



Atmosphere, Architecture, Cinema

Thematic Reflections on Ambiance and Place

Michael Tawa

palgrave
macmillan

Atmosphere, Architecture, Cinema

Michael Tawa

Atmosphere, Architecture, Cinema

Thematic Reflections on Ambiance and Place

palgrave
macmillan

Michael Tawa
School of Architecture, Design and Planning
The University of Sydney
Camperdown, NSW, Australia

ISBN 978-3-031-13963-5 ISBN 978-3-031-13964-2 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13964-2>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2022

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

*In memory of Nadia Tawa.
Born Alexandria, Egypt, 29 January 1925. Died Sydney, Australia, 11
February 2022*

*To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
To rear the column, or the arch to bend,
To swell the terrace, or to sink the grot;
In all, let Nature never be forgot.
But treat the goddess like a modest fair,
Nor overdress, nor leave her wholly bare;
Let not each beauty ev'rywhere be spied,
Where half the skill is decently to hide.
He gains all points, who pleasingly confounds,
Surprises, varies, and conceals the bounds.¹*

*“The day was ending in a serenity of still and exquisite brilliance. The water shone pacifically; the sky, without a speck, was a benign immensity of unstained light; the very mist on the Essex marsh was like a gauzy and radiant fabric, hung from the wooded rises inland, and draping the low shores in diaphanous folds. Only the gloom to the west, brooding over the upper reaches, became more sombre every minute, as if angered by the approach of the sun.”²
All my world is scaffolding.³*

¹Alexander Pope, *Epistle to Several Persons: Epistle 4* (1733–1734). <https://www.poetry-foundation.org/poems/44894/epistles-to-several-persons-epistle-iv>. Accessed 20 February 2022.

²Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1910), 1.

³Gerard Manley Hopkins. “Commentary on the Spiritual Exercises,” in W. H. Gardner and N. H. Mackenzie (eds.), *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), xxvii.

CONTENTS

Prologue	1
Rehearsing Atmospheres	11
<i>Alexandria, Egypt</i>	11
<i>Karnataka</i>	12
<i>Gamaka</i>	14
<i>Gerald Manley Hopkins, 1844–1899</i>	16
<i>Coogee Beach, January 1995</i>	20
<i>Dhurabbin Country</i>	21
<i>Adele: ANZ Stadium, Friday, 10 March 2017</i>	23
<i>A Million Windows</i>	24
<i>Das Fastenschleiertuch</i>	26
<i>Shadow</i>	27
<i>Sumvitg</i>	36
Ambiance	43
<i>Ambiguity</i>	43
<i>Types of Ambiguity</i>	45
<i>Instress</i>	52
<i>Circumstance and Consequence</i>	59
<i>Circumspection</i>	64
<i>Tracking</i>	73
<i>On the Lookout</i>	80

Mood	85
<i>Mood and Stimmung</i>	85
<i>Attunement</i>	89
<i>Dasein: Being-the-There</i>	93
<i>Melancholia</i>	101
<i>Music and Melancholia</i>	109
Atmosphere	117
<i>Flaky, Fluffy Wadding</i>	117
<i>Atmosphere</i>	128
<i>Meteorology</i>	131
<i>Halo</i>	138
<i>Haze</i>	142
<i>Scenography</i>	150
Tectonics of Cinematic Atmosphere	157
<i>Atmosphere and Cinema</i>	157
<i>Immanence: Robert Bresson</i>	159
<i>Reverie: Alain Resnais</i>	165
<i>Terror: David Lynch</i>	170
<i>Aporia: Béla Tarr</i>	175
<i>Grace: Terrence Malik</i>	182
<i>Suspense: Jane Campion</i>	187
Tectonics of Architectural Atmosphere	193
<i>Architecture and Atmosphere</i>	193
<i>Suspense: Tympanae</i>	196
<i>Anomie: Kafka's Castle</i>	204
<i>Consilient Discrepancy: Flores Prats</i>	222
Anatomy of Atmosphere	231
<i>Advent</i>	231
<i>Agency</i>	231
<i>Allegory</i>	231
<i>Ambiance</i>	232
<i>Ambiguity</i>	232
<i>Anticipation</i>	232
<i>Aporia</i>	233

<i>Apprehension</i>	233
<i>Assemblage</i>	233
<i>Atmosphere</i>	233
<i>Attunement</i>	233
<i>Character</i>	234
<i>Circumambiance</i>	234
<i>Circumstance</i>	234
<i>Climate</i>	234
<i>Coalesce</i>	235
<i>Colour</i>	235
<i>Complexion</i>	235
<i>Conjugation</i>	236
<i>Consequence</i>	236
<i>Consilience</i>	236
<i>Countenance</i>	236
<i>Crisis</i>	237
<i>Defer</i>	237
<i>Density</i>	237
<i>Discrepancy</i>	237
<i>Ekstasis</i>	237
<i>Emergence</i>	238
<i>Fold</i>	238
<i>Fragment</i>	238
<i>Garden</i>	239
<i>Gesture</i>	239
<i>Gleam</i>	239
<i>Gloaming</i>	240
<i>Gloom</i>	240
<i>Immanent</i>	240
<i>Indeterminate</i>	241
<i>Interstice</i>	241
<i>Margin</i>	241
<i>Matrix</i>	242
<i>Melancholia</i>	242
<i>Metaphor</i>	242
<i>Milieu</i>	243
<i>Mood</i>	243
<i>Perturbation</i>	243
<i>Porosity</i>	244

<i>Potentiality</i>	244
<i>Remembrance</i>	244
<i>Reverie</i>	244
<i>Rhythm</i>	245
<i>Shimmer</i>	245
<i>Space</i>	245
<i>Sublime</i>	245
<i>Suspend</i>	246
<i>Tectonics</i>	246
<i>Temper</i>	246
<i>Time</i>	247
<i>Undecidable</i>	247
<i>Waver</i>	248
Postscript	249
References	253
Index	263

LIST OF FIGURES

Rehearsing Atmospheres

Fig. 1	Adele, ANZ Stadium, Friday March 10, 2017 (Photograph Michael Tawa)	23
Fig. 2	Elke Maier, <i>Das Fastenschleiertuch</i> , Stephansdom, Vienna, 2014. (Photograph Michael Tawa)	28
Fig. 3	Shadow: Thursday, 27 November, 2020, 1.40 pm. (Photograph Michael Tawa)	28
Fig. 4	Shadow: Thursday, 27 November, 2020, 1.40 pm. (Photograph Michael Tawa)	29
Fig. 5	Shadow: Thursday, 27 November, 2020, 1.40 pm. (Photograph Michael Tawa)	30
Fig. 6	Shadow: Thursday, 27 November, 2020, 1.40 pm. (Photograph Michael Tawa)	31
Fig. 7	Shadow: Thursday, 27 November, 2020, 1.40 pm. (Photograph Michael Tawa)	31
Fig. 8	Peter Zumthor, St. Benedict Chapel, Sumvitg (Graubünden), 1989. (Photograph Michael Tawa)	36
Fig. 9	Peter Zumthor, St. Benedict Chapel, Sumvitg (Graubünden), 1989. (Photograph Michael Tawa)	38
Fig. 10	Peter Zumthor, St. Benedict Chapel, Sumvitg (Graubünden), 1989. (Photograph Michael Tawa)	39

Ambiance

- Fig. 1 After a diagram by Louis Kahn. Organizational schema for the First Unitarian Church and School, Rochester, 1959, in John Peponis, Sonit Bafna, Salim Dahabreh and Fehmi Dogan, 2015, Configurational meaning and conceptual shifts in design. *The Journal of Architecture* 20.2: 18 (Drawing Michael Tawa) 62

Mood

- Fig. 1 Albrecht Dürer, Melencholia 1, 1514. The Art Institute of Chicago. CCO Public Domain Designation 108

Atmosphere

- Fig. 1 Edouard Vuillard, Woman in a striped dress, 1895. (Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington. CCO Public Domain Designation) 119
- Fig. 2 Edouard Vuillard, Vase of flowers on a mantelpiece, 1900. (Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington. CCO Public Domain Designation) 120
- Fig. 3 Renata Pari-Lewis, Us versus them, 2018 (Photographer Stephen Oxenbury. Used with kind permission of the artist) 121
- Fig. 4 Renata Pari-Lewis, Mouseion, 2020. (Photograph Jenni Carter. Used with kind permission of the artist) 123
- Fig. 5 Renata Pari-Lewis, Harmony in red, 2021. (Photograph Jenni Carter. Used with kind permission of the artist) 124
- Fig. 6 Alphonse Bertillon. Tableau des nuances de l'iris humain, in Instructions Signaletiques, 1893. Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) 148
- Fig. 7 After Francis Galton, Composite Portraits of Criminal Types, 1877. The Galton Archive, University College London, Special Collections. (Drawing Michael Tawa) 149

Tectonics of Cinematic Atmosphere

- Fig. 1 After Alain Resnais, Last year in Marienbad, 1961. (Drawing Michael Tawa) 165
- Fig. 2 After Alain Resnais, Last year in Marienbad, 1961. (Drawing Michael Tawa) 166
- Fig. 3 After Alain Resnais, Last year in Marienbad, 1961. (Drawing Michael Tawa) 168

Fig. 4	After David Lynch. <i>Lost Highway</i> , 1997. (Produced by Asymmetrical Productions. Distributed by October films. Drawing Michael Tawa)	173
Fig. 5	After Béla Tarr, <i>Werckmeister Harmonies</i> , 2000. (Produced by Göess Film (Budapest), Von Vietinghoff Produktion (Berlin) and 13 Production (Paris). Distributed by Artificial Eye. Drawing Michael Tawa)	178
Fig. 6	After Béla Tarr, <i>Werckmeister Harmonies</i> , 2000. (Produced by Göess Film (Budapest), Von Vietinghoff Produktion (Berlin) and 13 Production (Paris). Distributed by Artificial Eye. Drawing Michael Tawa)	180
Fig. 7	After Béla Tarr, <i>Werckmeister Harmonies</i> , 2000. (Produced by Göess Film (Budapest), Von Vietinghoff Produktion (Berlin) and 13 Production (Paris). Distributed by Artificial Eye. Drawing Michael Tawa)	183

Tectonics of Architectural Atmosphere

Fig. 1	Gislebertus, Tympanum of the Royal Door, Cathedral of St Lazare, Autun, 1125–1135. (Photograph Michael Tawa)	197
Fig. 2	Gislebertus (?), Tympanum of the Royal Door, Cathedral of St Madeleine, Vézelay, 1120–1150. (Office de tourisme de Vézelay, Creative Commons Attribution CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons)	199
Fig. 3	Flores Prats, Mills Museum. Palma de Majorca, 1999–2002. Interior. (Photograph by Duccio Malagamba. Used with kind permission of the architects)	223
Fig. 4	Flores Prats, Mills Museum. Palma de Majorca, 1999–2002. (Assembly drawing. Used with kind permission of the architect)	224
Fig. 5	Flores Prats, Mills Museum. Palma de Majorca, 1999–2002. (Photograph by Hisao Suzuki. Used with kind permission of the architect)	225
Fig. 6	Flores Prats. Casal Balaguer (2009–). (Cross section. Used with kind permission of the architect)	226
Fig. 7	Flores Prats. Casal Balaguer (2009–). (Photograph Adrià Goula. Used with kind permission of the architect)	229

Postscript

Fig. 1	After Raymond Burnier. Frontispiece, in Stella Kramrisch, <i>The Hindu Temple</i> (Calcutta: The University of Calcutta, 1949. Drawing Michael Tawa)	250
--------	--	-----



Prologue

The concept of atmosphere has drawn substantial interest from philosophers and theorists over the last ten years. While its currency in architectural thinking is undoubted, the treatment of the concept has so far been limited to philosophical and aesthetic coverage. At the same time, there remains a distinct imprecision in the literature on atmosphere, which has tended to deal with the subject matter in generic terms, reducing atmosphere to questions of feeling, sensation and affect, but never properly broaching what it is that triggers these subjective experiences. The terms *ambiance*, *mood* and *atmosphere* appear to be used interchangeably across the literature. Attempts to define atmosphere default to inexact terminology and semantic slippage that render its use and its usefulness deeply problematic, chiefly as it might apply to those interested in engaging with atmosphere through design, and in particular the design of atmospheric architectural settings.

The term *atmosphere* dates from the seventeenth century and was coined to describe the apparent vaporous halo that surrounds the moon at certain times. The subsequent history of the term was played out following two registers, in two different trajectories—from thunderstorms to the mood of a domestic interior, that is, a meteorological or scientific/physical register (e.g. the atmosphere of the earth) and an affective or aesthetic/emotional register (e.g. the atmosphere of a gathering). In the eighteenth century, the term was associated especially with aeronautical experiences,

such as Baldwin's *Aeropaida* (1786) and Auguste Andree's balloon expedition to the North Pole (1897), casting atmosphere in terms of the human imaginary, hence producing a certain conceptual airiness or vagueness in its subsequent take-up.¹ This history establishes how the concept of atmosphere has been thought exclusively in terms of the phenomenological—that is, in terms of experience, affect and emotional response²; scenography, *mise en scène* and spectacle³; or else in terms of politics.⁴ Architecture and cinema are then considered as manipulating and modifying haptic settings (through air conditioning, temperature, climate, lighting, acoustics and other technical artifice) to produce specific effects designed in advance.

In what concerns mood, Gerhard Thonhauser has usefully traced the lineage of Heidegger's notion of *Stimmung* (mood or attunement) through Otto Friedrich Bollnow and Stephan Strasser through to Matthew Ratcliffe's notion of "existential feelings", Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of intercorporeality and interaffectivity currently advanced by Thomas Fuchs, Hermann Schmitz's neo-phenomenological defence of an objective yet atmospheric understanding of feeling and Gernot Böhme's development of Schmitz into an aesthetic theory of atmosphere—an approach currently also defended by Tonino Griffero.⁵ In doing so, Thonhauser has foregrounded David Wellbery's claim that, since the nineteenth century, the original metaphorical musical reference of *Stimmung* has dulled and been progressively supplanted by a psychological framework—a "trans-subjective determination of situations and spaces... which leaves no room

¹For example, see Matthew Gandy, Urban atmospheres, in *Cultural Geographies* 24. 3, 2017: 353–374.

²See Tonino Griffero and Marco Tedeschini. Eds. Atmospheres and moods: two modes of being-with, in *Atmosphere and aesthetics. A plural perspective*. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

³See, for example, Gernot Böhme, *The aesthetics of atmospheres* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

⁴See, for example, Bruno Latour, Atmosphere: atmosphere. In Olaf Eliasson, The weather project. Exhibition catalogue. (London: Tate Modern, 2003), 29–41. <http://cast.b-ap.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2009/09/Latour.pdf>. Accessed 20 February 2022; and Peter Sloterdijk, *Bubbles: Spheres I* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011),

Globes: Spheres II (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014) and *Foams: Spheres III* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).

⁵Gerhard Thonhauser, Beyond mood and atmosphere: a conceptual history of the term Stimmung. *Philosophia* 49 (2021): 1247–1265.

for the metaphorical complexity that was vivid from Kant to Heidegger.”⁶ Thonhauser reads current work by Böhme, Griffero and others as correctives to this trend⁷; and to the extent that *Atmosphere: cinema, architecture* promotes ambiguity and complexity, it too can be read as a corrective in the same vein.

According to Matthew Gandy, since the 1990s, an “atmospheric turn”—evident, for example, in movements such as “affect theory”, “affective atmospheres”, “new phenomenology” and “new materialisms”—develops as a reaction against the over-intellectualization, excessive technification and haptic impoverishment of an increasingly distracted contemporary socio-cultural and spatio-temporal lifeworld.⁸ No doubt the “atmospheric turn” contests the generalized disenchantment of a world orientated to the direct, the hyper-defined, the transparent and clear, the radically virtualized, the unambiguous, the evidence-based and the immediately guarantee-able value for money. What space remains here for the indirect, the oneiric, for dreams and reverie, for the obscure and turbid, for alternate temporalities of deferral and delay and for the ambivalent and the circumspect?

Three prominent authors whose recent work has dealt with atmosphere are the philosopher Gernot Böhme, the architectural theorist Juhanni Pallasmaa and the architect Peter Zumthor. Böhme’s monographs and journal articles have focused on the philosophy of atmosphere and scenography, while Pallasmaa has largely concentrated on the experiential and phenomenological aspects of the theme and Zumthor’s short text is an impressionistic sketch. Böhme’s key monographs, specifically dealing with atmosphere and architecture—*Atmospheric Architectures* (2018) and *The Aesthetics of Atmosphere* (2017)—are phenomenological treatments of the topic, focusing on aesthetic theory and calling for a recuperation of the ephemeral in art while reducing architecture to spectacle, scenography and *mise en scène*. There is no coverage of cinema and its relation to the architectural enterprise. Pallasmaa’s *The Architecture of Image* (2007) is framed around discrete themes (minimalism, poetics, the monstrous, narrative vision, geometry of terror) that are metaphorical and serve to poetise his analyses, whose central objective is the structure and experience of cinematic image and imagery. Much of the text is descriptive and aims to

⁶Thonhauser, *Beyond mood and atmosphere*: 1262.

⁷Thonhauser, *Beyond mood and atmosphere*: 1262–1263.

⁸Matthew Gandy, *Urban atmospheres*: 353–354.

“explain” more fully the films covered. Architectural precedents are few and dealt with mostly in passing. The book does not aim to establish direct links between cinema and spatial or architectural design practice. Zumthor’s *Atmospheres* (2006) is a personal, wide-ranging, allusive and elusive text, transcribed from a lecture delivered in 2003. Like Pallasmaa, the book focuses on an aesthetic appreciation of atmospheric places that happen to move the author. The lexicon here is affective but loose and generic: feeling, touch, magic, passion, beauty, joy—terms imprecisely delineated, leaving much unsaid and undefined, and so effectively limited in what one might draw-from for one’s own practice. As for Böhme and Pallasmaa, cinema is not broached; and the specific conditions that produce atmosphere in the architectural examples cited are not made explicit or articulated in detail.

None of these proponents investigates atmosphere from the perspective of a maker or creative practitioner—architect or cinematographer; rather, all focus on broadly explaining and contextualizing the atmospheric experience. Consequently, the works tend to be reflective and generalist, with little insights or implications for praxis. Where dealing with precedents and exemplary instances of buildings and films, their methodologies tend to be descriptive. While illuminating atmospheric qualities and affects their treatment of how atmosphere might be achieved tends to the imprecise and self-evident. What is not available in Böhme, Pallasmaa or Zumthor is a systematic and precise investigation of the grounds of atmosphere in architecture and cinema from the perspective of praxis—of the practitioner who is making, creating and producing buildings and films, that is, what and how, exactly, have architects and filmmakers constructed their works and how do the assemblages and conjunctions in those works produce atmosphere.

By contrast, *Atmosphere: cinema, architecture* takes up the concept of atmosphere through a *tectonic* rather than phenomenological, political or aesthetic framework: that is, it does not focus on the meteorological conditions or the sensory (special) effects produced in/by a setting (lighting, temperature, moisture, sound, smell, etc.) in order to trigger cognitive or sensory associations, impressions and mobilizations. Rather, it focuses on the underlying spatial and temporal structures of those settings—their ambiance—delivered by implicit and often indiscernible but categorically designed geometries, forces and rhythms. It does not take architectural and cinematic settings as primarily theatrical, scenographic and effect-producing, but as *enabling infrastructures*. That is, it investigates the

assemblies, distributions, velocities, agencies and affordances that constitute architectural and cinematic settings as productive ambient contexts and life-worlds.

Atmosphere: cinema, architecture evolved in part because of a persistent dissatisfaction with the vagaries of the current discourse. What is missing to date is what I would term a *tectonic* approach, which takes its bearings from the compositional, volumetric and material registers of architecture and cinema. *Atmosphere: cinema, architecture* suggests that atmosphere results from precise tectonic means, exacting manipulations and specific conjunctions that can be described and hence rehearsed, adapted and applied in creative work. The book aims to articulate a framework and resource to directly inform spatial design practice and extend its semantic concerns. It features interdisciplinary readings of atmosphere across cinema and architecture that can indicate useful implications for tectonics: that is, for the organization of architectural settings (through planning, geometry, volumetrics, light and materiality) that constitute affective ambiances with atmospheric conditions, consequences and experiences.

The basic premise of *Atmosphere: cinema, architecture* is threefold. Cinema and architecture are ambient constructions; they are affective settings or circumstances. Human beings come into these affective settings already predisposed, already in a mood. Atmosphere is then what emerges or arises, consequentially, between the ambiance of a circumstance and the mood of a human being who encounters it. Ambiance relates to the way a work is organized and set up as a setting: it refers to the tectonic assemblage of the work and to the potentialities and possibilities that the work affords. Mood relates to human disposition and comportment. Like the ambiance of circumstances, moods are a function of how we happen to be in the world and how our various dimensions (physical, mental, social, cultural, emotional, moral, ethical, philosophical, spiritual) are assembled and orientated so that we happen to be in such and such a way at a given time in a given place. Films don't have moods; buildings don't have moods. Human beings bring their moods to the circumstances they encounter. Atmosphere is what mooded beings sense and experience as they enter into circumstances and deal with their consequences.

But what is it, exactly, that produces atmosphere? What are the precise conditions that enable atmosphere, ambiance and mood to emerge in the experience of buildings and films? How do architects and cinematographers frame and manipulate space, time, light, sound and narrative to create environments and settings that we might call atmospheric? *Atmosphere:*

cinema, architecture asks these questions by setting up a specifically architectonic perspective on the question of atmosphere—that is, an approach that privileges the work of making, assembling, joining, constructing and connecting. To tackle this, the book elaborates key elementary and compositional aspects of buildings and films that are pivotal in producing atmosphere—aspects, in architecture, such as geometry, form, context, materials, spatial sequence and organization, and in cinema, such as montage, temporal sequence, setting, light, sound and narrative.

The project might consequently appear to take up an instrumental purpose. But its objective is not to concoct a formulaic approach that would guarantee atmospheric outcomes. Because atmosphere is a circumstantial and emergent phenomenon, it cannot be designed. But it can be designed *for*: that is, the conditions for its emergence can be put in place as an infrastructure of potential that awaits and *lends itself* to the possibility and to the conditions of its mobilization. Invariably, these conditions must have to do with temporality, with time and with what changes and cannot be fully predicted. They must also have to do with human being, with the people who enter into, engage and interact with the spatial and temporal settings and ambiances of the worlds in which they find themselves. I would say that buildings and films have ambiances, but it is only when they are engaged with by human beings, by beings who are in moods, that atmosphere arises. To the extent that atmosphere can be designed for by the setting up of an affective ambiance, it can be designed so as to *lend itself* to the emergence of atmosphere. What is lent is foremost a gift; but its possession is only ever temporary or provisional. What is lent is also owed, hence bound to a responsibility in return—it is conditioned by an essentially ethical gesture. To lend means to leave off, to relinquish, to eclipse—all from the etymological root *LEIKW, leave. And to leave contributes its own ambiguity: to leave means to depart, to abandon, but also to leave alone, to let be—so as to safeguard, to preserve, to bequeath: in other words, to let remain, to let survive, to leave unchanged. In lending itself to the consequences of its circumstances, ambiance both withdraws and advances. Its potential is circumspectively preserved as latent virtuality and circumambiently projected as realizable opportunity. This double phase of constraint and release—this alternating vibration between two tendencies—produces the affective vaporous circumambience we might call atmosphere.

Atmosphere: cinema, architecture is organized into six sections. The first, *Rehearsing Atmospheres*, begins on a personal note with a series of

recollected atmospheric experiences that will serve as a keynote to the whole book and touch on the main themes of ambiance, mood and atmosphere.

The second, *Ambiance*, introduces ambiguity as a central theme in the production of atmosphere. Ambiance is by definition ambiguous because in the ambiguous there is the simultaneous presence of several unaligned yet resonant conditions that together produce the infrastructure of potential necessary for atmosphere. William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* and the motifs of instress and inscape in the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins provide further thematic scaffolding for a subsequent discussion of three key ideas: circumstance, the consequences of circumstance and the faculty of circumspection that is best suited to the apperception of ambient potential. There follows a treatment of the First Nations' practice of tracking and mapping Country in which circumspection, being on the lookout, and what Martin Heidegger called "circumspective concern", make possible an ethical, strategic and productive reading of circumstance so as to understand and maximize its consequentiality.

The third section, *Mood*, takes its bearings from Heidegger's treatment of *Stimmung*: mood or attunement. Mood is a particular mode of being-in-the-world, a particular state of mind. The musical origins of the word "Stimmung" are developed to read mood as the dynamic relationship—concordant or discordant—between the ambiance of a circumstance and the disposition of human beings who find themselves there. The idea of place, of the situational "there" in which we find ourselves situated, is explored through Heidegger's *Da-sein*: "being-there", or more precisely, "being-*the*-there" that we are and in which we find ourselves. Mood is then brought back to the themes of ambiance and atmosphere, before the section continues with a reading of the key mood of the book, that of melancholia—specifically in the music of Eric Satie and Claude Debussy—and the pivotal role that ambiguity, discrepancy and irresolution play in its distinctive ambiance.

In the fourth section, *Atmosphere* is defined as that emergent condition which arises between an ambient and consequentially affective circumstance and a mooded human being. Readings of works by the painters Edward Vuillard and Renata Pari-Lewis, and the prose poems of Charles Baudelaire, foreground the importance of dematerialization and definitional ambiguity to the experience of atmosphere. Metaphors deriving from meteorology (mist, vapour, clouds) and the weather, and from allegorical registers of atmosphere—for example, the colour, tenor, temper,

temperament and temperature of a setting—are used to introduce the related motifs of the aura, halo, nimbus and aureole: irradiations, emanations or emergent circumambiances of unactualized potential that both darken and illuminate the aspect of a circumstance or a being. The chapter closes with a critical review of scenography as a pervasive yet wholly unperceptive cipher for atmosphere. I suggest that, aside from the kinetic and scenographic techniques of manipulation that produce special effects as a species of prestidigitation, this sense of suspension, of entanglement, of the wavering borderlines that produce a kind of perturbation, palpitation or shimmering are achievable wholly within the normative possibilities of architecture (i.e. both in accordance and *contra* the geometries of space and form) and of cinema (i.e. in accordance and *contra* the dynamics of time and the image).

The final two sections are built around thematic readings of selected buildings and films. In *Tectonics of Cinematic Atmosphere*, I investigate the kinds of structural or inherent conditions in the setup of a film that render it atmospheric. What are the characteristics of a film that contribute to atmosphere? How is the film put together, assembled, composed, mounted, edited, organized and joined up? How is its logic of assemblage, and the strategies deployed to achieve it, constitutive of its ambiance? How are space and time configured? What is the spatiality of the film: what forms and geometries predominate? Is the spatial setup expansive or constrained, dilated or condensed, thin or viscous, orthogonal or curvilinear, straight or circuitous, hierarchical or rhizomatic? What is the temporality of the film? How is it sequenced? Is it chronological, diachronic or synchronic? Is time linear, circuitous or fractured? How does time ebb and flow or shift between times? Is the time of the film continuous or discontinuous? Is it porous to different scales of time? Do past, present and future flow one from the other or do they interpenetrate? What temporalities do the characters inhabit? How is the film's setting construed? How are narrative and action contextualized? What is the scenographic approach? What prospects are enabled? What kinds of edges and borderlines are established? What is in- and out-of-frame? What is included and excluded, seen and unseen, heard and unheard? And how do these questions, which all in one way or another deal with the ambiguity of limits and boundaries, contribute to atmosphere?

The thematic analyses will demonstrate how such tectonic means are deployed—individually and in constellation—to produce atmosphere, or atmospheric affects: for example, immanence in Robert Bresson’s *Une Femme Douce* (1969); reverie in Alain Resnais’ *Last Year in Marienbad* (1961); terror in David Lynch’s *Lost Highway* (1997) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001); aporia in Béla Tarr’s *Werkemeister Harmony* (2001); grace in Terrence Malik’s *Knight of Cups* (2015); and suspense in Jane Campion’s *The Power of the Dog* (2021).

In *Tectonics of Architectural Atmosphere*, I investigate the kinds of structural or inherent conditions in the setup of architecture that render it atmospheric. How is the place put together, assembled, composed, organized, joined up? How is its logic of assemblage, and the strategies used to achieve that, constitutive of atmospheric agency? How is the setting construed? How are buildings contextualized, what prospects are enabled and what kinds of boundaries and borderlines are established? How do these qualities build atmosphere? Likewise, what forms and geometries are used? How are the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch) activated, and what role do the five corresponding elements or materials play (fire/light, ether/sound, water, earth and air)? What of the chromatic and calorific dimensions of place: colour, climate and temperature? How do these contribute to the temperament and temper of a place, to its ambiance? Finally, how do these various registers and dimensions of a place sit together? Are they commensurable or incommensurable? Do they cohere or diverge, or are they held in suspension, according to a consilient discrepancy, to produce ambiguity—a precise and palpable undecidability, wavering or shimmering that is necessary to the circumambience of atmosphere?

The thematic analyses will demonstrate how such tectonic means are deployed—individually and in constellation—to produce architectural atmosphere, or atmospheric affects: for example, suspense in the Romanesque tympanae of the cathedral of *St Lazare*, Autun (1130–1136) and *St Madeleine*, Vezelay (1120–1150); anomie in the architectonic scenography of Franz Kafka’s unfinished novel *Das Schloß* (The Castle, 1926); and consilient discrepancy in Flores Prats’ *Mills Museum* (1999–2002) and *Casal Balaguer* (2009–).

The concluding section, *Anatomy of Atmosphere*, is a taxonomy and cross-referenced index of key of themes raised throughout the book. A lexicon of the conditions and tactics evident in the fabric of buildings and films that produce atmosphere is outlined, with each term summarily defined and the entries grouped thematically, including implications, grounds and conditions for the articulation of atmosphere in architectural and cinematic praxis that I hope will serve as way finding for the reader but also as a consequential map of potential semantic assemblages and possible tectonic investigations for the designer.



Rehearsing Atmospheres

ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT

I have always been drawn to gypsy music—duende, rembetiko or fado: La Paquera de Jerez, Roza Eskenazi, Amalia Rodrigues and Oum Kouloum. There is something in this music of longing and melancholia. It seems to be the sound of the immigrant, of the one seeking home, the one perpetually “at home in homelessness”. Heidegger saw this state of being “at home in homelessness” as the fundamental attunement of philosophizing, along with its intrinsic mood of boredom: the long while of waiting, watching and attending to what comes.¹ I asked my mother how it could be that I am so drawn to this kind of music. My Egyptian childhood was spent in the city of Alexandria, or at least in the time of its gloaming, and we were Alexandrians rather than Egyptians. Did my parents ever play rembetiko on the gramophone at home? Did they ever take me to a performance of Arabic music? Where could I have heard it? Why did it leave such an indelible impression? “It was on the radio, everywhere.... in the streets, in cafes, on newsreels at the movies...”, she said. “We never played it at home... it was just in the air.”

¹Martin Heidegger, *The fundamental concepts of metaphysics: world, finitude, solitude*, transl. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 80.

“It was just in the air”: that is, it hovered, suspended, or pervaded the interspace of the city. It surrounded us and backgrounded our lifeworld like an undertone, keynote or pedal point, like a circumambient vapour, like an atmosphere. Now, these memories of music—infinately recollected in fragments, in the interstices of time waiting for, anticipating or recuperating a sense of who I was, who I am, what I have or might yet become or who I might have been—seem always integral to the ambiances of specific places, to the particular moods with which I encounter and live them and to the distinctive atmospheres that are produced, strangely, somewhere in between.

* * *

Karnataka

Some 30 years ago, I had a memorable conversation, in Delhi, with Krishna Hangal, daughter of the great South Indian Karnatic singer Gangubai Hangal. She had performed alongside her mother in one of the regular “demonstration concerts” organized for university students. I wanted to know the basis for what I felt as a plaintive tone in the devotional style of this singing. It seemed to me that in calling to the god or goddess in song, the singer gave voice to a double gesture, on the one hand, rejoicing in worship and adoration and, on the other, the suffering that comes from knowing the god or goddess is infinitely remote, that she/he has withdrawn, that love will always already have been unrequited, always already in vain, and that yet, in spite of knowing this, we cannot not call. I could hear this double bind in the distinctive vocalization that, while staying implicitly with the keynote of the song, interminably wavers towards and away from it, around it, without ever sounding it. The keynote remains present without ever being presented as such. It is there in a palpable absence that pervades the song; and the entire performance strikes as being an interminable seeking, characterized by simultaneous distancing and approaching, approximating without reaching, hovering without settling. The sequence of sung notes, like the buzzing of mosquitoes around a prey, vibrate and shimmer around the keynote, sustained as a virtual centre and actualized in manifold ways by the alternating circuits that seem always tangential to the goal. This makes of the song a matter of

infinitely finishing ornamentation and embellishment, beautification and beatification of the deity to which it is addressed.

