

PhillyTalks 19 (this link, 26 pages)

ALLEN FISHER / KAREN MAC CORMACK

pre-event respondents: Matt Hart, Marjorie Welish

post-event respondents (for *PT 19* Supplement): Rob Holloway & others

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 17 (2001)

Reading: 6 p.m. E.S.T.

Discussion: 7 p.m. E.S.T.

WEBCAST LIVE from the Kelly Writers House, 3805 Locust Walk, Philadelphia. Participate by emailing a response or question during (or before) the event, or telephone (at caller's expense). Further info, Aaron Levy: adlevy@dept.english.upenn.edu.

MAC CORMACK TO FISHER #1

Wed, 27 Jun 2001 10:04:06

Dear Allen,

I'm wondering if you've revised and/or continued with your "Decoherence and Crowd-Out" of which you sent me a tantalizing glimpse some time ago? – "the quantum physics discussion of the step-like micro and the apparently different macro-experience . . . and the overlapping discussion about consciousness, perception and focus" – (your initial description).

I'm considering in what ways your 'investigation' might relate to my exploration of 'innovative architecture' and how such investigations and explorations inform one's writing practice . . .

Here's something on gravity from the French architect Bernard Cache, along with a section from my ongoing *Implexures*.

I look forward to more "Decoherence and Crowd-Out."

Karen

"We normally think it is gravity that makes us stand upright, and we therefore forget that it is diagonalization that prevents us from falling down. As if we were nothing but a weight. But our everyday actions and reactions take place within frames of support that prevent any evasion." (Bernard Cache, *Earth Moves*, 59)

Thirteen (from *Implexures*)

historical letters 10

"I" is only a convenient term for somebody who has no real being. Virginia Woolf

Following the implied direction of possessions, environment is a room more specific a person. Diane Ward

Description as a partial view – this side of the building visible presents itself as a form of re(a)d. Ruptures in the membranes of circumstances close by, successively overlapping . . . what is interaction? A mutual touching within the same instance. If the fall is 'free' then the trajectory knows no bounds other than contact or its delay.

"Between an empty space or landscape and a still life properly speaking there are certainly many resemblances. But . . . an empty space is distinguished above all by the presence and the composition of objects that are wrapped up in themselves or become their own container." (Deleuze, quoted in Vidler, from *L'Image-temps*, 27)

I enjoy travelling solo. There are problems, but they're not insurmountable. The Italian and Greek men are totally perplexed by single women going around the world & it seems to unnerve them that there are so many.

On Tuesday the Italian government, by a vote of 156-154, vetoed a bill legalizing abortion. It's saddening to say the least.

Athens is more expensive, harsher, more tired in every sense.

BUT, it is GREECE, goddammit it, it's Greece & it's the beginning of my trip & I'm thoroughly enjoying myself. love, love, love (Saturday 12 June 77 Athens)

“The medieval mason combined the skill of the modern contractor, engineer, and designer. The separation of the art of design from the knowledge of building is a post-medieval development. The design and construction of medieval buildings were rooted in the mason’s craft.” (*Medieval Crafts/ a book of days*, 24)

“A strange effeminate age when men strive to imitate women in their apparell ... on the other side, women would strive to be like men, viz., when they rode on horseback or in coaches wear plush caps like monteros, either full of ribbons or feathers, long periwigs which men used to wear, and riding coats of a red colour all bedaubed with lace which they call vests, and this habit was chiefly used by the ladies and maids of honour belonging to the Queen, brought in fashion about anno 1663, which they wear at this time at their being in Oxon.” (*The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, 1663*, 153 [The Literary Companion to Fashion])

To write a work structured not as an architectural blueprint but as if exploring an architectural surround (known or unknown?) length of a line or sentence concurrent with number of steps toward a wall, punctuation as door or window perhaps . . . to write as one would explore a city, so a map would produce routes of numerous lines of a poem or the range of sounds heard in a given setting.

Weight of snow becomes icicles in a temperature change. Evergreens deeper colour against winter morning. How temperature affects sound. Deer in the woods the train track interrupts. How a man looks when sleeping on his birthday morning. Seeming touch of darkness against dermis but ether sustains both our day and night. The sealing wax of earlier centuries a brittle membrane informed by touch, different from callous. “Public Guidance Systems” for orderly queues in the temporary train station adjacent to the one being replaced, now detonated.

Perhaps the summer when tent dresses fluttered in lime and hot pink swirls if there was a breeze I watched her sketching the sailboats and painted a single butterfly on my own cheek. The lobby represented “inside” surrounded by floor to ceiling plate glass windows (no curtains) with the single option of door. Waiting for grandmother’s social exchange to give way to a girl’s anticipation of lunch the delivery man appeared as a mobile distraction to the adults’ conversation. Noon. The brightness moved into one’s pores, though airconditioning terminated what should have been heat. He was a big man. The sound of glass breaking all around his trajectory through the expanse of window covered us all. Repeatedly shaking his head and arms he attempted to shed the shards adhering stubbornly. The superintendent appeared. No one thought the man should drive but he refused to be taken to hospital. Amazingly, there seemed to be no cuts as a result of this newly dangerous portal.

FISHER TO MAC CORMACK #1

Thu, 28 Jun 2001 08:47:14

Dear Karen,

The initial crowd-out text read at the King’s Talks (Birkbeck) should have been out from Fulcrum at Harvard by now.¹ Summer arrives differently there.

My research crowd-out, decoherence, traps and damage continues, became delayed by the British Library’s loss of Physics papers (they never did find them). In any case I had to jump back to review my torn comprehension of quantum mechanics and revisit the methods and practices in calculus and field theory, two areas of practice I have never used

¹ Part 3 of “Decoherence & crowd-out” is available at <http://www.poetics.yorku.ca>. –ed.

enough to be entirely familiar with. I'm very struck by recent work on the subject reflecting on John Bell's work after his death in 1996. Anyway, back at the farm I was shocked into waking when I noticed new work in decoherence this year which looks like it's going to sort the whole matter that engages me, that of perception, phenomena and truth, and as you note, focus. Remember my worry over the Gödel idea that truth cannot be demonstrated and then that whole business of quantum phenomena being beyond perception, except through machines of electronic nerve gas, that continuous reliance on the 'confidence curve' for decisions about accuracy.

I am immediately travelled into your 'investigations' into architecture, that momenergy (momentum-energy) of person in spacetime, its shift from the single expression into an interfered with expression, a more than at once experience, and its contribution to the aesthetic practice. The accuracies, mistakes, developments. Your decisions about counting, page layout, number of pages, book as text, text as poetry, performance of text, in what space when. These compositional

This also impinged into the gene matter of mistakes and evolution, brought to the fore my local issues (in Hereford, England) of genetically-modified food contamination, the consequences of using 'confidence curves' in genetic engineering. I completed WATUSI last month. I started WADDLE and a reappraisal of freedom and misery via Fichte and Simone de Beauvoir.

This sounds eclectic, but that's simply an illusion. The architecture of the micro-cellular spacetime, the impossibility of personal, human perception of part of the activity and the reliance therefore on prediction, expectation, confidence and the reliance, always unnamed and hardly ever signalled, of mistake. (The reliance in animal evolution on mistakes has recently come back into the forecourt.)

In the aesthetical experience, the ethical practice, the person decisions, become part of the design decisions. Whatever the plans for the *Gravity as a consequence of shape* sequence are, at the location-non-location design choices, structure what can eventually be deemed the aesthetic experience in *Implexures*.

We may need to pull out some texts already written, to help new readers to this get some it.

