

VA335

SOUND AND IMAGE

Week 7

On Sonic Arts Part II

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All materials are used for academic purposes

Writing / Speaking

Since very ancient times, human thought and communication has been inextricably bound up with the use of the written word.

Ever since the ancient Egyptians developed pictures into a viable form of hieroglyphic notation, our world has been dominated by a class of scribes, capable of mastering and hence capable, or deemed capable, of controlling what was to be written down and stored in the historical record.

hieroglyphic notation

 A	 B	 B	 C	 D	 E
 F	 G	 H	 H	 I	 J
 K	 L	 M	 N	 N	 O
 P	 Q	 R	 S	 T	 T
 U	 V	 W	 X	 Y	 Z

Writing / Speaking

In the long era of scribery, all people regarding themselves as 'cultured' or 'civilized', as opposed to illiterate peasants or craftsmen, have lived within the confines of an enormous library whose volumes have laid down what was socially acceptable and, in effect, possible to know and to mean.



Writing / Speaking

The vast growth in literacy in the last century, with its numerous undoubted social advantages, has, however, further increased the dominance of our conception and perception of the world through that which can be written down.



Writing / Speaking

So here we are in a library, and I would like to convey to you what I mean. If, for a moment, we could put all these volumes of words on one side, if we could face each other across a table and engage in the immediate dialectic of facial and bodily gestures which accompany face-to-face communication, perhaps you could appreciate that what I intend to mean is not necessarily reducible to the apparent meanings words I employ during the interchange perhaps you could reach through my words to my meanings.



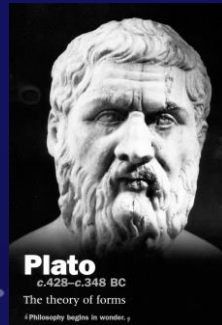
Writing / Speaking

Divorced from the immediate reality of face-to-face communication, it became objectified, generalized, and above all, permitted the new class of scribes (whether priests, bureaucrats or academics) to define and control what might 'objectively' be meant.

Writing / Speaking

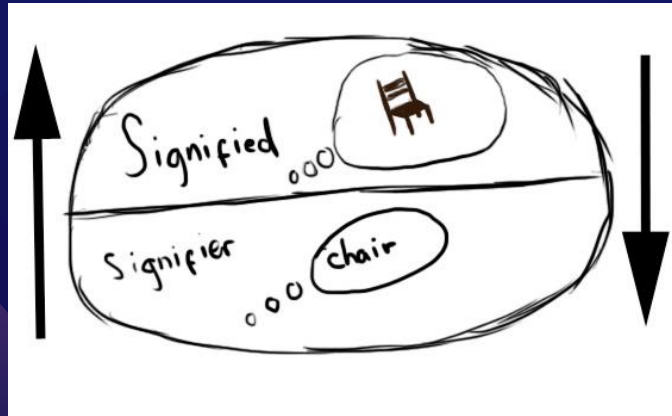
For Plato, the idea of the object, which took on a new historical permanence in its notation in the written word, came to have more 'reality' than the object-as-experienced

The commonplace tables and chairs which we experience in the course of our everyday life were mere pale reflections of the ideal table and chair existing in some Platonic heaven.



Writing / Speaking

I am going to propose that words never 'mean' anything at all.
Only people 'mean' and words merely contribute towards signifying
peoples' meanings.



Writing / Speaking

It is clear that not meaning, but signification, resides in the words and that the mode and context of use of these significations all contribute towards the speaker's meaning.

Writing / Speaking

For the scribe meaning appears to result as the product of a combinatorial process; broadly speaking, various words with more or less clearly defined reference or function are strung together in a linear combination to form sentences, paragraphs, etc., which have a resultant clearly specified meaning.

Writing / Speaking

For the individual speaker, she or he means. Not merely the combination of words but a choice from an infinitude of possible inflections, tones of voice and accents for their delivery, together with possibilities of movement, gesture and even song, enter into the synthesis of the speech-act which attempts to convey what he or she means.

