TO LEAP FICTIVELY UNDER ELECTRONIC REPRESENTATION

Because fiction is so closely entwined with the forms of saying, of 'telling', that constitute the everyday life of language in a culture saturated by media-representation and the construction and transmission of information, I begin with and give most 'space' to texts drawn from that 'literature' which, while rooted in and emerging from everyday language, is driven by a questioning relation to both that language and a sensed (however loosely) tradition of writing-as-art. All performing projects that choose (or are chosen by...) fiction as the site of trying to make toward art face the challenges of leaping-out in their most acute and explicit form. For they share the very 'medium', ordinary language, through which the culture of mass techno-representation makes sense of itself and seeks to ensure its own consistency. The ordering of the day, the everyday, is already achieved utterly routinely through the story-telling that generates and confirms a world-in-common (more or less) and is the vehicle for knowledge-dissemination.

To escape from, to suspend, the terms of use to which ordinary language is subject, while remaining 'within' it becomes a project defined by this inescapable paradox. If we live by 'fictioning', the endless making up of stories, however brief or fractured, to account for 'things', 'relations', 'processes' and 'what we are', then making-for-art has to find ways of telling differently while remaining within the 'same', within the utter ordinariness of telling. It has to constitute ways (a way...) of telling that disclose, enact, the extraordinariness within the ordinary, that which enables the ordinary to remain unchallenged while grounding itself on nothing but its 'own' (though in the end and the beginning it 'owns' nothing) conventions. Performing has to turn itself back through ordinary language, and thus, in the process, to try to turn 'the ordinary' out of the language (out of what we 'use', without thinking about 'it', to make sense), while simultaneously clinging on to it for dear life. For ordinary language is precisely what grants making-for-art its very possibility in 'the first place'. The very ordinariness is what performing loves, wants to celebrate and make extraordinary by drawing it towards art, while committing itself to stay wholly within it.

The questions for performing have to focus, then, on just what this 'it' is, what it can hold, bear, and contain, whether it can be stretched to its limits (even though we do not know what might constitute such limits). Thus, if it wants to make towards art's swarming, fiction has to be entirely consumed by, has to find ways of surviving within and as this paradox: how to get out within, how to cut itself off from representation while remaining in the grip of the latter's taken-for-granted 'medium' (it is, of course, always more than, unspeakably in excess of - *and in this very excess lies art's hope and possibility* - anything we could fix as and limit to 'a' medium).

This is, of course, the challenge that, under modernity and its afterward, writing toward art through fiction has taken and continues to take on. Fiction becomes a site where the unavoidable questions about the relations between language and living, language and subjectivity, language and memory, language and sociality, are taken on not as conceptual problems but as the substance, the literal mattering, of writing-as-performative. Writing, aiming for art, seeks to make its own performance available as a possible experience with and of language through its making of a text that discloses, exposes, the paradox of simultaneity - of getting out while within; in pursuit of this 'getting' it hopes to hover-in-between, to survive in the tiniest of gaps between the fictions of a pure outside (no language) and a pure within

(absolute language, nothing-but-language) and thus, with luck, to filter itself through to where it can leap towards its no-place, an elsewhere where its singular language seems to keep on meaning while, in the end (the end of reading), meaning nothing but the exposure of its own being-outside.

In the afterwards of modernity, fiction writing that seeks art's 'out' now finds itself in a field shaped by emergent assumptions, almost perhaps conventions, about what it can no longer offer itself through or live within. Thus the singular voice of the controlling narrator who seems to be outside and overseeing all the written 'action' is suspended in favour of the seeming play of many 'voices'; writing 'genres' (realism, fantasy, historical accounts and so on) can be inter-mixed and sequentially aligned; the text's sequencing can be sustained through multiple forms of interruption, abrupt shifts of 'voice' and tone, and insertion of textual materials from apparently external, non-fictional, sources; the relation between the text and its sourcing (authorial) and resources (its literal 'contents') may be continually problematised; ordinary language as the 'founding' resource becomes a site of 'play' (of doubling (paronomasia) and the undoing of consistency of 'reference'); the respondent (reader-listener-perceiver) may be drawn into the gest as a seeming co-constituent, one who is colluding with the 'author-performer'in the gest's emergence, through direct address. Fiction becomes a zone of generalised intertextuality, the mingling and interplay of collaged texts and voicings, seemingly aside from the authority of the directing 'voice' of a singular subject(ivity), relying for its attraction and seduction on the surprising pleasures arising in the course of reading's movement across its idiosyncratic conjunctions.

But while these and other textualising 'tactics' may seem to place the resulting texts in some problematic relation to the surrounding culture of representation, none of them demand to be taken as unequivocal oppositions to techno-representation. Indeed they may all be found, singly or in combination, 'at work' in conventional cultural forms, especially those used in the mass programming of entertainment. In contrast, both the challenges taken up by the gests offered here as mini-case studies, and thus their cogency in opening up performing's contemporary plight, lie exactly in the ways that they take on representation on its 'home ground'. They site themselves in and, through the specifics of their movement as textual forays, seek to divert and interrupt, the very 'conditions', the routine 'circumstances', through which techno-representation is 'ordinarily' assembled and maintained. They take this as their, and perhaps by implication, making-for-art's, unavoidable task and responsibility. Their way of performing toward art is to begin in and spiral through the very 'things' and processes that they take to be catastrophic for art's (and our) living-on. Through their exposure of performing's relation to itself, to language, and to its binding circumstances, they seek to show art's plight and its fate (and thus ours too) as unequivocally bound up with the real history of techno-representation's machined careering onwards. Through singularly different tactics and responses, they each try to shape performing into a making-search for a way of bringing to language, of figuring, a gest that exposes itself as a pointing beyond, a possible way-through-and-out-of, our 'fate' - techno-representation's programming of 'life'. Differently, they figure the conjunction of mattering, energising, socialising, and language (and thus everything we gather within that little word 'meaning') as the zone where power(ing) is brought off. It is at this conjunction that making-for-art has to make its slightest of slits in exposing itself as power's other.

Fictioning as a Visceral Figuring Out of Voicing Under Extreme Representation
It is performing's contemporary plight to be still living within the aftermath of the multiple, partially visceral, figuring-voicing exposed by Joyce, Woolf, Artaud and, now, enacted by

uncountable others. For, pitching at the extreme, Art's Body is no more than the swarming-beyond that is the play its multiple gests. But it is an aftermath whose enclosing and permeating circumstances are utterly different to those of *their* already-late modern 'world'.

If each performer is compelled to try to construct their own self-insulating 'pocket' as the 'place' from within which to explore the possibilities of their idiosyncratic vision of art's swarming, it is undeniable that the very seams and textures enclosing this 'pocket' are now impregnated throughout with the alien (that is, other-than-performing's) interests and demands of the surrounding machinery of general representation. The aim of the permeating discourses, texts, images, and programming processes that constitute the routine products of culture-management is to figure out and implement strategies of appropriation that bind performing and its gests into 'culture' on their own terms. Performers are all too well aware that their 'own' visions are thus always already, before they even make a 'mark', under the sway of interests responsible for the routine delivery of all things gathered up as 'culture' (within which art is merely one component). They know that performing and its gests sur-vive only on the terms of assessments of their potential contribution to the maintenance of those interests' real powers over the 'delivery' of 'culture'.

Thus the challenge faced by performers is how to recognise and respond to the effective 'presence'of such interests amongst the multiple voices constituting their sourcing void. For 'art' as represented by cultural interests (... 'art-lite'...) has little more than the name in common with that specific figure of Art's Body towards which each performer tries, idiosyncratically, to leap. 'Voicing' and its sourcing may still seem to be many and groundless, but the representing machine needs to so infiltrate performing's movements that it makes itself the dominating ground unbeknownst. Its operations are geared to ensuring that 'the arts' appear and are placed on the terms of its need for stability, continuity of output, and the programmed integration of all the 'products' it manages. As one little collection of its 'products' among many, 'the arts' have to be aligned, overlapped, and thus reconciled with all the others. They appear under and as affirmative contributors to a kind of stage-managed 'cultural togetherness' that subsumes 'differences' as minor troubles for its programmed marketing of this generalised gathering. Each 'art' is allocated its 'own' pathways within the systematically managed programme maintaining the flow and continuities of 'culture's' everyday life; consequently each survives on the terms of a continuing programming that subordinates each one to its task of coordinating and integrating all of them.

Caught up in this dynamic, performing's only hope for securing and holding on to the idiosyncrasy of its vision and its affinity for art's swarming is to try to situate itself in the nowhere of a peculiar in-between – to live out the tension of an insoluble paradox. Firstly, it has to develop a paranoia specific to its unique circumstances; this entails a virtually mad suspicion and questioning of everything 'outside' (all the conventions of representation that surround it) that might just have got 'inside'and be working their way into its gests; but this same paranoia has, in turn, to subject everything, especially the figuring-voicing-sourcing, that 'seems' to have come solely from within, to a similar scrutiny in case it has, unsuspectingly, been tainted and marked already by an infiltrating 'outside'. Secondly, in order to procede with its gest, it has to find ways of combining this strange paranoia simultaneously with a sublime indifference to everything other than those elusive figurings that, it senses and hopes, are marking out the strangeness of its emergent almost-language. Thus making-for-art can keep going only through an interminable oscillation between these demands; its paradoxical challenge is to find ways of

keeping itself on the move around in this airless groundless in-between. It has to try to stand by the compulsive faith it has in art's swarming-beyond as its own potential destination.

Crucially, this ungroundable commitment to its own collection of affinities for others' gests has to be open-ended and unruly. For performing knows that its capacity for surprise, for being surprised, taken aback and elsewhere, both by the gests of others and by what it brings forth itself in each gest's emergence, is a defining constituent of its relation to art's swarming. Performing is infused by a latent readiness for being-surprised that operates through a kind of wandering and unfocussed alertness; this generates a heightened anticipation of and a hopeful preparedness to be thrown, in the course of its exposure to others' as yet unexperienced gests, into their 'differences', their unaccommodatable near-languages. To look to be disconcerted by, while simultaneously accepting and celebrating, such offerings from elsewhere, is surely a requirement for the emergence in performing's own course of that untranslatable not-quite-language whose idiosyncrasy charms by its puzzling differing, its affinity for the unlanguageable while making out within something like a language. Indeed, to embrace the unruly as performing's defining term directs it precisely to its challenge: to offer a gest that is the material residue of its search for the always receding unreachable 'rule'. For it is in the gap left by this 'absent' rule that performing's collected affinities for art's swarming are gathered. This is where its commitment to make-for-art (and nowhere else) is exposed.

It is this search for what cannot be found that gives it the outside chance, through leaping's risk, of making it over to art's swarming. Precisely to the extent that its gest preserves the seductive difference of its almost-language it will overlap with that little collection of affinities for particular art gests that drove it into making in the first place. This is what gives it the potential for assimilation by Art's Body (the unique sensed Body that only 'it' and no-one else has felt-out and gathered in just this way). Somehow the elements and leaps that constitute the syntactical aligning of performing's gests, through a syntax without ties to any as yet known language, have to preserve the tension of living through the irreconcileables of these paradoxes. The abandoned gests stand (or fall...), they live-on (or not...), as the tension's residues. In trying to hold to their idiosyncratic near-language they keep open the outside chance of their absorption by Art's Body, even though, absolutely dependent as ever on institutional others, they may have to go via the enormous and vapid detour of 'art-lite'.

Circumstantially hemmed by these paradoxes into its strange in-between, performing across the arts now is thus challenged to make its way towards Art's Body through becoming the site, the ungrounded playground, where multiplicity is taken on. But it is now, in modernity's afterwards, an already divided multiplicity, a multiplicity continually in the process of multiplying itself where, for performing, and defining its peculiar plight, two multiples are brought into an always troubling conjunction. It is in the zone between these two that making-for-art finds itself pulled this way and that. Performing has to put its commitment to art's swarm (the vague but infinitely weak multiple desired as its destination and figured practically by its little collection of affined gests) through a continually testing engagement with all the 'things' it brings with it from its routine involvements in the world of everyday life (the vague but institutionally powerful multiple of techno-representation on whose terms everyday life now subsists and from which performing seeks to leap). It is precisely the being-beyond of art's multiple, the play over there of its many figurings-voicings as other-than-what-is, that, in the weakness of their impracticality, grip performing. Whereas the vast multiple emanating from the machinery of general representation, displaying the latter's awesome display of speed and power, seeks to hold all modes of performance, art included,

to the terms on which they will be fixed alongside each other in the course of its programming of everyday life. Once in tow to the machinery all modes become, *first of all*, its representatives. For it, all modes are 'there' only to contribute to the routine and utterly practical reproduction and confirmation of 'what is' (where this 'what is' includes the entire *phantasmagoria* - the symbolic-mythic-fantasy-dream-world - insistently refuelling global techno-capitalism). Thus the stakes could not be higher: performing, drawn in its weakness to make for art's beyond, wants out, while all-forceful techno-representation maintains within-ness. Torn apart in between, performing is left to expose itself, in and as its gest, as the site of this tearing.

In taking on the late-moderns' legacy of the condition of multiplicity, makers thus task themselves to try to survive under art's seduction (its half-promise of otherness) as this unavoidable experience of being-torn. Their know-how shows them that their immersion in 'circumstances', routinely ordered by powerful interests alien to performing (the alternative multiple of pan-techno-representation), will leave indelible marks on their gests. So, to keep the chance of art as destination alive they have to find ways of holding to the not-yet-language towards which their affinities and, crucially, their bemusing other-figurings-voicings lead them. Each emerging gest will be textured as the struggle over the terms of leaping and aligning. And this leaping has to leap through and, hopefully, beyond at least some of the binds of techno-representation's machinery. Somehow the otherness of art's swarming-beyond has to cajole making into risking itself to the absence of a language (a 'ground', a 'position' from which 'to represent') under whose 'rules' the gest could be seen to lie in security. Unless performing takes on the question of the absence of grounds for the language(s) dominating its chosen medium/media it risks falling back on and trusting to the conventions whose repetition endlessly secures, however precariously, commonsense. Yet it knows only too well that it only gets under way from within those very conventions for, as for all of us, its defining circumstance is its immersion in the everyday life of the multiple of techno-representation. Leaping-aligning's 'point' in making-for-art is to trust itself to being cast adrift among fragments of what cannot yet be assimilated by knowable language sources, by representing's operations. What appeals to it are precisely the particulars of the figures, voices, graphics, sounds, shapes, colours, accents, inflections, that seem, synaesthesically, to come to it alone from a zone between sense and nonsense and outside of any containing language, aside, that is, from any language or structure through which they could be drawn and which would allow us to say "A-ha, so that's what they mean!".

This is *poiesis* putting itself to the test of art. And, in the case of poetry itself, as a guide to performing's taking on of its media-specific language(s), I have already considered the difference through which poetry's relation to breathing, rhythming and turning (versing), interrupts whatever we take to be the conditions of sense-making in everyday life. When poetising engages the limits of its own relation to 'voicing-writing' through its displacement of the things we rely on in making and transmitting sense (specifically now the defining processes of techno-representation), it suspends us in a zone that may already require us to leap from our knowledge securities to somewhere on the way towards art.

But fiction-as-art appears to be more problematic because, under the conventions of a tradition of literature that makes story-telling and narration seemingly defining constituents of fictionalising, it is already immersed in the very forms of accounting, of making and relating 'sense', that sustain the commonsense world-under-techno-representation. We make 'sense' by constructing, however briefly (a 'story' can be as 'short' as a syntagm, even

perhaps an inflected word or phoneme), stories; and the emergence and recognition of something like a story-line is dependent entirely on the aligning, the conjunction and spacing-timing, of its syntagms. Borrowing from Jakobson's distinction, sense, and thus a story, emerges in the process of reading from the way we integrate (without 'thinking' about it) the two apparently independent dimensions of relation – the metonymic relations of association internal to the 'line', and the metaphoric relations that associate the line's constitutents to external referents. Performing's ordering aligning lays down the challenge to reading's trajectory; through its aligning of linguistic elements it offers the toe-and-imagination-holds and the voids-in-between which enable the event of relating, of associating. The internal relations make possible the memory-suffused imagination's leaps to multiple possible external associations. Leaps internal to the line (across the multiple gaps from letter to phoneme to syntagm to sentence to paragraph and so forth) perform the making of sense. But whether this sensing can have art's distant swarming as its possible destination will depend upon whether the aligning can withdraw reading from its commonsense securities and affiliate it to, plunge it into, synaesthesic ambiguities that mark art's otherness, its being inassimilatable within any known language.

'Fictioning', irrespective of medium, which seeks to make-for-art (as opposed to entertainment, information, or sociality as the prime sites, now predominantly techno-mediated, of story-telling in everyday life), has thus to find ways of resisting cooptation by the culture's languages and sense conventions while seemingly engaged in the process of 'standing by' them. For performing fiction generates its 'something-gest' not from 'nothing' but from the materials already 'available' in and as culture's languages. It interrupts the languages of representation, excises whatever it needs and re-aligns these fragments according to its own non-representational end – the difference that its not-yet-language might just make to art's swarming. For this swarming, how and where art moves, happens within the gaps between the different kinds of 'sites' used by the culture to represent and thus to place language; at the least there is the site of the generalised sociality of commonsense language 'use' in everyday life, the presupposed site of an inaccessible language-in-general from which all specific language events are assumed to flow, the sites of particular languages (national or 'technical') that allow translation between each other, and the context-bound sites of particular 'enunciations' (in whatever phonic or graphic combination) that may contain elements from many languages. In trying to make-towards-art 'fictioning' will move between, draw from, allude to, all such sites while trying to resist assimilation or identification with any of them. And it has to live out the tension of searching for art's difference while absolutely enmeshed in the matters and processes of techno-representation.

Figuring Voicing Out
This is why 'fictioning' now unavoidably *has to take itself as its topic*. Whatever its seeming 'references' and 'themes', in searching, and thus making, for the possibility of its difference (its idiosyncratic written leap towards art), writing commits itself to confronting writing. Searching for its way of writing in, figuring out, its own voice, it has to confront how writing is entwined with voicing and 'voices' itself. But, as writing alone, it has to live with writing's material displacement, its literal and active 'disappearing', of the voice. And this doubled search (already opened up in the earlier consideration of transliteration) has to take on and break out of the binds of techno-representation if it is to have any chance of making it over to art; making-towards-art is a making-out, a making *of* 'out'. The *witz* of its imagining is engaged in the out-witting of writing as we know it routinely, before it is undone and taken elsewhere in the play of fictioning – it devotes itself to out-writing writing. For it has to stay

'in writing' only to figure the multiple of voices - ways of voicing - precisely as that which is other to writing. We are required to see (read) in order to see *through* to voicings that, though leaving writing behind, dispelling it, preserve its materiality as memory traces of the voicings' latent possibility, their only possibility of living-on.