Allen

There are influences going faster than light, even if we cannot control them for practical telegraphy. Einstein local causality fails, and we must live with this. The orientations a and b are not independently variable as we supposed. Whether apparently chosen by apparently independent radioactive devices, or by apparently separate Swiss National Lottery machines, or even by different apparently free-willed experimental physicists, they are in fact correlated with the same causal factors as the A and B (the outcomes of the measurements). Then Einstein causality can survive. But apparently separate parts of the world become deeply entangled, and our apparent free will is entangled with them. The whole analysis can be ignored. The lesson of quantum mechanics is not to look behind the predictions of the formalism. As for the correlations, well, that's quantum mechanics. (John Bell, 1980)

FISHER TO MAC CORMACK #2

Wed, 4 Jul 2001 08:54:41

Dear Karen,

leading off from back into your use of Carruthers²...

² For Mac Cormack's use of Mary Carruthers's work, see her essay, "Mutual Labyrinth," at <http://www.poetics.yorku.ca>. —ed.

Patterns, of simple words and stories (text) and of decoration...become incised permanently in the brain, like the ruts that kept cartwheels on medieval roadways. (Mary Carruthers in *The Craft of Thought. Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200*, Cambridge U.P. 1998.)

Carruthers's description of pattern reminds me of Waddington's idea of chreods (necessary path). It is that pattern that I need and need to change, and mistake encourages that. (the Waddington book is in Hereford) meanwhile in London, Carruthers continues,

Distraction leads to "error", wandering from "the ways" of one's thinking.

and this leads into the discussion of mnemonics, architecture, maps and locations. (I remember the memory theatre and places and the Fluxus Memory jars carried in transit and the idea of the city as dynamegopolis where all roads lead to and from the metropolis are the city) (I don't think Freud and Derrida on magical writing pad and trace have quite got this.)

In Carruthers's book on memory *The Book of Memory* discussing Quintilian (this is coincident with a request for the Quintilian volumes on oration in preparation for a class on Ravenna, from the library STACK, and finding out today that they have lost them). Quintilian, defining the "places" of argument laid down in memory, likens a skillful orator to a huntsman or fisherman who knows exactly the habits and haunts of his game... "The metaphor in the word (for example Aristotle speaks of how people recollect... "hunt successfully") error, both "error" and "wandering," is an aspect of this same idea, for the one who wanders through the pathless silva (meaning both "forest" and "disordered material") of an untrained memory is one who has either lost the footprints ... that should lead him (sic) through...

Not to mention

Along the journey of our life half way,
I found myself again in a dark wood... (Dante and now Caroline Bergvall)

Anyway, the recall complexed as I noticed your architectural links to person and senses and startled in again on the first *Implexures* in *The Gig*³ (no.7 Nov 2000) and prompted by the wonderful new small book⁴ taking from *Implexures 7* onwards, and the memory plastics in that work "in progress". I came back from Belfast last week, with its mixture heavy colonial pressures massive Victorian architecture for instance, and its world fashion culture, that is the same high street in Leicester, Cardiff, Hereford and Belfast serving the same cheap-labour made goods from US/UK designed SE Asia.

"Declensions of travel as in a language, shift." (*Implexures 2*) and your Deleuze and Guattari link to maps, that whole territory/McLuhan conundrum.

Standing in the garden, aircraft above, a car buzzes by, a bird, a fox I'm thinking about a bruise on my leg taken out by outside the garden, trip up again. How the memory journey is that but more interesting, inventive even.

The de Beauvoir I was alerted by came via Steve's discussion, ethics and my crowd-out worry about the dialectic (the latter used I also note by J.H. Prynne and Steve in their exchange in *The Gig*). The difficulties of phenomena material memory and dialectics. The rejection of poetry by Sartre in his later work and the whole discussion about ethics without belief in essence and what I would insist upon (probably influenced by Mukarovsky and Marcuse) that is esthetics as redolent of ethics. I was looking at *The Blood of Others*, (1945, trans. 1948) a dialogue reads:

"A worker wants his freedom; you'll never want anything else but other people's freedom."

"That doesn't matter. The main point is to get the same result."

"But it's impossible to disassociate the result from the struggle that leads up to it..."

and I still feel that.

de Beauvoir writes "a being who is at a distance from himself and who has to be his being" *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1976 trans.) and her openness in: "To say that (existence) is ambiguous is to assert that its meaning is never fixed, that it must be constantly won".

³ Edited by Nate Dorward, <http://www.geocities.com/ndorward/> -ed.

⁴ Published by housepress, Calgary, Alberta, <http://www.telusplanet.net/public/housepre> - ed.

I think I'm trying to get past the idea that "consciousness is always conscious of something," which de Beauvoir gets from Husserl on Brentano. It leads into one of the ideas in *crowd-out* which rather than a singular consciousness, recognises multiplicity with a shifting range, a mobility of emphases and foci.

Architecturally that can mean an understanding that fixities are involved in shifts, that doors open, glass cracks, walls move, but also our comprehension of where we are shifts with weather, temperature, the presence/absence of others, that is we move through, tarry, move back.

We now realize that even bacterial replication generates many mistakes, requiring a whole suite of enzymes to repair them – a process that does not usually recover the original sequence.

...

Normal physiology is not so much buffered as machine-gunned if it strays from the narrow path. Cell death is normal. (Jack Cohen, 'Knife-edge of design', May 2001, *Nature*, vol. 411, 529)

(This also reminds me of the "shot-gun" method used in genetic engineering. That is, its proclivity from randomness to error and lack of exactness.)

We had thought that gene-conversion and chromosome-crossover mechanisms were invented by eukaryotes for the business of squeezing mendelism out of meiosis. We now see that they are rooted in the repair of ancient prokaryote (archaen) mistakes.

...

Perhaps this proneness to mistakes in reproduction is evidence that well-designed, efficient biology is out of reach of the natural selection of undirected genetic change. (Cohen)

Thanks for *Implexures*, tremendously engaging, lovely production, but in particular, the juxtapositioning of places related through some traces and disassociated by others made cogent by the juxtapositioning of vocabularies. So again with *Mutual Labyrinth* and the surroundings of spacetime and language.

Allen

MAC CORMACK TO FISHER #2

Fri, 06 Jul 2001 21:27:52

Dear Allen,

Carruthers . . . again . . . into ethics . . . "The choice to train one's memory or not, for the ancients and medievals, was not a choice dictated by convenience: it was a matter of ethics. A person without a memory, if such a thing could be, would be a person without moral character and, in a basic sense, without humanity. *Memoria* refers not to how something is communicated, but to what happens once one has received it, to the interactive process of familiarizing - or textualizing - which occurs between oneself and others' words in memory." (Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 13).

"Writing itself was judged to be an ethical activity in monastic culture." (Carruthers, 156), and as she further states "Readers, in the course of familiarizing a text, became its authors too. No modern reader would think of adding to the work of someone else in the way medieval readers freely did, sometimes indicating the difference by writing their own work in margins, but often not. The results plague every editor of a medieval text." (Carruthers, 214) In part, it was this and her further discussions re: ethics and the medieval approach to reading that prompted me to consider the possible similarities between this approach (wherein information is not simply received but rather "chosen" by its reader through a text) and whatever affinities and dissimilarities this approach might have to the 'contemporary' notion of the productive reader, but I haven't explored this in any depth as yet.

Perception . . . Medieval mnemotechnique treated "the memory as though it were a flat area divided linearly into columns within a grid," whereas "Roman mnemonics were not as closely tied to the grid . . . the classical mnemonic ties the 'places' to an architectural setting." (Carruthers, 129) Now for me what is fascinating is the probability (?) that this changed understanding of the "nature of the mnemonic 'locus' – from a three-dimensional room, in which

perspective changes as one 'walks' through it mentally, to a two-dimensional cell within a grid on a flat surface --- may account for some of the confusion medieval writers had in understanding Tully's rules about the making of backgrounds." (Carruthers, 129)

In your *Sojourns* there's the wonderful poem SHEAR (STRESS) "Deformation occurs where parallel planes in a body remain parallel, but are relatively displaced in a direction parallel to themselves. Contact usually includes a tendency to slide over each other. A rectangle becomes a parallelogram, a conversational stretch." And so to Bernard Cache's *Earth Moves* again "our perceptions are inscribed on the surface of things, as images amongst images," (Cache, xviii) and so to(o) Antonio Damasio (via Carruthers), "The factual knowledge required for reasoning and decision making comes to the mind in the form of images." (Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 96) It was a reference the fact that "A current theory in neuropsychology describes memories as being stored in 'bits' in various parts of the brain, and 'recollection' as a process of re-gathering the bits into a whole memory experience," (Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 356) that impelled me to read Damasio.