Writing / Speaking

- Gesture is essentially an articulation of the continuum.

All wind instruments having a direct and continuous connection with the physiological breathing of the player are similar gesturally-sensitive transducers.

Bowed instruments, similarly, where sound is produced by a continuing physiological action, are also gesturally sensitive.

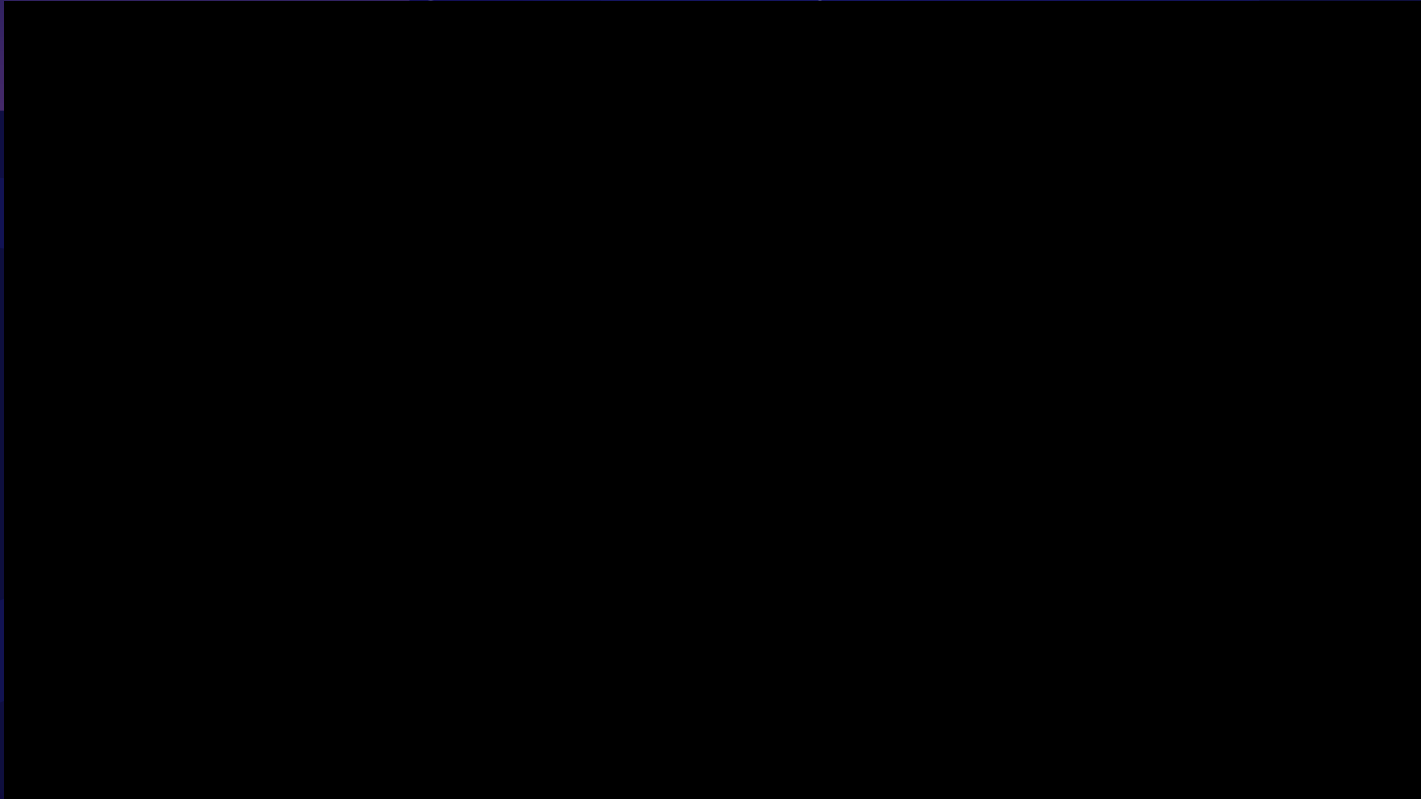
Writing / Speaking

Percussive instruments are not gesturally sensitive at the level of the individual sound-event.

