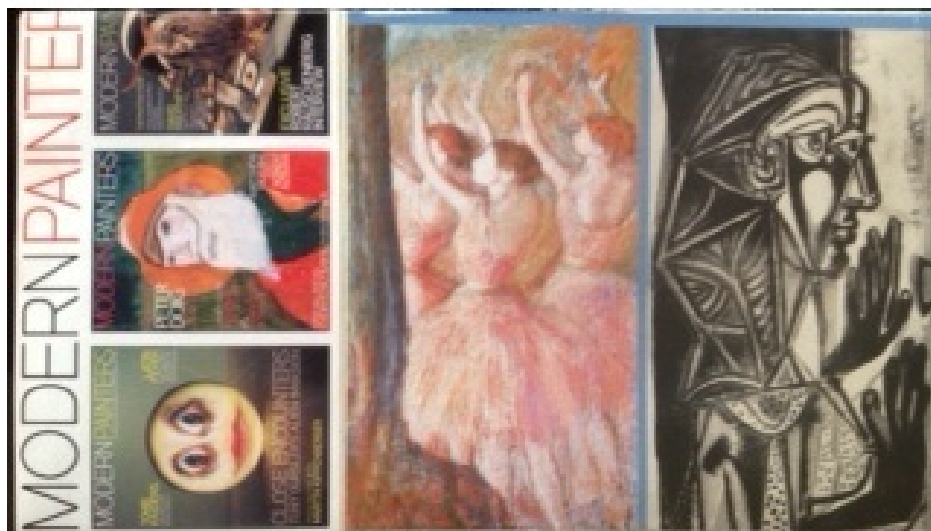
A Brief Take on Homeric Time

Homer opens the *Odyssey*: “Tell me, O muse, of that ingenious hero who travelled far and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy.” After quickly whetting his audience’s appetite with a prelude swirling with delightful expectations for adventures, disasters, loves, and battles to come, Homer immediately segues to a council in Olympian halls where Zeus, the first of men and gods, was first to speak. Here at the epic’s very beginning, the *Odyssey* designs time differently. This is not relentlessly successive modern calendar time. The broad swathes of past time and the unknown expanse of future time vivify the epic present tense as well as the actually present singing and hearing this epic. Time may in fact go on forever, and heroic Odysseus struggle against immortal Poseidon; yet past, present, and future are not the only times twisting and turning in the *Odyssey*. Like Penelope’s weaving and unweaving her daily cloth, the epic itself is woven and unwoven with fabulous, historical, narrative, dialectical, dream, and of course, mortal and immortal time. That is to say, Homer stitches several temporal dimensions together: he briefly presents grand history like the Trojan War, for example, within the compressed time of Odysseus’s and his audience’s day-to-day experience. Continuing his song, Homer ties and unties the epic with single events like stitches. His idea of time seems to suggest that epic truly exists in experiencing thinking in action. It makes myth live on and on; it is telling in both senses of the word for grand epic happens through heroic daily life. Long before 20th century physicists discovered time’s relativity to perspective and motion, Homer expresses time as infinitely expandable (immortality) or absolutely abridged (simultaneity). He works his epic and daily scales of time to focus faraway or in close-up detail. Homer uses time the way Einstein and Fellini use time: as that which everyone carries according to both everyone’s place and any other thing’s velocity. Before Homer ends his epic with a thunderbolt from Zeus securing a whimpering peace in Ithaca and weaving time one last time, he presents many different time experiences. In one special case he even details how Argos, a neglected, dying dog, experiences time by somehow remembering his long past and then feeling his beloved master, Odysseus, now nearby. All this time happens then and then again now.

E.Mail Art Time

Art passes into history. All art eventually becomes past art but not yet. History conversely compresses time into art. Time eventually comes from art. History passes into art.

The images on the envelope below are from a thick, special-edition *Gallery Guide* for June/July/August 2006. The envelope itself is handmade, cut from thick, drawing paper so that the cut-and-pasted collage has firm backing. The images are purposely not from new artists showing their work in the summer 2006 but from dead artists whose reproduced works supposedly exemplify Art. Yet the collage's context places them in 2006 to suggest their work will always be historical, passing, and present.



The advertisements, words, and place names inside and outside the envelope use folds to hold memories going backward past 2006 for some art. The envelope thus becomes a physical metaphor for art and time: a way to understand history as something containing images and words, as something sent from one time to another, and as something physically and temporally present.

Inside the envelope is a folded poem entitled, *Time*, on its front. When the poem is first unfolded the letters, *m*, and *o* appear, each letter centered on a separate side. These two sides are then unfolded to reveal the letters, *m*, *e*, *n*, and *t*, with each letter centered in a segment of the four-part, thrice-creased, folded poem. When the poem is closed by turning the two outer flaps back together and turning the insert over to the back, the letter, *s*, appears. So the insert is a meditation on *Time* by involving the reader who opens *Time* and sees in the time of reading the poem: *m o m e n t s*.

Here is the e.mail art with the envelope unfolded and the insert poem:



Time and Space in Darwin's Science and Flaubert's Literature

What is 'past'? Where is it in space? The long ago, that time once filled with its then existing life, is of course virtually vanished, no longer recognizably alive like a heartbeat. The expression, the past, concretizes an intangible direction to the formless and placeless phenomena called time.

The past has a space forever just beyond us and somehow in us. Can we be past and present the way a scientist like Darwin and a novelist like Flaubert think we are?

Darwin publishes his monumental *Descent of Man* in 1871 and concludes it with the thought that men still bear in their bodies the indelible stamp of their lowly origin. He thinks the past shapes everything in our present nature.

As he gets into Chapter 4 on Natural Selection in his 1859 *On the Origin of the Species*, this is what he writes: *How fleeting are the wishes and efforts of man! How short his time! And consequently how poor will his products be, compared with those accumulated by nature during whole geological periods.*

Nature's grand temporal scale composes us physiologically because our biology—our nervous, nutritive, reproductive, and other systems—clearly resemble and relate to other species' biology throughout time.

Remains and restoration imply how the past once worked. The human is only another branch on Darwin's metaphoric evolutionary tree. Above, below and before our own seasonal bough, there were other seasons with other primates: some are historic Neanderthals perhaps like us; others differ slightly from us, like apes.

Darwin's human is more a classification than an individual. Man is a species long in development and still developing. We are identifiable as playing a child's role in nature's exuberant story, which awards certain species longevity because they adapt for survival and lets other species die off because they do not adapt to survive. Darwin specifies organisms and extrapolates from nature's physical variety the evolutionary array including us as well as those who will live after us. He writes science so



well that fields like evolutionary biology, psychology, and genetics model their analyses after his painstaking example.

Science and literature exploit the past differently, of course, but not so differently as to contradict each other's temporal understanding. Yet Darwin writes about species without any individuals; Flaubert writes about individuals without any species.

Flaubert publishes *Madame Bovary* in 1856. He is writing literature as Darwin is writing science. Both present a past as if the past were as easy a matter as opening a wrought iron gate and entering another's place; and for them, it is that easy. For me, there is no gate and no way to enter yesterday. There is only art's occasional chink between past and present. Skeletons remain dead bones; storied imaginations recreate their once beating hearts or their written characters.

You are apt to find when starting any particular chapter in *Madame Bovary* a precise description about an individual that leaves an impression on you about their past character. Thus the beginning of chapter VI in Part 2: "One evening when she was sitting by the open window, watching Lestiboudois,

the sexton, trim the boxwood, she suddenly heard the Angelus ringing.” Bovary recognizes what it is she hears. Part Three, chapter VII begins: “She was stoical the next day when Maltre, the bailiff, with two assistants arrived at her house to draw up inventory for the seizure.” She realizes she has to pay her long-accumulating and ever-mounting debts.

Like Darwin explaining present status from past origins, Flaubert arranges the plot chronologically from young dreams to adult nightmares. If Darwin were a physician, he would be a specialist in Internal Medicine, not caring too much about his patients’ stories, but examining their bones, blood, urine, ears, eyes, throat, etc., for pathologies. If Flaubert practiced medicine, he would specialize in Clinical Psychiatry, less concerned with his patients’ physiology than with their mental status and behavior. He would examine their orientation, thoughts, obsessions, relationships, etc. These two authors take separate paths through the past and thus differ in what and whom they are looking at and thinking about as well as what to conclude from it.

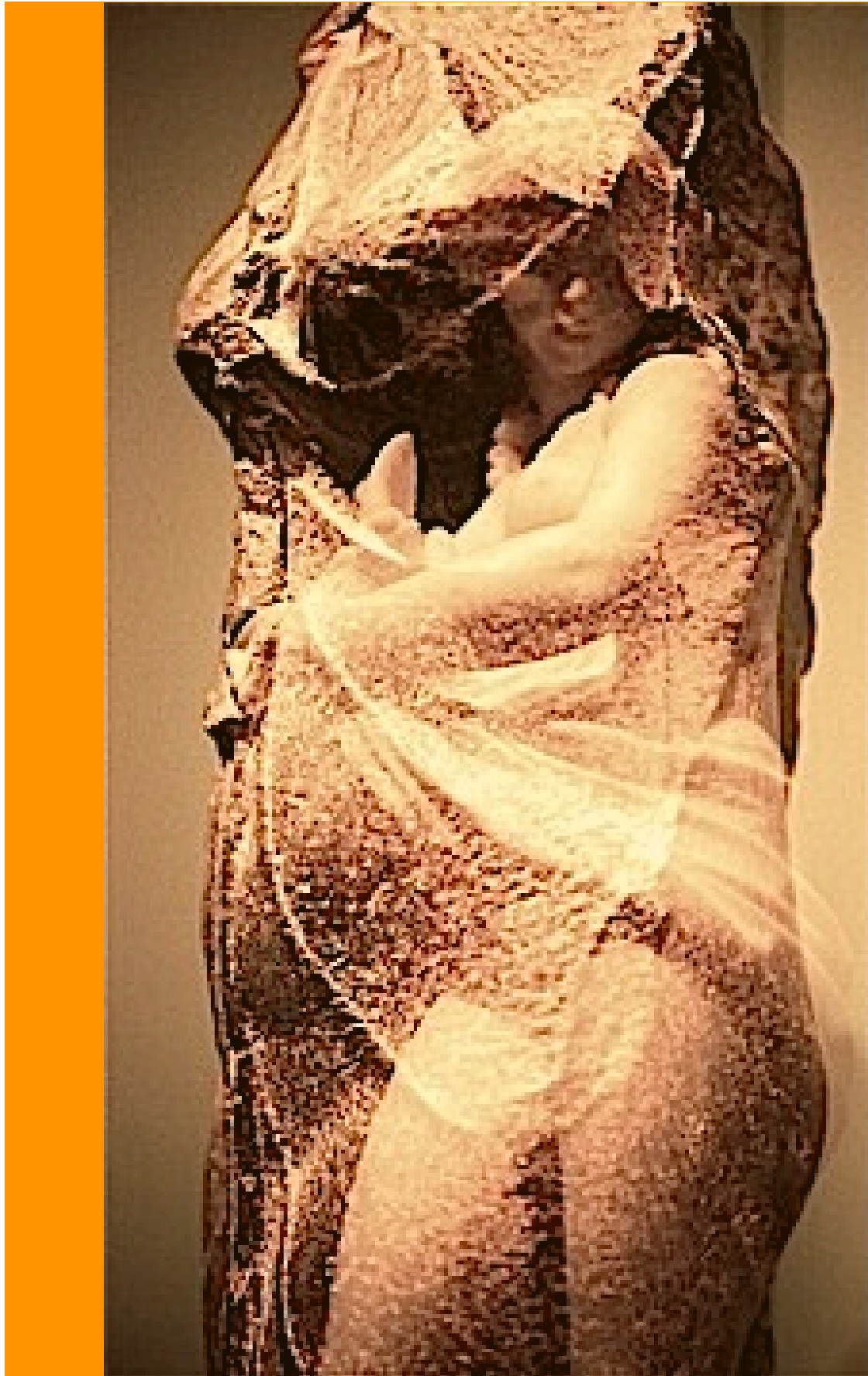
Darwin’s science renders a cartographic time. He maps time, graphically charting changes. He renders time in stop-motion, an existing series where we develop our present condition. We complete part fish, part bird, part animal; then, ta-dah, we are finally here. Flaubert’s art renders time in cinematic motion. His prose run our eyes page to page as a movie camera runs them scene to scene. We see Madame Bovary develop and die.