All of which is a lengthy collage towards contextualizing what informs the process that is *Implexures*.

I just finished reading *A Selection from the Works of Thomas Swan* (edited by Martin Corless-Smith and Alan Halsey, and published by West House Books). Do you know this seventeenth-century poet's work? (His "Colours that do correspond not to the outward aspect though in truth I do see them so" is quite extraordinary, and impelled me to re-read your *Sojourns*!) To quote again from SHEAR (STRESS) "'Focusing theorem' concerns bundles of rays and plays a crucial role in blackhole physics, in the theory of singularities, and the poetics of mobile collage."

Now referring to a poem in my *Straw Cupid* (1987) I quote:

"pattern is an overlay on disparate elements
how many

desperation's continual distribution of complexities
singular and present

voices speak a simultaneity distance holds hostage
a precedent of impulse in intervals of letters" (SC, 87)

(in part) to ask you how the following may or may not correspond to your own practice - (?)

"Just as letters are the shapes and signs of spoken words, pictures exist as the representations and signs of writing."
(Gilbert Crispin [Abbot of Westminster 1085?1117])

Karen

p.s. and I look forward to WADDLE!

FISHER TO MAC CORMACK #3

Sat, 14 Jul 01 14:12:57

Dear Karen,

Thinking about *crowd-out* I remember M.R. James' story *Count Magnus*. "It is curious," he notes, how on retracing a familiar path one's thoughts engross one to the absolute exclusion of surrounding objects. Tonight, for the second time, I had entirely failed to notice where I was going (I had planned a private visit to the tomb-house to copy the epitaphs), when I suddenly, as it were, awoke to consciousness, and found myself (as before) turning in at the churchyard gate, and, I believe, singing or chanting some such words as, 'Are you awake, Count Magnus? Are you asleep, Count Magnus?'

and then something more which I have failed to recollect. It seemed to me that I must have been behaving in this nonsensical way for some time.

I was following up a check on Aristotle's last work *Ethics to Nicomachus and the Politics* for a talk on Raphael's *School of Athens* and I started looking at an analysis by John Gilles in 1893 and reminded of Mary Carruthers' investigations and your *Implextures*, partly because of the hunting metaphor in mediaeval vocabulary, which I'm not sure I go for, and partly the struggle with description of perception of another's perceptions and your own memory and vocabulary generated from encounter with the vocabulary of another connected other,

For the perceptions of imagination and memory, though not rigidly governed, like those of sense, by the power and presence of external objects, do not, however, float at random [I think I prefer phased in distinction or crowd-out against], but are subjected to a certain order and progression, conformably to established laws of association [and laws now jars the door of it], which Aristotle was the first philosopher that attempted to investigate, to enumerate, and to explain. He investigated them in analyzing the complex act of reminiscence or recollection, in which the principles of association [this analysis written contemporary with William James excitement about the stream of it and Freud the narrator's will to completion] operate under the immediate direction of the human will [which Nietzsche burgled from their sleep]. He enumerated them, as far as seemed requisite to the subject which he was then treating [an indicator of Aeslepien intrigue], by saying that they might be reduced to the four following heads: proximity in time; contiguity in place; resemblance or similarity [which I would now need to unravel in terms of spacetime and aesthetics or consciousness and patterns of connectedness]; contrariety or contrast; and he explains them by showing that in every act of recollection we are conscious [somewhat emphatic in an age that precedes Cubism] of *hunting about, as it were, among our thoughts*, [his emphasis] until we hit on some one which is intimately connected with that which we wish to recall; or in other words, that we produce in succession a multitude of vibrations ["A Singular Plurality" *Straw Cupid* (39)] or motions in our organs [this business of the momenergy] ["Sometimes the words arise from the outside and lips form around them" *SC*], until we hit on some one of them intimately connected with that of which we are in quest [relabelled in an era when the mobile video-phone reports from the war crowd to the city war zone almost before it happens, unlike say Tennyson reading *The Times* after the event and collaging a poem into his peer's recent rhymes recited from a woollen helmet], and which has the power of reviving this last, because the one motion is either excited nearly at the same time with the other [or exactly simultaneous but not observed at the same time it is measured and is anyway decohered by any semblance of measurement], or is entirely the same in kind with it, or so nearly the same [a notion of simulation and simulacra in John Gillies' contemporary Aby Warburg later to be revived by the Catholic pain of Jean Baudrillard's Reformation], that the minute difference between them is speedily overpowered and lost and from near agreement finally reduced to perfect coincidence [much, no doubt, to the awakening of Jung's jaded followers]...

At such times I turn to *Straw Cupid* to freshen up.
...they walk away from
these limitless blue resolutions... (86)

Another matter to do with freedom as it recurs in WADDLE (underway) when Aristotle quotes "the poet"
None choose wretchedness, or spurns delight. (Aristotle, *The Ethics*, trans. John Gilles, London: Routledge & Sons, 1893, 205)

which preceded (in the sense of not remembering or apparently knowing this passage first, "freedom includes the decision to be miserable" and this is accounted for by what precedes it, "mis-scribed by origin of freedom / the decision to be in misery made by someone else."

Leaders are those members who gain control of any given group. *SC* (40)

The second stanza of WADDLE part 2 begins
Ponderous eruption
shakes London
Named in laws of interaction
break them
Named jubillance and speak of joy and worry,

a net spread and tightened, a sparrow chick
simulates flight in fledged flurry
on gutter edge
capital's main street the Banker
sharpens his steel...

as you put it "pattern is an overlay on disparate elements" *SC* (87).

Or back with *crowd-out*:

If words *are not* things, or maps *are not* the actual territory, then, obviously, the only possible link between the objective world and the linguistic world is found in *structure, and structure alone...* (Alfred Korzybski [1933] *Science and Sanity. An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*, Lakeville, Connecticut: The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Co., p.61).

and

In fact, in structure we find the mystery of rationality, adjustment., and we find that the whole content of knowledge is exclusively structural. If we want to be rational and to understand anything at all, we must look for structure, relations, and, ultimately, multi-dimensional order, all of which was impossible on a broader sense in the Aristotelian-system..." (S&S [61])

Allen

MAC CORMACK TO FISHER #3

Fri, 20 Jul 2001 18:10:47

Dear Allen,

the second stanza of WADDLE invites "more" please!

Re: Gilles analysis and the act of recollection . . . his reference to the "hunting about, as it were, among our thoughts" and it reminding you of the hunting metaphor in medieval vocabulary . . . the medieval 'gathering' metaphor is perhaps even more prominent (all those bees . . .)??

I would like to introduce Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* into this discussion . . .

"Most people relate to themselves as storytellers. They usually have no use for poems, and although the occasional "because" or "in order that" gets knotted into the thread of life, they generally detest any brooding that goes beyond that; they love the orderly sequence of facts because it has the look of necessity, and the impression that their life has a "course" is somehow their refuge from chaos. It now came to Ulrich that he had lost this elementary, narrative mode of thought to which private life still clings, even though everything in public life has already ceased to be narrative and no longer follows a thread, but instead spreads out as an infinitely interwoven surface." (trans. Sophie Wilkins, *TMWQ*, p. 709)

[Remembering that *TMWQ* was set in 1913 and that Musil worked on it after WWI to his death during WWII (it was unfinished) the above seems 'contemporary' to me. I'd like more information on Musil's invention, the *variationenkreis* (produced commercially), which was used to help in investigating perceptions of colour . . .]

