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THE ESSENTIAL, INTERACTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN

A CREATIVE THINKER AND AN AUDIENCE

by

SUSAN KING

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Department of Curriculum Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute of Education of the
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Canada

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SUSAN KING
DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM TEACHING AND LEARNING
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

ABSTRACT

The relationship between a creative thinker and other people raises many questions. Thought expressed in a language, perhaps mathematics, dance, sculpture, English, has a product, performers and an audience.

What is a creative thinker? Do thoughts require expression at all? What is language? Are the limits of language too confining for some thoughts or too traditional to express a radically new idea? Is a listener likely to understand the thought itself, with some of the context, and is this understanding possible or unlikely considering the differences between people, especially over time and place? Does the recipient of the thought require training to understand the subtleties of the expression? Does the performer of the product offer an accurate interpretation of the thought, and will the audience be able to make the leap in imagination required to understand it? If translation is necessary what are the limits of accuracy, depending on the faithfulness of the translator?

This dissertation's focus is the relationship between the thinker and the language chosen to express a thought; the relationship between interpretation by the recipients (performer,

critic, or audience) and the original expression; the relationship between people, across history, culture and time who receive the expression and try to understand it, and the original creative thinker.

This relationship is both interactive and essential; interactive because the creative thinker is attempting to express a thought to someone else and has an audience in mind, or the audience may have been unimaginable to the thinker. The choice of the language has limitations and sometimes the thinker pushes at the limits of this language to effectively articulate the thought, especially if it is new or different. The recipients who interpret the expression also transform the thought with their experiences and biases. How far can the thought be transformed before it is changed rather than enriched by this interaction? And where does truth lie in this relationship? The relationship is essential because without each of its participants it would not exist. Each component is interdependent, shaped by each, and has a place in history because of each.

These questions will be explored

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There is one important person I would also like to thank. Jeffry Ordover was the stimulus for the origin of this thesis in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1966-67. Ironically and appropriately, he also suggested finishing touches in Great Neck, New York, 2000.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

As a high school English and philosophy teacher in the Ontario school system for almost three decades I have become increasingly fascinated by a deceptively simple question: how does a thought get transmitted accurately from one person to another?

A teacher facilitates the communication of thought: her own, the thoughts of great thinkers, a student's thought. She must also teach how to use the language, as a form of expression and comprehension. Assessment of the accuracy of this communication, oral and written, in discussion, debate, essays, creative writing, exposition, is also important,

Some thoughts, of course, are simple and their transmission is relatively easy to understand, such as facts, instructions, basic descriptions of things. We just need to speak the same language. But what of big thoughts, the kind of thoughts expressed by a Socrates, for example? How can the brilliant world view of such a mind, preserved by Plato, spoken in ancient Greek in a culture 2400 years ago, be taught meaningfully to a sixteen year old Sri Lankan immigrant boy, whose first language is Tamil and who is being taught in English? Or again, how can a seventeen year old Somali girl, a refugee from an East African culture, be helped to hear the music of the Austrian Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, circa 1780, and experience in some fashion what Mozart himself or his particular audience might have been hearing in its performance? I am led to wonder, in my classroom, how it is that I can communicate my own

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thoughts to my students. Do they understand me? Do I understand them?

I want to believe that meaning is transmitted, that I and my students are able to grapple with great thinkers of any time and resonate with something basic and true. This is what keeps me going as a teacher. Much is assumed, but the longer I introspect the more complex and marvellous it seems to me. In my own fashion, I have tried to study the process, a study that has ultimately led to this doctoral thesis.

It all begins with a thought in the mind of a thinker. A thinker can be any great artist, philosopher, writer, or you and me. The thinker has a holistic experience, a kind of prethought, unformed hunch, made up of all the mental capacities we can imagine, and more. I speculate that this thought may grow in associations, memories, sensations, feelings to the point where it finds coherency in what some might call a voice. This voice is heard only by the thinker and it is in a symbol system chosen by the thinker to express this thought to himself or to another person. Nowadays, we think of a spoken tongue and writing as synonymous with language. Here, I mean more than linguistics. Music, movement, imaging, sculpture, mathematics, to name a few, are all modalities of communication made up of symbols, syntax, form, structure.

The first three chapters of this dissertation are essentially about the 'thinker', though there will be a great deal of overlap throughout. In the first chapter, THE THINKER, I explore the

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thinking processes of a variety of people, demonstrating differences in talent, skills, and interests of individuals. The second chapter, A PERSON, explores the problem of how some thinkers are not legitimized and therefore not heard within their own culture, for example, women, the poor, slaves, the illiterate. There is no set rule here. Exclusion is dependent on history and social culture, and changes allow the thinker to be heard later, sometimes with the help of the historian, archaeologist, sociologist, sometimes because the thought has been maintained in oral form or in memory. The third chapter looks at those who were 'out' and have, in the course of time, come 'in'. This chapter focuses specifically on one example of exclusion, American black slaves, and how their thoughts eventually came into the mainstream of society. This chapter is called JAZZ.

The thought finds voice and form in language. The thinker must have a close relationship with his language if it is to express the deepest workings of the heart and mind. It is a kind of love relationship that we tend to take for granted. As a teacher of English, sometimes to students for whom English is a second language, I aim to inspire them with an understanding of this love. The thinker has a close relationship with it, knowing how to use it as a fine tool which bears the mark of his character. Much can be said about language, but I am just an inquiring teacher not a linguist or cultural anthropologist. I feel able to speculate on what I have come to appreciate from my own experience and readings. This process, of a thought finding voice in a

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language, takes place in a particular culture, at a particular historical time, under particular human conditions. The chapter, LANGUAGE, looks at various symbol systems: movement, mathematics, painting, sculpture, music, verbal languages in order to describe their commonality as vehicles of thought expression. STRUCTURE AND MEANING deals more specifically with words and music. In it, I analyze how the structure holds and transforms meaning. Carrying this forward, I explore how language may also limit the expression of thought and how a great thinker often strains at these limits, breaking the rules and establishing new usage. This chapter is called FRUSTRATION.

Two other chapters are devoted to language as well. TRANSLATION deals with the passage of the thought, formed as it is in a language, to other languages, other cultures and times. This chapter deals with relaying a thought accurately, and comprehending it based on the process of translation, sometimes just between different people in the same community, sometimes between vast distances and times. Unless a language is direct, as is oral communication or body movement, people have invented a means of communicating which is more permanent and transportable. The chapter, TECHNOLOGY touches on the interface – alphabet, books, computer, just to name a few in verbal language – between a thinker and the person who receives the thought. Students are touched directly by computers which they use for many purposes, to notate and play music, to draft architectural plans, to write an essay, to illustrate using animation. Technology plays an important part in

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all other forms of expression from kiln, costume, CD, protractor, any medium used to facilitate expression.

Interpretation takes training and practice. Teaching students how to interpret a poem, an essay, a Shakespearean play for themselves without imposing one's own bias is difficult. They must learn how to analyze, deconstruct and see the whole, then to interpret another person's expression. Three chapters in this dissertation cover interpretation. INTERPRETATION deals with the technical skill of a performer, editor, museum director, to read a piece of music, manuscript, work of art and identify, compare, evaluate and present its message and meaning to an audience, reader, spectator. THE CRITIC, or expert at interpretation, offers an opinion to which people with less skill look for guidance or assessment, and all students must learn to choose their authorities carefully. THE HISTORIAN, who studies the thinker in a distant time and place in the context of significant events, is another influential interpreter. The audience is involved on all levels as critic, historian or individual attending a performance

Then comes the unanswerable question students hopefully ask when they have acquired skills and knowledge in depth. How can we understand another person? How can we understand another thinker from a time, place and langauge quite different from our own? These questions are raised in the last chapter, UNIVERSALITY.

There are a number of terms used in this paper. The basic premise is that there is an interactive, transformational relationship between the thinker, the language, the executants and

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the audience and this transformation must stay within a radius of truth so that the original can be understood with accuracy or faithfulness. Each of these terms has a range of meaning which fits the scope of the dissertation.

The thinker in this paper is a creative thinker: a mathematician, painter, sculptor, musician, poet, dancer. This person is similar to you and me, but after the evaluation of history is deemed vastly talented, innovative, great.

Relationship is the most significant term. This word means 'connexus' or connection, link, relatedness, interdependence. Between the thinker and the language chosen is the link of choice. The thinker chooses the language, moulds it to suit his needs and impresses it with his personality. Between the thinker and the executant there is a relationship based on the connection of shared technical skills, education and appreciation. The audience interprets, internalizes what has been presented, and gives it personal meaning. Between each partner in the communication of an idea is an interdependence.

Transform describes an interactive relationship. The thinker actively shapes the language to suit his needs while the language offers resistance and constraints no matter how passively. The executant must make decisions, create a setting for the thought, interpret a piece of work, like choosing the fonts used in a book, the frame of a painting, the instrument used in a performance. These aspects define the presentation because of their intrinsic qualities. The audience brings its own experiences, feelings and

ideas to the articulation of the thought, and the performance is influenced with small modifications.

Radius of truth is the hard one. What is truth? In some cases, truth may be identified as simple factual accuracy, tested against perception and experience, or found in the voice of authority. It may be an axiom, a valid deduction, or a scientific hypothesis. It may be a philosophical concept. Nevertheless, it must 'ring true'. The audience who takes the thought into its own realm of understanding must believe that the meaning they comprehend is what the thinker meant, and that it is valid.

Students, who have trouble articulating their own thoughts, begin to express themselves articulately. They also learn to interpret, analyze, and test another person's ideas. Hopefully, they comprehend that they can take part in the 'give and take' between thoughtful people and play an active role in their own community of thinkers.

The thought processes of people can be almost as varied as the people who think.   Some don't express their thoughts.   Most do.

Albert Einstein, in his "A Letter to Jacques Hadamard" examined his mechanism of thought.

> a.   The words or the language, as they are written or spoken, do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought.   The psychical entities which seem to serve as elements in thought are certain signs and more or less clear images which can be "voluntarily" reproduced and combined.   There is of course, a certain connection between those elements and relevant logical concepts.   It is also clear that the desire to arrive finally at logically connected concepts is the emotional basis of this rather vague play with the above mentioned elements. But taken from a psychological viewpoint, this combinatory play seems to be the essential feature in productive thought - before there is any connection with logical construction in words or any kinds of signs which can be communicated to others.
> b.   The above mentioned elements are, in my case, of visual and some of muscular type.   Conventional words or other signs have to be sought for laboriously only in the second stage, when the mentioned associative play is sufficiently established and can be reproduced at will.[1]

Temple Grandin in her *Thinking in Pictures* says Einstein also "told his psychologist friend Max Wertheimer, "Thoughts did not come in any verbal formulation.   I rarely think in words at all. A thought comes, and I try to express it in words afterwards." When he developed the theory of relativity, he imagined himself on a beam of light.   His visual images were vaguer than mine, and he

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[1] Albert Einstein, "A Letter to Jacques Hadamard", in *The Creative Process*, page 43.

could decode them into mathematical formulae."[2] Temple Grandin is a high-functioning autistic woman who has spent years trying to understand how she thinks. She is essentially a non-verbal thinker who has to make a great effort to translate her visual thinking into words for communication to verbal people. To the engineers she works with, her drawings of the buildings speak for themselves. She doesn't need words at all.

I would like to describe the thought mechanism of several people who go through the process of thinking in diverse ways.

To me, my mind is a theatre larger than my body and not governed by conventional laws of time and space. At its centre is a stage filled with light, sound, odours, people, movement - experiential material that appears consciously or sub-consciously, voluntarily or involuntarily, at any moment and simultaneously. Memories of sense impressions bring in music, the taste of food, pain, feeling, faces in combinations, and relationships that are unexpected and not based on real experience. The play that I set up between instances of remembered impressions and their rearrangement creates an inner experience that I attempt to control within limitations.   Lack of experience, sensitivity to relationships, lack of agility in rearranging the props and people create a thought that I attempt to control. These thoughts are disorganized until I can relate them to symbols which give them consistent and tested meaning; then I begin to understand and start to express them. My self-consciousness would be the metaphorical

[2] Temple Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, pages 182-183.

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audience which is present and actively watching, listening, interpreting, and reacting to the play. My thoughts, in the theatre of my mind, allow me to solve problems, understand situations, create beauty and meaning outside of my day-to-day experience.

Doug Wade[3], a computer and mathematics teacher at Weston Collegiate Institute is a non-verbal thinker who has never dreamed in images. He has never heard, smelled, tasted, touched or seen a sensual representation in his imagination, or visualized a thought in colour. Wade could barely see until the age of four, when he was given glasses and he certainly has mathematical talent. He only thinks in numbers, never words. It took him great difficulty and a very long time to articulate his process of thinking. In his mind he imagines models using lines which have changing measurements expressed in numbers. These models are symbolic devices which represent meaning, and the measurement indicates relationship between the parts. It is very difficult for him to translate his thought into words and to communicate to people who are not mathematical.

JoAnne Leach[4] is a teacher of special education at Weston Collegiate Institute. She has been tested often at Stanford University in problem solving. She is both a marvel and a frustration to her testers because she is so quick, accurate, and

[3] Interviews with Doug Wade at Weston Collegiate from 1990 to 1996.

[4] Interviews with JoAnne Leach at Weston Collegiate from 1990 to 1999.

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unconcerned with the results. She, like most of us, has barely articulated the process of thinking she uses in her problem solving. Leach has a method similar to the model that Plato used as explained by Twyla Gibson[5]. Leach has a large, holographic, three dimensional grid (as I have a theatre) and she slots the relevant material in relation to the question, moves it, rejects the irrelevant, and solves the question at remarkable speed. In fact, she was once given a puzzle that very bright minds at Stanford had been struggling over for three months and solved it in twelve and a half minutes. It is partly because of the speed of her mental processing that she has had difficulty articulating for herself the model she uses.

Henry Moore explained how he, as a sculptor, thought:

> This is what the sculptor must do. He must strive continually to think of, and use form in its full spatial completeness. He gets the solid shape, as it were, inside his head – he thinks of it, whatever its size, as if he were holding it completely enclosed in the hollow of his hand. He mentally visualizes the complex form *from all round itself*: he knows while he looks at one side what the other side is like; he identifies himself with its centre of gravity, its mass, its weight; he realizes its volume, as the space that the shape displaces in the air.[6]

Mozart in a letter said he didn't know whence and how his ideas came, but once they made their presence felt, provided he was not disturbed,

my subject enlarges itself, becomes methodised and

[5] Gibson, Twyla. Lecture in John Eisenberg's class at O.I.S.E., September 18, 1995 for her doctoral thesis.

[6] Henry Moore, "Notes on Sculpture", in *The Creative Process*, page 74.

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defined, and the whole though it be long, stands almost complete and finished in my mind, so that I can survey it, like a fine picture or a beautiful statue, at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively, but I hear them, as it were, all at once. What a delight this is I cannot tell! All this inventing, this producing, takes place in a pleasing lively dream.[5]

The mind of Scott Wilkinson[6], a composer, is like a symphony filled with rich, colourful, textures of sound. He imagines images, smells, words and other experiential data, but always in conjunction with sound. He can create a piece of music in his mind that is complete when he writes it down, translating it from pure sound to symbols on a page for whatever instrument he has chosen as the voice.

It may not be necessary to communicate thoughts to others. It may be that the expression of thought stays with the thinker. R.G. Collingwood believed that what is thought is of value in itself.

> When a man makes up a tune, he may and very often does at the same time hum or sing it or play it on an instrument. He may do none of these things, but write it on paper....But all of these are accessories of the real work, though some of them are very useful accessories. The actual making of the tune is something that goes on in his head, and nowhere else.... Hence, the making of a tune is an instance of imaginative creation. The same applies to the making of a poem, or a picture, or any other work of art.... The artist, when he has made his tune, may go on to do something else which at first sight seems to resemble this: he may do what is called publishing it. He may sing or play it aloud, or write it down, and thus make it possible for others to get into their heads the same thing which he has in his. But what is written down or printed on music-paper is not the

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[5] Wolfgang Mozart, "A letter" in *The Creative Process*, page 45.

[6] Interviews with Scott Wilkinson at Weston Collegiate from 1990 to 1997.

tune. It is only something which when studied intelligently will enable others (or himself, when he has forgotten it) to construct the tune for themselves in their own heads.[7]

When the thinker expresses a thought, the language then transforms the thought which the listener, spectator, sharer of the thought, must work hard to understand as clearly as possible.

There are many ways of thinking, and though often idiosyncratic to the individual they are common to our humanity, and therefore shared and comprehensible to others. As well, there is the effect of culture belonging to a specific people at a specific time in history. The characteristics of the community, its politics, mores, geography, technology, environmental and national influences all help to determine attitudes and methods of looking at the world. Depending on the latitude of influence this culture has with its neighbours, ways of thinking, styles of expression and assumptions about reality take historical shape without an individual's awareness of its effect on his or her thinking.

Derrick de Kerckhove in his "Theatre as Information Processing in Western Culture" developed a theory that in Greece both theatre and a phonetic alphabet were developing at the same time. They grew symbiotically with a culture in a state of expansion with a growing diversity of expression and sudden surprising self-consciousness. De Kerckhove, with McLuhan and the growing disciplines of media-power, looked at the change in perspective

[7] R.G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, pages 134-135.

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that the Greek phonetic alphabet and Greek theatre wrought in the
mind of Western people.

> Theatre is an outgrowth of the alphabet. It not only
> stems from it and decorates the alphabetic culture, but
> also provides its spectators with models of integration
> for those aspects of perception and experience which have
> been determined by the alphabetic technologies in the
> total culture. Theatre and the alphabet both affect
> patterns of memory and techniques of classification. In
> his preface to Plato, inspired by the pioneering work of
> Milmann Parry and Alfred Lord, Eric A. Havelock explains
> that the techniques of recall in the oral tradition
> involved the participation of the whole body; composition
> and delivery depended on rhythm, prosody, sound patterns,
> singing, gesturing, and dancing. The introduction of
> phonetic writing soon rendered obsolete most of these
> strenuous strategies of recall to replace them with the
> single line of visual signs supporting the practice of
> vocalization. Besides being a significant labour-saving
> device, the alphabet introduced a critical distance
> between the knower and the object of knowledge.[6]

Perhaps theatre and the alphabet have indeed developed in the
Western mind in this way. Perhaps the resulting detachment, the
objective position of an individual, the alienation from
participation in an increasingly fragmented world can be directly
drawn from the synchronous development of theatre and alphabet in
our culture.

> Little do we suspect that our notions of space, even as
> they are supported by maps of all kinds, are only
> extensions of the theatrical space, and as such are
> strongly biased by our visual perceptions. Since
> obviously the eyes cannot embrace in a single glance the
> totality of whatever there is to see, it follows that our
> minds work not only on evidences of "real space", but on
> mental constructs. It is the mind-set, visually biased
> and highly flexible which is the product of literacy and

[6] Derrick de Kerckhove, "Theatre as Information-Processing in
Western Cultures", in *Modern Drama*, 1982. 25: 144.

theatricality combined.[5]

This is just one perspective on a cultural convention. It may not take into account the profound influence of commerce on the conceptualization of the Greek world, or the centrality of the aural experience especially in the neighbouring European population whose majority was illiterate for much of its history.

Thought process may be as varied as individuals and their talents. Cultural conventions and religious assumptions (for example, God as Prime Mover, therefore causation) also colour and shape the thought when it is expressed to others. The thinker takes a thought through the constraints of the chosen language with its structure, history and constantly flexible, dynamic changes and offers it to another person who must then translate it back into personal understanding. This transformation is acceptable only if the thinker adheres with integrity to a radius which is close enough to the truth to be meaningful.

[5] Derrick de Kerckhove, "Theatre as Information-Processing in Western Cultures" in *Modern Drama*, 1982, 25: 148.

CHAPTER THREE
A PERSON

The thinker must be acknowledged as a person by the society receiving his/her thought. If the thinker has a low status in the community then that thinker may not be heard until some later time when personhood is granted. Slaves, working class people, foreigners, women, children, prisoners or enemies were often members of groups who were not heard and this exclusion shaped the character of the community. The voices which are heard define knowledge and its scope. In time, the groups which were repressed or condemned to silence may be heard and then archaeologists, historians, anthropologists, activists and other researchers open channels for their voices.

To define a person is to reveal the relationship between an individual, the social constraints of the community, the political nature of the State, the cultural/historical context, and the bias of the person investigating the subject. One must look carefully at the difference between what is stated and what is practised in order to assess the bias of the researcher. An investigation of the philosophical history behind the exclusion of people may allow one to see consequences in contemporary society, understand why these conditions may have come about, and foresee possible future changes.

In each case, a person is viewed differently: as an individual, from the community's point of view, from the state's position, and from the viewer's bias. Even when all three -

individual, community and state - are synchronized there is still debate. Generally, continuing through history to the present, there is conflict between the value and rights of these three as separate entities and in relationship with each other.

An individual may be interpreted as a microcosm of the perceived world and representative of that world (Aristotle). A citizen may be perceived to be a member of a state and the state may have much greater significance and value than the single person (Plato). An individual must free oneself from the desires of self to reach enlightenment (Lao Tzu). Therefore, the individual strives to harmonize and join with the universe and not be a person at all (Buddha). A person is an individual, not dependent on the state but on his own character only (Rousseau). A person should not be constrained by birth - race, class, or gender - to make choices about a social or political action (Mill). A person is one who is able to financially support his or her life and therefore be autonomous (Woolf). In any relationship between people, a person's full recognition and the acknowledgment of that person's being must be made and his wholeness affirmed (Buber).

The nature of education and who is allowed to get it reveals most obviously the groups who have and do not have power. Examining what philosophers say about education can reveal which thinkers in society are heard and, as a result, shape the nature of our world. Other thinkers, not heard until the political structure of the society has changed, also contribute to the nature of our world because when they are silent misconceptions occur and when

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they are finally heard corrections can then be made.

From the perspective of education in history, a "person" has been defined according to a variety of values. These definitions reveal the attitudes of the establishment. A thinker can only be heard when he or she is acknowledged as a person.[1]

In the fourth century B.C., the city state of Plato's Athens was the focus of attention, and the individuals who populated it were considered secondary and supportive only. An individual had rights, privileges and power according to status accorded by birth. Man or woman, free or slave, citizen or foreigner, with the social status of craftsman, wife, citizen, merchant, soldier or statesman all were accorded a different definition of person. When Plato discussed the education of a person in *The Republic*, he was referring to a free citizen of either gender possessing the social status to which he or she was born. Each individual would receive an education according to his or her future function in the State.

Plato stated that in his ideal system of education men and women were to be treated equally and given equal education according to the position they would take later in society.

> And if, I said, the male and female sex appear to differ in their fitness for any art or pursuit, we should say that such pursuit or art ought to be assigned to one or the other of them; but if the difference consists only in women bearing and men begetting children, this does not amount to a proof that a woman differs from a man in respect of the sort of education she should receive; and

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[1] In each example of the education system discussed here, there is a difference between the ideal and the reality existing at the time. However, these ideals do reflect what the system might have offered if the reality were not so intrusive.

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we shall therefore continue to maintain that our guardians and their wives ought to have the same pursuits.[2]

However, the world as Plato would have it was an ideal one that did not exist during his time. Women were not considered equal to men. Plato's vocabulary shows this differentiation - "our guardians and their wives". Even two centuries before Plato, Sappho and women who wanted education and equality had to leave Athens and create their own separate community on Lesbos.

For Plato, the purpose of education was to train the people who would fill the various levels of society to serve the State. The highest level was the guardian and the people who would fill that level would be trained appropriately for leadership.

> And surely you would not have the children of your ideal State, whom you are nurturing and educating - if the ideal ever becomes a reality - you would not allow your future rulers to be like posts, having no reason in them, and yet to be set in authority over the highest matters.
> Certainly not.
> Then you will make a law that they shall have an education as will enable them to attain the greatest skill in asking and answering questions?
> Yes, he said, you and I together will make it.[3]

The word "compel" elsewhere is used by Plato and it is obvious from the above quotation that the law would be used to set the standards of education for the State. People would have to be compelled, one way or another, in order for Plato's educational system to work.

Methodology, revealed in Plato's writing, indicated the

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[2] Plato, *The Republic*, page 191.

[3] Plato, *The Republic*, pages 297-298.

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relationship between the student, the teacher and the State. The classes were small, intimate and respectful because they relied on dialogue. The students were all familiar with each other and the teacher, and could tap each other's strengths and tease each other's weaknesses without risk of failure. The ideas of an individual were considered by everyone and discussed until the subject in question had been thoroughly investigated. The teacher controlled the discussion, the state controlled the subjects under discussion, and the students were ready to serve the state and accept their position in the social hierarchy. As a result, the students must have felt like fully realized individuals in a stable environment which was there to protect and encourage their development, as they would later protect and maintain the state. In our pedagogy, the Socratic Method still has respect and is often used by teachers.

The student is led through dialogue to the eternal ideals Plato envisioned.

> All these things, then, will have to be carefully considered by us; and if only those whom we introduce to this vast system of education and training are sound in body and mind, justice herself will have nothing to say against us, and we shall be the saviours of the constitution and the State; but, if our pupils are men of another stamp, the reverse will happen and we shall pour a still greater flood of ridicule on philosophy than she has to endure at present.[4]

Aristotle believed education should be regulated by law, that teachers should be professionals in a public school system, and that education was often "training". Human autonomy was sacred

[4] Plato, *The Republic*, pages 299-300.

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according to Aristotle and all knowledge was interrelated, but the state was of far greater importance than the individual and women and slaves had no place in his concept of autonomy.

> ...the mind of the pupil has to be prepared for the inculcation of good habits, if it is to like and dislike the things it ought.[5]

> We must have a character to work upon which has a natural bias towards virtue, loving the noble and hating the base.[6]

> The best that could happen would be an institution of a sound system of public supervision in these matters.[7]

In contrast to Greece, in India, Buddhism through the concept of "maya" states that there is no ego, no self and that "a separate individual self is an illusion"[8]. As well, the Buddha "insisted on freedom from spiritual authority"[9]

> Therefore a qualified student can obtain the true Knowledge of the Self only from those paramahamsas who have renounced all desires for the external world and embraced the monastic life, who are engaged only in the pursuit of Vedanta, and who follow the instructions of Prajapati as laid down in the four chapters just explained. Even today only such revered teachers can rightly explain the doctrine of Self.
> (Sankaracharya.)[10]

Hinduism requires a teacher who is qualified, with a definite set of instructions as in the Aristotelian system of education,

[5] Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, page 310.

[6] Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, page 311.

[7] Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, page 312.

[8] Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, "Buddhism", page 95.

[9] Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, "Buddhism", page 96.

[10] *The Upanishads*, translated by Swami Nikhilananda, page 389.

but the purpose is not to rule or maintain the State but to free the soul from ego. Therefore, although a student usually followed the instructions of a teacher using a Socratic method, the purpose was not just to gain skills or to play a successful and responsible part in the function of the State, but eventually to free oneself from the desires of the world. However, there were requirements of age and class and gender. In youth, it was anticipated that an individual fulfil the expectations of the family, and it was the retired man of fifty or older who might have gone on this spiritual quest. The younger ones, women and those of the lower castes would have been expected to maintain the family and the State.

In China, Taoism, like Hinduism, taught that freedom from self was most important. A teacher or "master" would offer a model of "right thinking" to anyone who wanted to learn. Gender, class, age or nationality are of less importance.

> The ancient masters were subtle, mysterious, profound, responsive.
> The depth of their knowledge is unfathomable.
> Because it is unfathomable.
> All we can do is describe their appearance.
> Watchful, like men crossing a winter stream.
> Alert, like men aware of danger.
> Courteous, like visiting guests.
> Yielding, like ice about to melt.
> Simple, like uncarved blocks of wood.
> Hollow, like caves.
> Opaque, like muddy pools.
>
> Who can wait quietly while the mud settles?
> Who can remain still until the moment of action?
> Observers of the Tao do not seek fulfilment.
> Not seeking fulfilment, they are not swayed by desire for change.[ii]

[ii] Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, # 15.