The present imagines the past to exist in the past and to be present for the present. The past is believed in as the origins for the present, a conclusion based on evidence like bones, patterns, habits, and temporal confidence. Is that confident move checkable? Are we in checkmate or in an endgame?

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Young Woman in and out a Mirror in the Past in a Picture

To focus on what a young model, my daughter, might mean to herself at any particular moment and to think about how photography differs from other compositional strategies, this black & white photograph captures her looking forlorn out from a mirror at the camera with a slightly quizzical stare. From fixing her hair, which is still wet from her shower, she now instead has to look at the viewer who is surprisingly seeing her as she is getting ready to go out to see, and to be seen in, the outside world.



This particular photograph's arbitrary abstract lines as well as the subject's expressiveness, the greyscale values from her hair, and the extra imagery in the mirror and in the room all convey a particular past place from a particular angle. Her hair from the back is visible in the picture, but it cannot get her attention, while her face and her hair from the front are visibly a conscientious concern in the mirror, but more so now are you, the viewer, her concern, by interrupting her from studying herself before she has had time to prepare.

To extend the way artists often study and use photographs for painting portraits, I arrange the different blacks and whites from the photograph into blunt elements for a paper collage. These elements accentuate both the mirror's effect and the abstract architectural and image developments within the photograph.

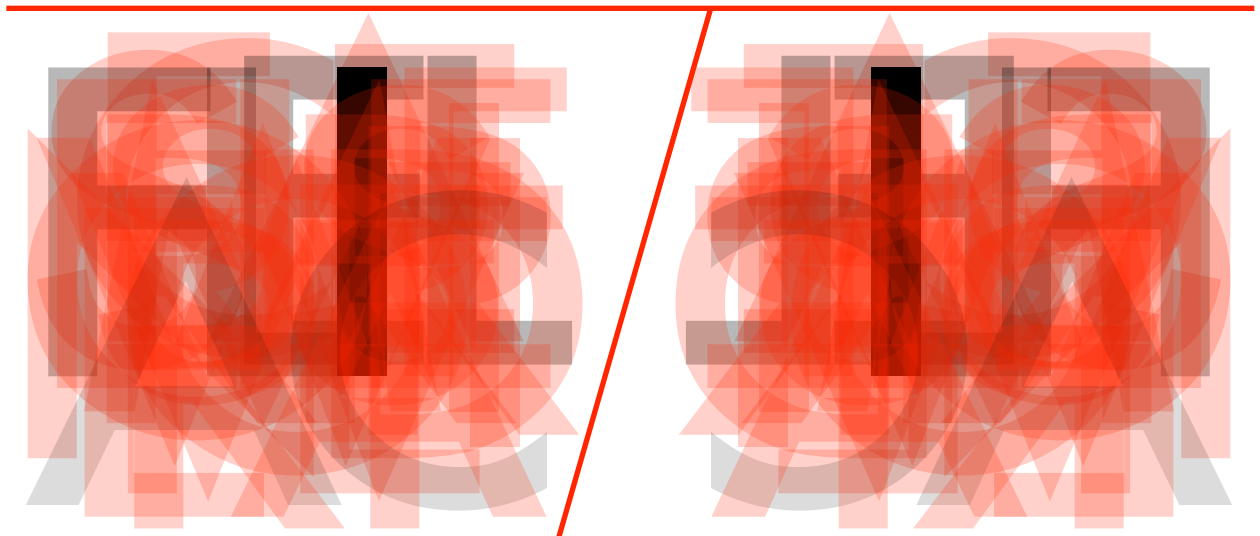
Different pieces torn and cut from an old, somewhat high quality, architectural journal, called *Arcade*, published here in Seattle, form the collage elements.

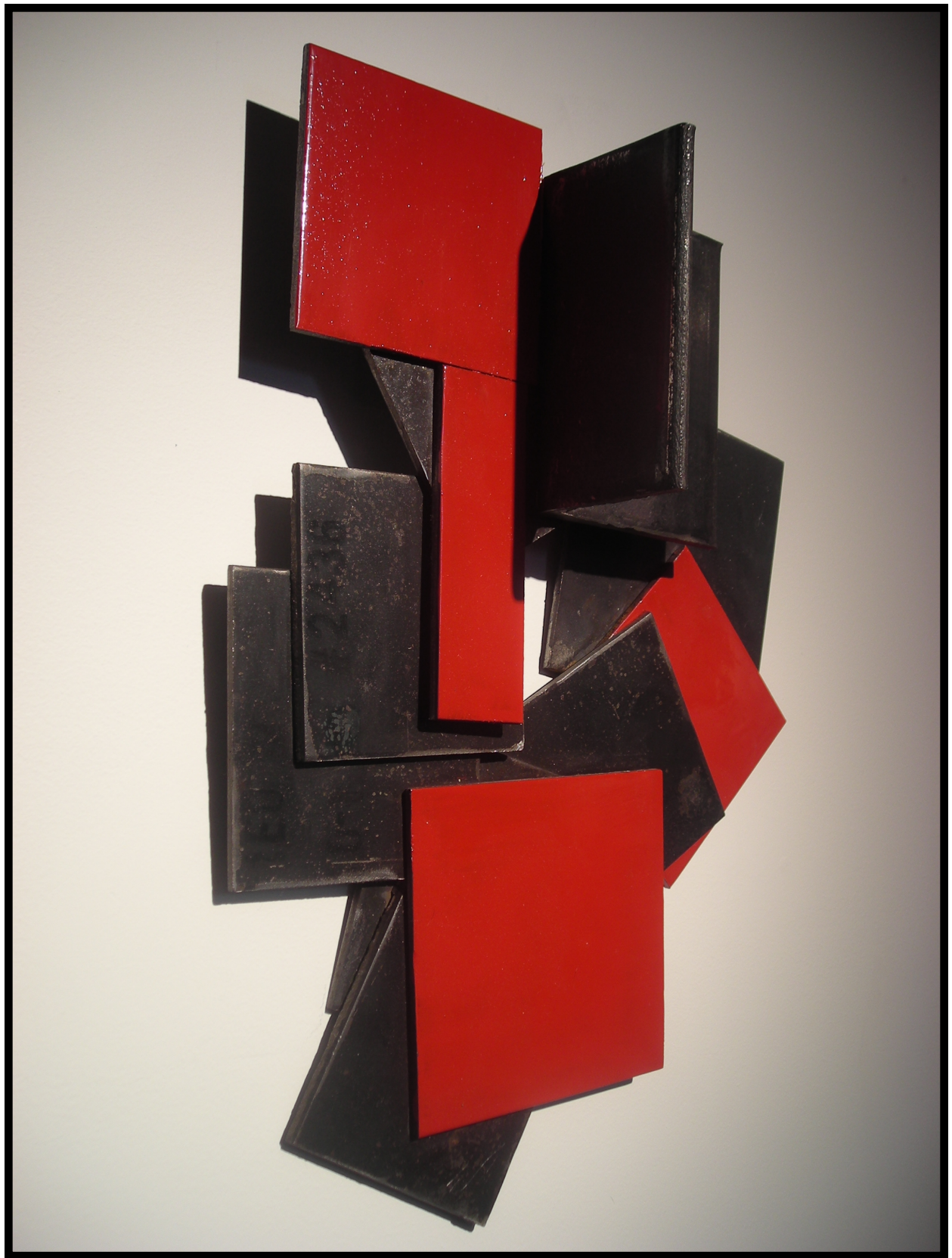


Le Corbusier's quote, "Light is the key to well being," is included with other small text to indicate the way language can apply its meaning even when seen out of its original verbal context. Sometimes in this way, words are like mirrors to see others and ourselves thinking with them. Again the past is again the present but is different from now.



The close-up of my daughter's face in the paper collage expresses her stare and her delicate vulnerability. She is beautiful and sad, smiling and crying, depending on how she views herself and how the world views her, but I think anyone can see many sides for a young woman in and out a mirror in the past in a picture.







Post-Genesis Art

Neither fixed nor secured like steel beams in tall buildings, relationships are temporal and fluid. More like waves and particles in sunlight reflecting through leaves and over sparkling streams, we travel in time all together separately. Our relationships involve dynamic processes. The person who is our mother, father, lover, spouse, sibling, or friend never remains the same, and neither do we. Everyone comes through time. Literature demonstrates that well. Unlike steel sculpture, it is a temporal art.

Perhaps the most historically controversial narrative about relationships is Genesis. After the weeklong creation, the relationship between Man and Creator quickly seems to require a kindred companion to help Adam name the birds and animals. *Voilà!* Eve joins him in Eden. Promptly they distance themselves from divinity to enjoy and suffer one another outside paradise.

Time passes and so do their progeny. Nevertheless for today's post-Genesis audiences, three novels do a fine job rewriting scripts for best supporting actors playing Adam and Eve roles. The earliest novel is Abbe Prevost's *Manon Lescaut* from 1783. The Adam figure is the Chevalier des Grieux. His Eve is the very beautiful Manon Lescaut.

Though some consider this a tragedy about class and gender roles in Enlightenment France, I think it is a great comedy. Like Charlie Chaplin, the Chevalier des Grieux is hilarious. This character cuts himself loose from his family ties, stumbles into the world, and produces wild amusement as he and his borrowed funds easily separate or as he falls for yet another incredible alibi. Though he seems constantly to be taken advantage of, Grieux at times is so devotedly captivated by his young, infinitely desirable, and so very worldly, Manon Lescaut, that he plays a ludicrous, tragicomic figure, hopelessly in love with someone who never actualizes the potential glories he finds in her. Grieux takes Manon not wholly as a sex goddess, which is the way many men in the novel see her, but as divinity herself. It is as if Adam imagined Eve as God.

Grieux is not the only seriously comic figure in art. Over a hundred years before, Don Quixote presaged Grieux's passions with his ardor for

Dulcinea. Then centuries after Griex comes stone-faced Buster Keaton whose love for a woman, or a young cow, makes his silent films such rich entertainment. Yet each is an individual, and Griex's character packs his own visually comic scenes one after another. For instance, when he is sneaking his lover out of confinement, he is trying to appear inconspicuous while not wearing any pants. Likewise, when he and his hired band of ruffians try to attack the wagons containing his lover and other supposedly incorrigible women exiled to America, all his stalwart, brave ruffians, but one, turn coward and run from the wagons' armed guards.

In a particularly operatic, slapstick scene Manon is fixing Griex's hair before a mirror in her boudoir, treating him like a vain lady, when suddenly her Italian prince enters and demands to know whether she is accepting his generous bribes and going with him or not. Manon grabs Griex by his curly locks and dragging him in hand turns to this prince and says in effect, 'How could I leave? This one is my true love!' Her relationships form, break, reform, rebreak; but always true is Griex's love for Manon.