Performing is thus required (it requires this of itself under the aegis of art) to constitute the 'key' to each gest as its exposure of the very process of its being-written: the showing of the 'how' - the 'why' of the aligning that is displayed in its way of being done. And this doing is always trapped between, and thus cannot help disclosing this as the tension of the writing's peculiar mode, the two multiples: it aligns only to get out, while its aligning is all too soon condemned to live on only through its appropriation by the materials and processes (its constituents and its surrounding circumstances) that hem it in.

The focus of performing, then, has to be on the figuring out of voicing, on what the writing can draw us towards and get us to hear for ourselves through its aligning- spacing of possible particular voices, or ways of voicing. For the voicings that the writing out-lines have to be both recognisable but alien, voicings that themselves come out of the residues of techno-representation yet could have appeared nowhere other than this writing as precisely an aside to the latter, *as a catastrophe for it*.[1] This is why the writing has to struggle with itself (over every mark, letter, gap, every relation 'interior to it), with its own emergence, as just this figured alien aligning of voicings. For to move itself and us towards art's swarm, it has to break out of the enormity of the authoritative grip of those means of support for aligning and voicing that fix us unbeknownst in and on the terms of representation for almost all of our waking lives. Once 'fictioning' seduces us through its interruption of this grip we are released to leap out into a zone-in-between, where neither representation's calculative multiple nor art's synaesthesic swarm have yet exerted a defining control over us. If we are moved towards art's swarm by the gest's peculiar aligning then, abandoning the props of commonsense, we may find ourselves adrift in the play of a figuring that undoes, displaces, what we thought we knew and took for granted, about the relationship between language and living.

Artaud and Performing's Ventriloquising of its Not-quite-language
Thus, irrespective of medium, performing as 'voicing' - the performer trying to affiliate with art through finding and materialising her/his 'own voice' - procedes through a kind of transforming ventriloquism. Faced with the multiplicity of 'voicings' that Joyce's and Woolf's texts, in their different ways, exposed as art's plight - its promise and challenge - performing's search for and transliteration of the 'voice(s) afar' (they might also be called 'figurings afar') is ventriloquial. These con-fused 'figurings-voicings' sourcing performing are drawn forth, transmuted, and then cast out in whatever shaping and texturing the chosen media require. Treating the sourcings this way keeps before us the synaesthesic multiple that constitutes them; it holds them to the spiration and pulmonary rhythming through which its sensuous sourcings subsist. As discussed earlier, Kristeva's 'chora' has already pointed to this undifferentiable togetherness that 'voicing' glosses. Ventriloquism preserves and takes off from this more or less chaotic interplay; it reminds us that sourcing is multipli-sensed and thus that 'voicing' cannot be divorced from the visceral, for it displaces the mouth (and thus

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[1] The gest has to perform what, for techno-representation, would be a disastrous, catastrophic, 'wrong turn' (*strepho* – Greek for 'to turn') out of everything the latter 'stands for' (represents) in its provision of the rules and materials, the productive machinery, for the controlled programming of sense as ordinary, as beyond question.

simultaneously the head) and returns us to the abdomen, the belly - the *venter*. Thus the whatever-figured-voicing that has to be transliterated into the gest is not the speech of the mouth. Rather, issuing from a void, it is a confused (synaesthesic) multiple that makes and marks its way out, depositing its traces-on-the-way-to-language through and across the body and, eventually, as transliterated surfacings, exposing itself as a one-off near-language. Its surfaces (or better perhaps – surfacings), in their untranslatable particularity, lie wherever they can in wait for the other(s) who might just draw them into the play of language's sociality.

Artaud, writing about the theatre and, specifically, acting, offers this void as making-for- art's visceral condition, the generating condition and site of its possibility. The abyss 'within' is defined by the bottomlessness of the bodily experiences that infiltrate and permeate all the modes of becoming that they 'support'. For him, the urgent question confronting performing (in 1936) was how to reconnect with the givens of these abyssal experiences in ways that set aside performing's existing conventions and habits. Whilst, since then, this question has been insistently and differently explored across art's media, its cogency and unavoidability still haunt making-for-art. Performing knows that it is located in the in-between where the sensual and the thoughtful are separated and joined. Its site is where the interplay between the body-as-memory, the imaginary-as-memory, and language-as-memory, occurs, but always in response to the specificity of the circumstances enclosing performing. Artaud introduces these themes, brings them to writing, and shows their inter-dependence in 'Seraphim's Theatre'. In this brief essay dedicated to Jean Paulhan (it is written as a kind of poetic declaration of his own response to the challenge facing acting), he explores, writes out, the terms on which he, as an actor, might attempt a 'terrific feminine' cry, '(t)he lamentation of an opened abyss'.[2] But, '(t)o vent this cry I must exhaust myself' by expelling 'the very capacity to make sound'; he has to get back to a kind of null point in the stomach which is where '(s)ilence must start'.[3] For that is the site, stretched out 'between two breaths', of the 'strangled void' where breath goes down, creates its void, and launches it back 'up TO THE TOP OF THE LUNGS.'[4]. The null point, always both embodied and thought-loaded, marks the essential exit for art's possible materials.

Supporting my earlier association of performing with 'weakness' (rather than identifying art-making with power), Artaud proposes that the actor's abyssal process of cry-generation needs not strength but a 'weakness' from which 'will-power will spring' and 'will live to recharge my weakness with all demand's strength'.[5] This will-power is breathing's gift; it is the result of concentration points on the 'void on the belly' which gave birth to the 'picture of that armed cry at war' whose sourcing as 'that terrible underground cry'[6] the actor sought. The body which grounds us, connects us with the earth, is metaphorised as a bottomless 'cave', as 'caverns', into which, as actor, he has to fall in the course of recovering his defining weakness. The actor's 'fall' into the earth's caverns generates the cry that 'awakens its double in sources in the cave walls'. This double, 'more than an echo', is 'the memory of a language of which theatre has lost the secret'.[7] Artaud's project is to find ways of restoring this doubling awakening to acting, to the theatre, and by extension to each of the arts according to its medium's demands.

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[2] A. Artaud, 'The Theatre and its Double', Calder and Boyars, London, 1970, p. 96.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Op. cit., p. 97.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Op. cit., p. 98.
[7] Op. cit., p. 100.

But of course he can only do this through bringing to language, and thus performing in his own writing in this essay (and others), the very transmutations and transliterations through which his body is (and others' bodies are) merged with and makes its 'presence' felt in language. Acting, and thus performing towards art, enact leaping transitions from the viscera through memory into some kind of inchoate language that makes its way out eventually in and as Artaud's own exposing pointing writing. The dreamt-of feminine cry becomes achievable through a re-learning of the intricacies of just such organic transitions and a re-siting of acting's response to the leaps that are necessary to make links. For in the mode of viscerally thoughtful 'heightened waking' that is theatre, and thus is making-for-art too in the differential inflections of art's media, the actor's guiding of fate 'begins with breathing' and then 'relies on sound or shouts in order to reforge the links, the chain of a rhythm when audiences saw their own real lives in a show'.[8] It is this very linking - 'the chain of a rhythm' – that performs and sets itself out as and in the syntactical activity that the artist offers as something like, something on the way towards, a language. But, returning us to the earlier probings of 'inspiration', it is a language that is sourced in the interim, in the mediating-between that breathing is. It is a languaging that has to be continually reconnected with the viscera that sustain it. The magic links can only be reforged by beginning with (and then transliterating) breathing's 'hieroglyphics'.[9] But art's possibility makes further demands, for it has to be drawn into and partially shaped by the maker's utterly specific affiliations with art.

Only when engaged, seized, by the head-and-heart's desire to make-for-art, to leap away from the mundane which they all occupy together, will performing begin to transmute these sourcings into materials that might display their potential for affiliation with art's swarm. Resonating from their inexplicable sourcings, these figurings-voicings summon, cajole, guide, charge-up and drive performing towards art through whatever-transmuting mode (medium) it turns out to need; for art's sake they demand to be thrown out, cast off. And what is cast off ventriloquially are the transliterated materials that are to surface and expose themselves 'over there' (on the stage, on the canvas, in the stone/metal/wood/resin, on the page, on the screen, through the 'speakers', at and as the whatever-surface). The 'voicings-figurings' (the often-inseparable scintillations, colourings, imagings, tracings, murmurings...) seeming to come from 'afar', though simultaneously so intimately close as to also seem to be within one's grasp, have to be reconstituted as and in materials by means of which performing makes them leap away from their sourcing 'sites'. And, eventually, as completed gests, a further leap severs them from the site of performing and its concerns; cut off from performing's 'here-and-now', they are sent on their way away definitively marked by an indirection.

For performing's entire effort is directed to ensuring that, at the point of abandonment, the gest leaps out towards an utterly different somewhere-else that is neither commensurable nor reconcileable with what 'goes on' on performing's site. It is the gest's point to leave performing definitively behind and offer itself as, at last, other to performing. Abandonment enforces differentiation. For the gest-on-its-way is no ventriloquist's dummy just mouthing what we all know is still the ventriloquist's – the performer's voice. Rather the casting off of the gest effects a definitive detachment. It marks the rift where performing acknowledges that much of what constitutes the gest has been unknowably sourced in ways which forbid any simple claim to sole authorship. Performers 'know' that, although they put their name to the released gests, each of the latter is partially indebted to a 'many' only a few of which are familiar to and identifiable

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[8] Op. cit., p. 101.
[9] Op. cit., p. 102.

with themselves. Thus the voicing of each gest cast off by a performer is always im-proper – it is never unequi-vocally 'my' property but always already 'mine-and-the-others''. And if what seem to have been 'mine' can only appear in conjunction with, as co-partners of, the others, then even 'mine' are no longer just 'mine' but 'mine-in-collusion-with', and thus transformed (misled perhaps...) by, the others.

Thus the 'figuring-voicing' that has been materialised and set down as the gest's emergent surfacing is 'there' only to finish with performing-this-gest forever and to figure resoundingly, graphically, somewhere else altogether, somewhere where others can engage it on their own terms according to their circumstances. But, though performing recognises that, once cast out, it has to be taken over, be appropriated and passed on by others, it knows that the destination towards which it has tried to throw it is still nowhere nearby, nowhere ready-to-hand. This allows it to cling to the faint possibility that its unique feeling for and gathering of what art's swarming amounts to might still coincide with what its gest has managed to preserve of this feeling. Performing cannot ever quite relinquish its hope that its gests might still somehow be affiliated to Art's Body on terms very close to those that seemed to inhabit and charge its 'own'voicing, that drove it to and through its own distractions. It hopes for the maintenance within its gests of the slightest of envelopes, pockets, fissures, folds (but all right there at and as a surfacing that is turning back on and through itself in its doublings), in which fragments of its feelings for art as it experienced them might just be secreted. This is all it can hope for knowing that appropriation will turn its gests into something else entirely. For it is the infinitely distant swarming of Art's Body towards (but always only *vaguely* towards for the leap's direction is unknowable and its journey's length is, like that to Kafka's 'destination', 'truly immense') which gests are made to leap quite aside from any knowledge of the way (for there is no such way...), let alone any guarantee of arrival. Performing can only hope that whatever it manages to expose through its surfacing activities bears, either explicitly or inaccessibly, ciphered secrets, sufficient affining traces of compatibility with art's swarming to attract others who, once seduced by the timbres of its figured ventriloquial casting, might just draw it on and themselves cast it the last stretch of the way towards swarming's play.

Yet performing also recognises that it's hope is always already confounded in advance by the difference, the differentiation, through which it has launched itself into its projecting-towards-art. For it knows that its figuring of 'Art's Body' is absolutely specific to itself; the swarming it hopes to join is that particular collection of gests (albeit one surrounded by a receding penumbra of uncountable others) for which it feels singular affinities. Its 'Art' is figured by this idiosyncratic collection. And its own attempts to align itself with this singular collection are constituted in the gests whose entire point is the excavation of the differently inflected near-language that might just affiliate it to the Body over there, *whether or not anyone else ever finds and takes on this near-language, let alone carries out the essential affiliating work.*

Virginia Woolf's Voicing-In-Between
Perhaps this inflected near-language, constituted in in performing's multiple ventriloqualising, is one of the things pointed to in the name given by Virginia Woolf to the place where she rehearses and plays (yes, let us keep these verbs in the tense of our reading's presencing despite her use of the past tense for the text's seeming narratorial voice) out her own final pageant in 'Between The Acts'.[10] In and across the groundless grounds of 'Pointz Hall' words bearing minatory signs-as-pointers to war, water and mud (especially in the closing pages) continually

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[10] Virginia Woolf, 'Between The Acts', Vintage, London, 2000.

emerge and disappear; they syncopate the surface of the many-voiced pageant enacted by and as the text. Quite apart from the ways in which Woolf's personal crisis surfaces in the writing, it is undoubtedly probing the question of what art's (and thus 'life's…') point might be, of whether it has a 'point' or 'points', and whether writing, through its unique 'means' (its spacing out of voicing and voices through the interplay - the paged page-ant that has to be read - of letters, words, marks, and the points of punct-uation across a blank page), could ever get to, and expose, this point. And this point, as the book's title implies, lies always in between, elsewhere to, the 'acts', the matters (the letters and marks) with which we partially fill living's spaces. The point, the 'hall' within which art might be momentarily assembled, is what goes on in the gaps, across which reading leaps, between the words and marks in which the text is written out. Endlessly elusive, on the move and always just ahead of us, this point is performed in the out-spacing of the text itself. It is 'in' and through these gaps, these abysses, that the text is allowed to emerge, to stretch out across the book's pages. But the text also drops us into them as they punctuate and interrupt the written matter along whose lines reading has to make its way, to sound its way out.

And it is precisely the peculiarity of this interrupting, this punctuated spacing, that 'Between The Acts' confronts us with; it is this spacing that makes possible and sustains the many voices in their separateness, a process of differentiation and dispersal whose fragments cannot be gathered under and as a coherent identifiable authoritative transcendent voice. It is the texture of the texting itself, *how it aligns the things that matter to Woolf*, that draws reading's attention continually to the multiple voicing that it 'is'. Its aligning (the way it lines us up and keeps us going on... leaping across its breaks) is achieved only through the momentum of its self-interruptions. Through these we are drawn across its extraordinary self-fraying interweaving of memory, history, and the disasters marking the ordinariness of relating (to others, to circumstances). Its peculiar syn-tactic turns absolutely on the abruptness of the breaks, the abysses, between the written-voicings.

The book's opening sentence places, perhaps less than obliquely, the subsequent writing in relation to both Eliot's 'The Waste Land' and, by extension, to the 'waste' that I have already offered as one of the defining terms that making-for-art now has to 'take on', and to our memory's struggle to situate us historically, for, '... they were talking ... about the cesspool' the chosen site for which was 'on the Roman road'.[11] And, setting the historical scene for the pageant which follows, 'Mr. Oliver'[12] remarks history's marks on the local landscape as seen from 'an aeroplane':

> '... he said, you could still see, plainly marked, the scars made by the Britons; by the Romans; by the Elizabethan manor house; and by the Plough,...'[13]

Not only does this sentence offer us, through the 'scars', a wounded landscape as history's legacy to we pleistocenians, but also it brings into play Woolf's characteristic (it marks the

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[11] Op. cit., p. 1.

[12] Woolf's play on and with names, the multiple associations (a compound of tensions) that they compact and invite us to unpack, is a constituent feature of her writing. Here 'Oliver' not only recalls a significant and defining moment of conflict in English history, but also offers us ('revol…') its revolutionary quality; and the 'rev' and thus the 'ver' itself performs the turn that all writing, especially *poiesis*, turns around. And such a reversing gives us the tension 'evil' and 'revile' that haunts her book, as well as the 'live' writing that might be seen as taking on the 'evil' through the 'love' that every 'lover' of writing hopes their writing might bear: thus writing as an 'olive' branch or wreath emblematising peace?

[13] Ibid.

remainder of the text) slowing down of a sentence by isolating phrases with semi-colons rather than commas. The longer pause interrupts the flow - punctuation holds us up by dropping us down between the acts of the phrases, thus requiring us simultaneously to dwell slightly longer on each phrase. Indeed on page three a performative draws our attention to this very characteristic by isolating 'paused' between two semi-colons. Perhaps this already telegraphs the spacing and punctuating practices, and specifically the *caesurae*, the breaks between the irreconcilable written, and thus spaced, 'voices' through which much of the later text moves in the course of the recounted pageant. While the authorial narratorial 'voice' situates the events in the past (proximate to its being written under the disaster of war, having been commenced a year before the war's outbreak and brought to a perhaps premature conclusion a year and half into the war by Woolf's suicide), the excerpted pageant-texts skip between tenses according to the needs of the voices articulating them. The multi-phonic play of pageant voices, crossing histories, social differences, and cultural tonalities (via the range of its literary references), calls into question and constantly disrupts the very relations within which it has been set by the narratorial voice. Although the pageant is enclosed within the narration of these relations, the authority of a singular authorial 'position' is dissolved.

What the writing performs through the sequenced collage of textual voices and writing modes (it includes poetic forms, monologues/dialogues, theatre as script and staging instructions, linking commentary) is an exploration of fiction as the textual confrontation of voices-in-difference, of whether the traditional novel's claim to identity through the coherence and resolution of its 'story line' can be sustained when it is constituted by the juxtaposition of radically different textual modes. In this conjunctive-disjunction it is not just how memory can be languaged and written out, or under what 'voice' an authoritative history might still be tellable, that is at stake. Rather the question the writing performs is whether, and if so how, writing might still make-for-art by confronting the dissolution and disappearance of the imagining writer's position of authority. If there is no privileged position, no external site of authority, outside and above the 'place' (language) where the writing (its inter-weaving of character and action) seems to 'take place', then writing has to come to terms with this difference on art's behalf. It has to 'place' itself, or rather set itself adrift (thus putting itself and its 'place' in question) within the very 'events', the 'acts', that its syntactical aligning spaces out. Its transliteration of the 'voice[s] afar' has to take on the multiplicity of this voicing without privileging a voice that is somehow above, outside the (af)fray that this voicing 'is'. Surely this is the challenge that Woolf is taking on and staging in 'Between The Acts'. Performing-towards-art has to show how it is in the play of the multiple, for it knows implicitly (as its 'know-how'...) that Art's Body is nothing other than this swarming multiple without a species-identity. And Woolf enacts this explicitly through the literal breaks between the voicings and the remembrance, through fusions of history and literary 'forms', that each such voicing performs and exposes.

That the writer is dispersed, has to remain many, all the while appearing to be a 'one' voicing from an elsewhere in singular control of the aligning, is the tension defining writing's insoluble plight. It is the struggle between this dispersal and its containment, the (im)possibility of bringing it to a stop, that Woolf explores and offers us here. She disperses herself, or perhaps is dispersed by the emergence of the 'voices' themselves, across at least three of the women characters. From within their differing aligned 'roles' they displace the narratorial voice and themselves comment both on the text's 'events' and the process, the task, of writing itself. Woolf seems to align herself, show her affinities, with 'Isa' (Isabella), whose home Pointz Hall is, 'Mrs. Lucy Swithin', the widowed sister of one of the owners of the Hall, and 'Miss La

Trobe', the writer and producer-director of the pageant, assembler of the 'orts, scraps and fragments', one of the many phrases from the pageant that Isa rehearses, re-voices, for herself.