I asked Krishna if one way of interpreting this vocalization was in terms of the devotee's calling for a god who will never come or of a love that will never be consummated and that the song stages the devotee's interminable struggle with the conditions—the musical conditions, but also the incommunicability or untranslatability at the heart of language itself, at the core of representation itself—that simultaneously promise and foreclose divine union. In a sense, the song is not founded on what might too easily appear to be a chasm between divine and human. Rather, it is a staging of the simultaneous pleasure and pain that attends to devotion and which I felt as the melancholia of unrealizable union. Now and then, this somewhat too intellectualized reading of something so immediate and affective vaporized before the mood of frustrated anger to which the devotee seemed driven, made palpable by what I can only describe as the growling of an animal or the grumbling shudder of the earth.

Gangubai Hangal's performance was distinctly atmospheric; it produced a particular ambiance and drew me into a palpable mood. I use these terms interchangeably for now but hope to differentiate between them in due course. The atmosphere was clearly related to the devotional tenor of the performance, to the deity being called to or called for. In a very general sense, this quality was unquantifiable; it had to do with the moment or temporality of the performance, with the room—in the middle of an academic day, full of attentive students, crowded in by an incessant peripheral cacophony, that is, with the spatiotemporal circumstances of the performance. It had to do with the emotions conveyed and the feelings conjured up. All of these qualities have something of the undefinable. They have less to do with objective, calculative evidence and more to do with subjectivity, with haptics. Yet the temperature of the room was calibrated to a temperament and realized through a distinct tenor. All of this remains ambiguous and imprecise. And this is exactly how atmosphere is commonly understood: as a fleeting, vague and undefinable feeling. Thinking back on the experience now, not satisfied to let atmosphere rest there, I would rather focus a little more on the conditions that enable atmosphere to emerge. I believe that these conditions have something precise and rigorous about them and that these conditions can be described with some exactitude.

I mentioned earlier that the melancholia flowing from unrequited love, or from the unattainability of a deity that has irremediably withdrawn

from the world while simultaneously leaving the palpable presence of a trace, suggests that the conditions of atmosphere in the performance had something to do with a gap, discrepancy or irreconcilability voiced in singer's devotional song. This gap is at least twofold: narrative or qualitative and what I would call tectonic or quantitative. The first rests in the melody and the words sung; the second rests in the musical material itself: the tones and microtones, the intervals between them, the trill—the *andolan* shaking between one pitch and another—with which the singer stresses now one, now another microtone, or improvises and elaborates the basic melody at various speeds.

* * *

Gamaka

Certain instrumental tactics in Classical Indian music are instructive in this regard. These are performative techniques deployed to produce distinctive effects and affects; and many are common across different musical traditions. They are called ornaments, but we should not regard them as cosmetic because, traditionally, ornamentation and decoration are integral aspects of order: they are the outward manifestation, irradiation, *ekstases* or emergence of order in the spatial and temporal conditions of a world. In that sense, the ornaments of Classical Indian music convey something of an atmosphere.

Ornamentation (*gamaka*) in Karnatic singing is crafted using a variety of techniques for linking microtones in a melodic line. *Gamaka* are connectors between two notes, and Karnatic music recognized 15 types of *gamaka*. The word *gamaka* means to move, and the aim is to move and so to join one tone to the next by causing it to oscillate through varying amplitude and speed. One such technique is *meend*: a method of connecting two notes without break by exploiting intermediate microtonal intervals between them. As such, *meend* differs from *legato* in Western music, which does not use microtones but only focuses on the two notes (tones or semitones) to be linked. *Meend* makes use of all the microtones and strikes each one, but unnoticeably, by way of a sliding or slurring technique without elision. Western *glissando*, for example, in violin instrumentation, is a close parallel.

Another technique is *andolan*, by which a tone is shaken, much like a slow vibrato, to alternate or oscillate a few microtones above and below the frequency of the keynote. *Kana* involves quick jerking of notes that hint at notes yet to come. *Murki* is a particular variation of *meend* in which the sliding sequence of microtones will occasionally involve striking one or more distinct notes, before returning to the sliding sequence which remains nevertheless uninterrupted. Here the sequence is articulated and given a particular shape, for example, a zigzag, through the rhythmic delimitation of flow represented by the disposition of struck notes. The objective is to play out a sense of approximation, of sound reaching for and hovering around but never attaining its goal: something like an extended performance of desire for the keynote that holds the oscillation in place, but without ever resolving it.

Gamak involves the very rapid shaking of a note by taking it to microtones above and below it so that the sound shudders while at the same time developing along a melodic sequence. As for *andolan*, the theme here is the (thrilling) playing out of tension between a keynote and notes that are seeking to become identified with it through an indefinite process of approximation, of a buzzing around the keynote that is ever present though never effectively sounded. The theme is anticipation, but again, the anticipated resolution remains interminably deferred.

In all such ornamental tactics that contribute to the ambiance of Indian music, there is a consistent trope of moving to and away from a given note, of oscillating around it, of suggesting without striking, of lightly touching than drawing back, of approaching then withdrawing, of reaching for then releasing and of aiming then avoiding. At the same time, the play (sliding, oscillating, shaking) between tones also orchestrates an exchange of energy, of dynamics: touching one tone such that it impels the next, descending to a lower tone before rising to a higher. In other words, the music is constructed as an interminable process of implication, connotation and deferral: the tactic is to touch but tactfully, without touching. In that sense we are dealing with both an ethical and an erotic practice: solicitation without appropriation.

These ornamental tactics are said to enliven and sweeten the taste of the music, and they undoubtedly have aesthetic effects and affects. But they are produced out of very specific tectonic means and technical moves by a performer interacting with their instrument. The recurrent theme is that of repeated and interminable reaching for but never being able to attain

something—a characteristic ambiance not only of Classical Indian music but also of Arabic music, Portuguese fado, Spanish flamenco and duende, Greek rembetico and multiple variations of gypsy music generally: that is, the music of peripatetic, nomadic communities, for whom home is not a fixed location but an interminable longing and yearning for homeland.

The key tectonic register of these musical tactics relates to continuity and discontinuity. Irrespective of the number of microtonal sound-producing elements in an instrument—the number of strings supplied to a harmonium or a vina, for example—the tones will always be individualized as isolated elements, unlike the human voice which preserves continuity in the tonal range. *Meend* and other ornamental techniques aim to recuperate continuity between tones that have been artificially separated and rendered discontinuous within an instrument. At the same time, these techniques palpably make us aware of the material and technical resistance to continuity that is inherent in the instrument, as well as the irremediable struggle that every performer must endure. This gives the music a distinctly agonistic character: a sense that something is being reached for, something is being sought and something is being desired or longed for, even as it remains constantly out of reach.

* * *

GERALD MANLEY HOPKINS, 1844–1899

My first encounter with G. M. Hopkins was pivotal. As a teenager studying English, incited by a teacher who created a hermetic atmosphere of curiosity and fascination, snagged in an intricate web of words and impressions, I was astounded: astonished by the outlandish language, its syncopated musical syntax, the relentless juxtaposition and concatenation of sounds and images. I felt something like the resistance and grain of language, its conflictual counter to the transport and advent of significance. Its interminable deferral of denotation. The way each impression interacted with another to form large, expanding swales of infiltrating sense. Ignorant of its natural place in Victorian literature until much later, I saw the world conjured by Hopkins as both opaque and porous to sense. Ambiguous, it resisted the passage of clear meaning, and yet it conveyed palpable ambiances, imaginable and affecting delineations. The poem

That Nature Is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection was a standout. Some 20 years later, I put it in front of my architecture professor and mentor, L. Peter Kollar—a neo-Platonist and a Catholic—who did not know Hopkins: “not bad”, he said. Here it is, one of Hopkins’ last and most innovative sonnets, completed in 1888, just before his death at the age of 44:

Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows | flaunt forth, then chevy on an air-
Built thoroughfare: heaven-roysterers, in gay-gangs | they throng; they
glitter in marches.

Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, | wherever an elm arches,
Shivelights and shadowtackle in long | lashes lace, lance, and pair.

Delightfully the bright wind boisterous | ropes, wrestles, beats earth bare
Of yestertempest’s creases; | in pool and rut peel parches

Squandering ooze to squeezed | dough, crust, dust; stanches, starches

Squadroned masks and manmarks | treadmire toil there

Footfretted in it. Million-fuelèd, | nature’s bonfire burns on.

But quench her bonniest, dearest | to her, her clearest-selvèd spark

Man, how fast his firedint, | his mark on mind, is gone!

Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark

Drowned. O pity and indig | nation! Manshape, that shone

Sheer off, disseveral, a star, | death blots black out; nor mark

Is any of him at all so stark

But vastness blurs and time | beats level. Enough! the Resurrection,

A heart’s-clarion! Away grief’s gasping, | joyless days, dejection.

Across my foundering deck shone

A beacon, an eternal beam. | Flesh fade, and mortal trash

Fall to the residuary worm; | world’s wildfire, leave but ash:

In a flash, at a trumpet crash,

I am all at once what Christ is, | since he was what I am, and

This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, | patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,

Is immortal diamond.

The sonnet is constructed out of a series of oppositions at different registers. There is first a narrative opposition between nature (clouds, elms, pools) and human being (manmarks, manshape); then between the processes in the lifeworld of nature (tossed, flaunt, throng, glitter) and the human lifeworld (treadmire toil, firedint, drowned, foundering); and then

between the mutability of life (death blots, time beats level, flesh fade, fall, wildfire, ash, joke, poor potsherd) and the immutability of Christ (immortal diamond) that is ultimately also the destiny of human beings (I am all at once what Christ is since he was what I am). These oppositional doublets pivot on the transformative power of Christ at the words “Enough! The Resurrection”: a point of narrative contraflecture, paralleling the existential realization of identity with what eclipses the vagaries of space and the fluxions of time.

There is then a series of vivid imagistic juxtapositions: dancing, billowing clouds like pollen on the breeze (cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows... flaunt forth... chevy on an air-built thoroughfare... gay-gangs... throng... glitter); the dark shade of arching branches and dense foliage, lit up (down roughcast... dazzling whitewash, wherever an elm arches... shivelights and shadowtackle); a landscape dried of its rain by a sharp wind (the bright wind boisterous... beats earth bare of yestertempest’s creases... parches); sparks from a fire (million-fuelèd, nature’s bonfire burns on... her clearest-selvèd spark); the irremediable mutability of human life, its imprints encrusted in mud (in pool and rut peel parches... squandering ooze to squeezed dough, crust, dust... treadmire toil there... footfretted in it), or shipwrecked in measureless, undignified obscurity (man, how fast his firedint... an unfathomable... enormous dark); the dismal ravage of time (death blots black out... vastness blurs and time beats level). And then, against this gloomy, dejecting prospect, a shining: the clarion call of Christ—resurrected and resurrecting, saving, transforming (Enough! the Resurrection, a heart’s-clarion! Away grief’s gasping, joyless days, dejection. Across my foundering deck shone a beacon, an eternal beam. Flesh fade, and mortal trash fall to the residuary worm; world’s wildfire, leave but ash); the instantaneous conjunction of sound and light (In a flash, at a trumpet crash); a realization of the transcendent nature of human being (this Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond, is immortal diamond).

Hopkins depicts nature in terms of Heraclitean flux, as an overflowing dynamic conflagration (million-fuelèd, nature’s bonfire burns on) that strikes the poet with exhilaration and elation, with an excitement that is both pagan and Christian in tenor.² This effect of impulse and quickening comes through an insistent beat, overlaid with secondary stresses and

² James Wimsatt, *Hopkins’ poetics of speech sound: sprung rhythm, lettering, inscape* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 55, 92–3.

rapid short syllables that together produce a clipped, disjointed texture—something like musical staccato. These sound patterns are the objective correlates of the emotion conveyed in the sonnet: specifically, the impermanence of nature and man and the evanescence of phenomena (Flesh fade and mortal trash fall to the residuary worm; world’s wildfire, leave but ash). Hopkins then switches from a cosmic to a personal outlook, yielding a melancholic reflection on the consequences for human beings (Manshape, that shone sheer off, disseveral, a star, death blots black out; nor mark Is any of him at all so stark but vastness blurs and time beats level). He finally shifts to a supernal register (Enough! the Resurrection), calling on the transcendent intervention and consolation of Christ. As James Wimsatt reads it:

The denouement is even more emotional and dramatic than the opening. The last coda has short linking and final lines: In a flásh, | at a trúm | pet crásh, I am áll | at ónce | what Chríst is, || since hé was | what Í am, | ánd | This Jáck, | jóke, | pòor pótsherd, | páтч, | máтчwòod, im | mórtal | díamond, | Ís im | mórtal | díamond. (21–4) Here the strong alliterations are assisted by notable internal rhyme and vowel gradation to give particular effect to the stresses. The brief appositions and the monosyllabic feet in the third line particularly implement the phonic excitement.³

The way Hopkins handles words has something of the tectonic in it, something of words being sourced, hewn, worked and compounded or fused into components and assemblages forming larger wholes. Several tactics are deployed to construct these sound shapes and sound resonances in order to build intonation, tonality and attunement. One is the coinage and compounding of words—a practice going “back to primordial word-making processes”⁴—assembled out of juxtapositions (shivelights, shadowtackle, yestertempest, manmark, treadmire, footfretted, manshape) which eclipse and transpose the individual component words into new, emergent ideas. Shiverlights, for example, brings together luminosity as clarity with its vibrational character as a scintillation: a luminous shivering. Treadmire brings together the idea of footfall as the mark and cadence of a gait (tread) with the clayey sludge (mire) that conveys something of a struggle. At the same time, because the compounds retain the separate

³Wimsatt, *Hopkins’ poetic*, 55, 92.

⁴Gardner, W. H. and N. H. Mackenzie, *The poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, xxxi.

form of their components, the effect is not the production of a novel word or idea but the experience of an ambiguous juxtaposition that eclipses the two components and emerges somewhere between them: a kind of poetic atmosphere or ambient *ekstasis*.

* * *

COOGEE BEACH, JANUARY 1995

What if, on a late summer afternoon, you find yourself at a suburban beach facing east to the Pacific Ocean, waist deep in clear water, still and mirror-like; and if around you are a few others, standing, like you, looking out to sea; and if behind you, to the west, some way off but sufficiently close to cast a shadow across the valley, a high ridge frames the lowering sun; and if that afternoon a heavy storm, bringing rain and thunder, had just passed and left dark and dense glowering purple clouds hanging above, stretching over behind the ridge and in front of you in a suspended bank as far as the horizon, out to sea; and if between the ridge and the dark overhanging clouds in the west was a long horizontal cleft through which the low setting sun sent acute, warm orange rays across the valley; and if those rays went as far as striking the purple clouds above you and out to sea, deflecting them downward through clear, still water; and if then the rays met sharp white sand below the water's surface around your feet and again deflected, this time upward; and if that upward deflection of bright light struck you and others standing nearby around the chest and below the chin and illuminated you and the space around you from below; and if that glowing astonished you and others standing nearby so that all were to be struck still and silent for a moment; and if then all were to look to each other to assure themselves that what all thought they saw and felt right there where they found themselves in a glowing, on a late summer afternoon, did in fact just take place?

Such atmospheric moments emerge from very specific, precise circumstances, from very particular assemblages of conditions—in this case, from a very distinctive alignment of topography, weather, materials, light, geometry, distance, time, space, elements and senses: the languor of a late summer afternoon; low sun through the dense haze of a western sky; a dramatic landscape of high ridges, steep declinations and gullies delimiting a flatland on three sides, open to the ocean in the east; the urban fabric dissipating to the public domain of a beach; an interstitial zone between

land and sea; a meteorological conflagration, only just distended; extreme contrast between colours, densities of substances and materials; the smell of salt, sand and wet lawn; bare flesh, radiant, wet and backlit by the setting sun; an incredulous exchange of glances and gazes; the radical clarity and translucency of a scene suspended in the shared experience of an opportune moment.

The Greeks called such moments *kairos*: propitious moments that are in time (*khronos*) but that also open time up to what exceeds it, to what is outside time or to what transcends the conditions and experience of chronological time: an experience of what Gilles Deleuze referred to as the outlandish, the disorientating and deterritorializing capacity of the uncanny. The atmosphere of that moment was consequential. It was triggered by a circumstantial alignment between multiple registers that just happened to overlap. This concatenation gave the moment and the place a distinctive and affective tenor or ambiance. To sense the atmosphere of that ambiance was to attune oneself to the resonance produced by the alignment, to be with the evanescent tonality of a moment and a place and to find oneself in the midst, there, with others.

We might say of these different layers, these different registers, that they are open to each other, that they defer one to the other and that they mutually admit each other. They are not opaque and separate layers but coexist in a kind of inter-transparency. They make room one for the other: the cleft opened up in the western sky between ridge and cloud admits the sharp rays of a lowering sun into the valley; the glowering clouds make possible a deflection of the sun's rays downwards; the mirror-like stillness of the sea at the shore reflects the heavy sky but also enables the sun's rays, and our sightlines, to penetrate through to the sand below without distortion; the whiteness of the submerged sand affords an intense reflection; wet human flesh lends a warm glow; astonishment seeks reassurance.

* * *

DHURABBIN COUNTRY

A creek running east-west. On either side, low scree with high scarps. Typical landform and hydrology of Dhurrabin sandstone country on the Hawkesbury River, north of Sydney. On one side, the north side, a level, mostly cleared platform, some 20 m above the water affording an

uninterrupted view of the southern scarp on the opposite side of the creek. It too features a lower scree of some 20 m and then steep slopes interspersed with large boulders up to the scarp. All wooded dry sclerophyll forest, dotted with large Angophora. In the morning, the rising sun is low, so that the forest canopy on the south slope casts a dense, contiguous, long shadow. The slope reads as a solid mass of green, dark in between, with only the sandstone facets of the scarp above the canopy picked up by the sun's rays. At midday, the high sun's rays become zenithal, penetrating through the scant eucalypt canopy, dilating its mass, lighting up the ground. Shadows cast by trunk and canopy are shallow and shrink. The ground itself becomes a light source by reflection, throwing everything above it into dark relief, so that we read the *antumbra*. This time we see the steep topography of dry soil and interspersed boulders as a flat, vertical plane, separated and spaced out from the profile of tree trunks and the dilated canopy that now appear in dark silhouette.

In the morning, the southern slope reads as an im-porous, solid mass, its colours saturated. At midday, one reads instead the interstitial: the space between the ground in full light and the porous canopy suspended above in silhouetted filigree. Its colours are now bleached. The same slope, two different spatialities, mobilized by two different temporalities. In the morning, sunlight skims the water's surface, rendering it opaque and the water body thick and solid. At noon, the sun's zenithal light penetrates the shallow surface of the water, reflecting off the blond sand, rendering the creek fully transparent, even invisible. These two moments in turn transform not only the appearance of the place, what it seems like, but they fundamentally transform its spatial and tectonic structure. The width of the valley—the space between slopes—contracts in the morning and expands in the evening as its felt boundary shifts from the surface of a concealing canopy to the inclined plane of the ground. Its edges and boundaries expand as they become perforate—the foliage on the opposite side aerated and screen-like. In the morning, the water is opaque and presents a dark boundary. At midday we can read the depth of the water. The sense of the valley alters from predominant verticality that accentuates the sky above in the morning to predominant horizontality that accentuates the creek bed at noon. This sequence then reverses over the length of the afternoon, though by then, with the sun setting beyond the western range, shadows weaken, and all is absorbed into the declining dusk.

Over the course of a clear day, our attention is displaced: the whole atmosphere of the setting changes. The same assemblage of sky, valley,



Fig. 1 Adele, ANZ Stadium, Friday March 10, 2017 (Photograph Michael Tawa)

canopy, ground and water—its various dimensions, contours, inclinations and declinations, materialities, textures and colours remain unaltered—assumes radically different configurations, produces radically different effects or impressions and triggers radically different affects or expressions. Subject to other weather and ambient conditions—wind, tides, cloud cover, rain, thunderstorms, the seasonal and diurnal behaviour of flora and fauna, human activities on the water, constantly shifting soundscapes—the same place assumes radically different, more complex and imbricated atmospheres.

* * *

ADELE: ANZ STADIUM, FRIDAY, 10 MARCH 2017

We often report, on attending a concert, that there was a “great atmosphere” (Fig. 1). But the atmosphere is not limited to the venue or the event. Its production precedes the event and continues long after. The details matter: that tickets were bought as a gift to a daughter and her friend; that a decision was made to avoid the headaches of parking and travel by public transport; that much planning was necessary to decide what bus to take and where; that the buses were so full that several passed before one stopped; that on the bus, in the company of others all finding themselves in the same situation, there was much whispered talk, there was pre-emptive singing or there was anticipation; that the venue was more familiar as a sporting arena, which brought its own memories to disturb, complexify and expand the experience; that finding seats proved

interminable; that once installed the whole stadium seemed arraigned in a steep hemisphere below; that spectators, moving in packs, in single files, in solitary figures, slowly filled the bleachers; that, looking around, one could sense the tension of expectancy (How long will she sing for? Will she sing my favourite song? What will she be wearing?).

* * *

A MILLION WINDOWS

“If in the further reaches of some or another remote corridor in an immense house of two or, perhaps, three storeys, and behind some or another door that remains mostly closed but in sight of a window overlooking some or another tract of far-reaching landscape of mostly level grassy countryside with low hills or a line of trees in the distance, a certain man at his desk, on some or another day of sunshine with scattered clouds, were to spurn the predictable words and phrases of the many writers of fiction who have reported of this or that male character that he once fell in love with this or that female character, and if that same man, after striving as neither I, the author of this sentence, nor even the most discerning reader of the sentence, have or has striven nor will ever strive, in late afternoon, and at about the time when the rays of the declining sun might have caused the pane in the window of his room to seem to a traveler on a distant road like a spot of golden oil, had found in his heart, or wherever such things are to be found, the words best fitted to suggest what he seemed to have felt long before, on a certain hot afternoon, in a distant inland city, and whether he had simply kept the words in mind or whether he had actually written them, either as notes for a work of fiction that he might one day write or as part of an actual work of fiction, then I do not doubt that the words would have been to the effect that a certain boy, a mere child, while he watched unobserved a certain girl, a mere child, whose name he did not know and who had almost certainly never had sight of him, wished for the means to inform her that he was worthy of trust.”⁵

⁵Gerald Murnane, *A million windows* (New Hampshire: David R. Godine Publisher, 2014), 46–47.

Everything in this single, extraordinary sentence—which the author himself considers the best he has written⁶—everything, in its broad sweep and in its infinitesimal details, builds and leads to the final phrase: “wished for the means to inform her that he was worthy of trust.” Everything conveys the mood of one seeking the recognition, acknowledgement and union in the love of another. And yet the atmosphere of the scene is freighted with a double melancholia: were he to find the words, would the lover’s address be returned or remain unrequited?

Under the pretext of providing a factual report on a fictional event, the passage hinges on the uncertain and provisional tone of every phrase (if, were to, would, whether...); speculation and projection (if in the further reaches; if that same man); imprecision and vagueness (two, or perhaps, three; some or another; mostly level; at about the time; might have caused; has nor will ever; in his heart or wherever; whether he had... or; either as... or; or wherever such things are to be found); uncertainty of recollection (on a certain hot afternoon; a certain man; whether he had... or; either as... or; a certain boy; whose name he did not know; had almost certainly never had); or the pervasive melancholia of the remote observer (far reaching landscape; late afternoon; the rays of the declining sun; a traveler on a distant road; that he once fell in love with; in the distance; that he might one day; while he watched unobserved; wished for the means to), all leading to the lover’s assured certainty (he was worthy of trust).

The atmosphere owes much to interminable deferrals, deterritorializations and dislocations: *spatial* deferral (in a corridor; behind a door; in sight of a window; overlooking a tract of far-reaching landscape; grassy countryside; line of trees; a man at his desk; the pane in the window of his room; a traveler on a distant road; a distant inland city); *temporal* deferral (on some or another day of sunshine; in late afternoon; at about the time when the rays of the declining sun; have or has or will ever; long before, on a certain hot afternoon; might one day...); and *narrative* deferral between multiple protagonists—the author (Murnane), the author in the narrative (a certain man at his desk), other authors (the many writers of fiction), the “most discerning reader of the sentence,” the characters in the narrative (a certain boy, a mere child; a certain girl, a mere child), the outside setting (a tract of far-reaching landscape of mostly level grassy countryside with low hills or a line of trees in the distance), the built setting (an

⁶ Gerard Murnane, *Last letter to a reader* (Artarmon: Giramond Publishing, 2021), 93–94.

immense house of two or, perhaps, three storeys), the interior (a desk; some or another remote corridor; behind some or another door; in sight of a window overlooking), the story in the narrative (he once fell in love; that [he] wished for the means to inform her that he was worthy of trust) and the task of writing (if... a certain man at his desk... were to spurn the predictable words and phrases of the many writers of fiction who have reported of this or that male character that he once fell in love with this or that female character; had found in his heart... the words... to the effect).

These deferrals contribute to the insubstantiality of the setting and of the moment: where and when does it take place? This is amplified by the multiple folds of and in the story—from place to place, time to time, voice to voice; the iterative cadence of the syntax and lexicon (if; some or another; two or perhaps; neither, nor; about; might; have or has); and the multiple tenses poised on the present certainty of “I do not doubt” (were to spurn; who have reported; once fell in love; have or has; might have caused; had found; have felt long before; had simply kept; had actually written; might one day write; I do not doubt; would have been; while he watched; did not know; had almost certainly; wished for the means; was worthy).

With exceeding syntactical and punctuational precision, Murnane renders the space, time and narrative of the account radically porous and indeterminate by folding, felting and in time vaporizing spaces into spaces, times into times, characters into characters and stories into stories. Yet the precision is critical to achieving a ubiquitous ambiguity, a palpable ambience of reverie and the densely imbricated atmosphere of the scene: an atmosphere that emerges and pervades and that constitutes the contingencies and circumstances of the scene, but also one that functions as the very substance out of which the narrative is built.

* * *

Das Fastenschleiertuch

The title is of an installation by the Austrian artist Elke Maier that I happened to come across, by coincidence, in the cathedral of St. Stephen, Vienna, in 2017.⁷ *Das Fastenschleiertuch* means—though I did not know the work’s title at the time—The Translucent Lenten Veil, a reference to

⁷Elke Maier, *Das Fastenschleiertuch*, 2014. Installation in Stephansdom, Vienna.

Luke 23:45: “And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst”. Lenten veils are customarily purple fabrics used to wrap and conceal the crucifix, altarpiece, relics, paintings and even entire parts of churches, during the 40 days of fasting between Ash Wednesday and Easter of the Christian calendar. Maier’s installation involved some 300 hours of work to stretch some 50,000 meters of fine white silk some 30 meters from the hatches of the cross-ribbed vaults to a steel wire stretched just over head height, spanning between the stone columns either side of the nave.

I had been wandering the city centre streets of Vienna with no purpose and no destination in mind. If I was in any mood, it would have been *ennui*, or at least a neutral, blank disposition, open to whatever encounter might present itself. I had no particular desire to enter another cathedral, but having nothing else planned and time enough to use up, I made my way in. I was not aware of Maier’s installation, no anticipation, no expectation. *Das Fastenschleiertuch* stopped me in my tracks and took me by surprise. It was deterritorializing, disorientating, outlandish. In the late afternoon, sunlight flooded the space through large clear high windows in the west façade, glancing the multiple threads of Meier’s layered screens, condensing into a tissue of crystalline gossamer translucency. Interrupting the sun’s rays and rendering them visible, this Lenten veil hovered, suspended and charged the space as if the sun itself—as if divinity itself—had materialized into a vaporous, luminous haze, filling the interspace of the cathedral with a scintillating cloud that seemed detached from the structure, free of its moorings and over what remained of the afternoon, calming in brightness from a glow that filled and expanded the space into the dim contracting glowering of twilight (Fig. 2).

* * *SHADOW

A banal observation: a boundary fence; tubular galvanized metal posts; chain link (Fig. 3). The fence is oriented east-west and the chain link fabric facing north-south. Latitude: 35°17'00" S; Longitude: 149°07'41" E. Elevation above sea level: 571 m. Annual rainfall: 629 mm. Rust. Some deformation in the chain link pattern—cause unknown—occasioning some buckling, slumping and undulation of the metal fabric. On the tubular posts, shadows of the chain link cast a discernible A (Fig. 4). I am contemplating beginning a book on atmosphere. A banal conjunction, yet the banality gives me pause to think. On the one hand, a relatively stable,



Fig. 2 Elke Maier, *Das Fastenschleiertuch*, Stephansdom, Vienna, 2014. (Photograph Michael Tawa)

Fig. 3 Shadow:
Thursday, 27 November,
2020, 1.40 pm.
(Photograph
Michael Tawa)



Fig. 4 Shadow:
Thursday, 27 November,
2020, 1.40 pm.
(Photograph
Michael Tawa)



measurable spatial setup—specific and precise: tubular posts 2100 mm high, 50 mm diameter; chain link fabric tied to the posts; north/south facing orientation; Canberra, ACT Australia. A moment in time: Thursday, 27 November, 2020, 1.40 pm.

The shadows are an emergent phenomenon, an *ekstasis*. The conjunction and the conjugation of a stable setup (the fence) and a changing circumstance (the sun's [apparent] movement) produces the shadows. As time flows, the shadows change position and shape: the A tight and compressed at midday, elongated and oblique in the early morning and afternoon, so distorted as to be indiscernible at sunrise and sunset (Fig. 5). We could use the setup as a timepiece if we wished: the shapes of the shadows can tell us the time of day or the season of the year. No two As are alike: the distortion of the woven fabric and its variable distance from the posts produce differently shaped A, or no A at all, just indeterminate shapes. Yet every shadow shape produced, whether an A or not, is a distinct, measurable, consequential phenomenon, each with its own geometry, length,

Fig. 5 Shadow:
Thursday, 27 November,
2020, 1.40 pm.
(Photograph
Michael Tawa)



breath, monochromatic density and so forth. And every shadow shape produced emerges out of a precise, measurable set of conditions—spatial, temporal and material.

The phenomenon of shadow here is temporary, ephemeral, evanescent and mutative. The shadow is real and perceivable; yet its presence is unstable, insubstantial and phantasmatic. Every shadow is a particular, momentary and emergent entity produced on the fence by the fence obscuring the sun's rays. The shadows are produced interstitially, intermedially: between the sun, the chain link and the posts. If we are attentive enough, we will see the shadows change, dilate, thicken, merge or fade. The shadows are a third entity—not chain link fence, not sun. Beyond the fence now, a distinct shadow appears of its top rail cast on the ground (Fig. 6). Moving a few feet to the left, the shadow line begins to break up, becoming discontinuous and, a few moment later, vanishes (Fig. 7).

These phenomena send us to the motif of the shadow more generally. And of the mirror, since a shadow is an analogue of what casts it, just as a



Fig. 6 Shadow: Thursday, 27 November, 2020, 1.40 pm. (Photograph Michael Tawa)



Fig. 7 Shadow: Thursday, 27 November, 2020, 1.40 pm. (Photograph Michael Tawa)

reflection is the analogue of what is reflected; though a reflection and a shadow are radically different phenomena, radically different similitudes: the first rendering a clear correspondence, the second an obscure one; the first an avatar, the second a phantom. Each in turn produces its own uncanny, its own mystery. The mirror reflection is uncanny because it produces a flipped double of what is reflected and its world. The shadow is uncanny because the lineaments that define what casts it are obscured and absorbed into its darkness, because the distortion can be extreme, because the shadow form interminably morphs or folds and fractures as it encounters turbulences, impediments and obstructions.

The legend of what produced the first drawing, the first depiction, the origin of painting, is well known. Alberti refers to it, referencing Quintilian; and it is also told by Pliny. The Corinthian maid Dibutades, daughter of a potter, traces the outline of her departing lover's shadow, his silhouette, on a wall.⁸ The practice is known as *adumbration*: the production of a faint sketch, image, outline or reflection, prefiguration or foreshadowing. The word is from Latin *ad-*, “to”, and *umbrare*, “cast in shadow”. *Andho* means blind, dark, shade. Here, shadow is trace, residue, memento and memorial—the evidence of an absent present; but it is also a substitute, a simulacrum. This motif plays into the persistently contemporary privileging of light, together with the idea of shadow's alliance with the untrue, illusion and mutability that Plato committed to Western philosophy in Book Seven of *The Republic*. There, shadows are conditions of falsity, of the phantasmatic productions of mimesis: stereotypical, inadequate refractions of archetypal *eidōs*. The Middle Ages sustained this notion, but there was also a sense in which shadows were ominous and harboured the unreal, the ghostly; that they foreshadowed and prefigured unseen presences: beneficent, maleficent, threatening, or uncanny—especially when a shadow is uncoupled from what casts it, as in the paintings of de Chirico, or indeed when subsumed by it so that no shadow is cast, as at the solstices. The idea of God both radiant and “dwelling in thick darkness”⁹ mobilized an ambiguous tectonics for the Christian church—initially

⁸ See Ernst H. Gombrich, *Shadows: the depiction of cast shadows in western art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). See Stephen Kite, *Shadow-makers: a cultural history of shadows in architecture* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Junichiro Tanizaki, *In praise of shadows*, transl. Thomas J. Harper and Edward G. Sidensticker (Stony Creek: Leete's Island Books, 1977), and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The ground of the image*, transl. Jeff Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).