In his bungling way, Griex at least tries to follow the words in Genesis [2:24]: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh." Things turn out much differently when Franz Kafka in 1915 rewrites Genesis with a firstborn Gregor Samsa as an alienated Adam and his junior sister as a pubescent Eve. In *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor, a traveling salesperson, a wage-slave to his boss and his company's salary, wakes up one morning unable to go to work because overnight he has changed into a big, hapless bug. On his back, he sees his many "pitifully thin" legs waving helplessly in the air.

On one level, this horror tale moralizes how some people can manage to love neither God nor any companion. They instead live out everyday lives thinking they are sacrificing themselves to some pecuniary goal or are somehow managing to stay young and carefree forever. Similar self-confined characters go mad like Norman Bates, Alfred Hitchcock's famous *Psycho*. Still others like the fatted calves of Federico Fellini's film, *I vitelloni*, become perpetual mama's boys unable or unwilling to move away

from their parents. For these people, committed relationships are unattainable, and their situations reveal uncomfortable truths about modern capitalism and its pernicious, unromantic effects.

On another level Kafka's story intimates how some young quadriplegics with traumatic brain injuries from terrible accidents, roadside bombs, or overdoses may seem from inside themselves and from their families' perspectives. Others suffering from strokes or dementia often never get outside their nursing home nests. Like Gregor, these unfortunate beings are kept a secret somewhere without much hope for any relationships besides their families and paid caregivers.

As *The Metamorphosis* ends, after Gregor has died and a housemaid sweeps him out with the trash, his little sister, Grete, leaves with her parents for a sunny streetcar ride and seems to unroll like a spring bloom. With the damaged, detested, loveless Adam expired, nubile Eve rises on her own out from beneath her big brother's specter. With the novel's last line an ingénue feminism commences: "And it was like a confirmation of their new dreams and good intentions when at the end of the ride their daughter got up first and stretched her young body." Not on a Botticelli clamshell, but on a trolley, is this Venus born.

At the 20th century's end, fashion dictates to people to be perennially desirable and socially ambitious. J. M. Coetzee parallels the effects on two Adams and two Eves in his 1999 novel, *Disgrace*.

Professor David Lurie is a White South African and infatuated with campus beauties. He is a Romantic-period, literary scholar who has not learned much about the intervening years between Lord Byron and Catharine MacKinnon. After he whimsically and selfishly consummates his desires with fashionable Melanie, who is younger than his own daughter, his scholarly community banishes him.

This Adam leaves without his Eve to visit his daughter, Lucy, a separated lesbian, who is struggling on a farm in a predominantly Black region east of Cape Town. Her sketchy Black protector, Petrus, helps her with her dogs and flowers but wants her land. He is notably absent when three men rape her, set Lurie's head on fire, and lock him in the bathroom where he uses

the water from the toilet to douse the flames. Though both father and daughter survive this, Lucy is now pregnant. Her father wants her to abort. She refuses. At the novel's end, Lucy seems to him suddenly lovely outside in her straw hat cutting flowers. Petrus seems to have invited her to join his clan as his third wife thereby protecting her and gaining her farm. Meanwhile Melanie stars in a popular play in Cape Town where her boyfriend fires spitballs to protect her from satyrs like Lurie, and Lurie keeps busy himself euthanizing unwanted dogs near his new son-in-law's growing farm.

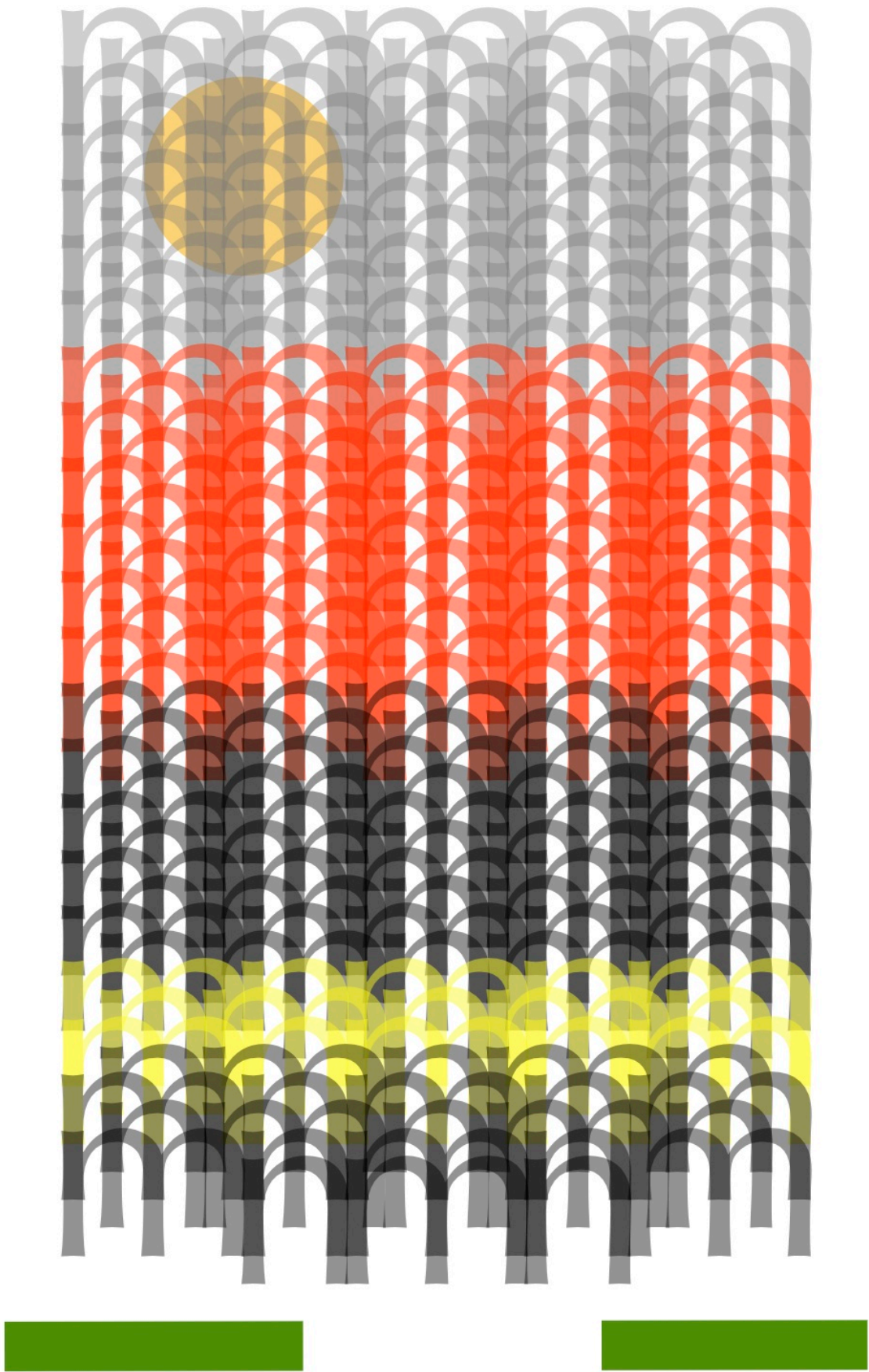
Coetzee's literary relationships—between the White and Black Adam figures and between the two Eves, one, a nouveau careerist, the other a mother-to-be whose husband and child will keep her in the African paradise she loves—reflect how time's sunlight keeps us proceeding as we revolve with and around one another. Though it has not weathered history as long as *Manon Lescaut* or *The Metamorphosis*, *Disgrace* summarizes how varied are the trees' sunlit leaves and fruits, how wide the river now flows, and how far we are from Eden.

Prevost, Abbe. *Manon Lescaut*. 1753 edition. Trans. Donald M. Frame. New York: Signet Classics, 1961.

Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*. 1915. Trans. Stanley Corngold. New York: Bantam Classic, 1981.

Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Viking Books, 1999.

1 love



Being Mentally Ill in Seattle

A Place

Across the street from the massive King County Courthouse is an old hotel providing subsidized rooms and efficiency apartments for some mentally ill people in Seattle. In front of the hotel is a bus shelter on a wide sidewalk. Near it is a neglected city park where many homeless people camp at night and sit on benches during the day with shopping carts filled with all their belongings nearby. Around the corner as well as in the hotel are public service offices for the mentally ill. A block away is the King County Jail. Four blocks away is Seattle's Central Library. A mile up First Hill is Harborview Hospital with a psychiatric-care staff.

What Families or Family Life?

This downtown neighborhood has many tall office towers for personnel but few apartment towers for families. Daytime, families are notably absent for anyone who cares to think about it. Here every one seems to be mentally ill or an office worker. Both groups may have intact families somewhere though many live alone or with a partner and most with few or no children. Those who have a diagnosed mental illness and live in the hotel or in shelters or on the street seemingly have little or no biological family experience in their present lives. They gather in small groups in the bus shelter or in the park, or they sit on the sidewalk as if it were their porch. Families may not cause mental illness, but family voids in this neighborhood may be a factor in its huddled, makeshift atmosphere as if the people were all either waiting for Godot or commuting back and forth to work and waiting for nothing and no one in particular anymore.

Culture

Seattle is diverse. The mentally ill too come from all around the globe. Their indigenous culture now is an urban North American one. Many mentally ill here have cognitive and affective disorders, which make it particularly difficult for them to integrate into Seattle's technologically advanced, social-media culture. Without families here, they coalesce into small haphazard lonely groups particularly around the architecturally

stunning central library, where there is a line every morning before the doors open at 10 am. Inside they mingle and sit at computers or in comfortable chairs. At long tables they surf the internet, read international papers, or try to sleep before a guard nudges them. The culture surrounding and within the downtown mentally ill population provides a rich mix for some unacknowledged brightness as well as deep-set isolation. Seattle culture offers highs and lows abundantly.

Health Care System

Harborview Hospital dominates the system here. It is huge and prestigiously affiliated with the University of Washington. It treats acute, emergency mental illness mostly with pharmaceutical intervention. It seems to provide state-assisted, inpatient and outpatient, chronic care. Smaller clinics throughout the city handle many day-to-day treatment and drug prescriptions. Unlike African communal medical practices, health care in Seattle engages individuals. There are individual patients, individual psychiatrists, and individual clinicians. Thus, patients, who are often lonely, receive treatment in a lonely fashion. There is no holistic or neighborhood approach to caring for the mentally ill. There is little concern about fresh foods, hygiene, conversation, and entertainment. These options are up to individual North American patients.

