

Meridiana:
Lines Toward
A Non-local Alchemy

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Do go gentle into that good night

Like the last time we tried our hand at a set of liner notes, we start out messing with some famous words. This time they're from Dylan Thomas, the great Welsh poet, where he's writing on his dying father, before continuing, "Old age should burn and rave at close of day", and then "Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

While daring to remove a word, we emphatically want to avoid a sense of setting up yet another opposite of something, a dualising framework, instead suggesting a shifting of mode, an alternate way: still burning, still open, to intensify awareness of faculties, going gentle, gentle, not only into the good night, but elsewhere; and perhaps even adding: irrespective of age.

Being, breathing, going, coming. Coming from where?

Of course, if you really want to look into the trail of a *where*, pursue it, you'll never get there, won't find it. So for this project we'll choose a moment, a circa moment, a circa place, locality, call it June 17th, 2011, San Francisco, longitude 122.40897, latitude 37.78966, late evening.

There we were, with SK in charge, first in a trio setting with our friend Theresa Wong on cello, later in an extended ensemble sort of jam. Both settings part of a larger evening, with sounds on three floors, sometimes simultaneously, all part of a fairly loose weaving reverberating through the building, through the floors, through the cracks and the lines on the walls, through ... and now we're getting a lot warmer, *tampen brænder* as we say in Danish, it's literally burning: name of place, Meridian Gallery, name of SK's heading for the evening, Meridian Xings.

There we were, under the great wings of Anne & Tony, the gallery owners, full names rarely given, but here: Anne Trueblood Brodsky and Anthony Williams. Under their patronage and direction, the city of San Francisco has witnessed wonderful moments of sight and sound, often combined, over many years, over many obstacles, precious moments seeping into history, check the archives.

Again, there we were, evenings of 2011, with SK as resident artist or resident composer or musician, whatever his title was. And not just evenings, afternoons and even mornings as well. For here it needs to be said that Naya Buric, at that time girlfriend and now wife of SK, had come over from Denmark for an internship under the auspices of Anne & Tony, crossing the lines further.

The gallery, its name, the crossing of lines. Speaking geographically, a meridian of course refers to a line connecting the two poles of our earth, a virtual line, that may be understood either as a circle or a half circle, a kind of verticality, a longitude, which is then crossed by another line, perpendicularly, a latitude, which strictly speaking is not a meridian. Together they form a system, an order in which a set of ordinates will co-ordinate, marking a place, marking a point, more or less.

These lines are pretty straightforward, sort of the Western way, a Cartesian mode, two-fold, this way, that way, clarity, distinct lines, man, nature, the inner, the outer, the infinite, the finite, the mind, the body, etc.

The gallery, its name, some other lines. Then, still speaking geographically but now heading east, we're running into another set of meridians, still fairly vertical (if we remain standing up), but less linear, maybe curving, like streams, like rivers, flowing, swelling, maybe being blocked, dammed up. These are the lines within us, internal geography, not physical like veins with blood, not quite virtual,

maybe an in-between, a system in between: not binary, twofold, like Western ways of cutting things; here the whole tends to come in threes, in China the Daoists will talk in terms of jing, qi, shen, something like physicality, energy, spirit or, say (there being so many ways to translate), the grosser, the subtle and the very subtle, not that clear and distinct, more interwoven.

Before the gallery, still the name, the term. Maybe at this point it could be thrown into the mix that SK and TU, touring, recording and talking together in years prior to that evening in the gallery, had spent many hours on the subject brought up most concisely by Baruch Spinoza (Jewish philosopher writing in Latin, in Holland), and centuries later taken up by Gilles Deleuze (writing in French): we don't know what a body is capable of.

From there we had also gone into some of the themes that Deleuze had laid out, still inspired by the texts and geometry of Spinoza: internal cartographies, longitudes and latitudes, slowness and speeds, degrees of intensity and a breakdown of dualities, continuing in view of Spinoza's one substance.

Likewise, both of us having experienced and played in different parts of China, we had witnessed, and been interested in, Chinese ways of looking into this larger question, what a body is capable of, also in those pretty concrete fields, tai chi, qigong, acupuncture, internal alchemy, etc.

The gallery, June 2011. Given the above, it may then be seen that, coming into that gallery evening, there was at least a certain amount of awareness of, looking East, the ideas of the twelvefold meridians of the human body, the prenatal and postnatal flows, the Chinese version of the five elements (with wood and metal), the trigrams, the threefold treasures, and again, coming back West, to Holland, to France, the modes, the mappings, the motilities, attributes, affects, flightlines, longitudes, etc.

At the same time it was clear that, compositionally speaking, if we were to give a certain shape to all of this, there was much too much ground to cover given the resources and time allotted at the gallery that particular evening. However, we both knew and felt: this would be something to return to.