Now this from the Spanish architect Ignasi Solà-Morales's *Differences* (which resonated for me regarding *crowd-out* and *Implexures*):

"Contemporary time – today's fragmented reality of overlapping virtual and "real" times that was artistically anticipated in the writings of James Joyce, Robert Musil, and Mario Vargas Llosa – is presented precisely as juxtaposition: a discontinuity; something that is in complete contrast to a single, unique, closed and complete system. Time in the architecture of the classical age could be simply reduced to zero (as in the experience of Renaissance

centrality) or at most constitute a controlled time – a time with a beginning and an orderly and ordered expansion (which was entirely the experience of baroque temporality). . . .

Contemporary time, however, cannot sustain these classical or baroque illusions. It presents itself as a diffracted explosion in which there is no unique and single time from which we can construct experience. There are, instead, *times*, various times, the times with which our experience of reality produces itself. . . .

Eugenio Trias, in his book *Los limites del mundo*, speaks of the untimely nature of the contemporary situation and contemporary art; untimely in the sense of sudden, unanticipated coagulations of reality, events that are produced not through linear and foreseeable organization but through folds and fissures, as Foucault himself sometimes says, that in some way afford the refuge, the tremulous fluttering of a brief moment of poetic and creative intensity.” (*Differences*, 66-68)

Now returning to your references to Jack Cohen’s “Knife-edge of design,” (*Nature*, 2001, vol. 411, 529), especially “Cell death is normal,” I’ll quote from an article in *Prevention*, citing Daniel Nixon, MD:

“Cancer cells forget how to die – they just grow and grow.” (*Prevention*, July 2000, 59)

So there’s some relation (am not sure that’s the right word) not only between ‘normal’ cell death and cancer cells ‘forgetting how to die,’ but also between cell ‘behaviour’ and multi-dimensional order, and structure, . . . and to time, too? Because as you wrote in *Breadboard*:

“More than one clock runs on civilization
There can never be one count down” (53)

Further thoughts on this?

Karen

FISHER TO MAC CORMACK #4

Tue, 24 Jul 2001 09:06:51

Dear Karen,

Here’s WADDLE as it is today, more response to your last soon. love
Allen.

1.

I focus on a bridge form
as it moves
releases pinches releases
pylons lift in sunlight from grassland
catch sky base a range of cloud shapes
cirrus interrupted by striations
A figure embraces and unfolds in rhythm
it could be a bird, trapped to the ground
attempts to free from this instructs its
unseen other in operation beyond view
Gender unspecific but questions are raised
regard for freedom
About situation
between edges of perception, now
reaches between strata:

a state of uplift:
a new freedom.
This celebrates an increase in existents
a multiple self, enhances embrace.

2.

In simulated light surveillance I lift
heat coil and appear alienated
up from a bird screech marked by wing beats
Listen up, an overhead
pours a neon spread pathway
shut against an actual road
serpentine from animal wander
felt pushed in the back lost footing,
stammered, loose metal bushes burn
exactness and expectation. Dice clenched, apparency,
return in to light shafts
recorded in blind stripes or
exhausted definition in measured speed
Somehow, it's difficult to know,
I prove my shell metal mossed wrath
vivify flight indoctrination
through hector lime hash robbery's guise.

Ponderous eruption
shakes London
Named in laws of interaction
break them
Named jubilation and speak of joy and worry,
a net released and tightened, a sparrow chick
simulates flight in fledged flurry
on gutter edge
capital's main street the Banker
sharpens his steel it skins a chance replaced
his finesse. Can you imagine his loss
shaken. The Banker chances with
his speculation
"free to arrest transcendence" stolen in conscience,
cell wrapped and
unwrapped stingray
Beaver's ontology
condemned to be free
without value judgements
authenticities.

3.

Who the I is confuses the narrative
tossed in translation
eroded her language like a kid
with a trick
this common individual

the inert limit
of freedom
In keeping with my intention
maintenance of close relations
between ideal and real measurements
now a collective observation
in which decoherence occurs. For as long
as the struggle lasts, always
to others that the very contingency
of events and the qualified freedom
of individuals express the conflict itself
always possible to put an end to it
a sort of comportment necessary
an individual pleroma, imagined
virtuality, normative and catalytic,
gratuitous play, ascetic
expressions of sadness, joy, love
in very limited particulars

4.

always the historic and circumstantial
result of conditions outside
the domain of knowledge
to get away from it
and destroy it where
freedom includes
the decision
to be miserable.
The Banker
studies complicated
by extreme variation
in substitution rates
between sites the
consequence of parallel mutations
difficulties in estimations of
genetic distance
Constantly before the reader
an accidentality of any
surface stricture
chosen as realisation
of underlying thought
told spelled tould
to rhyme with would.

5.

the discrepancy a prediction error
demonstrated by observation
that learning is blocked
a dreadful state of misery
may overtake the
in uncertain hope of annihilation
simple temporal contiguity

between stimulus and reinforcer
Presentations of surprise generate
positive prediction errors
encoded neuronal messages modify
synaptic connection in snares
of reason, absoluteness and knowledge
the decision to be
in misery
made by someone else.

May-July '01

FISHER TO MAC CORMACK #5

Sun, 5 Aug 01 16:52:49

Dear Karen,

Really enjoyed the lead off from Musil...

the way WADDLE and elsewhere gives apparencies of continuity, of sentences and narrative...

One plateau of discussion invites linked together realities, (collage can be defined as more than one plane of reality presented in one plane of reality, a kind of simultaneity or a kind of cubist enterprise) our work, on various occasions, uses linking and/or demonstrates a range of realities that overlap, sometimes blur into each other, sometimes erase one over the other, sometimes crowd-out the previous instant until itself crowd-outed and sometimes this is fleeting and initial reality returns.

this pressure recognises that reality proposes representation of an actuality, what is happening, has happened, re-presented, presented again.

a syntactic or paratactic continuity that provides a ground for demonstration of sudden change – characterised in the vocabulary of “quantum leap,” René Thom’s catastrophe theory where smooth process jumps into new spacetime (new reality) like a phase shift from wet to boiling, in the larger scheme: the punctuated equilibrium of step-like change in animal evolution.

the underlying discussion is epistemological and thus about truth and freedom as well as knowledge, about will and natural expectations, as well as information and structure and how structure provides (facilities?) the necessary pathways as well as the auto-habits, the chreods, (Deleuze and Guattari call the crevices made by the run-offs) for representation.

the problems of truth and knowledge proposed by Foucault in the early 1970s, but also by John Bell in discussions of quantum measurement, this whole business of the Copenhagen conversations. the need for remote-sensing in quantum physics/mechanics (until the recent trap inventions to provide empirical tools or evidence midway and neither microscopic nor macroscopic.

the inevitable or typical spread of sequence top to bottom and left to right in poem displays provide an order which leads to narrative and linked realities, the discussion of consciousness and aesthetics how one imperfectly fits around and into the other provides new pertinence – a new edge between impertinent action and appropriateness.

this requires research and experiment, drawing on a range of vocabularies from pre-Enlightenment as much as Enlightenment and post-Romantic - from Fichte as much as De Beauvoir and Sartre as much as Deleuze and Guattari.

a reappraisal of the personal pronoun position, the identity position is “is,” the comfort to local conditions need critique in the larger patterns without loss of the situation, linked that is to the in and out of a pattern of connectedness that necessarily doesn’t quite work.

pasting the geneticist’s enterprise onto the capitalist method. shifting the burglar’s ingenuity into the realm of both, where the singular purpose of the latter crowd-outs any difference with the other.

“Each set,” Fernand Braudel (1979) writes, “we have singled out for the purpose of exposition is in real life inexplicably mingled with the others.” (*Civilisation & Capitalism in 15th - 18th centuries, Volume III: The Perspective of the World*)

other plateaux would then discuss intake from scheduled outsides, connections to a larger spread of connectedness without immediate, apparent patterns, but with innuendo and rhyme to early tracts in the same sequence complex A >> Z but not in that order.

and with Musil in mind, “Instead of seeing the world as a thing, a universe, whose truths we might uncover through for example the procedures of science, *Closure* proposes that we regard the world as open and it is we who close it through our stories.” (Hilary Lawson, (2001) *Closure. A Story of Everything.*)

Allen

MAC CORMACK TO FISHER #4

Sat, 11 Aug 2001 12:10:02

Dear Allen,

Thank you for your latest, and for WADDLE, on which more presently.