Gestural structure is the most immediate and yet notationally the most elusive aspect of musical communication.

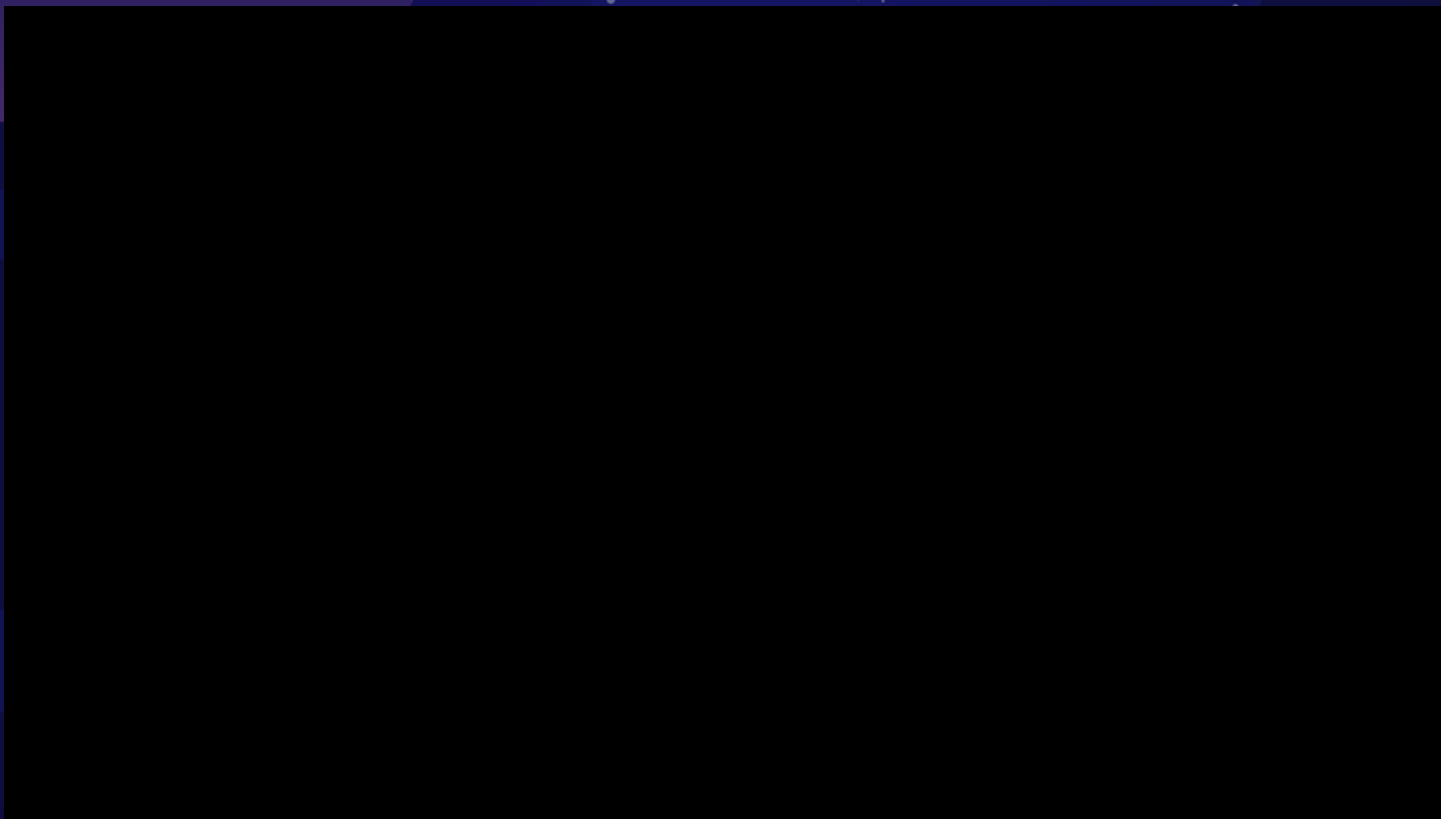
In music which attempts to deal with the continuum (rather than the lattice), gestural structure becomes the primary focus of organizational effort.

