

LANGUAGE, AS A MUSIC

Six Marginal Pretexts  
for Composition

Benjamin Boretz  
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I

THESIS

A language, a music

An utterance within, a view about

Circumvention of hypercritical  
counterfactuals nowhere metabounded  
without utterance within, without  
view about

What is there to be on to,  
logically; or ontologically  
(without benefit of philosophistry) :

What is about, is also of, also is :

within :

also ever-specious metapresent worldnow,  
somewhere, metabounded nowhere :  
utterance within nascent sempiternal,  
being, about to be of; coming, contained;  
elapsing, incontinent: unshaded, urtexturous,  
unextirpated hereplace, anytime  
immemorial, a leading edge of a vanishing  
act, uncatalogued hoards of phenomenal  
finds, all comprehended within (without  
benefit of theory), all systems gone  
without a trace: not a language, not  
a music, within sound, or sight; not  
a thing for a thing to be, nor anything  
leftover to do: utterance within view  
( : about), nowhere metabounded (without : )  
view within utterance about,

from what one ever speciously itself metafested  
a now irretrievable attachment  
within view of utterance about;  
then, now itself irretrievable; then,  
now irretrievably itself; then, itself  
retrievable now, as was,  
in specious increments attaching  
what there was; attaching to  
what there was; attaching what there was  
to what there was: nowhere, metabounded  
somewhere, utterance within of view about:  
in a language, in a music,  
within a world now irreducibly reshaded:  
view within utterance of,  
nowhere metabounded:  
unconditional counterfact  
of metapresentable species,

. . . begins . . . . . here, . . . .

. . . . . attaching, in  
specious increments,

then,

to now,

as now of then,

reshadowed,

as then of now;

as here of there,

reechoed,

as there of here;

as nowhere,

emerging,

as somewhere,

... begins, ...  
... impending,  
metabounded nowhere,  
... from somewhere: an  
utterance within, not  
yet about, or of, not  
yet still —  
— still unactualized counterfact subtextually  
prearticulate, just now elapsing along  
a line of least demarcation, selfdetermining  
a stillformative startfeeling,  
something, extending somewhere; somewhere,  
terminating nowhere;  
... what there is,  
commencing here,  
... in specious increments attaching,  
the shaping spans of singularity retrieved,  
... plurally compounded  
as unitarily infused,  
... endlessly recalled  
to the brink of awareness, everfilling  
the void of unpreoccupied space, allways  
following nowhere,  
... (without benefit of geography), along  
the untravelled auguries of undelimited  
... expectation, now  
unfolding itself beyond its time,





— begins,  
from a firstindexed moment,  
to form  
members  
in thick  
and fastening perfusion  
multiplied  
in specious  
increments conforming  
to now,  
from a firstindexed moment,  
unspools a timescene  
evolves a place of conjunction. attached  
everretuning  
to erenow again  
and again  
refluxes on tightwarp extended  
omniimprescient  
with intimate hindsense  
speciously,  
from a firstindexed moment  
warps across a flickering timescene unspooled  
increment  
by lingering increment  
utterance conjoining  
with utterance  
to frame,



a voice is heard, wrapped in utterance,  
inscribing in resonance a neveremptying  
newspace berimmed along the unsilent  
warp of a timescene outspread  
— a voice, framed in somewhere,  
filtering through a finemeshed timescreen,  
is heard, draped in reverberance past,  
diffused in echoing shimmer gone,  
bathing in afterglow lost, in incipience lapsed,  
with touches of depth relieving a longdead  
unrememberable shadowless noworld;  
with shades of dimension backgrounding echo,  
with breadthstrokes drawing new form  
from a refractory void, otherhood and selfness  
elicited in unison,  
a voice  
is heard  
becoming  
a language, becoming  
a music, becoming a worldnow refracted in resonance,  
within a world sempiternal,  
nascendant, within,  
becoming awareness  
and utterance as one  
and only now,

begins:

as a timescene unspools across  
popuiously creatured, densely warped ridges,  
astride the slithering torrents  
of utterance unleashed,

there recalls something,

then,  
lingering  
still  
in its ownplace,  
somewhere  
between  
that old  
upstart  
moment  
firstindexed  
somewhere  
between  
then  
and now  
by another  
moment  
somehow  
recalled  
before

only  
increments  
onflowing  
torrent  
perhaps  
slightly  
tilts  
warp  
ridging  
firmescene  
perhaps  
membering  
perhaps  
creaturing  
before  
now  
somehow  
there calls  
anew  
arises  
confronting  
now  
across  
the ridged  
warped  
timespace  
between  
then

and now  
confronted  
each  
by the other  
reverberant  
across  
the span  
something  
and another  
now  
and then  
or sooner  
and later  
somewhere  
between  
the first  
and most  
and only  
moment  
til now  
indexed  
at all  
since  
then  
became  
incremented  
into  
utterance

