

Lectures

and

writings

by

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CAGE

SILENCE

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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. (I WAS SILENT: NOW I AM SPEAKING.) 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.

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FOR ANY ONE OF US CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

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.

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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 EX-
 PRESSED 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?

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