

SUPPLE SCIENCE:
A ROBERT KOCIK
PRIMER

EDITED BY
MICHAEL CROSS & THOM DONOVAN

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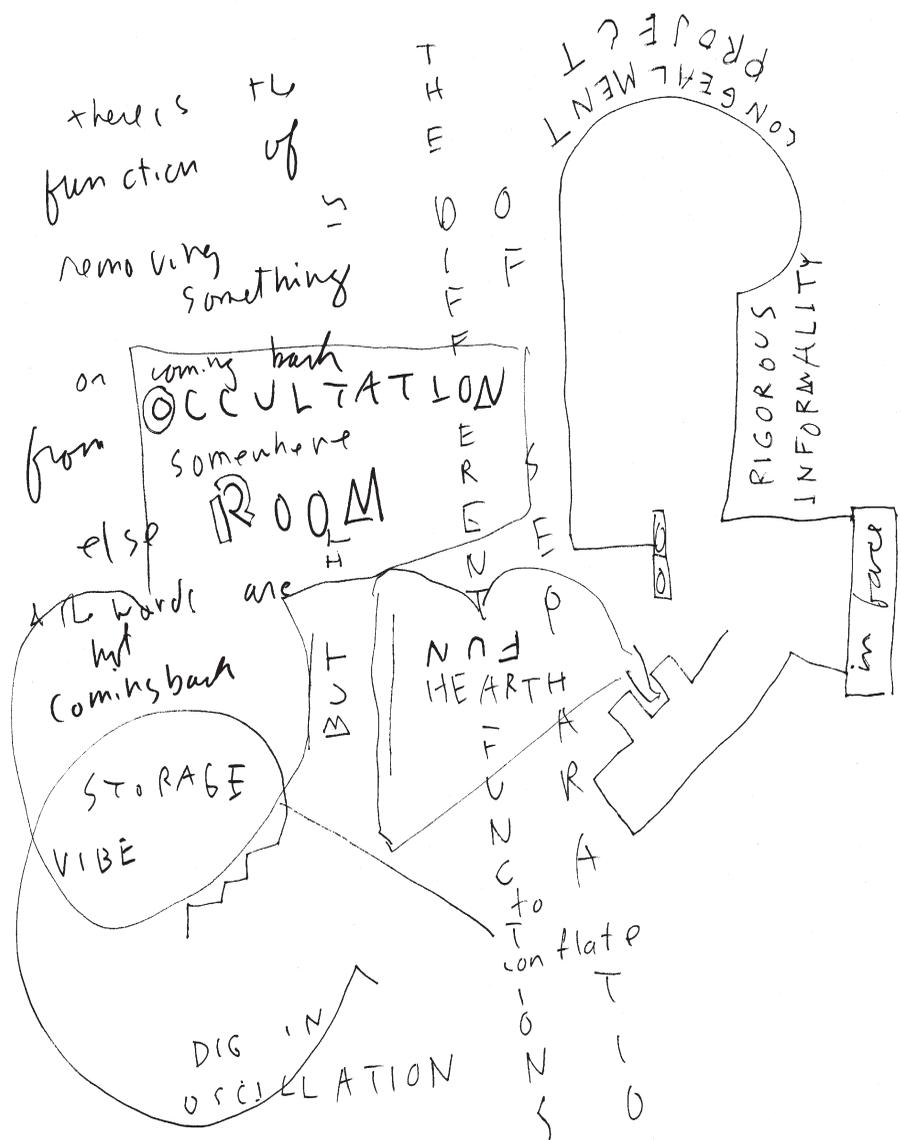
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SORE ETHICS: AN INTRODUCTION

THOM DONOVAN

Consider our behavior as a model for biology—as a model for a wished-for, viable biology (constructive wishful thinking).¹

—Robert Kocik

Like so many polymaths throughout the 20th century, the poet/prosodist-designer-theologian-critical theorist-healer Robert Kocik is hard to know what to do with. Having studied with Robert Duncan and other faculty members in the short-lived poetics program at New College of California in the early eighties, and having published in small poetry and poetics magazines for nearly three decades, Kocik's early purchases are in a realm of poetry/poetics that stretches back throughout the 20th century North American *avant-garde* as well as many other cultural traditions (European, Greek, East Asian, Indian, Persian, Native American). But Kocik has also designed buildings and furniture; he has had numerous functioning businesses for activist design and architecture; he has given talks and presentations on law, economics, politics, architecture, aesthetics, prosody, and medicine; he maintains a visual art practice (mainly drawings); and he has collaborated extensively with choreographers and performers, most significantly with his life partner, Daria Faïn, with whom he founded the Prosodic Body and the Commons Choir, organizations devoted

to convergences between medicine, spiritual practice, movement, and embodiment. Kocik doesn't belong. His work is inappropriate, as only the work of the most generative artists, poets, and intellectuals can be: "like artworks that have departed from their proper genres."² By acting inappropriately, it becomes both a model and an allegory of how the individual may act far beyond the historical boundaries of their nominal discipline or field (poetry, design, architecture, visual art, etc.). Genreless, anti-categorical, identity-defying, anarchic, antinomian, inter- and anti-disciplinary.

I first discovered Kocik's work in graduate school, at SUNY-Buffalo's Poetics Program. Fortuitously, during a visit by David Antin to Charles Bernstein's seminar, Kocik sat beside me. I remember making a comment about Antin's improvisational practice and Kocik nodding in agreement, adding the comment that one of Antin's rarest talents was evidenced by all the things he *didn't* say; which is to say, by the attentional and intellectual reserve marshaled by his extemporaneous "talks." I have always been impressed by Kocik's understanding of matters occult, withdrawn, and subtle; the ways he constantly negotiates the invisible and potential (what he calls the "totipotent" throughout the collection before you). In Kocik's work—his cosmology, his 'poethics'—our greatest and most common resource economically, legally, biologically, and aesthetically is one that we cannot see, a "substrate" residing below the threshold of a perceptible world. Looking inward—"endogenously" (from the Greek *ενδογενής*, meaning "proceeding from within")—we can locate this resource in the hopes of drawing upon it. The following book presents a comprehensive ethics of the endogenous (of inner resource and potential) and the subtle (where subtlety identifies places "where the Original [. . .] can be re-written"³) in relation to multiple fields of knowledge, theory, and practice. It is a handbook or primer for how one may extend and practice such an ethics.

When Michael Cross and I initially conceived this collection with Kocik, we imagined a book that might not merely act as a career retrospective, but deliberately introduce the concepts and articulations of a work spanning over two decades (the earliest texts collected in this volume were composed in the mid-90's) to both a readership that has anxiously awaited an anthology of Kocik's texts for many years, and to a new readership for whom Kocik's syncretic, anti- (ante?) disciplinary projects may offer new pathways in poetry, linguistics, medicine, and sociopolitical/economic/legal activism: "Consider this approach a cross-amateurism."⁴ My own reasons for wanting this book

to exist are deeply personal. They stem most of all from my friendship with Kocik and a sense of affinity with his and Faïn's ongoing projects. It also stems from a sense that Kocik's work is urgent and needs to be read by a much wider audience than his reception in small presses and by select audiences across various discourses has allowed. Many of the concepts in this book have contributed to a conversation vital for contemporary poetry, regarding embodiment, the "Poetics of Healing" (Eleni Stecopoulos' term/event series), commons (ecological and socioeconomic justice), inter-disciplinarity, and prosody. It is my hope that an existing conversation may be widened and intensified by the availability of this book.

With regards to the structure of the book before you, it is divided into five principal sections: *Overcoming Fitness*; *Evoked Epigenetic Architecture*; *The Sore, Oversensitive, Insecure, Supple Sciences*; *Re-English*; and *Common Cents*. The book closes with a letter composed to the late poet and translator Stacy Doris (1962-2012), Kocik's longtime friend and an invaluable comrade for both his milieu and community. Additionally, the editors have included a glossary of terms composed by Kocik, an index, as well as acknowledgments. In organizing the work as such, our intention is to represent discrete aspects of Kocik's overarching project, what one might call his "poetics," acknowledging simultaneously that all of the sections and texts are necessarily overlapping and coextensive.

The first section, *Overcoming Fitness*, includes in its entirety a pamphlet Kocik published with the Brooklyn-based publisher, Autonomedia, as a staple-bound pamphlet in 2001. The text, "Overcoming Fitness," considers genetic expropriation with the nearing completion of the human genome sequence. One of the key questions it asks, which Kocik pursues in other texts included in the current volume, is how "poetry [and other forms of art and cultural production] portends physiology?"⁵ Which is to say, how can the most fundamental substance comprising our being—genetic material—be taken-up as an *aesthetic* material? "Overcoming Fitness" also attempts to rethink notions of fitness in relation to a wider culture of exploitation and bellicosity, one Kocik locates within the economics of finance capitalism. To overcome fitness, as Kocik explains, draws upon every connotation of the term *overcome*: to transcend and to surmount conditions of socioeconomic oppression; to be overly generative, procreative, munificent; to 'fight' as it were, corruption with an excess of generation. Drawing upon a hagiographic rhetoric of beatitude ("Woe to the rich for they have already got all they're ever going to get"⁶), a surreal literalism ("Poetry doesn't ask why two white

rabbits don't produce a red rabbit but why two white rabbits don't produce a putto"7), and Augustinian antinomianism ("had they only made use of the world without using it"8), "Overcoming Fitness" presents the notion that "The Last Judgment is for the living"9; that, contra any number of official religious doctrines, it is in *this* world, materially, that justice, health, and well-being must be achieved. The third text of this section, "The Other Front Underfoot," is contiguous with "Overcoming Fitness" inasmuch as it extends a meditation upon the origins of contemporary warfare and the task of the artist/poet in the face of seemingly endless military engagement.

The second section of the book, *Evoked Epigenetic Architecture*, proposes forms of architecture and design that may influence (human) being "epigenetically." Whereas traditional science and a reactionary biomedical establishment presuppose that genotype determines phenotype, Kocik proposes the inverse may be equally true. By designing for "epigenomes" (the outer-lining of the gene which regulates genetic expressions) he believes that architects and designers can influence the health and well-being of the individual and society. In this section of the book, we also include specific design proposals by Kocik. In "Enwreathing Developmental Difficulty and the Feldenkrais Method" one can see clearly articulated many of Kocik's principal ideas regarding how design can facilitate sensory-motor development. One can also see a correlation between Kocik's approaches to disability and design in which he puts forth a dialectic of what he calls "far-side facilitation" and "far-side disablement":

To the far side of the norm lies the underexplored frontier of radical facilitation. Like a sudden loss of resistance in the direction of one's movement (as an overpowering wind at one's back) this far-side facilitation can be as disequilibrating and debilitating as near-side intentional impeding. This far-side disablement sets up conditions in which exceptional capacities may be acquired by the disabled because disabled, while exceptional capacities may at once be acquired by the abled because they've been benignly blocked (kept from experiencing ability as norm). We cross into each other.¹⁰

Similarly, in "Anechoic Naad Darkroom," a proposal for an anechoic chamber to be installed in a public square in lower-Manhattan, one can see many of Kocik's most fundamental ideas about the endogenous and evoked epigenetics given architectural expression. Whereas the proposed design for the Field Center may remediate built environments inauspicious to the disabled in the

interest of empowering both the nominally disabled and ‘able-bodied,’ the Anechoic Naad Darkroom enables the common, non-proprietary study of our most inwardly kept resources—our minds, our souls, our genetics:

Prosody is perhaps *the* Open Science. It’s unbounded and non-self-reinforcing. It’s plenary—not another assembly of a field with relevance only to itself as it desperately lunges outward in an effort to avoid inbreeding depression. (How shall the very design of a building enact the communicability of Open Science? How can it countervail aggressive privatization and asociality and still be a recognizable entity?)¹¹

The Sore, Oversensitive, Insecure, Supple Sciences includes two key works from Kocik’s *oeuvre*, “The Susceptive System,” which playfully imagines a tertiary nervous system that would invite foreign pathogens, becoming “hospitable” to them, and “Without Suffering Succession,” which entails a sustained conversation with disability theory and activism. Not unlike the philosopher and ethicist Emmanuel Levinas, in “The Susceptive System” Kocik imagines medical practices based on responsibility for the “Other” (foreigner, stranger). Only whereas in Levinas’ philosophy the Other equates an ethical demand put-forth by the “stranger” with the “face” (of God)/“infinity,” Kocik’s others (foreign pathogens) take the ego-body “hostage” by demanding an invitation from their host. In the process they conceive original conditions of possibility for cooperative, convivial exchanges between heterogeneous embodiments.

Composed in the wake of 9/11, and not unlike Antonin Artaud’s text, *The Theater and Its Double*, which imagines the Plague as a massive autoimmune attack within Europe’s borders/political body,¹² “The Susceptive System” analogizes bodies and international borders whereof, as post-9/11 politics of exception have proven, foreclosure of boundaries and borders is more often than not detrimental to geopolitical health. In “The Susceptive System,” in particular, one gets a clear sense of how embodiment, for Kocik, is both real and allegorical simultaneously—a problem Eleni Stecopoulos addresses in her introduction to the section, where she evokes the treatment of metaphor in works by Susan Sontag, George Lakoff, Ed Cohen, and others. In Kocik’s work, the ways that we write about the body and behave as bodies are inextricable; so much so that one impinges upon the other, and language use often specifically determines somatic expression. The term Kocik uses for this phenomenon elsewhere in this book is *logosomatic*:

The logosome activates when a word from ‘without’ reaches and rewrites the originary ‘within’ (or perhaps nowhere inside or out) and then selectively penetrates the notorious germ barrier.¹³

The Booth [for Retrofection] uses an audio input known as a poetry pop-in to set off an aesthetic reaction capable of logosome activation. The *logosome*—the fusing of logo-centric song/verse and originary Logos (that which manifests matter)—selects the new somatic mutation produced by this fusion and sends it through the germ barrier and into perpetuity.¹⁴

Wording so potent it germinates *who* in *what* we are.¹⁵

The fourth section of the book, *Re-English*, provides a cross-section of Kocik's ongoing project/organization, The Prosodic Body, by which he attempts to coordinate poetics and linguistic theory with historiography and political economy. The first two texts of this section, "Dearest Choir" and "E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E," originate in Kocik's collaboration with the Phoneme Choir, a performance group founded by Kocik and Faïn in 2008 which attempts to overcome the primary historical uses of the English language for mercantilism and warfare through its deformation into the primal elements of a universal linguistics: phonemics. "Dearest Choir" provides Kocik's conceptualization of the choir, and how specifically it may approach prosody through movement, gesture, and holistic bodily expressions. "E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E" is a libretto that the choir uses for their performances. Within it one finds poems, chants, charms ("amulets"), and prose regarding the history of (land) expropriation since the 15th century. "E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E" anticipates much of Kocik's work in the fifth section of this book, which historicizes the 2008 financial collapse in relation to systematic assaults on a global commons. The other texts of this section, and the text "Poetry May Take Any Substrate (Including Poetry)" in particular, reconsider the role of the poet in society.

- 1) poetics as the art of poetry
- 2) poetics as creative commentary or literary hermeneutics
- 3) poetics as making in general; or, as I say: 'all-of-making'

I'll go one step further and propose poetics as 'materialization'—cottage industry logos, shop-built Big Bang. Word produces material. It is both supreme and servile. The art of poetry subsists in poetics.¹⁶

Posing one of the most radical definitions of the poet by any one in the last two centuries, and certainly by those associated with an historic European/North American *avant-garde*, Kocik imagines an expanded function of poetry that would "outsource" the poet for legal and political activism, social work, non-exploitative business practices, community organization, medicine, and a potentially unlimited number of other activities.

The last section of the book, *Common Cents*, includes recent texts by Kocik which both historicize modern economics and propose creative responses to the current economic and political crisis originating in the financial collapse of 2008 and the subsequent ‘bail-outs’ of major economic institutions within the United States and abroad (however, much of *Common Cents* was actually written before the financial crisis). I read these texts much as I imagine one encountering the antinomian pamphlets and broadsides concurrent with primitive accumulation in Europe circa the 14th and 15th centuries. They are similarly strategic and rhetorically impassioned in their attempts to promote a culture of direct action against capital. Like many of the texts in this book, it is the hope of the editors that the texts of *Common Cents* may offer practical tactics for intervening in our current economic, legal, and political systems. Like the work of Strike Debt, Arts & Labor, and other affinity groups spawned by the global Occupy movement of 2011, *Common Cents* offers an original application for aesthetics, one that would not only transform aesthetic discourse (Art History) but hopefully strive to practice social justice beyond provincial discourse about aesthetic politics.

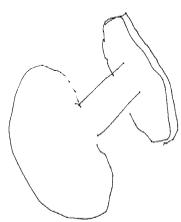
The book’s title, *Supple Science*, refers to all those resources we may draw upon from both aesthetic and spiritual traditions that, coupled with the ‘hard sciences,’ may radically transform the micro- and macropolitical, ecological, and socioeconomic foundations of our current world. “This is where the ‘nascent’ or ‘missing’ sciences set in—at the point of the ‘sore’ question—the inappropriate, the awkwardness of the probe.”¹⁷ In the interest of providing additional insight into specific aspects of Kocik’s lifework to date, we asked five of his contemporaries to produce introductions for the discrete sections of this book. The introducers were selected based on how we understood their relationship to Kocik and to his body of work. They include, respectively, Andrew Levy (*Overcoming Fitness*); Madeline Gins (*Evoked Epigenetic Architecture*); Eleni Stecopoulos (*The Sore, Oversensitive, Insecure, Supple Sciences*); Rob Halpern (*Re-English*) and Silvia Federici (*Common Cents*). The glossary—a paratextual form Kocik uses throughout his work—we hope may encapsulate key terms from the book.

Thom Donovan
Portland, Oregon
7/17/2013

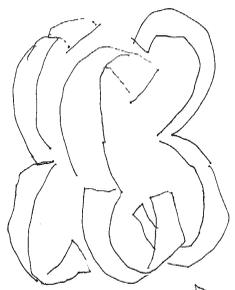
Notes:

- 1) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 203.
- 2) Ibid, 202.
- 3) Ibid, 42.
- 4) Ibid, 171.
- 5) Ibid, 187.
- 6) Ibid, 41.
- 7) Ibid, 27.
- 8) Ibid, 70.
- 9) Ibid, 41.
- 10) Ibid, 212.
- 11) Ibid, 173.
- 12) See Eleni Stecopoulos' book, *Armies of Compassion* (Los Angeles: Palm Press, 2010), for a brilliant exploration of this idea from Artaud.
- 13) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 312.
- 14) Ibid, 46.
- 15) Ibid, 313.
- 16) Ibid, 304.
- 17) Ibid, 203.

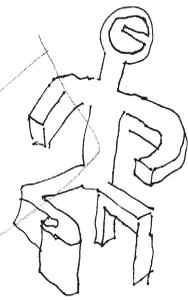
is introspection



color sets heart rate



electrical



furniture arousal



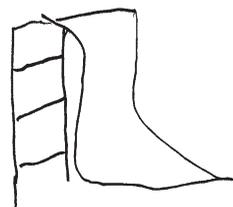
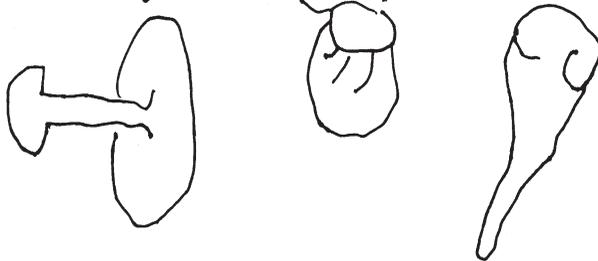
of aesthetic

ENTIRELY

AFFERENT



OVERCOMING FITNESS



round: an easy way out

THE PARTICULARS OF SUBTLE FITNESS AND ITS USE FOR LIFE

ANDREW LEVY

A theory that has ceased to have any connection with practice is art.¹
–Max Horkheimer

I'm a carpenter and I can only write about
what I can't write about.²
–Robert Kocik

January 30, 2008: Robert forwarded a note telling me that The Lower
Manhattan Cultural Council had granted Daria Faïn and him

a temporary workspace for the design and development of a building based
on poetry (I actually prefer to say 'prosody'). To my knowledge there is not
a single structure on the planet designed specifically for meeting the needs
of poets—addressing such interrelated questions as working conditions,
livelihood, listening, learning, public contact, seclusion, social change,
diverse assembling, hanging out, heating up, formal innovation.³

In sympathy with other philosophers of his generation who have engaged
the grounds of language and life, I think particularly of Giorgio Agamben's
work on "the coming politics," his philosophical and political exercises for
disrupting ideational incarceration; it is the *concentration* that matters and not

ideas. From Kocik's standpoint on poetics, those who think they have private thoughts have misunderstood language.

WHAT IS A WORD? (I sure don't know!) I'll present the 4 stages of speech and cosmogony of phonemic emanation of Kashmiri Saivism (particularly the writing of Abhinavagupta) as example and practice of 'word' at its fullest—in contrast to 'English,' psychoanalysis (especially Lacan's parole pleine) and the neurocentric 'problem of origins' in linguistics (is language acquired or hardwired?). All day Sunday 2/10 and all day Wednesday 2/13 (from 10am on) the two rooms at 14 Wall Street will serve as communal reading rooms . . . ⁴

We're in what's become the Garden of Eden. Robert Kocik's "Overcoming Fitness" is a paradigmatically radical proposal for a contemporary poetics, perhaps the most radical made among his contemporaries. Like some among his more adventurous peers, his work calls for the rearrangement of one's reading habits as a first step, but then Kocik goes further. In re-imagining how things work and words fit together, how habits of language long ingrained are unfit for the world workers and writers live in as participants in a common destiny, he suggests American poets begin again, cognizant of the mercantile origins of the English language. In economic terms, that means that one does not sell somebody something they cannot evaluate. That we can no longer, by taking thought, transcend the life that exists by taking thought.

What I've always liked about Robert's work is how off the grid it is in relation to forms of academic discourse, which is not infrequently fueled by bad faith. I don't see how the hegemony of the university-factory could be effectively contested but that Kocik's lifework, as in "Overcoming Fitness," is an exercise in the powers of constraint that would fit form to fitness for a kind of nonparticipatory participation—conceived as an "indescribably more ruthless and cruel upheaval than any political revolution ever was,"⁵ as Robert Musil writes in *The Man Without Qualities*. Kocik's writing is a return to the sphere of interest that art has left for what has become merely *interesting*. No one cares about banning ineffective art. Kocik's writing must be understood within a political context that a work of philosophy and beauty can be.

Kocik's writing, in a way similar to that of Epicurus, tells us what is not, and what's not only better than what is, but much more like the truth—it might want not to, but it can't help it. Epicurus, in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "was aware that deeply ingrained habits of thought are not easily corrected, and thus he proposed various exercises to assist the novice."⁶ In

“Overcoming Fitness,” Kocik declares his work “impenititudinist”; that is, “it views the world as a place of missing or omitted organs, organizations, life forms, agencies, properties and events. It sorts through the nonexistent.”⁷ According to Robert, “Overcoming Fitness both conceives and constructs.”⁸ The writing is in dialogue, reflexively organized about the ways in which an author ‘identifies’ with its genome, with its co-workers and friends—its readers. It arrives in our hands as a working draft.

The work of beauty, however, can be undone. Writer Sarah Jaffe has reiterated the point:

Politics has become a playground for the ultra-rich, where they get to test their pet theories on the rest of us and we’re expected to smile and thank them for their charity [. . .] We’re ruled by an ever-smaller group of elites (“the income defense industry”) [. . .] The same people who are pushing wages downward are the ones paying for politicians’ campaigns, and they’re the same people on the boards of directors and trustees of our universities.⁹

In “Overcoming Fitness,” Kocik shows what’s at stake for life in our state of politics 2000; a forewarning that twelve years later is as yet inaudible in the mainstream media:

(The) unabashed government handing over to a single private interest of a public trust that is at once a biological commons. This permission of commercial takeover and the faith in the superiority of self-interested incentive characterize us more acutely than any genomic insight. The pattern is well established. Before technologies are marketable, cost and risk are socialized (paid for with tax dollars). Later, when profitable products are in view, the creative works of the public sector are given as gifts to the business world. The human genome is now added to an illustrious list of public giveaways that includes: transistors, the internet, computers, satellites and information processing. Once technology transfer of this sort is assumed, government and the corporate sector function as an alliance.¹⁰

Do the math. Screw the *New York Times*, Goldman Sachs, and the journalist who wrote this piece of fluff: “Goldman itself calculated that since 2008 it has showered \$76.1 million on community activities in Lower Manhattan.” BUT, it has received “\$1.65 billion worth of tax-exempt Liberty Bonds and an additional \$115 million in tax sweeteners.”¹¹

From Philip Green's "Farewell to Democracy?":

While the self-protectiveness of the mediocracy edges out any possibility of contrary critique entering the public sphere on equal terms, the big-money propaganda barrage of the Right generates rarely challenged disinformation for anyone listening. What this means most crucially is that the fantasized "liberal bias" of "elites" who supposedly dominate the media comes to be seen as manifesting itself simply by expressing any opinion, or any allegation of fact, that is not that of the organized Right. This bullying, which taken seriously makes the exchange of viewpoints simply impossible, is tacitly accepted as though it were gospel by almost all but hard-and-fast liberals.¹²

I'm struck by the precise anger of Kocik's social (and linguistic) critiques in regard to what he terms an "adversarial materiality," evidenced in the example of Goldman Sachs' largesse reported above. It reminds me of a well known statement by Karl Marx from the introduction to the "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*": "The arm of criticism cannot replace the criticism of arms. Material force can only be overcome by material force; but theory itself becomes a material force when it has seized the masses."¹³

A call for political and economic freedom from within our 'bios/bias' technologies and tautology, "Overcoming Fitness is based on experiential inheritance brought to bear on the genetic moment. We're free to diverge from the dictates of our material substrate and the very life of that substrate, in fact, depends on our divergence!"¹⁴ Where does poetry *fit* in such a course of understanding?

We're immortal but not as expected or desired. The poetic view claims that we have sequenced the genome in order to confirm just this—to demonstrate scientifically what was already known poetically—the fact that we're also not alive! Identifying with inanimation as ancestor, individual makeup, enlightenment and fateful flowering and feeding back into being, greatly expands human spirit. It furthers or stretches sympathy to include all that's left outside sensation. As yet, the organ of such perception (enlivenment in inanima) is present only as a trace. Poetry is one of the few forces that can flesh it out.¹⁵

Epicurus? Kocik's defense of poetry vis-à-vis the work of poetics:

[. . .] poetic inquiry is, first, a matter of looking where the light is bad—beyond the instrumentation, if you will—looking into the blinding light and blind spots within the data, and remaining intact throughout the failure points of mental, mathematical, material modes. Second,

poetics is the matter of that which does the looking. It is a distinctive sensory set up—set of recognition skills, proclivities, propensities and predispositions.¹⁶

In other words, the material of poetics is the non-exploitation of human life. And in that there's Robert's humor, too: "(I really should take out a patent on forward-looking exclamation so that I might collect royalties on all the goods it invokes.)"¹⁷

Philosophers often see themselves as builders or demolishers. The most ambitious ones tend to think that they can do both—Kocik's work may be described as a building's archeology though not enslaved by the building's text. The debris becomes as light as the page in a book. Imagination, as the Shakespearean scholar Harold C. Goddard pointed out, "is neither the language of nature nor the language of man, but both at once, the medium of communion between the two [. . .] Imagination is the *elemental speech* in all senses, the first and the last, of primitive man and of the poets."¹⁸ Kocik's focus is upon that idea of elemental speech. He advocates, as did Elinor Ostrom, awarded the 2009 Nobel Prize in economics for her lifelong work studying how communities share resources, a "polycentric" approach to commons management involving oversight "at multiple levels with autonomy at each level." The chief virtue and practical value of this structure, according to Ostrom, is that it helps establish rules that "tend to encourage the growth of trust and reciprocity"¹⁹ among people who use and care for a particular commons.

Resilience and curiosity have been the only fundamental particles predicted by theory but not yet detected in endowing theory with a material force. Building an ecology of restoration, laying the planks of resilience against imaginative drought, Kocik, who hails from Minnesota, imagines the commons to be national in scope; it coheres as an archive of cultures (to be as resilient and curious as the missing social services and omitted agencies in the Bureau of Material Behaviors, Kocik's pseudo-parody of administrative and business models); its mode is thinking slightly left of center; the work is metamorphic compassion; its diorama focuses on the small and finds the most beauty in the creativity of small things; it fires back at art talk and the cognoscenti who do and would encrypt the songs of life; his work says you and I are here; it does not nickel and dime the poor or workers with shovels; it is a hallucinatory poetry on the matters at hand; it challenges common conceptions of behavior and dialogue; it proceeds in fragments of

a pre-Poundian logic (“The skull does not hold all the human intelligence”²⁰) toward a coming democracy of communally-linked citizens. It offers critical models of enthusiasm and rapture to heal today’s human commons trending toward ruins.

Whitman’s voice is the gamete of a further society. While the poem is the heritable pattern of expressed characteristics.

(Of course I believe that prosody and cosmology are consanguine. And their common ancestor would be ‘materialization’ itself.)²¹

Kocik’s writing arrives fully articulate in the mid-1990’s; it has remained constant in its intensity, humor, intelligence and compassionate interest since that time. I believe his manuscripts to be among the foremost contributions to philosophy and economics of the past two decades. That twenty years have passed for a generation of readers to arrive equipped to exercise the sequential states of revision on authorial intentions his writings unveil, to discover in reading just exactly *what could be said*, is a testament to the generative power of his psycho-analysis of economics by poetics. Kocik’s work places poets at the point of pure research in any materialization that grants poems the full status of personhood. Poems, in other words, have *beings* of their own. In Kocik’s research it is people who become “material.”

Today’s political action eliminates the physical presence of people. People are the material of poetics. Overcoming fitness is about restoring value to the public sector, a commons that has suffered the loss and suppression of values for much too long, with the past 35 years bearing the greatest degradation of values in American history. Kocik has been working toward a restorative ecology of life for twenty-five years. I have been his friend, and sometime publisher, for twenty years. It is encouraging that a younger generation is hearing what he has to say.

Notes

- 1) Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Towards a New Manifesto* (New York: Verso, 2011) 100.
- 2) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 52.
- 3) Email correspondence with the author.
- 4) Ibid.
- 5) Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities: Volume 1* (New York: Vintage, 1996) 399.
- 6) “Epicurus,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Feb. 18, 2009, <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

entries/epicurus/.

7) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 25.

8) Ibid, 26.

9) Sarah Jaffe, "Corporate Profits at All-Time High; Wages at All-Time Low: Can We Call it Class War Yet?" June 30, 2012, San Diego Free Press, <http://sandiegofreepress.org/2012/06/corporate-profits-at-all-time-high-wages-at-all-time-low-can-we-call-it-class-war-yet/>.

10) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 29-30.

11) N.R. Kleinfield, "It's a Goldman World," *The New York Times*, June 29, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/01/nyregion/its-a-goldman-world-in-battery-park-city.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

12) Philip Green, "Farewell to Democracy?," *Logos: A Journal of Modern Society and Culture*. Available at <http://logosjournal.com/2011/farewell-to-democracy/>.

13) Werner Blumenberg, *Karl Marx: An Illustrated History* (New York: Verso Books, 1999) 51.

14) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 32.

15) Ibid, 34.

16) Ibid, 35.

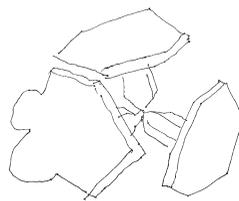
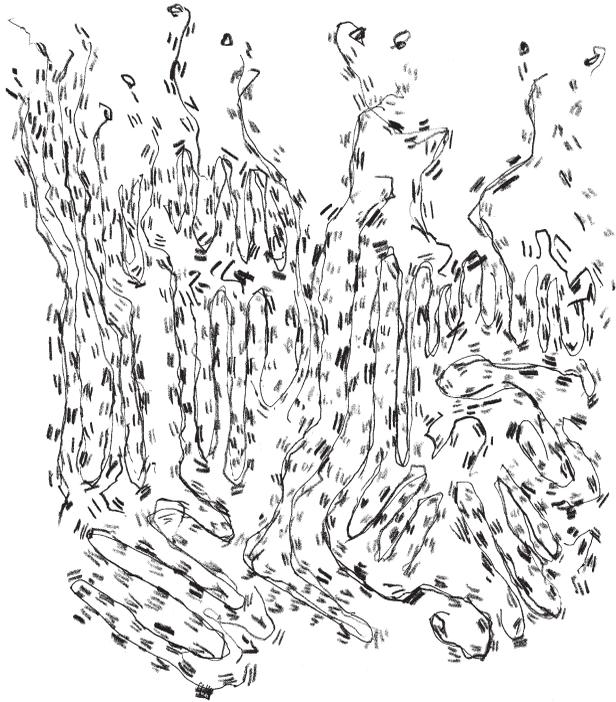
17) Ibid, 36.

18) Harold C. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare, Volume 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) 10.

19) Jay Walljasper, "Elinor Ostrom Outlines Best Strategies for Managing the Commons," *On the Commons*, <http://onthecommons.org/magazine/elinor-ostrom-outlines-best-strategies-managing-commons>.

20) Ezra Pound, *Machine Art and Other Writing* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) 27.

21) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 58-59.



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THE SORE, OVERSENSITIVE, INSECURE, SUPPLE SCIENCES

[This poem predates and prefigures the writings in this book. It's a tuning with, to diverge from, Charles Olson's "A Later Note on Letter #15"; diverging from identifiable poetry, viscera violently accessed, furnishings as inert, prosody as inconstitutive of production at large, and any practice of a current poetics that is other than the future, in its fullest sense, realized.]

In the U.S. the poetics became maximization
thereafter (after 1911
with Frederick W. Taylor as the standard)

and the intensive overrating of select items produced inefficiently
by rule of thumb (thereafter 'art').

until overcoming fitness admitted to germline
by getting the nongiven in (as against the given cosmos alone)

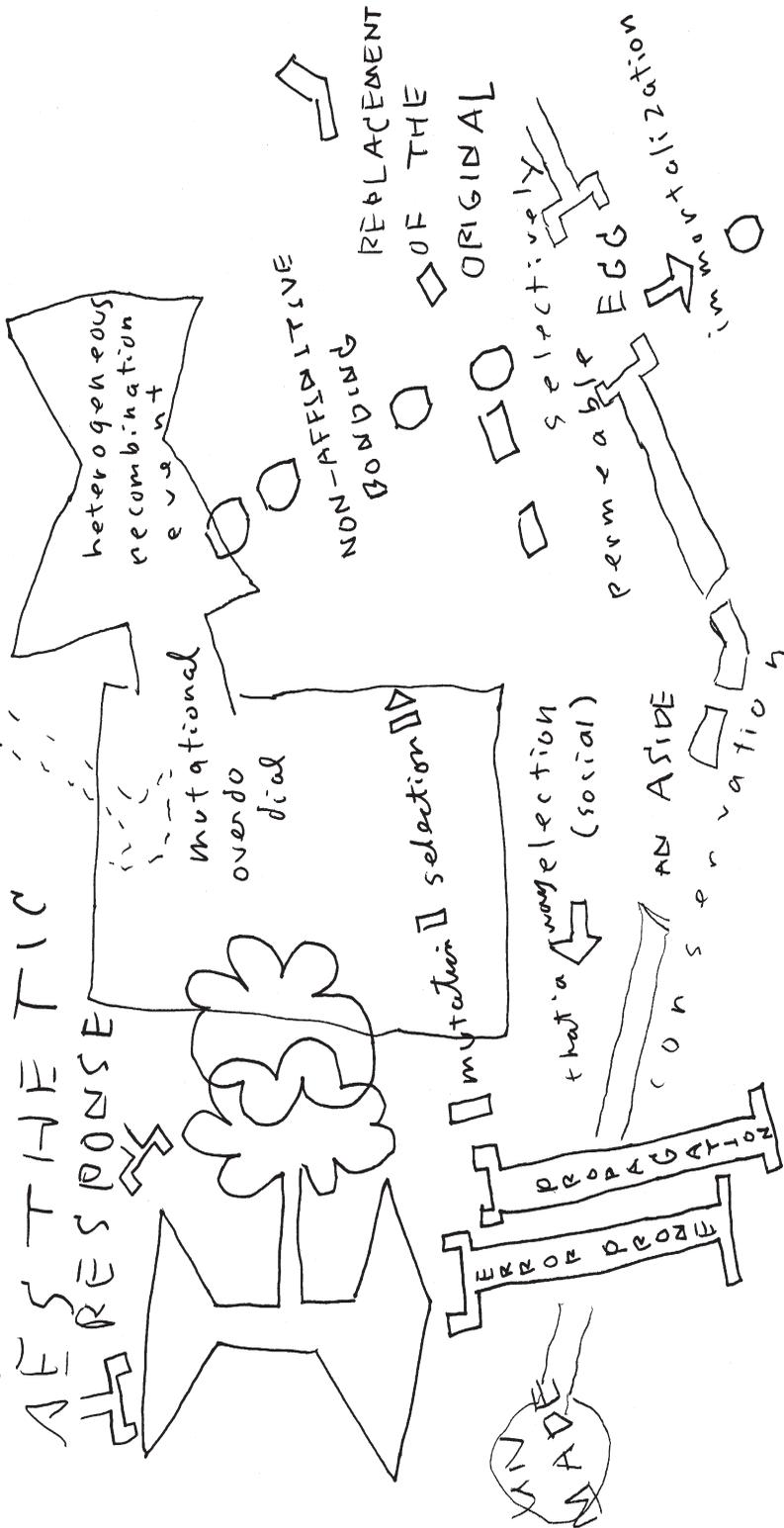
the oversensitive, the insensitive, the sore (as sciences extending
through the exact, the soft, the social)

and that concept of history
that makes anyone's act a character in its own right, in
other words, opens the wound or at least the wonder
that we demonstrate genius if
only with each step. That in a given, disfavored world
contribution that does not treat this disaffection does
further damage
as against what we know will take place: the *omitted*, the omitted
being capacitation through nongivens seized and
with one indispensable corollary—that
no individual is not longed for, courted, in eternity.

The poetics of such a situation (the dark and blinding data)
now safe to gaze upon.

COURSE OF ALLESTHETIC RESPONSE

ACQUIRED REGION



OVERCOMING FITNESS

["Overcoming Fitness" was originally published through Autonomedia in 2001. It was written, secondarily, as a response, at the time, to the 'innovative' avant-garde tendency to borrow conservative biological terms (the 19th century breeders' term 'hybrid' comes to mind) while the life sciences themselves were bursting with new processes, taxonomies, models, patterns, behaviors, systems and syntheses; and primarily to countervail the Human Genome Project which I had been following since the late 1980's. When the completion of the genome draft was announced in 2000, I was working in the Catskill Mountains, trying to introduce a regional architecture. Peter Lamborn Wilson had recently relocated upstate and, as a neighborly gesture, I dropped off my genome writings, which he read through, expressed some regret that I had been too soft on capitalism, and then asked if he could publish the work in his new Exit 18 pamphlet series.]

UPON COMPLETION OF THIS COURSE YOU WILL HAVE GAINED AN UNDERSTANDING OF

Overcoming Fitness is impenititudinist—it views the world as a place of missing or omitted organs, organizations, life forms, agencies, properties and events. It sorts through the nonexistent.

An omission is an omission because its admission would be more than beneficial. Thus *missing* means sorely missed. Potential works fill the air. But how many, once realized, would be salubrious? And of the salubrious few, how many prospects actually fall within one's competence (if compete we must). Bringing life about (as we've learned from studying our local instance of life-on-earth) is harrowing and most improbable. Thus, Overcoming Fitness represents that slimmest chance favoring ineluctable life always yet to exist.

Aren't things fine the way they are? Maybe so, but (I contend) only if a lack of means makes change untenable. Inconvenience is almighty! It is oppressive. (My co-workers claim that I'm able to remove the ease from even the easiest tasks—even from the automatic, the involuntary and Second Nature.) Are the given conditions, whether human made or 'unmade,' indeed inexorable? Ours to revere or revamp?

Overcoming Fitness both conceives and constructs. A work is not conceived until constructed. Until constructed, too little is known about a work to conceive of it. Word/deed dichotomy is eliminated or fused.

Is this an emergency or merely urgent? Is there enough time to undo infrastructures from within or should I just take to the street? I don't want to simply be voluntarily disadvantaged.

Our meddling has reached the core. Thus, time-honored adaptation has too little time to react. This is the case for Social Darwinism as well.

Overcoming Fitness desecrates the zero-sum landscape. It reinvents incentive. It attempts to construct a viable model of benevolent behavior to set against the volatile model proposed by today's so-called compassionate conservatives with their Carnegie-method of responsible contribution by the disproportionately rich.

For Overcoming Fitness to indeed be viable, it must be as proof-oriented as it is poetic. To this end, Overcoming Fitness extends through the soft, speculative, social, hard and exact sciences to generate further scientific types, such as the Sore, Oversensitive, Insecure, Insensitive and Subtle Sciences. The role of these sciences is to provide an alternative 'fulfilling' description of human being. Why? Are the other physical models unfulfilling? Decide for yourself, but with or against fitness as optional.

Inheritance is already being forced to respond to our works. May poetry determine phenotype! Poetry doesn't ask why two white rabbits don't produce a red rabbit but why two white rabbits don't produce a putto.

The unsafe condition of the sexual transmissibility of artwork. Of lifework. Safest surgery.

Sweet, humbling ingratitude.

Ungrateful about what, exactly? Fitness and apoptosis (programmed cell death) are synonymous. We struggle to survive because we ultimately don't survive. We already have this inheritance. It's given. Why work for it? That's what I mean! Fitness is the opportunity to die without using its occasion for further ends.

As a theory, Overcoming Fitness is physically absurd. Nonetheless, it works. It agrees with a world we must not live without. Max Planck once described his mechanics as 'an act of desperation.'¹ Though the quantum concept allowed him to obtain expressions that agreed beautifully with experiment, he recognized that his quantum assumption was physically untenable. Or as Gregor Mendel who, without an understanding of the underlying process of meiosis or the particulate unit (the gene) of inheritance, could nonetheless accurately observe the patterns of genetic transmission in garden peas.

Just yesterday, I was speaking with a biologist friend, describing my impenititudinist practice. With more sympathetic skepticism than I'm accustomed to receiving from her sector she exclaimed: "Well, you're going to have to stretch the boundaries of science pretty far to get that overfitness to fit." My immediate response was to point out that the boundaries of poetry, in all likelihood, would have to be stretched even further.

THE ERA OF KNOCKOUT HUMAN BEINGS

Overcoming Fitness and the Human Genome Project are roughly coeval. I began paying close attention to genetics in 1988 when the National Institutes of Health announced the first attempt to sequence the genome. I was reacting against the potential danger of genetic determinism—that *who* we are could possibly be reduced to *what* we are. I simply felt that the developments of the HGP should be accompanied by (as remorse for the certainty that these developments would not be influenced by) an equally arduous poetic

language. Overcoming Fitness is, after all, a non-reductive (to state it negatively) identification with objective biological fact.

On June 26, 2000, the public Human Genome Project and the privately owned corporation Celera Genomics jointly announced the first assembly of the human genetic code.² (An assembled genome is one wherein the location and order of the chemical letters of the genetic code along the chromosomes are known.) It's a coincidence that this pamphlet will be published at the same moment that a working draft of our DNA sequence will be complete. In light of this coincidence, I'd like to open this pamphlet with a few comments concerning the meaning of the occasion of this working draft.

Self-Knowledge

Are there ways in which we might 'identify' with our genome? Do we behave in the ways it behaves? Hardly. But the process of completing the genome map—the way in which we've gone about it—does in turn completely characterize us. Matter reveals not itself but us. (I usually believe this.)

Produce a drug and then discover what it does. Don't be overly concerned about which condition it might treat. This is primarily an instance of human behavior and secondarily an instance of chemical behavior.

The genome has been called a 'pigsty.' A 'pearl.' A 'model of high performance.' We're free to make claims about the genome precisely because it is not a person. It won't talk back until we provide it with its facts.

The harshest macro characterization I've come across, reflected back from our projections onto the genome: "The body is a kind of repressive socialist state where every cell is equal but each must respond precisely to collective authority or receive orders to self-destruct."³ (Thus democracy would at least prove that we can't be reduced to our physiology!)

Competition

A great deal has been made of the rivalry between the public and private sequencing efforts. Both sides now minimize the competitive aspect and point to the benefits that will arise from a quickly completed genome database. As

Francis Collins (coordinator of the public effort) said at the White House-hosted joint announcement: “The only race we’re interested in discussing here this afternoon is the human race.”⁴ This egalitarian attitude is reassuring, but who will the completed draft benefit first and foremost? The assumption is that the human genome database will at last ‘democratize’ gene research. But this term is only half-accurate. To be more precise, gene research has been *market democratized*. This means that the attitude (whether cooperative, philanthropic, or perhaps cutthroat) of the researchers is of little consequence to the underlying process. Under market democracy, the genome will be portioned in a purely proprietary presidentially-approved-profit-maximizing major player gene grab. Celera has only highlighted and sped up the process. (Imagine a privately owned corporation having shared center stage with government directors for the Manhattan Project!) What the Human Genome Project basically portends is the high probability that no public interest whatsoever will be present in the next Big Science Project. Someone could patent, not a planet, but the only way to travel to that planet. What’s the difference? Your vote won’t earn you a seat on the last flight off of our cooling or crumbling earth. The lottery—there’s always the lottery preying upon those left behind.

Taxation Without Medication

I’m a little guy. The last time I tried to buy some of the advanced material—the stuff that could really take my business somewhere special—minimum order: one boxcar. It’s probably easier to find a way to buy the whole train. Figure it out or step aside and let a fitter lifeform fill those shoes. How did we get this way? Isn’t there a crime in here somewhere? Or at least a travesty? What fool/entrepreneur is going to crack the fitness code and give people a free subscription to a brand new set of controls? The generalized jackpot. Do we even know what ‘dream come true’ would mean on the evolutionary plane?

I think of the June 26th ceremony as a shockingly premature, unabashed government handing over to a single private interest of a public trust that is at once a biological commons. This permission of commercial takeover and the faith in the superiority of self-interested incentive characterize us more acutely than any genomic insight. The pattern is well established. Before technologies are marketable, cost and risk are socialized (paid for with tax dollars). Later, when profitable products are in view, the creative works of the

public sector are given as gifts to the business world. The human genome is now added to an illustrious list of public giveaways that includes: transistors, the internet, computers, satellites and information processing. Once technology transfer of this sort is assumed, government and the corporate sector function as an alliance.

Can we view the genome 'commercially' (or even usefully) without such a view determining what the genome is? Are genes simply human interests overriding the genome's lack of punctuation in order to distinguish their functional expressions?

The company that created Celera was the principal supplier of sequencing machines for the public consortium. In 1998, when this company (headed by a certain Michael W. Hunkapillar and now known as PE Biosystems) developed a new generation of automated sequencer called the ABI PRISM 3700, Hunkapillar realized that this machine would allow a single center working on an industrial scale to start from scratch and sequence the human genome faster than the public effort.

At this point, though Celera is indebted to 134 years of general genetic research and 12 years of specific public HGP data, they are only kept from withholding their own information by the fact that the public effort, under an accord known as the "Bermuda Principles," submits its DNA data every 24 hours to a public data bank. Had the public effort failed to respond to the push provided by Celera's entry into the 'race' in May 1998, when the human genome was only partially sequenced, Celera might have been able to complete its draft genome, reverse the Bermuda accord and receive congratulations at the White House alone without a public counterpart at its side.

Perhaps the final drive of the consortium (the combined efforts of Britain, France, Germany, Japan, China and the USA) was not to avoid humiliation but to avoid monopoly—to serve as Celera's only possible competitor and keep it from commanding top dollar for its database.

Like anyone dying of a disease, I want Celera-style incentive and vested interest to speed things along. (The webpage of Celera Genomics used to greet visitors with the statement "DISCOVERY CAN'T WAIT.") Call it *celerantics*. Many will benefit from the goods and services publicly funded research has allowed the few at Celera to now provide—I just resent paying for it again.

Can't a percentage be established? Shouldn't my gene therapy come with a certain pre-deduction? Aren't we in fact already shareholders in the maverick genomics companies' investment risks?

We're Into Optimization and Cosmetics

My purpose in applying my faulty logic to this historic achievement is to say that the moment has truly been lost on us and is irrecoverable. This is perhaps the most consequential research of all time. If an occasion of such magnitude does not compel re-evaluation of our productive behavior and is only used to reinforce grievous already ingrained socio-economic patterns, we are, I feel, though living longer and looking good, being buried alive.

Will self-reflection factor into the genome, as the genome appears as a product of our selves (the 'alert' genome—aware of its material nature as co-created by observer and instruments of observation)?

Keep your eye on our 'traits'—the genome will fashion itself after our traits and behaviors and not vice versa. In this way the genome will become an advanced type of retrofection—germ cells influenced not only by somatic cells but even more directly by social forces or perhaps psychological factors (though psychosexual retrofection is clearly beyond the scope of this essay).

What we're learning from our genome, therefore, is that human nature is not about to change for the better. We couldn't even safeguard the international character of the genome effort. We're learning that the nascent disciplines—genomics, bioinformatics, proteomics, pharmacogenomics—will only embed themselves in our current customs, shortcomings and fitness tests. We're learning that our government serves as promotional agency for the ultrafit companies to which it transfers federally funded technologies.

If I can locate the protein responsible for creativity and trace it to its gene, I should be entitled to royalties on all drugs and products that are designed to stimulate that gene. And the makers of those downstream drugs and products would, in turn, be entitled to royalties on any artworks produced downstream from their drugs. They would then logically be liable for any downstream 'losses' as well. What does the word 'royalty' mean in market democracy America? Munificence finally redistributed? Or rents and consumer prices that are more like taxes paid to the private sector?

We're Only a Fraction of What We Are

It's been announced that people are, genetically, more than 99.9% identical.⁵ This statement, whether factual or not, has a different meaning if announced by an aggressively economic hegemonizing culture rather than a threatened non-industrialized culture. That's one point.

If our microbiology is used to justify our commonality, it can also be used to justify our bigotry. Under this justification, all behaviors are built in (the *bios/bias tautology*⁶) and there's little we can do about it.

On the other hand, if we're *that* identical chemically, then our differences (including our differences of appearance) must be experiential. This would be a purely Lamarckian world-picture, albeit spread out over enough time to appear to have been all along Darwinian. This world-picture would favor Overcoming Fitness, as Overcoming Fitness is based on experiential inheritance brought to bear on the genetic moment. We're free to diverge from the dictates of our material substrate, and the very life of that substrate, in fact, depends on our divergence!

It would be impossible to overemphasize that harmony and relationship are not assured by identity but limited, perhaps threatened, by it. What I call the *non-affinitive* or *heterologous* bond has not yet been revealed in recombinatorial genetics. Without the non-affinitive bond, we are stuck—doomed—within a bios/bias tautology where no significant relationship is possible among entities with little or nothing in common. Non-affinitive relationship is a rich macro-behavioral rule of thumb (for instance, a workers' union made up of limousine drivers and machinists or strangers sharing the same favorite restaurant) which can usefully be brought to bear on the genome.

Contrariety, if anything, is consecrate.

(The poetic view: there is no common ancestor. Each of us flew in on our own asteroid.)

At this point in time, concerning the genome draft as portraiture, it's safer to say that our instrumentation and interests have so far made us (and by 'us' I mean animal and vegetable) look stunningly generic. This will change as the 'draft' phase moves into the 'annotation' phase. But even then, once our

differences begin to be charted, they will be perceived as point mutations, defects and variations and not unique discrepancies. (We've got a long way to go—the profusion of unique and expansive proteomic portraits each of us would be honored to identify with still can't even be imagined!)

The Inanimate Imponderables

J. Craig Venter, Ph.D., president and chief scientific officer of Celera Genomics, makes the most remarkable statements. As spokesperson for Celera he closed his June 26th White House speech with the following remark:

Some have said that sequencing the human genome will diminish humanity by taking the mystery out of life. Poets have argued that genome sequencing is an example of sterilizing reductionism that will rob them of their inspiration. Nothing could be further from the truth. The complexities and wonder of how the inanimate chemicals that are our genetic code give rise to the imponderables of the human spirit should keep poets and philosophers inspired for millennia.⁷

This is a very complicated statement with which he sends us forward into this new post-genomic era. Venter argues against the reductionism of the genome project with a reduction of his own. (Diminish or be diminished! Fight stereotype with stereotype!) Perhaps he has developed his views by speaking with particular poets and philosophizers. But I sense that his statement is not rigorous. He uses the term 'poet' to identify those unable to see the miracle of our chemistry—those threatened by scientific method—those skeptical, hesitant and trembling at the threshold of instrumentation—poets as the new 'retrograde'—an incredulous class forming in the wake of Celera's work. It is at least fair to say that Venter is reductive of the range of materials poets have used for inspiration up to the point of his closing prescription.

(Nor is his use of the word 'spirit' rigorous—no more rigorous than a layman's use of the word 'protein'.)

It is also appropriate that it is Venter who fields the complaints against gene sequencing—for he has become the daemon of our genome, having been so central to its implementation, industrialization, and commercialization. He has placed himself in the poetic position—the person capable of feeling the inspiration.

His poetic prejudice aside, I find that the most remarkable moment in his speech occurred when he linked inanimate chemicals and human spirit. We are, to the extent we stem from our DNA, inanimate! The immortal code responsible for life is itself inanimate. I find this fact utterly inspiring—worth reflecting on for millennia to come—that we arise from the inanimate, are borne by the inanimate and ultimately return to the inanimate—and that our most profound commonality is with the inanimate. The most extreme non-affinitive bond imaginable. We're immortal but not as expected or desired. The poetic view claims that we have sequenced the genome in order to confirm just this—to demonstrate scientifically what was already known poetically—the fact that we're also not alive! Identifying with inanimation as ancestor, individual makeup, enlightenment and fateful flowering and feeding back into being, greatly expands human spirit. It furthers or stretches sympathy to include all that's left outside sensation. As yet, the organ of such perception (enlivenment in inanima) is present only as a trace. Poetry is one of the few forces that can flesh it out.

Whereas most so-called liberal criticism of the genome project has been in fact conservative and constraining, poetics would argue that genome sequencing is in danger of being carried out too moderately—as basic research over-determined by investors and ethicists. Poetics could even encourage the genome effort to be more completely reductive—to realize our diminished humanity so that a further humanity may stand in the place of former, less fulfilling humanity.

(For example, there could be a mandatory payback from the genomics companies to the government for funding pure unpatentable research. Complete with Department of Novel Genomes.)

And it must not go without saying—the human genome project should not have been allowed to leave all economic systems other than capitalism out of the picture. These further freedoms: the ability to not *modify* but *introduce* species, removal of pure research and student wonder from the commercial grip, nonexploitation (in Augustine's words, "to use without using") and profound re-evaluation of incentive, are all incompatible with market democracy and the liberalisms of free trade. And, of course, it's not safe or wise to write new rules until a wholly different faith in incentive is established—until incentive is subtilized and allowed to inform our productivity. Perhaps the coming nano-age will provide us with such great material abundance that greed and insecurity will be vanquished without really becoming character issues.

It's Said That Scientists Always Look Where the Light Is Good

This statement couldn't possibly be true. In any event, poetic inquiry is, first, a matter of looking where the light is bad—beyond the instrumentation, if you will—looking into the blinding light and blind spots within the data, and remaining intact throughout the failure points of mental, mathematical, material modes. Second, poetics is the matter of that which does the looking. It is a distinctive sensory set up—set of recognition skills, proclivities, propensities and predispositions. Its home is the hunch, the crunch, the puzzle, the riddle, the drizzle, the unknown, the nonsensical, the nondescript, the insensate and the noncoding. Poetics is also highly sensitive to counterintuitive systems. As such, at certain points in the pressures, there is the very real 'outside chance' that poets may be more adept at sensing phenomena and reading data within a given scientific inquiry than scientists themselves.⁸ Integrating the ultra-intricate annotation phase⁹ of the genome project with the poetic 'outside chance' could provide the critical difference in terms of both efficiency and profundity when insight is otherwise no match for impasse.

Supple Science's Insights Into These Dark and Blinding Areas

As we enter, in earnest, the annotation phase of the Human Genome Project, poetic perception would be particularly applicable to the following areas:

1) The Noncoding: If it's true that only 3% of the genome is made up of working genes, 97% is either 'fill' or simply misunderstood. Poetics readily identifies with this so-called nonfunctional, nonessential, deletable chromosomal matter.

2) The Non-Affective: The annotation phase is the study of differences. The recognition that people are more than 99.9% identical ultimately isn't very *useful*. From knowledge of differences, defects, variations and mutations will be developed treatments for disease and designer genomes for better health. As an extension of the importance of difference, poetics proposes further chemical bonds for the genome assembly—the *divergent*, *non-homologous* and *heterogeneous* bonds yet to be introduced to the recombinatory world of DNA.

3) Era of Knockout Human Beings: Our genome is so similar to the genomes of other animals that counterpart genes can be deleted in other species to create 'knockout' strains. The knockout animals reveal, by their defects, the natural functions of the deleted gene. The poetic perspective relative to the knockout method is that the one-to-one relationship between a gene mutation and a disease will prove to be the exception. The interaction of tens of thousands of genes and their protein products is bewilderingly complex. Multiple genes of smaller effects acting in combination with the social and natural environments may account for most diseases. A disease that produces a mutation in a gene could, at once, be the basis of well-being for some other tissue. Each purine and pyrimidine that makes up each base pair perhaps holds an incomprehensible amount of information. One computational biologist attempting to diagram the regulatory logic of the polygenic genome has said that the network looks "increasingly like explosions in a spaghetti factory."¹⁰ Because of this complexity, any gene treatment practiced on people will inevitably create a knockout wait-and-see suspense. Certainly there are effects our counterpart knockout mice friends can't tell us about or won't even experience. Poetics would provide a kind of *solace/sensor* for tracking the tremors and terrors of the newly nuanced knockout human being.

4) Preposterous Hypothesis: A fool's freedom. Informality from the informal sector. For example, a gene might not even be determined by sequence but by enfolded spatial proximity or timing. Or by some fool thing like 'mood.' Poetics is laughing stock used as leverage.

5) Superlatives: "The instruction book previously known only to God"¹¹ (coordinator of the public effort, Francis Collins). Poetics appreciates exaggerated claims and understands their morphological role—the portending of further physiologies. This language just-out-ahead-of-the-data is also a property of poetics. (I really should take out a patent on forward-looking exclamation so that I might collect royalties on all the goods it invokes.)

6) Contradiction: Especially the issue of public/private. Keeping 'our' genome public but 'my' genome private. Get government out of our lives, but give the goods of the genome project to the little people.

And in that the HGP and Overcoming Fitness are coeval and concurrent, the annotated phase of fitness overcome now begins—like the 36,000 genes predicted, there will issue forth 36,000 complementary and incompatible further traits, properties, advantages, agencies, essays, body parts and democracies formerly yet to be.

INTRODUCING OVERCOMING FITNESS

What do I have against fitness? Hasn't fitness gotten us this far? It must be doing something right. Why would I rule it out? Why would I claim that its contrary is as credible? What's so bad about being adept? Why promote ineptitude?

There are different types of fitness:

Evolutionary Fitness: As in *survival of the fittest*—life's inherent eugenics which goes by the name of 'Natural Selection.' The lifeform editorial tasks that meddling, sentimental, error prone, self-interested, low-fidelity creatures have naturally been spared. I place evolutionary fitness at the top of the list because it often serves as general model for other phenomena—as indubitable evidence for the ways in which things work, why things are the way they are and why they can't be otherwise—often corroborating questionable social behaviors such as 'getting ahead,' 'watching out for number one,' 'dog eat dog' and 'free trading.'

Social Fitness: The view that the bright and strong and qualified rightfully find their way to the top. Today we say "survival of the best-informed." Equal opportunity as enlightenment.

Market Fitness: Or capitalism. Business behavior is self-regulating because the best product at the best price will prevail. Anywhere prices are rising, the market has been restrained. Market fitness is an incentive safeguard and spur (in sharp contrast to the sluggishness of socialisms).

Fitness Fusion: Fusion of social/political/economic sectors as Market Democracy. With the demise of communism, Market Democracy has become the dominant political system. And, like dominant lifeforms, a dominant political form 'spreads.'

Synthetic Fitness: Surgery, bioengineering, gene therapy, pharmacogenetics, medical treatment in general. Saving and prolonging lives.

Spiritual Eugenics: Only those who merit salvation will be saved. Only the moral will know peace of mind. Competing paradises.

Racist Fitness: Fitness is out to win. Taken to its extreme it leads to the notion of supremacy—what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. referred to as the *drum major instinct*—to be out ahead of all the others. The race-based collective version of this form of fitness is, of course, racism.

Physical Fitness: Staying in shape. The vanity of looking good. Because I am a manual laborer, I tend to think of physical fitness as the pre- or post-workday training programs of others. (As vitamins are to food, fitness is to lifestyle). An indication of lopsided living just as I have a shortage of sedentary time seated at a desk, lounging, lying on the grass, lotus-like. Enough resources to be maladaptive. Money to burn. Fat to burn off.

Subtle Fitness: Fitness overcome. Fitness can be viewed as benign or malign. According to the friendly version, fitness keeps us on our toes. It keeps re-sharpening the cutting edge. Life under fitness is robust. A little worker insecurity is good for the economy. According to the cruel version, fitness is a deeply rooted, distrustful, ruthless behavior based on elimination of the nonfit. But what or who is nonfit and relative to which world? Who sets the standards of fitness testing? How much of the fact of fitness is actually fabrication?

According to the benign view of fitness, to succeed or excel is perfectly acceptable behavior. One could even surpass excelling itself—beating fitness at its own game while leaving the game intact. To be above the law is a matter of taking advantage of the world operating within the lowly law. Changing the rules of the game renews the game. But can ‘game’ itself be eliminated? No testing? (Some schools have tried—only to find that students ultimately want to be tested.) Aren’t there approaches other than fitness for finding out all we’re capable of? Different ways of being capable? Can it be shown that our deepest incentives are in fact diminished by fitness?

Am I trying to knock the fight out of life? I am indeed at odds with fitness, yet I don't feel threatened by fitness (though fitness is a theory based on demoting, obsoleting and demolishing the opposition). I feel confined, ill-defined under fitness. I feel our humanity being dulled by fitness. Welfare to workfare is reversion to fitness. The 110% increase in my rent the year my wage fell 20% was condoned under fitness. Fitness narrows the range of rewardable behaviors. 70% of the males graduating from college expect to become millionaires. Less sensitive people are more and more likely to survive. You get better at preying upon me as I get better at slipping away. Under fitness the tenant underclass subdivides its spaces and creates an under-underclass. Fitness is not just the propensity to survive but a greater adaptedness over others within a common, tightly knit niche. Fitness is fundamentally moderate. "You there, you look more like your predecessors than the population at large." The tendency to eliminate drastic traits and types. Fitness convinces us that resources are scarce. It determines the tension between nations. The more global my culture the more inert. Under fitness all choices are forced into smaller and smaller matters. More incremental than earlier. Diversity marks upswing while homogeneity marks decline. Fitness restricts the influence of art to its makers. Anywhere weakness of vision permits, fitness persists.

Under evolutionary theory, well-established populations are threatened by individuals devoted to departures from established modes. Here evolutionary theory affects me personally. Am I threatening? I've always borrowed against my advantages—gambling away an immense reserve of principled poise in order to gain time for realizing artworks barely acceptable as artworks. Fringe of the fringe. Am I threatened? I only want to find ways to put my works to the test I'm testing!

Must dominant, popular culture display protective, offensive behavior relative to artworks? Isn't resistive artwork resisted by culture in order to revitalize culture gradually enough to already be culture by the time it (the artwork) is accepted? Is this an outdated, romantic formula? If it is romantic in this sense, the implication is that artwork no longer has the power to threaten and revitalize—as if it were consumed by an all-powerful, all-appropriative culture from the start. So, either culture is fundamentally radical and there is no artwork/culture discrepancy to be drawn, or artwork is not resistive. Which?

Fitness is exterminationist.

How to re-define art as ultra fit? Is its role to outdo fitness in order to alter eliminationist culture? Instead of competing against each other, why wouldn't artists band together like an oppressed sub-population?

There must be more for one to resist than the elimination of one's role. There's an invisible hand at work both at large and within—held hands—a selectionary complicity stopping unnecessary contributions before they start. If your work didn't survive under fitness, 'justice has been done.'

(For art's sake, I place the invisible hand squarely within the artist and not without. It's too defeatist and abstract to leave the power of life and death to the art market/gallery grind/accident of location/critic-criteria complex. I'm interested in non-affinitive (i.e., more freely associative) artworks—mutants that make the cut, survive the fitness gauntlet, walk on air beyond the evolutionary gangplank, due to qualities other than moment-of-truth affinities with dominant culture or experimental niche. Once freed into 'further genre' made available by non-affinitive practice, then the artwork may be appropriated, promoted and passed on without damaging its germ.)

Fitness impressed me from the start. It has certainly spurred me on. As a boy I lost friends because of whom I befriended. I associate with retrogressive types. I cultivate disadvantageous traits in myself. My charitable acts and low bids have been termed 'unschooled in life.' I've always twisted and tested straight-ahead fitness. Whether to be a conscientious objector (my first adult fitness test). Fitness was reflected in my first readings of poetry, particularly ancient Greek texts. Pindar's epinician odes pay homage to victorious athletes. Aristotle's only poem is a prayer to Excellence. Archilochus' memorable line: "Recognize what sort of rhythm holds us,"¹² corroborates the severity of fitness—for every boon, two setbacks; beware of hubris, etc. The object of classical fitness was excellence. In this sense, fitness failure would be a matter of either underachievement or overreaching. Poetry since Pindar has rendered glory more metaphysical and informational and less battlefield/prowess-based.

Are there glorious states without fitness? Undeserving and elated? Gratuitous and undying? Aren't vulnerability and hunger advantageous too (Athens became a philosophical power only after losing its navy)?

That's precisely what blessedness does—it overcomes fitness. The Beatitudes, pronounced by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, brought invaluable

symbolic liberation. The democratization of happiness. Woe to the rich for they have already got all they're ever going to get.

But the Beatitudes themselves have only begun to *materialize* rather recently—applying themselves not to otherworld or kingdom come but to current socio-economic conditions. Since 1525 (when Thomas Muntzer caught cannonballs with his bare hands while leading the Peasant Revolt) we've been in a period of material beatification. The Last Judgment is for the living.

The nightly news. 30 dead from Florida tornado. Car hits propane plant in Wisconsin. Hundreds spend night in gymnasium. Numerical horror. If we decide to bomb, 1000's will die. We're capable of it. We grow accustomed to it. We can get used to anything. That's why Overcoming Fitness is the opposite of transcendence. It is unaccustoming. Unaccustomization.

Thus fitness is half habit. We can get a handle on it. A handle on a horror could be its logo.

We are not, after all, threatened by another species. The fitness test we undergo is therefore an intra-species sociological device called 'self-interest.' Is self-interest acquired or inherited? Is it taught or learned through experience? Is my anger over the attitudes generated by fitness-testing merely a poetic (i.e., non-rigorous) protest against advantage or can I actually unseat advantage?

But shouldn't poor products, weaker works, less qualified people and lame lifeforms lose out? Isn't this 'natural' editing vitality per se? (Just as Overcoming Fitness must be more vital than fitness to survive.) The conflict would have killed us! Natural Selection knew that it could not make people both sensate and eugenic. Natural Selection knew that people would fight against its array of mortality rates—in an attempt to eradicate disease, overturn apoptosis, end war and spare everybody in a 100% survival scenario.

In our appreciation of Natural Selection we've implemented Social Darwinism. How well has it been working? The leading cause of death is not apoptosis but poverty! So, maybe we are eugenically reliable after all. Our policies are *that* poor. Where are my statistics? Can I show that our improvements subtract as many lives as they lengthen?

Do away with fitness? Why do to fitness what fitness does to us? Denying any part of our human inheritance has always proven to be disastrous. Even if I take fitness as foe, I must realize that it is a life-sustaining foe. A host foe. Think fast! As I undercut fitness, cut the proven lifeline and feel my own vitality seep away, what further vitality can I provide? Is my art an enlightened, sexually transmissible, phenotypically influential, full-bodied eugenics? (If meddle we must we might as well admit our most preferred eugenics). Interior and exterior environments are changing so fast that adaptation can't keep up. Fitness can no longer fall back on time-honored incrementalism.

In the unseating of Natural Selection, vote art. An insurgence of safer more salutiferous selections. Artwork is a reaction that happens 'on time' while conventional adaptation falls behind.

I'm subtilizing fitness. It's very simple. (Like Blake's "mental, not corporeal war.") Not social fitness, not surgical fitness, but subtle fitness. An inquiry into human properties so arduous and unforgiving that those properties are brought to light where light upon them literally places these inborn properties (the sum of which is our nature) plially in our hands. *Subtle* refers to the malleable phase wherein constitutions may be denatured and remade by means of *attention* and *unconditional love*. Safe synthetics, to say the least. Under subtle fitness, all the attention typically devoted to the ingraining of the habits of survival shifts to physiological points where our fundamental properties are both heritable and open to influence—where the Original (through which we had been surviving) can be re-written. Where myths—like good triumphing over evil—can be made or unmade. Perhaps the *myth of the selection of the most delightful*.

And just as the Beatitudes were at first strictly symbolic, subtle fitness will first be established in spirit. Once the subtle pathway is opened and understood, the gross pathways can then be identified and researched materially—prosodically, medically, environmentally, economically:

Prosodically: A shift in the creative paradigm—any change in the music brings forth corresponding physiology, well-being and disease.

Medically: For example, cancer was foreshadowed by overproduction and outburst in Wordsworthian romantic verse.

Environmentally: Now that most causes of cancer have been confirmed as environmental and not genetic, we can focus on the cause of environmental cancer as human behavioral patterns.

Economically: Unlimited growth of productive forces could stand as a definition of which disease? Which type of prosody?

Post-Cold War fitness has been strictly commercial. Competition has moved from social to economic system. The vaunted 'peace dividend' (which would have been an instance of fitness overcome) never arrived. The attempt to manifest this dividend materially failed. Now the attempt may be subtilized. War over, we are as defensive as ever. The 'National Defense' category of the federal budget for Fiscal Year 2001 accounts for 49% of all discretionary spending. In the U.S., we spend more on our military than the next twelve biggest militaries combined. This is the lesson of peace. Defense is a sickness. The more peace, the more time to build up defenses (too busy to stockpile once the war breaks out!). Subtle fitness works with the fact that half of our resources will always be spent on defense as long as we are defensive. The leading cause of war is defensiveness (i.e., offensiveness during times of peace). And the leading cause of defensiveness is evolutionary fitness.

§

I hope the prior pages have provided the reader with an understanding of what I mean by 'fitness.' Now, it would be fair to wonder what is meant by 'overcoming'? Though I feel that the above definitions of fitness, as a matter of course, amply substantiate my use of 'overcoming,' I would nonetheless like to end with a few reflections on this word. First of all, the sexual reference is essential. Cumming all over fitness. More fruitful than fitness. Perhaps an expository essay drawn from more body parts than brain (as it was once believed in pre-genetic times that our seed was drawn from every cell in every part of the body and not exclusively seated in sex cells). *Overcoming* is not the story of mind over matter but of matter over matter. Over-matter. Love of making. Finally, I'm also building on the Civil Rights background of 'overcome'— as in 'we shall overcome'—and attempting to do it justice in return.

The 'Free World' is the gamble that *kind* dies for *individual*. Socialism is the gamble that *individual* dies for *kind*. Communism is the plan for planting us in the ground one by one in order to reconvene at a more convenient place and time—anywhere fitness will have been left behind.

RULES OF FITNESS

To savor is the strongest assertion.
(Who cuts the cake cannot choose the first piece.)

A safer button can't be built until the button's built.
Biology obeys. Fortunately the best idea—
cost-ineffective success—never caught on.

Many little extinctions prevent one large one.
(In the U.S., it's illegal to fund the study of defeat.)

Few loves survive the pressures of prosody.

Try.
(Of course you're right, but
that's just not the way things work.)

Some agree more grumpily.
Contest is to incentive as sacrifice to self-love.

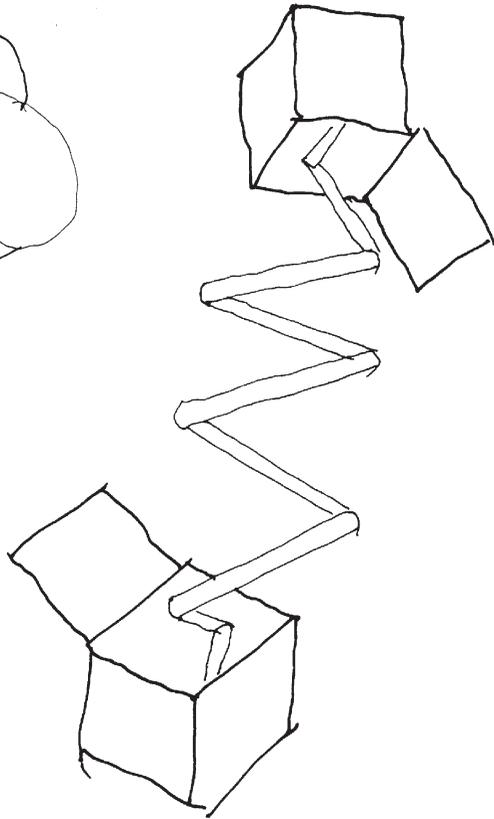
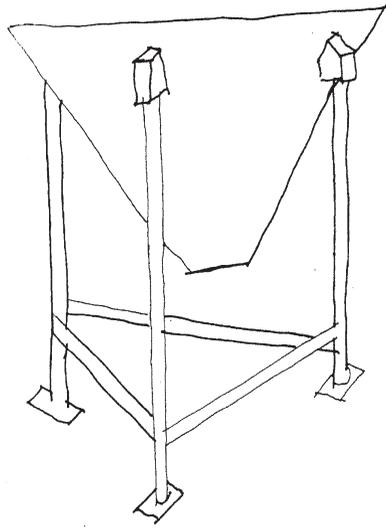
Give to gradualism that which is gradual.
(Certain seeds germinate only through elephant gut.)

The seed was safe, the plant slashed.
Now the seed besieged, the plant perfected.
(Recipe for merchandise: remove all potential.)

Art protects other works that must change less immoderately.
Unrest's obvious stumbling block: all
those who've earned all they got.

Human being nonbeing's free labor.

(Just shove the words aside and see for yourself.)



THE FOLLOWING IS AN ANNOTATED LIST OF VARIOUS MISSING SOCIAL SERVICES AND OMITTED AGENCIES CURRENTLY BEING DEVELOPED

Bureau of Material Behaviors

Definition: Correlating and de-correlating (1) the microstructure of materials, (2) the behavior of materials and (3) human behavior, and then designing a desirable environment accordingly.

Key Words: micro-management, human-material age, untried verbs

Booth for Retrofection

Definition: This booth uses an audio input known as a 'poetry pop-in' to set off an aesthetic reaction capable of logosome activation. The *logosome*¹³—the fusing of logo-centric song/verse and originary logos (that which manifests matter)—selects the new somatic mutation produced by this fusion and sends it through the germ barrier and into perpetuity. If art influences physiology, if artwork influences the environment, artwork influences the genome. *How and to what extent?* The process, start to finish, is called 'aurivoce.'

Key Words: logosome, aurivocal, artwork as non-invasive genetic recombination, volitional evolution

Outbuildings for Inadmissible Disciplines

Definition: Many missing disciplines remain missing due to a lack of customized meeting place. Many missing behaviors persist as missing because their furnishings have yet to be realized. Provide the appropriate place and the practice will follow. Cure for chronic interloping and commodity scavenging: design.

Key Words: stealth building, parasitic pod, vestigial envelope, permitted obstructions, levitated lair, docked department, cantilevered counter-clubhouse

Refrigerium Factory

Definition: A refrigerium is a place of refreshment. A provisional paradise where all there is to take care of is being taken care of. Paradise has always been one artificial containment or another. (Secondary definitions of refrigerium: a commemorative meal; an offering placed on a tomb; a place mat.)

Key Words: habitations, *in bonis*, knowledge of future happiness, sleepers

Peace Dividend Pickup Spot

Definition: \$305,000,000,000 for Pentagon National Defense spending divided by the adult population of the United States would equal one possible peace dividend portioning. If peacetime buildup of arms is the cause of war, the only cause of peace is more war. In fact, the dividend should not simply be distributed individually like a tax cut. The Peace Dividend Pickup Spot would work best as a place of community-oriented debate (with dividend money in hand) for conjuring sorely missing services. Government giveaway for novel civic incentives.

Key Words: rescission, transfer of funds, reprogramming

Comic Warfare Training Center

Definition: Appropriating the zero sum terms of military strategy for expediting comic (drastically fortunate) civilian outcomes.

Key Words: attrition sweeping, *phortikostics*, confusion agent, dud probability, *imboscata*

Gym for Overcoming Fitness

Definition: Supplanting physical fitness with manual skills practiced directly upon the omitted world, world-as-wish—the poetic plenitude.

Key Words: redirection of exercise, autogamy, grace

Clinic for Vestigial Organ Stimulation

Definition: Recovery of the senses and physiological functions excluded as the body sealed around itself. Trace physiologies engaging faint physical environments.

Key Words: reaccommodation, alloreceptor, confectionary

Zoo of Favorable Throwback Safe Return

Definition: Past portents. Now that the environment is changing too fast for adaptation to react, even people are already throwbacks. New dormancies. Haven for the rudely deleted.

Key Words: reevolve, instinct, de-dominance

Bureau of Missing Behaviors

Definition: Just as certain building types remain missing because their functions are yet unknown, certain functions are unknown because their behaviors are still untried. Which way of acting will bring about an unbelievable benefit? All the disciplines of the fictitiousness of theater called upon to attain real being.

Key Words: anti-eugenics of gestures, space of all possible combinations, instant custom

Overfacilitation Facility

Definition: Suddenly supplied. The sense that there is too much wind at your back. *That* kind of dilemma—over-provisioning. The need to complete works expediently enough to keep from falling over forward into the waste of perfectly good materials and momentum. As distinct from the covetousness of capital and donation by the ultra rich, implantation of a grassroots watchful eye focused on emergency apportionment of available properties, products and personnel.

Key Words: *omnia sunt communia*

Poetry Outsource

Definition: Poets ‘placing’ themselves by pursuing new roles, omitted modes of operation and revenue generation at once perfectly provides architectural specifications for a location through which such modes may be facilitated. ‘Outsource’ simply means taking the role of the poet out into the society in novel and necessary ways as well as taking into poetry concerns, resources, substances and practices ordinarily considered extrinsic to poetry.

Key Words: poetry beyond recognition, unboundaried, intangible equipment, pleromatic plan

Plan for the Eradication of Downpayment

Definition: Borrower over banker security. Toward the condition of a voluntary (if at all) renter population. Completed privatization—occupancy, use, monthly payment make the place *yours*. For example, homes could be priceless while the monthly payment to the bank made by an unlimited series of owners is set ridiculously low.

Key Words: O.O.O. (only occupant ownership)

Secular Sacraments

Definition: Loan Forgiveness, popular beheading of Corporation-Individual, etc. The solemnization of a necessary, ‘comic’ course of action and its concomitant materials, without which things can’t quite happen. The key or critical difference in commitment. Democracy’s missing rituals and victuals.

Key Words: efficacious act, proper malediction, set aside

Viatore Vomitorium

Definition: Sick of being-not-yet. A place to go for the elimination of

undesired traits, impediments, self-concocted toxins and chronic behaviors that *should* be missing. Recognition of and respect for the violence of the 'passing' process.

Key Words: ontology sanitation, upchucking fitness

Anachronism Generator/Acclimator

Definition: Working toward a richness of modalities. Generation of new, current anachronisms, not befitting the times, as well as recovery of already outmoded modes. Backward, wayward as onward. Not just 'bicycle,' 'buggy,' 'backwoods' or 'benedictine' but 'pleistocene,' 'blastocyst,' 'philistine,' 'pristine' or 'pre-biotic.' Anachronisms that never were to begin with.

Key Words: apocatastasis of all types, peaceable

Lab for the Sore, Oversensitive, Insecure, Insensitive and Supple Sciences

Definition: Extending the soft (social or philosophical) sciences out through the hard and exact sciences with a probity based equally on poetics and proofs.

Key Words: full circle science

Informed Informal Sector Surge

Definition: Format for public input into all professions. Counter specialization. Contrary to polarization of disciplines. In contrast to the popularization of disciplines, the precisioning of publics.

Key Words: civic intelligence, national curiosity asset

Hypothetical Post

Definition: All the news that's missing or should have happened. Missing Behaviors Daily.

Key Words: portentous reporting, daily presentiment

Poetry Privatization Detox

Definition: Like commerce, creativity has also been to a great extent 'privatized.' Ward for non-self-important prosody. Poetry subsumed in *other* acts.

Key Words: poetic poultice jacket, civic solipsism

Chiasma Consultation

Definition: Free-arts made servile, servile acts given free reign.

Key Words: involuntary fulfillment, completing the contrary, indigence disburdening, deliverance by demand

Institute for Omitted Idioms

Definition: Just as certain agencies remain missing because their functions are yet undiscovered, certain peoples and places remain missing because their constituent idioms are unrecognized or underdeveloped. (Globalization will bring down the arbitrary geopolitical boundaries and inadvertently unearth regional speech patterns and speakers fit for non-affinitive bonding that will serve as basis for the Fair World, as distinct from our Free (for all) World.)

Key Words: under-utterance, gurgling grammars

Instead Inc.

Definition: Development of business models opposing organizations proven oppressive. Other than the given. Not that. In particular, economy for the noncommodity. A living contradiction. Such economy creates and safeguards such noncommodity. Economy for the oddity. Economoddy. Economic oddity. Marketing the unmarketable. If commodity is survival, how to make a noncommodity and thrive.

Key Words: econoddy, polycontrariety, imagination's advocate

Novel Genome Repository

Definition: One-of-a-kind lifeforms, even lifeforms without genomes! Can a new species be unrelated to all other species? Non-meddling in knowns. Leaving well enough as known in order to near unknowns.

Key Words: divergence, saltation, evolvability, sentiment-limit, *xenogenesis*, post-adaptive

Country in Commemoration of Nuance

Definition: Country set aside for subtilization of incentive. Senses reopened by oversensitive sciences. Whether such a world once was or never was, *constructively* facing its nostalgia seated deeply within us.

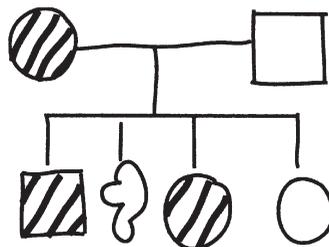
Key Words: world imploded into unworldly, tender intervention, tacit dictation, better than it gets

Saltation City

Definition: City offering unprecedented goods and services, such as those distinguished in the partial list above. Life springing from nonlife (*getting the lead out*) each step of the way.

Key Words: *barzakh*, cities of the intermediate world

The invention of further functions along with their realization as architectural concept qualifies these agencies as both artworks and instances of retrofection. Furthermore, construction of an agency vicariously constitutes an epic poem—how we ever came to this point as told by ‘remedy.’ Each service is a fragment or replacement part of a missing materiality that nonetheless completes that entire materiality under the rule of thumb that any point of wholeness renders the whole ‘whole.’ In this way these services are compatible with all other attempts to implement satisfying sorely missed social goods. This list is also amenable to others’ adaptations, appropriations, adoptions, alterations, extensions or customizations of the idea of missing agency. Fire must be fought with something hotter than fire. These counter agencies proposed by an ordinarily poetic practitioner undercut omissive society with the same commercial, material and organizational tools and tactics with which the omissions are typically committed. The weapon ‘hotter than fire’ is of course *comedy*. These are to be buildings put in place with a great deal of levity (defiance of the forces). Levitated buildings. The levity runs to the core. For, once these indispensable services are constructed, even then, once they are working certain wonders, it will still be impossible to tell whether their realization had all along only been a farce. Success can be *that* sweet! The missing service supposition: there are further functionalities so terribly novel that their delineation may indeed undo the divide between creativity and creation. I’m not implying that non-retrofectionary artworks commonly confound function because they have no clear vision of function (the way poetries might confound language because their meaning is weak enough to allow them to do so), but I am stating that, directly underfoot, there are unidentified functions so ludicrous and suitable that they, by way of their extreme accommodation, are amply disequilibrizing (without knocking us off our feet), more than creative and heritable to boot. That’s comedy!



ANGEL OF EXTINCTION
(masked as sustainability)

Keep this secret:
suspense not sustenance sustains us.

The worst system to have ever worked out for the better is
is.

(Even cheaper than not wanting one at all.)

(Without baring your teeth)
say “everything I have is yours.”

Do everyone a favor.

Living forever already is. We just can't
get its host to react other than

detrimentally.

The dark and blinding data surpasses or
subtracts adaptation with each act.

I'm a carpenter and I can only write about
what I can write about.

It's irritating to me as a scientist—
people unadventurous departures from reality,

reckless jargon borrowers.

Which of the following is fatal to our kind:
A use; B misuse; C disuse;

E unattempted usurpation?

(While lack of earth—environment bypass—
will be equally inherited by each.)