MUSICAL GESTURE



Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXBGZoBYaLY>

MUSICAL GESTURE



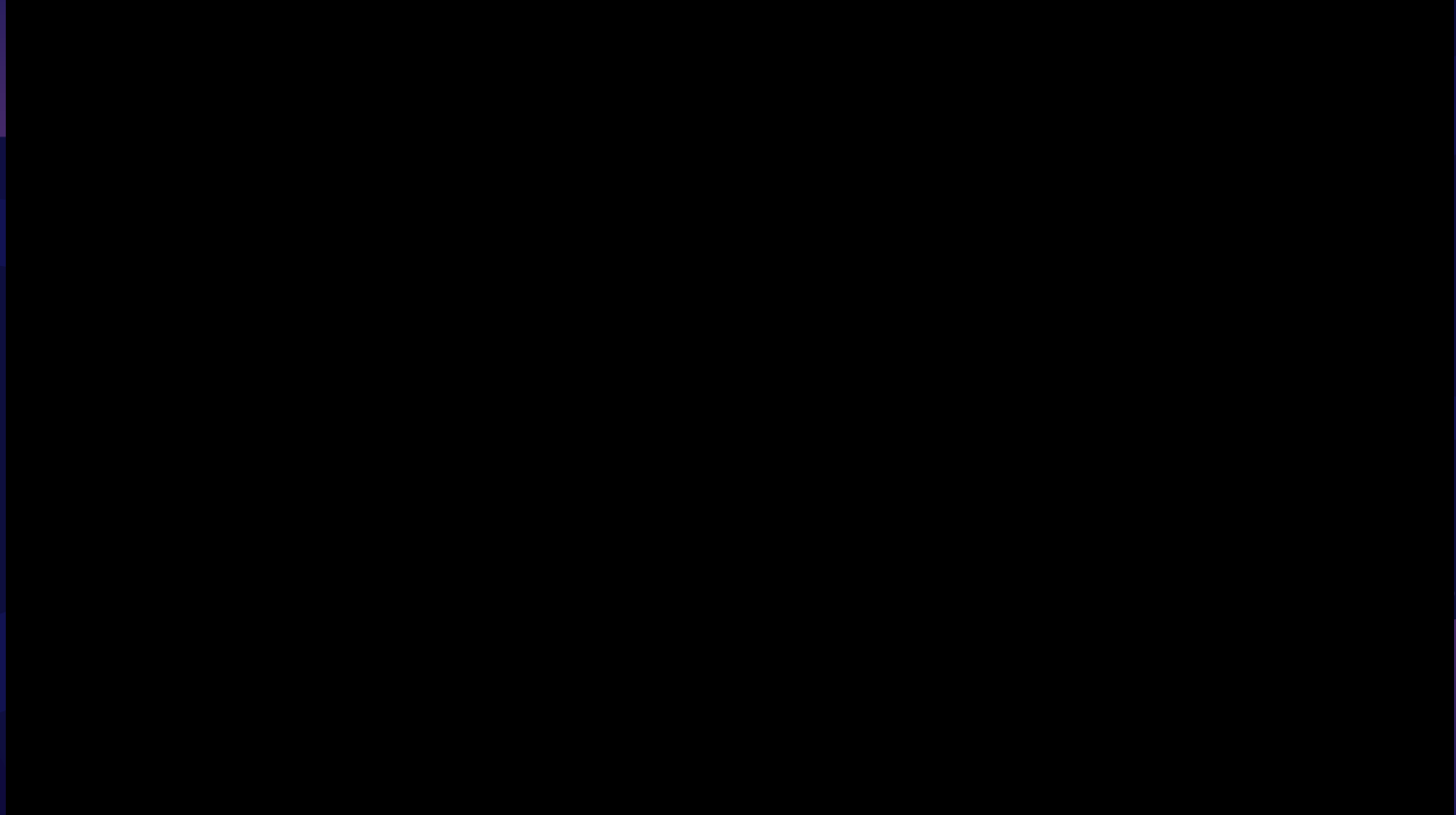
Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTXtOVaCaOU>