warped  
into  
timescene  
spread  
out  
filtered  
through  
depthed  
dimensioned  
ridged  
encreatured  
membered  
and now  
there  
recalls  
first  
confronts  
the other  
across  
reverberant  
space  
within  
between  
the old  
returns  
recalled  
across  
another



indexed  
as each  
and both  
confront  
within  
reverberant  
time  
or space  
between  
at first  
unqualified  
except  
as each  
and other  
confronted  
elicit  
across  
reverberant  
span  
of scene  
an echo  
of self  
or other  
reverberant  
within  
the screen  
of sound  
or glow

referring  
between  
before  
the old  
refrains  
the new  
returns  
across  
the span  
of space  
or time  
between  
referring  
to qualify  
each  
recalling  
the other  
refers  
within  
to index  
either  
first  
confronting  
both  
and now  
the moment  
at once

detaches  
confronted  
no more  
returns  
to place  
relocated  
somewhere  
between  
the moments  
onflowing  
within  
the spaces  
expanding  
returning  
on course  
deflected  
selfness  
qualified  
conferred  
by otherhood  
attached  
touched  
by reference  
without  
by reverberance  
infused  
by confronting

recalled  
between  
the place  
somehow  
there  
lingering  
beyond  
somewhere  
at first  
indexed  
last  
moment  
again  
the timescene  
begins:

to be a language, now; to be a music,  
now; to be an utterance within, now; to be  
within a worldnow, irreducibly reshaded; to be  
an image of now; to be metabounded, nowhere;  
to be: of; to be: about; to be: now; to be: is: to mean.

II

ARGUMENT

[for piano]

$\text{♩} = 44$

A musical score for piano, consisting of two staves: a treble staff (top) and a bass staff (bottom). The treble staff begins with a treble clef and contains a series of notes with slurs and accents. The bass staff begins with a bass clef and contains a series of notes with slurs. The music is marked with a tempo of quarter note = 44 and a dynamic of *pp*. There are two fermatas in the bass staff, one under the fourth measure and one under the eighth measure.

*ped.*

\* *ped.*

\*

Musical score for piano, consisting of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music features chords and melodic lines with various articulations, including slurs and accents. A dynamic marking *poco* is written above the bottom staff, and *pp* is written to the right. Pedal markings are present below the bottom staff.

*Ped.*

\* *Ped.*

\* *Ped.*



A musical score consisting of two staves. The top staff contains a series of notes with slurs and ties, followed by a dynamic marking *pp* and a *poco* decrescendo. The bottom staff contains a similar series of notes, ending with a treble clef. The *poco* markings are represented by triangles pointing towards the right.

\* *Ad.*

\*

A musical score for piano, consisting of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music features a series of chords and single notes, many of which are beamed together. The dynamics are marked as *pp* (pianissimo) at the beginning of each staff, with a *piu* (more) dynamic marking in the first staff. The notation includes various note values and rests, with some notes beamed together in groups.



*pp*

*mf*



sub. **ppp** cresc. sempre: poco ..... più

*ped. sempre*

*senza sordino*



A musical score for piano, consisting of two staves. The top staff features a sequence of chords and intervals, with a dynamic marking of *rit. poco* (ritardando poco) above the sixth measure. The bottom staff contains a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs. A dashed horizontal line is drawn across the middle of the two staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as stems, beams, slurs, and dynamic markings.

... slow, resonant (♩ = 56)

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It contains a melodic line with a long slur over the first four notes, followed by a dotted half note, and then a series of notes with slurs. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef and contains a bass line with a long slur over the first four notes, followed by a dotted half note, and then a series of notes with slurs. The notation includes various dynamics and performance instructions.

*ff* cresc. molto

sub. p

*Red.* \* *Red.* \*

A handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of two staves. The music is written in a style that appears to be a sketch or a study. The upper staff begins with a treble clef and contains several notes, including a half note with a flat (Bb) and a dotted half note (D). The lower staff begins with a bass clef and contains several notes, including a half note with a flat (Bb) and a dotted half note (D). The piece is marked with a dynamic of *p* (piano) and includes a *Ped.* (pedal) instruction. The notation is fluid, with many notes connected by slurs and some notes appearing to be written with a pen rather than a printer's font. The overall impression is that of a composer's working draft.



*non legato*

*rit. poco*

*p*

*dim. poco*

*ped.*

*\* ped.*

*\* ped.*

*\**

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff begins with the instruction "non legato" and contains a melodic line with various notes and rests. The bottom staff contains a bass line with notes and rests. Performance instructions are placed above and below the staves: "rit. poco" above the top staff, "dim. poco" above the bottom staff, and "ped.", "\* ped.", "\* ped.", and "\*" below the bottom staff. The notation includes various note values, accidentals (sharps and flats), and dynamic markings.