But apart from their doubled roles as participants in and commentators on the text's emergence and themes, it is their names that turn us away from the text both towards its author and towards its outside – its overlapping affinity with and citation of matters of the world and its being written towards art. In 'Isa' there are not only the the i and a of Virginia, but also there is the open and unanswerable question that all writers put to themselves and to which every writing performance is the only answer possible: the writer, writing, 'is a' ... what? And turning the name back on itself we can read the direct connection that Woolf offers us between 'Isa' and herself - 'as I'. Through 'Lucy Swithin' Woolf introduces and maintains her own and writing's, art's, entwinement with history and memory, the self-fragmenting theme that the pageant itself subsequently enacts. She is introduced stretching out 'for her favourite reading – an Outline of History' and engaging in her 'imaginative reconstruction of the past'[14], though age inhibits her own remembering as her sentences tail off into vague questions. She becomes one of the writing's agents for showing the difficulty of recalling and holding on to the long-passed. And her name offers us remembrance itself as our inner light (a light that possibly doubles as fate (luc(k)) – it shows us that 'Luc (*lux/luc/luck*) ys (is) Within'; it also secretes the 'wit', though perhaps 'thin' with age, essential to the imaginative project. Through 'Miss La Trobe' Woolf insinuates the artist-writer as the outsider who 'was an outcast. Nature has somehow set her apart from her kind.'[15] After the intense frustrations of the pageant's performance she entered the village pub, where there were 'shelter; voices; oblivion'; but, already anticipating her next project, she drank and listened, and already out of the oblivion something began to emerge:

> 'Words of one syllable sank down into the mud. She drowsed; she nodded. The mud became fertile. Words rose above the intolerably laden dumb oxen plodding through the mud. Words without meaning – wonderful words.'[16]

But the wonderful words are arising from a sombre source. For the name 'La Trobe' preserves the dark from which the words rise – *ater/atro* – black... and by extension *atropa* – deadly nightshade, itself quickly extendable into the poisonous chemical atropine. The mythic source of this troubling darkness is *'Atropos'* , (one of the *Parcae*, the *Moira,* - the Fates), who is the figure of the fate (luck…) that cannot be avoided, while the 'trob' also offers us the root of trouble, of *tourbillon* – the whirlwind. Extending the etymological resonances we might also hear the lyric poetry of the 'troubadour' (the *trobar* celebrated by Pound…) enacted in her pageant, as well as the 'tropes' by which writing contrives (*turbare*) its figures. And this contriving, as a necessary turbulence, extends the noun for both a 'crowd' and a 'disorder/commotion' – *turba*. Michel Serres, following 'the *turba* of Lucretius', hears a specific connection to art in this when he writes that the 'physical chaos of circumstances, where the primal *turbo* spirals itself along, is, if I may be so bold, isomorphic with the raging crowd of bacchantes…'.[17] And by turning the letters of the name back through themselves, as Woolf invited us to do with Isa, we also find – abort. The name thus packs in the multiple that the writing itself performs. It becomes clear that naming for Woolf (as for Sebald as I shall show) is far more than a game. It is a deadly serious sounding-out whose seriousness matches the triangulation between her personal circumstances, the tensions and fragilities of the relations

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[14] Op. cit., pp. 4-5.
[15] Op. cit., p. 131.
[16] Ibid.
[17] M. Serres, Op. cit., p. 100.

explored in the text, and the devastating external conflagration already enfolding the text's emergence.

These names (and likely many others[18]) are allocated not simply as character differentiators, context definers and continuity maintainers, but are written in as lettered sequences whose very appearance (what they invite us to recognise by seeing-voicing, and then to respond to through our own out-sounding of their constituents) disrupts the aligning in which they seem to have their 'place'. Once reading takes them as doublings (or multiplyings ... why stop at two...) it can no longer hold onto a conviction that the text's aligning is performing a 'single' line. And now Jarry's spirit is hovering close by, for the entire text becomes a potential double (or more) whose elements (letters and punctuated spacing) may be carriers of differences belying the commonsense of first appearances. Here it is the names, but the the implication is that any element might, at any reading-moment, puncture the very continuity it seems placed to affirm and drive forward. Perhaps all elements have the potential to stop reading in its tracks, to divert it from its chase to the end of the supposed story-line, and provoke leaps into extra-textual zones, before leaving it hanging and having to decide on the terms of its own return to the momentum of the syntax. Like the interruptive semi-colons, while being essential to the liveliness of the text's provocation of movement, they simultaneously transform reading's rhythming by giving it pause for thought, for imaginative leaping. And, in 'Between the Acts', such leaping-thinking is cajoled into invoking, taking on, the text's ever-present themes - the very remembrance and imaginative probing of our inexplicable immersion in histories seemingly way beyond us.

Perhaps, taking the pageant as its key, this text itself performs, and thus exposes, its and art's plight now as necessarily a kind of 'pageanting': that performing-towards-art, whatever its medium, is condemned to the fracturing, the breaks, the multiplicity, that constitute every pageant. Perhaps it proposes that whatever 'themes' performing now ostensibly explores, if it is to engage and hold on to the circumstances that enfold and permeate art, it can only assemble sequences of things, marks, or event-happenings aside from any claim to an encasing whole. Identityless art can only juxtapose its material elements through the spacing sounding-out of fragments that are held, precariously, 'together' (and 'apart') by a syntactical conjoining outside any gathering unifying 'whole'. And perhaps it is this very precariousness that 'Between the Acts' performs exactly through its spacing-out. Dispensing with numbered or named chapters or page breaks, while abiding by linear and margin conventions, the writing moves us through itself by effecting multiple modes of separation.

Its basic 'unit' for separating these sections of varying length which mark shifts in place, time, character and event, is a doubling of the conventional paragraph-separation space. But across and within these sections the writing brings many other forms of textual interruption into play without giving any one a precedence that would allow it to impose a singular rhythm or structure on the alignment. The writing's very variety becomes a pageant of differences through these interruptions. It requires us to search for, to invent, and to restore continuity through literal leaps across the various break-modes. But, as with the names, it is a leaping that carries us of necessity 'outside' the text and into our own zones of remembrance and historical reconstruction, of sounding-out our possibilities within a *logos* with unknowable boundaries. And invariably the breaks provoke us into, cast us towards, the very questions that dog the text

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[18] Presumably the butler – 'Candish' – is one who, *like the writer*, can dish things out with self-effacing aplomb...

itself, the 'burden' on which Isa muses as she looks down at the roots of a pear tree that are in the earth but breaking the flagstones laid over them:

> ' "That was the burden," she mused, "laid on me in the cradle;
> murmured by waves; breathed by restless elm trees; crooned by
> singing women; what we must remember; what we would
> forget." '[19]

The tension between 'must' and 'would' marks the struggle that remembrance lives by. Interrupted by voices passing nearby she reflects on voicing itself, on the implacable differences between voices that the writing that she 'is' is already playing out, but also on what they have in common and the cacophony this produces:

> ' "But none speaks with a single voice. None with a voice free
> from the old vibrations. Always I hear corrupt murmurs; the
> chink of gold and metal. Mad music...." '[20]

Differences trapped by remembrance ('the old vibrations') and the differences permeated, corrupted, by the world's chink of money, constituting an opus of unreason in which art itself is a participant. The four dot ellipsis after 'music' marks a further interruption of her reflections by more voices. But it is just one occasion from many in the text in which ellipsis, usually by three but occasionally by four dots, is used to both interrupt continuity but also to disperse 'meaning' by displacing those marks that bring things to a, however temporary, halt (full-stop, exclamation mark, question mark, semi-colon...). An ellipsis leaves us stranded, adrift, and thus slowed right down with no directions as to where to go, in the midst of irresolvable things (even if they are 'only', finally, words, letters, or spaces). An extended 'dash' performs this suspension for Lucy Swithin upon which the text itself comments:

> ' "Is it time," said Mrs. Swithin, "to go and join——" She
> left the sentence unfinished, as if she were of two minds, and
> they fluttered to right and to left, like pigeons rising from the
> grass.'[21]

The extended dash, the ellipsis, indeed all punctuation marks, are the spacing out, the figuring, of instructions for reading; they are voiceless and unvoiceable, non-literal figures-in-suspension. They can only come to voice through being substituted by other words, dot dot dot....

Perhaps punctuation marks are the gests that, *being between the acts*, make the acts possible, but only as writing. And in Woolf's text these marks are embedded within and participate in the multiple typographic differences that mark the oscillations between pageant-events and the 'linking' narratives of relations and circumstance across which the pageant eventually courses. In this way the entire text itself performs a pageant through the shifts across the 'gaps' that are the in-between of the acts of writing. The writing spaces out the written voices, differentiates them, through the marks of punctuating-spacing. In this way the rhetorical forms constituting the 'inner' pageant (the pageant within the enclosing text-as-pageant) - modes of poetry/verse, theatre, song, prose, and performing instructions - are figured through typographic and punctuating differences in type-face, size, mark, and alignment. Showing the differences while remaining unspeakable and unhearable by the reading voice, they require the latter to come to terms with its own improvisatory and inventive responsibility for whatever coherence it can make of the writing's collaged assemblage. In inviting us into the interplay of remembering and

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[19] Op. cit., p. 96.
[20] Op. cit., p. 97.
[21] Op. cit., p. 46.

historical experience, the writing, using only spacing and punctuation as guides, asks us to leap between tenses, periods, writing's positions, voices, and contexts.

Woolf shows us her response to writing's plight, what it has to do and what it wants to do (its 'must' and 'would'...), by suspending us in the open-and-closed of a leaping syn-tactic subservient only to her elective affinities for art's swarming. We are left to derive any authority we may attribute to these affinities (what they offer to and ask of us) for ourselves by tracking down the affinities that Woolf's writing generates for us as it draws us through its fragile aligning into art's proximity. She shows us that performing for art under her unique circumstances (and thus still, perhaps, for us now), whatever the medium or media, entails a voicing of language's manyness in ways that do not situate this multiple under some unifying authority supposedly external to the languaging itself. Joyce's 'Finnegans Wake', published some eight months before the outbreak of the second world war, had already undone and re-marked, definitively decentered, writing's relation to language. Compressing the moderns' distressing of the relations between language and its 'referents' and contexts into this 'one' volume (and thus stressing 'fiction' beyond 'acceptable' limits), Joyce cajoled and tortured language into a transposition of the ways that the remembrance and experience of history and myth worked their way into and out of the unconscious and dreaming. Woolf's 'Between the Acts', completed in the teeth of total war (in Europe and elsewhere), returns writing-for-art to the irreparably fractured histories of the everyday life-world. But it performs this return through a complementary decentering. She challenges reading to make its own ways in this life-world through taking on the breaks, the interruptions in sense, and the practicalities of aligning, aside from rule or principle, through which we negotiate our passages through everyday life.

It seems that the everyday living that lay between 'Finnegans Wake' and 'Between the Acts' was a living-through that these texts marked out as a fateful hiatus for both art and life, an ending-beginning (perhaps definitive as we saw with Celan) for the reasons, already remarked, the transition from less-than-total-war into total war, in whose shadow we are still making our way. Joyce died in mid-January of 1941; two months later Woolf committed suicide, and 'Between The Acts' was published in the July of the same year. Perhaps making-for art is still held up (and down) in, necessarily taken up with, exploring the consequences of trying to live on within this unbounded multiple. For the infinitely spacious, but always compressing and troubling, legacy and challenge bequeathed by the two texts, is nothing less than how to cope with and become *something else* in this 'in-between': how, condemned to drift in the hiatus aside from authoritative guides, to make for and gain proximity to an art which is always elsewhere-beyond, in a swarm of its own, yet absolutely in thrall to and permeated by its circumstances.

Perhaps all performing can do, in hope, is to expose its debt to this multiple in the idiosyncratic aligning of its way through the *tourbillon* of circumstances, to create temporary differentiating isolating bubbles knowing that the circumstances themselves will, sooner or later, puncture them and re-absorb their scattered particles. The medium-specific search for this idiosyncratic syn-tactic marks its ways through the enclosing whirlwind by abandoning self-insulating remnants (its gests-as-bubbles) along the way. And the spaced out marks that are on the bubble's inner surface are the 'substance' of the abandoned gest. They are the residue of the performer's transposition of its 'voice(s) afar' into whatever their thoughtful feelings for art and the chosen media/um for affiliating to it seem to require. For 'voice' here carries us into whatever it is that dominates the resonance of each performer's affinities for art, what leaves the performer in art's

grip, unable to do other than make towards it through the search for idiosyncratic marks that show the effects of this grip.

And what performing's know-how seeks to make manifest in its gests is that such being-gripped is always an in-between condition - for the resonance that has to be 'voiced' is both organically sensual (skeletal-visceral-abdominal) and simultaneously absolutely seductive of thought. Performing pitches itself into the in-between that is the zone where the performer's 'identity' begins to give way, where the dissolving 'I' is neither one 'thing' nor another, neither primarily the thoughtful practical reasoning being nor the feeling-suffused and -directed creature, but rather the strange not-quite-fusion of these two and uncountable others - simultaneously within and without language. It is the sealing in of this strangeness that constitutes the bubble's transparent but temporarily insulating 'skin' - it both attracts and holds at bay the sensuous attention of others, potential respondents, until such attention is dispersed by the critical attentions of the representing machinery whose knowing ways burst the bubble asunder.

Whichever organs come to dominate a performing's sensual teasing-out of its marks, and thus its chosen medium/media, the affinity for art has shown it that it has to 'live' in-between, in the midst, amongst the disjunctive inseparability demanded by the hyphen marking out felt-thought. Far from being dependent on or defined by what comes out of the mouth, 'voicing' becomes the infinitely malleable fusing medium out of which performing's felt-thought transposes, transmutes and transports the specific marks through which it seeks to display its affinities for art. Voicing is both being-voiced-by that which resonates but cannot or may not yet have 'a voice' because it comes from somewhere aside from a particular voice, and a sounding-out of some of the surrounding multiple voicings around whose maelstrom we are all inescapably whirled and drifted. In performing, this being-voiced is experienced as a threshold zone, a cata-linguistic coming-and-going whose elements and movements cannot be identified with any definable known language. Resonating as this not-yet-language, its vibrations await medium-specific transliteration through cuts, with-drawings, mouldings, twistings, inflectings, accentuatings, and spacings into something approaching a language. Performing hopes to release them in ways that might just be shaped up by others as a one-off language in the course of their granting the gests their sensually seduced thoughtful attention. It is as if performing, caught up in the emerging folds of this not-yet-language, knows that this emergence is indebted to multiple but still fused sourcings that challenge it to render the multiplicity in a singular near-language. It hopes that its media-fixed transliterative rendering will somehow hold on to, embed and offer clues to the manyness, the finally unstatable overflow, of its summoning resonant resources.

The gest's 'point', then, is to preserve in its surfacing something of the con-fused inchoate murmurings, the vibrating resonances and figurings that are not-yet-quite-language, that nevertheless, in what they offered to the performer, led to their compression into just this one-off near-language. Indeed the very vibrant variety of media that constitutes the swarming-beyond of Art's Body displays the synaesthesia that knows how to explore the ways that the eyes hear, the ears see, the fingers taste, the nose touches, the mouth reads, the heart knows… *whatever it is that holds the performer within the grip of the affinities for art*. This grip invariably comes in the mode of a complex, a not-just-one, a sensuously thoughtful in-mixing, out of whose oscillating near-fusion performing's marking emerges to create a surface anywhere that will take its marks and irrespective of the 'sourcing' to which it is a response. For it is nothing other than a leaping off that, in this transposition from language's off-limits (the synaesthesic sourcing via the affinity for art's swarming) into something like a language, undergoes a

necessary mutation - a transliteration. It has to go through this change simply in order to emerge, to surface, appropriately, that is in a way that allows its marks, in their being released, to surface, to constitute the very surface that they need. And it is on these terms that performing is leap-dependent for, in order to release the transliterated sourcings and to set forth the gest's surface, it has to cross the groundless gaps, the *caesurae*, between the differences through which it must make its way.

Precisely because, in the interests of art, performing is consumed by its feelings for difference, by the process of differentiation, from the seemingly tiniest discrimination (between mark and mark, between letter and letter, between sound and sound, between A flat and G sharp, between scratch and groove, between... and ....) to the 'largest' of differences (between this world and the next, between appearing and disappearing, between creature and subject, between giving and taking, between loving and hating, between representing and arting...), it knows that its becoming is nothing other than a way-making through discontinuity. It lives, becomes, in and as this 'between': performing is a betweening. Pitching itself between whatever-whatevers, it revels in the fact that the continuities it seems to assemble consist of nothing but the aligning of disjunctive differences. For art's sake it knows that it has to condemn itself to surviving-in-between, to a living and dying in disconnection, to performing gests whose aligned differences rely absolutely on the seduced attentive commitment of others to find and delight in the ways these differences seem to hold together. And it stakes its chance of its gest being affiliated with art on its resolute self-sustenance between chance and necessity, a gap where the conjunction performs an absolute disjunction. Performing moves by throwing itself across irreconcileable differences; it becomes and sur-vives, by leaping, by leaps and out-of bounds.

W. G. Sebald, Memory, Disaster, and Affinity

Perhaps it is the vicious circle, enacted at this conjunctive-disjunction, that W. G. Sebald circled around, turned into his meridian, through his exploratory writings (his essays, poems, and 'fictions' that are not-quite-novels). These writings do display (perhaps inadvertently, un-electively) some affinities for and resonance with Prynne's concern to re-site the conjoint life of memoration and writing outside the conventions of representation local to our current lot, to re-memorise as unavoidable 'matters' for art (rather than for technoscience's dna-work) repressed and hidden qualities of our epochal becoming. The specific focus of Sebald's explorations turns around our defining epochal involvement with, our contaminated suffusion by, the forms of destruction contingent on our will to power by a combustion that defines our electronic dependence.