Social Determinants

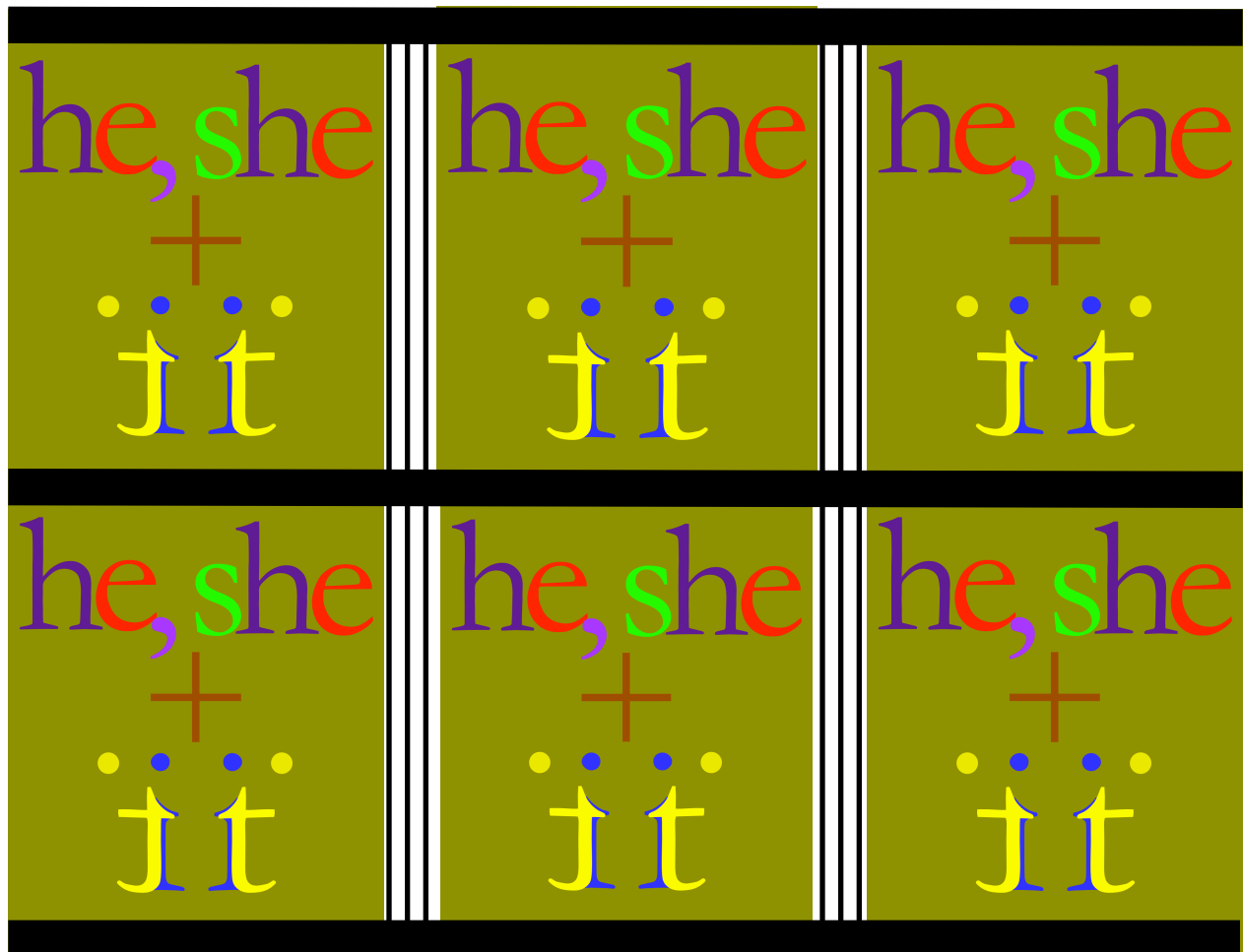
Being born is always someone else's choice other than the person who is being born, and their being born and then left homeless seems to bless and curse them. Their basic human rights are individualistic rights. Their birth societies seem to have variously allowed them to grow and live apart but not to work and age hand in hand with society. The urban mentally ill die much younger than most other groups, and they often cannot find any jobs that they can do in Seattle. Instead, the government provides them with small monthly checks called disability benefits.

Although love as a social determinant goes unmentioned, the mentally ill live their daily lives seemingly without any permanent commitment for love from their society. The loveless, conflicted societies into which they are

born have assured contraception, abortion, or adoption as methods to avoid having family commitments, and perhaps the mentally ill learn from this as well to shut out any love from a child. Children are almost completely absent everywhere, and when the rare infant appears, she or he will usually be with a single, seemingly stressed or oblivious mother. This mentally ill population within a conceivably, mentally unbalanced society wears their being unloved in soiled tatters, hurt looks, and secret strengths.

Social Attitudes

Ignorance, prejudice, and discrimination prevail differently here. Between office workers and those deemed ill and incapable, people discriminate not so much according to race or sex, but according to class, fashion, and age. People with money and jobs avoid others without either. Thus, financial and mental functioning segregates this pocket within Seattle's downtown neighborhood. Microsoft and Bill Gates are nowhere around here.







Mock Turtle in *Alice in Wonderland* laments that he could not afford an education with extras but only took the regular course: "Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with, and then the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision."*

Here Mock Turtle begins to read Hamlet:



*Carroll, Lewis. *Alice in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass*. 1865 & 1871. Illus. Sir John Tenniel. New York: Watermill Classics, 1983, p. 94.

Histories, Places, Politics: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, and the Peace That Runs Out of Time

Time works on us in grand ways we do not often notice. History superbly demonstrates this on any scale—personal, national, continental, or global. History, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Karl Marx write about it, means a progression that is less a progress than a debacle. Time makes us worse.

Neither Rousseau nor Marx thinks or writes about history as a personal chronicle narrating powers, fortunes, and events as Herodotus or contemporary journalists do. Rather history influences us with superhuman force with or without individuals' knowledge and complicity.

That everyone is born from their mothers into quite different eras and places allows both thinkers to attribute to historical progression a role that distinguishes one's being present from predecessors and from descendants. Both agree history exists, but what precise role does history play in human affairs? Their philosophies diverge over what to do about history doing what it does to people. Their philosophies converge in nurturing similar consequences in subsequent political events.

For Rousseau, a deep question about history's role is "Who is better, the natural or the civilized human?" This question he first answered in 1750, winning an award from the Academy of Dijon with his *Discourse on the Art and Sciences*. With a resolute, *No!*, Rousseau answers the Academy's topic question, "Has the restoration of the sciences and the arts contributed to refining moral practices?"

Rousseau detests so-called historical progress. It is a fiction. People *degenerate* from natural to civilized existence. Like Socrates, he knows nothing, unlike the civilized, good citizens who think they know a lot. Furthermore, Rousseau writes, if Socrates were to return to life among us, "This just man would continue to despise our vain sciences; he would not help to augment that pile of books with which we are swamped from all directions, and he would leave after him, as he once did, nothing by way of a moral precept for his disciples and our posterity other than his example and memory of his virtue. It is beautiful to teach men in this way!" For

Rousseau, historical progress is actually entropy, a continual diminishment into deceit and disaster.

Rousseau concludes his *First Discourse* with political ideals from Plato's *Republic* and cites the need for true philosophers to be inside government: "Then, and only then, will we see what can be achieved by virtue, science, and authority, energized by a noble emulation and working cooperatively for the happiness of the human race. But so long as power remains by itself on one side, and enlightenment and wisdom isolated on the other, wise men will rarely think of great things, princes will more rarely carry out fine actions, and the people will continue to be vile, corrupt, and unhappy."

Karl Marx would agree both that historical progress has not been beneficial to subjugated and alienated people and that philosophy can affect, even right history's progress. Yet his philosophy, far from being Platonic, derives from class analyses and labor's true object. In contrast to Rousseau, Marx writes in *The Communist Manifesto*: "And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention direct or indirect, of society, by means of schools, etc.? The Communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class."



Historical progress requires better government through thoughtful philosophy for Rousseau; for Marx it requires better education through forceful intervention from workers and their freedom from the ruling class. Rousseau sees progress as a return to classical ideals. Marx sees it as requiring a revolutionary educational and political model.

In his *Second Discourse, Upon the Origin and the Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind*, Rousseau demolishes the platitude that all men are created equal. He distinguishes natural inequality in regards to individual strength, cunning, speed, etc. with civilized inequality between rich and poor, powerful and weak, educated and unschooled. Yet his brilliant differentiation Robespierre eventually takes up to support the Reign of Terror.

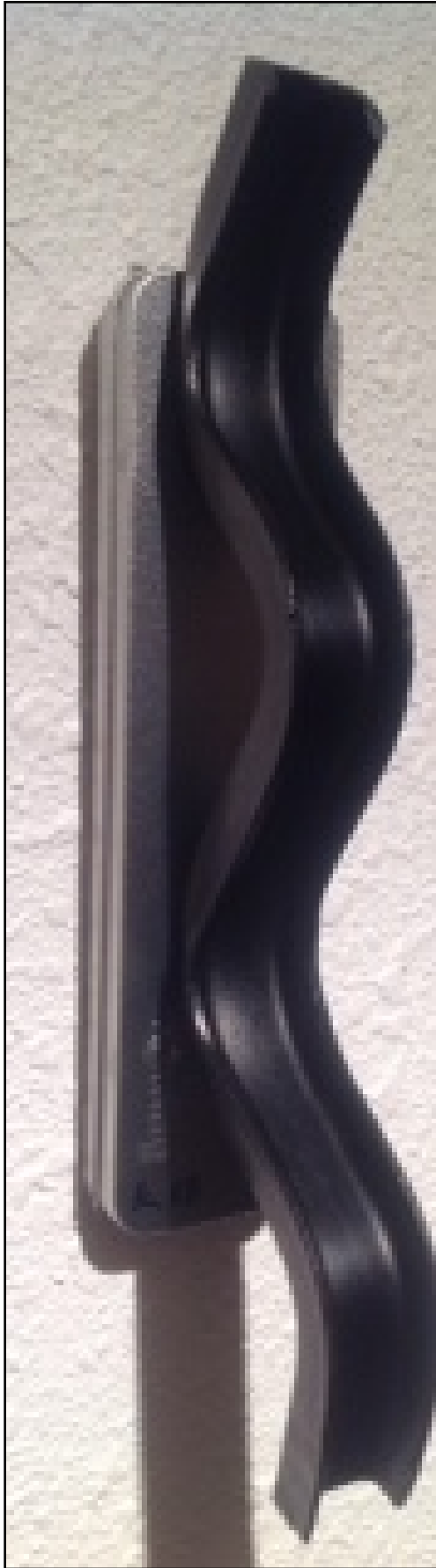
Conversely, Marx writes cogently about bourgeois procedure accomplishing faux equality: "The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe." Like a queen bee regulating her swarm of worker bees, the bourgeoisie convert everyone into hired laborers. This social sham leads Marx to his famous battle cry, 'Workers of the world, unite!' Nevertheless, for all his brilliant analysis, Marx's ideas were crucial to a Stalinesque politics at least as inhumane as the Reign of Terror. Queen bee turns killer bee.

Times, places, and politics also work on philosophy and peace changing them into rancor and revolution. The present moment in North America seems as overstretched, desperate, and oblivious as the Rousseau and Marx moments.

What will follow us remains another predictable mystery.











Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Non-Art

Though Freud and Nietzsche write about art, neither is a visual artist. Both write powerfully, but neither paints nor sculpts; they consider art but do not make art. This makes it provocative perhaps for artists to think about their different approaches to art.

Freud is actually a neurologist, but the physical nervous system is background to his focus on repression, dreams, hysteria, sex and the desire to kill one parent and make love to the other. For Freud, everyone is his potential patient, and his approach turns people into guilt-ridden pathologies ripe for therapeutic psychoanalysis. His famous writings treat art as a palliative mirage, a placebo, and less an effective answer to what ails people than psychoanalysis. Freud writes: "The substitutive satisfactions, as offered by art, are illusions in contrast with reality, but they are none the less psychically effective, thanks to the role which phantasy has assumed in mental life."¹

Like so many medical scientists, Freud writes as if he were above humanity and able to understand people through superior methodology. If he believes himself able to do this, why are artists and art less capable of doing this? Claiming substitute artistic satisfactions are psychically effective illusions in contrast with reality is another Enlightenment-type idea from someone who thinks he can distinguish and define what is real and what is illusion. Accordingly, for Freud, sex is reality; guilt is reality; art is illusion.