There’s been an ongoing heatwave here (record high temperatures of 36 degrees Celsius), during which time I’ve been reading Joseph LeDoux’s *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life*. (Carruthers referred to it, along with Damasio’s *Descartes’ Error* in *The Craft of Thought*)

Compare the following to the “lost” ‘narrative mode of thought’ in Musil’s character Ulrich . . . “We concluded people normally do all sorts of things for reasons they are not consciously aware of (because the behavior is produced by brain systems that operate unconsciously) and that *one of the main jobs of consciousness is to keep our life tied together into a coherent story, a self-concept.*” [emphasis mine] (LeDoux, 33)

And not losing touch with Carruthers (and in response to your “. . . connections to a larger spread of connectedness without immediate, apparent patterns”) she writes . . . “We tend to make a firm division between reading and creativity now, but it is clear that medieval scholars did not. . . every verse . . . becomes a gathering place for other texts, into which even the most remote and unlikely matters are collected as the associational memory of the author draws them in. Associations depending upon opposition and contrariety are just as apt to end up being collated as those of consonance and likeness.” (Carruthers, “The Poet as Master Builder: Composition and Locational Memory in the Middle Ages,” *New Literary History*, 892)

And so to Cache:

“A sort of cubist sculpture of the city of Lausanne could then be constructed through the combination of these four basic figures: cone, prism, dihedral, and plane.

This sculpture is a mnemotechnical object. One must also remember that the surface of the territory is mobile and fluid as it is given to the continual distortions of memory. . . .”

“In the exercise of their profession, architects can choose to ground their practice in the concept of site. The work of

architecture then becomes the expression of the specificity of the site that is to be built upon. . . . But this position runs the danger of falling into a mistaken notion of site, equating all too easily the notion of specificity with that of identity. The case of Lausanne demonstrates clearly enough that the identity of a place is not given, and that if the expression ‘genius loci’ has a meaning, it lies in the capacity of this ‘genius’ to be smart enough to allow for the transformation or transit from one identity to another. . . . [there] are gestures through which an architect can position him or herself with respect to a site. But in no case does the identity of a site preexist, for it is always the outcome of a construction.” (*Earth Moves*, 10-15)

All of this takes me to WADDLE, but again via Musil:

“The work of art is *not* like one curved line but like one drawn with many separate pen strokes.” (*Diaries*, 247)

and Cache:

“In mathematics, what is said to be singular is not a given point, but rather a set of points on a given curve. A point is not singular; it becomes singularized on a continuum. And several types of singularity exist . . .” (Cache, 16)

and Cache again:

“If we wish to define architecture as an operation on space, we must then define the nature of this space more precisely. Classical philosophy saw it as a form of coexistence or simultaneity. It was contrasted with time, which was seen as a form of succession. But architectural space is not this general form of simultaneity; it is a space where coexistence is not a fundamental given, but rather the uncertain processes of separation and partitioning. The wall is the basis of our coexistence. Architecture builds its space of compatibility on a mode of discontinuity.” (Cache, 24)

What if we wish to think of poetry as an “operation”? Its “space” would be language, words separated and partitioned . . . and in much of the work I’m interested in, poetry “builds” its space on a “mode of discontinuity.”

Constantly before the reader
an accidentality of any
surface stricture
chosen as realisation
of underlying thought
told spelled tould
to rhyme with would. – from WADDLE

Precisely. WADDLE’s intensities recombine with each reading, providing multiple “grounds for sudden change.”

I was particularly struck by your phrase in the most recent installment (yours of 5 Aug 01) “a new edge between impertinent action and appropriateness.” Thinking not only about this in your own work, but that’s indeed what’s ‘evident’ in all the work I’m affected by. (Apologies for being literal but your “burglar’s ingenuity” gave me cause to re-think Jean Genet and Albertine Sarrazin’s writings . . .!) And then you “end” with the tantalizing quotation from Hilary Lawson’s *Closure* and so I now want to read that!

Thank you so much for the structure-that-is-WADDLE, its layered discussions and actualities! Is there room for Agamben with Fichte, de Beauvoir, Sartre, and Deleuze and Guattari?

Karen

“Imbalance is a porthole.” (*Quill Driver*)

“the name on the subject an object’s articulation
senses of humour and a present inclination to substitute
z for s in name brands
collections of labels without accompanying articles (minimalized acquisition?)

experience as accumulating (if not neatly filed most likely labelled)”

– (unpublished fragment re: AT ISSUE)

FISHER TO MAC CORMACK #6

Sun, 12 Aug 01 11:55:56

Dear Karen,

this matter of continuity, narrative (Musil & co) and impertinence: the issues of post-collage; for instance in *Quill Driver*

Then it was crashing. Film technology has advanced since Stein’s use of ‘cinematic’ technique. But embroidery done by machine still lacks desire. If the object ‘to move’ insists on being ‘still the subject’ there is always a room for a table.

and patterns of connectedness along with multiplicity and the energy of shifting truths as you point out via LeDoux, – one of the main jobs of consciousness is to keep our life tied together into a coherent story, a self-concept

and Carruthers,

... a gathering place for other texts, into which even the most remote and unlikely matters are collected as the associational memory of the author draws them in. Associations depending upon opposition and contrariety are just as apt to end up being collated as those of consonance and likeness.

and Cache:

... the surface of the territory is mobile and fluid as it is given to the continual distortions of memory...

but as you say, also where poetry “builds” its space on a “mode of discontinuity.”

We both use the complexity of transformations a lot. In *Quirks & Quillets*, for instance from proven to heaving:

Combination or weaving the influence of
literature on sunsets with a proven space for
heaving anything at all through windows
where aeroplane numbers are without...

or in *Multiplex Oval Value*: “an option positions opposition ‘just so’”

put the trash out
leads to
put the trash out, Darling
which gets realigned in
put the trash out, Darling,
it’s on fire,
but the impertinence is better attained in
put the trash out, Darling,
fired the lot of them.
The expectation from sense and syntax
leads to a new syntax, or a new plateau of conscious/unconsciousness,
an alternative in asyntax
could provide the occasional realignment shift
but this cannot be continuous if it is to work
put the trash out, Darling

nails it (closure)
whether in the storm or waits
for the can to
put the cat out
before it eats the trash.
Somehow the break from expectation
needs to also provide enough shift
to be beyond a single collage
change in direction
plane over plane
and somehow demand a rereading
of vocabulary in the process of reading it
where the vocabulary “trash” becomes
verb and trash out like
thrash about shifts
put the trash out into
something like “do the funky chicken”.

I’ll come back on this architectural matter, particularly on “a mode of discontinuity” and the “grounds for sudden change.”

Tell me again about Agamben. Meanwhile let me get this to you.

Allen

MAC CORMACK TO FISHER #5

Wed, 15 Aug 2001 10:34:34

Dear Allen,

Here’s another definition of architecture, this one from Ignasi Solà-Morales:

“It seems more and more that we are confronted not so much with a work of architecture as a point of intersection, the interaction of forces and energies proceeding from diverse locations whose momentary deflagration explains a concrete and particular architectural situation, action, and production. . . .

The explication of architecture is not some arborescent endeavor, comparable to the branches of a tree growing out of a common trunk and nourished through its roots from a particular soil. Architecture is not a tree but an event, resulting from the intersection of forces capable of situating an object that is partially signifying, contingent. Criticism is thus not the recognition or manifestation of branches but is itself a construct, purposefully produced to cast light on that situation, as a means of drawing the topography of that point where a certain architecture has been produced.”
(*Differences*, 16)

Architecture as operation (Cache), architecture as event (Solà-Morales), forms of writing . . .

