

Saving Time

This is a love letter to my readers, to give them the key both to my heart and the liquor cabinet where, after encountering one after another dead-end, repetition, wild-goose chase or some other failure of writing or thinking they need a well-deserved refreshment. As to the heart department, anyone who knows me knows that writing is more than a way of staying competitive within a discipline that has a cruel love-hate relation with writing. Architecture teaching/research's relation to writing resembles a 50s film-*noir* account of an abusive affair involving alcoholism, betrayal, violence. The pretense to sobriety has led to a realism that treats poetic device as a wild animal caged in a zoo dedicated to classification and syllogism. All the while it uses rhetoric as ideology to set up the audience's gullibility and avoid critical confrontations. In other words, the writing standards of our field suck.

As my writing shows, just being aware of this sad condition isn't any help. You don't get better by wanting to be, or by hating the bad examples. But, it's not the case that when writing becomes a means by which the soul can find its way that you give up when you are disappointed. I am always disappointed. I've read almost everything that Nabokov and Iris Murdoch wrote in English, just to find out how they do it, but I still can't produce a single paragraph that comes up to their standard. I've gotten intoxicated by the romantic ego-fiction of John Fowles and Lawrence Durrell, and I can't even match their crappiest self-indulgent page. I'm the boy who fell in love with the beauty-queen, who doesn't know he exists. See? Even that's a pathetic clichéd story line!

So, why bother? When your writing becomes as important as breathing, and when the line going to the right side of the page just to flip to the left again and you feel your heart beating, then you don't need to explain, you just continue. But, at some point you need company, and Bruno Schulz wrote that the writer needs to hold the hand of a reader "beneath the table." That's all it is, maybe, nothing more than the need for companionship and sympathy, but nonetheless those hands, and that table, are better than anything on it or above it. This short essay hopes to put something on the table that makes holding hands more a matter of pledging solidarity in some common cause. The writing of the past year has reflected the turbulence of the times and my increasing awareness that we don't have all the time in the world to goof off. It's also been compelled to recognize that there are smart people in the world who have said smart things, and yet been misunderstood and unappreciated. Oh yeah, I'm going to "set the record straight!" — Not bloody likely, but each of us has a part of the password needed to get out of the fake cardboard prison that, like the jail in Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading*, is never locked but still immobilizing. In *Tristram Shandy*, there's the story of the two nuns who have to get to town but have borrowed a mule that refuses to move. The mule's owner was a vulgarian who would shout *Foutre!* to get the mule to go, but of course the nuns can't say that, so they decide that one yells *fou* quickly followed by the other yelling *tre*. This is the classiness of reading's act, to find a way to say the one word we need by dividing it into parts, some of which are said by the readers, others by writers, and to assemble our password as an anagram.

And, like any crossword puzzle, there are things that some of us know right away and, almost without knowing it, will fill in blanks helping others who are puzzled. There are no black squares in our crossword; it will be a perfect square that reads left-to-right, up-to-down, and diagonally, but also right to left and down to up: a perfect palindrome, just like the heart, that by allowing for contradictory motions keeps the blood moving in a circuit. Now, there's a story about the pulse that has something to say about the perfect

palindrome. It's that the pulse carries "sound" in the form of micro-vibrations — "noises" or maybe even "tunes" — that beneath the bass-line of diastole and systole, set up a multi-way channel that the organs use to communicate with each other. So, the kidney can say something to the elbow, the eyelid can, after elevating itself to acknowledge a risqué proposition, alert the genitals that something may be about to happen. The body *as body* is like the table where the reader and writer are holding hands beneath. A squeeze here becomes a caress there, a pinch becomes a pat. That's a real body, coming close now to being able to state what Freud meant with the term "autoerotic," a closed system (an economy) able to diversify internally to make an outside from an inside, to allow anarchy the chance to flower beneath the despotism of the brain that only thinks it is in charge. Poetry in this case looks like pathology from the point of view of the "executive functions" that have it that we think first and act later. All experiments about this show that we "shoot first and ask questions later" — that acts precede any awareness that we intend to act. So, we are really and truly poetic beings in our collectivity as well as our individuality, and only later compelled to protest like Victorians "horrified" at our excesses.