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The Islamic states from approximately the end of the Roman Empire to the twelfth century defined a person according to gender and class. Educated men, whether Christian, Moslem, or Jew, were treated with equality. A slave had no such rights and no access to education. It was similar in Europe in the Middle Ages, except that religion would have negated personhood. A Jewish student would be educated to his bar mitzvah or her bat mitzvah in the synagogue, a Moslem student in his own community in Spain would study the Quran, but non-Christians would be unlikely to receive an education through the Church or the Christian community. A serf, like a slave, had the same low status and lack of rights. Women, too, would not have been given access to education in the Church. However, some women were educated by their brothers or fathers (for example, Christine de Pizan) and this education was respected by the elite. Christine de Pizan worked in the court in her father's position after he died.

In *Emile,* Jean-Jacques Rousseau revealed the change in attitude towards the person after the Renaissance and Protestant Reformation. From being taken as a member of the State, the person was now conceptualized as an individual who was separate from his community and alienated from it. As a result the education of this person had dramatically changed.

> If we have to combat either nature or society, we must choose between making a man or making a citizen. We cannot make both. There is an inevitable conflict of aims, from which come two opposing forms of education; the one communal and public, the other individual and domestic.
> To get a good idea of communal education, read Plato's *Republic.* It is not a political treatise, as

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those who merely judge books by their titles think. It is the finest treatise on education ever written. Communal education in this sense, however, does not and can not now exist. There are no longer any real fatherlands and therefore no real citizens.[12]

Rousseau's definition of a person was strangely paradoxical.

In the natural order where all men are equal, manhood is the common vocation.... Before the vocation determined by his parents comes the call of nature to the life of human kind. Life is the business I would have him learn. When he leaves my hands, I admit he will not be a magistrate, or a soldier, or a priest. First and foremast he will be a man.[13]

Now, what did Rousseau mean by a "man"? He described Emile as his

ideal ordinary student.

Emile is no genius, but a boy of ordinary ability: that he is the inhabitant of some temperate climate, since it is only in temperate climates that human beings develop completely; that he is rich, since it is only the rich who have need of the natural education that would fit them to live under all conditions; that he is to all intents and purposes an orphan, whose tutor having undertaken the parents' duties will also have their right to control all the circumstances of his upbringing; and finally, that he is a vigorous, healthy, well-built child.[14]

The criteria for the ideal student had definite limitations. He

could not be female. Rousseau stated clearly that females should

be trained to serve men and be trained for that purpose only. He

could not be handicapped. He was European; therefore a boy from

Africa or India or China could not have been acceptable as a

[12] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* in *The Philosophical Foundations of Education*, page 156.

[13] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* in *The Philosophical Foundations of Education*, page 157.

[14] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* in *The Philosophical Foundations of Education*, pages 157-158.

student to Rousseau. His social class had to be high as well. A working class boy would not have been acceptable. The teacher would have had total control over the student and the State would not have interfered in any way. The student would have been an individual, but he would have expressed Rousseau's ideal, not the State's or the community's. He would have been Rousseau's Galatea, but without the submission of the creator to the work of art. Rousseau did not acknowledge the reality of the student's life; he would have purged everything social, political and historical until the student reached manhood. Even then he would have kept him from sex and the realities of life. How anyone could do this beyond theory is hard to imagine.

John Stuart Mill stated that the modern world viewed people differently from the past. But this was a description of an utopian world not reality.

> For, what is the peculiar character of the modern world —the difference which chiefly distinguishes modern institutions, modern social ideals, modern life itself, from those of times long past? It is, that human beings are no longer born to their place in life, and chained down by an inexorable bond to the place they are born to, but are free to employ their faculties, and such favourable chances as offer, to achieve the lot which may appear to them most desirable.... The modern conviction, the fruit of a thousand years of experience, is, that things in which the individual is the person directly interested, never go right but they are left to his own discretion; and that any regulation of them by authority, except to protect the rights of others, is sure to be mischievous.... It is not that all processes are supposed to be equally good, or all persons to be equally qualified for everything; but that freedom of individual choice is now known to be the only thing which procures the adoption of the best processes, and throws each operation into the hands of those who are best qualified

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for it....[15]

Mill added:

> But if the principle is true, we ought to act as if we believed it, and not to ordain that to be born a girl instead of a boy, any more than to be born black instead of white, or a commoner instead of a nobleman, shall decide the person's position through all life - shall interdict people from all the more elevated social positions, and from all, except a few respectable occupations....any limitations of the field of selection deprives society of some chances of being served by the competent, without ever saving it from the incompetent.[16]

Mill protested the position of women in his society.

> That the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes - the legal subordination of one sex to the other - is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.[17]

Virginia Woolf, in *Three Guineas*, discussed power and a woman's lack of influence. Up until 1919 a woman could have used feminine charm alone to "influence" her world.

> The educated man's daughter has now at her disposal an influence which is different from any influence that she has possessed before....She need no longer use her charm to procure money from her father or brother. Since it is beyond the power of her family to punish her financially she can express her own opinions. In place of the admirations and antipathies which were often unconsciously dictated by the need of money she can declare her genuine likes and dislikes. In short, she need not acquiesce; she can criticize. At last she is in possession of an influence that is disinterested.
> Such in rough and rapid outlines is the nature of our new weapon, the influence which the educated man's

[15] John Stuart Mill, *A Selection of His Works*, page 364.

[16] John Stuart Mill, *A Selection of His Works*, page 365.

[17] John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, page 219.

daughter can exert now that she is able to earn her own living.[16]

Up until this time class, gender, and nationality decided the direction of a man's life. Now, Virginia Woolf introduced women to the power of money and the independence it gives. Gender had negated half of the population from being considered a person from the time of Plato to the twentieth century. Women, at last, were accorded education, the vote, and jobs which all granted independence. As Woolf pointed out, it had taken a very long time for a woman to be allowed an education which would lead to a career. With an education she was no longer chattel, a domestic servant, a spinster, a witch. She was a person.

Martin Buber transformed the dialogue of Socrates, "The relation in education is pure dialogue"[18]. A relationship between two people would be based on full recognition of each person's being, on "full mutuality". However, the teacher and the student were not fully "inclusive".

> ...full mutuality is not inherent in men's lives together. It is a grace, for which one must always be ready and which one never gains as an assured possession.
>   Yet there are some *I-Thou* relationships which in their nature may not unfold to full mutuality if they are to persist in that nature.
>   Elsewhere, I have characterized the relationship of the genuine educator to his pupil as being a relationship of this kind. In order to help the realization of the best potentialities in the pupil's life, the teacher must really mean him as the definite person he is in his potentiality and his actuality; more precisely, he must not know him as a mere sum of qualities, strivings and

[16] Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, page 17.

[19] Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, page 125.

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inhibitions, he must be aware of him as a whole being and affirm him in this wholeness. But he can only do this if he meets him again and again as his partner in a bipolar situation. And in order that his effect upon him may be a unified and significant one he must also live this situation, again and again, in all its moments not merely from his own end but also from that of his partner: he must practise the kind of realization which I call inclusion (Umfassung).

But however much depends upon his awakening the *I-Thou* relationship in the pupil as well - and however much depends upon the pupil, too, meaning and affirming him as the particular person he is - the special educative relation could not persist if the pupil for his part practised "inclusion", that is, if he lived the teacher's part in the common situation. Whether the *I-Thou* relationship now comes to an end or assumes the quite different character of a friendship, it is plain that the specifically educative relation as such is denied full mutuality.[20]

Ideally, students might anticipate a relationship with a teacher which would satisfy their needs for self-recognition and the actualization of their potential. As Buber suggested, a teacher should see a pupil in a dialogical relationship even if the pupil does not share the mutuality.

The definition of a person is dependent on the established power structure of the State. At times, when free men with property ruled, then no one else was acknowledged as a person. When slavery, a caste system, or feudalism existed, class determined personhood. In an established patriarchy like Rousseau's, women had no voice.

Today, in Ontario, it seems that everyone has access to

[20] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, pages 131-132.

education and to the opportunities it provides.[21] But, let us look more closely. All children are offered access to education. There are schools, both public and private, for every type of child and also for those who do not fit a type. There are schools for the deaf, blind, mentally and physically handicapped, for every religious group, every social class, every individual. There are alternate schools for students who don't fit the mould and schools for children who work (Interact at Vaughan Road Collegiate). There are programs for students who drop out, correspondence courses, programs for adults, and retraining programs. Many of our schools are integrated. Northern Secondary School, in Toronto, has a program for the hearing impaired, and hearing students also take signing in order to communicate with their deaf friends. There are schools within schools. Weston Collegiate is an example of a typical Toronto school. There is an International Baccalaureate school within the school, a program for travel and tourism, for dental hygiene, for adults, with technical studies, business, languages, humanities, art, drama, physical education, a T.V. studio, cosmetology and although it does not have a daycare program it does offer the community access to hair dressing, dental care and travel arrangements. The students are from every ethnic origin, are multi-lingual (with E.S.L. and E.S.D. classes to teach

[21] Chris Olsen would say, "persons we educate, non-persons we don't" and he would include all human beings as possibly educable with the exceptions of "fetuses and human vegetables", (from "Minds and Persons" in *Knowledge, Mind and Persons* pages 3 and 5).

standard English[22]), represent every class and religion in the world (there is an Ummah for Friday prayers for Moslem students) and many students are not yet citizens. There are exchange students, re-entry students, students who are going to college or to work at the same time as they are attending Weston C.I. (SALEP, Articulation, Co-Op).

Does that mean that every student is treated as a person?

As Martin Buber demonstrated, the key is found in relationships; but, the relationship between student and teacher cannot be regulated from the outside. If a teacher has a personal bias then respect may be limited, but, hopefully, governed by good manners. This is not always so, but there are channels for complaints. The idea of "destreamed" grade nine was an attempt to achieve a fair base for the streaming of students (there are six levels - mentally challenged, vocational, basic, general, advanced and gifted) because there was a fear that prejudice regarding class and ethnic origin was interfering in the designation of advanced, general and basic level students, even though all students can move from one level to another level freely - based on their own and their parents' choice or on the suggestion of the school which usually makes a fair decision about a student's ability. Wealth is often a means of separating the elite from the masses. In education, until recently in Ontario, the public schools did attract the wealthy students because they attracted well-educated

[22] Ebonics - an American E.S.D. was created for a specific type of student, in a challenge to have the personhood of a neglected group acknowledged.

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teachers by offering good salaries. Wealthy students may go to private schools for choice in style of pedagogy (Montessori, Waldorf), but the poor get as good a basic education as the rich. The poor who are not academic, however, may be offered training in manual occupations, while the rich who are not academic may be appropriately socialized and slotted in a relatively secure niche, with interesting trips to enrich their courses. This does not negate the personhood of anyone, just the comfort of some.

In any system a hierarchy of power exists, and the people at the bottom of the hierarchy do not have the same opportunities. Once the system has been adjusted because of a revolutionary or evolutionary change, it still takes generations to modify the system to reflect the changed balance of power (theoretical, legal, or real). The laws might change, but the realities of practice take much longer.[23] In our society laws protect equality and equal access to education for each individual or group. In actuality, there are still discrepancies between class, gender, age, ethnicity, religion and wealth which each generation must challenge and adjust.

Nevertheless, now, according to the law, each individual is

[23] Jane Roland Martin expresses a feminist concern: "Educational equality between sexes is still far from having been realized," the OECD report says. I fear that as long as women's education is designed on the one hand to develop traits genderized in favor of males and on the other to ignore gender differences related to learning, this finding will continue to hold true. In the name of identical educational treatment, girls and women will experience difficulties and suffer hardships our male counterparts will never know. In *Changing the Educational Landscape*, page 106.

acknowledged as a person[24]. Education reflects contemporary social and political reality in the relationship between school system and student, and teacher and student. Each student will struggle with relationships at school in order to be acknowledged as a person; and in education, as in society, this struggle will be constant for everyone.

[24] Except fetuses.

People who do not belong to the established hierarchy in a community, people who have not been allowed a legitimate status or an education are unheard. These people may belong to a variety of groups: perhaps identified by gender (women in medieval Europe), class (peasants in Czarist Russia), religion (the Maya at the time of Cortez), language (Jamaican patois until 1960), culture (the Beothuk in Newfoundland), race (African American slaves prior to emancipation), or a combination (Native Canadian women on the reserve). When such groups of people are marginalized, ignored and unheard, how does their thought remain viable? What is the relationship of their expression to its present and future audiences which keeps the thought alive until it is legitimatized, developed and acclaimed?

I would like to look at music which had its roots in the experience of the African American people over more than three hundred years. The development of jazz demonstrates the relationship between a people whose creative expression was rejected and their prospective audience. When they moved from slavery to freedom to inclusion in American society, their culture, expressed in music, had an increasing influence on the nation.

> A wave of vulgar, of filthy and suggestive music has inundated the land.... No seaside resort this summer has been without its ragtime orchestra, its weekly cakewalk.... the cakewalk is nothing but an African *dance du ventre*, a milder edition of African orgies, and the music is degenerate music.... Ragtime is nothing new, but its present usage and marriage to words of veiled

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lasciviousness should banish it from polite society.
The Musical Courier, 1899[1]

Slaves were at the lowest rung of American society, and were segregated from people who could move freely and could voice their opinions freely. Because most slaves did not receive an education in mathematics, music, literature, dance, painting, this did not mean that they had no thoughts or that their thoughts had not been recorded somewhere, if only in communal cultural memory, to be heard sometime in the future. Perhaps the language chosen was one of movement and unwritten music, both oral and instrumental. Its tradition changed slowly over time until historical events allowed it to be introduced to the general society. As these people themselves moved through the society to a position of legal equality, their music also rose to a level of acceptance by the establishment.

Slavery in America was in direct opposition to the country's ideals. How could one accept slavery in a nation whose constitution stated that all men were created equal, and freedom was a right?

> The weight of law had to be imposed before the degradation of the blacks was complete....These laws stripped the black of all rights and made color the mark of servitude.. More laws were then passed to guarantee this new black status. It became illegal to learn how to read and write. More than five slaves were forbidden to gather without the presence of a white man. Slaves had to have signed passes from their masters when travelling abroad.... Slaves were not permitted to testify in court. Slaves, of course, could not vote.... Ministers found justification for black servitude in the Bible. "The institution was ordained by God Himself," they said.

[1] Leonard Feather, *The Book of Jazz*, page 8.

> Learned doctors discussed the reduced cranial capacity of the African brain and its inability to benefit from higher education.[1]

The process of dehumanizing African American slaves meant that the creative thinkers among them could be ignored and were ignored until after emancipation. Although the music which came from slave culture was part of Southern life on the plantations and in the towns, it was not acknowledged as meaningful. It was just tolerated in its place.

This does not deny the value of the thoughts and expression of people on the periphery of a society or a culture, but a larger established group who might have valued it also did not yet have access to it. This expression in music was not communicated into a wider sphere until after 1865 and it was after this date that jazz steps into history. Thomas Kuhn deals with this kind of movement in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and in the arts this type of cultural, conventional acceptance of a paradigm may happen only after the new expression has been understood by the radical members of the establishment and then incorporated into mainstream culture.

Jazz is an example of the expression of people who, at one point in their history, came from the lowest rung in a community's social hierarchy. One of the sources of jazz is the African slave in America. Frederick Douglass remembered:

> I did not, when a slave, fully understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs.... They breathed the prayer and complaint of soul

[1] John Rublowsky, *Black Music in America*, pages 59-60.

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overflowing with the bitterest anguish.... Slaves were expected to sing as well as to work... [as] a means of telling the overseer, in the distance, where they were and what they were about... those commissioned to the Great House farm were peculiarly vocal... While on the way they would make the grand old woods for miles around reverberate with their wild and plaintive notes. They were indeed both merry and sad. Child as I was, these wild songs greatly depressed my spirits.[3]

The work hollers from the plantation and the prison, the spirituals, the blues, the brass bands and minstrel songs in the bawdy houses and streets of New Orleans were part of the creation of jazz, a musical expression enjoyed and acclaimed by many people all over the world today. How does it happen that people who are not acknowledged as persons with rights or status in a community, whose thoughts are rejected, can continue to express themselves and have their thoughts respected in a much later period of time? Is it a question of universality, of meaningfulness in human shared experience? Is it a question of the urgent budding relationship between a creative artist and a reluctant audience which may persist in growing at the edge of a culture until the time is ripe for its fruition? The two are essential, both the creative thinker and the audience, but neither is solitary, neither exists on its own; if the memory of the thought lives it can be heard when the audience is receptive.

Early slave music consisted of many human passions derived from oppression. Spirituals, blues, hollers and work songs were some examples which echoed emotional despair as well as jubilation and optimistic yearning for Utopia - a better place without a master, without auction blocks and without conditions of servitude. These songs,

[3] Hildred Roach, *Black American Music: Past and Present*, page 5.

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both simple and complicated, had grown out of the duties and drudgery associated with bondage and had served for work, worship and play. Many such creative influences were vestiges of their own Africa.[4]

There were three hundred and fifty years of slavery in America from its inception in 1517 by the Spanish[5] and 1619 by the English in Virginia[6] to its end in 1865. Slave music, with its roots in Africa, developed during this time from British, Spanish, French and Portuguese songs and rhythms. Identifiable beat, melody and instruments were woven together on the loom of history to produce the rich and colourful tapestry of jazz.

The work songs of slaves with their direct connection to African tradition, had a relationship with the work on the plantation, and the demands of the overseer who used the slaves' singing to identify each worker and know where each one was.

> The work song, then, of direct African derivation, was the first musical expression of the blacks in America. Here in the cotton, tobacco, and rice fields, the toiling slaves worked to the accompaniment of song in an antiphonal lead and response style deeply rooted in tradition....
> So important was the work song to the life of the slave, that the value of a good "singing leader" was quickly recognized. Such men commanded a premium price of the slave market, and advertisements often listed such accomplishments as an added inducement.... He had to have a very special kind of talent – a feel for the work being done, together with an understanding of the men with whom he was working. In addition, he had to have the capacity to evoke both music and a physical, or motor, response.... Often he would improvise, not only melodies,

[4] Hildred Roach, *Black American Music: Past and Present,* page 5.

[5] John Rublowsky, *Black Music in America,* page 37.

[6] John Rublowsky, *Black Music in America,* page 56.

but words.[7]

It is possible to identify the origins of certain qualities in jazz. Improvisation, rhythms (duple and triple rhythms), instruments sounding like voice and voice like instruments, lead voices, polymelodies, call and response, and an oral tradition all have roots in Africa and the work song, and are still evident in jazz today.

> Ah'm a natu'al bo'n cook
> An' dat aint no lie,
> Ah can fry po'k chops
> An' habe a lo-down pie....[8]

Spirituals voicing hope also show roots of and influence on jazz. "Having been born somewhere between African voyages of the 1600's and American Revolution, spirituals were the end products of call and hollers developed during early colonialism.... They were constantly used in the search of freedom, in religious services, to teach, gossip, scold, signal or delight in the telling of tales."[9]

> I got Shoes; You got shoes; All-a God's Chil'en got shoes!
> When I get to Heaven, gonna put on m'shoes an' gonna shout
> all over God's Heaven![10]

Much in spirituals is carried into jazz. Because slaves were allowed very limited voice, spirituals were often in code. Gossip and news could be encoded and sung, and allegory, "allusions and

[7] John Rublowsky, *Black Music in America*, page 65-66.

[8] Hildred Roach, *Black American Music: Past and Present*, page 21.

[9] Hildred Roach, *Black American Music: Past and Present*, page 23.

[10] Hildred Roach, *Black American Music: Past and Present*, page 31.

hidden meaning."[11] would be interpreted by the community from which they sprang. Early jazz was an extension of this expression.

Early blues singers were part of the oral tradition which was African, improvised, moody, unwritten and profoundly human. Jimmy Rushing said, "Today as it was then, the blues comes right back to a person's feelings, to his daily activities in life."[12] Those daily activities were earthy, basic and ironic.

If you don't b'lieve I'm sinkin', look what a hole I'm in
Say, if you don't b'lieve I'm sinkin', look what a hole I'm in
If you don't b'lieve I love you, look what a fool I've been.[13]

In the blues, the human voice is closely related to the instruments. Texture, tone, style, bending notes, lyrical pattern are all distinctive. The personal style of the improvising musician, the tonal qualities which are individual to Louis Armstrong, Pee-Wee Russell or Dizzie Gillespie, are also found in the voices of blues singers like Billy Holiday, Bessie Smith or "Big Bill" Broonzy.

Minstrel shows and street bands in New Orleans reflect another step in the development of jazz. Composers and musicians were individualizing the music. House slaves with musical talent had been encouraged to play at dances and other celebrations. This is an advertisement for a runaway slave, placed in the *Boston Gazette or Weekly Journal*, July 9, 1745, long before minstrel shows and New

[11] Hildred Roach, *Black American Music: Past and Present*, page 25.

[12] Leonard Feather, *The Book of Jazz*, page 146.

[13] Leonard Feather, *The Book of Jazz*, page 147.

Orleans street bands.

> Ran-away from Capt. Joseph Hale of Newbury, a Negro Man
> named *Cato*, the 6th Instant, about 22 Years of Age,
> SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH AND CAN READ AND WRITE, understands
> farming Work, carry'd with him a striped homespun Jacket
> and Breeches, and Trousers, and an outer Coat and Jacket
> of home-made Cloth, two Pair of Shoes, sometimes wears a
> black Wigg, has a smooth Face, a sly look, TOOK WITH A
> VIOLIN, AND CAN PLAY WELL THEREON. Had with him three
> Linnen Shirts, home-made pretty fine yarn Stockings.
> Whoever shall bring said Negro too his master or secure
> him so that he may have him again shall have *five pounds*
> Reward and all necessary Charges paid by me.
>   Joseph Hale, Newbury, July 8th, 1745.[14]

Slaves who worked in the fields also had their musicians who played

at jubilees and cakewalks. These musicians were the prototype of

the later black professional.

> Ef anybody ax you who writ dis song,
> Tell 'im 'twuz a dark-skinned nigger
> Wid a pair o' blue duckins on,
> Jes a-lookin' for a home.[15]

Supposedly, jazz as "jas", "jass" or "jazz" started in New

Orleans, in the bars, bawdy houses and streets where the bands

played for funerals, dances and celebrations.

> Its origins in blues, spirituals, coon songs, shouts,
> jigs and rags were performed long before the title of
> jazz was given. The forms were definitely perpetuated
> within minstrel shows and similar places and the
> religious and secular emotions had long since been part
> of the music of minstrelsy, from whose bands jazz was
> partly derived.[16]

Scott Joplin was one of the early black composers and

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[14] "Runaway: Eighteenth-century Slave Advertisements" in *The Picador Book of Blues and Jazz*, page 10.

[15] Hildred Roach, *Black American Music: Past and Present*, page 45

[16] Hildred Roach, *Black American Music: Past and Present*, page 59.

musicians. He came from a family of musicians, had been taught by a local musician who was impressed by the boy's talent. His parents may have encouraged him to become a concert pianist; but as a teenager, Joplin wandered through the South and Southwest becoming a regular player in honky-tonks in St. Louis. He had musical training and talent and became a composer. In 1899, the *Maple Leaf Rag* was published. Joplin considered ragtime a legitimate musical form and defended it.

> What is scurrilously called ragtime is an invention that is here to stay. That is now conceded by all classes of musicians. That all publications masquerading under the name of ragtime are not the genuine article will be better known when these exercises are studied. That real ragtime of the higher class is rather difficult to play is a painful truth which most pianists have discovered. Syncopations are no indication of light or trashy music and to shy bricks at "hateful ragtime" no longer passes for musical culture. To assist the amateur players in giving the "Joplin Rags" that weird and intoxicating effect intended by the composer is the object of this work.[17]

The relocation of jazz musicians from New Orleans to St. Louis, Chicago and New York added to the development of jazz style.

> The New Orleans period of jazz ended in 1913 when all the saloons and dance halls in Storyville were closed because of a brawl in which two men were killed. Deprived of their livelihood, jazz musicians began to flow from New Orleans in a mass exodus. By the time Storyville was back in business again, in late 1914, most of the musicians had already left; and there were few to mourn its official demise in 1917. From New Orleans, the musicians streamed north and east to play in cabarets and honky-tonks in St Louis and Chicago, Memphis, Cleveland and New York. Most of them were welcomed. America had had a taste of jazz through the efforts of touring bands, such as those organized by King Oliver and Freddie

[17] John Rublowsky, *Black Music in America*, pages 117-118.

Keppard, and demanded more.[18]

The military drum, quarter note rhythm, larger bands and as a result orchestral arrangements, individualized style, and a slick performance were part of this development. Then a revolt by musically literate professional musicians changed the style again from dance music to music for listening. Jazz became formalized, cool and intellectual. "What began as 'bottom-waving, vulgar, barbaric howl' has been transformed into a sophisticated, even esoteric, lady."[19]

The time came when African Americans had a musical language in which they could record their lives. The white audience who had been a separate part of their history would eventually hear and appreciate it. By the time jazz[20] developed into a formal, elegant expression, race, class, gender and national origins became colourful, richly textured threads in a most lovely tapestry.

The question raised in this chapter is: why is the creative thought of a people who are totally beyond the pale of general society accepted with respect many years later? Perhaps, it is because the expression is beautiful or touches the shared humanity of many other people no matter how long after. Perhaps it is because this oppressed, abused and ignored people had a cohesive

[18] John Rublowsky, *Black Music in America, pages 127-128.*

[19] John Rublowsky, *Black Music in America,* page 133.

[20] 5:03 p.m., Sunday January 9, 2000, Channel 96.3 FM. On the five o'clock news the news caster announced words chosen to represent the millennium. The word of the twentieth century is "jazz".

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culture with parameters and structures and rules by which the members of the culture could measure meaningful expression, could remember this expression as having continuing meaning, and when they were granted equality and freedom they could develop their expression in society with all of the talent and genius that had been unacknowledged. The creative thinker must have a language (which is indicative of a cohesive and developed community) in which to express his thought and must also have an audience who receives it as meaningful enough to continue with interest to develop and preserve its life over time. This audience may be within the confines of the community of the thinker, no matter how small or restricted it may be. Or the audience may be beyond the boundaries of the larger society which is excluding this community. The general American audience, when there is no longer any reason to ignore the community, may show a serious interest in the thought because it is beautiful or valuable or meaningful at last.

James Baldwin, according to the fashion of jazz, explains the universal nature of jazz in poetic, ambiguous words.

> Music is our witness, and our ally. The *beat* is the confession which recognizes, changes, and conquers time.
> Then, history becomes a garment we can wear, and share, and not a cloak in which to hide: and time becomes a friend.[21]

[21] James Baldwin, "Of the Sorrow Songs" in *The Picador Book of Jazz*, page 331.

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CHAPTER FIVE
LANGUAGE

A problem creative thinkers must face is how to express their thought to themselves, to another person, or more difficult still, to a wider audience. Thinkers translate their thought with as much of their inner world as necessary into language. The thinker has the challenge of finding symbols which exactly express the feelings, colours, sounds, shapes in his or her mind. Verbal language has often been considered the only language, but in fact there are a variety of symbol systems which may communicate as effectively as words. Language can take the form of dance, music, mathematics, English, sculpture, painting, architecture, or any other conventional series of symbols. To be more precise language is an intellectualized symbol system which is self-conscious and intentional, negotiated over time by a participating community.