And in that sense, here we are. Of course, in more than one sense it could quickly become apparent that it's still too much of a mouthful, still too much ground to traverse, too large a challenge. That may easily be. That's part of the reason why the third word in our title reads: Toward. A longish process, ongoing. Another part would be knowing one may never get there. And also: there is not a there to get to.

Still, here we are, inside two LPs, with what we have called four approaches, four sides of vinyl, four voices, a string quartet, four times three, the twelve meridians, sometimes called postnatal or acquired or tidal; four times two, the eight meridians named extraordinary or congenital; the two of us, in what David Bohm has called the explicate and implicate orders; Norman at the board recording, Andreas having filmed and delivered both Chinese rain and thunder, Nis and Nis having further explicated everything.

Four approaches, four sides of vinyl. Approaches will refer to process, play, passage, part, piece. Compositionally, musically, maybe a little different from the traditional word "movement" pointing to a tempo, andante, largo, presto, since we're not doing symphony. Maybe it's closer to a suite in

the sense that it was conceived as a sequence, first side before the third (on our previous recordings the order would not have been that orderly). The sides are definitely related, linked, the lines run through, but more in the sense of four possibilities out of a manifold: when we went into the studio, we had no idea, no grip on, what we would end up with (if anything).

Four voices. Having said no idea, no grip, doesn't go as far as the voices. We did have this idea of string quartet as in a traditional string quartet, with two violins, viola and cello. And we thought of the meridians, in the Western (geo-navigational) sense and in the Eastern sense (Daoist-alchemical) as having two voices each, with short texts (inspiring also a recomposition, permutation later on), by a venerable four: Deleuze, Spinoza, Sun Bu'er, Lü Yen. We've already tried to give a few pointers toward what we have understood of the lines connecting Deleuze (1925-1995) and Spinoza (1632-1677). The Daoist voices also would be seen as sharing in a lineage, where he, Lü Yen, also known as Lü Dongbin or Ancestor Lü (b. circa 796), would figure as what they call founder or progenitor of a school, and she, Sun Bu'er (circa 1119–1182), would be treasured as a poet and practitioner of those teachings. A very well-known, short text by Ancestor Lü has come up through the centuries as the Hundred Character Tablet, and we have seen photographs of a stone inscribed with those characters written and to be understood in twenty lines. Since the twelve and eight meridians taken together make twenty, and since our larger theme as laid out is toward the alchemical, from the perspective of wholeness, we thought we would take twenty lines from Sun Bu'er, Deleuze and Spinoza as well. Sometimes the way they count, the whole itself (the stone, the name, a heading) will count as a number, a nice reminder it seems, thus making twenty-one in all, an auspicious one in many fields. (In the studio we joked around a little bit with the textual voices and the different instrumental voices of the string quartet, and we came up with Deleuze playing the first violin, Spinoza the second, Sun Bu'er the viola, and as the deep voice, on cello, Ancestor Lü.) Voices in non-local tongues, never easily translated, transmuted, into the local, eighty or eighty-four lines all together, here they come:

Gilles Deleuze:

In short, if we are Spinozists we will not define a thing by its form, nor by its organs and its functions, nor as a substance or a subject. Borrowing terms from the Middle Ages, or from geography, we will define it by longitude and latitude. A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity. We call longitude of a body the set of relations of speed and slowness, of motion and rest, between particles that compose it from this point of view, that is, between unformed elements. We call latitude the set of affects that occupy a body at each moment, that is, the intensive states of an anonymous force (force for existing, capacity for being affected). In this way we construct the map of a body. The longitudes and latitudes together constitute Nature, the plane of

immanence or consistency, which is always variable and is constantly being altered, composed and recomposed, by individuals and collectivities. ...¹

What is unique about Spinoza is that he, the most philosophic of philosophers (unlike Socrates himself, Spinoza requires only philosophy ...), teaches the philosopher how to become a nonphilosopher.²

Baruch Spinoza:

... Nothing happens in Nature which can be attributed to any defect in it, for Nature is always the same, and its virtue and power of acting are everywhere one and the same, that is, the laws and rules of Nature, according to which all things happen, and change from one form to another, are always and everywhere the same. ...

Therefore, I shall treat the nature and powers of the affects, and the power of the mind over them, by the same method by which, in the preceding parts, I treated God and the mind, and I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if it were a question of lines, planes, and bodies. ...³

... The mind and the body are one and the same thing, which is conceived now under the attribute of thought, now under the attribute of extension. The result is that the order, or connection, of things is one, whether Nature is conceived under this attribute or that; hence the order of actions and passions of our body is, by nature, at one with the order of actions and passions of the mind. ...