Thanks to the heart's palindromic talents, what would just be a pump and check-valve is now an "inverter gate" that executes a kind of cross-hand arrangement so that the partner (the "follow") can do a turn. The rule in dancing applies to writing. If you don't do the preps, you can't do the motion. The lead must communicate to the follow, the idea has to be "already and always" there before it's introduced and explained. That way, when the train arrives at the station, you discover that it never left. Time folds over on to itself without the embarrassment of having to turn the arrows (Eros) around, because arrows, *c'est la vie*. We need our transitive, irreversible directions, our causal chains, our hierarchical signifiers, our Matryoshka dolls, our scale distinctions. When we break these arrows, the mitral valve doesn't leak blood, it opens up the phone lines. Autoeroticism means that the prince connects to the pauper, David slays Goliath, Virginia gets Santa to write back directly. And, I hope it also means that the beast gets to first base with the beauty. It is the idea of the short circuit, about which one can give the only truly convincing argument, "saves time."

The biggest "bang for buck" trick in writing is to take what you've written, look carefully at the ending, and put it at the beginning.¹ Sometimes you won't even have to make any changes. Just moving the last to the first recharges the whole thing. This means that what you thought consciously was the Big Deal, the thing you had to prove, was somehow "always and already" there, and that relocating it made no difference, except that it avoided creating a sense of let-down when the reader, after suffering through pages of tedium, got to a point that was a moment of "really?" Avoid that at all costs. Like any travel experience that works out, getting there is almost all of the fun. Delayed pleasure, like delayed love, is a waste. Enjoy now not later. Enjoyment is not knowing. It's the gift that's wrapped and mysterious, not the one that's been opened, the unknowns let out. *Before* is glorious, amorous, wound to exquisite tightness, set to explode with joy. I won't go further with this metaphor, it's too well-known. The point is that delay is artful and kind and intelligent. You don't give anything by moving the last to the first, except your conception of scale.

¹ I can't take credit for this. Elaine K. has always told me to do this when she reads over my work, and Berrin Terim's writing responded so well to this "treatment" that I suspected her of planting the Easter Eggs so that I would always be able to find them.

When I started this chapter of my writing career, I decided that I was not “writer material,” that I would have to put up with my amateur status, but that knowing in advance that I would lose, I should remain true to a few things by not remaining true to anything, at least on any principle. I would think I knew how things would end. This is true in life as well as writing, so maybe there’s “at least one truth.” Everyone should read Sanchez’s introduction to *Nihil Sciet* (“that nothing is known”) to avoid the stupidity of skepticism. The short form of the story is that skeptics who say they know nothing have admitted to knowing “at least one thing,” and so they are guilty of self-contradiction and disingenuousness; but Sanchez knows this in advance and supplies a clever rebuttal. It’s one of the elegant masterpieces of philosophical writing. Vico knew about it but was able to out-do Sanchez by making his version of “knowing nothing” into a literary style. Fiction is another, generic way. But, not all of us have the luxury of escape to fiction. Those writing up the business report on reality have to use Sanchez’s rebuttal-in-advance or be as clever as Vico. Just don’t use that fake ignorance that social scientists pretend with their null hypothesis. Why doesn’t someone pull the curtain back on this sheer hypocrisy? It’s the basis of all the ideology pretending to be science, different versions of the “natural attitude” (“Everyone knows that ...”).

Back to my original intention of providing a kind of “read me” introduction to the writings I put out to share with a small group of writer-friends. The Big Idea of the past two years has been to move from “expositional” essay-writing — where argument is framed in the format of “I really mean to say this” — to fiction, where the device of point of view can be moved around from exposition’s “sincere” intentionality. Fiction is not an intention to lie without paying the penalty. It’s done out of the realization that all writing and thought is fictional in that it belongs to the codes and conventions we set up to create common cultures. Language begins with the two registers of the Cretan Paradox, we can’t say one thing without engaging the “other thing” that capsizes the truth value of what we first said. Our position as a speaker can’t be avoided when we make a claim. This is expression’s “efficient cause.” We have to conceal/occlude the contradiction in order to connect our speech act to the intentions of our thoughts (the “final cause”), but the occulted element (the fact that we’re all Cretans when we say we’re trying to tell the truth, that we’re liars) doesn’t go away. It waits. It waits on its “second coming,” and this second coming is like Lacan’s letter that “always reaches its destination.” As Mahalia Jackson sang in relation to God, “He may not come when you want Him, but He’s right on time.”