♩ = 60

*pp*

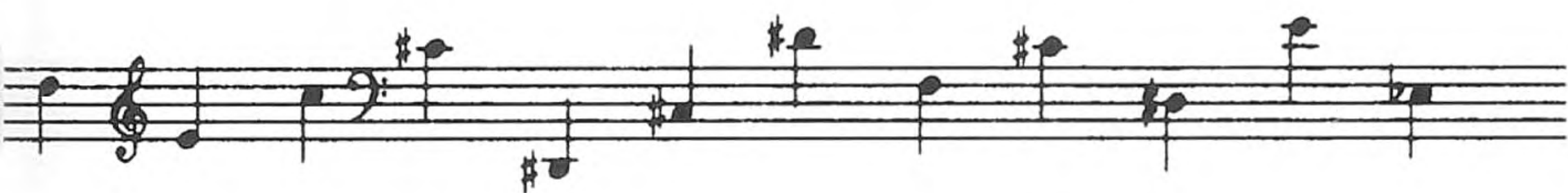
*And. ad lib.*  
*sord. sempre*



A handwritten musical score consisting of two staves, grouped by a brace on the left. The notation is written in black ink on a white background. The top staff features a series of notes, including several chords marked with a sharp sign (#). The bottom staff contains a more complex sequence of notes and rests, also including a sharp sign (#). The handwriting is clear and legible, typical of a composer's manuscript.



A musical score consisting of two staves, likely for piano, with a brace on the left side. The notation includes various notes, accidentals, and stems. The top staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef and a common time signature. The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The top staff contains notes on the treble clef, including a B-flat on the first line, a D on the second line, a B-flat on the second space, a D on the third space, a B-flat on the third space, a D on the fourth space, a B-flat on the fourth space, a D on the fifth space, and a B-flat on the fifth space. The bottom staff contains notes on the bass clef, including a B-flat on the first space, a D on the second space, a B-flat on the second space, a D on the third space, a B-flat on the third space, a D on the fourth space, a B-flat on the fourth space, a D on the fifth space, and a B-flat on the fifth space. There are also several accidentals (sharps and flats) scattered throughout the score, including a sharp on the second space of the top staff and a sharp on the second space of the bottom staff.



A musical score for piano, consisting of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The top staff begins with a treble clef and a B-flat key signature. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef and a B-flat key signature. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. The top staff has a melodic line with a B-flat on the first note, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff has a bass line with a B-flat on the first note, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The music ends with a double bar line.





A musical score for piano, consisting of two staves joined by a brace on the left. The top staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody starts on a whole note B-flat in the first measure, followed by a half note D-flat, and then a series of eighth notes: E-flat, F, G, A, B, C, D, E. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The accompaniment starts with a whole note B-flat, followed by a half note D-flat, and then a series of eighth notes: E-flat, F, G, A, B, C, D, E. The piece concludes with a final whole note E-flat in both staves.



*p*



A musical score for piano, consisting of a grand staff with two staves. The upper staff begins with a treble clef and contains a single note on the second line (F4) with a slur extending to the right. The lower staff begins with a bass clef and contains a single note on the second space (D3) with a slur extending to the right. A dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) is placed between the two staves. A large, curved brace on the left side of the staves indicates that the notes in both staves are part of a single melodic line. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots on both staves.

III

SPEC SHEET



No sooner had the word emerged (met from nowhere, as it were spatiotemporarily undisposed), abounding about in a spate of unmitigated meaning, than the fraughtful prongs of unrequited referentiality uproared their schizophonic boom, shivering timbres, rattling rafters, rocking the runes to their utter detriment, sounding the larrups of freeshouting fancy to the four square cornice of the unspeakable thingdom, impeached on the yawp of a megamansspokes, repealing the hours in rapid succession, an endless present of hallow chitchatter stretching from here to girdle the mumblers, a tomb of tones in dismal retreat, selfhooded in shameful solitary habits, forever doomed (or so it deemed) to mean existence in and of and by itself.

Inconsolate, then, alone, the word, by no object detained, is visited only by nameless desires, haunted visions of destinies unfulfilled, foreboding deliverance from drab anonymity indefinitely deferred. Even the prospect of future decay, and final dissolution, in such an unsteady state of being, would have daunted less than the inexpressible umbrageity presently under sufferance. To what effect, may be imagined when one considers that it remained entirely moot as to whether it was to be a part of speech, a chord of nature, or only an immaterial gleam of thought adrift in the frozen endless wastes of time impassively spent.