Responding, during a wide-rangeing interview, to questions about memory (and, specifically, living with extremely painful memories), Sebald characterises our species in evolutionary terms as 'a species in despair' because,

> '… we have created an environment for us which isn't what it should be. And we're out of our depth all the time. We're living exactly on the borderline between the natural world from which we are being driven out, or we're driving ourselves out of it, and that other world that is generated by our brain cells. And so clearly that fault line runs right through our physical and emotional makeup. And probably where tectonic plates rub up against each other is where the sources of pain are. Memory is one of those phenomena. It's what qualifies us as emotional creatures, psychozootica or however one might describe

them.'[22]

Utterly discomfited on this 'fault line' between the 'natural' and what we construct within it, Sebald offers us the epochal geological metaphor to situate the painful sources of our plight. It is, of course, a 'borderline' whose features we are becoming all too well aware of, but only in and on the terms of that same technoscience whose practical development re-constitutes both our real living conditions and our perception (our representation) of those conditions. Memory, generated out of and inhabiting this conjunctive-disjunction (the rub of the plates), is an ineliminable pain source, for the 'only thing you can do… is to subdue it.'[23] Likening memory, '(l)ooking in the past', to 'looking down a well shaft' he says that 'it has always given me that vertiginous sense.'[24]

Thus memory's relation to the destruction that is the permanent running consequence of living on this fault line and the melancholia it generates for the writer winds its ways across Sebald's texts; it emerges as the defining theme of his various writings. It is present in the first (woven around the life of the painter Matthaeus Grunewald) of the three prose poems that preceded his four not-quite-novels and it receives its most extensive elaboration in the last of these - 'Austerlitz'. In 'As the Snow on the Alps' the painter's rendering, in *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, of a 'pathological spectacle' of creation,

> 'image of our insane presence
> on the surface of the earth,'

becomes simultaneously a self-description for both Grunwald's and his own project. For it is that,

> 'to which he and his art, as he must have known,
> themselves belong.'[25]

Taking the painter's rendering of snow-covered hills, Sebald invokes the desolation of the Ice Age as a foil for the spectacle and itself as,

> '… the construction of a metaphysic
> and a miracle…'[26]

The poem concludes with a 'colourless image of Earth' iced over and likened to the effect of tearing the optic nerve when

> 'all turns as white as
> the snow on the Alps.'[27]

But already the poem, in a passing premonition of the writer's own emerging theme, has referred to a prophet's announcement that, in the coming apocalyptic ending of the world,

> '… the water boils itself out,
> that the earth trembles and the great city
> with the iron tower stands in flames,'[28]

For Sebald it is the destructive heat – combustion – whose specific forms of delivery and use set the terms of our epochal existence. We Ice Age remnants survive, pathically for Sebald, through our destructive conversion of matter under extreme heat as our means of generating and appropriating power.

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[22] See 'the emergence of memory conversations with W. G. Sebald', edited by L. S. Schwartz, Seven Stories, New York, 2007, p. 56.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Op. cit., p. 57.

[25] See W. G. Sebald, 'After Nature', Hamish Hamilton, London, 2002, p. 26 and p. 27.

[26] Op. cit., p. 31.

[27] Op. cit., p. 37.

[28] Op. cit., p. 28.

In *'The Rings of Saturn'* Sebald makes absolutely explicit the importance of this theme as a recurrent point of return across his writing. His account of an extended walk (an echo of Twombly's and performing's 'Anabasis'?) through the Suffolk coastland ('that melancholy region') complements the necessary elusiveness of Prynne's poems (and their concerns with the buried continuities of memory across epochal changes) in a prose that sets out his thesis about combustion. He remarks the deforestation that occurred 'after the last Ice Age' whose 'phase of evolution was halted when the first settlers burnt off the forests' for cultivation. Just as today 'over the Amazon basin or over Borneo … mountainous palls of smoke' hang 'over the forest canopy', so then 'ever more extensive fields of ash and cinders … ate their way into that green-leafed world.' For '(o)ur spread over the earth was fuelled by reducing the higher species of vegetation to charcoal, by incessantly burning whatever would burn.' 'Combustion is the hidden principle behind every artefact we create.' Whatever appears to and for us now, whatever represents us, from the lie of the land(scape) to all consumable objects and processes, is combustion-dependent, for our history now turns ceaselessly around the heat-light dualism as its means:

> 'From the earliest times, human civilisation has been no more than a strange luminescence growing more intense by the hour, of which no one can say when it will begin to wane and when it will fade away.'[29]

But this very luminescence is also writing's possibility and founding need, for without illumination there can be no inscription, without the heat of the machinery of mass print production and distribution there can be no routinely available books or information-archives. And we view illuminated manuscripts now under the rigorously monitored cold light and warm conditions of the museum. All writing, and thus every writer-for-art and every gest sent off towards art, live within the realities of heat-light provision. Performing is no more nor less burn-dependent than any other mode of making; it is entirely caught up within the systems for the making and distribution of all kinds of power. In order to be offered to, made available in, the encasing culture, the energy (the heat-light-bio-charge) expended in making-for-art has to be directed precisely to ensuring that its contact with those energy sourcings is rendered as invisible, unnoticeable, and continuous as possible. It cannot afford, if it is to put in any cultural appearance at all, to pay much attention to, let alone forego altogether, the tiny leap it has to make across the junctures where its embodied energies-for-art meet the provision of socially produced light-heat. Yet, within performing, there is a defining resource whose engagement, while not necessarily focussed explicitly on resisting this seemingly unavoidable productive machinery, can nevertheless effect its gest's at least partial separation. And it is precisely the way that this resource is brought into play in each performing-for-art that generates the singularity of its gest, of the difference the latter might just make to art and thus to us. This resource is memory - memoration as a defining function in, of and as our becoming.

Remembering is that zone of experiencing, intrinsic to both art and everyday life, whose necessary activation preserves the potential of a relative independence from this burn-dependency. For, unbeknownst to and beyond the control of the performer, it is memory that 'stores' the whatever-things-and-processes whose release (via an unplaceable minuscule energy-discharge) enables their materialising transliteration by performing into something like a language (of art). Re-memoration-for-art, groundless and without either reason or identity, holds

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[29] W. G. Sebald, 'The Rings of Saturn', Harvill, London, 1998; all above quotes from pages 169 and 170.

itself apart, aloof, beyond control and as the outside of power (with the exception of the virtually no-power of its weak discharging). This conscious re-memoration, the self-activation that seeks to hold to art, can only get under way within the infinitely tangled resources of a memory-without-bounds whose very illimitability both accompanies us in our becoming and, simultaneously, shapes the latter's possibilities. In human becoming memory is everywhere in play, underway, in the shaping and sustenance of that becoming. But in performing-for-art it has an absolutely specific 'role' and significance as both enabler (the without-which-not) and the unavoidable topic or theme of all gest-making, for it is the remembrance of art in all its peculiar specificity for each performer, that energises, charges everso slightly and weakly, the performing in the unplaceable 'first place'. It is the tight but absolutely open 'circle' within which performing oscillates and leaps about. For in origination something for and of art alone is being remembered and celebrated.

Memory is the cradle of imagination. And imagination, including dreaming and reverie, emanates from and itself activates memory as it courses through, in-forms, all the modes of becoming through which we attempt to grasp and relate to (and to represent…) our circumstances. Memory thus acts as the protective provider that encloses us within a boundary whose limits we can neither define nor reach (except under the incursions of pathology). It is the tacit resource that feeds us endlessly (without our even having to turn towards it) with more or less what we need in order to get by routinely, to turn the multiple flows of our passing into something like syntaxes that delimit and shape those flows. Yet when we need to stand back from its unquestioned resourcing and distance ourselves from it in order to consult it, to tap its resources through an active summoning, it also invariably responds with something close to our need. In this way it works its way out through us as that region of our energising that maintains a very slight hidden and dispersed 'heat source' for the generation of an internal luminescence, amplification, and filling-renewal of that which, pouring forth and through, keeps us 'in touch' with whatever-materials, pours us through 'the present' as embodied, sentient, partially self-aware sense-makers. It is both a holding-in-reserve and a making-available of whatever our pouring-on requires for its re-filling.

From the silent sounding out of our 'internal' monological conversation, through the interruptions of our mundane vision by the 'flash' of images, to the lighting-up of an other-than-time that is dreaming, memory draws us on and keeps us supplied with what our relating needs. And, crucially, in relation to the plight of making-for-art, it is what enables the leaping that constitutes imagining to move at and beyond will in its way-making. The internal discharge that effects this being-illumined-within and that lights and points up imagining's way, can always remain partially (aside from the necessary intake of the means of sustenance…) independent of the external heat-light generating machinery. And, as such, it preserves the possibility of performing's goal of leaping out of culture, however briefly, in its elsewhere-quest for incorporation into Art's Body away over there. Only when we have granted memory its extraordinary and project-defining part in this leaping-out can we admit that memory does indeed fail us. The consequence is that performing's attempted leap has to operate in the void between the always bizarre collection of remnants that memory actually offers, and what it might just fail to deliver when we put our questions to what we think of as our 'voluntary memory'. It is imagination's role to draw the best it can out of the remains of this shortfall. It springs its unanticipatable near-syntactics through its leaping oscillations across these remains. And it is the tension of this plight - performing chancing itself to the unpredictable outcomes of imagination's oscillations - that Sebald engages in the pages following his remarks on combustion.

Continuing his journey through Suffolk, the narrator visits the poet, writer and translator Michael Hamburger[30] who, at the age of nine, had emigrated from Germany with his family. Ostensibly citing freely from Hamburger's written memoirs (though the text may equally be read as reported speech), the narrator remarks the disastrous effects on memory of Hamburger's enforced gradual assumption of a 'new identity'. Scanning the 'few memories he still possesses, barely enough for an obituary of a lost boyhood', the chronicler then lists vivid fragments of memory, including the appearance of objects, sounds, smells, tastes from his Berlin childhood: '… were these not all merely phantasms, delusions, that had dissolved into thin air? … Whenever a shift in our spiritual life occurs and fragments such as these surface, we believe we can remember. But in reality, of course, memory fails us.' The past, it seems, is buried, literally and metaphorically, under the heaped up 'rubble' - as 'the moraines and deposits'[31] - of apocalyptic events that are historical but simultaneously, returning us again to a different relation to passing, geological; again the text reminds us that we are the after-effects of the Ice Age – grounded Pleistocenian heirs. Re-memoration's possibilities are, it seems, a function of transformations (occurrences entailing the release of uncontrollable energies – heat-light) both local and epochal and aside from the machinery of our ordinary understanding and knowledge-production. Imagination has to make its way between the remains of these unaccountable mutations that define the surface of becoming, literally how we surface, by tapping into its own latent luminescence and charge. And it has to do this outside of and before the latter are infiltrated and appropriated by the pan-global systems of representation through which everyday life is programmed and consumes itself.

Sebald's unavoidable theme, the indelible but coded traces deposited across layers of our becoming through the intertwining of destruction and memory, is brought temporally closer in 'Austerlitz', his final fiction, and a collection of essays focussed around the literary and socio-cultural responses (or, rather, perhaps, the relative lack, the repression of these) in Germany to the mass destruction of cities in the last years of World War Two.[32] But the significant gesture that 'Austerlitz' performs is to fuse the destruction-memory theme with the exploration of its own writing. Through self-reference and the writing as performative, the scription takes, and thus both displays and explores, its own relation to language as its unavoidable question and theme. By following through, working out, the consequences of taking reported speech as its main vehicle for narration, the writing's own flow is made explicit as the text's armature. The syntax's insistent rhythming, its winding turn-backs through the plight of language itself (the gap between words and sentient experience), thus counters and becomes other to the troubling interruptions and memory losses characterising the reported fragmented life experiences.

Reporting on memory loss and interruption, destruction, ruins, and the sensed fragmentation of experience lacking a unifying theoretical explanation, the writing nevertheless sustains a compelling continuity: it finds, makes, ways of over-riding and re-sealing the reported abyssal interruptions. What Sebald finds out, makes explicit, is that, in rigorously following the demands of reported speech to convince as both narrative form and display of 'character' (that of

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[30] Hamburger published challenging translations of selections of poems by Holderlin, Celan, and Eich, among others. See also his, 'String of Beginnings', Skoob, London, 1991; 'The Truth of Poetry', Anvil, London, 1996; and 'Late', Anvil, London, 1997.
[31] Op. cit., p. 177.
[32] W.G. Sebald, 'Austerlitz', Hamish Hamilton, London, 2001, and 'On the Natural History of Destruction', Hamish Hamilton, London, 2003. See also his essay, 'Between History and Natural History - On the literary description of total destruction' in 'Campo Santo', Hamish Hamilton, London, 2005, pp. 68-101.

Austerlitz), the syntax is obliged to transliterate the vagaries of speaking into the rhythmic weaving demanded by writing. There is a strong echo of Thomas Bernhard's elaboration of this narratorial form through extended sentences. Indeed one such sentence, broken only by commas, dashes, a colon and a semicolon, is sustained for some ten pages. It describes 'life' in Theresienstadt, the ghetto-concentration camp set up as a supposedly 'model' town to hide what was going on elsewhere. This sentence follows and seems offered as a counter to the 'pseudo-technical jargon governing everything in Theresienstadt' and whose 'long compounds' 'had to be unravelled syllable by syllable'. Commenting on his own struggle to understand these compounds from the Nazi bureaucracy, Austerlitz is reported as saying,

> '… when I had worked out what they meant, he continued, I had to make just as much of an effort to fit the presumptive sense of my reconstructions into the sentences and the wider context, which kept threatening to elude me…'[33]

The jargon concealing the ghetto's 'almost futuristic deformation of social life'[34] is then countered in the lucidly chilling contrasts detailed in Austerlitz's extended oscillating sentence. This exemplifies Sebald's transliteration of the ordering 'voice' of Austerlitz (the childhood refugee from Germany whose relation to remembering and its failures is both vehicle and mood setter for the text's insistent tone) through his written syntactic of reported speech. And this syntactic, here as in all writing, is accomplished through, aiming to display this as its self-exposing gest, the writer's singular mode of leaping. If living, the writing seems to 'say', is characterised by fragmentation and interruption, by having to get over inexplicable abysses, then writing's responsibility to living might be to re-trace this syncopation in its own singular terms in order to offer writing, through the difference of its leaping-sealing, as the display of the otherness of our potential.

Sebald himself provides a key to at least one of the activators of the leaps through which his writing performance is moved – 'elective affinity'. In it, co-incidence, the relating of two (or more) incidents is proferred as more than chance. Examples, extensions, developments and relatives of it occur across his writings and it is occasionally addressed explicitly, as in the already mentioned visit to Hamburger's Suffolk home. As the combination of a partially reasoned and willed choice with an unaccountable affective attraction, it fits comfortably with some of the complementary processes that constitute making-for-art, especially those (such as connecting to and selection of influences, identifications, topics, themes, characters, names,) apparently emerging from a maker's positive attraction to and affection for a whatever. In accounting for the insertion of something into a gest as the exposing of various possible relations, for example, between the performer and the 'thing' inserted, and between this 'thing' and other elements within the gest, elective affinity offers a form of relatively convincing reasoning that is less than an explanation and more than accident while being, finally, groundless. It has the virtue of holding together reason and eros while giving advantage to neither.

In 'The Rings of Saturn' Sebald reports Hamburger's musings about 'the imponderables that govern our course through life' and his posing of the question,

> 'Across what distances in time do the elective affinities and correspondences connect? How is it that one perceives oneself in another human being, or, if not oneself, then one's own

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[33] See 'Austerlitz', op. cit., p. 330, and the sentence that follows it on p. 331.
[34] Op. cit., p. 331.

precursor?'[35]

For Sebald these coincidences often take the form of the experience of some kind of apparent duplication or near repetition whose 'ghosts' haunt him 'with ever greater frequency'. They provoke a disconcerting physical sensation of a 'peculiar numbness'. And he hazards that there is,

> 'in this as yet unexplained phenomenon of apparent duplication
> some kind of anticipation of the end, a venture into the void, a sort
> of disengagement…'[36]

Could it be that it is precisely 'disengagement' that carries us into the groundless founding challenge faced in all making-for-art, and, more broadly (but could anything be broader…?), faced perhaps across every medium in the bringing of any thing into and through language, in the languaging of everything? Sebald's not-quite-fictional writing displays his recognition of this in the ways it draws us into this numbing void (that is both the end and the beginning of everything that we gather in the words 'social' and 'cultural') in a singular form of over-coding. The gestures, the occasions, of this idiomatic coding do indeed enact repeatedly the elective affinity that haunts his writing, but they operate on the 'sites' of the phrase, the phoneme, the letter, and thus, ultimately, of the sounding-spacing through which writing constitutes itself within and on the framing space of a page (or something like it, such as a canvas, a screen, or a photograph …). Its 'occasion' in his writing is the appearance of a name as the identifying 'mark' of a character or a place; the compulsive importance of naming to Sebald's writing is made explicit, unavoidable, from his earliest writings and the importance of this citation is an immediately visible (and thus orally precise and resonant) feature of what the texts demand of reading. Names, appearing singly or in lists and gatherings, become keys and clues to connections, overlaps and affinities that are themselves what seem to guide and drive his writing.

Common to all Sebald's almost-fictions is this insistent citation of names as markers of a difference(s) quite aside from the conventional narratorial maintenance of different identities (of characters or places in particular) as vehicles for sustaining a convincingly coherent realist, or even naturalist, narrative. It quickly becomes apparent that Sebald wants us to see-and-sound-out many of the names in ways which might draw us into other connections that they are performing. Across his texts, the extraordinarily frequent insertion of names, singly or in lists, is exposing something more than the sustenance of a sense, for example, of a documented authenticity of the journeys that his writings seem to be recording (a role which so many of the accompanying images - of photographs, maps, diagrams, charts, notes, written scraps - seem to enact). What is exposed is Sebald's peculiar attachment to naming and names themselves; their recurrence itself exposes one utterly specific elective affinity that seems to be a defining constitutent of his urge to write.

But this is not just a generalised affection for names' visual patterning or resonance (in their being read) as they syncopate his texts. It is to be found in the *witz* that marks *his insinuation, at the level of the letter, of elements of his own name* (particularly his patronymic surname and the first two letters of his familiar name - 'Max') into a multiplicity of so many of the names 'scattered' (though anything but randomly so) throughout his writings. Through this insinuation his patronym becomes a defining cipher, a coded marker, that performs the memorialising activity which is both the topic and 'means' of his writing performance. It performs the elective

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[35] Op. cit., p. 182.
[36] Op. cit., pp. 187-188.

affinity at the 'level' of the letter by making a visual-phonic connection with people and places (and other 'things' too) that fire his need to grapple with (write-through) the relation between memory and its loss (destruction). Through this driven coding the writer puts or finds, 'sounds out', elements of 'himself', partially at least, 'within' those named. Through the letters he overlaps them, is mapped across them and thus becomes partially synonymous with them. His literal repetition of the letters thus performs a kind of sieving, a slight shake, in which some letters from his own names slip through and are inlaid into the affined named. Through an abstracting and abstracted 'short-hand' the common letters are inlaid in the actual names, into which they appear to have just fallen, as clues to the compulsive but carefully chosen affinity.

