

The following text is made up of questions and quotations. The quotations are some from the writings of others and some from my own writings. (That from Christian Wolff is from his article "New and Electronic Music," copyright 1958 by the Audience Press, and reprinted by permission from Audience, Volume V, Number 3, Summer 1958.) The order and quantity of the quotations were given by chance operations. No performance timing was composed. Nevertheless, I always prescribe one before delivering this lecture, sometimes adding by chance operations indications of when, in the course of the performance, I am obliged to light a cigarette.

III. Communication

NICHI NICHI KORE KO NICHI: EVERY DAY IS A BEAUTIFUL DAY

What if I ask thirty-two questions?

What if I stop asking now and then?

Will that make things clear?

Is communication something made clear?

What is communication?

Music, what does it communicate?

Is what's clear to me clear to you?

Is music just sounds?

Then what does it communicate?

Is a truck passing by music?

If I can see it, do I have to hear it too?

If I don't hear it, does it still communicate?

If while I see it I can't hear it, but hear something else, say an egg-beater, because I'm inside looking out, does the truck communicate or the egg-beater, which communicates?

Which is more musical, a truck passing by a factory or a truck passing by a music school?

Are the people inside the school musical and the ones outside unmusical?

What if the ones inside can't hear very well, would that change my question?

Do you know what I mean when I say inside the school?

Are sounds just sounds or are they Beethoven?

People aren't sounds, are they?

Is there such a thing as silence?

Even if I get away from people, do I still have to listen to something?

Say I'm off in the woods, do I have to listen to a stream babbling?

Is there always something to hear, never any peace and quiet?

If my head is full of harmony, melody, and rhythm, what happens to
me when the telephone rings, to my piece and quiet, I mean?

And if it was European harmony, melody, and rhythm in my head, what has happened
to the history of, say, Javanese music, with respect, that is to say, to my head?

Are we getting anywhere asking questions?

Where are we going?

Is this the twenty-eighth question?

Are there any important questions?

"How do you need to cautiously proceed in dualistic terms?"

Do I have two more questions?

And, now, do I have none?

Now that I've asked thirty-two questions, can I ask forty-four more?

I can, but may I?

Why must I go on asking questions?

Is there any reason in asking why?

Would I ask why if questions were not words but were sounds?

If words are sounds, are they musical or are they just noises?

If sounds are noises but not words, are they meaningful?

Are they musical?

Say there are two sounds and two people and one of each is beautiful,
is there between all four any communication?

And if there are rules, who made them, I ask you?

Does it begin somewhere, I mean, and if so, where does it stop?

What will happen to me or to you if we have to be somewhere where beauty isn't?

I ask you, sometime, too, sounds happening in time, what will happen to our experience
of hearing, yours, mine, our ears, hearing, what will happen if sounds being
beautiful stop sometime and the only sounds to hear are not beautiful to hear
but are ugly, what will happen to us?

Would we ever be able to get so that we thought the ugly sounds were beautiful?

If we drop beauty, what have we got?

Have we got truth?

Have we got religion?
 Do we have a mythology?
 Would we know what to do with one if we had one?
 Have we got a way to make money?
 And if money is made, will it be spent on music?
 If Russia spends sixty million for the Brussels Fair, lots of it for music and dance, and
 America spends one-tenth of that, six million about, does that mean that one out of
 ten Americans is as musical and kinesthetic as all the Russians put together?
 If we drop money, what have we got?
 Since we haven't yet dropped truth, where shall we go looking for it?
 Didn't we say we weren't going, or did we just ask where we were going?
 If we didn't say we weren't going, why didn't we?
 If we had any sense in our heads, wouldn't we know the truth instead
 of going around looking for it?
 How otherwise would we, as they say, be able to drink a glass of water?
 We know, don't we, everybody else's religion, mythology, and philosophy
 and metaphysics backwards and forwards, so what need would we have
 for one of our own if we had one, but we don't, do we?
 But music, do we have any music?
 Wouldn't it be better to just drop music too?
 Then what would we have?
 Jazz?
 What's left?
 Do you mean to say it's a purposeless play?
 Is that what it is when you get up and hear the first sound of each day?
 Is it possible that I could go on monotonously asking questions forever?
 Would I have to know how many questions I was going to ask?
 Would I have to know how to count in order to ask questions?
 Do I have to know when to stop?
 Is this the one chance we have to be alive and ask a question?
 How long will we be able to be alive?