For indeed, no one has yet determined what the body can do, that is, experience has not yet taught anyone what the body can do from the laws of Nature alone, insofar as Nature is only considered to be corporeal, and what the body can do only if it is determined by the mind. For no one has yet to come to know the structure of the body ...⁴

Sun Bu'er:

Before our body existed,
One energy was already there ...
A particle at the point of open awareness,
The gentle firing is warm ...⁵
Gather the breath into the point where the spirit is frozen,
And living energy comes from the east.
Don't get stuck on anything at all,
And one energy will come back to the terrace ...⁶
The energy returns, coursing through the three islands;

The spirit, forgetting, unites with the ultimate.
Coming this way and going this way,
No place is not truly so ... ⁷
The relic from before birth
Enters one's heart one day
Be as careful as if you were holding a full vessel,
Be as gentle as if you were caressing an infant ... ⁸
In time the elixir can be culled;
With the years, the body naturally lightens.
Where the original spirit comes and goes,
Myriad apertures emit radiant light. ⁹

Lü Yen:

Nourishing vital energy, speechless, maintain it.
Settle your heart, do no-action.
In movement and quiet, know the origin.
Inactive, who are you seeking?
In reality, you should respond to things.
Respond to things, but don't be attached to them.
Without attachment, your spirit will remain steady.
With spiritual steadiness, Qi returns naturally. ¹⁰
When energy returns, elixir spontaneously crystallizes,
in the pot pairing water and fire.
Yin and yang arise, alternating over and over again,
everywhere producing the sound of thunder.
White clouds assemble on the summit,
sweet dew bathes the polar mountain.
Having drunk the wine of longevity,
you wander free, who can know you?
You sit and listen to the stringless tune,
you clearly understand the mechanism of creation.
The whole of these twenty verses
is a ladder straight to heaven. ¹¹

Being, breathing, becoming, becoming process, going, going where?

Now, as with Dylan Thomas above, you sit with these canonical lines, in some sense overwhelmed, there's so much to work with, so much to work on, to listen to. Still, they are not your lines, not your music, until you've tried to make them your own, making your very own connections with them. In that attempt, in that process, you may falter. Still, you get going, see what may appear, if you dig in, stay with those constellations, outer meridians, inner meridians, modes of

melodies, harmonics, ruptures, fire, waters, inks, linkings, after those four voices, what does a fifth voice, SKTU, come up with?

First, however, in the words of SK:

If a body of lines were laid out at the Meridian Gallery back in the spring of 2011, it was not until about a year later that things started to move on, when TU opened the possibility of picking up some of those threads again, proposing the title already then.

TU had also suggested that I'd write for string quartet, as a way of linking up the music with the other foursomes, being like cardinal points in the work: the four voices, the four root texts, the four LP sides, the four approaches and so on.

Turning to Deleuze, tuning into his thoughts on Spinoza, on speeds and slowness, it seemed the topography of the string instruments related to our topic, as their bodies, geographies of their own, were fields for an interplay of lines, of longitudes and latitudes, of strings and bows, intersecting in sound. A string then becoming a longitude, vertical in pitch, and points along it, sonic locations that await activation, by a finger, hand, wrist, arm, elbow, shoulder, by a body, a bow. And still with Deleuze resonating on, navigating further East, a meridian could also be seen as a melodic line that moves through a sonic landscape, shaped by it and giving shape to it, composed and recomposed, as a melody sung out by one of the four voices, with the others responding in harmony at points along its way, opening for yet another interplay between the horizontal and the vertical: the melody, weaving along, water-like, and the chords, clusters of notes stacked on top of each other, reflecting the different layers of the melodic body. Again, that three-fold of the grosser, the subtle and the very subtle, now sorted in layers of frequency, the grosser being the twelve well-tempered tones, roots, and the subtler being the harmonics and overtones of those twelve.

And remembering that meridians are common in nature for all bodies, one could also say fundamental, basic, prime, which seemed to be a way of establishing a common ground between the twelve prime meridians and the twelve well-tempered tones, being also prime in some sense; linking them up in a twelvefold of pieces, of twelve lines, each featuring a voice in the quartet.

Writing those lines, I tried to listen deeply to their bottom nature. (Coincidentally, a poster of Pauline Oliveros was the only thing hanging on the walls when I entered the gallery atelier in San Francisco, a local heroine around there, and elsewhere. After a few months of it just hanging there silently, Theresa Wong turned my attention to her and her concept of Deep Listening.)

I also looked to another revered voice from the past, to Brother Yusef Lateef, whose music and teachings were a strong influence on our Alphabet, Peaceful, Diminished project. Back then in 2010, Brother Yusef was still with us, playing

his horns and flutes up in the woods of western Massachusetts, but since last year, not anymore, at least not locally, not in grosser form. So, there I was, going through the pages of Brother Yusef's "Repository of Scales and Melodic Patterns", as a page of Chinese Interpolations suddenly showed up, twelve tone rows in strict symmetry, still with a nice sound to them. I improvised on them, trying to loosen up their symmetries, and before anything made too much sense I wrote it down, part random, part improvised, part sung out.