Giorgio Agamben informs us “The usage of the word ‘stanza’ to indicate a part of the canzone or poem derives from the Arabic term bayt, which means ‘dwelling place,’ ‘tent,’ and at the same time ‘verse.’ According to Arab authors bayt also refers to the principal verse of a poem composed in praise of a person to whom one wishes to express desire, and in particular the verse in which the object of desire is expressed. (Agamben, *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, 124-125)

Agamben suggests that “Poetic language takes place in such a way that its advent always already escapes both toward the future and toward the past. The place of poetry is therefore always a place of memory and repetition.”(Agamben, *Language and Death*, 76)

Here's a recent poem (that having read "put the trash out, Darling" seems a response of sorts)

Karen

somehow the weather intrudes (not only in the month of February)
it's not as if one writes "best" simply when impelled
(far from it) the temperature declines repeatedly
and a slip takes on connotations other than
not even "slides" is equivalent in this environment
language means itself across and through such seasons
to remember is a reference the act of printing
points to an action continually revised

another month (of May) and I join *raining* in the act of
going out into itself along the swerve of
leaf-green these minutes hinge a subject with a walk's
duration, process a recognition of how pacing
affects degrees of density (as in "is this surface durable
enough to write on?") reworking what occurs
in the words familiar new realizations understood

to determine or undermine sequence
disrupts middle into where-to-when occurs for whom
the instance of what advertising is why
lifestyle is how recent a term

FISHER TO MAC CORMACK #7

Thu, 23 Aug 2001 08:51:42

Dear Karen,

I've returned to some simple concepts to bump into more recently, in response to the use of texts by architects and their proposers, like Cache as well as Agamben's stanza design, with a view to
hold the matter of speech at becalmed points of place as such
on all fours three ways... (Oval Value in *MultiPlex*)

I've been making a map of my room in Roehampton so that I can keep track of where various projects and books are. I already keep such data on what's in Hereford and in my studio. Something about the activity brings me to some of what we have been saying. To begin with take typology, for instance, Will Kunz (1998):

The established principles of typography could be likened to the principles underlying architecture or music – necessary for craft but insufficient for art.

...

A fundamental structure is inherent in all typography. Even a single word or line of type placed on a blank sheet of paper subdivides the space and creates a simple visual structure.

...

Typographic design can proceed from two types of structure: an optically improvised visual structure, or a predetermined structure – the grid system.

...

For complex, extensive assignments, a predetermined structure – the grid system – is necessary.

...

Depending on their placement within a given space, the same elements will assume different visual aspects of weight and movement. (Kunz, *Typography: Macro- Microaesthetics*. Switzerland: Niggli)

and then a colleague at Roehampton, Alan Read, “Walking west from Hammersmith Bridge, along the north bank of the Thames...,” notes:

Here is a speech site where a history of orality reveals something more than oral history, a location where locution might be amplified in order to discern an ethics of speech for an emerging metropolis.

...

is there not something to be gained then in the interests of complexity from rereading these signs of the street as dialogue with each other, a sedimentation of pasts and futures, rather than a contradictory impasse of thought?

...

He concludes,

Between these two apparent poles, [modern and older architecture] is a spectrum of positions from which one might construct a politics of the location of locution, that neither lionises stability nor celebrates the insecurities of hybridity. Walter Benjamin understood this tension when, in speaking about the art of the storyteller, he characterised the archaic representatives of the genre:... (Read [2000], “Speech sites” in the section “Revealing” of *Architecturally Speaking. Practices of Art, Architecture and the Everyday* edited by Read, London: Routledge)

In the same volume, Ann M Pendleton-Jullian (“Autopoetic Architecture”) writes...

to plant within the context of architecture the experience of working in a group and the proposition of employing the poetic use of “word” as the foundation for an architectural polemic.

One of the understandings from what we’ve been exchanging is that specialist practice is secondary to aesthetic necessity, and that any specialist practice needs interaction, however framed or broken, with another practice and more. Of course, once we grab aesthetics as a requirement, but not a precedent nor a simple outcome for active consciousness, the momenergy, subsequent on the impertinent, imperfect fit, becomes the wonderful ...

Allen.

MAC CORMACK TO FISHER #6

Tue, 28 Aug 2001 22:47:56

Dear Allen,

Read’s (*Architecturally Speaking: Practices of Art, Architecture and the Everyday*) “insecurities of hybridity” certainly caught my attention (and made me think of John Hall’s review of *The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity* (Vol 2 of de-, dis-, ex-. Interdisciplinarity: Art/Architecture/Theory) . . .

You refer to “simple concepts” but in the context it seems to me that you bring a welcome swerve to such concepts (structure, maps . . .) And the first excerpt from *Implexures* that I sent to you at the end of June included a reference to maps (indeed, that work is full of them):

“To write a work structured not as an architectural blueprint but as if exploring an architectural surround (known or unknown?) length of a line or sentence concurrent with number of steps toward a wall, punctuation as door or window perhaps . . . to write as one would explore a city, so a map would produce routes of numerous lines of a poem or the range of sounds heard in a given setting.” (*Implexures*, Thirteen)

As stated by Korzybski [cited by you earlier] maps aren’t the actual territory, and words “aren’t things” and so according to him [in *Science and Sanity*] “the only possible link between the objective world and the linguistic world is found in *structure, and structure alone*”. Your bridge in WADDLE seems to me to offer a more fluid link than does Read’s departure from “Hammersmith Bridge, along the north bank of the Thames” as “speech site” --- [WADDLE opens with “I focus on a bridge form / as it moves”].

The experience is framed differently by you than it is by Read, and interestingly so. Yours is simultaneously a linguistic and mobile focus, his is “a location where locution might be amplified . . .” and so the discussion of ethics is different and discussed differently.

Where Read sees “a spectrum of positions [between modern and older architecture]” and while I welcome that, I’m interested in the potential of a discipline. For me your work provides much evidence of increasing what’s possible.

Thinking about typology and typography I offer a further spin (the following quotation appears in the section of *Implexures* I’m currently working on):

“Writers between 1500 and 1650 used all of the marks of punctuation in use today, but with observable differences. Semicolons will be met with only rarely, colons far more than today. Question marks were used then as we use them, but also they were used where we use exclamation points. These last were latecomers, being almost unknown before 1650. Quotation marks were seldom used before 1600, and then rather to call attention to a phrase or a sententious expression than to mark direct quotation.” (Giles E. Dawson & Laetitia Kennedy Skipton, *Elizabethan Handwriting 1500-1650*, p. 18)

I have become increasingly intrigued by late 19th and early 20th century shorthand dictionaries and manuals, and most recently a mid-20th-century typewriting manual, and from this interest a new project, VANITY RELEASE, is underway.

The choice of word lists, sentences to learn by, and the exercises in these respective manuals reflect not only the ongoing changes in North American English for this period, but also the shifts in educational, business, and technological terminology. To engage with these terms in a context of contemporary investigational poetic practice is one way to meaningfully perplex what is so easily taken for granted technologically, linguistically, and socially in our own times.

Here’s a sample from GWAM (forthcoming in *West Coast Line*, Winter 2001):

Tab a full size otherwise
Take the brakes off your fingers and let them explore new stroking patterns.
5 minutes
reach the centre of hold
to do it or if is by it and can . . .
Skill Measurement II
in a similar manner do not stop, let it go; just keep on
at any easy, controlled rate
now think the word, not the letters
(instead of o r, or) word-recognition response
“It can be done if you do not pause . . .”
accuracy, shifting for capitals
stretch as you make the reach
Place movement touches
“Let us do big things if we can or small things in a big way.”

I concur with you that “any specialist practice needs interaction, however framed or broken, with another practice and more” and I would underscore your point that “. . . we grab aesthetics as a requirement, but not a precedent nor a simple outcome for active consciousness . . .”

Indeed, the more I consider these issues the more I think in terms of the plural. “Architecture” is no more an homogenous ‘given’ than “language” is, yet both are too often taken for granted in the discussions to which they are central.