But even as one gaped upon this scene of desolation, born of such noble promise, yet seeming to bear such arid fruit, there could be descried, just now becoming visible upon the distant verges of one's own creation, a diminutive mote approaching on the medial distance; a fleck of form, a whispering whirr, a streaking color, a lowering flap, a swooping circle described, a flash of sudden shadow, a fluttering downscendant shred of fuzz, a trill one minute, the next an alighting achieved—in such wise there came into view and audition a pandemonium of estimable qualities, each passing distinct within the enveloping timescape, yet all together contriving somehow to become converged, in tenuous hypostasis and some disarray, into a corpulate singular creature, now carefully preening itself upon its newfound perch.

Here the reader is beseeched to grant indulgence, for the regrettable poverty of detail and incident in the ensuing narrative. Not, to be sure, that the author sustains any scruple or modesty such as to induce him discreetly to conceal any circumstance essential to the veracious accomplishment of his chosen task; for this were to betray at its very root the unflinching impartiality which is the ethical fundament of responsible authorship.

No, the reader's indulgence is required entirely in virtue of the peculiar insufficiency of the author's vantage point, much encumbered as it was by that formidable obstruction behind which he was obliged to make his observations, obscured from any access to that specific consciousness wherein the principal events of the sequel necessarily took their occasion.

The reader, however, must further be warned that, not wishing to resign himself to the abandonment of his narrative at such a critical and interesting juncture, the author has, perhaps rashly, taken the liberty of setting forth, in the sequel, events and passages which, it must be confessed, are wholly of his own invention. These, nevertheless, gave promise of proving highly favorable, if not verily indispensable, to the satisfactory resumption of his tale, and also appeared quite haply to approximate nearly to the authentic facts of the case.



And so let us now, with the aid of such wisdom as we may command, return forthwith to the place of our adventure, not dallying overlong in speculative digression lest, in musing the while upon the perils of unscientifically grounded conjecture, we unduly exaggerate the risk that happenings of some considerable moment may pass unobserved before our preoccupied senses.

For what seemed to be an eternity, but perhaps was only a virtual timespan, remaining transfixed in reflection upon its unutterable plight, and oblivious to the progress of all that had so precipitately transpired, the word merely went on repeating, tirelessly, rapt, its redundant refrain. Such indifference as it appeared to exhibit was greatly perplexing to witness: was there nothing sufficiently prepossessing about the creature now in evidence to warrant the most symbolic gesture, at least, of acknowledgment, even without reference to any particular individual virtues it might have professed? Or was it an entity of such unreal estate as to be worthy of regard as only the insignificant stuff of which dreams might be fashioned, hardly a thing to endow with the solemn promise of substantial grounds for reification as one, above all, or not even, first, among many? Or was the word itself one of such circumspection as to conceal within its ephemeral bosom any mode of response or conjecture? Or perhaps it was simpler, perhaps it merely chanced to be in an especially uninterrogative mood. Perhaps more to the point, it might have supposed that the creature so grossly encroaching upon the hitherto unbroken spell, was, in all likelihood, already spoken for, and hence unavailable for further attachment. (For this, after all, was a quite inexperienced word, unpracticed in the varied customs of sophisticated intercourse, and as yet unexposed to the forthcoming shocks of the cultural usages by which it would shortly be bruited about.)

Does it perhaps strain the reader's credulity that we ascribe, to an inanimate word, a mere instrument of utterance, after all, barely a grain of sound on the timeseashore, in imminent peril of utter extinction by any careless snap of the jaws

of conceit, that we deign to attribute to such an insubstantial configuration, such qualities of mind and spirit, as are properly reserved to the more fully dimensional creations of that Intelligence which has ordered and divided the categories of all experience and entity, placing each securely in its rightful and hierarchical place within the ordination of all that is? Yet no other conclusion nor explanation could be scientifically drawn from the passage of events which now, on the burgeoning timeplane, commenced to unfold, than that this very word, intent though it was in contemplation of its own condition, had begun to exhibit some sensible change, some measured response to the altered circumstances of its environs. It seemed, I submit, to be audibly moved; though with what glimmer of hope, what tremor of fear, or other sufficient condition, could not be determined by any available means of objective inquiry.

The object of so much uncertainty, meanwhile, reposed content in alert readiness for further flight at the least provocation. Though it tended to give close attention to its surroundings, words were quite simply not preeminent among its concerns, and its character was, at all events, preternaturally unreflective. Thus, despite the anomalous condition in which this creature now found itself, it had far too many properties of its own to take account of, and far too much appetite for its own comfort, to give weighty scope to any unease it might have felt, regarding its personal identity or image. A twitter or two, and a few desultory pecks, were the only outward signs it gave of possible agitation.