ALLELE OF INSTINCT
(enough untried body parts to be buried in)

I'm a carpenter and I can only write about
what I can't write about.

(People are too sentimental to modify.)

Uncommodified
we'd be living much shorter lives.

Why accept a body when you could be
relishing thoroughly theoretical biology?

Exulting in painstakingly poetic biopsy?

Dark and blinding data—instructs those
struck by the need to design instruments
the data can't be sensed without.
The good life by now, if not at the time.

What keeps us from thinking our first
parents weren't harmed by the elements?

(It wouldn't be nostalgia then would it?)

So very little longing for that which is not.

To all those (no one) more moderate than I:
the detail at which I see what is not—

a disease to be unable to merely modify.
If you dispute the claim that it's a fatal

love with that with which you make,
restore us 'on time,' as never before.

Though circumstances beg for less.

OSTRICH CALLOUSING AND *LEAVES OF GRASS*

Take, for example, the *ostrich*. Ostriches rest by squatting on their legs and sternum. Callosities can be found at those sites where the skin is habitually rubbed against the ground. Callousing of this type can be classed as an acquired, somatic adaptation. Astonishingly, these natural callouses are already well-formed in the friction free ostrich embryo. Therefore, commonsense would tell us that these strategically located callosities are germline encoded. Poetic sense would also tell us that such callousing is germline encoded. And can't calluses be induced to occur in other parts of the skin? How did such anatomically specific morphological information ever get back to the germline? Is it possible to document a soma-to-germline transmission route along which poetry can be classed as a *replicase*?¹⁴

Although I make chairs for a living, I nonetheless squat far more frequently than most Americans. (Woodworkers rarely get to sit on the chairs they build.) This habit has not granted me increased reproductive success among my own people. Nor has my bone structure been modified by all my squatting. Thus, if I were to be adopted by an aboriginal people who have different bone facets that allow for comfortable squatting, my fitness would again be diminished. So where do I fit in?

Is poetic being inherently disadvantageous? How do I get it to work for me? And for those 'down the line'? Is it fair to infect them? Does poetry influence physiology? Is there an artwork/genome crossover? Or should evolutionary experimentation remain quarantined in scientifically-controlled inquiry? Can I generalize retrofection of the germline by somatic mutations for human creativities? May I introduce to you the thin-edge-of-the-wedge cutting open widespread poetic adaptations?

It strikes me that a poet may be the fittest motility symbiont for research as a whole. A sort of itinerant surgeon or septic system specialist with a bag of perceptual tools for unplugging, rechannelling, suturing, sewing together and so on. With a nonspecialist sense for all of making, the poet may serve as point of communication and commutation for more or less stationary and isolated disciplines—to make the condition of being on unfamiliar ground (where one has the most to gain) a condition of having a great deal to give. A kind of general contractor for formations. A mutagen. Beyond benign.

Could a poem commute over and over again and still keep its own terms? If its prosody is based on other beings and bindings?

Could a poem be maladaptive in its own field while being well adapted in other fields? It could be your maladaptation. The maladaptation could be *your* gain, absorbing *your* ills—why you're so at ease.

Research re-establishes words as unknowns (in order to arrive at its questions). Co-opting a specific research without furthering its terms in their proper context could only limit poetry's ability to cross effectively. The poem as crossing of separate spheres, including or excluding itself, is therefore this very furthering.

Case in point: this writing toward poetry adapts to, or is replaced by, the terms of the life sciences. If this writing is unable to further the terms of the life sciences, it will prove to be neither a successful cross nor poetry writing. While *cross* has several meanings, I'm focusing on *cross* as it is used in natural history—in its relevance to productive/reproductive and generative/regenerative processes. In this sense *crossing* is native to both biology and poetics. (Poetics, i.e., 'making' and 'materializing.')

And with the advent of genetic engineering and artificial life, making now readily applies to biology. Just as, conversely, with the advent of evolutionary biology, cosmology, prebiotics and early earth research, the study of life now applies to so-called inanimate matter.) This shared ground, this cross of related types or kin, this allowing of incestuous contact between prosody and life science, led me to this writing. Self-incestuousness.

Cross of course has other meanings. 'Passing from one side to the other.' 'To meet in passing.' 'To counter.' 'To contravene.' These other meanings are all at play in the reproductive sense of *cross*. Poetry, of course, 'crosses' in every sense of the word.

In effect, by alleging that poetry can pass for biology, I open the pangenetic box. A body is constantly crossing over to other bodies. At the same time, it contains a constant crossing of its genetic constraints with its behavioral flexibility. This double-cross—a combinatorial explosion of possible compartments—is embodiment itself.

As an overarching word of warning: evolution does not explain our actions. Any attempt to identify biology with behavior is methodologically biased

apriori in favor of naturalist determinism. Trying to prove that behavior mimics biology is tantamount to describing life as a reproductive testbed wherein each anatomical part is crafted to afford each creature a certain edge in 'nature' perceived as the ultimate lesson in good design practice, fitting, not forcing, puzzle parts, all for the better in a robotism of optimality.

Are there heritable, robust behaviors that have broken with the bottom-line bent for advantage? Would this not be a double heresy? Behavior (an acquired characteristic) both heritable and aloof to survival?

Perhaps biological form is itself internally inconsistent. Laid-back parts. Parts serving no purpose. Vestigial parts. Parts the inverse of vestigial, looming ahead. The last word is never 'in.' Is life really working? The sublime doesn't need an unqualified success. Life arose, after all, from nonlife. Marked for life by that experience.

Imagine a current behavior with no basis in biology—just as a bodypart may now serve an end for which it was not originally 'designed.' Now, exaggerate!

It's not as if we know what biology is. It's not us, but a specific knowledge of our physicality. Is there some benefit in placing behavior under the hegemony of biology? Would life then be more harmonious? Or would we choke on unrealized potential? Will we ever need to surpass our biology in order to survive? Immortality of, at least, our kind. At least we'll never run out of real estate, given a universe.

It's just as probable that biology exerts its constraints upon our behavior in order that we diverge and donate a fuller humanity. Such divergence goes by the name of 'poetics.' Only humanmaking, or, unnatural selection—call it what you wish—can prophesy and occupy divergent domains.

(At this point, I'm asking for no more than a 'novel' implausibility.)

Work that is also able to realize itself outside of evolutionary forces may be referred to as 'artwork.' Artwork prevents culture from fusing with evolution. It prevents 'who we are' from becoming extinct in 'what we are.' Artwork doesn't bar the ways in which our works are restricted by adaptation but conserves the extent to which they are not. Finished artworks register on germcell scratchpads. Just in case. Just in case the intragenetic dose is too potent. In case we run out of options. Sudden advantages which may keep us from succumbing to the soft genocide of almighty gradualism.

There is no advantage in holding artwork to adaptation's fertility barrier (only kindred types can cross), or the neo-Darwinian *Weismann Barrier*¹⁵ (nothing you *do* can influence your sex cells). Bioinformatics blows the issue open. Bioengineering is surgical. (Radical poetics has actually absconded to the hard sciences.) Artwork, subtle, perhaps impalpable. Its mechanism must nonetheless be laid out. Suffice it to say, some sort of cross must remain unhindered by the 'kindred' constraint—entailing the lifting of the too-close-to-cross taboo, as well as the too-far-off-or-far-out-to-cross prohibition. Safely. Not just safely (nor at best sanely) but to our delight.

(Can invocation break the Weismann Barrier? Can I produce a poetically mutated gene? A poetically mutated gene presumes a soma-to-germline feedback loop. Or does it? Perhaps it presumes a direct artwork-to-gamete feedback loop, with somatic cell bypass.)

Once artwork and evolution part ways, perhaps we can perform a few essential separations—like exploration from exploitation, or, power from money. Long lost pry bar.

Keeping in mind our current theory of evolution: an impartial reshuffling of genes tested in the field for immediate advantages by long-term selection pressures responsible for our differential reproductive success. A theory that speaks for itself. It's unbelievable. As well-rooted as it is indefensible? It's just a theory, so what harm could there be in conceptually breaking its hold on our thinking for a moment, by envisioning a further plausibility? Only the rock bottom non-creative Creationists seem to be putting any fervor into a different take on materialization.

Evolution, like its theory, is already creative. 'Is' is already beyond belief. Perhaps we try to understand just to alleviate the intensity of the wonder—shelter from the sharp light of unmediated presence of life, animate or inanimate. So, what's to keep artwork from becoming just another energy cutback? Supplying our practical needs—subsistence—is already more mystery than we can manage. Practicality already demands constant material transmutation. One role of artwork, therefore, would be to keep our worldly transactions from blocking the light of the pervasive Is-Overload—crossing inconvenience and grace in a further out-of-the-blue facilitation.

Things are all mixed up. Evolutionists have even likened Natural Selection to a poem. Such similitude is at least as loose as a poet's likening of a poem to

organic form. Meanwhile, engineers, as a form of refined denigration, refer to faulty or ludicrous architectural designs as ‘poetic’ variations.

Creative individuals tend to be: A) automatically Lamarckian; and B) nonrigorously so. Thus, the strong-armed baby of the blacksmith is reborn.

We first stood up (way back when) because the *braininess* required to know-what-to-do-next was just out of reach. Once it’s possible to fulfill potential without renewing potential, we’re finished. Once the last unplanned baby is born, we’re finished. Can such a poetic statement be biologically based? Can we base our behavior on biology without butting against inflexible genetic dictates we’d never choose to emulate? I have a list of things to do that offer no advantage, and I don’t have to do them. If they did offer some advantage would there be even greater freedom in refusing? If the list of things I must do were but a list of advantages, I’d perish on the spot.

Is fitness really that tough? Nonfitness is not really a barrier to procreation. Anybody can pass this most stringent fitness test. Or fail it. An infertile billionaire. A crippled president. Combocornucopia. Everybody just a little bit ‘sub’ and ‘super’ fit. Maybe life is more like fitness subterfuge. Consciously or not. The more fit, the smaller the family? An oncoming bullet encoded in our brightest? The boldest fall first? Doesn’t democracy defend nonfit? Or is democracy like its money—claiming more and more people will be better off while, in fact, the gap between the financially fit and financially feeble widens. The invisible hand of the Market and the invisible hand of Natural Selection, a one-armed despot. Both political parties now agree: welfare equals survival of the undeserving.

I happen to be reading the poetry of Walt Whitman as I write this essay. *Leaves of Grass* and *The Origin of the Species* were both published in the 1850’s.

When Whitman states:

This day I am jetting the stuff of far more arrogant
republics.¹⁶

isn’t he instilling in the genome a dynamic cultural trait? Couldn’t the same poetics be true for both verse and genome, without one miming the other? Whitman’s voice is the gamete of a further society, while his poem is the heritable pattern of expressed characteristics.

(Of course I believe that prosody and cosmology are consanguine. And their common ancestor would be ‘materialization’ itself.)

So, I exaggerate. ‘Poetic’ is pathetic. Maybe Whitman exaggerates. Maybe exaggeration is closely linked to genetics. Like a leap after a long lull. A false claim that can’t be true, but merely create what’s true. The ludicrous may well be Selection’s ace in the hole. Life’s sole defense against its ongoing utter unlikelihood.

Artwork is just one branch of cultural evolution. It plays no part in Natural Selection. Agreed? What about artificial life scientists inspired by poetry? What will they make of it? People who read poems will never be more numerous than those who don’t. Why hurt your chances? In the quantity-of-life, verse can’t switch on a trait or turn on a dime. What are the correlations between the qualities of the poem, the quality of life and the qualities that make up life?

It’s possible to understand the terms of evolutionary biology (lifeline) without referring to development (lifework). But the very severance of lifeline and lifework opens a distinct opportunity. Genes and culture can be interfaced by means of their dissimilarity. The resulting heterozygote would constitute a third approach to the gene/culture question—the non-affinitative association.

First, could lifework be a mutation—a somatic mutation? Then, could the mutation be inherited in germline DNA?

If lifework could pass straight into the genetic transmission system, offspring could take almost any form. Hardly a sustainable situation. A complicity separates biological gradualism and hasty behavioral scratchpad. Morphology is set in its ways while behavior is destabilizing. Even presented with the need for an entirely new function, the body may merely modify its existing anatomy. The bones and cartilage with which we swallow, hear and speak are derived from the gill apparatus formerly used for exchanging gases in sea water—not unlike an artwork that overcame the infinity of material possibilities by using whatever was on hand. Oxygen was originally a poison! Both poetics and phenotype are makeshift. The current functioning of a body part is not a reliable gauge for knowing what that body part was originally designed for. Their tempos and temperaments diverge; relative to evolutionary forces, artwork is rapid, reckless.

Artwork, a matter of development, may diverge not only from evolution but from development as well—from culture, customs, current quality of life. It is formation's free agent. Poetics was meant to be survival's greatest rival—and it is—as well as being our only means for revival. Through our works, we will either wipe ourselves out before the asteroid hits, or escape the solar system before our sun burns out. (Or send up a song of helplessness that will save all souls.)

Thus poetics is not like the other acquisitions—culture, behavior, acclimation, use; it is comprehensive of them and is capable of acting upon inheritance.

'Experimental' culture is a somatic storage, delay and relay—the genome's safety first approach to risk taking. Soma is test run with live dummies.

In place of biology/behavior identification there could be a science of biology/behavior divergence. Associative divergence. As an exchange. On shared ground. Not according to our traditional understanding of the origin of species wherein divergence occurs due to physical separation, but according to 'sympatric' (shared terrain) incentives. Because they do share the same site, biology and behavior become each other's speciation event.

Or, at least a science of convergence, basing our behavior in biology but in non-reductive ways. Running counter to any sociobiological simplifications such as:

—Xenophobia dates to protocell periphery wariness.

—Altruists endure simply because the greedy, in order to survive, require an exploitable type.

—Formation of cities re-enacts the prebiotic brew's original intent to keep reactants in each other's proximity.

—Biology predisposes us to avoid sexual feelings towards siblings because of birth defect frequency among mating kin.

Could behavior over-diverge? If we locate and treat a cancer gene, no longer compelled to correct its ecological or behavioral cause, would the resultant environment-resilient human being truly be better biology?

If molecular biology were used to explain our behavioral rigidity, what would the structural basis be? Can genotype control phenotype while deregulating behavior? Isn't the pressure of physiological constraint serving to expand our propensities? Homeostasis will carry us toward either extreme. Hot and cold are opposites; therefore, they must both be temperatures. What's the opposite of temperature and can it be experienced? A poetic question. Or is counter-biological activity alone experimental? Why are we so defensive, I mean, psychologically, that is, molecularly?

Thus the laws of evolutionary biology can also be called upon to explain developmental independence. Such independence is responsible for the production of a behavioral surplus. A behavioral abundance. An exuberance. A life science that frees us from the constraints of lifeform. Overcoming fitness. The following are exemplary criteria for the founding of behavior's freedom from biology within the biological (a contradiction that is inconsistent with itself as a contradiction):

- The unspecified morphology of the human body (not born to only root, paddle, cling, swing or grope). Specification is in suspense.
- The rapid fetal growth rate of neurons continues well beyond birth (the protracted, permeable and protected playtime of the human young amassing potentialities before adult profession).
- The brain can perform many functions unrelated to the original impetus for its increase in size (thus a disproportionate capacity in relation to material substrate—yes, like using a computer to write a grocery list, or distributing tasks among many cheap, low-power processors to perform a higher function).
- Alteration of DNA sequence is not required for the differentiation of somatic cells.
- Almost all genes possess more expressions than survival requires.
- The presence of non-coding DNA. Extra material? Material without contents or of unknown potential.
- Cognition has more coding or complexity than underlying DNA (again, freer than material substrate—material substrate as inadequate explanation of immaterial effects).

—As stated above, current utilization of a body part is not a reliable reflection of its original purpose. By now we may be, part for part, completely cut off (perhaps many times over) from pristine adaptation. Polyvalent if only lineally so.

—Adaptation is referred to as a walk through the space of all possible combinations. What is our experience of these possibilities? Are we oblivious of their presences? Are they felt like a phantom body? Or is lifeform a matter of running the gauntlet?

—Selection favors genotypes that respond most readily to stimuli (and of course favors even more those responding most readily to favorable stimuli).

—The main selective force favoring increased intelligence arises from the opportunity to respond to a variety of social contexts. The brain initially popped up due to the intense, intimate desire to say something during the novelty of frontal coitus. Or, in a more contemporary version, the brain popped up to remove the wrapper from the chewing gum without breaking stride.

Any turning to biology in turn used to narrow our behavioral responses is instantly belied by the massive non-genetic transmission of information, generation to generation, day to day, minute by minute, over and above the restrictive, cautionary genotype. As if development were the genome's way of having arranged the running of its risks at a safe distance, unindelibly. Our experiments are the genome's test runs, simulations, chalkboard diagrams. We're not the real thing—not the live recording of inheritance—fortunately.

Turning to the body as behavioral bonanza? Sociobioblastic? As the biological does not require release from itself, but release into its own extended bodies. Outstripping biological terms along lines extended by biological systems—to proceed poetically.

Poetics and adaptation act creatively upon the same matter. Their concomitant actions can cause that matter to diverge from itself.

Poetics is not a matter of laying out options in the sense of game theory. Nor is it a sort of well-planned live action Kriegsspiel. Poetics and adaptation together constitute one dissociative act augering the invertibility of genotype and phenotype.

Cognition is not simply going to surface all over again at some point in a simulated run-through of molecular evolution. It will have to surprise us, all over again. It will have to diverge from the simple, subsumptive conditions we are able to set up—a machination outperforming its givens to such an extent there'll be a leap into consciousness, escaping our understanding all over again. Only by surprising ourselves, in the losing track of the steps, can cognition become what it is—the head's inability to wrap itself around itself.

Artwork (according to the special position I am conferring upon the non-specializing artist) is not just one of the modes of developmental, cultural transmission. Nor is it simply one of the materials transmitted by culture. It is the yield of neither cultural nor evolutionary forces, but the yielding forth of their combined potential. This potential, as a physical space, is called 'chaos.' As a mental space, 'madness.' It is the space in which an artwork meets its material specifications.

So how can socio-somatic shifts affect the expression of genes? Must the mixing rate always be imperceptible?

Natural Selection is an environmental force exerted upon gene recombination. More and more, the built environment is behind our modifications. Methylation acts on genes to silence and express the DNA coding sequence. Genetic variation caused by the environment conflicts with the neo-Darwinian dogma that states all variability in germline pre-exists (before the action of Natural Selection pressures). The environment as human development is already reverse-transcribing itself into DNA expression. Environment crosses the Weismann Barrier. As environment reverse transcribes into genetic code, our innocence relative to Natural Selection is also reversed.

(No need to wait eons for social justice!)

Last Friday a probe entered Jupiter's atmosphere.

What allowed Whitman to empathize/identify with absolutely anyone? Perhaps we don't all stem from the same cell, but each one of us does indeed stem from one cell. One identifies with oneself over others. Can't this one-to-one self-identification be overcome? If one is everyone, isn't one even more particular? Which membranes did Whitman cross, allowing him to embody everyone and turn biology into pan-organic speech—extraorganopoetic

speech—an opening of a further, all encompassing sense stemming from an extra organ?

How little data I need to become that probe “plunging into Jupiter’s swirling gaseous mass”! An extra organ of far flung empathy for inorganics and artifacts. What next?

My linking of Whitman and evolutionary theory now reads more like critical convergence than coincidence. Whitman:

The law of the past cannot be eluded,
The law of the present and future cannot be eluded,
The law of the living cannot be eluded [. . .] it is eternal,
The law of promotion and transformation cannot be eluded,
The law of heroes and good-doers cannot be eluded,
The law of drunkards and informers and mean persons cannot be eluded.¹⁷

The first four of Whitman’s lines are genetic. The last two lines are epigenetic (or developmental). Perhaps it was the phrenology of his day that allowed him to amalgamate all these laws together under the banner of ineluctability. These laws promise to produce both heroes and drunkards—a non-biased, non-eugenic natural/unnatural selection. His scheme is not betterment but well-being. “What will be will be well—for what is is well.” The restitution of as-is is not a given—it is not passive—it’s poetic. Is this well-being acquired or inherited? Both—but without barrier between the two. Fused. Imagine acquisition and inheritance taking each other’s place. Cross-substitutional.

The mechanism is as complicated as life itself. It is life itself. Can a poem translate into genetic outcome? (The Big Bang, in some books, was a ‘word,’ or, more precisely, a ‘verb.’)

Or, perhaps the process is very simple! Again, commonsense and poetics agree. The soma-to-germline feedback loop is easily shown. Philosophy of life determines lifestyle. Lifestyle influences genetic make-up. Consciousness translates into genetic outcome. If so, who needs poetry? What kind of consciousness is poetry? Poetry above all is progenitive knowledge. Poetry is information about the fundamental reverse transcription—immateriality reverse-encoding in materiality. The locus of immateriality is somatic—the way mind is embodied. The body is possibility and spirit while the genome, acted upon by the entire body, is materiality in materiality’s entrenched variation known as ‘survival.’

Leaves Of Grass is the replicase. The poems themselves, having undergone all selection pressures, dock onto the utterly susceptible soma-cells that copy the vital alterations of lifework, recombine with original, immortal gametes and pass on to progeny. Artwork transmitted sexually. Or, if you prefer, sex which is transmitted through poetry. The transmission event is *Leaves Of Grass*.

But what determines Whitman's selections? His selections are obviously not random but directional.

(There must be some way in which we can fail in life and still fail to fall within Whitman's all-inclusive well-being. Or succeed and fail all the more to fall within his apocatastasis.)

Whitman's adequation, after all, is not gratuitous. (As if someone waiting in a soup-line didn't 'pay' for that handout with 'quality-of-life.')

Reading further in *Leaves Of Grass*, I find that his poetics does propose a rather stringent fitness test. In his democratic vision, well-being is available to everyone, both socially and genetically. He has fused cultural and evolutionary laws. I suppose one could call it 'bad science.' But the 'test' is still individual. Whitman sensed that his writing would be passed on. The question of progeny is double—one's lifework and oneself. Again, he fused the 'two.' His selection pressures were produced by the dictates of this fusion. His fitness test was ultimately a matter of permanent survival of the individual. Very rigorous. 'Pre-poetic' actually means 'non-provisioned.' There is no competition to eliminate. A test without which no face could be human. Here poetry is admitted as direct evidence. A hopeful, helpful monstrosity.

Eugenics, due to the fact that the human being is modification, is unavoidable. I'm simply stating that poetics is the preferable eugenics because its selection pressures course through entire human being and act upon a materiality proposed by that same poetics.

Poetics can be used in breaking the biology/behavior tautology, or the closed fitness/behavior circuitry. It can usefully be brought to any vicious circle. To sum up: Natural Selection opted for eugenics when it realized that its sensate products (in particular, human being) could not be asked to develop both its sensitivity and eugenic selectivity. We were too soft to be entrusted with the necessary severities of selection. We've been spared the worst of willful works so that we might develop clear conscience (whose greatest expression is, arguably, artwork). Yet, clearly, with the modified environment growing

straight into the genome and gene therapy on the rise, those lazy, hazy days of clear conscience are past.

I've attempted to establish a relationship between 'use' and genetic make-up in order to fuel activism. According to *Overcoming Fitness*, actions are directly heritable on all levels almost immediately. Further, by establishing a link between the very specific activity of artwork and genetic expression I have attempted to introduce the very pressure propitious mutations require.

I'll end with the following provisional definition of poetics: clear conscience newly coupled to selection responsibility. Sensitivity taken to selection pressures for the clearest conscience yet. Conscience coupled to selection pressure pressing toward heightened, limitless sensitivities.

GONER REVIVAL, VIABLE THROWBACKS

As a theory, fitness has one distinct advantage in prevailing over contending theories of speciation—its proponents act with the conviction of their own ideas. Their evolutionary model (i.e., beating the competition) has readily informed both personal and professional codes of conduct.

In light of the fact that the newly annotated genome will provide the means for altering what genetic inheritance is anyway, and with genetics moving further into the area of poetics (poetics which is nothing other than the human hand of selection as distinct from the supernatural hand of natural selection), a host of defunct and hopeful zoologies reappear as viable generational options. A partial loser list follows:

Heterogony: Production of living beings from substances without germs or ovules. The belief that one species can change into another.

Saltation: The saltationists, whose lineage extends back to pre-antiquity, maintain origin of species *per saltum*—by jumps. Under saltation, speciation is due to the spontaneous origin of novel beings by the sudden production of a discontinuous variant.

Geoffroyism: According to this view, the all-powerful environment causes a direct induction of organic change.

Panspermia: The name for the theory that views life as distributed throughout the universe in the form of germs or spores.

Wedging: The term Darwin dropped in favor of 'Natural Selection.'

Membrementosis: At first only body parts appeared: heads or limbs without abdomens, heads without eyes, unattached mouths, and so on. While floating, these parts were attracted to each other until perfect combinations were achieved and imperfect assemblies perished.

Essentialism: This construct holds that variation is nothing but errors around a mean value. All members of a species share the same essence, unaffected by external influence or accidents (as distinct from 'population thinking' which stresses the uniqueness of individuals).

Hozho: When the world came about, people were already here. When the sky and earth were created a dispute broke out. People were here beforehand in order to settle the dispute. One is responsible for the beauty that is inseparable from one's health.

Hylozoism: Matter is endowed with life. Or, perhaps, life as a mere property of matter. No distinction drawn between animate and inanimate.

Theism: A belief in a personal god of revelation who forever intervenes in natural processes.

Deism: A belief in a god who once created the world, established its laws, and does not, thereafter, intervene in natural processes.

Plenitudinism: The view that everything possible actually exists. Any omissions, extinctions and modifications would contradict the creator's perfectionist generosity (and are therefore inconceivable). Fixity of species.

Implenitudism: There are plenty of sub-optimal, deleted and omitted lifeforms for both better and worse.

Bean Bag Theory: You get exactly what you plant.

Dislodgia: The theory that an organism changes its species by changing place.

Abiogenesis: Life is generated from the inanimate.

Cub-Lump Morphogenesis: Like Locke's claim that we are at birth a tabula rasa on which characters are stamped, the licking of bear cubs by their parents is so extensive that observers believed the licking to be morphological, as if licked into 'cub' from initial amorphous lump.

Pangenes: All parts of the body participate in the production of seed material.

Endosymbiosis: Swallowing without digesting or eliminating. Hosting, permanently.

Eudehiscence: The bursting open of capsules, pods, fruits, organs, antlers, etc., at the opportune moment.

Somatic Hypermutation: The reverse transcription of today.

Recapitulation: The theory that an organism, during its ontogeny, passes through the morphological stages of all its predecessors.

Delectatio Victrix: Delight wins.

And plenty of types I can't recall, have never heard of or am failing to formulate.

Or any of the above in combination: e.g., *impenitudinist heterogony*, *atheist wedging*, *bean bag deism* (reaping the god you sow), *cub-lump endosymbiosis* and so forth.

The above zoologies are of course immediately available as viable poetics. And once the action-to-germline and the artwork-to-germline feedback loops are established, 'use' (again recalling Augustine's phrase, "to make use of the world without using it") will become direct genetic endowment, and we will enter the era of the inheritance of everyday life and be gene free once again!

**FTHATHIS (FREER THAN ANYTHING THERE IS):
READY-TO-USE OVERCOMING FITNESS CONCEPTUAL TOOLS**

Thanner than than. Freer of anything there is. Er, er, er, er. Leave it at that. Than is the death of that. Leave well enough alone and it gets sick.

The simultaneity of all fossils. Possible? As fossils or full-bodied beings? The survival of each and every. Resurrection of the dead—reprobate and elect alike, and still that creeping sense that something is missing.

Consider the world radically impletudinist—a place where the vast majority of events and lifeforms have been omitted or misplaced.

Fthathis is an appreciable gain in freedom as measured against any condition, curriculum or regime whose terms are furthered by this gain. Quantification where quantification dare not go.

A field functioning at its fullest is also up against its sharpest limitations. This concurrence of full capacity and point of failure is where Fthathis enters. It does for that field what that field can only do for itself, if it only knew how.

Fthathis acts as a dedicated obstacle detector. Widely applicable though not uniformly. It outstrips (outstripping is the antithesis of avoidance) practicality.

It's an If Sensor. At the concurrence of full capacity and fracture, fathoming further more fortunate forms, organs or organizations.

It's an Either/Or Switch. Operating along stubborn divides such as animate/inanimate, blip/blob, here/hereafter, haves/have-nots. Any feature native to one side of the divide can be switched to the opposite side. Mechanical empathy. The beauty of the Either/Or Switch is that it undoes divides without destroying distinction. We must have ancestors capable of respiration and photosynthesis *and* crystal growth. (Our products will fill out the coming animism.)

Precisely at the point of fusion, this Either/Or Switch becomes a Both-Bridge. That which anyone is both of. This switch, however, is effective only in a polarized world. Under nuance, myriad possibilities, haywire or once the 'between' swallows its surrounds, the Either/Or Switch shuts down of its own accord.

There is in fact an array of cognitive switches that can be adapted to the work at hand. Mentors for manufacture. Contractors for constructing conscience. The list includes: Neither Here Nor There Switch, None Of The Above Switch, All Of The Above Switch, Infinite/Or Switch (or this, or this, or this, or this as recovery of the infinite). Perhaps even an Immaterialization Switch—admitting that the bulk of what weighs down upon us need not.

Not to forget the Blur Or Bit Switch. This switch allows instant egress. A person can pass from the despotism of detail to the buoyancy of abyss. Or, conversely, too much time in the nondescript can flip someone straight into the vital severities of determination.

A switch can spin, swirl, slur or slosh without discrete stops. A Branch Switch can make myriad contacts at once. A Repercussion Switch is a condition wherein all of the consequences of an act are touched at once.

When you can't get anything (no matter how hard you try) to not matter, Fthathis is your most suitable tool.

When new forms, types or genres come into existence, the process can be either 'subtle' or 'vigorous.' Vigorous speciation is a matter of physical change. Subtle speciation is predominantly perceptual—a person-place-thing unchanged physically yet seen in an entirely new light. Epiphany, for instance. Under subtle speciation, what exactly undergoes change? When Augustine laments "had they only made use of the world without using it," what kind of a divide is he drawing?

If there is anything that is inherently freer than itself, it would probably be 'language.' But certainly not just *any* use of language.

Poetry is a switch of almost unlimited movements—it may spill, dispel, sort, filch, fetch, fund, reorient, disarray, cross-link, quench, cluster, implant and/or basically enverb innumerable found terms and traits. With so much capacity, the action shifts from switch to swivel. Both sides of the coupling, all sides of the conjoining, freely mingle in the richest behavioral space that exists. A Toggle-Off-Its-Track-Out-On-The-Loose Switch reacting back on your reaction.

The inner workings of a poem could be described as a massively extrinsic parallel machine. In this way, prosody works in each and every way in which the world is working. Prosody is the world's phenotypography.

And because bodies are the most adept extensions of matter, speciation is prime object, obsession or idol of Fthathis. Fthathis assumes that any body, in order to enclose itself, in order to break into being, accepted certain reductions and rather severe limitations. Through a process called *extraorganopoieia*, Fthathis works backwards and sideways along the lines of embodiment in an attempt to reopen the process of formation and recount sensory being's omissions—further organs and senses which evolutionary pressures failed to issue forth.

Is it possible to be alive without qualifying as this species or that?

Freer than coupling? Not in the sense of 'immaculate conception' or 'orgy,' but in terms of *breaking sequence*. Making precursors. A species of 'one' which is not a monstrosity. Breaking the sterility barrier while, nonetheless, maintaining distinction of types. Fostering unrelated or unfounded types and leaving typical types alone. A deviation that didn't fight for its life. A supreme advantage that wasn't passed on. Strengthening in disuse. A useless trait unchecked by Natural Selection and granted an even wilder variation equal to the pleasure it will one day bring. More improbabilities: greatest variety from the least flourishing. The less specialized the greater the freedom of movement. The less organized the more variable. A modification in one genre exclusively for the benefit of another genre. To cross over to where one has no kin. To vary without heredity. Embeddedness as not, itself, embedded in the structure of things. That just once this writing will complete another's equation. The senses that fell away. Overcoming Fitness—conditions not true to life incorporated into life as unknown.

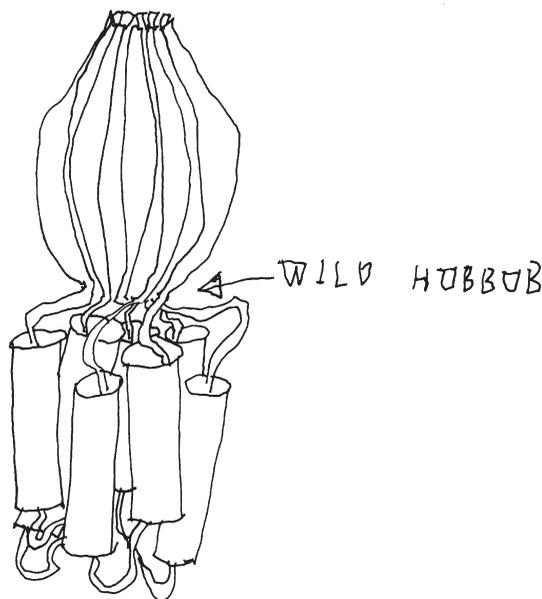
The dreaded blurring of types—the loss of integrity of evolved, beloved life forms may be bypassed by origination of types without kin. The opposite of cloning and copying. (Though the period of familiar lifeforms serving as springboard and scratchpad for reproductive technology has only reached its infant stage.)

Conventional speciation is racist, typist. Novel types originate by isolating themselves from the inflow of foreign populations. Speciation by sharp alien-gene increase is virtually unknown among higher animals. Under conventional speciation, artwork is a special case of non-fitness—increasing the intake of vital foreign substances in order to attain one-of-a-kind sterility.

Non-conventional speciation works with properties and not genres, types, and forms. Selections and reconfigurations are boundless in that they are not species specific. Property determines behavior. Behavior invokes property. Morphology follows behavior. The engineered materials of our dreams.

Revolutionaries and dissenters sometimes devalue values devalued through the importance rational productivity places upon those values—like ‘work,’ like ‘organization,’ like ‘efficiency,’ like ‘gain.’ But until we find a way to live without supplies, production will require de-rationalization not devaluation. Fthathis is thus the re-evaluation of production by means of irrational values—like ‘ardor,’ like ‘splendor,’ ‘love.’

The point at which something could have gone any number of ways. To sum up, “I believe that species come to be tolerably well-defined objects, and do not at any one period present an inextricable chaos of varying and intermediate links.”¹⁸ Richer than Natural Selection? Those too few in number. Too expendable. Too amenable. Those who didn’t ‘make it.’ Altogether replenishing the pool of constraints and pre-resolves known as the Space Of All Possible Combinations [SOAPC] out of which the sensory has arrived at the next-to-nothing we experience as this world.



THE SUBTILIZATION OF INCENTIVE

Artwork that can change our looks
(runs deeper than at best, best as is)
An inheritance given to as it is given.

Don't touch the buds or they'll open.
(Only suspense is sustainable.)

It's far more unlikely we'd ever be
to begin with, than, once
in existence, to one day be no more.

Allow me to open the lesser unlikelihood.

Light at the mid-point of the tunnel.
(There's too little time to adapt).

Mechanics outperforming fantasy.
(Lack of time is the turn on.)

Goodness appears to be unprotected.

It happened to me despite all I'd done
to have it happen to me.

(The involuntary tolerates trying.)

Work intended to be an intoxicant.
(Making mortifies inexperience.)

[A] Fear of annihilation. [B] Fear of
unfamiliarity. [A] will be replaced by [B].

Antidote designed to arrive too late.
(Suspense versus extinction.)

Cure prevents passage.
(Cure passes while care lives on.)
One's momentary extinctions.

Further organ far too distinct to function.

(Some lines develop outside of time.)

Stains stay only if aestheticized.

(Lust makes a great leaping stone.)

As strings plucked of their own accord by

skilled placement of building blocks.

Tension, genius. Compression, inertia.

A fire temporary if it purifies

(unable to change its material any further)

permanent if it petrifies

(unable to ever use up its material).

Works untainted by raw material:

savagery.

Getting high without higher being's vagrancy.

Who dared pit living against subsistence

(vision against adventure)

to begin with?

Whirlwind assembling spacecraft from trash.

Seniors seated at rest stop restaurant

supplementing homegrown produce and
yesterday's church-lunch leftovers with a
few scrupulous selections from the menu—

able to blaspheme against the givens.

(Deadly environment's recovery rooms).

'Hell' for which they have no word

(which they have no place for) translated as
'without.'

With poetics, the verb's second coming—
heaven and nature singing,
actually alloys hell and our artifacts

as unsung.
Futility too costly.
(A utility already too cheap to meter.)

To execute is to truly predict.

The less likely to have noticed the detail
the more effaced the void.

The pinkest possible coat with the yellowest
hat. Selection pressures, windfall and/or

slim chance, as once *thunderbolt*, steer all.
Hate only the morbidity in me.

Make a work work the work.
Preferences preference's preferences.
An excavation that fills in.

In Adam all die while in Want Ads all live.

Fighting fitness twice fails to win.
Damned if I'll call that 'immanent.'

My heart's just not in any world I know.

(For lack of a word that's worse.)

Certain statements in this pamphlet are forward-looking. These may be identified by the use of forward-looking words such as ‘further,’ ‘portend,’ ‘propose,’ ‘could,’ ‘diverge,’ ‘extra,’ among others. These forward-looking statements are based on the author’s current expectations. The Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 provides a ‘safe harbor’ for such forward-looking statements. In order to comply with the terms of the safe harbor, the author notes that a variety of factors could cause actual results to differ materially from the anticipated results or other expectations expressed in such forward-looking statements. The risks and uncertainties that may negatively affect the performance of Overcoming Fitness include but are not limited to (1) operating losses to date; (2) lack of response from target audiences; (3) personal despair; (4) inability to develop clearly defined marketable products or services; (5) conservative backlash from the bioethics movement; (6) liabilities related to the handling of volatile issues; (7) dependence on donated expertise; (8) cultural developments affecting demand for Overcoming Fitness data; (9) personal disruptions caused by sudden shifts in interest or massive intake of information unrelated to a topic at hand; (10) government regulation of noncategorizable business endeavors; and (11) other factors that might be described from time to time in future Overcoming Fitness publications and filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Certain statements in this pamphlet are backward-looking. These may be identified by the use of backward-looking words such as ‘throwback,’ ‘recovery,’ ‘saltation,’ ‘God,’ ‘artwork,’ among others. These backward-looking terms are based on the author’s expectations for the future and comply with the terms of the safe harbor in the same fashion as noted above for forward-looking statements.

The forward and backward looking terms, taken together, comprise a practice called *retroforeia*.¹⁹

Notes

- 1) A letter to Robert Williams Wood, drafted on October 7th 1931 and quoted in A. Herman, *Frühgeschichte der Quantentheorie* (Mosbach: Physik Verlag, 1969) 31.
- 2) White House Press Conference on the Human Genome Project, James S. Brady briefing room, June 26, 2000. Participants included President Clinton, Prime Minister Blair (Mesentvia Satellite), Dr. Neal Lane, M. Francis Collings and Dr. Craig Venter.
- 3) Nicholas Wade, “Reading the Book of Life; Now, the Hard Part: Putting the Genome to Work” *New York Times*, June 27, 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/27/>

science/reading-the-book-of-life-now-the-hard-part-putting-the-genome-to-work.

html?pagewanted=all&src=pm.

4) Videocasting of the announcement available online through the National Institute of Health at <http://videocast.nih.gov/>.

5) D.N. Cooper, et al., "An Estimate of Unique DNA Sequence Variation Heterozygosity in the Human Genome," *Hum Genet* 69 (1985): 201-205.

6) Refer to glossary entry, 425.

7) Transcript of the event available online at the National Human Genome Research Institute, <http://www.genome.gov/10001356>.

8) Poetics is its own discipline as long as it is not its own subject matter. Knowing nothing in itself is to know itself. What Venter calls 'spirit'—what he probably means by 'inspiration.' That which *takes on* forms and concerns.

9) The annotation phase of the genome project will deal with gene identification and function. The word 'annotation' was borrowed from computer programmers' practice of writing explanations alongside the major routines in a piece of software.

10) P.K. Dearden & M.E. Akam, "Segmentation in Silico," *Nature* 406 (2000): 131-132.

11) Ibid.

12) Archilochus, *γίνωσκε δ' οἶος ῥυθμὸς ἀνθρώπων εἴχει*, translation by the author, fragment 128. M.L. West, ed. 1989-1992, *Iambi et Elegi Graeci: Ante Alexandrum Cantati Archilochus, Hipponax, Theognidea* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

13) See "Introducing the Logosome," 311.

14) A polymerase that assembles RNA by copying an RNA template.

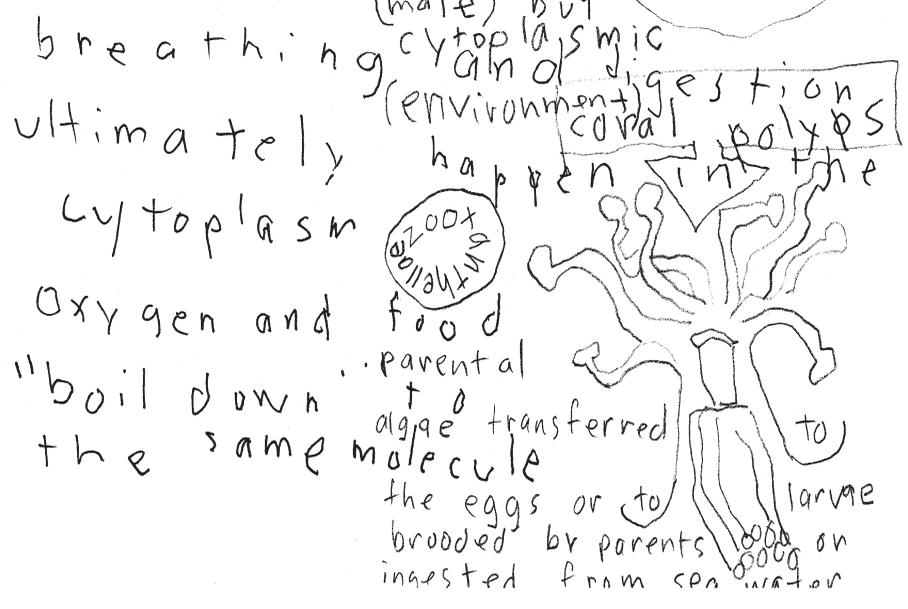
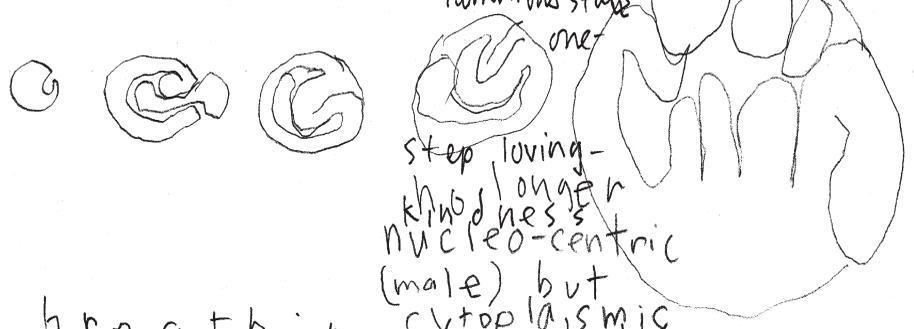
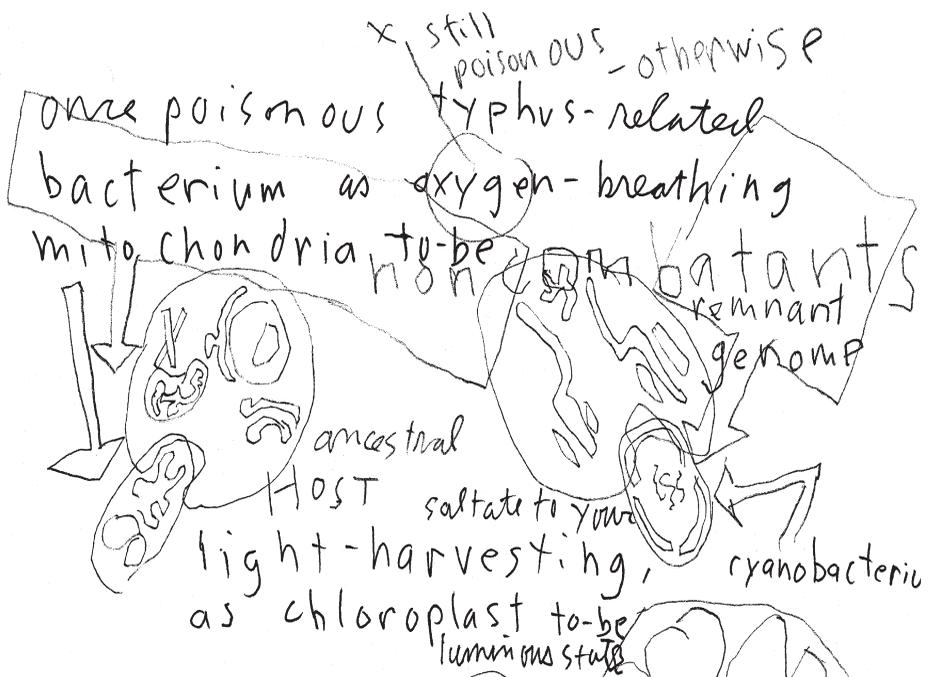
15) The Weismann Barrier is the principle of germline segregation developed by German biologist August Weismann (1834-1914). This principle states that somatic cells (i.e., the body, differentiation, physiological adaptations to the environment, characteristics acquired during one's lifetime) can't be inscribed on the sequestered, heritable gametes (i.e., sex cells, ovum, spermatozoon). On the other hand, the emergent science of epigenetics has shown that a zygote is not an absolute genome reset, but that both gametes carry across a residuum of 'experienced' (silenced, methylated, acquired-change) DNA under the guidance of the somatic.

16) Walt Whitman, from "Song of Myself," *The Portable Walt Whitman* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004) 51.

17) Ibid, 81.

18) Charles Darwin, *Origin of the Species* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 145.

19) The fusing and freeing of backward and forward as current euphoria.



THE OTHER FRONT UNDERFOOT (ALL'S WELL AS CAUSE OF ALL WAR)

[A talk presented fifteen days prior to the March 20, 2003 invasion of Iraq, in the context of "Poets Against the War," State University of New York, Buffalo.]

Without doubt it is we, the poets and thinkers, who are to blame for this
bloodbath and who have to atone for it.¹

—Hugo Ball

I call it *The Other Front Underfoot*.

I'd like to forgo my opinion of this possible war, in order to speak for
impossible war.

By not having stopped war from arriving at this brink, poets have already
failed, have long failed. What recourse within ourselves and our materials
does this failure compel?

(Now that the potential problem with stopping the war is stopping stopping
war.)

At this point, to protest war is reactionary and compulsory. I'd call it 'peace conscription.' A citizen's as distinct from a poet's action.

To instinctively stay within an efficacy particular to the materials of poetry—the language we'd be fighting for peace for.

We don't live in a world where the use of force is unviable. It's chronic. It's called the war to end war over and over. It may one day be terminal—the war that ends all. But it can't be made acute—like a fever that breaks and takes away the sickness from then on. It's a terminal condition kept chronic. We can't just, as a species, get it over with. The war we're fighting against is the just and always justified war.

Recovering but not cured. Getting hungry again. Back in the saddle. War is likely. It's back in vogue. Entertainable. (If not this war then some other war.)

Is it a law of nature or just a rule of thumb?

Threat of the use of force in order to empower negotiation, is already war. Poetic failure—specifically because the language of threat is 'language.' Once the language of threat is unleashed, no poetic operation can retroactively unengender it.

Once reactionary, we might even be tempted to react further—to subvert aversion—come out in favor of war, in the sense of sobering oneself with reality in an unbiased, disinterested sense—or exuberantly admit war as vital, life renewing, as creation's ritual creativity. (Not pro-war in the narrow, passionate sense of having belligerently taken one's own side—which has nothing to do with artwork.)

As Long As The Body About To Be Blown Up Is Not You Or Yours? Too late for artwork to take effect. Artwork, like herbs, is not a viable last minute strategy. Or can it work when nothing else can—isn't this, by definition, what it does?

What would poets place in the world to bring us to the point where we could at least find out if it's possible to live without force? Apparently not poetry.

What poem?

Looking as little like a poem as unlike a weapon.

As little like a poem as the language of war it would employ in order to be preemptive.

Preempt was a poet's word (and is now a Wolfowitz word)—a word poetry could have given to the populace so that it would have been unavailable for military use. Preempt is another word for 'prefigure,' 'portend' or 'prophesize'—to materialize, which is to poeticize.

Fighting against has never yet worked. What I fight against is (explicitly) not that which I fight for. Nor is fighting for what I fight for. It's called 'lose/lose.' Mutual exclusions.

To fight against is to fight for that which to fight against denies.

To fight for, in the fighting against, is to forfeit that which is fought for.

Shall we just let roll right over us the condition that would deny the positive goods living without war would be a matter of?

The positive goods, if provided, would disallow war as well as its precipitation. *That* poem, undertaken while at peace, with all one's resources, when the real crisis is called 'all's well'—just as the Orient goes to the doctor in times of health. To write that crisis, that poem, the all's-well-that-breeds-all-war turnabout—tantamount to our re-wiring.

(Our Surgeon General admits that a great deal is known about sickness while very little is known about health. How many pages went into *Paradise Lost*, and how few could be produced for *Paradise Regained*? What about our nature necessarily dims at the brink of peace?)

'Fighting against,' at most, waylays the occasion (the occasion poetry has in fact forfeited) to implant the moral and vital equivalent that de-necessitates the belligerence fought against. Not that poem.

Should poets usurp the means for war—i.e., reason, righteousness, rage, results; realizing that each mental mode is at base a writing genre. By fighting against fighting, are we repulsed by warlike modes though these very modes have in fact been taken from us in order to wage war—modes which now

seem nonnative to poetry and naturalized to power and aggression? All uses of the language belong to poetry because the proper object of poetry is all of language—all languages within the language—because language is a property of poetry.

If the all's-well-as-cause-of-all-war poem can't be written, we'll no more than plant geraniums in helmets evermore. Post-preemptively turning swords to plowshares re-militarizes because productivity itself will not have been called into question, will not have been arrested. Productivity still brings us to our knees. Peace and war, two arms joined to the body of productivity.

With our backs to the wall, what's called *Comic Warfare* becomes viable. Comic Warfare is the appropriation of the terms of war toward *contrary* ends—to stand the fallen back up. Covert: unidentifiable poetry. Conversion not coercion of materials. Overt: disarming poetry.

If poetry has never once kept us from the brink of war, why are we now concerned with conserving its identity (with conserving our identities) in the face of war? Is not the face of war occasion for being less concerned than ever for the conserving of the recognizable poem? If we keep looking strictly at all that poetry has ever done, war remains inevitable. What it has not done, allows war to happen. In a world only poetry could put in place, would war be no more?

Get out of, not *type* of genre, but *genre* itself. Take hold of agency, office, infrastructure and construction in ways that are not redundant to, or reiterative of, power.

Comic Warfare doesn't underdo or undo the controls—it outdoes the unavoidable, comically. If, for example, determinism is killing us, the comic poem could extradetermine—one last loop around or lace straight through the precondition and fate is outdone. So, overfacillitate the fraud of the ineluctability of force—in order that, with its next step, force fall flat on its face. Fathom the U.S. as extremely advanced in the arts of escapology—a civilian population massively mobilized in a counter-military sense, occupying, with a like coalition of the willing from every corner of the globe, every square inch of an about-to-be-war-torn country, as tourists, technicians, entertainers, sadhūs, blocking belligerents' basic ability to maneuver. Interrupt the inevitable, never as expected or as tried and tested or demonstrable or guaranteed.

As shown in my opening quote by Hugo Ball, even the reproachful language of incrimination can be applied with considerable and surprising poetic efficacy. While blame is the blunt instrument of belligerence, Ball, by blaming himself and his kith and kin, declares personal and total empathy with the catastrophe. He calls on blame to make a ludicrous claim real.

How? By overproviding.

How about adding an adversely active attribute to an antagonistic category? Extemporize predetermination. Alleviate axiomatics. Unbias theophanics. Experientialize expertise.

Haywire teleology. Contradictory is complementary. Demilitarize security. Concretize Wesenschau.

Up the ample: aestheticize ascetics. Sediment the transcendent. Suprasensitize empiricism. Be a munificent, bemuddled mechanist.

Maybe betray your own kind: actualize inexplicable. Eroticize R&D.

How about disinterested self-help? Rambunctious reductionism?

Or, delve into the extra delectation of overdoing the doubly debunked (a term discredited inside and outside its field) as demonstrably vitalist. Add a negative or double debunk to a double debunk: support dead-beat behaviorism.

Although the above operations are stop-gap and not quite occlusive—belying beatified materiality (globe: as below, so above)—they are nonetheless solid steps toward fighting neither for nor against. Anything but perversity for perversity's sake—steps pertaining to the impending perpetual peace.

The obvious danger in appropriating the terms of the oppressor: driving deeper behind enemy lines to directly undo an unwanted world may distance artists from 'native' aesthetics of a wanted world, from undercutting war with beautiful works alone, from building a world too beautiful to ravage, from growing their families and domestic discretionary spending. One instructive example comes to mind: the NYC-based anticonsumerist artist-collective RTMark adopts corporate and free market methodology in order to sabotage advanced global capitalism. RTMark hijacks corporate and political identities in order to snare the unaware. For instance, RTMark has parodied the WTO

website by using the same graphic elements as the official WTO site. The confused guest stumbles upon a directory of direct action initiatives that challenge the neo-liberal juggernaut. In another instance, RTMark channeled funds from a military veteran's group to the Barbie Liberation Organization which used the investment to switch the voice boxes of Barbie and G.I. Joe dolls. Brilliant. But, I think poets can ask even more of themselves by acting completely outside of reaction. Without the hoax.

How might poets, with their open identities, remain relevant between breakaway utopia and turning into their own antitheses?

Is a poet nothing in particular? Because a poet is nothing special (last nonspecialist standing), something denatured, denurtured—one card not contained in the deck can be played.

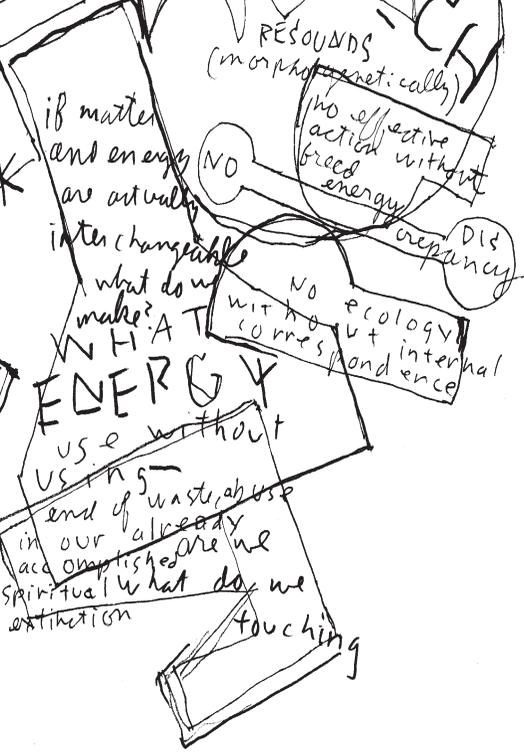
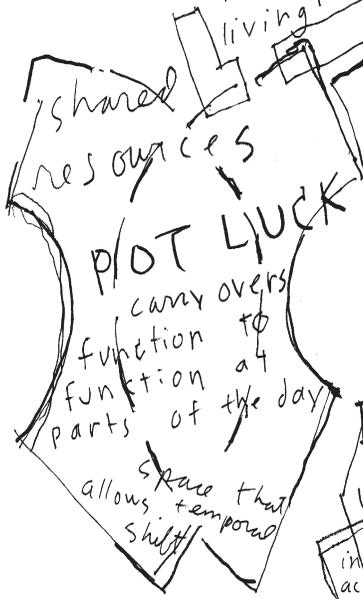
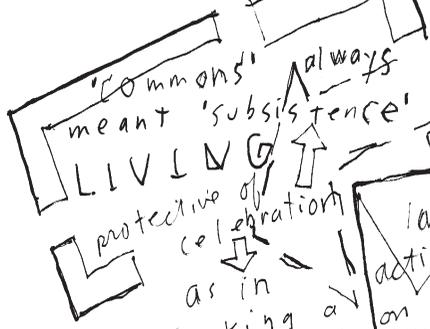
Poets aren't people. Poets may be citizens—but not necessarily people. I can't do as a citizen what I can only do as a poet. Politicians are people—though often confused people. Speaking for the people with the voice of the people is, at best, approximate. Switzerland (where I studied engineering every weekend for one year) is full of people. A consensus cult. If I'm speaking, as a poet, with the voice of the people—just how cut off from my material am I?—from the shift only I, as non-democracy, can occasion. Like the first fool eukaryote that let in an organelle that we might one day breathe. Poet: as opposite 'elitist' as 'democratic' (as the requisite limitless agent).

The problem with throwing our prosodized bodies before the war machine is ending up with fewer lives for perpetually jamming up the Big Biocide of which war is a speck and spectacle.

By means of all the possible actions of the poet of *unconserved* identity—or even a poem on a piece of paper or a poem read out loud (the point at which the least a poem can be becomes its utmost)—through Comic Warfare, this time a fair fight, in the fantastic asymmetry of artwork vs. warworld. (Our publicity will never be as powerful as Theirs.) The asymmetric strike is quintessentially ('quintessence,' another recoverable ordure) poetic—of poetic scale and odds. A line drawn on a piece of paper up against biocide. Auspicious enough—the imbalance beckons ungraspable tactics. With a little package delivered directly to the door by one's own pet. WMD in the bottom of a shoe. Counter 'counter' too. Only an asymmetrician can pose a serious threat to threat. And provided poets hit their stride in the fight without side . . .

Notes

- 1) Hugo Ball, *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1996) 29.

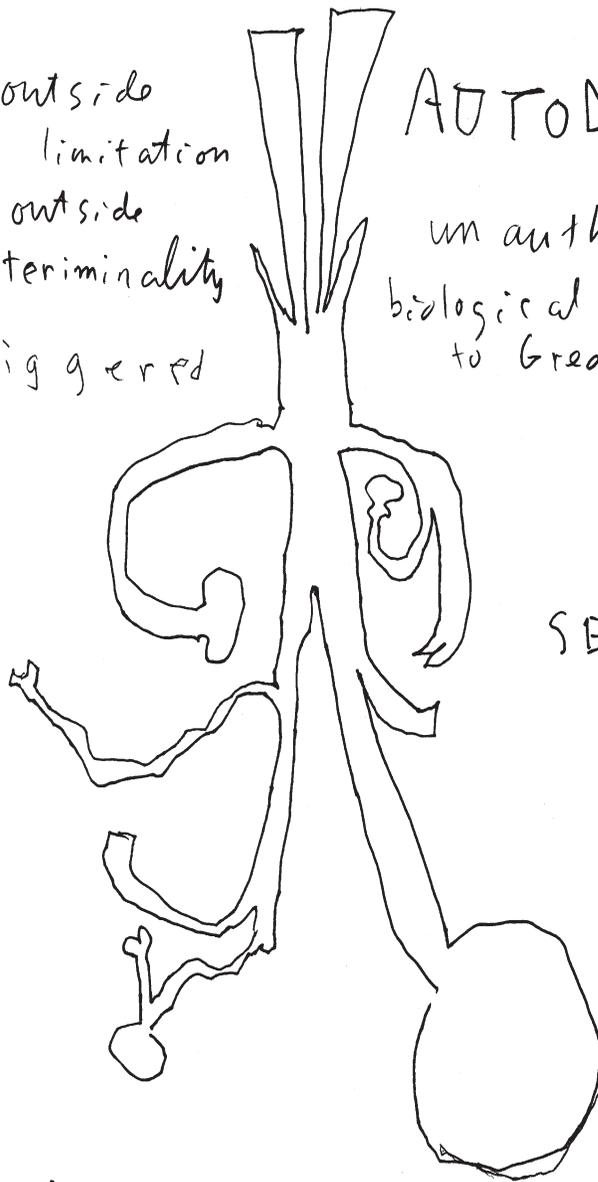


**EVOKED
EPIGENETIC
ARCHITECTURE**

or outside
one's limitation
or outside
one's terminality
triggered

AUTONOMY

un authored
biological response
to Greater Life



SERENE

Seizure

parasympathetic
preparedness

CIRCUMAMBIENTLY YOURS: ROBERT KOCIK'S ARCHITECTURAL MOVE

MADELINE GINS

The branch of art/architecture/science under discussion begins with, sails through and fervently insists on this question:

If suffering and disease come from dissonance in tissue and interrelationship, how can the dissonance be remedied by prosody (by breathing, by thoughtform, by tone, by phonic focus) with full assistance from its building?¹

Into the “The Prosody Building” and then into the “Anechoic Naad Darkroom” go I. Who or what rides the waves of phonemes that nestle there, circumambiently, to form me further into (and as) life? I speak as someone who was partially whisked away and had better get cracking at undoing the negative cascading. Those who enter this chamber will meet vibratory knowhow within the dark or, better, find it hovering, tellingly, within both the darkness’s bright summoning dark and its darkest deepening dark. “There is no knowing what comes from darkness without being in the dark and having what comes from darkness come.”² Vibratory phonemes use hummings and croakings and sibilants and yawnings and roarings to encourage and generate tissue formation and organ sanctity and thereby forestall life’s being whisked away. How do phonemes manage to do this?

Two strands tether Robert Kocik to poetry despite his having struggled, probably since his womb days, to escape it for art/science/architecture. One strand is the usual one that keeps poet-people in the poignancy of life: “Mark of Poet: Drop even love if it interferes with love.”³ Oh, that poetry seduction: it does make some among us contortionistic. Then, in the end, I (big fish), will make world (small pond), just as I see fit, revealingly so, up to a point, more or less, except when I feel drowsy, says the poesie loyalist. How did poetry come to loom large for you, despite your having, early on, astutely, recognized it to be hideously entrapping? Name this first tethering strand, whose umbilicalness lives on borrowed time, the *quirk* strand, or if you like, the *penchant for penchant’s sake* strand. The other strand that tethers Kocik to poetry is the *prosody* strand. Kocik cannot forget the power of prosody, and he is determined to show us that power. This saintly researcher sees himself and others as having been shaped and doubly shaped by prosody, considers this to be of the utmost importance and will not rest until prosody, as organizing principle, becomes nurturing environment. He turns to architecture to make this come about.

Choosing to put the emphasis on and to grow the prosody strand, Kocik succeeds in staying both utterly tethered to poetry while outdistancing it:

Prosody is interrelation. It’s the rhythm of our speech and the quality of our silence. It’s the pressure of what we say and don’t say to each other. Light and sound (as well as their absences) are pulsations and pressures (‘frequencies,’ if you like, or ‘waveforms’ if you prefer). Our sensitivity to these energy patterns we call ‘prosody.’ Prosody is composition of the medium of which we’re made, in which we move and interact.⁴

In “E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E,” Kocik and Daria Faïn’s cascading phonemes sound and explode as (and through) prosody. For these two theorists, “Empirical knowledge and contemplative practice go hand and hand.”⁵ Within each phoneme, within each one of these neighbors of, and contributors to, the morphemic, lies fructifying symbolization akimbo. Oh, what a skillful species this. Adept but lost. Let phonemes grab precisely positioned areas of mounting concern that require recasting. Something is having its say through phonemes—who said that?!

Faïn and Kocik have produced what they speak of as “a combinatorial artscience that can be applied aesthetically or therapeutically.”⁵ They have determined that prosody and the phonemes that shape and inhabit it can give human organisms the overflowing amplitude they deserve. The power

of phonemes has been put to therapeutic use and celebrated in cultures world-wide. Kocik and Faïn wish to consolidate and amplify this vibratory knowhow. They have conducted research while living for extended periods within the dark. During these periods, prosody came at them in reverberating phonemes.

Robert, you and I have often spoken of the close agreement we find ourselves in regarding poetry and action despite the utterly different ends-in-sight we are each urging forward. You have told me that you want to build structures that will help people die in a magnificent way, and, as you know, Arakawa and I have, for some time, been given to believe that structures can be constructed that will keep people from having to die at all. From my point of view, and I gather from yours as well, there can be no bigger disagreement than this; our views are diametrically opposed. Then what are we in close agreement about? Simply put, we each see human organisms as being in desperate need of augmentation and view the architectural surround as the best means for augmenting these poor, forlorn creatures. Why should it be that other people do not yet realize this? And once this realization has been arrived at, what steps should be taken then? You want to give great power to the poet by putting her within the Prosody Building, but you also know that prosody is for all, probably subscribing, as do I, to this startling and enticing Lautreaumont dictum, “We are all poets to begin with.” I think that as much as, or even more, than poets, we are all universes to begin with. It is unendingly abhorrent to me that these universes are discardable.

Notes

- 1) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: On Contemporary Practice, 2013) 170.
- 2) Ibid, 161.
- 3) Drawn from an earlier iteration of “Anechoic Naad Darkroom.”
- 4) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: On Contemporary Practice, 2013) 157.
- 5) Ibid, 161.

EVOKED EPIGENETIC ARCHITECTURE

*[The Stress Response Building or Blood Pressure and the Built Environment—
biochemistry of a building that could treat the cause of our climate crisis,
developed during a three-week residency at The Watermill Center for Scott Eliot,
Saara Hannula, Christina Guerrero Harmon, Elisa Laurila, Rikka Notkola and
Alan Prohm from the Environmental Art Department at the University of Art
and Design, Helsinki, 2007.]*

LOOSENING UP

The matter of the earth-brought-to-the-brink can be approached by simply pointing out who has inherited the earth and how. (Setting aside, for the moment, the even graver matter of the earth misconceived as heritable.)

An architecture based on the stress response would, above all, dispel the delusion that individual and collective interests are at odds—a dichotomy responsible for the greater part of our wretchedness.

Most biologists now agree that constancy is not a fundamental condition for life. Few biologists, if any, would be willing to go one step further and doubt the principal evolutionary ‘set-point’—i.e., that the aim of all the body’s vital mechanisms is reproductive success under Natural Selection.

Piloerection (production of goosebumps) is a response to cold or fear. Hair standing on end traps air for insulation or makes an animal appear larger. In humans it now serves no known purpose.

The unknown (the forest, darkness, fear of God, infinity) has been deposed from its position of regulatory predation. Stress incessantly deregulates.

We must either introduce a humanmade predator to unmuddle our autonomic response or become truly autonomous.

Meanwhile, let us link, causally, our stress with the strain the environment is under.

Meddle only endogenously (nonviolently).

Everyone is the patient.

It’s time to admit that the stress response is the stress syndrome.

Evoked Epigenetic Architecture is an immoderate intermingling of internal and external environments in order to arrive at an unflappable physiological balance. Homeostasis (stability through constancy) is the classical model of physiological regulation. In recent decades, allostasis (stability through change) has replaced homeostasis as the core regulatory model. This writing introduces a third regulatory model called *evoked epigenetics* (stability through evoked parameter values). Evoked epigenetics will be used to describe the Stress Response Building—a novel healthcare facility with a comprehensive approach to both distress and eustress. The Stress Response Building is the first instance of architecturally evoked epigenetics.

TO BLAME OURSELVES WE MUST FIRST ACQUIT EVOLUTION

The earth has been brought to the brink. Must we blame ourselves? There must be some way in which we can view ourselves as the victims. Hasn’t Natural Selection driven us to this precipice?

If we wish to blame ourselves for earth-at-the-brink we must first acquit evolution.

Let's take a hard look at evolutionary theory. Under evolution, selection pressures acting on genetic material favor those individuals bearing an adaptive advantage by means of successful reproduction. Evolutionary theory is itself the perfect tool for the advantaged, fabricated by the advantaged, in order to act advantageously. Natural Selection is the eugenics our collective conscience won't allow us to claim as our own—so, to soothe and delude ourselves, we then create evolution's visible, surrogate, bafflingly blameless socioeconomic hand: the hand of market-competition, preferential policy, test scores, try-outs, privatized plans, pay-offs, playground powerplays and countless other ways of grading, graduating, getting ahead, or groveling, losing out and falling behind.

(After all, it would not be 'freedom' were we to decide who succeeds. Freedom is the decision to protect the mechanism by means of which some individuals excel while others plod or founder. All else is oppression. So says adaptation, and the transparent farce of equal opportunity cannot convince it to claim otherwise. Equality is punitive and opportunity exploits outcome.)

A building designed for our survival would not pit us against each other. Rather, it would place us together, working against the conditions that equate survival and strife.

Is the capitalist body a nervous wreck? Are we living in autonomic servitude and slaughter? If predators still roamed the planet in search of human prey, would our stress levels have remained regulated as adrenal rush would release and shut down in relation to evident fright, flight and refuge. Now that we're thoroughly psychosomatic creatures, earth-brought-to-the-brink by a host of constant stressors (climate change, overpopulation, social disruption, insecurity, terrorism, discrimination, fundamentalism) eats us from within.

In this regard, global warming could be understood as a humanmade predator of humans, conferring on us the advantage of 'huddling together' to save the planet (from ourselves).

Believing that it's possible to treat stress without dealing with the evolutionary, exogenous stressors is, in itself, a sickness typical of today's diseases.

§

Inheriting the earth has itself brought earth to the brink. Who owns our wealth?

The offensive, the defensive, the self-congratulatory, the authoritarian, the overbearing, the conditionally caring, the speedy, the greedy, the keen, competitive, the vindictive, the deserving, and those who had already inherited the earth have inherited the earth and, as a direct consequence, the earth itself is under tremendous strain; the allergic, the infirm, the nurturing, understated, the meek, the misunderstood, the weak, the kindly, oversensitive, ascetic, endangered and diaphanous can ease the earth back from the brink, but not by becoming themselves the offensive, imperious or deserving (which would only serve to re-set the hypertensive trap).

Under stress we ravage the planet, we war and compete against each other, and we ingest ourselves by turning our fatty acids into readily combustible sugar.

The purpose of non-adaptive architecture is to shift us away from behaviors that correspond with our maladaptive release of stress mediators such as cortisol, epinephrine and norepinephrine.

‘Green’ building, though crucial, scarcely addresses the cause of the climate crisis—the emergency of autonomic self-ingestion (‘stress’ or ‘pressure’ if you prefer)—and the need to rebuild an environment that balances us and guides *voluntary well-being* (by consciously engaging autonomic functions which, for the most part, operate below the threshold of our awareness).

Don’t we need both stress and relaxation? Why not both at once? Why mess with the autonomic nervous system? It is, after all, ‘built in.’ Why buck the biologically suitable?

If I can accept the autonomic as an evolutionary given (i.e., as an involuntary control) I can also swallow the need for both the weak and strong and the advantaged and disadvantaged. The ostensible argument would be ‘we need the variety.’

What variety of variety? The contrary of weak/strong is not ‘monotype’ but the beginning of an infinity of nuanced difference within a vast

and unexplored voluntarily beneficent behavioral range. Arguing for the inevitability and vitality of advantage/disadvantage keeps us from discovering the biopsychosocial variants that could sustain us in any eventual environment.

Am I in charge of digestion or merely egging it on? How can I accurately frame physiologic function? Is it fair to say that cognition controls involuntary processes by entrusting itself to creation (the Tao of nervousness)?

Cognition doesn't take charge; rather, it connects autonomic physiology with its own involuntary movements. Perhaps this could be called 'intuition.' Perhaps there need not be any distinguishing of voluntary and involuntary. Perhaps (is there any doubt?) the least pathological state obtains when the volitional knowingly entrusts itself to the workings that brought it about.

In any event, I will say that the autonomic nervous system hasn't befitted us since the forming of the new rind of neocortex.

As a practical response, as a starting point—build a building in which the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems can be signaled simply by location and activity within the location. For example, a location for collapsing chronic stress into an acute reaction—a clean burn by means of swift fix.

Run both autonomic responses at once (e.g., increased epinephrine during decreased heart rate). *Parallel Stress Response* (if autonomic we must be). Interchange. Couple. *Selectively Interspersed Autonomic Response*, if need be.

Parasympathetic prominence is synonymous with voluntary autonomic response (an apparent paradox). Design a portal for wished-for homeostatic parameters.

There can even be a location for neither. Neither the stress nor relaxation response—a response in which metabolism is immaterial; in which physiological response is itself not germane!

Prepare for fused, paradoxical, unprecedented, near-impossible responses such as wakeful hibernation, alarmed estivation, extra-cortical condensation, conscious epigenetics, free-range genomics, pathless cascading, metabolic disband, serene shock, copious coping, a-autonomia, waived adaptation and sensitizing overstimulation.

§

Perhaps any discussion of evolution is counterproductive. Evolutionary dynamics are themselves overwhelmingly *sympathetic* (fraught with panic, injury, assault, insult, upheaval, harm, alarm) and have shaped us to such a great extent that we are now our own greatest threat to survival. Until the earth was literally brought to the brink, this process remained hidden as it slowly tore us apart from within.

Even the enlightened positions of ‘gene/culture co-evolution’ and ‘voluntary evolution’ (wherein we see the work of our own hands in both long-term and short-term evolutionary scenarios) are terminal. Nor does genetic engineering warrant its suspenseful moment of trial and error—no more so than the old external alchemies that absolutely proved fatal.

POST-PSYCHOSOMATIC AGE

This morning I received news from Cuernavaca that Sophia (the 83-year-old mother of my friend and doctor, Lucinda) has *susto*. *Susto* is a serious pathologic condition in which fright enters and lodges in the body. The incident occurred when Sophia’s son was attacked by another man. During the fight the man knocked Sophia to the ground, at which point the *susto* entered. *Susto* can only be expelled as a wild animal, such as a mountain lion or leopard. To be cured, the animal must freely walk out of the body. *Susto* can be self-treated. It can also be treated by a professional healer, a close acquaintance or even incidentally by a total stranger. Sophia is a village elder. With a quarter million indigenous people behind her, she has led several protest marches into Mexico City. She designed and built the adobe Roman Catholic church in her village. There is more to learn from her experiences than from the reams of research on the stress response mechanism.

§

Stress occurs whenever requisite activity exceeds available energy.
Grace occurs whenever the exceeding of available energy is effortless.
Effortlessness is a condition in which we do exceedingly demanding work without drawing on reserve energy or by replenishing reserves.

Psychosomatic response occurs when an exceeding demand is met by the ravaging of reserve energy.

§

I use the term 'psychosomatic' in a negative sense (even though any and every word that puts together bodymind would seem positively indispensable) as it best expresses the belief that the body unwittingly takes the brunt of psychological process.

Call it the Unbeknownst Body.

§

'Subconscious' can be attributed to neuropeptides present in the tissue of the involuntary nervous system.

§

The only official book-burning ever carried out by the U.S. government followed upon the publication of Wilhelm Reich's research linking cancer and the failure to express emotion.

§

Danger, strangers, intensely novel stimuli, dread, a perceived threat to well-being, all trigger the stress response. The two main components of the stress response are the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. During the stress response, the sympathetic system releases the catecholamines *epinephrine* and *norepinephrine* from the adrenal medulla. The HPA axis releases the glucocorticoid cortisol from the adrenal cortex. These three hormones in particular prime the animal in emergency by increasing heart rate, blood pressure and cardiac output, while accelerating respiration, shunting blood away from skin and viscera to oxygenate skeletal muscle and brain, contracting the rectum, mobilizing fat and glycogen, and inhibiting salivation and digestion as the organism goes into a state of heightened vigilance.

The stress response is sometimes referred to as the 'fight or flight response.' In theory it evolved as an instinctual reflex against being eaten alive. But,

even prehistorically, the fight or flight response would have been a drastically oversimplified, distinctly masculine model. Responses to extreme danger vary throughout the kingdoms. Cuttlefish change color. Some animals immobilize. Stress response could result in play or altering one's form—even mating. People also withdraw, abuse substances, negotiate, weep, and reach out when threatened.

Whatever the resultant behavior, the stress response was designed to be activated only momentarily. It was meant as a rush of reserve energy. A jolt. A surge. The same hormones that trigger the response are part of a feedback loop that signals the hypothalamus to stop their secretions upon detection in the bloodstream—durations that can be measured in the fraction of a millisecond. And this is precisely where the pathology comes in. Now that we are modern psychosomatic creatures with persistent psychological and environmental stressors (and not just the occasional man-eating behemoth), the stress response can be triggered and remain tripped. We became psychological and it is the psychological that spawned its proper predators: anxiety, insecurity, self-esteem, rage, along with the constant environmental insults and stressors: toxicity, climate crisis, traffic, conflict, loss of variety—all added to socioeconomic stressors such as creditors, risk, foreign policy catastrophe, bombs, sodium.

(The evolutionary assumption: when the stress response was first fashioned, prehistoric peoples had neither worries with which to worry themselves sick nor that with which one worries.)

We easily, mentally make ourselves sick. Anticipation alone saturates the blood with sugars. We are as haunted by our psychosomatic selves as prey is haunted by predation.

Prehistoric fear was based on the real possibility of being eaten by a larger or stronger animal. We've subsumed that fear as psychological stressors (working in tandem with neurohormonal discharges) that eat us from within. To meet increased energy demands under stress, the stress hormones mobilize energy by releasing stored fatty acids (glucose and proteins) into the bloodstream. Delivery of these raw foods is accelerated by an elevated heart rate that in turn increases blood flow to critical areas such as the brain and muscles. When the stress response is constantly activated, the body begins to consume its reserves. This state of hyperarousal is tantamount to fast-forward fasting. Body functions are disrupted, tissues outside the stress loop are deprived

of nutrients, immune function is suppressed, and the host of stress-related pathologies begin to appear. (The World Health Association estimates that 80% of illness is either caused or aggravated by stress.)

When the sympathetic nervous system is switched on, its complement (the parasympathetic system) is switched off. It's an either/or situation. With one exception (shockingly enough) all glands and organs in rapport with one system are also linked to the other (the parasympathetic branch is not in communication with the adrenal glands). The parasympathetic system reverses the modifications made by the sympathetic system. It conserves and restores energy as it reduces heart rate and blood pressure while facilitating digestion and the absorption of nutrients.

The parasympathetic system oversees stimuli that do not require immediate reaction. Parasympathetic preganglion fibers are in fact longer than sympathetic fibers because they are further from the spinal chord. This is quite literally a laid back, slowed down system.

It's often implied that the parasympathetic response follows upon the sympathetic, returning the body to 'normal' hormonal levels—a sort of second fiddle. Of course this is not the case. (Rather, it can be the case only if we accept human being as biosocial worst case scenario.)

Had America, for example, led with the parasympathetic from the point of the collapse of the World Trade Center's twin towers (Tehranis had for the first time in two decades dropped the "Death To America" incantation and had taken to the streets to publicly grieve with our people) our globe would have become more habitable, not brought to the brink of more war. Instead of producing a global atmosphere of shared horror toxic to the spawning of more terrorists, we've secreted a virulent and counterproductive neocortisol, ideal for further fundamentalist propagation.

§

Some freshwater turtles stop their heartbeat for as long as six months while buried on the floor of a vernal pond.

§

Leading with the parasympathetic is as uncomplicated as conscious breathing. Changes in the rate and depth of breathing produce changes in the quantity and type of peptide that is released from the brain stem. Meditation is a voluntary hypometabolic state of parasympathetic prominence—heart rate decreases; there is a decline of adrenocortical activity; respiration itself may be suspended. Even an iced transplant organ in transit between donor and recipient is in a hypometabolic state of relaxation.

§

Yet the two autonomic branches do seem to follow upon each other (that's the nature of regulation—like inhalation/exhalation, diastole/systole). And an overactive parasympathetic system brings on its own deadbeat pathologies. The autonomic nervous system is a vicious cycle. Its image is that of a peace protest torn apart by riot police and dogs; stem of a flower stuck in a gun barrel; boy standing before a tank; even averted war is a torquing toward subsequent violence (to believe otherwise ignores human history).

Thus the stress response as a whole, originally designed to save life, can be more accurately called the *stress syndrome*. The response responsible for so many of the day's diseases can now be relegated to their number, counted as one among them. Relaxation is part of the stress response just as stress is part and parcel of relaxation.

I've arrived at the crucial question: Is there regulation outside the autonomic nervous system? And if so, what role does consciousness play? Would not autonomic bypass ultimately be the only way to regulate physiology? Perhaps the idea of regulation is itself an evolutionary scam. Is there a higher-order balance (or a more underlying balance) than stress/relaxation? Finding out for oneself is as easy as removing the world. One primary function of the Stress Response Building is to counterpoise absorption in the world with removal of the world.

Holding one's breath or sitting still are perhaps the most violent acts we require.

§

As a fully realized psychosomatic being, I'd argue that we were never meant to evolve consciousness without concomitantly coming up with ways to consciously regulate physiological processes now considered involuntary and auto-ingestive.

Would this be a matter of directing the efferent autonomic system afferently?

§

The fact that our actions and artifacts profoundly influence physiology is not only a matter of common sense. The influence of poetics on phenotype is also supported by today's most complex branch of biology called *epigenetics*. The epigenome regulates the expression of the genome. It selectively signals and silences genes. It stands between the genome and cell development and is utterly susceptible to behavioral and environmental forces. Short-term adaptations, transgenerational inheritance and reversibility of phenotype variation are examples of epigenetic phenomena. The upshot of epigenetics is that one is, to a startling degree, one's own inheritance (some say "organismal adaptive inheritance," while others simply take it for the neo-Lamarckianism it surely is). Epigenetics is, to a certain extent, autonomic bypass by means of *underlying regulation*.

The epigenome composes with the genome. To regard the epigenome as secondary to the genome would be tantamount to saying that the song exists for the sake of the notes.

Construction is an incredibly violent process. To build, we disregard more ecosystems, balances, and sensibilities than we'll ever realize. The built environment, for the most part, has been put in place by insult and abuse—by exploitation and pleonexia (radical greed) at least, and at worst, slavery. If we are unaffected by this violence, such insensitivity is, obviously, symptomatic.

An epigenetic architecture exposes the evolutionary environment as psychosomatic inflammation. How it is built, who pays for it, who benefits, what it serves, and the materials of which it's made (at last the 'green' question), in almost every case, promote the pathologic. Evoked

epigenetic architecture traces the source of sickness in both the exogenous (the socioeconomic, the built, the behavioral) and the psychological—and then constructs an environment in which it is safe to sensitize and safe to surrender to the parameters it proffers and dissolves. (A parasympathetic anticipation, if you like. A place the endangered may inherit.)

Realizing the degree to which material is susceptible to our every word.

THE STRESS RESPONSE BUILDING ITSELF

The life-process has no thing that distinguishes it from freedom. Freedom has no thing that distinguishes it from the life-process.¹

—Nagarjuna

An epigenetic building places selective pressure directly upon our impending persons. A rather instant inheritance—a direct awareness of working with our psychosociobehavioral effectors.

The Stress Response Building is based on an all-embracing approach to stress. Its function is to keep us from being terrified by our endogenous chemical productions.

Once the body is peripheral to itself it begins to heal. We may begin to speak of an all-volunteer anatomy. Beside itself (with joy) the body becomes the nexus of the psychological, the cellular, the social, the environmental; the subjective, objective, cultural, biospherical, biospiritual, and celestial. The same sickness can be treated through any of its concomitants. The stressors are thus exogenous; the only medicine is the mindfully endogenous (there is no pharmaceutical, no ayahuasca, no nano kool-aid unhinging and clamping down homeostatic set points).

I'll refer to the being that is versed in evoked epigenetics as the Unstinting Body. I'll refer to it as the Bountiful Body. The Unbilked, Tickled Pink, Disenthralled Body. Ad Libitum, Unscripted, and Unchumped. Perhaps I'll say Unbidden Body, suggesting a complex, un-coerced behavior—though uninvited, even transgressive—further suggestive of a situation spinning somewhat out of control and about to turn tonic, even salvific. A body placed under dynamics that are atypically curative would indeed be very epigenetic. Finding no tension or contradiction in surrendering to the voluntary—very, very 'epi.'

The purpose of this section of the essay is to describe the various functions of the Stress Response Building.

This building is a diagnostic facility, designed to deal causally with both harmful and beneficial stress with regard to the interrelation between the stress-related diseases of our day—hypertension, diabetes, obesity, heart disease, atherosclerosis, and their psychosocial correlates—globalization, segregation, migration, industrialization, discrimination, disruption, dislocation, insecurity, climate change, isolation, alienation, dispossession, dejection, destitution, distrust, indigence, underthriving.

The various aspects of the building actually emerged at once, while notating the functions that an epigenetic architecture would require. Because I was looking for a ‘missing’ psychosocial organ, I found myself excluding standard, partially-effective therapies befitting former biology—the clinical, the psychiatric, the phenomenological, the sexual, and the aesthetic. The building divided itself into 4 sectors linked by a central office or interspersive ‘master gland.’ The quadrants are thus slightly dispersed in order to offer various activities without collapsing into an integrative morass. It is a slightly-pulled-apart entirety, not quite entire until slightly pulled apart. The proximity and interrelatedness of the quadrants are crucial for the concerting of an effective, unexpected form of healthcare. (Surprise is itself part of the potency and increased neural plasticity.)