This always-on-time letter comes after intentionality has found its form (this is the Lacanian Symbolic) and fashioned it with similarly occulted techniques, craft, and material being (“material cause”). Because Form/Material, as kinds of causes, are not binaries but vectors connected at a 90° angle (= related but independent, i. e. “orthogonal”), we find the path for the return to the original suppressed truth (maybe should be written, always, “Truth”) within material opportunities. This in short was the discovery of the ancients, re-discovered by Góngora, Tesauro, Sforza-Pallavicino, and (naturally) Vico.² Also Lawrence Sterne and every good poet you know. (The Robert Hass poem “Heroic Simile” is a lesson in four verses on this essential idea.) These guys, it seems, are always *giving away* the secret, knowing that only a few will understand! The letter *comes back to where you first threw it away*. So, the last thing you say can be brought up front, it doesn’t matter. It will have the effect of purifying your thoughts without anyone having to wake up or sober up. Penia gets Poros, after all, while he is still drunk and asleep, and the result is *ingenium*.

² Maarten Delbeke, *The Art of Religion: Sforza Pallavicino and Art Theory in Bernini's Rome* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012). Online text at <<http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=956277>>.

If it ain't got that swing, it don't mean a thing. It don't mean a thing all you got to do is sing. Makes no difference if it's sweet or hot. Just give that rhythm everything you've got. The rhythm that the heart uses, beneath the pulse, to let the organs communicate with each other, to get that letter back to where you hid it. Now, let's talk about why you hid it in the first place. The unconscious is expressly denied or falsified by most of the honored functionaries of phenomenology: Heidegger, Ricoeur, Bachelard. In my view, Bergson just doesn't get it but knows he should. Merleau-Ponty *does* get it, and get it well in his idea of "flesh of the world." Sartre gets it perfectly, even if he becomes over-possessed by the ethics of consciousness. Lacan



realized that getting the swing of Freud required tapping in time to the rhythm of the death drive, a circuit after all that, seemingly pumped full by the check-valve of the Real/trauma, was enlivened by the secondary capacity for *acousmatics*. Just like the heart and blood, circulation was only the bass line over, beneath, and within which other rhythms could be used to telegraph from any where to any other where, including points in time. This acousmatics was the same by which the unconscious spoke to the conscious, and this formed the "discourse of Analysis," where in Lacan's four-over-four bilateral set-up, the place of the Productive was the master signifier, the S1 that was the Janusian function. Just as *jouissance* became the Agent, the "object-

cause of desire," in Analysis, it sublated what the unconscious *knew* about the Subject, $\$$. In the position of truth, this knowledge, S2, had as its only true possessions, its gaps, mistakes, slips-of-tongue, fake accounts, embarrassments, failed loves, concealed crimes. The so-called "treasury of signifiers" was a pile of trash. But, inside this pile, the *edges of things* allowed light to shine through, and this was the S1 light of the Janusian "beams" that, in shining are *shone*, in looking are *looked at*, in speaking are *spoken to*. Light that shines in only one direction, from source to object, travels at the speed of light, and is limited to that. Light that shines in both directions, which is both light and darkness shining through the light (J. Joyce) *takes no time at all*. When it shines, we are before, during, and after what is lit. *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*. Where the "it" was, there I am "becoming." I *will* be where I *will to be*. Wishing is being, in these conditions. And, so, it is OK to write fiction, if only to get into this new idea of time and realize the promise of *durée* that Bergson foreclosed when he made sympathy travel in one direction, from antagonism to humiliation. Hegel had already figured out that humiliation is also a beginning, that antagonism is also an end. Just look at the *Witz*: the joke is already there, and it's on us. Doowa, doowa, doowa ... don't matter if it's sweet or hot, just give that rhythm everything you've got.