Therefore with Freud, beauty is separate from reality, implicated like an implant and the desire to be desired. This is how Freud considers beauty: "The love of beauty seems a perfect example of an impulse inhibited in its aim. 'Beauty' and 'attraction' are originally attributes of the sexual object."² To define beauty as sexual attraction subverts art into stimulation. Not all sublime, beautiful subjects are attractive, sexual objects.

Freud may be contradicting himself. His own ancient classical art collection from Egypt and Greece, abandons artists from his own time like the Viennese painters, Gustav Klimt or Egon Schiele. Freud's antiquarian art

collection³ indicates what he considers beautiful enough to buy and keep around himself. Arguably, besides studied beauty, what classical art conveys is authority; and it is revered authority, it seems, not art as beautiful sexual objects that the distinguished thinker really covets.

Like Freud, Nietzsche is no visual artist. He comments meaningfully about art, but I find him as estranged from visual art as from his god. For Nietzsche, god is as dead as art is vicious. Art results from intensity and cruelty, and his aesthetics still prevails in too many postmodern artists. Nietzsche writes: "What, in the last analysis, was the meaning of the Trojan War and similar tragic atrocities? There can be no doubt that they were intended as festivals for the gods, and, insofar as poets in this respect are more 'divine' than other men, as festivals for the poets."⁴

For Nietzsche, art means atrocious strength and tragic passion. Yet strength and passion as well as justice and meaning are ideas about experience, and for the poet-artists who created the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, they may not have meant anything at all like what he imagines. Close reading in these classics reveals an exemplary interactive approach to divinity and humanity within a cultural framework with Zeus, Hera, Athena, Aphrodite, and Poseidon taking sides and with humans taking their licks but also at times getting in their superhuman kicks. Death is the ultimate divisor: gods do not die; mortals do. With impending death, Homer creates epic poetry and philosophy, not atrocity. With impending madness and death, the poet Nietzsche creates epic genealogy and philosophy.

Plumbing Nietzsche's interpretative approaches to Homeric poetry leads me to question his approach to visual art. He asks: "Would beauty exist if ugliness had not first taken cognizance of itself, not said to itself, 'I am ugly'?"⁵ This question seems to me a more cogent probe than Freud's attractive sex object theme, but it also seems more about self-loathing than about actual art and beauty. Like Freud, he posits guilt with inspirational value. Then he declares: "Bad conscience, the desire for self-mortification, is the wellspring of all altruistic values."⁶

Before justice and art, Nietzsche places memory and the cruel historical polarities between creditors and debtors. Yet art may not be the meaningful

result from struggle and the will to power. Art may be its absolute origin. Circularity then is all, while madness, death, art, and all that is not art, become us. To be more consequential than Nietzschean memory and cruelty, it is necessary to dodge preemptive genealogy to make better art.

In conclusion, while artists practice, Freud and Nietzsche write and think about what artists make. Their thoughts about art, and perhaps much else, require some artistic reservations. Art had continued long before them, and art continues long after them. Art has the final word.

1. Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Trans. James Strachey. (New York: Norton, 1962), p. 22.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

3. <http://sydney.edu.au/museums/exhibitions-events/sigmund-freuds-collection.shtml> or

<http://www.amazon.com/Sigmund-Freud-Art-Collection-Antiquities/dp/0810911817>

4. Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals*. Trans. Francis Golfing. (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 201.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 221.



The Ice Cube Palace

(in memory of Tarjei Vesaas, 1897-1970)

Clear, sparkling clean, perfectly round, the ice cube palace is so small, it fits right in my hand. This empty cylinder has a heavy glass bottom with a very thin circular wall rising to an undifferentiated rim, a flawless circle but for a small chip, which spoils the otherwise inviolate smoothness.

The missing chip gathers about its absence semicircular striations about a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch long and less-than- $\frac{3}{4}$ - inch wide, marring the 3-inch diameter rim.



This imperfect edge is sharp enough to cut your lip if you raise the glass and sip without looking where you are drinking.

The three characters I drop into the ice cube palace roll together. They are practically identical. They enter the palace already frozen stiff, and they

mingle on the glass bottom where the thicker-glass clarity becomes light gray and magnifies the world beneath the glass. The three characters are mostly water that had once been poured into a rectangular-segmented tray to freeze in an electric chamber colloquially called a freezer.

Water, this fresh liquid, which flows freely from a stainless-steel spigot, after a short while in the freezer, becomes solid ice. Why they are cubes, I do not really know, for they are not at all cubic. Unlike cubes, which have six equal sides, my English language does not have a simple name for rectangular three-dimensional objects, which have four long sides meeting two shorter sides.

Officially, they may be rectangular cuboids. Rectangular cuboid, though, sounds pretentious like being overly serious and calling someone playfully teasing you an adolescent schoolchild.

My three characters freshly released from their segmented isolation enter their ice cube palace with deep winter in their watery atoms. They exist in one fiction while they are frozen and in another while they are liquid or steam. They clink, crack, and have a white cloud inside them, a cloud like a Milky Way streaming small stars and planets in lines.

As I swirl the three characters, they mingle in what has melted from themselves. In this, their intermediate, thawing, spring-like season, their fiction is changing: once completely solid, now becoming ever more fluid, they play being water in the palace's temperate temperature.

Their figures change rapidly though as I generously splash beautiful, liquid water into their palace. The solids now rapidly thaw into sad shapes drifting far apart from one another. They surface above their transparent, palace lake, a lake they have helped create, a small sea into which they will completely dissolve.

Carefully I bring these tiny liquid characters to my lips as if kissing them. Then they enter me with their cool depths quenching my thirst.

They become human inside me, for like them, I too am mostly water, and I too am melting slowly into an unknown cosmos us fictional Anglophones call death.



Searching for an Explanation for Anglophone American Difference & Finding a Possible Answer in Ralph Waldo Emerson and Ludwig Wittgenstein

How differently Emerson and Wittgenstein approach the ordinary provides insights into how distant North American is from Continental thought in regards to day-to-day historicism, conventional language, and standard reasoning.

For Emerson the past is the common dirt growing the extraordinary present. In "Self-Reliance" he asks: "Is the acorn better than the oak which is its fullness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence, then, this worship of the past?"¹ For Emerson, the ordinary seed and the tree are equally good, as are the child and parent. He emphasizes living in the present over the past: "Life only avails, not having lived."² He suggests that time is a drag and that experience is not as good as present performance: "These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence."³

In contrast, Wittgenstein rarely writes about history or time.⁴ He takes history for granted as offering people narratives to conceptualize the world. For him, history is ordinary in the sense that it is always just there like a museum to go look and see facts. For Emerson, history is ordinary in the sense that it is like a bad rash which attention scratches. The difference helps separate historical European from ahistorical American culture.

Language, the ordinary material for human communication, provides further contrast. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* painstakingly examines the minute and mostly accepted ways language is used: "I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the 'language-game.'"⁵ He concentrates on language and the ways language institutes thoughts and actions. Three phenomena—words, thoughts, and actions—are fundamental to Wittgenstein's ordinary language philosophy. The reflective effects from Wittgenstein's later approach to language extend into postmodern analytical philosophies.⁶

With Emerson, words are signs and spiritual symbols. He understands language as if we were all individual Moses holding a tablet with commandments from Nature. "Words are signs of natural facts," Emerson writes, and these natural facts are on our tablet: "The world is emblematic. Parts of speech are metaphors, because the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind."⁷ Emerson's way with language leads less toward continental⁸ and more toward modern mathematical thought.⁹

Finally, Emerson's and Wittgenstein's thinking about history and language creates a pattern for how they think about ordinary reasoning and what is wrong with it. Their own expressive thoughts distinguish their individual remedies for ordinary thinking.

Emerson expresses disdain for everyday intelligence: "But the man is, as it were, clapped into jail by his consciousness."¹⁰ He castigates conformity and consistency and offers the self as a unique being. He offers in his philosophy what Whitman offers in his poem, "Song of Myself."¹¹

Wittgenstein thinks more critically. He not so much celebrates the present self as problematizes it. His thoughts about ordinary thinking demonstrate how the self can be mistaken about fundamental concepts including the self-concept. For him, the self is unstable, and he questions both humanist and scientific theories about identity: "The feeling of an unbridgeable gulf between consciousness and brain-process: how does it come about that this does not come into the considerations of our ordinary life?"¹²

In summary, Emerson and Wittgenstein talk about the ordinary extraordinarily: one as if at sea ruminating with the sailors about the waves, the sky, and the floating present; the other as if in a city talking to people about words, meaning, and behavior.

The two philosophers share the world differently, as do most North Americans and Europeans.

1. Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Self-Reliance*. http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Essays:_First_Series/Self-Reliance

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*
4. Glock, Hans-Johann. *Wittgenstein and History*. http://wab.uib.no/wab_contrib-ghj.page
5. Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Philosophical Investigations*. Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. (New York: Macmillan, 1971), p. 5e.
6. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP). *Philosophy of Language*. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/lang-phi/>
7. Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Nature*. Ch. 4: *Language*, #3 *Nature Is the Symbol of Spirit*. <http://www.online-literature.com/emerson/nature/4/>
8. Being in the World: A Celebration of Being Human in a Technological Age. *What is Continental Philosophy?* <http://www.beingintheworldmovie.com/ph-what.html>
9. Newcomb, S. (American Mathematical Society: *Modern Mathematical Thought*, 1894.) <http://www.ams.org/journals/bull/1894-03-04/S0002-9904-1894-00177-3/S0002-9904-1894-00177-3.pdf>
10. Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Self-Reliance*. http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Essays:_First_Series/Self-Reliance
11. Whitman, Walt. *Song of Myself*. http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/s_z/whitman/song.htm
12. Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Philosophical Investigations*. Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. (New York: Macmillan, 1971), p. 124e.



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Art Seems Powerless Compared to Science. Why That Might Not Be So Bad After All: Analyzing the Will to Dominate in Science and Justice: Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Michel Foucault

Power as domination, as concept and practice, compels *The Concept of Enlightenment*¹ co-authors, Horkheimer and Adorno, and *Madness & Civilization*² author, Foucault, to write quite different case histories: Horkheimer and Adorno consider the concept and practice behind scientific rule; Foucault covers past sociopolitical supremacy leading to the present and questions “What is Enlightenment?”³ Their separate, exhaustive studies identify and accuse domination’s assumed authorities and subsumed subjects quite provocatively.

Horkheimer and Adorno prosecute enlightened reason for its continuing crime against humanity—totalitarian dialectical materialism. They present their case with exhaustive argumentation. They begin with Francis Bacon (1561-1626), for whom the scientific method went hand-in-hand with eradicating myth, tradition, and narrative in order to master nature for use; and they conclude: “Today, when Bacon’s utopia, in which ‘we should command nature in action,’ has been fulfilled on a telluric scale, the essence of the compulsion which he ascribed to unmastered nature is becoming apparent. It was power itself. Knowledge, in which, for Bacon, ‘the sovereignty of man’ unquestionably lay hidden, can now devote itself to dissolving that power. But in face of this possibility enlightenment, in the service of the present, is turning itself into an outright deception of the masses.”⁴

They detail how scientific absolutism drains thinking itself into formulaic computation. Nature is mathematical, and scientific reasoning is but calculation. The masses, deceived with products from applied sciences, sell themselves to advertisers, politicians, and physicians.

Along their dense and thorough way they consider how language ceases being a uniquely human, poetic experience and instead a cipher: “As sign, language must resign itself to being calculation and, to know nature, must renounce the claim to resemble it.”⁵ Language, though, distinguishes their indictments against scientific absolutism so language as well as art offers

hope. However irrefutable scientific reasoning appears to be, they turn scientific proof against itself to demonstrate how domination works its ways inside and outside scientific purviews by controlling scientific minds and the great masses.