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

IS NOT THE MUSIC OF THE FUTURE

NOR THE MUSIC OF THE PAST

BUT SIMPLY

MUSIC PRESENT WITH US:

THIS MOMENT,

NOW,

THIS NOW MOMENT.

Something remarkable has happened: I was asking questions; now I'm quoting from a lecture I gave years ago. Of course I will ask some more questions later on, but not now: I have quoting to do.

THAT MOMENT IS ALWAYS CHANGING.

SPEAKING.)

(I WAS SILENT: NOW I AM
HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY TELL WHAT CONTEMPORARY

MUSIC IS, SINCE NOW WE'RE NOT LISTENING TO IT, WE'RE LISTENING TO A LECTURE ABOUT IT. AND THAT ISN'T IT. THIS IS "TONGUE-WAGGING." REMOVED AS WE ARE THIS MOMENT FROM CONTEMPORARY MUSIC (WE ARE ONLY THINKING ABOUT IT) EACH ONE OF US IS THINKING HIS OWN THOUGHTS, HIS OWN EXPERIENCE, AND EACH EXPERIENCE IS DIFFERENT AND EACH EXPERIENCE IS CHANGING AND WHILE WE ARE THINKING I AM TALKING AND CONTEMPORARY MUSIC IS CHANGING.

LIKE LIFE IT CHANGES.

IF IT WERE NOT CHANGING

IT WOULD BE DEAD, AND, OF COURSE, FOR SOME OF US,

SOMETIMES

IT IS DEAD, BUT AT ANY MOMENT IT CHANGES AND IS LIVING AGAIN.

TALKING FOR A MOMENT ABOUT CONTEMPORARY MILK:

AT ROOM TEMPERATURE IT IS CHANGING, GOES SOUR ETC., AND

THEN A NEW BOTTLE ETC., UNLESS BY SEPARATING IT FROM ITS CHANGING

BY POWDERING IT OR REFRIGERATION

(WHICH IS A WAY OF SLOWING

DOWN ITS LIVELINESS)

(THAT IS TO SAY MUSEUMS AND ACADEMIES ARE

WAYS OF PRESERVING)

WE TEMPORARILY SEPARATE THINGS FROM LIFE

(FROM CHANGING) BUT AT ANY MOMENT DESTRUCTION MAY COME SUDDENLY

AND THEN WHAT HAPPENS IS FRESHER

WHEN WE SEPARATE MUSIC FROM LIFE WHAT WE GET IS ART (A COMPENDIUM OF MASTERPIECES). WITH CONTEMPORARY MUSIC, WHEN IT IS ACTUALLY

CONTEMPORARY, WE HAVE NO TIME TO MAKE THAT SEPARATION (WHICH PROTECTS US FROM LIVING), AND SO

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC IS

NOT SO MUCH ART AS IT IS LIFE AND ANY ONE MAKING IT NO SOONER

FINISHES ONE OF IT THAN HE BEGINS MAKING ANOTHER JUST AS PEOPLE

KEEP ON WASHING DISHES, BRUSHING THEIR TEETH, GETTING SLEEPY,

AND SO ON.

VERY FREQUENTLY NO ONE KNOWS THAT

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC IS OR COULD BE ART.

HE SIMPLY THINKS IT IS

IRRITATING.

IRRITATING ONE WAY OR ANOTHER,

THAT IS TO SAY KEEPING US FROM OSSIFYING.

IS OR COULD BE A WAY OF LIVING.

SEVERAL STORIES OCCUR TO ME THAT I SHOULD LIKE TO INTERPOLATE

(IN THE SAME WAY, BY THE WAY, THAT WHILE I AM WRITING THIS THAT

I AM NOW TALKING, THE TELEPHONE KEEPS RINGING AND THEN CONTEMPORARY

CONVERSATION TAKES PLACE INSTEAD OF THIS PARTICULAR WAY OF

PREPARING A LECTURE).

THE FIRST STORY

IS FROM THE *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

HIS LIVING AND TALKING

HAD IMPRESSED A MUSICIAN WHO BEGAN TO THINK THAT HE SHOULD GIVE

UP MUSIC AND BECOME A DISCIPLE OF RAMAKRISHNA.

BUT WHEN HE PROPOSED

THIS, RAMAKRISHNA SAID, BY NO MEANS.

REMAIN

A MUSICIAN: MUSIC IS A MEANS OF RAPID TRANSPORTATION.

RAPID TRANSPORTATION, THAT IS, TO LIFE "EVERLASTING,"

THAT IS TO SAY, LIFE, PERIOD.