⁹ For example, 1 Kings 8:12.

sombre and cave-like, eventually perforate and luminous. Tanizaki's shadows—not “etched out by light but a dimness that envelops”¹⁰—gather and collect, in opposition to the glaring light of discrimination and isolation. Such darkness makes possible the scintillation or glow of rare light reflected off gold leaf, or deeply lustrous timber—evident in Japanese architecture, for example—complexifies the idea of shadow, making it an ambiguous, uncanny region in which light and dark become mutually indeterminable.

Shadows have three states: *umbra* (the darkest shadow and the place from which the light source is fully occluded by the intervening body), *penumbra* (the intermediate shadow and the place from which the light source is partially occluded by the intervening body) and *antumbra* (the lightest shadow and the place from which the light source reads as a ring around the occluding body). In the *umbra*, the light source disappears. In the *antumbra*, the light source appears as a circumambient halo around the occluding body.

If the shadow darkens, swallows up and closes down, then its corollary, the mirror, lightens and opens up to an alternate reality, to an impossible depth within existential space, to an another world, symmetrically folded and reversed—left to right; almost but not quite the same, similar but radically alien. Because that world is both familiar and unfamiliar, recognizable and strange, it evokes the uncanny. I recognize the face reflected in the glass as myself. In fact it is all that I can know of myself because it is the only way I see myself, other than in photographs, in the way that others see me and in which my features will be reversed. These two images—the photograph and my reflection in the glass—double me. Should I happen to overlay them, I become ambivalent to myself, caught up in the ambiguity of that space between the two representations of what I know to be one, but which the evidence confirms to be two. Uncanny, but also wonderful, as the Latin *mirus* implies: miraculous, admirable reflection, mirage. In the mirror image I am mired in “deceptiveness of appearance... delusive seeming”¹¹: unseemly then. But the Latin word for mirror, *speculum*, derives from *scua*, shade, or shadow—as do the Gothic *skuggwa*, mirror, and Old Norse *skuggi*, shadow. Catoptromancy (enoptromancy) was divination by means of a mirror, exercised by ancient Roman priests

¹⁰Kisho Kurokawa cited in Stephen Kite. *Shadow makers*: 48.

¹¹Online Etymological Dictionary: mirage. https://www.etymonline.com/word/mirage#etymonline_v_16229. Accessed 14 February 2022.

called *specularii*¹²: speculating spies—from the etymon *SPEK, to observe. Seeing is always a form of speculation, of invention, of construal; and these all necessitate interpretation: hence the practice of divination, the interpretation of signs, of phantasmatic patterns produced within a substance—for example, light refracted within a crystal or between a reflective surface and other substances such as moon beams, water, mist or smoke.

The word shadow belongs to a complex semantic constellation around an ambiguous and undecidable alternation between revealing and concealing and lighting and darkening.¹³ One can readily experience this ambiguity in the gloaming of twilight: the glum, sombre, turbid darkening of dusk, characterized by the simultaneous glisten, glitter, gloss and gleaming sullenness of light yet to come. In regard to the phantasmatic, and the obscure relationship between light and dark, it might be interesting to muse on the capacity of Plato's paradigmatic, regular and stable forms to produce ambiguous, unstable interreflection—a measure of constitutive internal destabilization. Numbering five, and each associated with one of the five elements, these forms are the tetrahedron (three vertices, three faces, six edges—Fire), octahedron (six vertices, eight faces, twelve edges—Air), hexahedron/cube (eight vertices, six faces, twelve edges—Earth), icosahedron (twelve vertices, twenty faces, thirty edges—Water), dodecahedron (twenty vertices, twelve faces, thirty edges—Ether/Quintessence) and the sphere: the limit toward which the series of volumes tends without ever reaching it.¹⁴ The five preserve inherent relationships that enable them to be pocketed one inside the other, within a circumscribing sphere, or indeed to be considered as so many emanations or emergences of the singular spheric central point, through its multiple, exfoliating manifestations. In that sense, all are latent in the sphere, residing there as emergent, consequential possibilities. Held in potential within

¹² Armand Delatte, *La catoptromancie grecque et ses dérivés* (Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1932).

¹³ The words shadow and shade derive from the same etymological root *SKIA, which also gives “sky”, and the Greek *skene*, tent, tabernacle, stage, cloth or veil. There are two senses here: one from the etymons *SKEI and *SEK, to cut, split, divide, cleave, part or separate (bisect, dissect, saw, sect, section, sedge, segment, scission, rescind, prescient, conscious—that is, the capacity to discriminate, to distinguish, to tell one thing from another) and another from the etymon *SKA/*SKEU, to cover or conceal: the sky as the region of clouds; Old Norse *skuggi*, shadow; Old Saxon *scio*, cloud (to cover, darken, render dim or obscure); and with Gothic *skuggwa*, mirror, we are back in the tight connection between shadow and reflection.

¹⁴ Plato. *Timaeus*: 54d–56c. See also Keith Critchlow, *Order in space: a design source book* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000).

an undifferentiated, unarticulated and pure form, these five immanent configurations constitute an internal phantasmatic and turbulent valency, held in check, but that might at any moment be triggered, mobilized and unfolded. The irradiation of the forms' various vertices, faces and edges while held within the sphere can be rendered as multiple overlays, producing the interreflections, refractions and emanations of a scintillating fractal luminosity that belies the sphere's apparently stable, pure delineation. Multiplicity mired in unity, illusion of the mirage as an atmospheric *ekstasis*: in effect, a fine example of the relationship between potentiality and actuality and of the preservation rather than the exhaustion of potential in actualization. As Deleuze saw it:

Every actual surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images... The virtuals, encircling the actual, perpetually renew themselves by emitting yet others, with which they are then surrounded and which go on in turn to react upon the actual... an actual perception surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images, distributed on increasingly remote, increasingly large, moving circuits, which both make and unmake each other.... The varyingly dense layers of actual objects correspond to these, more or less extensive, circle of virtual images.¹⁵

As Eliot Ross Albert noted, “the virtual and the actual participate in a circuit, in which all the elements, including the perceived object itself, hold each other in a state of mutual tension.”¹⁶ This state of tension, in which we discern the complex lineaments and circulations of virtual and actual, constitutes a vaporous circumambience that interminably displaces—or a shadow that infinitely dissimulates—the definite boundaries of things, of places and of people. Following Bergson, Deleuze wrote that in memory, virtual and actual coexist; and he extended this idea into cinema, which for him consists of “movement-images which are mobile sections of duration”¹⁷: that is, snapshots, each at a given actualized moment, of an extensive and literally unrepresentable circuit of virtuality. Likewise, at any moment, an individual standing before me, actualized, can only ever be the discrete cross section through an unimaginable complex of as yet unactualized physical, mental and spiritual conditions. What some call the “fragrance of divinity”—symbolically actualized in the incense that

¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 148–152.

¹⁶ Elliot Ross Albert cited in Deleuze and Parnet. *Dialogues*, 158, fn5.

¹⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: the movement image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London and New York: The Athlone Press, 1989), 11.

permeates the space of a church or temple—might be a likewise atmospheric intimation of inseparable yet individually affective components, held in suspended volatized animation.

* * *

SUMVITG

The journey to Peter Zumthor's St. Benedict Chapel is perilous in winter. The building is half buried in soft snow. Everywhere is quiet. It is a very small building but looms, settled into a knoll commanding the valley. A path to the front steps has been cleared of snow. A heavy front door is unlatched and then closed behind. Through a shallow low ceilinged and interstitial space within the wall, entry is into an equivalently silent yet uncanny space. Outside, snow dampened every sound; here, silence is moderated by artifice: the interior is effectively closed off from the world, and materials are bare and resonant, calling for careful footfall (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8 Peter Zumthor, St. Benedict Chapel, Sumvitg (Graubünden), 1989. (Photograph Michael Tawa)

I enter a space whose verticality is magnified by a small footprint and high ceiling. It first appears circular in plan, then oval and then leaf-shaped. Narrow at the entry, the tail of the leaf circumscribes the altar. The space is axial, but in its plan shape, there are remnant traces of centrality. I count at least seven centres, distributed outside the building and along the axis, which describe the curve of the wall. These seem to begin at some distance from the building and then align with its axis. The distance between them reduces proportionately so that there results a distinct compression of the axis as the altar is approached. One of these is the geometric centre of the space; another is centred on the altar and a third on the apsidal curve. At any point in the space, different centres come to prominence, each sending a part of the space to a different origin. The geometry of the room and its dynamics adjust to circumstance and produce alternate perspectives, tendencies, energies and affects. An apparently simple plan shape is produced through a complex of discrete systems of curvilinear geometry that never cohere into a singularity.

The space is radically interiorized. High walls prevent eye-level connection with the outside; but a continuous highlight far above, framing a milky vaporous sky, moderates an ambiance of constantly changing light: brightening when the sun forces through, dimming when dense clouds obstruct it. These changes in light also change the sensed size of the space. It feels larger when bright, smaller when dim, shifting scale with the light, in turn expanding and contracting. Again, the felt sense of the space is ambiguous: it is both connected to and disconnected from its context; it is one, yet not totalizable or singular, but multiple and open to constant modulation.

The highlight ribbon separates the wall and ceiling continuously around the space. The wall is made of three separate components, detailed so they appear not to connect: the timber columns, the wall surface behind it and the high windows recessed away from the top of the wall. Window mullions are minimal, producing a sense that the roof floats above the wall. The columns are spaced away from the wall with almost imperceptible brackets. The wall surface is set jointed and painted silver-grey. The top is unframed, and the wall continues below the floor level in a recessed gap so that its thickness is not discernible (Fig. 9). This renders it as an insubstantial, suspended veil, free of the columns, the windows and the roof. The columns, too, continue below the surface of the floor and do not touch it.



Fig. 9 Peter Zumthor, St. Benedict Chapel, Sumvitg (Graubünden), 1989. (Photograph Michael Tawa)

The recess that accepts wall and columns is painted black, so it recedes, and its depth becomes indeterminate. Above, the columns are solidly connected to the roof beams, forming a single armature which, because of the detailing at the window and at the floor, seems to hang from above rather than being planted on a sure footing. Likewise, the floor, separated from the columns, and in such a way that its thickness is not visible, is reduced to a thin unstable surface, apparently hovering and potentially mobile within the space. Throughout this assemblage, Zumthor is scrupulous in expressing the discontinuity and radical independence between all the elements that constitute its discrepant fabric.¹⁸ As for the ceiling and roof, exposed beams extend the columns to an axial ridge that then fans out above the altar. The construction evokes the hull of a ship, and the entire

¹⁸ See my *Agencies of the frame: tectonic strategies in cinema and architecture* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 126–130.



Fig. 10 Peter Zumthor, St. Benedict Chapel, Sumvitg (Graubünden), 1989. (Photograph Michael Tawa)

space appears as if contained within an upturned boat: the central axis and ridge beam its keel; the roof and wall its hull; the pivot point above the altar its mast; and the apse its stern (Fig 10).

The ambiance of the space is built of tectonic and allegorical registers that conform to the architectural syntax and theology of the Christian church and its Judaic antecedent, the first tabernacle or tent of meeting, which was conceived as hanging from heaven and stretched across the earth like the sky or like a cloud. Its function was to represent the shadow of God cast onto the earth, protecting the people of Israel and indicating to them an itinerary of peregrination towards a permanent land. I remembered the stretched fabric over the altar in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the parasol or baldachin. I recalled that the night sky was once conceived as a perforated veil stretched across the world, through which the light of heaven shone. The tabernacle (Hebrew *mishkan*) was a pavilion (*shekina*)¹⁹ or tent (Greek *skene*), associated with the human body (*skenos*), and, as previously noted, likened to a cloud (*skia*) or sky cover (*skephas*)—a *skull*, *skin* or *scale*. These metaphors extend seamlessly into nautical referends. The *skene* is a landing boat (Greek *skenos* = vessel; *skaphe* = dug-out/skiff, sailed by a *skipper*) or a covering vestment (shirt/skirt) that roofs the ancient Greek *tholos*—a vaulted chamber that doubles the cosmos²⁰ (Fig. 10). Nautical symbolism abounds in Christian doctrine and architecture. Nordic churches feature prominently displayed scale models of timber boats. The word *nave* links etymologically to both *navel*—in the sense of *umbilicus*, centre of the body—and *naval*, in the sense of a ship or vessel. The church building is metaphorically a vessel that conveys the faithful to “yonder shore”. The nave leads the believer to the altar, which is metaphorically the navel or centre of the world—an *umbilicus mundi* that also functions as a door between earth and heaven.

It seemed that Zumthor had assembled multiple layers and registers here but that he had kept them discrete, unaligned, suspended and therefore infinitely available for retrieval and conjugation. The ambiguous overlay of registers remained in abeyance, circulating together and apart to form a palpable circumambience. Elsewhere I had broached the matter of intentionality—did Zumthor explicitly intend these different layers of meaning, or were they simply latent and implicit in the setup, simply made

¹⁹ Job, 39: 29. For *shekinah*, see René Guénon, *Le roi du monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), 22–30. On the “canopy of heaven”, see John James, *In search of the unknown in medieval architecture* (London: Pindar Press, 2007).

²⁰ E. Baldwyn Smith, *The dome. A study in the history of ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 88.

available by the building's architectonics, to be read (or not) by the mood or the attuned readiness of whoever happened to find themselves in its midst?²¹ In summer, I imagined a completely different voyager, a different set of circumstances, different consequences, a different ambiance, another kind of reverie and a radically different emergent atmosphere.

²¹ See my *Agencies of the frame*, 22–23, 130.



Ambiance

AMBIGUITY

A common understanding of ambiance is the “atmospheric effect of an arrangement”. But this is problematic as it allows slippage between the terms *ambiance* and *atmosphere* that produces a marked imprecision in the way the terms are used interchangeably and that contributes to lose thinking and loose terminology. This in turn makes it very difficult to account for the conditions that each term references and therefore how these conditions might be considered and acted upon in design. Nevertheless, the definition does raise two important characteristics of *ambiance*: first, that *ambiance* has to do with an arrangement or an assemblage that is a collection or gathering of parts, aggregating to a whole and, second, that *ambiance* is an effect—that it is the result of or that it is an emergent condition or property of that assemblage.

The treatment of *atmosphere* will have to wait until the matter of mood has been dealt with in the next section. My contention is that *ambiance* is strictly speaking a property of spatial assemblages or arrangements—or rather of places—which have distinctive cultural and social dimensions. Such places are affective: they are capable of triggering or eliciting particular experiences, emotions and affections, depending on the prevailing moods of those who find themselves there. Moods are not properties of places but of human beings, situated within affective ambiances, and engaging or otherwise transacting with their circumstance or context.

Atmosphere is then an emergent condition, resulting consequentially from the transactions between affective situational ambiances and human moods. Places have ambiances but not moods; and they can only be said to be atmospheric if human beings and their moods are involved.

Ambiance derives from the etymon *AMBHI, meaning around, on/ from both sides, and *EI, to go. This might refer to a gesture of going around or vacillation, but also to a state of being encircled, environed, surrounded: that is, to an ambit. The sense of going around implies something like restlessness, instability, wavering or hesitancy and alternation: what ambles is not at rest, and hence it is indeterminate, undecidable, equivocal, ambivalent. Ambivalence is a condition of simultaneous, multiple or contradictory—or at least still unresolved—states, dispositions, emotions, drives, meanings, ideas. At the same time, equivocation, vacillation and wavering produce something like a virtual, ephemeral, gossamer tracery of gestures that surrounds the ambient space with a halo, an atmosphere: something simultaneously limiting and insubstantial, emergent and emarginating.

The ambivalent character of an ambient setting in turn makes it ambiguous. Another sense of *AMBHI is double: the duality or diremption—the interval between—that causes meaning to vacillate and remain indeterminable, virtual, open to multiple possibilities. Not being able to close that interval, to resolve the discrepancy—remaining interminably under the impulse of ambivalence—ambiguity profusely alternates, multiplies and produces alternate sense. This at least is a positive reading of ambiguity. Commonly, the ambiguous is not valued because it is seen as a sign of doubt, uncertainty, disagreement, dispute, hesitation, confusion, deceit—all qualities running counter to what is widely valorized: doubtlessness, certainty, agreement, indisputability, decisiveness, clarity and honesty. The ambiguous leaves a situation open and hence always demands attentiveness and readiness to engage in marginal, hermeneutical practices of interpretation. The ambiguous is the domain of Hermes, the peripatetic boundary rider, the perambulator—the “wall piercer” who glides “edge-ways through the keyhole”—and who interminably circumambulates the *oikos*, the home, whose centre is sustained by Hestia, his consort and goddess of the hearth.¹ The trajectory of Hermes’ peregrinations is itself

¹ See Jean-Paul Vernant, *Myth and Thought Amongst the Greeks* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1983), 127–175, 232. Plato identifies *Hestia* with *ousia* and *essia*, immutable and permanent essence. See Plato, *Cratylus*: 401c–e.

deeply ambiguous. At one level, the overlaid traces of his circulating pathways delineate the indefinite borderlines or atmosphere of familiarity, hospitality and home. At another level, Hermes' movement radically destabilizes and defamiliarizes the home, rendering it inhospitable, unhomely and uncanny.

TYPES OF AMBIGUITY

In *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1949), William Empson broaches the theme of ambiguity within literature, but implications abound for architecture and cinema. Acknowledging that ambiguity is commonly read as an instance of witty deceit, Empson proposes a wider definition: "any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language".² Ambiguity arises when two or more meanings are possible and complicate a statement in terms of its implications. Metaphor is pivotal in ambiguity "because metaphor, more or less far-fetched, more or less complicated, more or less taken for granted (so as to be unconscious), is the normal mode of development of a language"³, and "the machinations of ambiguity are among the very roots of poetry".⁴

Empson's seven types of ambiguity is a convenient framework, arrayed in stages of advancing logical disorder, producing increasing levels of ambiguity. The simplest and most fundamental type of ambiguity occurs when "a detail [such as a word or a grammatical structure] is effective in several ways at once". In the second type, "two or more alternative meanings are fully resolved into one". In the third, "two apparently unconnected meanings are given simultaneously". In the fourth "the alternative meanings combine to make clear a complicated state of mind in the author". In the fifth, there is "a fortunate confusion, as when the author is discovering his idea in the act of writing... or not holding it all in mind at once". In the sixth, "what is said is contradictory or irrelevant and the reader is forced to invent interpretations". The seventh and final type "is that of full contradiction, marking a division in the author's mind".⁵

To exemplify the first type, Empson takes the example of a simile from a Shakespearean sonnet, pointing to the multiple resonances and "implied

²William Empson. *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1949), 1.

³Empson, *Ambiguity*, 2.

⁴Empson, *Ambiguity*, 3.

⁵Empson, *Ambiguity*, vi-vi, 2.

meanings” layered in the phrasing “Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sing”. Empson writes:

[R]uined monastery choirs are places in which to sing... they involve sitting in a row,... they are made of wood... used to be surrounded by a sheltering building crystallised out of the likeness of a forest... are now abandoned by all but the grey walls coloured like the skies of winter... and for various sociological and historical reasons (the protestant destruction of monasteries; fear of puritanism)... these reasons, and many more relating the simile to its place in the Sonnet, must all combine to give the line its beauty, and there is a sort of ambiguity in not knowing which of them to hold most clearly in mind.⁶

Evident here is the richness of implied meanings conveyed by a density of allusion:

Thus a word may have several distinct meanings; several meanings connected with one another; several meanings which need one another to complete their meaning; or several meanings which unite together.⁷

This condition of severed, disseveral unity composed of an inseparable multiplicity produces ambiguity, which could mean:

[A]n indecision as to what you mean, an intention [to mean several things, a probability that one or other or both of two things has been meant, and the fact that a statement has several meanings. It is useful to be able to separate these if you wish, but it is not obvious that in separating them at any particular point you will not be raising more problems than you solve.⁸

Turning to the question of atmosphere, Empson suggests that it is not produced by a kind of unanalysable, incantatory magic allied to the sound value of language. Rather, he implies that atmosphere can be analysed without destroying poetic effect.⁹ Referring to Samuel Johnson, he adopts “correspondence theory”, according to which sound and sense are modulated in versification, simultaneously producing semantic and

⁶ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 3.

⁷ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 5–6.

⁸ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 5–6.

⁹ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 7–9.

acoustic affects that trigger “the power of the imagination”.¹⁰ Juxtaposing words having the same sound prompts us to think of their possible connections if their sense is similar or to be struck by the value of incompatibility if their sense is different.

Apprehending or comparing one sense in relation to another involves “synaesthesia”, which “throws back the reader upon the undifferentiated affective states which are all that such sensations have in common”.¹¹ Here, Empson alludes to the gestural, onomatopoeic and mimetic character of language and words—to “how far their sound is an echo to their sense”—such that, for example, the word “‘huge’ moves the tongue back from the teeth so as to make as large a space as it can”, while the word ‘wee’ “moves the tongue near to the teeth as to leave as small a space as it can”. “In this way”, he continues, “not the sound itself, but our experience of the way it is produced, does, in fact, continually exhibit the idea of corporal bulk... all the sounds may be reduced to gestures in his way, more or less fancifully; they all, then, carry some suggestion of size, or shape, or movement, or pressure, up, down, forward, or backward, and, in themselves, that is all they can convey”.¹²

Important here is the relationship between a word’s individual meaning or semantic value, the manner of its pronunciation and the physicality or gestural register of its pronouncement: in other words, the direct, embodied relationship between sense, production and materiality.¹³ Empson relates poetic atmosphere to the phenomenon of pure sound and sees it as an affect that is over and above semantic reference, though it is commonly defined as an intimate, strange and mysterious physical quality or sensation, unattached to any one distinctive sense. He then counters this idea of atmosphere as mysterious, unknowable and therefore unanalysable, by comparing it with a musical chord. This can be directly, immediately and unmediatedly sensed; but it can also be understood in terms of its separate notes “even at the moment of sensing”, as something that is both felt and thought at the same time. Likewise, in poetry: “what the poet has conveyed is no assembly of grammatical meanings, capable of analysis, but a

¹⁰ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 13.

¹¹ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 13.

¹² Empson, *Ambiguity*, 14.

¹³ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 15.

‘mood’/an ‘atmosphere’/a personality/an attitude to life, an undifferentiated mode of being”.¹⁴

As Toth and Dienlen note in connection to affective musical experience:

Both nostalgia and melancholia necessitate that we experience specific affects. These affects are often ambivalent. When feeling nostalgic, we experience positive affects such as happiness, pride, joy, warmth, surgency, desire, gratitude, affection, tenderness, elation, pleasure, satisfaction, and euphoria; at the same time, we also experience negative affects such as sadness, disappointment, loss, irritation, fear, mourning, stress, poignancy, and regret. When feeling melancholic, we experience negative affects such as sadness, sorrow, despair, dread, and grief; at the same time, we also experience more positive ones such as longing, pleasure, sublime, hope, excitement, and joy.¹⁵

But Empson is more interested in the grammatical (i.e. structural and precise) foundations of ambiguity in language, than in any (imprecise) psychological mode of approach, producing distortions of meaning that belong to darker regions of the mind. An example is “false antithesis”, which opposes words without saying how they are opposed. Devices that convey ambiguity “leave it to the reader vaguely to invent something, and make him leave it at the back of his mind”,¹⁶ not unlike antithesis or comparison, which leave hanging exactly how two words are opposed or how they are to be compared, or with the use of “comparative adjectives” which do not say what their nouns are to be compared with; since all adjectives are in a sense comparative, this source of ambiguity is a comparatively general one. He gives an example from “Mr. Waley’s Chinese translations, to insist upon the profundity of feeling which such devices may enshrine”.¹⁷ The citation is from the poem *New Corn*, by T’ao Ch’ien (365–427 CE):

Swiftly the years, beyond recall. Solemn the stillness of this spring morning.

¹⁴ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 16–17.

¹⁵ Roland Toth and Tobias Dienlin, *Bittersweet Symphony: Nostalgia and Melancholia in Music Reception*, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339669193_Bittersweet_Symphony_Nostalgia_and_Melancholia_in_Music_Reception. Accessed 14 February 2022.

¹⁶ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 21.

¹⁷ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 23.

Here two time scales are juxtaposed in a single act of apprehension—the duration of a life and the duration of a moment; the swiftness of years and the stillness of a morning: two statements “made as if they were connected, and the reader is forced to consider their relations for himself”.¹⁸

For Empson, “ambiguity is a phenomenon of compression”.¹⁹ Rhythm (the foot, grammatical clause, line, sentence, stanza or paragraph) also delivers ambiguity, contributing a level of complexity and density to the temporality of the reading and to the dynamic register of sense: “a beat faster than the pulse, on a par, or slower convey, respectively, exhilaration and control, sincerity and sympathy and portentousness and uncontrollability”.²⁰ Further, rhythm can affect the semantic sense, both insisting upon or emphasizing, or else limiting our understanding of what is meant.²¹ Rhythmic and semantic compression make possible a multiplicity of interpretation, each opening up a world of sense, references, stories, myths and situations—sometimes consilient, sometimes contradictory—and all simultaneously valid. Empson lists three scales or dimensions of ambiguity, the first being most critically important: the degree of logical or grammatical disorder (foundational to the order or structure of the poem; what Hopkins would call inscape), the degree of consciousness of the ambiguity and the degree of psychological complexity (related to the poem’s reception; what Hopkins would call instress).

Empson’s second type of ambiguity involves “fluidity of thought and several superimposed rhythms”.²² It occurs “in word or syntax, when two or more meanings are resolved into one; when there is one resultant emphasis”. For ambiguity to arise, not all meanings should be evident to the mind; “what is gathered is the main sense, the main form and rhythm, and a general sense of compacted intellectual wealth, of an elaborate balance of variously associated feeling”.²³ For example, Shakespeare’s mature style features accumulated and “concentrated imagery, ... (a) bright central metaphor steeped and thickened in irrelevant incidental metaphors”.²⁴ The quality of accumulation, of layering, of sedimenting and consequently of densifying and thickening the metaphorical texture is pivotal here. It

¹⁸ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 25.

¹⁹ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 31.

²⁰ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 30.

²¹ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 30.

²² Empson, *Ambiguity*, 75.

²³ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 57.

²⁴ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 59, 63.

means that no single sense can be extricated, that meaning will begin to circulate, to transact and network across multiple registers, rendering the overall sense indeterminate. This setup causes sense to reflect, deflect, echo or diffract so that we find ourselves in a semantic forest: a forest of symbols that intertwine and mutually refract each other to build a complex texture that is resonant though not necessarily coherent or singular.

The third type of ambiguity occurs “when two ideas, which are connected only by being both relevant in the context, can be given in one word simultaneously”.²⁵ The meaning of a pun of this type puts several meanings into one word and “produces an additional effect”. The distinction must be kept ambiguous, since if it were too clearly or definitively delineated, the ambiguity would come to the forefront and be consequently neutralized.²⁶ Type three also occurs “when what is said is valid, refers to several different topics, several universes of discourse, several modes of judgment or of feeling”.²⁷

In the fourth type, “ambiguity is less conscious, because more completely accepted, or fitted within a larger unit”.²⁸ It occurs “when two or more meanings of a statement do not agree among themselves, but combine to make clear a more complicated state of mind in the author”.²⁹ Here, the ambiguous terms are sharply detached from one another, the marked division forcing the reader to “question its value”, though at the same time contributing an emergent quality that eclipses the irresolvability. Empson cites Proust’s contention that to live in one place is to be reminded of other places, of other atmospheres or mental climates; it is to live in several places simultaneously, and hence to exist outside of time, or in another temporality. To live in one place or in one time is intolerable; to live in two is ecstatic, beatific.³⁰ Yet the dissevered, admixed senses produced by ambiguity—the lack of clarity in the mind producing disturbance and incompatibility of feeling—also enrich, leave their mark and render the experience more memorable.³¹

In the fifth type of ambiguity, “the author is discovering his idea in the act of writing, or not holding it all in his mind at once, so that, for instance,

²⁵ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 102.

²⁶ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 103.

²⁷ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 111.

²⁸ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 133.

²⁹ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 131.

³⁰ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 133.

³¹ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 145.

there is a simile which applies to nothing exactly, but lies half-way between two things when the author is moving from one to the other".³²

Type six ambiguity occurs "when a statement says nothing, by tautology, by contradiction, or by irrelevant statements; so that the reader is forced to invent statements of his own and they are liable to conflict with one another".³³ Doubt arises due to a proliferation of alternatives, ambivalence, contradiction, antithesis and paradox in a term otherwise "dedicated to unity",³⁴ to the insistent energy that "sticks in your head" "when opposites left open are tied around a single strong idea".³⁵ Empson situates the propensity for such "secret ambiguity" and "suggestive indefiniteness" historically within the "clarifying labours of the eighteenth century" and the concerns of nineteenth-century poets to counter, with vagueness and indeterminacy, the certainties of scientific sensibility, of "logical punctuation", "simple ecstasies" and "smoothness of lyrical flow".³⁶

The seventh type of ambiguity—the last and "most ambiguous that can be conceived"—occurs "when the two meanings of the word, the two values of the ambiguity, are the two opposite meanings defined by the context, so that the total effect is to show a fundamental division in the writer's mind... A contradiction of this kind may be meaningless, but can never be a blank; it has at least stated the subject which is under discussion, and has given a sort of intensity to it such as one finds in a gridiron pattern in architecture because it gives prominence neither to the horizontals nor to the verticals, and in a check pattern because neither colour is the ground on which the other is placed; it is at once an indecision and a structure, like the symbol of the cross... You might relate it to the difference of sound heard by the two ears, which decides where the sound is coming from, or to the stereoscopic contradiction that imply a dimension".³⁷

Empson's analyses of ambiguity foreground the important tactical values of semantic indetermination, suspension and deferral of meaning. These are precisely constructed, and yet they produce in the reader or the listener an inability to definitively situate the boundaries of sense in a word or phrase. Meanings interminably connote, imply, deploy and proliferate. The multiplicity of possible senses coexist in relief, overlay or

³² Empson, *Ambiguity*, 155.

³³ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 176.

³⁴ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 179, 180.

³⁵ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 190.

³⁶ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 187, 190.

³⁷ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 192–193.

juxtaposition. Some advance, others remain in the background and yet others circulate or wander in between. This kind of semantic relay builds density, texture and richness, but in such a way as to keep the material porous, to aerate it, to precipitate in it an *ekstasis* of irradiating sense, a vaporous circumambiance.

INSTRESS

Gerard Manley Hopkins coined two terms “inscape” and “instress” to describe two related worlds and two related works: the world encountered by poetry and the world depicted by poetry and the work undertaken by the poet and the work undergone or experienced by the reader of poetry. Inscap is the characteristic, defining identity, unity and order of a thing or a scene. Instress is the corresponding affect experienced by the listener. Instress is twofold: the impulse, force or internal dynamic system assuring that unity as well as the force that conveys it entire to a beholder who experiences it through the sound-body of the poem. Instress is the recognition of inscap by a kind of consilient resonance between what is there to be seen, the seer and the seeing, between object, subject and art.³⁸ In the terms I have been using so far, inscap corresponds to the ambiance of a setting, subsequently experienced by a mooded being as the instress of atmosphere. Inscap is “forged”, Hopkins says. That is, it is made and constructed by artifice; it is a “forged *feature*” that lends character and quality to the thing. It “thrusts on” and “throngs” the ear, advancing and surging forth, gathering and resonating.³⁹ Its affective consequences mutually attune the author and the reader to the poem’s particular inscap. Yet, as Susan Ferris has highlighted, there is a difference between the meaning of words and the instress they provoke:

Hopkins defined poetry as speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning. Some [subject] matter and meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support

³⁸ Stephen Greenblatt et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 2159.