Meanwhile, I’ve only recently discovered biomimetics (“the interdisciplinary study of nature as a model for inorganic materials” that is [apparently] “becoming more and more popular as high technology grows.”) Evidently much of this

work is being conducted at the University of Newcastle and at the Centre for Biomimetics at the University of Reading.

I would like to read *Architecturally Speaking: Practices of Art, Architecture and the Everyday* . . . And what does the map of your room in Roehampton actually look like??

Karen

FISHER TO MAC CORMACK #8

Mon, 3 Sep 2001 19:06:01

Dear Karen,

Before I get to *Closure* which I'll try to get to again later this week, I'm reflecting on maps. I don't know whether or not I can send you the graphics on my primitive e-mail, but i could send you the legend (at end of letter). Meanwhile I want to quote at length from the very bright introduction by Deleuze/Guattari to their *A Thousand Plateaus* in Massumi's translation. I came to this late, I had read the terrific last chapter first in semiotext(e) and somehow dropped into the book in an appropriately non-linear way. I'm engaged with their principles throughout, but let me example from 5 & 6:

Principal of cartography and decalcomania: a rhizome is not amenable to any structural or generative model. It is a stranger to any idea of genetic axis or deep structure. A genetic axis is like an objective pivotal unity upon which successive stages are organized; a deep structure is more like a base sequence that can be broken down into immediate constituents, while the unity of the product passes into another, transformational and subjective, dimension. This does not constitute a departure from the representative model of the tree, or root...

continues

It is our view that genetic axis and profound structure are above all infinitely reproducible principles of tracing...

and

The tree articulates and hierarchies tracings; tracings are like the leaves of a tree. The rhizome is altogether different, a map and not a tracing. Make a map not a tracing [write D&G]. The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp, in a rhizome. What distinguishes the map it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome. What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real...

Now the idea of the 'real' needs to be unpacked, but I was encouraged by the drift.

Later they note: "The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged 'competence'."

and then we get to something else that you and I have been engaging regarding the inside outside architectural discussion:

Drives and part-objects are neither stages on a genetic axis nor positions in a deep structure; they are political options for problems, they are entryways and exits, impasses the child lives out politically, in other words, with all the force of his or her desire.

My note on your last email says: the route from the building through an opening, door entrance/window, is at once an entrance for the outside you perceive, already part of you by your perception of it, part of consciousness. Without proceeding beyond the building, the entrance or window already permits a set of changes to consciousness through perception and this begins to add to the definition of architecture. The walls are crowd-outs that shift as you do, as your eyes shift, as you shift position or orientation.

"The temple in its standing there," notes Heidegger (translated 1975), "first gives to things their look and to humans their outlook on themselves." and also, "Poetry first of all admits human dwelling into its very nature, its presencing being. Poetry is the original admission of building." (*Poetry, Language, Thought*)

I'm not sure how this is useful, but it may amuse you:

Legend for map of Templeton room 4 (0.8.01)

1 desk drawer

2 zip/diskettes rack
TASK BOOK
KIFF ANALYSIS
BEUYS ANALYSIS
IMAGING BRIXTON

3 over tv
TIME TO CHANGE
PARADISE LOST

4 books
UK POETRY
GRAVITY RELATED

5 box
CHRONOLOGUES
DAY BOOKS

6 front of tv
CURRENT

7 righthand desk (a)
TO READ BOX
SCATTERED/BUSH

8 righthand desk (b)
EVENTS
CALENDAR

9 box and videotapes
ART HISTORY COPIES FOR STUDENTS' PREP READING
ART HISTORY TO READ BOX
BOTTICELLI illus DANTE, CALCULUS

10 books
ALLEGORY ISSUES
NARRATIVE ISSUES
FAERIE QUEENE

11 top shelf books
(a) EUROPEAN POETRY, FICTION
(b) Poetry in English incl. UK, Canada, Australia and USA,
DIVINE COMEDY, TOPOLOGY
(c) FICTION

12 books
BEUYS
EARLY CIVILISATION, PATTERNS
WORLD HISTORY
GRAVITY/SPACETIME

DRAWING
FOOD
HEALTH
CONSCIOUSNESS

13 upper narrow shelf

- (a) BEUYS, EARLY CIVILISATION, PATTERNS
- (b) CHEMISTRY, AF ART & NARRATIVE, AF AESTHETICS, NON-LINEAR MATHEMATICS
- (c) AF SERPENTINE, HOGARTH, HIPPOCRATES, HEALTH

14 books

- (a) CELAN, UK POETRY, PRYNNE
- (b) CARRUTHERS, NEW MUSIC
- (c) SITUATIONISM, PLACE, THEORETICAL BIOLOGY, CYBERNETICS

15 (a) SPENSER, BENJAMIN, DRAWING, ENLIGHTENMENT

- (b) draw unit (i, ii, iii)
- (i) LETTERS
- (ii) COLLAGE, REXROTH, CROWD-OUT, INDIVIDUALISM, polyfolders
- (iii) AF cv, bio, biblio, TV data, Bank data, ADDRESSES

16 case

17 lower narrow shelf

- (a) GRAVITY DATA, GENETICS, DRAWING
- (b) WATUSI copies, DRAWING, PRYNNE, OLIVER, DENISE RILEY data
- (c) WOODPECKER copies, ULLI FREER copies

18 lower shelf

- (a) BEOWULF
- (b) BREAKS & MAKES, POLLUTIONS, OPPRESSION, HORACE, GRÖNEWALD
- (c) PAINT, DRAWING

19 (a) red filing box and (b) over box

- (a) TALKS/ESSAY FILES
- (b) PLACE REPRINTING, GRAVITY, reading misc in database, TEXT PREPS (ephemeral, rocket science painters, crowd-out)

20 (a) blue filing box and (b) over box

- (a) GRAVITY FILES
- (b) BLAKE, BENJAMIN, SLEEP, QUANTUM MECHANICS, BRONZINO, RICOEUR, TUMA, XENAKIS, LEAR, ENLIGHTENMENT, CONRAD, GILGAMESH, CONCEPTUAL ART, KELLY'S LOOM, FICHTE, RICOEUR

21 BACK top shelf

- (a) ORIENTALISM, MIGRATION OF IMAGE
- (b) EARLY HUMAN, CIVILISATION, BLAKE
- (c) FERNEYHOUGH, BOULEZ, XENAKIS, ELECTRONIC, FOOD, CAROLINE TISDALL, RENE THOM and LU, MANDELROT, JACK SPICER

22 FRONT top shelf

- (a) HISTORIES, SUPERSTITION/IMPOSTURES
- (b) various essay reading incl. BATESON, KAUFFMAN, ARENDT, GAMSCI, LEVINAS, CHANCE/CHAOS, MATHEMATICS, UNKNOWN PUBLIC
- (c) SEARLE, WEYL, SPACETIME, HAWKING/PENROSE
- (d) RICHTER, BONNARD, RILEY, KITAJ, RUBENS
JOHN BARRELL, WELISH, BERNSTEIN, DRUCKER

- (e) KRAUSS, IRIGARAY, DE BEAUVOIR, PLANT, SARTRE, HARAWAY, SILVERMAN
- (f) FOOD, HEALTH, GRAMMAR, Exmoor, SHAKESPEARE, OLSON
- (g) PRE/EARLY CIVILISATION, COLTRANE, FILM, SPINOZA/DASCARTES

23 inner shelf

- (a) DELEUZE, GUATTARI, DERRIDA, ROSE, GADAMER, ARENDT, MARX, ADORNO, ARISTOTLE, WALLERSTEIN, BERGSON, HEIDEGGER, CHOMSKY
- (b) Conventional Art History: PANOFSKY, SAXL, WIND etc
- (c) PHYSICS, EARLY GREEK, US and UK POETRY, JC JONES

24 BACK main shelf with audio

- (a) SARTRE, LEVINAS, ECO, DERRIDA, GUATTARI, DELEUZE, POPPER, AUTONOMIA, CASTI, UK POETRY, ARCHITECTURE
- (b) NATURE magazines
- (c) BLAKE, RAPHAEL, TURNER, JOHNS, BOSCH

25 FRONT main shelf with audio

- (a) BAUDRILLARD, TOPOLOGY, DARWIN
- (b) FOUCAULT
- (c) MAPS

26 over fridge

GRAVITY reading texts, Spanner Sales items

27 archive box

- (a) LANYON, POUSSIN, BLAKE, ROGER FRY, AJANTA, MICHELANGELO, DANTE, TURNER, DOT ROWE, POE, TJ CLARK, WITTKOWER, COMPUTER ART
- (b) SKETCH BOOKS, INDEXES

28 scarpa box via database

29 over scarpa

ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN, POUSSIN

30 shelving over fireplace

PIERS PLOWMAN, GRAMMAR, BESTIARY

Get this off and get back again soon, looking forward to GWAM.