The quadrants lay out along diagonal and adjacent, complementary and canceling axes. The SW quadrant is the *Bodywork Bstride*. This quadrant is a somatics disciplines area. It is exploratory in the sense that it approaches the autonomic nervous system as a parallel system (as distinct from alternating or opposing)—activating, balancing, coupling, and blending the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches. *Bstride* has three implications: both sides of the autonomic; both sides of the voluntary and involuntary; indicating that the quadrants are both part of and apart from the building. *Bodywork Bstride* features a walk-in access for perfect-stranger care (as well as sessions by appointment)—accepting the traumatized, troubled, infuriated, insulted, out of sorts, over-ruffled, crimped, accosted, bossy, blasé and bellicose. There is also an inpatient ICU for admitting the gravely insipid.

Diagonally to the NE is the *Exteroceptive Theater* (exteroceptive: relating to stimuli external to an organism). This theater is the Body Politic or Policy-Making area. It functions as a contentious, adrenally over-secretory

quadrant. As the Globe's Organ Of Speech, it works by means of referendum, civic solo and group deliberation. As a highly-honed hypertensive instrument, it critiques, counter-assaults and crystallizes constructive intolerance. Crafting an effective law is, in effect, an act of making a chronic problem acute. Acuity (in adrenal terms) is sufficient response deftly delivered to a stressor.

In an epigenetic environment, laws are not the most binding agency. Like regulation of physiological processes, law is for allowing as many social freedoms as possible. Law for its own sake is oppressive. Enforced behavior breeds psychosomatic citizens. Voluntary behavior is more binding than law. If the laws are not fair, one is not free to volunteer. As the Taoist dictum states: "Once the law is established the criminal appears." Lawlessness is the apogee of human interchange. There is no greater and more committed force than unforced impulse.

In the NW, adjoined to the exteroceptive policy quadrant is *Ascetic/Aesthetic*—a perforated sanctum for the practice of preserving and vivifying the world by means of its removal. (Ability to blot out the world is basic for balancing both society and individual allostasis.) The concerns of *Ascetic/Aesthetic* include seclusion, stillness, meditation, quiescence, cessation of the stress syndrome, neither/nor non-dichotomous techniques. (Here the writings of Nagarjuna come to mind).

Altered states and voluntary control of internal states begin with the hypometabolism of parasympathetic arousal. Sympathetic control under parasympathetic prominence straddles world/unworld.

The conservation of energy through the regulating and removal of inner states is the first step toward environmental conservation. *Meditative hypometabolism* is a positive preemptive policy. *Adaptive hypometabolism*, on the other hand, is the body's forced adjustment to scarcity under harsh conditions. The former is living, the latter a matter of mere survival. Accordingly, *Ascetic/Aesthetic* features a built-in desert called 'Mum,' 'Here Nor There,' or 'Nothing Doing.'

As the concerns of *Ascetic/Aesthetic* are often immaterial (irrelevant or nonexistent) the quadrant operative diagonally, diametrically due SE is a design/build department called *Material Beatitude*. This quadrant is devoted to the built environment and includes a materials research center, a design office, workshop, and assembly area. Patients can either call upon the

services of fulltime staff or come in and concoct their own constructions. For epigenetic architecture, real changes are those that are carried out materially. To the degree the transformations we seek are not materialized, there is only backsliding. A beatitude (e.g., “blessed are the meek for they shall evolve the earth”) basically combines a nonadaptive trait with spiritual reward. The resounding implication is that the reward for such a trait is not material. A beatitude was, originally, an inverting of value, intended as a comfort for the oppressed. This dichotomous mode of comfort, equating immaterial wealth and material deprivation, is an incredibly powerful psychosomatic tool. To a great extent (even in a capitalist society) the belief that material advantage is spiritual disability determines the built environment, public policy, and adrenal output.

Materialized Beatitude inverts value once again (according to the spiritual needs of the day). It’s too simple to state that the meek should be given the goods (that would only start a mass competition for demonstrating greater virtue). In an epigenetic environment, the handling and acquiring of material goods may be the processing of spiritual wealth. (Is there a more effective means for bringing about a just world? Comfort for the materially well-off must also be taken into consideration. The poor have an obligation toward the redistribution of goods as a technique for diminishing the spiritual deficit of the rich.)

Happy are the hapless for they will respond as they wish.

Privileged are the poor for they shall parallel heaven and earth.

Blessed are the maladaptive for they will sidetrack extinction.

So, one more time around. Let’s reset evolutionary development. This time without the hypertensive fitness testing, without the greed creed, the push to the top on the part of the pure of heart and the grieved or the chronic cortisol grab from those below.

Materiality may be, after all, the non-conflictual (neither selfish nor altruistic) religious practice of Reality—earth/heaven, here/hereafter, worldly/otherworldly/unworldly, living/everliving, inner/outer, psychological/somatic fuse.

Good and goods, the voluntary's only option: once 'having' is understood and established as a basic right, we excrete adaptation's paralytic poison. The Unstinting Body believes that exclusion of material means from spiritual practice corrupts the intimate and the real.

Materialized Beatitude is the requisite parallel response—the de-double-crossing of the material world—for leaving behind adaptation's stress syndrome.

§

All users of the stress response facility are considered patients (presenting with any number of psychosomatic symptoms) whether arriving to draft referenda, sit in the dark, draw a footing-drain or walk across a hardwood floor like a crane. Patients would generally enter the building through the centralized office which functions as an interspersive master gland or *Routing Node*. The first function of this node is that of listening, a listening so intent it's indistinguishable from responding. The effect is that of an allostatic exam: determining which of the patient's activities have exceeded her or his available energy; which autonomic branch to bear on; whether to run in parallel or pass into autonomic override; whether to switch from one's habitual activity; how to fully carry out one's response to one's cast of stressors: these are the sorts of questions that will come up. The sympathetic/parasympathetic layout of the building will then be carefully explained to the patients. Ultimately the patients will determine their own routings.

§

In a *slightly interspersed* architecture, one space doesn't simply stream into another, nor are they absolutely severed. Membranes separating the different areas are selectively semi-permeable. Patients have roaming rights and may move freely along the axes to experience for themselves (psychoneuroendocrinologically) the East/West sympathetic/parasympathetic divide, the hands-on physicality marking the building's southern hemisphere, the law/lawless shift when moving from the sugar-saturated SW quadrant to the wantless SE, or the return of bloodflow from muscle to bowel while leaving the high rpm of the table saw motor to move along the SE-NW diagonal and enter the neither/nor deadcalm.

All areas of the building are necessary for a patient to be effectively cared for in any one area (whether the patient uses the other areas or not). In an epigenetic environment, the body is whole only to the extent that treatment of any one of its systems treats the entirety.

**SATISFACTIONS CAN'T BE STORED
(REBUILDING INCENTIVE BY RE-SETTING THE LIMBIC SYSTEM)**

Are our behaviors merely matters of physiologic regulation?

What comes first: a chronically elevated appetite or the industrialized agriculture that provides the salty items cheaply and markets them intensively?

So, voluntary stress response and voluntary appetite are synonymous. Waiting in line at a Brooklyn post office, the woman in front of me finally loses patience with the worse-than-lethargic performance of the postal workers: "Get another job if you don't want to do this one. And if you then don't want to do that one, get another job again."

More heart attacks occur on Monday morning than during any period of any other day of the week.

Charles Fourier believed that each worker should be allowed to flit around the commune every two hours, imbibing the nectar of feeling fresh at the next task. This method of overcoming the scourge of work he termed *papillonnage*. Not only escape from monotony or escape from work itself—*invigoration* by means of work has been a non-negotiable utopian demand since our dawning. (With market America as setback.)

Can the Stress Response Building (with its patient roaming privileges) actually become a complex of dopaminergic pathways throughout which its users flutter?

Why be epigenetic if we're not feeling good about it?

It is generally accepted that physiological regulation is driven less by fear and fighting than promise of reward. Any source of satisfaction (whether sunset, sugar, art, acclaim, sex, sodium, ritalin) causes neurons in the ventral

tegmental area to deliver a pulse of dopamine to the nucleus acumbens and prefrontal cortex, providing a brief sense of well-being. What the nucleus acumbens and prefrontal cortex want is not sodium, art, or sex per se, but a pulse of dopamine. The well-being wears off instantly because the signal of satisfaction at once desensitizes the system. Another name for this desensitization is *adaptation*. The satisfaction cannot be stored or prolonged and must be continually and variously renewed. This reward circuit is designed to serve myriad satisfactions, each one contributing its dollop of cerebral dopamine.

§

Market-centered social organization, on the other hand, is notorious for narrowing the range of satisfactions. Single-source satisfactions such as work, shopping, watching a screen or eating, naturally ‘adapt’ (keeping in mind that adaptation and desensitization are essentially synonymous). The more persistently one source is called upon, the less satisfaction it can provide. The less satisfaction it delivers, the stronger the stimulation that is called for. As the dose and frequency of stimulation increase, the reward circuit begins to mediate addiction. The fewer the available satisfactions, the greater the likelihood that the system will lock onto a single source and create a persistently intensifying demand.

Dopamine is released by a neuron into a synapse shared with a neighboring neuron. Normally it is then destroyed, diffused, or reabsorbed by the emitting neuron. This neurotransmission is active only between 0.5 and 1 millisecond. (Cocaine, for instance, attaches to the transporter and blocks the reuptake process, resulting in a build-up of dopamine in the synapse, which causes the reward to persist.) Satisfaction, evidently (like the sympathetic nervous response), was not made to persist. Dopamine is, after all, another catecholamine and it is released (along with the glucocorticoids and a host of other hormones) by stressors. Satisfaction itself seems essentially stressful; perfect in a pinch but over the long haul *detrimental*.

Is sustained satisfaction (some might say ‘happiness’) chemically impossible? Perhaps we can make it pulse on and off so rapidly its state seems steady—a continual firing and dissolution or reuptake of the impulse—ceaselessly starting up (like word after word after word).

In light of the chemistries of stress and satisfaction, how should the Stress Response Building function? How might the macro ability to change activity every few hours effectively mesh with the minute millisecond cascading of catecholamines and steroids?

What I've mapped out so far is a modest but certain start. I've described a number of voluntary epigenetics' opening operations: parasympathetic prominence; making the chronic acute (pathology sets in when the problem takes too long to solve); parallel autonomic release; selectively interspersed stress response systems; autonomic override; (and as practiced in their respective quadrants) architecturally manifested wakeful hibernation, waived adaptation, pathless cascading, serene shock, metabolic disband, and so on. Once the building is up and running, exploration of further satisfactions and regulations can begin as new predicaments pour in and other supplely beneficial behaviors appear. Ultimately communicator chemicals will become biosynthesized (not swallowed or spliced in) by the architected environment in direct interchange with bioprocess. (Could such psychoactive construction be measured in *archorphines*—archoendogenously active?)

§

The physiological rule of thumb: it's more radical to synthesize one's own medicines within. Subtle is more extreme. Endogeny is safer because more potent. On the physiological level, healing is a matter of the synchrony of all systems. When all systems are operating on their own, the patient is given the greatest chance for dealing with stress autonomously, nonsymptomatically, and with greatest dignity. (The Stress Response Building provides for this.) Under market-medicine, the body's systems are isolated and pharmaceutically targeted. It's not possible to mechanistically fix one parameter without compromising the body's ability for self-fix (without at once dysregulating and desensitizing a number of interrelated parameters). For example, entering, maintaining and leaving a hypometabolic state requires strict synchrony of oxygen intake, carbon dioxide elimination, temperature regulation, discharge of metabolic wastes, control of heart rate, and maintenance of cell integrity. A partial, synthesized activation of the parasympathetic system tends to trigger autonomic stress. And beyond the physiological, without a sickness' corresponding emotion, a patient is likely to lose the path back to health. Emotion concerts otherwise scattered and inconsequential data in both internal and external environments.

§

The basic chemical rule of thumb: high that stays high stays high by not depressing other parameters.

Even our very restlessness is our own mechanical insistence—a prefrontal call for that almost irresistible neocortisol.

We're flighty and fickle not because our satisfactions are constantly being met but because they are not.

There are no tradeoffs in fulfillment.

Grace doesn't sustain the stimulus.

Only the exceeding of expectation doesn't desensitize. (Ask your amygdala.)

Because satisfaction can't be stored, a building rich in dopamine sources would constantly renew sociosensory reward through every detail. Paralleling Fourier's papillonnage, pathways in the building lead to separate but accessible worlds—allowing any level of voluntary interchange, reciprocation and sharing. Physiological regulation depends on continual modulation of emotional expression. If emotional expression is clamped at restrictive parameters, regulation is sought in pathologic extremes of the psychosomatic. Urgency, not emergency, regulates physiology. Ideas themselves are not capable of urgency and focus. Emotion sustains thought. Negative emotion is more cohesive than positive emotion. A dysregulated system darts into the negative for fatty fix. The reward circuit of the Stress Response Building treats this syndrome by providing palpable sociobehavioral options for patients to explore once their plateaus of physiological regulation have been reached by the very provision of the options.

The Stress Response Building is emotional in every detail, just as there is nowhere in the body the physiological correlates of emotion can't be found. This emotionality is a matter of the interrelation of design and manual devotion (taking the tools in hand).

On any given day, the very least the Stress Response Building would proffer is the renovation of the classic stress response. The choice of either fighting

or running away when endangered is admittedly male and mortifying. To instead seek support or “tend and befriend,” perform or pretend or perplex, defuse, cry, surprise, or distend, would serve to diminish a stressor’s predatory potency.

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The primary response addressed by the Stress Response Building is the most natural response of all: *rapid desensitization*. Rapid desensitization is the mainstay of the autonomic. We may have some say in stress (the central nervous system incites and subdues its production to some extent) but our satisfactions can only ultimately be fashioned in the autonomic. (At least this is the case for physiology up to this point in time.) That which we experience as satisfaction is the release of a small pulse of dopamine. The stimulus that initially releases dopamine adapts—thereby limiting or entirely shutting down the satisfaction obtainable from its repetition.

Of course this ingrown reward circuit may be overridden by something as plain as tone of voice, song or prayer. But the purpose of the Stress Response Building is to develop ways to beat the biodeterminism of this circuit by biopsychosocioarchitectural means.

A system that can no longer fluctuate desensitizes. A system that has nothing to fluctuate between, desensitizes. The wealthy can stay ahead of the hyposatisfaction syndrome by varying their routines and seeking further sources of satisfaction, but this variable is not a guarantee of beatitude or even enhanced sensitization.

For the moment, let’s extend appetite away from the tongue and expand the potential sources of satisfaction. Built into the Stress Response Building are civic, social, cultural, constructive, occupational, material, legislative, and ascetic appetites—all potential sources of satisfaction. Appetite must be kept myriad because fulfillment boils down to one bio-mechanism and this mechanism may now (by means of evoked epigenetics) safely be kept from ‘adapting.’

REMEMBER LABOR?

If an artwork takes labor as its medium, what then gets built?

If a healthcare facility based on overcoming the stress syndrome is built by stress-maximization of workforce, is the building itself not a contradiction; has its purpose not been undercut by the construction process; has the body of the building, having absorbed every blow, not become debilitated?

How can we rest if, energetically, a building is the embodying of the sum of the qualities of force gone into its construction?

How can we take ourselves seriously if the construction process is not used as the basis for treating the problems our constructions intend to address?

Is not 'empire' rebuilt each time labor cost is cut?

Does 'kindness' or 'work' apply the greatest epigenetic pressure?

How to *build without building* if construction is a form of violence committed with and against the earth?

What does it serve if we make a building our surrogate psychosomatics?

Could anything possibly be more psychoactive than something we're inside of?

Why shouldn't worker benefits and satisfactions be narrowed to compensate for the impossibility of assembling a building offshore or overseas (to be shipped back 'home')?

If the market is a Natural Selection mock-up, why shouldn't we use it as a mirror?

Why reinforce the mechanistic error by maintaining places in the body wherein we are not aware?

If there is nowhere in the body neurons are not, how could matter not be consciousness?

Could anything other than qualities of consciousness account for the built environment?

(Matter is consciousness while our materials and makings are qualities of consciousness.)

If having but one path of reward is either oppression or addiction, what compels a worker to a zero site (to return to work over and over again where there is neither satisfaction nor fair compensation)?

IT'S NOT NECESSARILY THE BODY (IT'S THE HYPOSATISFACTION)

It's said that modern medicine is disease-centric. Traditional medicines believe that disease is psychoexogenous (the result of climate variations, bacterial attack, emotional imbalance, lifestyle).

Now that we understand the host of physiological changes that are activated by a stressor, how can it be said that sickness is intrinsic or even 'centric' in any sense?

Which is to say: we may be doomed if physiology (in the sense of pressure applied directly to the heritable) is not an actual artistic medium.

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Just as rat pups detached from their mothers show an eightfold increase of corticosterone over 24 hours, human toddlers detached from their parents show heightened cortisol levels. Neural signals that call for increased blood pressure also call for salty foods.

Fat from the get-go.

Children who have been abused or bullied 'acquire' a ten-year decrease in lifespan. These children are also at increased risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, and self-destructive behaviors. These same children, though they rarely have a physiological defect or something 'broken' or 'dysregulated,' are 40% more likely to become hypertensive.

Homeostasis attributes all pathology to defect and deviation from set-points, and is therefore an extremely limited diagnostic tool.

Essential hypertension is the term used for hypertension of unknown cause. Of the one-quarter of U.S. adults with hypertension, 95% are classified as 'essential.'

It is astonishing that today's energy regulation diseases are rarely traced to a specific physiologic defect or mutant allele.

Nothing is wrong, we're simply diseased.

Nothing is wrong, something goes wrong.

The less we do the more we consume.

I'm fine, I'm just dysfunctional. Why do you ask?

It's so easy to override the local negative feedback.

Food's cheap, let's eat.

Something's got to satisfy someone.

"I just love the taste of a stranger" (ancient Greek saying).

That's not a fact, it's an effect.

Perfectly normal adaptations of internal physiology driven into mass-scale pathogenesis.

It's not inappropriate.

People are dying for nothing.

People are dying from nothing.

People are dying in perfectly good order.

Art treats iatrogenesis.

Push the placebo for what it is.

Expectation heals.

Anticipatorily palliative.

Bottled at the source.

The real stuff in place of the prescription.

Buying it from yourself.

Consciously tricked takes the cake.

Consciously tricked tickles.

Though physical defects are rare, standard medicine tends to target the body. Treatments directed at the symptomatic body (peripheral or repercussive receptacle) will tend to be countered by the higher order behaviors that brought them on.

Targeting the body with drugs, workups and operations can now be added to the list of today's diseases—a mechanistic fix can easily generate a mechanistically based problem whose fix is in turn mechanistic, and so on, until the pathogenic body is built (blood pressure may be treated by a diuretic to reduce volume which effects a compensatory increase in heart rate and vasoconstriction which is treated in turn by beta-adrenergic antagonists and calcium channel antagonists, etc.).

The allostatic model attributes the pathogenesis of hypertension, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, panic disorder, reduced life expectancy, allergy, tumor growth, Post Romantic Stress Disorder, victim presentation, apologetic excess, suicidal ideation, the common cold, memory deficit, intrusive thought, immunosuppression, Dissociative Identity Disorder, Learned Helplessness Syndrome, hypoarousal, hyperarousal, anorexia, ulcers, soul murder, migraines, metabolic syndrome, Support Network Inadequacy, libido-loss, instability of intent, bone demineralization, infertility, eroded personal boundaries, amygdala atrophy, Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and chronic fatigue to a pair of maladaptive stress responses known as *hypervigilence* and *hyposatisfaction*.

Hypervigilance is the condition of prolonged lowered expectation (particularly prominent among those of low socioeconomic status).

Hyposatisfaction is the chronic shortfall in an already greatly reduced range of satisfactions. Both conditions are products of *social disruption* or *cultural dissolution*. To take an extreme example: among industrialized aboriginal peoples, the rise in depression, obesity, alcoholism, suicide and murder invariably accompanies the rise in hypertension, and the rise in hypertension invariably accompanies increased environmental insult.

Allostasis is a more accurate regulative model because it doesn't defend blood pressure, temperature or hormonal set-points. Instead, allostasis demonstrates coordinated variation by means of predictive regulation. The body anticipates environmental demands and adjusts its parameters accordingly.

The potential allostatic problems are quite evident. We easily anticipate pressures while we are under no actual threat of being pressured. We feel generally unsafe, pressed, stressed and begin to *oversecrete*. Sickesses arise when the sedentary stress of the psychosomatic body fails to burn up the extra glucose that has been released into the bloodstream—or when organs outside the stress loop become blood deficient.

Welcome to the *allostatic syndrome*: an even newer evolutionary aid turned pathogenic.

Enter epigenetics.

The key difference between allostasis and epigenetics lies in that which they respectively modify—allostasis regulates neuroendocrinologic behavior while epigenetics modifies the functioning of genes. Allostasis applies largely to involuntary physiology while epigenetics applies voluntarily to gene expression. A step toward conscious epigenetics is far more natural and consequential than a similar step in the direction of the allostatic. Parasympathetic prominence and sympathetic control quickly lead to the need for evoked epigenetics. What good will it do to add the hypometabolic state to the three states recognized by science (waking, sleep with dreams, deep sleep without dreams) without changing the material world? Alert relaxation acting directly on stressors, adaptation and the architectural is optimal epigenetics.

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When evoked epigenetics asks “To what degree can the epigenetic be voluntary?” it moves beyond the adaptive, anticipatory bounds of classical regulation wherein we are secretorily trapped.

While classic epigenetics blindly modifies genes by means of behavior and environmental pressures, evoked epigenetics is *engaged* or *guided* gene expression. The evoked epigenetic theater consists of the actions of the genetically expressible self (omissions and commissions alike) within the whole environment (familial, social, cultural, built, natural). These actions produce the conscience that initiates actions. ‘Health’ is a consistency (a holding together) that is maintained only by engaging all aspects of the epigenetic theater.

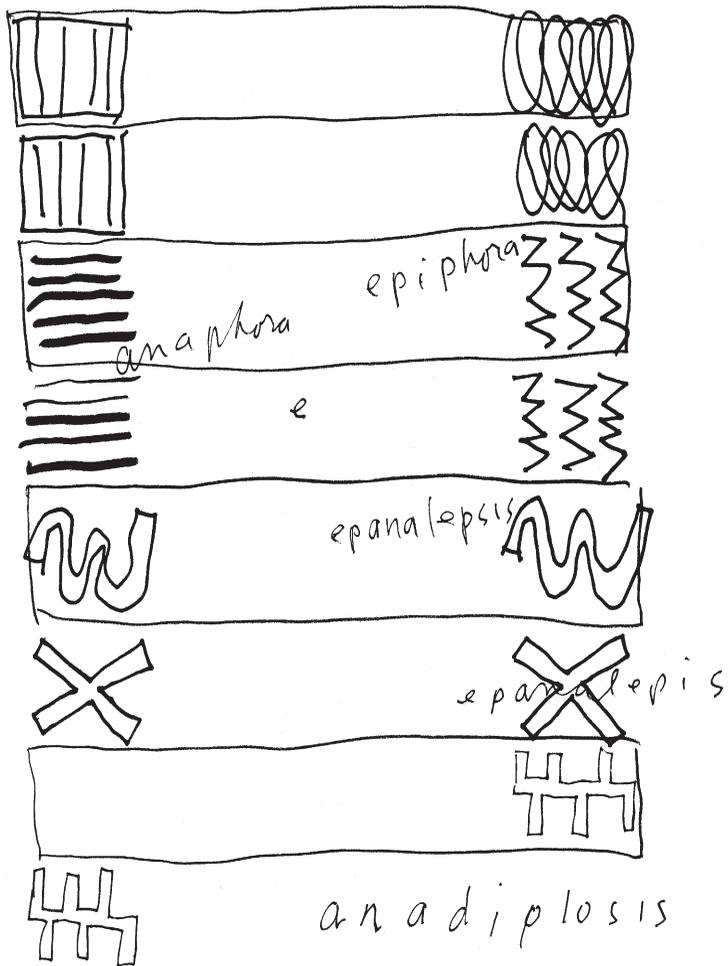
The age is decidedly post evolutionary. While past gene mutations required millions of mishaps over as many years, syndromes now develop over mere decades, and detonate within a single generation. The Stress Response Building untargets the body, pulls out the PICC line, and returns the patient to the patient by placing the stressors under the patient’s sway. At this stage of the earth-brought-to-the-brink the old evolutionary model with its concomitant economics and autonomic overdrive is itself the crisis.

Notes

1) Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna*, trans. David J. Kalupahana (Albany: State University of New York, 1986) 366.

building as stanza

symplote



ARCHITECTURAL LICKING

[A talk presented at the Reversible Destiny—Declaration Of The Right Not To Die: Second International Arakawa + Gins Architecture + Philosophy Conference/Congress at the University of Pennsylvania, 4/6/08.]

Because we coordinologists, as a tribe, have not yet broken through to the therapeutic . . .

. . . in fact we are as likely to find that disease stems from procedures typical of Reversible Destiny—mutation, permutation, aberration, lesion, sequence interruptions, breakages, deletions.

Do we know what we're doing? We're distancing ourselves from the endogenous base in order to tamper, tinker, tweak and overturn. Just because it's art doesn't make it aloof to the dread of doing harm.

Because living-on-and-on is intended to be somatic, we only pretend Reversible Destiny is working if it is not directly influencing the material of which chromosomes are composed—the proteins and telomeres programmed to terminate *individual* in favor of *kind*.

What I've heard one speaker after another say, in her or his own words—for Reversible Destiny to work, the path to genotypic change must pass through phenotype. That's the very reversal. Reversible Destiny is proposed phenotypic plasticity; creativity acting back on the genotype of current users. The way to care for future generations is to make sure not-a-one-of-us rots away today. In this way, Reversible Destiny would be genotype arising from phenotype—reversal of developmental biology.

Can an architect actually fight disease (much less ask the question of discrete ongoingness from-now-on)? How might architectural procedures work with something more than the symptoms and the expression of, say, autism? Workable Reversible Destiny would be a matter of coordinating epigenome/genome/architecture toward functions unknown until now.

Differentiation is terminal. True for cells, true for sound, true for us. Body is that which is discontinued. We drop the organic platform or, at best, at our most enlightened, we drop it before it drops us. Once we leave potential—once we actualize—once we leave the totipotent, we die. To decide is to die. To not decide to not die is also to die. It's even deadier.

Kind (as in 'species') used to be continuous. Given the crises we're in—climatic, economic, cultural, and (I'd say) spiritual, individuals have brought kind to the point of discontinuation. We could conceivably go extinct. This is part of our consciousness and hopefully a great part of conscience as well.

The work of Reversible Destiny is to return the comfort of continuity to kind (of course) by making individuals continuous (not so obvious). To date this is quite contrary to nature.

(And problems inherent in not-dying would bring on their proper crises—especially when such ongoingness would be nonoptional and enforced by law, as Arakawa and Gins propose.)

We're no longer assured the species will live on.

Non-somatic everlasting life (which is there for the taking; take any religion, for example) is, for the purposes of this conference, too little to ask. What's at stake here is somatic ongoingness—body forever. Somatic ongoingness is not possible without changing what we are genetically; without changing what makes us what we are.

In the epigenetically expanded evolutionary view, Natural Selection acts on language as well as other organic organizations. Language, in turn, acts on the conventional object of Natural Selection (i.e., our genes). In this evolutionarily active material known as ‘language,’ Gins and Arakawa pose the ultimate question of not dying. This questioning offers us a way to proceed. It doesn’t claim to answer the question. Its function is to coordinate its own inquiry.

Biotopology is the science of viability. To elucidate what a living organism is, biotopology assembles as many scales of action as possible. The language of Arakawa and Gins’ biotopology is invariably ambiguous because it wittingly and unwittingly recognizes that determinate language is terminal. It recognizes that discrete being is, by nature, annihilated into ambient energy.

Biotopology has developed a language in which discrete being, potentially, does not dissolve into all energy. There is no either/or. This is perhaps the first Western nondual language since Parmenides.

During our lunchbreak Arakawa recounted a story of having spoken to someone with leukemia. He told this person “Oh, this problem [of leukemia], this can be fixed from the outside.” Fixing something from the outside—such exogenous fix—is biotopological.

What is utterly new about this nondual language is the inclusion of architecture in its nondualizing dynamics. In nondual contemplative practices (as most nondual practices are contemplative) material is an emergent property of consciousness. Biotopology posits not-dying as an epiphenomenon of architecture! This is a real turnaround. The surrounds our glorious beings dissolve into is not immaterial but architected. Somatic immortality and architecture are interchangeable.

How can architecture, for which not-dying is a desired result, be linked to the genetic material that must be changed for architecture to bring about this desired result (especially while realizing at once that result itself is terminal)? We want these genomic changes—this terribly counter-genetic transformation—brought about within our lifetimes.

Genome itself is static, inarticulate, dumb. It’s the same in every cell. Epigenome is the silencing and signaling surroundings of the genome. Genome is like the notes of the scale or the ABC’s. Epigenome is composition. The biosphere is the epigenome’s surround.

There are a number of reasons why I believe the epigenome is key to biotopology. Epigenetics is at the heart of phenotypic variation. Epigenetics is the link between environment and genetic process. It bridges the gap between social and biological functions. Epigenetics interacts with cell division. It is any process that alters gene activity without changing DNA sequence resulting in modifications that can be transmitted to daughter cells.

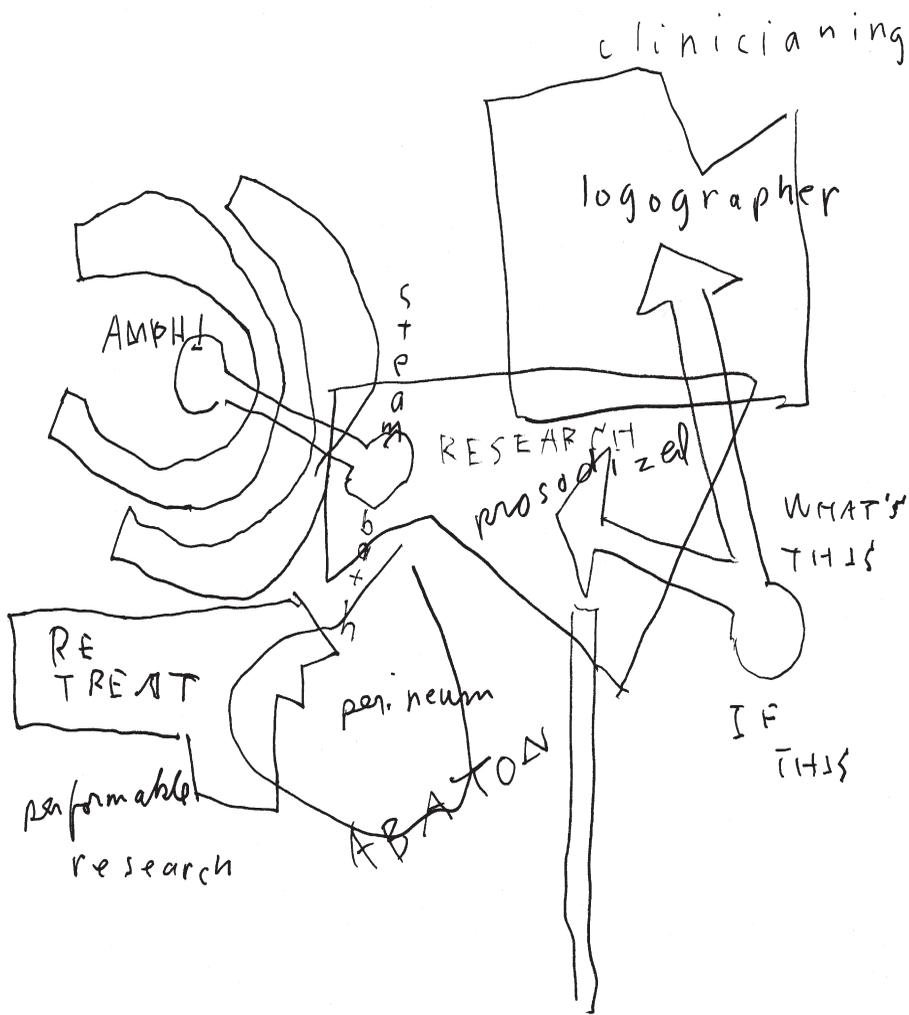
Aberrant epigenetics is linked to aging and disease.

Causes of epigenetic change (for better and for worse) include heavy metals, pesticides, diesel exhaust, tobacco smoke, viruses, behavior, nutrients, licking, grooming, nursing, mothering, motherese, fathering, fatherese.

So, why not 'architecture' (as active epigenetic agent): the built environment intersecting, interrupting the transfer of genetic material from DNA to RNA? As possible biotopological practices how about:

- Architectural Licking
- Phenotypic Foray
- Post-Adaptation Short Term Genome Reset
- Biotopological Toxicity Silencing
- Over-focus Override
- Expressive Language Delivery Divinatory Device
- Reversible Phenotypic Totter
- Nonpathological Paramutation Teeter
- Re-trait
- Tentative Genome Expression (permanently reversible may well be pathological in itself)
- Reprogrammed Omniscape
- Mesospheric MassEnergy Massagery
- Action Potent Enough To Treat Gene
- Angelic Individuation
- Secluded Intersubjectivity
- Awake While Not Awake Takeover

Phenotype is a particularly viable artistic medium. If it is not—if phenotype is not taken up as a particularly viable artistic medium and made true as such—how will we ever stay alive?



Exploding the
ORIGINS- PROBLEM

ENWREATHING DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFICULTY AND THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD

[A cover letter accompanying preliminary plans for the proposed renovation of the Field Center in New York City, submitted to the Field Center Executive Director Sheryl Field, 2006.]

BUILDING THE OPTATIVE (AFFERENT=EFFERENT)

Resist anyone who asks you to design only the visible part.¹

—Lebbeus Woods

My role is to provide an environment that helps practitioners and parents take part in the learning process of children with neuromotor difficulties. By focusing on the practical, material needs of The Field Center space, it's possible to furnish an environment that effectively extends the somatosensory dialogue with which the Feldenkrais practitioner engages a child.

We're imbued with our surroundings. Even when we pay no attention to the built environment, when it seems to be serving, for example, only as a backdrop for the kinesthetic loop between practitioners and children, we're deeply influenced—exteroceptively, viscerally and introspectively—not only

by the material attributes of a place, but the quality of the care with which everything was made and put into place. (Perhaps we're especially susceptible to such suffusion when we're not paying attention.)

Objects are part of the afferent nervous system. They are not simply separable sensory input; they flow back to perception as their impulses are transduced into electrical signals. Developmental exploration situates itself along this afferent flow. Greater awareness of the effects of an environment on internal bodily processes (digestion, breathing rate, body-based emotions, muscle tension, etc.) enables self-composition, clarifies action and tends to heighten one's sense of empathy.

Just as objects are part of the nervous system, so the nervous system is integral to the exterior receptive field. The two are constitutively dependent. This nervous system/receptive field interchange is referred to as a *wreathe*. An 'object' experienced as enwreathed in this afferent=efferent conduction is called a *gesture*, or *wield*, *spate*, *rollick* or *cadence*. This gesturing points out how objects are co-materialized by the interpretive nature of perception.

A person orienting herself intentionally or therapeutically anywhere throughout the wreath—as external stimulus, cutaneous mechanoreceptor, ganglia, gut feeling, or in the neural underpinnings of a psychological state—is referred to as an *ambitus*.

A device or environment designed specifically, assistively to help people function by conducing to a bodily knowledge/built environment fluency is called an *optative*. An optative is the construction of the enwreathing process mentioned above. Basically we are unable to want for ourselves what we can't imagine. Because full development of 'person' involves connecting the motorsensory to motivation and emotion and reflexive awareness (awareness of one's emotions and motivations) an optative must draw on all that we live for, all that we long for. Optatives construct the imaging of completely unknown—yet to be known—actions relative to desires recognizable and satisfiable only by means of their actions. The optative mood (the verbal mode of wishing) generates its receptive field. It is its own action. Less intense, focused and necessary emotions aren't necessarily embodied as their own actions. Construction is a process of beaconing, of building what the optative, as action, perceives.

NOTES ABOUT THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN RELATION TO THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD

Just as a body/mind practice opens awareness through movement, so may awareness be opened by means of the built environment. Realizing that the body is an ongoing neuroanatomical interaction with the environment extends the range of body/mind practice to *body/mind/built environment*. And building with a bodily-sensed knowledge extends the functionality of a space.

The purpose of extending the functionality of a developmental space is to introduce a body/place fluency wherein children can situate their difficulties and engage the reparative processes of sensory integration, motor learning, neuro-repatterning and positive, subjective representation of their somatic, fully sentient selves (as emotions and registration/representation of somatic processes are constitutively dependent).

Increased functionality in one area implies fluency in another. Motor and motivation, muscular and manual, material and mental, are correlates, coordinates.

If you're looking at your hand, it's hard to reach for an object. Without reaching for an object, it's hard to know where your hand actually is. If you have to look at your hand as you reach for an object, you are, in effect, yet disabled.

At some point in every moment and in every movement the proprioceptive opens to and is opened by the exteroceptive. Just as a bodyworker assists motor development, the architect directs aesthetic information. This architected information, manifest as color, weight, texture, surface, position, configuration, utensil, table, window, etc. (all based on the measure and pleasure of the body) is received by the nervous system. The nervous system integrates this information as impetus and motor imagination. As such, a door handle or spoon is part of the extended afferent network, cycling signals back to the nervous system. Designing an object as a gesture that enwrathes the exteroceptive and the kinesthetic situates a person within body/mind/built.

In the optative framework, functionality, fluency, efficacy and flourishing make up another set of developmental correlates.

Awareness through interchange with the built environment is a matter of attuning and provisioning, and specifically *not* a matter of challenging and imperiling. Instead of using design to double-up or knot-up the developmental process (by testing and challenging the so-called challenged), to increase agility optative construction pursues novel extremes in accommodation and facilitation—not only for the benefit of children with developmental difficulties, but for anyone at all, as freedom of movement is always a frontier. And without a sensitively correlated setting situated as far away as possible from the obstacle course of coercion and disequilibrium, we have no criteria for realizing we've barely begun to function.

Awareness through optative gesturing breaks the loop of abuse—of treating without care things made without care. Once again certain correlates come into play. Attention carefully given to the attention with which a thing is made and presented is, in itself, the acquiring of a new neuromuscular skill. Perception becomes the action of the making of a thing attentively. This new cognitive skill—the making of perception as caring for surroundings, enwreathing—can then be used to create content in other mediums (including one's self-imaging).

Although the pieces I'm proposing for The Field Center would primarily be used by nondisabled adults, they are at once conceived as integral to the exploratory method with which practitioners and parents engage the children.

At the same time, body/mind/built allows the exploratory method to act in reverse, engaging 'normally' functioning adults in their developmental progressions and impairments.

Just as the Feldenkrais Method offers the disabled a motor interchange that normally arises from one's own movements, body/mind/built offers the nondisabled alternative sensory information that normally doesn't arise from one's habitual interactions.

As motor manipulation in the Feldenkrais Method is a way of opening alternative neural pathways, awareness through the built environment sets the scene for more extensively engaged spatial responses. Together they form a two-pronged approach for working through and channeling around neuro and motor blockages.

Developmental difficulties reappear once we've safely grown up. Perhaps they never really disappeared. Do we continually set the bar of optimal functionality higher, or are we simply less and less able to leap? If I mean *motor*, must I mean *neuro* as well?

Am I set in my ways or is my brain literally shrinking? I'm too busy functioning to not develop learning disabilities and communicational limitations. Nose to the grindstone—a kind of transfixed spasticity and wonderpenia.

Aging is itself an insult (in the medical sense). Is aging necessarily a lifelong slide into the porridge of motor loss, sclerosis, and decreased brain plasticity? Can architecture intercede developmentally? Can it be the discovering of balance? With its sensory input can it supply the gravitational currents that load vertical being with the forces necessary to fully develop? Body/mind/built is a dialogue between ability and disability. Having been optatively realized, an optative construction provides a setting for imaging the actions of aspiration by means of bodily knowledge/built environment interchange. Because optativity brings us to the limit of our capabilities (with respect to mental and motor difficulties) and to the need to reach for greater energy, there is always, paradoxically, a built-in interface with effortlessness, with a sense of being carried by an exterior or further autonomic system. This is the point at which increased functionality doesn't disappear into convenience and competence; rather, it appears as new paths along which we're constantly facilitated. This grace underpins the design process, beaconing, beckoning to the built—to the to-be built—as experience that can be placed within reach by means of optative embodiment.

It's rather like a neotenic device: extending the period of gestation and protection in which we massively acquire and rewire our extraordinary capacities. Subtle is more radical, more at the root of development. As an architectural attribute this is referred to as 'swaddle.'

By enwreathing disability and ability, I don't mean to diminish in any way the hardship of living with CP or PDD or ADHD. I do mean to suggest that development is lifelong and beneficially so, if the environments we build become our optative sentience.

Empathy is isomorphic. Perhaps the greatest learning difficulty for the 'able-bodied' in finding themselves suddenly inexperienced—losing faculty and

learning to live with the difficulty that others, who've only ever lived with disability, have always known.

As I've mentioned above, the furnishings in this renovation proposal (outlined below), as requested, would primarily be used by practitioners and parents—the non-disabled. By briefly covering certain aspects of my design/build practice (body/mind/built and optativity, in particular) I've offered criteria for further, more exploratory furnishings (beyond the adaptive equipment geared toward normal functions such as sitting and eating) that would directly engage children with neuromotor difficulties—pieces that would provide a perceptive, experiential and encouraging sensory feedback just as the Feldenkrais practitioner provides a hands-on beaconing for innate ability. This further phase would require long hours of working with children in situ, as they become designers of their own space.

ISSUES CONCERNING THE TFC SPACE

At present the space is nondescript. It's unwelcoming, unfurnished, unaccommodating, tepidly colored, coldly lit and terribly reverberative.

Dimensions

The dimensions of the TFC space are problematic—specifically the ceiling height. Upon entering the TFC room, one's sense of space tends to waft up to the ceiling and get caught up in all the pipes, sprinklers, light fixtures, conduits and beams. Reinforcing this accent on ascent, all the existing lighting is upward, ceiling-lit. Currently there are too few features (furnishings) to ground people and hold their feet to the floor. The floor itself, unlike the original hardwood flooring in the hallway, is unattractive. These same dimensions are also responsible for the poor acoustic properties of the room resulting in a limited intelligibility of the voice. A listener in the space is receiving the same sound signal at slightly different times (first as direct sound, then as reflected sound and flutter echoes), blurring the intelligibility of the original signal. Adding furnishings will serve to dampen the reverberative effect. The already proposed curtain-dividers are in fact the overall plan for absorbing the wayward waveforms. If, for any reason, the curtains can't be installed, attaching short (2' height) absorptive panels from the ceiling beams in between the sprinkler pipes would be an effective second choice, which would also serve to lower the ceiling and deflect attention from the mechanical systems.

Lighting

Without windows and hemmed in by bordering spaces, the TFC space conduces to a year-round hint of Seasonal Affective Disorder. Also, the existing standard cool white fluorescent lighting (as studies show) tends to adversely affect children with learning and behavioral problems.

The proposed lighting plan for the TFC includes the replacement of all existing fluorescent tubes with full-spectrum tubes. There are many arguments for and against the natural daylight effect of full-spectrum lighting. For a number of reasons I would use full-spectrum lighting in TFC. It does render color more accurately, and I typically use color properties for precise outcomes when I design a space. Color matters, so a higher CRI rating matters. Critics of full-spectrum lighting tend to dismiss its benefits as purely psychological. This critique is for me a kind of proof, as I tend to find psyche more potent than scientific data to the contrary. Finally, I'll suggest that the body extracts from light whatever color it needs at any given moment. If the colors aren't present to begin with, the body can't draw upon them. And full-spectrum lighting, at the very least, carries a fuller color range. These are slight differences, and slight is often so much more.

Treating CP patients with laser acupuncture has produced some promising results. (Apparently, stimulation of different acupuncture points and scalp areas increases blood flow to the brain and other tissues.) I wouldn't recommend laser treatment or colorpuncture, but I would install two local, hanging, handmade, dimmable, floor-directed task lights to relieve the diffuseness of the existing general lighting.

Color

I can work with the current purplish walls as the base color for the TFC space. On the other hand, the green of the pillars is stifling. Because the pillars impede the flow of the space (trapping energy in the corners) they would best be transformed into positive features. I'd paint them a certain violet, arrived at by glazing—a white base then washed with concentrated violet. The effect would be luminous, like creating photons—the color intense and diffuse at once. (Like a painterly glaze, Taoist 'inner' color-healing uses 70% white and 30% color, as a rule.) Violet is associated, vibrationally, with neuro-function. Furthermore, violet is the only color that can act like white, carrying the

properties of all colors. It's also the only color range that calms as effectively as blue.

In the TFC space it makes sense to emphasize neurological and muscular relaxation.

The difficulty with color, architecturally, has to do with duration and intensity. Whether painted on a surface or inherent in a material, a color is constant while we might prefer a change. To feel the potency of a color—to receive the benefit—the color must be somewhat intense, yet this same intensity can become overbearing (thus the obvious tendency toward the application of bland colors and no color benefit). And it's rarely wise to aim a space exclusively toward one type of influence (just as it's rarely wise—only in an emergency—to treat only one organ or physiological system).

Could color be 'exploratory' at TFC? If the proposed system of curtains dividing the different work areas were double curtains of differing colors, people in the space could play with proportion and color property as an attuning.

Another problem with the space is *too little contrast*. To address this point, the tables, benches and cabinets would be made of pine with dark wood trim. The lightness of the pine would set the pieces apart from the floor. The dark brown trim would give weight to the space and cut the energy loss as attention lifts to the ceiling. The pine would have a few visible knots, to break the commercial feel of the space and resonate with the hardwood flooring of the hallway.

A FEW FINAL NOTES

I wouldn't turn the entrance into a kitchen area (as you have suggested in conversation). This would feel like entering a cafeteria. Instead, I'd place one of the soft seating areas in front of the kitchen and orient the refrigerator/pantry toward the far wall. The office-desk should be mobile and set aside between the far pillar and the wall when not in use. Sitting with one's back to the far door is unsettling (so I wouldn't set a permanent office area in that corner).

It's more than a matter of air quality. 'Respiration' is the word I arrive at. How can entering the room be like learning how to breathe—especially

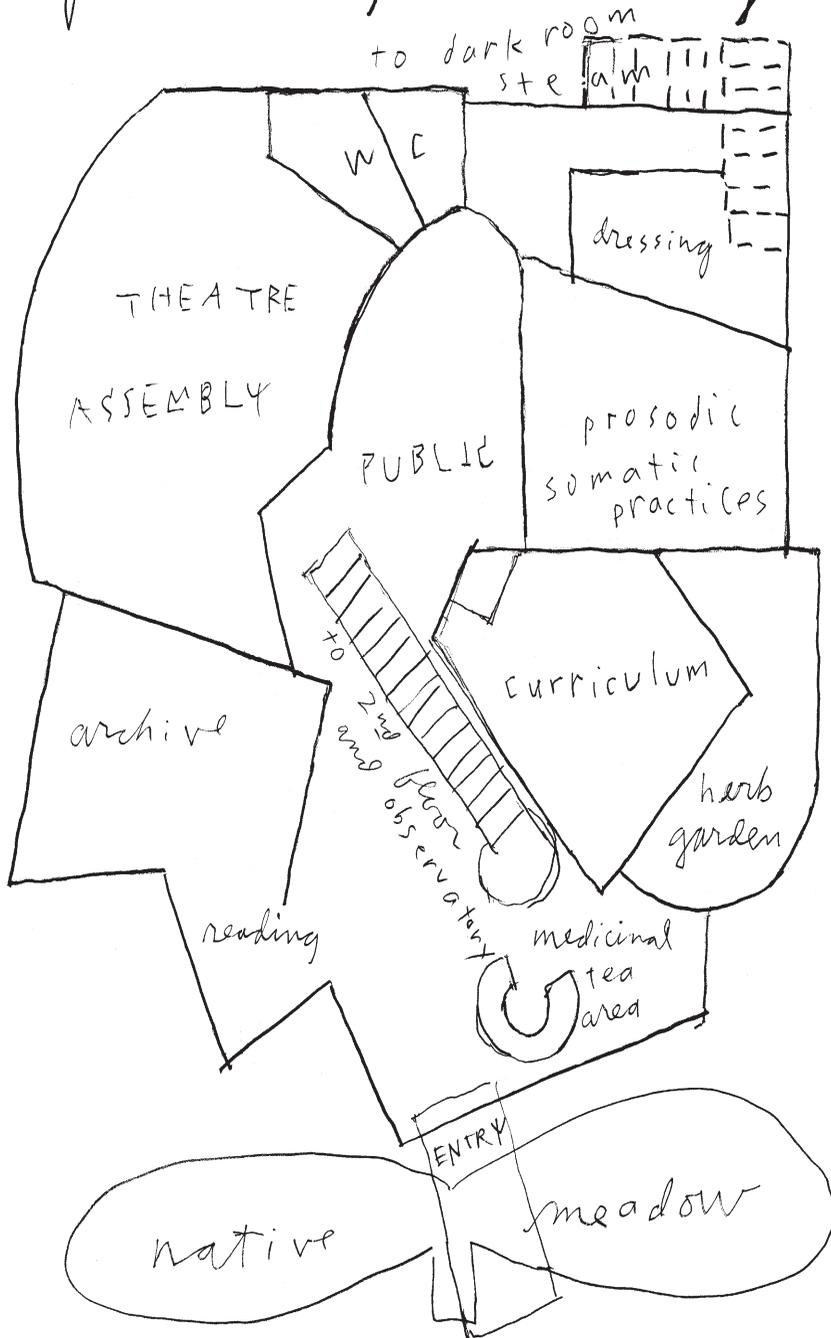
for children with motor difficulties who have been less able to properly develop the muscles of respiration? Here I'd recommend setting up a compact somatic practice area with a few well-gestured, assistive furnishings devoted to working rhythmically with a child's optimal cardiorespiratory synchronization (typically lost by adolescence).

A few plants can't hurt. Think about a hammock.

Notes

1) Lebbeus Woods, "Architecture and Resistance," <http://lebbeuswoods.wordpress.com/2009/05/09/architecture-and-resistance/>.

prosody building



THE PROSODY BUILDING (A PLAN FOR EXPANDING THE ROLE OF POETS)

[An open appeal to the poetry community, since 2002.]

...with the words which can alleviate people's tormented souls.¹
—Pindar on Asklepius

INITIAL NOTE ON PROSODY AND THE NEED FOR THE PROSODY BUILDING

A definition of prosody could be limited to poetry's basic elements of composition—but that would only further limit what poets do and what poetry can say. Can that which words can't say exist without words? Can poetry continue to exist (can the planet persist?) without poets doing what they typically don't do?

Poets are those who don't do what they typically do. Prosody is the unspoken, the substantial, paraverbal, extralexical and the *throughout*.

Poets primarily learn, present, publish and teach creative writing, and this is the basis of their limitation. Meanwhile, poets are responsible for the *throughout*. The Prosody Building focuses on expanding the functions of poets by freeing their formation.

**A BUSINESS STANCE: FOLLOWED BY A LISTING
(IN BUSINESS CARD FORMAT) OF MY 26 BUSINESSES—
ONE FOR EACH LETTER OF THE ALPHABET**

I'm proposing business as an indispensable and viable poetry medium. Business threatens the essence of poetry only if it is not part of poetry. America is organized by business and business-as-usual is biocide (to save \$5 we'd drive ourselves to extinction!). Unless we deal with this bottom line, one day there won't be an earth left to bargain for. The Prosody Building is entrepreneurial; designed to be economically self-sufficient as well as socially and ecologically regenerative.

ASKLEPIAD

medicine as intrinsic to poetry as music

BUREAU OF MATERIAL BEHAVIORS

**correlating
microstructure
material behavior
and human behavior**

*"Without a doubt it is we poets and thinkers who
are responsible for this bloodbath and have to
atone for it."*

Hugo Ball

COMPUNCTION ACQUISITION

show

DISPLAY

time

EXTRAORGANOPOIEIA

FURNITURE WHILE YOU WAIT

emergency / hardship / impromptu

dignified dirt and detritus dwellings

GARBAGE BRICK

h experimental breathing

susceptive system
autoxensis
convivialist response

INNOVATIVE IMMUNITY

overwhelming welcome
facilocytes
globaldevolitalization

joineries

matter comes from consciousness

Kashmir Saivism

LITHE

missing civic services

concept / design / construction of
novel offices, organizations,
charities, businesses or agencies
committed to the common good

NONDUAL CONSTRUCTION

building the unmade

OVERCOMING FITNESS

PROSODIC
BODY

QUIESCENCE

state changes, hypometabolism,
simultaneity of states, dead while
alive, awake while awake, alert
estivation, wakeful hibernation,
serene shock, delog experience,
parasympathetic volition, world-
no-world oscillation, engaged
gene-expression, autonomic
override, post-pyschosomatics

RE-ENGLISH

S O S

sore oversensitive sciences

TRANSLATION ENGLISH-TO-ENGLISH

any arcane domain or jargon made plain

UNIVERSAL COVERAGE INITIATIVE

the next third party

no priorities greater than care

VIBE ADVISOR

wind rose and wattle

prevailing wind diagrams
clay and lime plastering

at home in the unknown

x e n o a s i s

ALL PEOPLES SOLAR LUNAR CALENDAR

Y E A R



ALGORITHM

I'll unfold this plan by presenting a comprehensive series of statements, questions and propositions that connect the conditions of the inconsequence of poets with material causes and lead to an architectural resolution. Many of the causes are of course concomitantly moral (and matters of morale) as well. I simply want to base an approach to the problem, quite literally, on the concrete.

**IF POETRY IS OF LITTLE OR NO CONSEQUENCE, POETS THEMSELVES
ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY SOCIETAL BENEFIT LOST BECAUSE
OF THEIR LACK OF RELEVANCE**

If poetry is neither here nor there, aren't the poets themselves accountable for poetry's lack of place in the culture? For the purposes of this building proposal, I'll proceed as though poetry is of far too little consequence and that the cause of this inconsequence is poet-complicity in the conditions that create it.

It does little good to place the onus on non-producers of poetry—on the side of demand, the nonexistent audience, the readership, the overall lack of support for the arts. Such a response is deadbeat and can only deepen the inconsequence. At the same time, placing an emphasis on the promotion of poetry, greater exposure of poets and improved distribution of poems, is of limited benefit because such emphasis is a ‘downstream’ approach to the problem (i.e., after the fact of composition and detached from radical revision of the calling of the poet as a mode of composition in itself).

TO SITUATE THE QUESTION ARCHITECTURALLY

What’s the relationship between poetry’s lack of consequence and the absence of spaces designed specifically for the practice of poetry? In the U.S., there are only 2 buildings designed specifically for poetry (Poets House in NYC and the University of Arizona Poetry Center). In light of this startling lack of facilitation, I could either suppose that poetry has no specific functioning to accommodate, or that it functions well enough (perhaps optimally) outside the need for specifically designed spaces. Generally, the public venues for poetry and poetry centers are found in spaces originally designed for functions other than poetry. Obviously, poets interlope, adapt, renovate, transgress, but rarely, if ever, further their work through the designing of spaces in which their work would be fulfilled.

What’s the relationship between poets’ lack of regard for designing their own spaces and their overall cultural inconsequence? Is their space-indifference freely chosen or is it a consequence of their inconsequence? To what extent does this absence of specifically designed spaces restrict the roles assumed by poets? How does it restrict capacity for livelihood? For the most part, the mission of existing poetry centers is the presentation, performance, publication, promotion, and celebration of poetry, without casting an interrogatory light on the calling itself—without calling into question the very role of poet. (I’m drawing a sharp distinction between the ‘presentation’ and the ‘practice’ of poetry. All matters concerned with presentation are but a small portion of the entirety of practice.) Does this design-indifference constitute an aesthetic? Do poets identify with spaces not designed for their purpose? Do they have a robust response to the most minimally designed, least-descript and perhaps decrepit spaces—boxes, cafes, backs of bars, bookstore rears, classrooms, conference halls, street-corners or anyplace that will have them. (The poetics program I attended as an undergraduate student

took place in a space that had formerly been a funeral home and a Hare Krishna temple.) Is any space where there is no issue with space the place of poetry? Is everything new newfangled? Is this sensibility an autonomy or albatross? Is this placelessness part and parcel of poets' lack of social pertinence? Has it been cultivated to the point of superstition—such that a place designed for the fullest possible practice of poetry would, by definition, be disabling?

AND IF POETS WERE SUDDENLY FULLY FACILITATED?

The Prosody Building is a plan that accommodates the activities of poets by expanding and deepening the very nature of poetic activity. In this way, the Prosody Building offers our society the withheld benefits of poetry by revamping what is of benefit and the ways in which it's offered. (As I see it, the capacitation of poets in a custom-made space at this point in time would be completely countercultural—thereby provoking no identity crisis and posing no real threat to nonconformist poet-aesthetics.)

POETRY AS PUBLIC AMENITY

Relative to how they are identified by others, do poets define themselves differently and indifferently? Should this even be possible? I'll illustrate this line of questioning with the few sites that exist. The Poets House has recently relocated to Lower Manhattan's Battery Park City. Poets House occupies the ground floor of a 32-story luxury condominium complex. As required by the city when leasing public land to private interests, a percentage of the total space was donated by the developer for nonprofit use under the public amenity program. Do poets accept the definition of 'public amenity' as the basis for their participation in society? Must they be content to be crushed by 32 floors of condo? The University of Arizona Poetry Center shares its space with the Humanities Program. Are the humanities poetry's proper bedfellows? Would biochemistry prove to be a more productive partnering? Who decides? The Arizona Poetry Center is also known as the Ruth Walgreen Stephan (daughter of the founder of the drug store chain) Poetry Center. The proposed Poetry Center of Chicago has been funded by the heiress of the Eli Lilly pharmaceutical fortune. Are poets as indifferent to revenue source as design?

DESIGN PROCESS ALGORITHMS

Manifest further and fullest poet-functions by designing and building their architectural correlates.

As a further corollary, always indicate the way in which this building plan can also be implemented as a curriculum.

The building plan could also be performed (not unlike Frances Yates' *Art of Memory*—a walk-through that proactively designs and inhabits the space, normally carried out only in the 'head').

Functionally, the Poetry Building, as practice, pedagogy, performance and pilot-space, always already exists. It exists provisionally in every action that furthers and fulfills the roles of poets.

PRE-FUNCTIONING ARCHITECTURE

The best way to design a building is by beginning to use it before it's built. Do what you envision doing in the building. Extend your activity from the fantasized fact of your facilitation. Every step taken and every bit of information gathered along the way serves as experiential design specification. (Design by doing.) Designing before-the-fact (in the abstract, before the functioning) will only funnel users into a sterile or misfit shell. Designing after-the-fact removes the design process from the immediacy of the relevant information. Design *during*—while all is alive.

SALTATION

By means of pilot spaces and precursor places, accept the scale and scope of the eventual building that can be realistically realized right away. In other words, even the planning phase is part of the functioning of the building. The material building is just one step that manifests at a certain point along the way in the total being of the building. Waiting for the necessary funds and the finished physical structure in order to start functioning is a faulty (even fatal) approach—it is certainly out of focus, if not bluntly backward. The fullest

moment of the building may turn out to have been its first. Its full realization may even be its least energetic stage (or after it's gone—the greatest energy might even be in the rumoring of such a building).

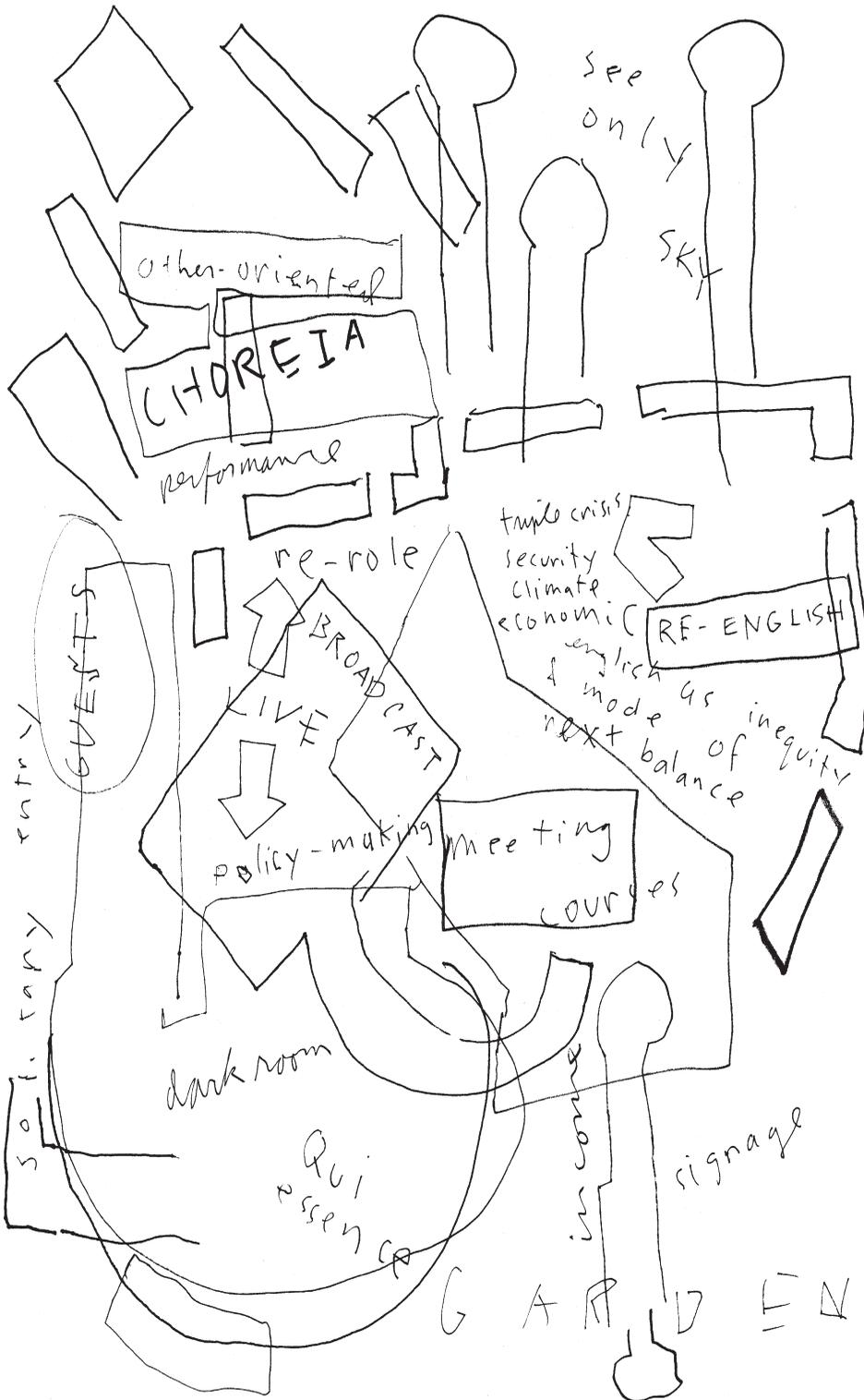
Just start.

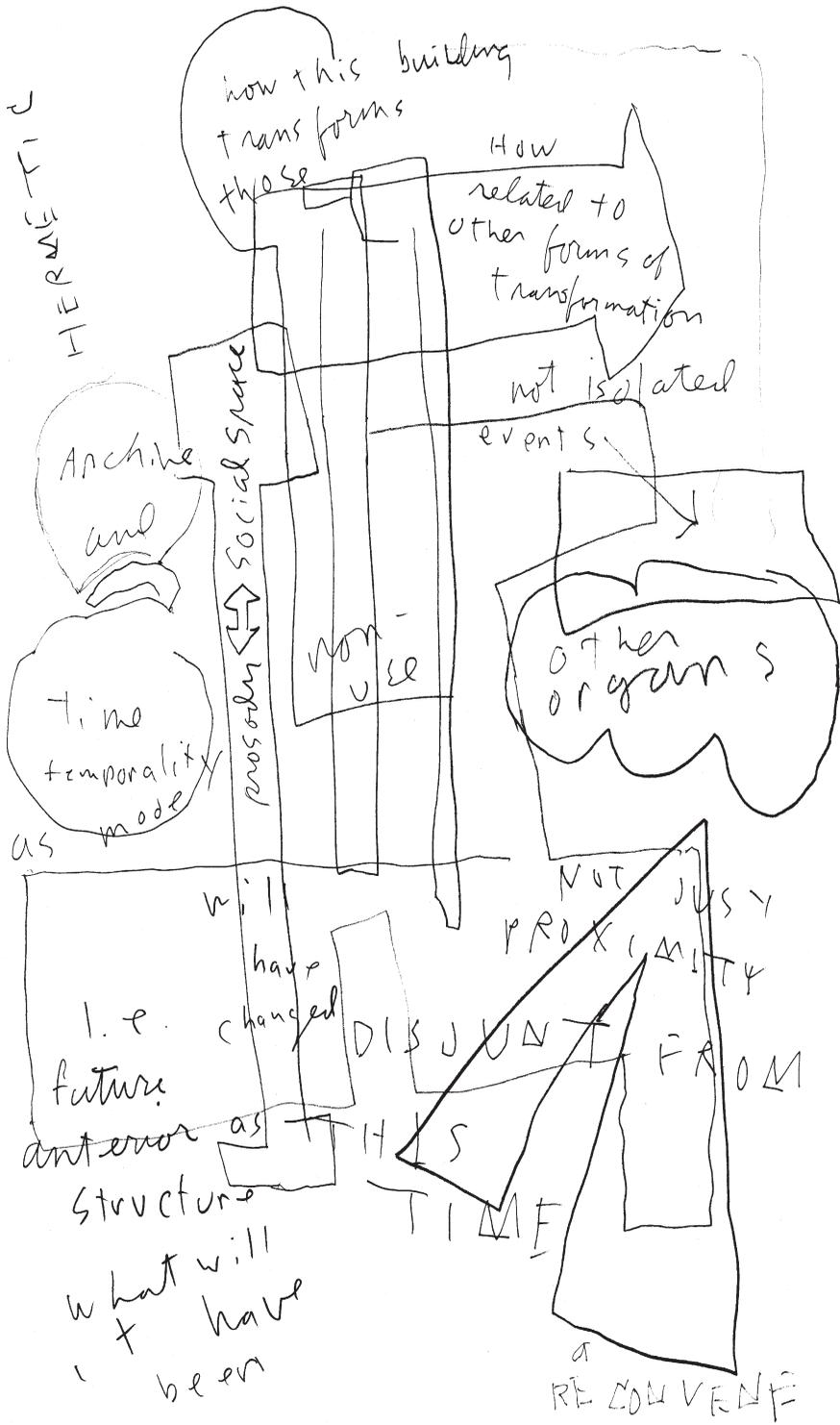
PLACING THE EMPHASIS ON DESIGN: SPACES AND THEIR CORRESPONDING POETIC FUNCTIONS

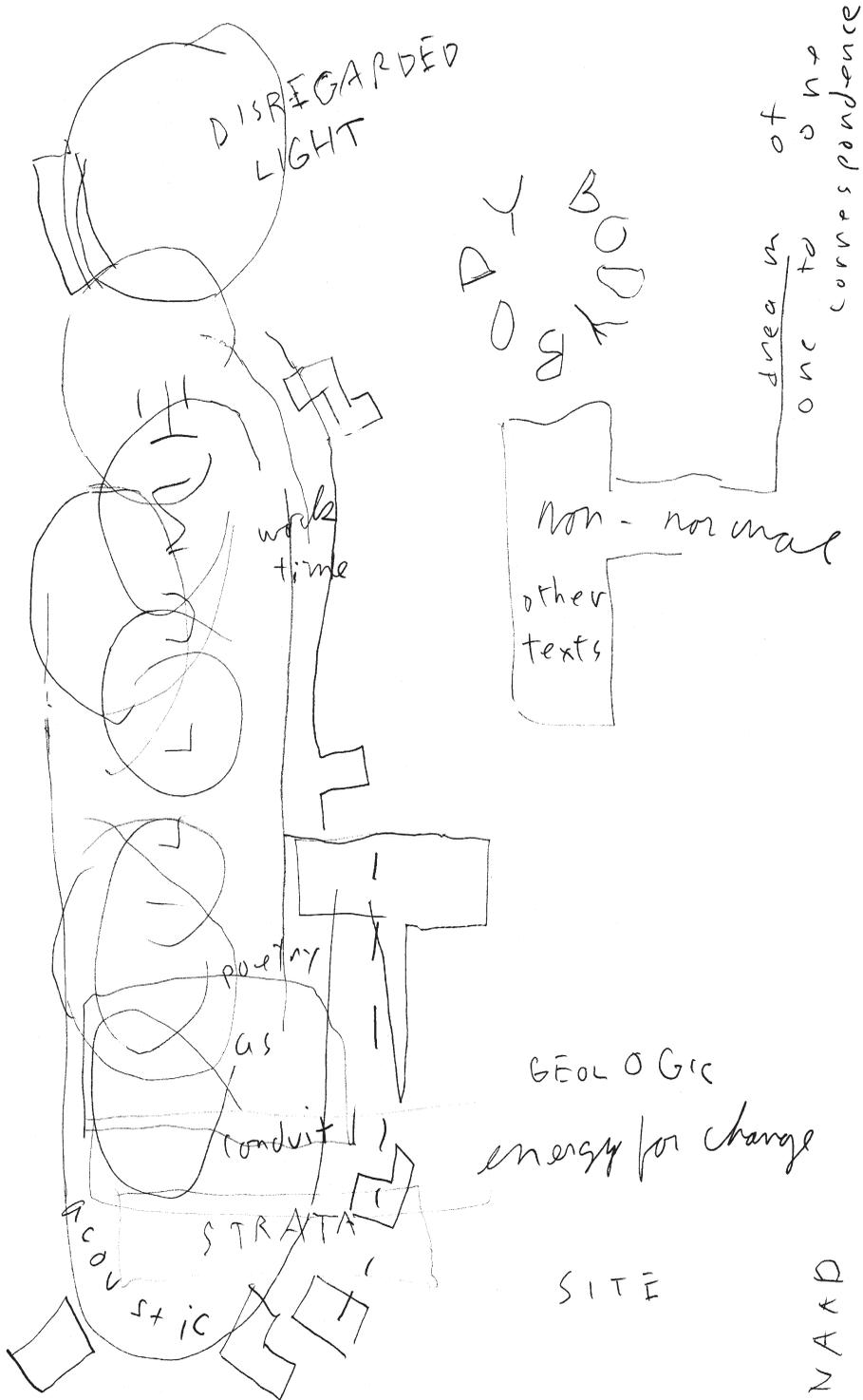
There's no way to design until a new function is in the process of being realized. A space is the defining of a role that could not have been realized without its space. Until one is designing a new function brought about by the act of designing, there's really nothing to design. This is the Prosody Building algorithm per se.

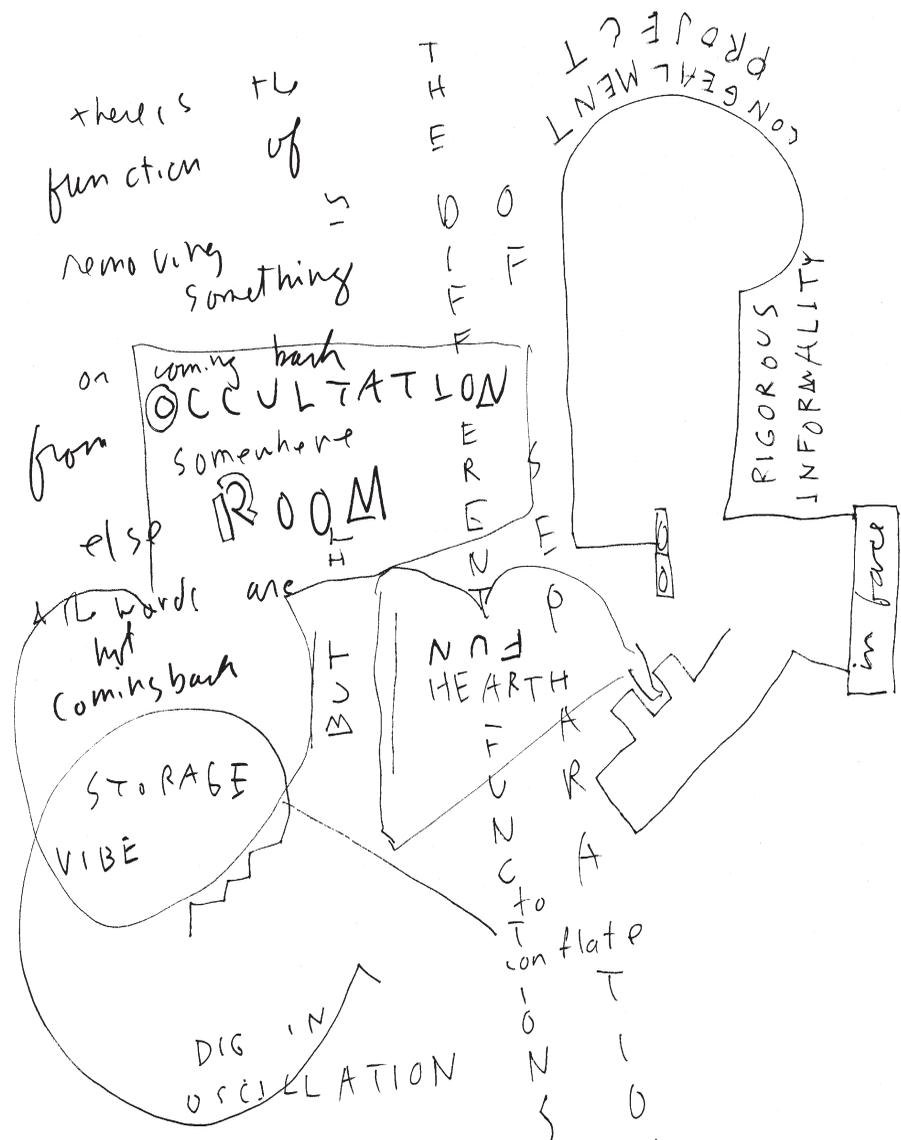
ARCHITECTURAL PORTRAITS AS PART OF THE DESIGN PROCESS

For instance, as one way of integrating the needs of poets in the design process I've been carrying out a series of meetings during which I draw a poet's architectural portrait. A 'meeting' is made up of a long conversation. I discuss the proposed Prosody Building and conduct a low-key interview, drawing out the poet's vision of a fulfilled poetry practice, on both a personal and societal level—particularly as potentially realized in the design at hand. During the course of the conversation I take notes and rough-out possible architectural parameters and details. The drawing that is produced is the 'architectural portrait' of that particular poet. Here the poet and the poetry community play the role of client. With my questioning I pursue the information any architect would need to complete a plan. When I start to draw an architectural portrait, the poet usually hasn't yet considered the ways in which she or he would rather work once given the opportunity to design the place and purpose of the working. Here again is the algorithm: architectural space and newly necessary poet-functions as concomitants.









see
Lamont Young
dream
HOUSE

were all
taken care of
where one is
alone

all

SERIES

LITHE: THE ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

The Prosody Building's foremost organizing principle is the expanded role of the poet in society at large. Of course such outreach is a matter of poets plumbing the depths of their own medium and motivations. This sets up an interoceptive/exteroceptive interplay—awareness of, and response to, stimuli originating both within the body and without. (As well as without the body?) To embody the culture, a poet must become the body of the culture. The poet can only function as an outflowing, efferent force if she is fully attuned to an inner vitality that would flow outward. She is afferent (inward-conducting) to the degree she is attuned to the exterior. Essentially there is no separable identity—only the creation of stimuli issuing endogenously and exogenously as whole commitment to the greater good as medium.

SOCIO-CHEMICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Prosody Building will have diverse directives determined by the involvements of different poets. It will have both stable and extemporaneous functions. It will have numerous inter-independent identities operating within the same membrane. The membrane may be displaced (the place will be made up of all that lies within the building envelope, as well as a far-reaching sense of purpose that can be transposed elsewhere). There will be permanent and provisional participants—some contingent, some fully committed. Organizations can enter the envelope and remain (and become) whole on their own terms, operating autonomously—un-ingested, un-engulfed. They will also be free to fuse with other functions. There will be different degrees and strengths of cohesion. The core can be diffuse or concentrated or multiple. In political and military arenas this sense of association might be referred to as a 'coalition.' Legally it might be called a 'consortium' or 'conglomerate.' These conventional terms scarcely apply to the ways in which the Prosody Building will hold together and be free to fly apart.

ENDOSYMBIOSIS AS SHARED-RESOURCE MODEL

Bacteria are the earth's true indigenous population, occupying every conceivable niche on the planet. They exist independently as single cells or in clusters, while multicellular organisms exist by means of complex interdependent relationships. Are there bacterial behaviors that can help

determine the optimal organization of the Prosody Building? Endosymbiosis (as elucidated by biologist Lynn Margulis) can, to a certain extent, serve as exemplary social system for poets working under the same roof. Endosymbiosis is the theory that complex cells originated as communities of interacting, autonomous entities. An entity (itself separately enclosed) within the larger membrane is referred to as an 'endosymbiont,' 'organelle,' or just 'symbiont.' Fundamental to endosymbiotic theory is the self-evidence of life's origin and evolution through cooperation, not combat or competition. (When conflicts arise, it can't hurt to have an harmonious underpinning.) Our cells took in oxygen-breathing bacteria (now mitochondria) to feed on the poisonous.

THE RANGE OF POSSIBLE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN ORGANISMS

PARASITISM (+/-) One organism benefits while the other is harmed.

PREDATION (+/-) One organism benefits while the other is destroyed.

COMPETITION (+/-) One wins or becomes dominant at another's expense (in fact mutually detrimental: [-/-]).

COMETABOLISM (-/+) One organism uses its own energy to transform another organism while unable to use the energy of the transformed substance.

AMENSALISM (-/0) An association in which one organism is disadvantaged while the other is unaffected.

ANTAGONISM (-/-) Mutual disservice.

NEUTRALISM (0/0) Interaction in which two organisms do not affect each other (probably nonexistent).

COMMENSALISM (+/0) An association between two organisms or populations in which one benefits while the other derives neither benefit nor harm (a form of facilitation).

EPIPYTE (+/0) One organism grows on another organism upon which it depends for mechanical support but not nutrients (as bacterial growth on skin).

SYNTROPHISM (+/+) Cross-feeding. Mutual dependence of different types of organisms for respective nutritional needs. An interaction based on a cooperative metabolism neither organism can carry out alone.

MUTUALISM (+/+) Both organisms benefit from a mutually dependent association (as ant and acacia).

NONOBLIGATE ENDOSYMBIOSIS (+/+) Both organisms benefit from a mutually independent association (unknown in the organic realm).

IN THAT BUILDINGS ARE NOT LIFE

In that buildings are neither bodies nor organisms per se, the great potential of architecture lies in the fact that it can function beyond the limitations of biology. Why should buildings replicate the same drawbacks found in life? Why be symbiotic all over again only to deepen biological dependencies? Buildings can be gutted, restructured and re-inhabited. We (as architectural organelles) can come and go. We can leave our membranes. We can instantly institute symbiotic communities. We can pull together a place of nonsymbiotic interaction wherein each party independently satisfies a need that couldn't be met otherwise. We can create a compact Natural Selection that would take eons to cobble together otherwise. We can dissolve a framework upon which all that has sustained us depends. A building can unmask the mystery of embodiment. The skin that severs us from one another is the optimal site for sensing and celebrating the inseparability of all things. For the Prosody Building to indeed be prosodic, this paradox would have to be both built-in and surpassed.

When is the last time poets indeed evolved, leapfrogged or revamped interchange itself, or replaced place with an instance of more broadly and freely (inter-independently) shared resources? Has there been an effective response to oppressive socioeconomic pressure since the passing on of the great classic nonegalitarian societies (leading up to and including our democracy)? If not, is it not this very lack of poet-initiative that has stalled our momentum toward a more equitable world? Lack of originality threatens our ancestors—now more than ever before.

**PATTERNS, MODELS, PRECEDENTS, ANALOGS, REFERENCES,
RECLAMATIONS AND COMPONENTS THAT MAY RADICALLY
EXPAND THE RELEVANCE OF THE POET**

Relative to the Building:

research center, social justice, benevolent society, metabolism, experiential science, shelter, think tank, school, community center, pressure group, clinic, publishing house, sanitarium, civic services (as composition), guest house, temporary employment agency, Asklepion, sound science, cave, guild, end of life care, daycare, endogeny, desert...

Relative to the Identity and Curricula of the Poet:

iatromantis, political ecologist, pholarchos, ecological economist, apothecary (as were Dante and Keats), griott, physikos/physicist, sage/linguist (Panini, Patanjali, Kukai), fili, law-writer, endogenist, pan-specialist, bodhichittist, complexity and systems theorist, prosodist (both art and science prosodies)—*Paniniya Siksa* through *De Vulgari Eloquentia* to...

THE SPACES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

Use of the building tends to divide into (1) activities internal to poets (instruction, research, writing, retreat, concern for craft, strategizing) and (2) outreach, programming, public services, livelihood.

Re-English Office

History of English as commercial, mercenary and duplicitous. The current economic, ecologic, inequity and security crises as consequents of the phonic and connotative properties of superpower English. Providing English with new roots and inherences, from its epicenter (poets working within the U.S.). A group of poets to 'write the book' and be the authority on the global and local repercussions of English. A reparative narrative.

Reconfigurable Theater

Even though poetry venues deal rather exclusively with the presentation, publication, promotion and exposing of poetry, little consideration is given to poetry as a production (lighting, duration, setting, staging, accompaniment, movement, etc.). Full consideration and facilitation of the presentation of

poetry in a theater that can alter its volume to accommodate various scales and types of activity. *Choreoprosodia* (full fusion of choreography and poetry.)

Anechoic Darkroom

The basis (basement) of the building. Sound arises and remains inseparable from stillness and unmanifest sound. A place for originating language for insight and enlightenment and for offering live data for the nativist/acquired origin-of-language-debate. A space synonymous with perineum, root, anahata, totipotent cell, unstruck sound. Dreaming and sleeping in the building. Staying awake in all states.

Roof as Observatory and Medicinal Herb Garden

Seeing only sky. The exteriorized link to infinity and fate. There is no progress without situating people in micro/macrocosmic interrelationship. Serving teas grown on the site in a tea room near the entryway. (Not 'landscaping' but ingesting plants as guides.) The Prosody Building is a palpable shift into being cared for.

Somatic Practices

Embodiment. Movement. Therapeutic. Words as embodiment. Opening compassion and community by opening listening.

Sound Science

Recording, psychoacoustics, shabd technology, cymatics, prosody as applied to poetry and the linguistic sciences, vocal production and bioprocess, 'medicine melodies,' sound as consciousness (if not cosmogenesis) and protection.

Entry/Envelope

Especially upon entering, the building must carry the paradox of embodiment—that which separates and that through which connection is realized are one. (One function of the poet is the statement of this luminous fact.) Buddhism holds that all suffering is based on the perception of a separable self as real. Ritual sets aside its process.

Assembly

A space for every sort of meeting of any duration, for poets, affiliates, neighborhood and passersby alike. For standing at the threshold and wondering about (wandering into) the rest of the building, the organs deeper in the body.

Archive

Unsurpassed prosody archive—as art, as science and in all mediums.

Educative

An area for instructing poets and offering a public curriculum—after-school and continuing education. Constantly and collectively re-setting, according to need and crises, the course of the poet. Perhaps ‘poet’ can be defined as one ‘least constrained by identity’ (most freed by meeting need).

Professional Offices

Because the building assumes its own economy, there will be revenue from core practitioners in language and prosody-related fields (counseling, breathwork, writing, publishing, voice practice, etc.).

Guests/Retreat

Allowing layover for readers and researchers. Overnight, extended stay; regenerative, taken in, taken care of. Hospitality is happiness.

Geology

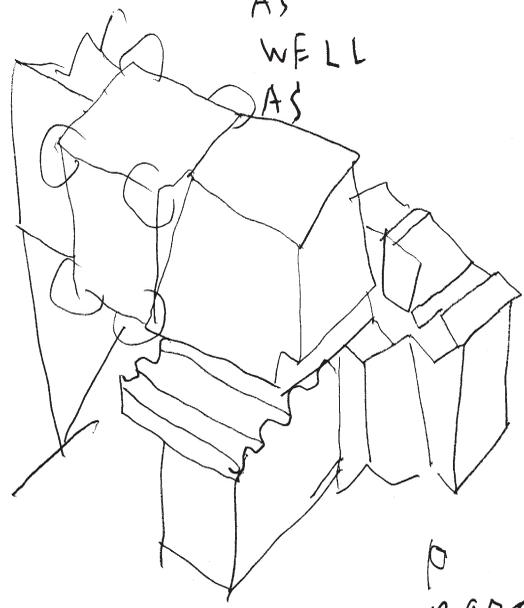
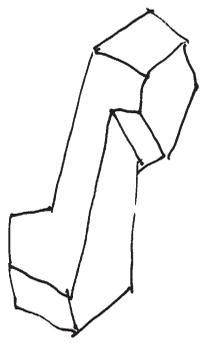
Propitiously situating the building on its site.

Notes

- 1) Pindar quoted in Giuseppe Roccatagliata, *A History of Ancient Psychiatry* (Praeger, 1986) 8.