And just as things were starting to come down on paper, now writing in the spring of 2012, I got sidetracked by another familiar voice from the gallery, the Canadian composer Ann Southam. I was asked to perform at the Click Festival in Helsingør, and decided to give a Danish premiere of Southam's solo piano work entitled "Simple Lines Of Inquiry". A bold and beautiful work, which I had become aware of back in San Francisco. As I investigated further into it, it seemed that her lines were close in family with our work. The hour-long piece consisted of twelve parts, each starting out with a simple line that would quietly weave together these mysterious harmonies, in a sort of melodic, repetitive twelve-tone language.

Between Sister Ann and Brother Yusef, the Canadian streams and the Chinese symmetries, I found a middle ground, an in-between, interpolating.

Attention was also drawn to the so-called eight extraordinary meridians, lines that were even more subtle, hidden, pre-natal, pre-instrumental, pre-well-tempered. The harmonics came into play again, as a way of toning down the fundamental twelve, and in the work in general: audible, but not right before your ears, or, right before your ears, but not audible.

Having never tried it out, I thought I'd go for an acupuncture session, in order to investigate the workings of the meridians in my own body. A good friend had recommended Dr. Bao in Lyngby. A quiet lady, ageless in presence and very meticulous. At one point, Dr. Bao placed a stethoscope at certain points on my arm, and started hitting it with a rubber hammer while listening closely. I asked her what she was doing, and she told me she was listening for the resonance of the meridian, which she described as a low sound, like that of pulling a bass or cello string.

During all this, I had to keep in mind that the string quartet pieces were also a starting point, a pre-set of lines awaiting new circuitry, as TU and I had talked about the possibility of mixing up the voices, alternating them, changing their velocities, still leaving space for the interplay between the two of us, as a duo and together with the quartet, 2+4 being yet a new constellation in the mix. So, really, during this whole time, I had more the feeling of writing toward something, toward a meeting of bodies, of strings, of texts, voices, keyboards, marble rolls and boiling water.

And being in the middle of a map, with lines already connecting various locations on the West Coast, ved Vesterhavet, på Vesterbro, it now pointed toward Vanløse, to Village Recording, where I met up with Andrea, Therese, Katarzyna and John, the four voices of Messerkvartetten. We recorded all the ground work, the 12+8 pieces. Still being raw mixes, they needed a good treatment, which pointed onwards to Oakland, to New, Improved Recording, where the next phase began: that of stepping into the string quartet, into the map of lines laid out, or as Deleuze puts it: "One never commences; one never has a tabula rasa; one slips in, enters in the middle; one takes up or lays down rhythms."¹²

So, here we were, TU and SK, with Norman behind the board, entering the work together, trying to take up and lay down those lines.

As mentioned earlier on, we recorded the four sides in separate sequences, as four individual approaches, starting from zero with each of them, leaving us roughly one and half days per side. Part of the structure was to create four thunders, one for each side, as sudden vertical strikes into the common plane of the work, with the first thunder being placed at the very beginning of side 1.

We started together at the piano, SKTU, four arms and elbows, all 88 keys, in one strike, bang. Adding layers of organ, synths, cymbals, gongs and slamming doors on top of it. By the end of day two, still building up the thunder, Norman remarked that at this point it might not even be playable on vinyl, because the needle could risk jumping out of the groove and lose its track, giving a new, unexpected dimension to our title. Thanks to Norman, though, we stayed in the groove and moved on into the rumbling aftermath, from which the strings would grow, starting out with the first cello piece, with Ancestor Lü, which made sense from a contextual point of view, Lü being the lower end, the deeper ground, so to speak.

And if side 1 was more grounded, still not so crowded, we started intensifying things little by little, as we moved across the four sides. Adding more layers on side 2, doubling up the voices. On side 3, we began to cut it all up (to 'yin' it up), giving it another kind of density and speed, and on side 4 we began to expand and compress the strings, alternating the lines and changing their velocities. Adding further layers of keys, texts and voices into the mess; mixed up, pitched down, stretched out and interwoven in a kind of alchemical practice, or malpractice if you will.

And as a return to zero, a looping back to the beginning, we ended the whole thing with one last thunder, reversing it, this time letting the rumble grow out of the voice and piano. A return to zero, full circle, also in the sense that this duo take pointed back to our very first moment of interplay, on the first piece we recorded together, back in 2007, in Seattle, on the Suddenly, Sound session, on Songline No. 1.

After the intense days in Oakland, and hosted under the warm care of Molly's

motherly cuisine, Andreas and I took off from Mount Tiburon and flew back to Copenhagen, where Nis was waiting behind his board, ready to help us tie up loose ends.