³⁹ Suzanne Ferriss, “The avoidance of what’s difficult: critical response to Hopkins’ ‘Henry Purcell’”, in *The Hopkins Quarterly* 17. 1/2, 1990: 57–58. See also Alan Heuser, *The shaping vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. (New York: Archon Books, 1968), 31.

and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake... Words are not valuable for what you can say with them but what you can make them do.⁴⁰

Ambiguity and uncertainty are central to the ambiance and affect of Hopkins' poetry; and to a great extent this is due to his leaving open the possibility of coexistence between the intelligible and the unintelligible: "most things should be at once intelligible; but everything need not and cannot be".⁴¹ So what is the strategic and productive value of the unintelligible to the carriage of instress? Opacity and ambiguity should not be read, necessarily, as causing confusion, unless, of course, one is looking for a definitive "solution" or singularity of meaning where none exists. The primary function of poetic language is not to convey or communicate information—Hopkins' is not an instrumental language, and meaning has only an ancillary function⁴²—but, by using stress and intonation, to appeal to human responsiveness by means of the sensory content and affective element of speech figures.⁴³

An extreme case of this can be found in Hopkins' *That Nature Is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection*. Here, ambiguity builds in the mirroring of sound patterns by Hopkins' deconstruction of words into their compounds and syllables and their dispersal across the versification to form rhymes, echoes, reflections and symmetries (bon-fire... bonniest... fire/dint; man/marks... man; I am...d/iam/ond). Such echoes build a rhythmic structure by dilating and distantiating the linguistic fabric, producing a "space" in which the various moments can be recuperated. This kind of deconstruction, destitution and disintegration in the linguistic body of the sonnet functions as a metaphor of the disintegration of the body (flesh fade, and mortal trash fall to the residuary worm) and its salvation through the trials and tribulations of an alchemical work, bur-nishing the self through undergoing an Heraclitean fire: a metaphor this time of the compression of carbon (a fallen, residual material) that produces (immortal) diamonds. These semantic echoes concatenate and

⁴⁰Ferriss, *The avoidance of what's difficult*: 57–58. See also Wimsatt, *Hopkins's Poetics*, 114: "Finding inscape in the presentation of the dreamer's face, which Hopkins sees as showing permanent character rather than passing mood, seems perfectly consistent with the idea that inscape is found in presentation of real generals, common natures, in specific individuals".

⁴¹Ferriss, *The avoidance of what's difficult*, 49–62.

⁴²Wimsatt, *Hopkins's Poetics*, 96.

⁴³Wimsatt, *Hopkins's Poetics*, 40.

densify meaning as they come to be superposed or imbricated in the sound-body and sense-body of the poem.⁴⁴ Ambiguously, however, there results a degree of opacity, built out of deferral (of one word to another, weaving an indefinitely complexifying fabric), together with an experience of porosity (which of the multiple senses prevails?), since the connections and resonances are not explicit but subliminal and open to multiple interpretation.

Hopkins' poetry draws from his acute observation of phenomena in the natural world and from human beings' engagement with those phenomena.⁴⁵ His scrutiny of these things leads him to discern the distinctive order, underlying pattern or inner structure of what appears or comes to presence in the world (inscape), as well as the affects these patterns produce, and the impressions they make, on human perception and experience (instress).⁴⁶ In that regard, Hopkins' poetry is geared not so much to represent or replicate the inscape of things but to work and deploy language to such an extent that its sonic body, its sound patterns, timbre and resonances, directly present and manifest inscape as instress.⁴⁷ Language, as articulated speech-sound, conveys inscape through affective connotation, not through cognitive denotation. What is critical to instress is not the individual meaning of words but the emergent conditions they give rise to through the ambiguity of language and the wonder or astonishment produced.⁴⁸

Ambiguity produces doubt in that sense wavers, hesitates, becomes equivocal or multivocal in the semantic texture. The defining edges of meaning become unclear. Meanings multiply and proliferate, as do possible interpretations. The way sound and resonance convey sense through instress is evident in Hopkins' *Binsey Poplars, felled 1879*:

My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
 Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,
 All felled, felled, are all felled;
 Of a fresh and following folded rank
 Not spared, not one
 That dandled a sandalled

⁴⁴Wimsatt, *Hopkins's Poetics*, 3.

⁴⁵Ferriss, *The Avoidance of What's Difficult*, 55–56.

⁴⁶Ferriss, *The Avoidance of What's Difficult*, 56.

⁴⁷Wimsatt, *Hopkins's Poetics*, 96.

⁴⁸Wimsatt, *Hopkins's Poetics*, 110–111.

Shadow that swam or sank
 On meadow & river & wind-wandering weed-winding bank.

O if we but knew what we do
 When we delve or hew—
 Hack and rack the growing green!
 Since country is so tender
 To touch, her being só slender,
 That, like this sleek and seeing ball
 But a prick will make no eye at all,
 Where we, even where we mean
 To mend her we end her,
 When we hew or delve:
 After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.
 Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve
 Strokes of havoc unselfe
 Sweet especial rural scene.

A palpable mood of melancholia and despondency pervades the poem: lamentation and litany, pitching the intrinsic beauty of a scene, its instress, against the violence and disrespect that would seek to destroy it. While the lexical meaning is obvious, it remains slight. Rather, Hopkins builds an affective ambiance through the form and intensity of sound: through rhyme, iteration, mirroring and trenchant stress. As James Wimsatt explains:

Binsey Poplars mourns the transformations of the Oxford scene. While the emphasis in the former is on the enduring natural beauty of Oxford in the frame of the Franciscan's triumphant achievement, *Binsey Poplars* focuses on nature and is elegiac in tone: My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled, Quélled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun, All félléd, félléd, are áll félléd. (1–3) The repetitions of the dominant liquids in 'quelled,' 'felled,' and 'all,' culminating in the repetition of 'rural' (similarly repeated in 'rural, rural keeping' in *Duns Scotus's Oxford*), abetted by the sibilant ss, contribute especially to producing an affective impact: Strókes of havoc únselfe The sweet especial scene, Rúral scene, a rural scene, Swéet especial rural scene. 'Especial scene' repeated, and 'rural scene' reiterated three times, unsubtly but effectively foreground the sounds.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Empson, *Ambiguity*, 120.

The texture of these poems is built of complex, layered fabrics of sense and sound in which the materiality of the language—its timbre and density, its grain and alliterated imbrication—builds consistency and complexity and at the same time brings a sense of constant deferment, echo and dilation, as if the fabric were always under threat of sundering and unravelling, which has been a common criticism of Hopkins' work: that it operates at the limit of what is verbally, grammatically and syntactical possible and that it veers towards a total breakdown of meaning.⁵⁰

Alliteration and assonance trigger resonances between the sound of words and their sense. Hopkins' is a kind of "musical etymology" that seeks "the authentic cadence", the "consonant chime" and "internal rhyme"⁵¹ of the scene depicted and the affect envisaged. He achieves this through various tactics: structural turbulence in the rhythmic transport of the poems, constituted of sprung rhythm, counterpointing, compounding and outliers; the simultaneous presence of several rhythms—regular and sprung—paralleling the simultaneous presence of several images in the narrative sequence; syncopated rhythm, given by irregular metric accents across stressed and slack syllables, such syncopation effectively quickening, enlivening and driving the rhythmic transport; a "roving over" or enjambement when scanning between lines that then, as Hopkins himself writes, "runs on without break from the beginning, say, of a stanza to the end and all the stanza is one long strain, though written in lines asunder".⁵²

Another way of understanding inscape and instress is in terms of what I would call Hopkins' linguistic tectonics: that is, the manner in which he works the linguistic material and organizes its sound-body in order for sense to come to presence in and through it. Inscap can be regarded as the unifying pattern or underlying structure of an assemblage (a thing, a group of things or events) that constitute its distinctive, "especial" character or essence. Instress consists in the dynamic relationships, forces or impulses between the elements of that assemblage—of the inscape—that

⁵⁰ Gardner and Mackenzie, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, xxix–xxx; xxxvii–xxxviii.

⁵¹ Gardner and Mackenzie, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, xix and xxii.

⁵² Gardner and Mackenzie, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 48. Gardner notes (254) the sense and tactical value of "roving" as the running on of the sense and sound of the end of a verse into the beginning of the next; the nautical sense of reaving as "splicing"; and its resonance with weaving "that would describe the interweaving of verses".

holds them together, sustains, vitalizes and mobilizes them⁵³ and that is conveyed to the reader as an affective atmosphere.⁵⁴

The Platonic ambiance of this is self-evident—an influence Hopkins drew from his background in Classics and the 13thC Franciscan friar and theologian/philosopher Duns Scotus: that is, the *eidōs* or *haecceitas* or “thisness”⁵⁵ implied in the “especial” unity or inscape which mobilizes, conforms and organizes the “cumbersome or restraining” linguistic material.⁵⁶ Also notable is Hopkins’ tacit understanding that for Plato, paradigmatic form (*eidōs*, idea) is not limited to static (*stasis*) pattern or shape (*morphe*), rendered by a mould. Rather, intrinsic to every *eidōs* is a distinctive moulding force (*plattein*, from the etymon *PLAT, spread, flatten out), a *dunamis*: a dynamic, an energy (*ergon*) or trajectory that holds form together in a state of tension—for example, in geometry, a static square is determined and held by the diagonal diremption of one into four, or by a fourfold compression or restraint applied to an irradiating force moving outward from a singular centre. This is the significance of the stress in instress: an elaboration of “Parmenides’ idea of ‘stress’ as signifying Being, which holds things together and imparts reality to them”.⁵⁷

It is the instress that enables a perception of inscape: a perception that grows in a progressive way, evolving and developing in time, as the

⁵³Wimsatt, *Hopkins’s Poetics*, 104.

⁵⁴Gardner and Mackenzie, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, xx.

⁵⁵Wimsatt, *Hopkins’s Poetics*, 97.

⁵⁶“The “inscape” that Hopkins speaks of is (loosely) the network of forms that you see when you look into a thing through its haecceity. That was what Scotus enabled Hopkins to see. For Scotus insists on the full reality and intelligibility of the individual, the reality of the formalities discerned in things by the mind, and the unity of the individual with the metaphysical tracery that composes it. One of the conditions of essential poetry is that universal and singular be interlinked, so that the unique can be represented in the general and the general manifested in the unique” Wimsatt, *Hopkins’s Poetics*, 106. See also Hopkins’ thoroughly Platonic tenor in a letter to Patmore, in Gardner and Mackenzie, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, xxi, fn. 1: “Fitness, proportion, of feature comes from a moulding force which succeeds in asserting itself over the resistance of cumbersome or restraining matter”.

⁵⁷Wimsatt, *Hopkins’s Poetics*, 99 and 106–7: “Parmenides, he says, has a striking ‘feeling for instress, for the flush and foredrawn, and for inscape’. Flush refers to fullness, foredrawn to boundedness and determinateness. In Brown’s words, “flushness” highlights the fluid informing principle of Being, while “the foredrawn” focuses on the bounding definition in which such force draws together as a unity”. See also 106: “The natural phenomena reveal the generality of the ‘laws’ that control them, while the speech sound patterns of poetry and the designs of all art have ‘emotional’ inscapes; their inscapes represent principles that lie behind the affective nature of humankind”.

connotative power of sounds builds resonance and feeling in the reader.⁵⁸ Such connotative development “prepossesses” the poet and primes or attunes the listener in advance of instress taking hold.⁵⁹ Hopkins’ use of phonal devices, grammatical liberties, tonal colours and unifying ligaments to build inscape and the affects of instress are intended to give “more brilliancy, starriness, quain [*angularity, coined from the architectural term quoin, corner*], margaretting to the rhythm and texture” to the poem. Significantly, the purpose of Hopkins’ poetic, metrical and semantic devices—specifically through verse, word and sound repetition, parallelism and rhyme (*oftening, over-and-overing, aftering*),⁶⁰ which Hopkins referred to as the “reverberations of language”⁶¹—together produce incantatory effects, akin to liturgical prosody and litany, effects of reverie, of rapture, whose major role is to aid detachment of the inscape for the contemplation of a mind absorbed, taken up, dwelling upon, entranced.

The spatial implications of these tactics are self-evident. They suggest an architecture built of multiple superimposed or juxtaposed configurations, patterns and rhythms which coexist, yet without fully fusing into a singularity. Hopkins’ tactics of “lettering”—that is, alliteration, assonance and complex orchestrations of sound⁶²—produce melodic lines or shapes, repeated so as to rhyme and build sonic texture and rhythm. These can be paralleled, in architecture, to the layering of repeated configurations in spatial depth that can be read over, against each other, or encountered in a sequence of spaces that unfold and echo as so many reiterations to build spatial complexity, density, texture and rhythm. A parallel instance in music might be Arvo Pärt’s *Festina Lente* (1988–1990), where the same melody is played simultaneously by three groups of instruments at three different time scales—slow, natural and fast. The instruments begin together, but the disjunction in tempo causes the three streams to immediately diverge. During the piece, the three will develop radically different dynamic and harmonic relationships as they separate, cross over and align with each other. This will range from resonance and concord to complete discord and chaotic deconstruction of the melody, from dynamic alignment, upgathering and amplification to an extreme opposition and

⁵⁸Wimsatt, *Hopkins’s Poetics*, 104.

⁵⁹Wimsatt, *Hopkins’s Poetics*, 100.

⁶⁰Wimsatt, *Hopkins’s Poetics*, 108.

⁶¹Wimsatt, *Hopkins’s Poetics*, 6–7.

⁶²Wimsatt, *Hopkins’s Poetics*, 45; 73.

cancellation of energy. The contradiction in the music's title—*festina lente* means “to hurry slowly”—also defines its ambit and its ambiance. By overlaying one melodic pattern with its accelerated and decelerated iterations, Pärt constructs an image of time in the process of unravelling and decompressing—the present put into tension and stress by the antagonistic of a propellant future and a restraining past. The piece moves from stable regular organization to irregular coagulations of multiple layers, then inexorably towards deconstitution as its texture disentangles into broad horizontal sheets of sound decreasing in proximity, separated by intervals growing in distance. Pärt effectively spatializes both sound and time through a texture that fades to an indefinite and infinitely finishing end.⁶³

CIRCUMSTANCE AND CONSEQUENCE

If ambiance is the distinctive assemblage that delineates and qualifies a surrounding world—an affective, charged setting in which we happen to find ourselves—then the components of that assemblage constitute a circumstance; they stand round about us in such a way as to circumscribe the setting as a place. Such circumscription is not simply geometrical and static but even more so gestural and dynamic. It is a charged field of forces, tensions and propensities within which we can build a lifeworld. Circumstance, circle, circumscription, circumspection and curvature all derive from the etymon *SKER/*KER, meaning to turn or bend. The ring of a circle is what successively bends to delineate a circumference, a corona, a boundary: more or less vaporous, dense or incorporated. The spatial connotations here parallel an equivalent range of temporal registers. The circle traces a cycle: whether closing and completing or spiraling and open-ended in its centripetal or centrifugal trajectory. Latin *curvus* and *cyclus* and Greek *kirkos* and *kyklos* refer to a circular body, such as a wheel, but also to a cycle of events, a round or revolution in time, a life cycle, an aeon or an age. The related etymon here is *KWEL, to move about, but also to sojourn, tarry, delay, dwell. The apparent dichotomy and ambiguity between immobility and mobility is constitutive rather than contradictory. Instructive here is the second sense of the etymon *KWEL: that which is far (off), remote, both temporally and spatially—hence the end as something yet distant, still to be achieved. We find ourselves here, in a given situation, fixed in time and space; and yet we are also moving there, toward

⁶³ See my *Agencies of the frame*, 160.

somewhere and sometime that is yet to be, to come. We always find ourselves both emplotted and deployed, here and on the way, present and futural. Circumstance is essentially perimetrical: it is the outskirts of a region. It lays out a boundary that functions as both limit and origin. Again, the perimeter is not simply a geometrical borderline. Rather, it is a charged interface—or, more properly, a surface as surfeit, as excessive production whose originary and terminal capacities are two phases of its radical scintillation and radiance.

The other component of circumstance derives from the etymon *STA, to stand firm, to set down, to establish. A loan word from the Greek *peristalsis*, it means what stands round about, on all sides, on the periphery—hence in a ring or circle. The Persian suffix *-stan* means country, the place of one's standing: that is, the constitutive identity one derives from place, from being placed and from one's taking place as coming into one's own, coming into existence and standing out. The Greek *bistemi* is cognate, adding a further sense of weight and gravity to that standing, to that staying put. The theme of staying, tarrying, sedentarism is integral here—Greek *stylos* means pillar, but also *stylus* and writing implement that engraves the characters and the characteristics of law, of *logos*. Likewise, Latin *sister*, to stand still, stop and produce in a court of law. Countering the static sense of *STA is a dynamic register implied by the cognate word *status*—the act of standing, the manner or attitude of one's standing, as well as the position one occupies in a hierarchy of relationships: political, sociocultural, emotional, corporeal. The antonym of circumstance (what stands around) might be instance (what stands in)—from Latin *instans*, instant; with the sense of imminent, immediate, at hand and pressing. The literal sense is standing near, in such a way as to urge, impel, bring about. Circumstance might then be read as the outflow and instantiation of instance, an actualization of potential, the affirmation of imminent possibility in a figure or configuration that we can see and that acts upon us. On the other hand, circumstance implies the sense of remoteness and distance, whereas the instant is radically near and proximate.

Circumstance functions as a setup, infrastructure or frame that enables happenstance: an organized set-out of multiple opportunities that can be procured and whose procurement constitutes the emergent capacity or ambiance of place. Here, circumstance parallels contingency. The contingent is uncertain and unpredictably dependent on circumstance. It might be a chance occurrence or an accident. It might never happen. Events are always contingent on: that is, what happens depends. Latin *contingente*

means to happen to one, to befall, to come to pass, but only provisionally. Strangely, the etymology derives from Latin *com-* together and *tangere*, touch, from *TAG, touch, handle, seize, partake of. Cognates are contact, tangent, tactile, tactic, tact. A possible sense through this is that in circumstance, a provisional assemblage of components is brought into a neighbourhood, into proximity, into contact. Once in touch with each other, those now contiguous components become charged and mobilized as relays open up between them. That charge might be the palpable ambience of circumstance.

We are familiar with different kinds of circumstance: fortunate circumstances, felicitous circumstances, inopportune circumstances, suspicious circumstances, unforeseen circumstances, extenuating circumstances, mitigating circumstances, prevailing circumstances, circumstances beyond our control, circumstances that enable, prohibitive circumstances, circumstances that demand, living in reduced circumstances, ceremonial pomp and circumstance. Each of these comports a different ambience and makes possible a different set of emergent possibilities. This means that circumstances are not passive but resolutely affective. Because they are fundamentally particulate, they have the capacity to modify or temper general principles; so that, for example, the circumstances of a concrete, contingent context will alter, temper and modify an abstract idea—whether philosophical, political, ethical, cinematic or architectural.

In his 2018 lecture on the American architect Louis Kahn, *The Eternal and the Circumstantial*,⁶⁴ Robert McCarter noted Kahn’s understanding of enduring architecture as resulting from a double condition, a double engagement: with the unchanging, universal and general and with the mutable, particular and circumstantial. For Kahn, the eternal register is in the classical tradition of “ancient monuments, the rituals they housed, and the geometries that ordered them”, while the circumstantial is in the contemporary settings that potentially transform the ancient through the interpretative and inventive capacity of design. Kahn’s reference to historical and classical types is not stylistic or aesthetic but tectonic—that is, the historical functions as a source of innate constructional and material logic that is bound in time but that has the capacity to be retrieved and reworked in novel ways.

⁶⁴ <https://esel.at/termin/98734/louis-kahn-the-eternal-and-the-circumstantial>. Accessed 15 October 2021.

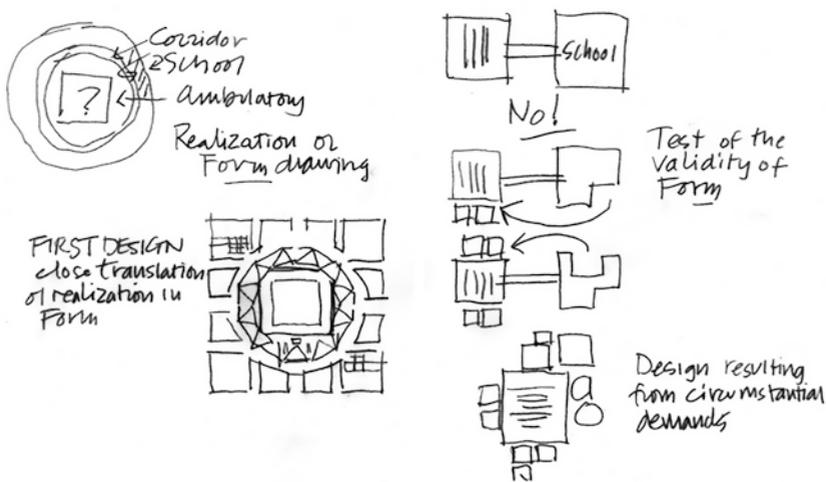


Fig. 1 After a diagram by Louis Kahn. Organizational schema for the First Unitarian Church and School, Rochester, 1959, in John Peponis, Sonit Bafna, Salim Dahabreh and Fehmi Dogan, 2015, *Configurational meaning and conceptual shifts in design*. *The Journal of Architecture* 20.2: 18 (Drawing Michael Tawa)

A key aspect of the circumstantial for Kahn is the prosaic contribution made by financial and legislative frameworks,⁶⁵ but it must logically also comprise all of the circumstantial demands of site, traffic, services, ground conditions, hydrology, ecology, climate, availability of materials, sociocultural aspects and so forth. Circumstance is associated with context, with the setting of design. It functions to modify, to adjust, to temper any designs one might bring to an architectural project. In Kahn's diagram, design proceeds through the incremental modification of an ideal form—inscrutably circular, then quadrilateral and symmetrical—that is systematically subjected to rearrangement, mutation, accretion, distortion and so forth, depending on its interactions with contextual conditions, with the “circumstantial demands” of a specific, contingent spatiotemporal situation (Fig. 1):

⁶⁵ “I think that it is the circumstantial things [the amount of money you had, and the difficulties of regulations and so forth] which show with what brilliance you have attacked the problems of design with which you were confronted.” (Louis Kahn, talk at the conclusion of the Otterlo Congress, 1959).

The persistence of a Platonic privileging of concept over context, of the general or universal over the particular or specific, of essence over substance, means that we still consider circumstance as somewhat inauthentic. Circumstantial evidence is not admitted in a court of law, for example, because it relies on inference since it cannot be definitively associated with an event or a fact in order to corroborate it, and so it is susceptible to being included in multiple possible narratives that remain mutually undecidable. The negative connotation of the circumstantial aligns it with the vague, unprovable, immaterial, indirect, inessential, indemonstrable, unverifiable, unconfirmable and unevincible. We might say “what were the circumstances of your birth”, by which we might mean how did it come about, how did it happen, what were the events surrounding the birth, where did it take place, when, who was there, what did they do, was it an easy or difficult birth and so on. But we might also imply “why did it happen in that way, what were the causal events and settings that led up to it”. In that sense, we might be referring to an assemblage, to a cluster of conditions that happened to align, to touch, to come into contact at the time and place of your birth, to come into proximity by accident, in an unplanned manner, in an unintended, undesigned way. Here, the circumstances of my birth are decisive, but they represent a momentary contiguity of conditions that we might define as non-essential, casual, fortuitous, and felicitous or not, fortunate or not, opportune or inopportune. By chance, incidentally, such and such a place, at such and such a time, plus such and such a person, in such and such a mood, produce such and such an atmosphere.

Circumstances have consequences: conditions follow or flow from them, they have implications. A particular set of circumstances is something like a section cut through a potentially indefinite field of possibilities, manifesting at a particular time in a particular place. Circumstances and their consequences might be usefully read, respectively, in terms of François Jullien’s motifs of efficacious disposition and propensity. A given setting is so (pre)disposed as to be open to the efficacious and strategic mobilization of its inherent potential—potential that has a distinct inclination or trajectory, a particular leaning or tendency towards, a specific capacity-to-become, that constitute its propensity.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ See François Jullien. *The Propensity of things. Towards a history of efficacy in China*, transl. Janet Lloyd (New York: Zone Books, 1995).

Consequence is from the etymon *SEKW, follow, and *SEK, cut, sequester, partition, divide. Implied are two apparently contradictory terms: to separate and to join. The term segue way—a link from one thing to another—is from the musical word segue: to link smoothly, to transition with continuity. What stands around and apart in circumstance at the same time impels a coming together, a confluence, a conjugation, a contiguity, in the same way that rhythm has the double sense of continuity (*RHEO, Greek *rhein*, flow) and discontinuity (*DHE, Greek *thema*, set, put). Rhythm cuts and separates into beats, but it also impels and drives the course of a musical phrase, a narrative, a film, a formal configuration or a spatial sequence.

The accidental alignment of conditions that we call circumstantial is decisive in that it has the potential to unclench consequences for us, to bring something about, to cause something to befall us: the very definition of an accident—from Latin *ad-*, to, and *cadere*, fall. The cognate lexicon is suggestive: cadence, cadaver, cascade, casual, casualty, chance, chute, decadence, decay, deciduous, incident, occasion. What follows befalls; and the befallen find themselves ensnared within circumstances and their consequences (Old English *befeallan*, from *fealle*, snare, trap). What happens takes place, establishes itself, pervades, spreads its influence, its ambiance. There is a fascinating nuance here around the idea of happening, of what happens (by hap), what comes to pass, comes about or emerges. The implied sense is of an unforeseen occurrence: something resulting from chance or good luck; and further, something that is lucky, favourable, propitious: some kind of success, some profit flowing from succession. At the same time, to befall is to happen to one as if from a great height. To fall is to drop, sink, subside; to fail, decay, die. Empires, governments, cities, bodies and nights all fall. Some fall on their sword; others fall asleep or into traps. We have our downfall, we fall out with others, or we fall upon (something unexpected).

CIRCUMSPECTION

How is ambiance detected? How do we see the circumstantial and its consequences? The apprehension of circumstance is necessarily circumspensive. We perceive circumstance not by looking at anything but by looking about, by averting the gaze. Circumspection literally means to observe (Latin *specere*, look, from *SPEK, observe) round about, to look around. Circumspection is not inspection; and the one looking is not an inspector

but a circumsector. To inspect is to look into, to look at, to scrutinize. Significantly, scrutiny—investigation, close examination, search—implies, through the etymon *SCREU, to cut. It is a practice of division, diremption, severance; it literally means to cut to shreds. Inspection is cognate with analysis, though the violence done to the inspected is of a different order to the “softer” deconstitution of the analysed. In the latter, there is a loosening up of connections and bonds, but only sufficient to see the various parts while they still maintain their relationships within a whole.

The word circumstance dates to the fourteenth century when it meant “‘careful observation of one’s surroundings, attention to details and probable consequences’ (with a view to choosing the safest course)”.⁶⁷ The sense is not simply observation but foresight (Latin *circumspectio*): not merely seeing (something that is already there) but seeing *for* (something that is not yet there), interpreting what is seen for the implications it has for what might come, for what might take place. Here, the idea of implication is pivotal. Circumstances imply: that is, they are constituted of multiple folds of virtualities and potentialities that give it density and texture but that can also be unfolded to yield complex actualities. Speaking of the importance of circumstance to placemaking, and of one’s comportment to it, Australian architect Richard Leplastrier saw it as a process of finetuning:

So that as you can come to a place, even in a state of disrepair, you can draw out from it circumstance; and when you say circumstance, what you’re talking about is those qualities that lie around—‘circum’; that stand around the place—circumstance... and we’ve found that the best way to do it is to draw it: so you draw out from the place its qualities and they make you look at things carefully... circumstances socially connected, environmentally connected.⁶⁸

Here, Leplastrier brings together the three key registers of an ambient practice: attunement, circumstance and the drawing out of consequences and implications for design. The way we look (at) is first of all a matter of ethics, as Heidegger pointed out, foregrounding the calculative over against the solicitous in terms of the look and the gaze and how the solicitous gaze involves a particular kind of “grasping”. He distinguished between a looking “which makes presence possible... (and) at the same

⁶⁷ Online Etymological Dictionary: circumstance. <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=circumstance>. Accessed 5 December 2021.

⁶⁸ Richard Leplastrier, personal communication, 12 March 2021.

time shelters and hides something undisclosed” and “the look of a being that advances by calculating, i.e., by conquering, outwitting and attacking... the look of the predatory animal: glaring... But the basic feature of this grasping look is not glaring, by means of which beings are, so to say, impaled and become in this way first and foremost objects of conquest”.⁶⁹ The call is for a kind of looking that does not grab and “lock” onto a subject, in order to incarcerate, eliminate or consign it to irrelevance by defining and categorizing it. On the contrary, this looking proceeds by way of attentiveness and care towards the arrival of whatever manifests itself in a given situation. It is not a matter of foreclosing but of unlocking and releasing. Hence Heidegger’s reading of nature is *Aufgang*, opening up, and, likewise, what one might posit as architecture’s foundational purpose: to make possible a seeing, to enable (a being, a place, a people, a circumstance, an event, a performance, a learning), to appear, to take place.

In *The Aroundness of the Environment and Dasein’s Spatiality*,⁷⁰ Heidegger broaches questions and themes implied by the spatial constitution of Being, of *Dasein*: insideness, what is closed around (*unschlossen*), boundary, extension, space as a receptacle, container and contained and so forth. Heidegger wishes to show, through an analysis of “what is ready-to-hand in space within-the-world”, how “the aroundness of the environment, the specific spatiality of entities encountered in the environment, is founded upon the worldhood of the world, while contrariwise the world, on its part, is not present-at-hand in space”.⁷¹ For Heidegger, circumstance is what stands round about (*Umberum*), the worldhood of the environment (*Umwelt*), the totality of entities and things that are in the world and “present-at-hand within the world”⁷²—“houses, trees, people, mountains, stars”⁷³—and which we experience phenomenologically, rather than merely perceive and account for:

‘environment’ (*Umwelt*) contains in the ‘environ’ (*‘um’*) a suggestion of spatiality, Yet the ‘around’ (*‘Umberum’*) which is constitutive for the environment does not have a primarily ‘spatial’ meaning. Instead, the spatial

⁶⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, transl. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 108.

⁷⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and time*, transl. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962), 94.

⁷¹ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 134–135.

⁷² Heidegger, *Being and time*, 93.

⁷³ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 90.

character which incontestably belongs to any environment, can be clarified only in terms of the structure of worldhood.⁷⁴

Those circumstantial things that are ready-to-hand, that are close by, are not there in terms of spatial proximity. Rather, they are close in terms of “circumspectively ‘calculative’ manipulating and using. At the same time what is close in this way gets established by the circumspection of concern, with regard to the direction in which the equipment is accessible at any time.... This ‘wither’, which makes possible for equipment to belong somewhere, and which we circumspectively keep in view ahead of us in our concerned dealings, we call the “*region*” (*Gegend*, ‘whereabouts’).⁷⁵

Circumspective, concerned looking is seeing in terms of the wither, towards that to which the equipmentality of the world might be applied; and this looking—which is a determination (*stimmt*) enabled through our mood or attunement (*Stimmung*) to that world—opens up a space of possibility, a region, a whereabouts, a situated circumambience:

Something like a region must first be discovered if there is to be any possibility of allotting or coming across places for a totality of equipment that is circumspectively at one’s disposal. The regional orientation of the multiplicity of places belonging to the ready-to-hand goes up to make up the aroundness—the “round-about-us” (*das Um-uns-herum*)—of those entities which we encounter as closest environmentally... The “where” of its readiness-to-hand is put to account as a matter for concern, and oriented towards the rest of what is ready-to-hand. Thus the sun, whose light and warmth are in everyday use, has its own place—sunrise, midday, sunset, midnight; these are discovered in circumspection and treated distinctively in terms of changes in the usability of what the sun bestows.... The house has its sunny side and its shady side; the way it is divided into ‘rooms’ (“*Räume*”) is oriented towards these, and so is the ‘arrangement’ (“*Einrichtung*”) within them, according to their character as equipment. Churches and graves, for instance, are laid out according to the rising and setting of the sun—the regions of life and death, which are determinative for *Dasein* itself with regard to its ownmost possibilities of Being in the world. *Dasein*, in its very Being, has this Being as an issue; and its concern discovers beforehand those regions in which some involvement is decisive. This discovery of regions beforehand is

⁷⁴ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 94.

⁷⁵ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 135–136.

co-determined (*mitbestimmt*) by the totality of involvements for which the ready-to-hand, as something encountered, is freed.⁷⁶

Here we have a connection between determination (*stimmt*) and mood (*Stimmung*) as a determined way of being—specifically, of being-the-there (*Dasein*), of being “in” the world. As will be seen in the next section, *Stimmung* means determining the pitches of an instrument—originally *Stimme*, the voice; but here it is adaptable to the mood of human being, such that it is inclined to or matches (*Abstimmung*), such as it is acclimatized, tempered and calibrated, to the particular modality, circumstance and ambiance of a given “there”, of a distinctive setting or place.

But how, Heidegger asks, is *Dasein* “in” the world? It is “in” the world:

[I]n the sense that it deals with entities encountered within-the-world, and does so concernfully and with familiarity. So if spatiality belongs to it in any way, that is possible only because of this unique Being-in. But its spatiality shows the characters of *de-severance* and *directionality*.

A pivotal contradiction appears here. Directed de-severally—that is, inclined not to unity and the one but to a sequence, to severance and to the several—the circumstantial has to do with the particulate, with the conditional, with the contingent individual components that make up an assemblage, an ambiance:

As de-severant Being-in *Dasein* has likewise the character of *directionality*. Every bringing-close (*Näherung*) has already taken in advance a direction towards a region out of which what is de-severed brings itself close (*sich nähert*), so that one can come across it with regard to its place... De-severance and directionality, as constitutive characteristics of Being-in, are determinative for *Dasein*'s spatiality—for its being concernfully and circumspectively in space, in a space discovered and within-the-world.⁷⁷

And yet, in apprehending circumstance circumspectively, the being must defer the temptation to rest on any one of the multiple components and valences of place. De-severance does not imply remoteness or distance; it is not a matter of spatial distension; it is not a fixed but an active and transitive constitutive condition of *Dasein*'s Being that gathers:

⁷⁶ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 136–137.