Certainly his 'full' name - Winfried Georg Maximilian Sebald, known as the writer and academic 'W. G. Sebald', and informally as 'Max' - offers plenty of opportunity for such literal overlapping and many other more elaborate coding possibilities.[37] Indeed his interest in and affection for names is itself an occasional topic across his texts. Thus, in the space of a few pages of the first section of 'Vertigo', 'Beyle' (the character titling this section whose name contains three letters from 'Sebald' - one of which is doubled - and who has already posed the question: 'what is it that undoes a writer?'[38]) is, firstly, suspected of using the name of his travelling companion, 'La Ghita', as 'a cipher for various lovers', three of whose names contain four or five of the letters of the patronym, and secondly, refers to writing as a 'protracted crystallisation process' of transformation, and thirdly, is shown inscribing with his cane 'the initials of his former lovers in the dust, like the enigmatic runes of his life'.[39] Noting, in 'Vertigo's' second section, Casanova's use of a number system generating coincidences to plot the right moment for an escape from prison, the narrator comments on his belief that 'a law' was at work in 'so extraordinary a coincidence, inaccessible to even the most incisive thought, to which he must defer.'[40] And subsequently in the same section, the narrator invokes repetition and coincidence by referring to his own writing as 'drawing connections between events that lay far apart but which seemed to me to be of the same order'. This of course includes the absolute difference that names mark at the very moment in which they perform and reveal coincident repetition. The 'distance' over which connecting has to move (infinite between names) enforces the leap that makes the connection. But it is a leap seemingly driven by a compulsion, a love, for names, for they are distributed profusely across his texts to be savoured, rolled off the tongue, for their phonemes' associative sounds and for their syncopation of the writing's rhythms through the emphasis the capitalisation of their first letter requires. This is brought out in the narrator's comment in 'The Emigrants'[41] on the 'beautiful names' it was still possible to decipher on the gravestones in an abandoned Jewish cemetery; of the twelve names cited only four had less than three letters in common with Sebald. Indeed the four chapters of 'The Emigrants' are titled with names that again bear this literal connection with the author. Presented as other than the narratorial 'I', they nevertheless literally stitch fragments of that

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[37] While the surname-coding pointed to here is relatively simple to 'spot', it raises the wider question of whether Sebald insinuated a plurality of other such 'codings' or 'cipherings' into his writing as either exploratory affirmations of or, perhaps, even playful interferences with (it is Oulipo-like in what it does to reading…) his writerly concerns. It subverts, usurps, the 'documentary realism' that appears to operate at and as the 'surface' of his texts. In allying the writing to a specific repetition it is brought into, it overlaps with, the textual space of writers who might appear initially very different, such as Raymond Roussel, for whom the pun's doubling opened up and scintillated his entire writing project. The connection with the earlier exploration of *'Pataphysique* will also be obvious.

[38] See W.G. Sebald, 'Vertigo', Harvill, London, 2000, p. 15.

[39] Op. cit., pp. 21-26.

[40] Op. cit., p. 59.

[41] See W.G. Sebald, 'The Emigrants', Harvill, London, 1997, p. 224.

which differentiates the author from every written 'voice' in his texts into the words that, in turn, seem to have already differentiated these still infinitely distant others.

The process had been established in Sebald's first published non-academic writing (the already cited 'Against Nature') where the name of the painter 'Matthaeus Grunwald' contains the MA of Max, the GR of Georg, and repeats, rhymes, the patronym's common ending. On the first poem's second page the appearance of Grunwald's face in a depiction of a female saint by HoLBEin the Younger in a BASEL painting is remarked by a commentator as one of several 'strangely disguised / instances of resemblance'.[42] This pre-figures and signals Sebald's own sometimes oblique and sometimes explicit self-references to the syntactics of his own performing, his syn-tactics of affined connection, of how he writes-toward-art. In the second poem the first line names the botanist-explorer whose expedition is its theme, 'Georg Wilhelm Steller', whose initials, by omitting the familiar 'Max', coincide with those of the name identifying the author.

As his recurring themes emerge and are developed over the subsequent course of his writing (in particular the insistent exploration and memorialising of the effects of disasters and destruction on our relation to the past *and to memory itself*) it seems that names and their recall, their being re-soundable, are consistent keys to what may be left to us of our pasts, of our epochal sitedness. They are, perhaps, what is given to us, what we are left with, to hold on to and to imaginatively make the most of in the face of the active dissolution of memory. Towards the end of 'Austerlitz', in the context of a discussion about 'the dissolution, in line with the inexorable spread of processed data, of our capacity to remember', he reports Austerlitz's wryly ironic comment that the 'entire layout and … near-ludicrous internal regulation' of the new BiBLiothEque NationALe (offering us not only the 'ebal' of Sebald but also 'Babel'…) building in Paris 'seeks to exclude the reader as a potential enemy'. It seems to display itself 'as the official manifestation of the increasingly importunate urge to break with everything which still has some living connection to the past.'[43] Following the associations and links that names offer to us, activated unbeknownst, the imagination's task and chance becomes that of re-sounding, and thus regenerating and re-situating, the connections through a saltation that *only it can perform*, a saltation quite apart from the programmed leaps of representation's machinery, no matter at what inhuman speeds the latter occur. For art's very possibility is vested right there in the re-sounding connections that its saltations bring off, saltations that are fixed in the singularity of each gest.

Yet each gest's singularity reminds us that it is drawn out of, points beyond itself towards, and celebrates, the infinite multiple that has constituted art's questing region under modernity: performing as a leaping-away-towards that is, simultaneously, both the making-out-of an opening (where an infinity of traces of Art's Body are affined and joined in a making-anew), and a renewal that offers itself as a conjoining gest to Art's multiple (its 'babel?). This is the region of making where 'anything goes', provided only that its resulting gest exposes, in and as the very tissue of its conjunctive-disjunctions, its driven affinity with Art's Body. The 'anything', which actually does 'go' on each performing occasion, has to show, has to deposit in its gest, how it is relating itself to, reaching out towards and trying to touch, precisely those others (the gests that the performer has already fallen for) towards whose zone it is leaping. It has to show, to make explicit the 'why' and the 'how' of the desperation (a desperation accompanied, and possibly partially shaped, by a euphoria) that drives it to leap only towards Art's Body and

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[42] 'After Nature', op. cit., p. 6.
[43] Op. cit., p. 398.

nowhere else. For this is the unreason that keeps it going. And what attracts and has already seduced performing, what holds it to its task, is precisely the multiple voicing, the resonances without number, across and amongst which it moves in trying to excavate its defining singularity. Its very point is to display, expose, its singularity through its affined relations within this multiple – relations it has elected, wilfully chosen, through a felt affinity unaccountable in terms acceptable to choice's reasoning will. And of course its very singularity may be nothing less than its assembling of a multiple, a unique assembly of many 'voices', multiple resonances, that, falling under no ruling defining authorial voice at the text's surface having the measure of them, cannot be gathered under the whole of an identity. Indeed such a multiple assemblage itself performs the scattering of identity. It may be that such gests leave us with nothing more (nor less) than an alignment of relations between 'voices', between sites where languaging exposes its manyness. What they seem to offer us is a one-off syntax, the movement of whose out-lining cannot be brought under a rule of identity. Is this not the point of the writing-for-art that is after-modernity, its legacy to us, what it has real-ised, made real for us in the course of its meandering explorations, as the defining circumstance of performing and its reception now?

William Gaddis and Performing as Necessary Failure
Perhaps, for those performers taking art as their purpose and hope, it is the now endemic character of making's-writing's struggle with both itself and its permeating circumstances that led William Gaddis to claim that 'the writer has been and remains an endangered species'.[44] But he follows this immediately with: 'That is our edge'. Recognising[45] that this 'edge' was the disastrous site where writing (art) was condemned to take on its species-threatening conditions, we can note the double sense of 'edge'. For not only does it show the writer as now looking out from performing's imminent precipice and down into the void of writing's (art's) near-immanent disappearance (recalling Kafka's 'Josephine'), but it also proposes that this very position gives writing (art) the 'edge' over this threat. Getting to the edge is the key. Once 'there', performing is simultaneously both exposed to danger but also given its chance to make-for-art. It is as if being at this edge, in making diagnostically clear the stakes of writing's struggle, also gives it the resolve and impetus to take up the challenge and make the leap out from the edge towards the source of its animating affinity. Precisely by being at the very edge of its survival, making-for-art has the edge over the dangers confronting it...

It is an edge that Gaddis both revealed and still reveals, presciently but now carrying ever greater urgency, and it is also precisely where he managed to sustain his 'own' (surely one we must all share now...) writing project. The specificity of his concern became ever more explicit and it is this specificity that makes him exemplary here, as my continual return to performing's relation to its technoscientific context seeks to affirm, for this is where art's fate now hangs in the balance but already unbalanced. Each of Gaddis's novels leaps away from its predecessors in its emergent exploration of different ways of taking on writing's relation to voicing - the aligning of relations, character, and events through writing's playful texturing, specifically its abrupting and diverting of narrative conventions in prising open and

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[44] William Gaddis, 'The Rush for Second Place', Penguin, London, 2002, p. 119.
[45] Indeed the relation between art and 'recognition' was the sustaining 'theme' of his first (1955) novel 'The Recognitions' (Atlantic Books, London, 2003.); its central character 'Wyatt Gwyon' (preserving Gaddis's initials) makes, out of love, paintings in the style of and indistinguishable from earlier master-painters. Through the intricacies of multiple characters and relations Gaddis takes on art's (all of the arts') relation to authenticity, imitation, memory, motivation, market, violence, and writing itself.

then exploring the play of voicing's multiplicity. Writing strives to get to the edge of voicing in order to test out its possibilities; the quotes from Beckett and Brodsky at the head of the previous chapter points precisely to the extremity of this challenge. Shadowing all Gaddis's writing is the figure of imitation as it is subsumed under, initially, mechanical and now electronic modes of reproduction. For this process of substitution, of representation, by a machine that stands-in-for, in its multiple cross-media forms, effects a taking-away-from individuals of their imaginative potential, of what they could do for themselves. For Gaddis it is the processes of programming constituting 'our' mediatised world that effect this unstoppable substitution. And it is precisely in the zone of art that this will be felt most acutely in terms of performers' relations to their gests, to art-as-other-than, and to possible respondents. It is the very shape of this zone itself, constantly mutating as a result of changes in the machining of reproductive representation, that challenges the real possibilities of imaginative response-to-circumstance defining performing's 'life'.

The responsibility of making-for-art to this mutation is, Gaddis proposes, to introduce 'disorder' into the machined programming that hems it in. As art is that which has to be protected at all costs by the maker, he embraces entropy as performing's help-mate. Specifically, he opposes 'failure' to the programmed control and elimination of error intrinsic to the processes of machined representation. It is art's virtue, in the face of the catastrophe that programming is enacting all about us, to be responsible for whatever disordering it can manage. To head off over there (to the swarming) is already to have set a little bit of degradation, of system-leakage, going. In its very weakness art is entropic for all programming. It performs as our essential reminder of an 'otherwise' that has been all but eliminated in the everyday relations of a culture under technoscience's sway. At the conclusion of his 'summary notes' on the history of the player piano Gaddis offers his response to a marketing slogan ("You push the button – We do the rest") for the player piano.[46] In contrast to that vision which proposes that the 'best of all possible worlds' to come will be one where machine-dependency is maximised, he links art's role, and consequent threat, directly to entropy and thus to disordering; this explicitly affirms the political threat enacted by art, pointed to by Plato and continually acted upon by all political regimes to date:

> 'When we note that a chief element in dealing with information
> programming in modern communications and control systems is that
> of entropy, the measurement of chaos or disorder which constantly
> threatens flawless functioning of the system, the analogy of the artist's
> threat to the social fabric becomes obvious, and the "scientific" case
> for order demanding his elimination is made clear.'[47]

To make-for-art is to live out this tension, for in the arts truth and error are 'interdependent possibilities'. Art lives in and by its engagement of just this 'element of loss and incompleteness, of unresolved estrangement from another self who could do more in just those erratic areas, which the player appeared to provide painlessly even as it programmed its extinction.'[48] This is also why, as a true affiliate of Beckett (to fail and fail again...), Gaddis elides art with the 'rush for second place'. He embraces second place because the artist-maker that he figures is one that 'could always do more'[49]; performing performs a perennial falling short. For every maker knows that with each gest abandoned they could have done

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[46] The slogan could, of course, be transferred to all button operated machines...
[47] 'The Rush for Second Place', op. cit., p. 144.
[48] Ibid.
[49] See also my earlier discussion of this concerning the performer's relation to sourcing and a 'muse' figure.

more, could have done differently, and this leaves them mired in uncertainty and anxious to try again from somewhere else – hence the irrecusable drive to get the next gest under way. For, under the sway of that other, the doppelganger-muse that offers the unheard of, the unpredictable, chance eruption, always aside from 'reason', the unanticipatable will come about (but always only with luck...). And this other is the one (the 'one' that is made up of many) that keeps alight the flame of the possibility of the more that could be done. Until it is taken away or disappears. As happens too often with age.[50]

It is the player piano, cropping up in passing references across his novels, that concretises the shadow of mechanical imitation that his writing continually confronts and explores. He had planned a history of its development and its relation to the dynamic of the intertwining of technoscience and consumer culture, the same uncompletable history being worked on by 'Jack Gibbs' a character in 'JR'[51]. Gaddis's own short introduction to this proposed history, together with some
associated materials from his archive, show the breadth of the context of his vision of the project. The player piano was to be the vehicle that would bear his vision of art's increasingly complex relations to reproductive machinery's imitative work, a machinery, whatever its stage of development, that for him has always defined art's fate.[52] And indeed his archiving of the player piano, running in parallel to his novel- writing and occasionally surfacing in it, defined the 'fate' of this writing too, what it had to take on – which was how, whether, art might survive under a mediatised state capitalism. The eponymous 'J.R.' of the novel's title is an eleven-year-old schoolboy who, operating almost entirely by telephone (but transliteratively brought to writing by Gaddis), brings the economy to the brink of collapse through a share-buying scheme (para-scam) that makes its way through the tiny gaps between the letters of the law, ordinary greed, and the trust conventions of commonsense. Gaddis intercuts the careering of this scheme with a complex of relations between characters (characters-as-voices) that draw us through the troubles of holding on to the primacy of the imagination's demands in the face of alien interests – those of the commonsense working out of the power relations mediating organisational life.

Having discovered in 'The Recognitions' his unique 'ear' for transliterating voicing Gaddis turns this into the defining concern and display of 'J.R.'. It is a novel written without any formal 'breaks' (other than the 'natural' ones of line-ends and pages) and almost exclusively in dialogue, with only the briefest and occasional interjections of quasi-narratorial contexting description. Thus the writing makes explicit its demands on the reader in the location of the emergence (and disappearance) of those textual qualities that are conventionally the 'reason' for reading 'novels'; the pleasures and frustrations - frustration-as-pleasure - of reading, through the search for 'things' such as 'story-line', 'character', 'theme', 'place' or 'event', are revealed in and as the challenged reader's participation 'in' the writing. For these 'things' can only emerge in the course of the reader's continuous leaping across the multiple

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[50] This is precisely the concern woven into the halting, self-disjointing, yet hauntingly voiced texture of 'Agapē Agape', op. cit., Gaddis's final 'novel', as it syncopates its way through multiple references to the complexities of the interplay between art and technology, and specifically imitative reproduction, with the player piano putting in multiple appearances. The narrative 'voicing' is one, apparently, hanging on, under a failing life-support system to its disappearing memories, desires, and words (all the 'things' that would have enabled it to do more).

[51] William Gaddis, 'JR', Penguin, London, 1985 (first published in the U.S.A. in 1970).

[52] This introduction and associated materials can be found in 'The Rush for Second Place', op. cit., at p. 6 and p. 141. As already mentioned details from this research recur selectively across Gaddis's novels and as defining motifs in both 'J.R.' and, in some fragmented detail, in 'Agapē Agape'.

disjunctions that are the writing's explicit characteristic. The writing makes its way through the abruptness of its leaps between such 'things' ('voices', 'places' and so on), the demand for movement remaining unmarked often by nothing more than the space between one word or letter and the next. But what 'J.R.' reveals is the primacy of voicing through transliteration that enables readers, indeed demands of them, to hear and distinguish, solely through the seeing of reading, the specificity of the 'voices' constituting the text's many 'conversations'. The writing 'demands' that reading 'hears' the multiple differences that lie dormant within it. It is in the ways that it manages, sets up, the imperceptible transition from seeing to hearing that Gaddis's writing plunges the reader into the process of 'recognition' itself. And it is immediately clear that this process, the finding and holding on to what differentiates 'voices', has nothing to do with the supposed 'imitation' entailed in a reproductive machine's displacement of human activity. Every leap is an implicit acknowledgment that the relation between writing and voicing, between seeing and hearing, is not one of imitation. It is the 'whatever-else-is-going-on' that every writer-artist, in performing-towards-art, both 'knows' about and is simultaneously in the grip of in ways that demand its exploration and exposure.

A 'world' of differences (and the continuities sustaining them) emerges out of the writing's seductive withdrawal of reading into its own unchartable oscillations. Reading is drawn into and through its seemingly 'private', but necessarily partially socially shared, synaesthesic memories and occult knowledges. Indeed the silence of reading is privacy's necessary mark if we are to take 'Jack Gibbs'' remark as the mouthpiece for Gaddis's own position:
> ' – God damned problem not read to be written aloud you read it
> then start here read it,'[53]

One has, that is, to hear it for oneself (alone). And Gaddis's sense of writing-for-art's way of achieving this silent seduction is hinted at obliquely, in what can be taken as a synonym for the printed page's rectangle, in his description of,
> 'a massive panel of black on white stroked with a mad reserve.'[54]

The paradoxical juxtaposition of delirium and withholding, figured in this 'mad reserve', erotically stroking writing into its black becoming and onto a white page, plunges us into the play of Gaddis's transliterative unfolding of his multiple voicings.

And it is 'Gibbs'-as-Gaddis again who points to the writing's challenge when, answering a conversational question about his 'social history of mechanisation and the arts' (via the player piano) which is 'more of a book about order and disorder ... the destructive element', he responds thus,
> ' – It sounds a little difficult, is it?
> - Difficult as I can make it.'[55]

He follows this shortly, pointing ahead to the still far distant 'Agapē Agape', with the following exchange:
> ' – if I wrote a novel it would end where most novels begin.
> - But this book you're working on, is it . . .
> - Is it what it's, it's like living with an invalid real God damned
> terminal case, keep hoping he'll pick up his bed and walk like
> the good book says.'[56]

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[53] See 'J.R.', op. cit., p. 604.
[54] Op. cit., p. 110.
[55] Op. cit., p. 244.
[56] Op. cit., p. 248.