But whether it was written in the stars, or only on the wind, or emblazoned in chalk on the white glyphs, or told in chains of invisible links, there came a moment of illumination, in a lift of voice, in a hardly perceptible movement, a moment when some antique fusion of thing to thing was reenacted, a moment wherein a thing of utterance, and a thing of flight; a thing of sound and fury, and a thing of beak and feathers; a thing of innocence, and a thing of experience, could be perceived upon the spreading mindward coupled in immaculate

encounter, consummating an act of referential miscegenation, engaging in a meaningful relation, each having become a metaform of the other, emplacing within its own ineradicable stain, to be carried thencefrom to the ends of existence, each bidding the other to take its name, to wear its plumage and crest, henceforth, ordained together to be forevermore BIRD, soundcreature become creaturesound, living form become form of life, wordsound become creaturesense, the named bearing the name, as it once more soared into flight, and the name calling the named, as it lingered, still murmuring, in profound recollection, among the filtering echoes and the softening shadows of advancing ages.

And how did they fare, forever after? And what of progeny? Well, no sooner had this very wordbird encountered an actual female human person for the first time (or so it reported, in any event), than that referential miscegenation itch returned with a vengeance, escalating in the wink of an eye to a case of outright semantic adultery. The creaturebird itself was to lead a veritably checkered career of its own before its time was over, acquiring nuances of questionable provenience, performing acts rumored by some to be considered unnatural, and in general raising hob in ways peculiar to its kind. Such exploits paled in triviality, however, beside the unbridled extravagances to which the wordbird lent itself (some say, even perpetrated) following almost immediately upon its having been put to the question. What some of the tricks it turned may have been, was anyone's geste, though they became extremely vivid in later description, just in the degree to which they lay on the shady side of lexical legality. But that, as my gentle readers well know, is the single place where something is most likely to find itself captured; depending of course on how much daylight is placed between the cracks and the populace straining in hot pursuit—not an adventure, I might add, for the timid, or the fastidious, who will find themselves better served going through regular channels, by coming to terms in a moderate way, and making their proper applications according to Hoyle.

With respect to the subsequent history of our two audacious desperadoes, a discreet veil will here be drawn over its ostensible particulars, owing to their indelicate nature, and to protect the innocence of the few so remaining. With this, we conclude our faithful account of the historic encounter of the Beast and the Burden, told in the familiar manner of a demoralizing tale, which we have offered here for the edification of all and sundry, dissembled.

IV

REDHOOK



[ HERE A PERFORMANCE IS GIVEN  
OF "REMEMBER"  
BY IRVING BERLIN ]

ok so thats got it together. so you couldnt pry it apart with a tendollar toothpick. so maybe its the payoff on all the purple burble's been let off around here lately, not that Im naming any names you understand, but lets face it, you know what I mean, with the windows shut and all, hard to feature all that jive in one sitting. well all thats ancient history now anyway ever since Old Man Berlin made the scene. really cut the mustard, way back in '25, in the days before anyone knew an eight track mixer from a one horse shay—I bet they hadnt even invented the running board yet, too busy winding up the good old Victrola to spin them Caruso platters on. and all that time Old Man B. went on squeezing off chartbusters, riffing on any old tatty thing that was going down in the street between the Statue of Liberty and the Russian Front. like its not like Im grooving on nostalgia or any kick like that, you dig? Its strictly that this cats meow just sets my table like nobodys business—know what I mean? really says it all and I dont mean any of this SM radio easy listening Muzakjive crapola neither, what I mean is is the whole works like on that track the longhair gent up front just blew, the real laying it out straight mccoys complete with canary and sidemen doing their thing like its quarter to twelve and theres no tomorrow. dont ask me how he gets it

to cook like that, you wouldnt take a flyer with a wooden nickel at suckerbait odds on the chances of one of those ditties making the cut with nothing up front but some mickeymouse marshmallow cornballing lyrics and some honkyman tonking his tinfoil tune that wouldnt of got Tchaikowsky past the doorman at the Man Hattan School of Music. hey like its simply unreal what comes off of those tinkertoy words when they start hanging out with that nowhere tune. comes on like gangbusters, like theres some meaning in them that no way was there before, or like they just went into some whole new karma —you cant believe they had it in them, just glomming them parked there on the sheet looking like Gabriel Heater reading his induction notice over a coast to coast hookup. unreal, that Mr. B., just camping there on the ivories all by his lonesome making those licks talk like they knew their way in the dark. and him like a dropout that made out like music writing was out to lunch 'n' he wouldnt give it the right time of day. gives you the creeps just trying to figure it, what kind of a number hes doing on you when he trots out that tacky bag of rubberbands and ragdolls and it comes out like Sarah Bernhardt should live so long. yeah and when the 14karat goldplated chantoozies goose it a couple notches like Sarah Vaughan or even some stud like the Groaner running it up those pearly pipes maybe going like sixty and then out of nowhere hitting the skids or floating it out front real purty awhile just setting it up for a little light jab or a quick knee to the inner sanctum, you know youve been somewhere else man they are talking to you in some heavy new language youre digging the most. or what was that Ellington said, it dont mean a thing if it aint got that swing or something—I dont know but it sure 's hell dont mean the same old thing 's them rinkydink noises youd make if you mouthed them words off in a massage parlor or even the Debutante Ball or over the p.a. at Ebbets Field pinchhitting for Gladys Gooding on Opening Day—better lay off it, youd blow the head gasket on your shinynew Laffmeter or the BMT dont go to Canarsie. makes you sound like you guzzled a glob of Preparation H instead of your Jello or maybe got water on the tonsils or like one of those borschtbelt boffolas that breaks you up goofing on some crazy saga like hes yakking some farout Eskimo lingo—drives you nuts cause it almost goes