Back and forth is the way Janus (*Djanus*, therefore Diana's male counterpart) is like Picasso: she doesn't have to hunt, her "kills" just wander in to find her. Actæon is also a finder who doesn't need to look. He just comes her way, no effort required, just keep the arrows/Eros handy. Splash the water of transformation to reverse predicate the hunter into hunted. That was a metaphor Bergson would have done well to remember. Humility (Actæon didn't mean to interrupt Diana's bath) to Antagonism (the opposite is always-already inscribed within; the hunter is already-always the hunted; the binary is, from the start, cross-inscribed, self-generated and self-generating). The beloved is the lover, concealed.

That is the set-up of writing. Make a clearing, undress, take a bath. What comes will come of its own. Just keep the Eros handy. The transitive direction of the instruments of the kill — the shadow on the wall behind the trash pile — will simply be agents of conversion, releasing the antagonistic element from within the “hero who falls *like* the cedar” in Hass’s poem. The shade of resemblance is sufficient to set up the doowa doowa of the acousmatic, the channel in the blood that allows the back-beat of *clinamen*, “stochastic resonance” (the way weak signals are amplified by the presence of noise). So “make some noise.” This is Góngora’s art of *ingenium* to open up the double, to figure out how to get the mule to move by dividing fuck into fu- and -ck. Anacoluthon, chiasmus, aposiopesis. The ancients have already figured this out. The formal figure is the *will* that would be, shall be, at the place where the pre-ego *id* took on its first forms: autoerotics = autopoiesis (but not Varela’s version; see Diego Rapoport about this, I can’t explain the technical details).³ The remarkable thing about Diego Rapoport’s highly technical, highly quantum-physics/biophysics argument is that I had come to the *same conclusions myself*, “reasoning” not through the competencies of mathematics or any of Rapoport’s expertise, but through the *ersatz* method I learned from Vico, who in following Mannerist principles of (aimless) elaboration created conditions analogous to the trash-piles of the unconscious — the radical contingency necessary to allow the *bi-directional* beam of “acousmatic” light to shine simultaneously in two directions. The point is not that I am a lucky idiot, but that the light beam works in all situations. Rapoport’s discovery of the light beam — which took him a lifetime of research and learning in some five different fields, all requiring the greatest intellectual labor — *is the same light beam*. Not a different one. It don’t matter if it’s sweet or hot. Just give the rhythm everything you’ve got.

So, when I took a break from thinking about the novel where the analyst, a failed academic (remind you of anyone?) turned psychoanalyst, who runs into an analysand named after Wisdom who dreams hysterical houses (I have no idea what this will mean), I was energized by the work of Tim Noble (hot) and (sweet) Sue Webster, who created trash-piles carefully arranged to create articulate surprising shadows on the wall when a focused light beam was shown through them. This had an economical way of showing that absolute contingency was *required* for the emergence of the Absolute as knowing, *kenosis* being the proper term for “knowing without knowing.” The reversed predication of that light beam was the same as the “darkness shining through the light” cited by James Joyce in *Ulysses*; the same as the light that travels faster than the speed of light, thanks to its reversibility; the same as Rapoport’s necessary three-state logic and the

³ Diego Rapoport, “Klein Bottle Logophysics, Self-reference, Heterarchies, Genomic Topologies, Harmonics and Evolution,” in three parts, *Quantum Biosystems* 7, 1 (November 2016). Rapoport demonstrates that Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana’s elaborate and influential idea of autopoetics “inadvertently” defined its “A reduced 3-state logic was posited in the theory of autopoiesis –etymologically, self-creation- of living systems due to Varela (1979), in which there is a single reentrance of the form on itself, archetypical Ouroboros. Yet, the distinction between the two states of self-penetration transiting between Outside and Inside, according to which is the departing state, renders the *direction* of self-penetration a necessary distinction by itself accounted by i and j. Remarkably, Varela proposed for autopoiesis a dualistic logophysics based on the dual (2 state) logic, dismissing this 3-state logic, introducing the notion of operational closure, by which the boundary of a system acts as a dual gate. In doing so, Varela’s autopoiesis neglects the two states of self-penetration (or self-reentrance) transiting between Outside and Inside and particularly the direction that relates the latter states” (Part 3 of Rapoport’s article, “The Klein Bottle Logic of Genomics and its Dynamics, Quantum Information, Complexity and Palindromic Repeats in Evolution,” 109).