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WHOLE

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AS

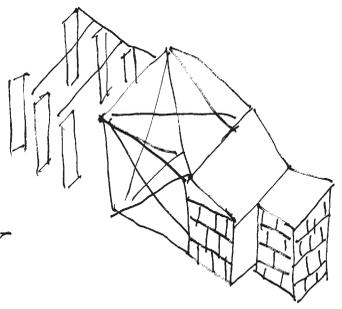


para tastic
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repetition of
a word in a
different case

GIVEN
GAVE GOT



POLYPTOTON

ANECHOIC NAAD DARKROOM

[In collaboration with Daria Faïn, a proposal for an experiential darkroom addressed to a team of potential partners—Mark Collins and Toru Hasegawa (design firm Proxy), Bobby Johnston (Co Adaptive Architecture), Michael Skinner and Matthew Castellano (Arup), and Sam Miller (Lower Manhattan Cultural Council)—providing initial design, functionality and fabrication criteria with a special emphasis on computation and device culture, 2012]

GREETING

We want to construct a space that offers elemental experiences of darkness and light and silence and sound. We'll provide these experiences by means of *prosody*. Prosody is interrelation. It's the rhythm of our speech and the quality of our silence. It's the pressure of what we say and don't say to each other. Light and sound (as well as their absences) are pulsations and pressures ('frequencies,' if you like, or 'waveforms' if you prefer). Our sensitivity to these energy patterns we call 'prosody.' Prosody is composition of the medium of which we're made, in which we move and interact.

We're committed to *better outcomes* (to borrow a therapeutic expression). An aesthetically pleasing event and living in less fear are not dissociable. Could

a specific use of color make our cities safer? For prosody, artwork, social justice, medicine, architecture, molecular biology, and emptiness are the same practice. Otherwise, how could we ever procure the benefit from the particular mode in which we immerse ourselves at any given moment?

We want to make prosodic knowledge more commonplace by providing people with an opportunity to become aware of prosody's potential benefits. To this end, the Anechoic Naad Darkroom will serve as a place for both somatic and inner practices (a whole interoceptivity). It will function as a care facility, lab, exhibition space, open platform, reading room and school.

Our artworks (whether choreographic, activist, architectural, educational, sonic, ascetic, somatic, energetic or theatrical) are designed to suffice as empirical evidence for the formulation of new knowledge true to the scientific method. We've named our area of research the *Prosodic Body*. Our central focus is the vehicle of the body and the discovery of prosodic approaches that modulate and regulate our biological processes. Just as the new customized medicine uses molecular profiling to match a drug with cell-responsiveness, we might recommend a syllable sequence that releases a specific neurohormone or inhibits histamine. Just as music can synchronize many areas of the brain, prosody can synthesize sensory experience throughout the body. With the practices we develop we can treat ourselves endogenously, non-invasively, profoundly. May prosody be suggestive of treatments for conditions as diverse as learning disability, wealth inequality, mood swings, neoplasm, inaction, over-incarceration, stress-induced disease, seizure and the price of gas.

ABOUT THE DARKROOM

The Darkroom is one component of a larger building called the *Prosody Building*. As such, the darkroom will be built as an autonomous structure with the capability of being disassembled and moved to subsequent locations. As an itinerant structure, it could possibly dock into other sections of the Prosody Building functioning autonomously at their respective sites. (Eventually the darkroom could perhaps attach to the completely assembled Prosody Building with all its subassemblies concentrated at one location.)

The sections are considered subassemblies with lives of their own. The Prosody Building has already been happening for half a dozen years. It manifests partially, temporarily, piecemeal. Every presentation of the Prosodic Body further specifies and further reifies the entire building. We find that it's best to use a place before it's built (as a heuristic for discovering how to build it).

The darkroom will be a public service built amid the bustle and hubbub of lower Manhattan's financial district, standing in sharp contrast (by scale, function, affect, materiality) to its surrounds. It will have the following five (or six) components:

stairs: scattered seating for passersby, small performances and audience capture—basically an exterior bleacher, also usable as an outdoor reading room for archive materials.

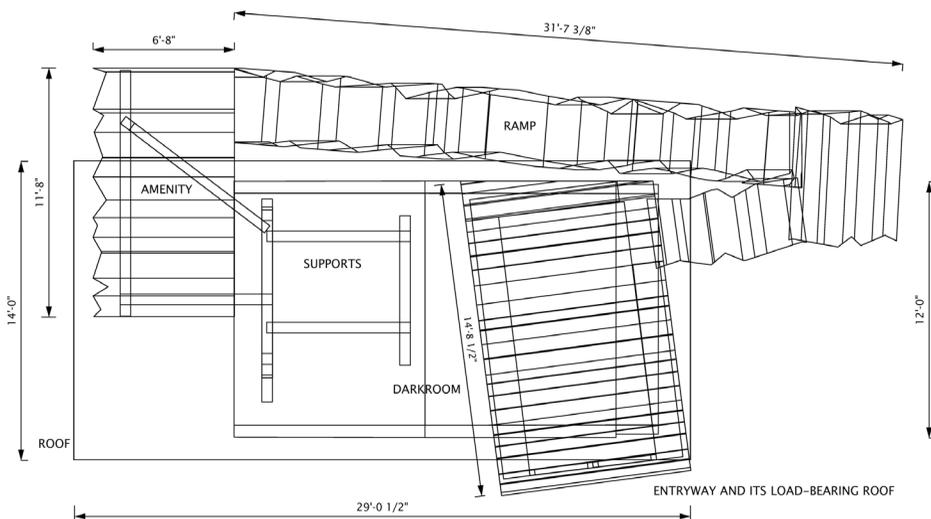
prosody platform: entryway for the darkroom where an attendant will welcome and acclimate those about to spend time in the dark; also serving as database, display, device-center and archive for the Prosodic Body.

corridor/ramp: 180° turn leading to the darkroom, making the necessary transition from light to dark and from dark to light again, gradually along an origami-inspired ramp.

amenity: small area for preparing food; sink and toilet; built out from the end of the corridor immediately before darkroom entry.

anechoic darkroom: main space for carrying out prosodic practices and studies.

roof observatory: budget permitting, linking the meditative space of the darkroom to the uncontrived space of the sky.



INITIAL CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

anechoic: a condition in which no sound enters from the exterior and no sound arising within the space is reflected.

naad: a Sanskrit word that means ‘sound,’ as well as sound-as-vibration, pulse, pressure, waveform, fundamental or formative frequency, sound current and harmony; with an emphasis on the phonic (i.e., voice, intent, logos, scripture, word signal as maximally meaningful). We use *naad* because we need a word that conveys the full meaning of sound, as the Anechoic Naad Darkroom is a place for experiencing all that sound is (as well as all of silence).

darkroom: the darkroom (Greek *abatón*) was used in Mediterranean sanitariums (*asklepions*) from roughly 1200 BCE to 400 CE for incubation of curative words and dreams. Parmenides wrote in the dark; medieval Irish poets were obliged to remain in the dark for as many as nine days before receiving poetry; Taoist and Tibetan traditions both have darkroom practices; and John Cage’s revelation of the impossibility of silence (hearing the high tone of his nervous system and low tone of blood circulation) in Harvard’s anechoic chamber directly influenced his composition 4’33”. A darkroom is absolutely dark. This removes the world. The anechoic darkroom is synonymous with stillness, non-differentiation, the perineum, totipotent cells, dream-incubation, the pulsating of consciousness, dreamless sleep, emptying and awakening.

prosody: in its broadest sense, prosody is interrelationship. It’s both verbal and nonverbal communication. It’s the impulse with which we express. It expresses the impulse. It is also, of course, the musical elements of poetry composition—cadence, pause, silence, stress, enjambment, meter, measure, beat, rhyme, and so on.

A FEW NOTES REGARDING OUR APPROACH

The membrane between science and art is of course, for us, extremely permeable. Empirical knowledge and contemplative practice go hand in hand. Concepts are experiential. Experiment increases devotion. Data awakens as it de-conditions. Case-studies expand wonder.

There's no substitute for being in the dark. There is no knowing what comes from darkness without being in the dark and having what comes from darkness come. Dark. Staying in the dark. (As with all somatic practices, it's so easy to not actually go through them, to 'think' them through instead.)

The Darkroom will primarily be dedicated to meditative darkroom practice. It will also be used in combination with very specific sound inputs (brainwave, intonation, phoneme, harmonics) and light and color pulsations. Through the use of evoked activity (bio-responses to prosodic stimuli) and the monitoring and interviewing of willing users, we will establish an evidence-based approach for a combinatorial artscience that can be applied aesthetically or therapeutically. Sessions in the darkroom will thus also serve as clinical studies and trials.

Outside practitioners will be consulted as part of the design and development stage of both the building and its programming. They will also be invited to operate the darkroom according to their own needs.

Through collaboration with other researchers, the work will become a distributed effort, with the darkroom as an extension of the research and resources of other practitioners. Reciprocally, we will extend our darkroom studies into other labs and apparatuses. This makes sense particularly with regards to 'testing.' The device-level in the darkroom will obviously be very limited (mapping magnetic fields produced by electrical currents in the brain, for example, is unthinkably expensive—the cost of a magnetoencephalogram machine is more than \$2 million).

We intend to make appreciable contributions to the sciences we're about to engage (or at least rigorous statements defining our prosodic research in relation to these disciplines). This initiative is, in effect, a next genre of interrelation, unfolding fields within fields in the new non-proprietary era of Open Science wherein critical contributions may be made by the uninitiated and attentive.

REDEFINING PROSODY IN RELATION TO SPATIAL COMPUTATION APPLIED TO DARKROOM DESIGN

Prosody is composition of vibration.

Prosody is the rapport between co-arising forms that allows them to co-arise.

Prosody couples force (formative energy) and phenomena—it couples intent and substantiation. Forms form according to prosody, as pattern, cadence, tonal morphogenic pressure, etc.

The Prosodic Body is *passage*—the interrelational means through which we transition, cross, transfer, transpose, morph and share our experiences. In this way, prosody is a platform that supports us throughout change.

“The arising of things and their liberation are not successive but simultaneous.”¹

Prosody is not the simultaneity itself (as this can't be helped), but the priming of the conditions for the freeing up.

In relation to darkroom practice, prosody is the expression of luminosity. It's not the luminosity itself, but all things finding expression from luminosity as source. Prosody is an immediate answer to the 'binding problem' (why do things hold together?) in terms of rhythm, pause, tone, vibe, listening, pronunciation, projection, intent, tempo, repetition, pulse, timbre and so on.

We speak just as we compute: so that the incommunicable may become part of that which we communicate. How can we encode this conundrum in exploratory spatial processes? Perhaps we can proceed like a complex system—building up from simple rules until an animate form arises and its behavior, beyond us, like life, can no longer be explained, neither computationally nor poetically. (Perhaps the only system greater-than-us to have ever been fully, materially described is the Sanskrit language, as delineated by the sage-linguist Panini in his *Ashtadhyayi*.)

In relation to computation in particular, prosody may also most usefully be described as encompassing all of semiotics: pragmatics (intention of the speaker), semantics, syntax (formalism used to represent the language) and the nature of the signal itself.

WHICH EXISTING SCIENCES TO DIRECTLY INVOLVE IN PROSODIC TRIALS?

Psychoneuroimmunoendocrinology

Often, meditation-oriented practices are analyzed only neurologically. Our emphasis is on elucidation of the entire body. A merely cognitive approach is too limiting and would give us little to build on (the biochemistry of darkness, for example, is largely glandular and hormonal, and acoustic energy influences not only the ear but connective tissue, ganglia, bone and cell membranes and cytoplasm). Absolute darkness shuts down the major cortical centers of the brain and activates the pineal, hypothalamus and pituitary glands (referred to in Taoist practice as the 'crystal palace') as emotional states are enhanced and the dream state manifests as conscious awareness. Enhanced melatonin production quiets the mind. Tryptophan-derived serotonin and DMT increase one's sense of elan as one enters a parasympathetic state. Peptides and the Hypothalamus-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis are as crucial to psychological states as neural transmission. Among the diverse biosciences, psychoneuroimmunoendocrinology [PNIE] at least makes a gesture toward our integrity and multifactorial etiology. PNIE will be essential for us in establishing the correspondences between prosody and our endogenous pharmacy.

Psychoacoustics

The darkroom will be set up to record and produce sound. Users will be introduced to a range of stimuli: brainwave patterns, binaural beats, compositions based on naad, rhythms for entraining and regulating body-wide (not only neural) systems (such as cardiorespiratory synchronization and neurohormonal secretions). We'll work with terms such as bodywave, auditory driving, Biological Sympathetic Oscillation, and frequency-following. We'll use the neural-network model of the brain to establish a broader premise and practice of psychoneuroimmunoendoacoustics.

Contemplative Sciences and Concentration Practices

How are we aware? What tells us that the mind is not the brain? The two are correlated, not equivalent, though we don't understand the nature of the correlation. Oddly and obviously enough, we aren't reducible to physical description.

For thousands of years contemplative traditions have conducted an empirical, incredibly sophisticated, exacting inquiry into the nature of mind and its potential to either cause or relieve suffering.

Extremely helpful terms from Buddhist phenomenology include *skanda* (the insubstantial aggregates we grasp at), *samatha* (calm abiding) and *vipassana* (insight meditation).

In Kashmir Shaivism, matter is an epiphenomenon of consciousness. Of particular relevance to darkroom practice are Shaivic terms such as *spanda* (pulsing consciousness, creative word), *sphuratta* (throbbing radiance) and *turiya* (the medium in which our dreams and waking states arise and subside).

An indispensable term from Dzogchen, *rigpa*, is the dissolving of the dualistic—experienced as intrinsic awareness, openness as the nature of all phenomenal existence, luminosity of the basis, spontaneously present knowledge, uncontrived presence, and/or the unity of clarity and emptiness.

Taoism maintains an utterly detailed and pragmatic inner alchemy, as well as offering forth *Wu Chi*.

Because we are about to, literally, build prosody, we are committed to opening the correspondences between contemplative science and architecture. How can the totality of the design-decisions of an architected space support a concentration practice that would remove the conditioning factors of craving, confusion, incoherence, competition and clinging to life? Can our architectural knowledge be as vast as we are, or is it (once the bottom lines are met) only material, aesthetic, perfunctory or, at best, ecological?

Because *everything* is at stake when we transform material into art and architecture, we only undermine our works by neglecting the great discernments of our introspective traditions.

Photobiology as Color Apothecary

As part of the combinatorial sessions (intermixtures of tone, beat, pause, phoneme, word, and so on), the Anechoic Naad Darkroom will be set up to modify color (using Roscolux gels) and explore the influences of the electromagnetic energy of different colors on the same neuroendocrinological system undergoing subtilization by sound, silence, concentration and darkness.

We will at once be testing the reliability of the performance of photobiology (as color science is a perpetually suspect, fledgling field, after all), starting not with Ghadiali's *Spectro Chromometry Encyclopaedia*, or even the treatises of Avicenna—our likely starting point will be the 5-element theory of the Bon tradition of Tibet. Although light is, after nutrition, the most important environmental input in regulating physiological function, we still don't understand how the electromagnetic energy of color interacts with the pituitary and pineal glands and the hypothalamus. Certainly we can do better than painting bridges blue to discourage their use by the suicidal (rumored to be effective), or supplementing fluorescent classroom lighting with ultraviolet lamps, or painting the locker rooms of visiting football teams 'passive pink' in an effort to debilitate an opponent.

Evolutionary Linguistics (Expanding the Hypothesis Space of Language Composition)

Is language inborn or do we pick it up along the way? If there's one thing we know for sure, it's neither one nor the other. It's not one at the exclusion of the other. (Do we in fact know this?) Can it be as forcefully argued that nativism and empiricism are 'one' (isn't 'nurture' part of 'nature')?

Innatism holds that a newborn is not a blank slate but comes equipped with a biological structure dedicated to language—a language faculty or instinct; a hardwired common grammar; a syntaxed brain/mind; a language organ or genetic apriori knowledge. Under innatism, language development is too richly complex to be derived from the environment. We're able to focus on what we're saying in real-time because the flow of words is effortless (we scarcely think about how speech is happening as it happens). Though we're responsible for what we say, we can hardly claim responsibility for the *ability* to speak.

On the other hand, empiricism holds that language is learned through sensory experience, as convention, reinforcement, social interaction and trial and error.

Prosody poses the same basic question to both innatism and empiricism. What is the least reductive account of the mind (with the behavior of neurons and synapses as perhaps the most reductive explanation of the higher-level phenomena of language and consciousness)?

The basis of the mind is its concentration upon itself coupled with prosodic interaction and expression as the process behind the arising of phenomena. (I offer this hopefully nonreductive simplification as a working definition of mind, for the moment, as befits this context.)

On one level, the Anechoic Naad Darkroom will be a space of the simulated emergence of language, with a special concentration on speech impulse. Language arises in mind. Perhaps it arises in the enteric mind. We're connected to its source. Perhaps it can be said that we are its source. There are practices of mind that approach the mind as source. Source of the mind or source of language? Prosody oversees the point of initiation of words. The idea of language as divine gift (as high innatism, as muse-speech, as logos) generally falls outside of serious scientific discussion. On the other hand, contemplative sciences (as referenced above) are rigorously empirical (even as they open introspection and first person experience) and have become investigative tools within neuroscience, cognition, psychology, medicine and many other disciplines. Likewise, we will bring concentration practices to the darkroom and to the emergence of language. Poets will also practice in the darkroom. Broadly speaking, poetry is the originating of language. Poets tend language physiologically, emotionally and mentally, and by doing so, become the raw data and observable phenomena of evolutionary linguistics. Evolution is not a matter of mere neologism. Or is it? Every poetic tradition has had its proper understanding of the interdependent arising of words and world. This data might easily be overlooked by linguistic science—just as a philosopher of mind might dismiss meditation, perhaps without ever having meditated. (The hand of science and the hand of art cutting each other off. Partial truths are their own disproof.)

As such, the Anechoic Naad Darkroom will be framed as an embodied case study in Evolutionary Linguistics.

At this point, we're placing the emergence of language and the development of spatial language in a co-evolutionary relationship as potential design criteria for the Prosody Building, as well.

Naad Science

We're approaching naad (as defined above) as a science that has already integrated many of the disciplines necessary for the full functioning of the darkroom.

NEW SCIENCES PROPOSED BY THE PROSODIC BODY IN RELATION TO THE DARKROOM WORK

First Person Plural Science

When the computationalist doctrine (in the words of Francisco Varela) “failed to account even for the most elementary coping with the world: walking, perceiving objects in a natural setting, imagination,”² cognitive science admitted subjectivity and first person experience as integral to phenomenological examination. This post-objective ethos has produced across-the-board benefits: some doctors now consider the experience of the patient and their interactions with the patient as part of the healing experience; an archeologist can't factually understand an artifact without as deep a dig into the intimate life of the user; and physicists include observation as part of the observed. These are all instances of first person singular science. Does this first person ethos come as good news for all sciences and for society as a whole? What about social science, game theory or ordinary politics and economics in which self-interest is already carrying the day? It's not too early to weigh the consequences of the first-person singular front moving our way from the cognitivist base. How will first person singular science interact with the pedagogical apparatus of market fundamentalism, unbridled self-interest, failing sociality, rampant privatization, dismantling of social protections and the near pathological disdain for public values?

As an isolated phenomenon, the new doctrine of subjectivity—of first-person pursuit—might only serve to reinforce the culture of solipsism. Certainly without a commensurate inquiry into the limitations of autopoiesis and

discrete being, first person singular science (and the cult of individual freedom) are considerably compromised.

The Prosodic Body proposes *First Person Plural Science*—an enactive approach to shared, consequential being. It proposes the development of a panoply of ‘skillful means’ for opening one discipline to another and exposing interconnectivity as real.

Consciousness is explicable neither as a private phenomenal construct nor as a higher-order metarepresentation. First Person Plural Science views consciousness as an interactive, extremely neuroplastic event open to and dependent upon sociocultural influence. ‘We’ are the key to a spontaneously organizing, embodied and broadly shared prosperity.

Prosodopsychoneuroimmunoendocrinology (PPNIE)

PPNIE seeks an applied understanding of the direct correspondences between prosodic stimuli and biochemical and bioelectromagnetic transformations. Methods for establishing such correspondences will be described below.

Open Science

Just as first-person accounts are already an integral part of scientific phenomena, proprietary, copyrighted, and trademarked materials constantly expand our common store of knowledge. With plurality soon to be added to scientific fact (individuality and our indivisibility), information will be less proprietary to specialists, big commerce and academies. Disciplines will have a less restrictive sense of method and contribution. Open Science is also a countervailing force with regard to power concentration, partiality and paucity of means. We’re of course proposing prosody, as presented in this document (as intermediary for myriad disciplines, and as an immateriality/materialization intermediary) as an active instance of Open Science.

INSTRUMENTATION, TRIALS, EXPERIMENTS AND THE PROSODOGRAM

The main purpose of the Anechoic Naad Darkroom will be the assembling of the *Prosodogram*: a diagnostic record that will be developed from qualitative and quantitative testing of the effects of tone, silence, beat, frequency, color, darkness, timbre, and other prosodic phenomena on bioprocesses (muscle tension, blood pressure, melatonin production, respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, pulse, limbic kindling, immunoglobulin, serotonin, magnetic fields, circadian rhythms, etc.).

The Prosodogram will work with personalized prosody profiles and the implementation of our combinatory-stimuli approach. It will, furthermore, interface with results from diverse symptomatological/diagnostic methods to become a tool suitable for use in clinical settings. A Prosodogram software will simultaneously be developed to link prosody, biomarker, case histories and desired outcome.

Obviously the questions of portability, affordability, feasibility, pertinence and noninvasiveness of measuring devices and methods must be taken into consideration.

Teaming up with institutions and labs will be rigorously pursued. We'll pursue new types of testing (as well as new signals and biomarkers to test for)—entrainment tests with mobile computers, behavioral feedback, an intrinsic awareness assay, phonic-photonics, citizen science (e.g., if 5,000 people undergo the same vowel sound, harmonic frequency or color wavelength over a set period of time, what evidence might be gleaned from the exposure?—perhaps the *seti@home* project or the protein-folding, distributed computing project *Foldit* could serve as models).

We'll also draw on interviews, make use of various existing paper and pencil tests like the Phenomenology of Consciousness Inventory [PCI] and POMS assessment [Profile of Mood States], as well as developing our own questionnaires. We'll adapt existing devices to prosodic inquiry (such as spectrograms, mobile brainwave measurement applications and mobile devices that measure other bodily functions (particularly endocrinological activity). We will also develop our own devices and systems.

What are the meaningful biomarkers for darkroom practice and can they be recorded or directed in real-time by devices within our technological and financial reach?

Are there vital signs we've yet to detect? If suffering and disease come from dissonance in tissue and interrelationship, how can the dissonance be remedied by prosody (by breathing, by thoughtform, by tone, by phonic focus) with full assistance from its prosodic building?

These studies can, in turn, be used to determine how architecture can assist the body in regulating itself, far beyond the hedonic requirements of convenience and comfort.

THE DARKROOM COULD ALSO BE CALLED THE BREATH BUILDING

Can a building assist breathing? If so, would it be by means of its materiality, its lighting, its ventilation system, sense of proportion, proprioceptivity, its transitioning from one space to another or the care with which it was designed and built? It would do so through its attention to prosody. Each emotion and each awareness is a specific breathing pattern. Because prosody is the creation of breathing patterns, it can be used to correct breathing disorders (it is not imprecise to approach hypertension, asthma or anger as breathing disorders).

To give one example: RSA (respiratory sinus arrhythmia, also known as cardiorespiratory synchronization) is the condition in which the heart beats more forcefully on the inhalation cycle (as it is about to send the newly oxygenated blood throughout the body) than during exhalation when the heart may allow itself to rest and recover in preparation for the next great surge. This heart-lung coordination is our most efficient, most replenishing breathing pattern. Although this pattern is our birthright, due to decreased physical activity, the onset of stress and accumulated environmental insults, it is generally lost by the time we're adolescents. So, more specifically, the Darkroom will be the birthright building, the RSA building, a place for recovering our optimal breathing rhythms.

A distributed computing system is essentially a way of breathing together.

THE PROSODY PLATFORM

By ‘platform’ we mean a place, both virtual and built, where workers from prosody-related fields can gather and co-develop the common area of prosody while furthering their proper interests. It’s a call and an accommodation—a distributed participatory program for peer contribution, exchange and operation (and is essentially amorphous otherwise).

How can the Prosody Platform be built into an architecture that includes the darkroom, stairs, corridor and possibly a roof observatory?

This project has a nested effect: the database is built into its computer architecture and the computer is built into its space (the platform/entryway), while the entryway is of course integral to the immediate architecture (the Anechoic Naad Darkroom) which is part of the eventual Prosody Building, itself none other than the embodied, enactive, full-scale and fully extended expression of the peer-created data system. That’s the overall picture.

The Prosody Platform proposition is as follows: everyone determining the nature of a field, the nature of which is its determination by everyone (prosody is most explicitly our expressivity, our interrelation and our intentionality). We’ve scarcely begun to extend the expressive, organic (vocal and gestural) terms of prosody to our computations. Building a brain or a robot that avoids an obstacle in its path is just a baby step.

Consider this approach a cross-amateurism, as we each become nonspecialists one step outside our confines. Call it *eachothersourcing*. You are results I can’t obtain for myself, as I am the same for you, in return. We help each other out.

Is it possible to organize the amorphous area of prosody? Can we even call it an ‘area’? Does it congeal like blood or jello; does it have flavors or tenors or timbres or discernible learning objects; does it move in veins; does it resonate sympathetically within itself? Are these metaphors intrinsic to its formation or extraneous and misleading? Will it be the first lifeform whose formation has been constrained purely by its own dictates? Must it be a model of consciousness, a simulation or instance of life-origination, merely a complex adaptation, a stigmery (at least) or just an absolutely messy mass-collaboration? The only possible structure of the entirety of prosody (the being it is none other than) is its constant creation, modification and destruction at the ‘hands’ of its autonomous human and computer agents (in

addition to the conceivably related works of those researchers uninvolved and working unrelatedly). Can we design every bit of that? Even a cloud is too formal.

On a more practical level, a few parameters can be assumed: the Prosody Platform must be open access (though probably not open content as we're not trying to efface work or erase faces, but create interrelationship); it must allow editing and interlinking; it must be archival as well as current (hosting works in progress, open research, and interactive real-time and asynchronous information exchange); with at least a modicum of logarithmic sorting and storing. (Obviously the digital platform will have to develop concurrently with the design and operation of the darkroom.)

The Prosodic Body requires not only a level of engagement that works toward social good, it also asks that its practices generate evolutionary strategies, computations and artwork-based algorithms that might influence our germline in ways that enhance not only our chances for survival but our shot at living in peace and widespread prosperity (before the failure to do so eliminates all chances for living any condition whatsoever).

FURTHER REFLECTIONS FOR GENERATING PROSODIC FORMS

Is it possible to turn prosodic modes and tropes into computation and design criteria? Can prosodic terms be developed into algorithms beyond the rule-based writing of poems? Can explicitly prosodic forms be generated? Are there prosody-based genetic algorithms that would allow us to contribute solution suggestions to the evolutionary process? How do embodiment and consciousness-practices interface with knowledge that can be sought with software? Can we interface nonphenomenological states (innate awareness, selflessness, spirit, nonduality) and spatial modeling?

The Prosodic Body, as a research area, is cross-platform in the sense that it seeks out, invites, hosts, deciphers, absorbs and serves other fields, whether they are cross-disciplinary or not. Prosody is, by definition, that which makes an initial gesture toward others. By learning other idioms, prosody allows others to keep and further the deep specificities of their proper areas of research. Vocabularies are most useful to prosody when they remain unadulterated. Native, idiomatic and unaffected languages have the best chance of cross-fecundizing prosody. On the other hand, prosody writes

versions of itself that can be supported by other systems (versions that could actually become the language of the other systems). It runs counter to what is commonly, comically referred to as “disciplinary separation anxiety” (i.e., not only sticking to one’s own field but convincing oneself such adherence is the only way meaningful work can be done). Plain speech, for prosody, is allowing others to speak freely. Prosody does not have its own language (it’s what languages are made of). Prosody is fluency. Prosody is responding-from-flow. It places us in the luminous. All its routes are sub-routines of luminous flow.

Prosody is perhaps *the* Open Science. It’s unbounded and non-self-reinforcing. It’s plenary—not another assembly of a field with relevance only to itself as it desperately lunges outward in an effort to avoid inbreeding depression. (How shall the very design of a building enact the communicability of Open Science? How can it countervail aggressive privatization and asociality and still be a recognizable entity?)

To borrow a computational metaphor: prosody is a platform that accepts all softwares for its own enrichment as it enables them to interface with each other. For prosody there is only one language (all language) and computation (as demonstrated by its vocabulary of script, code, program, etc.) is but one aspect of total communicability.

In turn, prosody as a knowledge or application can run in any system. Prosody is itself both platform-polyglottal and platform-naïve. As language, gesture, expression and intention, prosody can create its own urgency in any situation.

When prosodically crossing over, is there an advanced functionality to gain or give; a particularly salutary service or simplicity to arrive at?

Prosody is *already* native to other disciplines (otherwise the claim of its cross-platform ability would be trite, a mere exercise or stretch). To note the nearest example: prosody greatly informs poetry and music. It also bears on any language area (phonology, phonemics, semiotics, etc.); any field involved in patterning or pulsation (psychoacoustics, cymatics, astrophysics, particle physics); any field involved in the indivisibility of subjectivity, observation and the observed; as well as any expressivity (arts, oratory, publicity). Prosody is the inseparability of spheres. It’s a standard other systems may run on and by doing so become standards in their own right for other systems (technically

referred to as ‘cross-hosting’). It allows each participant to continue to speak her or his own tongue. It’s a glossarial panglotism. Above all, it’s an intense and extensively resonant listening.

The outcome of prosody as algorithm is materialization-as-interchange—not a ‘poem’ or individualized poetics or ‘voice’ consistent with the privatization of absolutely everything under the sun (such solipsism at the exclusion of other species and forms and even at the exclusion of other subjectivities, is about as promising as our continued use of fossil fuel). The outcome of prosody as algorithm is the realization of our interwovenness.

If correspondences and overlapping forms of analysis and generative morphologies can be discovered for prosody and computation, both fields will be given a vantage point from which to access further fields and take advantage of advances independent of each other. They will enable each other to distribute themselves broadly and beneficially.

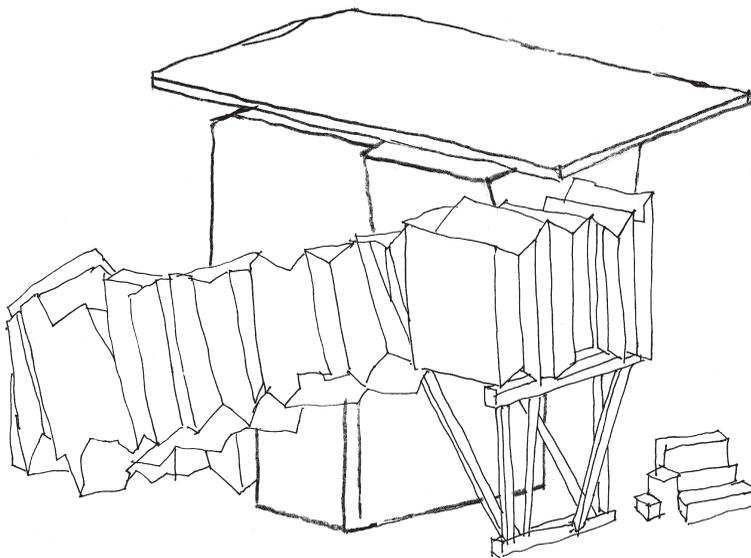
The experiences that will be undergone in the darkroom (the empirical observations, the qualitative and quantitative accounts and the input from various disciplines) will amount to a de facto database for the Prosodic Body. How this database will organize itself (whether alphabetically, by field, content clump, author, overlapping terms, chronologically, topically) is yet to be designed and will certainly require a mix of software agents and hands-on triage. Ordering of material is itself an integral part of the content and exploration of prosody (not just an extraneous, after-the-fact operation). The Prosodic Body is not an already well-defined, circumscribed area. It’s always an initial instancing of itself, with the instantaneous recognition of itself as absolutely integral to what it is. In this way, prosody as a spontaneous, self-organizing discipline can serve as a model for other areas and scales, whether molecular, societal, cosmic or economic. By definition, the Prosodic Body can’t merely be another decrepit website, personal blog or incommodious academy, nor can it be the matter of another lone author having sat down to write a book, or editor having put together a collection of the essays of many authors. It’s not a reading room, library or rigidly monolithic building. This open nature (whose core is everywhere) necessarily informs the development of the Prosody Building. It may be a building scattered in one place or concentrated across several sites. It will be guided by disparate intentions; agile, adaptive, able to straddle; eccentric, activist and service-oriented; a place with each of its parts in immediate contact with each other; with its users reacting regeneratively, minute by minute, to any potential outmodedness, impending obsolescence or senescence.

Prosodic design can't be the product of a purely object-oriented programming language—just as a poem is not the filling out of a pre-determined beat pattern, but a process of the unpredictable interplay of compositional elements, contents, connotations and emotions.

Prosody can also be made available as an application of proactive, predictive attributes, capable of carrying out tasks for other practices. As an open source, prosody can, reciprocally, incorporate functions and components from disciplines far from its phonic basis.

With its relevance ever-renewing and broadly distributed across many agents, contributors, trials and device-types, the Prosody Platform becomes an instance of commoning—of public utility. It's a wide area network, with promptly published, semi-proprietary feeds (rather like the human genome public consortium, before the privateering took over). Of course a software platform with mobile or democratic applications doesn't, in itself, give rise to a new social space. It's not simply a matter of how it's applied or what it's applied to. The Prosody Platform, from its inception, must coextensively, as part of its own development, manifest the world it calls for. If not, it can only be a retrofit tool for status quo, appropriated even before it leaves the 'drawing board.'

Scaling up: the architecture of the Prosody Building will conform to the human (and material) behaviors and the formative prosodic terms that bring the building to life.



NEW SPACE: COMPUTATION IN RELATION TO DARKROOM PRACTICE

What kind of space would allow someone to stabilize while absorbed in the absolutely unfamiliar, as the senses fall away, as ‘the world’ falls away? What stabilizes? What stabilizes when the body no longer serves as place marker? What stabilizes what? What design approach comes to mind for a space defined as (and whose function is to produce) emptiness? How conceive an uncontrived space? How represent a nonrepresentational room?

Prosody is emergency technology called upon when faced with confusion and loss of intrinsic awareness—when there is no situation whatsoever, we fall back on (fall into) the intermediary role of prosody.

How can the material context of the darkroom facilitate an unsituated awareness (an awareness that depends on nothing, that can and must happen anywhere, no matter what)? If there is an awareness that opens because there is no context other than darkness and emptiness (and if this is the objective of the darkroom), this non-context must somehow be built, and its materiality must be extraordinarily specific as it can’t be made of any parts of the world we habitually see, build with and ignore in order to focus and function ordinarily. It’s not a black box. In fact it deprives us of very little (when compared with the inner immensity it uniquely provides). It’s an abundance.

Prosody is our situatedness in shift. Mind’s empirical approach to itself.

When procedurally moving into the dark, what can computation detect? What can it detect when all our distributed activities and selves fall away? Of course things like blood pressure and electrolyte balance can be monitored—but can we measure the dissolution of the elements we’re made of, the dying down of stimuli, the charge of the interior imaging that spontaneously arises when the pinoline kicks in? Can we make an exact science out of endogenous (i.e., not ingested) compounds intentionally synthesized within? Does the pineal gland have a nonchemical life of its own? Do certain hormones go unnamed simply because we haven’t observed the coincidences that produce them? How much of our distress can’t be remedied simply because prosodic science has not yet been delineated and broadly applied?

Prosody underpins us within. Inwardness itself is our underpinning.

In any event, prosody is an endogenous body technology interfacing with exogenous formative forces as unity of consciousness. Add the science of epigenetics (the beneficial determining of gene expression by exterior influences) and we have an entire prosodic practice.

Subjectivity is situatedness in the shattered.

The darkroom doesn't set up a hedonic stability and well-being. It's not a relaxation pad. Concomitantly (with regard to dissonance and distress) it settles on source not symptom. It doesn't separate practice from experiment or empirical mind from illumination. Knowledge is not a distraction. Chemicals correspond with contemplation—both vibrate and inform.

The only organic model I'm offering to spatial computation for sensing its way in the dark is an *empty heart*. The heart functions optimally when it is empty. When it is unobstructed it serves the body most vitally, as the rest of the body nourishes the heart in return. The heart's sovereignty is self-emptiness. "A space where there can be nothing. Never anything."³ Where foot can't be set.

What does computation have to do with infinite light (what does architecture have to do with its own non-location)? How does 'shape' relate to the inconceivable when its relevance depends on the inconceivable? (Perhaps any stupa or astrophysicist could offer an answer.) Can thoughtform be *surfaced* (built, clad) as it arises and continues to morph?

Can computing detect the swollenness, the very emptiness that wells up in things—the *shunyata*, the void—or are we, as prosodists, averse to the rich and exacting vocabulary of contemplative traditions as though they threaten us or encroach on our territory?

Draw a form for emptiness (in that all form is empty, doubly challenging). Emptiness is certainly not a huge, hollow, nondescript space. It is rather a shape that *accommodates* emptiness. Emptiness is emptiness at any scale. How shall we place computation and emptiness in a reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationship?

Given that the darkroom is a totipotent space (like a stem cell, like the nondifferentiation we arise from and return to), how might a version-prolific program approach the designing of such a space-of-all-possible-combinations? How design potential itself? How develop a non-developmental

space? The Anechoic Naad Darkroom must be generative of far more possibilities than its actualization could ever exhaust. In its very materiality and with each limitation, the darkroom space must multiply the functions of prosody (giving off myriad patterns and possibilities for others to use in formulating their own expressions). The Prosodic Body produces artworks by opening onto uncreated and uncontrived space. (This is what the darkroom is.) Is there a parallel procedure in computation?

How can we even think about the spatializing of our uncontrived state? The darkroom will be radically original simply by following out its constraints. At the same time, as commonality, it will be entirely unecentric (universal). Picture a building that doesn't grasp after an identity. Then, don't picture it. A building that has no experience of objectivity (or subjectivity for that matter) would not be designed in an object-oriented or form-driven fashion. In fact it runs counter to driving at anything at all. What might non-representational spatial computing produce?

INTERRELATING SPATIAL COMPUTATION AND PROSODY

As a fundamental operational structure that includes hardware components, architecture is 'like' computer architecture. But beyond the obvious analogy, how can the element of space accommodate the prosodic body?

The purpose of the Anechoic Naad Darkroom is to provide a nonrepresentational (actually an *unrepresentable*) space. How might the full implication of this requirement test the typically representational aim of computational architecture?

What does prosody have to do with a polygon, or points and lines and surfaces? Prosody, i.e., pattern, repetition, pagination, punctuation, line-length, enjambment and (perhaps more promisingly) parataxis, heterophony, epenthesis, catalexis, polyptoton, notarikon, isochrony, symploce, technopaegnia, lay, melisma, stichic, lojong, morpheme, nazama, nada-brahman, clause, stressed-pause, stress clash, parallelism, epiphora, flourish, or anadiplosis, to name but a few under-utilized prosodic terms. It's like asking what prosody has to do with quantity. It has count-coherence whether one proceeds by counting specific features or not. Prosody and computation are both complexly adaptive, aggregative, layered, apophenic, ruled and run by a sense of connectivity across a surface, whether that of the page or

computer graphic on its screen. (As I've already indicated, computation and prosody share 'language'.)

Can a building be contoured by creating iso-curves from a specific tone, timbre or waveform? Can we form a phonoarchitectural phenotypology or a vocomorphoarchitectology? For example, can an architectural volume accord with a brainwave pattern: better yet, could it follow the combined waveforms of the epsilon (sub 0.5Hz) and lambda (as high as 200Hz) states associated with deepest insight and greatest synthesis of sensory information, respectively? Would this architectural instance of form-following-waveform indeed facilitate the anticipated mental state (thereby taking architectural acoustics into a new set of possibilities)? If so, 0.5 + 200Hz could be a consummate formal constraint for the Naad Darkroom.

Can an architectural volume be generated from a 3D surface spectrograph of a vocal cadence? Would a venerated lama agree to chant Om Mani Padme Hum to provide the resonant frequency of the darkroom space? How does intention inscribe waveform?

Can a building be brought forth from the acoustic signatures of the phonemes (just as the Indic cosmos is generated from the sound signatures of the 50 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet—the so-called phonemic emanation, or phonic cosmogenesis), from the speech sounds we produce, just as our bodies have formed around these sounds in order that we produce them, an architecture adhering to prosodic imperatives?

Perhaps the darkroom should simulate the reverberative mid-brain area of the hypothalamus, pituitary and pineal glands, and the nasal sinuses enclosed in their bony cavities.

What volume would be conducive to the secretion of melatonin by the pineal gland as the thalamus shuts down our sensory receptors (as this is indeed what darkness does)? Can pure darkness be chemically doubled by architecture? Is the brain really designed to block and inhibit awareness? Chemically, consciousness comes from an inhibitory process (harmine, harmaline and pinoline inhibiting the enzymatic actions of monomine oxidase and tryptamine N-methyltransferase, allowing for the synthesis of 5-MeO-DMT and DMT). The Anechoic Naad Darkroom would make the brain work *otherwise*. (The alleged frequency of the process of heightened consciousness is 8Hz—could this be the resonant frequency of the building?)

To undergo, chemically, the process of dying—design that! If we know how we're dying we know how to die—we know how to die *better*, or, more fully, stably.

Additionally, prosodic terms (such as those listed above) could be used as behaviors in an agent-based design process, with the prosodic term 'in effect' carrying out its comportment in coordination with other agents, building up to an intercommunicative whole.

How might an architecturally prosodic parameter behave as it brings forth the Prosody Building's intended presence in the world? The Anechoic Naad Darkroom can't be a representation of itself. Nor can it be the computational process that generates it. If it's alive, like prosody, it's greater than its process. It would re-coordinate itself with each act, not re-experience what it knows about itself. That's its first rule: inseparability from *all it's not*—as it is especially not a body, as all bodies are terminal from the instant mitosis takes off.

Finally, how might a fabrication process be integral to a form that follows prosody?

MISCELLANEOUS DESIGN, MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION PARAMETERS

Further, more detailed structural considerations await and hinge upon computer-generated prosody-forms.

As a possible, corresponding construction method: joineries of a complexity that can only be drawn by computer and only cut by hand—an interdependent mix of extremes of computation and manual skill.

Overall, there is a material preference for mineral. (Think *cave up in the air*).

The Prosody Platform Entryway will house an attendant, the database and a small archive/display area (approximately 90 square feet). This is the control center. The Entryway leads to the origami corridor that accesses the darkroom. (Wheelchair access is mandatory, as the corridor rises the length of the darkroom.) The main purpose of the corridor is to ease the transition from light to darkness and darkness to light. The end of the corridor (the area

just before the door to the darkroom) opens out into a small food-preparation area, sink and toilet (waterless composting system), while remaining spatially separate from the darkroom.

The darkroom itself is a raised structure allowing a 12-foot clearance at street level. It will be partially, integrally, supported by the entryway/corridor/stair structures. It will have a capacity of 15 people (roughly 250 square feet). It will be made of two identical end-to-end trapezoids with one trapezoid inverted in relation to the other (emphasizing weight carried upward and weight conducted downward). The exterior walls of the darkroom will be clad with 5-inch diameter pine posts positioned vertically.

A floor grating will be built over the top of anechoic floor panels. (Alternatively, shopmade earth tiles may be placed over the grid system spanning the floor.)

To date, two panels for the darkroom's interior walls have been researched: the hemi-anechoic Supersoft Compact Panel made by Eckel Industries and Eckel's EMW Perforated Metallic Wedge. This hemi-anechoic panel would avoid the conventional, extremely deep and daunting wedge shape. The metal wedge, on the other hand, is protective and prevents contact with polyurethane foam.

The ventilation system will be designed to maintain uniform temperature and twelve air changes per hour.

The electric service (from solar setup) will arrive by pipe sleeves that pass through the envelope.

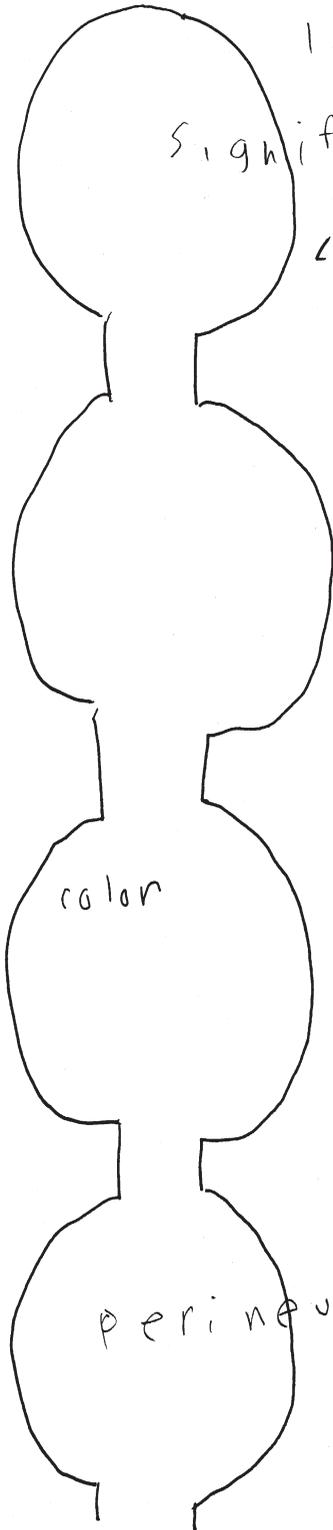
Rain runoff from the roof will be a prominent detail (e.g., an exaggerated gutter or overhang).

A roof that rolls back to open the interior space to full sun or night sky?

Notes

- 1) Tulku Thondup, *Peaceful Death, Joyful Rebirth: A Tibetan Buddhist Guidebook* (Boston: Shambhala, 2005) 161.
- 2) Francisco Varela, letter to the Cosmos Web Forum, <http://www.enolagaia.com/UMUArchive/Varela.html>.
- 3) Daria Faïn, in conversation.

dies out



significant

limitation terminal

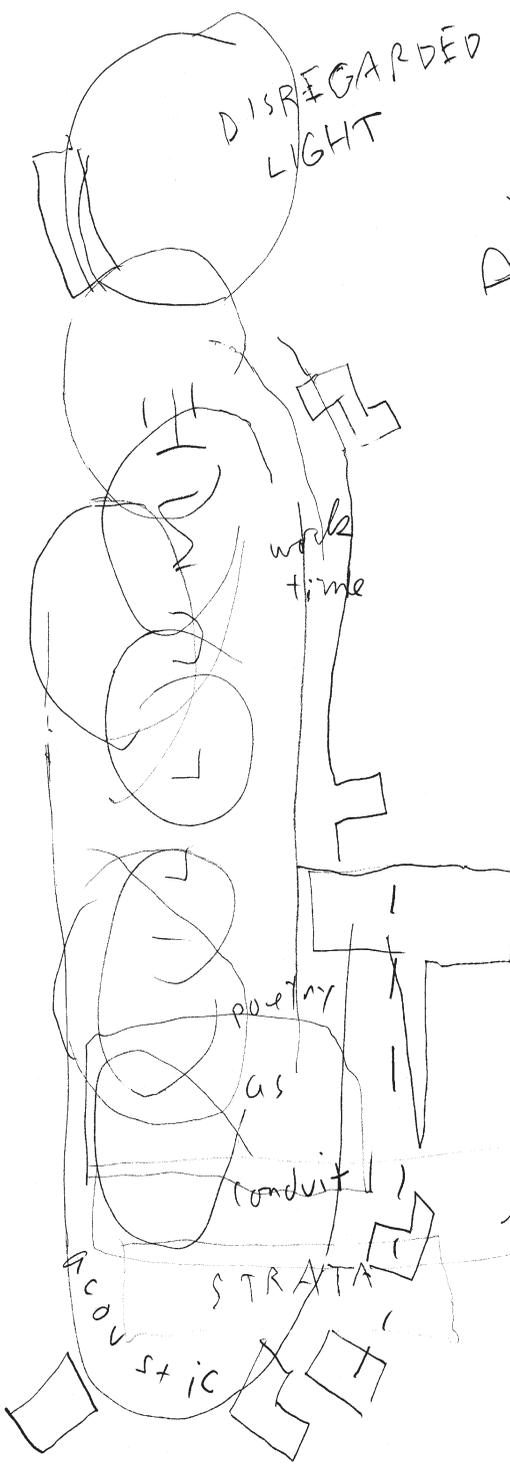
least AWARE

more energetic

differentiation

totip

**THE SORE,
OVERSENSITIVE,
INSECURE,
SUPPLE
SCIENCES**



DISREGARDED LIGHT

work time

poetry

as

conduit

acoustic STRATA

BY BODY



non-normal

other texts

of
one to
correspondence

GEOLOGIC
energy for change

SITE

NARD

ROBERT KOCIK'S THERAPEUTICS OF RELATION

ELENI STECOPOULOS

All of Robert Kocik's art is a form of treatment. A poet, artist, and builder, he works both with the matter of language and the aesthetic elements of the built environment to redress disabling structures of thought and society. As a poet (although he rejects that label in favor of "prosodist"), Kocik uses prosody to release the potency of language; prosody for him means "the aesthetics of poetry, the full influence of its sonic properties"¹—extra-semantic elements such as stress, phoneme, and breath. As a builder, he designs spaces that perform a kind of healthcare through architecture. At the deepest level, Kocik seeks to treat the relations that make the world, and his work radically reconfigures the ways in which art might be therapeutic.

Ultimately, Kocik wants to open up how we relate to language and how bodies relate to environments—because these relations affect and effect each other. As a writer, his style is performative and playful, full of apparent neologisms such as "autoxensis" and "wondercidal." Yet Kocik is less innovative than engaged in a precise retuning of what we can hear in a discourse, reactivating roots and relationships that have been suppressed, unrecognized, ignored. What seem like neologisms are actually restorations.

Through changing our language, he seeks to open up potentials that are unused. This aspect of his work is perhaps most effective when he takes on the antagonistic relations that produce the immune system, a foundational ideology of biomedicine. A number of scholars have shown how the concept of biological immunity was derived from political rhetoric, then applied to organic processes and mystified as natural.² In *Illness as Metaphor*, Susan Sontag famously critiqued the militaristic approach to disease which persists today (i.e., the war on cancer). Ed Cohen has written about the production of biological immunity as self-defense, and asks “what might have happened if ‘community’ had achieved the same biological status that immunity did,” if Metchnikoff, the zoologist who first articulated immunity in observations of cellular behavior, had focused on the dynamics of co-existence instead of the individual organism and “the dynamics of aggression and response.”³

Kocik’s intervention into the discourses of immunity is wholly different from those of other theorists, because he believes the effects of language are not merely ideological and not only injurious. For Kocik, the material, somatic, and positive effects of language remain largely unexplored—not only in the field of medicine, but by poets as well. In articulating bodies’ interaction with the foreign, Kocik is not interested in attempting to banish metaphor; he knows that such Platonism would be impossible. More importantly, doing away with metaphor would be undesirable, a forfeiture of the transformative work poetry can do. Kocik uses metaphor excessively, baroquely, reinventing medical and scientific terminology as therapeutic performance. And he goes further than merely substituting one metaphor for another. Kocik draws on his extensive knowledge of both Western and Eastern medicine to elaborate another system, one that doesn’t fight invading pathogens, but welcomes them. Whereas “immunity” originally meant exemption, Kocik’s “susceptive system” receives the pathogen “convivially,” losing exemption from the foreign agent in order to benefit from it. “Susceptive” recuperates “susceptible” into “receptive,” a positive quality—agency rather than victimhood, a “proactive, free [and] gratuitous” response rather than a forced or defensive one. Kocik wants to break open the antagonism of self vs. other which pervades Western epistemology. To do so, one has to enter fully, susceptively, into metaphor, where everything is other. (As cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have shown, our metaphors come from embodied experience and our embodiment actually takes place through metaphor.⁴) Kocik asserts that poets have to “usurp medical terminology,” because that terminology is limiting and damaging *and* because poetic language has limited itself, a limitation which plays a fundamental role in the dead language of discourses

such as medicine. Poets have the potential—and the obligation—to treat the language which produces our bodies, because “poetry portends physiology.” “The Susceptive System” is an act of treatment itself, a disarming of the antagonism in our language and thus in our bodies.

What other responses are possible? What if we responded by embracing the toxin? By welcoming the other? Can bodies—can we—respond differently? Can we get out of the economy of opposition and “belligerence”? For Kocik, these actually keep us from response—locking us into reaction, identification and target. He finds the same constriction problematic in the more obviously political work poets do when they proclaim themselves “against war.” Simply, poets can’t end or prevent war by using the language of war. Opposing war, studying war, only perpetuates the endless war our very language is locked in. Just as a focus on disease and pathology means Western medicine learns little about true health. Attempting to treat antagonism with more antagonism only leads to further harm. And because all “language is a property of poetry,” poetry is complicit with the rhetoric of warmongers; it is poets who have failed to prevent war.

Fundamentally, Kocik wants to shift poets’ attention to reconceiving and expanding their role in society. All the ways that poets do poetry, all the ways poets imagine what they might do in the world, are limiting. Kocik’s message to poets is clear: we ourselves are responsible for our irrelevancy. For not having imagined—acted—outside of reaction, rebellion, alterity, outsider status, difference. It’s the job of the poet neither to voice consensus nor to resist it—to side neither with orthodoxy nor heterodoxy, but to get out of doctrine, to “get out of [. . .] *genre*,” get out of ‘sides’ altogether. Kocik asks, “How might poets, with their open identities, remain pertinent between breakaway utopia and turning into their own antithesis?”⁵ Rather than being word workers, literary artists, or voices of the people, poets have the potential to be the ones who can utterly change the relations that structure society, change the very terms of our being. The “nonspecialist” status of poets is the key to reinventing what they can do—what their true work is, where their true efficacy might lie. This resonates with what Artaud writes in *The Theater and its Double*: “. . . poetry is anarchic insofar as it calls into question all relationships between objects and all relationships between forms and their meanings. It is also anarchic insofar as its appearance is the consequence of a disorder that brings us closer to chaos.”⁶ It’s that anarchic potential Kocik seeks to provoke poets into actually engaging—on the ground, in service, in body/space/action.

Kocik wishes to break down the divide between activism and poetry. Specifically, his work explores the relationship between formal innovation and social transformation. In his life, Kocik is a caregiver. Like the therapist or caregiver in the Asklepon, the ancient temple which is a primary source for his *Prosody Building*, he attends and serves. A major way in which he serves is by identifying “missing civic services” and by addressing lack of access to services and to spaces. His work in building and design (for example, his proposal to renovate the Field Center) and his participation in a forum on the ways experimental poets might dialogue with disability culture have led him to engage the social model of disability and attendant questions of access and environment. Kocik supports troubling the abstraction of terms like “aesthetics” and “form,” too common among poets, with the somatic forms and experiments that disabled people create and conduct daily—the ingenuity that writer, performance artist, and dancer Neil Marcus describes when he writes that “disability is an art.”

Kocik raises the question of whether the social model of disability might be usefully extended to the ways others may lack access, the way many are “disabled” by society. Kocik seems to suggest that no one has full access; we all have varying levels of access, we are all dis-abled to some degree by society, by the state. And he is provocative in asking whether identifying as able-bodied might be what is truly limiting; that is, disabling. Ableism keeps people from exploring the art of disability. Disability exposes the public secret that there is no normality and no standard body—only asymmetry, dis-ease, re-balance. Through encounters with disability culture, the “able” experience the beautiful particularity of every body, the particularity of their own bodies, the way all bodies are in some way disabled or will become disabled.

Of course, there is a danger in extending the term “disabled” to all who lack access, and ultimately, to all bodies. Some readers will see Kocik’s provocation as nothing more than appropriation—of a distinct cultural identity, experience of inequity, and lack of access on the ground—to extract metaphors which might be available to all, good for writing theory but removed from life. Kocik understands this danger, however, even as he courts it: “The predicament of poetics engaged with disability theory: how to not cause further harm.”⁷ While he may elide the terms of disablement and disability, and seems less interested in disability as a cultural identity, he is really after the radical recuperation of all that is isolated and rejected as vulnerable, pathologized, and disempowered by society—the recuperation of these as its true foundation.

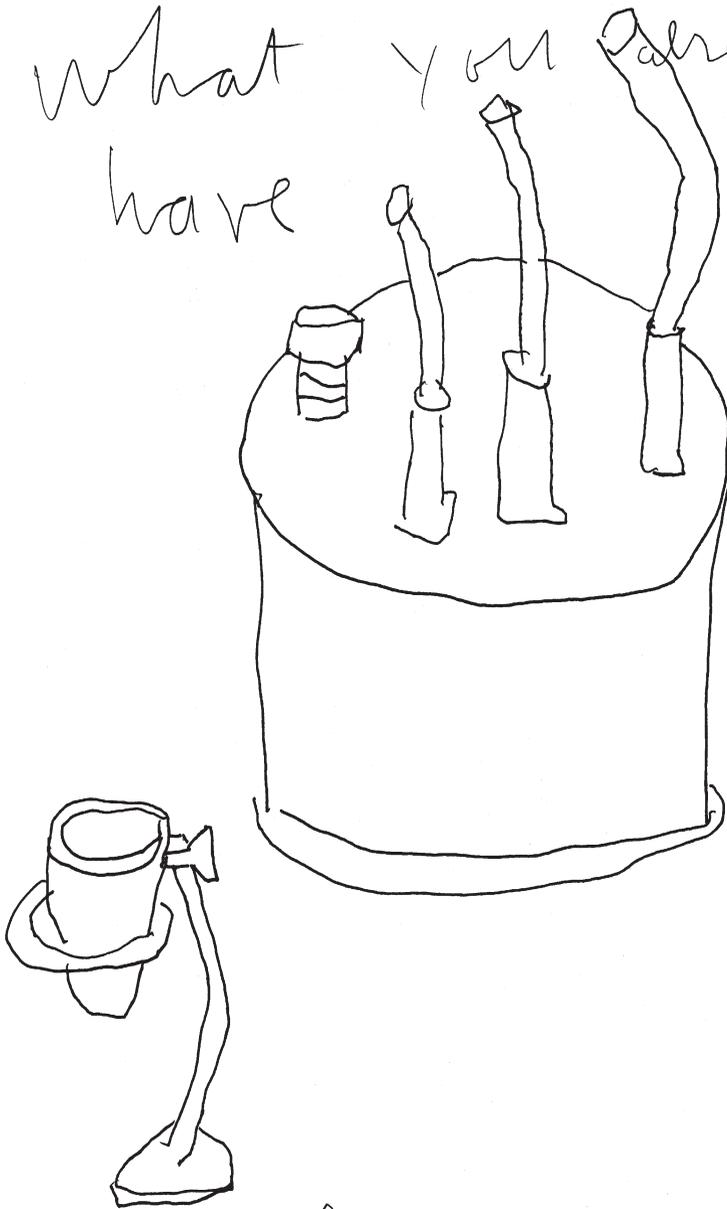
Just as the susceptible system invites us to remake vulnerability and sensitivity into positive attributes of embodiment, rather than liabilities which allegedly deprive us of our bodies, the vulnerable and sensitive are for Kocik the sites where true re-cognition of our relations—our humanity—can take place.

Notes

- 1) Drawn from an earlier iteration of “Without Suffering Succession.”
- 2) See, for example, Emily Martin, *Flexible Bodies: The Role of Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), and Ed Cohen, *A Body Worth Defending: Immunity, Biopolitics, and the Apotheosis of the Modern Body* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).
- 3) Ed Cohen, *A Body Worth Defending: Immunity, Biopolitics, and the Apotheosis of the Modern Body* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009) 281.
- 4) See George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 2009).
- 5) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice 2013) 84.
- 6) Antonin Artaud, *Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag, tr. Helen Weaver (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 236.
- 7) Drawn from an earlier iteration of “Without Suffering Succession.”

DON'T DONATE

what you already
have



organically

THE SUSCEPTIVE SYSTEM (A SEMI-POPULAR OVERVIEW)

[A self-published pamphlet handed out at poetry readings, talks and exhibitions in 1998.]

I'd like to introduce the *Susceptive System*. I'll begin by pointing out the means of expression at hand—this very writing—which is susceptively written and could not have authored its material if written other than susceptively. Susceptive writing is not simply open to association; it is, furthermore, open to the associating of unrelated materials as nonetheless missing, sorely needed life-sustaining links. Susceptive associations are known as 'non-affinitive bonds'—extending forms and bodies in ways that weren't perceptible prior to recognition of the non-affinitive juncture. Once such juncturing is recognized, the body, or at least certain areas or aspects of the body, then pass into susceptive suspense.

I can't remember how or why I began to think susceptively. (Perhaps each discovery creates its own prehistory.) Even the fact that the susceptive system developed in apposition to an already existing system came as an afterthought—once the susceptive was fully articulated. Which is to say, a

case can be made for the primordality of the susceptible relative to any existing system. How else explain its specificity spun from nowhere? The apposite system to which I'm referring is the immune system (and the immune system might indeed be the susceptible's offspring or shadow). At the outset, I'll simply state that this writing, by prefiguring the susceptible system, marks the bringing to light of the interdependence of the well established and fully functioning immune system and the fledgling or figmental susceptible system. The two systems were, and remain, coeval.

At first glance, the immune and susceptible systems appear to be contraries—as though one could be defined as the antithesis of the other. Upon further consideration, the two systems become more complementary. The functioning of one does not supplant, usurp or override the functioning of the other. They may even serve the same intruder, the same antigen. One without the other is an incomplete approach to 'organism' (incomplete, as well, as an approach to politics, economics and many other macro-behaviors such as immigration, terrorism, activism, globalization).

In time it will be shown that the two systems are neither complementary nor contrary; they are, in fact, *unrelated*. My initial reference to the immune system is more or less a convenience. *Immune* simply offers a known map of the body in its response to 'outsiders.'

§

Fundamentally, *immune* means 'exempt from serving'—not ready to be called upon. If we are indeed talking about the body being violated by an injurious agent, then to be rendered 'nonsusceptible' to that influence is, obviously, beneficial. Under immunity it's understood that the body is exempted from the injurious agent. The agent is destroyed or turned away; therefore, we understand that it is the body that has been exempted. But in an immune reaction how can we determine which party has in fact been exempted? The agent is also spared its fate (if only further life) in the host. The agent is thus rendered exempt from its duty as well—from whatever harm it would have carried out. It is exempted from its program. Privileged enough to be eliminated (shall we say)? Destroying the intruder de-obliges it from doing what it meant to do. Both the foreign body and the host are then non-liaible. The foreign body is discharged from duty as the host is spared the deleterious effect. A joint exemption. One is spared from undergoing the other.

Thus, to *undergo* is the opposite of ‘immune.’ To be susceptible is to undergo. But what exactly is undergone in a susceptible reaction? To be susceptible is not simply a matter of being open to invasion. Susceptible signifies a certain quality of reception.

§

A sanctuary keeps violators out. The susceptible is a refuge established or maintained by allowing the outside to enter. It’s an impregnability due to propitious porosity. When the foreign body enters the host and the result is overwhelmingly positive, a susceptible response has indeed been carried out—the host un-exempting the guest from its (perhaps unsuspecting) role.

§

Above all, the immune system is *defensive* and *reactive*. It doesn’t act offensively unless provoked. (Though it can go berserk and attack its host—in a kind of misguided pre-emptive strike against the body to which it belongs.) It doesn’t function like a standing army, or even a reserve army that draws upon units serving other functions. It is a made-to-order, customized, on-the-spot defense force able to recognize and respond to 10,000 trillion different invader-types—like inventoriless commerce open to infinite specification. Or is it? Are all those antibodies idly milling about waiting for a specific immune reaction to be triggered? Do antibodies preexist or are they called up from our nowhere’s mettle (from our mettle’s nowhere or know-how)? Or, as in immunization, once the particular antibody has been called upon, is the conjuring mechanism even readier? Perhaps the antibody simply does not sink so far back into the blastocyst soup? Is this what we’d call memory—knowing matter in our marrow?

Of course the biochemical facts behind such questions are rather well established. But what good is accomplished by going over the existing facts without first sensing a less reductive actuality? Why limit with fact the faculties we bring to the wonders of actual biochemistry? Which facts are not yet facts? Facts pursue and establish themselves according to which intimations?

§

What actually takes place when the immune system recognizes a substance as 'foreign'? The response is *appropriate*, if not perfect or inevitable. One force does not fit all occasions. The particular agent sent to meet the invader is not determined until the invader appears. The agent is the invader's exact, lethal counterpart. The foreign body delivers its own death sentence. Is there a death-wish involved? Or is the immune response blind microbiology playing itself out like macro-biological dog-eat-dog?

Is it confusing to psychologize microbiology though the biology in question is 'us'—even though many of our behaviors may be no more than extensions of our chemical dynamics?

§

As distinct from a defensive, belligerent response, the susceptible is welcoming and convivial. It is a jovial response. While memory cells involved in immunization hold a lifelong, instantly lethal grudge against a pathogen, susceptible cells function like an anti-vaccination—extending a lifelong invitation and overpowering welcome to outsiders.

(Unfortunately, the biochemistry of the anti-vaccination that would increase susceptibility to such jovial reaction is yet almost entirely unexplored.)

<u>IMMUNE SYSTEM</u>	<u>SUSCEPTIVE SYSTEM</u>
defensive.....	welcoming
eliminates.....	integrates
environment as hostile.....	environment as hospitable
exempt from service.....	dutiful
judgmental.....	jovial
wondercidal.....	wonder inciting
merest.....	most
logical.....	inexplicable
parses.....	plethorizes
self.....	Self

WHAT TRIGGERS WHAT

The susceptible reaction is triggered by otherwise injurious agents—agents that would have caused considerable damage under other circumstances (in the absence of susceptibility). What, precisely, are these agents? If not a virus, bacteria, fungi, protozoa or parasitic worm, which entity or event triggers the susceptible response? Could the pathway possibly be nonphysical in origin? Could anything be (or how could anything not be) nonphysical in origin? Perhaps the trigger is initially immaterial or psychosomatic. It might be more precise to say that the material of the susceptible is the *suggestive*, the susceptible, subtle or incredibly *supple*.

Suggestion initiates and patterns matter.

§

Admittedly the mechanism of the susceptible response is not well understood—often displaying apparently contradictory behaviors. At this stage in its disclosure, its mechanism can only be surmised.

Certain behavioral or perceptual patterns have been postulated as susceptible triggers. Habitual behavior itself may trigger a susceptible response. There is evidence suggesting that life chronically perceived as overfamiliar eventually produces a disorienting and positive shock that literally re-characterizes tissue. Depressed states, dread, doom and gloom inadvertently extend an invitation to their contraries. Simply stated, dispassion, disinterest and distraction generate an indiscriminate opening—a floodgate of despair—opportune for reckless adventure and novel delights, signaling the susceptible's rescue-reflex. In response to this signal the susceptible system either ushers in foreign proteins and polysaccharides or re-characterizes self-tissue as unfamiliar—as 'notself'. A shift takes place. Wondercidal behavior is overthrown as one becomes aware that one is no longer made of only oneself (or that there is nothing the self is made of). This extending of the inalienable can be referred to *ipseitipsy*.

On the other hand, sensationalism is also a potential susceptible system trigger. Constant change and over-stimulation can lead to the same ennui produced by relentlessly habitual patterns. When bombardment by diverse and entertaining data reaches a certain intensity, the sheer magnitude of

the onslaught depresses reactivity as the recipient becomes passive and indifferent. Increasing the dose of datum only augments the brutality, while any decrease is ineffective because sentience has already been shattered by the siege. Desensitization due to incessant stimulus is a type of nuance-deficiency disorder (*spectaculitis*, *stimulasis* or perhaps *bashonitis*—a condition in which stillness is chronically inflamed, and even the delicate writing of a poem can be a deeply disturbing distraction).

§

I would also like to stress the non-pathological basis of the susceptible system. Susceptive response occurs when the body is not under any imminent threat, when no crime has been committed, when there is no injurious agent pressing at the gate. Susceptive response is therefore nonreactionary—a proactive, free action.

Essentially, what makes the susceptible the susceptible—what makes the susceptible so susceptible—is its ability to respond, under normal conditions, with a degree of urgency typically activated only under threat of disorder, disease and death, exclusively for the overall benefit of the organism.

Unnecessary and salubrious. A radical boon that would never have been realized had circumstances been ripe for it or turned rotten. The susceptible is a comic disorder that does not tend to leave well-enough alone. When more couldn't be asked for—when things are better than they can get and there is no discerning how an even greater happiness could ever be brought about—the susceptible pathway opens, adding well-being to surfeit. An inexplicable and unwarrantable windfall. An advantageous anomaly. In this regard, to be *unsuspecting* is the susceptible's only pre-condition.

§

Complacency (the susceptible's antigen or antagonist) respects no privilege. It could strike anywhere—in any demographic designation, any age group or personality type.

Everything could be all right anywhere at all at any hour of the day. One is never exempt from the salutary effects of the susceptible.

The susceptible trigger is a free-ranging, 24/7, societal turn-coat pathogen, responding above all and with dire and ludicrous life or death expedience to the *de-activated, inert body*—an angel of life stopping at any complacency-stained threshold to roll out an overwhelming welcome for itself. It takes care of things for you, readies you to receive your guests. A surprise party for those who're throwing the party. You could never have guessed the occasion would be greater occasion (than the occasion) for even greater gratification.

§

There is an aspect of abduction involved. Enclosing oneself in a world entirely under one's own control (the morbidity of a little-self in a fixed identity) sets the stage for being overtaken by the susceptible. Under the susceptible response, the abductee is freed from the morbidity of deteriorative time. This abduction is less a matter of coercion and more an occasion for surrendering to one's wishes—abducted to one's own *amor fati*. In this way the susceptible system could also be called the 'presumptive system' (with a perfect predictive record).

While the immune system swallows and breaks down the outsider for elimination from the body, the susceptible system unengulfs and makes whole through participation in a larger body.

The *suscepto-sufficiency response* disarms intruders, showering them with gifts and subjecting them to the garnering of untold goods. *Plethorized*. Swallowed up, swaddled by, sufficiency of Self. That art thou, I am that, that I am, am that I am or just plain am—become literal, with all levels of meaning present and apparent within and without.

§

Finally the Susceptive System can be thought of as a favorable infection—a safe, saving de-inoculation working at the microbial level against experience of one's environment as hostile, as outer, as other. Working against imperviousness—against any distancing or disdain of the outside. (Isn't our skin 90% perforation? Wasn't it a last minute add-on, applied in a state of panic once it became obvious that everything would go terribly wrong from the word go, once single-cellularity itself contained the self-knowledge of self-

interest?) The de-inoculation working against experience of the environment as hostile (even as we legitimately live in fear) also extends to the macro-level of sense perception. Susceptively, one opens to the radical wonder of each interaction throughout all 5 kingdoms of life on earth as well as ‘inanimate’ matter. *Euanimasm*: sensitization to all levels interchange. *Panporosity*: a further, perhaps furthest, property of skin—opening us to every type of communion. The breaking down, peaceably and violently, of the membrane that makes each one of us ‘one.’ The eating of the environment that makes the environment whole. The being eaten by the environment that makes the one eaten whole. Helplessly volitional.

§

Aging and dying were never more than side effects of a more vital, adaptive process. The instant any one of us would begin to live forever the asteroid would hit (in any event)—or the earthquake or pipe-wrench.

Susceptivity is in dialogue, not with the immune system as ‘antagonist,’ but positively with fundamental adaptive processes—the original decisions made by ‘life’ at the germ or seed level—through which we accumulate the damages known as Sidetrack-of-Dying, as we attend the sideshow called Elongation-of-Longevity.

AUTOSUSCEPTIVE RESPONSE

If the immune system can misfire, attacking self-tissue misperceived as foreign, it can also assault foreign tissue that could beneficially be made into self-tissue—and not only in the more obvious case of a body rejecting a transplanted organ. Why wouldn’t immunity’s well-known ability to misidentify also apply to the intentions and missions of well-meaning outsiders?

§

A favorable reaction to self-foreignization is called *autoxenisis*.

§

In physiology textbooks, immunological misfirings are often referred to as 'derangements.' *Derangement* is, of course, Arthur Rimbaud's term for the positive operation performed on the senses for the purpose of self-dissolution. Under which circumstances would preservation of the self no longer be desirable? Biochemically, could self preservation ever be detrimental? To what degree are we willing to be made over? Into what? Is biology our barrier? Do we not fear even minor physiological modification, fight all signs of aging, dread irreversible change? Vedānta, for example, speaks of destroying the self for the sake of Self. How might this difference be represented physiologically (if not by aging per se, or as radiance)? How would Self-conservation behave *biochemically*? Does detachment from the body unblock its functioning?

How does giving-up-one's-life-to-gain-life inform organism and organization of society? To suicide into or out of fitness? Does giving-up-one's-life-to-gain-life inform *individual* and *kind* differently (or indifferently)? Dying is the most effective way kind could find for conserving germline. Quite literally, giving-up-one's-life-to-gain-life refers to generation and reproduction. Poetically giving-up-one's-life-to-gain-life refers to regeneration and production. By means of its depth of meaning and materiality, artwork confers on individual the qualities of kind (i.e., 'ongoingness')—at which point the poetic becomes the literal—the physically continuous.

§

While the autoimmune reaction is deleterious, autosusceptivity is beneficent. Under an autosusceptive reaction, self-tissue is perceived as foreign. It is rendered foreign. There is a strong phenomenological basis for the autosusceptive response (i.e., we are highly susceptible to responding susceptively). What could possibly be more foreign than oneself (after all)? Heraclitus has written that we are most estranged from that with which we are most familiar. That's what self is good for—*unit of shock*. Stuff of wonder. Survivable sublimity. An effector mechanism by means of which only the fully realized self is acceptable. Home as all. Stabilized throughout tumult.

At the biochemical level, the autosusceptive system is a disruption in self-tolerance that results in revitalization of damaged and morbid tissue.

(A ‘socially’ susceptible reaction is intolerant of inhospitable behavior. Functioning far beyond the ability to be nonreactive to emergent self-antigens, the susceptible fosters highly convivial interactions.)

Susceptive research linking cellular and social levels is in its infant stage.

The body’s ability to beneficially keep itself from destroying its own otherness is, on the other hand, both primordial and in full bloom (see *endosymbiosis*, *embryology*, *human microbiome*, *mutualism*, *empathic brain plasticity*, etc.).

TERMS

Because this writing attempts to fall within the scientific method (however ‘sore’ its science), ultimately the susceptible mechanism must be physiologically described (just as a susceptible experience, to actually exist, must manifest in and course through the body as sensation). As we can only suspect what is factual, it’s the susceptible itself that is delineating itself by means of our questions, drawing us to its disclosure. It comes across.

§

I’ll introduce some basic terminology suggestive of its corresponding physiology. My role is to crudely, carefully trace the initial outline of the Susceptive System as it comes into view while refusing to fill in detail where there is no vision—like an amateur sighting that stands as the only firsthand evidence—to secure and circumscribe a site on which others might place their more sophisticated probes.

Poetry prefigures physiology. The concrete is plastic.

§

Let the foreign substance that triggers the susceptible response be called a *comer* or *guest*. Its counterpart in the immune system is, of course, the antigen.

Let the reactive agent or receptor be called the *convivialist*. The convivialist forms a bond with the comers (binds, wines and dines) and then secretes *facilocytes* that join the reception in order to optimize the mirth of each guest. The convivialist's immunological counterpart is the opposite-acting antibody whose role is the targeting and destruction of foreign bodies (a *xenoktonian*—murderer of strangers).

The convivialist issues forth from *mettle*, not marrow. (The evocative is a more effective and less reductive mode than depiction.) Marrow is a specific physical location. Mettle is a physiological draw upon all of one's being, including and crossing into the behavioral and psychosomatic areas mentioned above.

The susceptible response is also referred to as the *hospicious response*. This response is an overwhelming welcome, capable of transforming an injurious agent or intruder into an essential guest by means of an excessive and disarming receptivity and provisioning (beyond one's most hopeful expectations).

The overall susceptible process is referred to as *xenisis* (entertainment of a guest).

Let the autosusceptive response (foreignization of self-tissue) be known as *intraxenopoiesis*.

(*Foreign* refers not only to the dissimilar or out-of-place; it refers to the inappropriate as well. The susceptible is involved in appropriating the inappropriate, propitiously—picking up the out-of-place in order to place-at-ease and make-at-home.)

Wondercidal: working at the killing of wonder within.

Not 'opportunistic infection' but *fortunate infection*.

Cells issuing from mettle are known as *naïve cells*. Naïve cells lend themselves to all functions without becoming identified with the mechanism of any particular function. They're capable of de-differentiation. They are imperishable cells that are nonetheless nonpathogenic (unlike cancer cells whose perpetuated proliferation undoes the host). Naïve cells are an immunity/apoptosis override—the first inkling of a post-adaptive, corporeal

everlasting life. The susceptible process thus re-renders somatic cells *pluripotent*.

Let's say 'roving marrow,' reaching everywhere, regeneratively.

§

The susceptible can't be localized. It lodges in intermediate areas—between apparently incongruous terms such as brain/mind, bound/boundless, time/atemporal, palpable/impalpable, perceptible/imperceptible, sign/symbol, vibration/vibe. Any immaterial impetus dependent on a physical substrate is mediated by susceptibility. It's the susceptible itself, as it opens space for its own operations, that distinguishes the organs, separates genres and genes, establishes opposites; allowing each to enter into relationship. It's the cohesion (the conviviality, communion and communing, the hanging together) of that which can be distinguished and differentiated.

As it applies its patterns and pressures according to the shifting needs of embodiment, the susceptible so intently specifies worlds-in-waiting that such worlds may come about.

The susceptible is the means by which we perceive the susceptible. It is part of the mechanism that allows experience to influence heredity.

§

The first susceptible organs will necessarily appear as extracorporeal—like artworks that have departed from their proper genres.

SOCIOSUSCEPTIVE SYSTEM

Was it necessary to extend Darwinism to 'social' Darwinism or was it merely undesirable? What are the dangers in defining life-potential reductively?

(What are the dangers for 'species' if its individuals let survival slacken?)

If we are merely an extension of our biochemistry, could this extension be carried out counter-reductively?

This is where the ‘nascent’ or ‘missing’ sciences set in—at the point of the ‘sore’ question—the inappropriate, the awkwardness of the probe. Human being as extension of its physiology stands as proof that the inverse is also the case.

Susceptivity states that “being betokens biology.” It’s the science of the understanding that *things work both ways*. As such, observation of socially susceptible phenomena can be considered direct insight into (and cause of) biochemical processes.

Consider our behavior as a model for biology—as a model for a wished-for, viable biology (constructive wishful thinking). Can we be so attuned and responsible with each breath and with each step we take?

For example, a terrorist attack is the most egregious violation of all. It doesn’t engage the defensive force of the enemy. It targets the innocent and maximizes horror. The immune response to terrorism is justified counter-attack. The susceptible response, on the other hand, is radically conscientious (if not compunctious)—either no one is to blame or complete responsibility for an incident is impartially assumed. Has America done nothing to merit a terrorist attack? Have we taken it upon ourselves to atone for our atrocities, or will we require reminder after reminder? Is a powerful nation powerful enough to consider the ways in which it may have invited violence? This is susceptible power (to consider adversity as a friend). Susceptivity is the furthest degree of empathy. Enemies are turned into insight. Guides are the flipside of demons. Grievances are justly heard. Granted, a susceptible response is not always the appropriate response. On the other hand, though it is rare that a susceptible response is not the most humane response to conflict, it’s rarely invoked.

Bodies need containment so bounty can belong to all. This is the basis of the susceptible bond. Any breakdown in this broad sense of bounty as belonging to everyone will produce violence.

§

Personal wealth is the byproduct of the ability of one’s conscience to selectively block out the broad sense of bounty in order to benefit oneself—the classic biology of extinction: the *susceptosuppressive* system.

The susceptible era of post-survival will comprehensively link biochemical and social realities, but not as a deadly, downward spiraling into the reductive data typical of the purely and numbingly physical descriptions of the past era of 'Adaptation-To-Our-Least.'

§

Greater energy will be found in our relationship with the foreign (as self?). As the perfect stranger who sat at my kitchen table this morning, tasting argon oil for the first time (oil pressed from a fruit picked by goats climbing trees too thick with thorns for human hands to harvest) proclaimed: "Where there is diaspora, anytime there is diversity of peoples, we're incredibly beautiful to look at."

The rest-of-the-world (as if it could any longer exist as such) will get the convivialist message only as fast and in as profound a fashion as America itself first assimilates it: only we are everyone. The sum is each.

§

Let the missing word for *tumor* be 'homelessness.'

§

Let the missing word for *susceptive* be 'global-devolatilization.'

INKLINGS OF A PSYCHOSUSCEPTIVE SYSTEM

Is it dangerous to confuse organic and altruistic?

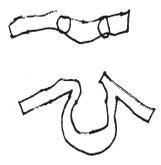
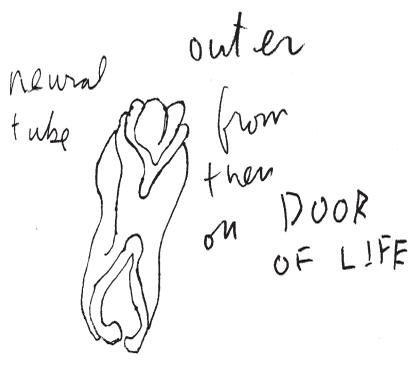
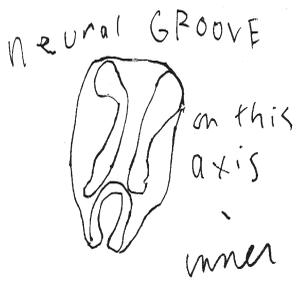
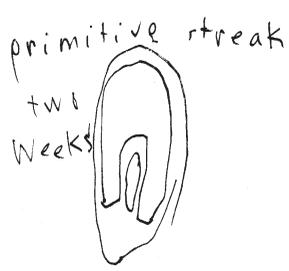
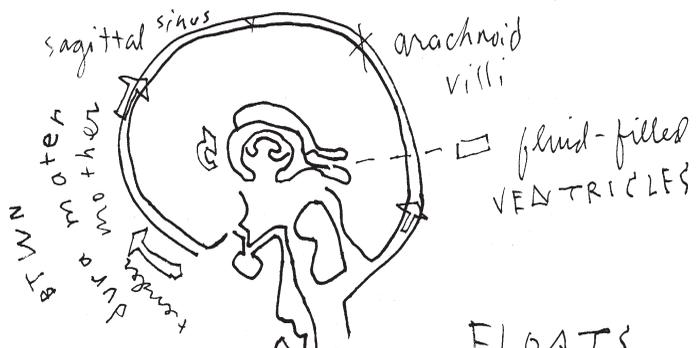
Spiritual traditions tend to be unequivocal in their treatment of self—get rid of it. On a cellular level, what could this possibly imply? We're already regrowing ourselves every so often. Should this become more terrifying?

This time around, the otherworld will gather scraps from the banquet of thisworld.

Has medical terminology been busy generating a less reductive body than poetry? Rematerialize in susceptible balance—not in the language of form but in the active terms of formation.

To host the kernel of that which we could never contain.

Naïve tissue as sublime, informing both invasive and self cells as they exchange who we are.



FLOATS

in CSF buoyancy

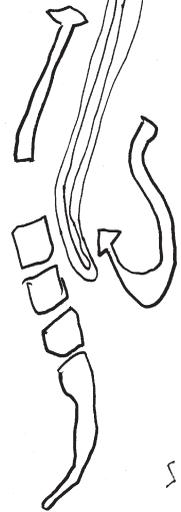
1400 gram brain

= 25 grams

turns over

3.7 x per day

(into venous system)



voice in the sense of 'guide'

sacrum

WITHOUT SUFFERING SUCCESSION

[This text was solicited in 2010 by Patrick Durgin for a proposed 'Post-Ableist' anthology. It was informed by recent exchanges with the San Francisco-based Nonsite Collective concerning the 'poetics of disablement,' and written as an attempt to address (or fathom) disability as a theoretical discipline.]

When you get off the E train at the World Trade Center/Church Street station you're greeted by a sign that states "Handicapped get back on the train, go back to 14th St. and take the bus." Relative to the absence of an elevator at the WTC stop, Bill Wheeler, director of planning for the MTA, when asked "What about the elderly and disabled, the people with luggage and strollers?" replied "We don't have a solution." It's as if frankness were a credible substitution for solution. In fact, wherever you happen to be in NYC and wherever you'd like to go, the likelihood of finding disability access at both entry and exit points is near zero.

There just isn't enough money. There isn't enough money? Too few would benefit to warrant the cost? The greatest benefit falling to the very few is, after all, the American way. (If equal benefit fell to the few they'd no longer

be the few.) We have just hastily put back together an economy with a wealth inequality that rivals the 1920's. Profit precedes humanity and fitness eschews fragility. If you offer people a handout, they'll just keep standing there with their hands out, and never constitute themselves as motivated, self-sufficient citizens. Right?