ANOTHER STORY IS THAT

WHEN I WAS FIRST AWARE THAT I WAS TO GIVE THIS TALK I CONSULTED

THE *Book of Changes* AND OBTAINED BY TOSSING COINS THE HEXAGRAM

TO INFLUENCE, TO STIMULATE.

SIX AT THE TOP MEANS THE

INFLUENCE SHOWS ITSELF IN THE JAWS, CHEEKS, AND TONGUE AND THE

COMMENTARY SAYS: THE MOST SUPERFICIAL WAY OF TRYING TO INFLUENCE

OTHERS IS THROUGH TALK THAT HAS NOTHING REAL BEHIND IT. THE

INFLUENCE PRODUCED BY SUCH MERE TONGUE-WAGGING MUST NECESSARILY

REMAIN INSIGNIFICANT.

HOWEVER, I FIND MYSELF IN

DISAGREEMENT WITH THE COMMENTARY.

I SEE NO NECESSITY TO PUT

SOMETHING "REAL" BEHIND TONGUE-WAGGING.

I DO NOT SEE THAT

TONGUE-WAGGING IS ANY MORE SIGNIFICANT OR INSIGNIFICANT THAN ANY

THING ELSE.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IT IS SIMPLY A MATTER OF

GOING ON TALKING, WHICH IS NEITHER SIGNIFICANT NOR INSIGNIFICANT,

NOR GOOD NOR BAD, BUT SIMPLY HAPPENING TO BE THE WAY I AM RIGHT

NOW LIVING WHICH IS GIVING A LECTURE IN ILLINOIS WHICH BRINGS US

BACK TO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC.

BUT TAKING OFF

AGAIN AND RETURNING TO THE *Book of Changes*: THE HEXAGRAM ON GRACE

(WHICH IS THE HEXAGRAM ON ART)

DISCUSSES THE EFFECT OF A WORK

OF ART

AS THOUGH IT WERE A LIGHT SHINING ON TOP OF A

MOUNTAIN PENETRATING TO A CERTAIN EXTENT THE SURROUNDING DARKNESS.

THAT IS TO SAY, ART IS DESCRIBED AS BEING ILLUMINATING,

AND THE REST OF LIFE AS BEING DARK.

NATURALLY I DISAGREE.

IF THERE WERE A PART OF LIFE DARK ENOUGH TO KEEP OUT OF IT A LIGHT
FROM ART, I WOULD WANT TO BE IN THAT DARKNESS, FUMBLING AROUND IF
NECESSARY, BUT ALIVE AND I RATHER THINK THAT CONTEMPORARY
MUSIC WOULD BE THERE IN THE DARK TOO, BUMPING INTO THINGS, KNOCKING
OTHERS OVER AND IN GENERAL ADDING TO THE DISORDER THAT CHARACTERIZES
LIFE (IF IT IS OPPOSED TO ART) RATHER THAN ADDING TO THE
ORDER AND STABILIZED TRUTH BEAUTY AND POWER THAT CHARACTERIZE
A MASTERPIECE (IF IT IS OPPOSED TO LIFE). AND IS IT?

YES

IT IS. MASTERPIECES AND GENIUSES GO TOGETHER AND WHEN BY
RUNNING FROM ONE TO THE OTHER WE MAKE LIFE SAFER THAN IT
ACTUALLY IS WE'RE APT NEVER TO KNOW THE DANGERS OF
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC OR EVEN TO BE ABLE TO DRINK
A GLASS OF WATER. TO HAVE SOMETHING BE A MASTERPIECE YOU
HAVE TO HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO CLASSIFY IT AND MAKE IT CLASSICAL.

BUT WITH CONTEMPORARY MUSIC THERE IS NO TIME TO DO
ANYTHING LIKE CLASSIFYING. ALL YOU CAN DO IS SUDDENLY LISTEN
IN THE SAME WAY THAT WHEN YOU CATCH COLD ALL
YOU CAN DO IS SUDDENLY SNEEZE. UNFORTUNATELY

EUROPEAN THINKING HAS BROUGHT IT ABOUT THAT ACTUAL THINGS THAT
HAPPEN SUCH AS SUDDENLY LISTENING OR SUDDENLY SNEEZING ARE NOT
CONSIDERED PROFOUND. IN THE COURSE OF A

LECTURE LAST WINTER AT COLUMBIA, SUZUKI SAID THAT THERE WAS A
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ORIENTAL THINKING AND EUROPEAN THINKING,
THAT IN EUROPEAN THINKING THINGS ARE SEEN AS CAUSING ONE
ANOTHER AND HAVING EFFECTS, WHEREAS IN ORIENTAL THINKING