Four, twelve, eight, twenty. Open up the opus, re-assemble, dissolve, re-form, integrate. Going back into our very title of these two LPs, “Meridiana: Lines Toward A Non-local Alchemy”, we’ve already tried to give an idea of how we saw the implications of that first word, going global in the sense of seeing those lines set up to connect the poles of our planet, how they formed a curved line, half a circle; but, of course, there’s always that other half, making it come full. And we have touched upon movement, being in play, process, becoming: the lines toward. But we haven’t yet articulated the connection, as we see it, between the first word and the last, connecting the meridians, outer and inner, to the word Alchemy. So as we see the implications of the title, the circular again comes strongly into play: the first word forming a line to the last, but re-connecting back again, and again. Perhaps bringing to mind the well-known symbol of the alchemical process, the serpent Uroboros, biting its own tail, visually indicating the ongoingness, the circular nature of the *opus alchymicum*, sometimes in this context also referred to as the *opus circulatorium*, pointing to the alchemist dissolving and coagulating the elements (fire, water, metal, etc.), again and again, distilling them, refining them, going gentle into that long night.

Aspiring alchemists or not, we are all situated in a certain locality, a time and a place, from where we set out to work. In the following TU will try to tell his side of the work-story, gathering the four texts, sitting with the lines, the lines:

Sitting here, on something called Mount Tiburon, in Tiburon, Marin County, California, about a 40-minute drive (on a good day) from central San Francisco and the gallery, sitting here with Molly, having been with SK those days in the studio in Oakland, having recorded this stuff with Norman at the wheels, SK being back in Denmark, taking things further with Nis and Nis, and we’re beginning to look into the co-writing of the liner notes, reading up again also on what David Bohm and his colleagues have to say about non-locality, finding pages, suitable quotes, when Molly comes into the house one early afternoon, saying: “Come and see.” And I go with her outside the house, and outside our garage door in the middle of the street there’s suddenly appeared a large cross (or an x) painted in white, a bit like those crosses, to be seen from far up, made for helicopters for their proper place to land. And Molly says: “Look in the middle of the cross.” And there’s a small, coin-like circular piece of metal in there. And something is inscribed in the metal. Getting close enough to read it, I kneel down on the street. There’s a circular inscription. It reads: “Meridian Surveying Control”.

So here we are, sort of surveying (no control) what went into the process of the four, the twelve, the eight, the twenty, the parts, the wholeness of local and non-local. First, maybe: the background of touring together in Denmark, behind

the two CDs, hours on the road, talking Deleuze and Spinoza, not knowing what a body can do, staying with SK and Naya, the four of us, SK bringing back great teas from China, sharing strokes of table tennis, thoughts on tai-chi. Later meeting and playing with Theresa Wong, realizing the need, maybe the urgency, of there being a female voice, amidst the four, the four voices of our texts.

Starting out then, as mentioned, with the twenty lines of Ancestor Lü, also taking the same number from available (English) translations of Sun Bu'er, Spinoza and Deleuze, making eighty lines. Sitting with them, getting to know them, to get inside. After a while Molly helped to break them open, break them down, into a randomized form (from a web page called Cut Up Machine that we had used before), making up twelve wider verse shapes, still twenty lines in length, and eight narrower ones. Sitting then with those, to get the feel of the overall textual flavors, now broken up, made more singular, but also to see if some interesting figurations would show up (in such a cut up, so-called random way). It didn't really.

Again a while, and it was time: getting down to write the actual lines. In other words, to let some unknown shapes come forth, if they would, to recompose out of the words available, still resonating with what you might call the harmonics of the root lines, the eighty of different length. How many words, altogether? Molly says 358. Those and only those.

And Molly made a kind of checklist that I tried to memorize, internalize. Long columns of those 358. And I would fall astray, coming up with a word that I thought was pretty nice, kind of fitting; and of course it wasn't on the list. Was there a near-word? Not really. Try again, let it soak.

And again, after a while there were twenty, twelve of a certain shape, eight of another, given here below, in the very order they were written:

and if,
and if a body,
as a set of lines, of
particles, of passions,
philosophy, the
recomposed elements
of Nothing,
and if, everywhere
the spirit of
Without, the question
again,
of particles,
of planes, these longitudes
of if, of
reality preceding
the ultimate,
respond, respond,
and how this radiant
Nature
requires a

and again
these islands
of speed, geogra-
phy, the mind
Coming to a point
of speechless
thunder, Sweet
clouds of breath
coursing
through thought,
Socrates,
Socrates, not he,
no holding,
no origin, yet
the passions
structure the laws
of determined
Therefore,
its summit frozen,
and

or
you
can get into
the always open,
listen to its
Coming, breath
already there,
Settle,
listen to the
Myriad
spontaneously
Gather into
the now
of no-action,
the gentle latitudes
of Yin, holding
mountain, holding
movement to
the fire,
Everywhere

only
to get stuck
on the terrace
of method,
the map
of planes, of
polar forgetting,
seeking
the short terms,
attached
to the already,
holding on
to the force of
latitudes,
to the mechanism
of motion, to
the way
of Spinoza,
drunk
on substance