“two states of self-penetration” that is as succinct and accurate a definition one could wish for to nail the idea of autoeroticism. And, this from a neuro-bio-physicist!

When Freud read Karl Abel's 1884 essay on contronyms (*Über den Gegensinn der Urworte*), he was as excited as someone who, hearing the numbers of a sweepstakes lottery while looking at identical numbers on his ticket, imagines in a few seconds what it is going to be like to be a millionaire. Poor Freud! The last number didn't match. Abel was just a second-rate (at best) philologist who had exaggerated his facts. Contronyms didn't proliferate in ancient thought as much as he claimed. One couldn't project the two lines of opposition back to a past where every word and thought contained its opposite — *Gegensinn* — at least not for the linguists who, lacking any solid model of subjectivity, had never compared, as Vico, Freud, and a few others had compared, the childhood of humankind with the childhood of individual humans. Freud was in possession of a more important truth about *Gegensinn*: that these childhoods, of the species and single person, were contronymic in their ability to shift from subject to object, passive to active, god to demon. The transitive positivity that kept the adult fully within the Symbolic's arrows of time, space, and causality was leaky in the autoerotic state of pre-Subjectivity. These leaks allowed children their sense of megalomania, their ability to create things by saying them, to animate toys and other objects, to play all roles at the same time. Freud was aware that this was a mechanism *as such*, that it was a motor on the wheel of the autoerotic's world of wonder, or rather an inverter that, simply by reversing, added pulse to the closed circuit of self-maintaining desire.

This was a moment when being wrong meant being right, where public wrongness shielded and protected a private victory. Freud was able to articulate the death drive as more than a compulsion to return to a traumatic experience in order to relive it, to *play it out* rather than simply remember it. Re-running trauma rather than encapsulating it with an enteric coating of fantasy meant that there were two memories, a “pictorial memory” operated by the Imaginary, a memory of recalling; and a ruthless real-time memory, a 1:1 mechanism of perfect reproduction, trauma for trauma, no fantasy buffering the Real. This memory could only come from the unconscious. It was too perfect, too mechanical. Once inside it, one was seated in the auditorium of a play that happened on both sides of the proscenium. Everything was set to a tempo of *now*, before you had time to prepare your reaction. The trauma of the Real was this mechanism of *Gegensinn*, whose effects were only gradually “over-written” by the devices of the Symbolic coating the Id to make an *Es* (“it”) in order to make an *Ich*, capable of I-thou relations within full subjectivity. The “it” on the way to the “I” was capable of accumulation. This was Freud's and Lacan's great discovery. This was Freud's “trash-pile” model of the unconscious where every denial or refusal pushed the counter forward, added to the stack. For Lacan, the accumulating device was the Production, the third (lower right) position on the bi-lateral diagram of the discourse, beneath the bar of the Other, across the divide from Truth.

For me Production's trash pile has opened a way of talking about sorites, that curious feature of symbolic logic where the addition of “one grain more” or subtraction of “one hair less” suddenly results in a realization. The contrast between slow accumulation/attrition and the “faster than time” act of realization — which is too fast to be regarded as a “response” but instead is more like a creative “Let there be!” — shows that the pile of trash is structured from the beginning, but not as some 3-dimensional random stack through which light is able to project a 2-dimensional shadow, as in Noble and Webster's trash piles. The 2-dimensional “things” in the pile are there from the beginning. They are the essence, the Real, of the pile.