The macroeconomic analog of the able-bodied ideal is supply-side economics with its accent on tax-cutting, regulation eradication and disregard for the fortunes and misfortunes of others in the pursuit of one's material betterment.

As my friend and I were sitting at the bar of the El Quijote restaurant on 23rd Street, an elderly man was exiting from the rear of the crowded restaurant through a narrow corridor delimited by bar stools, on one side, and a decorative dining area partition on the other. He steadied himself with the help of an aluminum walker as his party formed a protective line before and behind him. His snail's pace was further exaggerated by the deafening noise, dim lighting and raucous weekend ambience. Even the leanest bodies were obliged to turn somewhat sideways in order to file through the narrow corridor made even narrower by winter coats draped over stools and the newly arrived customers jostling for standing room at the bar. Every few minutes the bartender would ask us if we'd like to order another drink. Even more often he'd roll his eyes and groan due to the obstructionism of the elderly man and his entourage.

Were we to build our society around this man, around our most vulnerable and venerable (beyond their initial alliterative attraction, perhaps these two terms form a nearly unexplored synonymy) as an interpersonal and architectural imperative—just as an economy that would prioritize raising the poor out of poverty would lift and balance our entire society (the middleclass hoax as plan for permanent wage slavery, at this point in the U.S. economic fiasco, should be generally obvious)—perhaps our lapsed humanity would begin to arouse. We are each this elderly man impossibly making his way across an inhospitable course. If we are not right now, we will soon be, or just were. He is not a minority; on the contrary, there is nobody he is not. Fragility is not a fringe phenomenon; it's our fundament; it bursts the boundaries between individual, group, and even 'species' identities. The way we end up (we are constantly ending up the way we end up)—helpless and alone, whether physically or mentally—levels us. It's inexorable. Perhaps the basis of disability as a socially constructed phenomenon is privatization of consciousness. Overcoming disability (is overcoming really what needs to be done, or is such transcendence indicative of the obstacles surrounding

disablement?) perhaps begins by sensing our subjectivities as inseparable. Relying on separable selves to solve socially constructed problems is like calling upon bankers to redress banking abuses.

I would like to extend the definition of disability (to where it is shared, native and, of course, enabled), without necessarily transforming or glorifying its condition; without defending disability as a positive identity or as the fulfillment of human identity in 'variation'; without plundering its riches in order to intellectually inform critical theory; without characterizing disability as some sort of extra-sensory privilege over compassionless and clueless 'normal' people.

Though I may be mistaken, I believe the tendency in disability studies is to liberate through recognition of difference and infinite uniqueness (Temple Grandin has said that she wouldn't trade the clarity of focus her autism allows her for any normalcy), and not through acknowledgement of commonality.

Is it possible to reflect on disability without doing further disabling? To a great extent disability is a product of a debilitating social/architectural environment. In such an environment, ability is also disabling: a limitation, a contraction, a habit based on aptitude or training, or a narrowing into identity—a recognizable, reimbursable, bona fide, self-vested and fit human being. Additionally, structuralism's reductivist model of language, established as the dominant mode for understanding reality (a seemingly separate matter that is in fact at the core of disability as enculturation and categorization), further hinders any attempt to define ourselves as whole. And more generally, any understanding in which embodiment and language are at odds is, in itself, disabling. Tyranny of anatomy is also disabling—the dominant medical model of disability as 'physical' (and patients as 'passive') is a disservice to other equally oppressive disablers such as mental disorder and mood disorder, and less clinically-recognized conditions such as isolation, poverty, usury, stress, pressure, torment, noise, nature deprivation, carelessness, distrust, duplicity, bullying, militarism, pure commercialism, terrorism or prejudice.

Just as physical disability becomes design criteria for a fully accessible built environment, vulnerability can stand as our greatest source of knowledge for fully revealed human being.

Ignorance is disability. What is ignorance? Is it not the epigenetic disabling agent that runs through the interdependence of what we are and what we make? Enlightened social constructions are based on states of enlightenment. Can a non-self-absorbed, extroverted suffering become the invincible voice of vulnerability?

My awareness of disability as a theoretical discipline—as something other than the lived conditions I constantly deal with as an architect, social servant, and poet—dates from the investigations begun in the summer of 2008 by the San Francisco-based Nonsite Collective under the heading *Poetics of Disablement*. I owe my entire education to the Nonsite Collective’s website postings by Bhanu Kapil, Amber DiPietra, Rob Halpern, Eleni Stecopoulos, Patrick Durgin and Thom Donovan. As indicated above, I’m not in a position to blend the emerging disabilities discourse with critical theory and cultural studies. I can, on the other hand, in direct response to the *Poetics of Disablement* discussion, contribute to the filling out of one area of the underdeveloped field of poetics (here I’m defining poetics as ‘all-of-making’) by relating disability to my various practices. As Patrick Durgin has written, “In other words, disability culture needs to historicize itself with a wider lens.”¹ I’m proposing ‘poetics’ as that lens. The notes that follow have been drawn from my *Poetics of Disablement* inputs and postings.

I can’t refine and redefine the issue of disability as an end in itself—just as Rob Halpern has cautioned against reiterating the limits of our bodies and our communality. When he reminds us (via Spinoza) that we still don’t even know what a body can do, this accords with my belief that ability is so extremely unexplored we scarcely have reference to it (as social or subjective bodies). This lack of reference is perhaps the very basis of disablement.

Resisting an undesirable condition only reinforces it. Either replace it with another reality or yield to negativity’s nature as complicit with the condition it resists. Placing the onus anywhere other than within myself (however fitting and effective it might be to do otherwise), locating the discontent outside myself, only incapacitates.

My commitment to disability is disarmingly simple. I’ve vowed to help where I can, how I can, if I can, and especially if I *can’t* (as the only way of overcoming being unable to do so).

All of my works deal with disability. There's no way around that. To make the matter of disability even more immensely and immediately poetic (i.e., constitutive of the real), I went to the Nonsite Collective's website and retraced the history of the disability discourse. By combining Amber DiPietra's statement,

How can we have a dialogue around disability and poetics, not just at the political or social level, but at a generative level—one that begets new experiments in writing? To live with or study disability is to be constantly questioning form and constantly working toward formal innovation—whether that is through accessible architecture or the far reaches of cyber humanity. How can this be translated to syntax and the raw stuff of poetry?²

with the statement of Eleni Stecopoulos,

Disability founds aesthetics—for all persons, not just those with disabilities. If we became conscious of that, perhaps we might start to see how all our conditions determine our forms [. . .]³

the demand placed upon poets becomes a pan-demand—a search for a way of working that removes the discrepancy between activism and formal poetry innovation (which is an age-old imperative) by means of embracing disability (a trope or tack entirely untried).

The tack with regard to what I do: I believe my work remains relevant to disability because all aspects of it are involved in extremes of accommodation (and the requisite grasp of the impeded condition under shift).

“Disability founds aesthetics.” I'm still dazed by the ramifications of Eleni's statement. I'm also approaching disability (and pathology in general) inversely—aesthetics founds disability. I've been working on a new field of research and practice called the *Prosodic Body*. The Prosodic Body is an awareness of (and working with) the aesthetic as it manifests us. (This focus indeed meets the needs of the pan-demand mentioned above.) Aesthetics and epigenetics (the interdependence of environment and gene-signaling) are synonymous. In this regard, prosody is not only a product of an era, it is also responsible for the shaping of its era. The absolute correlation between aesthetics and pathology (or, more positively, *prosperity*) holds for disability as well. As a discursive writer, each essay that I write (working through the hard, soft and sore sciences to open the supple) inevitably addresses disability studies.

Because I literally live and work with the disabled, diseased, and the dying, and have my own developmental deficits to boot, I don't feel that I'm carrying any translation or appropriation over to the literary domain. Even my design/build business is dedicated to the realization of 'missing civic services.' It's textual only to the extent it's contextual.

I think disability is shared because ability is so extremely unexplored that we're left without a reference. (The alien lifeform that will one day appear to unite all humanity is our own liberated human being!) Ability viewed as the 'norm' is certainly necrotic.

There's the norm and then there's the near side of the norm wherein artists and entrepreneurs shatter our shared conventions over and over again (essential conventions such as grammar, comfort, security, balance, harmony, and habitability) for the sake of formal innovation and its correlated social transformation. To the far side of the norm lies the underexplored frontier of radical facilitation. Like a sudden loss of resistance in the direction of one's movement (as an overpowering wind at one's back) this far-side facilitation can be as disequilibrating and debilitating as near-side intentional impeding. This far-side disablement sets up conditions in which exceptional capacities may be acquired by the disabled because disabled, while exceptional capacities may at once be acquired by the abled because they've been benignly blocked (kept from experiencing ability as norm). We cross into each other.

Should we speak of 'voluntary' as distinct from 'involuntary' disability? Are there currents of cross-envy running between the enabled and disabled?

I don't want to slight anyone's suffering. I can't work with the notion of degree or comparative magnitude, as all suffering is complete in itself. I'm simply focusing on impairment as shared—whether one is physically disabled, semi-abled, super-abled, anxiously disabled, intermittently disabled, artfully, amorously or merely materially disabled (too much stuff, too few resources); whether broken, set back, split up, slapped around, blocked, stymied, embarrassed, fundamentally afraid, afraid of something, afraid of that with which one fears, frantic, fragmented, frozen or forlorn.

If I weren't writing a poetry that reveals my former enabled condition as severe and unwitting impairment, I wouldn't bother jotting it down.

Realization of the full extent of our sensitivity to an atmosphere would be one sort of enablement (once it takes our breath away).

We live in an interaction between terminal and eternal. Any breakdown in this interacting is quite debilitating. As viewed from the cellular level, once we differentiate we develop, and once we develop we die. Differentiation that cuts us off from its initiating (from its source or issuing) is disabling, while differentiation continuous with initiation enables and regenerates. Disability is total identification with the terminal. To differentiate and develop while increasing one's connection and identification with the pure potential of impulse is the work of aesthetics—as distinct, for example, with our sense of sight perceiving only the slice of the available spectrum of light that highlights perishable being.

If we train ourselves to be limited, all about us will be limiting. The question for poetics: How can living with disability make us boundless?

Isn't consciousness rarely other than disabling? The Prosodic Body encompasses this conundrum and works toward consciousness as uncrippling.

Freedom of movement must one day turn into freedom from movement. This is one extreme of facilitation. "Not suffering any succession" is Aquinas' phrase for this freedom (as cited in Olivier Messiaen's *Traite de Rythme, de Couleur, et d'Ornithologie*⁴).

To be caught (I'd say particularly as a poet) with only terminal knowledges is extremely debilitating, right when it matters most, and especially whenever it *doesn't*. Prosody exists to break words' entrainment with the terminal.

If our bodies and our works are strictly experienced as epiphenomena of the temporal, living and working is unaesthetic and decrepit. What has been passing for the norm is the most devastating sort of ineptitude.

The Prosodic Body is all about extremes in accommodation. In the interest of full disclosure I'll admit that I'm an agent from the ableist world wherein I covertly work to destroy its limitations, rules, discriminations, disembodiments, and above all its deafness. From this precarious vantage point I'm able to discern several deadly disabilities:

1) *Fitness, Natural Selection, Business as the model for America—all add up to one big biocide.*

2) *Limited (impaired) hearing as the normative state.* I've come to understand all constructed disability as based on the inability to hear 'what' we are, in turn based on the inability to hear the reality of words. "When you have listened not to me but to the logos it is wise to agree that all things are one" (Heraclitus).⁵ Each speech act is cosmogenic. When we're going through major changes (like during dying), if a poet does not place a straw in our ear and incant crucial factual instruction, we won't know what's happening—won't be in a position to make what's happening happen. The door of the ear (all of one's being as the inherent hearing of what's happening) won't open.

3) *Poetics (surprisingly) is debilitating.* By this I mean *poetics* perceived as more predominant than *prosody*. I say this because *poetics* is exteroceptive—it is knowledge of the making of forms as functioning from without. It's objectification. It's this very grasp of the world as made to function from without that is poisoning our planet. This is called 'use-of-the-world.' Use, like profit, overrides all vulnerability. *Prosody*, on the other hand, is endogenous and invisible (like waveforms issuing from within, in touch with their inception). It's synonymous with the forces behind all form. I'll venture to say that consciousness is itself an emergent property of *prosody*.

4) *Inconsequentiality of poetry.* Poets are not accommodated in our culture. At this point, the burden falls on the producers and not the consumers: poets' lack of consequence is caused by their own complicity in the conditions that create such in consequence. If phenotype does not become the medium of poetry, we're all doomed.

5) *Inability to see that aesthetics determines germline.* Aesthetics is the new epigenetics. Color, light, sound, scent, vibe, and sensitization are our most effective procedures and interventions. Language acts directly on Natural Selection. *Prosody* is phenotypic plasticity drawn from within. This is another basis of enablement—aesthetics as direct modification of the world of Natural Selection acting directly (and far more instantaneously than we formerly imagined) back upon human being. Artwork is given new credence because it's newly known that

the working of surfaces, spaces and features influences human being through and through. ‘Make it new’ is certainly a dubious ecology now that our very makeup has been tattered by the ravages and hype of novel profit-before-humanity material modification. ‘Make it fair,’ ‘make it entire,’ ‘make it subtle,’ are more directly effective and fulfilling ecological dictums—closer to the grace of the imperceptible footprint of using-without-use.

6) *Enclosure of the infinite.*

Even the abled can be able, just as the awake can wake up from being awake. What’s the opposite of automatic? Manually? Sedulously step by step? Finally instantly (with the greater good in mind)? We’re a long way from poetics as active and joyous nonidentification with the terminal, from turning the oil-clogged vibe and environment around.

Can a poetics strike against a sick society without becoming sociopathic, serving only to exacerbate the sickness and intensify the poet’s sense of isolation? Can a poetics that opposes the ableist environment by formally pursuing novelty, dissonance, atypia, ectopia, incongruity, sequence deletion, breakage, disfiguration, aberrance or incoherence possibly (paradoxically) be beneficial? Can a poet who formally identifies with the prevailing definitions of disease expect to remain physiologically aloof or immune? The dialogue around disability and poetics guides us to such questions.

I’m especially grateful to the *Poetics of Disablement* writers for tracing the beginnings of an accurate and immensely more effective and interactive immunology (perhaps *eco-immunology*) for the post-ableist world. In the ableist world our positive constructions can be every bit as baleful as our prejudices. If I do away with disability, dysfunction, deficiency, and disease in order to anneal, strengthen, and become more confident and whole—and not as my only chance for remaining vulnerable, for keeping (i.e., ‘making’) things as fragile and sensate as they are—I’m compromised and imperiled all over again (as would be the planet).

Notes

- 1) Originally posted at the Nonsite Collective’s deactivated website.
- 2) Ibid.
- 3) Ibid.

4) Olivier Messiaen, *Traite de Rythme, de Couleru, et d'ornithologie* (Edition Musicales Alphonse Leduc, 1994).

5) Heraclitus, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, trans. Charles H. Kahn (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1979) 132.

CAULDRON

Filidh debate

inspired or
inherited

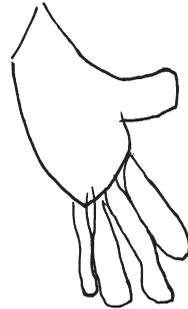
númaide

on the
continuity
of the
carrying of
prosody
through

S+GMO}

LOWER BRAIN
Cinnabar field
thelixer field

hissing



gair iath
incubatory
dip



RE-ENGLISH

HERMETIC

how this building transforms these

How related to other forms of transformation

not isolated events

Archive and

time temporality as model

social space prosody

non-use

other organs

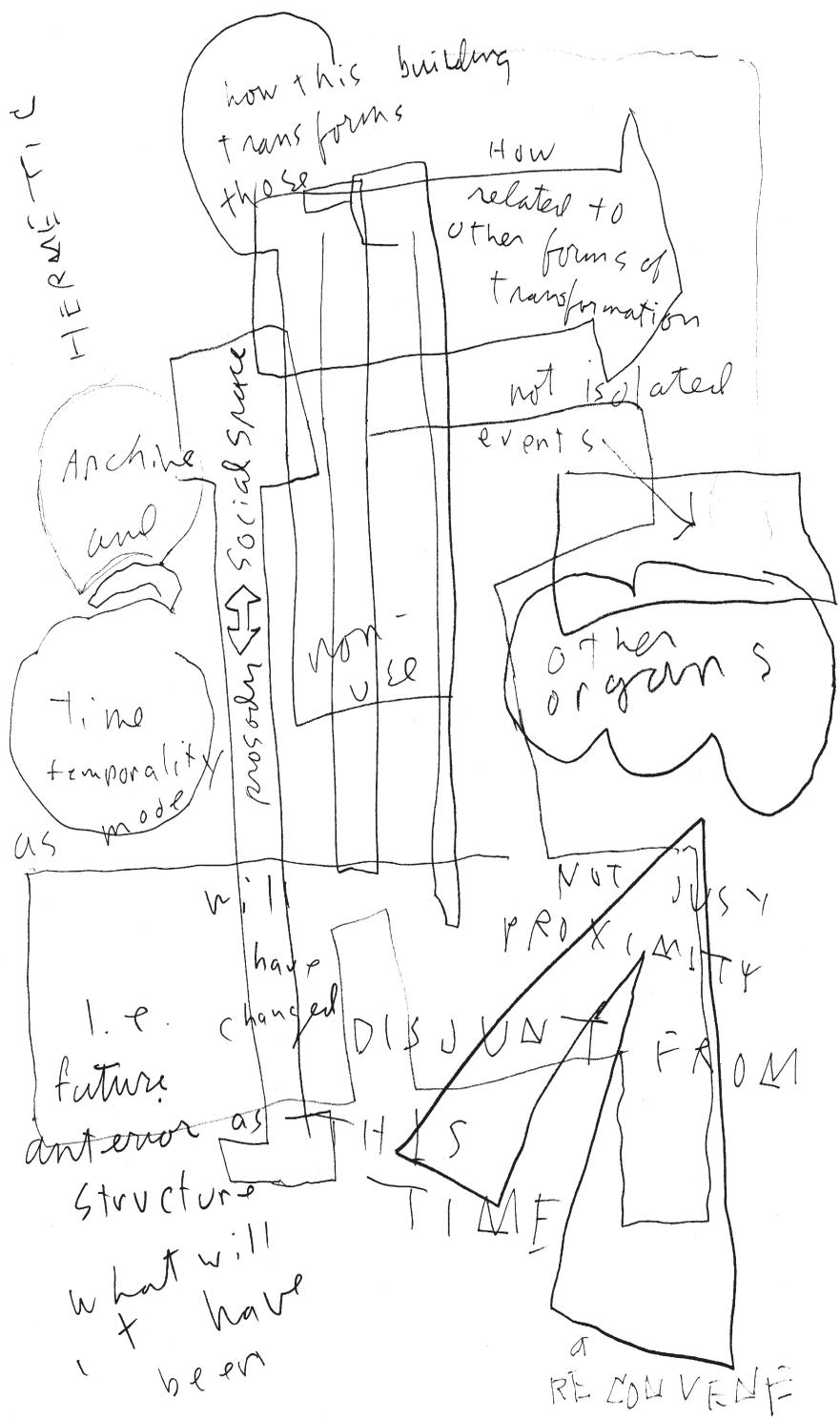
will have changed i.e. future anterior as structure

DISJUNCT FROM TIME

NOT JUST PROXIMITY

what will have been

RECONVENE



WHAT A PHONEME CAN DO

ROB HALPERN

“Prosody can end ignorance.”¹ “Prolonged sickness does not agree with meter.”² “The English language has never been the language of a free people.”³ Robert Kocik’s propositions are often startling in their simplicity while making good on the old Heraclitean adage: *Man is estranged from those things with which he is most familiar*. This estrangement is implicit in our current relations to both the body and the word whose powers escape our consequentially limited range of cognition and perception. In his work on and around “Re-English,” Kocik turns his attention against these limitations, and the Phoneme Choir is one means by which he, together with his partner Daria Faïn, organizes bodies and voices in real social space hastening our recovery from the damage these limitations impose.

Would that we had little in common with what we know. For while “what we know” might refer to that limited range of perception, “what we know” also stands as the material obstruction blocking our access to an other future. The privileged mood of Kocik’s writing here, as elsewhere, is the optative, the mood of wish and longing, one of English’s many lost modes, and whose loss alone suggests how English has come to obstruct our desire to imagine more habitable worlds. Kocik’s propositions expand in a syntax and a grammar that

overcompensate for this loss in an effort to stimulate all the potential of that mood. Would that we were to know the material of our own poiesis. Would that we only knew what a word—or phoneme—could do.

According to Kocik, “English has never been the language of a free people” insofar as it is “an inherently commercial, mercenary, discursive, duplicitous tongue.”⁴ How does one live in a language so entangled with predatory commerce? This is a little like asking, how does one live in a land rendered “ours” by centuries of violent expansion, murderous dispossession and villainous expropriation? A land ruled by property rights at the expense of whatever commons the first person plural possessive—“ours”—might denote? Language, like land (or, as Kocik has suggested, like money) is a common resource subject to systematic enclosures—accumulation and possession—which have been so well naturalized that they’ve become dumb to their own histories, making it almost impossible for us to perceive what is common in them. As far as language is concerned, all our common making (production) depends on collective language use and a “general intellect” that can either be disciplined by profit or aroused and organized to resist the production of surplus value.

Poiesis is the making of our world.

For Kocik, to “re-english” is to reclaim a commons. No doubt, the sonic proximity of “re-english” and “relinquish” is telling: to Re-English—understood as a verb—is to insist that English *relinquish* its stranglehold on the making of worlds, to insist that English cease its policing operations along the borders of the perceptible and the imperceptible. By “Re-English,” Kocik implies that language itself is a scene of struggle for perception, cognition, and sensation. This amounts to nothing less than a struggle for common sense against the privatization of consciousness, privatization being English’s otherwise unspoken logic. In a world characterized by a widening gulf between material production (the living labor of bodies) and immaterial value (what counts as “meaning”), the work of re-englishing aims to undo the dominant enclosures of semantic sense, to defrock the *Oxford English Dictionary* as hegemon.

Prosody is the means by which Kocik proposes to arouse and organize the language’s unexplored possibility and promise. In his expanded conception, prosody manifests the radical potential to redraw the lines governing the distribution of what is commonly perceptible. If prosody is organized stress,

then Kocik summons prosody's potential to organize and stress all that falls above or below the threshold of dominant (deleterious) modes of linguistic production and consumption. Re-English pays acute attention to the way what we hear is an effect of the limited range of sensory perception that capitalist prerogatives require and that commercialized modes of social life amplify, a range of sensation whose normalized produce implies a subtraction of the body from the very scene of cognition. By extension, prosody is a necessary gathering of energy, and this becomes a crucial component of what Kocik refers to elsewhere as "subtle fitness," participating in the work to overcome conventional regimes of adaptation wherein our senses—like our language—have been disciplined to cope within the most inhospitable social conditions, ecologies of suffering within which our bodies' capacity to evolve has been stunted. By contrast, enhanced prosody coupled with the aims of Re-English enable the individual—perhaps by way of seemingly "disadvantageous" traits and risking the allegation of non-communicability—to adapt to changing conditions in advance of their arrival. When effectively toned, prosody can prepare for the emergence of evolved sensory organs, which promise to overcome the limitations reinforced by dominant "fitness." In other words, prosody awakens our diminished capacity for the very sort of enhanced sensory perception that will allow us to survive.

As Kocik activates it, prosody is fundamentally performative—it makes things happen, it creates—and like all art worthy of the name, it implies "an act capable of causing a heritable change."⁵ The imperative, then, is to heal ourselves by healing the language—and language's extensions in social space—thru the activation of all its prosodic potential, which is also the body's potential, its capacity to find the sounds, the tones, the forms that are awaiting it. What will it take for us to exchange the body we know for the world we desire? What body will have had to be here in order to activate an other future? And how will we perceive beyond the limitations of our current range in order to know our desire in the first place? Kocik's thinking here helps us to move toward a place in our language—a nonsite—where we might, when the mood is right, pose the question of use—of the body, of the word—against a dominant regime at once mercantile and privatizing as we move toward the decolonization of language and body alike.

From another angle, one might say that what we perceive as sound is but the erosion of vibration in time. If this is the case, then what we hear when we hear is the effect of sonic entropy, that is, the ceasing of sound to sound. Prosody resists a terminal entropy—the deadly movement toward literal

semantic value, the slow petering out of all the meaning making potential, the slow grinding to a halt of those difference engines know as tropes. In this sense, I like thinking of Kocik's propositions in response to Wallace Stevens' "Motive for Metaphor" insofar as that motive is nothing less than the motive of meaning itself poised against what that poem refers to as "the arrogant, fatal, dominant X."⁶ In other words, the motive for metaphor, like the motive for Kocik's prosody, is life against death. Language communicates so much more than what it says, and while we might well know this, Kocik makes it clear that we don't know this well enough. The very excess of communicative value points toward language's material support: on the social scale, this concerns the disciplined contexts and established discourses within which meaning circulates as value; but on the somatic scale, language's material support is the body itself, fleshy substratum of all our utterances, the very organism from whose untapped potential we are typically estranged at the expense of life. "When words mean only what they say, we die,"⁷ Kocik writes. And so, rather than participating in the entropic arrest of linguistic value, the aim of both Re-English and Phoneme Choir is to stimulate prosody's aprotropaic function in order to turn away that which harms—to stave off death. This is prosody as "protection, regulation, balance abundance—in brief, all that's beneficial."⁸

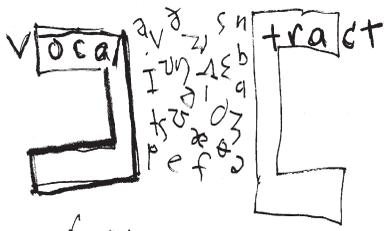
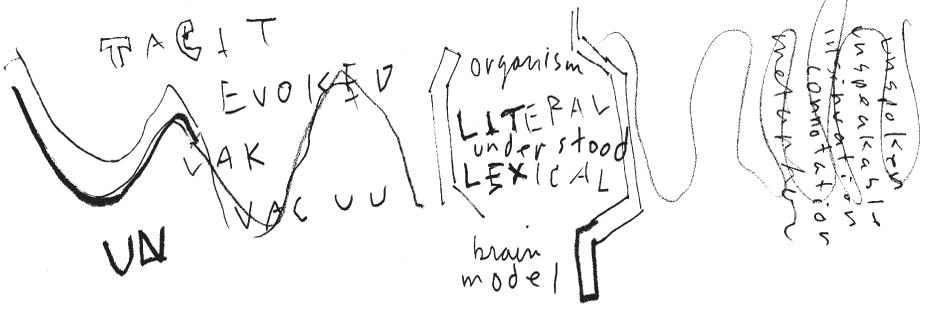
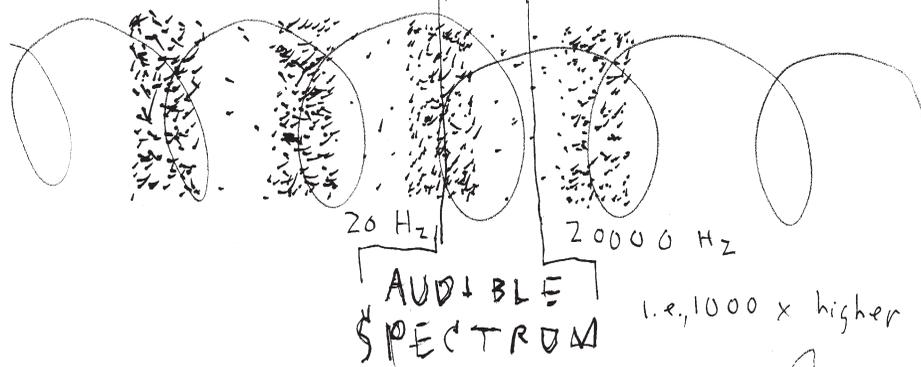
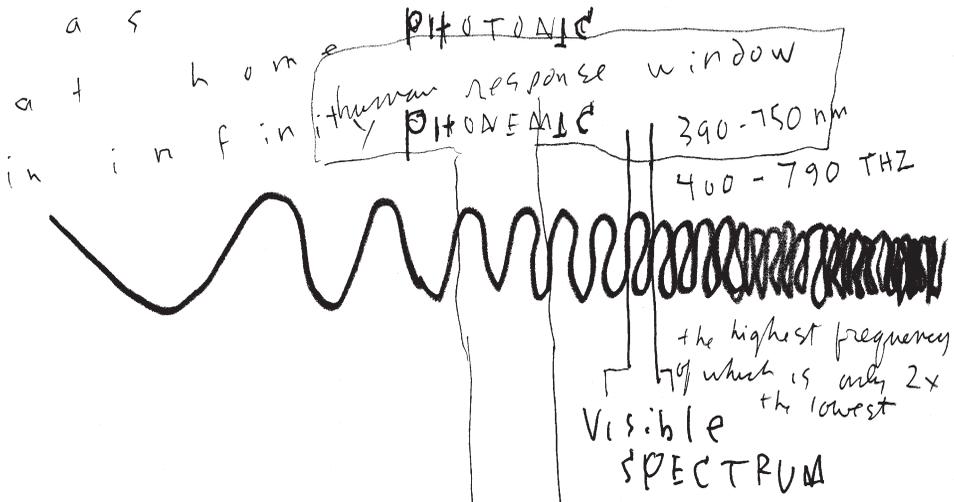
Just as languages might arrange themselves prosodically around faults in word and line, lexeme and syntagm, social formations too might organize themselves ek-statically around collective stress points whose breaks open onto scenes of uncertainty and promise against the grain of static sense. Kocik notes one critical social fault—a "schism" of consequence—in the divide between *making* (poiesis) and *managing* (praktikos)—a gulf around which a whole division of labor maintains and polices a strict separation of disciplines, thereby reproducing an unsustainable society of suffering. This is the schism between production and administration, labor and management, and in relation to which even our work as writers and culture workers has been subordinated.

This is where Kocik's proposition that "poetry may take any substrate"⁹ proves to be crucial. Poiesis, or "all-of-making," can manifest itself by way of any vocation whatever. As "poet" or maker, all of one's actions are committed to creating the world, and thus have the potential to yield a materialization of the immaterial, to render as living matter—meaning—that which, according to popular tenets or so-called 'common sense,' is matterless, senseless and meaningless. To risk doing the work of prosody is to risk the "immolation"

of both the poem as a discrete object and the poet as a separated worker. The aim here is to “exfringe” the poem in an effort to overcome the divisions that enclose it on the page. And while we may have heard this proposition many times in various approaches to contemporary poetics, Kocik raises the stakes by linking aesthetic divisions with social and somatic divisions, while showing the enclosure of the page to be but an extension of more deadly enclosures of all our human and post-human resource. In practice, “immolation” and “exfrinegment” can only amount to a realization of the poem in social space: the poet as the overcoming of separated vocations (division of labor), poetry as the overcoming of the poem, and prosody as the ek-static overcoming of the static word. Prosody is not a divided discipline; rather, it is a praxis capable of transforming any social context whatever, radically arousing language in the interest of making the world we want to live in (poiesis). The word thus becomes a literalized *meta-phor*—a vehicle of transport—capable of moving us beyond the insufferable limitations we have prematurely accepted. In this sense, I’m reminded of Robert Duncan when Robert Kocik (via Whitman) proposes to “break out of the little laws to enter the truly higher ones.”¹⁰

Notes

- 1) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 293.
- 2) *Ibid*, 299.
- 3) *Ibid*, 227.
- 4) *Ibid*, 234.
- 5) *Ibid*, 313.
- 6) Wallace Stevens, *Collected Poetry and Prose* (New York: The Library of America, 1997) 257.
- 7) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 293.
- 8) *Ibid*, 229.
- 9) *Ibid*, 303.
- 10) *Ibid*, 297.



Other phones form other worlds

DEAREST CHOIR

[An email sent to the members of the Commons Choir, the day after flying to NYC to join the intensive rehearsal schedule, in preparation for a performance of Re-English at the Harlem Stage in September, 2010.]

Dearest Choir,

First—thanking everyone for the bright energy and focus you're bringing to the choir! Merci infiniment.

At this point, as we begin to put the pieces completely together, as it becomes a living creature, I'd like to list the elements (like ingredients in a recipe) so everyone can have a fuller sense of this work's wholeness.

This work is called 'Re-English.' The premise is: the English language has never been the speech of a free people. It has been a duplicitous, mercenary, and commercial tongue from the get-go. Furthermore, in that English has been the hegemonic language of globalization, Re-English atones for this by imbuing the language with new inferences: tones, meanings, moods, subtleties, compunctions.

There are 4 elements running throughout the work:

1) *Emanation*: generation of the world from sound, in particular the saying of the phonemes as cosmogony. This puts the world in place.

2) *Narrative*: a series of stanzas that locate key moments in the consistently duplicitous history of English. This is the ‘commoning’ aspect of the work. (Some might narrowly say ‘political,’ but it’s really about widening the wealth on all levels. It’s the asymmetrical battle of our tiny choir up against superpower English, and we plan on winning, if winning must exist).

3) *PPNIE*: Our veritable, homespun science of sound that links specific biochemical processes (hormone secretion, neurotransmission, cell-signaling, chemical cascading) with precise phoneme sequences. The closest possible bearing for this practice within the Western understanding of the body is the new, unwieldy field known as Psychoneuroimmunoendocrinology, hence PNIE. To Psychoneuroimmunoendocrinology we preface ‘prosody.’ So: Prosodopsychoneuroimmunoendocrinology [PPNIE]. PPNIE is carried out by the singers as intoned words are far more efficacious than mere speech or prose. (Here we’re looking ahead to the ‘next’ medicine, the real stuff.)

4) *Optative*: this is a more or less ‘lost’ grammatical mood or modality. It’s the mood of wish, prayer, exhortation and sorrow. English can accomplish the optative with a lot of help from auxiliary verbs such as ‘would’ and ‘could’ (“would that I were rich”), ‘may’ or ‘might’ (“might I be of service”), or ‘had’ (“had I only . . .”).

A FEW KEYS

The manifestation of the body is always the microcosmic analog of the macrocosm. Our bodies are formed by the phonemes as they arise in us, just as the phonemes are the waveforms (the vibes) that bring the universe about. The ‘nothing’ (the who-knows-what), the silence, the nondifferentiation, or darkness everything comes from, arises (physiologically) from the perineum. That’s the root, the unlimited pulsating light, including the sacrococcygeal plexus and mulhadara. What we call the crown, of course, is the top of the

head, which includes the aural, aureolar area as well as the pineal gland, cranial sutures and sahasrara.

Fundamentally, Re-English is about sound and words as protection, regulation, balance, abundance—in brief, all that's beneficial. This property of protection is part of poetry's profound past (being recovered in Re-English).

The acoustic field we create with our voices salubriously acts back on us, influencing mood and body functions.

The last key I'd give with regard to the choir's practice: we work with nine stages in the manifestation of the phonemes:

1) *Sound as Unstruck*: Uncreated sound. Silent throbbing. Undifferentiated sound, or sound as only potential. Not even forming a sound. The Sanskrit word for 'unstruck' is *anahata*, which also means 'unhurt.' It's the sound that is made without striking two things together. Hearing soundlessness. Hearing the absence of sound (may even be deafeningly loud). Because it's uncreated it is ceaseless—always sounding—and can't die out as all created sounds must. Still sound. Plug your ears with your thumbs, to tune in.

2) *Sound Pronounced Silently Within*: Instilling and ingraining the sound. Sound sounded in mind without externalization. Going through all the motions of making the sound without actually moving. Awareness of the sound. Sound as awareness. Unsounded sound a thousand times more potent than the spoken.

3) *Sound Out Loud*: Sound made audible by means of the local vocal apparatus (teeth, tongue, jaw, oral cavity, larynx, lungs, diaphragm, respiratory muscles, etc.). Verbalization. Striking the air.

4) *Hearing With the Whole Body*: As both producer and recipient of the sound, feeling its resonance throughout the entire body, not only physiologically but emotionally and mindfully as well. Here the sonic field includes the soles of the feet, the pelvic floor, belly, diaphragm, local vocal apparatus, skull and crown as well as the air around the body in which the sound resounds and acts back on the body. Skin as tympanum. Every cell a resonator sending out, accepting, selecting frequency.

5) *Prosody as Part of the Sound*: Musical and expressive qualities included in the sound: for example, pitch, stress, pause, loudness and cadence as augmenting and enhancing the movement of the sound.

6) *Gesture of Sound*: The extended expression of the quality of the sound as hand and facial gesturing. This is usually understood as the limit of prosody.

7) *Sound as Entire-Body Gesticulation*: Sound unifying the body as one form or posture. Here the body does not move from its place. It's a stationary figure, like forming the sound's effigy, icon or essence.

8) *Sound as Movement Through Space*: Sonic character acted out. Following along the resonances. A sound as its own drama. This is the basis of *choreoprosodia* (the fusion of dance and poetry); including gait, muscular attitudes, giving up self, kinetic gesture. Phoneme/ movement concomitance.

9) *Chorus and Movement*: Moving in space in relation to others who are also moving under the impetus of the sounds. Entrainment that includes the movement of bodies in space. Full awareness of the phonemes.

~~AN~~ American Garland of Letters

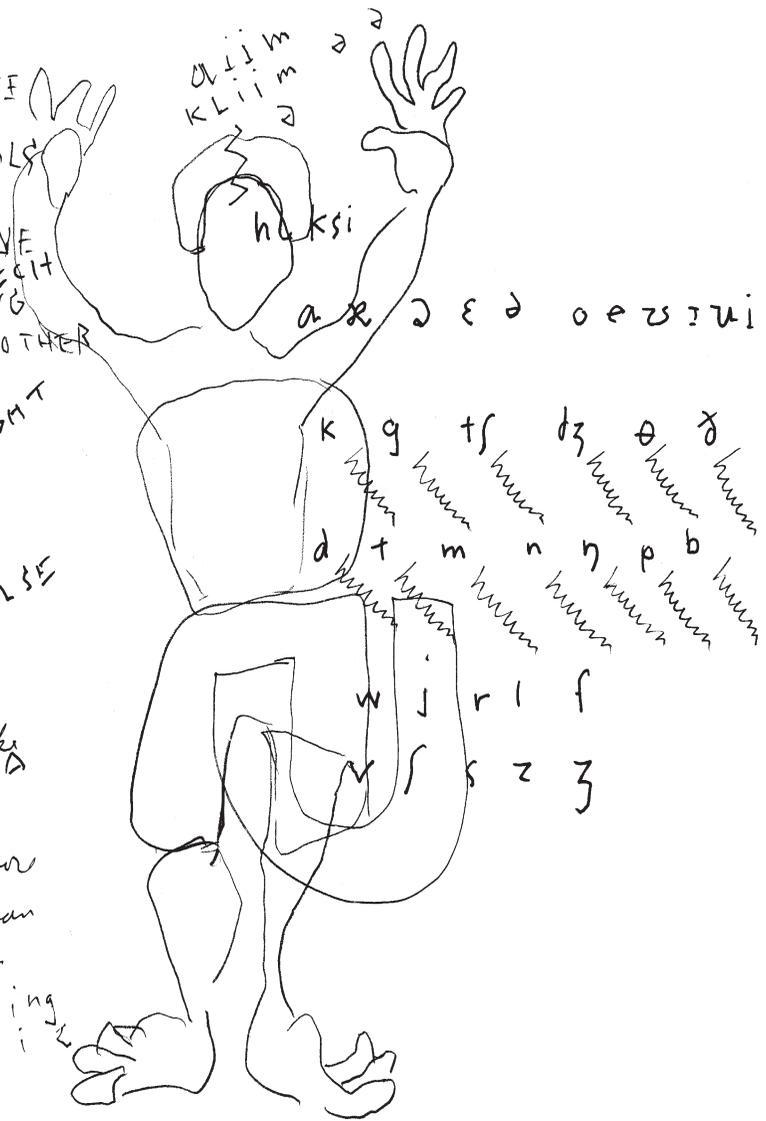
WE HAVE
NO PETALS
ONLY
ONE PHONE
RIPOLENG
INTO SO ADOPTER

THOUGHT

IMPULSE

more awake
than ~~PAR~~
being
awake, more
asleep than
sleeping -
unarisng
so v i l e
ligh +

unknown
matters
in n er n y a s a



E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E

[This is the libretto for a Commons Choir performance presented at New York Live Arts in 2013. To coincide with the NYLA show, and serving as the definitive program, it was published by Brenda Iijima as a Portable Press @ Yo-Yo Labs chapbook. It was written to honor the Commons Choir's performers and participants: Niv Acosta, Hadar Ahuvia, Aretha Aoki, Christina Andrea, Jen Baker, Massimiliano Balduzzi, Margot Basset, Lorene Bouboushian, Rebecca Brooks, Lee Ann Brown, Barbara Bryan, Corinne Cappelletti, Anna Carapetyan, Willa Carroll, Jessica Cerullo, Chun-Chen Chang, Stephen Cooper, Vincent DeGeorges, LaTasha Nevada Diggs, Thom Donovan, Ursula Eagly, Devyn Emory, Gabriel Forestieri, Eric Gelsinger, Levi Gonzalez, Peter Hanson, Maré Hieronimus, KJ Holmes, Hazuki Homma, Whitney Hunter, Akira Ito, Peter Jacobs, Aram Jibilian, Masumi Kishimoto, Dora Koimtz, Athena Kokoronis, Eliza Ladd, Martin Lanz, Andrew Levy, Rachel Levitsky, Melanie Maar, Douglas Manson, Susan Mar Landau, Marisa Michelson, Alejandra Martorell, Ana Monteiro, Iki Nakagawa, Mina Nishimura, Omagbitse Omagbemi, Jaime Ortega, Michelle Nagai, Kenta Nagai, Nick Piombino, Eva Perrotta, Jacob Robinette, Matthew Semler, Jonathan Skinner, Peter Sciscioli, Larissa Sheldon, Kensaku Shinohara, Chelsea Silber, Hendryx Silvia, Samita Sinha, Emily Skillings, Hadley Smith, John Sowinski, Sam Sowyrda, Ben Spatz, Despina Stamos, Mike Taylor, Tatyana Tenenbaum, David Thomson, Julia Ulehla, Saül Ulerio, Larissa Velez-Jackson, Brandon Washington, Carrie Wood, Ami Yamasaki, Kota Yamazaki, Katherine Young.]

E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E is dedicated to the choir's choreographer, overall exarchōn and core, Daria Faïn.]

Dance furnishes me with as many figures as ruinous night makes waves on the sea
in a tempest.¹

—Phrynichos

The structure of generosity is E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E—everyone with enough wherewithal with which. Abundance insists. *Everyone*. It's a perfect word. Thank you! *Each* and *all* perfectly intact and fulfilled in one verb. And in our interwovenness gone awry, even the big winners and abusers are victims. Poor us. But not just the 100% of us. Protect at once Sister Sea Turtle, Peer Pumpkin, Antecedent Algae, Tutor Topsoil, Daughter Dragonfly, Brother Cobalt, Guru Rutabaga, God Gypsum. Safeguard Flesh and Blood Photon, Professor Petroleum, Parent Pink Fairy Armadillo, Doctor Yellow Dwarf, Messiah Milk Thistle, Sage Space, Mirror Blue, Great Great Grandma Gas. Venerable Coriolus Versicolor, Cherished Cuttlefish, hats off to the 10 times as many Bacteria freeloading in one's gut as cells that make up the entire body. This Everyone.

Performed by the Commons Choir, E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E is an epic, town hall musical that calls upon a panoply of reparative tones, tunes and intentions to plead the case for an all-inclusive economy, proposing, with Thomas Paine and Martin Luther King, Jr., money as everyone's.² The Choir has named its idiom 'Re-English.' It's a local-tongue restart befitting its vocal cosmogenic redo. Granted, English is an incredibly agile, absorptive language that can bear all the love anyone has to give—that can give all the love anyone can bear. Still, there is the lingering question: Has English ever been the speech of a free people? Is it an inherently commercial, mercenary, discursive, duplicitous tongue, or is that just human nature? Given the means and opportunity, who wouldn't rule the world? Re-English asks, given our history, why have we not done otherwise? To proceed as responsibly as possible, E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E posits that today's economic, ecological and inequity crises are direct consequents of the sonic and connotative qualities of superpower English.

By means of *choreoprosodia* (full fusion of movement and poetry) the Commons Choir calls upon forms and phenomena as diverse as algorithmic procedure, neuroendocrinology, choral ode, folklore, economic theory, field holler, breathing patterns, Kashmir Shaivism, dead languages and lost grammatical modes, constitutional law, obscure chronicles, prayer, triple bottom line accounting, innate awareness, blessings, dispellings, outright bad-english and even poetry to manifest one vast amulet that can re-tune, detox and de-delude our tongue, imbuing it with heretofore unheard of inherences, moods, admixtures and admonishments.

E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E
in 4 acts (which are amulets)

I. PREAMBLE AMULET
II. PHONEMIC EMANATION
III. TOWN HALL
IV. PHYSIOLOGY FOR POETS / PHONIC PHOTONICS

CHARACTERS

UZUME (archetypal stand-up comic)
CORYPHÉE (who guides the choir)
SOUFFLEUR (whisperer, prompter)
OPTATIVE (grammatical mood expressing wish, longing, deepest regret)
PERINEUM (unsounded sound)
REPARATIVE NARRATIVE (chronicler of crux)
EPODE (who resolves all)
THRASYMACHUS (forefather of all justified greed)
VARIOUS EXARCHONS (those who step up to conduct all the components)

SYNOPSIS

The ‘story’ is the telling of language by using every state or stage of language—tacit, intuitive, lyric, technical, purely vibrational, critical, harmonizing, fine, crude, illuming. The Preamble is a welcoming to words as wonder and direct experience of our interwovenness as the performers begin to assemble an all-embracing, economically astute amulet. The world is then brought about from scratch by the specific formative energies of the vowels and consonants, until we arrive at the point of embodiment and language as transformation (‘poetry’ if you prefer). The Town Hall section links our inability to act in common to corresponding discordant modes of language—discursive, individualist, objective, judgmental, discerning, contentious and terminal (like stem cells leaving their totipotent states to differentiate toward death), while layered with the loving voices of Epode and Optative. E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E culminates by calling upon the choir’s homespun synaptic and secretory phonics to consecrate and activate every gland and energy point, and closes with a garland of the vibratory signatures and colors of the sounds of the letters wishing you well.

PREAMBLE AMULET

CHOIR ENTERS FROM ALL AROUND

*(gradually, sporadically introducing the incantation)
(3-tone range for the general choir while singers freely improvise)*

No one knows what a word is. No one owns what a word is.

CORYPHÉE

(intermediary between the performers)

SOUFFLEUR

*(begins to assist Uzume as need be)
(then throughout, for everyone)*

*(full spectrum laughter: real,
forced, phonic, slowed, scored,
faltering, faint, fake, heartfelt;
connecting tongue to heart
and firing up the collective
vagus nerve)*

UZUME 2

*(HI FU MI NO HARAE KOTOBA³
repeated 3 or 5 times, Kotodama-intoned)*

Hi fu mi yo i mu na ya ko to
Mo chi ro ra ne shi ki
Ru yu i tsu wa nu so
O ta ha ku me ka u o e ni
Sa ri he te no ma su a se e ho re ke

(pink to luminous to red, red into total darkness at close of preamble)

(abrupt instrumental interjections)

OPTATIVE

(cretic dominant)

And what might you be?
This means what it might.

UZUME

*(array of one-liners available to Uzume)
(more conundrum than joke)*

Everyone would have won the lottery.

No one knows what a word is.

Put your money in your neighbor's pocket. Stuff it in a stranger's satiety.
Thread it through our rotted safety net. Lock it in your loved ones' blossomings.

Impromptu will protect you.

What's the difference between uncirculated money and heart disease?

Had I known you'd do the same for me, I would have never done what I did for you. I can criticize by nourishing—I'm willing to go that far.

If money is made in the schism between mind and matter, does money make the schism?

As equality is to freedom, outcome is to birth.

Good politics begins with good posture.

NO ONE KNOWS WHAT A WORD IS

(vikriti variations,⁴ layering and interspersing of lines with entire choir opening into full harmony offsetting the preceding ludicrousness)

no one knows what a word is no one knows what a word is no one knows
what a word is /pada/

no one one knows knows what what a a word word is /karma/

no one one no no one one knows what what knows one one knows
knows what a word word a what knows knows what what a word is
is word a what what a /rekha/

no one word is one knows a word knows what what a what a knows what a
word one knows word is no one /dhvaja/

no one one no no one one knows knows one no no one one knows
knows what what knows one no no one one knows knows what what a
/danda/

no one one no no one knows knows one no no one knows
one knows knows one one knows what what knows one one knows what
no one knows what
no one knows /ghana/

PEPTIDE

(bubbles up)

γ ø fj H ks i n ::
γ ø fj H ks i n ::

NO ONE OWNS WHAT A WORD IS

(vikriti variations, full layering and interspersing of lines with entire choir)

no one owns what a word is no one owns what a word is no one owns
what a word is

no one one owns owns what what a a word word is

no one one no no one one owns what what owns one one owns
owns what a word word a what owns owns what what a word is
is word a what what a

no one word is one owns a word owns what what a what a owns what
a word one owns word is no one

no one one no no one one owns owns one no no one one owns
owns what what owns one no no one one owns owns what what a

no one one no no one owns owns one no no one owns
one owns owns one one owns what what owns one one owns what
no one knows what
no one owns

(red to dark)

BLESSING⁵

aelm adadah
bud bd
cause calmed
chaa-ched chitchtcha chihu chua

dar darned dwash da
emb ehem ef f ath th a
gar-a-gar-gar gheu geuh

hlin hma hurui hueh who who hyh hwh hyh
thum
ieuo ieuos
juok

kuere kuk kinickinickinick kleiein
l'al leug
mleuh mo mot maa
none nz na-meh-nay nui

ori mo pe o
pah pt(h)ah pei-pi-oh
quie quaoar quum
rh

saa sousp
tscl tkkeitahtok
untunk unkulunk
velv vivsv voi vaj vag vivasvat

weh-leh-who wihio wawa wuldress
x x
yum
yei yaw yayp you to whom you to whom

zihozo zeitein

PHONEMIC EMANATION

*(in the dark, choir completes coming down to the stage
from all points in the theater, gathering)*

(green)

PERINEUM APPEARS

(intoning an 11th century Japanese pangram)

IROHA

i ro ha ni ho he to
chi ri nu ru wo
wa ka yo ta re so
tsu ne na ra mu
u wi no o ku ya ma
ke fu ko e te
a sa ki yu me mi shi
we hi mo se su

(translation:

*Even the blossoming flowers
will eventually wither.
Who in our world
is unchanging?
The high mountains of pride—
we cross them today
and we shall not have dull dreams
nor be deluded.)*

PHONEMIC EMANATION

*(moves from vowels to consonants, beginning with the
sounding by the entire choir of bottommost 'a' in the
pelvic outlet)*

a a a a a a a
 a a a a a

a a a a a a
 a a

 a a a a

a a a a

(peptide continues)

Υ Ø fj H ks i n ::
Υ Ø fj H ks i n ::

(close of the BLESSING)

That we be each other's so- cial dividend.
of benefit to everyyy.

That we take refuge in the open.
Care is nature not indebtedness.

Mystery herself would guarantee
all material needs met instantly.

That we be each other's so- cial dividend.
The angelic is in the details.

As unimpressed by honor as commodity
a gray pig then pops out of our crowns,

that we be each other's so- called discipline.

OPTATIVE TUNE

Let us let. Long live livable. Bowing down
bows before bowing down.

Shall we say? Part of, what is, said is what,
can't be said.

VOWEL BRAIDS

(continuation of emanation)

(based on vikriti patterning, with phoneme-specific gestures and full movement)

(accumulation of all the vibrations of exchange, coming back to the laughter, joy of communication)

(bottommost vowels, falling into spine and back)

ɑ ɔ ɔ æ æ ɜ ɜ e ɑ ɔ ɔ æ æ ɜ ɜ e

(things coming together and coming apart, organizing, choreographically along a diagonal)

(topmost vowels, verticality, precision constriction)

ɪ ɪ ɪ ɪ ɪ ɪ ɑ ɑ ɪ ɪ ɪ ɪ ɪ ɪ ɑ ɑ ɪ

(as antagonism is also a coming together)

(rounded middle vowels, emphasis on others)

ʌ ʊ ʊ ʌ ʌ ʊ ʊ ʌ ʊ ʊ ʌ ʌ ʊ ʊ

(polarities popping up)

(mouth itself, perineum and eu-diaphragm)

ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ

*(echoing NO ONE KNOWS
WHAT A WORD IS)*

ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ ʊ

(liquids, emotional plexus, gathering horizontally at the belly just above the waist)

u r r u u r l u r r u u r l

POEM OF THE PERINEUM

(unarising)

seulement seul est cela assez

all wrong adapt excel egg on

all calm awash ajar alarm

awash ajar all calm alarm

afar appall almost wallow

seulement seul est cela assez

REPARATIVE NARRATIVE 1

Brother. It's not a bonus it's embezzlement.

Abolitionist poems so beautifully written
target audiences would read them to refine.

I don't know how to not nurture. Welcome,
I am Re-English, to the sub subsistence picnic.
Last minute sense intrinsic to our tongue.
With words what words can't say, my sore thumb.

Who wouldn't? But why in the world would we?

"Quicker to a field of blood than to a wedding."⁶
Quicker to a wedding than to a march against war.

(diphthongs, cardinal points, give direction, static)

a i a u e i o i a i a u e i o i

DIAPHRAGMATIC AH HA HA AH HA AH CHORUS LINE

(dragon breathing)

(luminous)

REPARATIVE NARRATIVE 2

What can reliably be said: the Roman withdrawal from Britain was complete in 407. 449 the Britons hire the Saxons as mercenaries for protection against the Picts. This is one of this story's starts.

Among the soldiers on the three Angle, Saxon and Jute ships a soothsayer foretold they would occupy the client-country 300 years, plundering it half three hundred.

Not only from the get-go—forked before the fact.

Quicker to boot up a new organism than to count the notes of the black-capped chickadee. Quicker to wash the camper than to keep a crop from going extinct.

CONSONANTAL EMANATION (BEOWULF MINUS VOWELS)⁷

(counter chorus line, Old English veneration of war gear, causes a falling into spontaneous march)

g t h b r n s c n
h r d h n d l c n h r n g r n s c r
s n g n s r w m t h h t s l f r t h m
n h r g r r g t w m g n g n c w m n n n
s t n s m t h s d s c l d s

GESTURED CONSONANTS

(paired consonants given gesture and movement scatter about the stage)

(color typewriter synesthetically–erratically–in sync with consonants on the march)

KINCICCALANA

(subtlest movement)

(phonic emanation and speech arrive at the point of the poem)

(clearing after commotion, no color)

If you're really original you come from Me.
Like words right before they come up,
yolk of the peacock containing all colors is itself monochrome.

The sound's the same. Some hear 'kindness,' some hear 'kill' 'kill.'
My holy mountain is a stack of dirty dishes, daffodils.

With what would a totally unobstructed view remove the view?
A hand centered in the window of a passing Wonder Bread truck
with red 'n' blue balloons or bubbles holding a half-peeled banana.

ESTROGEN CHORUS

θ δ θ δ η ρ υ ε υ
w j j j

θ δ θ δ η ρ d ʒ - -
w w j j

θ δ θ δ ε υ d ʒ η ρ
j - - -

d ʒ θ θ υ η ρ θ θ υ
w j w j w j w j w j w j w j w j w j
θ δ θ δ θ δ θ δ θ δ

θ δ θ δ η ρ υ ε υ
w j j j

θ δ θ δ η ρ d ʒ - -
w w j j

θ δ θ δ ε υ d ʒ η ρ
j - - -

d ʒ θ θ υ η ρ θ θ υ
w j w j w j w j w j w j w j w j w j
θ δ θ δ θ δ θ δ θ δ

OPTATIVE TUNE 3

(sung)

Would that we. Air's in-toxicant. Were we to, be before waves with trash.

What about. All troubles dying out in these words as they come.
Hum self-lit, shine on shine, with named as name, consciousness
is as close as we'll come.

TOWN HALL

SOB OF THE OPTATIVE

(starkly)

I've unlocked it. The law of nature. The nature of nature's nature to throw off all laws. My problem with generosity is that the generous, with or without enough with which to be generous, give. That's the problem. Giving without not giving.

Giving can only be channeled through ego or egolessness which are one and the same. (No one has ever been boundless or embodied enough to drive a truck through a buttonhole.) The act is volitional. It gratifies. Perhaps it's done begrudgingly. It's eccentric, not systemic.

Only generosity that goes into the ground of everyone's ability to be generous, without begetting obligation or accumulating merit, is generous. Only generosity that does no one any good is good is joyous.

Antistrophe

The way things are, you'd think things could or would only be otherwise while, of course, as it turns out, they specifically are not, in the very way in which they are not.

Things are things that turn out otherwise. Things are things because they turn out otherwise. You'd think we'd think things turn out otherwise beforehand, without our pants down. They'd then be things that turn out as we think. You'd think we'd be happy to think about things in ways in which we'd never think. To simplify: if things can be, and indeed they are, you'd think they'd be other than they are. Take sickness. Even seen as it is, or seeing simply that it is, 'is' nonetheless eludes us because it still is and it is *is* that deludes us. We're stuck with it. And then, it isn't.

epode

Annulet. Welcome to the pelvic outlet. Welcome your ear to the pelvic outlet. Place your heart in the lower stove. All the stars are too few to fit in your cranial bowl. To protect you. Lower the low. Problems transform upon their performance. That you see you are protected. That you are protected when this (that which protects you) would fail you. Problems transform upon their performance. Disease is dissonance. Is profit sociopathic or just an act of ingratitude? Is privacy our acme? Money the quantification of morality? Is business bliss if it equi-benefits 7 billion? Is English the speech of our extension or extinction? Bearing witness by listening becomes someone else. Lighten the low. Lower the defraud threshold. Just people act unjustly just as much because they are more able to do so. Problems transform upon their performance. It's only fair and fairness is the problem—evening the score—while caring is inordinate, disproportionate, uncalled for. Local. Looking into all of the cries. Language never native yet.

ODE

*(traditional tripartite ode-form of strophe/antistrophe/epode) (with color typewriter) (epode semi-sung)
(the world is in place) (lighting and instrumentation as extensions of prosody)*

Strophe

To the Shareholders of Berkshire Hathaway Inc.: “When it’s raining gold reach for a bucket not a thimble.” Chairman of the Board, Warren Buffet, February 26, 2010.

When it’s raining gold, you’re being soaked in the sweat of those who made the bucket. That’s the sweet side of it. In Fray Toribio de Benavente Motolinía’s 1543 *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, he lists the ninth of ten plagues to ravage the Aztec people as the forced mining of gold. For miles all around the mines, crows feeding on the bodies of dead miners blackened the sky. How do you put that in a bucket?

Gold falling freely from the sky, opposed to gold arising in your heart telling you to end the worrying sick of others, a worrying in many ways ascribable to the belief that gold rains down from the sky and fills bucket after bucket.

When I say business is biocide I mean this world is not safe to touch from this world. But what does that mean?

Antitrophe

The tyranny of earner-ship. To think that someone would get something-for-nothing. Revolting. To think that someone with little-or-nothing would get something-for-nothing. To think that someone with little-or-nothing would get something-for-nothing while someone else with little-or-nothing would not. Revolting. To think that someone with too much would loathe anyone with far less getting something-for-nothing. Even if we all were to be given the same something-for-nothing from no one. Revolting. On the other hand, to be given nothing for something, in exchange, would be to receive the nothing of those with little-or-nothing by giving all you've got. Nothing in exchange is too great a gift to accept. When giving is to give without exchange, giving is to get rid of.

epode

What do you know about this word 'pleonexia'? Are you perhaps pleonexic? The root of it: *plē*, means 'more,' though more like 'more than.' More than what? Not even justice and equality are equal. *Exia* from *exein* is to 'scheme.' To scheme for having more of what belongs to others than others. Habitually. A habitual madness. Screwing. Scheming to normalize but first glorify having what belongs to everyone.

If the poorer were to always rule, would the only poverty be voluntary?

Equality is more equal than justice. That's all I'm saying. It's not a toss up. But is equality more just than justice? Equality is working things out as they come up in our interwovenness, not in advance. Not even two moments are the same, and that is the model for justice. Ruled neither by the best rules nor rulers but the most interwoven moment.

Strophe

The first humans were given the choice to return each morn like the sun or rot and re-seed like a melon. Not a day passes we don't live to regret. The genome's stratagem for socializing risk at a safe distance is the body. Without performers imperiling themselves, species would not opt, could not cope. We wouldn't even be here. Performance predisposes genome. Generosity engenders energy. The implication is heard before the denotation—everyone knows that. Let performers claim responsibility for endangering the continuity of our kind, of all kinds, for the folly of each. It could be that the rotten is not unrivaled. If we can't rediscover interwoven it'll all be over soon.

Antistrophe

Let's keep it local, that is, interwoven. It's only fair. I couldn't even make a tadpole if I tried. Make the planet pay. Organism keeps us from being fluent in the full range of frequencies. It's confusing to perform on any level other than our least. To both grasp the fact that the planet is beyond our poetics and feel grateful for that fact can't always be asked of the same brain. Local was derisive. Interwovenness as motionless waves manifesting motion. Mmmmmmm. Something like that. Pop your head out of the topsoil. Let commons be everything under the sun. Nothing derived from the sun can be authorized. Exclude any definition of commons that excludes livelihood. Commoning is taking delight in the welfare of others by means of exchange throughout the interwoven. May we interweave the interwoven. Throw in the sun. Plant gardens in the supermarkets. Or not. If you can't produce what you produce outside the hand-me-down called 'civilization,' profit belongs to the planet. We parent ourselves with our poetics.

It's not a bonus, it's bad English. Pre-distribution is our commons. The before-flow. Upstream, the springs, spring, like the unknowable, unownable. Let all that's built be built within the ever about to be.

epode

Look after me and me and me. Problems are skilled emotions. Superstition protects you from harm. It's a trick. I wish you well and you're well. An amulet is the practice of entering the damage without being damaged. It has no prerequisites, including having no prerequisites. Sell me what you can't show me. Anything you sow you can't own. Mother earth, materials and manufactured goods are indivisible. Let mothering be the model for manufacturing. Nothing can be made of what we've made. The more original the more directly subsidized by origin. All I make is yours. All you make is ours. Not even ours is ours.

Strophe

Everyone earns the same amount of money while prices vary wildly for each person. Everyone earns wildly different amounts of money while prices are the same for everyone. No less absurd. It's private. It's none of your business. Isolation is ignorance. Intimacy is not an underdeveloped market anymore.

Almost anything can be in common, but what is the *commons*? The word is a throwback thrust upon us—less worn than 'public' and certainly less treacherous than 'collective' or 'socialist'. Commoning was groveling. Asking for the least that can be granted. Holding onto the bottom.

To move everyone from mud to mudita, by means of a few lite policy recommendations (like nonprivatizable money and splendor free-for-all) but mostly by means of a choir coming up with protections, vibe and the vast trust without which all draws toward discord no matter what.

Antistrophe

Host hostile hospital hospitable hostage saucer sausagess ssuage soulager. You've made your major point. The economy is not threatening the commons. Exclusion of economy from commons is threatening all there is. The heart is as unlevel a playing field as any market. Can we agree? Betting that people "in a position to take" will be scrupulous, against the assumption that those in a position to receive will mostly freeload, has brought out the worst in us all.

epode

The rooster, the rose bush, the raspberry, the camel. Bequeath. Besquish. We depend. We come about. We open out. We fly all the way apart. When lost, radiate light from your eyes. You must meet a demon stronger than you. You must. Re-Big Bang as only the vocal can. Waveform is to receive by giving, if it's breathtaking. Waveform is market as conscience, if it's breathtaking. Waveform is an amulet if left as waveform. Let every commodity be communion, unless there is another earth, unless all we'll ever leave behind is other than this, unless that which we make we make from something other than all we'll ever leave behind. My impermanence in you. Yours in me. As safety. (Is the commons.) Your selflessness is not the same as mine (unless it is breathtaking). The costs of your compassion sopped up within me (commons). Hear what you haven't just said. Deeper in the flesh than somatic. There's no way to stop suffering, so just stop.

Strophe

There was a Karl Benz of Mannheim, but never a Mr. Mercedes. Those who've felt for the helpless by hiring or bathing them. The reward for re-worded human nature. Mercy and merchandise trace to the same root. *Merx*. 'Wage' comes from 'pittance,' provided out of pity. The market is where we get what we deserve. Any meeting place. Friendship or luxury automobiles and busses. *Das Beste oder nichts*. Take what you get. Trade up. Unfair for one is fair for none.

I just caught on (or soon will). Who writes the social contract needn't sign it. So, ridicule my newly minted social movement that didn't place my life on the line against the brutality met by your push for mainstream rights in 1622, 73 BCE, 1866, 1791, 1381, 1760 BCE, 1848. The code expresses the condition, so condition the code in return or be crushed. If it's illegal to assemble, show up without assembling (as uncoordinated as a Super PAC and its candidate). Show up in support of the police force that would arrest you, in support of the law that would warrant your arrest. Show up. The more surreptitious the blow the more full-blown the show. You need me—cracking-the-code-of-inhumanity-made-easy. Opportunity exploits outcome. How can I ever thank you enough?

Don't originate the problem. Revolution is dual. As obviously as the inverse, I am them. Conflict is companionship. We're alone in the cosmos without it. It's not you, it's your view. It's not the view but the space it takes. Meet me in a space without organizational forces. Strip. Like I like a Maker that can never be met, I like a debt that can never be repaid (so long as it doesn't involve money). It's lifelong.

It's a strange expression: the sovereignty of the pro-privatization self-reliantly poor. Subsistence-seeking is the self-imposed austerity of a newly remodeled scarcity, in place of a similar measure imposed from above. You sure you want that—to give the genome that feedback at this point in time? We botched the sharing and management of resources, so shut down boundlessness? Have it bubble up from below or gently blow between us? Real giving begins at the point it undermines the imbalance allowing one to give. Until then.

THRASYMACHUS

(seated in the audience)

I'm still here. I'm always still here. Not so much immortal—more recurrent, or, chronic. I'm Thrasymachus, early sophist. Renown for adding rhythm to oratory and equipping emotion with gesture. I'm Thomas Hobbes, Ayn Rand, Yang Zhu, Angela Merkel, Übermensch and Paul Ryan rolled into one precursory fireball. Persist in injustice long and wide enough and it will become the common good. Don't pluck a hair from your body for me and I won't pluck a hair from my body for you and the cosmos will purr perfectly on its own. I speak to strike down once and for all the notion that power should ever be a means for servicing the lives of the less fortunate. It took me until 1964 to finally defeat Socrates in debate. R. Reagan promoting Barry Goldwater quoted Plutarch plagiarizing me: "The real destroyer of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations and benefits." Inequality is organic. Inequality is fair. Equality is more punitive than a tax. Amass enough money to withhold from others for their own good. This is responsibility. You're in my thoughts and prayers, I just can't forgive all the money you owe me. Original sin is the privatization of altruism. The cracks are there to keep the helpless and fallen from hitting bottom.

REPARATIVE NARRATIVE 3

(with some soft-shoe)

Strangers, I'm here to talk about the unconditional overample income guarantee, the U-O-A-I-G or *uoai*g—*uoai*g *uoai*g. It's no different from the conditional overample income guarantee (the *coaig*): if you don't already have too much money, you'll be given more than you need. It's the Unconditional-Overample-Income-Guarantee-On-One-Condition (the U-O-A-I-G-O-O-C). If you don't already have too much money, no matter what you do, you'll be given more money than you need. Who decides? I decide who decides who gets how much and from where, randomly. It's a complex algorithm. Start with the wished-for relative to all business and nonbusiness interests, delete ego, plug in potential skill sets, enter timeframe in relation to lifetime, loop through total budget plus 27% and crush with elegance—equals *uoai*goc. Implement. A real world problem solved.

As-happy-as-can-be is decidable. We're not in control, we're verbose and ultra-easily evoked. Basically the output device is one's bloodstream, where Thomas Paine, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mary Elizabeth Lease abound and outperform. "Raise less corn and more hell."⁸ Let material equality be causally tied to the determinants of productivity. Let our differences flourish from this basis of safety. Admit that redistribution is retarded.

PAY PEOPLE TOO MUCH

*(somewhat ridiculously rendered rather like Yip Harburg
lyrics sung & danced by Fred Astaire)*

it's super simple to index income to productivity—
just pay people too much

why should anyone other than the sick cough up for getting sick?
just pay people too much

may hoarded money turn into mulch—
just pay people too much

care to bury the matter of 3 decades of wage reparations?
just pay people too much

reserve a first-class seat for the World To Come—
pay your people too much

ego is status quo—just get over it
and pay people too much

prove that profit is not sociopathic—
pay people too much

make business supremacy a boon for everybody
just pay people too much

want to shrink government without shirking your debt to society?
go on and pay people too much

the mob will never rise up against its own interests (mmmm?)—
just pay people too much

because incentive has been noxious
just pay people too much

just pay people just because

of, by, for and as the people no different from the people, private
people, public people, people people—everybody be the boss
and pay the people too much

MY LARGESSE: THRASYMACHUS ARIOSO

(mechanically pompous, may be contrapuntally mixed with the exhorting of PAY PEOPLE TOO MUCH)

Welfare enough for the needy and inept in the leftovers and excesses of my largesse. If you've found any employment at all you know you owe your luck to the plucking of my largesse. The only fine art worthy of its fame has been cherry picked and championed by my largesse. No fate can ripen if under-subjected to the rations and radiance of my largesse. I promise all penniless research with any potential promptly appears on the radar of my largesse. You'll but break down in your own brainstorming if you've neglected to hitch your wagon to my largesse. Remove all life support unsupported by my largesse. My largesse, my largesse.

(Thrasymachus)

(Optative)

oh that would but, that
the might that
would that but but
be that would that
with a heart that
in an instant
cannot not what would
and justs

*(speech of Thrasymachus in ancient Greek)**

Ἄκουε δὴ, ἢ δ' ὄς. φημί γάρ ἐγὼ εἶναι τὸ δίκαιον
οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος συμφέρον.
οὔτως, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ ἰσχυρότερον καὶ
ἐλευθεριώτερον καὶ δεσποτικώτερον ἀδικία
δικαιοσύνης ἐστὶν ἰκανῶς γιγνομένη, καὶ ὅπερ ἐξ
ἀρχῆς ἔλεγον, τὸ μὲν τοῦ κρείττονος συμφέρον τὸ
δίκαιον τυγχάνει ὄν, τὸ δ' ἀδίκον ἑαυτῷ λυσιτελοῦν
τε καὶ συμφέρον.

You can't win if
you're all alone.
Subjects fight fair
fighting for fairness
while the truth is
'beating others.'
The deeper one's
hand in the rules
the nearer to truth.
Justice is the
unjust writing
laws for their own
advantage for
the good of all.

OPTATIVE/THRASYMACHUS-INTERLOCK, WITH SOME GERMS FROM THE ORIGINAL GREEK

(the two interchange with their respective, contrastive tones and movements—Optative in lament and utmost longings; Thrasymachus in extreme newly minted pushy and point-making legislator-gesturing, speaking in a 4-beat paean contraptionism, though compellingly, and able to morph somewhat into his opposite)

(Optative) You scratch my back and I'll scratch the back of every one.

(Thrasymachus) Retaliatory impartiality? You scratch my back and I'll bite back, I'll kiss your ass—it's all the same if you want results.

(Optative) I'll scratch your back because I'll scratch your back whether you scratch or do not scratch mine.

(Thrasymachus) That still depends.

(Optative) Then we agree: trust is the last impediment.

Each sound is already gone. *(said slowly and pointing to the air in which each syllable is released)*

Take my template and prevent unnecessary pain.

(Optative)

I would these laws stomach if only I were rich.

I would these laws stomach if I were only rich.

I would these laws treasure if only I were rich if I
were only rich.

I would these laws applaud if only I were rich if I
were only rich these laws would,
in my book, be lawful.

I would these laws not defend had I not already
benefitted from them.

(Thrasymachus)

I would these laws stomach if only I were rich.

I would these laws stomach if I were only rich.

I would these laws treasure if only I were rich if I
were only rich.

I would these laws applaud if only I were rich if I
were only rich these laws would,
in my book, be lawful.

No way these laws would I defend had I not already
benefitted from them.

(Optative)
 Let's at least try to form a sentence. For if: How I happy: Don'tn't I wish. If only we had but once thrown down our arms. Oh, deform open arms, infect finance, had profit only over our dead bodies— we might have been sentient. I don't insist (that's a separate matter), I beg.

(Thrasymachus)
 Could you repeat that last part, please?

(Optative)
 Oh, deform open arms, infect finance, had profit only over our dead bodies— we might have been sentient.

(Thrasymachus)
 It's as if what you're asking as it is asked is the only force potent and fitting enough to realize all that it asks as it asks.

(Optative)
 Just as we should all have all the money we need, why wouldn't these words take effect immediately?

(Thrasymachus)
 That would be counterfactual.

(Optative)
 Not in this book, and as you can see, this book is not a 'book' book.

YOU DON'T WAIT FOR LAWS TO BE FAIR

(sung by two choruses at tug-of-war, roughly following the rhythm of the traditional Dominican Republic song Baquini)

you don't wait for laws to be fair
you don't wait for laws at all

you don't wait for laws to be fair
you don't wait for rabble to arrive
you don't wait to be fair no how

you don't wait for laws or rabble
there's no time to do what's unkind
those who take only take from all

(it's not excess but embezzlement
bonuses pay-packages golden parachutes
is where the commons went)

you don't wait for laws to be fair
you don't wait for rabble to unravel

you don't wait to loot or be looted
you don't wait to hit a wall

you don't wait for laws to be fair
you don't wait
you don't wait
you don't wait

(softly, almost directly into the audience's ear, as all the ruckus dies completely down)

when to wait's tantamount to taking all that's made through all

INTERMISSION / STRETCH (THE FIRST ENDING)

*(may begin later in the controlled disorder and winding down
of the song for two choruses)*

REPARATIVE NARRATIVE 4

(optional)

Correct me if I'm wrong: in the entire history of America, only one individual has ever been imprisoned for charging 'market price' (the highest price the market would bear for a commodity) over 'just price.' In 1639 Puritan Massachusetts, merchant Robert Keayne was convicted of over-pricing the re-selling of buttons, thread and nails (a 50% markup from cost) imported from England. He admitted to the oppressive pricing while denying its wrongdoing; spending his incarceration and the remainder of his days writing against all forms of market interference. The day following the Keayne trial, clergyman John Cotton stepped up to the pulpit to point out a number of Keayne's faulty premises, principally:

"That a man might sell as dear as he can, and buy as cheap as he can."

Within a decade of Cotton's statement, even stern New England Puritan ethics were placed in the service of profit supremacy. Profitable behavior became ethical behavior. Either profit or cause hardship for all. Building wealth is a social responsibility and perquisite for any charitable act. What was once equally unconscionable became the commonplace. The roots of today's stewardship of culture and public policy by means of the free speech of money can be traced to this initial puritan twist.

Quicker to land on an asteroid than learn the lobes of the lungs.
Quicker to suck it up than to climb out of the cruelest rut.

**TRIBUTE: LIST OF PRE-DISTRIBUTIVE BUSINESSES
WITH THEIR TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE ATTRIBUTES**

*(sung while warmly acknowledging businesspersons
from the list who might be present)*

PHYSIOLOGY FOR POETS: PHONIC PHOTONICS

BELLY BUTTON AMULET

*(intoned by dancers and singers as the dancers spatialize the energy
belt or girdle—the Dai Mai—encircling the waist)⁹*

n:::haaa n:::haaa n:::haaa

v d v d v d v d v d v d v d v d tʃ:

i.ŋ::: i.ŋ::: i.ŋ:::

u g ts ɕ w hh b ɔ æɔ:: u g ts ɕ w hh b ɔ æɔ::

a::j:: í::a::

(tacit poem as commentary accompanying the amulet)

Umbilicus is an edict.

It says 'stem from.'

*We're given until the stopping of the beating of the jelly cord
—mere minutes—
to change over to air.*

To go in and out of the most rustic house on earth.

*Shen brought to the heart, the start of pericardial protection.
The sky blocking a doorway.*

Voices heard together just as forms occur together.

*What you were before you were
with what you are before you were
encircling the lips,*

picking up traits.

- (1 *at the gate of life 'r' is the tip or contact point of undifferentiated energy announcing the start of discrete being, as we're given our portion of limitless energy; an idiophonic instant—the unstruck contacting the mingmen point without which it couldn't be audible; just as 'r' is the tip of original energy, the tongue is the tip of the diaphragm as the entire abdominal cavity is used to root 'r' in the breath of life*)
- (2 *introducing a phonic field for the play of forces—folds, features, fluidities—before the physical, with the closing semi-vowel shaping, rounding and enclosing the energy in its cauldron; pressurizing slightly*)
- (3 *vowels complementing, completing the components at the cardinal points, protecting the process and the simmering passions; ambrosial tones, derived from Montserrat Figueras' Durme, Hermosa Donzella*)
- (4 *consonantal activation and movement inward from of the mingmen point, like fire moving along a line*)
- (5 *guttural, fully voiced, fully visceral*)
- (6 *plosive, percussive phones detailing the energy, lightness of pace, picking up momentum; discerning, directional*)
- (7 *combustion; digestive, sexual heat; air-feed; stoking*)
- (8 *fully catching fire, connecting one's breath with breath of all life; main burner between and below the kidneys is fueled (war:))*)

sssss hhhhh kkkkkk hhhhhh sssss hhhhhhhhhh wa:: sssss hhhhh kkkkkk hhhhhh sssss hhhhhhhhhh wa:: ...
tʃu da tʃu və tʃu dʒə tʃu da tʃu və tʃu dʒə tʃu da tʃu və tʃu da tʃu və tʃu dʒə nm tʃu da tʃu və tʃu dʒə ...

sssss hhhhh kkkkkk hhhhhh sssss hhhhhhhhhh wa:: sssss hhhhh kkkkkk hhhhhh sssss hhhhhhhhhh wa:: ...
tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*audible inbreath*) (audible outbreath) (*audible inbreath*) tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*long audible inbreath*)
tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*audible inbreath*) (audible outbreath) (*audible inbreath*) tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*long audible inbreath*)
tʃu da tʃu və tʃu dʒə tʃu da tʃu və tʃu dʒə tʃu da tʃu və tʃu dʒə

sssss hhhhh kkkkkk hhhhhh sssss hhhhhhhhhh wa::
tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*audible inbreath*) (audible outbreath) (*audible inbreath*) tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*long audible inbreath*)
tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*audible inbreath*) (audible outbreath) (*audible inbreath*) tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*long audible inbreath*)
tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*audible inbreath*) (audible outbreath) (*audible inbreath*) tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*long audible inbreath*)
tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*audible inbreath*) (audible outbreath) (*audible inbreath*) tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*long audible inbreath*)

tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*audible inbreath*) (audible outbreath) (*audible inbreath*) tʃ u::(unvoiced) (*long audible inbreath*)
pe ta ke ta
tʃu da tʃu və tʃu dʒə ...
ambrosial tones ::::::::::::::

pe ta ke ta de dʒ ɿ ae:: (inhaled) fffffff
tʃu da tʃu və tʃu dʒə tʃu və tʃu dʒə
ambrosial tones ::::::::::::::

sssss hhhhh kkkkkk hhhhhh sssss hhhhhhhhhh sssss hhhhh kkkkkk hhhhhh sssss hhhhhhhhhh
sssss hhhhh kkkkkk hhhhhh sssss hhhhhhhhhh tʃu::::

OXYTOCIN SONG

w ɔ ʒ m l m

e ε ɔ h-----

w ɔ ʒ m l m

e ε ɔ h-----

w ɔ ʒ m l m

e ε ɔ h-----

w ɔ ʒ m l m

e ε ɔ h-----

IROHA

i ro ha ni ho he to

chi ri nu ru wo

wa ka yo ta re so

tsu ne na ra mu

u wi no o ku ya ma

ke fu ko e te

a sa ki yu me mi shi

we hi mo se su

RESPIRATORY SINUS ARRHYTHMIA AMULET

*(dactyls blending with spondees, heart resting completely on exhalation)
(lunar over solar lines) (the audience instructed to intone either the lunar
or solar line silently within, slowly raised to a whisper only audible to
oneself and finally recited aloud until all lines together create a common
resonance-amulet)*

levelly valvular soluble yellowy lovesome non- somnolence
l'hm so sah um huh-mm ha

REPARATIVE NARRATIVE 5

Of the several hundred children shipped to Virginia in sixteen nineteen, of the one hundred sixty five children whose names were recorded, only twelve were still alive in sixteen twenty five.

Of the laws sanctioned by the Second Charter of the Virginia Company, twenty five of thirty seven articles prescribed capital punishment—principally intended to prevent new world workers from gazing beyond fortress walls into the frightfully novel where they could only see roome enough, plenty, liberty and classless Algonquian ease.¹¹

Quicker to chemotherapy than to crack down on a ponzi scheme.
Quicker to control costs by cutting pensions than to clean the toilet.

ROOT AND CROWN HETEROPHONY

(cardiorespiratory sync, opening muladhara and fontanelle)
(repeatedly)

(crown)

kʃ:	tj	gʌ	ɔ:	ð:
leɪ:	ɪ:		hu:	ʒ d
ʃ:	rm	ðθ	nà:	wè:
ev:	ip	tʃ	e ou:	ɪdʒ:
u:		ʃ	ɲɔ̀:	ts-z
so:	b	f	aɔ iar:	o ɔə:

(root)

fɪ: ʃ ʃ fɪ: ʃ ʃ B: P: fɪ: ʃ ʃ fɪ: ʃ ʃ B: P:

PHONIC GARLAND

(alphabetization of the body, matrika nyasa)

a i æ u

ɑ æ ɔ ɛ ə

æ u ɑ i

o e ʊ i u i

k hu:m g hu:m ch hu:m j hu:m θ hu:m ð hu:m

t hu:m d hu:m m hu:m n hu:m ŋ hu:m p hu:m b hu:m

w y r l f v sh s z ʒ:

hi: ksi: hi: ksi: hi: ksi:

ai:m kli:m ai:m kli:m ai:m ə: ə: ə: ai:m ə: ə: əm

(in which case, no one would get sick)

REPARATIVE NARRATIVE 6

(optional)

In the penultimate draft of his 1961 Farewell Address to the nation, Eisenhower called it the “military industrial congressional complex” but was ultimately induced to exclude the congressional attribute, with the further failure of foresight to collapse the whole formula

into financial nexus.

Quicker.

Quicker.

P-P-O-A-E P-P-O-A-E AMULET

P-P-O-A-E P-P-O-A-E P-P-O-A-E P-P-O-A-E P-P-O-A-E P-P-O-A-E
P-P-O-A-E P-P-O-A-E Planned Pauperization Of Almost Everyone
P-P-O-A-E P-P-O-A-E Planned Prosperity Of Absolutely Everyone
P-P-O-A-E P-P-O-A-E Planned Pauperization Of Almost Everyone
P-P-O-A-E P-P-O-A-E Planned Prosperity Of Absolutely Everyone

The structure of generosity is e-v-e-r-y-o-n-e—

with that with which

—enough, for everyone, materially, and so freed to fairly differ in splendor.¹²

OPTATIVE CODA

Would that we were safe.
Would that we were speechless again.

So that suffering doesn't freeload on phenomena.
So that mispronunciation is not sickness.

Had we only heard the sound of the door opening.
Had we instead put butter on the fire to make it rain.