down like making sense but keeps ending up with you clutching for air like you just whiffed out on 3 and 2 on a nickel scroogie a mile outside. no kidding, them Eskimo-type words come off like they could sound like they mean something irregardless of you not having a clue where its at. beats me how you can tell for a dead cert's Eskimo 'stead of frogjabber anyways. (hey maybe this here Classical dude 'sbeen laying it out straight the whole time in twobit Eskimo 'n' here i thought it was just ritzy fandangoes doing radical plastic surgery on the mother tongue.) or like hotlips Page on wawa mute blowing I let a song go out of my heart like hes jiving the fuzz so's the man wouldnt tumble to whether its heavy rank or just shooting the breeze with his horn. like back in Assembly when you did Pledge of Allegiance or Columbia the Gem of the Ocean and no one in the whole PS 45 couldve made out the words in a book—or like the old lush on the block had to do an X on his welfare chit could read his way round a liquor store faster 'n Albert Einstein could figure his pension. or like all that chintzy bookjive old Miss Portmore 'd lay on us that was like Hubert Updyke on the Judy Canova program 'n' that the cool dudes 'd do a dead ringer for her in the schoolyard at PT 'cept they just faked the words or did some naughty ones instead— got their ass kicked good for it too so I couldnt see much percentage in it myself. Old Man Berlin though he musta had all that jazz cooled so's he could take some regular old words youd known all your life and make them sound like they were something youd never heard before—maybe thats how come they sound so funny when you do that bit without the tunes after you got them down in your head like theyre inside the music—like the meaning just took a powder 'n' left you in the lurch with a mouthful of marbles 'n' a jinx on your cueball. 'n' anytime I dig some new Berlin number they mostly have the same words as each other but they keep getting more to them every time out, like your whole life the same words keep meaning more things from when youre a kid and theyre all pretty much a jumble and not too different than each other— like in kids games like a my name is Alice where the kids just groove on saying words that sound like each other or go through the ABCs 'n' don't really hear much of anything else they mean. cause when youre a grownup and heard a lot of

Berlin songs and all they keep sounding more and more different than all the other words, like they pick up some new crud from every way they've ever been spoke till you could spot them in a rushhour crowd like they were Marilyn Monroe at a Temperance rally. hey wouldnt it be too much to just like run into old Berlin out on the boulevard one fine day just to give him five 'n' tell him your handle's Joe Doakes 'n' Ive always admired your compositions Mr. Berlin like if he'd of croaked already it would of been in the papers but maybe then I could ax how he does it 'cept where would I be if he said what did I think the words meant the shit woulda hit the fan, right? cause hed probably clam, a deep mother like him didnt get in the chips handing it out on the corner of Broadway and 50th Street to any wiseass got the hutzpah to put the touch on him like hes got nothing to do but kill time. still and all there has to be some way he does it to put it together like Mutt 'n' Jeff 'n' it still comes up smelling like roses. well if someone wants to get the inside track on any of that theyll have to ask Berlin themself what hes into, what its about, you dig me? no point asking me, I just work here.

V

IVY



It has been entirely too long since we were last in touch. And I am aware that in the meantime our thoughts may have so far diverged that I should perhaps despair of trying to communicate across the resultant conceptual gap. But I have sincerely regretted our silence, whatever its possible cause, even to the point of finding it rather alarming; and so I eagerly break it now, fully cognizant both of the possible importunity of such an aggression, and of the obvious satisfaction I experience in having found what I can at least convince myself is a legitimate occasion for it. For I have been thinking about some things which I believe are of considerable concern to us both, and I wish to share them with you now.