and
what
will happen
When
the anonymous
comes into
the corporeal, the
real Nothing,
this living moment,
where
Nature crystallizes
into the point
between
heaven and
heart,
this moment,
before
being, before
spirit,
before

already
the affects
of
the preceding
are firing into the
apertures
of the passions,
alternating
between
stuck frozen
elixir
of Yin and
animal breath,
only to force
its way into
the states
of the already
existing, according
to the laws
of quiet forgetting

so,
to understand,
through one's open
experience,
what unites
fire and water,
what happens
When water is in
the fire, and so on,
what happens
When, through
living, living
crystallizes
into
particles of light,
by which
we are taught
another way of
the heart, indeed
the human

and
one Enters
the energy, and
one Enters again
each moment, there
to listen
to the quiet
Middle, the
unformed, open, now
to assemble into
another order, yet
elements of the same
immanence, a
pairing of lines
that we come to call
longitudes and
latitudes, same thing
whether geography
or
body being

now,
to consider
the clouds of
caressing
change, as this day
comes into
its full,
the idea of a body
altered, the social
recomposed,
listen,
as you were being taught,
treat it gentle,
the sounds
will sound unlike
anything Before,
origin returns to fire,
extension set free,
slowness
teaches

and
going into
Spinoza,
in what he
(or we) will call
God sive Nature, and
how we can come
to understand
what goes on
under all these terms,
body, lines, the affects
and so on, not
only as functions
of thought, of extension,
as appetites for terms,
but in the full force
of living relations, you and I
together, alone,
being this
whole, existing and not

but
not forgetting
breath, the way
it functions, awareness
of its movement,
clearly experience each
Coming, going,
naturally alternating,
now holding, careful
according to one's capacity,
at rest, be
the between,
speed already altered,
Sweet slowness
become vital
spirit,
immanence of yang
will emit, spontaneously,
clouds of
mountain dew

and
now, before
going back into
the Nourishing latitudes
of Nothing,
we remain
for another moment
with the laws of
Yin and yang, with
the appetites and apertures
in Spinoza, and
the lines between them,
to understand the connection,
if any,
and to listen, again,
to the stringless
sound
of
all
Myriad things...

and
to be
there,
open,
not
just
in
mind,
but
in
terms
of
body,
of
breath,
Coming

together

and
not
holding
on
to
the already,
for
a moment
being
free
of
time,
frozen
particles
of
the same

and
to come,
with
all
your
body,
into
the pairing
of
these
lines,
in
Sweet
awareness,
of
each
movement,
its
energy,
slowness,
speed

and
again,
acting
on
existing
geography,
to change
the time
elements,
settle
into
what
happens,
respond
to
the call

of
this
moment

and,
not
holding
one's
breath,
Coming
to
terms
with
what
is
there,
now,
the variable
longitudes,
latitudes
of
place,
no
set
relations

and
alternating
between
an already
existing
structure
and
what
the moment
teaches,
Having
lines
come
together
Nourishing
this

between

and
to Gather,
from
the always
acting
Nothing,
another
order
of
lines,
of
latitudes
altered,
the unformed

to become
the radiant
recomposed

and,
again,
to Settle
into
the heart
of
living
sound,
listen,

how
the energy
of
the elements
comes
together,

to Be
as
the sound
of
Everywhere

A word or two about connectedness, relations, interplay in the relation to the above. Firstly, these twenty pieces come out of the juices or the soup – thrown into the blender and churned – of the root texts. Which means they retain that relationship ongoingly, through the sides, through the approaches of the LPs. And also, if there's the slightest merit in their appearance, it's due to the root texts, and the process of going back and forth, intuitively or more semantically, into where such texts, combined, may lead one. Secondly, these cut ups, these permutations, may perhaps also be best understood as being in play between themselves, not as singularities, a sum of twelve, of eight, of twenty, more like a mesh of possibilities, to see what may happen, for all of us, if we at least try to integrate, gently, peacefully, these different cultural ways, local, non-local.

Timelines, flightlines, points of place. Where are we? Getting maybe toward the end of these already too long notes. Maybe it's more than enough. Still, if there's a field that could still require some final lines, some quotes, it would be about the last two words right above, local and non-local. Getting from the titleline's Meridiana to the non-local of Alchemy. Getting from the pretty clear articulations of a longitude, a latitude, their crossing, that point in space, on earth, that place, say, the gallery, our point of departure, 122.40897 and 37.78966, that locality. Pretty precise, it seems. And yet, as we begin to hone in on that point, the very where of it, it begins to get a little fuzzy. Is it that part or that part of the building? That wall, that chair, as we stand up right there, the left foot or the right foot, or in between? As we get closer into micro space, it seems to get trickier; as we get into the quantum fields, it seems to get very tricky, locality begins to crumble, when and where begin to spread out, maybe multiply.