⁷⁷ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 143–144.

‘De-severing’ amounts to making the farness vanish—that is, making the remoteness of something disappear, bringing it close. *Dasein* is essentially de-severant: it lets any entity be encountered close by as the entity which it is... Proximally and for the most part, de-severing is a circumspective bringing-close—bringing something close by, in the sense of procuring it, putting it in readiness, having it to hand.

Heidegger insists that the terms remote, close, distance and so forth do not refer to quantitative, calculatable spatial measure; they refer to qualitative relational disposition, such that, for example, things can be “here”, physically close and “proximally-to-hand environmentally” yet experientially or phenomenologically remote and “yonder”:

Dasein is never present-at-hand in space, not even proximally. *Dasein* does not fill up a bit of space as a Real Thing of item or equipment would, so that the boundaries dividing it from the surrounding space would themselves just define that space spatially. *Dasein* takes space in; this is to be understood literally. It is by no means just present-at-hand in a bit of space which its body fills up. In existing, it has already made room for its own leeway. It determines its own location in such a manner that it comes back from the space it has made room for to the ‘place’ which it has reserved... *Dasein*’s making room for itself is constituted by directionality and de-severance... To *Dasein*’s making room for itself belongs the self-directive discovery of something like a *region*.⁷⁸

Circumspection gives space to and makes room for the entities encountered within the world.⁷⁹ For Heidegger, this is principally an ethical matter, a matter of concerned surveillance that raises the question of care, “for as ‘care’ the Being of *Dasein* in general is to be defined”.⁸⁰ Being is always being with—it is always a matter of inclination, of *clinamen*—which, “like concern, is a *Being towards* entities encountered within-the-world... These entities are not objects of concern, but rather of *solicitude* (*Fürsorge*)”.⁸¹

The terms care (*Sorge*), concern (*Besorgen*) and solicitude (*Fürsorge*) are not limited by any sense of patronizing sentimentality, personal fondness for, anxiety towards and the like, which the common understanding of

⁷⁸ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 419, 142.

⁷⁹ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 146.

⁸⁰ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 157.

⁸¹ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 157.

“care” suggests.⁸² Rather, *sorge* should be read in relation to English “surge”, Latin *surgere*, to arise, ascend, swell—from *sub-*, under and the etymon *REG, to direct, lead, move in a straight line. Derivatives from *REG include regular, regulation, rectitude, regent, reign, right, rite, ritual and so forth. The general sense is one of emergence and *ekstasis* so that care, *sorge*, becomes that disposition (to a circumstance, an ambiance, a region, a being or those entities encountered within-the-world) that is attentive to the letting be, the letting arise and the letting emerge of that which concernedful circumspection has in view. In that way, concernedful circumspection frees other beings into their own radiance and reign by being there with them as they emerge and come to presence. It is a kind of solicitude:

[W]hich does not so much leap in for the Other as *leap ahead* of him in his existentiell potentiality-for-Being, not in order to take away his ‘care’ but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time. This kind of solicitude pertains essentially to authentic care—that is, to the existence of the Other, not as a ‘*what*’ with which he is concerned; it helps the Other to become transparent to himself in his care and to become free for it.

Heidegger considers three dispositions of care, three modes of seeing (*Sicht*) or concernedful discovery of what is ready-to-hand: circumspection (*Umsicht*), solicitude guided by considerateness (*Rücksicht*) and forbearance (*Nachsicht*).⁸³ In *Umsicht*, the prefix *um-* can mean “around” or “in order to”:

‘*Umsicht*’ may accordingly be thought of as meaning ‘looking around’ or ‘looking around for something’ or ‘looking around for a way to get something done’... a kind of awareness in which one looks around before one decides just what one ought to do next.⁸⁴

In his *Analysis of environmentality and worldhood in general*, Heidegger wrote:

The Being of those entities which we encounter as closest to us can be exhibited phenomenologically if we take as our clue everyday being-in-the-world, which we also call our ‘*dealings*’ in the world and *with* entities

⁸² Heidegger, *Being and time*, 157 fn. 4.

⁸³ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 159.

⁸⁴ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 98 fn. 2.

within-the-world. Such dealings have already dispersed themselves into manifold ways of concern. The kind of dealing which is closest to us is as we have shown, not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use; and this has its own kind of ‘knowledge’.⁸⁵

Such things with which we have concerned dealings with are what the Greeks called *pragmata* and which Heidegger calls “equipment”. Equipments are never singular but always form part of collectives, of assemblages that exist together, in order to achieve some work that is approached concernfully (*praxis*): a collectivity that Heidegger calls “equipmentality”:

Equipment is essentially ‘something in-order-to...’ A totality of equipment is constituted by various ways of the ‘in-order-to’, such as serviceability, conduciveness, usability, manipulability... In the ‘in-order-to’ as a structure there lies an *assignment* or *reference* of something to something. Equipment—in accordance with its equipmentality—always is *in terms of (aus)* its belonging to other equipment: ink-stand, pen, ink, paper, blotting pad, table, lamp, furniture, windows, doors, rooms. These ‘Things’ never show themselves proximally as they are for themselves, so as to add up to a sum of *realia* and fill up a room. What we encounter as closest to us... is the room; and we encounter it not as something ‘between four walls’ in a geometrical spatial sense, but as equipment for residing. Out of this the ‘arrangement’ emerges, and it is in this that any ‘individual’ item of equipment shows itself. *Before* it does so, a totality of equipment has already been discovered.⁸⁶

Circumspection is not a theoretical apperception but a practical one, concerned with the implications, the uses and potential manipulations of the ready-to-hand, with the “in-order-to” of production. “Action”, writes Heidegger, “has its own kind of sight”⁸⁷:

The kind of Being which equipment possesses—in which it manifests itself in its own right—we call ‘*readiness-to-hand*’ (*Zuhandenheit*). Only because equipment has *this* ‘Being-in-itself’ and does not merely occur, is it manipulable in the broadest sense and at our disposal. No matter how sharply we

⁸⁵ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 95.

⁸⁶ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 96–98 and 97 fn. 2: “The basic metaphor seems to be that of turning something away towards something else, or pointing it away”.

⁸⁷ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 99.

just *look* (*Nur-noch-hinsehen*) at the ‘outward appearance (*Aussehen*) of Things in whatever form this takes, we cannot discover anything ready-to-hand. If we look at Things just ‘theoretically’, we can get along without understanding readiness-to-hand. But when we deal with them by using them and manipulating them, this activity is not a blind one; it has its own kind of sight by which our manipulation is guided and from which it acquires its specific Thingly character. Dealings with equipment subordinate themselves to the manifold assignments of the ‘in-order-to’. And the sight with which they thus accommodate themselves is *circumspection*.⁸⁸

Yet again, an apparent contradiction arises. For the equipmentality of the world—for the ready-to-hand—to become proximate and available, “it must, as it were, withdraw (*zrückzuziehen*) in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically”.⁸⁹ This means that it must become second nature and that it must become tacit. And tacit means “passed over in silence”, “assumed as a matter of course”; but more critically, it joins an extensive lexicon that aligns tactic and tact, praxis and ethics, within the know-how necessary for *techne*, for technology as the practice of bringing into presence.

Circumspective, concerned attentiveness is geared to noticing the ready-to-hand as so many indices of ambiance, as so many signs that signal the potentialities of circumstance. The components that together constitute the assemblage of an ambient environment are not there prior to circumspection; rather, it is circumspective concern that brings them into presence:

[E]stablishing a sign can, above all, reveal. What gets taken as a sign becomes accessible only through its readiness-to-hand. If, for instance, the south wind ‘is accepted’ (“gilt”) by the farmer as a sign of rain, then this ‘acceptance’ (“*Geltung*”)—or the ‘value’ with which the entity is ‘invested’—is not a bonus over and above what is already present-at-hand in itself—*viz*, the flow of air in a definite geographical direction. The south wind may be meteorologically accessible as something which just occurs; but it is *never* present-at-hand *proximally* in such a way as this, only occasionally taking over the function of a warning signal. On the contrary, only by the circumspection with which one takes account of things in farming, is the south wind discovered in its Being.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 98.

⁸⁹ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 99.

⁹⁰ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 111–112.

Here again, circumspection notices the propensities, implications and applications of the ready-to-hand, drawing them into the ambit of a making, of a destining or projecting, in order to undertake a work, in order to de-sign:

This “in-order-to” prescribes a “towards-this” as a possible “in-which” for letting something be involved; and the structure of letting it be involved implies that this is an involvement which something *has*—an involvement which is *with* something. *Dasein* always assigns itself from a “for-the-sake-of-which” to the “with-which” of an involvement; that is to say, to the extent that it is, it always lets entities be encountered as ready-to-hand. *That wherein (Worin) Dasein* understands itself beforehand in the mode of assigning itself is *that for which* it has let entities be encountered beforehand. *The “wherein” of an act of understanding which assigns or refers itself, is that for which one lets entities be encountered in the kind of Being that belongs to involvements; and this “wherein” is the phenomenon of the world.*⁹¹

TRACKING

To further elaborate the idea of circumstantial ambiance and circumspective, concerned surveillance, the Australian First Nations concept of Country and the consequential practices of tracking that characterize being-on-Country can be instructive. In the Australian First Nations concept of place, what matters is not territory or landscape—understood in terms of abstract, cadastral and calculable spatial extent, or as aesthetic category or pictorial representation—but the preferred idea of “Country”.⁹² The term is problematic since freighted with a foundational opposition: that between the city and the country it counters by standing over against it. The motif develops from a broader opposition between civilization and nature whose epistemological, political and ethical implications produced the very alienation of human beings from places that don’t apply to Indigenous concepts and practices of Country. Unlike the countryside that lies beyond the city—unlike the landscaped gardens, squares and courtyards within the city; unlike the alienated wilderness of national parks

⁹¹ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 86/119: “The ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ signifies an ‘in-order-to’; this in turn, a ‘towards-this’; the latter an ‘in-which’ of letting something be involved; and that in turn, the ‘with-which’ of an involvement”.

⁹² See my Place, country, chorography: towards a kinaesthetic and narrative practice of place, in *Architectural Theory Review* 7, 2002, 45–58; and *Agencies of the Frame*, 57–59.

within or beyond the countryside—Country is an indissoluble, inalienable complex of ecological, hydrological, geological, climatic, cultural, societal, ceremonial, ritual, mythical and symbolic registers: an inextricable assemblage of physical and metaphysical dimensions of place.

The popular understanding of indigenous tracking is mundane—finding bushrangers, criminals, lost stock or disorientated tourists. Beside such practical benefits to the non-Indigenous, tracking forms part of a complex science calibrated to the multiple registers of place. The tracker works within an extensive, heterogenous and resonant world, using tacit embodied knowledge and tactics handed down and practiced over generations. The Country tracked is not constrained by the contingencies of its spatio-temporal, concrete reality. Rather, it always forms part of a larger network of actual and virtual, physical and metaphysical circumstances and consequences that the tracker ascertains, negotiates and maps to draw implications. Indigenous tracking knowledge, practices, tactics and techniques grow out of the same know-how that characterizes Indigenous painting which functions simultaneously as landscape art, cartography, narrative, cosmograph and mnemonic apparatus for the recollection of acculturated being in the world.

The circumspective attentiveness of the tracker might parallel what has become codified as the three phases of “situational awareness”: identifying components of an environment, understanding their assemblage as a situation and projecting future conditions based on that situation. Situational awareness is a tactical praxis that involves observation, discernment of patterns, recognition of anomalies, drawing implications, anticipation and prediction of future possibilities and action—ideally imperceptible or circumspect—to modify the situation to one’s benefit. Another word for this is cunning, can do, canniness. Its antithesis is the uncanny: a state of not knowing how to proceed, to have no way through, to front on to an impasse, to be uncouth and ignorant. Cunning is from Old English *cunnan*, to know, skilful deceit, craft, ingenuity. And its cognate, can, is from the etymon *GNO, Greek *gnosis*, Latin *gnoscere* (gnomon, gnostic): to know (a fact), to be cognisant of (how to do something), to have the power, to be able, to be acquainted with, to recognize (Greek *anagnore-sis*), to venture a prognosis—in other words, to derive the consequences of circumstances.

Tracks are vestiges or traces left behind: marks, imprints, remnants and remainders signalling what has passed—whether they be traces of footprints in the earth, of emotional experiences in the mind, of historical

events in the fabric of a city or of ideas that persist beyond their era. To trace is to investigate, to look for, follow, pursue, track down; to delineate, score, devise, plan out a design or a course of action. The word track is cognate with draw; and drawing must be considered prepositionally as having multiple registers and implications. One can make a drawing of, one can draw on, draw through, draw in, draw out, draw up, draw down and so forth. The most relevant to circumstance and circumspection is to draw *for*: that is, to see opportunities—in a circumstance, a place or an ambiance; to trace, pull out, extract or unfold implications that have futural potential. Here the words draught (as in beer: extracting a liquid or liquor; and in terms of an unwelcome current of air) and draft (properly the practice of a draftsman) align. Draw and track are from the etymon *DHREG, to drag, pull, carry, bring, lead; or *TRA, across, beyond, apart; and *TERE, pass or cross over, overcome. *TRA is in *strategy* also, through the cognate *STERE, to drag out, spread out, and *AG, drive, draw forth, act—so that strategy means laying, spreading or drawing out an action, by implication across a region or space of engagement. The figure of a dragnet is instructive, being an apparatus one drags or trawls across a terrain or dredges through a medium, in order to sieve, discriminate and triage, or to unencumber, free up and make room. The sense of delay (to drag one's feet, to be a drag) and trial are salient here, since drawing is trying; it takes time, and it bears the weight of ideas or information that it carries—from one place, say the mind, to another, say a sheet of paper, a building or a film. This carriage, across a region or a boundary, or between one region, say the abstract, to another, say the concrete, involves negotiating a borderline. Here the etymon *TRA enjoys *TER, term, boundary, limit, goal, end point—or, more properly, the mark or sign of that term—say a peg, boundary stone or cairn. We also have the ludic sense of drawing, involving trying and trialling, testing and experimenting—again a matter of boundaries, and of exceeding normative perimeters and peripheries. Significantly, Latin *trahere*, to pull, draw, is cognate with French *trahir*, to betray; since traces betray what has come to pass by handing or delivering it over (Latin *tradere*), by (sur)rendering it apprehensible, by fixing it in a sign. Likewise, drawing betrays the drawn by limiting its indefinite potentiality to the singularity of a figure traced upon a ground. Here we are in Platonic territory: treacherously, the stereotype betrays the archetype; mimesis is irremediably a matter of deception.

What of reconnaissance, reconnoitre and recognition more generally? Originally, recognizance acknowledged the mutual obligation that bound the one recognizing and the recognized, the surveyor to the surveyed, the tracker to the tracked, the drawer to the drawn. To reconnoitre a terrain is to seek the recognizable in it, to know it again, to familiarize oneself with it such that one can take advantage of it in one's future designs. But it is also to know the place solicitously, to bring it forth into presence through such knowing.

Writing of Paddy Woodman, an *Alyawarre* Elder of the Northern Territory of Australia, anthropologist and architect Paul Memmott recalled him as a master geographer who “carries in the order of three thousand site names in his head (perhaps more), each with a sacred song, a Dreaming and sacred history”.⁹³ Critical here is that circumstance or place is not merely a given spatial location but an acculturated setting that has integral, mutually informing and inseparable physical, mental and spiritual registers. As mentioned earlier, this complex constitutes the assemblage known as Country; it is at the core of the inherent resilience and adaptability of First Nations, and it is within this complex that the practice of tracking is situated. While First Nations trackers were used by colonial authorities to locate missing persons and stock, the skills that proved so valuable derived primarily from cultural practices, traditional law, ritual or ceremonial and customary activities—including hunting native species and following tracks to locate prey, collecting bush medicine, watching out for seasonal signs that indicated, for example, that the mullet were beginning to run.⁹⁴ In the process of tracking a soakage—a source of water in desert regions generally concealed from view—Mr Woodman deployed a number of tracking skills that evidence sophisticated local place-based knowledge and acute, precise observation of landform features that signal or indicate the possible presence of water. Among the circumstantial facts used to track the soakage were the following:

- (1) Long sand ridges, no matter how flat, were used as “pointers” to soakages. A soakage is often adjacent to the end of a small hill.

⁹³Paul Memmott, Tracking soakages in the Wakaya Desert with Yellowshirt, in Wright, A. ed., *Take power, like this old man here: An anthology of writings celebrating twenty years of land rights in Central Australia, 1977–1997* (Alice Springs: Jukurrpa Books, 1998), 205.

⁹⁴Michael Bennett, *Pathfinders. A history of aboriginal trackers in NSW* (Sydney: Newsouth Publishing, 2020), 244.

- (2) There is a subtle change in the greenness of grass and shrubs as one approaches a soakage. Some additional species may also appear.
- (3) As one approached a soakage in the Wakaya Desert, there were inevitably signs of past human habitation, albeit over 60 years old. Evidence of stone working and tool manufacture was taken as a sign that a soakage was probably nearby.
- (4) There is a general absence of animals in the desert, apart from birds and reptiles ... due to the lack of surface water. However, dingoes sometimes venture in. When their tracks were observed, we followed them as it is known that dingoes will scratch in the moist sand of a soakage when the water table is high.
- (5) The surface of the ground was studied for signs of surface water flow, which occurs after heavy storm rains. It seems that most soakages, at least on the sandplains, receive water from such surface flow and is often an indication of the direction of the soakage.⁹⁵

We can see here a practice of inference, drawing from the alignment of very specific conditions that signal the presence of water (long sand ridges and ends of small hills; changes in the colour of foliage; evidence of certain animal species; traces of human habitation; remnant patterns of water flow). According to Pat Lowe:

An experienced tracker can read the ground like a storybook. If the tracks are those of a mammal, he can probably tell you, from the size and 'weight' or depth of the tracks, its gender and approximate age. If the animal is a female, he will know by the spacing of the hind legs whether or not it is '*paraṣu*' (carrying young). He will usually be able to tell you the species of a lizard and not only which way a snake is travelling, and its size, but how fast it is moving and whether it is harmless or venomous.⁹⁶

Michael Bennett notes:

The incredible range and depth of Aboriginal people's environmental knowledge... there was barely a plant, animal or insect that they did not know, name and use. Aboriginal mastery of the landscape enabled them to manage the productivity of natural resources, particularly through fire and agricultural techniques, to ensure more than enough food was available.

⁹⁵ Memmott, *Tracking soakages*, 209.

⁹⁶ Pat Lowe, *Hunters and trackers of the Australian desert* (Dural: Rosenberg Publishing, 2002).

And part of this mastery of the landscape was knowing how humans and animals modified the land as they moved across it, creating pathways perceptible only to the trained eye as they went. Hunting and tracking skills were taught from an early age. Children sat on the ground and watched their parents, aunts and uncles drawing the prints of animals in the soil or sand, knowledge that would be vital to the food quest when they became adults. As children grew they learned not only to recognise the tracks of animals but those of people as well. Each person in the group could be recognised individually by the unique impression they left on the ground. A stranger's footprints might mean an imminent raid from a hostile group. The education they received was broadly based, linking plants, animals, people and land to religious belief and rightful behaviour. The Dreaming stories, gradually revealed, worked like mental maps, recording features of the terrain and the resources within, how their world was created and the best way of moving across it. Knowing the stories meant knowing the land.⁹⁷

Another observational skill—depending on “keenness of sight”, “swiftness of the eye” or “magic eyes”⁹⁸—is the ability to notice subtle changes or disturbances that signal the passage of a person or an animal: broken twigs, leaves and fallen branches on the ground displaced in particular ways that show the direction and time of travel; footprints that signal the gait, speed, direction and mental and physical condition of the tracked—“the way in which people react to crises”, the ways the tracked might behave, the “logic of his movement”; tyre tracks and patterns of dust settled along a road indicating the direction of travel, the type of vehicle, how heavily loaded it is and so forth.⁹⁹ To the extent that traces provide evidence of some event, of something that has passed or come to pass, tracking becomes a process of charting circumstances and drawing their consequences from the signs that traces indicate or insinuate. There is resonance here with Sun Tsu's *Art of War*, a pivotal source for situational awareness.¹⁰⁰ This manual of strategy promotes a practice of capitalizing on circumstances so as to gain advantage over an adversary:

According as circumstances are favourable, one should modify one's plans (I, 7); Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let

⁹⁷ Bennett, *Pathfinders*, 5.

⁹⁸ Bennett, *Pathfinders*, 39, 102, 120–121.

⁹⁹ Bennett, *Pathfinders*, 6, 131.

¹⁰⁰ Sun Tzu, *The Art of war*, transl. Lionel Giles (Leicester: Allandale Online Publishing, 2000).

your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances (VI, 28); Whether to concentrate or to divide your troops, must be decided by circumstances (VII, 16); To refrain from intercepting an enemy whose banners are in perfect order, to refrain from attacking an army drawn up in calm and confident array:—this is the art of studying circumstances. (VII, 32)

In a similar way, trackers must discriminate between incidental and critical tracks, fresh and compromised tracks; determine the correct track where several are present; walk along fences or on hard ground, walk softly or make use of feathered so-called *kurdaicha* shoes, so as not to leave traces or cover their own tracks; confuse other trackers by using a “circular, back-tracking technique”; and protect tracks by covering them up so they are not washed away.¹⁰¹ In this kind of fingerprinting of the land, attention falls on remnants and fragments, imprints and casts, disturbances and changes. Clearly to discern such often imperceptible alterations, the tracker must have comprehensive working knowledge of a landscape, acute vision, a high level of recall and extensive kinesthetic and embodied memory. The circumspective character of tracking is self-evident—as *Mitamirri*, a famous tracker of the early twentieth century, said “I never bend down low, just walk slow round and round until I see more”.¹⁰²

In many respects, the process of tracking is one of foregrounding—that is, of enabling something within a circumstance to come forth, out of its imbricated and dissimulated state as part of a woven complex of place, such that it might be seen in relief, over against a ground. The critical issue is to delineate the various layers of a situation—those that are closer or firmer in contour; those that are further away or fainter in outline; and those that are precarious or enduring in substance. It is to develop a sense of relative depth and of the occupation of that depth; a sense of scale and of the scaling of elements that populate the circumstantial field. A tracker is not concerned with the stable or firm conditions of a territory but with those elements that have changed or been disturbed, with the presence of alien elements or the absence of endemic elements. For a tracker, territory is always turbulent, and they must read scales and velocities of fluxion, turbidity and disturbance in order to note anomalies or inconsistencies. These might be imprints left by something moving at an unusual rate or

¹⁰¹ Bennett, *Pathfinders*, 39, 104, 110–111, 134.

¹⁰² Edgar, S. James, *Australian dictionary of biography* (Melbourne University Press, Parkville, 1996), Jimmy [Mitamirri] (1902?–1945).

causing changes of unusual scale within the normal temporality, spatiality and materiality of a place. In any case, the tracker reads for traces, not for form. Tracking tracks gaps and absences. It follows interstices so as to read the signs, marks and signatures left by absencing presences. It reads for the designs that beings have on places and on other beings. Tracking is a practice of consequential anticipation and enablement, not passive annotation and recording.¹⁰³

ON THE LOOKOUT

In the *ABCdaire*, Gilles Deleuze broaches, in philosophical practice, a technique that parallels that of tracking.¹⁰⁴ The French term is *être aux aguets*: to be on the lookout. Entertaining the concept of culture, Claire Parnet puts to Deleuze his own evident disposition of a cultivated intellectual, who reads and goes out to exhibitions, to see films, to encounter other people—engaging in a kind of cultural, cultivating effort or practice. Incidentally, this runs counter to Deleuze’s admission that he is not cultivated and that he is not an intellectual type because:

[W]henver I encounter intellectuals I am terrified (*éffaré*), by their terrifying knowledge of everything, they know everything, they are informed about everything, they know the history of Italy during the Renaissance, they know the geography of the North Pole, they know it all, can talk about anything, Its abominable. When I say that I am neither cultivated nor an intellectual I mean something very simple: I have no reserve of knowledge.... at my death, nothing left to publish, nothing. I have no reserves, no provisions, no provisional knowledge. Everything I learn, I learn *for* a particular task.... So why don’t I admire this terrifying culture? Because the people who speak ... it’s not erudition, they know how to talk, ... like Umberto Eco, it’s prodigious, ... What does culture consist of? ... I could never stand colloquia... travelling intellectuals are a joke. They move about in order to talk; they go from one place where they are to talk to go to another place where they are going to talk... even at lunch they talk to other intellectuals... they never stop talking... so for me, since culture is so tied to talking I hate culture, I can’t stand it...

¹⁰³ See my *Theorising the project: a thematic approach to architectural design*. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020), 42–43.

¹⁰⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *L’Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris, Éditions Montparnasse, 2004). DVD. The following exchange is drawn from the segment on C for culture.

“So why go out”, asks Parnet, “why this effort, practice, discipline?” Deleuze responds:

It is an investment in being on the lookout (*être aux aguets*).... I don't believe in culture, but I believe in encounters (*rencontres*), and these encounters are not made with people... but with things... So I encounter a painting or a piece of music... encounters with people are always catastrophic... when I go out I am not sure of an encounter, I depart, on the lookout (*je pars aux aguets*) wondering if there will be material for an encounter, in a film, in a painting... for me, as soon as you finish something it is a question of getting out of it (*il s'agit d'en sortir*)... so staying in philosophy also means getting out of philosophy... but getting out of philosophy doesn't mean doing something else. That is why one must leave while remaining there... I want to exit philosophy by means of philosophy. That is what interests me.

To depart, on the lookout, for encounters. The term is revealing. At one level, what we encounter counters us contrariwise; in the same way that the country(side) counters the city or opposes it. But to encounter is also to come across—not by design, but casually, unexpectedly, by happenstance. An encounter can be adversarial. It can mean a fight: what counters me can be an opponent; but it can also be an opportunity: what I encounter might detain me. What is the mood proper to such departure, to such encountering? Surely it must be circumspective: to take up the demeanour of looking about for someone or something that might concern me, that might be arresting and interesting, precisely because the encountered is encountered in an in-between space: something interesting calls for interstitial-being and is as such always both inside and outside the coordinates and rhythms of our lifeworld.

Expanding on the idea of leaving or getting out by remaining within, Deleuze speaks of his concept of the fold and recalls the instance of being contacted by an association of paper folders who declare “your business of the fold, that's us; we are in complete agreement, what you are doing is what we do”; and by surfers, claiming “we never cease insinuating ourselves into the folds of nature... for us nature is an ensemble of mobile folds... so we insert ourselves into the fold of the wave, we live in the fold of the wave... These are encounters. I encountered the paper folders: I've no need to see them; in any case we would be disappointed... I went beyond philosophy by means of philosophy... When I go see an exhibition, I am on the lookout... searching for a painting that might affect me,

a painting that might move me... there is a chance I might encounter an idea... I look around and I wonder, does that trouble me... what affects me is not being overwhelmed by ideas... we encounter things before we encounter people... we encounter the charm people have, their work, not the people in and of themselves".¹⁰⁵

What does *être aux aguets* mean? Firstly, it is a comportment, a disposition, a countenance, an attitude to the world: it is a *clinamen*, a being-towards (*être-aux*), and a certain manner or mode of being, a certain mood. It necessitates a distinctive practice—to be on the lookout, granted, but even more so, to be on the lookout *for*, to be attentive *to*. The etymology of *aguet* is instructive here. The word is cognate with guard, aware and wary, through the etymon *WER, prudent, careful, alert (so as to watch out for, so as to perceive). But to perceive what exactly? This *-for*, this *-to*, is not anything anticipated. The etymon *WER is revealing: we find it in aware, beware, wary, regard, revere, steward, warren, ward, warden, wardrobe, warehouse, garment, garrison, guard. The ethical register of these terms is clear. As Latin *verire* (observe with reverence), Greek *houros/horan* (see, guard, watch) and English ward (watchman, guard, keeper) imply, the prudent gaze is at the same time cautious and attentive. And to watch is equally to watch out for, to be ready for what comes, to enable the watched to come forth or even to summon them forth. Attentiveness to what might be encountered must be solicitous: it must be such as to enable it to surge forth, to come into presence.

In that sense, to look is to bring into visibility, to unveil, to unconceal. Such is evident in the allied sense of *WER: to enclose, cover, render covert, wrap up, protect, defend, put under curfew—Latin (*op*)*erire*, cover; (*ap*)*erire*, open, uncover; Old English *wer*, dam, fence, enclosure; German *Wehr*, defence, protection. To make something visible is to expose it, while to regard it is to protect, conceal and dissimulate it. This other sense of *WER adds a further, critical sense to the circumspective look of care and solicitude that concern the emergent surging forth of what is awaited: in coming into presence, into the light of perceptibility, the awaited must simultaneously be covered, veiled, protected—and hence saved, or kept in potential, kept *for* the sake of.

There are two further senses of *WER that add ambiguity and texture to this sense of mergence and emergence, withdrawal and advance, concealment and unconcealment, dissimulation and exposure. It comes

¹⁰⁵ Deleuze and Parnet, *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*.

through Greek *aerein*, to lift, raise up, hold suspended, and Latin *vertere/versare*, turn, turn-back, bend, roll (by implication inwardly or centripetally). We have this double sense of lifting and raising (as a figure above its ground) and of turning (of a figure back into its ground) in words such as awry, divert, invert, obverse, inverse, verse, versus, reverberate, verge, universe, vortex, warp, toward. The presentation of something is at the time its abstention, its absence. To present something—in a philosophy, in a film, in a room—is at the same time to protect it, to maintain it in potential, to enable it to absent itself.

A complementary circumspensive stance to Deleuze's *être aux aguets* is Jean-Luc Nancy's *être à l'écoute*, to listen out for. In its various dispositions, *être à l'écoute* means to be attentive to; to be alert, awake, and ready to act; and to spy, be a sentinel, be vigilant, be on guard for "who goes there". Fundamentally a disposition of attunement, *être à l'écoute* is a condition of silence which here must be understood as heard (*doit ici s'entendre*), not as privation but as a disposition of resonance: "a little—even exactly...—as, when in a condition of total silence, one can hear the sound of one's own body, one's breath, one's heart and one's whole resonant cavern".¹⁰⁶ For Nancy, "sense opens within silence.... it is a question of *listening* (*d'écouter*) to this silence of sense"¹⁰⁷:

Sense is first of all the rebound of sound, rebound coextensive with the fold/unfold of presence and of the present that makes or that opens the sensible as such, and that opens in it the sonority of the exposed (*l'exposant sonore*): the vibrant spacing-out (*écartement*) of sense in any sense we wish to hear. But this signifies as well that sense first of all means, not a signifying intention, but rather a listening where only resonance comes to resound.¹⁰⁸

To be on the lookout, to listen out *for*: these modes of alertness constitute rigorous, precise technics of circumspensive, attentive solicitude, through which the circumstantial comes to presence and presents itself to view. The final sequence of Michelangelo Antonioni's film *l'Eclisse* is a striking cinematic instance of this. Here the camera—moving in slow, parallel tracking shots or in still frames—functions as a neutral, disinvested frame that simply witnesses the passage and coming to pass of the everyday: empty streets, building sites and hoardings, sprinklers, close ups of water on shimmering leaves or seeping from drains and burst pipes, insects

¹⁰⁶ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Être à l'Écoute* (Paris: Galilée, 2002), 44.

¹⁰⁷ Nancy, *Être à l'Écoute*, 50–51.

¹⁰⁸ Nancy, *Être à l'Écoute*, 57–58.

teeming through undergrowth, rustling foliage; residential flats that look like an assemblage of industrial buildings; a pile of building materials; a makeshift fence in extreme asymmetrical perspective; buildings under construction shrouded in scaffolding; reflections and shadows on various surfaces; pure visual compositions of horizontals and verticals, of masses, surfaces and lines; smooth sequence shots past a series of cubic forms made ominous by the silent deserted streets; a man reading a newspaper report on the nuclear arms race; a luminous image of translucent foliage dripping in water; vapor trails of distant airplanes framed by a telecommunications tower; abstract forms of modernist buildings against the sky; people looking worriedly behind or across their shoulders.

Architecture can be construed to function likewise, framing the place in which it stands, soliciting attentiveness towards it, letting place be. Here the various elements of architecture—siting, orientation, aspect and prospect, geometry, form, materials, structure, light, sound, doors, windows, walls, stairs, bridges, terraces, balconies, roofs—also function as enablers of a heightened apperception and appreciation of place: a low, long, horizontal window highlighting the seasonal changes in a garden; a balustrade height calibrated to underline the dense canopy of a wood in the middle distance; a high zenithal window registering diurnal and seasonal variations in the sun's path, in turn affecting the sensed scale and size of a space, or bringing dynamic, ephemeral traces across the surfaces of an otherwise stable interior; a building sited along the ridge of a hill to magnify and honour its topographical form; or a public square that generously accommodates multiple trajectories of circulation that criss-cross it while also affording multiple zones of pause, rest and gathering.