The representation is *inherent* within the represented. Things are memories before they become acts, in the sense that past and present converge. It is interesting (to me) that the sorites offers a way of graphically plotting the emergence of the act as a structure of a vector connecting a point of view with a vanishing point, and that from this “orthogonal vector” position we can see clearly, *instantly*, the symmetry hidden inside the pile — its contronymic structure, its *Gegensinn*. In this model, any one part generates the others. We can start with the pile of trash and get the beam of light across the concealed profiles. We can start with the idea of the point of view and go to the vanishing point generated simultaneously, a “recess” created in objectivity at the same time we step back from a frame representing a “distanced” condition. We can even begin with the rotation out from the “plane” of representation (which may be any number of actual spatial/temporal dimensions) to the elevated advantage of the point of view. However we start, we finish with a complete picture of the “inverter gate function” of the autoerotic. This is not just a model of how humans become subjects but how subjects always have access to their prior states: this is the meaning of *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*. This is the bridge to the dream and the form of memory where we don’t have thoughts, thoughts have us. This is the hysteric’s mode of being, and in Lacan’s discourse of the Hysteric, knowledge, S2, lies beneath mastery. The unconscious, the “not knowing that we know” function, accumulates a positive kenosis, which is a Truth about desire. Vico says as much when he describes the feeling the reader will get when he realizes that reading *The New Science* amounts to a writing of it. The body of the reader/writer becomes the ground of the representation of proof of subjectivity’s “always was, is, and will be.” Vico puts this in the strongest language possible; it would be impossible to miss his point. This case of reverse predication (NS, §331) is the structural heart of *The New Science*, the inverter gate that returns us to the autoerotic conversion of philosophy to philology. Vico asks us to know ourselves as God knows himself — in terms of His creations, His *factum*. “He alone knows.” This means that when we know the *factum* of the *verum ipsum factum*, we will be alone. This is our relation to the “itself,” the *ipsum*. 1:1. This is the truth of *jouissance*, the *objet petit a* in the position of Truth in the Hysteric’s discourse, opposite the place of the *factum*, Production. It’s as if Lacan puts Vico beneath the two bars of the Hysteric’s discourse, $\$/a \rightarrow S1/S2$. This is the “beneath the radar” function Vico assigns to the lipogram in the frontispiece, the helmet of Hermes that is never discussed in the detailed commentary Vico provides for the image. The lipogram, $/x$, is the hole made in the sky through which the reader looks into a mirror to see what is “pinned on his back” that others see all too well (Lacan’s Three Prisoners’ Dilemma, re-told in *Écrits*). What is hidden within us is what we present to the Others who know it through and within a *kenosis*, an accumulation of profiles, rejects, denials.

This is a lot for my protagonist, Francis Conrad, to think about. He will have to handle it “kenotically,” i. e. without thinking about it directly. He will have to see it in the faces and actions of others, in the dreams of Sophie, in the hysterical houses she dreams about. As I put off the impossible task of thinking about this, I look through the hole of the space that, on the other side, looks like the eye of God. This is the point of view that sees symmetries that others take for contingencies, but there is something disagreeable about this. I feel like I’m turning up the clock of my own mortality. Hence, the tendency to delay.

Dear reader, lovely reader, I know there is some suffering involved in following the clues of the sorites, but my opinion lately is that this is the quickest way from A to B. It is the “mistake” that, like Freud’s mistake about *Gegensinn*, that discovers the greater success, the truth hidden behind the public aspect of the argument about subjectivity. You’ll see that I repeat myself trying to make the mistake in so many different ways. These writing are my trash pile, welcome to the junk yard! You always know you are

welcome to take home any piece of garbage that catches your fancy ... it would be an honor to have you steal, and then we can have the important discussion about how theft is essential to any idea, thanks to Mr. Hermes advice-to-the-lovelorn column in the newspaper we seem to be the only ones reading. Get used to the "alone" part of knowing, the *ipsum*. It is the silence imposed during the trial (cf. Bergman's version of *The Magic Flute*). There are little ones now, a big one later on. My intention is to find a way to give you a magic flute to play, or magic bells to scare away the Monostatoses of this world.