Maybe we need some help with that (it has been said that if you're not shocked by quantum physics, you simply don't understand it),¹³ and we may go here to Timothy S. Murphy, whose interesting essay entitled "Quantum Ontology" may send us on the way, linking Deleuze to the fairly contemporary fields of quantum physics, our own Niels Bohr and onwards:

In order to follow Deleuze's lines of flight, one must move onto the terrain that his work has defined and engage with the tradition that he has created for himself, a tradition that intersects phenomenology at only a few points. Rather, Deleuze's work finds its antecedents in materialist and rationalist philosophy, primarily Spinoza and Nietzsche. On the contemporary scene, his work resonates not so much with the human sciences as with the physical sciences. Manuel De Landa has shown the important connections that link Deleuze to recent work in cybernetics and information theory, while Brian Massumi has demonstrated the lines of flight that link Deleuze's work to the biochemical and thermodynamic work of Ilya Prigogine, one of the primary theorists of complex dissipative systems or "chaos"; Prigogine has named Deleuze one of the contemporary thinkers in whom he has "found inspiration" for his work on self-organizing complex systems, such as liv-

ing organisms. If this “extension of the conditions of the problem” is necessary to reveal the full scope of Deleuze’s work, then the most important task that remains in this area is to link Deleuze’s thought to contemporary work in physics.¹⁴

Since Murphy in the last lines brings up the name of Ilya Prigogine, it could perhaps serve us here to see a couple of sentences from Prigogine himself, concerning the wheres and the whens above (“a point replaced by an ensemble of points ...”):

Probably the most fascinating aspect involved in the transition from dynamics to thermodynamics is the deep change in the structure of space-time which the introduction of irreversibility requires on the microscopic level. Irreversibility leads to a well-defined form of *non-locality* in which a point is replaced by an ensemble of points according to a new space-time geometry determined by the inclusion of the privileged arrow of time.¹⁵

This Prigogine quote, as you can see below, comes from a weighty collection of writings and reflections called “Quantum Implications”, subtitled “Essays in honour of David Bohm”, to whom we would turn shortly, but before that insert a few more lines, hearing from different voices, getting different angles, starting out with a second fragment from Timothy Murphy, coming almost right after the one above, where he connects Deleuze challenging phenomenology with the ways some recent physicists have tried to articulate state of affairs, attempting “to go beyond Bohr’s principle of wave-particle complementarity”:

Among the physical sciences, physics is the most abstract discourse that claims material reference for its statements, even though the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum physics has restored the hegemony of representational mediation and post-Kantian phenomenality that physics had long ignored. That hegemony has been challenged in much the same way that Deleuze has implicitly challenged phenomenology. A number of contemporary physicists, including Roger Penrose, J. S. Bell, and David Bohm, have attempted to formulate a consistent and useful method of treating quantum mechanical events as actual occurrences rather than as probabilities that fulfill formal equations (and nothing else); chief among these was the late David Bohm, who made a concerted effort to formulate not only a new method of treating quantum equations but also a realist ontological framework into which to contextualize the mathematics. His attempts to go beyond Bohr’s principle of wave-particle complementarity to found new models for thought in physics finds its relay in Deleuze’s attempt to create new images for philosophical thought; an articulation of the two produces an ontological mechanics, not of static being but dynamic becoming.¹⁶

Before mentioning Bohm we see that Murphy brings up the names of Penrose and Bell, so maybe we can include a few lines from both of them, Roger Penrose first, in the book he has called “Shadows of the Mind”, where in a late page, dealing with twistor theory (and where EPR is shorthand for Einstein, Podolsky, Rosen), Penrose says:

[The] twistor theory ... provides a non-local description of space-time, where entire light rays are represented as single points. It is this space-time non-locality that relates it to the quantum non-locality of EPR situations.¹⁷

Also in the good collection of essays cited above, with Prigogine, we find these lines from Penrose:

Quantum reduction must be a non-local process, and the hope is that this non-locality can be matched with the non-locality involved in the gravitational entropy concept.¹⁸

Then a couple of sentences from J.S. Bell, taken from his own book, already with a nice title, “Speakable and Unspeakable in Quantum Mechanics”, and ending with that core question:

Suppose that we are finally obliged to accept the existence of these correlations at long range, and the gross non-locality of nature in the sense of this analysis. Can we then signal faster than light?¹⁹

What you get from J.S. Bell himself, his language, the tonality of his writing, is something perhaps a little softer, cautious, shaped perhaps like the question above – unlike Nick Herbert, who in the book “Quantum Reality” doesn’t seem to spare the horses:

Bell’s theorem ... says that *reality must be non-local*. “Non-local” means ... that the atom’s measured attributes are determined not just by events happening at the actual measurement site but by events arbitrarily distant, including events outside the light cone ... Bell’s theorem is a mathematical proof, not a conjecture or supposition ... Bell does not merely permit or suggest that reality is non-local; he actually proves it. ...²⁰

A universe that displays *local phenomena* built upon a *non-local reality* is the only sort of world consistent with known facts and Bell’s proof.²¹

So much for Reality (and what it must be). If now we go to David Bohm, we may begin by saying that the covers of our LPs are a bit inspired also by what Bohm has to say right below, in the first quote, dealing with the experience of a moment in time, with a “now”, that (just as our precise location, in the gallery, would begin to be a little ambiguous, fuzzy) turns up as “never completely localizable ...

determined only by the broader context in which they are embedded”.