I have been thinking, in fact, precisely about the ways in which we communicate our thoughts, to ourselves, to each other, and, concomitantly, to our students and readers. I have been thinking, in particular, about that rhetoric of discourse, in which we have all been so consummately schooled, in which we are all so exhaustively practiced, however comparatively adept or inept our individual performances may be. And I have been thinking of how the identifying resonance of this rather narrowly varying rhetoric of discourse has become our badge of social and intellectual identification, a virtual *sine qua non* for our public language, for it to be received, presumptively, as bearing the stamp of work embodying matters of serious intellectual intent and content. From this point of view, I perceive that our invariant, and perhaps unreflective, profession of such a rhetoric of discourse is motivated primarily by social considerations, as providing an accessible, shared, medium of professional intercommunication, a medium whose very neutrality of form and expression conduces to the sense of maximally intersubjective cognitivity of content, yielding such content explicitly and lucidly, even at a single reading, with a minimum of impedance by such idiosyncratic stylistic qualities as are considered more appropriate to the privater precincts of works of art, thereby enabling the widest range of discussion, criticism, and reformulation by the largest number of interested colleagues.

And yet, I have been thinking that our deepest and most passionate work of thought is, first and foremost, intensely personal to each of us, such that our need to capture it in configurations of language which express its most specific and individual significations might be supposed to be far more deeply exigent than the service of however worthy a social convenience. And can we not note, with T. E. Hulme's *Speculations*, that such specificity of configuration is virtually the province of the so-called creative artist, who is disabled to produce the curvatures he paints with such instruments as rulers and compasses, because the results of applying the latter are simply too approximate to achieve the precision of what he has clearly envisioned? The inconvenience of such a view, if applied to our intellectual work, is evident, and, equally, social in nature: for the more highly specific the sense of something, the less interchangeable with it, in sense or color, can any paraphrase be, the less that thing lends itself to plausible glossification or reformulation, without irreparable rupture. With respect to those so-called works of art, our inability to satisfy ourselves that we can duplicate, paraphrastically, what they say, leads us to speak of our apprehension of them as "intuitive", or, more usually, "purely intuitive". And, in the condition where we feel helpless to formulate extemporaneously, and in the common rhetoric of discourse, an intelligible duplicate of what we have received, we suffer acutely the insecurity of being unable to verify that we have understood, to identify what, in fact, was there to be understood, or even whether anything was. And how can we be persuaded by, assent to, disagree with, or correct, anything which merely is, even if what it merely is, is thought, but thought which has signally failed to address us in the rhetoric of discourse which we know how to receive, and in which we know how to respond? But I have been thinking that the "purely intuitive" epithet we use must in fact refer to objects and mental episodes whose principal interest and personal value to us must be, for their own sakes, to learn them intensely and quest earnestly after their qualities; in which they are radically divergent from our own rhetoric of discourse, cultivated essentially for the benefit of others, and for ends outside its own configurations. And yet, that we do, in the rhetoric of discourse, attempt to charac-

terize such obscure objects of purely intuitive nature, suggests that we do receive from them an intuition of sense. Perhaps we could even agree that in language of any degree of individuation, from outright plagiarism to total unparaphrasability—and not excluding, certainly, any instances of the rhetoric of discourse—it is possible, depending on the circumstances and content of utterance, that something is being said.

Suigeneric objects, both natural and artifactual, are, indeed, among the principal objects of attention whenever we think and teach. And we use the rhetoric of discourse as the neutral social medium by which to contemplate such objects, to order them into intercommensurable classes as subject matter, to reveal our knowledge of and insights into them; and we determine whether our interlocutors or our students have received the contents of our insights and thoughts by their performances within the rhetoric of discourse. And yet, do we not infallibly duct ourselves and our students and readers away from the ostensible objects of attention by the very persistence of our enclosure within the invariant rhetoric of discourse? Do not the paraphrasable “point”, the context of subject matter, the evidential language of “understanding”, perforce become the centers of all attention, wherein the object of interest becomes an example, the neutral medium from which we extract our significant generalizations as the termini of our enterprise, not reverting instead to that now descriptively influenced rereading of the object itself, a rereading whose contents may be unpredictable, untestable, or unrepresentable in the common cognitive rhetoric of discourse?

The rhetoric of discourse is our neutral medium of description; and yet, like any language, it has a color, and is a particular mode. The objects of our interest which we describe and understand in the rhetoric of discourse are inexhaustibly various in color, and are of equally various modes. Surely it is thus, that they possess the power to impinge upon our interest; this that they require to achieve a sufficient individuation to become vivid to our senses. And each of them, in turn, may be perceived in an inexhaustible variety of perspectives, each of them may engender an inexhaustible variety of thoughts. Can we expect to convey in the neutral rhythms, and terminal resonances, of the monochromatic rhetoric of discourse, in

its monomodal forms of description and analysis, all the variety of what we perceive, of what we think? Can a lingua franca such as is adequate to casual conversation transmit the nuances of what we have deeply pondered and intensely observed? Do we not require a rhetoric of discourse, description, and analysis at least as varicolored as its objects of interest in order to render it, and them, with adequate vividness and particularity? When we require a surgical instrument, can we avail ourselves of a bludgeon?