THIS SEEING OF CAUSE AND EFFECT IS NOT EMPHASIZED
BUT INSTEAD ONE MAKES AN IDENTIFICATION WITH WHAT IS HERE AND
NOW. HE THEN SPOKE OF TWO QUALITIES: UNIMPEDEDNESS

AND INTERPENETRATION. NOW THIS

UNIMPEDEDNESS IS SEEING THAT IN ALL OF SPACE EACH THING AND
EACH HUMAN BEING IS AT THE CENTER AND FURTHERMORE THAT EACH
ONE BEING AT THE CENTER IS THE MOST HONORED
ONE OF ALL. INTERPENETRATION MEANS THAT EACH ONE OF THESE
MOST HONORED ONES OF ALL IS MOVING OUT IN ALL DIRECTIONS
PENETRATING AND BEING PENETRATED BY EVERY OTHER ONE NO MATTER
WHAT THE TIME OR WHAT THE SPACE. SO THAT WHEN ONE SAYS

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THAT THERE IS NO CAUSE AND EFFECT, WHAT IS MEANT IS THAT THERE
ARE AN INCALCULABLE INFINITY OF CAUSES AND EFFECTS, THAT IN FACT
EACH AND EVERY THING IN ALL OF TIME AND SPACE IS RELATED TO
EACH AND EVERY OTHER THING IN ALL OF TIME AND SPACE. THIS
BEING SO THERE IS NO NEED TO CAUTIOUSLY PROCEED IN DUALISTIC
TERMS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE OR THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE UGLY
OR GOOD AND EVIL BUT RATHER SIMPLY TO WALK ON "NOT WONDERING,"
TO QUOTE MEISTER ECKHART, "AM I RIGHT OR DOING SOMETHING WRONG."

*This is the second Tuesday in September of 1958 and I still have
quite a lot to say: I'm nowhere near the end. I have four questions I must ask.*

If, as we have, we have dropped music, does that mean we have nothing to listen to?
Don't you agree with Kafka when he wrote, "Psychology—never again?"
If you had to put on ten fingers the music you would take with you
if you were going to the North Pole, what would you put?
Is it true there are no questions that are really important?

Here's a little information you may find informative about the information theory:

FOURIER ANALYSIS ALLOWS A FUNCTION OF TIME (OR ANY OTHER INDEPENDENT VARIABLE) TO BE EXPRESSED IN TERMS OF PERIODIC (FREQUENCY) COMPONENTS. THE FREQUENCY COMPONENTS ARE OVER-ALL PROPERTIES OF THE ENTIRE SIGNAL. BY MEANS OF A FOURIER ANALYSIS ONE CAN EXPRESS THE VALUE OF A SIGNAL AT ANY POINT IN TERMS OF THE OVER-ALL FREQUENCY PROPERTIES OF THE SIGNAL; OR VICE VERSA, ONE CAN OBTAIN THESE OVER-ALL PROPERTIES FROM THE VALUES OF THE SIGNAL AT ITS VARIOUS POINTS.

What did I say?

Where is the "should" when they say you should have something to say?

Three. Actually when you drop something, it's still with you, wouldn't you say?

Four. Where would you drop something to get it completely away?

Five. Why do you not do as I do, letting go of each thought as though it were void?

Six. Why do you not do as I do, letting go of each thought as though it were rotten wood?

Why do you not do as I do, letting go of each thought as though it were a piece of stone?

Why do you not do as I do, letting go of each thought as though it were the cold ashes of a
fire long dead, or else just making the slight response suitable to the occasion?

Nine. Do you really think that the discovery that a measurable entity exists, namely, the energy which can measure mechanical, electrical, thermal, or any other kind of physical activity, and can measure potential as well as actual activity, greatly simplifies thinking about physical phenomena?

Do you agree with Boulez when he says what he says?

Are you getting hungry?

Twelve. Why should you (you know more or less what you're going to get)?

Will Boulez be there or did he go away when I wasn't looking?

Why do you suppose the number 12 was given up but the idea of the series wasn't?

Or was it?

And if not, why not?

In the meantime, would you like to hear the very first performance of
Christian Wolff's *For Piano with Preparations*?

What in heaven's name are they going to serve us for dinner, and what happens afterwards?

More music?

Living or dead, that's the big question.

When you get sleepy, do you go to sleep?

Or do you lie awake?

Why do I have to go on asking questions?