Nice also to see Alfred North Whitehead mentioned there in the beginning, his “suggestion of starting with actual occasions”:

... I think that Whitehead’s suggestion of starting with actual occasions having the possibility of a complex inner structure is relevant. But now we add that the relationships of these actual occasions have to have the kind of ambiguity that is characteristic of the quantum theory. In order to emphasize this feature, I suggest that we use the term *moment* (referring here to our actual experience of the moment “now” as never completely localizable in relationship to other moments). ... The extension and duration of these [ambiguous (and overlapping)] moments is in general determined only in some broader context in which they are embedded. In the particular domain covered by the quantum theory, these features will depend on the quantum-mechanical wave function. And so we see that they are already an implicate order (in which each moment is subject to a certain lack of precise localizability over a region in which the wave function is appreciable).²²

And again:

I would be quite ready to relinquish locality; I think it’s an arbitrary assumption. I mean in the last few hundred years it has been given tremendous weight. If you went back 1000 or 2000 years, almost everybody was thinking non-locally.²³

You may have to be banged on the head for 200 or 300 years before you’ll change your ideas. For example, I think non-locality was obvious 50 years ago, but now only a very few physicists realize it’s there. If they’d get banged on the head for another 50 years maybe more will realize it’s there.²⁴

To sum up, then, the quantum potential is capable of constituting a non-local connection, depending directly on the state of the whole in a way that is not reducible to a preassigned relationship among the parts.²⁵

And so, again and finally, here we are, “depending directly on the state of the whole”. Still, this needs to be said: that we dedicate these four sides to four friends who have been deeply part of this project, even if at a distance. We think of Anne & Tony, mentioned above, cherished by so many, their renowned hospitality at the gallery, always open to projects that in bygone days would be called “far out”. And Theresa Wong, also already mentioned above, was from the early days of the present work one of the inspirations, giving us direction, sending us off. And Ib Skovgaard, dear old friend, who had linked us up before our first CD together, Ib, avid bicycle rider, commentator on what the

body can do in the arts of bicycle racing, the speeds, the slownesses, and also that central figure in the fields of Danish jazz music activities, untiring broadcaster, editor, reviewer, critic.

And since we started these notes with paying our respects to a great poet, we might well, still in the *opus circulatorium*, end that way also, taking a fragment of a speech, delivered October 22, 1960, by the great Paul Celan:

From here, thus starting from the “accommodating,” but also in the light of utopia, let me now undertake some topos research:

I am searching for the region from which Reinhold Lenz and Karl Emil Franzos, whom I met on the way here and in Georg Büchner, come. As I am back where I started from, I am also searching for the place of my origin.

I am searching for all of this with a no doubt very imprecise because fidgety finger on the map—a child’s map, I have to confess.

None of these places can be found, they do not exist, but I know where, especially now, they should be, and ... I find something!

Ladies and gentlemen, I find something that consoles me a little for having in your presence taken this impossible route, this route of the impossible.

I find what connects and leads, like the poem, to an encounter.

I find something—like language—immaterial, yet terrestrial, something circular that returns to itself across both poles while—cheerfully—even crossing the tropics: I find ... a *meridian*.²⁶

— SKTU, September 2014

Notes

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4. Ibid. (p. 155-156).
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6. Ibid. (p. 28).
7. Ibid. (p. 37).
8. Ibid. (p. 45).
9. Ibid. (p. 48).
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Side 1 – First Approach (17:53)
Side 2 – Second Approach (15:56)
Side 3 – Third Approach (13:00)
Side 4 – Fourth Approach (17:42)

Texts by Torben Ulrich
Compositions by Søren Kjærgaard

Torben Ulrich
Voice, ball bearings, marble rolls, hose horn, plunger, bag of tricks, etc.

Søren Kjærgaard
Piano, prepared piano, organ, keyboards, digital processing, percussion, etc.

Messerkvartetten
Andrea Rebekka Alsted, violin
John Chang, violin
Katarzyna Bugala, viola
Therese Åstrand Radev, cello

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Produced by Søren Kjærgaard, Torben Ulrich & Molly Martin

Liner notes by Torben Ulrich and Søren Kjærgaard, edited by Molly Martin

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Alphabet, Peaceful, Diminished: 29 Proposals from the Towers of Babble – (ILK167CD) – 2010

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