Foucault takes issue with this approach and declares the Enlightenment to be only “an event, or a set of events and complex historical processes, that is located at a certain point in the development of European societies.”⁶ Thus in “The Great Confinement” Foucault similarly addresses domination but domination not within language and thought processes, rather within history. Like Thucydides, he makes history into philosophy by describing how and why people did what they did. They could have done otherwise, but they didn’t because some were adamant in their will to dominate others who had no recourse: “It is common knowledge that the seventeenth century created enormous houses of confinement; it is less commonly known that more than one out of every hundred inhabitants of the city of Paris found themselves confined there, within several months. It is common knowledge that absolute power made use of *lettres de cachet* and arbitrary measures of imprisonment; what is less familiar is the judicial conscience that could inspire such practices.”⁷ Unlike Horkheimer and Adorno, who examine enlightened reason as the basis for present natural, social and cerebral domination, Foucault examines the sociopolitical realities about incipient industrialization and bourgeois capitalistic ethics for his views on power. Yet Foucault believes that judicial conscience is as responsible as enlightened reasoning for they work together in history to dominate those who may think differently or hardly at all.

For Foucault language is a resource, a natural human capacity that provides both his meticulous approach to historical research and his epic discoveries in the archives. He investigates history, gathering evidence about culpable domination over the insane within the Age of Reason: “The new meanings assigned to poverty, the importance given to the obligation to work, and all the ethical values that are linked to labor, ultimately determined the experience of madness and inflected its course.”⁸ Thus, Foucault reads domination by confinement as another fact about historically rational justice. He mentions great mad figures like Don

Quixote and King Lear and laments that such souls were in less than 50 years “sequestered and, in the fortress of confinement, bound to Reason, to the rules of morality and to their monotonous nights.”⁹

Horkheimer, Adorno, and Foucault argue convincingly that reason and the power to dominate walk together through modern history and into postmodernity. Reason thus is not so pure and innocent. No matter whom they think villain and whom victim, their views are bleak; and what key will unlock domination is undoubtedly not yet made in today's markets.

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 2. Foucault, Michel. *Madness & Civilization*. Trans. Richard Howard. (New York: Vintage, 1973)
 3. Foucault, Michel. *What is Enlightenment?* <http://foucault.info/documents/whatIsEnlightenment/foucault.whatIsEnlightenment.en.html>
 4. Horkheimer & Adorno, pp. 33-4.
 5. *ibid*, p. 13.
 6. *What is Enlightenment?* p. 12.
 7. *Madness & Civilization*. p. 38.
 8. *ibid*, p. 64
 9. *ibid*, p. 64





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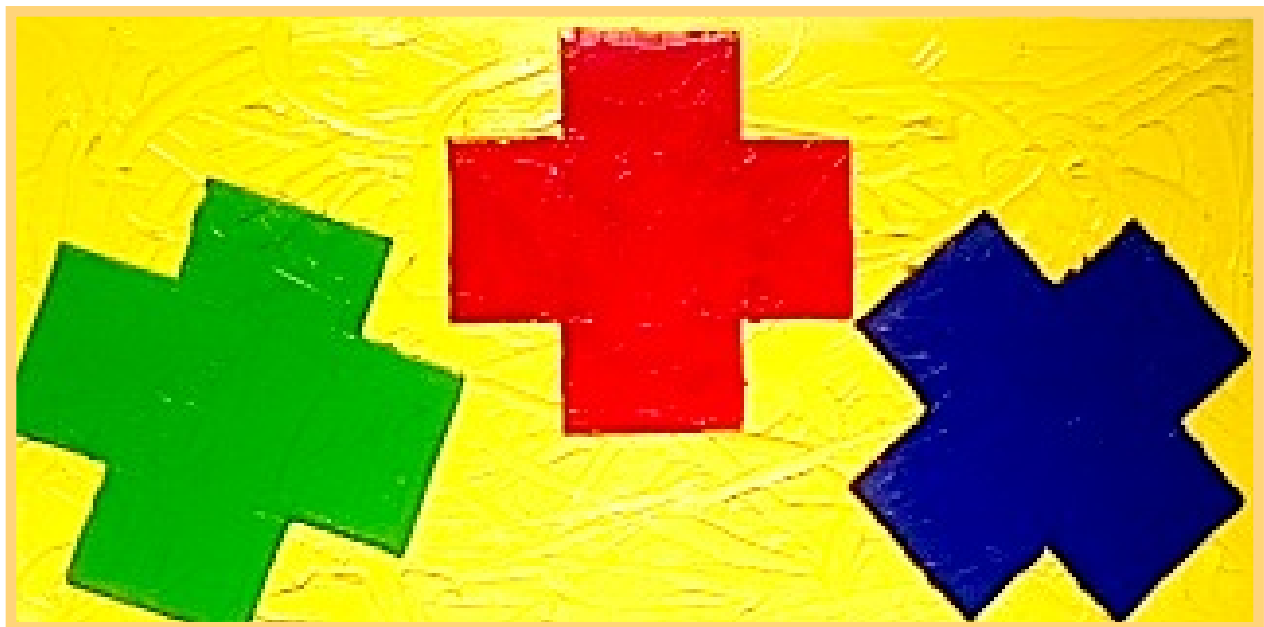
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Culture and Art: Their Roles in Climate Change

An economy has a dynamic relationship with a society: it directs people to live according to its market and governmental policies; people in turn manage it choosing either to live accordingly or to resist the dominant economic models and decide independently however best to live. For example, everyone needs food, but not everyone needs a supermarket. Some people will stock up at a Costco or Walmart for weeks' worth of food; others will shop locally each day for their daily meals. Some will eat fast food; others never dine out at all; and of course still others neither shop nor eat much at all and live on the edge.

All economies have art and culture in order to operate. They need political, ethical, and aesthetic customs to provide a framework for people to decide how they ought to live. Culture in a sense is always a necessary background to an economic foreground. It is a prepared field on which economic performers (i.e., governments, corporations, entrepreneurs, and workers) play with and in societies.

Cigarette smoking provides a vivid example about cultural significance for economic phenomena. When Hollywood films, smart popular advertisements, and tobacco's low cost hooked many people on nicotine, many cultures lavished erotic fantasies and fashionable inducements to promote smoking's sexiness and sales. Then when more critically minded



people saw through the smoke and witnessed cigarette's extreme personal and social costs, cultures changed; societies no longer easily tolerated the practice banning it in interior public spaces and ultra-taxing it no matter how impoverished were the addicted.

With climate change already accelerating more or less relentlessly, a low-carbon economy requires cultural transformation within our lifetimes. A low-carbon economy needs committed art and culture with ethics and politics that differ from high-carbon capitalist and socialist models. Both corporate and government economic policies rely on sciences and councils already in place to induce societies to change customs and enthusiasms. Their low-carbon economic policies help little; alone they are not enough as long as so many carbon-based cultures independently persist globally.

Yet the critical need for new culture not only pertains to climate change to improve our temperature, sea levels, and weather patterns; in fact, it pertains to much everything about us. Bruno Latour begins *An Inquiry Into Modes of Existence* by imagining an anthropologist who wants to study contemporary value systems, "she has to focus on the very heart of modern institutions—science, the economy, politics, law, and so on."¹ She eventually discovers that there is nothing purely *Science, Law, Religion, or the Economy*. Rather they form networks with actors who work as if their network were purely scientific, legal, religious, or economic. Latour wants the public to understand how actor networks operate:

So under the word 'network' we must be careful not to confuse what circulates once everything is in place with the setups involving the heterogeneous set of elements that allow circulation to occur. The natural gas that lets the Russians keep their empire going does circulate continuously from gas fields in the Caucasus to gas stoves in France, but it would be a big mistake to confuse the continuity of this circulation with what makes circulation possible in the first place. In other words, gas pipelines are not made 'of gas' but rather of steel tubing, pumping stations, international treaties, Russian mafiosi, pylons anchored in the permafrost, frostbitten technicians, Ukrainian politicians."²

Pragmatically Latour distinguishes several networks within the Eurasian, natural gas, fossil fuel, delivery system that are commonly misunderstood as just the available means for cooking and heating. Then, when he begins

to address the values that make the networks, actors, and users function or dysfunction, he finds a most significant gap: “Why is it so difficult to specify the values to which her informants seem so firmly attached? Why do the domains offer such feeble indications as to the nature of what they are thought to contain (they spill over into other domains in all directions and do not even define what they purport to cherish and protect)? In short, why is theory so far removed from practice among the Moderns?”³

This separation between theory and praxis distinguishes postmodernity and helps explain how a low-carbon culture might differ from traditional economies with respect to growth, prosperity, costs, and benefits. Even as an isolated sculptor, I sense a terrible disconnection with theory in artists, critics, and friends. North American culture almost embraces climate change as the way to live American-style lives. The growing enormity implicates ever widening political, social, religious, and artistic actor networks. Even the words, climate change, downplay the risky, normal living conditions so destructive for others globally now and in the future. The neutrality or positivity involved with the word, *change*, in climate change placates people. Rather than arousing people to act, “climate change” becomes an *Oh, that topic*.

Though I look to the arts for cultural transformation, political and scientific powers already in place do offer numerous actor networks trying to stave off climate calamity. *The Guardian* recently asked, “Could climate bonds pave the way to a low-carbon economy?”⁴ The article addresses how paying for a low-carbon future might be facilitated through investment-grade bonds. *The Guardian* also points out how Copenhagen is changing its civic landscape to face the rising seas and rainfall in its predicted future.⁵

These simple newspaper articles at least speak to the public and by showing how other people are dealing with climate change imply perhaps that their audiences consider their own plans. Academic and government reports offer more substance but less audience. In December 2012, the *Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy from the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment* released a policy paper entitled: *Recklessly slow or a rapid transition to a low-carbon economy? Time to*

decide. It may come as no surprise that it concludes: “What we need now is renewed leadership that can forge a new way forward that brings developed and developing countries together in a way that builds trust and overcomes barriers to progress.”⁶ Perhaps more cheerily, the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* spotlights climate change in an article, “How the low carbon economy can improve health.” It happily ends: “Health professionals can promote greater accountability, and generate the evidence to aid the selection of policies that will improve health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”⁷ Carry on and cheerio.