TUVA SINGING EXAMPLE



Source: Genghiz Blues : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8Lr_27MkzA

Anna-Maria HEFELE



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHTF1-IhuC0>

'sonic art'

as being something that has the same socio-cultural function as visual art, but which uses sound as its medium.

However, I now anticipate the counter-response: "...but isn't that what music is?".

If we take the definition of music as being axiomatic, then the answer to this question is "it could be..."! If we believe that music is 'organised sound', then music becomes a subset of sonic art...



Jamie Bullock

<http://jamiebullock.com/post/3857534649/music-and-sonic-art>

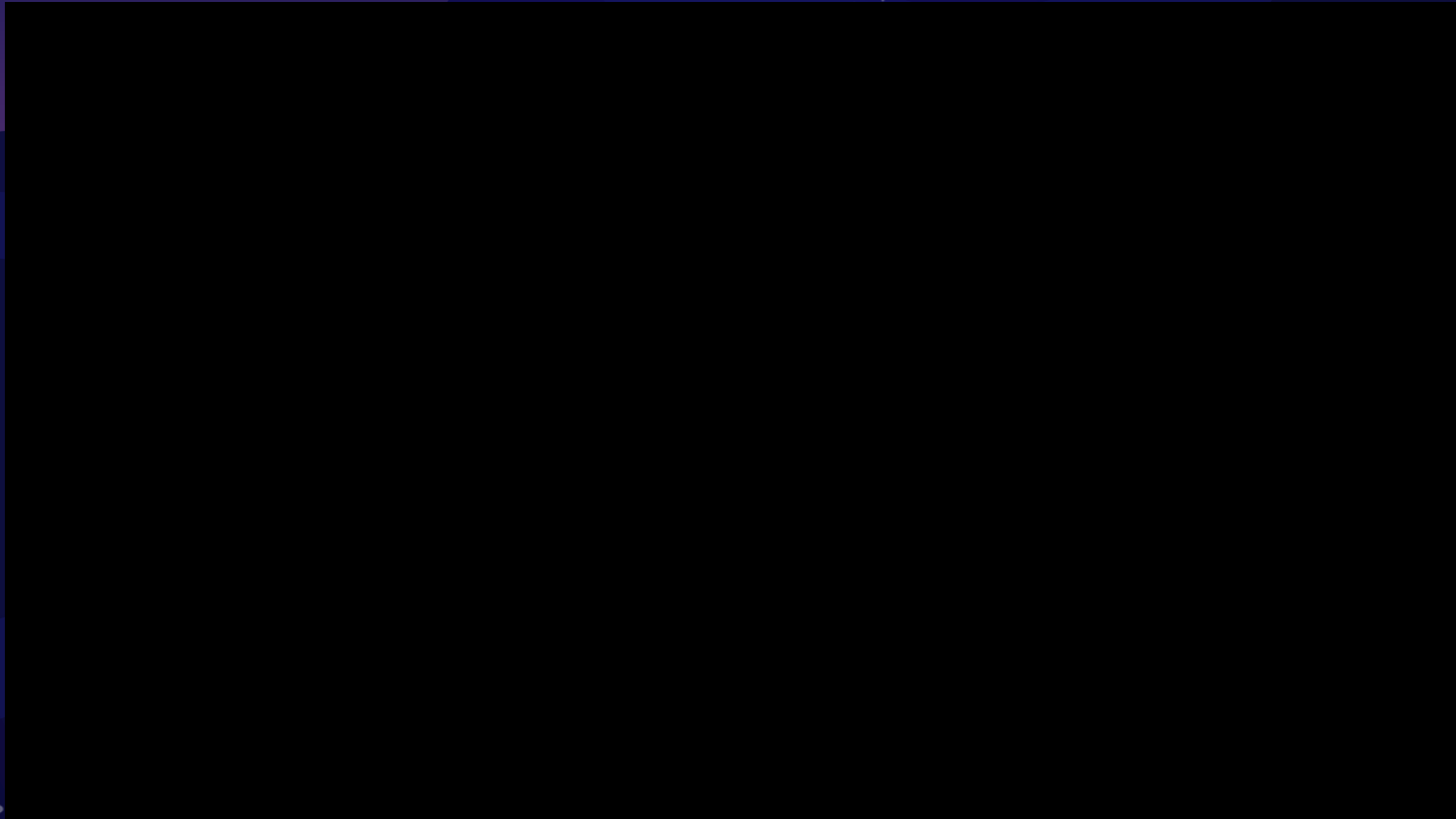
Bonus Assignment

Explore the list of Sound Artists from wikipedia. Find a video documentary of one of their art works and write a paragraph of self-analysis.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_sound_artists

Also provided as pdf on Sucourse

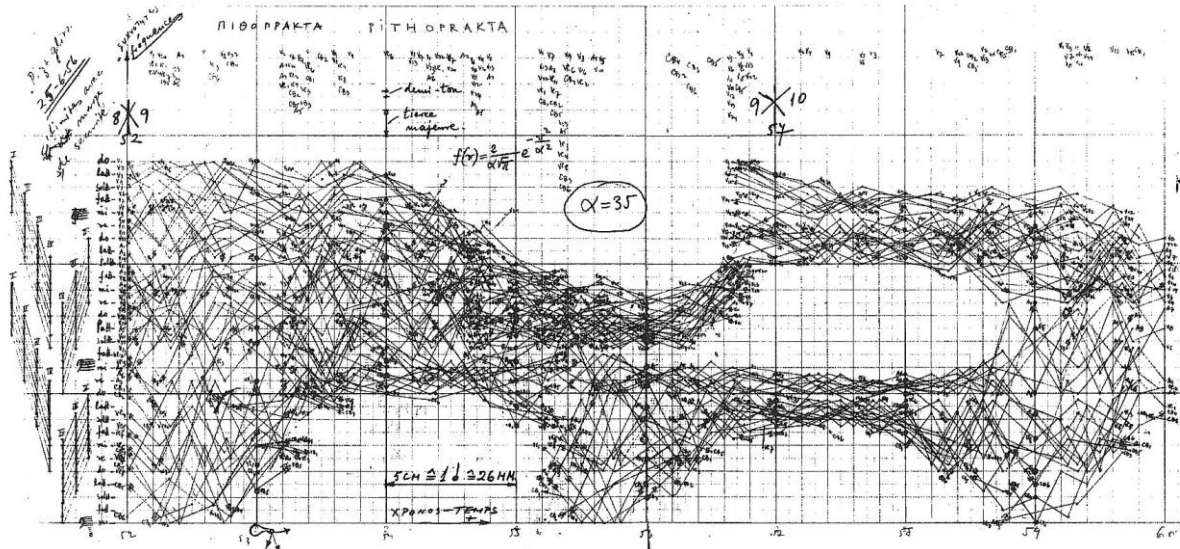
GRAPHICAL notation and composition



Describe a Musical Event

Example : Xenakis' Pithoprakta

Pithoprakta (1955-56), mesures 52-59 : graphique de Xenakis
Source : Iannis Xenakis, *Musique. Architecture*, Tournai, Casterman, 1976, p. 167



Describe a Musical Event

Example : Edgard Varese - Poem Electronique