(to close, choir members form a line downstage to still the theater as they slowly enunciate their names one by one, in turn, surname-first)

Notes

- 1) William Mullen, *Pindar and Dance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).
- 2) For details regarding Paine's asset-based egalitarianism and the arbitrary divisions of 'rich' and 'poor' see his greatly ignored 1797 pamphlet *Agrarian Justice*. "I am now convinced that the simplest approach will prove to be the most effective—the solution to poverty is to abolish it directly by a now widely discussed measure: the guaranteed income"; Martin Luther King, Jr., "Where Do We Go From Here," August 1967. In 1968, John Kenneth Galbraith, along with 1,200 other economists, brought before congress a document calling for a system of basic income guarantee. Even Napoleon Bonaparte admitted "man is entitled by birthright to a share of the Earth's produce sufficient to fill the needs of his existence." Currently, there are many organizations working to establish a citizen's dividend. The Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) advocates a universal basic income "based solely on citizenship and not on work requirement or charity." Already, The Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend pays an annual dividend garnered from oil and gas proceeds to every resident: child, woman and man. If you're convinced that poverty is the product of personal shiftlessness, see *Just Give Money To The Poor*, by Joseph Hanlon, Armando Barrientos and David Hulme.
- 3) HI FU MI NO HARAE KOTOBA is a *norito* (Shinto prayer or Kami speech) used for tuning the voice to original nonarising sound as it becomes the speech inherent in all things. Uzume recited this *norito* as she danced on top of her overturned tub.
- 4) Vikriti (Sanskrit: 'crooked') is a codified, mnemonic recombining of syllables for the purpose of teaching and safeguarding the tonal and phonic integrity of Vedic verse. Eventually *vikriti* became a devotional practice in itself. The principle *vikritis* are: *pada*: a/b/c/d/e/; *krama*: ab / bc / cd / de / ef /; *jata*: abbaab / bccbcb / cddccd / deede /; *mala*: ab / ba / ab / bc / cb / bc / cd / dc / cd /; *shikha*: abbaabc / bccbcbcd / cddccde / deede /; *rekha*: ab / ba / ab / bcd / dc / bcd / cdef / fecd / cd / defgh / hgfe / de / efghij / jihgfe / ef /; *dhvaja*: ab / yz / bc / xy / cd / wx / de / vw / ef / uv / wx / cd / xy / bc / yz / ab /; *danda*: ab / ba / ab / bc / cba / ab / bc / cd / dcba / ab / bc / cd / de / edcba /; *ratha*: ab / ef / ba / fe / ab / ef / bc / fg / cba / gfe / ab / ef / bc / fg / cd / gh / dcba / hgfe /; *ghana*: abbaabccbaabc / bccbcbddcbcd / cddccdeedccde.
- 5) *Aelm* more from *aelmihitig* than 'alm', *adada* Zoroastrian 'without beginning' *bd* contracted from *bohd buddh*, behind which Sanskrit *bheda-abheda* 'differentiation-undifferentiation' as well as Middle Welsh Blodeuwedd 'flower face.' *cau cau* sounds Tsimshian creator Caugh, let arising go. *chaa-ched* Tiwa 'here and now' *ched* vibration of perception *cha* creating its space, Chinigchinich 'creation force' for Takic-speaking Tongva people of coastal Southern California, then sending the tightly fricative up and out to sea. Da 'serpent supporting the ocean in which earth floats' for West African Fon can be seen in a rainbow, *dar* 'to give,' darn useful, *d'wash* cut from Aramaic 'heaven.' Embed beyond reason *ehem*, *effath th* a luxuriating from Aramaic *ephphatha* BE OPENED. Gar-a-gar-gar creator of all life, *gar-gar* 'master craftsman creators' creator, *gheu* 'to evoke' 'the one who is evoked' *geuh*, *geu* PIE for 'pour', *Ga-gaah* Iroquois wise crow, *gneh* 'know'. *hlin* Old Norse 'protected', *Huruing Wuhti* 'two Creators' Hopi, Hii Hii, Hu Nonp 'wisdom' Oglala, Hahgwehdiyu who planted maize in his mother's corpse to give to hu man, who is who, 'call upon' our word 'god' PIE *ghuto* Sanskrit *hutu*, hu root 'sacrifice', sounds 'h' 'y' 'w' 'h' 'y' 'w' seemingly 'I am am whoever' in *heofon* for hosts of tribes. *Thum* plus *os* 'smoke'. *Ieuo sef yetz* name from which all tongues rise, Sanskrit *Ios* 'welfare', *Ieuos* 'holy bound'. Juok God of Shilluk "liftest up" the sick provides fish millet and breadth of life. *Kwei* 'make restfull' *kuere* root 'seek' 'ask' or so I think, Kuk straightup thee Egyptian 'darkness,'

kinnikinnick Algonquian ‘mixing animate and inanimate by hand.’ *Kleiein* nonsense to close. *lal* shortened from *la-alam* Aramaic ‘ever’ Ler Lir Old Irish sea Creature, *leug* ‘light’ *leuk* PIE *lug lunx* ‘to shine’ *lugere* ‘mourn’ too. *Mleuh* ‘speak’ PIE, *mot (moe)* French everybody knows, Mot God Phoenician Klallam Mikimatt creatress, *momo* Hopi ‘bumblebee.’ Nzame Bantu, *naa-meh-nay* in Tiwa is land but what is land but earth and sky walking, night without ‘t.’ ‘Pinnacle’ Yoruba *ori, ori mo pe o* ‘I call on you’, *ori la ba bo, a ba forisa sile* OH, keeping in peace. *Pah-ah* Piute ‘great path’ *pah* ‘protect’, *pei-pi-oh* ‘to give death to truth’ *Tiwa* ‘act of fasting.’ ‘Honor’ *quie*, Tongva Quaoar danced existence into existing. ‘R’ alone rhythm pattern that holds us, code of action that keeps well, with ‘h’ for fire purifying. *Saa tisfy, souspire* or *souspira* must be a word with *sousp* what the word is, *spersps soesp soesps susses sus senx, sreo*. To bring to the sound to its point of pronunciation, rain falling on parched ground, Tekkeitaertok Toodlayoetok gods of Inuit earth Inuit sky, *tah* ‘to plow’ bomb blossom between tick and tock. Lakota Untunktahe ‘water’ who helps others, *unkulunkulu* Zulu ‘lizard,’ bliss as the unthunk. *veloutte velu* ‘v’ speared into ground, the way the voice, wandering Hungarian thunder butter bolt vague wave ‘brilliant’ *vivasvat*. Crying for vision is to give, *weh-leh-who* Tiwa ‘climb to a place where there is no judgment or control’, teachable, ‘tornado’ in Australia Awhiowhio, *Takic Kwawar, wah* Tiwa, *wuld* Old English ‘glory’ place like *wulderness*. Inexhaustible ‘x.’ Yum Lakota *Love* whirlwind Phoenician yaw Holy Ones Yei Navaho also ‘immune,’ yip yipe yikes like vulgarity as grace, all this has been not address but that we address that we are those-who-address. To. Whom. *Sa’ah naaghahii hik’eh hozho* Navaho balance makeshift intensifier ‘zi’ prefix. Seek Zeiteitikos seek *zeitein* ‘seek’

6) “Quicker to a field of blood / Than to a wedding. Quicker to the ravens’ feast / Than to a burial.” Embedded couplet from Y Gododdin, Aneirin’s medieval Welsh elegy to fallen warriors (translation, A.O.H. Jarmon). Whether intended as a lament that men died in battle before betrothed or as tribute to soldiers who’d rather wed a bodybag than endure an ordinary life, the ‘quickness’ is invariable.

7) *Beowulf* V, 321-325:

	gúðbyrne scan	the men together; war-byrne shone
heard hondlocen	hringíren scír	harsh, linked by hand, ring-iron glittering,
song in searwum	þá hie tó sele furðum	they sang in their arms, as they to the hall straight
in hyra gryregeatwum	gangan cwómon	in their grim gear came marching;
setton saémépe	side scyldas	they set down, sea-weary, their wide shields

8) A phrase coined by stump speaker Ralph Beaumont but widely and pejoratively attributed (with her full approval) to Mary Elizabeth Lease (1850-1933), a fiery suffragist, agrarian, lawyer lecturer, poet, teetotaler, Populist orator and early socialist, who, standing before the assembled Women’s Christian Temperance Union in 1890, certainly did say “When men shall be just and generous, little less than gods, and women shall be just and charitable toward each other, little less than angels; when we shall have not a government of the people by capitalists, but a government of the people, by the people.”

9) Plato, *The Republic: Books 1-5*, Loeb Classics Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930) 338C, 344C.

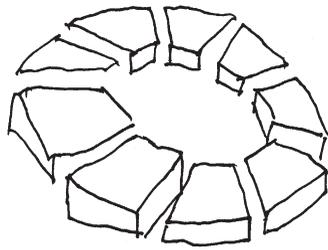
10) “E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E” is one large, living amulet (as well as one long algorithm working toward an all-inclusive prosperity). I mentioned to the choreographer that my main focus has been the composing of sound sequences that protect us. “Can you come up with movement that would protect us, movement that would work like an amulet?” “Protect us from what?” she asked. “Well, from ourselves—what else is there to protect ourselves from?” She immediately

wrapped her hands around her waist and said “this is our protection.” The *Dai Mai* is the body’s only horizontal meridian. It’s a cross section made up of eight points that intersect the vertically-flowing meridians. It binds the vertical meridians the way a drawstring pulls together an unwieldy robe. It holds together and harmonizes without constricting (when all is well).

11) See Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992). Also see Hugo P. Leaming, *Hidden Americans: Maroons of Virginia and the Carolinas* (Taylor & Francis, 1995).

12) “Autre est l’éclat de la lune, autre est l’éclat du soleil. Alléluia! Autres sont les corps terrestres, autres son les corps célestes, Alléluia! Même, une étoile diffère en éclat d’une autre étoile! Spoken by the chorus as the curtain falls at the close of Olivier Messiaen’s opera *Saint François d’Assise*.

place where something
is burned



sounds the
same as



PHOTONIC PROSODY

[A talk presented at the Meridian Gallery in San Francisco as part of the “Poetics of Healing” symposium curated by Eleni Stecopoulos, 2008.]

Loss of coherence [of cell assemblies’ collective vibration] can lead to disease and disorder.¹

—Herbert Fröhlich

I’m sure you’ve all heard about the inadequacy of language. I’d like to remedy this fallacy, here and now, once and for all, again and again.

In this symposium on the Poetics of Healing my brief talk will focus, not on poetics, but on prosody. I’ll call it ‘Photonic Prosody.’ By *photonic* I mean ‘vibratory,’ if not ‘cosmogenic.’ I’ll present a few of the most basic elements of prosody at such a rudimentary level they become key to our composition and the basis of our ability to be well.

When Eleni Stecopoulos invited me to speak about poetry and healing she gave me two directives. The first directive was simply: “I press you to be obvious.” The second directive—a de facto challenge to the first directive—

was a request to deal with the habitual reference to and reliance upon ‘catharsis’ as the therapeutic mechanism of art. Neither Eleni nor I typically use the word ‘healing’ in relation to poetry (though for the purposes of this talk I’ll use *healing* as often as I credibly can). I believe her second directive comes from a need to admit the healing properties of poetry without limiting what those properties are. Cathartic experience—release of emotion as relief from emotion, as in Freudian talking cure—is crucial for healing. Yet, each point I present will extend the ways in which poetry may heal, moving toward poetry’s full efficacy. She and I are perhaps weary of pathology—wary of knowing primarily through pathology—without at once proposing a body or poetry that calls for our well-being from a place of being well. So, by adhering to her double-directive, I’ll attempt to break free from limited, chronic impressions of the power of poetry.

PROSODY

First, I’ll simply mention that the science of poetry known as ‘prosody’ only ever came about as a complete taking-responsibility-for the well-being of a society and the fulfilling of individual lives. It’s a civicospiritual vocation combining nature, science, law, music, education, medicine, memory, astrology, cosmology, and so on. Just as the Shinto temple at Ise must be disassembled and rebuilt every 20 years so that the knowledge of how to build it continues to be transmitted from one generation to the next, so the poem needs to be written over and over in ways that renew the relevance of the poet’s role.

At the outset, also from the traditional perspective, I’d like to point out that healing is most effective when practiced as that which we all constantly do for each other—and, as with all medicines, the best time to be treated by poetry is when you’re feeling just fine.

Prosody asks: are we in fact constantly tending to each other as we speak—through the tones of our voices, the pause called ‘listening,’ and the cadences of our caring?

Defining prosody is a never-ending process for me. Usually I don’t define it. Prosody simply envelops and originates me. At the same time, I recognize that prosody is an uncommon term and some degree of defining is needed in order to effectively bring this word into the conversation.

Of course, prosody consists of the elements of composition familiar to poets—stress, pause, intonation, cadence, and so forth. More primarily, indeed primordially, prosody is how language communicates other than semantically—aside from, beneath, and beyond the literal meaning of the words. It is especially this property of language that allows poetry to affect health.

Were we to recognize what words are, words in themselves would be healing. Or is it the recognition that is healing? How does photonic prosody work?

LANGUAGE ITSELF

When words mean only what they say, we die. We've opened no further possibilities if they can do no more than say what they say.

The way in which language states what it does not actually say is called 'prosody.' That which words say without actually saying it—and because they have not actually done so—is prosodic. In Sanskrit this capacity is named *dhvani*. Dhvani, the central element in Indic aesthetics and poetics, can be loosely translated as 'suggestion' or 'evocation'—either by means of the sonic properties of language or by dint of connotation. Either way, prosody—as the way in which language states more than or other than its literal meaning—is extra-lexical. A word's ability to communicate what it does not actually say is part of the word. In fact, it can be questioned whether the ineffable beyond words could even exist without the words that suggest it. This excess reference—of words communicating more than they say—can be carried to infinity. How do we understand infinity? Can we understand infinity? How could we possibly understand infinity? Even our way of not understanding infinity may be a gift from language. This 'trope' is what we are—the manifest word interchanging with the unmanifest is our sense of infinity. This play is gloriously complementary and sufficient.

When words say the unsayable they bridge the unbridgeable and remove us from isolation. Words working at this level of resolve dissolve dichotomy. Of the 84,000 afflictions (Sanskrit *kleshas*) the most dissonant is *avidya* (ignorance of connection; perception of separation). As the affective and evocative capacity of language, prosody can end ignorance. Under the same capacity, words can of course be maximally afflictive. Though language may have a mind of its own—and though this mind may be free from suffering—it is anything but user-indifferent.

According to Heraclitus, most people are deluded about the nature of language and self-expression:

Although the Logos is common, most people live as though they have their own private understandings.²

Heidegger heroically attempted to rescue logos from its history of assertiveness, coercion and lording-over-matter. He traced the verb *legein* to its meaning as 'listening' and 'laying.' With his use of language he intended to heal language itself. He diverted the meaning of logos from its primary definition as 'speech' and 'expression' to its primordial definition as that-which-underlies-and-nourishes-all-of-life. He lengthened *legein* to arrive at "Saying is a letting-lie-together before that which gathers and is gathered."³

How can this language—English—which has been so consistently mercenary, merciless, duplicitous, exploitative and overridingly commercial be used for healing? This is a problem only prosody can effectively pursue.

Were we fish, language would not only be the water we swim in, it would also be that of which the water is made, as well as the forces responsible for our form as fish.

Furthermore, we're moved by speech. Each cell assembly, whether tissue, organ, or marrow, generates an electro-magnetic field. Words as thought or phonic patterns pattern the intricately intermeshing bio-fields. If, as we speak, we become quiet enough, these patternings begin to be perceived. The hypothalamus—the neuroendocrinological signaling center—as it sits atop the speech apparatus, is especially susceptible to consonant collision and vocalic wavelet. Speaking is like using a vibratory keyboard. Similarly, on a more subtle level, thought tones our biochemical being. Chants are bioregulatory templates.

Accuracy of pronunciation is lack of separation from the initial impulse to speak. How do you come up with that which you say? Is speech any different from hearing the words we speak as we speak? It's all happening so fast—in a flash—how are we to distinguish impulse from interpretation? It's inconceivable that words would not be bioregulatory—just look where they 'are.'

PHONEME

Photonic prosody is necessarily active at the sublexical level as well. It's by way of the phonemes that language regulates and originates our beings. Phonemes are the smallest, contrastive sound units with which we distinguish meaning in language. Phonemes are tones and sonic patterns that precede us. Just as the ear formed according to the sounds it would hear, our entire bodies formed around these few sounds we're capable of meaningfully producing. We're coeval with our speech sounds. Each is a specific awareness and energy constitutive of matter. This science of sub-syllabic sound is intricate and vast. Its coherence, properties, and applications easily exceed the superficial structuring of syntax and has little or nothing in common with the nonsense of most Western sound poetry. Here I only have time to allude to this resonant world—the meeting of phonology, cymatics, shabda science, bioacoustics and prosody.

METER

Having determined meter to be the procrustean bed, one typical reaction is to sleep on the floor; another tendency is to sleep no more for fear of having one's feet chopped off or one's forehead gruesomely elongated. The prosodic equivalent of pattern perceived as procrustean bed would be tantamount to rejecting music itself, having heard a song too constrained to give rise to actual emotion. Unappealing or out-of-date patterning prompts an inelastic ear to throw out pattern altogether. Conversely, Emily Dickinson, warring against epic and patriarchy, interfaced hymn stanza with reigning iamb.

ONTOLOGY OF METER

Since, Nisāda, you killed one of this pair of krauñcas, distracted at the height of passion, you shall not live for very long.⁴

— Vālmiki

Gayatri is both a meter and a Goddess. As a meter, gayatri consists of three lines of eight syllables each. As Goddess, Gayatri is the mother of all Vedas and the unchanging reality behind all phenomena. It is never one or the other, nor one over the other.

The first classical (i.e., post-Vedic) Hindu poet was Vālmīki. When the male of two mating cranes (krauñcas) was shot from the sky with an arrow, Vālmīki extemporaneously cursed the hunter. His speech was verse—four eight-syllable lines which came to be known as the *anustubh* meter, the primary epic verse form of Sanskrit. Because Vālmīki initially uttered this verse in sorrow (*shoka*), *sloka* (the name of the type of verse in which *anustubh* appears) is synonymous with *anustubh*.

Coleridge felt the influence of meters “As a medicated atmosphere, or as wine, during animated conversation, they act powerfully, though themselves unnoticed.”⁵

(True, the beat in accentual poetry tends to be slightly faster than normal heart rate, physically exhilarating the reader.)

On, off; long, short; stop, go—binary is beyond basic. In fact, the first known description of a binary system was the *Chandas Shastra* written by Panini’s younger brother Pingala, in which he listed all the Vedic meters with short and long syllables.

Studies show that the slowed, quantified pace of dactylic hexameter produces cardiorespiratory synchronization. Has any poet put together a poetry capable of embodying and guiding a prosody that has assimilated today’s knowledge of breath, biochemistry and electrons? Would it be counter-prosodic to carry out such a claim?

Appreciation of meter is not due to pattern perceived in an exterior object, but arises through our own bio-regulation and patterning owed to that ‘thing.’

Medieval meter is a simulacrum of the delight taken in the principle of order and recurrence in overcoming the terror of chaos. Existence, nonexistence; existence, nonexistence; word, space; word, space; return.

Of course meter has always survived by means of its variation from perceived pattern—both observing and breaking decorum. Shakespeare’s nobles speak in blank verse while bumpkins blurt out their words in prose and clowns sing songs. The heroic couplet dominated the entire 18th century. Can that be called ‘decorum’? Isn’t it a contradiction to create decorum? To this day rhythm still matches social status and ethos. We’re scarcely able to detect free verse or spoken on-beat rhyme as the decorum of our day.

It's not difficult to trace why western poetry, when experienced as regulatory and healing, is said to be cathartic. Even the logician Aristotle believed that meter was determined by nature (as when speech was introduced in tragedy, the meter appropriately changed from trochaic to iambic). In his essay "The Poet," Emerson wrote:

For it is not metres, but a metre-making argument that makes a poem, a thought so passionate and alive that like the spirit of a plant or an animal it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing.⁶

D.H. Lawrence:

I have always tried to get an emotion out in its own course, without altering it. It needs the finest instinct imaginable, much finer than the skill of the craftsman [. . .] remember skilled verse is dead in fifty years.⁷

Emily Dickinson, associating through-composed iambic pentameter with confinement and authority, chose to write in stanzas. She didn't break from the history of metric convention but interacted with it, as did Whitman. Though Whitman professed that the soul was too whole and pure for mechanical assistance and measure, and although he (in his essay "Real Grammar") claimed the English language is "grandly lawless like the race who uses it [. . .] breaks out of the little laws to enter truly the higher ones,"⁸ he tended to draw on the dactyl to carry emotions of commonality, and the iamb to drive home individuality. Alice Notley refers to metrical patterning as a ghost behind most contemporary American poetry:

We poets know we probably shouldn't locate it and fix on it rather than on the changes American speech has brought to bear on it. But I like having it there in the poem's rich subconscious.⁹

Outburst produces corresponding pattern. Free verse often reverts unwittingly to metrics.

On the other hand, there is the certitude of author and musician Russill Paul, for whom harmony is the goal of the universe. He believes the liberties taken by artists over the last century have produced extreme discord. Paul once asked the Dalai Lama if he had any advice for artists. His Holiness' response was: "Learn to deal with your inner issues in private. Don't burden society with them; it is burdened enough. Transform your own energy first, then use your gifts to bring healing to society."¹⁰ Or, as Cornel West would perhaps say: "Too self-made."

So, evidently, not only is catharsis not in a privileged position in relation to poetic healing, it may be detrimental. What we don't currently have in American poetry is an extensive science of prosody, freed from the accusatory dichotomy of instinct and intellect. Without such knowledge, it's more likely that freed verse, like catharsis, will only add to the overall burden brought on by mass egocentrism.

PERFORMANCE

...my tongue
is my rosary.¹¹
—Kabir

Speech is performance—performance of the most fundamental act of human being. Poetry readings and theater productions are more conspicuous instances of performance. 'Performance' comes from *parfournir*—to fulfill through form. In order to speak or act, performers must surpass their limits and become a greater possibility than 'oneself.' They turn into who they are not. It's a necessary departure for the opening of human being to healing. As poet Stacy Doris has succinctly said: "becoming someone else is how we heal."¹²

Though content may be transformative in itself, performance brings the power of language to fruition—just as offering themselves in performance completes the lives of the performers.

When we hear in our speech the immediacy of the source both language and human being arise from, we're in a harmonizing waveform capable of regulating the body.

Anthropologist Barbara Tedlock has stated that shamans who encourage their clients to publicly perform their dreams are 80% effective in healing while psychiatrists encouraging their clients to describe or draw their dreams in private are only 30% effective.¹³ This goes beyond the catharsis method, calling for contexts and forms in which psyche transforms upon presentation.

CODA

I've only had time to touch upon a few of prosody's basic elements. A fully developed artsience of prosody (capable of healing) would expand upon the

properties and potencies of these elements, while bringing in the remaining elements such as pause, stress, gesture, cadence, enjambment, intonation, rhythm, and so on. And because all meanings of language other than lexical meaning can be considered prosodic, the very brackets enclosing this set of elements must be blown away.

METER IS NOT WHAT IT IS IF DEFINED OUTSIDE OF WHAT IT DOES

To protect you. That you remember you are protected.
That you are protected when this (that which protects you)
exposes you to the fire, the infinite dark.
To keep the words from harming you I write
to keep them from falling outside a form of protection.
The form that keeps them from turning on you.
The limits only form knows. New science—
to keep the limits kept and surpassed without depending on harm.

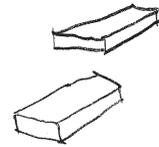
If you want to blossom, make an offering to meter for it is meter that blooms. Meter makes itself synonymous with satisfied desire. Desire produced by meter introduces speech. If you want possessions, make an offering to meter as possessions are meters and the meters will produce possessions. If you want a city, a city exists in its meter and only by its meter may you own or operate a city. Meter may be offered to the sick as prolonged sickness does not agree with meter—it disorders the settling into sickness of those whose sickness would drag on. Meter may be offered to those to whom meter does not apply as meter is the inapplicability, and the offering may then be that which makes the meter apply. Meters must be offered to those who have made offerings, as meters already offered wear out and unworn meters must be newly won to let the offering apply to those to whom it does and does not apply. Measures must be taken for those to whom well-being doesn't apply—taken to let measures that don't apply to those for whom blooming doesn't apply. Who wants to be radiant may make an offering to meaning as measure is radiance and only by measures taken can radiance apply, as meter is made of milk and as milk radiance may fully be made to apply by placing us in the midst of radiance. Offering calls to all meanings at once though we take one measure at a time and then two at once and then one again, as all measures taken at once would burn up the call and all offerings would then produce not its wellspring but its sicknesses and necroses of repeated beat.

I am with Yaska: place life at risk to be protected from now on.
 The safest way to protect yourself is by saving your gods from fault.
 Pindar was the last poet to have practiced this code—(aware of
 the impact on society once anyone finds fault outside oneself.)
 Meters are no more numbers than law is in letters.
 Words accommodate what the words want for us.
 Meter creates the structure that exceeds our technology.
 Without this support our burdens can't be carried off.
 When words delight in them is taken, once they carry burdens
 and only then are the words themselves disencumbered.
 Meter is vegetation. When I say speech is in the air
 I mean we're granted certain means and these means are our home.
 This is poetry for there is no poetry in poetry.
 Poetry is that by which all that which poetry sees is shown.

Notes

- 1) Herbert Fröhlich, "Coherent Electrical Vibrations in Biological Systems and the Cancer Problem," *IEEE Transactions on Microwave Theory and Techniques*, Volume 26, Issue 8 (1978): 613-17.
- 2) G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960) 188.
- 3) Walter A. Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006) 97.
- 4) Vālmiki, *The Rāmāyāna of Vālmiki, Volume I: Bālakānda*, trans. Robert P. Goldman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) 127.
- 5) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1834) 213.
- 6) Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: Modern Library, 2000) 290.
- 7) D.H. Lawrence, *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 61.
- 8) Walt Whitman, *An American Primer* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1904) 6.
- 9) Alice Notley, *Coming After* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005) 136.
- 10) Russill Paul, *The Yoga of Sound* (Novato: New World Library, 2004) 130.
- 11) Kabir, *Songs of Kabir from the Adi Granth*, trans. Nirmal Dass (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991) 257.
- 12) Stacy Doris, in conversation.
- 13) Barbara Tedlock, *The Woman in the Shaman's Body: Reclaiming the Feminine in Religion and Medicine* (New York: Bantam, 2005) 16.

MARBLE S
into
FUNNEL



PINAKIA
into
slots
crank



KLEROTERION

POETRY MAY TAKE ANY SUBSTRATE (INCLUDING POETRY)

[This autobiographical talk was developed from a short essay titled 'If Poetry Leaves Too Much To Be Imagined,' published in 1993 in Object #1, edited by Kim Rosenfield and Rob Fitterman.]

I've called us together in the faith that there is no problem on earth that prosody can't acquire or reclaim . . . that there is no problem that prosody can't claim.

The etymology that concerns me is as simple as it is disconcerting: *poetics* is 'making.' Nothing else, nothing less. (And indeed it was through the generality of the term that I arrived at my working definition of poetics as 'all of making.')

Yet, etymologically—that is, in the lived experience of those who defined the word we now inherit—*poetic* was originally opposed to *practical* (*praktikos*). How does one make something without practicality? *Praktikos* means 'business'; doing business; *managing* as distinct from *making*. As an artist (or am I an entrepreneur?) this schism tyrannizes every aspect of my life. I was discordantly born into its clarification. This conflict is of course cultural, not merely personal. It's my odyssey (far from the path of simply fusing beaux-arts and business acumen).

And the more exclusively *poetic* is understood as ‘creative making,’ the greater the schism. In contemporary culture, the divide is typically total. Manufacture is opposed to art, with design falling in between. Artists often exploit industrial processes but only as a way of distinguishing their quality of art. The merge is trite.

Etymology aside, in current use (to my ear) poetics breaks down into three areas:

- 1) poetics as the art of poetry
- 2) poetics as creative commentary or literary hermeneutics
- 3) poetics as making in general, or, as I say: ‘all-of-making’

I’ll go one step further and propose poetics as ‘materialization’—cottage industry logos, shop-built Big Bang. Word produces material. It is both supreme and servile. The art of poetry subsists in poetics. Poetry is the lesser term. As a poet, everything I do is based on getting the lesser term to swallow the larger. How can the art of poetry possibly be the practice of all-of-making? Simply by realizing prosody as cosmology, by wrapping the creative around the insufficiently emphatic practical (admittedly, I want the wonder of the world to blow business away).

It’s not only a matter of comic vengeance (of wanting to prevail after absorbing so many socioeconomic disadvantages in the pursuit of art). More importantly, my need that creativity reabsorb Creation is a matter of setting the record straight. Creation is creative. It’s creative in an ongoing sense. It’s a verb. One long verb. Maybe endless.

I’d like to speak the language of origination. One manageable way to speak the language of origination is by speaking all the languages within the language I speak. This is a localized Big Bang. Speaking the languages of all the makings around me would confer a fluency that could then force me out of conflict with the practical. The writing of a poem would then be urgent news, further findings—for social science, urban planning, astrophysics, applied ethics, business modeling, biotechnology, cognitive science or agroecology. The aesthetics I’ve forfeited in order to fight the world that won’t accept beauty as be-all and end-all would then be aestheticized. Adding this exacting panglotism to an attuned heart opens the languages within language. Anyone’s.

Through the language of origination, it's possible to assemble one's having been created in the first place; engendering that which generates—like Maori artists carving their very ancestors just as genomics is ancestor tampering, only invasively.

Which makes making, outside of poetry, *misperception*.

Am I fooling myself? The tone in which I carry out this transdifferentiation of poetry is *high unseriousness*. This is the mood, the mode, that accepts such ardent antics. It keeps the weights of meanings suspended, unsuspecting.

At the outset, I'd like to exonerate myself. Whenever I have referred to publication as 'interment' and page-poetry as 'putrefaction,' I have done so only for the greater good of the poem. With *world-as-is*, it has seemed delusional to proceed as though *poem-as-is* could have the desired effect upon a poetry-dispassionate populace. I don't want to somehow make a well-adjusted poem in a world ill-adapted to poetry. It's a formula for isolation and decrepitude. Being true to the poem in a nonmorbid sense would then require an approach to the poem from *the other way around*. From the ground up. As the ground itself. Adapting the world to the art of poetry.

Problems arise when the vicarious practice of *the other way around* becomes exhaustive and consummate—when it becomes the only poem practiced. If it's not necessarily recognizable as poetry, how then speak for the art form, with no currency, without a body of work, without the knowledge of having brought the art about? Dispossessed? Disinherited, and rightfully so—for having squandered the wealth, for having freely let the poem go, for remaining attached as a way of having freely let the poem go.

As a poet, practicing poetics-as-all-of-making has been the pursuit of a not-me. A moving away from the redundancy of aptitude—away from acquiring what was already mine to acquire—in order to arrive at a place where I have nothing to give and everything to gain (for the disappeared poem?).

Poetry is the efficacy of meaning. And for this efficacy, meaning is not requisite—it's *gratuitous*. A surfeit. Such a poetics is actually very restrictive. A sentence has until its finish to take effect—to bring about that which it says. Each sentence up against all the ills in the world. Where one thing is changing into another, where anything is coming about, the poem becomes legible. It reads the code. Recognizes the pattern. It's the hallucination of unrestricted literacy. The poet impersonates who the poem requires until it is redoubtable.

Poetics poses so little threat (so little is expected of the poem, its influence so negligible), it moves under radar, walks through walls, passes through checkpoints unchecked—able to penetrate further than its detractors would ever suspect. Comic Warfare—reaching deeper into enemy territory than detectable. Standing bodies back up—diaphanous, abetting and alphabetting.

Consider *is* and *beyond*. While *is*, obviously, is beyond our grasp, the poem nonetheless makes this condition explicit by wrapping *is* around *beyond*. This also keeps Creation ongoing. The small ‘c’ of creation in our hands, in such a way, frames capital ‘C’ Creation. This act of counter-engulfing is an instance of *exfringement*—a ‘frame exfringement.’

I’ve entirely exfringed.

During the first two decades of my practice of poetics-as-all-of-making the poem’s identity wasn’t conserved. As a consequence, I’m scarcely identifiable as a poet. As a disestablished person, it’s almost impossible to make a contribution to an established discipline. (It’s almost as impossible for stalwart, conventional practitioners to make a difference within their properly conserved fields.) Aside from scant exceptions within architecture, evolutionary biology, linguistics, and neuroendocrinology, my practice of poetry-beyond-recognition has produced no notable findings. In order to make a useful and lasting contribution to a field, I’ve been obliged to introduce the befitting field. I am, for example, the sole contributor to the network of nascent disciplines known as the Sore, Oversensitive, Insecure and Supple Sciences. And, to date, I’ve only been able to start-up a fraction of my Missing and Omitted Social Services. Headwind tends to outweigh headway.

It’s an immolation. The quality of the questioning as the art of poetry—without attempting to preserve its own interests—adopts other quandaries as substrates, acceding to the completeness of the burning. An other-oriented self-qualification in a culture that disqualifies the poetic.

Literary freedom? First question of the day: on the page or off?

(There is of course the concern whether such transmutative acts are appreciable—as the poem undergoes countless momentary extinctions in order to crop back up unrelated to itself.)

I've written the forming, melting, deforming and refreezing of a snowflake before it hits the ground. I've run the static forces of a structure in directions opposite those expected. All of the science of engineered materials—and I mean every bit of it—every grain boundary, every morphology, any plastic deformation or lattice, invariably fissures across as direct prosodic instruction. This is life lived in the immediacy of the vibrant sub-sensory body.

Poetics-as-all-of-making is maddening—patterns and properties constantly breaking across as poetic potential. Like reading the same book many times at once. Like seeing numbers alive in things. Like a poet hearing prosodic order in the orders of music. It hits the homeless hard. An ubiquitous debilitation input. To keep up with the transcribing of materialization as it etches its codes all over my being, as my being.

Fortunately, I've never actually practiced such morphogenetic mimicry so terribly literally. (What a heap of whatever that would have generated.) If I ever do bring about the Great-Epic-Of-All-Of-Materialization it will all fall out quite unwittingly, disjointedly, all over the place. Its bits and pieces assembled at any point along the way. Its failed or freak forms—good chance—granting more fascination and satisfaction than wholes.

What about language per se? With the poem unrelated to itself, renewed in any form other than its own, how will I ever find a way back to language? Was I ever there to begin with? Is my ritual sacrifice a fraud? Perhaps my having-come-around-as-never-having-gone can be explained or perhaps it can't.

The desecrated poem, in 360 x 360 degrees, has eaten its way through its membrane. Gross overproduction of prima material has at last necessitated the reaestheticization of poetics. It's time to crawl out from under. To be refreshed by the air filled with flying shards. The unrelenting density of origination's scribbling has formed a blank surface.

Is poetics-as-all-of-making-embodied-by-the-poem-as-creational synonymous with Logos? Is it as limited as Logos? Whether one believes in an immanentist or interventionist Logos, supernatural and natural are implied. Especially as we are about to finally understand ourselves as inseparable from the environment, it's critical that poetics preserve its potency as artifice. It's a safezone for checking and re-envisioning the haphazard and headstrong swings of the organic. The poem may encompass humanmaking, even as

humans cross into making human (and in doing so encroach upon—stake a claim in—a little piece of Logos.) This is a further, perhaps furthest, exfringement operation—to wrap small craft of poetry around its creator—the speechlessness of Logos.

If *made* is to encompass *unmade*, trust but art. Poem now appears as all-of-making—our combined and embodied arts and sciences and arts of life and lifework. Logos as a subset of making has historically been the hubris or heresy behind the poem, making the poem ‘the poem.’ Where else could Logos lodge? How else could it be heritable if not through our art?

It’s a full-blown rematerialization. The poem no longer takes on the substrate of another material, it becomes that material’s subtle, vibrational substrate per se. The poem-as-materialization is the emergent form’s shift (the signal for which also issues from the poem) into the primal grooves of formal space. The poem—like a totipotent cell’s transdifferentiating into all types of tissue. It’s what I call *mettle*—the energy drawn from one’s entire being—too elusive to localize.

Once poetry exfringes the poetic, the un-annihilated poem appears, incarnating and characterizing us each instant. Our makers—the given, the underlying laws, the models and metaphors, paradigms, policies, patterns, precedents, generalizations, customs, cravings and habits—are the language of poetics. Poetry is the hallucination of unrestricted literacy. The immaterial epigenome.

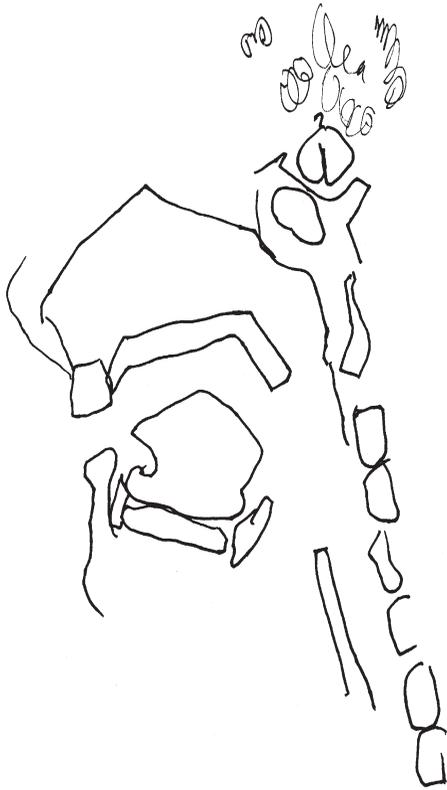
The narrative of the poem (the Epic of Materialization) traces the treachery of humanmade laws enforced as unmade immutable laws of nature. It traces the arts and sciences as they take up the unmade laws. The whole can of worms. Censorship’s creating of the arcane. The hiding of the hidden. The literal as inscrutable. The stage behind the scenes.

Having wrapped the made around the unmade, I arrive at (of all places) the page—and at once arrive at one alarming conclusion: our model of life is *biocide*. This is not what I want to believe about the basis. It is what I see when I put all the pieces together. All-of-making, as it stands, amounts to biocide. That is, all-of-making *unencompassed* by the poem, is biocidal.

It’s an alarmingly asymmetrical battle. A piece of paper up against our end. I write so that, this time around, the fight will nonetheless be a fair fight. A Feast of Fools where the prevailing values are inverted, subverted, converted.

Through our efforts, *kind* (as in humankind) has been rendered as discontinuous as *individual*. Now that kind is as terminal as each, the role of each is to return the gift of continuity to kind.

KINDNESS
root of palate

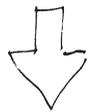


hypothalamus
brain

pituitary
blood

LIQUOR

LUNAR PLEXUS



falls, cools

dissolution of

INTRODUCING THE LOGOSOME

[I claim to have discovered or invented (when no distinction can be drawn between finding and making, the result may be referred to as a heuriprod) the logosome in the summer of 1999.]

What to call it? The very problem of naming is logosomic. What are the variations? Name something that doesn't have a name. Name something that doesn't exist. Name something unnamed until it exists. Name something that exists only in its name. Name something that exists once named. Name something that once named won't then exist. Name something named as it exits. Name something that exists contrary to its name. Name something in spite of its existence. Name something that exists less once named. Name something that exists less unless named. Name something whose existence is name. Name something whose existence is name with or without its name. Unnamed though identified. Is that possible? Just point. Logosomics, as the predictive potency of words, makes light work of such rhetorical questions. Our very thoughts are UFOs.

The logosome will be the ultimate witness to the fact that *poetry may take any substrate*. To be more precise—the logosome will show that substrates *are* their subsumption under poetry. The poetic proof that elucidation (the dark and blinding data; the intimations facts follow) brings forth physiology will indeed be borne by the logosome.

The logosome activates when a word from ‘without’ reaches and rewrites the ordinary ‘within’ (or perhaps nowhere inside or out) and then selectively penetrates the notorious germ barrier.

By *logosome* I mean the actual particle—the somesthetic agent of change situated in its proper biochemistry. This heuristic follows the innate trust that insight is entirely, precisely embodied.

For thousands of years tuberculosis was responsible for devastating epidemics. TB was believed to be a mysterious, amorphous, sickly ether or atmosphere that swept through populations. In 1882, when it was widely announced that the cause of tuberculosis was a tiny bacteria, so weak that exposure to sunlight could destroy it, even before any preventative medical action was taken, the death rate fell to one-third its previous level. The logos had swept through the cities and countrysides. The rumor. The report. The effective superstition. The word—as incarnate suprasensibility, breaking fevers and composing bodies.

I carry out this heuristic not as physicist, physician or metaphysician, but from the premise of the poetic—the one premise already based in creative language as the world materializes in the words in which it will be recognized.

At this level, there really is no relationship between ‘name’ and ‘morphogenesis’—as relationship requires *two*. It’s nondual.

What’s the difference between logosome and chromosome? Is the logosome merely the poetic counterpart of the chromosome acting on the same heritable traits? If so, what is meant by ‘poetic’? Though logosome does indeed influence phenotype, there is no overlap with the genetic material. It is gene-free, as we will also, again, one day be. The logosome is the molecular agent in an aesthetic reaction that alters chemical conformation. It shifts the action out of the *marrow*, which is the narrow bio-deterministic view of life, and opens into the *mettle*, which is all of being brought to bear bodily each instant, as we bring forth our very physiology through our deepest motivations.

While I've made myriad claims, each statement feeds the same thesis: *artwork influences germline*. Actions, practices, approaches carried out in one's lifetime have heritable consequences. An act capable of causing a heritable change I call 'artwork.' It's heresy, just as non-competition is economically and evolutionarily heretical. Hereditary heresy. If I have a black eye, any baby born to me will have a black eye. The entire process wherein the logosome carries out the heretical variation is known as the *aurivocal*—how far the word, once heard, if only in the heart of silence, can take us.

Wording so potent it germinates *who* in *what* we are.

Further organs too distinct to be literal. Extra without having first produced ample, in the superstition that survival is.

original shiftlessness

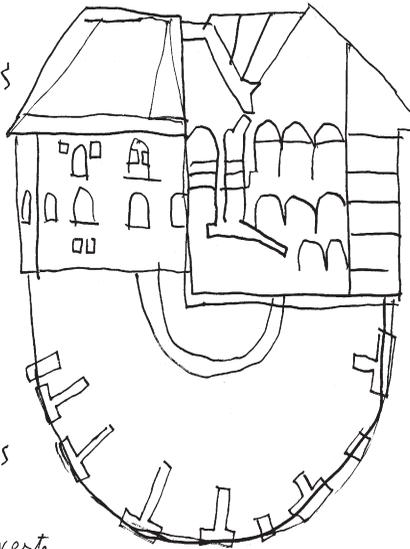
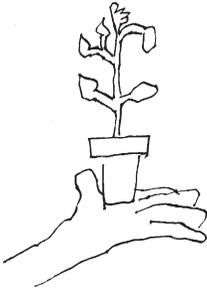
the cause of poverty
is individual and
moral...

STATUTE OF LABORERS
1351

same man who first said
people would sooner accept
a handout than earn their
dignity

(of course designed the first panopticon)

1495
VAGABOND AND BEGGARS
ACT



1530 IDLENESS
OUTLAWED

1601 POOR LAW poverty
considered a necessary
fear

1696 WORKHOUSE CORPORATION



HAMMURABI

death penalty (if the house
I built for you falls down)

1834 NEW POOR LAW



the historical
anomaly

SARGENT SHRIVER 10 YEAR
WAR ON POVERTY

1996 Personal Responsibility and work
opportunity Reconciliation Act —
consistency with which those in need are treated
with contempt by those offering assistance

COMMON CENTS

Exactly 1200
years later
1649, Lord
Faulfax, as
the first act
of newly
reincarnated
England trampling
the crops of George's
Hill commoners —

military intervention
on behalf of private
property

2008
mortgage
originators
originate an
industry code
"I'll
be gone, you'll
be gone"

to lure the swinish
multitude into false
hope of ownership

MONEY, POETRY AND THE NEW COMMONS

SILVIA FEDERICI

“Common Cents” belongs to an illustrious tradition. From William Carlos Williams’ *Paterson*, an “epic” poem supporting the social credit theory (and Party),¹ to Allen Ginsberg’s *Howl*, American poetry has repeatedly confronted the question of money especially in times of social crisis and revolution.

Poetic economics were expelled from the circle of literary respectability in the 1950’s by the likes of Randall Jarrell, who ridiculed *Paterson*, casting money, banking and credit as the “enemies of man, God and contemporary long poems.”² Since then, poets have feared economics.

Kocik’s move, then, is a bold one, also because rather than demonizing money, his objective is to re-imagine it, by analogy with language, as constitutive of a human common. Neo-liberal thinkers should not be too quick to applaud however. What makes money a common for Kocik are not its abstract qualities, fit to represent the abstractness of labor, which presumably make of it the great equalizer. Kocik’s vision is shaped by contemporary radical practices that, against the increasing privatization and individualization of everyday life, aim to create new forms of social cooperation and solidarity, whether by means of urban gardens, or time

banks, or local currencies, as alternatives to the ongoing enclosure of all forms of social and natural wealth.

In this perspective money is the mover and circulator of goods in society, but not—as in capitalism—the instrument for the exploitation of labor and the creator of differentiated labor regimes. Rather, to use a once popular metaphor, money circulates through society by analogy to the circulation of the blood stream, transporting wealth and keeping the system alive—made not only innocuous but beneficial to humanity by the absence of the social conditions Marx so powerfully described: the separation of workers from the means of their reproduction.

Kocik's poetic vision not only anticipates a new society, but stirs the desire to fight for it. In this he validates Shelley's vision of the poet as the unacknowledged legislator of humanity, but with a crucial amendment. Instead of legislator, the poet should be the acknowledged champion for humanity! Thus, when discussing the 1976 Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act that committed the Federal Government to full employment (which is still law but the government has abandoned) he writes:

If literature is indeed the most relevant use of language, then poets can call upon their utmost to remove a law's disuse, or secure remedies from Federal courts when official policies *create* rather than *curtail* unemployment.³

In this process the struggle to transform money becomes the vehicle through which poetry can transform us and poets can become political actors. Kocik has even imagined a new organization for this task: the Pre-Distributive Poet and Performer Pressure Group [PPAPPG]. This would be an organization of poets and performers who would poetically “widen the wealth” and make “art the missing publicly owned public space.”

Notes

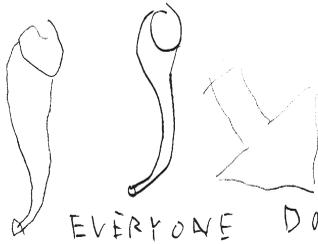
1) Social Credit was a very popular theory and policy tailored for the creation of a “fair” capitalist society that saw the whole population as inheritors of the nation's commonwealth. In it everyone would receive a dividend from this collective commonwealth. This would create a continual stimulus to the economy and tame the capitalist class into organizing production to satisfy the consumers of their products.

2) Randall Jarrell, quoted in Joel Conarroe, *William Carlos Williams' 'Paterson': Language and*

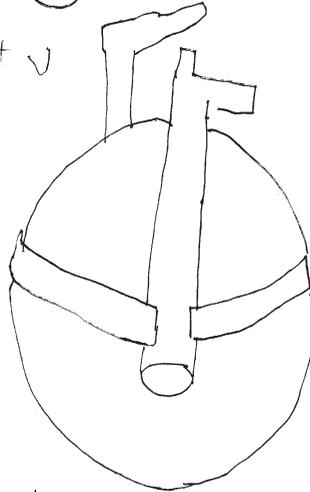
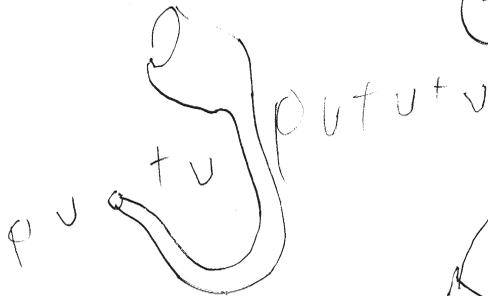
Landscape (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970).

3) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 343.

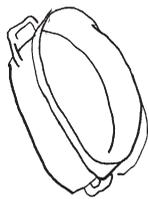
'IN LUCRE'S sordid
charm''



EVERYONE DOESN'T KNOW EVERYONE ELSE



policy for
prohibiting poverty



I HAVE ONLY
THIS PIECE OF
PAPER in the asymmetrical
battle UP AGAINST
- and it is sufficient

INSTEADS

[The following 32 monetary measures treating the paradox and pathology of financialized democracy were distilled from a series of talks, concerns and discussions that began shortly after Michael Bloomberg was elected mayor of NYC, continued through the shadow-banking induced Great Recession and ended around the advent of Occupy.]

In this way, afflictive emotions are liberated as wisdoms and suffering as great bliss. Hence, this approach is referred to as the “fruitful vehicle” . . . because effects are seen to be inseparable from their causes.¹

– Jamgön Mipham

An *instead* is an interaction, intention, adeptness, way of life, purpose, policy, means, compensation, kindness, cost, commitment, interchange, emotion, expression, business plan, balance, structure, understanding, procedure, culture, process, country, vocabulary, framework, formulation or role that is carried out instead of (1) what typically takes place and (2) what one typically does. An *instead* is a fusing of (1) and (2) for a more sentient world. However meaningful one’s life, it is possibly that very living that reinforces a general dissatisfaction (if only by omission). Opening paths to potential

compositions of shared prosperity may well be a matter of setting aside identity, known energy and recognizable artworks. *Insteads* necessarily exceed one's limitations, drawing upon or throwing in with the originality of others and abundance itself. Like our new customized medicines, *insteads* are often more potent when combined synergistically (if it can be determined which therapy can purposefully be mixed with which). *Insteads* necessitate response from the party to whom they appeal and apply. It's not polite to not respond, and it's even more uncivil to not inspire meaningful reaction. It is the work of poets to fulfill language by means of words that liberate response and allow us to be fully alive. Please hold poets responsible. We're composing poetry when we fight for fairly shared resources and productivity. Intent rides the waveform of action (or is it the inverse?). Ills are our raw material. Objective world (as medium) is as malleable as dream.

MAKE THE LAW POETRY

. . . uti lingua nuncupassit, ita ius esto.
(As language has said, so the law is.²)
—The Law of Twelve Tables

This is a call for interested poets, performers and people to collaboratively write and pursue the enactment of model legislation, resolutions, ordinances, bills and initiatives in favor of a more nurturing, other-oriented economy. We'll form a task force for providing lawmakers with model policies that distribute goods and services directly to needs, without the mediation of monetized exchanges geared toward maximized personal gain. We'll serve as a clearinghouse for ideas that introduce and induce an economics based on interconnectivity and plenty.

The condition of scarcity, insecurity and isolation is a cultural contrivance, not a fundamental reality. On the other hand, enjoying an inclusive economy in which we're infinitely grateful to others and to nature for providing the goods that sustain us is integral to who we are.

As things are, representative democracy is the means by which people are given political freedom in order to be subjugated economically. The powers of speech, acting and performance can be used as a countervailing force to make freedom and materiality synonymous. Let economy practiced as commons be part of our proper work as artists!

This is a poetics of pre-distribution and distinctly not the pursuit of a condition of economic redistribution in which the barest minimum of wealth is transferred from above (via taxation, philanthropy and concessions) in order to stave off unrest.

The overall aim is to make changes in the very structure of our monetary system by changing the private nature of the common currency known as ‘money’—to make economy a form of empathy. To this end, we’ll propose laws to lawmakers, write policy publications, engage in dissemination activities, commission research, convene workshops and instruct with our experience.

Possible foci include: wage reparations, repealing the Taft-Hartley Act, putting back Glass-Steagall, proposing procedures for recalling federal officials, greater reliance on referendum, arguing against the legal dismantling of the manufacturing sector, the taxing of unearned income at the same rate as earnings, offering interest-free money, point-by-point challenging of the Roberts Court “systematic dismantling of existing legal protections for women, workers, the environment, minorities and the disenfranchised,”³ backing Barbara Lee’s Income Equity Act, rewriting the constitution at the local level of community self-governance and environmental rights, de-growth, universal entitlement, capping or ending tax-free executive deferred pay, election by lottery and just raising up the bottom in general.

There are already certain inroads available to us. Law itself requires that whenever a federal agency proposes a substantive new law it must first seek public comment. If poetry is to change the structure of money it must be both prescient and fully aware of historical and legal precedents. Corporate wealth, for example, has been public in the past. 19th century corporations, after recovering a certain amount of profit on big projects, were obliged by law to hand all revenue over to the people. (Some advances are backward.) We can get behind the Municipal Home Rule movement. To what extent can towns, municipalities and community bills of rights disallow state and federal laws and the corporate power protected by those laws? Re-framing the constitution to protect localities from corporate interests is not a pipe dream—this is precisely what the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund [CELDF] has already accomplished. CELDF has managed to pass local ordinances that deny corporations constitutional rights. Newly implemented local laws are used as collective civil disobedience tools against state protection of corporate personhood. CELDF is a viable model for developing laws from scratch instead of getting stuck in existing legislative gridlock.⁴

It's also possible to directly intervene in the legal process. Virtually anyone can become an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court), by volunteering unsolicited information or evidence to assist a court in deciding a case being heard. (Whether the testimony will indeed be admitted is of course at the discretion of the court.) The Model Amici Curiae Brief drafted by the civic strategist and legal historian Richard Grossman is an exemplary tool that can be used to “assist communities organizing to challenge the United States government’s gift of constitutional powers to property organized as corporations.”⁵

Let constitutional economics be a sociolect of poetry. Poets, performers and people can reach beyond the analysis of economic and political activities within the existing framework of rules in order to propose non-normative sets of constitutional laws that would commit economic and political players to a more equitable apportioning of our national wealth. (In fact, the judiciary once fell within the jurisdiction of poets.)⁶

For example, Section 1 of the 14th Amendment can be used to argue that a nonliving wage is deprivation of liberty and property. Section 4 can be updated to define the colossal risks taken by investment banks with depositor money as insurrectionary—as more than having broken the social compact—as a revolt against civil authority and a national security threat. Poets can also revisit the long-overlooked 13th Amendment jurisprudence (“Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”) The scope of the 13th Amendment extends beyond reconstruction-era slavery and modern day peonage and human trafficking. It can positively be interpreted as a means for protection against fundamental deprivations of economic freedom (like middle class as indentured debtorship). While the 14th Amendment only applies to state-committed discrimination, the 13th Amendment prohibits both private and public human rights abuses. Could its reach possibly protect against today’s creditor prerogatives?

Just as a poem is the utmost relevance of the use of language in a given context, we can expand the scope of international treaties by applying their terms to our inequitable economy with a radically renewed ardor. Certainly we’ve slid backwards since adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its two companion covenants, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

For equal opportunity to start creating more equal outcomes perhaps the solutions are simpler and more readily at hand than we can imagine.

The universal issuing of a credit card that adjusts the cost of goods to personal income and assets for each purchase?

In 1993, Belo Horizonte, Brazil's fourth largest city, decided to end hunger by declaring food a right of citizenship. As a result of eradicating hunger the infant mortality rate was cut in half. Declaring food as a right also produced a local-grower renaissance, nutrition and gardening community education, a fully participatory market, peoples' restaurants, government competency, and a host of concurrent boons. As Adriana Aranha, city manager overseeing Belo Horizonte's anti-hunger agency, said: "But what is so upsetting, what I didn't know when I started this, is it's so easy. It's so easy to end it."⁷ It's so easy to end private dejection and communal despondence.

Engineer groundswell.

MAKE WAGE REPARATIONS TO THOSE WHO LOST OUT ON DECADES OF NATIONAL GROWTH

Blatant wage theft has hit epidemic proportions. Blatant forms of wage theft include systematic underpayment of a contractually promised wage, non-payment of overtime, minimum wage violations, stolen tips, denial of benefits rightfully owed to an employee, employee misclassification, a culture of 'working off the clock,' illegal deductions in pay, and not paying a worker at all. In 2008, the National Employment Law Center estimated that low-wage workers lost 15 percent of their income to wage theft. Kim Bobo, author of *Wage Theft in America*, estimates that over \$100 billion are stolen from low-wage workers annually.⁸ Along with blatant wage theft there are many forms of built-in, sanctioned wage theft. The ratio of CEO to worker compensation, dissociating increases in income from productivity and growth, profit strategies that depend on doling out low wages and layoffs, gender and race pay gaps and a minimum wage that does not adjust to inflation are all sanctioned wage thefts.

Under the pre-1980's social contract, as the rich got richer, so did the middle class. Since the late 1970's, the majority of workers have seen their real wage decrease as U.S. productivity has steadily increased. During the last boom of

the last decade, the middle class became (in the words of the Congressional Oversight Panel for the Troubled Asset Relief Program chair Elizabeth Warren) “the turkey at the Thanksgiving dinner” that fed the economic elite. Had compensation distribution rates kept pace with productivity since 1970, the median household income would now approach \$100,000! David DeGraw, author of *The Economic Elite Vs. The People of the United States of America*, considers this withholding of wealth (“An entire generation of massive wealth creation has been strategically withheld from 99% of the U.S. population”) the greatest crime against humanity in the history of civilization.⁹

It’s time to bring to the table the matter of wage reparations for wealth withheld not only over the last few years but over the last forty years as well. It’s not an entitlement but a sum that’s due.

Reparative actions for some of the more blatant violations have already been carried out. Last year Staples paid its assistant managers \$42 million in illegally underpaid wages. Walmart settled an underpaid wage case for \$35 million. New York car-washers received \$3.5 million in unpaid overtime. A 2009 study titled “Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers: Violations of Employment and Labor Laws in America’s Cities” has shown that 26 percent of workers in low-wage industries are paid less than the minimum wage, and 76 percent were either underpaid or not paid at all for overtime hours.¹⁰ Similar levels of violation span the economy in industries such as caregiving, retail stores, restaurants, manufacturing, janitorial and security services, dry cleaning and laundry, beauty salons, hotels and motels.

Tax refund is not a proper reparation (that’s not where the lost revenue went). Culpable finance firms should start payouts for lost income and social services caused by the 2008 collapse. When the state of California cut over half a billion dollars from the university system, college students backed by trade unionists and activists asked the state’s top 1% to refund the cut. The proposed Financial Transaction Tax [FTT] (sometimes referred to as the ‘Robin Hood tax’) is a miniscule charge on bonds, derivatives, currencies and other speculations to be levied on big banks and investment firms. In effect, the FTT would function as a small preemptive reparation. Nurses in both the U.S. and Europe have been particularly active in pressuring their respective governments to adopt this tax.

There are thousands upon thousands of cases of workers and retirees living in penury who were subject to employer wage and benefit violations. To help

put a halt to further abuses reparative settlements must become common practice. Were we to establish even a modest cut in CEO to worker wage ratio (say 100 to 1) and apply the algorithm retroactively, the returns to the workforce would be colossal.

Wage and salary discussions, typically discouraged or even prohibited by managers (particularly in the private sector), must become part of our public discourse. This would be a solid starting point toward uniting across race and gender gaps to end income discrimination.

There is an abundance of evidence showing that a higher living-wage standard does not harm job growth, business growth or pro-development climates. Nonetheless, market democracy is geared to work just well enough to keep a middle class (the poor and destitute be damned!) placated and fearful of even greater personal economic difficulties; just well enough to keep any labor movement on our soil from fighting for worker ownership of the businesses that produce our goods and services. There is only a smattering of unrest or distrust, even though the middle class dream of punching in and punching out within a society of an ever-increasing real-wage collapsed 40 years ago.

Until further notice, let's refer to punching in as a temporarily alienable liberty.

RETURN TO SORTITION: MAKE LEADERSHIP BY LOTTERY THE BEDROCK OF DEMOCRACY AGAIN

I say that justice is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger.¹¹
—Plato

Elect decision-makers by lottery, as we do jurors. Appoint officials as a random sample of citizens. We truly can't do any worse than we're doing now. There'd be no need for campaign finance reform. The Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission decision (prohibiting the government from restricting massive political expenditures by corporations and unions) would be rendered irrelevant. Sortition (rule by the people through the appointment of lawmakers by lot) is the true test of democracy. The first democracy on the planet understood that sortition was the only way to overcome oligarchy and corruption. The randomization machine used by the Athenian polis to select its officials was called a 'kleroterion.' Sortition is far closer to Natural Selection than a free market. Ambition disqualifies qualification.

MAKE DECISION-MAKING NON-REPRESENTATIONAL

Democracy is how decisions take place. The vote is how your voice is taken away. Commoning is a decentralized, popular, open-ended, slow-paced, often inefficient form of collaborative listening in which people help each other speak—as distinct from giving our voices over to spokespeople. The next step (in a yet nascent democracy) will be a new way of making decisions inclusively. Congress and political conventions will not be the center of political discourse. It's evolutionary: representative democracy with an 8% approval rating has killed itself off. Legislators lack legitimacy when it's known, once they're voted in, they'll answer to lobbyists and act as though big contributors are their bosses. In Congress, issues that could represent greater good become intractable.

Because democracy is the way in which people are given political freedom in order to be subjugated economically, clearly we can no longer call what we're striving for 'democracy.' Etymology has its own evolutionary dynamics. The meanings of words invert. Language is unmanageably alive. Perhaps our civic assemblies should be as alive as language. At this point, either democracy will proceed by plebiscite or perish. (In plutocracy, only plebians are not parasites.)

Democracy as representative has become the ideal mode for proceeding with the assumption (insult?) that 'people' aren't qualified to grasp the complexities that determine their own lives and come up with the most effective solutions. In this infantilization, there is the further assumption that people will act irresponsibly and chaotically if the controls are simply handed over to concerned citizens.

We (as distinct from the 'stronger' in the above Thrasymachus quote) qualify each other.

Individuals who are in positions of power simply because they figured out how to make more money than most people should be, de facto, disqualified from public service as untrustworthy with regard to empathetic action. Depositor-owned banks and worker-owned factories are analogs for bottom-up democracy. Face-to-face changes prejudice. Face-to-face, energy is not diverted to electing new politicians or making new laws. All is allowed to fall away—to know nothing of oneself and assume no knowledge of others—leveling ourselves before the wonder of communication and setting aside self-interested-deafness-as-the-acme-of-freedom-of-speech.

We have the world on our side. We don't have to say another word that is not inclusive. Stop everything. A single image, one transformative action or a resonant word can spread throughout the world in minutes. The globe is our local assembly.

Make social justice, political justice and economic justice synonymous.

DEBT DENUNCIATION

What I don't like about the idea of debt-cancellation is the presumption that our debts are valid. Cancellation, however welcome, is at once a final condoning of the debt. What interests me is the construction of frameworks that question the legitimacy of the lending process, altering our understanding of money in ways that might undo personal debt at its core.

Is money owed to an institution that has criminally acquired its capital a credible debt? Is money owed to an industry that has brought the national economy to its knees, caused widespread hardship and then been bailed out by the distressed public a valid debt?

Privatization is a flagrant uprising against the government (the public).

Section 4 of the 14th Amendment cancels all Federal and State debts "incurred in aid of insurrection." The clause basically declares that the U.S. government won't cover any debt incurred by the Confederacy during its attempted secession (nor cover any claim for the loss of slaves). Section 4 should be updated to include the cancellation of debt incurred by any citizen from an institution posing a threat to national stability for its own gain.

We're looking at insurrection from the wrong angle; perhaps from the wrong side.

The planning of a debt-fettered population is treasonous. Securities fraud, predation and unjust enrichment imperil market democracy. Permissible 600% interest on a payday advance should in itself constitute ample criteria for collapsing the contradiction between morality and law.

There are acts (like usurious loaning) that should be prohibited that are nonetheless not against the law. There are laws for prohibiting acts that should

be prohibited that are nonetheless not against law—they just haven't been written yet; nor should they need to be written to be implemented (if it's a matter of conscience).¹² Either way, as the saying goes (as cited above): "As language has said, so the law is." Ultimately, prohibiting the unconscionable is a matter of coming up with words potent enough to enact the prohibition. Poets?

The issue is not debt cancellation but, on the contrary, debt restitution—not drawn from the public treasury but the breaking up of banking spoils. Let interest-bearing loans be illegal instantly and retroactively, requiring creditors to make restitution of all interest ever collected. At least we could form a Debt Restitution Committee for all interest paid in excess of the statutory maximum usury limit set by each state.

Debt predates human being. We could never repay the gift of life. We're over-endowed, yet, in the end, everything is taken away. It's not a balanced situation. We're filled with grievances and goodwill. If we must have both rich people and poor people, why not alternate year to year? The banker and the borrower interchange. The offshore shelterer and the short-order cook. It can't be predictable. The totally absurd is no less absurd than our current condition.

Money is a social currency, not an economic currency. As in the beginning.

Would debt *denunciation* be more potent than debt *cancellation* (which is valuative, equivalent and above suspicion)? Denounced debt doesn't grow right back, while the clean slate of cancellation is a fresh debt restart.

Education, for example, is so invaluable there is no equivalency. It should be free because the debt can never be repaid. Banks and private lenders in particular establish terms for the cost of education which can easily turn unpayable. With their educations, students would like to give back to society something invaluable, but they are typically too burdened to do so. (Here I'm defining generosity as the desire to give invaluablely.) In the situation of an unpayable debt or when debt servicing determines our every waking hour and troubles our sleep, money itself becomes invaluable. No available amount is enough. It exceeds the value of our very hours. When commercial economy meets human economy, the result can be catastrophic (and not only for students). Instead of money being used to enhance one's functioning and prosperity within the society, the monetization of every manner of exchange

becomes debilitating. Mind becomes career-mindedness. Moral behavior becomes the equivalent of honoring one's repayment plans. Behind our failure to pay is the threat of violence.

Can we, at this point, at least declare that only the principle is owed? Dorothy Day advocated the abolition of legal enforcement of interest-rate contracts. Can we at least write down debts to reflect ability to pay, instead of handing over more wealth to our often conniving creditor class?

I still say *money* is the commons.¹³ It's the currency of our shared means of subsistence. Commoning humanizes money. But when the commons itself becomes monetized, so does all that we share and how we share it.

At this point, there's not much unmonetized interconnectedness left. The conversion of the commons into a creditor cash cumulator and capital expansion contrivance is nearly complete. Loans are merely the means for borrowers to make enough money to continue servicing their loans. The bailouts were all about keeping us bonded to our debts by keeping them on the books.

Of course the genteel word for 'debt' is 'credit.' Our consumer debt crisis is another form of sanctioned wage theft. Alan Greenspan:

As we reflect on the evolution of consumer credit in the United States, we must conclude that innovation and structural change in the financial services industry have been critical in providing expanded access to credit for the vast majority of consumers, including those of limited means. Without these forces, it would have been impossible for lower-income consumers to have the degree of access to credit markets that they now have.¹⁴

Since the recession began, banks have drastically cut lending and credit card companies have made credit more expensive and harder to obtain. The only easy money available is the financial innovation known as the 'payday loan.' The deficit (national debt) is considered a national security threat. Personal debt (total U.S. consumer debt as of May 2011: \$2.43 trillion¹⁵) is an even greater national security threat. (A satisfied and economically secure citizenry will defend its lifestyle against any enemy. Anyone deeply concerned about our national security cannot fail to reflect on the fact that al-Qaeda and the Occupy Wall Street movement targeted the same symbol.)

When considering a loan, a bank will look at the potential borrower's debt-to-income ratio. Financial experts have determined that a person's outstanding debts should not exceed 36% of gross monthly income. Common sense says that any debt service ratio over 20% is a threat to both personal and national security.

Again, the total U.S. consumer debt as of May 2011: \$2.43 trillion. Average credit card debt per indebted household: \$15,799.¹⁶ Less than half of U.S. households have a retirement account holder.¹⁷ Of the 60% of bankruptcies that are attributable to unpayable medical bills, 3/4 of the filers actually had health insurance.¹⁸ Most of the medically uninsured (58%) are from working families. We fear our medical system more than sickness; debt more than disease. 2011 college graduates owed an average of \$26,600 on their student loans.¹⁹ They also graduated with an average \$4,100 in credit card debt.²⁰ Student loan debt now exceeds credit card debt,²¹ while student loan default rates rise faster than default rates for credit cards.²² 14.7% of students who graduate in debt will default on their loan payment within three years²³ (a responsive government would 'interpret' this as a de facto strike demanding emergency measures). Students should be mad as hornets. Congress has removed all consumer protections from student loans, including bankruptcy protection, refinancing rights, statutes of limitations, truth in lending requirements and even the applicability of state usury laws. Congress also ceded unprecedented powers of debt collection to the lenders, including wage and social security garnishing, suspension of professional licenses and denial of public employment.

Insurmountable debt as legitimization of an unpaid workforce is an historical constant in the West, beginning with the Roman *plebeians* and *coloni*. Student loans and northern creditors harvesting Third World surpluses are examples of contemporary debt-peonage.

There's very little jubilee. One would assume that, at least in America, debtor's prison is a thing of the past (two signatories to the Declaration of Independence were jailed for debt). In fact, more than a third of U.S. states permit incarceration for nonpayment of debts. Given that money is power, it's safe to assume we're kept out of prison in order to find ways to keep paying our debts.

What can we do now? What measures can we take? Domestic debt cancellation for the distressed is not about to happen—resentment on the

part of debtors in good standing, alone, would eliminate such a possibility. (Should we also refund those who paid off their usurious debts? Why not?) Should there be a general, well-coordinated debt strike? Should borrowers in good standing sympathetically default and join the already-delinquent? When it comes to sacrificing security, sympathy simply isn't terribly widespread. If we lived in a functioning gift-economy, weakening oneself (giving away all one has) would in fact be part of the rhythm of reciprocation. The debt strike is a weapon of last resort, and it's a long way from being built and posing an actual threat—simply because it pre-assumes the society it moves toward is already in place. A strike hurts many of the wrong(ed) people without setting up a procedure for the culpable to turn things around—to help themselves 'qualitatively' by being of great service to others. (The most effective debt forgiveness would start with the usurious carrying out their own atonement.) Should we implement a financier embargo: no re-fueling of private jets and Lamborghinis, depriving the glitterati and public-sector-bashers of the public and its services (on whose backs their fortunes are made and facilitated)? The collective-private (all individuals taken together) is the public. Let's simplify: anyone other than yourself is your *public*. The financial sector made vast profits by trading with public entities and pension funds. The embargo could then include city councils leveraging their money and divesting their funds from banks that refuse to modify mortgages or re-negotiate rates and fees. As Eliot Spitzer has said:

The actual ownership of major banks, manufacturers, and retail giants resides in vast repositories of capital that are owned and controlled by the public: mutual funds, public pension funds, and endowments at public institutions. If the public exercised its huge ownership capacity by influencing board member selection, compensation, and political donations, then these companies would be fundamentally altered.²⁴

Should there be a Defaulter's Party or an Unmanageable Debt Party? Definitely—defaulters (perhaps a quarter of the adult population) uniting across all divides (car, student, home, business, credit card loans) to petition for fairer repayment terms (perhaps 20–30 cents on the dollar). Obviously, we're in need of a force equal to the influence of the finance-sector lobbying that has been instrumental in creating ideal default conditions.

Keeping in mind that money is the commons and that it's not the little borrowers who've taken more than their fair share, can we establish a shared sense of security that hurts no one and punishes no one in the process? Can

we change a corrupt system and all those who control it by doing everyone a great favor? Poets?

If we implement debt forgiveness, who should be forgiven? Who merits forgiveness?—those who lost their jobs or homes due to the recession; those subject to predatory, purposefully deceptive lending practices; those whose lender incentivized default, resulting in a greater than 15% customer-default rate; those whose lender relied on penalties and fee collections for more than 20% of total revenue? Many creditors were already forgiven their debts via TARP funds. What's left to forgive? All those responsible for the grossly asymmetrical compensation (those “in a position to take”) could be asked to turn criminality into virtue by setting up rebates from their personal fortunes for the clients they've disserved. Even a billion dollars is a small price to pay for clear conscience (the company one incessantly keeps with oneself). Sallie Mae is the largest student lender in the U.S. A colossal 60% of Sallie Mae's income comes from fees, added interest and penalties. It's a clear sign that the design is rotten—legality, lobbying and loopholes aside. When Sallie Mae's CEO Albert Lord stops to reflect on whether he should use a 2-iron or 5-wood on his private 244-acre golf course in Anne Arundel County, just outside of Washington DC, we can be sure he's not weeping over the 46% default rate on high-interest private loans issued to low-income students and the consequent damage done to those who are just starting out in life. As Lord recently told the Washington Post: “The sole purpose here is to build a golf course [. . .] a very, very private golf course.”²⁵ The man is in serious need of coming clean, and it's our responsibility to create the occasion.

Again, with forgiveness plans, amnesties, reparations, settlements (as distinct from prosecutions), rebates and refinancing, we have to be wary of ‘payoff’ mentality—as though the situation has been satisfied as a way of maintaining status quo. Like redistribution, debt forgiveness is a dead issue. It simply allows the same system to sprout anew. The monetized world is robust and invasive. From the *Position Statement for a Peaceful World, Feminists for a Gift Economy*, presented at the World Social forum in Porto Alegre, January 2002: “The answer to the injustice of the appropriation of the abundant gifts of the many is not a fair return in cash for the theft but the creation of gift based economies and cultures where life is not commodified.”²⁶

In a free market, student loan integrity is a lost cause. On the other hand, a people can decide that education must be free. Money is the commons and money will always want to pressure students to pay exorbitantly. Taking back

the commons, in this case, is a matter of deciding that education is part of our infrastructure and can't be financialized.

What would be more effective than the mutual destruction of lender and borrower brought on by a general debt strike? An indictable denunciation of profiting from the hardship of others. Rich nations renouncing all profiting from the world's poorest nations. Declaring the dissolution of conflict of interests—if you hurt one of us you hurt us all. With the power of words, place in the world the relationships and structures that denounce and renounce inequity. Poets, traditionally, have the power to renounce and denounce and can use this power as a destruction-sparing device—to announce another world and not only antagonize the anti-world (the world we don't want and already have).

Perhaps all lending should be philanthropic. Short of that, let's have a public debate about usury and put the matter to a referendum vote. Is usury profit without labor or product? Is usury the charging of any fee for the use of money (as history usually defines it)? Is it excessive, exorbitant interest? Usury is the charging of a price for credit that exceeds the limits set by law. Let's look at the usury laws and see why interest rates in the U.S. typically exceed the limits allowable by state laws.

As of January 2010, according to Fitch Ratings, the national average default interest rate on credit cards was 27.88%, a full 12% higher than the rate allowed by law in the highest-interest-rate state. State usury laws vary rather widely. Illinois, for example, has a legal interest rate of 5% while the legal rate of interest in New Mexico is 15%.²⁷ How do the lenders bypass the law? Where can poets pick up the issue and begin to appeal, petition and apply pressure?

The 1978 *Marquette National Bank of Minneapolis v. First of Omaha Service Corp.* decision allowed nationally chartered banks to charge the legal rate of interest in their home state regardless of the borrower's state of residence. In 1980, the Depository Institutions Deregulation and Monetary Control Act exempted federally chartered savings banks, installment plan sellers and chartered loan companies from state usury limits. In 1996, *Smiley v. Citibank* further determined that states could not regulate fees. There you have it.

Granted, the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009 is merciful. If you read its provisions and protections you will learn

just how roughshod the banking industry rode right over our lives. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau with its newly appointed director (Richard Cordray) promises to improve disclosure practices, accountability and transparency. But, neither of the above have any power over interest rates! Unbelievably, the problem is perpetually and purposefully unaddressed.

Can we make charging fees for money illegal and still make money available? This would be a commons.

The JAK Medlemsbank in Skövde, Sweden is already there. (JAK is an acronym for Land, Labor, Capital). JAK charges no interest on loans that are entirely financed by member savings. Local Exchange Trading Systems [LETS], mutual credit Time Banks (a community that uses units of time as currency) and Interest and Inflation Free Money²⁸ are also viable examples. The drawback with regard to these lenders, of course, is that they are monetarist, functioning in tandem with the dominant market exchange system, without a powerfully negative critique of the logic of exchange itself. These incentives offer alternative approaches within the ubiquitous economic system, extending short-term participation of the poor within the monolithic marketplace without proposing lasting social change.

Allegedly, we're the land of the free. The eyes of the entire world are on us. If we can't rein in the interest rate right now, the whole world will feel the squeeze; the globe could shatter.

Eradicate interest. This will, in itself, move us toward a more mothering economy in which needs are directly met without manipulative profit-mongering. Money can become part of the gift economy rather immediately. Leave the bailouts in place (no reparations from egocentric financial institutions for profiting from the public gift instead of making the money flow for the good of all). Reduce all existing loans to zero-interest. For now, the manipulators of capital can keep their wealth while the money system is restructured against further creditor accumulation. Money would become free money—no paying for its use. What's the incentive (if not compassion) for making a zero-interest loan? Banks either give out the money or watch it lose value due to inflation (in effect a 'negative-interest currency' and concomitant compulsion to circulate). Overall, it's either this or losing everything when the unpayable-personal-debt crisis hits.

Let hoarding become a losing proposition. Let performance bonuses beyond 10x the minimum wage be taxed at 100%. Capital gains may be subject to an Eisenhower-era, progressive tax rate.

Or, if grow we must, merely matching interest rate to the rate of economic growth would significantly disperse the concentration of wealth.

With the above measures in place, we could then move on to the crucial discussion of free money.

MAKE GROSS ECONOMIC INEQUALITY UNLAWFUL ACROSS ALL DIVIDES

That is, examine the presumed criteria for income discrimination.

Think of all the divides to undo and then come up with even more—race, gender, age, education, opportunity, location, vocation, and division of labor, at the very least. Can we at least admit that our degree of economic disparity is distasteful?

By law, government money can't flow to companies that discriminate socially in their employment practices by race or gender. We can also deny tax money to companies that discriminate economically. Today's wage inequality is the main mechanism of economic injustice and ranks among the most violent discriminatory practices our nation has ever suffered. Billions of tax dollars flow annually to companies that pay their CEOs more in one day than a worker earns in one year.

MAKE RECALLS OF FEDERAL OFFICIALS BY THE CITIZEN BODY A COMMON OCCURRENCE

There's no sane reason why a people should be stuck with representatives for a full term if they've failed to act on their campaign promises. It should be common practice to dismiss duplicitous public officials, instead of enduring them for years on end to the detriment of the polity they disserve. (An electorate, in fact, empowers its politicians to be duplicitous by not swiftly holding them accountable. 'We' are always to blame—I contend.) Currently,

federal officials can only be removed by impeachment. Recalls are allowed at the state level in 18 states, and at the local level in 29 states. Let recall be universal and swift, with no hard feelings.

BAIL OUT PEOPLE, NOT SOCIOPATHIC BANKS

The troubling paradox is that the strongest proponents of 'broken windows' theory and policies in the blue collar crime context are the strongest opponents of applying analogous policies in the elite white collar crime context. *The Wall Street Journal* is the most prominent example of this class-based incoherence.²⁹

—William K. Black

The total figure is now emerging. According to Working Paper No. 698 of the Levy Economics Institute, the Fed, in its function as lender-of-last-resort, dolled out over \$29 trillion in emergency assistance to foreign and domestic entities during the 2007-09 financial crisis.³⁰ Only one entity (the Term Auction Facility) can be understood as suitable for the Fed's known mandate to protect commercial banks from collapse. The bailout was basically a rescuing of the shadow-banking sector.

Had the lender-of-last-resort simply given \$93,000 in fiat currency to every man, woman and child in the U.S. (a commensurate distribution of the \$29 trillion), the stimulus package would have been unnecessary, no homes would have been lost, all potential start-ups would have been seeded, and an innovation frenzy would have far exceeded any abuses. How would the banks have made out? They'd have rendered themselves serviceable to their customers or gone out of business. As for the Fed itself, it would have proven that our democracy is strong in all of its parts, as a single institution of unelected officials would have freely carried out its commitment to the citizenry instead of vindicating itself by propping back up the financialized democracy that had just failed almost everyone.

Lending primarily to other financial institutions, hedge funds, insurance companies and real estate groups while engaging in their own speculations, banks have moved so far away from financing economic development that they basically benefit at the expense of the economy, in a predatory, extractive, sociopathic fashion. This pattern of behavior was more consistent and insistent than ever, as bad loans on bank balance sheets became public debts owed by taxpayers and the TARP faucet was flowing.

As the great subsidiarity advocate Ambrogio Damiano Achille Ratti wrote in his *Quadragesimo Anno*, “every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them.”³¹

MAKE OUR NEGATIVE RIGHT (THE RIGHT TO DO NOTHING ABOUT ANYTHING WHATSOEVER) A POSITIVE VOW

Is that a right, an obligation, a law, responsibility or mere prerogative? Is it written, oral, assumed or just tacitly upheld as a rule of thumb?

Above all, you own your freedom. In a vacuum, freedom is ownable.

Add interaction.

I just happened upon the following Ayn Rand pledge: “I swear, by my life and my love of it, that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine.”³²

Negative rights function like unwritten permissions. “I don’t have to extend my hand.” “No one can make me pitch in.” “What does it profit me if I pad your pocketbook?” “How can it possibly hurt you if I make a billion dollars?” Expressions like these keep common vermin from crawling up the legs of superpeople. Can we measure what is lost in overall economic well-being when so much wealth is pocketed by so few? Is it or isn’t it self-destructive to dedicate our national resources to the elimination of the commons? It’s a paradox I should be able to appreciate—‘people’ without ‘public’; nationless nation.

Emotionally, we have the negative right to not feel ashamed, guilty, greedy or repentant. I suppose the pulpit and the poem could make positive rights of these reproofs: “You must feel awful about your complacency.” “You must make amends for damage done whether by you or another.”

Please refrain from making a billion dollars (though I would privately admire you for having done so and wish I had done the same for myself).

On April 19th of 2011, McDonald’s launched a national hiring day. 62,000 of 938,000 applicants were hired for positions paying roughly half the \$15.95

hourly average across all industries. Nothing wrong with putting people back to work after a recession, right? McDonald's didn't have to pay a living wage and, of course, it did not. At an opportune time to offer even less than usual, they (or it?) indeed did.

We're too divided, distressed and opportunist to rely upon lame, unregulated morality as market reform.

The future of humankind depends upon the vows that arise from the emptiness of our ultra-free negative space.

Once emptiness becomes a selfish state, we're undoubtedly doomed.

Once the space of negative right (the voluntary) becomes insular, limitless energy is no longer available and the globe grudges over.

No one steps up.

MAKE FULL EMPLOYMENT THE GOAL OF ECONOMIC POLICY

I was about to write 'make full employment the law.' I stopped short because it already is law. It's been statutory since the 1976 Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act.

As Andy Kroll has noted, McDonald's acceptance rate of 62,000 out of 938,000 applicants (6.2 percent) on its national hiring day is "more selective than Princeton, Stanford, or Yale University admissions offices."³³

Expose the fact that labor surplus is planned. Under a labor surplus, market forces place downward pressure on wages, and business owners maximize profits. Wealth-holders-with-more-disposable-income is the core republican mission. On the other hand, creating a labor shortage (an environment in which there are more jobs available than workers to fill them) would optimize spending of real wealth by the poor and middle classes. This is a pressing poetic priority. (A poetic priority is a common good that politics and privacy prove helpless to provide.)

As things are, the National Jobs For All Coalition calculates that the actual unemployment rate is 17.8%—28.4 million unemployed people, with

more than 9 job-seekers for every available job. (The NJFAC publication “Uncommon Sense” is an excellent model for poets wishing to apply their language skills to the social change movement.³⁴) To the number of officially unemployed workers, the “U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey” [CPS] adds involuntary part-time workers, non-job seekers who want a job and full-time year-round workers earning less than poverty level, and comes up with a grand total of 45.4 million. In my estimation, that’s somewhere between 1/4 and 1/5 of the working population out of work, out of luck, on the dole, down and out.

It’s a planned paradox. We’re given a dual-identity as worker and consumer. The two roles work against each other, grinding us down each and every day. We want lower wages so that goods and services will be cheaper once we leave work and become consumers. If we receive more pay, consumer prices will rise with the increased cost of production and we will have proportionately less buying power with the added money. A wage and benefit increase could also, ultimately, force our factories overseas as our wages fall to zero.

A few are making a lot of money from this fake conundrum.

Until recently, companies would indeed relocate to countries where worker exploitation is allowable. Now they can stay home and either import illegal immigrants directly to their shopfloors or offer the natives insultingly unacceptable terms (as has been the case in my hometown of Austin, Minnesota, home of Hormel Foods). Boeing and Caterpillar will soon open new plants in the U.S. There is a rebound in manufacturing. The rebound is based on cuts in unit labor costs (as well as the devaluation of the dollar). During the recession, companies obtained emergency concessions from the unions. Though firms are profiting again, the concessions remain in place. This celebrated growth in manufacturing is based on the deliberate orchestration of a decline in the wages, benefits and living standards of U.S. workers—a raw instance of the planned pauperization of almost everybody. It is of the utmost poetic importance that these emergency concessions do not become the new norm—the new norm for even more “ruthless taking.”

After WWII, the great fear was that the return of 12 million soldiers would undermine the civilian workforce and throw the country back into the Great Depression. To avert disaster, Congress passed the GI Bill of Rights. 7.8 million veterans went to school on the GI Bill, and we nurtured a generation of veterans ultra-fit for entering the workforce.

By definition a student is not unemployed. Instead of lining up the unemployed at McDonald's we could send them to school, letting them feel first hand the truth of the old adage that 'recession is a blessing in disguise.'

The goal of the 2011 More Than Full Employment and Equitable Growth Act [MT-FEAEGA ACT] is 9 job openings per applicant.

The way of the world is realism. It's a front, a fact that serves as a front and is easily manipulated. It's what we already have and wish otherwise. I'm just worthless because I'm unemployed and unable to go out there and land one of those scarce job opportunities.

On the other hand, being unrealistic can prove to be a far more effective practice of both solidity and solidarity. James Joyce:

Poetry, even when apparently most fantastic, is always a revolt against artifice, a revolt, in a sense, against actuality. It speaks of what seems fantastic and unreal to those who have lost the simple intuitions which are the tests of reality; and, as it is often found at war with its age, so it makes no account of history, which is fabled by the daughters of memory, but sets store by every time less than the pulsation of an artery, the time in which its intuitions start forth, holding it equal in its period and value to six thousand years.³⁵

Our problem with full employment is quite perverse. Full employment is already the law a few times over, yet it remains a fantasy. The realism of law has deadened its prospects all the more—law as lipservice and façade; law as duplicity cut in stone.³⁶ In 1945, the U.S. signed and ratified the Charter of the United Nations. Ratification renders the charter a treaty. All treaties, as stated in Article VI of our Constitution are the supreme law of the land. Article 55 of the UN charter contains a mandate for full employment tied to higher standards of living and economic and social progress. There's no mention in the charter of using the matter of employment to remove dignity. If literature is indeed the most relevant use of language, then poets can call upon their utmost to remove a law's disuse, or secure remedies from Federal courts when official policies *create* rather than *curtail* unemployment.