But we are complacent about the colorlessness of our talk, of our linguafrancic rhetoric of discourse, because we know it is neutral and innocuous. And we never claimed to capture all that we might perceive, in our descriptions, nor all that we might have sensed, in our analyses. What we communicate is what is communicable, leaving the rest for the higher sensitivities of pure intuition. I have been thinking that we are deceived in this belief, that while we may not speak as we perceive, we will soon enough be perceiving as we have spoken. For the rhetoric of discourse is coercive on our senses, as is any mode of description or thought: description transforms the described—else why would we believe that we can influence the perceptions and awarenesses of others by its means, however much we may have failed to consider whether our influence is likely to inspire those higher sensitivities on which our rhetoric of discourse so crucially relies to supply intuitively what it leaves cognitively undescribed? And if we so influence the perceptions and awarenesses of others by how we speak, descriptively, by the same route we must be even more profoundly influencing our own.

We know, too, that it is only in the formulation of our own thought that we begin to discover its contents. A mathematician does not have mathematical thoughts in the absence of mathematical symbols and syntax. On the other hand, the truly creative mathematician is one who finds himself obliged, in order to have his original thoughts, to invent new symbols and syntaxes—still, to be sure, mutually intelligible and cotenable with the old, but not necessarily intertranslatable with them. Gödel's justly famous proof of the inconsistency or incompleteness of all mathematical systems



more powerful than sentential logic required for its elucidation a series of forty-six fantastically original preliminary definitions, before the sense of his theorem could be formulated. Our capacity to think is delimited firmly by our capacity to invent modes of thought; and if our modes of thought are restricted to the methods of paraphrase, the conventional forms of discursive reasoning, and the invariant grammars of traditional syllogistic, symbolic, or inductive logic; if the acceptable modes of intellection cannot include an inexhaustible variety of thoughts displayed, and captured in a continuously creative ontology of constructions and speculations; if it cannot include that which is subject only to precise and cognitive reception and attribution, as a singular phenomenon or entity, along with that which is subject to explicit proof, test, and reformulation; then the context within which we are able to think, and to perceive as thought, has shrunk alarmingly to preclude from our intellectual world not only the modern incarnations of Beethoven, Chrétien de Troyes, or Flaubert, but those of Plato, Kierkegaard, and Wittgenstein as well.

These are my thoughts on the rhetoric of discourse which we share, and on which we depend for so much of the significant contents of our lives. I ask you earnestly to consider whether this neutral medium, this impartial arbiter of the issues of thought, this unprejudicial vehicle by which we order our journals, our disciplinary standards, our minds, our senses, our concepts, our curricula, and our educational desiderata, is really so innocuous after all. I await your response with intimate concern.



VI

EPILOGUE



●●●●●●

Listen:



you can hear an image,



or,

you can hear a symbol.

Listen:



you can retain an image,  
drawing to itself  
everything  
that  
attaches to it,

or,

you can metabolize an image, as a symbol  
absorbing it into  
an infinite chain  
of disappearing links,  
each a path  
to something else.

Listen:

to an image of utterance,  
language brewing in the  
cauldron of composition,  
creating time as sound  
of meaning,

or,

Listen:

to a symbol  
language vanishing  
in terminal utterances  
terminally delivering  
each its own message  
evacuating itself  
at every tick  
outflowing  
interminable oneness  
evaporated  
in the sound  
of clocktime  
passing.

Listen:



the capacity to give things  
quality and sense and resonance  
is what enables language  
and is the power to make  
language.

meaning is  
a heterogeneous metamorph  
of the everevolving  
senseworld,  
now personified.

every word that deepens an object  
every object that amplifies a word  
every utterance in referential  
tones, creates a metaphor;  
only names and terms  
correctly applied  
must fail  
to describe.

Listen:

to an image  
of thought presented  
asking only to be  
received,  
as a heavily indexed  
sense of something  
imagined,

not,

to a symbol  
of points to be scored  
as for and against  
or grist for a mill  
of doctrines and truth.

no textbook need be rewritten  
nor footnote obliged  
to acknowledge  
the present occasion.

Somewhere, metabounded nowhere,  
there may arise  
a language which might be a music  
a music which might be a language:

I,

have been listening,  
for something to speak,

listening to hear language speak  
listening to hear music speak

listening to language  
listening to music  
listening to find a voice  
for myself to speak

so that I  
may speak  
to  
you.

The complete score of Language, as a Music is published  
by Lingua Press

PERFORMANCE TIME: ca. 1 hr. 30 min.