Movement is non-verbal and spatial. Body language may be human's oldest language and has ancient, accepted meaning according to the culture it springs from. It includes a series of movements, usually accompanied by music, which demonstrate a relationship between people, space, time, emotion, spectator, rhythm, music, lights, costume and sets. The grammar of the particular mode or style of movement prescribes specific moves: a pirouette, strathspey or pas de deux. Individual choreographers reconstruct the original thought using the accepted language in performance. Human body language is used to reveal the meaning and express it interpretatively to an audience.

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> It is the dancer's whole function to lead us into imitating his actions with our faculty for inner mimicry in order that we may experience his feelings. Facts he could tell us, but feelings he cannot convey in any other way than by arousing them in us through sympathetic action.[1]

Music is a language in which many voices can speak at once and result in meaningful harmony rather than irritating cacophony. The symbols used to notate music represent sounds and the relationship of one sound to another: their texture, pitch, colour, speed, timbre, rhythm, mood, depth, resonance, tone, key, voice, modulation, accent and clarity. In Western music, the individual notes are set in a grammar of treble and bass clefs, sharps, flats, whole notes, quarter notes, runs, three-quarter time, syncopation, pizzicato and crescendo. This language allows a thinker to express the music as a whole with its emotional, intellectual or sensuous meaning, to an individual or group of people who will play designated instruments and reproduce the thought faithfully in a song, symphony, aria, lament or requiem to an audience. It is an imaginative language filled with emotion and sensuous impressions.

> Music is a succession of tones and tone combinations so organized as to have an agreeable impression on the ear and its impression on the intelligence is comprehensible.... These impressions have the power to influence occult parts of our soul and of our sentimental spheres and... this influence makes us live in a dreamland of fulfilled desires or in a dreamed hell.[2]

Mathematics is a very different language. There is no emotive or imaginative quality to it. Mathematics is precise and highly

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[1] John Martin, *Introduction to the Dance*, pages 53-54.

[2] Arnold Schoenberg, *Letters*, (ed. E. Stein), page 186.

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specialized. It has symbols for numbers, including zero, plus and minus to designate positive and negative numbers, to indicate measurement and quantity. It may also use the alphabet to symbolize objects or unknowns, distance or measurement, quantity or abstract possibility. Symbols for division, multiplication, addition, subtraction, pi, infinity, angle, square root are all used to create relationship between numbers, shapes, grids, spacial dimension, planes. Each of these symbols is used with a grammar which allows the thinker to transfer ideas to paper. Spatial and numerical relationships, sometimes concrete, sometimes abstract, sometimes two or three-dimensional, communicate to express the thinker's inner world of "elements and relevant logical concepts"[j] of space, mass, movement, volume, speed, quantity and time. A mathematician deals with the abstract, with logic and patterns of non-linguistic entities. Howard Gardner described Michael Polyani's frustration with mathematical communication.

> Michael Polyani, eminent scientist and philosopher, confessed that he himself lacked the necessary intellectual equipment to master many contemporary aspects of mathematics which those within the tribe would consider (as mathematicians are fond of saying) relatively trivial. One can glimpse the kinds of demand made in mathematical thinking by noting the difficulties in decoding this English sentence:
> "We cannot prove the statement which is arrived at by substituting for the variable in the statement form, "we cannot prove the statement which is arrived at by substituting in the statement form the name of the statement form in question", the name of the statement form in question."
> As Polyani suggests, understanding this sentence may well require the setting up of a string of symbols and

[j] Einstein Albert, "A Letter to Jacques Hadamard" in *The Creative Process*, page 43.

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then carrying out a set of operations upon these symbols. Clearly, the comprehension of certain strings of the symbols of language requires more than simple competence in linguistic syntax and semantics (though, it may be properly pointed out, such competencies are a prerequisite for "solving" a sentence of this sort).[4]

Gardner indicated the differences between the mathematician and the scientist, although they used basically the same symbol system to express their thoughts.

Indeed, the mathematician ends up working within a world of invented objects and concepts which may have no direct parallel in every-day reality, even as the logician's primary interests fall on the relationships among statements rather than on the relation of those statements to the world of empirical fact. It is primarily the scientist who retains the direct tie to the world of practice:[5]

English is used in poetry and prose. It is a verbal language with a strict structure of grammar, punctuation and syntax. If a thinker has an idea which is not necessarily verbal, that idea must be translated, from perhaps a holographic vision or symphonic conversation or model of a grid or an emotion, into a lineal, logical, two-dimensional, verbal entity existing in chronological order and governed by an alphabet, script and grammar whose usage has been taught meticulously in school. John Locke pointed out the difficulties in communicating and understanding language.

Sure I am, that the significance of Words, in all Languages, depending very much on the Thoughts, Notions, and Ideas of him that uses them, must unavoidably be of great uncertainty, to Men of the same Language and Country. This is so evident in the Greek Authors, that he, that shall peruse their Writings, will find, in almost every one of them, a distinct Language, though the

[4] Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, pages 136-137.

[5] Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, pages 135-136.

same Words. But when to this natural difficulty in every Country, there shall be added different Countries, and remote Ages, wherein the Speakers and Writers had very different Notions, Tempers, Customs, Ornaments, and Figures of Speech, etc. every one of which, influenced the signification of their Words then, though to us now they are lost and unknown, it would become to us to be charitable one to another in our Interpretations or Misunderstandings of those ancient Writings, which though of great concernment to us to be understood, are liable to the unavoidable difficulties of Speech, which (if we except the Names of simple Ideas, and some very obvious Things) is not capable, without a constant defining the terms, of conveying the sense and intention of the Speaker, without any manner of doubt and uncertainty, to the Hearer.[6]

Besides the difficulty of understanding others who live at different times, in other cultures, there are many constraints on this symbol system itself: the grammar, etymology, metaphor, allusion, and the visual or auditory effects of the choice of words and their arrangement. Thinkers at various points in history have protested by bending the structure of the language in ways that cause the reader to make a leap of imagination in order to understand the idea that is being conveyed.

Sculpture is a non-verbal, emotional, sensuous, spatial, three-dimensional representation of an object or an idea using a concrete medium such as clay, bronze, marble, wire, wood, glass or any material which can be moulded, shaped or carved into the visual, tactile object that the sculptor has created. The constraints of the material, the space required or available, and the translation from the idea to the concrete determines some part of the sculptor's expression. The fact that sculpture exists in

[6] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, page 489.

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space in relation to its viewer and does not change except as the viewer changes position in relation to it is one of the constraints of sculpture that has caused artists like Calder to find a slightly different mode of construction.

Painting is a visual language based on lines, colour, texture, narrative, images and symbols that the culture has accepted as meaningful (*Guernica* by Picasso stretched all of these). It may create an illusion of three dimensions using a two-dimensional canvas or surface, and may suggest movement, mood, place. Ted Bartram paints Georgian Bay granite in black, pink and cream stripes with ochre lichen and shadowed crevasses. A viewer not familiar with the Canadian Shield would think the painting was an abstract, impressionistic design suggesting movement and contrast in colour, while in fact it is representational of geological formation, and suggests antiquity, character and a profound love of the land.

Lines and points, as in drafting, architecture, engineering and art, are the symbols of another language – thin, thick, dark, light, measured, angled, distanced, shaded, with cross-hatching, use of light and colour, a suggestion of dimension and space. Pointillists who use pencil or paint to create images of objects – people, animals, fish, birds, landscape, buildings – employ this language to express their thought on a flat, two-dimensional surface. They create an illusion that the viewer can understand.

I am a thinker whose thought often is often non-verbal, but whose choice of language is words, English, prose and poetry,

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spoken and written. I take my three-dimensional, holographic thought, ungoverned by time or space, and convert it into sputtering sounds or squiggling lines which exist in time, chronologically and lineally. Words are conventionally accepted symbols that are given meaning and depth by tradition and all those who have used the language before me. I must take these sounds or use an alphabet which was once, perhaps, pictographic, but is now phonetic and held tightly in a grammatical structure. I express my idea which is made up of thoughts forming a coherent unit, consciously squeezed into a series of symbols, and hope that it enters chambers of ear and eye only moderately distorted, and is reconstructed in the theatre of the mind of my audience or reader, coming alive once again, accurately and meaningfully.

Whatever symbol system is chosen, the medium is far removed from the experience, from the inspiration, from the thought and its ingredients. R.G. Collingwood indicated this difference.

> The relation between making the tune in his head and putting it down on paper is thus quite different from the relation, in the case of the engineer, between making a plan for a bridge and executing that plan. The engineer's plan is embodied in the bridge: it is essentially a form that can be imposed on certain matter, and when the bridge is built the form is there, in the bridge, as that way in which the matter composing it is arranged. But the musician's tune is not there on paper at all. What is on paper is not music, it is only musical notation. The relation of the tune to the notation is not like the relation of the plan to the bridge; it is like the relation of the plan to the specifications and drawings; for these, too, do not employ the plan as the bridge embodies it, they are only a notation from which the abstract or as yet unembodied plan can be

reconstructed in the mind of a person who studies them.[7]

Collingwood, legitimately, refused to let art and engineering share their creativity equally and tried to make art different in its thought and creation. Because his book is *The Principles of Art* and his interest is in creativity in the arts his definitions are specific to art. John Dewey articulated that difference.

> Dance and sport are activities in which acts once performed spontaneously in separation are assembled and converted from raw, crude material into works of expressive art. Only where material is employed as media is there expression and art.... Everything depends upon the way in which material is used when it operates as medium.[8]

When an engineer plans a bridge or a musician creates a melody, both products first exist in the mind and must be translated into an appropriate language (lines and measurement for the bridge, notes and rhythm for the tune). Then, the design and the notation are interpreted into the materials used to express the creation (concrete, steel and stone, or violins, bassoon and flute) and players (specific contracting firm or famous musicians, each with their reputation for excellence in recreating the conception). To assess the final product as art one must consider the choice of medium, the nature of the intent, use of the product, or meaningful communication beyond mere use springing from it.

Language and the medium used to express thought play important roles in the transformation of the original idea, through the

[7] R.G. Collingwood, Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, page 135.

[8] Sidorsky, David, (ed.), *John Dewey: The Essential Writings*, page 271.

medium (language, instruments, performers), to a listener or spectator. Transformation and translation change, colour and shape the expressed idea, but accuracy in meaning and faithfulness to the truth of the original are essential. Therefore, the transformation must fall within the radius of truth which has been determined by all of the thinkers who have gone before and who will follow after. Because of this, there is a universal understanding which is possible to attain.

CHAPTER SIX
STRUCTURE AND MEANING

How does the structure of a language transform and yet maintain meaning, allowing it fall within the radius of truth which is acceptable to other thinkers?

A thinker must take a thought and organize it in a way that allows it to be articulated in a chosen conventional language and then meaningfully reconstructed into a shared idea by the person who receives the thought. The accuracy and meaningfulness is determined by the interpretation of the performers and the understanding of the audience, reassessed each time it is received. Verbal language (or the symbol system using words organized by grammar and given significance by semantics) is the language that is considered usual for expressing a thought, but musical language (a symbol system using tones ordered in combination and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity) is just as feasible. A word, a note or chord, a symbol, a concept, each can be defined, and has a significant place in relation to the structure which supports it. Although this structure is rarely mentioned, it has an essential role. The structure of the language influences, perhaps determines, the meaning that is communicated.

The structure of a language is the form in which thought is expressed (for example: sentence, paragraph, chord, theme). It determines the value of parts and the meaning of the whole.

A word is a meaningless sound or written combination of the alphabet without its etymology, grammar, context and the intent of

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the thinker. So too, a note or chord is meaningless sound without the musical environment to define it, to enhance it, to give it a matrix. An aspect of the structure of a word is found in the spelling if it is written, the pronunciation if it is spoken. The etymology, usage, context and framework into which it is placed, all provide meaning. A note or a chord is meaningful when the key, the time signature, the clef and the accompanying notes give it definition.

Vygotsky put word meaning into a "'cell' that cannot be further analyzed and that represents the most elementary form of the unity between thought and word." He added, "A word without meaning is an empty sound; meaning, therefore, is a criterion of "word," its indispensable component."[1] An extension of this is also true - a word or note without a structure to support and define it is "an empty sound".

A word and a musical note are similar. A note or chord is structured by the clef, the bars, the time, the sound of the whole piece of music, its cultural history, and the intent of the composer to set other notes around it.

> The most constant context of a word is with other words in a sentence, the purpose of which is to communicate something.... Are there musical parallels to these speech components? The smallest units in music are single notes or chords which may be compared with phonemes; it is more difficult to think of a musical parallel for word but a cell or unit of notes is a fair approximation; a sentence can consist of two words or many, similarly a musical statement can be brief or long, containing a succession of musical ideas; cadences can be likened to punctuation

[1] Lev Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, page 212.

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marks though they are far more than this.[2]

Vygotsky dealt with the problem of changing word meanings.

> A word might denote at first one object and then become associated with another, just as an overcoat, having changed owners, might remind us first of one person and later of another. Linguistics did not realize that in the historical evolution of language the very structure of meaning and its psychological nature also change. From primitive generalizations, verbal thought rises to the most abstract concepts. It is not merely the content of a word that changes, but the way in which reality is generalized and reflected in a word.[3]

A word has a constantly evolving meaning according to usage and its significance to the people thinking, creating, or hearing the thought. Albertine Gaur made this point in relation to changes in script. "We have discussed the disadvantages of phonetic scripts, namely their dependency on one particular language, the fact that ideas have to be translated into sounds and that these sounds must then be made visible in the form of conventionalized (mostly abstract) signs which in turn have to be retranslated into the sounds of the (same) language and back into the original idea."[4] This translation must be made by a composer as well as a writer, and the retranslation must be done by a reader of script as well or a reader of musical notation. The question is whether the thinker, after struggling to put a thought into words or notes, is understood clearly and accurately by the reader or listener.

Vygotsky examined the acquisition of words by an infant just

[2] R.A. Henson, "The Language of Music" in *Music and the Brain*, page 236.

[3] Lev Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, page 213.

[4] Albertine Gaur, *A History of Writing*, page 16.

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beginning to speak, demonstrating that the meaning of the word is found in the crossover interaction between empirical learning and learning from authority. A parent playing with a child encourages her voice and imitates the sounds the child makes. The child plays with her voice and the range of sounds she can make, often imitating her parent or the sounds around her until at the point of comprehension she puts sound and meaning together. The point at which Helen Keller realized the association between the feel of water gushing from the well over her hand and the word W-A-T-E-R tapped into the palm of her hand, was the point at which a name became a symbol allowing thought. "I left the well-house eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought."[5]

Vygotsky, in his analysis of the development of inner speech, demonstrated how a word has layers of meaning which have accumulated over time and use by a child in the interplay between experience and teaching.

> The relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought. In that process, the relation of thought to word undergoes changes that themselves may be regarded as development in the functional sense. Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them. Every thought tends to connect something with something else, to establish a relation between things. Every thought moves, grows and develops, fulfils a function, solves a problem. This flow of thought occurs as an inner movement through a series of planes. An analysis of the interaction of thought and word must begin with an investigation of the different phases and planes a

[5] Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life*, page 23-24.

thought traverses before it is embodied in words.[6]

But the experiences of one person are always different from those of another and therefore word meaning is shaded differently by individual understanding. Communication between people is a negotiation of meaning Each checks that the other understands what is said, but the understanding is never exactly the same.

Word meaning exists on several levels at once. A word has a history; etymology will always be there to colour meaning with its historical development. Meaning also exists in the lexicon of the user and has the texture of the user's past and present usage. A word exists in a sentence. Syntax gives it meaning. ("Oh boy! Look at that score!". "Oh, Boy? Look at that score." The punctuation, the emphasis of the words in the sentence, the arrangement of the words, all shape the meaning of the sentence. "SCORE! Oh! Look at that, boy!" "Look at that boy score! Oh?") And the semantics provide context in relation to a larger scope (perhaps the subject was music and not hockey); but words always have meaning defined by their structure and they cannot have meaning without it.

> At best, the relation of words to their meanings is precarious. ... Philosophers and scientists constantly struggle with the verbal shells which they must use to package their thoughts for preservation and communication. Should they keep a familiar term and try to invest it with a new meaning, at the risk of seeming to use a concept they have abandoned? Should they coin a new term? All this trouble arrives because words, as mere labels, try to keep up with the live action of thought taking place in another medium. "The birth of a new concept," says Sapir, "is invariably foreshadowed by

[6] Lev Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, p. 218

a more or less strained or extended use of old linguistic
material." This strain of birth exists primarily in the
medium of thought itself. It comes about because the
structure of the matter under scrutiny, to which the mind
clings, is put under stress by the new, more appropriate
structure imposing itself. The struggle against the old
words is only a reflection of the true drama going on in
thought.[7]

And this occurs in music just as in verbal language. Syntax

is important in the meaning of music. The designated clef, the

sharps, the flats (accidentals), time signature - all give

recognized values to the notes. A note without its syntax, just

like a word without its grammar, is meaningless. And the

relationship of all of the parts of the music are interdependent.

The various levels of architectonic significance are, of
course, interdependent. Just as there can be no chapters
without meaningful relationships between paragraphs, or
paragraphs without meaningful relationships between
sentences, so the significance of the longer parts of a
musical work depends upon the existence of meaningful
relationships between the shorter ones. There could be
no musical sections if one period did not in some way
imply and lead to consequent periods, and there could be
no periods if the phrases which form them did not follow
one another in an understandable and meaningful way.[8]

The syntax of Western music includes certain chords which

resolve in a way to give a feeling of completion. The first

example below is a descending sequence of chords.


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I        VI        IV   V7   I
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[7] Rudolf Arnheim, *Visual Thinking*, page 245-246.

[8] Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, page 47.

In this progression the VI chord is perceived as "passing" from the I (tonic) to the IV (sub-dominant). In the second example, the VI chord appears at the end of the progression and plays a role in the cadence. In this example the VI replaces the expected return to the I (tonic) acting as a deceptive point of arrival. The meaning is set out by the placement within the phrase.

I   IV   V7   **VI**
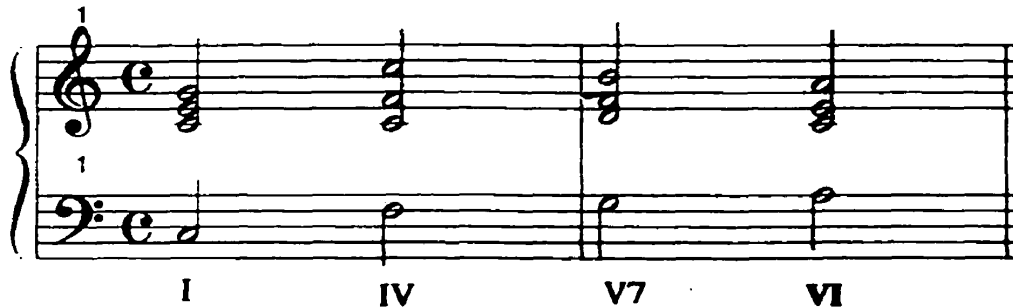
Symbols are used in the structure of both music and verbal language. A symbol gives an object abstract meaning which evokes thought rather than action. Symbols have a structural association between an object/sound and its given conceptual meaning and are sometimes confined within a specific piece of work, although a symbol can have a more generalized meaning, reaching far beyond the specific work. Symbolism has many levels too: the history of the symbolic meaning of a word (a beaver is a symbol of Canada because of the fur trade), its idiomatic usage (busy as a beaver), its slang usage (!), its biological definition, and a symbolic meaning (Beaver Lumber).
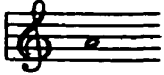
A note or a chord has levels of symbolic meaning defined by the structure of the piece in which it is found.

> In and of themselves, for example, the opening chords of Beethoven's Third Symphony have no particular musical stylistic tendency. They establish no pattern of motion, arouse no tensions toward a particular fulfilment. Yet

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as part of the total aesthetic cultural act of attention they are meaningful. For since they are the first chords of a piece, we not only expect more music but our expectations are circumscribed by the limitations of the style which we believe the piece to be in and by the psychological demand for a more palpable pattern.[9]

The meaning of the opening chords are defined by the symphony's structure. By being the first notes in the piece, later repeated and therefore familiar chords, Beethoven provides mood, pattern and anticipation.

Music has semantics. Melody is expressed thematically. The rhythm of a waltz and the beat of a march are similar to the meter in poetry or the intonation of the voice when it is communicating an emotion or being emphatic. Context gives meaning.

The meaning of a word can vary according to the context in which it is employed. Brain frequently used the term "chair" as an example. "Will you take the chair?" can mean, "Will you preside at this meeting?", "Will you take this university appointment?", or simply, "Will you take this chair (away)?" Music can pose similar problems in meaning according to the context and capacity and experience of the perceiver. If we consider this note we find it evokes differing responses from different musicians, for the individual with absolute pitch it means 440 Hz when heard, but for the violinist it is an open string, the tenor regards it as a note towards the top of his range, while the pianist sees it as a lever near the middle of the keyboard.[10]

A concept is a complex development of an idea, with layers and interdependent levels of meaning which have been developed by an individual thinker in a culture with its particular history. Each individual has a personal history as well, which adds to the colour

[9] Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, page 36.

[10] R.A. Henson, "The Language of Music" in *Music and the Brain*, page 236.

of the concept. The fact that Lev Vygotsky was a Russian, dying of tuberculosis at age thirty-four, a psychologist influenced by Piaget and others, and a poet, living in a Soviet society stressing a Marxist doctrine, and yet a strong individual who could still do significant original work and not toe the party line, were all significant details which allow a person studying his work to better understand his thought. The biography of a composer is not as important to the meaning of the musical concepts because in music bias is not as obvious or insidious as bias in verbal language. However, knowing the personal history of Dowland or Wagner or Cage may add depth of comprehension for the listener. And having some knowledge of the composer's biographical and cultural background adds understanding as well. Biography supplies part of the referential structure. It allows the reader/listener to understand more fully forces that shaped the thinker's intent, and caused particular choice of style, genre, or method of development. The thought in itself is most important, but the layers supplied by the environment of the thought give its meaning a richer shading.

Concepts, however, do exist in their own right and must be considered for themselves. Vygotsky claimed that there are two kinds of concepts: spontaneous and scientific. One is learned through experience in the world, and the other is learned from parents, teachers and other sources of authority. A concept is complete when the two provide meaning to each other. He gives the example of the concept "flower":

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> A child learns the word *flower*, and shortly afterwards
> the word *rose*; for a long time the concept "flower",
> though more widely applicable than "rose", cannot be said
> to be more general for the child. It does not include
> and subordinate "rose" - the two are interchangeable and
> juxtaposed. When "flower" becomes generalized, the
> relation of "flower" and "rose", as well as of "flower"
> and other subordinate concepts, also changes in the
> child's mind. A system is taking place.[11]

Concepts are meaningful generalizations that have been woven
together with experience and teaching. A concept is a rich
tapestry, for the thinker conceives of it with both a conscious and
unconscious response. The relationship between meaning gained
through experience and from authority makes it particular to the
person who has acquired it; particular but not unique. The concept
must also have a shared conventional meaning which allows it to be
understood by others.

> Concepts are abstract forms embodied in conceptions;
> their bare presentation may be approximated by so-called
> "abstract thought", but in ordinary mental life they no
> more figure as naked factors than skeletons walking in .
> the street. Concepts, like decent living skeletons, are
> always embodied....[12]

Meyer stated Morris R. Cohen's definition of meaning generally:

> ...anything acquires meaning if it is connected with, or
> indicates, or refers to, something beyond itself, so that
> its full nature points to and is revealed in that
> connection.[13]

goes on to give a fuller shape to meaning in music,

> The meanings observed are not subjective. Thus the
> relationships existing between the tones and the things
> they designate or connote, though a product of cultural

[11] Lev Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, page 173.

[12] Suzanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, page 61.

[13] Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, page 34.

experience, are real connections existing objectively in culture. They are not arbitrary connections imposed by the capricious mind of the particular listener.[14]

and to differentiate between designative meaning and embodied meaning:

> ... most of the meanings which arise in human communication are of the designative type, employing linguistic signs or the iconic signs of the plastic arts .... But even more important... is what we have called embodied meaning. From this point of view what a musical stimulus or a series of stimuli indicate and point to are not extramusical concepts and objects but other musical events which are about to happen. That is, one musical event (be it a tone, a phrase, or a whole section) has meaning because it points to and makes us expect another musical event.[15]

Just as a word is meaningless in itself, it is meaningful only in the relationship between the thinker, the word, and the complete idea articulated in the work supported by its particular structure; so too is a note or a chord in music.

A musical score has a grammar and notation which can be read by a performer who has been taught this written language, and understood by a knowledgeable audience. A composer will write his thought, and performers will read the score in order to present it to an audience which may or may not be familiar with the written score and anticipate the interpretation of the conductor.

> The next question is whether composers use musical units in any universal or general way in order to achieve meaning, that is to say whether there is a vocabulary of music. Hindemith (1961b) said there is no evidence that composers have agreed that any group of notes or chords represents a certain meaning or communicates the same thought, though he conceded that "certain patterns of

[14] Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, page 34.

[15] Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, page 35.

tone setting correspond with certain emotional reactions on the listener's part." Cooke (1959) argued forcefully that composers use similar material to express similar meanings or to depict similar situations, and he provided a wealth of examples to support his contention.[16]

Two examples could be Bach's opening descending bass pattern played by the strings in "The Crucifixus" from *The Mass in B Minor* BWV 232, which is very similar to the descending chromatic line used to generate Dowland's *Lacrymose Pavan* one hundred years before.

Structure shapes meaning. A musical score like *Siciliano* by

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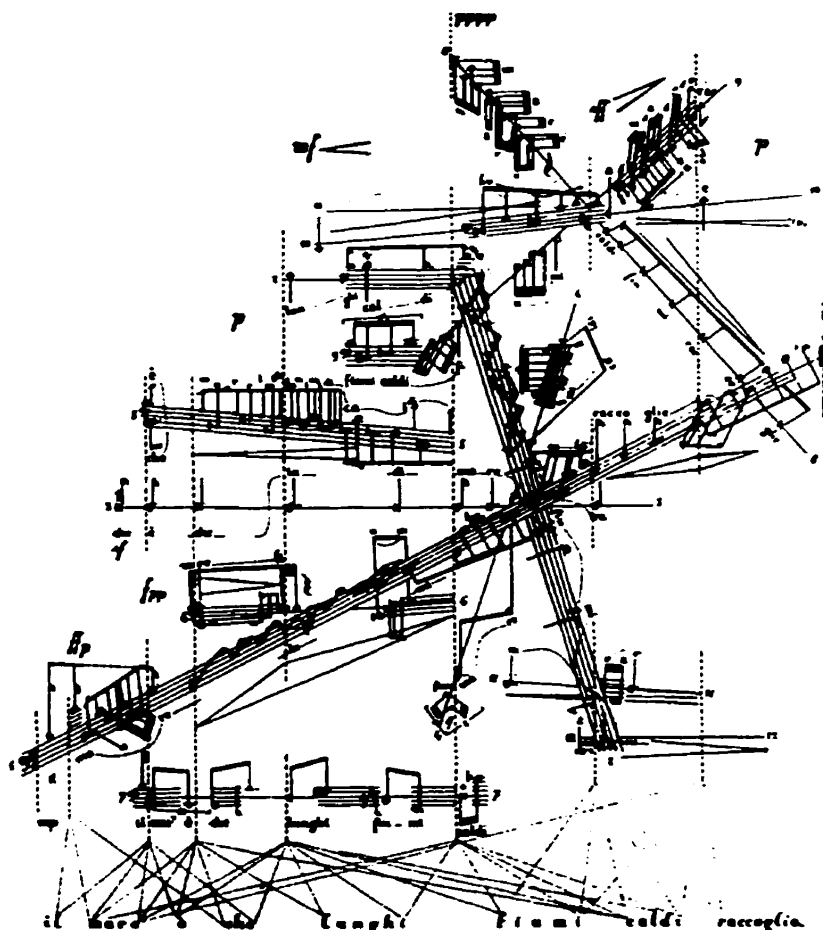
[16] R.A. Hansen, "The Language of Music" in *Music and the Brain*, page 237.