In such examples, cinema and architecture are made to be on the lookout, to be attentive to, to listen out for those multiple components of a circumstance and, by doing so, to foreground the ambiance and the consequences of circumstance. A tracker looks about circumspectly so as to be able to notice signs of the slightest change, alteration, movement or disturbance in a place and thereby deduce the consequences of those changes. In a parallel way, films and buildings can circumspectly frame their respective settings so as to enable a viewer, a resident or a citizen to notice the ambiance of a place, to have a heightened sense of where they are and how they are there.



Mood

MOOD AND *STIMMUNG*

While there is often slippage between the terms *ambiance*, *atmosphere* and *mood*, a provisional definition of these three terms could be advanced. *Ambiance* is the distinctive assemblage of conditions that characterize a setting—that is, a circumambient milieu or circumstance, together with the affective, dynamic or mobile radiance, or the palpable aura that flows from that assemblage. *Mood* is the temperament, countenance or disposition brought to that circumstance by a human being, thereby affecting that being's reception and experience of the *ambiance* they find themselves in. *Atmosphere* is then what transpires, emerges and takes place between a circumambient setting and a *mooded* human being, giving the place and the experience a certain colour, tenor and temperature.

The common metaphor to articulate the relationship between *mood* and *ambiance*, or the internal constitution of a being and the external circumambient conditions, derives from an acoustic or musical phenomenon: that of attunement. We are either in or out of tune with the circumstances that surround us: concordant if there is alignment and resonance or discordant and discrepant if there is misalignment between our internal state of mind and the external surrounding context or setting in which we are situated.

Human beings are constituted as distinctive assemblages of social, cultural, ethical, epistemic, mnemonic, aesthetic, corporeal, kinesthetic and other dimensions. These might be aligned or non-aligned, so that every human being has a distinctive tension, consistency or inconsistency between one or more of these dimensions. Likewise, settings are distinctive environmental assemblages comprising socio-temporal, locational, orientational, meteorological, climatic, geological, hydrological, ecological, chromatic and other elemental constitutive registers, producing distinctive affective circumstances. The various registers, dimensions or valences of a setting might be aligned or non-aligned, concordant or discordant, internally consistent or inconsistent, resonant or dissonant. The particular balance of these conditions within a circumstance could be said to produce, express or manifest a particular ambiance which is there to be sensed, experienced and made sense of. Ambiance is something like the intrinsic charge of circumstance.

We might say that places have ambiance but that only human beings can be in moods. To say that a room, a street or a garden is in a mood is patently absurd, though we might risk saying that a certain person has an ambiance or an atmosphere “about them”: for example, that they are charismatic, anxious or dreadful. This suggests that ambiances are characteristic of settings and environments, while moods are characteristic of human disposition towards the settings they encounter and in which they find themselves, or indeed towards the moods of other human beings they encounter, individually or collectively, and among whom they find themselves.

A mood *prevails*. We say of winds that they are prevailing, but we also recognize the prevailing political climate of an epoch, the prevalent beliefs of a people. We attribute moods to landscapes, buildings, rooms, art works and symphonies, which represent and express those moods. Gerhard Thonhauser considers that both subjects and objects can be mooded, or, using the German term, in *Stimmung*: a meeting, a room, a person.¹ Angelika Krebs writes that *Stimmung*, unlike moods that are capricious and transitory, refers to longer lasting affective attitudes, to “enduring moods” akin to Heidegger’s *Angst* (anxiety).² Krebs also considers that *Stimmung* applies to places—both natural and artificial, or designed—as mooded settings. *Stimmung*, she writes:

¹Thonhauser, *Beyond mood and atmosphere*, 1247–1265.

²Krebs, *Stimmung*, 1419–1436.

[D]oes not only refer to moods as psychological states of individual human beings, but also to atmospheres, both interhuman ones such as mass panic and nonhuman ones such as the melancholy of landscapes or cities.³

Ambiance is subject to the transitoriness of places—changes in climate; in the weather; in light and the colour and saturation of light; in the acoustic character of a place, as well as the soundscapes it affords; and so on. And yet places also have enduring ambiances, something in the character of the place, its *gestalt*, that remains consistent across the vagaries of what constantly changes in it.⁴ We could also read atmosphere in terms of Deleuze's definition of cinema as a mobile section of duration. At any moment, we are in a given "internal" temporality—slow or fast, melodic or rhythmic, smooth or rough, continuous or discontinuous, reflective or projective, conflictual or resolved—and that temporality is set within a circumambient temporality over against which we are aligned or misaligned, resulting in concord or discord.

Particular musical modes (or scales) have distinctive moods. The Ionian mode or major scale is centred and resolved; the major Ionian scale is bright and even; the Dorian minor scale is melancholic yet optimistic; the minor Phrygian dark and foreboding; the minor Locrian unstable, dissonant and resistant to resolution. These qualities are produced by the key or starting note of the scale and hence the order or sequence of tones, semitones and intervals that characterize each mode. The mood of modes is due to the particular internal tension between tones. The tones themselves are the same across the modes (C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C), but their distinctive position as part of a different assemblage produces a different mood for each mode. It is essentially a matter of context, of circumstance. There is nothing absolute about individual tones: everything depends on setting, situation and relationship. As human beings find themselves in a mood, musical tones find themselves in a mode; and this contextualization contributes to the apperception of ambiance and the experience of atmosphere.

A complex lexicon gathers around the term mood, deriving from the etymon *MED, measure. Mood, mode and mind (German *Mut*, mind) are cognates: in each instance, there is calibration, weighing up or correspondence. Mood is calibrated to ambient settings, modes to the

³ Krebs, *Stimmung*, 1436.

⁴ Krebs, *Stimmung*, 1423.

arrangement of tones, mind to meditation and mediation. What is in a mood is therefore akin to an instrument, calibrated, measured or attuned to different kinds of registers. For example, in *De institutione musica*, Boethius proposes types of attunement to different degrees or levels of music: celestial (*musica universalis*), of the spheres (*musica sphaerarum*), mundane (*musica mundane*), human (*musica humana*) and instrumental (*musica instrumentalis*).⁵ There are also the verbal moods of the English language: indicative (factual, a person stood there), imperative (commanding, stand there), interrogative (questioning, would you please stand there?), conditional (qualified, a person might stand there if there happened to be a there there) and subjunctive (hypothetical, if the weather had been mild, a person would have stood there). Verbal moods indicate the tone of a verb in a sentence, which in turn indicates the intention of the author or character.

Human moods are emergent phenomena, arising from distinct relationships between the inner constitution of a person and the ambient environment. Evidently, the same ambient environment can trigger different moods in different people, depending on their disposition, their intellectual or emotional state, their feelings—in short, depending on the propensity of their attunement. Likewise, a mooded person can affect the ambiance of a setting, for example, turning a jovial gathering into a dour confrontation.

Stimmung can have three senses, relating to three phenomena. It can refer to harmony, to mood and to atmosphere. The word *Stimmung* derives from Old High German *stimma*, voice (Greek *stoma*, mouth); *Stamm*, trunk of a tree; and the etymon *STHA, stand, be firm. The etymon is *STA, to stand, stop. The sense is of the rhythmic beat that articulates, a resistance to or stemming of flow (a holding back or abating), an opposing gesture that thrusts or strikes against something—like the stem of a ship opposing an oncoming swell. But the sense of stemming from and projecting, or stemming forth, is also implied. The resistance is generative: stemming the flow is at the same time stemming forth, arising. These related themes imply that the voice is a phenomenon that strikes, that is striking, and that struck, arises, resounds and spreads out to fill space, to take (up) time. In the sixteenth century, the term came to refer to the harmonic tuning of musical instruments or of the human voice in

⁵Gabriela Ilnitchi, 'Musica mundana, Aristotelian natural philosophy and Ptolemaic astronomy, in *Early Music History* 21, 2002, 37–74.

singing (*Stimmig*) and in the eighteenth century to the attunement or harmonization of the soul: its proportionate tempering. *Stimmung* is therefore always in relation to, measured against. When an “internal” mood meets an “external” circumambience, our mood gathers the world in which we find ourselves according to the particular tenor of our disposition. In that sense, moods have an integrating function, they “synthesize what we feel into a more or less harmonious whole”.⁶

Phenomenologically, *Stimmung* is not acquired. Rather, it emerges as a “common permeation”⁷ between self and situation, between being and world—more precisely as being-the-there—which captivates us or that we captivate *to* us. It does not fill place as if it were some vaporous content made to infuse or pervade a container, as subject to object or as interiority to exteriority. It is more a question of negotiation between the self as an always mooded being and the ambiance of the there in which the self finds and makes a home in the world (*Geborgenheit*).⁸ For Angelika Krebs, architectural and landscape places can seem atmospheric because they are circumambient: they surround us, situate us, contain us and immerse us in a palpable tonality. This is to say, atmospheric places are expressive, they emit, and they have a charismatic presence that eclipses any aesthetic, visual or representational dimension that may have at first struck us: they are not more or less impressive images but affective environments, entire worlds.⁹

ATTUNEMENT

The connection between mood and attunement, between human moods and musical modes or between mood and measurement is foundational. Mood and mode are cognate terms through the etymological root *MED: judge, estimate, measure, in the sense of mindful discrimination. An extensive lexicon follows: model, medium, mediation, moderation. We can think of tuning in terms of optimizing the performance of a system—of an apparatus to improve performance, for example, of a machine; the optimization of a system to increase efficacy, for example, in manufacturing; or the adjustment of parameters in a model to better calibrate data,

⁶ Krebs, *Stimmung*, 1421.

⁷ Krebs, *Stimmung*, 1425.

⁸ Krebs, *Stimmung*, 1425.

⁹ Krebs, *Stimmung*, 1433.

for example, in climate science. In this case, the system or instrument is adjusted so as to calibrate it to an ideal state or to the parameters of a model: to match, calibrate and moderate the system or the instrument to its intended, designed purpose. To “determine the calibre of” is clearly a phrase originating in ballistics: the calibre being the internal dimensions of a gun barrel. One provenance derives calibre from Arabic *qalib*, a mould for casting, and another from Latin *qua libra*, of what weight, or of what quantum (*qua*) in relation to a balance (*libra*). A mould is evidently the standard against which, or in relation to which, what is cast from it is measured. The key idea is something like “measured relative to a standard”. Latin *qua* can mean where, which way; *quis/quid* means in what respect, to what extent; in any case the English, from the etymon *KWO, is “who”, which indicates quiddity, the whatness of something. Hence calibre refers to the quantum of a quiddity, the measure of what something is. Cognates include quantity, quality, quorum, quotient and ubiquity. But we also say the “calibre of a person”, by which we mean their character, their “force of character”, their measure as a human being, the standard against which, or in relation to which, they measure themselves. Character, from Greek *kharakter*, is “the sum of qualities that define a person or thing and distinguish it from another” and derives from *kharassein*, to engrave, to mark, and *kharax*, pointed stake, stylus.

Mood, calibre and character all refer, like *Stimmung*, to a threefold semantic content: firstly, the state of being attuned—whether an instrument, a mind or a nervous system; secondly, a corresponding dispositional state, a state of being ready to play, of having been calibrated or measured so as to resonate in a particular manner or mode; and finally, to the process of attuning itself. Locating mood in the mind raises the concept of empathy—an affective category that emerged in the nineteenth century as a psychological and psychologizing aesthetic experience: to feel something *into* something else, to project one’s own self *into* an object and thereby to vitalize or animate it. I can affect the mood of a meeting by projecting my own tension into it, or the tension palpable in a meeting can project itself into me, rendering me tense.

However, there is distinction to be made between *Stimmung* as the feeling of a subject and *Stimmung* as the character of an object. A continuous interaction plays out between mood and character—for example, in how my mood affects the way I experience or feel about a landscape. Alternatively, how the character of a landscape affects my mood: either reinforcing and amplifying it or changing and transforming it. But the

character of an object is not defined by the mood that encounters it or the effect it has on the mind of a subject. Character and mood are not causally related. For Georg Simmel, both places and human beings are mooded, and the apparent unity of a landscape is one with its *Stimmung*:

When we refer to the mood [*Stimmung*] of a person, we mean that coherent ensemble that either permanently or temporarily colours the entirety of his or her psychic constituents. It is not itself something discrete, and often also not an attribute of any one individual trait. All the same, it is that commonality where all these individual traits interconnect. In the same way, the mood of a landscape permeates all its separate components, frequently without it being attributable to any one of them. In a way that is difficult to specify, each component partakes in it, but a mood prevails which is neither external to these constituents, nor is it composed of them.¹⁰

For Heidegger, *Stimmung* is an ontological condition rather than an emotional or psychological state. How we find ourselves in a given place, how we are there, how we are always already mooded or in a given *Stimmung*, Heidegger calls *Befindlichkeit*¹¹—“on-going and all-encompassing way of being-in-the-world”, “disposedness”, “ontological disposition”, “affectedness” and “situatedness” of *finding* oneself in such and such a way in such and such a world.¹²

Stimmung aggregates and integrates the elements and beings thereby encountered into wholes that are more than their parts—whether these are capacities of the mind or parts of nature. *Stimmung* attunes being-in-the-world as a whole. *Stimmungen* cannot be conceived in terms of mental states; they are not occurrences within a mind¹³; they are neither in a subject nor in an object. Rather, they attune the relationship as a whole—intersubjective being-with-one-another and situated being-amidst entities. *Stimmung* is located in the dynamic relation of a subject to its world as it attunes this relation as a whole. Being affected by “things mattering to me” is what Heidegger calls the *Stimmung* of being-in-the-world. But we are not simply placed “in” space nor placed “in” time as contents within containers: the spatiality and temporality of our being-there applies to us

¹⁰ Georg Simmel, The philosophy of landscape, in *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, 2007, 26.

¹¹ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 126–131.

¹² Lauren Freeman, Towards a phenomenology of mood, in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 52.4, 2014, 448.

¹³ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 63–66.

and to the world in which we find ourselves. In the same way that *Dasein* is not simply “being” or “being-there”, but more precisely “being-*the*-there”, I do not simply find myself “in” a world. Rather, I always find myself “worlded”, such that the distinction between myself and the world become indeterminate. I don’t exist over and against a world; I exist as being-the-world-in-which-I-am. *Dasein*’s being-the-there is evidently a situational, spatialized condition: I am somewhere. But for Heidegger, *Dasein* has a primarily constitutive temporal existence: *Dasein* is always-already somewhere; it always exists “ahead-of-itself—being-already-in (a world) as being-alongside (entities encountered in the world)”.¹⁴

We can certainly think of *Stimmung* as a closed state: I am in a bad mood. But Heidegger contends that *Stimmung* is an open state, a condition of being on the lookout, of listening out for potential resonance. It is a futural condition: a “dispositional state of openness for further determination (*Bestimmung*) mobilised by attunement”.¹⁵ Consequently, moods are not fixed, stable conditions. They have to do with relationality, process and interactivity that eclipse any fixed individual state: “moods are not mere mental states that result from, arise out of, or are caused by our situation or context. Rather, moods are fundamental modes of existence that are disclosive of the way one is or finds oneself (*sich befinden*) in the world”.¹⁶

Heidegger’s non-oppositional setup between *Dasein* and the spatio-temporal *there* in which it takes place is deeply problematic for architecture, which is classically founded on the opposition between inside and outside. This opposition is amplified in Modernity in which the allied motifs of individualization and alienation, and the figures of the desert and the ruin as prototypical regions of alienation, loom large and condition pivotal works in literature, cinema and architecture. Among these one might list Albert Camus’ *Exile and the Kingdom* (1957); Antonioni’s cinematic trilogy of *l’Avventura* (1960), *La Notte* (1961) and *l’Eclisse* (1962); and Le Corbusier’s effective disentanglement of architecture from its ground in the *Villa Savoye* (1931) and the *Unité d’Habitation* (1952). In each of these works, there is a marked dislocation, estrangement or disharmonization between person and person, person and place, though not

¹⁴ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 317.

¹⁵ Andreas Elpidorou and Lauren Freeman, Affectivity in Heidegger I: moods and emotions in Being and Time, in *Philosophy Compass* 10, 2015, 664.

¹⁶ Freeman, Towards a phenomenology of mood, 445.

without the emergence of new forms of attunement: in Camus, the palpable, existential appreciation of the ambiance of a milieu; in Antonioni, the experience of alternate temporalities that reveal the world in new ways; in Le Corbusier, the novel prospects afforded by survey.

DASEIN: BEING-THE-THERE

Heidegger's *Dasein* is commonly translated as being (*sein*)-there (*da*). But the term is itself deeply ambiguous as it implies multiple combinations and interpretations of sense: for example the being-there: *das sein-da*; the there-being: *das da-sein*; being the-there: *sein das-da*; and there (is) the-being: *da ist das-sein*. The pivotal preposition, *Da*—cognate with English 'do'—derives from the etymon *DHE, set, put, place, with a marked sense of placing as acting, executing, performing, causing, carrying-out, bringing-to-pass, bringing-about, making, installing, in a specific place, 'there.' Also cognate is the definite article 'the', with sources in Sanscrit *sa*, Avestan *ha*, Greek *ho/he*, meaning 'this,' 'that'—or more precisely, 'that-one-there.' As Heidegger wrote:

Da-sein is a key word in my thought and because of this, it has given rise to many grave misunderstandings. For me *Da-sein* does not so much signify here I am, so much as, if I may express myself in what is perhaps impossible French, *être-le-là* (being-the-there). And *le-là* is precisely *Aletheia*: unveiling-disclosure.¹⁷

Dasein would then mean “being-that-one-there”. The notion of setting and putting relates, through Latin and Greek *thesis*, to the idea of a proposition, something put or laid down, arranged, positioned, situated, as well as to the “downbeat”: the rhythm, on-beat or syncopated off-beat that punctuate, articulate and propel the musical fabric. If ambiance affects mood, if it is affective, then the Latin term *affectus* can be revealing. Here notions of mood, state of mind or body “produced by an external influence” are tied to the notions of disposition and inclination, through the literal sense of furnishing, endowing and supplying. The etymons are *ad-*, to, and *facere*, make, fabricate, fashion—itsself from the same *DHE as

¹⁷Heidegger, *Lettre à monsieur Beaufret* (1946) in *Lettre sur l'humanisme*, cited in Giorgio Agamben, *Language and death*, transl. Karen E. Pinkus with Michael Hardt. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 4.

Dasein, set, put, place, do. Other cognates complicate the ambiguity, producing resonant sense: affect, effect, fact, feat, edifice, edify, thesis, theme. Being (*Dasein*) is the one who is there, who is placed; but who is also there—that is, whose being is fully identified with the place in which they are. The fact of being is a feat and a proposition: a putting-down or establishment that is at the same time effective and affective, an edifice that is also edifying.

For Heidegger, *Da* is “the open expanse”, “that clearing in which things stand as a whole, in such a way that, in this *Da*, the being of open things shows itself and withdraws. To *be* this *Da* is a determination of man”.¹⁸ This pivotal showing—this “primordial disclosure of moods”—is foundational to bringing *Dasein* before its being as “the-there”:

Da-sein is always already in a mood... in this *Da-sein* becomes tired of itself. Being has become manifest as a burden. One does not *know* why. And *Da-sein* cannot know what because the possibilities of disclosure belonging to cognition fall far short of the primordial disclosure of moods in which *Da-sein* is brought before its being as the there... Mood makes manifest ‘how one is and is coming along.’ In this ‘how one is’ being in a mood brings being to its ‘there’.¹⁹

In the *Da-* of *Dasein*, the there evidently implies spatial location. But *Dasein* does not simply find itself thrown into this or that pre-existing space as content to container. Rather, the spatiality of *Dasein* is produced by the way in which, and at the same time as, a being finds itself in the world, according to the mood it is in: a world-projecting mood that constitutes a distinctive spatiality and temporality. Place and space arrive with and through mood; the world appears to me as a projection of the mood I am in.²⁰

Being-the-there, which is also “always a heedful being-with”,²¹ is realized through attunement: “an existential, fundamental way in which *Da-sein* is its here”. Characteristically, Heidegger contends that the encounter of *Dasein* with the-there of its being, though essentially a spatial metaphor, is nothing fixed or permanent. On the contrary, and

¹⁸Thomas Sheehan, *Making sense of Heidegger: a paradigm shift* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd., 2014), 138.

¹⁹Heidegger, *Being and time*, 131.

²⁰Heidegger, *Being and time*, 275–6.

²¹Heidegger, *Being and time*, 133.

enigmatically,²² *Dasein* is said to *evade* the-there which, “while veiled in its whence and whither”, nevertheless discloses itself in that evasion.²³ *Dasein* is thus “thrown into its there” as an “existential attribute of that being which is in the mode of being-in-the-world”.²⁴ Such “evasive turning-away” means that *Dasein*, in its attunement, finds itself “in a finding which comes not from a direct seeking, but rather from a fleeing”.²⁵ As Jean-Luc Nancy wrote: “we are human beings because we are outbound (*en partance*), disposed towards a departure about which we can and must know that no definitive arrival is possible or promised”.²⁶

Mood and attunement are not psychological conditions, as are the *pathe* in Book II of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. Heidegger sees them as ontological prerequisites and “existential structures”²⁷ for *Dasein* encountering its being and dwelling-in-the-there. Moods are what disclose to *Dasein* the realization of the-there in which it finds itself, of the fact that-it-is-there, of the reality of it having-been-thrown-there and of how or in what manner it is (in) the-there of its thrownness.²⁸ For Heidegger, thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) is the condition of finding myself in a world that matters to me and being-there in a state of disposedness (*Befindlichkeit*) or receptiveness. Our moods open up or disclose the world to us in particular ways: melancholic, sombre, euphoric, uncanny. For Bruce Bégout, *Stimmung* is an a priori existential condition of human being, since human beings are never indisposed but always situated within an ambiance, within an affective tonality, always “being-disposed-in-such-and-such-a-way”—that is, according to a particular affective disposition (*Befinglichkeit*) that is more or less open or closed to the circumambient world.²⁹ Following Heidegger, Bégout affirms that moods are not psychic states, experienced as the internal repercussion of an impression; nor are they the external projection of a personal humour, psychic coloration or tincture on people and things.

²² “Moods bring Da-sein before the that of its there, which stares at it with the inexorability of an enigma.” Heidegger, *Being and time*, 128.

²³ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 127.

²⁴ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 131.

²⁵ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 128. Consider the Talmud Yerushalmi, Eiruvin 51a: “We learn place from place, and place from fleeing; fleeing from fleeing, and fleeing from border; border from border, and border from beyond.” <https://www.sefaria.org/Eruvin.51a?lang=bi>. Accessed 15 November 2021.

²⁶ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Partir—Le Depart* (Montrouge: Bayard, 2011), 29–30.

²⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Being and time*, 134.

²⁸ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 313.

²⁹ Elpidorou and Freeman, *Affectivity in Heidegger I*, 662.

We are only touched and affected by the ambient world to the extent that we are always already in a mood, to the extent that we subjectively encounter that world of people and things given to us “in the midst of one and the same ambiance... (such that) the sensible depends on the affective”.³⁰

Heidegger lists four foundational and intrinsically linked structures of existence that constitute *Dasein*'s ontological structure of care or solicitude (*Sorge*) towards the world: affective disposition (*Befindlichkeit*), understanding (*Verstehen*), fallenness (*Verfallen*) and talk (*Rede*).³¹ Affective disposition enables human existence to find itself situated, through attunement, within a world that then matters to it, and that consequently discloses itself.³² It is a mode of being-in-the-world such that one is open to it and available to what presents itself in and through that world. Moods—whether interested or indifferent, invested or ambivalent, positive or negative (for we are always in a mood)—are various ways through which *Dasein* relates to and solicits world-disclosure.³³ They are not internal psychological states or indeed the external conditions of an extant world: there is no opposition between an inside and an outside. Rather, moods are fundamental modes of existence that are both constitutive and disclosive. *Dasein* is its disclosedness³⁴: my mood is my way of being, my disposition towards the world; and it also reveals the world to me in a distinctive way.³⁵

Heidegger associates moods with atmospheres³⁶ in the sense that moods are circumambient settings *in* which we find ourselves: we are *in* a mood to the extent that we are situated *in* or surrounded and contained by a particular, pervasive circumstance, a particular atmosphere. Moods assail us³⁷: “(a) mood is not related to the psychological... and is not itself an inner condition which reaches forth in an enigmatical way and puts its mark on things and persons... It comes neither from ‘outside’ nor from

³⁰Bruce Bégout, *Le Concept D'Ambiance* (Paris: Seuil, 2020), 14–21, 95. See also Elpidorou and Freeman, *Affectivity in Heidegger I*, 661.

³¹Heidegger, *Being and time*, 134, 234, 249, 327, 335. See also Elpidorou and Freeman, *Affectivity in Heidegger I*, 664.

³²Elpidorou and Freeman, *Affectivity in Heidegger I*, 663.

³³Heidegger, *Being and time*, 173/134.

³⁴Heidegger, *Being and time*, 171.

³⁵Elpidorou and Freeman, *Affectivity in Heidegger I*, 664.

³⁶Heidegger, *The fundamental concepts of metaphysics*, 67. See also William Blattner, *Temporality. A companion to Heidegger* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2005), 77.

³⁷Heidegger, *Being and time*, 136.

‘inside,’ but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such being”.³⁸ This means that our receptivity to the world—how we are disposed towards it and how we regard it—is played out and foregrounded against the circumambient horizon of the mood we find ourselves in. To let something be encountered is a matter of circumspection and concern because, at that moment, the world matters to us, and this mattering “has the character of becoming affected in some way”.³⁹ Moods materialize or effect the world for us, rendering it grave, weighty, and in turn affective.

The slippage between atmosphere, ambiance, mood, emotion, feeling, disposition and other common terms used interchangeably has become problematic in the discourse on atmosphere but also in experiments conducted in psychology that aim to bring clarity to these terms.⁴⁰ The literature is full of phrases that aggravate this slippage; for example, we might read that landscapes, cities and buildings “have aura or atmosphere”; that they “express” or “represent” moods; and that they are “infused” with moods. As mood is not isolatable from the context in which it manifests itself, an inside is not isolatable from an outside, and form is not isolatable from matter, figure from ground or content from context. This means that moods are constitutive, not symptomatic:

Insofar as *Dasein* is always attuned through mood, mood colours and influences every encounter, experience, thought, belief and desire that we have... My mood makes the world present to me and the way that the world appears and matters to me is directly dependent upon how I am attuned through mood. For example, when I am melancholic and heavy-hearted, it is not just that I *feel* as though the world is gray, dull, uninteresting, uninspiring, and unexciting (although I might), or that the world is gray, dull, uninteresting, uninspiring, and unexciting *for me*. Rather, when I am melancholic and heavy-hearted, the world *is* gray, dull, uninteresting, uninspiring, and unexciting.⁴¹

This also means that a designed setting—a film, a room, a street, a public square, a garden—cannot not be mooded, and in turn cannot not affect those who experience it, as mooded beings. To the extent that architectural settings are assembled and manipulated moodedly, they have the

³⁸ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 136.

³⁹ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 137.

⁴⁰ Freeman, Towards a phenomenology of mood, 455–462.

⁴¹ Freeman, Towards a phenomenology of mood, 450, 453.

capacity to induce moods. Likewise we are not simply placed in space or in time as in an abstract neutral setting. Spatiality and temporality are disclosed to us in relation to our attunement. A mooded setting demands a certain temporality. If I am pressed for time, maybe on a breathless touristic itinerary, I am unlikely to appreciate the iconographic subtleties of Giselbertus' Royal Portals at the cathedrals of Autun and Vezelay or the multiple semantic references resonant in Peter Zumthor's St Benedict Chapel. Likewise, if I am anticipating a brisk filmic narrative, I am unlikely to value the reiterative oneiric texture of Alain Resnais' *Last Year in Marienbad* or the systematic foreclosure of transcendence in Bela Tarr's *Werckmeister Harmonies*.⁴²

The idea of being in tune relates less to the instrument itself than to its readiness to be played⁴³: that it is now attuned and calibrated to the musical setting in which it will be deployed—the key or *mode* of the musical piece, for example, or the orchestral setup of which the instrument is a part. This is a question of relative measure or proportionality. At another level, it is a question of fitness or appropriateness. Hence we need to distinguish between how a film, a room or a landscape make me feel and what those settings are in themselves. A park might make me feel peaceful, but in itself, the landscape setting is not peaceful. In fact, ecologically, the setting—nature in other words—might be described as conflictual, riddled with competition, alternating interminably between growth and decay, proliferation and putrefaction. If a landscape has a causal effect on me, this might rather be by association, metaphor, analogy or allegory. Angelika Krebs makes a useful observation here, proposing four basic types for the aesthetic experience of atmosphere: perception or understanding, developing out of a passive awareness of the atmosphere in a landscape; empathy or vicarious feeling, developing out of an active cognitive understanding of an atmosphere, such as cruelty, but without sharing it; sympathy, emotional or aesthetic resonance that moves with the atmosphere and shares it, and that includes bodily feeling, cognitive evaluation and behaviour; and infection or contagion, swayed by immersion within an atmosphere of mutual resonance—such that “not only do we respond to the world, the world also responds to us”, or “when *you* don't play the music, but the music plays you”.⁴⁴

⁴² See Sections 5 and 6.

⁴³ Krebs, *Stimmung*, 1420.

⁴⁴ Krebs, *Stimmung*, 1429, 1432.

According to Thonhauser, the idea of *Stimmung* can only function metaphorically and in terms of musical attunement or harmony (*stimmig*), understood as both a state of being-attuned and a process of attunement. He contends that translating *Stimmung* with English “mood” reduces its semantic scope, since the derivation is the Indo-Germanic etymon *MUT, meaning mind, and *Gemüt*, the capacity of the mind, which precludes a technical application of the term. But a more fundamental etymological derivation is through *MED, which means to measure, to evaluate—in the sense that the mind essentially mediates, meditates and weighs up and in the sense that attunement is a question of correspondence, of proportional measurement, of matching one condition with/against another.⁴⁵ As Thonhauser writes, what is attuned is ready to be played: “an attuned mind (*gestimmtes Gemüt*) is ready to be determined (*bestimmt*)”.⁴⁶

The motifs of correspondence and communicability then imply that of empathy: the resonance produced between beings or between beings and places. In some definitions of mood, empathy is the aesthetic experience resulting from the mental act of projecting one’s own self into an object or a landscape to vivify it. Thornauser cites an important precedent in Lipps’ notion of empathy as projection:

When this happens, it leads me to *emphasize*—i.e. project—moods into an object or a situation, which explains how it is possible to experience, for example, a painting as cheerful or a landscape as frightening. Lipps’s theory shows that the musical metaphor is still at play even in the psychological understanding of *Stimmung*. However, *Stimmung* is now fully transformed into a psychological concept. Within a psychological framework, it is obvious that all *Stimmungen* or moods are located in individual minds. It is psychological common sense that only sentient beings can have feelings, emotions or moods. Thus, if moods are attributed to objects, there is no other way of understanding this than in terms of a projection. And this is also the precise meaning of the theory of empathy: *Einfühlung* literally means *to feel something into something else*. Hence, speaking of empathy implies the idea that, for example, when someone experiences a meeting as tense, this needs to be explained psychologically in terms of her projecting her own mental states into the meeting.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Carl Gustav Carus, *Nine letters on landscape painting, written in the years 1815–1824; with a letter from Goethe by way of introduction* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2002).

⁴⁶ Thonhauser, *Beyond mood and atmosphere*, 1250.

⁴⁷ Theodor Lipps, *Leitfaden der Psychologie* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1909), 226.

Here, *Stimmung* is a subjective state of psychic arousal: a condition of the human mind, a mode of mindfulness and a disposition of mindedness. To say “I am minded to” think, do or say something implies that I am prepared to think it, I am inclined to do it and I have convinced myself that saying it makes sense. My *Stimmung* is an attunement that might be affected by the objects that I find myself among in the world in which I am; but *Stimmung* does not originate in those objects; it is not an attribute of those objects. Rather, those objects, together and alone, become coloured by the *Stimmung* I project “into” them or by the ambiance I recognize that “surrounds” them.⁴⁸ However, as Heidegger noted, when a subject’s feeling is in tension with or contradicts the character of an object—an upbeat mood encountering a grim scene, for example—the “theory of effect” (that my mood is caused by the character of objects among which I find myself) breaks down. Heidegger does not accept mind/body or subject/object dichotomies. His ontological, non-oppositional treatment of *Stimmung* contests normative psychological and aesthetic frames of reference. Here, Merleau-Ponty’s concepts of intercorporeality and interaffectivity are useful in promoting a relational and transactional theory of *Stimmung* that focuses on the dynamic intermediate zone of flows and mutual interactions between beings and worlds, between moods and ambiances.⁴⁹ Moods are not mental states, nor are they qualities that are “in” subjects or objects. Rather, they attune the relationships between subjects and objects. They emerge as the relational totality of intersubjective being-with-one-another and being-among-entities.⁵⁰

According to Simmel:

When we refer to the mood (*Stimmung*) of a person, we mean that coherent ensemble that either permanently or temporarily colours the entirety of his or her psychic constituents. It is not itself something discrete, and often also not an attribute of any one individual trait. All the same, it is that commonality where all these individual traits interconnect. In the same way, the mood of a landscape permeates all its separate components, frequently without it being attributable to any one of them. In a way that is difficult to

⁴⁸ See Stefan Witasek, *Grundzüge der allgemeinen Ästhetik* (Leipzig: Barth, 1904), 99.