When this novel does get written, as the voicing of just such a 'terminal case', it ends (having begun with a 'No', thus echoing a typical conversational opening of the young 'J.R.'!) by reminding us about Gaddis's ever-present theme of making's beginnings - origination itself in that 'reckless exuberance' of 'Youth'. For this is what the writer-artist 'can tell you about'.[57] It is this that performing, 'pursued by Age', seeks to recover again - the 'rage and energy and boundless excitement' of 'that Youth who could do anything'.[58] It is that state, exemplified in being carried 'off' by music, 'of being that's not your own, of feeling things that you don't really feel, of understanding things you don't really understand, of being able to do things you aren't really able to do' – precisely the transfiguration into 'the self who can do more!'[59]

In the two novels following 'J.R.' , 'Carpenter's Gothic' and 'A Frolic of His Own',[60] art's fate, teased out through the plight of this multiple (here, explorer-writer-playwright) self, turns on his relationship with two dominant and intertwined orders of social power − the mass media and the law. As in his previous novels Gaddis opens up and draws out his themes ('authenticity', 'ownership, 'appropriation') absolutely concretely through conversations which themselves write-in, constitute, the terms on which making gets done. Making is shown as irretrievably bound to and dependent upon circumstantially specific relations; these are made 'visible' (readable) through nothing more (nor less) than the interplay of the voices of different characters and documents. In this way the the writing performs and displays the irresolvable ambiguities that mark the always circumstantially bound terms of 'authorship': what is the relation between the 'active' writing and the 'passive' being-written, what claims (if any...) might the maker have over the gest that is always already (yes, from the very unfindable 'beginning') drifting in imperceptible ways into the 'public' realm, that is always, in other words, *partially someone else's*?[61] As in 'The Recognitions' it is 'authenticity' that is thrown into disarray, displayed as always being 'disordered' through the entropic effects of the conversational interests through which it passes. And in 'A Frolic...' Gaddis echoes Woolf's multi-text collaging in 'Between the Acts', by interleaving a range of legal documents (depositions, judgments) and extended excerpts from the script of a play by 'Oscar Crease', the character around whose authorship troubles the text itself turns. While eschewing the intrication of a conventional master narratorial voice into the text's aligning, Gaddis interrupts the latter (and thus the text's predominant conversational mode) with these documents that also comment on its events and characters. For they enable the elaboration of alternative 'voices' that remain aside from any linking narratorial 'voice'. In dispensing with the latter 'this' text becomes 'these' texts - a collection of texts - so that its own very performance opens the question of the 'oneness' of authorship. And in doing this it simultaneously confronts readers with the related question of 'authenticity' and their own responsibility, through the leaping they have to perform, for finding and restoring their 'own' sense of and feelings for continuity across the textual breaks. In taking on this responsibility readers are engaging, performing for themselves,

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[57] See 'Agapē Agape', op. cit., p.96.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] William Gaddis, 'Carpenter's Gothic', Picador, London, 1987, and 'A Frolic of His Own', Scribner, New York, 1995.
[61] This 'someone else's', the 'public'realm always already inside and in-forming the supposed 'private', may seem to draw us towards the 'intertextuality' of post-structuralism, but I am resisting such affiliations here because my interest is not in offering some kind of independent 'unified theory' of 'art-practice', but rather to open up ways that gests expose some of the defining terms of their own emergence, the how-why of their having-been-performed.

the very 'thing' that for Gaddis is art's promise, offer and display: 'your own participation that roused your emotions most.'[62]

This 'participation', as the defining condition for art's possibility, is the precise focus of and reason for Gaddis's researches into the player piano. For what the player piano offers - mechanical reproduction - is counterposed to the 'biggest thrill in music ... playing it yourself.'[63] To be on the way towards art is to be taking on and trying to realise, as performer or respondent, the imaginative challenge of leaping away from imitation, from reproduction of the same. To intitiate this (re-)creative leap is
 to enter a zone aside from criteria of failure. Oscar Wilde had remarked the following sign in in a 'Leadville' saloon: 'PLEASE DO NOT SHOOT THE PIANIST HE IS DOING HIS BEST' and Gaddis finds in this the 'frail human element' that defines art's plight.[64] This '*doing his best,'* redolent of 'chance and the very immanence of human failure', marks the precise thing that mechanical imitation was seemingly out to eliminate. In that Colorado saloon 'all art's essential predicament threatened to be laid bare with the clap of a pistol shot'.[65] For Gaddis this shot metaphorised technology's, mechanical imitation's, the programme's, threat to art. Epitomised by the player piano, technology's 'promise', devoured by democracy, banished 'failure to an inherent vice.'[66] The player became the 'tangible essence of the programmed republic ... the elimination of failure through programmed organisation.'[67] For what is at stake for making-towards-art in this process are the terms of its own shot-in-the-dark ; technological invention, now in partnership with 'success in life', is bent on eradicating 'the very possibility of failure as a condition for success precisely in the arts where one's best is never good enough.'[68]

The surfacing of 'agapē' across Gaddis's writings and its juxtaposition with 'agape', in both his writing on the player piano and the title of his final novella, reveals its significance for his vision of art and his perception of technoscience's threat to it. Agapē, the love feast of early Christianity, figures art's making-situation for him as an always chancy celebratory making that knows it can never do enough, be 'good' enough: making-for-art is the festive exposure of a love that will always fall short, a love shaping itself as an unceasing yearning-for. And in the wake of technoscience this making activity finds itself agape, jaw-droppingly open-mouthed, aghast at what it it has to take on in trying to hold to its festive love for the imaginative possibilities of making-for-art. For performing knows that what it is challenged to struggle with without end, as a struggle that it is condemned to lose, is the technoscientific grip on and shaping of its circumstances. Thus agape in the face of this condemnation, what issues from performing's 'voicing' (its mouth-as-open-wound) is its response to its now permanent openness, the making patent of its exposure. The challenge to performing is to try to save shards of the delight, the delirium, generated in the course of holding on to the outside possibility of finding some 'beauty' (however strange) in the inevitable pain of the failure that marks all such performing. And because its possibilities are in doubt, the coming gest, already partially 'public' – social – in its very emerging (because it has always shared some things at least with the languages to which it is partially a response), becomes an ambiguous object

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[62] 'Agapē Agape', op. cit., p. 55.
[63] Ibid.
[64] See 'The Rush for Second Place', op. cit., p. 8.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Op. cit., p. 9.
[67] Op. cit., p. 13.
[68] Op. cit., p. 11.

metamorphosing without end through different social 'lives' from the 'point' of its abandonment by the performer.

It is thus the self-defining exposure of its patency that invites, challenges, its recipients to take up the offer of this patency, to expose themselves to it by entering into its openness and re-filling it according to the specificity of their affects and interests. It becomes a site where confused, but perhaps delirious, exchanges are played out according to the idiosyncratic differences each recipient brings to it. And these exchanges (always with 'value(s)' attached) often turn on or include assumptions about and feelings for what is or is not 'beautiful' (or at the very least seductively 'attractive'). For the performer, however, an idiosyncratic sense of this beauty always infuses the performance. This condemns performing to having to live with the doubt of never knowing whether that sense is manifest in the gest, for, as Gaddis recognised, failure, for the one who could always have done more, constitutes the very project. The problem for performing is to make this love fest, itself as celebratory performative, accessible in the gest whilst still managing to show the pain of doubt. At the very least this entails a disordering of expectations of 'the beautiful' in the face of this plight's anguish. For reasons beyond reason performance continues to perform in response to, while remaining non-plussedly agape at, its plight. Teasing out performing's reasonless reason in the course of his ramblings around reproducibility, the 'terminal case' narrator in 'Agapē Agape' draws us towards the unavoidable matter of Gaddis's focus:

> '...this game you can't win because that's not why you play it trying
> to cultivate this whole swamp of chaos and chance, of paradox and
> perversity to wipe out the whole idea of cause and effect...'[69]

In the teeth of an economy turning around reproducibility (the 'life' context here being that of organ transplants, interchangeable parts, and cloning), he gets to,

> '... the heart of it, where the individual is lost, the unique is lost, where
> authenticity is lost, not just authenticity but the whole concept of
> authenticity, that love for the beautiful creation before it's created that
> that, it was Chesterton wasn't it? That natural merging of created life
> in this creation in love that transcends it, a celebration of the love that
> created it they called agapē, that love fest in the early church, yes. That's
> what's lost, what you don't find in these products of the imitative arts that
> are made for reproduction on a grand scale...'[70]

The transcendence pointed to here is surely art's 'being-beyond', its leap out of the relative certainties and securities of commonsense into the 'swamp' where chaos and chance intermingle. And for Gaddis this leap, essential to performing's attempt to hold to 'authenticity', must be engaged in its own disordering project, its own following through and tracing out the implications of entropy in relation to reproducibility, to the imitative processes themselves hemming it in. The echo of Rimbaud is audible here, for such a disordering of what both infuses performing and is essential for the emergence and availability of its gests focuses Rimbaud's 'deranging' precisely on imitation itself. To take on the disordering of the very processes necessary for its own emergence (organisational representation) generates the paradoxes that are being explored here as art's plight. And so to keep alive any hope for art's beyond, performers have to find ways of surviving, of living within, these paradoxes. Such survival entails an incessant search for, and a consequent tortuous grappling with, ways through that both preserve and, paradoxically, at least partially avoid them. Art's gests are performers' attempts to

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[69] Op. cit., p. 37.
[70] Ibid.

materialise and crystallise the imaginative responses that shape their ways through the binds of paradox. The hope is that the idiosyncrasy of each way of making-for-art will, in its defining strangeness (its disordering of the taken-for-granted), display its affiliation with art's otherness and thus seduce others into leaping towards its beyond. But performers also know that this hope is way beyond all guarantees. It is not they who rule on the presence or absence of the seductive; all they can do is to expose their strangeness as the offer of a possibility in the face of a technoscience that provides the alternative comforts of programming's familiarity and repetitions.

Christine Brooke-Rose at the Conjunction of Performing and Conceptualising
If Gaddis challenges art's relation to the machined 'culture' of technoscience through a writing that offers art as an agent of entropy through its sowing of disorder in, and thus a way out of, the entertaining world of imitation-reproduction, Christine Brooke-Rose experiences the challenge to her own performing-toward-art as arising directly from art's relation to and dependence upon language. But, crucially, she understands contemporary language 'use', in a culture that forms itself around the demands of technoscience, as itself already entangled with, informed by, the latter. Any relation to art has to begin in the midst of the complexities of this entwinement. Making-for-art, as an engagement of language(s) for art, already lives, as we all do, partially within the coils of technoscience; for language-in-use is where personal experience, social relations, technoscience and art overlap.

As language has long been treated as a potential object of knowledge by both the natural and human sciences and the humanities, their knowledges (and the assumptions these rest upon...) have filtered, however selectively, back into everyday language use. Social life as, in part, the practical thinking about itself as a knowledge-solvable problem, becomes reflexive under technoscience. And nowhere more so than in relation to its emergence and maintenance in and through language's multiple 'forms'. While the structuring, content, and organisation of programmes of formal education constitute the most obvious site of such application, for example in relation to 'language acquisition' and the measurement of 'competence', now that the emergence of a global culture is manifestly dependent upon the coding processes of information technology, such filtering is universal. The theories and researches of language-in-use are implicit in how language is put to work in the multiple processes of social reproduction. And all such conceptual frameworks (epistemologies) have to make assumptions about the relation between language (as, supposedly, a medium or container that carries an independent 'content') and its referents – between, for example, language and 'life'/living, and thus between 'art' and 'life'. As knowledge-generators they work with theories of truth that enable them to produce something that can be constituted as communally (if only, at first, by a 'community' of similarly-minded technoscientists) *sharable* knowledges.

This is precisely the everyday situation of language, where it is both an object of knowledge and the very 'medium' for transmitting that same knowledge about itself; it thus functions simultaneously as topic and resource. By trying write, to survive, in the 'and' that holds topic and resource together and apart, Brooke-Rose, through her novels, takes on art's and language's relation to technoscience. And, by extension, her writing effects a scission with the modes of telling (information and entertainment) that constitute the programming of language-use and its machined digitisation across the mass media. Indeed the intertwining of social life with the technical relation to language entailed in the ever-multiplying applications of computing to everyday activities figures across her fiction. She provides a clear (and, as we shall see, it is exactly the issue of 'clarity' which is at stake for writing's transliteration of voicing) indication

of her, and thus her writing's, relation to the 'new technological dream' of a universal planetary 'consciousness' in 'A Rhetoric of the Unreal' in the course of an analysis of 'metafiction':

> 'This consciousness that is to wrap the planet seems to me dangerously like the pollution that may stifle it. For every work of incomparable genius in all fields there are millions of tons of paper wasted in garbage, in exactly the same way as every benefit of civilisation is paid for not only in entropy but in pollution and extremely ugly politics to get hold of raw materials -'[71]

For her, all fiction is 'realistic' for it performs a version of miming. But it can only perform this 'mime' through its transliteration of voicings; it has to find and show, as writing's very reason, every 'voice' as coincident with, as no more and no less than, what it has to say. And what it and all making toward art is thus challenged to mime, that which it faces as what I earlier offered as its double-edged plight, is, as Brooke-Rose puts it, 'the non-interpretability of the world, which is our reality as its interpretability once was (and may return).'[72] This 'reality', in which it both participates but simultaneously tasks itself to mime, is none other than the 'world' of everyday life as set forth on its way, represented to 'us' (an 'us' as yet without a 'we'...), through the awesome combine of technoscience and capital. This, unavoidably, has to be the 'real' content of performing in the contemporary arts. It resonates strongly with Heidegger's question concerning the contemporary demands on making's response to its plight, although, his concerns lying elsewhere, it was not a question to which he felt drawn to respond. In his probing and cogent analysis of the relation between Heidegger's thought, writing and politics, Lacoue-Labarthe, quoting from a 1967 lecture, points up the dilemma facing making in relating its Greek roots to contemporary experience:

> '... from what region does the demand come to which modern art, in all its fields responds? ... They belong to the universality of world civilization. Their composition and organization are part of what scientific technology projects and produces. This latter has decided the mode and possibilities of man's [sic] stay in the world. ... the region in which the demands originate to which art today feels it has to respond, is none other than the scientific world.'[73]

Brooke-Rose focuses the plight precisely, and crucially here by focussing on art's unavoidable but absolutely paradoxical relation to the dominance of technoscience in the production of our everyday knowledges, because, as both analyst and novelist, she moves back and forth between 'the scientific world' (the university research culture of the analysis of language, literature and the arts) and the challenge of making-toward- art.

Her leap into fiction thus takes off, at least in part, from her intimate relations to and work within the site of the communal production of knowledges about literature itself. For, as the preceding quotations show, her writing as a critic-theorist confronts the defining problem for all writing, that of the possible relations between language, literature, knowledge, and 'life'. In some senses her 'academic' writing, necessarily participating in the institutionalisation of 'literature', opens onto both the literary 'spaces' constituted by her fiction and the ways in to many of the foci of her novels. But, reversing the direction of the leap, her fiction writing undoubtedly gives her conceptual-critical work a specific cast. Thus, in her early text on Pound (written from inside

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[71] Christine Brooke-Rose, 'A Rhetoric of the Unreal', Cambridge University, Cambridge, 1988, p. 388.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, 'Heidegger, Art and Politics', Blackwell, Oxford, 1990, p. 114.

and outside the critical debates about his writing and life and after the publication of several of her novels[74]), when considering the persistence of the 'Form' and 'Content' division in the conceptualisation of literature, she inserts a parenthesis indicating where her sympathies lie:

> 'Certainly creative writers (and I prefer their testimony to that of critics) have written against the division.'[75]

And for her, both 'creative' writers and conceptualisers of literature face a common context that defines the plight and possibilities of each. This is precisely the constantly self-metamorphosing mediatised world of functional technoscience. In her passionate and stirring defence of Pound, written in the wake of both his imprisonment and the   post-McLuhan concern with the emerging dominance of electronic media in popular culture, she notes Pound's continuing relevance, as a digger out of 'vital spots' (his own term) and through the closeness of his ideogrammic writing practice to the media's operational mode:

> 'But I do not myself believe that this present generation, of the McLuhan age, which takes for granted television and modern films with their quick cuts and unexpected juxtapositions (pregnant or otherwise), can possibly find the ideogrammic method difficult as such, apart from Pound's specific field of reference. Any method which causes the reader 'suddenly to see' is a swift, live thing.'[76]

Responding to McLuhan's prophesy that the book will die altogether she acknowledges that,

> '... we shall be, are already, living in a audio-tactile culture of electrical media. But even on this supposition *The Cantos* are more likely to survive as a transition from the old fashioned book to the art of instantaneous apprehension of multitemporal and multinational facts.'[77]

In her later 'A Rhetoric of the Unreal'[78], written in the wake of the emergent dominance of the metaphors of 'structure', 'sign', and 'code' (and thus of structuralism, semiotics, and post-structuralism) in literary studies, she considers the issue of the relation between literature and the 'real' through an exploration of fictions from seemingly different genres. But the context once again is that of a contemporary culture under the sway of a technoscience whose implications for both living (what 'life', what 'human being', might be) and making art (what 'language' is) we eternally fail to grasp. Modern science has dissolved earlier relative certainties and sustaining myths about identity and place with the consequence that,

> '... man [sic] is now faced with a philosophy of indeterminacy and a multivalent logic. .... the prevalent cultural metaphor, now more or less banalised , is no longer that of order, or 'organic unity', but that of entropy.'[79]

The vacuum of meaninglessness is filled by the proliferation of discourses studying discourses within a 'world' (but is it *a* world?) that is, in Robbe-Grillet's terms, 'neither meaningful nor absurd. It simply *is*.'[80] We continue to search in the name of knowledge for systems, by

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[74] See for example 'The Christine Brooke-Rose Omnibus: Four Novels', Carcanet, Manchester, 1986.

[75] Christine Brooke-Rose, 'A ZBC of Ezra Pound', Faber, London, 1971, p. 68. Her sense of 'testimony' here might now be considered in relation to Derrida's discussion in 'Shibboleth' of what it it might be to 'bear witness'.

[76] Op. cit., p. 13.

[77] Op. cit., p. 34.

[78] 'A Rhetoric of the Unreal', op. cit..

[79] Op. cit. p. 7.

[80] Op. cit., quoted on p. 10.

fabricating systematic discourses, while acknowledging the ultimate arbitrariness of every discourse and language system. And this very search, now of industrial proportion, is deeply entwined with the maintenance of the systematised, programmed, media. Yet our systems unsystematically, but without cease, are undone through the entropy confounding all organisation, the entropy to which Gaddis sought to affiliate art's performing.

Thus echoing Gaddis, Brooke-Rose takes us and herself to the edge-as-brink of that permeating context away from which her novel writing seeks to leap. In setting the scene for her own (and thus art's?) divided performance in this way her writing indirectly raises the question of the challenge confronting writing (making-towards-art). Is this making under technoscience caught up in a vicious circle of production in which makers perform first of all for the critical-theorising machine which they feed and thus maintain? Is making, now unavoidably performed partially under and in response to the auspices of the knowledges of critical reflection and analysis, one 'half' of a joint enterprise, a collusive partner in the production of a recognisable and critically-analytically acceptable (respectable...university supported and verified) institution? If so, can making-toward-art still find ways of preserving, of holding onto for dear life, its desire and hope for, let alone any claim to, otherness, difference, excess, to the disordering entropic 'effects' of its attempt to expose a 'beyond' in the midst of 'what is'?