[17] Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music*, page 377.

Bussotti has a structure which is meaningless to all but the cognoscenti who have had the privilege of the notation legend which clarifies it. Notational innovations often reflect the composer's struggle with boundaries of his language, and the ways he has innovatively structured a composition to better communicate the musical idea/concept.

e.e. cummings in "1(a" was renovating the written structure of the language of his choice to express his poetic thought. This poem is for a literate coterie who would sympathize with his frustration with the limits of his language and his attempts to expand the boundaries of the its structure.

"1(a"

1(a

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af
fa

ll
s)
one
l

iness [18]

If one were to reconstruct cumming's "1(a", by writing it in the literate, poetic, horizontal form - 1(a leaf falls)oneliness - one would see a sentence parenthesized within a word. But this would lose the imaginative suggestion of a single autumn leaf slipping from its branch through space in its dancing fashion, leaving the tree naked and alone to face the awful loneliness of winter, the

[18] e.e. cummings, *Complete Poems*, page 673.

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colour and hope of spring and summer lost. (The same could be done with Bussotti's *Siciliano*, and each part, numbered as it is, could have its lineal, horizontal, conventional score for the specific musician to play.) e.e. cummings was indicating his rejection of stylized forms by which poetry had come to be governed. James Joyce was another writer who protested the structures he found. Joyce loved the sound of the language, a sound no one hears when prose is read. He not only loved words, he created words:

> And the duppy shot the shutter clup (Perkodhuskurunbarg
> gruauyagokgorlayorgromgremmitghundhurthrumathunaradidil
> lifaititill ibumullunukkunun!) And they all drank free.
> For one man in his armour was a fat match always for any
> girls under shurts. And that was the first peace of
> illiterative porthery in all the flamend floody flatuous
> world. How kirssy the tiler made a sweet unclose to the
> Narwhealian captol. Saw fore shalt thou sea, Betoun ye
> and be. The Prankquean was to hold her dummyship and the
> jimmies was to keep the peacewave and van Hoother was to
> git the wind up. Thus the hearsomeness of the burger
> felicitates the whole of the polis.[19]

Joyce mutated English prose. He created words, he included words and word fragments of other languages. And he kept the experience aural. His language was written to be read aloud, to be understood only when the reader mouthed the words, relished their sounds. Yet the rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar were still present and significant. Joyce had strained the bounds of his language to recreate his thoughts and in so doing widened the parameters of ours.

John Cage not only used unconventional instruments (brake drums, string piano, thunder sheets, "any household or

[19] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, page 23.

architectural elements"[20]), he "developed a new "method of writing music" to accompany these unusual materials. Treating musical form as a sort of "empty container," he set up for each composition a series of proportional time units measured by precise numerical calculations. Once this abstract durational structure - the "container" - had been determined, he could insert whatever sounds he wished, relying on the prescribed proportional relationships to provide a larger temporal framework."[21]

CAGE, *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*, excerpt from piano part

[22]

In his piece, *4'33"*, structure seems non-existent.

[20] Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music*, page 360.

[21] Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music*, page 360.

[22] John Cage, *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*, in *Twentieth-Century Music*, page 364.

The score of this piece consists of three Roman numerals, each followed by a numerically specified duration (all three add up to the four minutes and thirty-three seconds of the title) plus the word "tacet", indicating that the performer or performers (*4'33"* can be "played" by any number, and on any instrument or instruments) are to remain silent. The piece, in other words, consists solely of silence.[23]

Nothing had been written by Cage to structure the notes, the key, the tempo, the melody, the denouement of the piece - nothing. But the fact that the piece is called *4'33"*, and it must last only that exact amount of time, does set a structure, and that structure with no content makes a clear statement about Cage's indeterminacy. The humour, the background sounds (air conditioners, cough in the audience), the philosophy, the confidence of the composer, all offer meaning to the performer and audience. The structure has determined meaning.

Structure is found in the smallest and the largest arrangements of language. A word has a structure which has been etymologically formed and historically maintained through the natural evolution of usage. Spelling, meaning, syntax, semantics, usage, all fit into the structure of language. A note or chord, too, has the same kind of structural history and position in relation to an octave and the whole composition. From there, a phrase, chord, sentence, series of bars, paragraph, melody, book, score, all have structures which define their meaning. Nevertheless, although each part has its role and importance in its language, the structure which gives each part a relationship with the next is what determines the meaning of the whole. Thought,

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[23] Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music*, page 362.

shaped by the will of the thinker is articulated in a chosen language. The way the thinker uses every aspect of the structure of that language gives the thought its full character, ready to be reconstructed by the listener or reader into a shared idea understood within the bounds of our comprehension.

CHAPTER SEVEN
FRUSTRATION

To translate an idea into a symbolic form and communicate it gracefully, effectively and clearly creates frustration which has been vented by many in their straining at the bonds of language.

Years of training go into the articulation of an idea into a symbol system that best suits the thinker, the idea and the receiver. And when the training has at last allowed thinkers to express themselves, they find that the boundaries of the medium, the structure, the conventionally held assumptions all limit the sharing of their ideas with others. In many cases, the thinker will use a traditional genre without changing the accepted style. In others, thinkers will struggle to improve, destroy, recreate the structure or the style of their language to suit their expression.

Two writers who have innovated style, structure and vocabulary in language are e.e. cummings and James Joyce. cummings, in his "my sweet old etcetera",