Allen

MAC CORMACK TO FISHER #7

Wed, 05 Sep 2001 23:48:19

Dear Allen,

you're correct in thinking that the legend of your map would amuse me but it also delights me because in a sense it's such a fascinating glimpse of how you approach creativity (others' and your own)!

"historical letters 4 Contrary to a tracing, which always returns to the "same," a map has multiple entrances . . . A map is a matter of performance, whereas the tracing always refers to an alleged "competence." Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari" (from *On the Line*, p. 26, quoted in *Implexures*)

I refer to this quotation as it seems to be a resonance we both hear (and so here again). I share your excitement re: D &

G and offer you this, as it ongoingly informs my thinking:

“There is no language in itself, no universality of language, but an encounter of dialects, patois, argots, and special languages. There is no more any speaker-auditor ideal than there is a homogeneous linguistic community.” (Deleuze & Guattari, *On the Line*, pp. 12-13)

Just as there is no universality of language there’s no “universality” of architecture, i.e. “architecture” should not be construed as a blanket term anymore than “poetry” is some singular, neutral “form” . . . how this does or doesn’t work re: quantum mechanics I don’t know – thoughts on this?

To allow D& G to continue: “A rhizome is made of plateaus. Gregory Bateson uses the word ‘plateau’ to designate something very special: a vibrant and continuous area of intensities that develops by avoiding every orientation toward a culminating point or external end.” (ibid, p. 49, and in a footnote on p. 64 re: Bateson’s *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* D & G state: “It should be noted that the word ‘plateau’ is used in classical studies of bulbs, tubers, and rhizomes: cf. the entry for ‘bulb’ in Baillon’s *Dictionnaire de botanique*.”) I would say that Musil’s *The Man Without Qualities* is one of the best examples of this . . .

As for the “real” I return to Damasio:

“These various images-perceptual, recalled from real past, and recalled from plans of the future-are constructions of your organism’s brain. All that you can know for certain is that they are real to yourself, and that other beings make comparable images. We share our image-based concept of the world with other humans, and even with some animals; there is a remarkable consistency in the constructions different individuals make of the essential aspects of the environment (textures, sounds, shapes, colors, space). If our organisms were designed differently, the constructions we make of the world around us would be different as well. We do not know, and it is improbable that we will ever know, what ‘absolute’ reality is like.” (*Descartes’ Error*, 97)

I’m thinking about how this might have a relation to the “continuous reliance on the ‘confidence curve’” you referred to in your first response (28 June 01), re: quantum phenomena being beyond perception “except through machines of nerve gas” . . .

Walls as crowd-outs, windows as frames within crowd-outs?

One more trajectory before I send this off to you, from Michael Camille, concerning Romanesque art:

“But whereas in the ancient world triumphal arches and amphitheatres articulated the centrality of imperial rule, for medieval people they became gates and passageways between psychological, rather than political, states. Romanesque art is one of entrances, doorways, westworks, narthexes, porches, capitals and cornices. . . .” (*Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*, 56)

(This puts a certain spin on Blake’s “I cannot imagine death as anything more than going from one room into another” [I’m paraphrasing]. . . among other things, of course.)

And I haven’t yet responded to the “drives as political options” quotation (D& G) . . .

Karen

FISHER TO MAC CORMACK #9

15/9/01

Dear Karen,

One of the extraordinary results from the exchange has been the way in which it has opened out some of the complexity, given energy to the complexity to encourage better application. The terminological shifts from concepts of

phase spacetime, catastrophe theory, punctuated equilibrium, quantum mechanics finds new ground in Lawson's *Closure*, flips to and from agreement. I've been researching *Traps or Tools and Damage* and this begins to impinge and contribute here to your extended work on architects' terminologies and that of linguistics (to give 2 examples). This, as promised previously, is from *CLOSURE* looked at last week:

A mousetrap for example, can be regarded as having two discrete states: it is either set, it is ready, or it has sprung, it has gone off. Many different causes may have led to it being in one state or another: it may have been sprung by a mouse, but it could also have been knocked by someone or something, or someone could have deliberately set it off. In the context of the mechanism all of these variations are of no consequence, it is either set or it has sprung. The diversity of the immediate environment is thereby reduced to single state and its absence: it is either set or it is not set. Any mechanical arrangement that enables a system to alternate between two or more discrete states is thereby capable of providing the basis for preliminary closure... (p.30)

or what I might have called 'crowd-out'

Lawson on p.31:

It can be seen that closure provides a new outcome, which is not the same as the circumstances from which it was realised.

and on p.50:

Take the previous example of the preliminary closure offered by a mousetrap. Such a system can be made partially self-sustaining if the mouse is trapped unharmed, and only released when it has run on a wheel long enough to generate enough energy to reset the trap....

on p.92:

The importance of an individual's space to perception and to the capacity to intervene in openness becomes clear if we consider the difference between someone who has considerable experience in a particular field and a novice...

Thus when you say, "Contrary to a tracing..." and "There is ... no universality of language, but an encounter of dialects..." or a multiplicity of spacetimes (and again Bateson's plateaus) which are necessarily unique or complete or separate from each other, but as quantum mechanics indicates, more complex, not open to the simplicities of measurement, which may over specify, which may be determined by the kind of measurements being used, which may require remote or virtual measurement, which may not be measurable in the usual sense at the level of phenomena and perception, but rather relies on hypothetical blur.

It is that blur, which has to be presented as measurement, or as a description of how subatomic activity or macro-universe-wide activities occur, that relies on the 'confidence curve', a kind of Boltzmann decision about spectra (which could have enlightened, but in fact confused some colour vision 'science')

Walls become decisions, and thus become 'crowd-outs', and as you say, "windows as frames" within these and this is contiguous with your note on, for instance the Romanesque, that art of memory that cannot exclude the copulating couple or mooning saint or the dancers in the rafters of, and given the solemnity of, the sanctuary.

In medieval Chartres, in the late Romanesque, a floor carved into a labyrinth around which pilgrims crawled on their knees until, at the centre, they stood up to see the rose window before them, and were, presumably sent into another spacetime or certainly given a perception lift that becomes a crowd-out to the labour of getting there.

Allen

MAC CORMACK TO FISHER #8

Sun, 16 Sep 2001 23:08:52

Dear Allen,

thank you for your latest, particularly after the events of Tuesday, 11 September 2001. In terms of trying to process such a plethora of "information" concerning those events, and being unable to discern anything contributing to clarity

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in that regard, so as to make some “sense” of them, I initially questioned how “anything” could matter artistically – until it occurred to me (on Wednesday the 12th) that I should attempt to engage with the things that are “usually” important to me (I suppose in an attempt to assert that if we lose sight of them then we lose them altogether in a greater sense . . . as countless generations must have felt in such terrifying, yet specifically different, moments).

As you stated “blur . . . as measurement” . . . I hope to take up this discussion with you in Philadelphia on 17 October 2001. In the meantime thank you so much for this exchange.

Karen