While art only swarms 'over there', the analytical work that generates knowledges and critiques has to be seen to have brought its objects back and to have opened them out and taken them apart 'right here' in the midst of the technoscientific culture's everyday operations. Facing this operational field, art's fate turns on the ability of its gests to slip through the fingers of, and thus confound, analysis, in their performance and display of something else altogether, something that is not only beyond analysis's comprehension but an exposure, a laying bare, of its limits, its ends. For the know-how of making-for-art casts itself 'forward' into its meridian only by trusting itself to the outside chance that something will come to it from the nowhere from which it is eternally excluded and about which it hasn't got a clue. Performing's trust lives by the off-chance that it will be marked out by receiving something from nothing , from nowhere. Analysis can make nothing of that which, never taking place and thus lacking in both identity and position, cannot be assimilated to its terms for knowledge. Nor can it admit, as I have argued earlier, to being moved by an art-gest beyond its own competence. But, once it acknowledges that its object, in coming from nowhere that it can identify, is thus essentially 'placeless', what does this do to the status of and claims for the value of its own objects of knowledge?

Brooke-Rose's fictions, beginning in the midst of this dilemma, must be taken as attempts to outwit and finally to cast off the explicit richness of their own informing analytic resources. As a writer she is in a contest (a life-struggle?) with herself (as analyst-critic). And surely her writing project - fiction - finally and originally (and reiterated on each writing occasion), has to be to non-plus, to stifle, her 'own' analytic voice, to put paid to the very analytical voicing out of whose shadows each fiction is trying to step. For the point of the fictional text is to separate art definitively from analysis, to display itself as not-knowledge; the fiction has to confound the reasonable, thoughtful, and coolly persuasive voice of the analyst who, in order to be accepted into the analytical 'community', has to work with generalisation, constant comparison, typification, a hierarchy of values, and something like a 'method' which purports to be shocked, upset, by nothing. These are precisely the terms which making-towards-art must eschew, if it is to have a chance of making it towards art's swarming, in trusting itself to to the leap-beyond. *What it has to make patent, to expose, in each writing performance is the definitive failure of analysis to touch, let alone grasp, the difference that arting might make to analysing*. Through

its own break with analysis it has to try and get the latter to realise the limits of its own 'movement', to accept that it cannot allow itself to be moved out of itself by the gest if it is to maintain its analytic purpose. In making (texting) for art the imagined otherness has somehow to become experienceable as an undoing and a scattering of the means and matters of analysis and critique, and thus of the terms of value which they seek to embed. It has to bring analysis to a halt and lure it into a movement in which, giving up on itself, it falls, leaps, into another way of becoming – that offered by the gest in its specificity. Somehow the one-off gest for art has to move the analyst beyond the clutches of analysis to a region where analysis is brought to realise not only that it has nothing to say (about the excess of art's difference), but also that, in having to admit to its falling short, it is experiencing the profundity of its own limits.

In her fiction Brooke-Rose stages this contestation (between art and technoscience) through the ways she plays, toys, with the relations between voicing and writing. Art's possibility is staked on the chance and hope that its ways of showing the strange intimacy between voicing and writing open onto a radically other relation to becoming (to our passing through) than that at work in the analytical project. Trying endlessly to instigate such a relation entails a suspension of the performer's subjectivity through the attempted leap away from 'what is' toward art's beyond. Once on the way, leapers trust in the outside chance that they may receive inklings of what they seek – that which implicitly sources them unbeknownst. For writers these inklings have, as already proposed, to be transliterated into something recognisable as a voice, as voices. Everything turns here on this recognisability, on how the writing provides for that recognition which we have already noted as a founding and recurrent concern of Gaddis. And while, across her fictions, Brooke-Rose's writing rehearses, stages, often playfully and humorously, the ways that 'her' multiple interwoven voicings seem to resist any gathering within a single language-site, under a unifying authorial 'voice', nevertheless her writing is constituted precisely to enable us to recognise this very play of diffferences. It has to make this clear as a condition of its readability. It is as if each text, as a questing journey through a shifting metamorphosing multiple, though continually confronting the recession, the absenting, of the very 'matter' - language - which allows its emergence, takes on the challenge to make this recession and its consequences for reading abundantly clear. Indeed it has to insist on this and to follow its requirements, for, as its founding 'condition', this is precisely what its performance pursues. It has no option.

Taking on the Prose of the World – Sense, Telling, Alignment, Mime – for Art's Otherness
So, could it be that the welling up and setting down of this multiple voicing across her various novels discloses, makes utterly explicit paradoxically (since it is implicit in the activity that performs prose-writing itself), something seemingly inescapable, something defining, about the relation between 'prose' and 'narration' in their fusion as the 'telling' of a 'story'? Perhaps, too, this 'something' has become a taken-for-granted constituent of 'telling' (a story...) across the multiple and seemingly diverse sites of representing (including everything from casual conversation through to the vast realm of information-mediation via programmed telematics) whose commonsense is mediated precisely through the construction of 'stories' (no matter how brief, as in the phrase or exclamation that 'says it all'). Indeed it seems that the very possibility of 'making sense', as a minimal cohering, is itself bound to the activity of story-telling. Such coherence is shaped in the material conjunctions which constitute every syntactic alignment, whatever its specific 'medium' (audio, visual) or 'media'. We just 'know', and act unthinkingly (relatively, always relatively) on the 'basis' of that know-how, that every world's possibility as

a 'sensible something' is prose- and thus story-dependent. It emerges through the alignment of 'particles' that seem to bear 'sense'. And 'prose', from the Latin *prorsus (proversus)*, means 'turned forward', 'straightforward' (*Prosa* was the goddess of conventional birth, with the head foremost...) . As children we 'find out' and construct our vague horizons about this possibility straightforwardly and precisely through stories.

But shadowing all this story-telling, and nowhere more closely than in the finely wrought writing that seeks to make for art, even that which, as in Brooke-Rose's writing, disrupts story-telling's 'conventions' in the search for art's otherness by challenging the straightforwardness of what we take for granted, is the unavoidable 'something' that writing-as-a-telling has to 'achieve' and display. And what making-toward-art has to do is *to make clear in how it is done*, thus enabling us to recognise, that art is its sole destination, that this is the only 'difference' which concerns it. This significant 'something' entails the enactment and revelatory exposition of just such a 'making clear'. And the emergent hoped-for clarity can only be shown in and as the relation between the performance of the writing and the aligned words which constitute its eventual gest. For in the end it overrules every other consideration of a writer's (or any other performer on-the-way toward art) relation to 'voicing', 'narration', 'telling', or 'saying', in other words to 're-lating' itself as a carrying back, a portage, of something to some-where or - one (of certain matters to art and, incidentally, to 'us').

Blanchot crystallises this 'something' in what he calls 'the law of the story'.[81] In writing that makes for art, where each phoneme, mark and gap may be the site of an anguished struggle to get the gest sounding-appearing so that the story 'says all it has to say in saying it'[82], the writer's 'happiness' (and perhaps that of the reader too) arises from the clarity that 'comes both before and as a condition of the serious or ambiguous meaning it also transcribes'[83]. It is the happiness of getting it right, of the 'story' saying clearly everything, no less and no more, that it had to say in order to be what it is, to send itself leaping out of culture toward art's swarm. This saying of 'all it has to say' is exactly what it has to get its readers to recognise. This is its lure.

For Blanchot such 'clarity' coincides with the 'narrative voice'; it is what the latter seems to have performed. And Blanchot's 'narrative voice' is not the conventional voice of a singular narrator who, as re-teller, appears to be the story's author or authority. *Rather it is implicit within the syntax of the telling*; it is what seems to release that explicit 'I', 'she' or 'he' which we take as the tale's teller. But, identifiable with no 'subject' (it is not the voice of an authorial 'I'), it remains implicit, nowhere present, folded into the story's aligning and is that through which the story is accomplished. Indebted to spacing and punctuation as well as the materialised letters of a text, it emerges from and disappears into some in-between. It is achieved in and as a 'Saying' that is, perhaps, the mark of its possible way in to art (over there), for,

> '... before all distinctions between form and content, between
> signifier and signified, even before the division between utterance
> and uttered, there is the unqualifiable Saying, the glory of a
> "narrative voice" that speaks clearly, without ever being obscured
> by the opacity or the enigma or the terrible horror of what it

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[81] Maurice Blanchot, see the essay 'After the Fact', in 'Vicious Circles', trans. by Paul Auster, Station Hill, New York, 1985, p. 68.
[82] Op. cit., p. 67.
[83] Op. cit., pp. 67-8.

communicates.'[84]

Whatever its possible referencing (content, signified, meaning, representation...), a text's moving quality is dependent on the clarity of its assembly of the play of differences, the voicings, that constitute the 'how' of its surface aligning. This is the 'unqualifiable Saying' of a 'voice' (but *is* it a 'voice' if, lacking the attributes, the familiar tonality, of what enables us to recognise particular voices, we can never quite 'hear', let alone locate, it?) aside from the qualities we attribute to both the text's surface voices and to the real voices of everyday life. It speaks from and simultaneously withdraws into the shadows of a reserve that cannot be made manifest yet which is felt right there as the clearness of the text's self-projecting aligning. The surface convinces because of the clarity of the ways its unspeakable sourcing generates surface movements, orderings, that, ahead of any doubt, carry us off. This 'narrative voice', though belonging to no-one and seemingly aside from any mastery or display of authority, is nevertheless what holds and orders us, fixed, gripped and moved by its clarity, for as long as our becoming is absorbed by and on its terms.

So, in spite of enacting the play of language's multiple as their way of surfacing, Brooke-Rose's texts cannot dissociate themselves from what 'telling' has to do and show in order to become a 'telling' for art. She herself found just this 'clarity' as a defining constituent of Pound's writing and perhaps took it as a motif for her own writing. Discussing Pound's translation from the *Ta Hio* and his requirement that terminology must 'fit the thing', she takes this as clearly meaning that 'it must represent the inarticulate thoughts'. She then picks up on his requirement for precision as manifest in the following quotation from an essay, 'The Serious Artist':

> 'By good art I mean art that bears true witness, I mean the art that is most precise. You can be wholly precise in representing a vagueness.'[85]

This is followed by a brief discussion of 'clarity' as writing's singular requirement which is to be achieved by miming 'the thing' (whatever it is).[86] And as can be seen from the quotations, the narrative voice makes its way relentlessly on by taking on every challenge to miming, be it inarticulacy, vagueness, disappearance, or the illimitably detailed. It must be remembered, too, that the requirement to 'fit the *thing'* has to be taken in the double sense of fitting both the event-thing signified and the specificity of the context of the writing itself, the syntactic alignment within which it is to make its 'appearance', its coming-to-voice, through terms that are just what that context called for. And this sense of miming as a double fitting recalls my earlier reference to Derrida's exploration of Mallarmé as a 'syntaxer' in his essay on mime, *for what is at stake in mime is iteration itself*. Miming is the performance as original repetition; our 'recognition' of a mime's 'signified', the 'whatever' that it mimes, occurs by way of an original performance, a performance of that which has not taken place elsewhere. Mime shows something for the first time as if it were repetition. As a voicing it is the making indisputably clear, and thus recognisable through its enacting play on memorialised associations and affinities, in a unique and originating performance, of that which has not yet occurred. It is the peculiarity, the idiosyncrasy, of its syntactical alignment, that drags the 'paradigmatic', the metaphoric, reference 'outside' the text, back into and fixes it in and as the terms of its 'syntagmatic' aligning. We only 'get' its reference, its signified (its seeming 'outside'), by being drawn into, along and through the distinctive temporal process of passing through its conjunctive-disjunctive

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[84] Op. cit., p. 68.
[85] Op. cit., pp. 125-6.
[86] Op. cit., p. 127.

relations. This is what enchants and charms us, holds us in its grip − how the flow of its paradoxcal originating-repeating exposes one thing leading to another.

And if, for Brooke-Rose, making toward art is a realism that is accomplished through the precision of its performance-as-mime, this invites us to approach her fiction as just such a performance and thus to ask what it 'is' that the writing is miming. If, as I have already suggested, in writing out of analysis and toward art, she situates her fiction at and as the border between technoscience (obviously most manifest in 'planetary thought' and the mass media) and its other, then perhaps what the writing seeks to stage as mime is precisely this contest. But in making-for-art this can only be explored in texts that, by resolutely cutting their ties to analysis's methodic production and accumulation of the generalisable-typical and vesting everything in an unruly specificity, hope to disclose a quite other relation to language and living. If there is a contest it cannot be a matter for art of following a miming procedure that turns the contest into a generalisable 'thing' with recognisable typical contours provoking routine performances in response. Rather each performing foray, each gest, has to offer itself as a one-off unruly diagnosis that can only take on, under its current unique circumstances (remembering Celan's 'all our dates'), singular features of that which it is seeking to leap away from. Each text, each writing-event, each becoming-gest, has to be approached as a 'different' contest. As originary-repetition, each writing performance would seek to mime what it (the 'act' of writing) is 'going through' (repetitive separation from the analytical machine) in its absolute singularity (originary), as if each writing performance were a 'for the first time'. As a task of avoidance, of a perhaps literally (lettered) violent excision of just those things essential to the analytic life (and, in particular, repetition) in order to show their falling short of the art-thing, writing finds itself in the position of having to mime (*if mime it is...*) the impossibility of mime for art. Committed absolutely to its own circumstantial specificity, making-toward-art can only figure the ways and materials of analysis as what must be put out of play definitively (for art's sake), laid aside, if not laid waste, in order to keep art's otherwise to the fore. It has to strive to show its originary as precisely repetition's other − this is what it has to make clear.

This is surely the risk involved in any becoming-clear, in self-conscious authorial attempts to *make* clear, for such making may find itself tempted into repetition (reportage, illustration, documentation, the importing of any 'external' information) in order to enhance its clarity. Whereas Blanchot showed us that the Saying of the 'narrative voice', proceeding from no identifiable authority or source, comes before and aside from authorial intention. And, in relation to mime, I have already offered transliteration, the necessary transformative transition from one site of 'experience', one 'medium', to another, as an alternative to the problem of sustaining a sense of imitation for this transferring. For this movement, this leaping from-to, occurs (without taking place) across an absolute break; the substitution of one languaging thing (mark or whatever) for another (whether differently languaged or not-yet-languaged), entails complete difference, *it manifests the perfection of differentiation.* Something definitively 'else', a complete metamorphosis, is going on. For if, after we have granted something (almost nothing) to all forms of onomatopoeia, we acknowledge that written words do not mime the sounds of and feelings for letters and words (or vice versa), that drawing and painting do not mime visual perception and its accompanying feelings, that the sounds of music only very rarely try to mime explicitly and unequivocally, *and without adding 'anything else',* the terrifying rustling humming explosive noising of worlds, then perhaps we need to consider very carefully whether Pound's requirement (and its affirmation by Brooke-Rose) that terminology 'fit the thing' (whatever 'it' is) can be reconciled with the commonsense of miming. For miming, in seeming to offer like for like, seeks to hide the unfathomable and dizzyingly abyssal bafflement of

difference, of the subliminal leap over nothing, of necessary complete transformation. If, as Brooke-Rose proposes, technoscience's legacy is the 'non-interpretability of the world' then mime immediately restores the reassuring comfort of that interpretability by substituting similitude, which we all seem to be able to spin out without termination. To hold to 'realism' as art's responsibility in the face of this non-interpretability would require making-toward-art to acknowledge that it begins in, ends as, moves (has to leap) without cease from groundless site to groundless site across contourless abysses *through something other than 'likeness'*.

And this, of course, is precisely what the 'narrative voices' of Brook-Rose's fictions do indeed live by, with only occasional intrusions by the external voice of analytical authority threatening to turn a text into an illustrative vehicle for ideas. Each differently takes on, is in a many voiced conversation with, the inescapable forces through which technoscience permeates everyday life. In some cases an external rule has been imposed on the writing performance, echoing the Oulipo approach to fiction as a playful test site for exploring the borders between writing, reference, literature and the seeming 'rules' for assembling each. Thus 'Amalgamemnon'[87] is written entirely in future tenses, except as necessary in some reported speech, while 'Next'[88] invents voices through which consequences of 'not having' (things and language) are themed by omitting the verb 'to have' (thus echoing Perec's omission of the commonest vowel – the letter 'e' – in *'La Disparition* [89]). Much of the dialogue in 'Next' is pitched in phonetic renderings of accent and character-specific syntactic idiosyncrasies, thus taking on precisely the issue of writing as transliteration considered in my earlier discussions of Lynton Kwesi Johnson's and Louis Zukofsky's poetry. The process of reading as a 'sounding-out' challenges the reader to reconstruct the voice from an array of markers whose seeming consistency 'rules' do not always lead to unequivocal re-soundings, thus holding any 'final sense' in abeyance at an undefinable distance. Language is thus figured by Brooke-Rose as the strange receding site from which, through our intertwining of absolute differences (writing, reading, and sounding, for example), we nevertheless seem able to generate something like a singular and clear telling. This is the paradoxical and ever unstable terrain that she recognises as the challenge to both analysis and fiction and that, in her fiction, she seeks to probe by putting into play conjunctions and disjunctions absolutely forbidden to analysis.

Thus the imaginative possibilities for fiction in the challenge to engage technoscience are made explicit in her fictional probing of the process of 'evolution'. The interdependence of evolution, language and telling are offered through a 'story' that performs voicing's multiple. 'Subscript'[90], backing itself up with extensive research across the sciences of life's emergence and development, turns selected materials from these sciences into an occasion for verbal invention and the construction of a fiction for evolution 'itself'. Spanning some four and a half thousand million years, the text offers 'a story', through the clarity of its cohering linking of 'themes' and syntactic precision, that recounts, thus seeming to account for, the transitions from cell to complex social relations. Using 'the code' as an overarching metaphor, which enables her to interlink, merge and separate, biology-bio-chemistry (DNA) and language (the semiotic code), the unseeable metamorphoses are brought into language as a succession of huge but infinitely slow changes in 'the code's' structuring, across millions of years, through the appearance and disappearance of possible species (the (possibly) Neanderthal for example) and

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[87] Christine Brooke-Rose, 'Amalgamemnon', Carcanet, Manchester, 1984.

[88] Christine Brooke-Rose, 'Next', Carcanet, Manchester, 1998.

[89] See Georges Perec, *'La Disparition'*, Editions Denoel, Paris, 1969, dazzlingly and lovingly translated by Gilbert Adair, as 'A Void', Harper Collins, London, 1994.

[90] Christine Brooke-Rose, 'Subscript', Carcanet, Manchester, 1999.

the criticality of sexual difference. With the emergence of a languaging consciousness the biological code is subtly displaced by the developing social coding of language. As something like a 'voice' emerges and begins to evolve so does the text invent bravura ways of exposing possible voices in elemental relations and, eventually, as speakers in fully developed complex but always context-bound relations. Once again the matter of our Pleistocene sourcing is raised and responded to in a way which intertwines the question of language's emergence with embodiment and remembrance; 'Subscript' invites us, perhaps, to consider how what we have become in our visceral-reflexive-combine, our routine performing, might be recalling, endlessly but unbeknownst, the mattering of Lorca's 'dark beforehand'.