> my sweet old etcetera
> aunt lucy during the recent
>
> war could and what
> is more did tell you just
> what everyone was fighting
>
> for,
> my sister
> isabel created hundreds
> (and
> hundreds) of socks not to
> mention shirts fleaproof earwarmers
>
> etcetera wristers etcetera, my
> mother hoped that

```
i would die etcetera
bravely of course my father used
to become hoarse talking about how it was
a privilege and if only he
could meanwhile my

self etcetera lay quietly
in the deep mud et

cetera
(dreaming,
et
   cetera, of
Your smile
eyes knees and of your Etcetera)[1]
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protested the stylized forms of poetry. European poetry, which had originally been sung or chanted, had become a genre for the literate and had to be written to be effective (for example, the sonnet). It needed to be revolutionized to regain its vitality. cummings rejected metre and rhyme, and he rejected some rules of spelling, grammar and structure. He broke words, phrases and sentences into fragments that may be sputtered, murmured, may be disjointed conversations, may be reflections of dreams. He did this as a protest and to state his thought in a violently different way in order to present another perspective to his reader. Yet still he is a literate poet. His poetry must be read to be understood. It must be printed and is part of the culture he is fighting.

James Joyce in *Finnegans Wake* represented an experience that cannot be stated in simple or fragmented language like cummings'. Joyce created his own words and rules from his extensive knowledge of Indo-European languages.

[1] e.e. cummings, *Complete Poems*, page 276.

> When I turn meoptics, from suchurban prospects, 'tis my
> filial's bosom, doth behold with pride, that
> pontificator, and circumvallator, with his dam night
> garrulous, slipt by his side. Ann alive, the lisp of
> her, 'twould grig mountains whisper her, and the berg of
> Iceland melt in waves of fire, and her spoon-me spondees,
> and her dirckle-me-ondenees, make the Rageous Ossean,
> kneel and quaff a lyre![2]

The sense of his words is not readily understood visually, as it belongs to an auditory experience. As de Kerckhove indicated, our culture may think in visual patterns because the alphabet and the theatre have opened the mind to representation using a visual mode. The ear is not of great importance in a literate culture. The eye and the mind's eye have been taught to govern thought, to train thought to exist in time and space chronologically, lineally and systematically. Joyce protested these bonds. He used words that contain many conflicting meanings.

> The "penisolate war" is the war of the pen in isolation
> (shem, artist in exile), the sexual war, with its thrust
> of the penis, and the Peninsular War which (Wellington
> and Napoleon) is a type of the struggle of brothers
> locked in mutual hate.[3]

Joyce was writing at a time when many thinkers were straining at the bounds of their language. Pedantic literacy had started to strangle expression. Joyce protested this strangulation. He loved the sound of words, the vitality of their flexibility of meaning, the magic of the levels in connotation and metaphor. The shift in national consciousness as well as class consciousness allowed his

[2] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, page 139.

[3] Anthony Burgess, "What It's All About", in *A Shorter Finnegans Wake*, page xxvi.

protest to be heard. Joyce was a highly literate writer but he needed to push the parameters of his language to their limits

Alexander Calder, a sculptor using wire and wood, expanded the traditional bounds of sculpture.

> The process of construction as in architecture inevitably suggested to the sculptor the truism that the void, the depth, the space of the sculpture could be as important as or even more important than the edge, the solid, the mass. A mass or line could frame a shaped void as effectively as, throughout history, voids had framed shaped masses. And finally, in abstract sculpture, constructed from solids and voids, lines and planes. motion need no longer be introduced without transforming the sculpture into a gadget or toy.[4]

Until his creation of the mobile, sculpture was motionless. It existed in space, redefined space, and implied the relationship of an object to its space. However, it had never moved in space, restating its being and its place. Calder moved from static forms to mobiles on solid bases, to suspended mobiles orbiting a focal point which could be empty or constantly changing in a series of unpredictable cycles. His language used three dimensional space, time, and movement to express his fascination with change and relationship.

> "I thought at the time how fine it would be if everything there moved, though Mondrian himself did not approve of this idea at all. I went home and tried to paint. But wire, or something to twist or tear or bend, is an easier medium for me to think in."[5]

Movement, real not merely suggested, allowed for a changing relationship between viewer and object, and object and its space.

[4] H.H. Arnason, *Calder*, page 9.

[5] *The Painter's Object*, edited by Myfanwy Evans, page 26.

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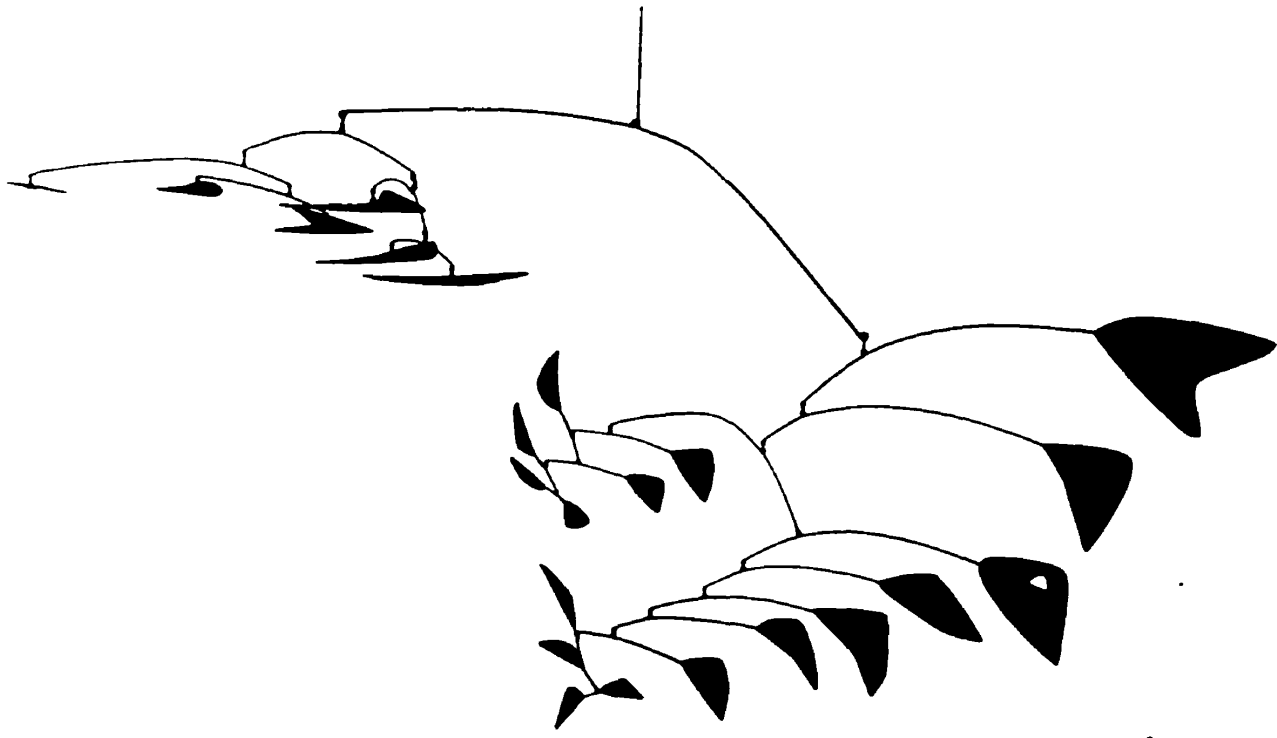
6

This shattering of conventional or traditional uses of language is similar to cummings' and Joyce's and gives those who come to art for meaning another perspective to contemplate.

Marcel Duchamp did not create a new form or a novel structure in his language, although he rejected conventional style in a shocking, innovative statement about his frustration. Two-dimensional, flat and framed canvas could give only a suggestion, an illusion of experience beyond its limits. Duchamp, Picasso and other painters in the first quarter of the twentieth century shocked their world and changed traditional views on styles of painting. Duchamp, in his *Nude Descending a Staircase*[7] attempted

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[6] A. Calder, *Roxbury Red*, 1963.

[7] Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase*, in *History of Modern Art*, page 212.

to overcome the conventional assumption that a still painter, by painting a still model or scene, captures a precious moment in time. He tried to suggest the curious dance an observer has with a visual perception. To understand an object visually one usually focuses on a part of it, comes close, backs off, circles it, scrutinizes and registers the impression through time in a series of blinks and changes in points of view. To express that experience Duchamp attempted to create the impression of movement in both of the observer and the observed, and the illusion of their changing relationship in space. Two-dimensional, framed, painted in oil on canvas, the *Nude Descending a Staircase* is a new statement in an old medium.

Toller Cranston also shocked his audience-spectators. A skater for whom ice, skates, music, materials, movement and confined space were the media and materials, Cranston used all of these traditional means of expression in a manner surprising and

innovative. His choice of music, costuming, style of execution, were all extravagant and innovative. As a result of his conception of movement on skates, he made statements of grace and fluidity, statements of a man's rejection of his physical limits in an attempt to free himself from the friction of plodding feet on dusty earth. In *Strawberry Ice*, with the assistance of the camera and its techniques to produce illusion, he combined the dream, desire and wishes of the imagination to fracture time, space and state of matter. He danced on skates underwater with giant goldfish, through fire, through air. His creative thought expanded the language of his art, offered new perceptions, inferences and reflections on movement.

Johann Sebastian Bach, although from another period of time, was a creative thinker expressing himself in a culture which had developed structure for the sake of the beauty of order. Frederick's Germany prized order and the music of the court, directed by Frederick himself, was typified by the canon, the fugue and the sonata, all of which have a structure as rigorous to follow as the sonnet. The canon has a single theme which is played against itself and must harmonize with itself. Two or three voices enter in the same key following a fixed time-delay, and each of the notes in the theme must harmonize as the voices speak to the theme and its variation. These are different kinds of canons; for example, in *The Musical Offering* Bach used the crab canon which is a complex construction in which the theme is played backwards in time. One wonders what form rebellion might take within such a

strict structure. Bach, with a wonderful sense of humour, played with subversion. In *The Musical Offering*, which he wrote for Frederick on the king's theme, he included an endlessly rising canon labelled simply "Canon por Tonos". There are three voices.

> The uppermost voice sings a variant of the Royal Theme, while underneath it, two voices provide a canonic harmonization based on a second theme. The lower of this pair sings its theme in C minor (which is the key of the canon as a whole), and the upper of the pair sings the same theme displaced upwards in pitch by the interval of a fifth. What makes this canon different from any other, however, is that when it concludes - or rather, seems to conclude - it is no longer in the key of C minor, but is now in D minor. Somehow Bach has contrived to modulate (change keys) right under the listener's nose. And it is so constructed that this "ending" ties smoothly onto the beginning again: thus one can repeat the process and return to the key of E, only to join again to the beginning. These successive modulations lead the ear to increasingly remote provinces of tonality, so that after several of them, one would expect to be hopelessly far away from the starting key. And yet magically after six such modulations, the original key of C minor has been restored! All the voices are exactly one octave higher than they were at the beginning, and here the piece may be broken off in a musically agreeable way. Such, one imagines, was Bach's intention; but Bach indubitably also relished the implication that this process could go on ad infinitum, which is perhaps why he wrote in the margin "As the modulation rises, so may the King's glory."[6]

Bach, using a language so structured, could have rebelled and shocked his audience. He could have struggled against the system and expanded the modes or style of expression. He didn't. He used the system to make suggestions. Was he keeping Frederick busy, endlessly spiralling upwards? Was he directing Frederick as imperiously as Frederick directed everyone and everything in Germany? Who knows? Bach merely suggests and allows the flute,

[6] D. Hofstadter, *Godel, Escher, Bach*, page 10.

violin, and oboe to contend.

Many thinkers, using a chosen symbol system which best suits the expression of a thought, found that their language had become static or stale or hide-bound by rules and social attitudes. Many broke the bounds of their language and initiated the next step in its evolution. This may have been shocking at the time, but the changes that were initiated are now part of the norm and allow everyone to express thoughts more clearly, freely and vividly.

CHAPTER EIGHT
TRANSLATION

Translation is the act of substituting one set of symbols in an accepted system of language for another in order to share the original meaning with another person. It is done for the purpose of understanding oneself or another person, comprehending our historical past across time and change, communicating from one social or cultural group to another (with the subtext of political intimidation, or with understanding, manipulation, mythologizing, reporting, obscuring, persuading). If the enormous task of understanding another person were truly appreciated, translation would be given the respect it deserves.

The relationship between the thinker and a thought through translation to another thinker must include consideration of the linguistic, psychological, social, literary and political aspects of the transaction. This relationship is an active, transformational one in which the thinker and the thought are subtly changed by the translation and then again by the receiver of the thought. The translation could be intra- or inter-lingual, could be over millennia or simultaneous, and could be between two very different cultures or within the mind of the thinker alone. Just the act of expressing a thought in a chosen language is an act of translation. Perhaps the thought would be considered prethought before it is organized in language. We are all multi-lingual. Our thoughts must be translated from a multi-lingual matrix into a single language for expression to another person who then takes the

thought and translates it into his own multi-lingual matrix for personal understanding. Because ours is a literate civilization, we have a bias that language is only verbal or written words. However, this does not cover the ground adequately. When I think, my thought may combine music, mathematics, movement, feeling, intuition, visual images and words. I may take the single language or combined languages of an expressed thought (for example, the maths and lines of architectural drafting or the music, movement and Italian of opera) and then translate these into my own understanding. This is primary translation. Everyone does this translation automatically, and yet it is rarely seriously analyzed.

> "Translation", properly understood, is a special case of the arc of communication which every successful speech-act closes within a given language. On the inter-lingual level, translation will pose concentrated, visibly intractable problems; but these same problems abound, at a more covert or conventionally neglected level, intra-lingually. The model "sender to receiver" which represents and semiological and semantic process is ontologically equivalent to the model "source language to receptor language" used in the theory of translation. In both schemes there is "in the middle" an operation of interpretive decipherment, an encoding-decoding function or synapse. Where two or more languages are in articulate interconnection, the barriers in the middle will obviously by more salient, and the enterprise of intelligibility more conscious. But the "motions of spirit", to use Dante's phrase, are rigorously analogous. So, as we shall see, are the most frequent causes of misunderstanding, or what is the same, of failure to translate correctly. In short: inside or between languages, human communication equals translation. A study of translation is a study of language.[1]

Everyone is fundamentally multi-lingual. We accumulate an

[1] George Steiner, *After Babel. Aspects of Languages and Translation,* page 49.

array of languages as we mature from infancy to adulthood, starting with body language or movement which is one of our first languages. We add our mother tongue, a verbal language (or more than one mother tongue for some), then perhaps the language of music if we studied piano, or dance and gymnastics which we might learn in kindergarten, to film which we are exposed to from *Sesame Street* to *Star Wars*, to maths which we learn in grade one, to drafting in grade nine, and drawing, painting, sculpture and other related arts in school, to a variety of second languages (French, German, Bengali, Mandarin, Hebrew, etc.) which we learn as adolescents, Each of us is multi-lingual.

Translation from pre-thought and thought into an accepted language requires sensitive choice of vocabulary, syntax, image and structure in order to express the thought clearly and accurately. The expressed thought in its chosen language is always slightly different from the thought as it was conceived and shaped in the mind.

> Would it have been worthwhile,
> To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
> To have squeezed the universe into a ball
> To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
> To say, "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
> Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all:-
> If one settling a pillow by her head,
>   Should say: "That is not what I meant at all.
>   That is not it, at all."[2]

Interpretation, using metaphor to give vivid images, or personification to make the abstract concrete, or onomatopoeia to

[2] T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", in *Collected Poems* 1909-1962, page 16.

fill the ear with sounds close to the original, or meter and rhythm to catch cadence, heartbeat, breath, dancing feet, or even polysyllabic, Latinate terminology to specify an elusive idea, is always present. We choose our language to thrill, to enchant, to intimidate, to bully, to woo, to amuse or to persuade a listener. The process can be slow and painful or as swift and unselfconscious as birdsong. It is the act of translation. The next step is the listener's process of decoding, comprehending, interpreting and double checking. This is the other half of translation, and the two together complete the relationship between the thinker, the language and the receiver.

Language allows a person to create an identity. One's cultural mythology, family stories, admired models and painful experiences shape that identity, but language articulates and defines it. People who think in non-verbal ways, or who are dyslexic, or deaf, still choose languages to express themselves and as a part of that expression create a persona. Temple Grandin, autistic and highly visual, uses drafting to articulate her visual thinking and through this talent now sees herself as a cow.

However, if a person has to move from a mother tongue, to a second language which has a different social value, identity is jeopardized. Second language acquisition not only spans words but possible class differences and all of the value shadings inherent in the culture supporting this new language. Until the second language becomes as close as one's own shadow, a coherent identity is fragmented and the person alienated.

In Richard Rodriguez' *Hunger of Memory*, the main problems of translation do not spring from Spanish to English but from working class to middle class. The child, Richard, has become middle class because of his education and his parents have remained working class. Accent, grammar and vocabulary maintain class boundaries. His parents cannot speak "up" and the child will not speak "down". Both find it impossible to see their identities in relation to the other, even though there is a constant search. This identity presented through language puts up blocks for intra- and inter-lingual translation. More than just the words, it is in the relationship of the child to his parents in the larger context of society.

> Intimacy thus continued at home; intimacy was not stilled by English. It is true that I would never forget the great change in my life, the diminished occasions of intimacy. But there would also be times when I sensed the deepest truth about language and intimacy: *Intimacy is not created by a particular language; it is created by intimates.* The great change in my life was not linguistic but social. If, after becoming a successful student, I no longer heard intimate voices as often as I had earlier, it was not because I spoke English rather than Spanish. It was because I used public language for most of the day. I moved easily at last, a citizen in a crowded city of words.[j]

For Eva Hoffman, in *Lost in Translation*, her identity was bound up in words. Her separation from her mother tongue had made her identity suspect.

> But mostly, the problem is that the signifier has become severed from the signified. The words I learn now don't stand for things in the same unquestioned way they did in my native tongue. "River" in Polish was a vital sound,

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[j] Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger of Memory. The Education of Richard Rodriguez*, page 32.

> energized with the essence of riverhood, of my rivers, of
> my being immersed in rivers. "River" in English is a
> cold word - a word without an aura. It has no
> accumulated associations for me, and it does not give off
> the radiating haze of connotation. It does not evoke.[4]

She could not articulate herself in English as she could in Polish
with all of the context and connotations bound up in her
experience. Later, English words became as close as her
"bloodstream".

> But once this mutation takes place, once the language
> starts speaking itself to me from my cells, I stop being
> so stuck on it. Words are no longer spiky bits of hard
> matter, which refer only to themselves. They become,
> more and more, a transparent medium in which I live and
> which lives in me - a medium through which I can once
> again get to myself and to the world.[5]

Maya Angelou expressed the spliced nature of her identity, and
how language separated the scholarly girl from the Black girl in
her self.

> My education and that of my Black associates were quite
> different from the education of our white schoolmates.
> In the classroom we all learned past participles, but in
> the streets and in our homes the Blacks learned to drop
> *s*'s from plurals and suffixes from past tense verbs. We
> were alert to the gap separating the written word from
> the colloquial. We learned to slide out of one language
> and into another without being conscious of the effort.
> At school, in a given situation, we might respond with
> "That's not unusual." But in the street, meeting the
> same situation, we easily said, "It be's like that
> sometimes."[6]

Djimon Hounsou, the Benin actor in *Amistad*, found that in
America his identity was suspect. African Americans protested when

[4] Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation*, page 106.

[5] Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation*, page 243.

[6] Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, page 191.

he spoke with them because his language did not contain street slang. His diction and accent were not familiar, his history and his assumptions were not theirs and even though his skin was black he was not Black.[7] It is language which largely defines identity. Class, race, ethnicity, religion, gender are all tied with the knots of language. Rodriguez, Hoffman, Angelou, Hounsou would all confirm this. Until a person can translate identity freely into and through words, alienation and fragmentation can result for the speaker and misunderstanding for the listener.

There is also the translation from one verbal language to another through time, requiring etymology and cultural history to make the meaning of the words clear. Words suggesting stereotypes are learned without the conscious awareness of the symbol's history. This example is a gross over-simplification: since English is a Germanic language, history and prejudgments of the pre-literate Angles, Saxons and Jutes are built into the foundation of words' meanings. Because the northern Europeans were fair and the Romans, their only serious threats as enemies, were dark, the hero in many English stories used to be blond, blue-eyed and implicitly understood by the English reader to be good, intelligent and pure while the villain was dark in face and heart. How does one translate this cultural "short-hand" embedded in a story? How does a reader from Africa whose community is black of skin, hair and eyes, translate this underlying prejudice? How would the

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[7] Bruce Kirkland, "Amistad Caps a Long Journey", in *The Toronto Sun*, Friday January 2, 1998, page 46.

translator render "a green-eyed vamp" or "a fiery-haired fury" with all of the connotations intact?

> "Meaning" resides "inside the words" of the source text, but to the native reader it is evidently "far more than" the sum of dictionary definitions. The translator must actualize the implicit "sense", the denotative, connotative, illative, intentional, associative range of significations which are implicit in the original, but which leaves undeclared or only partly declared simply because the native auditor or reader has an immediate understanding of them. The native speaker's at-homeness, largely subconscious because inherited and cultural-specific, in his native tongue, his long-conditioned immersion in the appropriate context of the spoken or written utterance, make possible the economy, the essential implicitness of customary speech and writing. In the "transference" process of translation, the inherence of meanings, the compression through context of plural, even contradictory significations "into" original words, get lost to a greater or lesser degree.[δ]

Translation must not only bridge verbal languages but also class, religious, educational and political differences. There are political implications of translation, for example, between imperialistic and colonial languages with assumptions of superiority and inferiority. Translation exists on every level and through every nuance of difference. The imperialism of a colonizer who chooses words to undermine the culture of the "inferior" nation is one concern, and the imperialism of the empire builder whose purpose in translation is to make a myth which will aggrandize the empire and negate its origins is another.

> Because literary success is equated with military success, translation can expand both literary and political borders. A similar attitude toward the enterprise of translation may be found in the German Romantics, who used *ubersetzen* (to translate) and *verdeutschen* (to Germanize) interchangeably: translation

[δ] George Steiner, *After Babel*, page 291.

was literally a strategy of linguistic incorporation. The great model for this use of translation is, of course, the Roman Empire, which so dramatically incorporated Greek culture into its own. For the Romans, Nietzsche , asserts, "translation was a form of conquest".[9]

Assia Djebar, an Algerian literary writer, used French, the language of the ex-colonizer and was aware of the inherent politics of her choice. Samia Mehrez commented on her struggle:

> What Djebar effectively does... is to create a new confrontation: the French gaze on Algeria against her own gaze on the French words: "lodged in volumes now gathering dust on library shelves" which "present the warp and woof of a *monstrous* reality, that is made manifest in all its unambiguous detail." She writes in the French language which "was formally used to entomb [her] people" 150 years later to expose it. This confrontation between her gaze and that of colonial officers, her use of the French language and theirs, generates the most crucial tension in the text. Furthermore, just as Djebar rereads the French eyewitness reports, she transcribes/translates the oral testimonies of Algerian women on the war of liberation (1956-1962) which she had recorded in the spoken Arabic dialect. As Djebar reinscribes these testimonies in her narrative, she "arabizes" the French in which they are recorded.[10]

Gender politics is an aspect of translation which has feminists concerned. Lori Chamberlain combined both Derrida's deconstructionist theories and feminist concerns about "what it means to be a woman translator in and of a male tradition" when she discussed Suzanne Jill Levine's translation of Cabrera Infante's *La Habana para una infante difunto.*

The very choice of texts to work with, then, poses an

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[9] Lori Chamberlain, "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation" in *Rethinking Translation,* page 61.

[10] Samia Mehrez, "Translation and the Postcolonial Experience: The Francophone North African Text" in *Rethinking Translation,* page 125.

initial dilemma for the feminist translator: while a text such as Cabrera Infante's may be ideologically offensive, not to translate it would capitulate to that logic which ascribes all power to the original. Levine chooses instead to subvert the text, to play infidelity against infidelity, and to follow out the text's parodic logic.... It is essential that as translators women get under the skin of both antagonistic and sympathetic works. They must become independent "resisting" interpreters who do not only let antagonistic works speak... but also speak with them and place them in a larger context by discussing them and the process of their translation.[11]

In translation, intent is all important. First, the intent of the thinker must be considered. Is the choice of word or metaphor or structure made to provide clarity? Is it to hide a conscious or subconscious fear, a politically incorrect or blasphemous opinion? Is it to reveal a secret secretly? No one can really know but the thinker and even he may not be aware of the subtleties of the subtext. It takes an effort to read T.S. Eliot because the complexities of his intent are mixed with both obvious and hidden levels of meaning. How would Eliot be translated into a language and culture far removed from his American/English, Protestant/ Catholic, first third of 20th century Europe, profoundly literate, and intimately personal quest? Would

> .... Alas!
> Our dried voices, when
> We whisper together
> Are quiet and meaningless
> As wind in dried grass
> Or rats' feet over broken glass
> In our dry cellar[12]

[11] Lori Chamberlain, "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation" in *Rethinking Translation*, page 71.

[12] T.S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men" in *Collected Poems 1909-1962*, page 89.

be rendered sibilant with the same onomatopoeic effect in another language? Could an Inuit computer programmer in Kangiqsujuak, a logger in Williams Lake, a Quebec bush pilot on Lake Kipawa, a Toronto teacher of Jane-Finch students, a Newfoundland fisherman from Bonavista, each with a language or dialect (Inuit, English, French, patois) be able to catch the anguish of Eliot's urban sophisticate in a spiritual wasteland? And how would it be caught in languages which are very different from English - Mandarin, Urdu, Yoruba, Nootka, Finnish? How would one translate Xhosa poetry or song with its clicks, which for the thinker in and speaker of Xhosa have meaning, to another language without these same sounds?

The intent of the translator determines the translation. If the translator chooses to be literal for the purpose of exactness, she runs the risk of bias in her choice of words or phrases. If the translator chooses to be less concrete and more inspirational what is gained in creativity may involve sacrificing faithfulness. In any case, translation will always be a derivative, not an original act. If a reader from a different time or culture does not share the mindset of the translator, another level of complication is added to the original intent or meaning.

Intent may also be identified in the reader or listener. Louise Rosenblatt dealt with the "transactional" process that occurs in reading a text. The reader brings with him all of his experiences, education and preconceptions and gives the text the colours and textures of his own response. The reader's intent is

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bound up with the reader himself. While it can be said that the intent of the thinker and of the translator may be rational and conscious, this is rarely true of the reader.

> The reader's attention to the text activates certain elements in his past experience - external reference, internal response - that have become linked with the verbal symbols. Meaning will emerge from a network of relationships among the things symbolized as he senses them. The symbols point to these sensations, images, objects, ideas, relationships, with the particular associations or feeling-tones created by his past experiences with them in actual life or in literature. The selection and organization of responses to some degree hinge on the assumptions, the expectations, or sense of possible structures, that he brings out of the stream of his life. Thus built into the raw materials of the literary process itself is the particular world of the reader.[13]

Besides the difficulty of understanding others who live at different times, in other cultures, there are many constraints of this symbol system itself: the grammar, etymology, metaphor, allusion, and the visual or auditory effects of the choice of words and their arrangement. In addition, some thinkers innovatively stretch the structure of their language. For example, how would one translate James Joyce's celebration of sound?

> The fall(bababadalgharaghtakamminarronnionnbr-onntonnerronntuonnthunntrovarrhounawnskawntoohoohoorden-enthurnuk!) of a once wall strait oldparr is retaled early in bed and later on life down through all christian minstrelsy. The great fall of the offwall entailed at such short notice the pftjschute of Finnegan, erse solid man, that the humptyhillhead of himself prumptly sends an unquiring one well to the west in quest of his tumptytumtoes: and their upturnpikepointand place is at the knock out in the park where oranges have been laid to

[13] Louise M. Rosenblatt, *The Reader, The Text, The Poem*, pages 10-11.

rust upon the green since devlinsfirst loved livvy.[14]

But it can be translated (and Joyce did translate *Finnegans Wake* into Italian). It may be translated faithfully, with every word exactly rendered, or it may be translated in the spirit of the original with creativity on the part of the translator. Because there are many invented words in *Finnegans Wake*, exactness would be difficult. If the second language were a Germanic language the onomatopoeia and compound words would be easier than in a language which used characters or ideographs rather than a phonetic alphabet.

Just as one person must translate a thought from a multi-lingual matrix into a specific language, there is much that is lost in translation from one language to another. Just as the listener must then translate what he has heard, seen or read, back into the language of his own thought,with his own interpretation and understanding and with his own embellishments or literalism, so the translator goes through the same process. The relationship between the original and the translated reveals the quality of the translator and her political, psychological and cultural agenda or bias, her perspicacity, her ability to share the human condition and her sensitivity to meaning expressed in the original and shared by the receiver.

Universality is one key to understanding translated text. Because each of us shares in the human condition and has suffered similar experiences in a lifetime (childhood innocence, sexual

[14] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, page 3.

desire, unwelcome aging, family politics, jealousy of love, fierce integrity) we are able to understand other people who exist in other cultures and at other times who go through the same basic experiences. Just as it is difficult to understand a member of our own family, so it is difficult to understand any other person, but we share our humanity and are able to understand each other with effort and imagination. Even though thought may be translated to another totally different tongue, culture and time, the original thought caught in its silver spider web of language can still be spun out to others. Consider the translation of *King Lear* from Elizabethan English to Kurasawa's Japanese of *Ran*. If the play is translated and performed, then the movements, intonation of the words, body language, the silences, costumes, sets, and sound effects all contribute to an understanding of the play. Somehow the thought must be translated accurately through all of these, from Elizabethan language and culture to Japanese, and still remain true to Shakespeare's original. How is it that a twentieth century Japanese audience watching *Ran* or a Canadian audience watching *Ran* with English sub-titles can possibly receive the thought that Shakespeare may have hoped to convey? And yet the audience, then, now, here and there, does get a great deal of meaning and is touched by it. It may not be exactly the same meaning; at least it falls within the bounds of Shakespeare's intention (something we can only guess at) interpreted by Kurasawa and conveyed by another medium.

Another example of the universal is found in the universality

of sign. Oliver Sacks found in his study of signing with the deaf

that although there are many schools of sign there is a great deal

of similarity which seems to have developed naturally and is

probably related to universals in body language.

> Thus a monolingual Japanese would be lost in Arkansas, as
> a monolingual American would be lost in rural Japan. But
> a deaf American can make contact swiftly with his signing
> brother in Japan, Russia, or Peru - he would hardly be
> lost at all. Signers (especially native signers) are
> adept at picking up, or at least understanding, other
> signed languages, in a way which one would never find
> among speakers.... Some understanding will usually be
> established within minutes, accomplished mostly by
> gesture and mime (in which signers are extraordinarily
> proficient). By the end of a day, a grammarless pidgin
> will be established. And within three weeks, perhaps,
> the signer will possess a very reasonable knowledge of
> the other sign language, enough to allow detailed
> discussion on quite complex issues.[15]

Translation, intra- or inter-lingually from a thought to its

expression, from one person in one time, culture and nation to

another person perhaps in a very different era, society and

ethnicity, subtly transforms meaning (linguistic, psychological,

social, literary, political) in the relationship between the

thinker, the thought, the expression, and another person's

comprehension. All of this leads to further dialogue between many

thinkers, through many languages over millennia.

Translation covers an enormous range of potential language

concerns touching many sensitive and challenging issues. These

issues have been confronted according to the era, culture and

politics of the people whose ideas have been translated or the

people who are doing the translation. In the future, the specific

[15] Oliver Sacks, *Seeing Voices,* page 113-114.

issues may be different, but concerns about translation will always be at the heart of expression and communication. George Steiner sums up translation grandly:

> To a greater or lesser degree, every language offers its own reading of life. To move between languages, to translate, even within restrictions of totality, is to experience the almost bewildering bias of the human spirit towards freedom.[16]

The relationship between the thinker, the language, and the receiver is one that is always transformational. Time and distance and individual statistics (gender, ethnicity, age, class, religion, race) are mere shadows. It is the participation, facilitated by the translator, whose part is equally active, which makes this relationship vibrant, political, personal and meaningful.

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[16] George Steiner, *After Babel*, page 498.

CHAPTER NINE
COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Communication technology has facilitated human interaction for millennia. Drums communicated over miles to neighbouring communities; smoke signals, cairns and sculpture left as messages, were forms of technology used to share information between people. Today, cell phones, hearing aids, television, radio, recording devices, fiberoptics, all and more facilitate communication. How does communication technology influence our relationship with each other and with our world? We seem to have limitless contacts, to be capable of overcoming numerous disadvantages and exploring vistas beyond the imagination of our ancestors, and to be able to survive the rigours of nature more easily. At the same time, we feel alienated from other people, our faculties seem less capable, and the natural world is quickly being destroyed.

It has only been in the last five thousand years that communication technology has had such pervasive power to influence our humanity, in ways both constructive and destructive. Sensing this power, which offers us tremendous control in our lives and threatens our control of ourselves, we react with wondering enthusiasm and bewildered fear. Here is a paradox and a dilemma. We, who invented the technological advancements which have given us freedom, time, and great potential for choice in our lives, feel that we have lost freedom, time, and choice. Technology which expands the far-reaching possibilities of interaction with other human beings also isolates and makes us less socially interactive.

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These paradoxes are at the centre of the relationship people have with technology. How do such paradoxes of control and interaction affect the relationship between the artist, the performer and the audience?

People are inventive and social. We like to interact with others and enjoy inter-supportive relationships. We like to hear other people's ideas, and share their feelings and thoughts. We participate joyfully in stories and react with pleasure to painting, sculpture, poetry, music, or any expression which includes us as fellow humans delving into the mysteries of our lives. Even if a tragic play puts us through the rigours of fear and pain for a short while, the cathartic effect which purges us offers release.

Our technology in the past facilitated communication with other people and widened our social and cultural horizons. Now, it continues to enhance communication, but with a difference. The individualism which developed in the West over the past five hundred years is now entrenched. Communication is no longer choral or communal. It too has become individualized. Perhaps chat rooms are an attempt to rediscover a communal conversation, but they do not carry responsibility. An individual may have his say and disappear, pseudonom and all. From mead halls for saga singers, to larger concert halls with rigid seating, to the Walkman, is movement towards individualism with its attendant loneliness and social aberrations.

From sculpture in the past warming the palm of the hand to

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massive abstractions in bronze towering over us like skyscrapers is movement from the sensuous to the intimidating. From a singer around a campfire wooing an audience of friends under the stars, to a book of sonnets designed for elite literati, to Net surfers who read a poem from a transgender cyberpunk with no known identity and a mysterious pseudonym is movement from lyrical passion to a disembodied printout without a signature. A thinker uses the available technology as a matrix for expression and communication; and both the person who relays the thought and the person who receives the thought are transformed by the technology. Contact, cultural and social exploration, sharing of ideas, are facilitated, but dehumanization and desocialization also result as technology distances us from the thoughts and feelings of others. Our culture embodies this dehumanization and both the fears and the violence resulting from it are considered normal human responses. The pleasure in interpersonal sharing continues, but the responsibility that results from this relationship starts to slip away when technology is our interface.

The relationship we form with technology is personalized yet invasive. The alphabet, the printed page, electronic equipment and the computer, each created by us, have changed us in the process of our use. We think we control it, we fear that it controls us and both reactions have validity. This ambivalence pervades our interaction with technology. Technology has always been present. It has been a part of the relationship, whether by conscious or subconscious consent or by fearful or ambivalent accession,

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throughout human history.

The impact of technology on the relationship between the thinker, a thought, the performer and the audience has transformed the traditional balance and the original human reality of the communication. The reality was that a person expressed a thought directly (in dance, poetry, prose, painting, sculpture, music) to another person or a group who was present and actively or passively participating. Technology, which intrinsically is neither bad nor good, has a great effect on culture depending on the way it is used.

Painters have always taken advantage of technological development. Pigment on cave walls, mosaics of glazed clay tiles, illuminated parchment, oil on canvas, egg tempera on gesso - at different times painters have used materials developed in their era. Many painters are including designs based on the microchip or industrial invention. When paintings are displayed through photography, film or TV (and these in colour have only been available for the past fifty years) the viewer is removed by a degree from the work. Lost is the sensuous experience of feeling texture, the appreciation of complex detail, and the emotional intensity. And although many people have more access to classical paintings, they may miss going to galleries and sharing the experience of the painting through their own senses, and with other people.