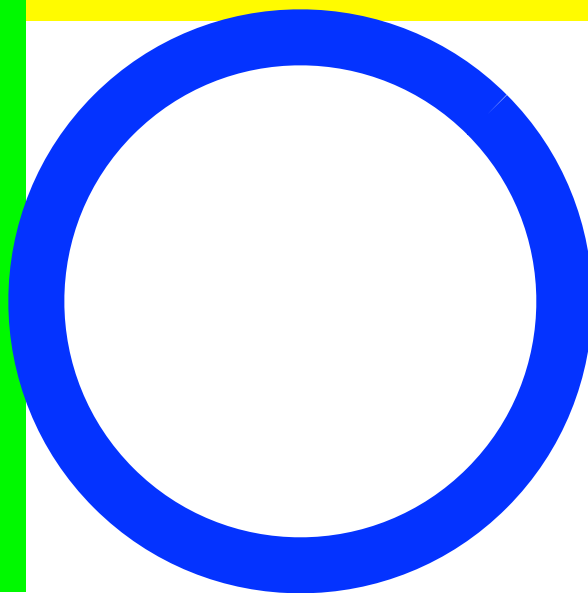
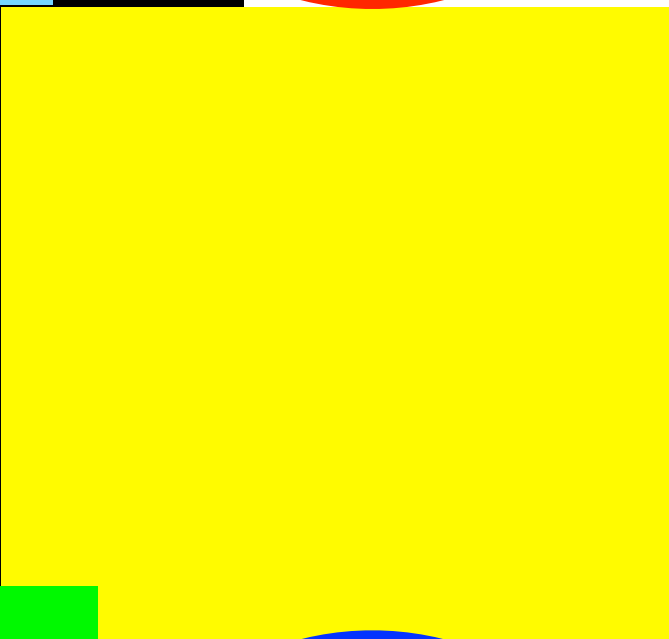
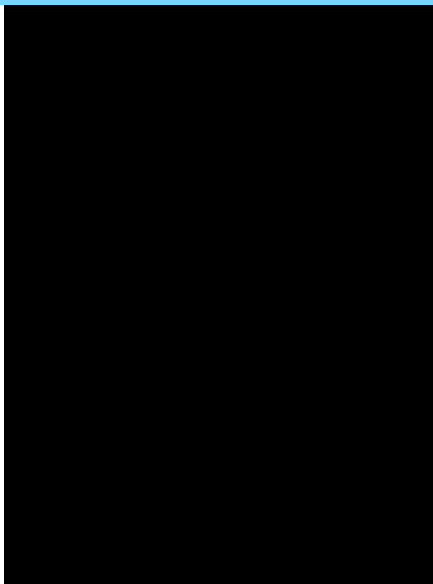
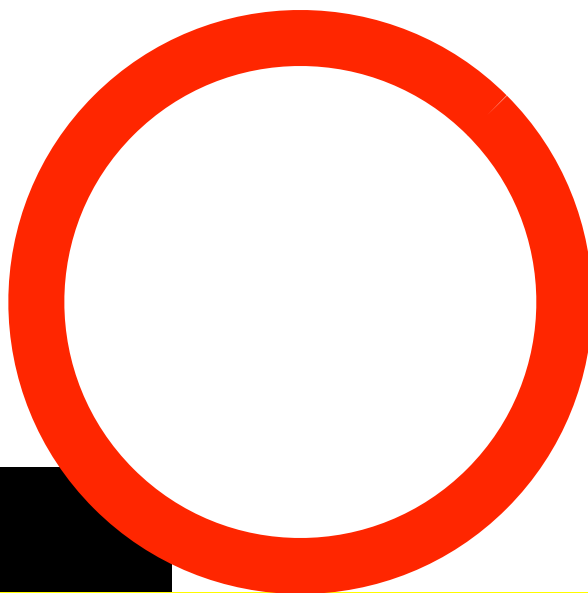
SMART 2020: Enabling the low carbon economy in the information age, from the Climate Group (Global eSustainability Initiative) tries to answer questions like “What impact do pervasive information and communication technologies have on global warming? Is it a sector that will hinder or help our fight against dangerous climate change?” This report comes closest to what I consider paramount for a low-carbon economy—cultural transformation. Of course, in their view it is Information and Communications Technology (ICT) that will transform the culture, not poets and artists: “The scale of emissions reductions that could be enabled by the smart integration of ICT into new ways of operating, living, working, learning and travelling makes the sector a key player in the fight against climate change, despite its own growing carbon footprint. . . . It is now up to policy makers, industry leaders and the sector itself to make sure this potential is realised.”⁸ Obviously ICT is already transforming business and politics for better and worse. The economy still divides classes dramatically. Most people still have to worry more about their earnings than their carbon-based culture. If there are some, artists and poets inside ICT have yet to respond to ICT’s possibilities for economically sustainable low carbon occupations.

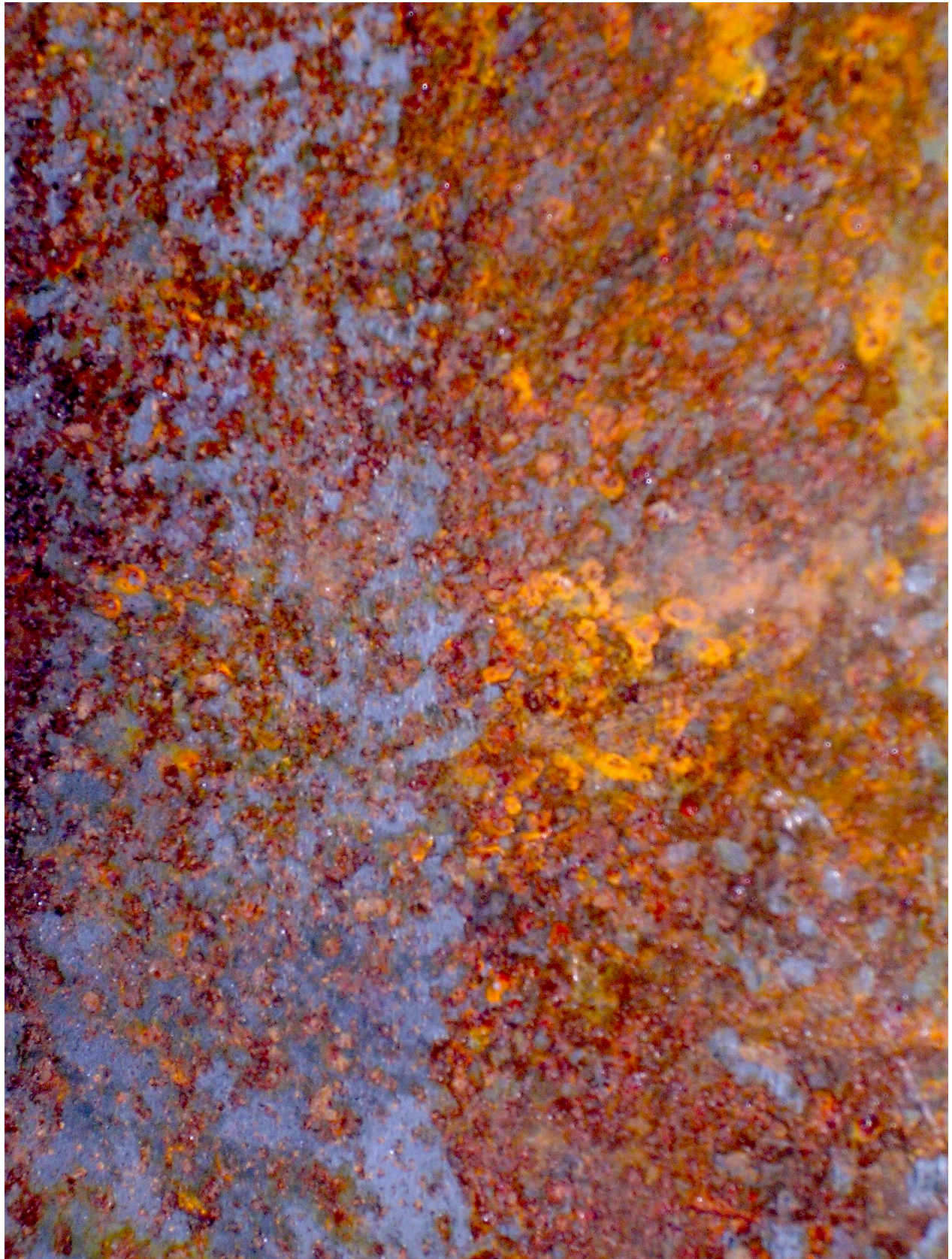
So far, these articles and reports present socio-politically acceptable objections and alternatives to the mostly oblivious present and endangered future; and in a way, their existence counters my argument that art and culture have to become more prominent and forceful before a low-carbon economy makes dynamic headway in society. Yet these documents, which imply that carbon culture is transforming itself through professional and popular efforts, are symptomatic. They serve existing actor-network causes

by advancing their domains—government, health-care, ICT. The culture has lost its artistic and poetic vision. It puts its problem in professional hands though those hands are tied by the minds above them.

The ethical and philosophical problems with how we live our contemporary lives need, I think, deep analysis to change ourselves as well as the high carbon societies we take for granted. It is not just ignorance or denial about high carbon toxicity. It is also indifference to the imperiled. To begin afresh with artists and cultural change seems necessary for beneficial climate change.

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1. Latour, Bruno. Trans. Cathy Porter. *An Inquiry Into Modes of Existence*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 28.
 2. *ibid.*, p. 32.
 3. *ibid.*, p. 42.
 4. Scott, Mike. "Could climate bonds pave the way to a low-carbon economy?" *The Guardian*, 15 August 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/climate-bonds-fund-low-carbon-economy> Date accessed, 20 October 2013.
 5. Braw, Elisabeth. "Tackling climate change: Copenhagen's sustainable city design" *The Guardian*, 8 October 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/tackling-climate-change-copenhagen-sustainable-city-design> Date accessed, 20 October 2013.
 6. Romani, Mattia; Rydge, James; and Stern, Nicholas. "Recklessly slow or a rapid transition to a low-carbon economy? Time to decide." Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, p. 14. <http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/publications/Policy/docs/transition-low-carbon-economy.pdf>. Date accessed, 20 October 2013.
 7. Haines, Andy, and Dora, Carlos. "How the low carbon economy can improve health." *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* 19 March 2012, p. 5. <http://www.bmj.com/content/344/bmj.e1018> Date accessed, 26 December 2013.
 8. The Climate Group: Global eSustainability Initiative (GeSI). "SMART 2020: Enabling the low carbon economy in the information age. 2008, pp. 9-11. http://www.smart2020.org/assets/files/02_Smart2020Report.pdf Date accessed, 25 December 2013.





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LENT IN TIME

(from: *All the While a Child Counting on Counting the Moon in Flight*. (Winston, Oregon: nine muses books, 2003), revised 2013).

They die while I live.
Alive, how do I love while they die?

I am fighting for a promotion.
Five years in instrumentation,
I do not know how I do it.
I still have awhile.

Where are they now that they are dead?
I am not there yet.
They are dead all the while now.
I am alive awhile.

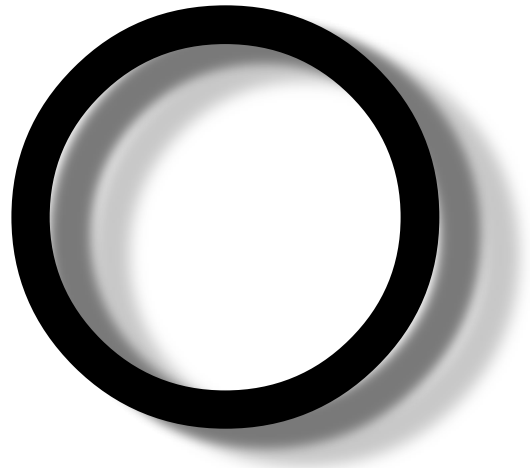
I am them, not now then.
I want the poets alive.
Do they want?
I bow, I kneel, I lower my forehead
To touch the Earth.

Five years in instrumentation,
Finally I have an opportunity to move up.

You and I, we die.
Why are we alive then not?

I know I am my body.
I do not know the body I am:
The body I think I am;
The body who thinks, I am.

Look at that time!