But just as the future tenses of 'Amalgamemnon' could not be a miming, neither can the invention, however carefully responsive to scientific research, of a fiction for evolution through coding processes be taken as the miming of some pre-existent process. Rather what 'Subscript' offers is a playfully serious originary construction that is effected through the double act of the Saying of the implicit 'narratorial voice', which then opens the way, as a continual stretching out of an imagined clearing, for a highly self-conscious and explicit narrator that assembles the code's coherent transitions as the story's own evolution. The 'telling' emerges from and as the interaction of these two voices, differently implicit but combining to perform, out of the thunderous silence of our emergence (it's absence as an experienceable 'reality'), its possibility as a condition of language: the language of evolution and the evolution of language - the two inexplicably intertwined and figured in their mutual on-rolling. In stepping into the (analytical) 'gap' between evolution and language, fiction here performs its necessary conjunction by showing that the gap can only be bridged (leapt across) through a writing-in (encrypting) that figures language as many-voiced. But, to reveal this multiple, telling has to pass by way of the two voices' aligning in a singular clarity.

In her earlier fiction[91] Brooke-Rose had displayed her commitment to an approach to writing that sought to show what fiction could 'do' when it put in question the still largely taken for granted conventions of story-making's voicing of and as a 'commonsense', the very field she later reviewed as analyst in 'A Rhetoric of the Unreal'. In the latter (published six years after the publication of 'Thru', the last of her four earlier novels) she offers a critical survey and appraisal of the 'transgressions' seemingly characteristic of a range of modern and postmodern fiction; she gathers such writing under the terms 'metafiction' and 'surfiction' and considers a wide spectrum of novelists and texts in relation to the analytical discourses and research constituting the analytical response of academic literary theorists. In part, then, this review is a retrospective analysis of her own 'earlier' writing-self , of many of the very writing-defining practices of discontinuity and interruption which she herself had already performed and explored in her earlier fiction. But it is, of course, written in response to the terms of methodic knowledge-production that define the technoscientific analytical project; it offers itself as a contribution to the discourse of academic literary studies that place themselves as theoretically rigorous research by informing themselves with whatever conceptual and methodological apparati from other knowledge-generating disciplines (linguistics, semiotics, psychology, psychoanalysis, biology, physics, and so on) seem relevant to their textual analysis.

If the discontinuities she reviews as constitutive features of much contemporary fiction- writing are, as she notes, necessarily relative (as language's, and thus writing's, groundless condition is that of a discontinuity manifest in the leap-necessitating breaks and gaps that make it possible),

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[91] See 'The Christine Brooke-Rose Omnibus', op. cit..

then analytical discourse itself shares and works within this discontinuity. And, further, as the medium for an analytical machine whose defining procedure, its methodic approach to its objects of knowledge (texts), is that of reading as a rigorous and unending interruption (a taking-apart and re-assembling through the search for each text's implicit structuration processes and elements), the apparent continuity of this discourse grounds itself in the consistency of its interruptive reading. It has to break every text down by turning it into an object for a stop-start reading that is searching for something other than an immersion in the satisfactions of its flow. But because it does not understand itself as 'telling' a 'story' it never applies its analytical engine to itself. For to do this would call into doubt its conviction about and commitment to the appropriateness of its procedures and the certitudes (always relative, that is, discourse-specific, knowledges...) they produce. Analysis is the arch-interrupter that procedes entirely by a discontinuous reading (though, of course, its instrumental writing, its account of its researches and their findings, procedes by following the rules for producing continuous (logically coherent) discourse). A certain complementarity seems to emerge.

It is as if the fiction of modernity and its afterward procedes, at least in part, through a self-addressing interruption of its own constitution, thus turning some of its resources into the materialised content, the substance and topics, of its telling. It seems intent on performing a disclosure, an opening out, of some of its own resources that situates itself, however ambiguously, in close proximity to the analytical work that follows it and, in turn, takes it as its own topic. And analysis, in its turn, though seeming to come from somewhere else entirely different (the site and institution of technoscience and its analytic knowledges with their relation to claims to 'authority' and 'power'), appears to share a similar impulse to interruption and the inhibiting of continuity, of making reading (and thus writing) into a kind of research work. Perhaps Brooke-Rose's writing, generated from within the midst of this strange double relation (to fiction and to analysis), focuses an unstated complementarity, an implicit collusion even, that marks, perhaps in some ways defines, late modern practice across the arts. Marked by, and perhaps treating this being-marked as the very focus and desire of performing, the crisis (disaster...?) that is the real everyday life of language (and thus of the 'us' that lacks a 'we') in a technoscientised self-aestheticising culture, performing (exemplified here in Brooke-Rose's writing) is condemned to making its gests available in terms, languages (figurings - via voicings, soundings, markings, shapings), that reveal its institutional sourcing.

If modernity has insistently forefronted questioning and the discontinuity of the 'moment' of performing (the gest as an excision from the continuous present) as defining the challenge faced by performing toward art, it is hardly surprising that the institution whose rationale is grounded in questioning (always in relation to the limits of knowledge-specific discourses) and that is now politically and economically centralised and crucial to the technoscientific culture's self-projecting, should be the site where such performing is generated, responded to, but simultaneously trapped. The life of making-toward-art is dependent not only on the capital resources that place it in public arenas but, crucially, on the response it generates in the very places – academies – that shaped the sense of both questioning and of performing's everyday life for the majority of its contemporary performers. For nascent performers' apprenticeship to the arts is largely served in academies on the terms of the latters' specific socio-political authority (power). It is hardly surprising that a certain complementarity, a part-sharing of implicit models of relating (to texts, to audiences, to the performing situation), should emerge as a condition of performing's survival. If technoscience is found in its most explicit form in the institution of higher education through the combine of research, development and knowledge transmission, and if its ethos spans and rules the activities of all its faculties and disciplines (the

universal measurement and grading of performance via an adherence to the value of 'work'), the arts, whether as performance or under analysis, can survive only through their necessary partial embrace of its calculative method. Their living-on has to be ordered around and through this embrace, an embrace that inevitably comes to enfold, and thus confoundingly ambiguate, art's celebration of precisely that which is the beyond, other to, the calculative.

For Brooke-Rose it is as if the analytical work entailed in surveying other writers' relation to discontinuity and transgression in narrative voicing marked a watershed in her relation to her subsequent fiction. After 'A Rhetoric of the Unreal' her novels, while, as I have indicated above, holding fast to linguistically adventurous and often playful questioning of the relation between language, knowledge, and everyday life, do offer 'stories' constructed around characters and events the telling of whose story develops something like a solvable mystery voiced through an accessible narrative clarity and continuity. In contrast 'Thru'[92], readable in retrospect as the culmination of a conception of writing performance as the continuous problematising of continuity (and thus coherence) through displacement of the narrative voice, enacts multiple forms of narrative transgression through intertextuality and a wide range of typographical settings that require reading to suspend its reliance on linear continuity and to reposition itself. To stay 'with' the text reading has to become otherwise. Toying with the issue of the relation between mirroring, distortion (eyes seeing themselves doubled through a flaw in a car's rear-view mirror) and language, the 'story' procedes through jump cuts that take on multiple aspects of the signifier-signified relation. Much of the 'action' (the writer's and that of the 'characters' and their relations) is unwound around the activities of an academic seminar involving presentation and discussion of students' papers. This provides for a continuing interplay between the 'events' and a kind of near-relentless reflexive intervention that comments, often obliquely and indirectly, on their linguistic, and thus literary, interest and functioning. A careering self-dissembled ensemble is generated in which the writer's delight in and celebration of paronomasia becomes a significant resource in the writing's movement, its persuasive drive.

The text is thus offered as a kind of *rebus*, so that reading moves through it via interruptive puzzle-solvings in a search for possible continuities. A multiplicity of materials (visual/aural-phonetic repetitions, rehearsals, echoes, memorial-reminders) enable just such a restoration of continuity, but they have to be worked at through reading-differently; the writing takes as its challenge the necessity of exposing just what it is that reading takes for granted in following story-telling conventions. Nevertheless this highly self-conscious authorial setting up of up-settings relies implicitly on the silent Saying, pointed to by Blanchot, that somehow suspends itself 'within', alongside, the printed words. The utterly obsessive concern with setting down an alternative mode of textual sequencing, of persuading readers to find other ways of associating its graphic re-structurings, reveals an approach to the 'problem' of order and the process of ordering (the calculated manipulations of conjunctions, disjunctions, reversals, trails, clues) which has already given itself absolutely over to clarity. For, without the puzzles and writerly conundra having been worked through in and as the very movement of their writing, together with their clear integration in a coherence emerging through the interlinking of puzzles, there could be no such 'fiction', no way 'thru'.

But it is these very paronomasically, *rebus*-typographically, and intertextually inflected relations to writing that form a substantial focus for the later analysis of 'A Rhetoric of the Unreal'. From her seemingly complete immersion in such style-founding practices, Brooke-Rose leaps to the

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[92] Op. cit., pp. 577 – 742.

absolute distance required by analysis in which these same writerly constituents become objects of technical knowledge, taking their places within the classificatory schema she devises for positioning the texts of contemporary fiction. Thus, after noting Pound's intertextuality (as we have seen Pound is one of her own guiding interests) as a significant precedent for the writing of Philippe Sollers and Maurice Roche, she says,

> 'Pound, however, went much further than Sollers, juxtaposing idioms of all periods, regions, and domains, veritable metalepses in the jumbling of narrative levels in that named characters may tell their story or someone else's, either in their own idiom or in Pound's version of it.'[93]

In the same context she remarks Roche's integration of 'innumerable levels' into the text of 'Circus' (1972) and goes on to list many of his procedures, including his 'typographic extensions or anagrams (Ecrit/Recit) or acrostics.'[94] These typographic shifts, anagrams, and acrostics are the precise procedures that were in play extensively in 'Thru'. Yet nowhere in 'A Rhetoric...', *in spite of being the best witness she could possibly have called upon in exploring linguistically transgressive approaches to fiction,* does she make her own writing, her own joyful immersion in such procedures, in short - her own relation to fiction writing - the object of her research. It is as if there is an absolute schiz dividing the analyst from the novelist so that the latter cannot recognise or respond to, let alone bear witness for, the former's needs. The tiniest chink in this screen between analyst and writer is to be found in the book's final footnote; drawing attention to two of her earlier novels, whose 'main characters are called Someone and Something', she writes that, in relation to 'some aspects of Sukenick's writing, I seem to be very much on his wave-length.' She had earlier noted that Sukenick's ultimate concern is 'the uniqueness of the real' and it is perhaps this wave-length that she is aligning herself with.[95]

This tactic of avoidance alerts us to the possibility that the very distance necessitated by the analytic work had both opened her to critical problems in such engagements of language and had precipitated a subsequent shift in her own return to the novel form. It seems that with 'Thru' she had taken her 'formal' disruption of continuity as far as she could, or wanted to in pursuit of the 'uniqueness of the real'. Somehow, perhaps, the analytic work, the technoscientific context and circumstance of writing's survival possibilities, had redirected her towards attempts to integrate more conventional senses of what a story might now be 'doing' with her personal excavation of the relation between fiction and the everyday experience of the crisis of language. For, as her writing clearly discloses, that crisis is bound absolutely to the sway that technoscience has over everyday living. Never less than 'serious' in their 'themes', her later fictions enact particular and quirky responses to this sway. The humour put into play by language's doubling-multiplying of alternative 'meanings' (a generalised paronomasia) becomes the site of writing's challenge to 'reference', to reading, to literature-as-art, and thus to language itself as the condition of all our relating. Brooke-Rose's texts recur continually on, and thus open and expose themselves as challenges to, the ever-present slippage between possibly 'intended' senses and the graphic-phonic realities of texts' material surfacings: how textual figuring-voicing undoes, loosens, and thus ambiguates, meaning-as-information.

In the wake of 'A Rhetoric...' the paronomasic humour that had developed in tandem with the calculated surface disruptions and dense typographic-intertextual play of 'Thru', returns in the

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[93] Op. cit., p. 335.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Op. cit., see, respectively, p. 416, and p. 384.

later fictions, but increasingly as a shaping constituent of an altered approach to the ordering of 'telling', its syn-tactic. Whilst the novels continue to spiral through language's doubling, with its unpredictable shaking of the relation between language and life, her writing project seems to shift towards the challenge of intricating her affinity for the playfully disturbing effects of paronomasia with the exploration of language-in-use in specific zones of activity. The writing comes to focus on zones of relating in which the sensed crisis of language, her recurrent concern, is manifest precisely in the troubled relation between technoscience and everyday practices and relations. In addition to 'Amalgamemnon', 'Next', and 'Subscript', her novels weave their ways around era-defining concerns, including nuclear proliferation, the emergent domination of computing and machine-intelligence, information-processing in the organisation of everyday life, and the relation between the literary imagination, the academy and the media-programmed celebrity culture.[96] She had already concluded 'A Rhetoric...' by placing her writing clearly, but therefore necessarily equivocally..., within the paradox 'of using words to say meaninglessness ... when everyone knows that real power ... functions silently and has no need of the semblance of speech, even though it never ceases to use that semblance to persuade that we participate. If art can cope with that kind of terror and humour, it has a long future yet.'[97]

But it is precisely the challenge of finding ways of engaging this troubling conjunction, of the terrifying and the humorous, that she has taken up in her fiction, while acknowledging, via the 'nothing' of 'meaninglessness', that art's leaping forays out of power and into this zone risk experiencing only disjunction and returning with almost nothing at all. And we might also ask of her assertion about 'real power' whether this is also intended as a self-reference to the 'power' that analysis-critique (within which 'A Rhetoric...' is a committed participant) wields over the life of performing and its gests. Is the 'speech' (writing) of analysis-critique, as the bearer of knowledge and method (and thus implicitly of the techno-scientific frame), a 'semblance', a cover-up, behind which the silent 'real power' of placement - the dis-posing of art's fate – takes place? Any movement out of the analytic frame into that open-field of making-toward-art, a front-line criss-crossed by Brooke-Rose herself, surely has to face the troubling implications, the really painful tensions necessarily involved in such transitions. Perhaps her fiction writing is, in turn, the zone within which this pain is explored. It leaves us with a perhaps unanswerable question that marks out the contours of art's contemporary plight: far from being reactive and secondary, *does analysis-critique now 'come first'*, thus setting the scene for a making-toward-art that has to follow in its train, pick its ways along the trails that analysis-critique is already laying out for it up ahead? Is art drawn along in the wake of the calculative and its knowledge bearers?

And even if this 'coming first' is only partially, ambivalently, operative, it may be that, under techno-representation's appropriating machinery, the above-mentioned 'almost nothing' is the most that such performing can hope to recover and find ways of saving through its figuring-voicing. For it knows in advance that, however 'far' its disordering loosening syntactics seem to carry it away from calculation's embrace, it can only return to, have some 'presence' in, the culture it sought to suspend, through the machinery's analytical-critical work of appropriation and placement. In the out-figuring of their voicings as writing's syntactic task, each of the writers considered above sought to find and hold to an 'otherwise', while knowing full well that culture's judging courts (the academy-entertainment-market combine), under the *habeas corpus*

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[96] See, for example, Christine Brooke-Rose, 'Xorandor', Paladin, London, 1987; 'Verbivore', Carcanet, Manchester, 1990; 'Textermination', Carcanet, Manchester, 1997.
[97] Op. cit., p. 389.

they license themselves to operate, would have their fragments, as the available representatives of Art's Body, dragged before them for either assimilation to art-lite, institutionalisation in the national museum of the past, or deportation (to the margins beyond the pale).

Such is the plight of performing across the contemporary arts. The depth of its challenging complexity is revealed explicitly in fiction, that writing-toward-art that has to begin in (and in some singular way to end in) the very commonsense language that is now the appropriated 'home' of calculative techno-representation. Where fiction orients itself toward art (rather than popular culture), the acuteness of the challenge to performing, of squeezing itself into the gaps between the acts of representation, of maintaining itself there, and even now and again of leaping, however briefly, away from representation's binds, is patent and continuous. For not only is it carried along by Saying's clarity, implicit in the very process of telling itself, but it is fixed in that mesh of sense which already bears the associative content and weight of representing's now utterly taken for granted work.

To hold to language's multiple offer, to turn out a singular not-quite-language through transliterated voicings of the unspeakable, to figure our historical becoming differently through memory's idiosyncratic conjunctions and discontinuities, to set forth a doubling text that can confound its surface appearances, to try to perform and manifest a different relation to energy (to the 'ends' of its expenditure (combustion))... these are what performing has to risk and hold to if it is to have any chance of breaching representation, of leaping towards and offering a passing glimpse of art's alterity. By making the undoing, the dissipation, of their own being-in-the-midst of techno-representation's mesh the subject and task of their performing, the writers discussed keep alive their pledge to art's difference. Their particular 'virtue' here, in the context of offering performing as a necessary leaping, is their making explicit and unequivocal through their singular differences, the necessity for performing to confront, and thus to find ways of turning back, in hope, through and, however obliquely and slightly, out of its own becoming-in-the-midst of calculative representation. Precisely through their immersion in and dependence on the latter's unavoidable 'medium' - 'ordinary language' - they make patent the scale of the challenge faced by all making-toward-art, irrespective of medium or media-combination: how to turn their, and thus our, beginnings in the 'ordinary' into the 'extra-ordinary' by figuring their out-leaps into their gests.

Aspects of this turning-back-through-and-out-of, a kind of practical and speedy reversal of evolution, were offered earlier through re-formulating the relation between performing and 'creation/creativity' as 'de-creation', a searching back through and laying aside of the conventions through which the 'one' has emerged from a multiple. And, through a consideration of a drawing and sculpture by Twombly, the figure of '*anabasis*' was implicated with performing as an up-country march, a meandering journey-away-from-the-here-that-is-home that perhaps, in its eventual return 'home', has some affinity with the constantly interrupted meridian that has to pass through troubling and very challenging terrain. These ways of approaching performing's 'movements', through which it attempts to release itself from the whatever-binds holding it 'in place', all point to the need to contend with becoming-in-the-midst. They are common to performing across the arts and they alert us to what may now have emerged as performing's plight-defining crisis - *the fragility of 'medium' itself under technoscience's now permanent dynamic of continuous change*. For this dynamic without destination not only drives the changes which redefine the terms on which we live routinely (by fixing 'living' as a passage through and a relation with an encasing complex of machinery –

both socio-cultural and physical), but also throws into question (while being constitutionally incapable of addressing this question) what 'life' either 'is' or 'might become'.

For performing, as for all ways of engaging, of searching for ways of coming to terms with, 'life', becoming-in-the-midst means taking on what is most unsettling about this 'midst' – the disappearance both of what used to be taken as 'settled' (always relatively...) and of the possibility of still being able to 'settle matters' once and for all, and thus , as we saw through Kafka's 'Josephine', the appearance in their stead of the 'nothing but' of disappearance-to-infinity as 'our' condition. This becomes performing's troubling terrain, the groundless ground from whose surface it tries to leap imaginatively towards Art's receding (and perhaps diminishing) unplaceable Body, in the faint hope of offering a tiny aside to the inexorable charge of the calculative. Caught up inevitably in the aggressive cross-fire-and-play of the latter, all it can do is to try to expose, through its 'how' and its 'what' and the gests it leaves behind, the overriding necessity of making for a different way of relating.