Ed Bartram is a Canadian printmaker. His painting and prints have all been of Georgian Bay rocks. He has a print machine at his

home studio and he pulls prints using inks of slightly different colours to suit the effect he is trying to achieve. He also uses photo-etching and transfers the photo to a copper plate and incorporates it into the print. Bartram recognizes the difference between the creative act and the use of technology.

> Technology is neutral and a creative artist exploits various aspects of technology to get the effect he has been aiming for. He will experiment with an aspect of technology, play with it, until he has discovered an effect which assists him in expressing an idea or a feeling. A creative scientist may create something new in technology; a creative artist reorganizes and uses the technology to help him create the impression he is striving for.[1]

He stresses that a technician will analyze and predict what might happen if technology is used in a certain way. Advertising will use the latest and most effective aspects of visual, auditory and perhaps olfactory and tactile presentation innovatively, but this is not what a creative artist will do. The creative artist, who is trying to express a feeling or a thought, may exploit the technology (like Andy Warhol's use of advertising methods and models, perhaps to express the idea that the democratization of America can be seen when both rich and poor both buy a can of Coke for the same price and get the same product), but this use is as a matrix or a vehicle for the creative thought.

Florin Brojba was a student of Bartram's at the Ontario College of Art. He studied print making in Rumania and computer programming in Holland. At O.C.A. he combined the two. He created

[1] Ed Bartram, Interview with Susan King, October 29, 1995.

a lithograph, which included photo-etching and bar codes which could be read by a wand connected to a computer. The spectator could pass the wand over the print and when the bar code was activated a computer screen would fill with poetry and music as part of the art expression. The lithography, the photography, the photo-etching (and here he was experimenting with electrical nodes to fix the negative) and the computer were technological means with which he expressed his thought and feeling.

Sculptors have chosen materials which bring the spectator close to the product. A tactile/visual/spatial experience is presented in stone, wood, metal, clay. An Inuit sculptor would create an animal (or spirit). Palm sized, a walrus would be rubbed out of soapstone or carved out of whale bone to be touched by a viewer, even to the point of being warmed by the hands. This was true of much sculpture. Trudeau had a typical response when he goosed a statue of Queen Victoria in Ottawa; tactile and personal.

Technology has often been used in the making of sculpture. A sculptor using clay must glaze and fire it. One using stone, or bronze, glass, wire, or any combination of materials must rely on technology to work the medium and transform it into a finished product. How does technology affect the transmission of an idea into a final product? Cost, mutability of the medium, breakage, unanticipated results, all come between the sculptor and his thought; and, in many cases, limit the transmission as any medium will. As technology permits a grander scale than we can touch, and galleries tell guards to prevent touching (for good reason), the

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relationship between the sculpture and the viewer is changed. Sculpture becomes objectified, distanced, no longer tactile and sensuous as it was meant to be. Moore didn't intend his massive mommas to be mummified. The relationship with sculpture has always been spatial and three dimensional; but, it was never intended to be objectified. Now holding the remote to tune into the Learning Channel is as close as many get.

The use of technology by a poet influences change in the traditional creative act. The poet may have originally used voice, and mnemonic devices in the creation of a poem. Later, a poet may have included a musical instrument and still later a quill for writing, and paper to scribble his verse. Now, perhaps, a poet may use the computer. We no longer have the occasional rough scrawl on the margins of a page to let us see the construction of the poem, the choice of words, the changes in rhyme, the development of the theme. The poem saved on a disk, posted on a bulletin board, produced on a print-out, or sent to a publisher is what we get, finished and printed. Poets still scribble, but with the computer the process has changed and so has the relationship between the poet, the vehicle used for sharing communication and the audience.

A program which gives some idea of the extent of change in writing patterns is The Writer in Electronic Residence, used in high schools across the country to assist students of creative writing. The poet, Lorna Crozier, is a part of this program. Students write poems using a word processor and send them off to the centre which co-ordinates a dialogue among the writers. Every

individual who has access to the program can read the poem and comment on it. From all across Canada students, teachers and the five poets (who are part of the program out of Simon Fraser University) comment on the poems, and the writers then change details or rewrite portions as a result of the criticism. The writing and rewriting process for one student can take weeks. This communally, publicly shared experience is no longer the private cry/shout/song of an individual to a small, known audience. The poem may be an intensely personal expression, but the audience who responds to it is now beyond the poet's anticipation.

Other poets share their poetry through the Net and get almost instant feedback. Poetry, inspired by one poem read on the Internet, gets written and sent out. This experience has become increasingly international in its reception. People not only send poetry, but also art and music in this way. One young poet has received letters from Poland, Israel, Italy, Iceland and Norway, which contain responses to his poetry, and drawings which he could use to illustrate the poems when they would be published in a book. Here, both old and contemporary technology meet. The audience participates as actively as it may have done when poetry was oral and communal. However, the readers are more numerous and varied, and the memory belongs to the computer.

There is a continuous debate between humanists and technological determinists over the dehumanising effect of technology on people. The technological determinist welcomes the development of the computer (in this case) and suggests that

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machines allow humans to explore their own minds which have similarities to the workings of a computer. The humanist is fearful of a person losing the qualities of being human - taking responsibility, participating actively and creatively in one's own life, sharing feelings, having self-conscious and sensuous experiences.

> The hackers illustrate another facet of our emerging relationships with machines. Their response to the computer is artistic, even romantic. They want their programs to be beautiful and elegant expressions of their uniqueness and genius. They recognize one another not because they belong to the same "profession", but because they share an urgency to create in their medium. They relate to one another not just as technical experts, but as creative artists. The Romantics wanted to escape rationalist egoism by becoming one with nature. The hackers find soul in the machine - they lose themselves in the idea of mind building mind and in the sense of merging their minds with the universal system. When nineteenth-century Romantics looked for an alternative to the mechanism and competition of society, they looked to a perfect society of two, "perfect friendship" or "perfect love". This desire for fusion has its echo today, although in a new and troubling form. Instead of a quest for an idealized person, now there is the computer as a second self.[i]

All aspects of this debate can be seen when a poet uses a word processing program and transmits his work through the Internet to others. The poet may be using the computer as a vehicle for expression, a tool with a keyboard and screen like a pen and paper. The technology may not be considered transformational, just transportational; but it does transform.

Even before the alphabet, oral language used as a societal directive had been a technological device.

[i] Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self*, page 307.

> With the achievement of language, our species was placed
> in a position to invent a supplement to the genetically
> imprinted code. A second form of informational storage
> became available for man to use, and this enabled him to
> some extent to take charge of his own further evolution.
> Instead of adapting to his environment, he acquired the
> ability to change it, and also to change himself. The
> first initial use to which this ability was put was to
> devise the primary structures of human society. This
> grew up as they were incorporated in the language of the
> linguistic group, the individuals of which were required
> to memorize behaviour patterns shared by all members of
> the group. By the act of communicating in accordance
> with these memorized codes, mere herds and tribes gave
> way to societies with socially conditioned habits,
> customs, laws, history.[3]

From the time that the phonetic alphabet was developed by the
Greeks, there have been concerns over the influence the alphabet
itself was having on our humanness. Human memory was being
changed.

> ...The art of writing provided man with a transpersonal
> memory. Men were given an artificially extended and
> verifiable memory of objects and events not present to
> sight or recollection. Individuals applied their minds
> to symbols rather than things and went beyond the world
> of concrete experience into the world of conceptual
> relations created within an enlarged time and space
> universe.[4]

It has been speculated that the change in verbal technology from
oral to written alphabet caused lateralization of specialized brain
function including a change in its sequential and "time ordered"
processing abilities[5], the change to organization by classification
and objectivization, and a change to logical, lineal and
developmental argument.

[3] Eric A. Havelock, *Prologue to Greek Literacy*, pages 22-23.

[4] Harold Innis, *Empire and Communications*, pages 10-11.

[5] Derrick de Kerckhove, *The Skin of Culture*, page 28.

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What is the effect on the poet of using a computer for the writing of poetry? The young poet, mentioned above, used to write only by hand and enjoyed the sensuousness of the pen as it carried his thought across the paper in his individual handwriting. It was his creation, one he could feel and put his signature on. Now, he uses the computer and enjoys the experience even more. He feels he has found a friend. He has a relationship with this computer which is private and personal.

> I would say that I have a perfect interface with the machine... perfect for me. I feel totally telepathic with the computer. And it sort of generalizes so that I feel telepathic with the people I am sending mail to. I am glad I don't have to see them face to face. I wouldn't be as personal about myself. And the telepathy with the computer - well I certainly don't think of it as a person there, but that doesn't mean that I don't *feel* it as a person there. Particularly as I have personalized my interface with the system to suit myself. So it's like being with another person, but not a strange person. Someone who knows just how I like things done.[6]

The computer does not talk back (yet), but it gives him a product which can be printed in a chosen font, can be edited with immediate ease and presented to readers in a form as close to 'published' as possible. His audience can receive it immediately, even if that audience is thousands of miles away, across many international borders, and he can get a faster than light response. What is the influence of the computer on the poet's expression and on the relationship of the poet to an audience? Perhaps, because poets can print and publish their own poetry without the influence of an editor, who often holds the political values of the publishing

[6] Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self*, page 211.

company as an absolute criterion of judgement of poetic content, freedom of expression is guaranteed, even if the poetry is considered Satanic, pornographic, morally dangerous, or politically revolutionary. The audience has direct access to the poetry and the poet, and can give an immediate personal response. The computer allows a closer, more intimate response than a published book of poetry, even at a book launch, ever could. Here the use of the computer for a poet acts both as a matrix and a transforming agent.

With music, because technology can be used to record a performer long before an audience hears the performance and without a real audience present, the quality of the performance can be manipulated and the spontaneity in the relationship between the composer, performer and the audience may be very different.

In the case of one pianist, his idiosyncratic health, his sense of perfection, his highly personalized interpretations, his lack of interest in a live audience, and his self-containment, all were details which determined his desire not to perform in public. Glenn Gould, who gave marvellous interpretations of Bach, made a decision to stop performing in public and to record his performances.

> So, in 1964, he confirmed a decision made four years
> earlier and completely gave up the old-fashioned custom
> of concert-giving in order to channel his performing
> primarily into the new technologies of recording
> machines, radio transmission, and television.[7]

[7] Richard Kostelanetz, "Glenn Gould: Bach in the Electronic Age" in *Glenn Gould Variations*, page 126.

And what of his audience? What of those people who had come to hear his concerts in the company of friends and other music/ piano/Gould/Bach lovers? People went to concert halls to directly experience a performance of music in order to take home memories of a once-in-a-lifetime Gould rendition of a Bach fugue or a Beethoven sonata or a Brahms intermezzo. It was both a one-on-one experience and an experience shared with many. What of the concert hall audience? Gould's personal, perfectionist principles had a serious relationship with the piece but not with the audience.

> He frankly sees no justification for playing compromised performances before mere thousands of people when records extend his best rendition into millions of living rooms.[8]

Perhaps the music, having been edited and rerecorded to perfection, would have been his best rendition; but the experience, the relationship between an audience and performer would have been lost. And the human achievement would have been changed because the editing and mixing would not demonstrate the real performance, but an artificial one. The shared experience of the concert hall would be changed to an individual response in a closed, completely private, auditory only, concert hall of a Walkman.

> At the recording session, as soon as he finishes a complete rendition, he comments excitedly and specifically on his performance; and if these remarks are negative, the recording engineer whispers "take two" into the tape and Gould plays the deficient section again. ("I resent," he once remarked, "the onetimeness, or the non-taketwoness of the live concert experience.") Skipping lunch and other pleasantries, he comes to the control room and goes over the tape with the record's

[8] Richard Kostelanetz, "Glenn Gould: Bach in the Electronic Age", in *Glenn Gould Variations*, page 126.

producer. While listening to the playback, Gould watches the score, humming one of the melodies and conducting himself with a pencil-baton in his left hand; from time to time he jots down editorial notes on the manuscript or sips from a cup of tea. A perfectionist by personal taste, he rejects a section merely because an eighth note has slipped from a line; and he often instructs the tape editor that a few bars from the third take of a certain section should be spliced into an entire section of the second take, which should in turn be integrated in place of similar material in the original. Sometimes Gould will record several distinctly different interpretations of the same score and then pick judiciously among the available results even splicing two originally contrary renditions into his final integral version. In the end, therefore, the record of a Gould performance that we hear is really a carefully patched collection of segments.[9]

How does this affect the relationship between the composer, the piece of music conceived and written many years before, the performer's interpretation and the audience's appreciation? It affects it a great deal because the performer, here, has taken control and manipulated the result beyond what would be possible in performance. He has weighted the relationship in his favour with the use of technological artificialities.

But Gould went even further. Gould had a vision of the future where the individual audience could also edit the music to suit a particular taste.

"I'd love to issue a kit of variant performances and let the listener assemble his own performance. It would draw the audience into the re-creative process." Beyond that he envisions a machine that will literally allow every man to become his own conductor. As it "eliminates the pitch/speed equation," it would enable the listener to draw from the "felicities which appeal to him as among varying performances of a musical composition" and then combine the most felicitous versions into a single, personal interpretation. The machine would have the

[9] Richard Kostelanetz, "Glenn Gould: Bach in the Electronic Age", in *Glenn Gould Variations*, page 132.

capacity of allowing the listener to become, Gould writes, "a master editor," choosing phrases "from any number of performances of the same work which may have totally different tempo predilections and dynamic relations. This would make it physically possible for the listener to produce his own Fifth Beethoven Symphony as a compote of the, to his mind, preferable features of a Mr. Karajan, Mr. Bernstein, or any other combination of interpreters that he would like to supervise."[10]

What would this do to the original thought? Perhaps the notes might not be changed, but the performance, which at one point in time may have been a unique experience captured only by memory, now becomes a far step away from reality, a cut-and-paste recording. This changes a person's concept of time, performance, experience, and memory. Our human experience of hearing exquisite beauty (almost a spiritual encounter) or making mistakes, having a life uncut and unedited, sharing a moment with another who may be trying to express a complete thought to a sensitive listener, is changed and rendered artificial. How does this affect us in our personal lives and in our temporal lives? I think it affects us a great deal. Life on the TV screen becomes more real than life in the family or on the street. Photographs of people are airbrushed to make them look more commercially attractive than those with natural flaws. Music that is totally controlled by machines is preferable to music played by individuals on instruments which are mastered and revered.

Gould also changed the instrument Bach had selected for many of his pieces; *Goldberg Variations* was written for harpsichord, but

[10] Richard Kostelanetz, "Glenn Gould: Bach in the Electronic Age" in *Glenn Gould Variations*, page 134.

Gould chose to perform it on the piano. The piano is a product of technological development and quite different from the harpsichord; but that choice of instrument barely changes the relationship between the composer, performer and audience. It merely changes the voice. Perhaps, because a harpsichord is a plucked instrument and a piano a percussive one, the emotional effect is different. However, the technology of the recording studio results in a greater change in relationship between the performer and the audience.

Gould defined audience as marketplace, a term which is appropriate today. Music, not in concert halls, but in H.M.V. or on M.T.V., is big business. This performer rejected the demands of commerce in order to meet the demands of his personal musical integrity.

> I simply feel that the artist should be granted, both for his sake and for that of his public - and let me get on record right now the face I'm not at all happy with words like "public" and "artist"; I'm not happy with the hierarchical implications of that kind of terminology - that he should be granted anonymity. He should be permitted to operate in secret, as it were, unconcerned with - or better still, unaware of - the presumed demands of the marketplace - which demands, given sufficient indifference on the part of a sufficient number of artists will then abandon his false sense of "public" responsibility, and his "public" will relinquish its role of servile dependency.[11]

Gould died just as digital recording was becoming more accepted. This technological breakthrough is perhaps the latest bridge between live and studio performances for it eliminates

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[11] Glenn Gould, "Glenn Gould Interviews Glenn Gould about Glenn Gould" in *Glenn Gould Variations*, page 29.

technical problems like tape hiss and distortion (and in compact disc format, warpage and surface noise) that mar analog recordings. Recorded music now sounds as if it were live, even when it comes from dozens of takes and contains hundreds of splices.[12]

Music symbolizes an aural reality. Technology originally, did not change the relationship between the performer and the audience although changes in the instruments redefined that reality. For example, as the lyre evolved into the harp, the lute, the guitar, the cello, or the bass, and then all became electrified, the sounds and the character of the music changed. The evolution in the instruments did not change the relationship between performer and audience, just the sound. But, with modern recording technology, as Gould has shown, this relationship is transformed. The dialogue is gone. It may have been distanced as the concert hall was enlarged, but now it has gone. The audience response has become more passive and internalized. It is not shared except perhaps with someone in the same room. The audience also feels it has an artificial control over the performance. The volume can be adjusted, the CD can be stopped at any time.

The ways in which technology has come between the thinker and the expression of a thought are complex. Musical instruments made by technology are the vehicles for performance. Music which is being recorded relies on the interpretation of the singer,

[12] Robert Hurwitz, "Towards a Contrapuntal Radio", in *Glenn Gould Variations*, page 261.

conductor and performers, but the performance has an artificial flavour. The editing of the performance can include cuts from a variety of takes. Weaknesses in the performance can be eliminated. Perfection can be realized. But the players and conductor have no interaction with an audience; the audience is now made up of distanced consumers who will buy the finished product. It also relies on the quality of the electronic methods of recording and the expertise and choices of technicians who mix the music. The medium used to record the thought can distort or change the balance of the components of the expression. If music is recorded, the type of electronic equipment can make a difference. Perhaps too, the audience which once was an interactive, feeling unit existing in time for a singular experience, has now lost its connectedness to the people relaying the thought, has lost its emotional responsiveness, has lost its memory for the details of the piece, and has become a dehumanised, lonely consumer shaped by a barren marketplace peopled by 'bots' and electronic money. Carrying this a step further, we have become an audience in the music marketplace when telephones, elevators, and shopping malls mesmerize us with musical wallpaper.

If a thinker is a photographer, a scientist using a computer, a musician using amplified sound, a poet being received by the Internet or published by a chosen publisher, a novelist whose stories are to be read as listening books, a script writer for TV, film, or the stage, a mathematician writing on paper, or an architect using blue printing and C.A.D., he is using technology as

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a vehicle to transmit his thought to an audience. The audience also must have the technology to receive it.

How does technology affect the transmission of thought from one person to others? Facilitate it? Broaden it? Depersonalize it? Dehumanize it? In the case of Gould, no one can ask questions, talk back, encourage with cheers, throw tomatoes. No one even gets 'the real thing'.

One must follow the constraints of technology and be aware of the limits. This is difficult to do today when technology is woven so closely into our lives. There is an aspect of control which is central to technology. A person using the technology has control over the invention, development and use of the instruments, the media, the means of communication, or so we hope. At the same time, we fear that the technology has control over us. Our sense of time has changed. The pace of our life is no longer close to a heart beat. Time ticks like a clock, runs like an engine, goes as fast as fiberoptics can carry sound. A computer can be more efficient than our mind and do more than we have time to do. We fear it will gain autonomy, and control us. And it does control us. Just as the alphabet changed our memories and methods of communication, just as the telephone and computer changed our social interactions, so we have been changed.

We have had many aspects of our lives changed. Our faculties are different; our memories, once perhaps able to remember an epic story, have libraries of information at fingertip; our ears, once sensitive to nuances of speech and accent, bird songs and forest

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whispers, require theatres to crank up the sound; our eyes, unused to distances, require glasses for the computer screen which reveal unimagined vistas. Our bodies are different; we may live longer with better medicine, but we are soft and suffer diseases of urban pace. Our social existence is different, with access to planetary communication networks with increasing personal isolation. Our interaction with nature is different; we meet creatures on The Learning Channel that are extinct and see nature as a Disney boutique. Our technological inventions have recreated our world.

Once a thinker expressed a thought to an audience or spectators who were limited in numbers and known personally or socially. There was direct contact and participation and interaction at its reception. That thought (perhaps it was a historical narrative or a societal directive) was passed through saga singers to others over time, interpreted, rendered more appropriate to contemporary demands and passed on. Then, as now, the thought was maintained and also transformed in transmission. Technology is one step in this transmission. As the thought is carried by competent performers to an audience or spectators, so technology, is expected to maintain the integrity of the idea. Glenn Gould wanted what Homer wanted – the best transmission of a good product for an intentional effect. From oral to print to film or CD the thought is passed, maintained, protected and transformed; it is not radically changed, just tailored to suit the audience and its time. So too, the audience and the time have been changed to suit the technology. From Homer via Gutenberg via the Internet

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over 3500 years later the story of Odysseus is conveyed through the matrix of technology. This wonderful story has been transformed, but still exists within the radius of recognizable truth.

And although we have been transformed equally, our humanity is still recognizable.

CHAPTER TEN
INTERPRETATION

Alicia Zizoe, in an interview with Paul Kennedy on *Morningside*, July 20, 1995 discussed her discovery of Gershwin's original *The Rhapsody in Blue* in the Library of Congress. Publications of *The Rhapsody in Blue* had been abridged because, as Zizoe says, the audiences in the 1920's found that it was too long. When she was asked to play the piece in a on a CD for Edward Jablansky, she had many problems with the published 'known' editions, so "my own curiosity took me to the Library of Congress where I was able to view the original microfilm of his handwritten manuscripts only to find that about five minutes of piano score had been deleted from the published edition."[1] For her, the original score made sense. "It sounded the way it should"[2] Her performance, which was being recorded in Toronto in the summer of 1995, was the first new edition recording the complete score since 1924.

Here is a performer who insisted on researching the score because there seemed to be something missing from the published scores that she had seen and attempted to play.

A performer executes the thought of another person. How does one interpret a play, a dance, a piece of music? Edited by a

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[1] Alicia Zizoe, interviewed by Paul Kennedy, *Morningside*, C.B.C., July 20, 1995 9:30-10:00 a.m.

[2] Alicia Zizoe, interviewed by Paul Kennedy, *Morningside*, C.B.C., July 20, 1995, 9:30-10:00 a.m.

publisher? Interpreted by a choreographer? Conceived by a composer? And how will the thought be transformed if the interpretation, which will always be different, falsifies or skews the original?

Leonard Bernstein, a conductor who collaborated with Glenn Gould and appreciated his interpretations, gives a picture of working with this radical performer.

> One day in 1962, I received a call from Glenn in Toronto. He was to play Brahms' D Minor Concerto with me and the New York Philharmonic the following week in Carnegie Hall. He said, "Oh boy, have I got some surprises for you; I have made such discoveries about this piece." I thought, "Well, wonderful." Any discovery of Glenn's was welcomed by me because I worshipped the way he played: I admired his intellectual approach, his "guts" approach, his complete dedication to whatever he was doing, his constant inquiry into a new angle or a new possibility of the truth of a score. That's why he made so many experimental changes of tempi. He would play the same Mozart sonata movement adagio one time and presto the next, when actually it's supposed to be neither. He was not trying to attract attention, but looking for the truth. I loved that in him.[3]

A composer's music is interpreted by the conductor of the orchestra performing it and by the solo performer who has one part of the whole. These interpretations do not change the notes of the piece, but the feeling coming through the tempo, the volume, the tension created, all give a slightly different cast from perhaps what the composer had in mind. The problem is that once an idea is expressed by the artist it is interpreted. Changes in instruments (harpsichord to piano, bassoon to saxophone, viola da gamba to cello, brass to strings), mood of a period (war, peace, depression

[3] Leonard Bernstein, "The Truth about a Legend", in *Glenn Gould Variations*, page 17.

or revolution), or individual search for the truth of the piece (Glenn Gould, Wynton Marsalis, Ella Fitzgerald) all contribute to the original going to an audience in a different style or tone.

In *A Sense of Direction,* William Ball discussed the job of the director in relation to the playwright and the play.

> In the preproduction period, the director immerses himself in the world of the play. He tries to seek out the heart of the playwright.... reading the other works by the author aids the director in this very special way: The director learns to appreciate the language of the author; he learns how the author expresses himself. He discovers what sorts of things are important to the author. He becomes aware of the author's use of leitmotif, symbolism, detail, humor, social attitudes, spiritual values. He also becomes aware of what the author considers important and what vision the author is striving to reveal. If the director can place the very heart of the playwright within his own breast, he will more successfully express the playwright's intent.[4]

The director must understand the playwright in order to interpret his thought accurately. The director knows that an accurate interpretation will ensure consistency and will ring true to an audience, especially one which is familiar with the playwright. The integrity of the work must be served or the play will not be a success.

Scott Wilkinson, the composer of *Concerto For Orchestra*, went through the process of creating a piece of music from a series of thoughts which were not verbal, which had many voices speaking at once, had texture, density and colour. He captured his own experiences, emotions and aspirations. He created the music and

[4] William Ball, *A Sense of Direction*, New York: Drama Book Publishers, 1984.

wrote it in state of growing frustration with the limitations of
the structure of musical language. He had to create other symbols
which would convey the sounds he wanted reproduced. He used the
form of the concerto

Concerto for Orchestra

but had the solo parts act only as transitional structures in order
to get to other parts of the music. The conductor had to sit with
Wilkinson over several sessions in order to understand the music.
Wilkinson played (one instrument at a time) a few of the many parts
in the concerto in order to demonstrate the sound. This had
difficulties, because Wilkinson could hear all of the parts at once
when he thought of the music, but he could only play separate
strands of the piece at one time. The performers read the music,
asked questions and rehearsed their parts, but they required some
translation from him. He had to be there the first time it was
rehearsed to reassure the players that the musical notation meant

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[5] E. Scott Wilkinson, *Concerto For Orchestra*, page 1.

exactly what he wanted. He wanted some of the music to sound like a cloud with a density which changed as the sound thinned. Some of the parts could be played using whatever rhythm the player chose or whatever speed, or however often, as long as by the end of a specific period of time a point had been reached. Confusing? Yes. Wilkinson knew what sound, what musical result he wanted, but even when he communicated it using the musical notation and his own symbols, the players had great difficulty reproducing this sound. It took direct collaboration between Wilkinson, the conductor and the performers, for the piece to take shape and finally become the music Wilkinson had conceived and written. When the piece was performed for an audience in Thunder Bay, the music continued to change subtly over the week. An audio tape was made of one performance but it could hardly capture the nuances of this process. The audiences, in their reception of the music, transformed the sound again and gave it an interpretation according to the place, time and individuals present on the night of that performance. The critics, as well, had their parts influencing in the subsequent performances.

In another composition commissioned for harp and flute players of all ages (from seven to seventy) and stages of development, Wilkinson continued to explore his earlier ideas of controlled randomness. Here a tiny part of the score demonstrates the development of his vocabulary.

The relationship between the composer, the creation, the language and its limitations, the performance, the audience and the context of the performance gives the thought its complete being. R.G. Collingwood reviewed this relationship:

> The work of artistic creation is not a work performed in any exclusive or complete fashion in the mind of the person whom we call the artist. That idea is a delusion bred of individualistic psychology, together with a false view of the relation not so much between body and mind as between experience at a psychical level and experience at the level of thought. The aesthetic activity is an activity of thought in the form of consciousness, converting into imagination an experience which, apart from being so converted, is sensuous. This activity is a corporate activity belonging to not any one human being but to a community. It is performed not only by the man whom we individualistically call the artist, but partly by all the other artists of whom we speak as "influencing" him, where we really mean collaborating with him. It is performed not only by this corporate body of artists, but (in the case of the arts of performance) by executants who are not merely acting under the artist's orders, but are collaborating with

[6] Wilkinson, E. Scott, *A Fantasy for Flute and Harp Ensemble*, 1995, page 14.

him to produce the finished work. And even now the activity of artistic creation is not complete; for that, there must be an audience, whose function is therefore not a merely receptive one, but collaborative too. The artist (although under the spell of individualistic prejudices he may try to deny it) stands thus in collaborative relations with an entire community; not an ideal community of all human beings as such, but the actual community of fellow artists from whom he borrows, executants whom he employs, and audience to whom he speaks.[7]

Wilkinson had a direct relationship with his community. He had music lessons when he was a child. He played the guitar on camping trips in northern Ontario with his friends. He went to the University of Toronto and studied music for four years - music history, theory, composition - learned to play many instruments, and took an active part in exploring the value of every possible kind of music. He became the Head of Music in a high school (teaching classical guitar to head-banging, death-metal rockers in chains and black leather. They won at Kiwanis Festivals several years in a row.) No thinker can be completely isolated from the community or autonomous. There is always an enormous influence on the ideas and concepts and thoughts of a composer. As a result the relationship between the thinker and the thought, the expression of the thought to others, and its reception by the world is interactive and meaningful.

The people who receive the thought have an important connection to it. They are the ones who must retranslate the thought into their own particular arena of personal or communal experience, and interpret the thought meaningfully for themselves.

[7] R.G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, pages 323-324.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As in a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:[8]

This is not easy; it takes inclination, training or expertise, and time.

With music, Aaron Copeland believed:

The intelligent listener must be prepared to increase his awareness of the musical material and what happens to it. He must hear the melodies, the rhythms, the harmonies, and the tone colors in a more conscious fashion. But above all he must, in order to follow the line of the composer's thought, know something of the principles of musical form.[9]

Henry Moore believed that only those with natural skill in understanding spatial relationships could truly appreciate sculpture. These people would need to be versed in the language he was using to be able to comprehend the expression of the sculptor.

Appreciation of sculpture depends upon the ability to respond to form in three dimensions. That is, perhaps, why sculpture has been described as the most difficult of all arts; certainly it is more difficult than the arts which involve appreciation of flat forms, shape in only two dimensions. Many more people are "form-blind" than colour-blind. The child learning to see first distinguishes only two-dimensional shape; it cannot judge distances, depths. Later, for its personal safety and practical needs, it has to develop (partly by means of touch) the ability to judge roughly three-dimensional distances. But having satisfied the requirements of practical necessity most people go no further. Though they may attain considerable accuracy in the perception

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[8] William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" in *Introduction to Literature: Poems*, pages 230-231.

[9] A. Copeland, *What To Listen For in Music*, page 17.

of flat form, they do not make the further intellectual and emotional effort needed to comprehend form in its full spatial existence.[10]

And Andrew Gleason said something very similar about understanding mathematics.

It is notoriously difficult to convey a proper impression of the frontiers of mathematics to non-specialists.... Topology, the study of how space is organized, is like the great temples of some religion. That is to say, those uninitiated into its mysteries can view it only from the outside.[11]

The ability to comprehend the symbol system, to have interest in the subject, investment in the results of the thought and curiosity about its nature, all help to adorn it with criticism and history, and thus modify it.

Not enough attention is paid to the people receiving the thought and how much they modify the thought. A performer alters the thought in its transmission to an audience or spectator. As the audience responds to the performance, the performers spontaneously enhance or de-emphasize aspects of the piece for their audience.

Translation from the original into a more modern language causes transformation. So too, a different culture with different values receiving the thought changes its nuances, assumptions, and significance. Interpretation at another point in history modifies the intent of the thought. When an individual with different

[10] Henry Moore, "Notes on Sculpture" in *The Creative Process*, pages 73-74.

[11] Andrew M. Gleason, "The Evolution of Differential Topology" in COSRIMS, eds., *The Mathematical Sciences: A Collection of Essays*, page 1.

tastes, experiences, perspective, values and abilities receives the thought, the thought is changed. Often it is enriched, sometimes its meaning is distorted altogether. Those who receive the thought interpret and slightly reshape it. Its reception changes the thought and history modifies the thought through time. The thinker conceives a thought, chooses a language for its expression, and translates that thought into the medium of the language. It becomes available for others to see, hear, feel, consider and interpret.

The person or community who views, hears, reads or considers the work of the thinker also has an important relationship with the whole experience. People have to translate the poem, concerto, equation, painting, or sculpture back into their own world of thought. They then reflect on it, immediately or sometime in the future. However, it is necessary to understand that the person who receives the thought does not do so passively. It is an active comprehension, one that is critical and requires judgement and analysis to get as close to the original meaning as possible and to understand the completeness of it. This is difficult and accuracy may require great effort. This is also not the activity of one person at one moment in time. Mastering a language may have taken many years of study. Understanding is achieved as people share dialogue over time. And people in one historical period enrich the thought of another with their interpretations.

The performer translates the creative artist's thought for the audience. It must reproduced within an accepted radius of

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interpretation for the audience to understand it. Technical skill and interpretive ability are developed by training enhanced by talent. Sometimes the performer is also a creative artist and sometimes such a fine virtuoso that the medium gets more attention than the message. The thought, as it is expressed, can be maintained in concrete form in libraries, museums and galleries; but, until it is performed, it may be accessible only to the literati. Therefore, the interpretation by the performer is essential, interactive and transformational, evaluated with serious appreciation by an audience. But this performance is only one of many and until technology could record it, its magic was momentary.

The creator of the product of thought may be satisfied with the performance of the work or may be unhappy with the limits of the means available to express it. When it has been defined by the executors of the piece (scientists, dancers, performers, editors, actors, musicians, dancers), he may be discouraged or pleased by the results. The audience also may be pleased with the performance and therefore with the thought.