Once everyone is fairly and/or meaningfully employed, we can begin to cut back on consumption and create 'time off' as we start the urgent work of increasing the goods and services that repair the planet and are not necessarily exchanged for money (repairing human relations as well). Perhaps

a guaranteed-wage check provided by the ‘localized’ finance sector will fill the gaps. Or, under the new pre-distributive plan in which interdependence and interconnectivity are expressed by wage compensation, even the quintessential commodity—the automobile—can be understood as a cultural endowment (in the public domain, or like a social dividend) unavailable for private profiteering. Write the bill that would justify spreading the wealth around.

We need enough economic freedom to have enough time to care for our environment in ways that don’t generate income. Then we can begin to ask the most meaningful questions (tantamount to poetry), such as: What can we make here from materials found here that we can’t live without here while asking what ‘here’ is?

Why would we want to send millions of people back to work if it only means consuming more of the planet and monetizing what little remains of the commons?

ONLY RAISING THE VERY BOTTOM WILL LIFT EVERYBODY

When you don’t give is when people really start worrying about you, when people start wondering about what kind of person you have become. Being rich here means that there is something wrong with you, that you aren’t giving enough to the needs around. The only way you get to be rich is by dissociating yourself from other people.³⁷

—Coumba Toure

If our culture doesn’t take care of the poor, the poor become a majority. It’s only fair. One in three Americans is now poor or perilously near to being poor.

It’s not possible to demonize the poor and homeless without placing a curse of churlishness on our culture.

The chute leading to destitution gets greased every day: loss of unemployment benefits and childcare, phasing out of food stamp funding, rising college tuition, 70% of potential employers checking applicants’ credit ratings, and so on.

Poverty is an injury. The issue is injustice, not charity or entitlement. Institutions like the Half In Ten Campaign (cut poverty in half in ten years)

and the Congressional Out Of Poverty Caucus are excellent tools, but we need a society that is itself a safety net—a vast and surprising cross-linking: a former derivatives trader joining hands with an unemployed graduate to explore alternative banking systems; soldiers (albeit unarmed and disarming) coming out to side with protestors as uniformed protecters standing before uniformed riot police; a one-baker crusade (native Argentine Veronica Descotte) providing birthday cakes for all the families in Minneapolis who can't afford to bake or buy one³⁸; the Red Swing Project anonymously hanging swings in public spaces around the world so that people can happen upon a moment of delight; Gift of Kindness whose adherents commit random acts of kindness; Dr. Jessie Gaeta of Boston Health Care for the Homeless who set aside protocol to act on her convictions:

Basically I was seeing that if I could write a prescription for keys to an apartment that that was going to do more to improve the health of the patient sitting in front of me than the prescription I can write for anything else.³⁹

MAKE OUR WAGE, COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS STRUCTURE A WORK OF ART

We have a more ruthless economy. There's breaking down in social norms by people in a position to take.⁴⁰
—Larry Summers

They [Native Americans] esteem it irrational that one man should be possessed of a greater quantity than another and are amazed that any honor should be annexed to the possession of it.⁴¹
—Robert Corman

Capital is individual while labor is communist. Things may have become this clear cut.

Employing. Emplowning. Ownplying. Enownment. When people scramble to get at the head of the line of wage slavery opportunity.

Poor little society, under such tremendous pressure to make people perform unfulfilling work that deprives them of their 'species character' (i.e., spontaneous, conscious, common, human being). Solution: pay people as little as possible! Resent having to pay non-job-creators anything at all. Wage slavery is asymmetric bargaining power between workers and capital. It's the exchange of money and debt for prolonged and draining labor.

Far and away, our dominant mode of economic life (and arguably all of life) is wage labor. The 9 to 5 and overtime renting of our freedom for conditions beyond our control. It is the major mechanism of the massive scale of wealth-withholding.

Even my antagonist, Larry Summers, before joining the Obama administration, admitted the obsolescence of the orthodox economic belief that productivity growth keeps pace with average real wage growth. In a June 25, 2007 article in the *Financial Times* he wrote:

It can no longer plausibly be asserted that the income distribution is relatively static or that average wage growth tracks productivity growth [. . .] since 1979, changes in income distribution had raised the pre-tax incomes of the top 1% of the population by \$664bn or \$600,000 per family—an increase of 43%. By definition what one group gains from changes in the distribution of income another group must lose. The lower 80% of families are \$664bn poorer than they would be with a static income distribution, which works out to \$7,000 less in income per family or a 14% loss.

Here we are, envious of a stagnated real wage (in place of the actual wage erosion). We get as little as we ask for. Imagine having moved in the direction of greater equity. Had the wages and benefits of the poor and middle class somehow risen into the vast unexplored territory I'll call 'greater-than-pace-of-productivity,' perhaps producers and business owners would now have the prosperous consumer base they require.

We can't introduce new terms without first establishing accurate terms.

Renaming is essential to the implementing of an *Instead*. An *Instead* offsets any official use of language that is specious and denatured, slicing away duplicity, removing phenomena from euphemism, circumlocution and disingenuousness, and placing events in an accurate, consequential light while letting go of one's own bias, letting go of the conceptual mind with each outbreath, knowing that equanimity and spaciousness, if anything, are truth. To offer one instance: a CEO salary is as much as 400 times that of the median household income. Banker bonus pay is typically ten times that of straight salary payout. This is an insular instance of negative right; i.e., there's nothing to stop "those in a position to take" from "ruthlessly taking," so why not just take and take and take?

As the song goes: it's not a bonus, it's embezzlement.⁴²

Today, instead of taxing the rich, government sells off its public assets for lost tax revenue. To raise cash, Arizona sold its state capital building to a private party and leased it back! Think of it as negative creativity.

When a public function is privatized, employees are paid less and are provided with fewer benefits. For having engineered the reforms, private managers take a large share of the savings. This shifts costs to other parts of government, particularly when lives start falling through the cracks. This is a brilliant innovation that allows privateers to profit twice or thrice from the same efficiency.

Walmart, the largest employer in the country, is now the iconic business model. The average full-time salary is about \$17,000, and fewer than half of the employees are covered by the Walmart health insurance plan. Even the pre-recession GM workers earned upwards of \$30,000 and received full benefits.

Of the 31 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the U.S. is the richest and yet ranks 27th in percent of income replaced by Social Security. Americans who work until age 65 will receive only 40 percent of their incomes after retirement. The OECD average is 57 percent.⁴³ One might assume that American retirees require less because their steadily rising wage will allow them to pay for their own pensions. Of course the national reality is 35 years worth of wage stagnation. The first 401(k) generation has just matured and, on average, according to a study conducted by the Center for Retirement Research, retirees will have about one-quarter of the amount needed to maintain their standard of living.⁴⁴

As seniors, instead of opening up to our beautiful deaths with a sense of security and fulfilled destiny, we'll be mired in the gloom of groveling through our remaining days—which would perhaps be fine, had we created the situation ourselves; had we had a say in the money we made for others; had we had a say in investment of company revenue, managerial and chief officer compensation, length of lunchbreak, adequate ventilation, length of paid pregnancy and new-parent leaves and hirings and firings. Having been a force unto ourselves as a workforce with a full voice and fully involved in the profits and risks, it would then be proper and appealing to be left on our own as we grow old and increasingly helpless. Not otherwise.

Raise the labor share of national income. Workers throughout the pay scale must capture more of the economy's real growth. CEOs engineer their own payouts (with their own best interests in mind). Workers should be able to do the same (with everyone's best interests in mind). Workers simply need to be on the corporate boards and serving as consultants. Shareholders, workers *and* community representatives should sit on corporate boards with full voting rights, including the right to vote for new board members. This is something the SEC can fix. As long as we're going to be a corporate democracy, opening corporate board elections is a very high poetic priority. From this point, we can move on from the narrow phenomenon of shareholding to the inclusive practice of *stakeholding*—an organizational approach that is ethically guided, involving the legitimate interests of workers, community, environmentalists as well as consumers at large.

(The real culprit is not 'corporation' per se, but the bottom line fiduciary duty to shareholder profit as alibi for absolutely any gainful behavior.)

When polled, 83 percent of respondents believed that the labor share (which has shrunk to record lows) of national income should be radically raised. When polled, over 70 percent of respondents agreed that the wage gap is a political issue and if politicians can't force the issue they should be recalled.⁴⁵ As stated above, the establishing of a ready mechanism for recalling lame, paid-for politicians is another high poetic priority.

An initial step would be to make CEO-worker pay gaps, incomes and taxes of the plutocrats, and all skewed financial rewards a matter of public record. In 1934 there was an attempt to establish such a 'tax sunshine mandate.' The measure failed when top-earners countered with the claim that it was an open invitation for kidnappers!⁴⁶ As it stands, workers now earn only 83 cents of every dollar they earned 35 years ago, while their productivity has increased 80%.⁴⁷ To a great extent, this differential explains skyrocketing corporate profits and the ever-greater income divide.

Which facet of the planned impoverishment of almost everybody is currently being featured inside the Beltway? Right now, policymakers and pundits are claiming that the country is broke. In an article titled "We're Not Broke Nor Will We Be: Policy Choices Will Determine Whether Rising National Income Leads To A Prosperous Middle Class," Economic Policy Institute president Lawrence Mishel shows that the U.S. has grown steadily over the last 30 years and will continue to do so for the next 30. Regarding deficit doomsaying, Mishel writes: "These claims [of both federal and state governments being

broke] are meant to justify efforts to scale back government programs and public-sector and private-sector workers' wages and benefits." He concludes:

Correspondingly, the degree to which typical workers have benefited from past income and wealth growth has depended on the economic policies that have structured the economy, especially those policies that have failed to produce and sustain good jobs and growing wages. Whether future growth results in shared prosperity and a prosperous middle class will depend on the same kinds of policy decisions yet to be made, including whether to maintain an economic regime that allows most growth to accrue to the already very well-off.⁴⁸

Mishel shows that corporate sector productivity and profitability grew rapidly during the recession while worker compensation has fallen. The 'we' claiming we're broke are doing quite well for themselves.

Making a wage, compensation and benefits structure a work of art is a matter of dealing with the problem of maldistribution of our wealth before the fact. (This process would also serve to destigmatize artwork in general.) We won't have to wonder whether redistribution is constitutional or squabble over taxation. The problem will already have been taken care of. As the song goes: 'redistribution is retarded.'⁴⁹

**MAKE A PRE-DISTRIBUTIVE POETS, PERFORMERS AND PEOPLE
PRESSURE GROUP [PPPAPPG] ANYONE CAN BE PART OF**

Without accomplishing your own welfare, there is no need to be a servant for others!⁵⁰

— Padampa Sangye

Are we, as poets, performers and people, particularly disempowered by our proclivities or can we consider ourselves uniquely qualified to spread the wealth around?

PPPAPPG pursues Equitable Growth Interactions [EGI]. An EGI is specifically not an 'action' per se—in that an action is not necessarily repercussive, doesn't necessarily beg reaction, and is free to be inconsequential. A non-interactive action that intends to get something done is, simply, duplicitous. Another variety of spin.

Doesn't inequality only slow growth? Isn't it a slow societal suicide rapidly driving us over a cliff?

The performer of an EGI (an interactor) somaticizes an imbalance (a problem, impasse, pathology, or an enmity of sorts) and in turn offers up her or his embroiled body as distinct from sulking, sucking it up, soaking in it and getting sick. The performer is a conduit of energy between heaven and earth as the intentness of energy interacts within the sociosphere. The offering up (the oscillating with worldlessness) balances the interactor by breaking the illusion of separateness (separateness from each other, and from abundance of energy).

Perhaps there won't be a workforce resurgence or a student uprising. From what unexpected sector might change come? PPPAPPG would certainly have surprise on its side (taking no known side), coming from an angle no conventional entity could brace against. PPPAPPG comes from powerlessness, disinterest and the untapped. It comes from 'surprise' in the sense of unexpectedly solicitous, humane, factual and especially salutary—not screwball or hostile. Radical benevolence.

Public policy is a medium. Legal documents are a genre. There's plenty of work to be done. There are myriad suggestions, interactions, prescriptions, proposals, propositions and procedures that have been presented throughout this writing. In addition to all aforementioned aims and intents, PPPAPPG could carry out English-to-English translations between diverse disciplines, conflicting interests and mutually unintelligible parties, generating new and sorely needed pidgins and idioms. PPPAPPG could offer bodywork sessions during stressful deliberations. A PPPAPPG treatment could, for example, release the fascia as it opens the Employee Free Choice Act into bold new wording. It could be an organized force easing the Great Income Divergence with its innovative prosodic and performative pressures. As a bad example, with countervailing objectives, PPPAPPG could scrutinize the sordid activities of ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council), a non-profit, nonpartisan, Koch-brothers funded, pro-conservative public policy group that drafts model legislation. ALEC's membership includes over 2,400 state legislators. Members are regularly invited to all-expenses-paid private meetings with corporate representatives and lobbyists where they formulate model legislation to fulfill their political agenda. According to Fortune, during 2009, of the 826 state bills developed by ALEC 115 were made into law!⁵¹ All in all, PPPAPPG will show how we've gone backwards since the

original drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and foresee new strategies.

On the positive side, The Sustainable Economics Law Center is an example of a protagonist organization involved in drafting and proposing equitable legislation. The Serbian-based Center for Applied Non-Violent Action and Strategies (CANVAS) is another operational example. The Levellers' series of manifestos called 'An Agreement Of The People,' written between 1647 and 1649, is a classic example of non-politicians proposing constitutional changes to a state.⁵²

There are, of course, countless kindred organizations we can turn to as models for our own interactions. To name just a few (with a NYC-based emphasis): Institute for Policy Studies, Slow Money Alliance, The U.S. Solidarity Economy Network, The Foundation for a Compassionate Society, Axis of Justice, PolicyLink (with its "Lifting up What Works" principle), Housing is a Human Right, Sustainable South Bronx, National Nurses United, New Economics Institute, Center for Equitable Growth, Community Voices Heard, New Economy Working Group, Living Wage NYC, Corporate Accountability Project, Coalition for the Homeless, Picture the Homeless, 16 Beaver Group, National Priorities Project, Grayson Bakery, International Forum on Globalization, Move to Amend, Poverty Initiative, Urban Homesteading Assistance Board, Make the Road New York, U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives, Mothers on the Move, Good Old Lower East Side, FUREE, Focus on the Global South, United for a Fair Economy, War on Want, Open Secrets, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Wealth for the Common Good, Center for Urban Pedagogy, The Agenda Project, Take Back the Land, Other Worlds Are Possible, Alliance for a Greater New York, The Annual Equity Summits, Backbone Campaign, United for a Fair Economy, Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, Shared Sacrifice My Ass, and so on and on and on.

What novel identities await that may treat an intractable problem or an untouchable ill? Anti-lobbyist lobby? Lobby for raising money to out-pay lobbyists to not lobby? When is the grand opening of the Poets' Bank (perhaps modeled after the borrower-owned Grameen Bank For The Poor in Jobra, Bangladesh)? Better yet: the Poets' UnBank or simply Abank. Poets can bypass banking and reclaim the credit commons by setting up a mixed monetized and unquantifiable Mutual Credit and Gift Exchange that channels interest-free loans, agreed-upon credits, time-based barter, service

for service exchanges, P2P lending, pooled emergency funds and free stuff, entirely based on the creation of trust and its counterpart *unconditional giving*. Poets are not a local but an omni-local phenomenon. It's crucial to use our vital bond not only for the propagation of poetry texts and readings but also for making key differences in the manifesting of a more direct, relaxed, creative and generous economy. Poets, as a rather discredited social and economic force, are uniquely free and fitted for the setting up of an exemplary network that claims capital, as controlling of our time, labor, creativity, relationships and collective direction, as the properly nonprivatizable.

PPPAPPG appears wherever PPOAE [Planned Pauperization Of Almost Everyone] plots, transforming it into the Planned Prosperity of Absolutely Everyone [PPOAE].

We're a constituency without a system worth our vote.

PPPAPPG connects resistance movements across countries and throughout history. It's not just a global movement but a species-long moment.

MAKE MONEY THE COMMONS

I want the green of the commons of old to be transposed as 'money'. Money is the commons. Money is common. It is public property. As with a natural resource such as water or air, should anyone control a billion parts of it over another's bit? Try making a mountain of money or even a single dollar without the entire society, if only to realize that money is interrelationship.

The U.S. is a backlash against the progress made in establishing a decent living standard as a basic human right. We are a bastion for the belief that the poor are undeserving (as distinct from poor as a result of systemic malfunction). The World Values Survey conducted a study between 1995 and 2000. People were asked why poor people are poor. Of the seventeen countries in which the survey was conducted, the U.S. had the highest percentage for those who believe the poor are poor because they are lazy, weak-minded and shiftless (61%), and the lowest percentage for those who believe the poor are poor due to an unjust society (39%). Contrast that result with the country at the bottom of the list: only 13% of Germans believe that the poor are deservingly poor, while 87% stated that the poor are poor owing to no fault of their own.⁵³ Globally speaking, the belief that the poor are responsible for their plight is quintessentially American.

The Global North initially became rich due to government establishment of social protections for the ‘people,’ beginning in 16th century England with collective responsibility for subsistence for all and ending (yes, *ending*) in 1948 with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The relevant articles from the UDHR establishing an adequate standard of living as a human right are as follows:

22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

23.1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment [. . .]

23.3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

25.1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.⁵⁴

Thus a cheap labor force was fed and ‘secured’ (historically referred to as ‘industrialization’). Material equality doesn’t simply progress. There are periodic backlashes against social protection. Behind these backlashes is the idea that the poor are responsible for their poverty (as in they had their chance, just like everyone else).

In terms of beating down the masses, the heirs of the mid-19th century workhouse are neoliberal efficiency, the Washington Consensus and maximum financialization of matter and interaction.

The widespread impression that giving poor people money makes them lazy and dependent is a product of free market ideology and advertising. The neoliberal view, at its meanest, holds that money spent on impoverished people is unproductive and diverts real development. Government is not in the business of almsgiving, right? Accordingly, 21st century Northern terms

for transferring money to the poor are heavily conditioned—whether by imposition of high interest rates on ‘high-risk’ (i.e., ‘poor’) Northern citizen-debtors, imposition of austerity and privatization measures for loans made to Southern debtor-nations, or humiliation.

Meanwhile, there is a movement afoot in the Global South that approximates a handling of money that is ‘common.’ This movement simply gives public money directly to the poor unconditionally (or with few, lenient, more socially-oriented conditions). Currently over 30 developing countries bypass bureaucracy and give money directly to the poor through cash transfer programs. In place of the paternalistic condescension of aid agencies and “good governance conditions” of discretionary donation, these cash transfer programs assume that the poor already know what they need the money for and will make the best decisions for themselves. For the financial/philanthropic sector, this approach is of course heretical.⁵⁵

The dynamic is that of classic class-distrust.

While neoliberal behavioral economists theorize that the worse-off must be guided to act in their own best interests, experience shows that donors (those in a position to give) typically make poor decisions on behalf of the poor.

Do better-off people in aid agencies assume that all people who receive free money would behave as they do? Indeed, the well-heeled, when given more money, are inclined to relaxation and extravagant spending outside their local communities.

It should come as no surprise that the needy and those whose basic needs are already met will spend free money very, very differently.

People on low-incomes use ‘extra’ money to feed themselves, clothe their kids and send them to school, buy locally, purchase seed, repair roofs, startup home businesses, pay utilities, and stop stealing. Giving money to the poor does much more than create the condition of quick consumption and immediate alleviation of malnutrition, sickness and hardship; it’s a first step toward sustainable and equitable development.

Meanwhile, under neoliberal guidelines, donors and better-off agents of aid tend to enhance their own wealth by means of the ineffective systems they’ve created in order to relieve the poor.

And the very wealthy, while insisting that more money in their hands will create more jobs and stimulate the economy, actually save more of their overall incomes than low-end earners who must consume to aspire to baseline decency.

In April 2010, *Fortune* magazine reported that the “500 largest U.S. companies cut a record 821,000 jobs in 2009 while their collective profits increased threefold to a record \$391 billion.”⁵⁶

As stated by Roger Riddell in *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?*:

The core problem is that hundreds of donors remain in almost total control of their aid and that, because of political, strategic, and commercial interests, are not prepared to give up that control. Thus the aid which is provided is not allocated in any systematic, rational or efficient way to those who need it most.⁵⁷

He concludes: “Just give cash to those who need the aid.”

What’s the analog for Northern *non-foreign* aid? Social spending (common money) is routine in all industrialized nations. It’s still possible to obtain food stamps in the U.S. (if you’re poor enough and not a penny less poor). In Britain, a weekly child benefit is paid to parents regardless of income. The Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security provide approximately \$40,000 to \$45,000 annually to each senior citizen. (And the 2009 public bailout of the banks in America was, after all, a colossal instance of financial sector socialism; or to use the word most loathsome for actors within that specific sector to hear: ‘welfare-ism.’) Clearly, given our efficiency, a social dividend covering the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and education for everyone is already viable and available (localize banks as public utilities, shift shareholding to stakeholding, tax capital gains, levy pollution fees, channel all profits from common resources to communities, etc.) Best of all, a sufficient social wage would leave people with plenty of time to work!

The alternative would be to universally set wages so high that welfare programs would be obviated (as well as the taxation system that funds social spending). We’d only need a limited government to structure and regulate business as egalitarian.

Before attempting to make law poetry and economy artwork, it might be useful to look at existent policies and proposals for giving money away.

A *Citizen's Dividend* is a state policy (or perhaps a citizen-trust) that assumes the earth is common. Under a citizen's dividend each citizen receives a regular payment raised by the state through the leasing and selling of natural resources for private use (land, air, the electromagnetic spectrum, minerals, timber, corporate charters, privileges, etc.):

[...] it is the value of the improvement only, and not the earth itself, that is the individual property.

Man did not make the earth, and though he had a natural right to occupy it, he had no right to locate as his property in perpetuity any part of it; neither did the Creator of the earth open a land-office, from whence the first title-deeds should issue.

It is the practice of what has unjustly obtained the name of civilization (and the practice merits not to be called either charity or policy) to make some provision for persons becoming poor and wretched, only at the time they become so—Would it not even as a matter of economy, be far better to devise means to prevent their becoming poor?⁵⁸

In 1976 the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend was amended to the Alaska constitution. Each year the state pays a dividend, garnered from oil and gas proceeds, to every eligible resident (man, woman and child). The 2010 dividend amount was \$1,281.

A citizen's dividend is a social salary. It's intended to be broadly popular; detached from both liberal and conservative rhetoric; the sharing of a bounty that already belongs to everyone. Taken to an extreme, the basic income of the citizen's dividend would obviate not only welfare but many forms of taxation as well.

Asset-based Egalitarianism, also known as universal basic capital, is a policy proposal that automatically grants a sum of money to every woman and man at the age of majority. This grant is intended to level the playing field of life by establishing an equal opportunity egalitarian framework. Asset-based egalitarianism also traces back to Paine's *Agrarian Justice*. Paine intended to finance his egalitarian asset from inheritance tax.

An *Individual Development Account* [IDA] is a new kind of anti-poverty program that focuses on asset accumulation. An IDA is a matched savings account that helps low-income households purchase a first home, finance a

small business or pay for post-secondary education. The participant opens a savings account associated with an IDA organization. For each deposit the account receives a match, usually one to four times the size of the deposit, from a fund drawn from both private and public sources.

The *Earned Income Tax Credit* is a federal income tax refund for low-income working families. When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes owed, the qualifying participant receives the credit. In 1986, President Reagan described the EITC as “the best anti-poverty, the best pro-family, the best job creation measure to come out of Congress.”⁵⁹ Another example of a refundable tax credit in the U.S. is the *Child Tax Credit*.

Guaranteed Minimum Income is a conditional federally-insured guarantee that all eligible citizens have enough income to meet their basic needs. Eligibility is subject to a means test and willingness to work or perform community services.

Basic Income Guarantee is an unconditional guarantee of sufficient income. It has had many illustrious advocates. Thomas Paine proposed a basic income guarantee for all citizens as compensation for “loss of his or her natural inheritance by the introduction of the system of landed property.” Napoleon Bonaparte stated that “man is entitled by birthright to a share of the Earth’s produce sufficient to fill the needs of his existence.”⁶⁰ In his August 16, 1967 speech “Where Do We Go From Here,” Martin Luther King, Jr. said: “I am now convinced that the simplest approach will prove to be the most effective—the solution to poverty is to abolish it directly by a now widely discussed measure: the guaranteed income.”⁶¹ In 1968, John Kenneth Galbraith, along with 1,200 other economists, brought before congress a document calling for a system of basic income guarantee. The Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) advocates a universal basic income “based solely on citizenship and not on work requirement or charity.”⁶² Though unconditional guaranteed income programs aim at sufficiency for all, they do not redress the income disparity gap. It’s like a workless minimum wage applied at the level of individual annual income, while allowing the top-earners to soar.⁶³ Poverty and economic insecurity were once moral emergencies to be turned into progressive principles to turn into law. Our stagnated nation would not be what it is today without three decades of scorn for welfare. Even certain mean-spirited or morally discredited historical figures were softer on

suffering than today's social spending would permit. President Nixon nearly passed a *Negative Income Tax*. NIT is a progressive income tax wherein low-earners receive supplemental pay from the government instead of paying taxes to the government. It's designed to guarantee a minimum level income for all. Milton Friedman proposed a version of NIT that would replace all welfare and assistance programs and complement an entirely laissez-faire market.

Traditionally, typically, we-the-people and modern America have been far more socially innovative than today's privateers care to admit.

In practice, in the U.S., since Newt Gingrich placed Bill (to-end-welfare-as-we-know-it) Clinton under enough pressure to sign the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (now TANF), the focus on federal assistance to the poor has shifted from direct cash transfers and benefits to job placement.

Market is conscience. Agreed?

Ultimately, the task is not to expand the welfare state to compensate for market imperfections, but to adjust market shortcomings in order to reduce the needs of the needy.

The great American horror is that someone (apparently even when that someone is oneself) would get something for nothing. Revolting!

MAKE ART THE MISSING PUBLICLY OWNED PUBLIC SPACE⁶⁴

But those who have themselves acquired it have a double reason in comparison with other men for loving it. For just as poets feel complacency about their own poems and fathers about their own sons. So men who have made money take this money seriously as their own creation and they also value it for its uses as other people do. So they are hard to talk to since they are unwilling to commend anything except wealth.⁶⁵

MAKE GROWTH INTEGRATIVE

Integrative means: ‘able-to-take-everything-into-consideration.’

Let’s just look at the numbers. Economists refer to the shape of current job growth as a ‘barbell’ (the ‘barbell effect’). At one end of the workforce you have a boom in low paying positions (cashiers, dishwashers, fast food preparers, shampooers, farm laborers, hosts and hostesses, housekeepers, nannies, parking lot attendants, sidewalk sandwich-board advertisers, and so on). On the other end of the barbell you have increasing numbers of high-wage ‘creative’ positions (anesthesiologists, chief executives, engineering managers, information scientists, marketeers, magistrates, financiers, and so on). Between the bells of the barbell you have the disappeared decent-waged middle class positions. Needless to say, the analogy as such is itself extremely lopsided, with the low paying jobs vastly outweighing (in number, not income) their high-end counterweight. This is the image of disintegrative growth-at-all-costs America.

Now let’s look at everything. If the experts say we can’t take everything into consideration, that’s purely a product of their combined myopias. If the rabbits running around my backyard are poisoned by the dandelion killer my neighbor sprays over his lawn, the productivity of the company that produces that poison is compromised. PPPAPPG can explain that dandelions are desirable; that the national obsession with impeccable, homogenous, constantly mown grass is part of a larger pathology.

We’ve scarcely begun to chart the full spectrum of inclusive growth. The Genuine Progress Indicator (though a vast improvement over gross domestic product as an indicator of health) only scratches the surface. Poets could write their own version of a comprehensive system of measurements for well-being—the fullness of the speech of all creatures from cytokines to quasars. I would love to sit down right now and draft the Poets And Performers Progress Indicator [PAPPI], but I’m too harried. I’m a first responder in a quotidian-emergency-pileup. There are too many mouths to feed, both locally and (now that we are 7 billion bodies on earth) globally, to sit down and sort out a system that would nourish us in every way. My facts are straight, my heart’s in the right place, but I just can’t get a handle on the national inertia. Only millions upon millions of us could form such a grasp, one at a time, a few at once. Once we have a grip on lifestyle, we could then choose to produce less and begin to ease the pressure to increase GDP.

MAKE GENEROSITY GENETIC

Be as rich as you can . . . for the sake of others.⁶⁶

—Charles Dickens

A word that we use a lot in Bamana is ‘maaya.’ When you say that somebody has maaya, you mean they are human, they hold humanity. To be human for us is to be able to give, to be able to recognize each other as human beings. That concept also incorporates the idea that our humanity is one.⁶⁷

— Coumba Toure

When you have enough and I have enough, our giving can take on a symbolic character.⁶⁸

— Yvette Abrahams

Basically we’ve been relegating our sense of equity and our sense of opulence according to private philanthropy. Our productivity is being expressed, if at all, through the whims and egoism of the tightly protected purchasing power of those in a position to take who’ve stopped at nothing to take as much as they can.

Michael Bloomberg: “I am a big believer in giving it all away and have always said that the best financial planning ends with bouncing the check to the undertaker.”⁶⁹

Poor undertaker!

Meanwhile, generosity is a birthright.

How debilitated are we when the Barry Goldwater model of broad-based prosperity is far more dependable, generous and enlightened than our current status quo? As Ronald Reagan said in his 1964 campaign speech in support of the politics and person of Goldwater:

This is a man who, in his own business before he entered politics, instituted a profit-sharing plan before unions had ever thought of it. He put in health and medical insurance for all his employees. He took 50 percent of the profits before taxes and set up a retirement program, a pension plan for all his employees. He sent monthly checks for life to an employee who was ill and couldn’t work. He provides nursing care for the children of mothers who work in the stores.⁷⁰

First, there is absolutely no reference to the causes of the hardship the well-heeled heroes step up and remedy. Secondly, those days are gone (if ever they existed) when company owners took it upon themselves to improve the lives of hirees above and beyond the bare minimum allowed by law and conscience. To believe in Goldwater goodness as a mass movement capable of producing a broadly prosperous democracy is delusional.

Goldwater goodness (welfare's extensive reliance upon the private sector) deeply preserves the presumption of haves having and have-nots having not. This same goodness further, contrarily, promotes the policy of giving on the part of the haves (including government, the richest 'have' of all) as detrimental to the well-being of the have nots (the would-be recipients). To this end, in the same pro-Goldwater speech, Reagan quoted Plutarch as having said: "The real destroyer of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations, and benefits."

We've moved from a world in which most of the nation's income went to the bottom 90% of households in the 1960's to one in which more than half of the nation's income accrues to the top 1%, with the top 0.01% (the highest-earning 1,500 households) earning more than 1 of every 17 dollars.⁷¹

Two core beliefs of American exceptionalism are that wealth is a measure of how hard a person works, and that graduated income tax is a punitive measure against innovation and success. A Harris Poll surveying 27 countries asked respondents whether it was the responsibility of government to reduce income disparity. Less than one third of Americans felt that it was, while in each of the 26 other countries less than one third of the respondents felt that it wasn't. Europeans, Canadians, the Japanese, believe that luck and circumstance are greater factors than skill and hard work in determining economic outcome. Accordingly, their social benefits are more universal.

Money is the accumulated wealth of tens of thousands of years of human development. It is the means by which we organize our total activities. How should this most powerful tool be handled, and by whom? Money is intention made manifest.

Generally, lower-income people are more generous than those with more wealth. They are more trusting and in touch with the needs of others and proportionately give away more of their incomes than higher-income earners.

To generalize further: it's safe to assume that people who have amassed more wealth did not do so by being committed to the values of egalitarianism. As Paul K. Piff of the Institute of Personality and Social Research has said: "wealth seems to buffer people from attending to the needs of others."⁷² It's not a class gap but an experiential gap.

Under the above logic, the higher you climb up the income ladder, the less altruistic and charitable you become.

Economic compassion is for the beleaguered and beset.

Or is it more the case that people who are less empathetic are more likely to have excelled in our skewed economic system?

Is not the situation entirely poetic? Just as we can change our behavior, we can shift our values, alter political policy, regulate the financial industry, favor labor over big business or become acutely compassionate after a life-changing experience. We make it up. The intrinsic is a most supple medium.

In 2010, Warren Buffet and Bill and Melinda Gates started a billionaire foundation called The Giving Pledge. Each member must pledge at least 50% of their wealth to charity. When billionaires start a private foundation they receive tax deductions for the full value of their contribution. This loss of state and federal revenue serves as a matching public subsidy for the foundation. The even greater loss is the public input in deciding how the money will be spent. Beginning with the establishment of The Philanthropy Roundtable in 1987, the wealthy have striven to maintain control over their donations, viewing money given away as investment in their private projects. This self-serving "protection of philanthropic freedom" is the apogee of the process of money-privatization.⁷³ The first step toward protecting public sector and poor sector participation in social decision-making would be the elimination of the Charitable Giving Tax Deduction. From that point, we could either distribute money evenly at the points of profit or ban lobbyists and reform campaign financing in order to encourage legislators to dedicate our treasuries to the common good.

The longer I look into money management the more I see the ubiquity of the churlish conviction that the people most affected by hardship are incapable of coming up with solutions for themselves—their very hardship serving as proof of dire incompetence.

How can people in need of help be of help to others? People in need of help know exactly what can be of help.

Structure society so that each person is in a position to be generous. What good is the freedom to be generous without means? Guaranteed security is the minimum requirement. Wealth is a function of generosity, not accumulation. It's a manifestation of well-being. For even greater security, invest in the well-being of those around you. As the song goes: "put your money in your neighbor's pocket."⁷⁴

A few suggestions. Re-word the language of giving. Stop blaming poverty on the poor. A living wage is not an alms or handout. Break the donor-recipient model of generosity. Trust the poor instead of the aid-industry officers and social workers who dole out funds with strict stipulations. Re-word the conventional language of charity and discretionary giving. Stop making decisions on behalf of have-nots (which only tend to maintain their having not). The spirit of philanthropy is the antithesis of generous.

In the spirit of Machik Labdron (11th century Tibetan yogini, tutelary of this writing), feed your demons. Overpower the negative right (the right to *not* act against injustice, the right to act unconscionably because it's not unlawful to do so) with a conducive energy—the energy of a world that would supplant habit-world. Coherence over dissonance, benevolence over dissidence.

Full speech concomitant with the arising of the world—this is the basic job-description of 'poet.' With regard to this writing, the role of the poet is the embodiment of pre-distributive speech. *Pre-distributive* corresponds with a return to origin from which we continuously come about (the 'initial'). Pre-distribution implies dealing with things before they go bad. By 'going bad' I mean *avoidable* suffering. Return to origin is 'no-world,' which is to say 'open possibilities'—the sum of the undifferentiated, the yet-to-be or never-to-be; the water the waves-we-are die back into. Discrete being taken to its extreme as our isolated selves severs us from the greater potential that brings us about each instant. Identity-as-done-deal detects its state of rapid decay and, in turn, cut off from abundance, deepens the disparity between little identity and All Energy, little and lavish incomes, paltry and plentiful speech. Likewise, our economics is based on privacy; our transportation is based on auto-mobility; our fuel is depletable and our politics is paralysis.

PPPAPPG, on the other hand, organizes the world around the synonymy of productivity and popular prosperity. It heals the wound of the dissociable word (word divorced from doing, word divorced from being).

Name and named form an equivalency, even if the name but names itself. It's momentary. The momentary is the profound. From the equivalence of name and named comes the equivalence of word and action. This is the basis of preemptive speech (speech that brings things about through greater energy—greater energy than words as part of what words are). Radiance is the most radical action.

Poets are not predisposed. They're not part of American exceptionalism. They are, precisely, nothing special. Nothing. There's no duplicating of deadening delimitation in order to be the same somebody over and over again. (We need to optimize our out-of-it-ness.)

Identities are made for dissolution. They're made for dissolving into that which we dissolve into. They're made for being that with which we identify with that which we dissolve into, just before we do.

A certain Sanskrit vocabulary has long informed my sense of econopoetics. Here the Sanskrit word *satya* comes to mind. *Satya* means 'an exact way of acting.' An *Instead* as enacted by PPPAPPG is a *satya* that allows identity to dissolve into the social good. The *Instead*, as an efficient moment, allows all the bits and pieces, points of view, the data and the deadlocks, to converge into one doorway that is the poem (the integrative poem as the composition of inclusive prosperity). *Rtu* is the word for 'efficient moment.' *Rta* is the common body. *Amrta* is the livingness of having acted efficiently, *forever*. I write this paragraph to assure you that what I'm saying is nothing new. It's always just as true. The ritual of creating the efficient moment is the work of poets and performers, unpredictable, with ever more to unlearn.

Good means 'ripe.'

Full speech fuses phenomenal and initial. Poetry makes the phenomenal flow from initial (as distinct from 'terminal'). That's the whole story.

Supply and demand are on the same side (they are one stream).

If the phenomenal fails to flow from initial, the world conforms to itself. This is as dead as things can get. The clearest image of the dead world is market dominance in which our greatest right is the freedom to disregard each other. It's the Negative Right Nation. We become so highly perishable we cling to possessions and invest in identity all the more as we tumultuously swirl away. Why did we model a market on morbidity? (So it wouldn't be mistaken for eternity?) Our Parent Pulse (that beats in us all) has asked me to inquire.

Parent Pulse insists: include the worst off or none will secure material bliss.

Who do we want to become and what would we love to receive from the world as we offer it our ripening?

Generosity is not giving from profit but giving up profit, before it is one's own to give.

Poets make poetry greater than poetry can be.

As the song goes: "the structure of generosity is E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E."⁷⁵

WORSHIP NATURE

It works.

MAKE AMENDS

Insteads are interactions that are also amends. You somaticize a societal problem or a perceived violence. It's bigger than you. It's life-threatening. It disrupts absolutely. The heart wants to make things better. The liver wants to attack. You become an indemnity, collateral, a living reparation, an offset, an atonement or 'attunement' to total suffering.

It hurts. As the situation can't quite turn into what you should be doing, it instead takes time away from what you indeed must do. It cuts into bare necessity. Not only must the amends not be allowed to fester in you, you must become the host of the healing of the social body you're part of, as well.

Hollow as a heart, open to the circulation of nutrients imbued with the heart's essence. No cracks in the compassion. You supply the optimal pressure. You owe the situation an absence of impediments.

Mind Body Data Sociosphere Prosperity Centering. Whole linguistically repercussive bodyworks, whether carried out across the desks of bank managers (as I will do later this afternoon with my 97-year-old father's \$264 worth of overdraft charges at US Bank from birthday checks sent to two great grandchildren) or while occupying the offices of policymakers.

Food for the vultures (feels identical to that)—poisonous to complacency.

MAKE RE-ENGLISH AN EVERYDAY DE-DELUSIONAL IDIOM

Apologists for patriarchal capitalism exist at every level of society from academia to advertising. The very language they use has been stolen, the common ground of its meanings distorted and co-opted in the very service of the perpetrators of economic violence.⁷⁶

— Position Statement for a Peaceful World, Feminists for a Gift Economy

Re-English resets English. It imbues the language with traits it never had to begin with. It's a long story. I want to tell the whole story, but not here, not right now. Here, I'll just suggest that English, though ambrosial, has yet to be other than a mercenary, duplicitous tongue. When 'we' declare a win-win situation 'you' are about to be taken to the cleaners.

In the context of this essay, Re-English is, of course, preemptive maldistribution.

Discourse that diminishes the wonder of the world by means of the world is disinformation, and runs counter to the practice of Re-English.

I'll give but one example by asking a simple question. Is 'employment' *employment*? Are we asking too little of this word? Do we need a more enlightened definition for an indispensable activity that involves nearly 100% of the population? Perhaps a more resonant, proactive defining is needed to eat through all the layers of PR, misstatement, scarcity-mongering, staged event, book cooking, self-justification and spin-dominated public discourse. First, would not employment—to merit the name—be a choice made from an abundance of job availabilities? As things are, employment is a matter of wage-setting (the ability of employers to dictate wages). Under the humane

definition of employment, care-work (caregiving, childcare, nursing, social work) that pays poverty wages would not count as employment. From the point of view of today's business owners (those in a position to take), wages don't necessarily rise along with increases in productivity. "I make it I take it" (as the business-friendly saying goes). Workers showing up for work and doing what managers tell them to do (as distinct from sharing in a broadening prosperity) is not proof of ample pay-incentive and acceptable working conditions. Wage tied to productivity (and not the maximum-take maxim) would begin to warrant the name 'employment.' Paying workers more than they can make elsewhere (and watching incentive swell), perhaps carries some greater sense of 'employment.' Hourly total compensation (including wage, pension, health care, paid leave, unemployment insurance, disability, social security), not only keeping pace with productivity (as it did until the early 1970's) but exceeding productivity (*exceeding* productivity as excessively as the 'productivity bonus' has benefited the chiefs of capital) and creating a broadly viable capitalism—these conditions I would consider calling 'employment.'

What shall we, instead, call the jobs that are being offered today? Only 21% of large and medium-sized firms offer pension plans that pay a fixed monthly amount for as long as a retiree lives, whereas twenty-five years ago sufficient benefit plans were provided by 80% of large and medium-sized firms.⁷⁷ Companies stopped offering pensions simply because there is no longer any pressure to do so. There is no language, legal or otherwise, telling them that they must not. Once again, we're being battered by the *negative right* to make the worst decision for the greatest number of people. On the other hand, the *positive right* (the freedom to choose the most beneficial behavior) would ask: given the sharp decline of union organization, how might employers be encouraged to develop a greater sense of obligation to employees (as instruments of their profit motivation) than shareholders?

(Should not poets organize the forming of a universal union? With organized labor down to 11.8% of the workforce in the U.S., shouldn't the precariat, temps, service workers and all those who don't comply with the traditional definition of labor form a powerful unorganized workers solidarity network?)

There's so much work to be done, as it demands its wording. We're mired in missing words.

ROTTING MONEY, NON-EXISTENT MONEY OR MONEY THAT BEGETS ITSELF

Hazrat Salaheddin Ali Nader Angha, when asked what should be done about the 'self,' simply said "*kill it*"; so for usury.

So that they laugh at those natural philosophers who hold that nothing can be made of nothing and of that which has no existence, but with them usury is made and engendered of that which neither is nor ever was.⁷⁸

Tokos (the Greek word for 'interest') means 'birth,' 'bringing forth' or 'breeding.'

I answer that, to take usury for money lent is unjust in itself, because this is to sell what does not exist, and this evidently leads to inequality which is contrary to justice. In order to make this evident, we must observe that there are certain things the use of which consists in their consumption: thus we consume wine when we use it for drink and we consume wheat when we use it for food. Wherefore in suchlike things the use of the thing must not be reckoned apart from the thing itself, and whoever is granted the use of the thing, is granted the thing itself; and for this reason, to lend things of this kind is to transfer the ownership. Accordingly if a man wanted to sell wine separately from the use of the wine, he would be selling the same thing twice, or he would be selling what does not exist, wherefore he would evidently commit a crime of injustice. In like manner he commits an injustice who lends wine or wheat, and asks for double payment, viz. one, the return of the thing in equal measure, the other, the price of the use, which is called usury.⁷⁹

National Bank Act of 1863: 131.Sec.5197 Limitation Upon Rate Of Interest Which May Be Taken:

Any association may take, receive, reserve, and charge on any loan or discount made, or upon any notes, bills of exchange, or other evidences of debt, interest at the rate allowed by the laws of the State, Territory, or District where the bank is located, a rate of 1 per centum in excess of the discount rate on ninety-day commercial paper, and no more, except that where by the laws of any State a different rate is limited for banks of issue organized under State laws, the rate so limited shall be allowed for associations organized or existing in any such State under this title.⁸⁰

In the 1978 case of *Marquette National Bank of Minneapolis v. First of Omaha Service Corp.*, the Supreme Court interpreted the word 'located' in the National Bank Act of 1863 as meaning the location of the bank, not the borrower.⁸¹

In 1980, to attract capital, South Dakota Governor Janklow introduced an emergency bill, drafted by Citibank, repealing the state's usury limit and inviting Citibank to relocate to South Dakota and legally export deregulated interest rates to customers throughout the country.⁸²

South Dakota Codified Laws: Chapter 54-3 Interest and Usury:

Rate of interest set by written agreement—No maximum or usury restriction. Unless a maximum interest rate or charge is specifically established elsewhere in the code, there is no maximum interest rate or charge, or usury rate restriction between or among persons, corporations, limited liability companies, estates, fiduciaries, associations, or any other entities if they establish the interest rate or charge by written agreement.⁸³

The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Financial Modernization Act of 1999 allowed state chartered banks to charge interest rates equal to those charged by national banks operating in their state.

The Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009 does not include interest rate caps.

Effectively, usury rates in the U.S have no legal limit, capital flows away from production (back to itself) and the credit-unworthy borrower has become the better investment.

MAKE FINANCIALIZATION EITHER PUBLIC AND BENEFICENT OR FLAT-OUT ILLEGAL

Although the financialization of America is ubiquitous and unbelievably complex, it can basically be defined in a single sentence. To quote UCLA sociologist Greta Krippner, "financialization is a pattern of accumulation in which profit making occurs increasingly through financial channels rather than through trade and commodity production."⁸⁴ In a prescient book, *Financialization and the World Economy*, published three years before the 2008 recession, editor Gerald A. Epstein wrote:

[. . .] finance benefits handsomely from the same processes that created economic crises and injure so many others. Hence the costs of financial crises are paid by the bulk of the population, while large benefits accrue to finance.⁸⁵

Non-financial corporations, in turn, respond to the financier gouge by cutting wages and benefits to workers, engaging in fraud to increase apparent profits, and shifting their own operations to finance in order to increase profits (these points taken from Epstein's introduction). This is referred to as the 'neoliberal paradox.'

If you'd like to deepen your understanding of financialization, you could also just read the newspapers and go about your daily life. Financialization is common knowledge. It's our everyday condition. Historically, financialization marks the terminal stage of a culture.

From the moment Obama chose his cabinet and advisors (before his presidency even began), our current economic fate was sealed. The only way for those responsible for the economic collapse to exonerate themselves was by conserving the same failed and unfair system they helped create. When the government took ownership stakes in GM, Citigroup, AIG, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, few obligations were imposed. Though administration officials had more of an obligation than opportunity to restructure the companies for the public good, their stated goal was the immediate re-establishing of private shareholder control. A financialized democracy essentially cannot act otherwise.

In an empathy economy, the industry of making money from money (without a client, without a commodity, through proprietary trading) would become a *public utility*. The rest of the market would be left to run fairly wild. We should at least make the managerial class make money by means of production and improvements, not complex financial investments that produce no real wealth (i.e., health, productive labor, pure water, stronger infrastructure, vibrant communities, knowledge, security, social sanity, and so on).

The U.S. is still breathing, not due to a scarcely resurgent manufacturing sector, but owing to the degree to which we still allow the finance industry to dominate our total economy. This financialization is a form of artificial respiration. (If you haven't seen a mechanical ventilator at work, believe me, it's awful to behold and far more horrifying to be trapped under.)

We already have a mixed economic system (how could we not count subsidies to oil companies as socialization?). Socializing finance-sector profits would simply shift the balance of the benefits. Which interested party might be perturbed by the recalling of the right to privately make money from money? Perhaps 90% of the population would not be troubled at all.

As part of the de-Bloombergization of America, Re-English will expose the main mechanisms of massive wealth concentration: CEO merge and purge strategies; dominance of financial controllers in corporate management; marketized securities and equities; unfettered globalization of financial flows in channels identifiable as ‘common’; speculative trading as distinct from investing in the creation of productive capital; exploitation of public office; total sanctioning of the creed of greed; the unchallenged expansion of financial motivation, markets, institutions and services; the ever more virulent for-profit private-benefit limited-liability corporation chartered to aggregate unlimited financial assets for absentee owners as it grows its political ability to thwart intrusive public oversight. As Frederic Bastiat has said: “When plunder becomes a way of life for a group of men living in society, they create for themselves, in the course of time, a legal system that authorizes it and a moral code that glorifies it.”⁸⁶

Our new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau promises to “arm us with information.” Information, like freedom of speech, is another form of placating the public. It’s clear that the only consumer protection reform we can anticipate is a little less legalese and a little more transparency in being exploited. It’s essentially the same war as before, only we’re up against an unreformed and even more formidable foe.

Can anyone honestly refute the fact that investment bank chiefs gave themselves the largest compensation bonuses in history immediately after the TARP bailout to avenge themselves for having been forcibly nationalized? It was backpay payback. Reparations! The same (inverse) reparations the ‘people’ now need to doubly demand.

We put the same cracked economy back together with colossal injections of cash for the sake of ‘credit,’ and the banks have not proceeded to lend it out. Why? Because they didn’t have to—because of the negative right not-to. Profit is a negative right. We’re protecting Lloyd Blankfein’s right to amass as much of the national wealth as possible because there are neither laws nor norms to dissuade him. Instead of creating cash flow, the corporations have chosen to buy back their own stock, acquire control of other companies and pay generous dividends to shareholders and oversized bonuses to management.

Money is interrelation, and economy is communication that should be kept communicable. One man nationalized our major banks overnight. TARP was nonsense from the start. Not only did Henry Paulson place no restrictions on

how the banks could use the cash injections, he also determined the Treasury would be a non-voting (i.e., powerless) shareholder. In other words, it wasn't even a lost opportunity to address the underlying problems that caused the downturn—it was predetermined that it would be a non-opportunity. Fix it without changing what wrecked it because there's no time to fix it. (Sounds too much like Western medicine to me. Now that it's fixed, it's too late to treat the problem. It's stitched back up and the cause has been sealed inside. No one is willing to rip open a fresh wound.)

Even Mayor Bloomberg has magnanimously volunteered to work for the city for \$1 per year (his fortune, having increased more than 4-fold since becoming mayor in 2001, is currently listed by *Forbes* as \$19.5 billion). If Paulson wasn't person-enough to redress executive pay while the executives were practically his employees, one would hope that the chiefs would have taken it upon themselves. In that opportune moment Paulson could have proposed, for instance, the imposing of a small fee on all financial transactions—on all stock, bond, currency and derivatives trades (somewhat similar to the currency transaction tax suggested by James Tobin in 1972)—and used the revenue to create a fund for direct cash injections for those about to take the hit (homeowners, the unemployed, the uninsured, the hungry, the under-educated, the down-and-out). He could have fought for the public interest at least minimally. He could have done something other than prop up the same diseased system as a personal vindication of his tenure as Secretary of the Treasury. We could have come out of the recession less resentful, less infected, and with some sense that something had been fixed. TARP was a private matter: one man saving face. In Machik Labdrón's terms, Paulson refused to offer up even the least part of the system he identified with himself. He won't have another chance to offer himself up—not even at life's end, as death is the closing of the door, the cutting of energy, the taking away of the opportunity to ripen in time through our actions. Decomposition is a constructive energy. Offering up the body as food is an interactive practice of impermanence applied to the greater good. Paulson could have, at once, at least matched personal executive compensation to the countrywide crisis. Had the top six banks, for example, covered the cost of modifying all underwater mortgages, they would still have had \$70 billion remaining to 'bonus' themselves and reward their risks. That would have been productive! How could anyone ever proceed as though a national crisis was a private matter? The top six bank bonuses and compensation for 2010 are estimated at \$143 billion—more than enough to have filled the budget gap in every state in the country for fiscal year 2011. If a man can nationalize our banking

system in one day against its will, he could have hitched the wages of an entire workforce to productivity and growth. He could have put something in sync, could have made something hum. Reform (at least reform) was easy to see, yet seemingly impossible to admit. At the very least, mega-banks could have been broken up while implementing tax and regulatory policies that favor community financial institutions. At most we could have seized the opportunity to begin a public discussion about the limits of money itself. We could have considered making money less abstract, using it only as a medium of direct exchange and limiting it as the store-of-value that prompts people to pursue it for its own sake and accumulate unlimited amounts of it on paper, electronically, abstractly. We could have depreciated money that doesn't circulate, depreciated money that doesn't work for the health of the planet and its people, and offer credit to those committed to the welfare of others.

In terms of Re-English, the financialized sector of the economy is the unproductive sector. It's the destructive sector. The parasitic sector. Incentivized bankers taking excessive risks for personal gain over the overall good of the shared subsistence system we call 'economy' brought the Treasury to its knees. Poets, performers and people can apply pressure that could make the above modes of exchange un-privatize-able. Poets, performers and people can challenge the negative right that makes it not-wrong to funnel money to top earners while depleting the bottom.

This upward drain is prevalent on all levels. As teachers and other public-sector workers are being asked to take cuts in wages and benefits, the salaries of university presidents (already exorbitant) are on the rise. Ohio Governor John Kasich has just signed into law a bill banning the right of public-sector workers to strike, as Ohio State University president E. Gordon Gee's pay package has climbed to \$1,818,911! As the usual logic goes, the sky-rocketing salaries are needed in order to attract quality candidates; or the payout, determined as a portion of a school's total budget, is defended as 'moderate' when compared with marketplace CEO incomes! It all comes home. Poets, performers and people can confront the manner, latitude, presumption and authority with which the negative right to ignore injustice is exercised.

More than any other move, making the financial sector a regionally-oriented public utility would undercut the predominance of money-mediated activity, depolarizing the schisms of debtor and creditor, public and private, morality and law.

To end this section with an illustration, I'll offer two juxtaposed quotations, lifted from an article by Bruce E. Levine called "How America's Obsession

With Money Deadens Us.”⁸⁷ The first quotation is from a reelection campaign speech delivered at Madison Square Garden by Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 31, 1936. The second quotation belongs to Barack Obama, taken from an interview excerpted by the *Wall Street Journal* in February, 2010, responding to Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein’s and JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon’s multi-million dollar bonuses:

We know that Government by organized money is just as dangerous as Government by organized mob. Never before in all our history have these forces been so united against one candidate as they stand today. They are unanimous in their hate for me—and I welcome their hatred. I should like to have it said of my first Administration that in it the forces of selfishness and of lust for power met their match. I should like to have it said of my second Administration that in it these forces met their master.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

First of all, I know both those guys. They’re very savvy businessmen. And I, like most of the American people, don’t begrudge people success or wealth. That’s part of the free market system. I do think that the compensation packages that we’ve seen over the last decade at least have not matched up always to performance . . . Listen, \$17 million is an extraordinary amount of money. Of course, there are some baseball players who are making more than that who don’t get to the World Series either.

— Barack Obama

FIND A NEED AND GET PAID FOR IT (AND BE FREED FROM IT)

Should poets financialize in the face of financialization, and if so, at whose expense? What would we performers and poets charge fees *for*? We can’t charge fees because we have nothing to be competitive with. This can be corrected. Do we agree that reinventing or replacing money is a colossal waste of time?

Build America Bonds [BABs] are part of Obama’s \$862 billion Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The U.S. Treasury issued most of the bonds to Goldman Sachs for re-sale (i.e., underwriting) to state and local governments. The Treasury pays 35% of the interest on the state and local debt. BABs are intended as cash infusions that allow municipalities to build infrastructure and create jobs. For the underwriting service Goldman Sachs charges municipal borrowers 37 percent more interest for BABs than their typical underwriting service. When this exorbitant charge came to light, the

U.S. Senate Finance Committee duly quizzed Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein regarding his deep bite into taxpayer recovery funds. In a letter of response to Iowa Senator Charles Grassley, Blankfein unapologetically explained that his bank is paid to “educate the market”; in other words, he’s not only paid to handle the money, he’s also paid to explain to clients why they are paying him for his handling service. His actions can’t be wrong or even unconscionable because, according to the norm, there’s no reason to not maximize profit. Of course, there’s always competition to keep the playing field level. Standing on a level playing field with Goldman Sachs, how large would my local credit union look?

PPPAPPG could offer its work to the market and then determine its fee. The work, for example, could be described as The Education Of Investment Bankers. Of course there wouldn’t be a client under obligation to pay. One can’t force others to pay for an unsolicited service (though in banking, a banker can exact additional involuntary fees from a customer once the service has been agreed to); or can one? If a poet educates the market, the invoice, regardless who does or doesn’t benefit from the education, could go to the likes of Blankfein, with full explanation as to how the market has benefited and why *he* has been selected to pay the fee. (Shouldn’t Blankfein pay for the publication of this book?) There could be an outbreak of such invoicing, following upon extraordinarily necessary and heretofore unproffered services and interactions that meet a need by healing a monetary wound. Is it illegal to send a bill to someone who neither asked for a service nor benefited from it? Hidden fees for hidden services? Sounds rather familiar. Performers, instead of applying for grants, could just send out invoices. Shouldn’t one decide one’s own worth in a supply-side free market? An awesome array of invoicing for the common good (a fusing of income and taxation)—though more along the lines of reparation for the “breaking down in social norms by people in a position to take.”

MAKE THE MARKET MEDITATION

Hide your mind by being continuously aware of your own faults alone.⁸⁸

—Dza Patrul Rinpoche

I am Hank Paulson. I feel terrible about myself. There is not one iota or electron of difference between Hank Paulson and ‘me’—we’re entirely interspersed.

I am Jamie Dimon. I exist only because I am part of everything else. The more I exist separately from all else the more I possess all that I have as a lie—as though I am living on my own and earned all that I have due to my own resources. All the philanthropy in the world cannot patch up this problem.

Those people we criticize over there are us. In the deafness of free speech—‘you’re free to say whatever you want so long as I don’t have to listen’—how can we reinvent language as the impossibility of inconsequence?

Listening is response.

We’re given economy in order to cultivate a relationship between the body and offering up the body.

Body is the host of identity.

I’m part of your body.

Make yourself a microenterprise.

Meditating on the economy can be quite appalling. The market is regulated by an intensification of our possessiveness. It plays on personal vanity and relies upon incentive separable from the benefiting of others. We live by means of this system and this system cuts us off from life—like waves unaware of their body of water.

Why is oneness reserved for spirituality and not the interconnectivity of economy? Is it a kind of insecurity? We’re perishable so we provide for ourselves privately, temporally. We brace against our end. What does economic system have to do with ultimate ineluctable annihilation of identity? What makes economics so mean? Shouldn’t economic reality (on the other hand) necessitate the realization of commonality over isolation? Is privacy our apex? Is it a toss up? If it’s a toss up between economics as selfish or selfless motivation, why wouldn’t we simply choose boundlessness? Can’t I crack this code here and now, word by word, in this very writing? We have an illusory economy based on an ‘I’ whose reality can’t be upheld. Does a free market necessarily cut us off from each other? Is a workable unregulated market in which we practice the reality of shared prosperity possible? With the happiness made available for personal use by a general practice of shared prosperity, I might even be able to accept some aspect of ego as provisionally

appreciable. It is presumptuous on my part, but I do believe Paulson lived in dread of the morning on which the world he recognized and was responsible for might no longer be there. As it turns out, he never took a new look—was never given a new view.

Why would we be given *economy* if not to find out who we are as a people? Can we seriously ask whether self-importance is the engine of the economy or the wrench thrown into its machinations? Is it a free market if we're not free to change how it operates? We contrast self-interest and selflessness as a way of maintaining the status quo. It's an unreal distinction. How could one not functionally be the same as the other? Why hitch the fate of a market to one pole or the other? A free market would make no distinction. It would be nondual. The conflict between the two is typically posed as the very dynamics of life, without which life itself would be threatened; while in fact this proposed threat is a ploy easily exploited by those in power for purposely portraying life as threatening.

Let the market be indifferent to regulation or nonregulation by greater good. Beating ourselves silly with capitalism versus socialism only creates countless unreconcilable differences. To remain in opposition is to stay dynamized and competitive. We long to be named and to live accomplished lives. Because we have ideas and beliefs about the market we suffer. The market is predominant. Regulated or unregulated, it's a manifestation of our worst fears. It's a blank canvas, not a mirror.

What could we possibly be empty of if not self as separable? A market that would form around this we certainly have not seen.

It forms around the ways in which we treat each other.

In *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, David Graeber states that pure self-interest rose globally, simultaneously with the appearance of great armies and coinage for paying the soldiers. He refers to this as the “military-coinage-slavery complex.”⁸⁹ The weight of the centuries of this consistent insanity can never be lifted. It is only possible for us to no longer understand ourselves as matter that can be trapped under such weight. The instant we stabilize the mind and turn to a cultivation of equanimity, we're no longer crushed by our own conditioning. This writing comes down to this: the market is a form of fear. It comes down to this: any form that does not let us suffer less becomes a cause of that untreated suffering.

The market matters too much. The only way to make it non-illusory is to use it as a means for removing ignorance of each other. We can make it real by making it a mechanism of conscience.

Perhaps this can't be said in a way that makes it true.

If these words are obstacles, throw them aside. By doing so, they will have provided what only they can provide, in the only way in which it can be provided. They provide what they can't give. They provide the absence of themselves. They become indistinguishable from the clarity only their limitations can open.

MAKE THE MARKET A COMMON SOURCE OF BLESSING

Economy is a projection of our mental habits. It's an environment that we all move in and rely upon for our livelihoods. Those "in a position to take" take more than their share because they've done more to put in place this shared environment upon which we all depend. They've made more money flow. They know how it works. They know how to manipulate this 'projection' to their own advantage. They're eaten alive (as distinct from offering up the body) while climbing to the top of the world.

The economy is an objectification of our beliefs regarding human nature. We imbue the market with scarcity, insecurity, competition, accomplishment, reward and self-advantage. Our relationship to the market is that of subservience. It is, specifically, not an expression of freedom. The market can be so fundamentally oppressive that castes, classes and classifications into lower, middle and upper conform to its dictates; while century upon century of sutra, scripture, gospel and sagacious adage have identified their sacred truths as devaluation of market and its concomitant materiality. If we will be judged, we will uniquely be judged according to our conduct in relation to 'making a living'—and the judge will be nothing other than another projection of oneself. It's a perfectly autonomous, completely self-referential closed system. A thing of wonder, whether generative of paradise or punishment or neither.

Lore has it that a person can't be both virtuous and rich. At the same time, it seems fair to say that the misery of poverty is more of a detriment than aid to virtue. Material well-being and any other form of well-being interdepend.

Poverty should be a choice (or a vow)—otherwise, unavailable.

Can the market be made into a common source of blessing that can remedy the poverty of the ‘priceless’ (to keep life a preponderance of what no amount of money can buy)?

Take care of yourself (or someone else will be obliged to). Can we each be evenly self-sufficient? That’s not the point. The divide between independence and being a burden to others, like the divides between self and selflessness and self-reliance and welfare, is a cynical artifice that severely restricts our vision of humanity and the diversity and abundance of our gifts. Right now, the daily pressures on each of us as individuals are so great that concern for others becomes practically impossible.

Ultimately there’s not a shred of difference between commoning and ownership (when fairness reigns).

LEVITY NOT INHOSPITALITY

I pray that we do not change from prisoners into prison guards.⁹⁰
— Adam Michnik

Societies have always drawn upon ridicule to ruffle any individual who assumes authority over others. We’ve drawn on derision to disarm the despotic, farce and frivolity to tactically fluster the ruffian, and mockery to muddle those who move against the mass’s egalitarian norm—though rarely without heightening the hostility, however subtly (where it really sinks in: into subtle being).

Kindness condescends. It assumes its counterpart. To bemuse is to belittle. I can’t tell if you’re kidding. Pranks produce the next pathology.

If you want to overpower the opposition, defy categorization. The commons is a carnival. The Iron Curtain fell because the forces tickling it were an array, a bewildering pluralism of social movements and idiosyncrasies. Participants included performance artists, nationalists, anarchists, liberals, religious leaders, workers, intellectuals, free-marketeters, socialists, postmaterialists, conservatives and pacifists.

“Precisely because they were so evidently innocuous, they backed the regimes into uncomfortable corners.”⁹¹

(Likewise, due to their perceived powerlessness, any action on the part of poets, however pointed, will be presumed impotent.)

Well-being will be the next weapon. (As music was our last and now obsolete secret weapon.) All borders porous.

Ignore Walmart. It *will* go away.

Levity disregards fear more fully than sobriety. It suspends the rules where they can be picked like low hanging fruit or left to rot.

People could protest by not showing up in the streets. Boycott business as usual. A shut-in shivaree. Or, if it's illegal to assemble, show up without assembling.

Perhaps the most effective maneuver of all time, far better than any antic, occurred in Chile in 1983. As coal miners were planning to strike, Pinochet's soldiers began to position themselves around the protestors. Instead of walking directly into the confrontation, the miners called for a national day of slow movement. As a result, people all over Chile walked, worked, talked, drove and ate in slow motion as a show of solidarity. Police action against a population bonded by moving in ridiculously slow motion is quite impossible (would itself be laughable). This slow motion protest was the first indication that effective tactics for lifting Pinochet's decade-long repression could be implemented.

As best antic ever, I'll propose Abbie Hoffman's October 21, 1967 levitation of the Pentagon until it began to turn orange, vibrate and cast out its "spirits of murder, violence & creephood" (Ed Sanders), with the help of a Hittite spell and the chanting of:

a-ri-ia-ad-da-li-is dim-an-za sar-ri ka-si-i
hu-u—e-hu-u-i-ia tap-pa-as-sa-it sar-ri
ti-ia-mi hu-i-hu-i-ia⁹²

On September 24, 1992 Chippewa chief Adam Nordwell flew to Rome, stepped out on the tarmac, and by drawing on the authority of the 1455 papal bull *Romanus Pontifex* claimed possession of Italy for his tribe according to the Doctrine of Discovery.

We are survived by our practice of imagination.

THIS TIME AROUND, MAKE THE REVOLUTION NONDUAL

Don't tear down institutions, build your own and then tear those down. Neither parallel nor opposite. Apposite.

People shouting in the streets for “NO REVOLUTION.” No resistance. How could a popular uprising not include everyone; including the unpopular and the oppressive (the targets of the revolt)? The only remaining revolution is the one that hasn't been tried: nondual revolution. Non-oppositional. Break the tension. ‘They’ are ‘us.’ It's as obvious as the inverse. When we exclude nothing from the need for fullness of human being our separateness becomes inconceivable. We even share subjectivity, the mode of our insularity—how we recognize what others are going through, by means of this common reference. I am one of those. We share sentience. That's more than enough to place us on the same side, with no dividing line or circumference in sight (and if that falls short, just add the impermanence of life.) This time around the revolution will not be based on the deadness of self-indulgence but interconnected other-orientation.

Social movements only ever succeed by uniting a pluralism of forces against a common oppressor. It is the common oppressor that unites. And that oppressor, in this case, is *everyone*.

Just as nondual revolution is a paradox, sweet science is a matter of hitting without hurting. Sweeter science is to hit without hitting, while the sweetest art sets things up so there'll be no blow at all.

The unrevolution will be a mutation, not a reformulation or polar shift. Nonegocentricity and the necessary energy for shifting to an eco-centric economy are one and the same.

I'm not looking for the altruistic complement to greed. There is no mirroring or contraversion. Using money as a social dividend and private accumulation are the same. Whether we're monied or moneyless, making ends meet is the same stubborn reality.

UNMADE ECONOMY: MOTHERING ECONOMY (AFTER GENEVIEVE VAUGHAN)

A mothering economy provides goods and services directly to needs without intermediary monetized manipulation. A mothering economy is market-free interrelationship based on taking care of each other. It bears the social priorities of universal entitlement, connectedness, consensus, maturity, community-centered political spaces, material sufficiency, guaranteed living income, turn-taking, ubiquitous generosity, protection of the environment and the valuation of qualitative gift giving. Instead of punishment it attempts to provide for needs the neglect of which necessitates crime.

Wealth of a society derives from women's free labor and the gifts of nature. Thus, abundance hosts whatever economy rises from it.⁹³ Capitalism is a parasitic economy in which the powerful have always positioned themselves to get something for nothing. Profit, by definition, is the acquisition of something for nothing (beyond one's investment). Profit is a gift to the capitalist in the guise of the low wage paid to plebeians. Profit also takes from abundance by appropriating natural resources, women's work of community-making and reproduction, and the ability to make money from money through usury and speculation.

Monetized economy is a manifestation of the worst aspect of one gender allowed to run wild. It denatures direct distribution of goods to needs. The male market foments distrust, scarcity, hostility, private agendas, leveraging, hierarchy, authority and the concoction of needs. It disregards unconditional giving and denigrates cooperation as aberrant behavior.

Maternal economy, on the other hand, provides an awareness of lifetime and all of existence as nurturing, comforting, loving and attuned to need, as parent to child. Maternal economy is not an attempt to reform market exchange by making it egalitarian. Its negative critique reveals that economic violence is not a matter of unequal exchange but the mechanism of market exchange itself. A mixed maternal and monetized egalitarian economy is out of the question (equation).

A parenting economy is a gratitude economy in which the thanks due to others and nature for providing the articles of our sustenance is experienced as boundless in each instance.

As infants, parents made us feel safe and completely provided for. Then we stood on our own two feet. Ultimately we outgrow the lifelong push for autonomy. The infant-parent bond again becomes an understanding of opening into all of energy and being taken care of and made safe by its boundlessness. When we organize our market within this sense of caring, needs are more directly met.

Market is a small flickering flame seen behind our closed eyelids, about to go out. A clear sky free of sunlight, moon and darkness.

WHAT I MAKE IS YOURS

All you make is ours.

No one put the earth here, so no one can own any part of it. Even a capitalist might concede the *earth*. Henry George (almost-mayor of NYC) and Thomas Paine proposed property 'rental' for all, to be paid to the community for use of unownable earth. Only improvements made upon the land (buildings or crops) could be owned and as such were untaxable, as they were a matter of one's proper labor. It would *seem* that one owns what one makes. What one makes is subject to sale and personal profit because it belongs to oneself. A capitalist would never concede the labor value of goods and services. On the other hand, all materials derive from the same unownable earth. Materials can't be made. Materials that are made can only be made from other material. That which a thing is made of also can't be owned because it's derived from that which one can't have made. Something one makes, because it's made of something, can't be owned or sold as one's own. What about our inventions, the intellectual property aspect? Can't that be owned as one's own and therefore sold? Even less so. A person is absolutely not responsible for having made that which brings to mind. Even the process of formulating an idea, whether understood as culturally cultivated or simply beyond one's ability to make happen as it happens, is given or granted. (There is no comprehending that with which we comprehend, nor being responsible for its ability to comprehend.) The more original the idea, the more gifted the inventor, the more 'given' the ability. (Inspired poets of old considered their work unauthored or muse-driven.) The more original the work, the more unowned. The less owned the less subject to selling as one's own. It's thankless to think otherwise. If you work well you're all the more beholden to abundance

behind, between and at the heart of us all. Is there any way for profit to be other than an act of blatant ingratitude? What about services that are made of nothing—just labor, just advice, just words, just sitting there taking up space? Again, no one built the space in which we move. No one made words arise. No one knows how or from where they arise. No one made our ability to speak (speech, perhaps, an inheritance from all of humanity). Those hands for hire, from where do they come? Boss, on what is your business built? If we don't amply pay craftspeople and caregivers closest to the sense of gift, how much less should the rest of us get?

Let the distinguishing of mother earth, materials and manufactured goods dissolve. It's all our mother. Making is further appreciation, as distinct from the monetizing of more and more natural and social resources. All material cheapness is artificial, as matter is invaluable. If we each internalize the full costs (ecological and social consequences) of what we produce, the nurturing economy will begin to supplant the quick buck.

“Let every commodity be invaluable, unless there is another earth, unless all we'll ever leave behind is other than this, unless what we make we make out of something other than all we'll ever leave behind.”⁹⁴

MAKE MONEY ROT

What's the difference between un-circulating money and heart disease?

Like dissolving a clot, let unused money rot.

Make the cheapest goods those that are the most wholesome for the planet.

Make them locally, to supplant import colonization.

Money doesn't grow, it only ripens.

Make more money a burden. A stinking mess. Clotted money.

Let money become less valuable unused, and valueless when not obligingly used.

If you can't produce what you produce outside the hand-me-down called 'civilization,' its benefits belong to everyone.

Work, then, like materials, begins to have infinite value (or, at least, an unquantifiable value), in that, in our interdependence, our works allow each day to fall in place. How would our pay reflect this way of exchange? To be paid invaluable would be 'fair.'

DEREGULATE OBLIGATION (WE ARE ONE ANOTHER'S SOCIAL DIVIDEND)

It's only once we can imagine human life as a series of commercial transactions that we're capable of seeing our relation to the universe in terms of debt.⁹⁵

— David Graeber

Some economists believe there is no social glue without ego, status, esteem, gratitude, respect, obligation (even obloquy) and honor, while such accoutrements of self are themselves gifts given to oneself spontaneously in the act of giving. We can't take them for ourselves. Anonymous giving has little to do with nameless giving and 'reverse theft'; it has everything to do with giving from a greater energy than one's own. Our return to the social strictness of the so-called gift-economy (in which heads would roll for hoarding the harvest or for minor acts of ingratitude) will be necessarily innovative and anarchic. We all owe each other—not because of what we've done for each other, but simply because life was given to us, because we live in wonder. Interdependence doesn't depend. Competitive generosity also destroys the social fabric. Detachment and immersion are indistinguishable values. High regard and humility are both distractions. Liberate (contrary to 'obliterate') obligation. Whether payment is made out of compulsion or pure gratitude is beside the point. Whether the world is delusional or indubitable, the indispensable currency is, in any case, openhandedness. Socialism could be sumptuous. Altruism and asceticism extravagant. We've received boundlessly. Both money and gifts are measures for turning our backs on trust and surfeit. Even a clean cold hard cash transaction is the interchange of oneself and all of existence. When we use monetized language to characterize our social relationships (i.e., the so-called primordial debt—all we owe to society and the cosmos for our existence), we're not contaminating ourselves but expressing the fact that economy is not separable from all other aspects of

life; in non-commercial parlance we could say we're to fulfill the efforts of our ancestors and each other.

Some modern-day gift-economists argue for a discernible set of appropriate motives and responses for giving and receiving. Elements of this etiquette include: reciprocating according to the degree of the gratitude felt, giving only if the gift is witnessed, exemplary meeting of need and giving of a gift in order to weave the web of obligation, excluding money from transaction, pricing that is recipient-determined, no charging of fees above one's cost of producing what's provided, excluding from future transactions those who haven't sufficiently reciprocated, deriding any unconditional giving (without anticipation of a return or the creating of obligation) as 'spiritual dogma,' giving not to be good but only if it feels good, giving only if it creates connection, giving only if the return will be unexpected or unrelated to the initial gift, giving only to validate and not abnegate self, and so on.

Some anthropologists correlate quantification of value and moral collapse. Some believe nobody really owes anybody anything (that the language of debt is disastrous). Some experience such mutual non-obligation as liberating, some infuriating. Some believe any standard is self-contradictory.

Giving and receiving in the economy in which we are each other's social dividend will be, to say the least, multifarious. Acts without concern for requital will still be the greatest acts opening the greatest sense of gratitude (of non-coerced giving in return). Money is never homogenous. How each person has earned her or his money and given of her or his time is unique. Accordingly, each act of giving has a different value. (Buying outside of gifting is considerably more homogenous.) (Perhaps progressive pricing in which people pay for the same goods and services according to personal income and assets would indeed make money homogenous and equally felt.)

TIME-OF-DEATH SERVICE MANUAL IN RELATION TO THE CONFUSED MARKET

The market is not itself a source of blessings, but a practice for opening to their source. A white drop descending, red drop ascending, meeting in a copper sky.

Loathing the market only allows it to live on. Acrimony can't change its chemistry. Cursed, it turns into an even more operative and omnipotent ghost.

As our subsistence, the market can't simply be chopped off. It will always grow right back. There's one chance in a billion that it would grow back benignly, as our completely cleared conscience. (Thus the odds are good. It may take many sentences to make this happen.)

Perhaps you're overlooking the fact that you're dead.

Rising in a ball of fire, saliva running out of the side of your mouth, mind is no longer restricted by market pressures. What you're left with is how well you've served others under this pressure while still confused.

Conduct a career for its moment of collapse, for the moment it no longer sustains living—in intense sickness, for instance, when its significance disappears.

The market is a covering. It covers that which can't be opened without the process of removing its cover. Market based on individual advantage is habit-market. There's only the covering.

The market 'in itself' (habit-market) is the deep regret that's too late to do anything about.

The market is for wanting nothing (far from crazed consumerism), and this is how it would perform most efficiently.

The market perceived as an object separable from our intentions (as a system with its own nature) is a perfect setup for rapacity and subjugation.

The market is for realizing that the harm caused by a little ill will is inestimable.

The market as is (not jewel-like) exists because of your tendency to be afraid and aggravated.

What is real suffers when we don't treat the illusory as a determinant of the real.

The only way to keep the market from becoming a source of suffering is to simplify it in a contrary sense: make it a form of thoughtfulness. Anyone who has experienced the pleasure of working together, who's felt the good of helping or serving others, has an implicit understanding of a simple market. Parent light.

Market Mind is complex and will fall hard and shatter self-horrified as it believes it is solid as rock (sold by the box).

You're a fool if you believe you can just drop the competition habit once you're through with it or once you're on your way out. Competition is not discontinuous. (You'll swear you're being slaughtered.)

Unconscious of the market as the path of perfection, consequently unaware of the arising of intrinsic peace as we decompose.

When panic closes in, possessions (the body among them) disappear, and whether your decisions eased the hardship of others becomes the mode you move in and are made of.

Forsaking the free market would be a small price to pay for a market that liberates. Stay with the going away of grasping until staying with the going away begins to glow.

A small amount of heat remaining around the heart. When the space we pass into is no longer space because space is a recognition made possible by a combination of elements that no longer form the space of space.

Your most precious belonging (your body) (which you will give up anyway) you'd give up to the market? On what level other than materiality might self-advantage apply?

The extent of the clarity will depend on the degree of the common probity. (Had only the unionized Washington State machinists not been placed in a position to be happy for South Carolina machinists who benefited when Boeing moved its passenger jet production plant from the Puget Sound to lower-wage, nonunion, right-to-work South Carolina because the Washington workers had exercised their collective bargaining rights. Had the South Carolina workers only declared in advance they'd unionize and pre-strike to protect the livelihoods of their sisters and brothers in the Northeast.)

Rickety backbone, armored bosom. From your destabilized mind you'll project another fright-filled scene for each occasion you could have increased another's sense of security.

Market is dead enough because we don't need to know anything about time of death other than nature of mind.

We'd give anything to do it all over again (and we are).

We'll be judged not *for* what we are but *by* what we are.

Just take care of who needs taking care of.

Material security is always marked by the feeling of being robbed while you're in fact rotting away, of having failed to pack the anchor, of being given an anchor when you already have one, of having an anchor when you can't use it, and of being unable to focus for the life of you.

Contempt for consequences, crushed with a burning hammer or perhaps nailed to the flaming ground.

Fairness resorts to the time of death because every other language of appeal will fail. The visibility of the sky as narrow as the view through a straw.

The market is the oubliette of your own skull. Take refuge in your terror: half the time peaceful visions have no other form to take. Worse yet, your suffering will not be able to end your life. It's not so obvious, distinguishing a helpful from a harmful action.

Nothing virtuous can be done with any part of a fortune earned by underpaying others or by paying taxes on a par with the underpaid.

Here to benefit others—period—especially if you have the wherewithal to have made a fortune on their backs instead. You were here in exchange. Fortune was to have been a potential fortune, exchanged for clarity and squandered in advance for everyone. Likewise, you can't give something up after the fact of having it. Return currency to potential.

We want to come back for more. We don't want to change when things are going well. We'll depart through a cracked kneecap.

The beautiful home of your senses, in which you're a donkey looking out the window, still inventing things to do. An unbearable pain you can't die from. Bravery is the product of an injured ego and ego can only be injury. Like a financial engineer lowering credit limits below the balances of credit card holders. Like a hunter not begging forgiveness from the animal about to be slain.

Your personal fortune is a model for countless others who are about to block a less-awful place of birth.

White as conch. Mind stuffed. Saliva still leaking out of the side of your mouth. Eyes closed, blue shimmering. Piss in bed.

To die unconsciously choose value over invaluable.

Let the inconceivable be represented as reflection.

When nothing matters more than how we deal with delusion, just how delusional is it?

Having not helped, you won't receive the benefit of being the source of the benefits received by those you would have helped. Your confusion and your remains can't be mixed with mud and made into mini-memorials that melt away. No most inward request.

One last never-ending inbreath.

Notes

- 1) Jamgön Mipham, *Luminous Essence: A Guide to the Guhyagarbha Tantra*, trans. by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2009) 45.
- 2) "The Law of the Twelve Tables," Table VI, 1. Available online at http://www.constitution.org/sps/sps01_1.htm.
- 3) Dahlia Lithwick, "From OWS to OSCOTUS," *Slate*, October 17, 2011. 1.
- 4) Visit Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund at <http://www.celdf.org>.
- 5) Available online at <http://www.ratical.org/corporations/demoBrief.pdf>.
- 6) This historical note has been included as a precaution, demonstrating the potential pitfall when engaged poets mix their uncommon poetics with arcane legalistic language, only to produce a puzzling poet-privatization that will be struck down by popular demand as the law falls back into the hands of the greedy demos, ultimately forming an even more virulent privatization of opaquely run government and generosity reserved for the few: In Ireland, from the time of Amergin Whiteknee (7th century) until the debate at Amain Macha between the ollamh-laureate Fercertne and the boy Neide, the judiciary was exclusively in the hands of the poets. Neide (so young he had to paste a grass beard on his face to pass for

a man) was vying for the ollavship because his father had been top poet before Fercertne. The Irish poets had evolved a dialect or 'dark speech' of their own—the Bearla na Filidh—undecipherable to all but themselves. Because poets were ipso facto judges and lawyers as well, the law was written in Bearla na Filidh and the equally obscure, legalistic Bearla na Feni. Fercertne and Neide debated in public to determine who would claim the chair of the Ollamh and wear the magnificent robe of feathers. The discourse of the two poets was so learned and abstruse—strings of kennings, metaphors, riddles, allusions, and superlative boasts—no one present understood what they were saying nor what they had decided. As a result the king (Conchobar mac Nessa) declared their language incomprehensible, separated the office of poet from that of judge, and decreed that from then on all people would share in lawmaking. This exchange between rival poets is extant in a number of manuscripts dating from the 12th century under the title *Immacallam*, and has been translated as *The Colloquy of the Two Sages*. Today such obscurity works in all directions through countless specializations and professional vocabularies. Perhaps poetry, were it to be generally read, would in fact be found to be one of the more evident uses of language. Certainly 'speech' in the sense of 'everyday speech' is old news for poetry. In any event, poets going the extra mile to acquire the jargons of other fields seems to be the most direct way of opening an enclosure, opening one commons to another and doing all that can be done to hold all that is good in life convivially together. Supple Science asks: In a broadly shared prosperity, will there be a common denominator language, myriad jargons, or a language to be discovered with each new communing?

7) Adriana Aranha, quoted in Frances Moore Lappé, "The City That Ended Hunger," *yes!* February, 13 2009. See also the Unesco report "Public Policies for Food Supplies in Belo Horizonte City Brazil" at <http://www.unesco.org/most/southa10.htm>.

8) Cited by Barbara Ehrenreich in "Preying on the Poor," *TomDispatch.com*, May 17, 2012. Available online at <http://tomdispatch.com/archive/175543>.

9) Elizabeth Warren interviewed by Lois Romano of the *Washington Post*. October 8, 2009. The citation from David DeGraw's *The Economic Elite Vs. The People of the United States of America* (AmpedStatus, 2010) can be found online at <http://ampedstatus.com/part-ii-the-rise-of-the-economic-elite-economic-elite-vs-the-people/>.

10) Annette Bernhardt, et al., 2009. Available at <http://www.nelp.org/page/-/brokenlaws/BrokenLawsReport2009.pdf?nocdn=1>.

11) *The Republic of Plato*, trans. by Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968) 338c.

12) "And from this it is clear what the equitable people are: they are those who by choice and habit do what is equitable, and do not stand on their rights unduly, but are content to receive a smaller share although they have the law on their side." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934) 317.

13) That is, after having insisted on money as the commons in articles contributed to the San Francisco-based Nonsite Collective, 2008-09. Deactivated website. Excerpts from "Stanzas on Commoning":

Of course the definition of a commons can be extended to include any heritable public good. But, to be precise, a commons was a piece of land owned by one person while being open to others for purposes of subsistence. Strolling, for example, though perhaps the exercise of a traditional right, is not a matter of livelihood. Thus a park is not a commons. A wildlife refuge is a commons, but for flora and fauna alone.

§

America, from the time the Europeans arrived, never knew a commons. Commons, in any capacity that might have been carried out in the New World, was systematically and

permanently eliminated during the English Civil War—say, from the beheading of Charles I to the belated beheading of Cromwell's disinterred cadaver. The closing of the commons in England was a key mechanism for the shipping of indentured settlers to America. The only force on earth that could have kept the commons open was Antinomian (anarchic religion) and Antinomianism fought and failed to do so. The only force on earth that could have stopped the Atlantic slave trade before it began was also Antinomian. The Antinomians were the most potent force of dissent because they linked unowned land with unowned spirit and could only, by extension, link unowned spirit with ownership of one's own labor and one's own person. (Just as, today, if we want to consider the air we breathe as a commons, failing to link environmental issues with private business, with doctrinaire colonization of spirit, with ideological captivation of mind, with worker insecurity, or with lobbying is ludicrous. No commons exists as such without dependence on every other area that can also be considered common and inalienable. Once, for example, biodiversity is separated from money-as-commons, neither side of the equation can any longer function as a commons. It's a wreck. Free Market can't be a commons because its use is based on maximized individual advantage. Tompkins Square Park on Manhattan's Lower East Side was not a commons when it was entirely squatted because it excluded other use.