Is it the same reason I have to go on writing music?

But it's clear, isn't it, I'm not writing music right now?

Why do they call me a composer, then, if all I do is ask questions?

If one of us says that all twelve tones should be in a row and another says they shouldn't,
which one of us is right?

What if a B flat, as they say, just comes to me?

How can I get it to come to me of itself, not just pop up out of my
memory, taste, and psychology?

How?

Do you know how?

And if I did or somebody else did find a way to let a sound be itself,
would everybody within earshot be able to listen to it?

Why is it so difficult for so many people to listen?

Why do they start talking when there is something to hear?

Do they have their ears not on the sides of their heads but situated inside their mouths

so that when they hear something their first impulse is to start talking?
The situation should be made more normal, don't you think?
Why don't they keep their mouths shut and their ears open?
Are they stupid?
And, if so, why don't they try to hide their stupidity?
Were bad manners acquired when knowledge of music was acquired?
Does being musical make one automatically stupid and unable to listen?
Then don't you think one should put a stop to studying music?
Where are your thinking caps?

WE'RE PASSING THROUGH TIME AND SPACE. OUR EARS ARE IN EXCELLENT CONDITION.

A SOUND IS HIGH OR LOW, SOFT OR LOUD, OF A CERTAIN TIMBRE, LASTS A CERTAIN LENGTH OF TIME,
AND HAS AN ENVELOPE.

Is it high?
Is it low?
Is it in the middle?
Is it soft?
Is it loud?
Are there two?
Are there more than two?
Is it a piano?
Why isn't it?
Was it an airplane?
Is it a noise?
Is it music?
Is it softer than before?
Is it supersonic?
When will it stop?
What's coming?
Is it time?
Is it very short?
Very long?
Just medium?
If I had something to see, would it be theatre?

Is sound enough?
What more do I need?
Don't I get it whether I need it or not?
Is it a sound?
Then, again, is it music?
Is music—the word, I mean—is that a sound?
If it is, is music music?
Is the word “music” music?
Does it communicate anything?
Must it?
If it's high, does it?
If it's low, does it?
If it's in the middle, does it?
If it's soft, does it?
If it's loud, does it?
If it's an interval, does it?
What is an interval?
Is an interval a chord?
Is a chord an aggregate?
Is an aggregate a constellation?
What's a constellation?
How many sounds are there altogether?
One million?
Ten thousand?
Eighty-eight?
Do I have to ask ten more?
Do I?
Why?
Why do I?
Did I decide to ask so many?
Wasn't I taking a risk?
Was I?
Why was I?
Will it never stop?
Why won't it?

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS SILENCE. GET THEE TO AN ANECHOIC CHAMBER AND HEAR THERE THY NERVOUS SYSTEM IN OPERATION AND HEAR THERE THY BLOOD IN CIRCULATION.

I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY AND I AM SAYING IT.

Would it be too much to ask if I asked thirty-three more?

Who's asking?

Is it I who ask?

Don't I know my own mind?

Then why do I ask if I don't know?

Then it's not too much to ask?

Right?

Then, tell me, do you prefer Bach to Beethoven?

And why?

Would you like to hear *Quantitäten* by Bo Nilsson whether it's
performed for the first time or not?

Has any one seen Meister Eckhart lately?

Do you think serious music is serious enough?

Is a seventh chord inappropriate in modern music?

What about fifths and octaves?

What if the seventh chord was not a seventh chord?

Doesn't it seem silly to go on asking questions when there's so much
to do that's really urgent?

But we're halfway through, aren't we?

Shall we buck up?

Are we in agreement that the field of music needs to be enlivened?

Do we disagree?

On what?

Communication?

If I have two sounds, are they related?

If someone is nearer one of them than he is to the second, is he
more related to the first one?

What about sounds that are too far away for us to hear them?

Sounds are just vibrations, isn't that true?

Part of a vast range of vibrations including radio waves, light,
cosmic rays, isn't that true?

Why didn't I mention that before?
Doesn't that stir the imagination?
Shall we praise God from Whom all blessings flow?
Is a sound a blessing?
I repeat, is a sound a blessing?
I repeat, would you like to hear *Quantitäten* by Bo Nilsson whether
it's performed for the first time or not?

The Belgians asked me about the avant-garde in America and this is what I told them.