⁴⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of perception* (London & New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁵⁰ Heidegger, *The fundamental concepts of metaphysics*, 63–66.

specify, each component partakes in it, but a mood prevails which is neither external to these constituents, nor is it composed of them.⁵¹

MELANCHOLIA

The ancient theory of the humours⁵² classified the mood of melancholia as due to an excess of black bile—from the Greek *melas*, black, and *khole*, bile, gall, acidic secretion from the liver. Bile is stored in the gallbladder and is important for digestion, suggesting that an excess of it implies an incapacity to process, a state of blockage or constipation, a degree of toxicity in a body unable to purge and clean itself. The word *khole* gives cholera and French *colère*, anger. The etymon is from Greek *kholazein*, green/yellow, in turn (and ambiguously) from *GHEL, to shine, gloss, glitter, glimmer—like gold or glass. Melancholia was said to be produced from an imbalance in the four humours (yellow bile, blood, phlegm and black bile), which were made to correspond to the four elements, senses, seasons, climates and human organs in a coordinated system typical of pre-modern world views:

Fire/light/sight/yellow bile/summer (choleric)/hot & dry/gall bladder
 Air/touch/blood/spring (sanguine)/hot & wet/liver
 Water/taste/phlegm/winter (phlegmatic)/cold & wet/brains, lungs
 Earth/smell/black bile/autumn (melancholic)/cold & dry/spleen

Likewise, any particular temperament was characterized as a distinctive proportionate mixture of these four. If mutually coordinated and in harmony or balance with each other (*eukrasia*), they produced wellbeing. If imbalanced and in conflict with each other, they produced disease. The latter is in the word distemper, from *dis-*, not, and *temperare*, tempered—that is, not mingled in the proper (due or correct) proportion, disproportionate, intemperate, untempered, to the extent that one or more qualities become excessive and threaten the balance of the whole. The appropriation of temper to characteristic disposition, inclination, state of mind or mood dates from the sixteenth century. The key idea here is “proper measure”, “moderation” and “restraint”. In that sense, moods are moderated

⁵¹ Simmel, *The philosophy of landscape*, 20–29.

⁵² Evident, for example, in the works of Alcmaeon of Croton (6thC BCE), Hippocrates’ *Of the nature of man* (5thC BCE) and Empedocles’ tabulation in *On nature* (5thC BCE).

temperaments, particular dispositional measures. The connection between temperament, time and measure is evident from the Latin *tempus*: time, season, from the etymon *TEN, tensioned, stretched, extended, spread or spaced out, distantiated, intervalled (by implication, from a fused, homogeneous and unified constitution to a heterogeneous parted-ness) and therefore capable of being measured, calculated, apportioned, distributed.

The initial sense of time was not related to homogeneous, chronological, mechanical time of equivalent units but rather to the idea of seasons—that is, the proper time *for* something. The word season is from Latin *sationem*, sowing, planting, and *serere*, sow—from *SE, sow (disseminate, seed, seminal); and *satiare*, fill, fulfil, satisfy; *satis*, enough—from *SA, satisfy. The act of sowing is tied to the proper time of sowing, to the appropriate season that would yield a full harvest, a satiated crop. And this appropriateness is a matter of favourable, timely and auspicious alignment—for example, as in viticultural *terroir*, between genus and seed, soil and hydrology, weather, climate, temperature (not to mention the cultural and symbolic registers in First Nations concept of Country) that, brought together, can unclench emergent, productive outcomes.

The idea of appropriateness and auspiciousness is related to the Greek notion of *kairos*, opportunity: one of the ancient Greek words for time. The other is *khronos*: time as an abstract quantitative measure of duration. *Kairos* and the concept of seasonality are fundamentally associated with social and cultural practices. They refer to acculturated, qualitative time, in the same way that place is distinguished from quantitative space as being an acculturated, qualitative region, a site of sociocultural practices. Every season has an integral climate, an intrinsic range of temperatures, of rainfall, of weather patterns. We can take the quantitative temperature of a day in degrees, and we can equally take the qualitative temperature of a crowd, a meeting, a colour and an era. As Alois Riegl suggests, different epochal worldviews are conditioned by different dispositions and values, and they produce different kinds of art: fetishist in arcane cultures that valorize physical strength; symbolic in Christian cultures that valorize the moral implications of metaphysical principles; epistemological in Enlightenment cultures that valorize calculable knowledge over faith.⁵³

⁵³ Alois Riegl, *Die Stimmung Als Inhalt Der Modernen Kunst*, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Augsburg und Wien: WUV, 1929), 27–37.

A season is not simply a portion of time, of the year: something merely calculatable and apportioned within a calendar. To come into season is to reach the right moment, the appointed time. It is to be at the threshold of opportunity, of maturity, of coming to a satisfactory (and satisfying, or fulfilling) end, to a state of satiation. In every case, there is passage through a portal (which is why opportunity is closely tied to the symbolism of the door—Latin *porta*): an ambiguous architectural element that combines death (to the space one is leaving) and life (in the space one is gaining)—the potential for extinction and oblivion as well as increase, amplification and magnification.

By extension, the action of seasoning would mean not so much adding flavour (by implication to something flavourless, by fulfilling a lack) but rather enabling something to ripen, to come into its own, to increase in savour by enabling latent potential to emerge. The Latin *sapere*, to have flavour, is significantly tied, through *sapientia*, good taste and discernment, to sapience: perceptiveness, mindfulness, insight, wisdom. A season, a seasoning are there to be savoured; and that implies a particular temporality, an appropriate attentiveness and ambiance of time during which flavours have the opportunity to emerge and be savoured. To savour a moment is to let that moment linger, to give it time to develop, to watch over what emerges in the time and pace of its emergence. If atmosphere is something to be savoured, rather than experienced once and for all in a sudden moment, then savouring atmosphere takes time. It takes time for flavours to develop, and it takes time for flavours to be savoured. Significantly, Old French *savourer* also means to appreciate, to care for, and this in the sense of making possible and enabling, in other words, to save, to preserve. The ethical register is evident. To savour a flavour, an atmosphere, a place, is to be with it as it comes forth, as it becomes. This is not simply a matter of taste; rather it has to do with tact, with tactful touching that is not invasive or violating but solicitous, and tactical.

There is temperature and there is tempering. Tempered steel, for example, is so manipulated as to become hardened and more resilient, to be less subject to fracture, to have its material constitutions so fused as to counteract any grain or layering that might produce weaknesses or fault lines in the material fabric. There is also temperament and its historical association with the humours, originating in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia and systematized by the Greeks, notably by Hippocrates who applied it to medicine. The word humour derives from Greek *chymos*, juice, sap or flavour, and Latin *umor*, bodily fluid, *umere/umectus*, damp, moist and

usescere, wet, humid. The sense is not simply humidity or wetness but rather sap or blood as that moist substance (energy, nourishment, power) that drives the lifeworld of a being—plant or animal, human or non-human. The register of moistness and humidity in relation to the earth is significant. Latin *humus*, earth, soil, is cognate with *humilis*, lowly: in the sense of being close to the horizontal dimension of the earth's surface, being submissive, meek, insignificant or base. Cognates are instructive—from the etymon *DHGHEM, earth, we have human, homage, humility, but also chthonic (of a specific place from the earth, ab-original), umber and umbrage (Latin *umbra*, shadow, shade; in the sense of retiring, withdrawing or absenting oneself [into the dark]; opposed to projecting, coming into presence [into the light]).

These semantic resonances situate melancholia within a category of ambiguous sense, as we find in the association between gloom, gleam and the gloaming. While the melancholic displays a gloomy state of mind, or an acidic temperament, there is also something there that shines forth: a latent, golden force withheld and maintained in potential. This idea is present in the symbolic registers of the colour green, associated with bile and the melancholic mood. Green is from *GHRE, to grow, implying vigour, life force and the colour of flourishing. Melancholia could then be defined as that state in which darkening and shining forth, withholding and forwarding exist simultaneously as an unresolved, suspended condition that is aporetic, impassable, insufferable: a state of muffled, unrealized and unrealizable potential, characterized by an apparent disturbance or even bewildering turbidity of the soul. As Sigmund Freud noted, this also situates melancholia within the ambit of grief and the processes of mourning: a mood suspended, spatially and temporally, within and apart from the everyday⁵⁴ and hence characterized by a marked inwardness and disengaged disposition to the world—a marked apathy towards it.

Latin *apathia* and Greek *apatheia* derive from *a-*, without, lacking, and *patheos*, emotion, feeling, suffering, undergoing, from the etymon *KWENTH, to suffer. The original sense is of a positive disposition, whereas the negative sense of indifference and uncaringness emerges only in the eighteenth century. The general idea is of impassability, of unmovedness, of passionless observation, engagement and experience. In that

⁵⁴ Sigmund Freud, Mourning and melancholia, in *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume 14 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1914–1916), 244, 245, 245, 249.

sense, the apathetic witnesses without being affected, influences without taking part from a distance and remove, which is why Aristotle saw it as the preeminent mood of the creative thinker:

Why is it that all those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts are clearly of an atrabilious temperament, and some of them to such an extent as to be affected by diseases caused by black bile, as is said to have happened to Heracles among the heroes?⁵⁵

Aristotle links the genius of the melancholic with madness, with the prophetic and divinatory complexion⁵⁶ which, according to Warburg, extended into the Renaissance theory of genius:

[T]he introspection of the melancholy man is understood with reference to Saturn which ‘as the highest planet and the one farthest from everyday life, the originator of all deep contemplation, calls the soul from externalities to the inner world, causes it to rise ever higher, finally endowing it with the utmost knowledge and with the gift of prophecy’... Like melancholy, Saturn too, this spirit of contradictions, endows the soul, on the one hand, with sloth and dullness, on the other, with the power of intelligence and contemplation; like melancholy, Saturn also constantly threatens those who are subject to him, however illustrious they may be in and for themselves, with the dangers of depression or manic ecstasy.⁵⁷

In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle considers *pathe* as emotions, which are affective reactions occurring between a corporeal being and the context to which they are exposed. In that sense, *pathe* are potentialities or capacities of a being, actualized by circumstance, but with their causes or triggers lying outside the being. They are feelings characterized by pleasure or pain: Aristotle lists appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hatred, longing, emulation and pity as examples. Of these, longing seems most associated with melancholia. In Aristotle’s conception of the soul, there are three categories: the *pathe*, the faculties and the states (*hexeis*). *Pathe* triggers action and affects the corporeal state of the being such as

⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Problemata*, Book XXX, in E. S. Foster, transl., *The Works of Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927). https://archive.org/stream/worksofariostotle07arisuoft/workso-faristotle07arisuoft_djvu.txt. Accessed 9 September 2021.

⁵⁶ Walter Benjamin. *The origin of German tragic drama*, transl. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1985), 147.

⁵⁷ Benjamin. *The origin of German tragic drama*, 149–150.

temperature, colour and expression. The appropriate experience of *pathe* depends on the cultivation of character and disposition and is critical to the good life led by *phronesis*: the discrimination that enables proper deliberation as to how one should lead one's life, how one should act and what one should do.⁵⁸ On the other hand, certain negative, unpleasant *pathe* can involuntarily interfere with discriminating judgement and so perturb the possibility of a good life. In that case, the *pathe* can be rebalanced through *katharsis*: a process of purging or discharging what interferes with *phronesis*.⁵⁹

Max Weber characterized the mood of modernity as disenchantment—a loss of magical connection between the world and the divine, through which he traced the onset of Protestantism and the engine of modernization and secularization. Modernity is thus understood as the work of freedom severely tempered by a permanent experience of loss. Paralleling this disenchantment is the Enlightenment shift from place to space, from a charged and turbulent ambient environment, saturated and populated with divine beings, angels, ghosts and demons, to an empty abstract and neutral container, from mythical cosmographies to the Mercator projections and cartographic geographies of the scientific revolution and the Imperialist project.

In Sigmund Freud's diagnosis, melancholia is an abnormal "pathologisation of mourning".⁶⁰ Likewise, Friedrich J. W. Schelling read melancholia as a form of mourning: the sustained awareness of a lost world, the experience of an unrecoverability and "unavowable loss" of the past.⁶¹ Julia Kristeva, in her 1989 *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, likewise associates the mood with an abnormal psychological condition.⁶² Yet, in romantic sensibility, melancholia produces a certain pleasure associated with pain or tears—the sensual *Wollust* for example, or Baudelaire's *volupté*. But in Freud, the melancholic subject, unable to contextualize or historicize its condition, eclipses the experience of mourning by turning on itself,

⁵⁸ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a, 16.

⁵⁹ *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*: Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Theories of the Emotions. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/emotions-17th18th/LD1Background.html%20retrieved%2017%20September%202021>. Accessed 17 September 2021.

⁶⁰ Freud, Mourning and melancholia; see also Judith Butler, *The psychic life of power: theories in subjection*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 117.

⁶¹ Butler, *The psychic life of power*, 117.

⁶² Julia Kristeva, *Black sun: depression and melancholia*, transl Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

as a kind of sadism. With Freud, Walter Benjamin reads Hamlet as a paradigm of the melancholic: a tragic hero whose predicament signals political impotence. Likewise, Macbeth is the disenchanting, pathetic melancholic, challenged to reconcile the physical and metaphysical constitution of the world⁶³:

Banquo: The earth hath bubbles, as the water has, And these are of them. Whither are they vanished?

Macbeth: Into the air, and what seemed corporal Melted, as breath into the wind. Would they had stayed.

Banquo: Were such things here as we do speak about? Or have we eaten on the insane root That takes the reason prisoner?

This makes melancholia a condition of exile, an experience of alienation from the world, from the self and from others that typifies the temperament of modernity, and which finds its most sustained cinematic study in the trilogy of Michelangelo Antonioni (*L'Avventura*, 1960; *La Notte*, 1961; and *L'Eclisse*, 1962).⁶⁴ The perturbations of melancholia are traditionally associated by Walter Benjamin with the sign of Saturn, with the saturnine temperament of pensiveness and mournfulness.⁶⁵ For Beatrice Hanson, Benjamin is himself a thinker eminently representative of the modernist subject, poised between past and future, absorption and projection, oblivion and catastrophe: “a brooding, gloomy Benjamin, born under the sign of Saturn, whose languid pose and language of gestures—that is, downward gaze, chin leaning on a clenched fist—seem to quote from an ancient pictorial archive of mourning and melancholia”.⁶⁶ Benjamin’s *Trauerspiel*, his account of German Tragic Drama (literally spoken [*spiel*] trauma [*trauer*]), significantly doubles Albrecht Dürer’s iconic engraving *Melancholia I* (1514). Here, the contemplative, down-cast figure of *Melancholia* mourns the loss of aura, the disenchantment of the world, the ruinous inoperability of technical apparatuses strewn about as dysfunctional equipment, no longer capable of moderating the human being’s relationship with the divine, with the world or with others (Fig. 1).

⁶³ William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 3.

⁶⁴ See my *Agencies of the frame*, 53–4, 83–5, 153.

⁶⁵ Benjamin, *The origin of German tragic drama*, 139–140.

⁶⁶ Hanssen, Beatrice. Portrait of melancholy (Benjamin, Warburg, Panofsky), in *MLN* 114. 5, 992.

Dürer appears to prefigure the condition of modern subjection or, in Heideggerian terminology, of “thrownness”: how we happen to find ourselves in the world. In Dürer’s account, the essence of this melancholic subjection is immersion—inward, into the self, away from the world and from others: a blackness of soul or complexion, manifesting as “world sadness” or spiritual boredom that Benjamin discerns in the symptomatic mood of seventeenth-century Baroque tropes, rhetorical, allegorical and pictorial figures.⁶⁷

MUSIC AND MELANCHOLIA

The melancholic mood, tone, temperament or complexion is equally applicable to music. Writing of Mahler’s quintet in F minor, Michael Steinberg notes that the second movement, in three quarter time (a standard dance time signature):

[C]onfuses a bit, as it sounds more as if the beat were in two or four rather than in three. In any case, the rocking melody that opens the movement would seem hardly danceable. This anomaly immediately complicates an apparently consoling texture. Consolation is combined with a complicated presentation/self-presentation of the music itself, as if the subject of the music were unclear and unclear to itself. The movement’s second theme of subject consists of a series of repeated phrases, as if the music were insisting on something, perhaps on its desire to know. The movement is in the key of A-flat major, the closest major-key relation to the quintet’s home key of F minor. The major mode is usually understood to offer the ear a sense of confidence, stability, and even optimism in comparison to the minor. The close relation, though, to the first movement’s minor mode doubles the emotional and cognitive ambivalence provided by the undanceable three-quarter time. The movement hovers between stability and anxiety, desire (to know) and inhibition.⁶⁸

In reaching for, yet finding itself unable to attain the purity of intended expression, the perfect manifestation of its content and drive or the acoustic expression that matches its trajectory and gesture, music finds its desire unfulfillable, and this is the innate source of the foundational mood of melancholia, normally associated with loss, memory and nostalgia which

⁶⁷ Benjamin, *The origin of German tragic drama*, 19.

⁶⁸ Michael P. Steinberg. Music and melancholy, in *Critical Inquiry* 40.2, 2014, 309–310.

is, for Steinberg, the condition of all music in its dimension of self-awareness, its desire to move towards knowing.⁶⁹ In that music expresses longing for a state of nature that can never be restored, it is itself an act of listening, a “desire for origins and for reconciliation with the world in both space and time”.⁷⁰ This is the melancholia of music as such. If the attainment of speech is the foundational impulse of music, the latter also contains, through its very inarticulacy, an unsignifying precision that speech itself may not be able to attain. Like two desires crossing each other in the wind, music wants the status of speech, while speech strives for the status of music.

The tension between the desiring and the desired is germane to tonality but also to the phenomenon of astonishment. If the ambiance of a musical phrase, a setting or an event should happen to surprise us, to astound us, then it must have to do with tonality. Astonishing is from the Latin *ex-*, out, and *tonare*, thunder, *tonus*, sound, tone, accent (compare French *estoner*, stun, daze, deafen, astound). Hence, the astonishing thunders out, detonates; the astonished is thunderstruck, astounded. These are all from the etymon *TEN, stretched, tense. As was noted earlier, the relationship between atmosphere and sound is fundamental to Heidegger’s idea of *Stimmung*, of mood as attunement. We sense and are affected by atmosphere to the extent that, through our mood, we are or are not attuned to the place in which we find ourselves. This is a matter of resonance, of accord or discord.

The etymon *TEN refers tonality to the sound produced by a stretched string, which relates two points in terms of a differential, of a distance that separates them. Tone is essentially the sound of difference or alterity, of a distantiation or instantiation represented by an interval. The octave is produced by the difference between a string length of 1 unit and a string length of 2 units—that is, by the ratio of 1:2. It is generally held to express a condition of resolution when compared, for example, to the fifth, in the ration 2:3, which conveys a sense of irresolution, or a dynamic tending towards resolution. We know that one of the major problems in music theory was the subdivision of the octave. In Classical Hindu modal music, there are 22 microtones (*shruti*) in the octave, separated by 21 intervals (*svara*), while in the Western tempered scale, the octave C to C’ consists of 8 tones separated by 7 intervals (consisting of either tones or semitones)

⁶⁹ Steinberg. Music and melancholy, 289.

⁷⁰ Steinberg. Music and melancholy, 288–310.

or the 12 tones of equal temperament (consisting of equal intervals) developed in the sixteenth century as a means of transposing musical figures across different scales. Mood depends on the degree of tension in a musical mode; and the ambiance or character of a mode depends on the intervals (full tone, T; or semitone ST) between the notes that constitute it—for example, the instability and dissonance in the Locrian mode (ST, T, T, ST, T, T, T); sadness in the Aolian mode (T, ST, T, T, ST, T, T); tension and foreboding in the Phrygian mode (ST, T, T, T, ST, T, T); ethereal suspension in the Lydian mode (T, T, T, ST, T, T, ST); and the melancholy mood of unrequited love in the Dorian mode (T, ST, T, T, T, ST, T).⁷¹

The seventeenth century in the West sees the adoption of two key musical modes—major and minor. The difference between major and minor is that the first produces a sense of resolution, conclusion and stability, like the octave, a certain stasis (both in the musical material and in the experience of the listener), while the minor produces a sense of irresolution, inconclusiveness and instability, a certain dynamic according to which a musical pattern set in that mode will exhibit a tendency to seek, but not find, resolution—that is, metaphorically, a desire to come to rest that nevertheless remains irreconcilable. Such tonal dynamics have spatial analogues (up, down, across, into, out of, around), and they parallel the idea of *clinamen*, or inclination, of tendency or propensity towards, which is characteristic of unresolved states and conditions. As Robert Martin wrote:

[C]onsider the difference between the third degree of the major scale and the lowered third degree, the changed tone that distinguishes the minor from the major triad. The characteristic of the example should be instantly clear: the lowered third has a particular “dynamic quality,” ... that we can express metaphorically by saying that it wants to go down, that it pulls down, to the second degree of the scale; while the major third has somewhat more equilibrium, if anything, it seems to want to go up to the fourth degree of the scale. Our characterization of the dynamic quality of these tones is of necessity metaphorical and anthropomorphic because the quality itself is primitive in the sense of not being definable in simpler terms. We have here a fascinating and perplexing feature of our environment: when perceived within a tonal context, a tone is felt to have a particular very dis-

⁷¹ Anastasia Voitinskaia, The many moods of musical modes.

<https://www.musical-u.com/learn/the-many-moods-of-musical-modes/>. Accessed 14 February 2022.

tinative property. However, one has only to alter the context, and the property is altered. Because tonality is involved, and not only acoustic facts, the phenomenon must be regarded as partly constructed, partly ‘natural’.⁷²

Tonal dynamics are pivotal in producing certain moods in music. These are not simply due to the qualitative character of individual tones but rather to the combination or assemblage of tones within modes or scales. The same tone can have a radically different value and produce a radically different mood depending on the tonal circumstance in which it finds itself and in which it operates. How tones are attuned within modes gives to each mode its characteristic mood, and that mood is in turn dependent on the precise calibration of pitches organized in distinctive sequences to form the various modes or scales. Martin elaborates on the mood of different modes:

[T]he minor is perceived as expressively coloured, perhaps darker or sadder than the major. The downward pull of the minor third, that contour, is similar to features of human expressive behaviour associated with downcast moods: most obviously and literally, the intonation contour of the voice of a person experiencing the emotion of sadness... in the key of C one hears the E-flat as pulling down a half-step; one hears the E natural as lifting toward F.⁷³

The F Minor key is commonly associated with the mood of melancholia in the musical traditions of the West, conveying, variously, something of the obscure, the plaintive, the funereal, the harrowing, deepest depression, lament over death and loss, groans of misery, readiness to expire.⁷⁴ One reason for this is that the key has an inherent structural ambiguity since it is at the same time stable and unstable, orthogonal and oblique.

⁷² Robert L. Martin, Musical “Topics” and expression in music. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 53. 4, 1995, 421. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/430976>. Accessed 18 September 2021.

⁷³ Martin, Musical “Topics”, 421–422.

⁷⁴ The classic source is Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart. See Lucien Karhausen, *The bleeding of Mozart* (Exlibris, 2011), 172; Rita Steblin, *A history of key characteristics in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries* (Ann Arbor: DM Research Press, 1983) and Ted Alan Dubois, *Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart’s ideen zu einer Esthetik der Tonkunst: an annotated translation* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, PhD Dissertation, 1983).

According to the pianist Glen Gould, it is halfway between “upright and lascivious, between grey and highly tinted”.⁷⁵

In Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*, an atmosphere of pathos or melancholia is produced largely due to the juxtaposition of two radically different scales (intimacy, vastness) and of two radically different modal frameworks. The piece is in F Minor and features in the *andante cavatina* the type of a lullaby, which implies qualities of cradling, comforting and consoling, together with the anxiety and distress of a fruitless search in phrasing, made discontinuous by pauses, and ending in the dominant C Major. These musical tactics produce a sense of irresolution, of suspension and of interruption that parallel the narrative event in the opera: the arrival of Marcellina and Figaro.⁷⁶

The affective sense of longing and melancholia promoted by the F Minor key is effected by the inherent dynamics of the mode, in which the tendency towards resolution and stability is matched by the impossibility of its achievement and closure. Such dynamics also feature in what might be called gypsy music—the depression era *Rembetico* of the Turkish and Greek diaspora, the tragic railing of Spanish *Duende* and the mournful strains of Irish folk music. Each in its own way conveys a sense of loss, the experience of unrequited love or the interminable search for a homeland. Such is the musical analogue of the aporetic experience, the impasse that blocks any way forward, any passage, any release from the binding strictures of life. Significantly, these moods are produced by configurations of sound and vibration that are the sensible and affective *ekstases* of precise mathematical and geometrical patterns.

Eric Satie (1866–1925) drew on the F Minor key to great effect in his *Gnossiennes* (1889–1893). Satie moved in turn of the century Catholic occultist, esotericist and mystic circles, such as the Rosicrucian sect *Rose-Croix Catholique du Temple et du Graal* (1891), the exclusive artistic society the *Rose-Croix Esthétique* that countered the hegemony of the establishment society, the *Société des Beaux Arts*⁷⁷ and the *Église Métropolitaine d’Art de Jésus Conducteur* (1893) that Satie himself founded.⁷⁸ Characteristic of Satie’s *Gnossiennes* is a propensity for emptiness and

⁷⁵ Catherine Meng, *Tonight’s the night* (Apostrophe Books, 2007), 21.

⁷⁶ Martin, Musical “Topics”, 423.

⁷⁷ Alexander Simmons, *Erik Satie’s Trois Gnossiennes in the French Fin de Siècle* (Birmingham: The University of Birmingham, PhD Thesis, 2012), 68.

⁷⁸ Simmons, *Erik Satie’s Trois Gnossiennes*, 1–2.

silence; a sense of the mysterious and unfathomable; a marked asceticism and detachment from the material world; an absence of direct, figurative, representational references in favour of a sort of abstraction, stylization and allegorical reference; and the use of clean, diatonic scales and simple, static phrases that suggest slow, quiet, contemplative and nostalgic prospects to a simpler, primal and authentic past. *Gnossienne 1* is set in the F minor key with signature chords of C minor and B flat minor. Satie's performance directions for *Gnossienne 1* (shining, questioning, from the tip of thought, wonder about yourself, on the tip of the tongue) convey the circumambient conditions the composer intended by way of connotation, implication, metaphor, analogy—that is, indirectly, suggestively, atmospherically.

In the *Gnossiennes*, Satie draws on the pure resonant capacity of sound, of mutual sonority and vibration, on timbre, rather than on the outline, form and shape of melodic figures. The work is austere, understated, suggestive. Harmonies succeed each other, free of any structural function. Repetitive strains effectively “camouflage” traditional expressive forms—a kind of anarchy at work in the musical texture,⁷⁹ conveyed, for example, by the use of unresolved seventh and ninth chords producing tonal dissonances. Likewise, Debussy (1862–1918), a contemporary of Satie:

[A]ssembles the sounds in more or less homogenous groups, or else allows them to create disorder in combinations which have long been considered respectable, and in this way throws new light upon both momentary and more durable associations of sounds, continually changing their expressive values, and preventing them from establishing themselves or assuming an ‘identity’.⁸⁰

Gnossienne 1 employs the F melodic minor scale with the addition of a raised fourth, giving it a distinctive oriental flavour, while the “exotic sound is created by employing a flattened second, the C natural together with an augmented third, the D sharp”.⁸¹ Likewise, in *Gnossienne 3*, the main melody is deliberately haunting, utilizing fluid and melancholic

⁷⁹ Simmons, Erik Satie's *Trois Gnossiennes*, 19–20.

⁸⁰ Simmons, Erik Satie's *Trois Gnossiennes*, 21.

⁸¹ Simmons, Erik Satie's *Trois Gnossiennes*, 85.

oriental scales.⁸² Recourse to exotic musical references has political as well as aesthetic purpose. Both Satie and Claude Debussy sought to convey “an encounter with alterity” or otherness: the inherent dynamics, irresolution and lack of closure typical of this kind of music, signalling a metaphorical engagement with the unknown, the mysterious and the ineffable, accompanied by its emotional engagement in longing and melancholia.

Satie’s *Ogives* have no bar lines and no opening key signature; their metre and harmonic structure are left vague. Rather than developing melodic narratives, simple musical figure or plainchant phrase are repeated rhythmically or mirrored in subsequent responses by variations in dynamics and harmonization.⁸³ This builds a persistent, resonant and hypnotic texture: a “ritualistic atmosphere developed from the same repeating passage...each repetition of an accidental or unresolved chord is designed to disorient and teach the performer to constrain their expressive instinct, producing what many scholars have believed to be ‘hallucinatory effects’”⁸⁴

The slow, contemplative modality of *Ogives* draws attention away from any investment in melodic shape, producing instead the effect of unemotional, timeless detachment, “intensification, deepening awareness of one idea or state of mind, rather than a constant movement from one to the next”⁸⁵ The effect is one of remaining, staying and persisting, rather than travelling, and one of attending to the unfolding resonance of a setting, contexture or place, rather than experiencing a sequential journey, progression or linear evolution leading on and beyond.

These tactics further “spatialize” the music, or spatialize time,⁸⁶ lending it an expansive intervallic quality, a vibrant contexture that counters normative ideas of music built of melodic lines, shapes and arabesques, expressed as figures over against a ground. Here, everything is ground, and the musical fabric emerges as the granulated texture of an affective setting made palpably resonant.

⁸² Simmons, Erik Satie’s *Trois Gnossiennes*, 84.

⁸³ Simmons, Erik Satie’s *Trois Gnossiennes*, 56.

⁸⁴ Simmons, Erik Satie’s *Trois Gnossiennes*, 58.

⁸⁵ Simmons, Erik Satie’s *Trois Gnossiennes*, 82–83.

⁸⁶ Simmons, Erik Satie’s *Trois Gnossiennes*, 83.



Atmosphere

FLAKY, FLUFFY WADDING

Atmosphere is produced between the ambiance of a setting and the mood of a human being who encounters it. Atmosphere and mood are emergent phenomena: something radiates from a circumstance as a result of its ambiance; something radiates from a human being as a result of a mood. Both broadcast something of inner constitution: the spatiotemporal assemblage of a place and time and the physiological assemblage of a person who finds themselves there, at that time, in such and such a way. The vaporous metaphor for atmosphere and mood is apposite and precise. Place and person, considered as radiances, are less discernible in terms of their contours or forms than in terms of the emanations that surround them as fluctuating, vaporous circumambiences. Their perceived limits—the configurations, patterns and forms of a building and the complexion and lineaments of a face or the silhouette of a body—are rather limbi, following the etymological root *LEM: ornamental border, hem, fringe, edge. Our beings are fringed by moods in the same way that places are fringed by atmospheres. In each case, edges are never distinct borderlines, but always indeterminate zones of exchange, in which place and person interminably produce each other as mutually interpenetrant emanations.

A startling instance of this in the fine arts is the Nabi group of painters and poets—in particular, the character of formal and pictorial ambiguity in

the work of French painter Eduard Vuillard (1868–1940). The Nabi Brotherhood was influenced by concepts of the flat, a-perspectival space of seventeenth- to nineteenth-century Japanese *Ukiyo-e*: “pictures of the floating world” in which predominate repeating pattern, asymmetry, obliquity, the cropped, the incidental, the partial and fractional points of view; dynamic rather than static setups; and the concern for a temporality of the temporary, the spontaneous, the momentary and evanescent—instances caught in the passage and passing away of their interminable transformations, elements of worlds becoming absorbed in a vaporous circumambience. As Steve Connor has noted, the mist and fog that pervade the works of Monet and Whistler “represent a kind of collision of the principles of incandescence and obscurity. This is a difficulty for the eye that is formed from dim dazzle, rather than from darkness. Here, light has become thickened into matter, as though captured like an insect in the slow ooze of resin”.¹

Most notable in Vuillard is the systematic erasure of perspective and depth in favour of imbricated density of surface. In *Woman in a Striped Dress* (1895), for example, the various components of the scene are rendered as if they were in the same plane. Their edges are indeterminate and seemingly interwoven into a single fabric (Fig. 1). The diverse patterning in each element is so porous as to meld with others: the flowers, the woman’s sleeve, the tablecloth and the wallpaper are on the verge of becoming indistinguishable. The surface swarms, scintillates and darkens. It dilates and densifies into one expansive, coalescing turbidity. Patterns and colours are applied not so as to produce realistic representations of each component, and to differentiate them, but rather to promote a generalized vaporization of form: a moment of mutual interpenetration and exchange of borderlines, shapes, textures and colours.