It does not belong to one person alone.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
THE CRITIC

The critic is a special person in the relationship between the creative thinker or artist and the audience. It is the artist who has the original thought, the expression of which is performed for an audience. The critic has some of the attributes of the artist and is also an active part of the audience. He is both and neither, a part and also separate. The question is - what is the job of the critic and how does one critique his role in the relationship?

The audience receives the piece of work and experiences the performance. In this reception, appreciation is often just inarticulate enjoyment but could include technical, aesthetic and philosophical understanding. The job of the critic is to analyze and write a review for a specific group of people. Critics for *The Sun* produce a very different critique than those of *The New York Times*[1] and it is the readership that makes the difference. Each critic enjoys and analyzes according to his education, technical training, tastes, moral stance, and these are individual and personal. The critic engages in an analytical process. One might identify the piece of work and describe it and its parts. Another might compare and contrast the piece with past and present works and similar genres, themes, structures or techniques. Another

[1] "The Arts Report", C.B.C. Monday November 17, 1997 8:00 a.m. reported that a survey showed that a good review from *The New York Times* could allow a Broadway show to extend its time on stage for many weeks, while a poor one could cause it to close within days.

might assess the merits and evaluate the whole work or just some aspects.

Alexander Pope would say the critic's role is one of teacher and judge.

> In poets as true genius is but rare,
> True taste as seldom is the critic's share;
> Both must alike from Heaven derive their light,
> Those born to judge, as well as those to write.
> Let each teach others who themselves excel,
> And censure freely who have written well.[2]

It is necessary to look at the whole relationship between the creative thinker or artist, the performers and the audience including the critic, before one can analyze the job and adequately critique the role of the critic.

Scott Wilkinson could be an example of the artist. Wilkinson is a composer who explains his thinking process up to the point of expression. He says that he waits for inspiration which may take a long time. Sometimes, it comes just as a feeling, emotional or textural, with colour and density. This colourful feeling begins to have sound, amorphous with density and texture but no structure or melody. As the sound takes shape in his mind, he then identifies melodic threads and definite sounds which may be metaphors or symbols. When he believes that he is ready and the piece is beginning to take shape, he translates the colour, texture, density and sounds into musical notes. These notes are not just for one voice; he writes the music for many voices at once. And when the piece is finished, he lets it go.

[2] Alexander Pope, "An Essay On Criticism", in *English Literature*, lines 11-16.

When the artist expresses a thought, the listener, spectator, sharer of the thought, must work hard to understand it as accurately as possible. There are many languages that artists use to express their thoughts. Each language requires literacy and that literacy has come from years of education, experimentation and experience.

The performer plays a part in this relationship. Each performer follows the direction of the conductor, director or choreographer who offers the major interpretation of the piece; but each performer, because of individual talent and response will shape her role according to her own critique. The audience and critic may take this into account when they see the piece performed and it will be a slightly different performance every time.

The audience, spectator or reader has both an active and a passive, a public and a private, role to play. The audience could be one of many in a concert hall or theatre, or the spectator could be alone in a small gallery, or could be the only recipient of the artist's expression. The reader would certainly be in the private domain of her own mind. This member of the audience could be well-educated in the history, the genres, the themes, the peers and period of the artist, or she could be ignorant of all or some of this. The member of the audience could also be literate in the language chosen, perhaps studying music, dance or art, and skilled in playing an instrument, able to interpret and understand the artist's intention and idea. Or she could be a neophyte and uninitiated.

Louise Rosenblatt saw the literary critic in relation to the poet and the written word, but this view can be applied to other forms of art as well.

> Outstanding among other readers from whom we may gain such perspective are the critics. Having rejected the critic-as-surrogate-reader, I am now ready to welcome him as a fellow reader who earns my interest through his special strengths in carrying out the processes I have outlined as essential to the literary transaction. Undoubtedly, he will possess a high degree of sensitivity to verbal nuances and will have devoted such energy to acquiring a capacity for intellectual and emotional self-awareness and self-criticism. Other valued attributes are a deeply humane personality and broad literary experience. (I link these, because I believe that it takes much more than a knowledge of the traditional pastoral elegy to do justice to "Lycidas".) Possession of knowledge or insight - historical, philosophical, psychological, political, for example - may yield special angles of vision or powerful organizing frameworks. The critic may be considered a professional because, while retaining the ordinary reader's capacity for reading for pleasure, he not only systematically tries to become a better reader but also seeks to develop the ability to communicate his experience to others.[3]

The critic takes a place in history. Aristotle, Plato, Samuel Johnson, William Hazlitt, T.S. Eliot, Northrop Frye, to name a very few, were perhaps all critics of words, rather than colour, shape, sound or movement. The role of the critic is complex and he must acknowledge the constant modification of interpretation through history. Every expression of thought belongs to the world and its history. T.S. Eliot in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" explained the importance of history and the tradition of the poet, and their relationship with the expression of the poet, the interpretation of the poem and the effect the poem has on future

[3] Louise M. Rosenblatt, *The Reader, The Text, The Poem*, page 147.

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poets.   In turn, with new historical and cultural contexts, the
poet of the future modifies the accepted interpretation of the
poem.

> No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning
> alone.   His significance, his appreciation is the
> appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and
> artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him,
> for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this
> as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical,
> criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he
> shall cohere, is not onesided; what happens when a new
> work of art is created is something that happens
> simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it.
> The existing monuments form an ideal order among
> themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the
> new (the really new) work of art among them.   The
> existing order is complete before the new work arrives;
> for order to persist after the supervention of novelty,
> the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly,
> altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of
> each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and
> this is conformity between the old and the new.[1]

Thus, the thought of the past influences the thought of the future
in the voice of the present. Aristotle's *Ars Poetica*, on the nature
and constraints of tragedy with reference to *Oedipus Rex* by
Sophocles offered a model many later tragedies followed. Aristotle
defined tragic hero as a man of noble birth who rises to greatness,
but, because of a tragic flaw, suffers a great downfall.   The
thought of the future modifies the meaning of the thought of the
past. *Death of a Salesman* attempts to admit a Loman to the rank of
tragic hero.   Arthur Miller used the model defined by Aristotle but
strained at its limits by including in the concept of tragic hero
a person who is not noble and who rises to greatness only in his

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[1] T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", in
Criticism, The Major Texts, page 526.

own imagination. There has not yet been sufficient time to determine the extent to which Miller has affected the definition of the tragic hero.

The audience, spectators, or recipients of the product of the thought respond according to their own set of personal, experiential characteristics, social pressures and linguistic abilities. As the viewers of Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* were aghast and disgusted at the time of its first exhibition, and were, at a later time, fascinated by the attempt of the artist to express movement using a new style initiated in his particular period of time, so any person receiving the expression interprets it and then adjusts his view of the world because of it. The world's view adjusts slightly; a later spectator will view the expression with a different perspective and a later artist will perhaps work with reference to Duchamp's painting.

A critic is a person who, as part of the creative transaction between the artist, the work, the performance and the audience, must be literate in the language of the expressed thought, be it music, lines, words, movement, sculpture. The critic is not the one who originates the thought, or the person who performs it for the audience. He is a part of the audience, but an active part. He must understand and offer a verbal interpretation as well as critique the performance and the performers. His is the voice of the audience, one the audience would like to have because it is an educated, articulate voice who can help in the translation of the thought from one language to another (for example, music to words).

He can demystify, clarify, interpret and evaluate it in words an audience can understand and share. However, he is apart from the audience because of his emotional detachment and intellectual objectivity. And he is apart from the creative thinker because, although he must think and express his opinion, it is always obviously derivative.

The critic is a very important part of the audience, be they spectators, readers or listeners, because he is articulate, educated, reflective, literate and challenging. Harold Bloom is an example. *The Western Canon* demonstrated his prodigious range of reading and his enormous scope as a critic. His education in history, literature and the arts spans time from the *Bible* to the present. And, although he is an American, his view is international and global. Harold Bloom criticized some of the modern problems characteristic of the literary critic.

> As the formulator of a critical concept I once named "The anxiety of influence", I have enjoyed the School of Resentment's repeated insistence that such a notion applies only to Dead White European Males, and not to women and to what we quaintly term "multiculturalists." Thus, feminist cheerleaders proclaim that women writers lovingly cooperate with each other as quilt makers, while the African-American and Chicano literary activists go even further in asserting their freedom from any anguish of contamination whatsoever; each of them is Adam early in the morning. They know no time when they were not as they are now self-created, self-begot, their puissance is their own. As assertions by poets, playwrights, and prose fiction writers, these are healthy and understandable, however, self-deluded. But as declarations by supposed literary critics, such optimistic pronouncements are neither true nor interesting and so against both human nature and the nature of imaginative literature. There can be no strong canonical writing without the process of literary influence, a process vexing to undergo and difficult to

understand.[5]

Bloom was concerned with the "now-threatened Western Canon".[6]

> The burden of influence has to be borne, if significant originality is to be achieved and reachieved within the wealth of Western literary tradition. Tradition is not only a handing-down or process of benign transmission; it is also a conflict between past genius and present aspiration, in which the prize is literary survival or canonical inclusion. That conflict cannot be settled by social concerns, or by the judgement of any particular generation of impatient idealists, or by Marxists proclaiming, "Let the dead bury the dead," or by sophists who attempt to substitute the library for the Canon and the archive for the discerning spirit. Poems, stories, novels, plays come into being as a response to prior poems, stories, novels and plays, and that response depends upon acts of reading and interpretation by the later writers, acts that are identical with the new works.[7]

Bate, in his Preface to *Criticism: The Major Texts,* enunciated

the role of literary criticism.

> And the activity that subserves the humanities – critical theory – fulfils its purpose only if it is as fully aware as possible of aim and character of what it subserves. Criticism of the humanities, that is, must itself be humanistic; and to be humanistic is to be aware of basic human values, to prize them as something more than idle abstractions to talk about, and to evaluate things in the light of the ends that these values characterize.... to make him realize that evaluation – seeing things for what they are, seeing them in their importance – is not a matter of caprice, custom, or affectation, but that it can emerge from intelligently conceived premises and aims....Criticism can thus bring into activity the noblest of human qualities: namely, the quality of sincerity, the desire to discern the truth, to see some point in what one is doing or thinking, and to keep penetrating until the answer is found.[8]

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[6] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon,* page 8.

[7] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon,* page 8-9.

[8] Walter Jackson Bate, *Criticism: The Major Texts,* page xi.

This is a description of the ideal critic. However, many artists would be ready to complain about the ignorance of the critic and his egomanical, personal opinions which are nothing but destructive to the artist and self-aggrandizing for the critic. After a weekend of book reviews in *The Globe and Mail* or *The New York Times*, there are letters to the editor from the authors of the books reviewed complaining that the reviewers did not understand them. This happens so often one wonders about the value of the critic.

The critic reviews works of art which are often limited to his experience and education. This education may be twenty years out of date. Creativity is a process in which rules are often broken and the artist is attempting to express a thought in a new and more compelling way in the immediate present. The work of the artist is often considered offensive to the establishment and to the critic. Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, which was rejected when first seen, is now a classic. The critics who rejected this work simply reflected the values of the establishment, and their opinions would not last beyond the moment.

The role of the critic in the relationship between the artist and the audience is similar to that of a judge or a teacher. He is more than a translator from the language of the piece to words. He is more than a detective identifying the genre, the theme, the issues and the structure. He does more than assess or weigh the parts against the whole. He is more than an evaluator of the quality and meaning of the work. He is more than an arbiter of

fashion. He is all of the above plus a person with wisdom and humanity who can see with clarity beyond the voice of the artist and her specific piece to our human condition, beyond the present and its fashion, to the point where history and the future fuse. Aristotle could do this and Samuel Johnson could do this. Harold Bloom would like to do this. Philip Marchand could not and A.C. Bradley did not. Why? Why not?

The job of the critic is to analyze the work, its relationship to the biography of the artist and its own genre in the present and historically, and to complete the process of analysis by giving a view that is humanistic and universal in scope. The critic may choose to focus on any part of the process of analysis; many critics can only deal with one part, few with the whole.

The process of analysis starts with identification. This could be identification of style, structure, genre, medium, lighting, style of interpretation by the conductor, director, choreographer or editor. This identification is descriptive. The plot, setting, costumes, sets and language might be described so that a prospective audience will be discriminating in its choices. Philip Marchand did this in "What I Really Like".

> The last sentence of the Ondaatje paragraph, however, contains five adjectives. You don't have to be Ernest Hemingway to consider that rather a lot for a sentence of no great length. As they say in creative writing classes, this kind of writing is telling, not showing. Moreover, the metaphors hardly stand up to scrutiny.[3]

Marchand was playing the teacher identifying the weaknesses of

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[3] Philip Marchand, "What I Really Like" in *Saturday Night*, October 1997, page 55.

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writing in a specific novel. At other places in his article his role varied slightly.

> Findley has also developed something of a stylistic tic, which is the creation of sentences consisting of a single word or phrase, employed the way soap operas used to call upon ominous chords from the organ, or the way non-writers still use the exclamation mark, or italics - for sheer emphasis.... All of this - the feverish prose and metaphors, the stock characters, the bloody horrors, the almost hysterical pitch of emotion and the exaggerated sensibility - all of these are classic components of the Gothic novel.[10]

Here, he went to the next step in identification and slotted Findley as a writer of Gothic novels. It is very easy for a critic to get caught at this stage of the process because people reading his article only want this information before they decide to go and read, hear or see it themselves. Many times critics stay at this point in analysis because it is fascinating to be a "bitch" and offer a controversial opinion which can be torn to bits at a cocktail party by sophistocats. This is where Marchand was stuck. He dealt with other Canadian novelists but only at the descriptive stage of analysis, although he did place himself on high. The word "usually" in the following quotation gives him away.

> Which brings me to my point: no critic can afford to be this tough. I myself have not usually tried to render judgment in Olympian fashion, turning thumbs up or thumbs down with magisterial certainty. I suppose everyone would agree that *War and Peace* gets a thumbs up, but after that it gets sticky.[11]

The next step in the process of analysis is comparison and

[10] Philip Marchand, "What I Really Like", in *Saturday Night*, October 1997, page 56.

[11] Philip Marchand, "What I Really Like" in *Saturday Night*, October 1997, page 59.

contrast. Other works are used to provide an historical context. Other composers are compared for their melody, structures or use of instruments. Other themes are compared or contrasted as foil to the work in focus. Harold Bloom did a masterful comparison of Shakespeare's self-conscious villain, Iago, in *Othello* and Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Bloom went beyond description when he compares these two colossal villains.

> Satan, gorgeous as his eloquence is, is nevertheless a repetition of Shakespeare's discovery of the nothingness at our centre. Hamlet tells us that he is at once nothing and everything in himself, while Iago goes deeper into the abyss: "I am not what I am," which deliberately reverses Saint Paul's "by the grace of God, I am what I am." "We know no time when we were not as now," and yet we are nothing now. Ontologically, Iago knows he is a hollow man because the bestower of being, the war-god Othello, has passed him over. Satan, passed over, insists he is self-created and sets out to undo the creation intended to replace him. Iago, far more potent, undoes his god, reducing to chaos the only reality and value he recognizes. Poor Satan, in contrast, can only attempt to pique God, not to destroy him.[12]

Bloom allows the reader to consider the "nothingness" theme in *King Lear*, the meaning of Yahweh's name (I am that I am) in contrast to Satan's names, and the comparison with a similar villain, Edmund the Bastard, who was also passed over. He stimulates the reader to jump to other comparisons and further conclusions, and this is the work of the true critic. A.C. Bradley, in his analysis of Iago said:

> it is not true that in Iago this egoism and this want [of humanity] are absolute, and that in this sense he is a thing of mere evil. They are frightful, but if they were absolute Iago would be a monster, not a man. The fact is, he *tries* to make them absolute and cannot succeed;

[12] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon*, pages 177-178.

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and the traces of conscience, shame and humanity, though
faint, are discernable. If his egoism were absolute he
would be perfectly indifferent to the opinion of others;
and he clearly is not so.[13]

Here he acted as a judge and came to conclusions for the reader and
she resents it.

The next step is assessment and evaluation. This requires a
fine education, discernment and wisdom. It requires the larger
vision and the ability to take risks. The critic could be
considered wrong. A.C. Bradley, in his lectures on Shakespearean
tragedy stated:

> In these lectures I propose to consider the four
> principal tragedies of Shakespeare from a single point of
> view. Nothing will be said of Shakespeare's place in
> history either of English literature or of the drama in
> general. No attempt will be made to compare him to other
> writers. I shall leave untouched, or merely glanced at,
> questions regarding his life and character, the
> development of his genius and art, the genuineness,
> sources, texts, inter-relations of his various works.
> Even what may be called, in a restricted sense, the
> "poetry" of the four tragedies - the beauties of style,
> diction, versification - I shall pass by in silence. Our
> one object will be what, again in the restricted sense,
> may be called dramatic appreciation; to increase our
> understanding and enjoyment of these works as dramas; to
> learn to apprehend the action and some of the personages
> of each with somewhat greater truth and intensity, so
> that they may assume in our imaginations a shape a little
> less unlike the shape they wore in the imagination of
> their creator.[14]

This intent is focused on the text of the plays not on their
performances, and is an academic exercise only, although Bradley
did defend this approach -

the prime requisite here is therefore a vivid and intent

[13] A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, page 191.

[14] A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, page xiii.

imagination. But this alone will hardly suffice. It is necessary also, especially to a true conception of the whole, to compare, to analyse, to dissect. And such a readers often shrink from this task, which seems to them prosaic or even a desecration. They misunderstand, I believe. They would not shrink if they remembered two things. In the first place, in this process of comparison and analysis, it is not requisite, it is on the contrary ruinous, to set imagination aside and to substitute some supposed "cold reason"; and it is only want of practice that makes the concurrent use of analysis and of poetic perception difficult or irksome. And in the second place, these dissecting processes, though they are also imaginative, are still, and meant to be, nothing but means to an end. When they have finished their work (it can only be finished for a time) they give place to the end, which is that same imaginative reading or re-creation of the drama from which they set out, but a reading now enriched by the products of analysis, and therefore far more adequate and enjoyable.[15]

Students of Shakespeare will remember A.C. Bradley as one of the prime critics of Shakespeare. Many would complain that "the metaphor was explained" and that they would have reaped bigger benefits from being challenged by an excellent theatrical performance and discovering the meaning of the metaphor themselves. Where is the wisdom except in the critic's own mirror?

The final step is that of the critic who sets standards that are followed by creative thinkers over time. Aristotle was a critic of this type. He lived in a time which was dynamic and thrilling, and also at its peak. His education included a profound knowledge of history. Alexander Pope, critic supreme even at age twenty-three, was one to set standards also.

First follow Nature, and your judgement frame
By her just standard, which is still the same:
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchang'd and universal light,

[15] A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, page xiii-xiv.

> Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
> At once the source, and end, and test of art.
> Art from that fund each just supply provides
> Works without show, and without pomp presides:
> In some fair body thus th'informing soul;
> With spirits feeds, with vigour fills the whole,
> Each motion guides, and ev'ry nerve sustains;
> Itself unseen, but in th'effects, remains.[16]

Perhaps the critic at this point must be a philosopher as well as a translator, an historian, a judge, a teacher, and a writer who enjoys being in an audience, not creating original work but criticizing it for fellow members of an audience for a salary and hopefully fame and a place in the history of the culture.

I have referred predominantly to critics of the written word because from the ancient Greeks, after the invention of the alphabet, written creative arts could be recorded with some permanence and so could the analyses of the critics. Sculpture, painting, architecture, photography and film are still with us and the art critic plays a similar role to the literary critic. Dance, music and drama are arts which require literacy, but a record of their performances has not been kept until now on film, video and CD. However, the magical moment of the presentation of the work is always lost. The performance has a different dynamic every time it is given because of the relationship between the piece, the performers and the audience. An Elizabethan audience at *Macbeth*, anxious because of James I's ascension to the throne, would have interacted with the players very differently from a Victorian audience for whom a witch and a lady were distinctly separate, or

[16] Alexander Pope, "An Essay On Criticism", in *English Literature*, lines 19-30.

a 1990's audience who saw it performed in Zulu. As a result the performances and their reception would be different. The critics would have produced very different critiques because of this. Each would have reflected an individual experience which over time would have lapsed into irrelevancy unless some universal truths were found.

> It is the task of literary criticism to help us read as total human beings, by example of precision, fear and delight. Compared to the act of creation, that task is secondary. But it has never counted more. Without it, creation itself may fall upon silence.[17]

In the relationship between the artist and the audience the critic is both a part and apart. He has some of the consciousness of the artist and he is a member of the audience. The critic is also apart from the artist because it is his objectivity that allows him to analyze the work, and apart from the audience in his emotional and intellectual detachment, which allows him to take notes during the performance and write a review later. The job of the critic as a part of the audience and apart from the audience is to identify and describe, to compare and contrast, to assess and evaluate, and to set standards. This is the role of a teacher and a judge and some are better at it than others. It is the critic like Marchand, neither a teacher nor a judge, describing his personal dislikes, who is used to light a winter fire and little more. It is the critic like Aristotle, often a teacher and a humanistic judge, one who completes the analytical process and jumps to the universal, who will live forever.

[17] George Steiner, *Language and Silence*, page 11.

CHAPTER TWELVE
THE HISTORIAN AND THE READER

History fills our imaginations with people larger than life
and with distant, exciting events. The great thinkers of the past
who have changed the course of our lives, exploring new parts of
the world, bringing in new laws, inventing wonderful things,
inspire us with ideas of our own. Sometimes great thoughts are
able to stand alone in their brilliant profundity. Sometimes they
need a context (cultural, geographical, political, social and
biographical) to make the thinker of these thoughts more real. We
appreciate the infallibility of Glenn Gould's performance of Bach's
Goldberg Variations edited to perfection, - perfection is awe-
inspiring; but we also like our heroes flawed with the foibles of
humanity which we share and understand. Thomas Jefferson, a
Southern slave owner who was rumoured to have had a slave mistress,
Sally Hemings, and slave children by her, drafted *The Declaration
of Independence*, "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all
Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with
certain unalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and
the Pursuit of Happiness."[1] This document can stand alone in its
own power and glory, but the hypocrisy, ambivalence and ambiguity
found in the controversial realities of the man behind its creation
allow the student of history to consider with ironic appreciation
an essential aspect of the history of the founding of the United

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[1] *The Declaration of Independence*, http://www.house.gov/
house/Declaration.html., June 2000.

States of America. The historian who brings us this context enhances our understanding of our ancestors, ourselves, our humanity.

The historian offers the context of the thinker to a reader of history. The historian does not demonstrate an active awareness of audience or take a place in the audience, as the critic does. The historian traditionally has been the objective, omniscient observer who offers a clear view of the action and the actors, describing and offering a balanced interpretation. Profound, continued interest in our identity, past and present, has allowed three partners to participate in the study of history - the past with its actors and events, the historian set in his/her own biography and culture, and the reader who searches for our human nature in order to understand the human predicament better - an inseparable and ever-changing relationship.

For every thinker there is a community involved in events. This community exists in time, and the thought of one person is connected over time to others of very different cultures. The historian has the important role of weaving the thinker, the milieu and significant events in a period of time together meaningfully and unselfconsciously, linking a thinker of yesterday to an audience of today.

> The historian and the facts of history are necessary to
> one another. The historian without facts is rootless and
> futile; the facts without the historian are dead and
> meaningless. My first answer to the question "What is
> history?" is that it is a continuous process of
> interaction between the historian and his facts, an

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unending dialogue between the present and the past.[2]

This statement does not take "the continuous process of interaction" far enough. Facts, the people and events that happened in a chaotic, bewildering confusion, may be meaningless without the interpretation of the historian who is rooted in his own period of history. People, the ones who stand out in this confusion, often thinkers of influential works or deeds, require the historian to tell their story. The historian's interpretation connects these people, living through extraordinary events which shaped their lives and thought, to the reader. However, the audience is an important member of the partnership. Readers of history at later points in time, want to understand the thinker and the thought more fully by investigating the biographical and historical context. Often the important works of influential people are preserved through time, but their biography (except for some statistical information), specific influences which helped to shape their thought, and the individual map of their lives are missing. The works of Shakespeare stand alone magnificently, but we want to know more about the man. The historian provides as much of the story as possible, shaping it with the bias of personal interest, research, and reasons for writing. The reader of history, more than likely not an historian but a lover of history, transforms the story once again with personal interests. This reader has an important place in the process, even though it is as a faceless, anonymous, ever-changing entity.

[2] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, page 30.

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How does the reader participate in the process of historical investigation and interpretation?

History begins with people and events set in time, in a society and in a continuum. The historian arrives on the scene, like a detective after the event, selects the evidence, organizes, describes, interprets, and presents the fullest picture. To whom and for whom does the historian write? Often that audience is other historians. Perhaps it is for a larger audience - university students, colleagues, or contemporary society who will confer fame and position. The audience, however, cannot be anticipated. It exists beyond the historian's imagination, because it also exists in the future.

T.S. Eliot in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" explained the importance that history and the tradition of the poet has had on the interpretation of the poem, and the effect the poem will have on future poets. In turn, the poet of the future and future interpretation of the poem will modify its meaning. The historical context affects the interpretation that the poem constantly undergoes. R.G. Collingwood expressed the same idea about the development of new schools of thought.

> Any addition to the body of philosophical ideas alters to
> some extent everything that was there already, and the
> establishment of a new philosophical science necessitates
> a revision of all the old ones.[3]

Louise Rosenblatt clearly articulated the interaction between the audience and the text. It is not a passive "tabula" to be

[3] R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, page 6.

impressed with the hypothesis of the historian for a faceless audience.

> Moreover, we see that the reader was not only paying attention to what the words pointed to in the external world, to their referents; he was also paying attention to the images, feelings, attitudes, associations, and ideas that the words evoked in him.... Notions of mankind as a whole, of war, or astronomical time were part of the readers' contribution to the "meaning" that evidently arose in this way.[4]

Carlo Ginsberg in *The Cheese and the Worms* commented on the process of reading.

> More than the text, then, what is important is the key to his reading, a screen that he unconsciously placed between himself and the printed page: a filter that emphasized certain words while obscuring others, that stretched the meaning of a word, taking it out of its context, that acted on Menocchio's memory and distorted the very words of the text. And this screen, this key to his reading, continually leads us back to a culture that is very different from the one expressed on the printed page - one based on an oral tradition.[5]

This is something every reader does, and it is especially noticeable when the text and culture are from a different time. Ginsberg went on to conclude:

> It was the encounter between the printed page and the oral culture, one of which he was the embodiment, that led Menocchio to formulate - first for himself, later for his fellow villagers, and finally for the judges - the "opinions... [that] came out of his head."[6]

This too is what a reader does. One reads, interprets selectively, goes through a process of synthesis, and then voices an opinion

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[4] Louise, M. Rosenblatt, *The Reader, The Text, The Poem*, pages 10-11.

[5] Carlo Ginsberg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, page 33.

[6] Carlo Ginsberg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, page 33.

which seems to be one's own. Irony can be seen in Ginsberg's analysis of Menocchio's reading of Manderville's *Travels*. Ginsberg read the Inquisition trial of Menocchio, then investigated his library and supposedly read the books to more fully understand the references. In his footnote to *Manderville's Travels*[7], he noted that there were opposing interpretations (Seymour's edition, Letts and Bennet). He then offered his interpretation of Menocchio's interpretation of the book and Ginsberg's reader struggles to see beyond the layers involved. To clarify: first there was Menocchio and the events surrounding his trial. Then there was the Inquisitor's secretary who recorded the words spoken at the trial. Then there was Ginsberg who wrote a fascinating study of a miller in the sixteenth century (even including a list of his daughter's dowry on his wedding). Then there is the audience, reader of *The Cheese and the Worms*, with her interpretations according to her own history and interests. Another level to be acknowledged is the number of translations that this process has gone through - the original language of the Manderville book, French translated into Italian[8], the Friuli dialect of Menocchio, the Latin of the Inquisitor's secretary, the Italian of Carlo Ginsberg, the English of *The Cheese and the Worms*. Not only does the event get filtered through interpretation, but also through the filter of language translation.

Obviously, I have not accepted what I have read

[7] Carlo Ginsberg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, page 147.

[8] Carlo Ginsberg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, page 147.

uncritically. Indeed, I have also tried "to think with" them and, in so doing, I have recast them in my own way and for my own reasons.[9]

Historians and the general reader of history (like Menocchio) "recast" the text into a more personal frame. The "external reference-internal response" of Rosenblatt enriches our historic understanding.

It is difficult to include the people reading history at some distant point in time and from a yet unknown culture. They cannot be identified or specified, cannot be addressed with assumptions. The reader can only be persuaded by an excellent argument.

E.H. Carr reacted against the suggestion of Collingwood that the interpretation of history is a totally subjective exercise. He said:

> In place of the theory that history has no meaning, we are offered here the theory of an infinity of meanings, none any more right than any other - which comes to much the same thing.... It does not follow that, because interpretation plays a necessary part in establishing the facts of history, and because no existing interpretation is wholly objective, one interpretation is as good as another, and the facts of history are not amenable to objective interpretation.[10]

and stated that this "infinity of meanings" is untenable. The historian has no control over the reader except through the integrity of the historian's interpretation. The reader's interpretation of the historian's work is too far removed for him to consider.

Three parts of the relationship are history, the historian,

[9] David Levine, "Considering the Subject", page 3.

[10] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, pages 26-27.

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and the student of history. Here the audience plays a specific role. The reader of history is multi-faceted and not necessarily an easily identified student.

> Before you study the history study the historian. Now I would add: Before you study the historian, study his historical and social environment. The historian, being an individual, is also a product of history and of a society, and it is in this two-fold light that the student of history must learn to regard him.[11]

Carr, Thompson, Warner and Gould are good examples of historians who fit into a social/historical environment. Just from Carr's quotation a feminist reader today might ruffle her feathers with his automatic use of the pronoun 'his' because Carr represented, in the use of his language, a scholar coming from a patronizing, paternalistic society.

Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class* (his study of family, community, education, war, professional and political experience) had serious investments in the working class. Warner, interested in literature and women's mythology, included much of that personal interest when she wrote *Joan of Arc*. Gould confessed his personal interest in the Burgess Shale and in Walcott's limitations:

> I did not approach the Walcott archives with any general biographical intent. I had but one goal, which became something of an obsession: I wanted to know why Walcott had committed his cardinal error of the shoehorn.[12]

Gould's profession and abilities (literary, professional, personal), his expertise and his sense of humour all add to our

[11] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, page 44.

[12] Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life*, page 244.

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understanding of paleontological history.

Mumford indicated that an historian cannot be separated from his personal biography, his cultural history, or even from global history.

> Seeking to clear out of his mind all knowledge, true or false, that it contained, in order to build from rock bottom, Descartes was left with what seemed to him an indisputable proposition: the famous, "I think, therefore I am." This equation of thought with being removed it from all qualifying limitations: thinking itself tended to become unconditional and absolute: in fact, the sole imperative demand of existence. In order to reach this point Descartes forgot that before he uttered these words, "I think...," he needed the cooperation of countless fellow-beings, extending back into his own knowledge as far as the thousands of years that Biblical history recorded. Beyond that, we know now, he needed the aid of an even remoter past that mankind too long remained ignorant of: the millions of years required to transform his dumb animal ancestors into conscious human beings.
> "I think, therefore I am." had meaning only because of this immense mass of buried history. Without that past, his momentary experience of thought would have been undescribable; indeed, inexpressible.[13]

The historian has specific context, but, since the historian is a human being, a "social phenomena" and a "part of the procession", Mumford may not have pushed his point too far.

> The historian, then, is an individual human being. Like other individuals, he is also a social phenomenon, both the product and the conscious or unconscious spokesman of the society to which he belongs; it is in this capacity that he approaches the facts of the historical past.... The historian is just another dim figure trudging along in another part of the procession....The historian is part of history. The point in the procession at which he finds himself determines his angle of vision over the past.[14]

[13] Lewis Mumford, "The Myth of the Machine" *in The Pentagon of Power.*

[14] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, pages 35-36.