IN THE UNITED STATES THERE ARE AS MANY WAYS OF WRITING MUSIC AS THERE ARE COMPOSERS. THERE IS ALSO NO AVAILABLE INFORMATION AS TO WHAT IS GOING ON. THERE IS NO MAGAZINE CONCERNED WITH MODERN MUSIC. PUBLISHERS ARE NOT INQUISITIVE. THE SOCIETIES WHICH ACTIVELY EXIST (BROADCAST MUSIC INC., AMERICAN SOCIETY OF COMPOSERS, AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS) ARE CONCERNED WITH ECONOMICS, CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN AN IMPORTANT LAWSUIT. IN NEW YORK CITY, THE LEAGUE OF COMPOSERS AND THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC HAVE FUSED, THE NEW ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING THE CURRENT INTEREST IN CONSOLIDATING THE ACQUISITIONS OF SCHOENBERG AND STRAVINSKY. THIS CIRCLE HAS, NO DOUBT, AN AVANT-GARDE, BUT IT IS A CAUTIOUS ONE, REFUSING RISK. ITS MOST ACCOMPLISHED AND ADVENTUROUS REPRESENTATIVE IS PROBABLY MILTON BABBITT, WHO, IN CERTAIN WORKS, HAS APPLIED SERIAL METHOD TO THE SEVERAL ASPECTS OF SOUND. THE WORKS FOR MAGNETIC TAPE BY LUENING AND USSACHEVSKY, LOUIS AND BEBE BARRON, ARE NOT PROPERLY TERMED AVANT-GARDE, SINCE THEY MAINTAIN CONVENTIONS AND ACCEPTED VALUES. THE YOUNG STUDY WITH NEO-CLASSICISTS, SO THAT THE SPIRIT OF THE AVANT-GARDE, INFECTING THEM, INDUCES A CERTAIN DODECAPHONY. IN THIS SOCIAL DARKNESS, THEREFORE, THE WORK OF EARLE BROWN, MORTON FELDMAN, AND CHRISTIAN WOLFF CONTINUES TO PRESENT A BRILLIANT LIGHT, FOR THE REASON THAT AT THE SEVERAL POINTS OF NOTATION, PERFORMANCE, AND AUDITION, ACTION IS PROVOCATIVE. NONE OF THESE USES SERIAL METHOD. BROWN'S NOTATION IN SPACE EQUAL TO TIME TENDS CURRENTLY TO FINE PRECISION OF DIRECTIVE. WOLFF'S INTRODUCTION IN DURATIONS OF SPLIT AND PARTIAL GRUPETTOS, IN TEMPI THAT OF ZERO, TENDS OPPOSITELY. THE GRAPHS OF FELDMAN GIVE WITHIN LIMITS EXTREME FREEDOM OF ACTION TO THE PERFORMER.

They also—the Belgians, that is—asked me whether the American avant-garde follows the same direction as the European one and this is what I told them:

THE AMERICAN AVANT-GARDE, RECOGNIZING THE PROVOCATIVE CHARACTER OF CERTAIN EUROPEAN WORKS, OF PIERRE BOULEZ, KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN, HENRI POUSSEUR, BO NILSSON, BENGT HAMBRAEUS, HAS IN ITS CONCERTS PRESENTED THEM IN PERFORMANCES, NOTABLY BY DAVID TUDOR, PIANIST. THAT THESE WORKS ARE SERIAL IN METHOD DIMINISHES SOMEWHAT THE INTEREST THEY ENJOIN. BUT THE THOROUGHNESS OF THE METHOD'S APPLICATION BRINGING A SITUATION REMOVED FROM CONVENTIONAL EXPECTATION FREQUENTLY OPENS THE EAR. HOWEVER, THE EUROPEAN WORKS PRESENT A HARMONIOUSNESS, A DRAMA, OR A POETRY WHICH, REFERRING MORE TO THEIR COMPOSERS THAN TO THEIR HEARERS, MOVES IN DIRECTIONS NOT SHARED BY THE AMERICAN ONES. MANY OF THE AMERICAN WORKS ENVISAGE EACH AUDITOR AS CENTRAL, SO THAT THE PHYSICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF A CONCERT DO NOT OPPOSE AUDIENCE TO PERFORMERS BUT DISPOSE THE LATTER AROUND-AMONG THE FORMER, BRINGING A UNIQUE ACOUSTICAL EXPERIENCE TO EACH PAIR OF EARS. ADMITTEDLY, A SITUATION OF THIS COMPLEXITY IS BEYOND CONTROL, YET IT RESEMBLES A LISTENER'S SITUATION BEFORE AND AFTER A CONCERT—DAILY EXPERIENCE, THAT IS. IT APPEARS SUCH A CONTINUUM IS NOT PART OF THE EUROPEAN OBJECTIVE, SINCE IT DISSOLVES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "ART" AND "LIFE." TO THE UNEXPERIENCED, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EUROPEANS AND THE AMERICANS LIES IN THAT THE LATTER INCLUDE MORE SILENCE IN THEIR WORKS. IN THIS VIEW THE MUSIC OF NILSSON APPEARS AS INTERMEDIATE, THAT OF BOULEZ AND OF THE AUTHOR AS IN OPPOSITION. THIS SUPERFICIAL DIFFERENCE IS ALSO PROFOUND. WHEN SILENCE, GENERALLY SPEAKING, IS NOT IN EVIDENCE, THE WILL OF THE COMPOSER IS. INHERENT SILENCE IS EQUIVALENT TO DENIAL OF THE WILL. "TAKING A NAP, I POUND THE RICE." NEVERTHELESS, CONSTANT ACTIVITY MAY OCCUR HAVING NO DOMINANCE OF WILL IN IT. NEITHER AS SYNTAX NOR STRUCTURE, BUT ANALOGOUS TO THE SUM OF NATURE, IT WILL HAVE ARISEN PURPOSELESSLY.