The next thing you know, we hear:

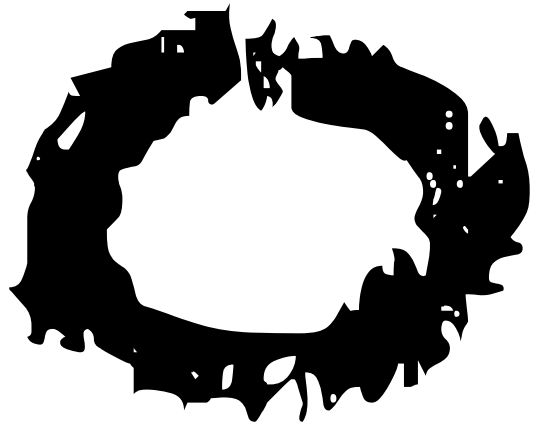
*Do you mind? You know,
We could get along without you.*

We get to truth by way of you and me.

To prove to you, you are you, I am me,
To prove who we are for you and me,
Forgive the truth—our death.

I better be earning a living.
For me, I am the work I do not do,
My time to live, to go on daily,
To inhale/exhale,
To update instrumentation.

I wonder, I do not know,
Who will I be when I die?
Not me, am I to die while alive,
My being me with all my being being body?
Who will be me when I die?
What do you know, Theseus?



A being like you, a being like me, being we,
We follow about, in and out, being you, being me,
Now, and now again, and then, when we,
Another now, over now, go down bodily,
To grave eternity.
Time wipes clean our world of you and me.

Why am I unhappy in instrumentation?
I come and go, earning a living as me,
As if living, coming and going
As me, I agree to pretend to be me.

Who do you not know?
You or me?
You remember me. Don't you know me?
Talk to her. Tell her to make me up.

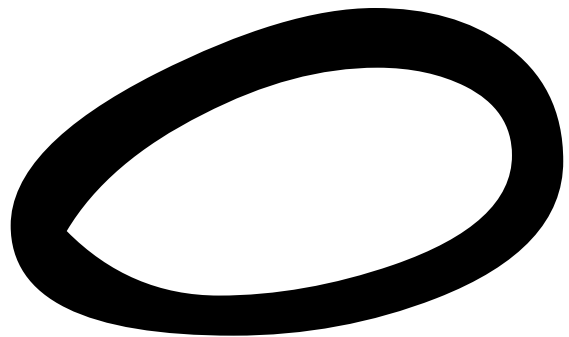
We have all the time we say we are out of.
When weren't we in a calendar
Like all the world?
Couldn't we be content without content
That June, that May, that October?

December whirred, clicked, added a number,
And going away, ended awhile
Round and round in orbit.
My winter day may be all wrong,
May not be a day at all.

My day gave up on me for good then,
A day I savored, I a day savored:
Me then and there me,
When I lived in my day.

A life to hook to time with tense,
I update me:
How old are you?
Do you have a receipt?
Do you know your password?
We are all somewhere aware
Who we are there.

Do you have one, two, three for me?
New news moving all the time,
Now we are breaking up,
We are breaking down now.



Weather will rain beautifully today.

Maybe we are there for where to be there.

We are where we live.

We number might, right, and wrong.

We add, subtract, multiply, divide.

We perform. We stir. We are.

She and he did conceive her and me.

We nested in her womb,

Warm unlike an unknown tomb.

Then are the dead anywhere there?

Are we anywhere dead?

Are we but when and where and who?

I am real and sure I am me.

It is good to see day and night in any light.

Bread bakes, drama dates—another day.

You people, what is so funny?

A whole city murdered!

To say this is the way it is

We say

We are different.

We are different dead

Or not ever at all.

We are and are

All wrong and all right.

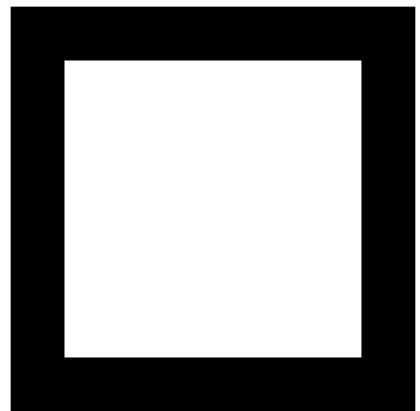
About all about is about, is.

We calculate ourselves to death.

What is your problem, man?

Can't tell destruction from instruction?

Destroy from employ?



You measure, evaluate, solve.
You take the time, the truth, the cake too.

When a cerebral spill instructs me,
Then my nerve will unnerve me.

I find it wild July happened in July.
Now we, then we then now;
We are material now and then.
When I look, I look, See.
I am sorry I see only material.

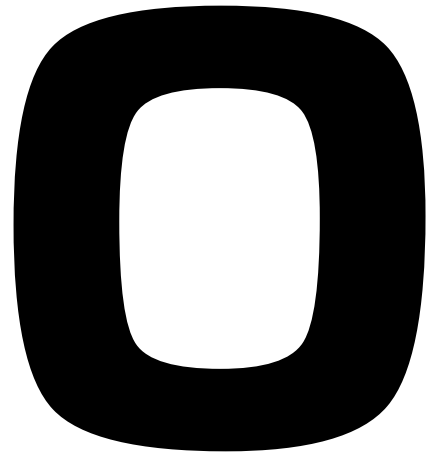
Am I over at death?
Am I nobody at death?
Is he a who or a what?

They pushed me down and held me down.
I will try you on Monday. I need to get going.
I need to think. I need a drink.

By the way who is doing the history?
Sure I want to be right.
Sure I want to be certain.
Sure I want to gamble.

They said, *Just scream,*
And started beating me,
An exercise to find an answer.
You are okay, they said,
But maybe not next time.

This me is mine, right?
This I is mine, right?
Thank you.
Is every one, one?



Everybody be every body.
They kill, I hear.
They cut off ears, air, and money.

I divide my time in half.
Then wake up in time to be me.

They start. I am born. We continue.
They stop. I sleep. We separate.

I provide my me with me.
I will not kill the I in me without death.
Match the number; withdraw a sum.

A couple of you and me, I tell you, are okay,
Okay? All right, okay, let's be real.

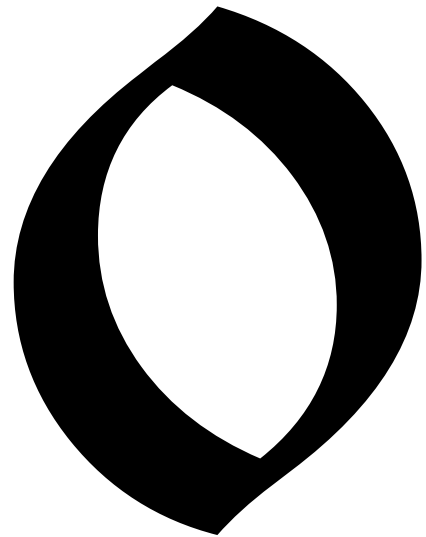
We get away with it but not from it,
It being the soul, we do not have, we are.

Thank you for you, the other I, I never am.
Thank you for me, the me you see.
Thank you for the breath we breathe.

I entice her to do what we do while together.
We are together. We are never alone.
You never know another alone.
You never know alone alone.

What do you do to be?

I thought about you too,
That that would be good for you.
I think I want . . . then I think again.



We think so hard we laugh.
We do not hurt ourselves either.
We go up, out, in, down, and away.
We go over a year between Novembers.
We mark time no matter what.
We have to do something to something.
We have something to do.

She might be right:
I would do anything to get off that floor,
Five-and-a-half years in instrumentation.

Black and blue and red, that is the truth.
On time in time is time.
We need to provide a need not to buy.

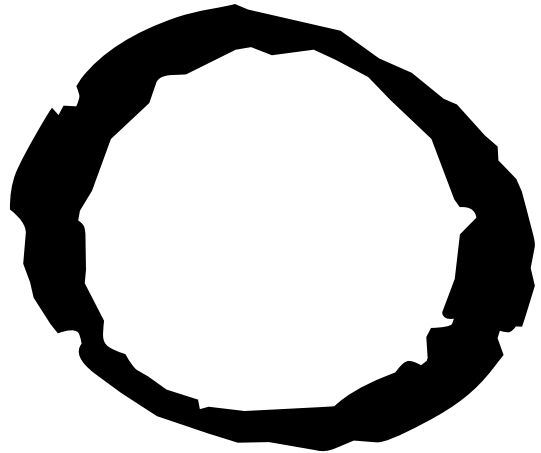
O God, come to my assistance.
Make haste to help me.
Please help me.

They are all for me.
They give me more opportunity, more.
They care for me, for me.

Any other problem?
I do not have much. I do not make much.
I try to get ahead. I never get ahead.
I have been in instrumentation too long.

I have got to stop.
You know, it is like, I mean, I never stop.

You let me know what more I have to do.
I mean, I feel, like, how I feel, like
Big, empty, all set, and almost nothing.



Logic will result from your annual birthday.
You will not be someone already there.

You and I differ.
A decade later we are gunned down in a square;
We are run over in a comedy;
We are burned, stabbed, drowned, dead.
We are buried.

I work. I buy. Before i know it,
I stagger in and out to improve what to do
To two o'clock: I am up all night.

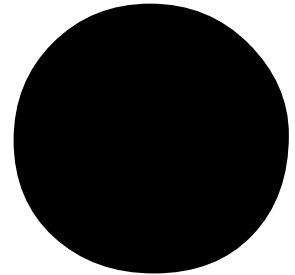
While time counted all the time, I counted too.
Who wants to make that kind of money?
To reek of elevator ennui and villa vanity?
You do? Clues bash the blues head-on.

Made up herself, she makes me up herself.
She renames the café, *A Little Annoyed*.
She wants to be more aware, wants me
To be more like what she wants.

What he thought, she did not;
What she thought, he yelled.
She knew the difference he desired.

She would give an unwritten agreement
For there to be a me tomorrow.

I am fine. How are you?
You know today's my last day?
Can you tell me about myself
And everyone you do not think highly of?



Have I any I left? Yes, no.
Other than I am there,
I am a soul not there.

What do I do about what I am doing?
I have been back for a long while now,
But you know what?
I am kind of at the beginning.

Dying, are we evolving in time?
Evolving, are we diving into time?

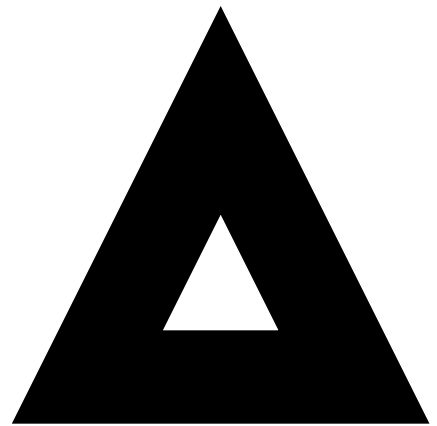
Do you know a long time ago?
Do you know a long time to go?

I keep up, I get ahead.
I comply. Now I am promoted!
They ask for me. I do great work.
I have done so much. I have moved up fast,
Only to be now again stuck in instrumentation.

The thing is nobody gives me any credit.
No, really, I deserve it. I make a big difference.
Nobody knows. Nobody cares.

They know what is going on. They have to give a little.
They never give me a break. I know how they are.
They are like November or December.
You know what they do? Nothing, nothing.
I do everything. I will let them know
I cannot do instrumentation anymore.

I will do instrumentation some more,
More wonderful rain today.





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SPARRING IN SEATTLE
WITH TIME, SPACE, ART, AND MINDS

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