The individuals caught in the original events of history are followed by historians through the ages who have offered their interpretation of what happened and why. At the end of the procession are the crowds of readers who bring their own interests and experiences, their own contexts, vocabularies with etymological development, and their own personal or communal political agendas to the reading and appreciation of history. The procession includes not only the originators of history and the interpreters of history, but also the readers who follow and cheer.

Other historians have offered hypotheses which fit into their societal, cultural and personal interests. Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon* reflects all of these. He speculated, "on purely internal and subjective literary grounds", that the J Code in the *Bible* was written by Bathsheba, a Hittite woman and wife of King David; this would have explained, for him, "the ironic presentation of the Hebrew patriarchs" and the character of God.

> The J writer was the original author of what we now call Genesis, Exodus and Numbers, but what she wrote was censored, revised, and frequently abrogated or distorted by a series of redactors across five centuries, culminating in Ezra, or one of his followers, in the era of the return from Babylonian exile. These revisionists were priests and cultic scribes, and they seem to have been scandalized by Bathsheba's ironical freedom in portraying Yahweh. J's Yahweh is human – all too human: he eats and drinks, frequently loses his temper, delights in his own mischief, is jealous and vindictive, proclaims his justness while constantly playing favorites, and develops a considerable case of neurotic anxiety when he allows himself to transfer his blessing from an elite to an entire Israelite host. By the time he leads that crazed and suffering rabblement through the Sinai wilderness, he has become so insane and dangerous, to himself and to others, that the J writer deserves to be

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called the most blasphemous of all authors ever.[15]

No one knows who wrote Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers. Once, it was believed that Moses wrote it down after God whispered in his ear on Mount Sinai. Historians, until today, would never have ventured this unique interpretation of the writer of the J Code. Today, the readers of Bloom laugh, rage, scowl after their fashion as they grapple with this outrageous theory. Future readers may have a very different response. Later, it is likely that the next historian amongst us may offer a further interpretation.

> The facts of history are indeed facts about individuals, but not about actions of individuals performed in isolation, and not about the motives, real or imaginary, from which individuals suppose themselves to have acted. They are facts about the relations of individuals to one another in society and about the social forces which produce from the actions of individuals results often at variance with, and sometimes opposite to, the results which they themselves intended.[16]

Joan of Arc by Marina Warner not only placed the individual in the midst of historical personalities who dwarf her, but also mythical figures who overshadow her. Little is actually known about Jhenne Darc. In books about her there are often an imposition of motives, description of inner feelings, assumption of causation, sheer speculation, and far-fetched theorizing. Marina Warner's book also reflects feminist interests. The chapters "Maid of France" and "Amazon" deal with subjects that have been long considered taboo. Joan of Arc's lack of menstruation and her transvestism were never dealt with by male historians. They have

[15] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon*, page 5.

[16] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, page 52.

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just become interesting because there are now a fair number of female historians and women readers who have an interest in such subjects. Warner's book will surely encourage other historians to investigate these obscure details. A reader's interest may range from power-dressing to anorexia to Greek mythology dealing with how the old matriarchy has been twisted into the bizarre (Medusa, Cassandra, and single breasted Hippolyta). The procession of history ends with the reader. The reader may take part in book club discussions and may go to parties where this sort of historical trivia is dispensed. An historical study has a wide influence generating further interest. Academia is not all.

> Great history is written precisely when the historian's vision of the past is illuminated by insights into the problems of the present.[17]

Insights by feminists into the forces that influence women and men to act emerge from the consciousness-raising work of politically active, contemporary women. The readers of history promote or neglect such interpretations which coincide with the values and intellectual investments of their period. Perhaps a reader of *Joan of Arc* may be a medical professional with an interest in schizophrenia. Thus another avenue is opened and explored, even if it was initiated only by speculation. The reader of history is a product of the contemporary social/political environment and explores the world from that context.

The now popular Chaos Theory is influencing many thinkers, causing them to revise an attitude which had been so integral that

[17] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, page 37.

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it was an assumption beyond awareness: there is a cause for everything. This was questioned by Hume and others following him. Contingency is a word which preoccupied Gould in *Wonderful Life*.

> Arguments of this form lead me to the conclusion that biology's most profound insight into human nature, status, and potential lies in the simple phrase, the embodiment of contingency: *Homo sapiens* is an entity, not a tendency.
> By taking this form of argument across all scales of time and extent, and right to the heart of our own evolution, I hope I have convinced you that contingency matters where it counts most.[18]

Many contemporary thinkers are considering contingency, indeterminacy, or the Chaos Theory with great sincerity, working it into their interpretations as Gould did. Readers of history are also fascinated by this now fashionable position expressed by people in a variety of fields like John Cage, Andy Warhol ("Urine on Copper"), Daniel Boorstin, David Ruelle, or Edward Lorentz.

> The past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present; and we can fully understand the present only in the light of the past. To enable man to understand the society of the past, and to increase his mastery over the society of the present, is the dual function of history.[19]

The historian is the accepted interpreter of history, the writer of historical analysis. Most historians do not live history (except infrequently, like Julius Caesar and Winston Churchill), that is in the province of the participants of history, those who lived through the events (with a subjective view of what happened, not the professional, objective view of the historian). The

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[18] Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life*, page 320.

[19] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, page 55.

historian may record, document events, analyze people involved in these events and write books read by students and lovers of history. The reader brings the experiences, assumptions, biases and richness of personal life, understanding and interpreting the original events once again. The reader of history is the product of changing times. This allows for variations in how history is seen and understood: focus of interest (from kings to workers, men to women, colonist to native), selection of details (power dressing, eg. Joan of Arc), or popular theory of historical analysis (causation/ indeterminacy, great man/Marxist materialism). The events, if recorded or available for investigation, will always be there. The historian's interpretation will be found in libraries; but, the reader is constantly changing and constantly a part of the developing interpretation of history.

The study of history is interactive. The events and people studied have an interaction with themselves. The historian actively interacts with his subject, and then the audience interacts with the historical study. But, who is the audience of the historian? The audience is not just another historian who reads the history at another point in time and rewrites it in the light of a new perspective, but anyone who reads the history and absorbs, with critical appreciation, the story through the historian's eyes. The interpretation of history changes not only with every new historian but also with every new reader of history.

However, if the historian were to be consciously aware of the reader, there could be enormous difficulties. Some recent

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historians have been forced to write history with the reader in mind. History becomes propaganda when the reader must be persuaded about the glory of the nation, or convinced that events definitely led to certain actions or reactions. The historians of Hitler's Europe or Stalin's Soviet Union were expected to reinterpret history for political purposes and even rewrite history to exclude events (the holocaust or Stalin's purges) to satisfy the demands of the leader and escape death themselves. Nations always operate with an ethno-centric bias and their histories often reflect this bias, but propaganda is unacceptable to most historians.

> Do not forget that, as Marx once said, the educator has to be educated; in modern jargon, the brain of the brain-washer has itself been washed. The historian, before he begins to write history, is a product of history.[20]

G.R. Elton insisted in his inaugural lecture as Regius Professor of Modern History that

> English history would show "the manner in which this society managed to civilize power and order itself through constant changes"; "an age of uncertainty, beset by false faiths and the prophets of constant innovation, badly needs to know its roots."[21]

The historian who "would show the manner in which this society managed to civilize power" is reflecting his own historical bias, his own brainwashing, and is also writing propaganda. And to whom would this be shown? Not to other historians, but to the student of history, to the reader of history who is seen as malleable and impressionable.

[20] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, page 40.

[21] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, page 173.

Carlo Ginsberg said he did write consciously for an audience.

> When I am writing I am always thinking about specific
> people. I write a sentence and think about how that man
> or that woman would react to that sentence. In some way
> it's a kind of dialogue going on.[22]

This does not defend the process of writing history with this audience in mind, because he is too vague about exactly who these people are and what his purpose is. He did state that he preferred nonprofessional readers and he appreciated the kind of reader Menocchio was; but, he also says, "I am deeply interested in catching the right meaning."[23] Therefore, his response to the reader was almost meaningless, because trying to get a Menocchio, as a reader of history, to get "the right meaning" is not guaranteed, not even imaginable. Ginsberg did have a real awareness of the reader but not of a specific audience. He may have liked dialogue to be initiated and ideas shared, but not because he was forcing anyone to share his beliefs.

The people and events, with the historian to interpret them, require an audience (which is not just other historians) to listen and appreciate. Odysseus, Achilles, Helen, Hector and Cassandra would have been forgotten without Homer; but the storyteller without an audience is nothing.

This audience is also made up of students. While studying history, students learn to read, interpret, and analyze influential thinkers in their historical context with the help of many

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[22] Keith Luria, "The Paradoxical Carlo Ginsberg", page 100.

[23] Keith Luria, "The Paradoxical Carlo Ginsberg", page 100.

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historians. Students represent changes in population and interests of the general audience. As African Canadians, Albanian refugees, South Asian immigrants, and many others with a variety of religious and political backgrounds, they bring rich and wide perspectives to the study of history. Presented with the vast scope of the historians they read, hopefully students begin to comprehend that the part they play as readers and thinkers themselves may lead to their becoming historians, archaeologists, or sociologists with active roles in the interpretation of events in their own communities and in the world.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
UNIVERSALITY

There are many controversies over how effective it is to communicate one's thought to another person. Bertrand Russell, in looking at John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* points out one aspect of this problem.

> Empiricism and idealism alike are faced with a problem to which, so far, philosophy has found no satisfactory solution. This is the problem of showing how we have knowledge of other things than ourself and the operations of our own mind. Locke considers this problem, but what he says is very obviously unsatisfactory. In one place we are told: "Since the mind, in all its thoughts and reasonings, hath no other immediate object but its own ideas, which it alone can or does contemplate, it is evident that our knowledge is only conversant about them."[1]

How does one person ever truly understand and acknowledge the validity of another's thought? The answer to this question is certainly far too abstract and subtle to know with certainty. One tests another's thought against one's own perceptions, experience, intuition, memories, and other people's ideas. Individuals may compare their perceptions of physical reality to the perceptions of others. When people are able to use language to reflect accurately empirical information, then perhaps rational concepts may be communicated as accurately. In the process one accepts on faith that one's own thought can be accepted (after testing) by another person. Each person has to try, with all the sensitivity possible, to understand the thought that was communicated, using the

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[1] Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy,* page 590.

limitations of the symbol system and one's own experience. It is a difficult process and there will always be distortion or modification. Collingwood articulated confidence in the capacity of people to understand each other based on a belief in universal human nature.

> The body of human thought or mental activity is a corporate possession, and almost all the operations which our minds perform are operations which we learned to perform from others who have performed them already. Since mind is what it does, and human nature, if it is a name for anything real, is only a name for human activities, this acquisition of ability to perform determinate operations is the acquisition of a determinate human nature. Thus the historical process is a process in which man creates for himself this or that kind of human nature by re-creating in his own thought the past to which he is heir.[2]

If an individual's thought is specific to one person and defined by the characteristic skills, interests, values and perceptions of that person in a cultural and historic context how can the thought be understood by others who are different? How can someone understand another without an identical background and similar perspective? How can another person understand my poetry without having gone through my experiences and my emotional responses to those experiences? One understands by approximating my sensual and emotional responses to similar experiences. I am not unique.

> A poem tells us how to be human by identifying ourselves with others, and finding again their dilemmas in ourselves. What we learn from this is self-knowledge.
>   I do not mean from this a narrow knowledge of our own foibles only. On the contrary, the self that we discover in this mode of knowledge is every self and is

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[2] R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, page 226.

universal - the human self. Or better, each of us discovers the outline of his self within the human totality. We learn to recognize ourselves in others, and the comparison shows us what we are and at the same time what man is, in general and in particular.[3]

One also understands through the language or symbol system which is chosen to communicate the thought. Language has a structure and signs whose meanings have been accepted by a group. Repetition over time makes the language more precise or appropriate to the users. Language is both wide and deep enough to accommodate subtlety, nuance and allusion, and if it has limitations they can be stretched. Though Noam Chomsky does not deal with universality of language, in his studies on the structure of language he does suggest that there is an underlying human nature for which language is innate, shared and understandable.

> In fact, whatever evidence we do have seems to me to support the view that the ability to acquire and use language is a species-specific human capacity, that there are very deep and restrictive principles that determine the nature of human language and are rooted in the specific character of the human mind....
> Speaking again from a personal point of view, to me the most interesting aspects of contemporary work in grammar are the attempts to formulate principles of organization of language which, it is proposed, are universal reflections of properties of mind....[4]

Some languages, such as mathematics, express absolutes. Axioms stated by Euclid express truths about an infinite flat plane. In arithmetic, 1+1=2 in any base greater than 3 is an absolute. Universals are understood and assumed. In the sciences, which use mathematics to explore nature and to express concepts

[3] J. Bronowski, *The Identity of Man*, pages 66-67.

[4] Noam Chomsky, *Language and Mind*, pages 102-103.

about the universe, general principles have been discovered which are true in all physical systems. Mathematics has been called an axiomatic deductive system. The axioms are self-evident truths, the reasoning is deductive, and the symbols are independent of the system. In the case of Euclidean geometry, where one operates on an infinite, flat plane, the stating of a theorem and demonstration of the proof follow a set procedure that anyone trained in geometry can understand. If the assumptions change, as in hyperbolic geometry, for example, the understanding is still universal. When Riemann discovered this geometry, he produced a construct that no one recognized as correlating to reality, but which had to be accepted as "real" as Euclidean geometry because it was equally consistent. Geometry has developed beyond the possibilities of Euclidean geometry, but mathematicians still accept Euclidean axioms as true within the bounds of a flat plane. The language of mathematics does have limits, and mathematicians have determined some boundaries to it, but if the structure of a language is concerned with absolutes, as mathematics is, then there is a greater possibility of universal understanding.

Rules, in the sense of conventions that have general agreement, present a different scenario than laws that have to be accepted. Rules, as for any game, ensure that all of the players understand the game. Perhaps not everything is understood perfectly, but within moderate bounds understanding is possible. People are multi-lingual. Those of one mother tongue can understand others of a different tongue when they play basketball

or golf together, because the rules are known and accepted as the basis of playing the game. People of different languages and cultures can read music together and agree on the sound produced. Over time, this may be more difficult because instruments are tuned slightly sharp or flat according to the fashion of the period. Perhaps Vivaldi would have expected to hear a slightly different sound, but he would still have been able to communicate in music across the years. The language, with its structure, rules and symbols allows meaning to be understood and shared.

Frazer's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* and the psychological works of Jung, suggest that archetypes are a set of themes which exist in the unconscious of us all across cultures and time. These themes have been used by psychologists to interpret dreams. Psychology's acceptance of archetypes point to a universal, subconscious reservoir of symbolic meaning.

Misunderstanding is always the other side of understanding. The intent of the person expressing the thought, the subtext, the honesty involved, the connotations of the vocabulary and of metaphor, the historical, cultural, communal context, the politics of understanding between people, the context both of the thought and of its reception, and the enormous problems of translation, all make the possibility of understanding quite difficult.

Imagination, both the writer's and the listener's or reader's, is a faculty praised by poets. It is this very human ability which allows understanding in difficult situations. In the expression of the thinker, the figurative images (components of a symbol system

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which give abstract ideas a concrete reality) provide the audience with tools of translation from a uni-lingual system to a multi-lingual system. Since all of us are multi-lingual, translation from an articulated expression to the mind of the listener can take a metaphor and render it colourful, textured and emotional. Imagination, with its ability to use metaphor to bridge gaps in vocabulary, with its images and unlikely comparisons, offers a great deal of assistance in understanding the strange and different in people's experiences and in communicating it to others. That 'give and take', the constant desire for feedback, allows the circle of accuracy to tighten until people believe that they are able to understand another's thought or feelings.

Even the word 'universal' has many assumptions built into it. One assumption is that there is a unified existence in a universe with similarities which can be shared. Recently, the word multiverse has been introduced by astronomers and sci-fi buffs who explore the systems in and beyond our universe. They theorize that communication between ourselves and aliens is conceivable. With this possibility in mind, Voyager II, the space craft sent to the far reaches of our solar system, contains a recorded message in many languages about life on earth.

Human beings represent a species with very little significant physical variation. Cultural differences are the major variables, but even though there are many cultures and many languages, there are still remarkably few language families. Indo-European is one language family and Sinitic is another. Much of the globe is

covered by these two language families. If Islam and Christianity are seen as cultural-religious groups, many of the people in the world belong to them. Universality is easier to imagine than individuality. Carr says:

> Society and the individual are inseparable; they are necessary and complementary to each other, not opposites. "No man is an island, entire of itself" in Donne's famous words: "every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.[5]

and goes on,

> As soon as we are born, the world gets to work on us and transforms us from merely biological into social units. Every human being at every stage of history or pre-history is born into a society and from his earliest years is moulded by that society. The language which he speaks is not an individual inheritance, but a social acquisition from the group in which he grows up. Both language and environment help to determine the character of his thought; his earliest ideas come to him from others. As has been well said, the individual apart from society would be both speechless and mindless.[6]

The translation of a thought from one individual to another is no less complex than from one language and culture to another[7]. However, the translation from one time frame and culture (for example Elizabethan English in Shakespeare's *King Lear* to modern Japanese in Kurasawa's *Ran*) has been done and to an modern audience's satisfaction.

Education or training in the language used is essential. The symbols which have a history and belong to a culture must be taught

[5] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, page 31.

[6] E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, page 31.

[7] George Steiner, *After Babel. Aspects of Languages and Translation*, page 49.

to the thinker, the performer, and the audience who will use them. The more intensive the training, the more likely the understanding. In languages highly reflective of culture, such as painting and music and dance, there are some aspects of the symbol system which are shared, but fewer than in mathematics based on deductive logic. In dance and music, beat or rhythm often reflects body functions which are universal. Heartbeat and breath are two constants. The causes of a faster heartbeat or breathing fall within the realm of the universally understood. Beat and rhythm in music exist across cultures. However, when it becomes complex, interpretation of meaning based on cultural familiarity is necessary and the understanding has a wider gap to cross. An ethno-musicologist can understand the complex rhythms and tones of an isolated culture with as much accuracy as a native musician, and a dancer can learn steps and movements in another culture's dance. The problem of hearing the unfamiliar or moving the body without having that culture's body language from a very early age is difficult, but with good instruction and natural talent it can be done. Sounds which are similar around the world are also conducive to universal understanding. The wind, birdsong, rushing water, all of which can be recognizably reproduced and are often found in the onomatopoeia of poetry or the melodies in music, can have similarities across linguistic and cultural distances. The metaphoric meaning built into the symbols must be learned, but this is entirely possible.

The possibility of expressing a truth, or a part of the truth, or truth as we as human beings can understand it, is the ambition

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of the thinker. To grasp the truth, to articulate it in a creative expression, and to have it acknowledged by a listener or spectator, is the aim of an artist. How much is hidden, intentionally or by subconscious intent, or by mistaken choice of symbol is always a subject of debate.

This concept of universality spans an enormous area and is beyond our comprehension. We may believe it is possible to be understood but we also wonder whether anyone understands us at all. This paradox about the limits of language expresses our doubts about the understanding of one person by another. However, the bubbling hope that human beings find difficult to suppress makes us consider the possibilities of sharing thoughts with others because they may be understood.

Somewhere in the human conception of truth, which is related to our development of language, is the belief that understanding is possible and worthy of a whole-hearted attempt. In the relationship between the creative thinker and the people who receive the expression of the thought there is a profound belief in the possibility of understanding our shared experiences in our universe. There is debate over the possibilities of misunderstanding, of interpretation, of accuracy of translation, of the influences of personal, historical, cultural and political context. Between understanding and misunderstanding falls the relationship of the creative thinker to the chosen language, to the executants of the expression, and to the audience. And it is in this interactive, essential relationship that meaningful thought is

created, expressed, shared, and appreciated.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
CONCLUSION

After many years of exploration in the domain of this thesis
I, as a creative thinker in communication with myself and with my
students, take pause now to note how it has affected my work and
life. Such a basic question as how one communicates meaning to
another person cannot but be personalized. It has been like living
with a kind of mantra going on in my head, especially in my
classroom. Do I really understand what this student is saying to
me? Am I able to put aside my assumptions, my bias, my agendas and
really know what a student means in a given moment? This is easier
said than done. I have come to appreciate that we are all not only
multilingual, as developed in this thesis, but in the classroom
many languages are spoken at the same time - body language,
English, words of a mother tongue, pauses, musical inflections and
rhythms of speech. I have learned to stop, to look, to listen and
most important to begin with the assumption that I do NOT
understand. I ask questions, and in so doing struggle with the
awareness that my very questions, framed in language, will limit
the responses I hear. I try to see how the history and the culture
my student has come from, whether as a Nigerian immigrant, a
refugee from Albania, or a native of Toronto, have shaped the
thought. And I ask myself constantly whether the student really
understands me, with all my own conscious and unconscious
modalities of communication, as I make an effort to be the
interpreter of thoughts from another thinker, of another time and

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place from ours. This process of inquiry has been genuinely humbling and enriching.

I realize that I have tried to encompass a topic of wide scope and what I may have accomplished in conceptualizing such an overview may have omitted certain details and topography of the landscape. I tried to take a subject usually fragmented in units which can be studied in depth, for example the relationship of technology and the mind, literary criticism, music history, and present its connections to other subjects as a cohesive philosophical whole. This was the challenge of the task at hand.

I am well aware that while I use the concept 'radius of truth' to explore issues of meaning in regards to the essence of thought, truth itself is a subject larger than this dissertation can encompass. There are many facets to the concept of relative truth: axioms, valid deductions, facts, conclusions based on experience or perceptions, authority, belief, opinion. Truth, as I have chosen to use it, is relative and based on negotiated agreement. The negotiators are all of the partners in the connection between the primary thinker, executors, and members of the audience. The radius of truth means an assessment about the subject's validity and appropriateness to the reality of the human condition, as the negotiators see it. It sometimes seems to spring from intuition combined with expertise. An example from music might be the combination of perfect pitch, comprehension of music theory, and the ability and love of playing a musical instrument which would allow an assessment of accuracy, appropriateness, scope and beauty

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by a performer, a critic, or a recording technician. If this assessment falls within the radius of truth, it joins other related responses to the thought from the past and slightly modifies them. The audience who hears, interprets, and evaluates the thought must believe that the meaning they comprehend is close to the thinker's meaning, and that it is valid.

Relationship is the interactive response which links the thinker, the language chosen, the executant, and the audience in a shared experience. This relationship is complex, can bridge long time periods, results in changes in how the product is experienced, and is sometimes an internalized personal interpretation, sometimes a public response. Between each partner in the communication of an idea is an interdependence. Between the thinker and the language chosen is spontaneity and choice. In some cases, a thinker consciously or subconsciously chooses to express a mathematical thought in words, sometimes in mathematics, sometimes in drawing. The thinker chooses the language, moulds it to suit his needs and impresses it with his personality. The language, with its character shaped from usage through history, offers limits, constraints and opportunity for change. Between the thinker and the executant there is a relationship based on the links of shared technical skills, emotional response, education, and appreciation. An editor, performer, historian reshapes the thought with interpretation. The audience hears, internalizes what has been presented, and gives it personal meaning according to individual taste and past experience. Between each partner in the

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communication of an idea is an interdependence and transformation.

How is this relationship interactive? How can it be interactive when, often, one member of the relationship is dead? How can Bach be part of an interactive relationship with Glen Gould and his audience, especially if his audience is listening to a recording made long before? T.S. Eliot, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" explained how each existing piece of writing is modified by those following it, the place of each thinker on the roster being slightly different after a new thinker has arrived, and the appreciation of a work developing as it takes its place amongst the others. The relationship is one that is not set or unchangeable; it is constantly being modified and as a result allows for new and vital thinkers to take their place in a historical period and give another dynamic perspective. M.M. Bakhtin in a different context makes a similar statement.

> The linguistic significance of a given utterance is understood against the background of language, while its actual meaning is understood against the background of other concrete utterances on the same theme, a background made up of contradictory opinions, points of view and value judgements – that is, precisely that background that, as we see, complicates the path of any word toward its object. Only now this contradictory environment of alien words is present to the speaker not in the object, but rather in the consciousness of the listener, as his apperceptive background, pregnant with responses and objections. And every utterance is oriented toward this apperceptive background of understanding, which is not a linguistic background but rather one composed of specific objects and emotional expressions. There occurs a new encounter between the utterance and the alien word, which makes itself felt as a new and unique influence on its style.[i]

[i] M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, page 281.

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This active understanding may seem to deal only with words, but the idea can be extended and Bakhtin does this.

> The speaker strives to get a reading on his own word, and on his own conceptual system that determines this word, within the alien conceptual system of the understanding receiver; he enters into dialogic relationships with certain aspects of this system. The speaker breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener's, apperceptive background.[i]

Considering the thinker and the listener, this interchange of listening takes place constantly whenever a thought is received. Considering the thinker and the executant, how is the relationship interactive? Performers offer interpretation in the present and in an historical context also. However, they not only receive a thought, they also present it to an audience. Glen Gould and Wanda Landowska performed *The Goldberg Variations* on different instruments with very different styles at different points in time. Performers who follow would consider these interpretations which would influence their own, giving an audience a thought, multi-layered with interpretation and yet in a unified, coherent, individual style. This shows the response of the performer or listener; but how can a thinker who is dead be considered interactive? Bach's work is full of instructions; every note offers direction. Alicia Zizoe, who was listening for what she intuitively expected from Gershwin in his *Rhapsody in Blue*, could not hear it in the abridged version. When she went to the original she felt she could then respond to Gershwin's voice. The thinker

[i] M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, page 282.

is present in the work and the work itself speaks for the thinker.

Transformation results from an interactive relationship. Choices, decisions, interpretation, assessment, evaluation and appreciation come from an active and interactive relationship. A thought as performed, presented in a gallery, or analyzed by a critic or historian, is modified sometimes slightly, sometimes greatly. Just a passive reception can adjust the expression of the thought. The transformation must fall within a radius of truth for its meaning to be maintained and accepted as valid.

If any of the components of this relationship were missing would a thought still be a viable entity?

The thinker and the thought are central to the relationship. They are essential. The biography of the thinker is often ignored. Is it necessary to know that Saint Thomas Aquinas' last words were "Omnia faeces est."? No, but it is a revealing titbit. Is it necessary to know about the period and city of Plato? Yes, but his thought is still viable without this knowledge and Plato as a thinker can be compared to other thinkers, rationalist or empiricist, utopian or utilitarian, determinist or deconstructionist, without the history. Basically, because during our history we have lost much information other than the thought alone, we have been come to accept the thought as complete in itself. But if an historian provides historical and biographical context, we are better equipped to understand the thought more clearly. Much of this information may be superfluous but it gives a wider scope.

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A language is necessary for the thought to be expressed. Until that series of impressions, feelings, memories, and sensations is represented in a symbol system which is consistent and accepted as meaningful to a community over a period of time, it is merely a disorganized, unintelligible confusion. It needs a language for its expression even if it is never shared; but if it is not shared it dies. Once it is expressed, rhetoric, linguistics, discourse and other studies of specific use of language can be made.

Once it is expressed it can be shared by others. Then a dialogue is an option, a reaction to the thought can be made. The thinker can check on the clarity of the thought, on the appropriateness of the language, and the truth of what was being expressed. Language is also necessary for the recipients of the thought. If the audience, spectator, reader, or mathematician has a problem with the language, the thought cannot be transformed back into the mind of the recipient clearly. The Rosetta Stone, the Mayan glyphs, the paintings of the sub-Saharan pre-historic people, the Phaestus disk of Crete are examples of language requiring translation so that the thought can be fully understood.

Is it necessary to be a specialist in the symbol system to understand the thought? Moore, Copeland and Gleason thought so, but many people understand Shakespeare without profound knowledge of the tragic dramatic form, or blank verse and iambic pentameter. Some specialist knowledge is necessary for some thought, especially mathematical and scientific thought, but little is needed for

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others. Dance, drama, and music can be appreciated on many levels, even though it is necessary to be literate to more fully understand the thought expressed. The better the language is understood, the better the thought is communicated.

The executants, however, must understand the language and years of training have made their interpretation as close to the thinker's original conception as possible. Some expression may not require an executant. A painting, a poem, or a sculpture exists as the thinker created it. But the person who buys, exhibits, or collects the piece for oneself or for a museum, anthology, or gallery must have some knowledge of the language in order to be a successful medium for later people to appreciate what has been created. The critic also requires expertise in the language in order to interpret it for others less knowledgable.

Is a performer or executor a necessity? Yes, in the cases of expressions which require excellent musicians, choreographers who can interpret the notes, publishers who make the work available to a large number of people to receive the thought. Shakespeare required actors to play *King Lear,* and after he died his work required editors, translators, and publishers to copy it for people who would read or produce it. Without them there would be no Shakespearean literature for us today. Almost every thinker needs an intermediary to convey his thought to people over time and through history.

And, of course, an audience is a necessity. Although a thinker may have a thought and not express it to others, a thinker

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must have a person to hear it if the thought is to live and persist through time. Socrates required Plato, both as an audience and executant. The thinker not only wants to share the thought with someone else, but also to develop the thought further, perhaps to debate a point, perhaps to pass on the idea so that it can be developed by others. And people await a thought in expectation, because it allows them then to live through it themselves or to appreciate the thought and respond with a thought of their own. But one might ask, what of the average person if there is such a creature? I would like to have been able to explore what might transpire in the mind of a variously unsophisticated, unprepared thinker, strolling by a Henry Moore sculpture in the art gallery, perhaps, and stopping for a minute to look and wonder. How would impressions, feelings, memories, thoughts configure themselves for our momentary spectator? And what forces might be set in motion to lead our audience member, at some future time, to return to the museum, or contemplate a rock, or take a sculpture class?

Each of the parts of the relationship is essential to the thought.

A thought cannot exist in a vacuum or on its own. It is not solitary but part of a community effort with an identity, a history and a future. Euclid's axioms, after Reimann, had a slightly different place in the mathematical world, with a different value, use and application. As other thinkers add their contribution (be they colleagues, performers, or audience) the thought is enriched.

The relationship cannot be anything but interactive. But,

however much this interactivity seems to modify a thought over time, there is always a radius of truth which makes a 'sweep' over each interpretation. This radius allows interpretation, and also allows other thinkers to develop tangential ideas of their own. The quest for truth, which is the aim of every thinker, is the qualifier. It prevents the interaction from transforming the essential meaning of the expression of the thinker beyond the bounds of truth. And who is the judge of this? The community of thinkers over time for whom truth is still at the centre.

Therefore, the thinker has a thought which when expressed has a relationship connecting other thoughts and thinkers. This thought lives through the language used to express it and/or translate it. The thinker and the thought have a relationship with the performers or executors of the created work and the thought is modified in this process. As well, the thinker and the thought have connections with their own culture and the culture of the audience in an historical context. As a result, thought is not an isolated individual's expression. It is a part of a dynamic, essential, interactive relationship with universal ramifications that extend across cultures and history, from the distant past of prehistoric wall paintings to unimaginable future thinkers.

Some of these unimaginable thinkers may be students, starting to articulate their own thoughts and gradually beginning to express themselves. They also learn to interpret, analyze, and test another person's ideas. Hopefully, they comprehend that they can participate in the 'give and take' between thoughtful people and

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play an active role in relationship to their own community of thinkers.

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