It's getting late, isn't it?

I still have two things to do, so what I want to know is: Would you like to hear

Quantitäten by Bo Nilsson whether it's performed for the first time or not?

I must read a little from an article by Christian Wolff. Here's what he says:

NOTABLE QUALITIES OF THIS MUSIC, WHETHER ELECTRONIC OR NOT, ARE MONOTONY AND THE IRRITATION THAT ACCOMPANIES IT. THE MONOTONY MAY LIE IN SIMPLICITY OR DELICACY, STRENGTH OR COMPLEXITY. COMPLEXITY TENDS TO REACH A POINT OF NEUTRALIZATION: CONTINUOUS CHANGE RESULTS IN A CERTAIN SAMENESS. THE MUSIC HAS A STATIC CHARACTER. IT GOES IN NO PARTICULAR DIRECTION. THERE IS NO NECESSARY CONCERN WITH TIME AS A MEASURE OF DISTANCE FROM A POINT IN THE PAST TO A POINT IN THE FUTURE, WITH LINEAR CONTINUITY ALONE. IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF GETTING ANYWHERE, OF MAKING PROGRESS, OR HAVING COME FROM ANYWHERE IN PARTICULAR, OF TRADITION OR FUTURISM. THERE IS NEITHER NOSTALGIA NOR ANTICIPATION. OFTEN THE STRUCTURE OF A PIECE IS CIRCULAR: THE SUCCESSION OF ITS PARTS IS VARIABLE, AS IN POUSSEUR'S *Exercises de Piano* AND STOCKHAUSEN'S *Klavierstück XI*. IN CAGE'S RECENT WORK THE NOTATION ITSELF CAN BE CIRCULAR, THE SUCCESSION OF NOTES ON A STAVE NOT NECESSARILY INDICATING THEIR SEQUENCE IN TIME, THAT IS, THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY ARE PERFORMED. ONE MAY HAVE TO READ NOTES ON A CIRCLE, IN TWO "VOICES" GOING IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY. AN ASPECT OF TIME DISSOLVES. AND THE EUROPEANS OFTEN VIEW ORGANIZATION AS "GLOBAL," WHEREBY BEGINNINGS AND ENDS ARE NOT POINTS ON A LINE BUT LIMITS OF A PIECE'S MATERIAL (FOR EXAMPLE, PITCH RANGES OR POSSIBLE COMBINATIONS OF TIMBRES) WHICH MAY BE TOUCHED AT ANY TIME DURING THE PIECE. THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PIECE ARE EXPRESSED, NOT AT MOMENTS OF TIME WHICH MARK A SUCCESSION, BUT AS MARGINS OF A SPATIAL PROJECTION OF THE TOTAL SOUND STRUCTURE.

AS FOR THE QUALITY OF IRRITATION, THAT IS A MORE SUBJECTIVE MATTER. ONE MIGHT SAY THAT IT IS AT LEAST PREFERABLE TO SOOTHING, EDIFYING, EXALTING, AND SIMILAR QUALITIES. ITS SOURCE IS, OF COURSE, PRECISELY IN MONOTONY, NOT IN ANY FORMS OF AGGRESSION OR EMPHASIS. IT IS THE IMMOBILITY OF MOTION. AND IT ALONE, PERHAPS, IS TRULY MOVING.