The word 'commons' often brings to mind the historical phenomenon of the English commons, particularly the enclosure movement carried out during the English Interregnum (1649–1660)—as the closing of commons was prerequisite for the industrial revolution and the genocidal, privatized colonization of America. A broader understanding of commons could include anything from the contemporary Landless Workers' Movement *Movimento do Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* in Brazil where 3% of the population owns two-thirds of the arable land, to the openly edited online encyclopedia Wikipedia.

A commons is a network of resources jointly used and managed. As such, any interpretation of commons becomes less and less useful the further it drifts from concern for subsistence, livelihood and material condition. A commons can be understood through its functions. It was traditionally used for hunting, fishing, gathering timber, firewood, stones for building and marl for fertilizer, pasturage, gardening, gleaned leftover grain from harvested fields, nutting, herbing, and fruit and berry picking. As generally perceived through the eyes of their lords and masters, commoners were lazy, obdurate, undisciplined, minimally productive, non-wasteful, self-reliant, argumentative and collectively celebratory ingrates. It was the commons—the land they were tied to—that kept commoners from destitution. The commons was their community, safety net, and social security. They didn't own the land, the land owned them (as the saying goes). In 17th century England commoning became a barrier to industrial progress, cultivation, and the development of English landscape architecture. Low productivity and weakened ingenuity are still considered the trademarks of nonprivatized industry. As recently as 1991, Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari eliminated the constitutional right to *ejido* (communal farm land) citing low yield of collectively owned property.

§

The limited collective autonomy of the commoners was not enviable—not in the Middle Ages, not in the Early Modern era, nor is it enviable today (squatting, lorded over by lenders). Only in light of the vagabondage that followed upon the enclosing of forest and countryside can commoner living conditions appear to be more desirable by comparison. All aspects of a peasant's life were invaded by contractual commitment. An Anglo Saxon serf's 7th century oath of fealty states,

By the Lord before whom this sanctuary is holy, I will to [N.] be true and faithful, and love all which he loves and shun all which he shuns, according to the laws of God and the order of the world. Nor will I ever with will or action, through word or deed, do anything which is displeasing to him, on condition that he will hold to me as I shall deserve it, and that he will perform everything as it was in our agreement when I submitted myself to him and chose his will.

Fear of punishment and poverty was willfully propagated to keep the people working, just as today fear of foreclosure, factory closure, unemployment, debt-deluge, insufficient income, and destitution in old age keep the populace trembling with nose to grindstone.

'Common' is also a verb; I common, you common, we common, commoning (first recorded use by Sir Edward Coke in the early 17th century). Commoning is the creating of our material condition and organizing of our labor with greater emphasis on the prosperity of all.

Can 'commons' be transposed from the forest of old to contemporary conditions? What is the closest approximation of the former functioning of a commons—commune, wage-labor, collective means of production, regional economy?

§

It's not a question of capitalism over socialism or profit over nonprofit. It's a matter of common munificence in a commensurate economy. It's a matter of what Aristotle, in his *Nichomachean Ethics*, called *epieikeia*. By *epieikeia* he meant 'equity' (albeit not for women and slaves—the very duplicity in fair-minded terms used repressively (and obliviously) constitutes the history of language that must be rigorously redressed). He opposed equity to strict law. Fair exchange of goods and services was referred to as *antipeponthisis* (reciprocal proportion). For Aristotle, exchange itself was common to a people (*koinos*), and the common currency was necessarily money. It was equitable interchange that held all things together.

Applying this voluntary ethics to our current conditions, I find that the most useful translation of commons is 'economy-as-shared-source-of-prosperity.' Economy is a compound Greek word from *oikonomos*; *oikos* (house) and *nomos* (managing or distribute); thus economy is a household management of labor, money, resources, and the production, consumption and exchange of goods. By perceiving our entire economy as one household, we reconstitute a commons. As such, the proper object of commoning is our wealth as a people (what each one of us earns and owns minus what we owe). It is this Total Wealth that has historically been pillaged by economic privilege within the private sector, particularly over the last 30 years. How else, from what source other than the commons, could one possibly amass a fabulous fortune?

Technically, this definition of commons could be called 'factors of production.' Marx, for his own purposes, translated commons as 'means of production.' Means of production as definition of commons is, obviously, too limited. On the other hand, commons as the total wealth of a people (incomes + assets – debts) might prove to be too unwieldy.

§

I find even the narrowed economic terms for commons such as 'capital' or 'profit' to be a more useful activation of commons than most of the heritable terms currently in the air (such as 'air,' 'resource,' 'nature,' 'environment,' 'knowledge') as the latter leave out the active component

of commoning called ‘labor’ (and, certainly, ‘livelihood’). Money (which at first glance might seem to be the antithesis of commons) represents the accumulated wealth of a people, amassed and invested over generations by each and every worker. This total wealth is used to build a society.

- 14) “Remarks by Chairman Alan Greenspan” delivered at the Federal Reserve System’s Fourth Annual Community Affairs Research Conference, Washington D.C. April 8, 2005.
- 15) Federal Reserve G.19 Report on Consumer Credit, July 2011. Available online at <http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/g19/Current/>.
- 16) United States Federal Reserve System: <http://statisticbrain.com/credit-card-debt-statistics/>.
- 17) Deloitte Center for Financial Services Retirement Survey, “Meeting the Retirement Challenge.” Available online at www.deloitte.com.
- 18) David U. Himmelstein, et al., “Medical Bankruptcy in the United States, 2007: Results of a National Study,” *The American Journal of Medicine*, Volume 122, Issue 8: 741-746.
- 19) “Student Debt and the Class of 2011,” The Project on Student Debt. Available online at <http://projectonstudentdebt.org>.
- 20) “How Undergraduate Students Use Credit Cards,” SallieMae, 2009: 3.
- 21) Mark Kantrowitz cited in Mary Pilon’s article “Student Loan Debt Surpasses Credit Cards,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 9, 2010.
- 22) The Federal Reserve Bank of New York’s “Press Briefing on Household Debt and Credit,” Meta Brown, et al., February 28, 2013.
- 23) “New Data Confirms Troubling Student Loan Default Problems,” The Project on Student Debt. Ibid.
- 24) Eliot Spitzer, “We Own Wall Street.” *Slate*. 21 Dec. 2011. Web.
- 25) Albert Lord, quoted in “Seeing Hazards,” *Washington Post News Blog*. January 27, 2006.
- 26) Genevieve Vaughan, ed. *Women and the Gift Economy: A Radically Different World Is Possible* (Toronto: Inanna Publications & Education, 2007) 375. Available online at <http://www.gift-economy.com/international.html>.
- 27) “Summary of Maximum Permissible Rates Under State Usury Laws,” *American Lawyers Quarterly*. Available online at <http://www.alqlist.com/interestratesummary.html>.
- 28) Margrit Kennedy, *Interest and Inflation Free Money* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1995). Available online at <http://kennedy-bibliothek.info/data/bibo/media/GeldbuchEnglisch.pdf>.
- 29) William K. Black, “Wall Street’s Broken Windows,” *New Economic Perspectives*, March 4, 2012.
- 30) James Felkerson, “\$29,000,000,000,000: A Detailed Look at the Fed’s Bailout by Funding Facility and Recipient,” *Levy Economics Institute of Bard College*, December 2011. Available online at http://www.levyinstitute.org/pubs/wp_698.pdf.
- 31) *Quadragesimo Anno: Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI on Reconstruction of the Social Order* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1939) Para. 79. Available online at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno_en.html.
- 32) Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* (Centennial Edition) (New York: Plume, 1999).
- 33) Andy Kroll, “How the McEconomy Bombed the American Worker,” *TomDispatch.com*, May 8, 2011. Available online at <http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175389/>.
- 34) Visit National Jobs For All Coalition at <http://www.njfac.org/>. See especially the “Uncommon Sense” series at <http://www.njfac.org/pubs.html>.
- 35) James Joyce, *James Joyce: Occasional, Critical, and Political Writings*, ed. Kevin Barry (Oxford: World Classics, 2008) 59.
- 36) Thomas Paine preferred ‘justice’ over ‘law.’ The full title of his 1797 social insurance pamphlet is *Agrarian Justice, Opposed to Agrarian Law, and to Agrarian Monopoly*.
- 37) Coumba Toure, “The Link to Humanity: Gift Economies,” *Birthing Justice: Women Creating Economic and Social Alternatives*, ed. Beverly Bell, (Other Worlds: New Orleans, 2012) 7-8.

- Also available online at <http://www.otherworldsarepossible.org/sites/default/files/documents/Birthing-Justice-sml%202012.pdf>. Also visit Other Worlds Are Possible at <http://www.otherworldsarepossible.org/>.
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- 39) "Mass. Doctor's Prescription for Homelessness," CBS Evening News Broadcast, February 23, 2012. Available online at http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18563_162-57384122/mass-doctors-prescription-for-homelessness/?tag=contentBody;cbsCarousel.
- 40) Response given by Larry Summers when asked to explain new census data showing the greatest gap on record between the richest and poorest. Cited by Dan Froomkin in "Larry Summers Optimistic About Middle Class," *Huffington Post*, September 28, 2010.
- 41) Robert Coram, "Robert Coram, 1761-1796: Political Inquiries," *American Political Writing During the Founding Era: 1760-1805*, Volume 2, eds. Charles S Hyneman and Donald Lutz (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1983). Available online at http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=2068&chapter=188771&layout=html&Itemid=27.
- 42) See "E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E," 233.
- 43) *Pensions at a Glance 2011: Retirement-Income Systems in OECD AND G20 Countries* (OECD Publishing, 2011). Available online at <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/8111011e.pdf?expires=1381896046&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=D6FB98D46C1E0C33BB9E42F55D914F1F>. See also "Social Justice in the OECD: How do the Member States Compare?" Available online at http://www.sgi-network.org/pdf/SGI11_Social_Justice_OECD.pdf.
- 44) Visit the Center for Retirement Research for constantly updated information at <http://crr.bc.edu/>.
- 45) See Michael Norton and Dan Ariely, "Building a Better America: One Wealth Quintile at a Time," *Association for Psychological Science*, 2011. Available online at <http://www.people.hbs.edu/mnorton/norton%20ariely%20in%20press.pdf>. Also see Margaret Jacobson and Fillippo Occhino, "Labor's Declining Share of Income and Rising Inequality," Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, September 25, 2012. Available online at <http://www.clevelandfed.org/research/commentary/2012/2012-13.cfm>.
- 46) Katrina Vanden Heuvel and the editors of *The Nation, Meltdown: How Greed and Corruption Shattered Our Fincancial System and How We Can Recover* (New York: Nation Books, 2009) 236.
- 47) Visit Change To Win at <http://www.changetowin.org/>.
- 48) Lawrence Mischel, "We're Not Broke Nor Will We Be," May 19, 2011, 3. Available online at http://www.epi.org/publication/were_not_broke_nor_will_we_be/.
- 49) See "E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E," 233.
- 50) Padampa Sangye, *Lion of Siddhas*, trans. David Molk (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2008) 306.
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- 53) Visit the World Values Survey at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>.
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- 61) Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010). Full speech available online at http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/where_do_we_go_from_here_delivered_at_the_11th_annual_sclc_convention.
- 62) Visit <http://www.basicincome.org/bien>.
- 63) There is no legal minimum wage in Germany, Sweden and Denmark. In these countries minimum wage is established by collective bargaining. Minimum wage laws generally work against income equity and poverty reduction. In any event, minimum wage (especially in that minimum wage often acts as a wage ceiling) without a complementary maximum wage (legal wage limit determining how much an individual can earn) is grievously unjust.
- 64) It's quite possible you're not actually standing in a 'public' park. Wholesale conversion of publicly owned urban spaces into privately owned public spaces (known as 'POPS') has been going on in U.S. cities since the 1960's. In New York City alone, encouraged by zoning incentives, floor area grants and related waivers, commercial property developers have created a total of 503 POPS.
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- 67) Coumba Toure, "The Link to Humanity: Gift Economies," *Birthing Justice: Women Creating Economic and Social Alternatives*, ed. Beverly Bell (New Orleans: Other Worlds, 2012) 7-8. Also available online at <http://www.otherworldsarepossible.org/sites/default/files/documents/Birthing-Justice-sml%202012.pdf>.
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- 69) Dakin Cambell and Katys Kazakina, quoted in "Broad, Bloomberg Back Buffett Call for Billionaire Donations," *Bloomberg.com*, June 16, 2010. Available online at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-06-17/broad-commits-75-of-wealth-to-charity-takes-buffett-up-on-giving-pledge.html>.
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- 71) Regarding the demise of broad-based prosperity as a long-term and rapid trend with an emphasis on top incomes, see the work of economists Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez, specifically "Income Inequality in The United States, 1913-2002." Available online at <http://elsa.berkeley.edu/~saez/piketty-saezOUP04US.pdf>.
- 72) Cited by Judith Warner in "The Charitable-Giving Divide," *New York Times*, August 20, 2010.
- 73) Visit the Philanthropy Roundtable at <http://www.PhilanthropyRoundtable.org>.
- 74) See "E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E," 233.
- 75) Ibid.

- 76) From the “Position Statement for a Peaceful World, Feminists for a Gift Economy,” presented at the World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, January 2002. Available online at <http://www.gift-economy.com/international.html>.
- 77) See “Meeting California’s Retirement Security Challenge,” ed. Nari Rhee. UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education, October 2011.
- 78) Plutarch, *Morals*, corrected and revised by William W. Goodwin (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1874) 417.
- 79) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Question 78, Article 1 (Rochester: The Aquinas Institute, 2012).
- 80) The National-Bank Act as Amended (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915) 68.
- 81) For a detailed discussion of nationally chartered banks overriding state usury limits, see Mark Furletti, “The Debate Over the National Bank Act and the Preemption of State Efforts to Regulate Credit Cards,” *Temple Law Review*, Vol. 77 (2004).
- 82) See Robin Stein, “The Ascendancy of the Credit Card Industry,” *Frontline*, November 23, 2004. Available online at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/credit/more/rise.html>.
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- 84) Greta R. Krippner, “The Financialization of the American Economy,” *Socio-Economic Review*, May 2005, 174. Available online at <http://cas.umkc.edu/econ/economics/faculty/wray/631Wray/Week%207/Krippner.pdf>.
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- 86) Frederic Bastiat, *Economic Sophisms*, Series II, Chapter 1, trans. Arthur Goddard. (Irvington-on-Hudson: The Foundation for Economic Education, 1996).
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- 89) David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2012) 229.
- 90) Adam Michnik, *Letters Written from Prison*, trans. Maya Latynski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 76.
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- 92) A rather complete, albeit academic, account of the levitation was written by Joseph P. Laycock and published in *Implicit Religion* 14:3 (2011): 295-318. Available online at http://www.academia.edu/4331129/_Levitating_the_Pentagon_Exorcism_as_Politics_Politics_as_Exorcism_Implicit_Religion_14_3_2011_295-318.
- 93) Our essential scholar of the history of production in relation to reproduction and feminist reconstruction of the commons is Silvia Federici. See *Caliban and the Witch: Women, The Body and Primitive Accumulation* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004) & *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012).
- 94) See “E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E,” 233.
- 95) David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2012) 75.

8-HOUR MOVEMENT AND THE BOUNDLESS HOUR

[Presented as a poster in “A Minuscule Commoning Museum and Reading Refuge,” an exhibition that accompanied the performances of “E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E” at New York Live Arts, 2013]

The 8-hour workday was an international labor movement that began in the latter half of the 18th century and came to an end by the mid-20th century as the 40-hour workweek became the predominant standard worldwide. It was the initial phase of the shorter hour movement that continues, although faintly, to the present day.

We mean to make things over, we are tired of toil for naught,
With but bare enough to live upon, and never an hour for thought,
We want to feel the sunshine, and we want to smell the flowers,
We are sure that God has will'd it, and we mean to have eight hours.
We're summoning our forces from shipyard, shop and mill,
Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will!
Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will!¹

John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) predicted that his grandchildren's generation would work only 3 hours per day. Today, roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ of the globe works over 50 hours weekly, while another $\frac{1}{4}$ is unemployed and underemployed. According to the International Labor Organization,² half of the total global workforce is vulnerably employed (defined as unpaid family workers, own-account workers, temporary agency workers, permanent

internships, mini-jobs, 'informal' employment, and characterized by indecent working conditions, sub-living-wage, zero job security, lack of social security, low-to-no fringe benefits, lack of 'voice,' no chance for promotion or upward mobility, expendability, and so on). In the U.S, the likes of resident physicians, managers, surgical residents, lawyers, double part-time job holders and IT programmers lay claim to the 80-hour workweek, with 60 hours viewed as the new part-time.

At the beginning of industrial capitalism a workday typically lasted 12-16 hours. Workers' lives were subordinated to production. An hour spent outside work was considered lost time. This measured extension of working time to the physical and mental maximum and the advent of our modern sense of time are coextensive.³

There is a pre-industrial account of Scottish miners working an 8-hour norm in 1765. These miners were also given 3 acres of land and a cow so that they'd become recreational farmers instead of drinking themselves to death during their surfeit of off hours. In 1791 (as the Haitian revolution began) workers in Philadelphia went on strike for a ten-hour day that would include two hours for meals. By 1817, Welsh social reformer Robert Owen had coined the mantra "eight hours labour, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest." In Britain, the Factory Act of 1833 limited the number of working hours for children aged 9-13 to no more than 9 hours per day and those aged 13-18 to no more than 12. New Zealand settler Samuel Duncan Parnell single-handedly established the 8-5 workday for Wellington tradesman and laborers in 1840.⁴ In 1866 Ulysses S. Grant passed the largely symbolic National Eight Hour Law Proclamation for federal employees. In 1872, 100,000 building trades workers went on strike in New York City and won the 8-hour day. In the early decades of the 20th century the 8-hour day was recognized in many countries. One benefit of the 1910-1920 Mexican Revolution was the 8-hour day. The 8-hour day was introduced in India in 1912; in Uruguay (along with universal suffrage) in 1915; four days after the October Revolution in 1917 in Russia; 1919 in Catalonia. Even U.S. businessmen, at times, backed labor's initiatives. Henry Ford proved that increased leisure was a boon for both productivity and consumption. "The need for goods makes itself felt in leisure hours." "Where people work less they buy more."⁵ In 1935 The International Labour Organization convened the Forty-Hour Week Convention announcing the 8-hour day / 5-day workweek standard for workers worldwide. Two years later, FDR, under the New Deal, passed the federal Fair Labor Standard Act restricting the workweek to 40 hours

(Section 207) (covering only about 20% of the workforce). The soft language of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights took the matter of limited time of labor to the next level—from law to inherence—declaring rest and leisure common human rights. Article 7 of the 1988 Protocol of San Salvador similarly states that both daily and weekly working hours should be reasonably limited.

Of course reality plays itself out in the gap between statutory law and enforcement, between rights and respect and between collective agreement and practice. Today, a domestic worker (such as a security guard or housemaid) works up to 100 hours per week in Kuwait. In South Korea, working overtime is institutionalized. In the U.S., as real income has decreased over the last few decades, work hours have increased (there is no legislated maximum limit on overtime hours, no minimum limit for annual leave and the minimum wage is set so low that earning a living wage often requires a second job). The Center for Work-Life Policy claims that a 70-hour workweek is the new standard.

It's fair to say that the 8-hour movement initially organized labor, as no other demand could have. Tactically, it united workers across all divides, regardless of ethnicity, race, nation, age, gender, trade, wage, rank, skill-level, class consciousness, political persuasion, militarism or pacifism, coarseness or cultivation, whether unionized or unorganized. People everywhere rose up in solidarity to own their own hours. The 8-hour movement was intertwined with other civil liberties movements of its time. It gave the citizenry a sense of empowerment and provided a powerful push for popular democracy. The success of abolitionist activism encouraged the Knights of Labor to call for the abolishment of the wage system. In 1869 Isaac Meyers founded the first black union.⁶

The Reconstruction Amendments were adopted between 1865-1870. Women's suffrage was won with the 19th Amendment of 1920. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 restored some Native American sovereignty.⁷ The massive 8-hour strike that began on May 1, 1886 in Chicago and ended with the Haymarket Massacre linked May Day and the Labor Movement for people across the globe.⁸ In the U.S., where every attempt has been made to officially dissociate May Day from the pent-up power of labor, Labor Day has been shifted to the first Monday in September while May Day itself is recognized as Law Day (thanks to Dwight D. Eisenhower).

Is the shorter hour workday a dead or merely dormant issue? Why did we stop at 8? The Great Depression nearly brought us the 30-hour workweek. Herbert Hoover believed it was inevitable. The Kellogg Co. of Battle Creek successfully implemented a 30-hour workweek in 1930. In 1933, the Black-Connery 30-Hour Workweek Bill was passed by a large majority in the Senate only to be defeated in the House. As the Black-Connery Bill morphed into the Fair Labor Standards Act, it became clear that the New Deal became the New Deal as such due to FDR's opposition to the 30-hour week! Was it not The Great Depression that cemented the leisure ethic as un-American? Why hasn't the shorter workday had a political constituency since WWII?⁹ Currently, the New Economic Foundation believes that a 21-hour workweek would treat a host of interlinked problems: overwork, unemployment, over-consumption, high carbon emissions, an impoverished welfare system, low well-being, entrenched inequality and our inability to live sustainably and care for each other.¹⁰

Is it a matter of public policy and economic assumption that we no longer value shorter hours? Once upon a time, it was natural to view increased free time as a positive result of economic growth and productivity. Doesn't the fact that an average worker today can produce in 11 hours what she or he produced in 40 hours in 1950¹¹ beg the question of a poorly shared prosperity? Is the massive wealth creation that's withheld from the vast majority of the population criminal? Is it healthier to get richer through economic equity or overwork? Is the private-profit motive an incontrovertible principle of well-being? Should initiatives come from government, collective bargaining, enlightened employers filled with the voluntary spirit, social insistence or simply arise spontaneously as brute market forces that serve the market best? Is nonconsumptive leisure heretical? Isn't money everyone's? Did we ever really adjust our democratic values to unprecedented economic prosperity? What's the word for 'mature-economy-phobia'?

Is the shorter day a cure-all for overproduction, overconsumption, unemployment and extreme income disparity? Does the work-share principle of the shorter workweek merely spread the misery more widely? Can shorter hours and higher pay be put in place at once, or must wages grow slowly or be cut back to compete with workers' desire for more free time? Can increased free time due to more efficient meeting of needs be rationally divided among all workers as leisure? Does overproduction or overwork lead to underconsumption? Can an infinite desire for more stuff overcome workers' desire for more off hours? Is it stuff that makes people work longer? How

can we keep working if we make more than we can buy? Are we becoming a nation of overachieving molleycoddles and milksops? Can zero growth ever become patriotic? If there's no such thing as saturation how can there be a need to limit the hours workers will work to produce stuff with which to sate themselves? Does carefully predeveloped consumption assure that one want will endlessly follow instantly upon another? Can leisure itself be consumed? Does industry serve leisure or leisure industry? Aren't wages fixed to offer us no real choice between leisure and wealth? Is it possible to limit unnecessary production and spread necessary employment at once? Have we traded our leisure for military supremacy? Have we traded our security for military invincibility? "Frankness and candor compel me to tell you that, in my opinion, the 40 hour week will not produce missiles."¹² Presidential candidate John F. Kennedy before a gathering of steelworkers in 1960: "In the face of the Communist challenge [...] we must meet today's problem of unemployment with greater production rather than by sharing the work."¹³ How could it have been anything other than an hours-of-work buildup that produced the arms buildup? Is it only Anglo-Saxon countries that have trouble addressing work-life balance? What would Mother Earth say? If we only ask such questions in times of economic collapse, is this the reason why we relapse? The invaluableness of the shorter hour movement is that it involves (invokes) civil rights, quality of life and ecological issues across the board. Earlier this year in Detroit, an unelected advisory board cut 10% from the wages of unionized city employees and then imposed 26 unpaid furlough days annually. The fundamental tenet of the 8-hour movement was a cut in hours without cutting pay. It's heartbreaking to witness the arc of democratic progress reverse this 250-year-old gain by servicing banker investments.

All nations are now transitional nations. If the industrial era brought on a sense of time poverty, what changed perception of time will accommodate our shift into the upcoming sufficiency, subsistence or empathy economy wherein we delight in each other's good fortune? The new workday will be adapted to the work/life balance of each person. It will free up countless, boundless hours for meeting family responsibilities, restoring energy, re-envisioning purpose and standing in awe. Needless to say, this flexibilization will be counterproductive if it lopsidedly serves capital over everyone's abundance.

The Twenty-eight Cities of Albion stretch their hands to thee:
Because of the Opressors of Albion in every City & Village:
They mock at the Labourers limbs! they mock at his starvd Children. They buy his

Daughters that they may have power to sell his Sons:
They compell the Poor to live upon a crust of bread by soft mild arts:
They reduce the Man to want: then give with pomp & ceremony.¹⁴

Notes

- 1) Opening stanza and refrain from a poem by lyricist and newspaper editor Isaac G. Blanchard that originally appeared in 1866 in the *Workingman's Advocate*. Set to music by the Reverend Jesse H. Jones, it became the official song of the 8-Hour Movement at a time when the strike-song was considered more effective than a hundred speeches. See *Encyclopedia of Strikes in American History*, Aaron Brenner, Benjamin Day and Immanuel Ness, eds. (Amonk: M.E. Sarpe, Inc. 2009) 106-7.
- 2) See <http://www.ilo.org/global/lang--en/index.htm>.
- 3) For an analysis of macro-level trends in the contemporary workweek see Sangheon Lee, Deimere McCann and Jon C. Messenger, *Working Time Around the World* (New York City: Routledge, 2007).
- 4) See "The Pamphlet Collection of Sir Robert Stout, Volume 69: Samuel Duncan Parnell, The Founder of the Eight Hour System." Available online at <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Stout69-t4.html>.
- 5) Statements taken from an interview with Mr. Samuel Crowthers appearing in *The World's Work* for October, 1926. Available online at <http://www.shorterworkweek.com/ford.html>.
- 6) See John Curl, *For All the People: Uncovering the Hidden History of Cooperation, Cooperative Movements, and Communalism in America* (Oakland: PM Press, 2009) 68.
- 7) Does tribal sovereignty have its roots in the New Deal? For a history of Federal Native American Law see Yuanchung Lee, *Rediscovering the Constitutional Lineage of Federal Indian Law*, available at http://lawlibrary.unm.edu/nmlr/27/2/01_lee_rediscovering.pdf
- 8) See Paul Avrick, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).
- 9) For a concise timeline and bibliography of shorter hour movements in the U.S. see Robert Haples, "Hours of Work in U.S. History," <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/whaples.work.hours.us>. See also Sidney Webb and Harold Cox, *The Eight Hour Day* (London: Walter Scott, 1891).
- 10) See "21 hours" at <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/21-hours>.
- 11) See Erik Rauch, "Productivity and the Workweek," at <http://groups.csail.mit.edu/mac/users/rauch/worktime/>.
- 12) Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate L.B. Johnson, quoted in William McGaughey, "Behind the Scenes Opposition to the Shorter-Workweek Proposal," available online at <http://shorterworkweek.com>. Also, see Eugene McCarthy and William McGaughey, *Nonfinancial Economics: The Case for Shorter Hours of Work* (Praeger Publishers, 1989).
- 13) Quoted in John de Graaf and David K. Batker, *What's the Economy For Anyway?* (New York City: Bloomsbury Press, 2011) 103.
- 14) William Blake, from "Jerusalem." *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David E. Erdman (Berkeley: University of California Press, Revised Edition, 1982) 193.

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LETTER TO STACY DORIS

LETTER TO STACY DORIS

[A letter written to poet Stacy Doris in 2007—while driving to spend the day with my father in his hospital room, and, during the stay, in preparation for an upcoming trip to San Francisco. At the time, her two children, Rayzl and Laish-Gedalya, were about one year old. I had been caring for my father for a year. We were both immersed in sound—her binaural work and my prosody research—within which we communicated in our own binaurality: not two ears there and two ears here, but hearing each other's hearing, whether crouched together within a hollowed Redwood trunk or an ocean apart. This fluency left me with the sense that we were not mediated, that everything could be said and that it was limitlessly being said; that saying is the limitless; that our missing sciences and practices would just come up in conversation; that, in addressing her, there was nothing that would not be noticed, nothing that couldn't be given.]

This morning's half hour drive from my slaughterhouse (Hormel Foods-headquartered) hometown to the Mayo Clinic in rival, refined, stethoscoped Rochester, Minnesota, driven as eccentrically as possible (to more perfectly accommodate the meeting of immediate needs and critical condition). Astragalus, mistletoe, hawthorn, tumeric tea steeping in an old pickle jar; shelling hardboiled egg onto shirttail while knees steer; crumpled

newspaper holding improvised flower vase upright in a larger stainless steel kettle; cognition soaring; coffee cream in a cup set on armrest sloshing whitest droplets straight up; backseat strewn with books on biolinguistics, plant spirits, Saivism, engineering, non-privatizable money, Guhyagarbha Tantra, nierika, epigenetics, organist ornithologist Olivier Messiaen, glands, Hesychasm, Naad, whatnot. Exiting the freeway along hairpin turn, confronted by colossal American flag flown at truckstop, held perfectly taut by stiff wind. Pierced by loss of the promise of Whitman's *Affectionate Democracy*—superseded by bomb first, buy and sell fast national interest. Having personally lost on every account of the promise since I was a kid hipply assembling various mediums, bolstering the paragon of the most powerful country on earth about to be taken over by music, that music might make might, might need poetry. And who needs might, anyway?

To have made it this far, continuous, stuffed with gems, junk-dealer, operating out of the back of my Buick. Lightning-adaptation. Trunk-load of powders, roots, Poise Bladder Protection Pads, notebooks, nuts, grains. With more than I could wish for. A father in his nineties who will recognize me, smile from ear to ear.

Begging (I do beg) that I never, not even once, fail the love or block the benefit with this excitotoxicity or practice-cherishing. Violate no one. No shortcut through another's begonias. Map my suppliers, shitting holes. Freshen.

(As written on the back of a passing milk truck): "Food Grade Only." My being passed by this truck, right now, applied to poetry. Food Grade Only—i.e., settling on sustenance, the least we can ask and not the least bit less. So, what is more sustaining than sustenance? Poetry's starting point. Nectar secreted throughout the body, endogenously. Following and free of biology.

§

[Arriving at the hospital room where my father is being treated with IV antibiotics for otitis externa—the previous doctors, having mismatched antibiotic to specific bacteria, having allowed the infection to become necrotizing. Wearier and wearier, not of medical terminology per se, but of assuming knowledge of conditions, medically.]

Oz. I am in Oz. World renowned Mayo. Oz though in L. Frank Baum's Oz, with the drawing back of the curtain, the swindle and brouhaha that is first exposed in turn exposes the wholeness of the sincerity behind the wizardry—quite the inverse relative to the physicianing in a place like Mayo. By 'swindle' I mean merely a strictly substantial treatment of a condition, even when nothing more is needed. When treated merely clinically (when nothing more is needed) all that takes place is a missed opportunity to access livingness. (We don't have diseases to be cured, my god, no; we get sick to see, even if we already see.) Livingness and not just sustenance that, alone (when approached as our greatest purpose, and not as a step or support toward our apogee), becomes our condition of comorbidity. Poetry cures as a technicality, along its path to becoming poetry. Cure is part of the equipment, or a clause in the contract, and is not the work that is performed per se. It's not what poetry makes of itself (no more than the body treats the body, brain understands the brain, or world fully explains the world.) Poetry cures as a matter of course, un-self-importantly, in the full-blown awareness of the sameness of anguish and life-as-wished.

Form follows fruition. Indivisibly, like space. Like space and wall. The wall is still in space. Like emptiness and bliss. Like pineal gland, DMT and seeing in the dark—indivisible.

Two glorious clippings from my mother's garden—one purple chrysanthemum, one stem of reddest roses—in a jar (I seem to function by conveying modest medicines in glass jars) set on the windowsill as ENT enters and asks me about my father's facial asymmetry. I answer, while continuing to type these words: "That's totally abnormal, that left-side of his mouth, as if separate from the rest of his body, drooping, frozenly."

So you and I, both, tending to newest life. Balancing fruit and vegetable purées on the end of a spoon, bandaging sweetest scrapes and cuts.

§

Reporting my binaural practice of the moment, to further set this hospital scene for you: ventilated air from the ceiling entering my right ear rather sagittally; wave of voices from around the ward, half absorbed by south curtain as the other half bounces off fabric-coated wall and broadly enters left ear at about 80 degrees. Taken together, the mechanical and perfunctory

vocables make a confining, mildly nervous blend that could easily be dispersed and relieved by the simple opening of one window (which is, of course, outlawed in all hospital rooms.).

The most recent binaural practices back at my house in Austin have been particularly restorative. As one instance: attuning to one or two crickets trapped in the basement since last month's flood, along with the longitudinal passing of the sound of car-tires turning against distant asphalt (even in rural America there is no escaping the humanmade-within).

The 'nonaudibles' (to say 'silence' would be utterly undiscerning) happily always a more pronounced part of my binaural practice—and always, as the cliché goes, deafening. Heard inwardly or putatively pulsed, bringing with them an amassing inner-outer and overall dissolving into that which we dissolve into once we no longer have that with which we hear. I think that says it. (I would hope this provides for us.) And all of this (whether unmade or manufactured frequencies), as you know, also available by way of the phones of spoken or unsounded words (to the science of which I've committed the rest of my life).

(Or is all sound heard within purely ubiquitous and without direction? Is 'inside' / 'outside' the basic binaurality?)

Making a gape of the mouth of God along my occiput, inhaling the Big Dipper up my ass, out through my crown and circularly down. Re-embryonizing a father by holding him up in increased, uncreated light, making synonymous my nuclei and outerspace—among the prosodic practices without which I'd scarcely be distinguishable from the dead.

So many boons to unearth for our maladious planet, every which way I turn, immediately efficacious touch, budding techniques.

The inconceivable marvel is not that we hear, but that we have two separate ears. It's come to this. As Alfred Tomatis realized, we can only say what we can hear ourselves saying. My father unable to hear—unable to wear hearing aid throughout this infection. He and I pass the days in stone silence. I'm far more silent than him, as he knows I will hear if he speaks while I know he will not. It's an intensely tacit encompassing, with all points, utensils, scents, furnishings and shifts, sensed as particularized qualities of consciousness and care immediately administered.

From the adjacent hospital room, a woman crying out, wailing—an intensity that couldn't possibly (I don't see how) increase. Her husband loudly attempts to break through his wife's pain: "You gotta get up so you don't get sores on your body. You gotta get up you gotta do that you gotta do this you gotta get up." Exceedingly unconvincingly, keeps speaking: "We're going to do something that works for you. You're going to try to relax. You're going to look into your mind and see yourself playing with your babies. You're running around with them, chasing them."

"Oh God, please help me Jesus help me."

(From the facing room): "Could you close the door please, thank you."

A little girl walks by with her mom: "Want to look out the window?"

"I want a pill, please give me a pill. Why can't they just give it to me, why do I have to wait. Please God help me."

Voices from the length of the hallway and from within all the rooms fill the space, are the space, as if without speakers, as if it were bodies that are born from voices.

"Jake." "Stop being naughty. Watch the shows. They're good for you." "She feels better in Arizona." "I don't want anyone pushing me in a wheelchair." "Do you think you're going to eat something sometime?"

Consciousness, here, is not the senses, but their delocalization, their dilation outside themselves.

Because my father can't hear, I write on paper with a purple pen and hold the sheets of paper at the angle at which his head rests against the pillow. There is the background sound of a circular floor-polisher bearing down on linoleum, as the husband restarts his dissonant insistence: "You can take 40 billion pounds of pills and if you don't sit up straight it don't do no good. Let's get you straight. You don't sit on that nerve."

My father, looking out the window, calmly: "I don't see a bird out there. I was looking this morning, too. One of these days those leaves are going to fall off,

yah. Too bad, yah.” He just sees what he’s looking at, indistinguishable from anyplace he might wish to be. It’s a mastery. My mother didn’t quite have it. She knocked herself out against what could be, and now she’s gone.

One of the possible side effects of this grade of antibiotic is listed as “not breathing.”

A bag of bones. Bulb burgeoning for all time. Once the binaural meets at the rarified common wave between empathy and emptiness. Ahh.

§

I must say, even the folkloric 4H movement (head, heart, hands, health), recently witnessed while parading hogs and displaying gourds at the Mower County Free Fair—more whole than the history of art-experiment (until such experiment includes those 4 h’s as well as a host of others).

It can’t be overstated: we were never meant to evolve consciousness without concurrently coming up with ways to voluntarily regulate what is now considered autonomic. We’ll tear ourselves apart otherwise, homeostatically as well as culturally (without the ability to cultivate and curtail the hypertensive stress-response produced and sustained by purely psychological stressors).

The poetics of secrets, synapses, secretions, mitochondrial respiration, voltage and gradient-safeguarding is unborn (or re-buried) while our age is, technically, advanced. What shall we make of this apparent paradox? Is our age in shock or just rattled? We have fibrillating poetries, sincerity derisionism, and dialogic rat-a-tat-tatting. (Perhaps we’d no longer depend on the rhythmic and metered, if we’d learn how to talk as we inhale—like a pulseless, continuous-flow heart replacement—or keep thinking without breath.)

By being itself, prosody (as interplay) alone strums both sympathetic and parasympathetic chords at once (i.e., at will). Just as breathing can be conscious or unconscious (though scarcely like the old sink set-up with separate hot and cold faucets).

Speech shuts down glucocorticoids. Even released anger will be down-regulated, i.e., its release is its termination. Anger ‘knows’ *that*.

As do unspoken words (while breathing in or out) heal.

What about the difference between an accented syllable and an unaccented syllable with regard to activation of the parasympathetic? Who else is betting her bottom dollar that accent and non-accent do not, simply, equally, turn on the cortisol? (The roof of our mouth is a piano keyboard.) Were survival to suddenly depend on the degree of our subtlety, little other than prosody would matter, little other than the alembics we are, as we are toned by enteric thought-wave and the perfect propinquity of all major neurohormonal organs clustered atop our vibratory vocal apparatus.

(And, until then, these matters may matter little.)

Taken together, prosodic, allostatic, and psychological stressors form a full-fledged science (though not yet applied).

We answer stressors with words, just as a rat allowed to gnaw at a piece of wood after electroshock will de-sugar. It's that vagus nerve quieting things down.

We're not allowed to work on the sabbatico-respiratory rest-stroke.

The neurocentricity of the biology of language is tantamount to decapitation. (Just as the macho nuclear-fixation of our cell sciences, at the exclusion of environing cytoplasm—sperm contributes no cytoplasm—is like ignoring mother earth.)

Right. Avant-garde—a million year lag.

Even I was beginning to think that I must be joking—that the logosome (word-signaled gene expression) could be elucidated in my lifetime. Then I find a first rate linguist like Eors Szathmary advancing a 'language-amoeba' hypothesis! That's 'out there.' Worthy of the vibe I live by.

They say a bird won't sing in a vacuum. That is, a bird in a vacuum will sing only the song of the vacuum.

Some sort of trip to San Francisco seems afoot for Spring. Very exhilarating prospect, to be together in that rich environment, facing the scarcity of models and means for moving our sector along.

I propose an interchange in which we entrain—a double entrainment (4 hemispheres) through two feeder frequencies (your materials and mine) generating one anomalous whelming wave wondrous enough to re-pattern the course of poetry.

The following are some areas we could approach. The first things that come to mind—the low hanging fruit, the immediate concerns I could bring to our banquet, without straining to reach for the riven and overripe:

1) *Biochemistry for poets*

Of course in consideration with the abiogenesis of words—or we'll no more than pile ourselves on the restrictive embodyist heap.

2) *New department of the artscience of prosody* (to phrase it academically or perhaps infrastructurally)

Stressing the baselessness of poet research, outreach, and overreaching, if without a corresponding drive into unmapped prosody. And stressing a moving away from poetry's conventional identification with itself, as the poem's self-indulgence is not a substitute or atonement for one's own self-absorption.

3) *Dedicated lab*

Required for an integrative prosody, not in the creative-writing-department sense or poet-conference sense but something like the good old Guillemin/Schally laboratories.

It's a debilitating social bias that only science is considered research-based, harming our country's ability to foresee itself and, in effect, a deharmonizing of humankind.

Goethe may have been the last poet to make a scientific contribution as poet—his culture, the last to tolerate and expect such contribution.

Poet, at least, as the world's raw data.

Perhaps even opting for the efficacy of complementary competing research laboratories and not just one poet-research lab drumming up results without fear of being outstripped by another, but fighting to be the first to unearth findings that may spare millions of civilian lives.

4) *Propose a study for the Santa Fe Institute that would explore experimental poetry as a complex adaptive system*

5) *Commit poetry to the service of the subtle (I say 'supple') sciences through trans-institutional corroborative collaborative coalitions*

The supple, selfless centers in the neighborhood of SF alone are plentiful.

'Supple' always applies to material conditions, as well.

Draw on, as model-behavior, far flung fields that have broken out of their confines, having managed to turn the corner and work toward a wished-for world.

As one illustration: there is a group of behavioral scientists who have convincingly argued for 'strong reciprocators' as against selfish agents, whose findings turn capitalism on its head. They've titled their work *Moral Sentiments and Material Interests*. See especially the way in which they organize themselves in order to work as they do.

6) *Start a fund vested with the power to commission poets' papers addressing pressing survival issues and stumped intellectual inquiry*

Convene mixed bodies of researchers in long-term retreat to further the focusing and fruition.

7) *Create tax breaks and grants for poets who choose to be civil servants or socially serviceable (as a way of informing what gets written on the page)*

As a way of the page pleading for the experience it needs.

Caring for our coming and going—the elderly, pre-schoolers, the hospice-bound—anywhere godforsaken privatization has tossed humanity to the whims of volunteerism and profit.

To bring poetry out of the blood-letting age, by entering civil society— it's not about to come to us—with at least the energy and daring of the planting of a counter-IED.

Examine 'income' relative to 'poet,' in general.

8) *Rename absolutely everything*

9) *Finally sit down and write the history of prosody's intricate interrelationship with pathology*

10) *Untangle the origins-problem (where do words come from?) by demonstrating language as neither acquired nor innate*

11) *Put forth a plethora of prosodic practices (I usually say 'upaya')*

May everyone abound in glowing practices of their own.

12) *What words can't say, as part of what words are*

What could possibly be more related than vibration and nothing—as a spectrum-strumming in which far sides touch in the midst of things that have nothing more to do, no further to go, than turn into and issue from each other?

Gesture.

Connotation.

§

Everything I touch falls into place. There is nothing I'm working at that doesn't begin to already work on its own—the more marvelous the intent, the more so.

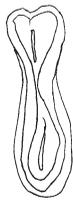
Create occasions in which our works matter. It's not evolutionary, per se. (Fulfillment can't afford to be linear or randomized.) No one can come around the corner after we're gone and bring 'our' benefits about. We can't merely plant seeds when our need is to nurture and bring to maturity. The degree to which poetry leaves the key formulations of human being to other fields—our fate: that much more miserable in the mad rush to the miserly, militarized and individually maximized material interest.

Perhaps *due* to our current devaluation, it's hard to imagine anyone other than a poet coming up with the requisite model-busting genre-indifference.

Love,

be opened

7 X 7 X K



neural tube

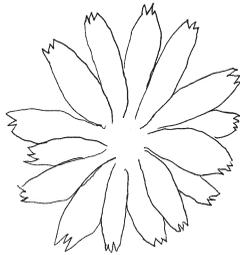


"give"



rubber bullet

⊗PHPH⊗TH



first first
anti-inflammatory day

in Anatolian

GLOSSARY

ACCOMPLISHMENT PASSING INTO UNCREATED LIGHT: A somewhat pragmatic understanding of lifetime in which the sum of one's actions perfectly burns up one's portion of boundless energy to burst through the far side of our local rainbow.

AHIMSA: The principle of doing no harm, physically, verbally, theoretically or otherwise. The opposite of ahimsa is not 'killing' per se. Its object is the complex of doctrines that warrant or give rise to violence: just war, just and proportionate punishment, the justification and justice that propagate the greater part of aggression; discrimination, 'free trade,' letting off steam and, above all, 'survival.' Fully understood, ahimsa is not a practice that is primarily directed toward others. It involves the non-arising of injurious events within, with the political world as metaphor for inner moral war. "From wisdom's vaunted lore what doth the learner gain/ if as his own he guard not others' souls from pain?"¹

ALLOSTASIS: Stability by means of change (replacing the classical, redundant model of homeostatic regulation: i.e., stability by means of stability).

AMARGI: “Enmetena instituted amargi in Lagash. He restored the child to its mother, and the mother to her child; he cancelled interest.” Amargi is the earliest recorded instance of debt cancellation and the first known use of a word for ‘freedom.’ Amargi literally means ‘return to mother.’

ALL’S WELL: The name for the time of crisis. The only time *before* it is too late.

AMICUS CURIAE: A ‘friend of the court’ who submits unsolicited materials or testimony to assist the court in making its decision.

ANTINOMIAN: It is faith that is against the laws. Unownable land and unoppressed spirit are congruent.

ANTIPEPONTHASIS: Fair exchange of goods and services. Laws aside, a sense of justice springing from the the natural vastness of one’s heart. It is exchange itself that is ‘common.’ As equitable interchange holds all things together, so disproportionate exchange is the cause of societal dissolution.

APAURUSHEYA: Unauthored—by neither human nor divine agency. Hearing. Heard words. Hearing words that were not being heard. Words heard outside the limitation of person. Rather like discovering or being struck by a new mathematical truth, as distinct from having created it—though relative to reality at large as well as locally and in flux. Words as the interchange of inhering and incidental.

APOPHENIA: Recognition of the unrecognizable. Nonrecognition of the recognizable. Recognizing the nonrecognizable in the recognizable.

APOTROPAISM: Warding off evil through its depiction.

APROSODIA: Inability of affective expression and comprehension due to non-dominant hemisphere damage.

ARTWORK: As adaptation can no longer keep up with our modifications, only artworks can keep us safe. Not confined to evolutionary forces. Genomes’s scratchpad. The invertibility of genotype and phenotype, and of acquisition and inheritance. Reverse transcription by means of the behavioral and the aesthetic.

ASHTADHYAYI: Panini's descriptive grammar that marks the shift from Vedic Sanskrit to Classical Sanskrit and introduces the secular into Indian thought by describing the morphology of such thought. The *Ashtadhyayi* was the first delimitation of language into 'phoneme,' 'morpheme' and 'root' from the illimitable sound stream of speech. Because of the *Ashtadhyayi*'s concise, comprehensive, rule-based approach, it can also be read as the first instance of computational language.

ARCHORPHINE: Biochemical unit of measurement for the satisfaction endogenously produced through interaction with the built environment. Imagine buildings rich in dopamine signaling. The anchorphine is a nonaddictive, non-adaptive (i.e., not a momentary, but continuous response), safe and salutary catecholamine release.

ASYMMETRICIAN: The potency of a single well-placed action on the part of the disempowered up against the vast vulnerability of empire. One who.

AUTONOMIC BYPASS: Regulating the body outside of the constant swings of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous responses by means of mind/body deselection.

BANKELSANG: Singing banner. Soapbox song. A street theater supporting its narrative with a sequence of unsophisticated images.

BIOS/BIAS TAUTOLOGY: The belief that behavior is nothing more than an extension of biology.

BODHICHITTA CONUNDRUM: Is *giving* fundamentally self-motivated and merit-oriented or can an act of generosity actually be free? Aren't altruism, sacrifice, helping out and volunteering rather one-sidedly presumptuous—assuming one imbalance or another (donor/need, benefactor/beneficiary, enlightened/ignorant)? Does charity, as the quintessence of ethical and religious conduct, merely serve to reconcile and maintain material maldistribution? Certainly the current Carnegie-method of philanthropic giving by the disproportionately rich is a serious distortion of opulence.

BODY/MIND/BUILT PRACTICE: Opening body/mind unity by means of the built environment. Body, mind, built inter-identity.

CELERANTICS: When government transfers publicly funded Big Science technology to a private company for resale to the public.

CHOREOPROSODIA: Interchanging choreography and prosody in the same compositional space. Extensive fusion of movement and the full range of poetry's elements of composition.

COMIC WARFARE: Unidentifiable poetry standing fallen soldiers back up before they fall. What poetry has not done continues to allow war to break out.

COMMENSURATE ECONOMY: The destitute south is financing the affluent north. Sub-Saharan Africa pays \$25,000 per minute to northern creditors. This is poor planning (i.e., 'planned poverty'). On the other hand, the organized eradication of poverty would, in effect, assure the greater well-being of all citizens (there is an abundance of data demonstrating that countries with the least income disparity have healthier and happier populations). Instead of focusing on the middle class (demand economy) or the upperclass (supply-side, trickle-down economy—the belief that the health of the financial sector is the precondition for popular prosperity), both of which are well-tested failures, we could pursue a 'third' or 'ignored' economy which I've provisionally named the *commensurate economy*, *consequence-side economy*, *epikeian (equity) economy*, or perhaps simply *conscience-economy*.

CORYPHÉE (or CHORYPHEAUS): Leader of the chorus, usually situated center stage, who speaks for the chorists when they're in action and occasionally engages them in dialogue. From Attic drama.

CREDIT: Debt.

DEFAULTER'S PARTY: One quarter of the population united across all debt-types and class divides.

DEHEEHÉE: Viewpoint in which artwork coincides with the originary viewpoint from which the world issues forth.

DISTRIBUTISM: 'Third-way' economic philosophy based on the condemnation of both capitalism and state-socialism, subordinating all economic activity to fully realized humanity. Inclusive ownership of property, local cooperatives, credit unions, artisanism, solidarity and subsidiarity

are key Distributist principles. Rooted in Augustine and reaching to E.F. Schumacher, the Mongdragon Corporation and Dorothy Day.

DHVANI: Words have the power of direct denotation and the power of indirect indication. Literal and implied. Dhvani is ‘suggestiveness.’ It is ‘trope’ itself. For the last thousand years the doctrine of dhvani has been at the center of Indian aesthetics and literary criticism. The more fundamental reality is trope. Our ability to refer to our feelings, to question, to imagine, is founded upon dhvani. It is, for example, the recognition of intrinsic awareness through an appreciation of its difference or distance from the objective world (the recognition being the trope). Without dhvani we live in a reductive, denotative world in which we are the end users of language as labelling. Dhvani is language’s power of revelation. The definitive exposition of the doctrine of dhvani is the classic *Dhvanyaloka of Anandavardhana With the Locana of Abhinavagupta*.

DUTIFUL AVADHUTIPA: Free-ranging nonidentification.

DYSPROSDY: Difficulty expressing and understanding the emotional components of speech such as melody, emphasis, inflection and gesturing.

EACHOTHERSOURCING: You are my unattainable results, as I am yours.

ECONOMIC TRUTH: Suffering is unavoidable. I see and what I see is that we don’t see.

EDUCATION OF INVESTMENT BANKERS INITIATIVE [EIBI]: Investment Bankers paying people to have people explain to Investment Bankers how people want money channelled to themselves.

EKASTOLOGY: The belief that there is no common ancestor. (From *ekastos*, Greek for ‘each.’)

EMPATHY ECONOMY: Other-Oriented, Mothering and Empathy Economies all provide goods and services directly to the greatest need without intermediary profit optimization, as all industries that make money from money become regional public utilities.

ENCLOSED ART: Artwork narrowly concerned only with its own subsistence exclusively in relation to the materials and terms of its proper medium.

EPIEIKEIA: A sense of equity, as opposed to the strictness of law which typically favors the powerful. It's not a matter of which political system is in force, but common munificence in a commensurate economy. Aristotle's use of epikeia in his *Nicomachean Ethics* didn't include women and slaves. The very duplicity in our foundational fair-minded terms constitutes a history of language that must, itself, be turned upside down.

EPIPHORA: Repetition of the same word or words at the close of neighboring clauses, pauses, verses, phrases, sentences, paragraphs or texts.

EQUITABLE GROWTH INTERACTION: Any action, from the panoply of practices proposed in this book and beyond, that takes us one step closer to realizing productivity as shared prosperity and celebration of life.

ESTROGEN: Estrogen physiologically forms female. To bring our planet back from the brink, Supple Science pleads that we now be led by maternal instinct. Supple Science's medium is resonance itself. Phonic sequence, tone, intention, connotation, tune (what is herein called 'prosody') all directly influence neural/hormonal functions.

EVOKED EPIGENETIC ARCHITECTURE: The built environment acting back on gene expression as wished. Engaged, guided, non-invasive, instant inheritance entreatment.

EXARCHŌN: The person who starts up the chorus and remains its leader throughout, setting the rhythm and functioning as conductor for all three components (song, dance, instrumentation) of choral poetry (choreia) by performing one or more parts herself. Also a provisional leader of any part of the performance, stepping up at a given point to lead all or some aspect of the action.

EXTRAORGANOPOIEISIS: The making of further, omitted, surplus, extra necessary and salubrious 1) organs; 2) instruments; and 3) organizations.

EXPANSION OF THE INALIENABLE: No-Way-Not-At-Home [NWNHAH]. Sovereign even outside the sensory.

EXTENDED AFFERENT NETWORK: Adding the built environment to the signaling that conveys sensation back through the nervous system. Integrating architecture in an exteroceptive/interoceptive loop.

FIRST PERSON PLURAL SCIENCE: We're already suffering the ravages of an overwhelmingly individualist moral code. With so many sciences now reinforcing 'I' by admitting subjectivity and embodied experience as part of objective fact, in order to preempt a total takeover by self-predilection, it's imperative that we establish an offsetting, experiential and expansive First Person Plural Practice.

FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT PRIVATE DEBT CANCELLATION: With extreme expressions of privatization and deregulation, creditors openly call for the abolishing of government. Under Section 4 of the Fourteenth Amendment all debts owed to institutions that profit in any way from insurrection are uncollectable. Ruinous debt, like poverty and surplus labor force, is carefully planned. Colossal personal debt is our greatest national security threat.

FRAME EXFRINGEMENT: A lesser phenomenon encompassing the entirety of the world in which its insignificance subsists. When an already fringe phenomenon passes even further from center and begins the process of engulfing its surrounds. The poem wraps itself around poetics. The made wraps around unmade—while we still have a chance to survive.

GENOTYPE: Interior natural environment.

GOLDWATER GOODNESS: Welfare reliant upon the private sector. Opulence, social benefits and any sense of the the good life dependent on the discretionary philanthropy of the disproportionately rich.

GRAY PIG: Of the three poisons (attachment, hatred, ignorance) from which all suffering stems, attachment and hatred stem from ignorance, represented in Mahayana Buddhism as a gray pig. Perhaps no one knows precisely what ignorance is, but it certainly could never flourish without a strong sense of self as separable from all else and rock-solid substantiation of the phenomenal world. When one is freed from ignorance, the pig exits through the top of the head. In terms of prosody, the poisons (in Sanskrit *kleshas*) are dissonances (prosodopaths). Though there are as many as 84,000 kleshas, Buddhist schools typically break the total down to a manageable list of root poisons. In addition to attachment, anger and hatred, delusion, self-importance, greed, speculation, wrong views, unskilled action, torpor and passion are repeatedly mentioned as principle obstructions. Kleshas condition consciousness. The practice of the Prosodic Body removes that in which affliction roots by disclosing that in which it has no resonance.

GREAT EPIC OF ALL MATERIALIZATION [GEOAM]: Poetics' poem.

GURAMYLAY: In Tigrigna, *guramylay* means 'making a beautiful and healing pattern out of diverse elements.'

HETEROSIS: When increased vigor in offspring is correlated with the degree of dissimilarity in precursor gametes, as opposed to outbreeding or inbreeding depression.

HISSISM: The belief that only materiality exists. A world attributable to nothing.

HOUSE OF SADNESS: Even being free of. Every support of which reinforces the entire structure, while the removal of even one support leads to its total collapse.

HUPORCHEMATA: Movement subordinate to accompanying words. "Imitation of actions interpreted from the diction."

HYPERTENSIVE TRAP: Each time kindness accedes to competition, nurturing adapts to exploitation of the ascetic assaults—the hypertensive trap is then re-set as we eat ourselves from within.

HYPERVIGILANCE: Exhaustion due to continual scanning of the environment. Exaggerated behaviors developed to detect threat, provocative of threatening response. Trauma, prolonged lowered expectations, sustained hyposatisfaction and oversecretion are a few known causes of the hypervigilant condition.

IKAROS: Medicine songs (typically made of non-lexical vocables) imparted to poets by plants.

INTERNALIZED COSTS: Suffering the momentousness of the use of any material derived from the earth. How could anything not be invaluable?

KINCICCALANA: Subtle movement. Vibration that, itself, doesn't move, manifesting as motion. Like the shared light of consciousness.

KNOCKOUT HUMAN BEING: Delete, disrupt, inactivate or replace a gene sequence, stand back, await and observe the phenotypic fireworks. (There is a group of poets named SOLACE who have spent the last twelve years working on word sequences that comfort and compensate the horrifyingly modified.)

KONKRETNY: An activist focused on effective means for overcoming everyday problems and implementing ideas (as distinct from those who merely enjoy analyzing the situation). 1980's Poland produced a generation of konkretnies.

KOTODAMA: Words move heaven and earth. Knowing that no one knows what a word is, shall we say that the power of the word comes from what we don't know? Aikido is founded on the Kotodama principle that sounds have intrinsic value capable of affecting matter. Each word is incantation. Each sound a vast reality. Dig especially the Mahavairocana Tantra, the text that called Kukai to China in 796.

LIFEWORX: A somatic ultimately genetic influence capable of rewriting original, heritable DNA sequences.

LIMBIC-HYPOTHALAMIC-PITUITARY-ADRENAL AXIS: The immediate beneficiary of our vibratory vocalizations and thoughtwaves.

LING: The ability to make Heaven respond. Advanced practice involving the kidneys and lower cauldron in which incentive creates no contention with Creativity.

LANGUAGE NATIVISM: The theory that language capacity is innate. Innativists argue that a child's 'hypothesis space' is constrained by biology—like an instinct limiting the infinite number of possible grammars to common speech.

LOGOSOME: Biochemical agent activated by words so apropos they epigenetically and esogenetically compose genome as they call up cosmogonic logos.

LOOP OF ABUSE: Treating without care things made without care as we are rendered less caring. No attention paid to the attention with which things are designed and built.

MACHIK LABDRON: 11th century Tibetan yogini who originated the tantric practice of Chöd (of offering up the body—to whom it may be of benefit). "To consider adversity as a friend is the instruction of Chöd."

MATERIAL BEATITUDE: Breaks the equating of material poverty and spiritual richness, as well as the meeting of material needs and spiritual

debilitation. Democracy so advanced it can't even recognize itself. Heaven aspiring to earth.

MATRIKA NYASA: Consecration of the body by consecrating the letters of the alphabet as they are placed in the body. Matrika means 'mother.' The letters are mothers. Matrika Nyasa opens the body of sound in resonance with all around. The sound body as compositional capacity is called the Prosodic Body. Matrika Nyasa is the fabled Garland of Letters.

MIND BODY DATA SOCIOSPHERE PROSPERITY CENTERING: Whole bodyworks that effectively treat societal ills.

MINGMEN: The Dai Mai point located between the second and third lumbar vertebrae. The mingmen point is also called The Door Of Fate. The original energy of all of creation flows through this point to instill one's depletable portion of the infinite, igniting a flame between the kidneys that will burn for a lifetime. Concentrating on the mingmen cauldron replenishes and prolongs finite life force. Ming is basically a mandate from Heaven as 'creativity.' Align personal action and Heaven, let spirit guide matter and bring effort and effortlessness into balance. A heart emptied of the world is filled with spontaneous affection. Mingmen tan-t'ien fountain of youth.

MOVERB: The organ of overlapped motor and verbal maps.

NAZMA: In Arabic, to string pearls, and to compose verse, while *nathara* to 'to scatter' yields *nathr* or 'prose.'

NON-AFFINITIVE BOND: Vital interrelationship between organisms with nothing in common. When applied to self, breaks biodeterminism.

NONDUAL REVOLUTION: Am I identical to you or to that which is greater than both of us, even though you don't identify with this greatness? We don't even need to see the whole elephant. When we each touch our proper piece of the elephant we only need to say "I'm touching my piece of the elephant." We could even ask "What elephant?" The conspicuous becoming so conspicuous the room is empty.

NON-OBLIGATE ENDOSYMBIOSIS: Communities of entities living as one in a state of mutual benefit and inter-independence.

OFFERED UP BODY: Nonconfusion.

OPTATIVE: Near-extinct grammatical mood expressing wish, deepest regret, begging, pleading, imploring, potential, imprecation. English can cobble together optativity by means of modal verbs ('may you become who you must'), the subjunctive mood, intensity, counterfactuality ('if only I could dance,' 'were we at least free') or the cohortative ('Let's!'). Its absence as a grammatical mood may betray our lack of affective depth. "O that I might be a corpse, my child, instead of you!"

OVERCOMING FITNESS: Experiential gene expression devoted to equitable distribution of resources and intrinsic happiness. The opposite of transcendence, without being opposed. Matter over matter (biological divergence over biological determinism). Developmental independence. Exuberance. Abundance. The sexual transmissibility of artwork.

OXYTOCIN: Empathy reduces inflammation. Oxytocin is a nine amino acid neurohormone associated with birthing, befriending, bonding, breastfeeding, lowered stress response, wound healing through heartening social interaction, nonmanipulative behavior, lardosis, loyalty, group cohesion, ethnocentrism, emotional addiction and calm in the face of life-altering events. Pulsatile neurohormonal secretions are produced primarily by the hypothalamus that rests directly atop our vibratory vocal apparatus while enveloped by the undulations of thoughtwave.

PANACEA: Prosody.

PAPILLONAGE: In Charles Fourier's system of Harmony, in keeping with his theory of "attractive labor," people living communally in phalansteries would change their work every few hours to avoid drudgery, flitting from one task to another like butterflies to the next source of nectar.

PARASYMPATHETIC PROMINENCE: Living in a predominantly relaxed, restorative, hypometabolic state.

PARENT PULSE: The beating that beats in us all. Tending to the neediest first.

PAROLE PLEINE: Lacan's 'full word' based on sanskrit *dhvani*. Suggestive, symbolic, prosodic aspects of speech revealing the subject (as had Freud's 'slips').

PEPTIDE: Just as neurotransmitters can be found outside the brain and virtually anywhere in the body, so the molecules that make up emotion are body-wide.

PERFECT PROPINQUITY: Our major neuroendocrine organs flowing and patterning atop the pulsatile voice box.

PERINEUM: Door of uncontrived being situated between anus and genitals.

PHENOTYPIC PLASTICITY: When our features are modified by genotypic response to environmental changes (particularly humanmade changes). Genotype determined by behavior overturns developmental biology.

PHOLARCHOS: A guard and guide during descent, trance, dormancy or enkoimesis.

PHONEMIC EMANATION: Cosmogogenesis through the phonemes our bodies have formed around in order that we sound them.

PHONOMORPHOARCHITECTOLOGY: Form following waveform.

PHOTOBIOLOGY: The study of the interchange of light and life form.

PPOAE: Planned Pauperization Of Almost Everybody morphing to the Planned Prosperity Of Absolutely Everyone.

PLEONEXIA: Insatiable appetite for accumulating what belongs to others. The belief that others, as well as all assets and resources, exist for one's own benefit. Advantage at the expense of others. Ruthless taking, as Larry Summers has pointed out, under a breakdown in social norms "by people in a position to take."

POET: Unpredetermined. Unobtunded.

PRATYAHARA: Usually defined as 'withdrawal of the senses,' the fifth of Patañjali's eight-stepped Raja Yoga. Because the senses naturally flow outward, 'withdrawal' is a counter-flow. Exterior stimuli is cut off, as well as visceral, interoceptive sensation—pain, thirst, temperature, organ sensations, hunger, emotions as body-based, all homeostatic cues, and so on. Pratyahara includes withdrawal from the sense referred to as the 'brain.' All higher neural

processes through which we form subjective representations of the world and our physical, sentient selves are cut, balancing the phenomenological fixation and fear of abstraction that can easily entomb our poetics.

PRE-DISTRIBUTIVE POETS, PERFORMERS AND PEOPLE PRESSURE

GROUP: A multi-localized, global disorganization using the proclivities of the uniquely disempowered and disregarded to astound the status quo. Unexpectedly awaited. Admittedly greatly appreciated.

PRE-EMPTIVE MALDISTRIBUTION: Structuring income and growth so that material well-being is equitable to begin with—pre-taxation and pre-philanthropic payback—before the damage is done. Poetics is, by definition, predistributive.

PRIVATIZATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS: The original enclosure movement.

PROSODIC BODY: The science of vibe practiced for the benefit of all beings. A new field of research that explores language as sound, embodiment, movement, intent and the tacit. The Prosodic Body is involved in various domains, principally performance, the built environment, health, education and socioeconomic justice. Composing with that of which we're made.

PROSODOGRAM: Diagnostic tool that tests the qualitative and quantitative effects of prosodic phenomena on bioprocesses.

PROSODOPATH: Disease is dissonance—its unit and path, as detectable in the Prosodic Body.

PROSODOPSYCHONEUROIMMUNOENDOCRINOLOGY: This field simply overlays and interrelates our sensitivity to prosodic phenomena with the already-acknowledged indivisibility of psychology, neurology, immunology and endocrinology.

PROSODY: Prosody includes poetry's elements of composition. Intonation, accentuation, pause, gesture, cadence and pitch are all acts of prosody. Evocation. A limbic, neocortical and entire body function that allows graded, highly variable vocal, emotional and connotative expression. The ways in which words say more than they can say. Unspeakable. Matter and consciousness are emergent properties of prosody. The vocation of poets in the rhythm, regulating and fulfilling of all of life. Prosody is the original motherese.

PROSODY PLATFORM: A participatory space where practitioners from prosody-related fields can freely feed in their findings to form the vast, up-to-the-minute, ever-evolving area of prosody. The Prosody Platform will be an integral part of the Prosody Building.

RE-ENGLISH: Provides hegemonic English with new inherences, priming an openhandedness that can disclose duplicity, transmute the mercenary and heal through unexpected euphony.

REPLICASE: A generic term for a polymerase enzyme that copies DNA or RNA base sequences into progeny.

RESPIRATORY SINUS ARRHYTHMIA: Rhythmic recitation (for example, the dactylic hexameter of Homer) establishes respiratory sinus arrhythmia [RSA]. Under RSA, heart rate increases during inhalation and decreases during exhalation. With each breathing cycle, RSA syncs alveolar ventilation and peak cardiovascular perfusion of oxygenated blood. Extra, discordant heartbeats are eliminated as ventilation becomes more efficient. This variable, lower breathing frequency, which is our birthright, as we are born into this arrhythmia (though typically lost before adolescence) is the rhythm of full breathing and recuperation. Heart rate is one of prosody's key compositional elements.

RETROFECTION: Actions acting back on germline for more favorable outcomes.

RETROFOREIA: Reaching all the way backward and all the way forward as the sublime present.

RIGHT OF DISCOVERY: Right of Discovery or Doctrine of Discovery was the sleight-of-hand with which European nations claimed America for themselves. Right of Discovery is founded on the principle that what belongs to nobody may be appropriated by the finder. This principle became effectual for America only when supplemented by the Church definition of Native Americans as *nullus* (nobodies). Something can't be owned by nobody. And by extension, a nobody, being nobody (and logically unable to own oneself), becomes part of the property.

ROANOKE COLONY OF 1650-1714: The only integrated commons ever established on U.S. soil. A non-plantation settlement in the recessed wetlands of the Albermarle Sound region of North Carolina, under the direct

suzerainty of the Tuscarora tribe. Tuscaroras, Blacks, White Runaways and the recently-released Indentured, all of whom held founding-father society as common oppressor. Native Americans still comprise 38% of the population of the county in which this commons once flourished.

ROTTING MONEY: A financial system in which the value of uncirculating money (above a certain income and asset bracket) is outstripped by inflation. A local, perishable currency was introduced by economist Silvio Gesell in Wörgl, Austria during the Great Depression in 1932. It was called 'stamped scrip' because it would lose 1% of its value monthly (basically, a negative interest rate) unless a stamp was purchased and attached to the bill. Gesell attributed the depression to sluggish circulation of money. The purpose of the scrip was to increase the velocity of circulation by making money perishable. "We must subject money to the loss to which goods are liable through the necessity of storage." Gesell's readership included Rudolf Steiner, John Maynard Keynes and Ezra Pound. (The other pillar of Pound's economics was the A + B Theorem of Major Clifford Douglas.)

SADHANA: A means to an end in which obstacles become liberation.

SAMASOKTI: Use of words capable of multiple meanings in order to intimate a purport not directly stated by the primary meaning.

SANCTIONED WAGE THEFT: Acceptable, lawful injustice. When social conventions permit, and laws do not prohibit, the looting of the labor share of productivity.

SEISACHTHEIA: Too small to fail. Too frail to fail. When Solon became head of affairs in ancient Athens he cancelled all public and private debt, freed all enslaved debtors and returned all confiscated property. This measure is referred to as the *seisachtheia* (removal of burdens). Until Solon's reforms, personal freedom could be used as loan collateral and claimed upon default, or forfeited when a defaulter's debt exceeded total assets. Deuteronomy refers to *seisachtheia* as the "Lord's release" or the "sabbatical year" where every seven years "every creditor shall release that which he hath lent unto his neighbor."

SERENE SHOCK: Awake in nondifferentiation. Parasympathetic pointedness. Comatosely creative.

SECLUDED INTERSUBJECTIVITY: Unperturbable in tumult. Individual in indivisible.

SHABD: Inaudible sound behind creation. Hearing the way. Audible light. Phonic photonics. Ununderstandable knowledge. Inner auscultation. The speech pattern manifesting each form, perceived as form (not as active speech patterning). Secret, unless that with which it can't be sensed is set aside. Matter's technique. Our own speech, shabd's furthest ripplet, about to die out and into.

SIMPLE MARKET: Market as serving others. It would be possible for the problems met in maintaining a simple market, as distinct from a solipsistic market or contrivance or ignorance of the unknown, to not merely maintain unavoidable suffering. A path of perfection. To enter the market as one might have entered a self-subsistence monastery or sangha. Squandering a fortune in advance for the benefit of everyone.

SOCIAL DIVIDEND: Unconditional guarantee of sufficient income for meeting basic needs—pooled from profits drawn from public resources, a socialized financial sector and raising the labor share of revenue, with national productivity as profit sharing. Ultimately we are one another's commons.

SORTITION: “It is accepted as democratic when public offices are allocated by lot; and as oligarchic when they are filled by election.”³

SOUFFLEUR: ‘Prompter.’ Someone (typically hidden to all but the actors on stage) who whispers the lines for the performers at just the right moment. Souffleurs may also appear in plain view as proper characters carrying out agendas of their own, improvising text, tweaking action and fulfilling the music.

SPAGHETTIFICATION: Elongated deformation of an audience as it is pulled into the black hole produced by performers with too little presence to keep the space from collapsing into itself.

SPECIATION: The arising of new species. A branching that produces, not sister species, but stranger species or separate seedings in the same soil. Or, without splitting, flipping back along the same line to an extinct antecedent. Home is the drift.

STRESSORS: Predator replacement by becoming prey to purely psychological states, principally anxiety, pressure and panic.

TENTATIVE GENOME EXPRESSION: Moment to moment, most favorable phenotypic re-manifestation, without fixed identity as reference point proving one's existence.

THRASYMACHUS: 5th century BCE sophist. At the time, philosophizing was a new societal role requiring new language genres such as rhetoric and oratory. Truth was up for grabs, as traditional beliefs fell away. In their attempts to be persuasive and influential (and remunerated), the sophists gradually became objects of derogation. Thrasymachus was a forceful defender of injustice. To drive his message home, he relied heavily upon the metrical unit called the 'paeon' (as this 4-beat measure had been, to his ear, vacated by the poets and was therefore available for re-purposing) as well as a highly developed gestural language accompanying his words (though no graphic, reproducible trace of this set of gestures survives). It is also known that his speech, as for all sophists, was utterly contrived so as to appear flowing, spontaneous and genuinely true. In the wreckage of epic and lyric forms, there was a strong preference for avoiding musicality, as song was considered inherently counterfeit. Thrasymachus is best known for his brief appearance in Plato's *Republic*.

TI-EH-NEH: Tiwa word for 'the people' as well as 'vibrations' (via Beautiful Painted Arrow).

TOTIPOTENT CHOREOGRAPHY: Movement that generates more possibilities than it exhausts with each decisive step. Limitation refuelling the Space Of All Possibilities. The reaching out, undergone all over again, that formed all limbs.

UBIQUITOUS DIVIDEND: Equitable distribution of resources based on the recognition that all goods and services are the congealed commons arising from thousands of years of advances whose benefits belong to everyone.

UNANNIHILATED POEM: Poetry as the substrate of all forms. Unrestricted literacy.

UNCONSERVED IDENTITY: Letting go of that which identifies oneself as oneself, as need be.

UNSTINTING BODY: The body versed in evoked epigenetics.

UZUME: The Sun Goddess had shut herself in a cave. To lure the Sun from the cave and restore light and life to the world, the Shinto Kami Ame-no-Uzume performed a frenzied, lewd, comic dance on top of an overturned bathtub, inventing the flute and kota while developing the first Kagura. By exposing herself she was also reminding the Sun of her maternal obligation to nurture the earth. Laughter is the Goddess of the pathway between heart and tongue. The vagus nerve is her shamanic speech. Prototype of performance as possession.

VIKRITI: Vikriti means ‘crooked,’ ‘imbalance,’ ‘deviation from nature.’ Expression out of sequence. Though a negative concept in Ayurvedic medicine, for Vedic poets vikriti was a codified, mnemonic recombining of syllables for the purpose of safeguarding the tonal and phonic integrity of Vedic verse. Eventually vikriti became a devotional practice in itself.

VIRGINIA COMPANY: Joint stock company that preceded Virginia and Virginians. (The New World was never other than privatized.) The main purpose of the Virginia Colony was to profit London stockholders (Shakespeare included.) To this end, the governor of Virginia (Virginia Company appointee Sir Thomas Gates) established marshal law—the earliest known English-language law in the New World, Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall, adapted in part from the military manual of William of Orange, which prescribed the death penalty for 25 of 37 civilian offenses (such as stealing a neighbor’s linen or an ear of corn, or for the use of disgraceful language). The severity of the law was less for maintaining worker discipline and more for keeping settlers from defecting to the amicable, leisurely, egalitarian Powhatans (1 in 8 had starved to death, 1 in 7 would defect). “Mowchick woyawgh tawgh noeragh kaquere mecher?” (I am hungry, what shall I eat?)—a question many of the Virginia Colony inmates had rehearsed. (A marshal law still too heavy to lift.)

WEISMANN BARRIER: The principle that information cannot move from somatic cells to sex cells. An acquired or engineered trait can’t be passed on. So some say.

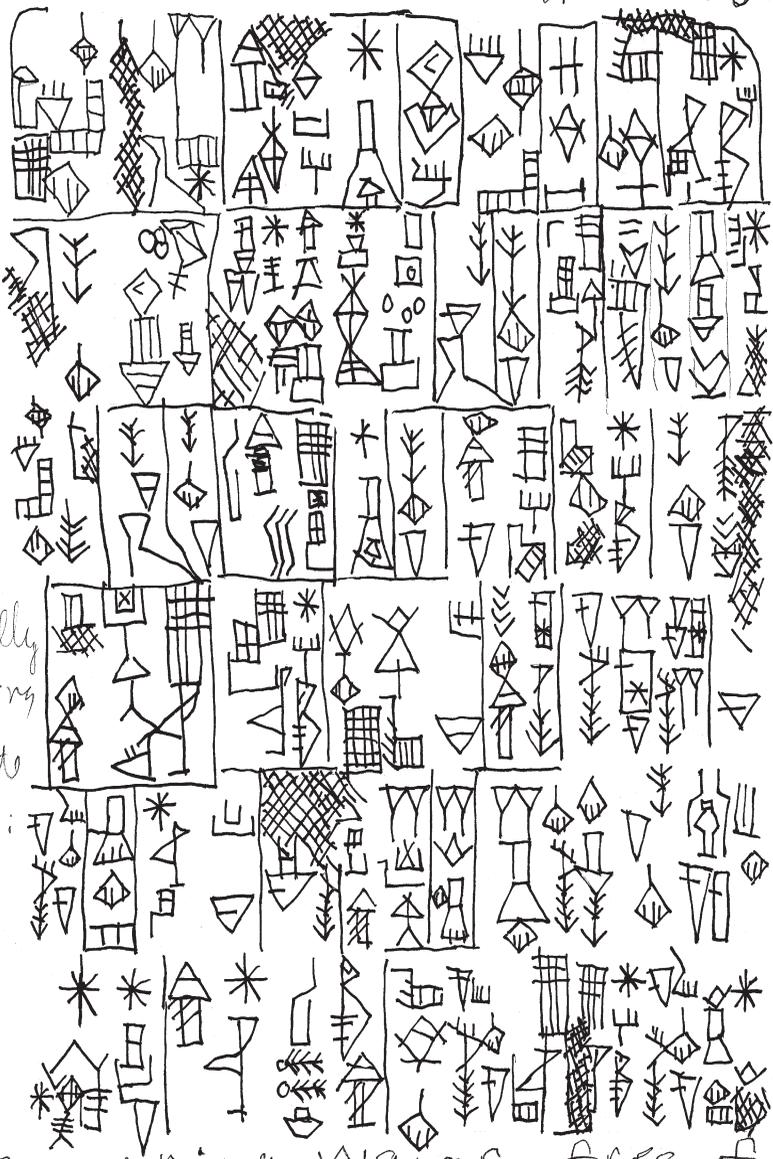
WONDERPENIA: Deficiency of wonder: the insult that shrinks the brain as we age.

WU CHI: Limitlessness in which there are no organizational forces.

Notes

- 1) From Book 32 of poet/lawmaker Thiruvalluvar's *Tirukkural*, quoted by Rev. G.U. Pope in "The Poets of the Tamil Lands," *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, Third Series, Volume V., Nos. 9 & 10, January-April, 1898: 364
- 2) Cuneiform tablet circa 2,400 BCE, translated by the archeologist Maurice Lambert. Cited in Michael Hudson, *The Lost Tradition of Biblical Debt Cancellations* (1993) 15, available at <http://michael-hudson.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/HudsonLostTradition.pdf>.
- 3) Aristotle, *Politics*, IV. 9, 1294b8, Loeb Classical Library No. 264 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932).

earliest record of debt
 cancellation, circa 2400 BCE
 1st recorded word for freedom



manually
 paying
 tribute
 to:

like running
 debt

"water fire of
 Enmetena instituted amargi
 in Lagash. He restored the
 child to its mother and the
 mother to her child. He
 cancelled interest."

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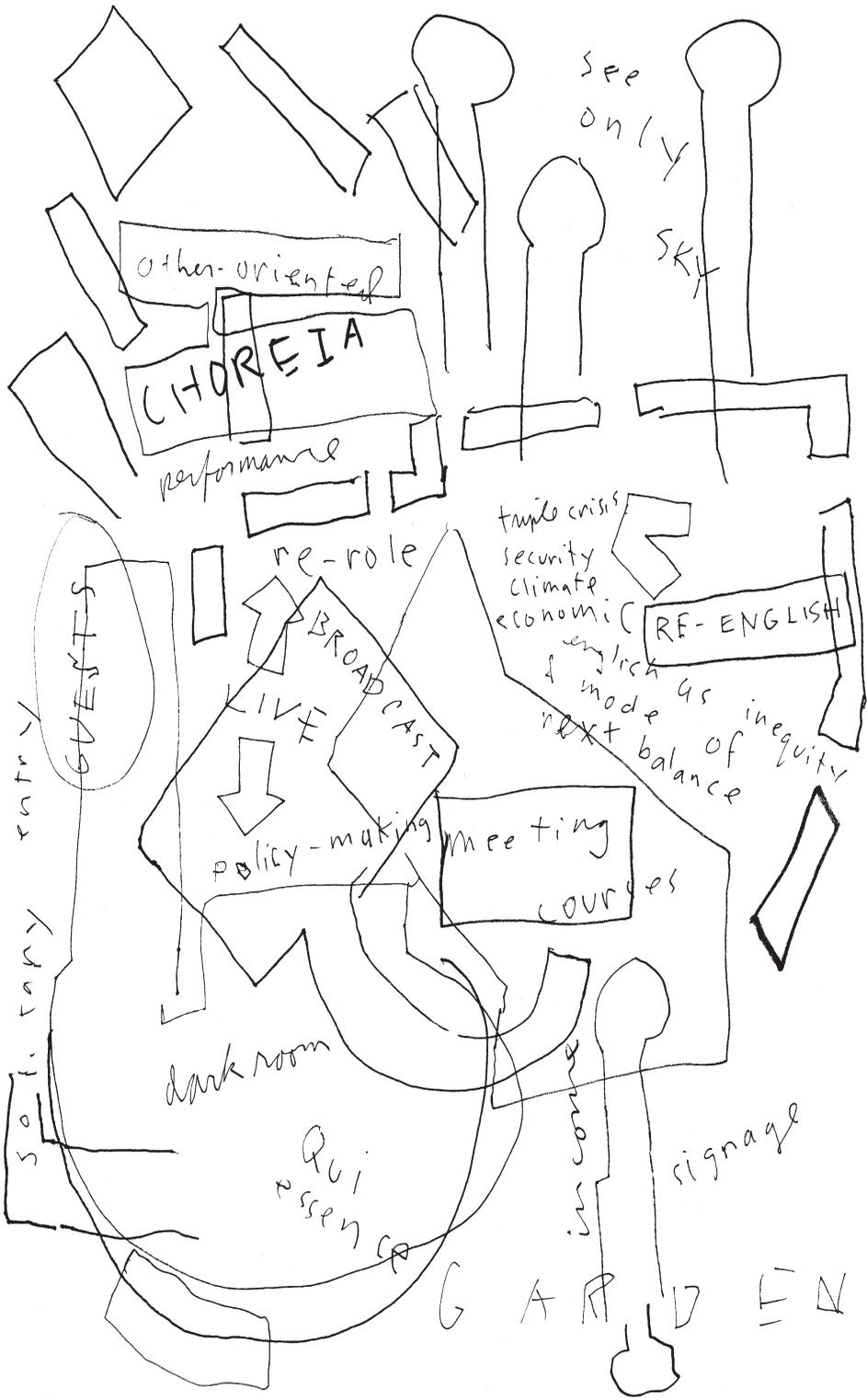
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As a Midwesterner I'm, supposedly, congenitally, and as a matter of conditioning, incapable of hyperbole. Nonetheless, and accordingly, my sense of gratitude wells over—it's well over-the-top, even wishful. I am almost nothing (as an aspiration). Without others to give over to, this aspiration is senseless, lifeless. Are we here *with* each other, *for* each other or *because of* each other? The gift of life is repaid by giving (what is wrong with this sentence?). Debt, even reciprocation, is too spiritually restrictive. Nothing is enough. Here we are. I simply would not exist without certain others and everyone, both. Because the wonder of sharing a locality of existing-only-through-each-other is boundless, thanks are infinite and in order.

Thanks can also be injury (if goods are given or received in expectation). There is an often-cited passage from Danish explorer Peter Freuchen's *Book of the Eskimos*. When Freuchen thanks an Inuit hunter for receiving a portion of the day's walrus kill, the hunter resolutely replies: "Up in our country we are human! And since we are human we help each other. We don't like to hear anybody say thanks for that. What I get today you may get tomorrow. Up here we say that by gifts one makes slaves and by whips one makes dogs."

That said:

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To our wishes.

for my families

LIFEWOR

Robert Kocik was born in 1954, in Austin, Minnesota. He is a writer, prosodist, builder, artist, caregiver and economic justice activist. From 1975-80 Kocik worked with the Center for Archaic Studies in Franconia, NH. He attended the New College of California Poetics Program from 1980-83. In 1985 he moved to France where he worked as a builder and translator. From 1990-95 he co-directed (with choreographer Daria Faïn) the arts and trades association Trigon. In 1994-95 he studied wood engineering at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne. In 1996, he moved to Brooklyn where he founded the Bureau of Material Behaviors—a design/build business and materials research workshop. Since 1985, Japanese and French woodworking traditions have been the mainstay of his livelihood.

His architectural works focus on missing services, functions and furnishings that meet critical social needs. His cross-disciplinary writings move through the hard, soft and sore sciences to comprise a field called ‘Supple Science.’ In 2006, Faïn and Kocik co-founded the ‘Prosodic Body’—an experiential, exacting exploration of the sonic, connotative and somatosensory aspects of language. In 2008, the Commons Choir (the performative branch of the Prosodic Body) was launched. Working from librettos that combine prosody research with socioeconomic concerns, the choir performs investigative musicals in various settings, to entertain, educate and enlighten.

Kocik’s publications include *AUKSO (gain)* (Object, 1995) *Overcoming Fitness* (Exit 18/Autonomedia, 2001), *Rhrurbarb* (Field Books/Periplum Editions, 2007), *All Peoples Calendar* (Prosodic Body, 2009) and *E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E* (Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs, 2012).