And now I have to read a story from Kwang-Tse and then I'm finished:

Yun Kiang, rambling to the East, having been borne along on a gentle breeze, suddenly encountered Hung Mung, who was rambling about, slapping his buttocks and hopping like a bird. Amazed at the sight, Yun Kiang stood reverentially and said to

the other, "Venerable Sir, who are you? and why are you doing this?" Hung Mung went on slapping his buttocks and hopping like a bird, but replied, "I'm enjoying myself." Yun Kiang said, "I wish to ask you a question." Hung Mung lifted up his head, looked at the stranger, and said, "Pooh!" Yun Kiang, however, continued, "The breath of heaven is out of harmony; the breath of earth is bound up; the six elemental influences do not act in concord; the four seasons do not observe their proper times. Now I wish to blend together the essential qualities of those six influences in order to nourish all living things. How shall I go about it?" Hung Mung slapped his buttocks, hopped about, and shook his head, saying, "I do not know; I do not know!"

Yun Kiang could not pursue his question; but three years afterwards, when again rambling in the East, as he was passing by the wild of Sung, he happened to meet Hung Mung. Delighted with the rencontre, he hastened to him, and said, "Have you forgotten me, O Heaven? Have you forgotten me, O Heaven?" At the same time, he bowed twice with his head to the ground, wishing to receive his instructions. Hung Mung said, "Wandering listlessly about, I know not what I seek; carried on by a wild impulse, I know not where I am going. I wander about in the strange manner which you have seen, and see that nothing proceeds without method and order—what more should I know?" Yun Kiang replied, "I also seem carried on by an aimless influence, and yet people follow me wherever I go. I cannot help their doing so. But now as they thus imitate me, I wish to hear a word from you." The other said, "What disturbs the regular method of Heaven, comes into collision with the nature of things, prevents the accomplishment of the mysterious operation of Heaven, scatters the herds of animals, makes the birds sing at night, is calamitous to vegetation, and disastrous to all insects; all this is owing, I conceive, to the error of governing men." "What then," said Yun Kiang, "shall I do?" "Ah," said the other, "you will only injure them! I will leave you in my dancing way, and return to my place." Yun Kiang rejoined, "It has been difficult to get this meeting with you, O Heaven! I should like to hear from you a word more." Hung Mung said, "Ah! your mind needs to be nourished. Do you only take the position of doing nothing, and things will of themselves become transformed. Neglect your body; cast out from you your power of hearing and sight; forget what you have in common with things; cultivate a grand similarity with the chaos of the plastic ether; unloose your mind; set your spirit free; be still as if you had no soul. Of all the multitude of things, every one returns to its root, and does not know that it is doing so. They all are as in the state of chaos, and during all their existence they do not leave it. If they knew that they were returning to their root, they would be consciously leaving it. They do not ask its name; they do not seek to spy out their nature; and thus it is that things come to life of themselves."

Yun Kiang said, "Heaven, you have conferred on me the knowledge of your operation and revealed to me the mystery of it. All my life I have been seeking for it, and now I have obtained it." He then bowed twice with his head to the ground, arose, took his leave, and walked away.

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One day when I was across the hall visiting Sonya Sekula, I noticed that she was painting left-handed. I said, "Sonya, aren't you right-handed?" She said, "Yes, but I might lose the use of my right hand, and so I'm practicing using my left." I laughed and said, "What if you lose the use of both hands?" She was busy painting and didn't bother to reply. Next day when I visited her, she was sitting on the floor, painting with difficulty, for she was holding the brush between two toes of her left foot.

Morris Graves introduced Xenia and me to a miniature island in Puget Sound at Deception Pass. To get there we traveled from Seattle about seventy-five miles north and west to Anacortes Island, then south to the Pass, where we parked. We walked along a rocky beach and then across a sandy stretch that was passable only at low tide to another island, continuing through some luxuriant woods up a hill where now and then we had views of the surrounding waters and distant islands, until finally we came to a small footbridge that led to our destination—an island no larger than, say, a modest home. This island was carpeted with flowers and was so situated that all of Deception Pass was visible from it, just as though we were in the best seats of an intimate theatre. While we were lying there on that bed of flowers, some other people came across the footbridge. One of them said to another, "You come all this way and then when you get here there's nothing to see."

A composer friend of mine who spent some time in a mental rehabilitation center was encouraged to do a good deal of bridge playing. After one game, his partner was criticizing his play of an ace on a trick which had already been won. My friend stood up and said, "If you think I came to the loony bin to learn to play bridge, you're crazy."