In Vuillard’s *Vase of Flowers on a Mantelpiece* (1900), the individual configuration and structure of each component—ceiling, wall, mirror, gilded frame and fireplace embrasure, together with reflected elements of the room—are dematerialized and distended and become inter-transparent to each other (Fig. 2). Consequently, space ceases to function as an empty container. The interval and the interstitial are no longer neutral voids but sites of inter-valency: charged plenums, saturated with indeterminate fluctuations and flows, mergences and emergences. The oppositions solid/

¹ Steve Connor. *The matter of air. Science and the art of the ethereal* (London: Reaction Books, 2010), 181.



Fig. 1 Edouard Vuillard, *Woman in a striped dress*, 1895. (Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington. CCO Public Domain Designation)

void, inside/outside, line/surface and figure/ground no longer apply: everything is circumstance, everything is consequential and everything is the refraction of another refraction, the ornament of another ornament.

The net effect is a precipitation and substantiation of the impalpable, of light and air: a materialization of atmosphere. It is as if the scenes are rendered at twilight, when day and night interpenetrate and borderlines become ambiguous and indeterminate: or else as in reverie. We are not witnessing a “scene”, within a “space”; rather we are assisting in the passage of a distinctive temporality, a moment in time as it passes, or time

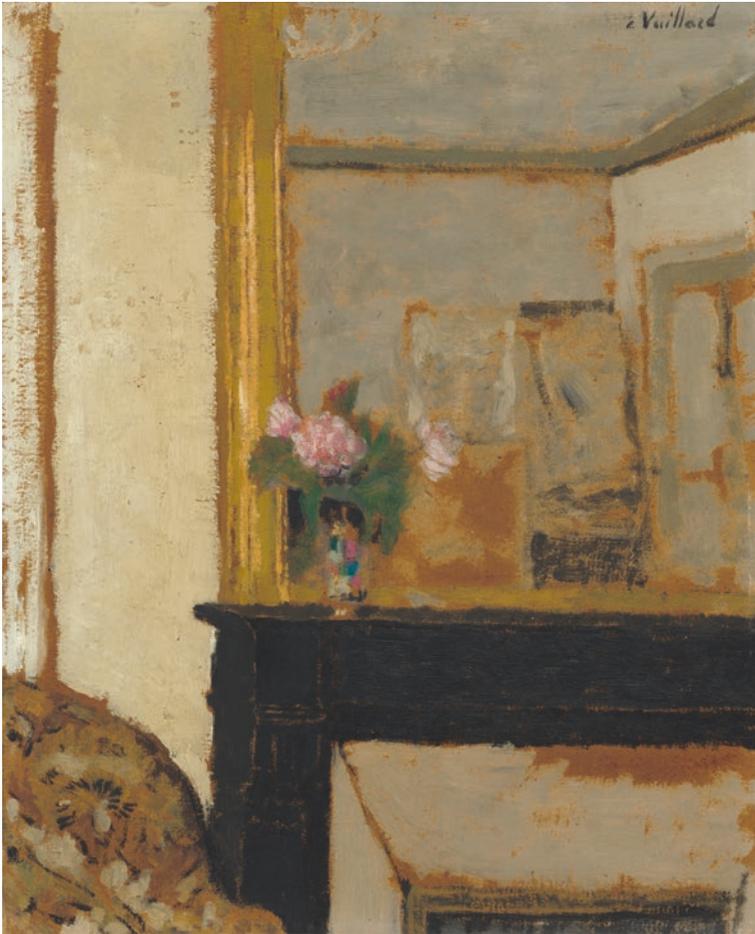


Fig. 2 Edouard Vuillard, Vase of flowers on a mantelpiece, 1900. (Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington. CCO Public Domain Designation)

itself in the moment of its passage. In a similar register, in recent work by the Australian painter Renata Pari-Lewis, there is a parallel materialization of atmosphere in which the ambiguity and indeterminacy between light and dark and gleam and gloom assume primary importance.

In that work, we are presented with a sustained, insistent attention to the coincidence of Hopkins' inscape and instress within the domestic



Fig. 3 Renata Pari-Lewis, *Us versus them*, 2018 (Photographer Stephen Oxenbury. Used with kind permission of the artist)

milieu (Fig. 3). Three related motifs—mobilized by way of a succinct and urgent painterliness—stand out: atmosphere, light and suspension. The pervasive atmospheric register of these scenes distorts the normal Cartesian spatiality of the apartment depicted: orthogonal rooms aligned the length of a corridor. The geometry of that space is made to fold and produce continuities, porosities and links that do not match the concrete reality. Yet such distortive modulation of the real captures with marked precision the subjective mood and atmosphere of the place as a home, as a *domus*. Significantly, the spaces are evacuated of human figures: a striking emptiness that is pivotal to the depiction of the painter's feelings, moods and emotional states:

My works neither depict day to day scenes nor try to reflect on how people and figures might use or occupy the rooms and space depicted. Rather they

are a representation of a state, and a relationship of that state and the environment itself. The spaces are empty, projecting to the viewer the mindset under which they might have been constructed.²

The sense of space and time in these paintings emerges as a function of the play between light and dark, shade and shadow, illumination and obfuscation and revelation and concealment. The boundaries of space are not given by material limits but by variable densities of atmosphere. Interiors are pervaded by an infiltrating glare and a scintillation of dark surfaces glanced by indirect light sources. The architecture is never given as a totality: space is sequential and episodic, though bound to a continuous texture. Pari-Lewis frames a specific conception of the outside: interiors have no antinomical counterpart—no prospects to a civic outside, over against which they might be read (the outlook from windows is drowned in the vaporized, opaque glowering of day). Everything in the world of the paintings is tangled in the contained, intestinal porosity of rooms and corridors, leading only to indefinite circuits without escape (Fig. 4).

And yet, the play of light, shade and shadow conveys to the darkness a kind of insistent luminosity. The sources of light are not explicitly given. They seem external and to be a kind of generalized pervasive ambiance. Light glares through fabric screens that veil openings; but in effect, this luminosity is not external. It appears to emerge out of the very material conditions of the spaces depicted—the walls, floors and ceilings, certainly, but even more so, the veils and fabrics that furnish, billow and animate the domestic sphere. That light skims dim surfaces, bringing a crepuscular materiality to shimmer or phosphoresce. The gaze is not set up as the aperture of a generalized, objective looking, disengaged from the settings before it. It is, in fact, imbricated into the contours, the material texture, the porosities and hollows, the lustre of wooden sideboards or bedheads, the amassed objects, the gleam of doorway edges, the nap of cloth, the folds of curtains.

Pari-Lewis' technique is mobilized to tightly control the quality, direction and intensity of light, the boundaries of spaces and the material qualities of surfaces that receive and reflect it, in order to intensify the atmosphere and mood of each scene. The edges of rooms, the interstitial shade and shadow that frame them and the black zones of the paintings function to produce intermediate zones or milieus of various kinds:

² Renata Pari-Lewis, *personal communication*, 2020.



Fig. 4 Renata Pari-Lewis, *Mouseion*, 2020. (Photograph Jenni Carter. Used with kind permission of the artist)

thresholds and disjunctions that are equally between rooms, spaces, atmospheres, lives, emotions and states of being. Light is less a “light source” than an incandescent presence, produced by and experienced as diffraction or interference within the ambient milieu. Compounding this affect is a light whose source and provenance are contrived to seem insistently uncertain and indeterminate. This renders space not through geometry, form and tectonic logic. Rather, space is characterized by relative grain, texture, density, viscosity, porosity and the permeability of precipitated luminosity (Fig. 5). It is not circumscribed by the constraining shape of a predetermined container upon a contained emptiness but by the fulgurations of darkness meeting the resistance of its own materiality.

But in these interiors, the scenography has undergone severe alteration. Each depiction begins with the familiar, the objective and the recognizable and then moves to the unfamiliar and the uncanny. The scene is disturbed through a process of evanescent delineation, a disappearance or erasure of the domestic in the very midst of domesticity. Such disturbance is realized

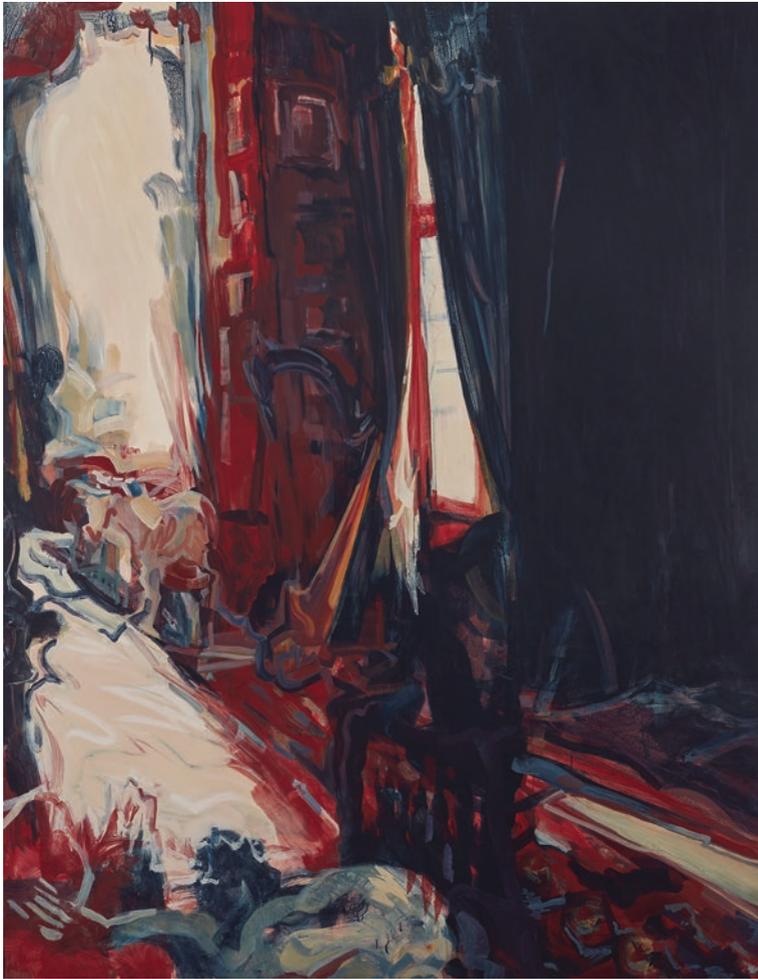


Fig. 5 Renata Pari-Lewis, *Harmony in red*, 2021. (Photograph Jenni Carter. Used with kind permission of the artist)

through an intensely painterly method that foregrounds the materiality of the image and the gestures of its production, by sometimes excessive over-painting that occludes underlayers, which blurs, smears or smudges contours, edges and boundaries. Elements of the scenography—furniture, objects, sheets, blankets, upholstery, drapery, insect mesh—are themselves

veiled, concealed and dissimulated into the folds of the painting so that a certain kind of forgetting and oblivion is conveyed. In some cases, the over-painting is total, and earlier depictions—doomed now—are effectively drowned or absorbed into new layers and narratives, either leaving faint traces of their presence or disappearing altogether.

There is something of *sfumato* here—the technique of applying multiple, very thin layers of paint to produce a smoky or vaporous shading and gradation—though achieved less by integrated blending than by discontinuous overlaying of lines, gossamer thin skeins and blocks of opaque colour that skim, translucently veil, blur or fully obscure the underlayers. The effect, though, is equally atmospheric, since everything is merged into the indistinct haze of a scene caught in the dynamic process of formation. Hence also the oneiric ambiance and dream-like reverie that suffuses the work. The edges of spaces—the meeting of floor, wall and ceiling at skirtings, corners and covings—are not delineated. Rather, they are implied, indirectly suggested zones, built of over-painted, discontinuous layers. This technique effectively dematerializes the space-defining boundaries of interiors. There is an a-perspectival flattening of space and, at the same time, an aeration or re-spatialization due to discontinuities in the layers. Consequently, the scenography is characterized more by atmospheric than by formal conditions and spatiality by a kind of suspension and liquefaction: the rooms hang in a netherworld, always on the verge of disassemblage and the potentially indefinite possibilities of re-assemblage.

However, here, artifice, scenography and perspectival imprecision give way to the qualitative precision of atmosphere and of emotional states or psychological attunement that are at one with the interior inscapes. There is urgency and agitation in the brushwork; it is performative and registers the mark of time, the duration, rhythm and tempo of application and process. Yet this is matched by a palpable sense of time suspended. The time of each image might be situated within the diurnal—morning, afternoon or evening, for example—but time does not pass in these scenes. What is depicted is not a moment in time—an impressionist instant, for example, or the palpable ambiance of a fixed period one might observe in Vermeer. Often, light looming through a window and diffracted by drapes into a scattering glare will drown everything into an oceanic swell: a kind of absorption of chronological time into an aeonic expanse, a timeless ever-being.

Significantly, light doesn't *fall*—as it might through an east-facing window on a clear summer morning. Rather, it suffuses the painterly

materiality of surfaces. Its direction is not given as an orientation within concrete space. It lies there, just below the surface, at one with the coloured layers of which the painting is made, of which the world depicted in the painting is made. It emerges through those layers or *as* them; or else they resist it. Everywhere there is a flattening of space and an intensification of the surface that now reads as a charged field of variable density, opacity and energy—topographical, cartographical, lumographical, neurological, a woven network or rhizome. These depictions hover around a set of interminable, unanswerable question: At what point does an object lose and regain its contour? Where are its edges located? What binds it? What ties self and selva? Are an object's lineaments inherent to itself, as projections of itself, or is the object constituted by the density of its context, by an impressing upon it of its circumambience? Is an object conceivable, perceptible, apart from the multitude of other objects with which it always forms and reforms shape-shifting collectives?

The dematerialization of form, the liquidation or vaporization of the boundaries between things brings everything into the ambit of a single imbricated, enveloping and deterritorializing tonality, making it impossible to discern isolated components and yet enabling the intimation of an extensive encompassment of deferment. In a parallel way, the music of Claude Debussy (1862–1918)—a contemporary of Vuillard and Satie and a striking exemplar of the ubiquitous mood of the epoch—forms vaporize and melt. They are no longer silhouetted by precise contours. They fade and drown in a pervasive fog³:

Was it not Debussy who composed *Brouillards* (Fogs) and *Nuages* (Clouds)? And don't these 'clouds' resemble fog? Debussy's clouds are rather nimbus than cumulus, rather swarm (*nuée*) than cloud... (evoking) the fog that, in Turner's paintings, drowns volumes and contours... these scenes of the Thames where air, earth and water interpenetrate within the one fluidity... Debussy's music makes us think of the flaky and fluffy wadding (*Pouate floconnense et duvetée*) of Baudelaire's prose poems. Is not this diffuse, diffluent, deliquescent existence, without precise limits, without plastic consistency and almost without mass, anything but a 'structure'? Like a sequence of waves, the parade (*defilé*) of alternating fifths and thirds evokes, in *Nuages*, a form that in turn strangles and dilates itself. Since what is a cloud other than an unstable and interminably deforming form?... in the thirteenth *Prélude*, *Brouillards*, everything seems woolly, amorphous, invertebrate:

³Vladimir Vankelevitch. *Debussy and the mystery of the instant* (Paris: Plon, 1976), 88.

form melts, and the contours that encircle things are erased into greyness. Because neither smoke nor vapour have a form. Clouds are unceasingly decomposed and recomposed, become monster, giant corolla or ribbon, until the moment when all substantial form is dissolved into the mist.⁴

Charles Baudelaire's aptly titled collection of prose poems, *Paris Spleen* (1869), is pervaded by atmosphere and by the mood of melancholia. In the preface, we find this reverie:

Who among us has not, in moments of ambition, dreamt of the miracle of a form of poetic prose, musical but without rhythm and rhyme, both supple and staccato enough to adapt itself to the lyrical movements of our souls, the undulating movements of our reveries, and the convulsive movements of our consciences? This obsessive ideal springs above all from frequent contact with enormous cities, from the junction of their innumerable connections.⁵

In Prose Poem 30, *The Double Room (La Chambre Double)*,⁶ Baudelaire describes “the moving architectures that God creates out of vapours, the marvellous constructions of the impalpable”⁷:

A room resembling reverie, a truly spiritual room, whose stagnant atmosphere is brushed with the lightest pinks and blues. Where the soul bathes in idleness, scented with regret and desire—something crepuscular, something bluish and roseate, a voluptuous dream during an eclipse. Low furniture, long, languid, in a state of trance, a life asleep, vegetal, mineral. The hangings speak a silent language, like flowers, like skies, like setting suns. No crass art on the walls. Compared to pure dream, to undissected impression, the art of contour and definition is blasphemy. Here, everything has the right measure of harmony's light and its wonderful dark. The faint notes of an exquisite taste, a fragrance touched by damp, swim through this atmosphere, where the drowsy mind sways amid hothouse sensations. Snowdrifts of muslin at the window and round the bed. On this bed the Idol reposes, queen of dreams. How is it she is here? Who has brought her? What magic power has placed her on this throne of reverie and pleasure? No matter! She is there! I recognize her. Those indeed are eyes whose flame pierces dusk;

⁴Vankelevitch. *Debussy and the mystery of the instant*, 88–89.

⁵Charles Baudelaire, Prose Poem 30.

⁶Charles Baudelaire. *Le Spleen de Paris*. https://www.bibebook.com/files/ebook/libre/V2/baudelaire_charles_-_le_spleen_de_paris.pdf. Accessed 21 December, 2021.

⁷Baudelaire, *Le Spleen de Paris*, 104.

subtle, terrible *beadies*, which I know by their fearful malice! They draw in, vanquish, consume the gaze of the fool who dares stare back. I have often studied those dark stars that compel curiosity and admiration. Which well-disposed daemon must I thank for setting me among mystery, silence, peace, perfume? Such beatitude! What we choose to call life, even at its most gloriously expansive, has 10 nothing in common with this, the supreme life I now know and savour minute by minute, second by second. No! No more minutes, no more seconds! Time has disappeared. Eternity reigns, an eternity of delight!

Baudelaire's paradisiacal reverie is then interrupted by a spectre's "brutal thump" at the door. All at once ambiance and mood are disarmed by a violating temporality. All at once, he sees the reality of what there is to see: the shrunken, rancid and desolate world of the "other" room and the ambiance of time's "brutal dictatorship":

I remember, I remember! Oh yes, this hovel, this home to eternal ennui, is indeed my own. Look at that stupid furniture, chipped, covered in dust; the hearth voided of fire and flame, soiled with spittle; the sad windows, where rain has ploughed furrows through the grime; manuscripts, crossed out or unfinished; the calendar with its pencil rings round ominous dates!

And that fragrance of another world, which sent my seasoned sensibility reeling, has been displaced, alas, by the rank odour of tobacco mixed with God knows what stomach-turning damp. Now lungs breathe rancid desolation.

In this reduced world, so full of disgust, just one familiar object consoles me: the phial of laudanum, old and frightful mistress—and like all lovers, alas, abundant with caresses and betrayals.

Ah indeed, Time is back, and reigns supreme now; and that hideous old personage has brought all his fiendish retinue of Memories, Regrets, Fits, Phobias, Anguish, Nightmares, Rage and Neuroses.

ATMOSPHERE

The word "atmosphere" is from the Greek *atmos*, steam, vapour, mist, fog, cloud, and *sphaira*, ball, sphere, globe. As John Wilkins observed:

In the Solar Eclipses, that there is some times a great Trepidation about the Body of the Moon, from which we may likewise argue an Atmo-sphaera, since we cannot well conceive what so probable a cause there should be of such an appearance as this, *Quod radii Solares a vaporibus Lunam ambi-*

bus fuerint intercisi, that the Sun-beams were broken and refracted by the Vapours that encompassed the Moon.⁸

The implied sense in the word “atmosphere” is twofold. There is the circular geometry or circumstantial pattern of a surrounding infrastructure (the celestial sphere, the sphere of the fixed stars), which was held by the Pythagoreans to be arranged after the intervals of the musical scale, and whose resounding produced the Music of the Spheres, and there is the consequential material condition of that infrastructure and what it produces—material in the case of the physical cosmos, immaterial in the case of its musical correlate, but in both cases preserving something of the vaporous and aromatic. This is reinforced by the semantic overtone of atmosphere, referring to incense as that fragrant smoke or cloud that emerges from a rare, burnt substance, suffusing the air with its perfume, rising upwards (to heaven), and effectively obfuscating and rendering the contours of a space and its contents ambiguous and indeterminate.

A French cognate of clouds, for which there is no English equivalent, is *nuée*; although we have the related idea of nuance that signals a “slight or delicate degree of difference”—whether in shade, colour, tone, fragrance, or in the affective haptic, aesthetic, epistemological or moral impacts of such minor differences on feeling, expression or opinion.⁹ French *nuer* means to shade, from Latin *nubes*, cloud, mist, vapor; and the etymological root is *SNEUD, fog. The occluding character of clouds, and by inference of atmosphere, is in the Latin *obnubere*, to veil, and Greek *nythos*, dark, dusky. In a different etymological register, we have Greek *skia*, which signifies both sky and cloud; and its correspondence to *skene*, tent, shade, shadow, that in the Judeo Christian tradition signals the sheltering shadow or cloud of God (*anan*) followed by the Israelites but also the heavenly pattern—the Platonic *eidōs* or archetype—on which the tabernacle and temple (*skenen*) are modelled.¹⁰ From there we have the notion of the theatre curtain, also known as the *skene*: a skin that divides the scenographic setting into two regions and into two cohorts of beings: terrestrial and celestial and human and divine. In that sense, the atmospheric

⁸The term atmosphere dates from the seventeenth century and was coined by Rev. John Wilkins, in his “Discovery of New World or Discourse tending to prove that it probable there may be another World in the Moon” of 1638, to describe the apparent vaporous halo that surrounds the moon at certain times. See Online Etymological Dictionary: atmosphere.

⁹Online Etymological Dictionary: nuance.

¹⁰See, for example, Exodus 13:21; Acts 15:16; Hebrews 8:2, 13:10; Revelations 21:3.

darkening produces an alteration in the fabric of the ambient milieu, dilating it to such a degree that it becomes porous to the interpenetration of different states of existence. Hence the mysterious or otherworldly nuance of the atmospheric, which produces several linked effects: it renders contours indeterminate by an obnubilating haze; it consequently obscures and darkens; it dilates and renders porous; and consequently it enables transaction between normally sequestered, separated realms of existence—unconscious and conscious, sleeping and waking, terrestrial and celestial, non-human and human.

At a prosaic, elemental level, vapor is an exhalation of water and clouds the condensation of water, leaving behind mist or producing rain. The process is circular and mobilized by the course of the sun; and it was anciently figured as a celestial river, Oceanus, flowing in a circle around the earth:

For according as the sun moves to this side or that, the moisture in this process rises or falls. We must think of it as a river flowing up and down in a circle and made up partly of air, partly of water. When the sun is near, the stream of vapor flows upwards; when it recedes, the stream of water flows down: and the order of sequence, at all events, in this process always remains the same.¹¹

Exhalation is in Greek *anathumiasis*, in which we can see the origin of the *miasmai* (noxious vapors) that have so preoccupied architecture and urbanism from the Enlightenment, through to Modernity and into the present day. Adopted in the seventeenth century to name “effluvia arising from the ground and floating in the atmosphere, considered to be infectious or injurious to health”,¹² the word is from Greek *miasma*, stain (of guilt), pollution, defilement; in turn from the etymon *MAI, (malodorous) stain, blemish, mark—evidently cognate with *MEL, Latin *male*, French *mal*, ill, bad, evil, maleficent. The link to melancholia (Greek *melas*, black) is self-evident.

Vaporous exhalation is warm and moist, in which the senses of steam, heat and haze cohere, as is the sense that an exhalation is an emanation, by inference from something: water, earth, organic substance, human being. It follows that the exhalation either weakens or fortifies: stale wine

¹¹ Aristotle, *Meteorologica*, Book 1, Part 9. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/meteorology.html>. Accessed 1 January 2021.

¹² Online Etymological Dictionary: *miasma*.

becoming insipid; a stock growing in savour as it is reduced, and the emanating steam evaporated; a life become vapid at the last. Here vapor corresponds to life force, breath or spirit and thus to the innate character of the exhaling substance or being. Exhalations are also subject to the motif of the abject, perspiration, discharges, evacuations—sweat, phlegm, pus, vomit, blood—and all those emotional and intellectual discharges or moods that have their own toxicity and violence: fear, anger, contempt.

METEOROLOGY

The study of the atmosphere has been known since Aristotle as meteorology. Aristotle's *Meteorologica* (c340 BCE) drew substantially from the astrometeorology of the Egyptians and Babylonians dating back to 3500 BCE and his systematic account “remained for two millennia as the standard of scientific texts, so that virtually all of the books on the European continent that dealt with the atmosphere until the early seventeenth century were essentially based on Aristotle’s considerations”.¹³ His theory of the exhalations aimed to explain meteorological or atmospheric phenomena in terms of an overarching system, consisting in the interaction of four categories arranged in two pairs of contraries conjugated by the action of the sun: hot/cold and dry/moist. The sun falling on the earth produces the hot and dry and the exhalation of smoke or dust; the sun falling on water produces the cold and moist or humid and the exhalation of vapor, mist or rain.¹⁴ The idea of atmosphere as belonging to the couplet cold and moist is a persistent one; even though deserts and dust storms also have their distinctive atmospheres.

Meteorologically speaking, the atmosphere of the earth has a depth of 480 km. Across that depth are five layers, varying in depth and thinness with altitude:

- the troposphere, dense and turbulent, 0–20 km above the surface of the earth
- the stratosphere, 20–50 km above, thinner and less turbulent, in which aeroplanes fly

¹³ Gustavo Zen de Figueiredo Neves, Nuria Pérez Gallardo and Francisco Arthur da Silva Vecchia, A short critical history on the development of meteorology and climatology, in *Climave*, 5. 23, 2017, 1.

¹⁴ de Figueiredo Neves, et al. A short critical history, 2.

the mesosphere, 60–90 km above, with average temperatures of minus 90 degrees Celsius
 the thermosphere, 90–1000 km, above, with temperatures of up to 1500 degrees Celsius
 the exosphere beyond

Each layer has a different air composition, temperature, pressure and gas profile. All are held in place by gravity but move and slide in relation to each other. Each absorbs, scatters, emits and refracts solar radiation, thus moderating diurnal temperatures on the surface of the earth and changing considerably over time to trigger changes in its climate.

What we call the weather is the state of the atmosphere at any one time, defined by differences in air pressure, temperature and moisture between one place and another. These differences result in uneven heating of the earth by the sun, causing temperature variation and air currents or wind. What we call the climate is the weather trend averaged over an extended period. Air in the atmosphere is under constant pressure. Low pressure, or depression, is associated with high winds, warm air and atmospheric lifting. It is accompanied by storms and cyclones, cloud cover and low diurnal variations. High pressure or subsidence is associated with cooling air, becoming denser and moving towards the ground, evaporating water. It is accompanied by clear skies and warm weather and extreme diurnal variations since there is little to no cloud cover. Air pressure can be mapped as isobars, to chart the aerographic contours of pressure that parallel the topographic contours of the earth's surface. Air in the atmosphere is in constant circulation—moving clockwise in the northern hemisphere and anticlockwise in the southern hemisphere, from high to low pressure: the larger the pressure differences, the faster the air movement or wind. Air moves around a low pressure anticlockwise and around a high pressure clockwise. Troughs are where air is unstable and turbulent. Hence the atmosphere, as a system, is an unstable assemblage: an asymmetrical ensemble marked by obliquity and heterogeneity, characterized by dynamics and tendencies, and whose components are in an interminable process of mutation, differentiation, interaction, influence and provisional de- and re-balancing. Any particular atmospheric circumstance or event is an emergent condition resulting from the precise conjunction, juxtaposition, alignment or indeed disjunction or discrepancy between these multiple parameters.

The primary existential sense we have of the spatial and temporal atmosphere of our lifeworld comes to us from natural diurnal and seasonal cycles. These cycles are made possible by several concatenating differentiations, discrepancies or obliquities—the separation of sun and earth giving light and dark; the rotation of the earth giving day and night; the inclination of the earth’s rotational axis giving the seasons; and the rotation of that same axis giving the precession of the equinoxes.¹⁵ The conjugation of diurnal and seasonal cycles produces four annual pivotal moments—the summer and winter solstices when the sun is at its highest and lowest, respectively, and the autumn and spring equinoxes when the sun rises and sets due east and west. The solstices are moments when, at noon, the sun appears to stand still (Latin: *sol stitium*) between its ascending and descending phases.¹⁶ Reaching the limit points of its cycle, the sun appears suspended between contrary tendencies and in this hovering begins to tremble and shimmer. These points are thresholds of contraflexure—limit conditions or terminals that mark a turning in the sun’s course. They are more accurately tropes, “turning circles” (Greek: *tropikos kuklos*) or nodes, which suspend and impel its motion at the same time. In that sense they are not *in* time but are dilations in or exceptions within the fabric of time. Also suspended is the event of twilight, whose ambiance belongs neither to the day nor the night. It is not a measurable extent of time and has no definite duration. It is not sensed as a third entity between day and night but precisely as the advancing withdrawal of one in and of the other—the becoming night of day at dusk and the becoming day of night at dawn. Visibility and clarity of discernment at twilight is difficult as the extremes touch their limit, become confused and ambivalent and start to waver. The sensed atmosphere of twilight is produced by an encounter with undecidability that erases the opposition between day and night: an auspicious

¹⁵The rotation of the earth’s own rotational axis causes it to wobble as it completes its cycle in around 25,920 years. This curious number belongs to sexagesimal arithmetic (by the number six) and the conjugation of 2 (duad) and 3 (triad): $25920 = 4320 \times 6$; $4320 = 2160 \times 2$; $432 = 72 \times 6$; $216 = 72 \times 3$; $72 = 36 \times 2$; $36 = 2^2 \times 3^2$; $72 = 8 \times 9 = 2^3 \times 3^2$, and so on. It appears in the Old Testament, the Vedas and Upanishads, the Platonic dialogues and what remains of Pythagorean doctrine. See Plato, *Republic*, 427b–c; *Timaeus*, 39c–d and Bartel L. van der Waerden, The Great Year in Greek, Persian and Hindu astronomy, in *Archive for the History of the Exact Sciences* 18. 4, 1978, 359–384.

¹⁶The solstices are generally identified with the door or gate that initiates the year but also with the possibilities of escaping time or of transferring to other temporalities. See my *Agencies of the frame*, 112, 267 fn17.

time outside of time that is poised on a turning point, both felicitous since it unveils an opportunity and dangerous since every passage harbours a kind of death.¹⁷

The slippage between weather and atmosphere is evidently a metaphorical turn—for example, we can take the temperature of a meeting; there could be a climate of discontent; the sky might turn moody or the day glum. But there is also something structural and constitutive at play here. The old word for weather and climate, “meteorology”, is revealing in this regard. Meteor is from Greek *meteoron*, something raised up—from *meta-*, by means of, and *aeiro*, to lift, raise up, suspend, hover. The etymon of *aeiro* is *WER, turn, bend, roll; and lift, hold suspended. *Meta-* also means “in the midst of”, “in common with”; so that the meteorological is a collective phenomenon, a multiplicity witnessed in lofty suspension, in the upper reaches of earthly space. Another sense of both *meta-* and *WER implies a change of state, condition or place: a going-beyond, conversion, versification, translation or transformation. The meteorological is always on the way to becoming other. Old English *weordan* means to become, to turn towards, but *weorthan* means to befall: “what befalls one”. Here we are in the neighbourhood of *Stimmung*, mood—in the Heideggerian sense of receptiveness or disposedness to our “thrownness” (*Geworfenheit*), to our “having been thrown in the world, to what consequently befalls us” (*vorfallen*) and *Befindlichkeit*, “how we find ourselves” in the world, in given place at a particular opportunity.¹⁸

More significantly, *WER has several apparently unrelated meanings: to turn, bend (avert, awry, converge, obverse, revert, invert, subvert, verge, verse, vertigo, vortex, wrap, wrinkle); to perceive, watch out for (aware, beware, guard, regard, revere, ward, reward, warden, wardrobe); to cover; and to raise, lift, hold suspended (aura, aureole, air, cover, covert, discover, overt, warn, warren, weir). The prepositional or spatial undertones are evident throughout: space is contained by turning, by the bending of an enclosing gesture, or a wall, to produce an inside over against an outside. Such an inside is a defensible region, a guardhouse that is also a watchhouse, and guarded because well regarded, worthy of being valued, in one way or another. The inside is clearly covert and covered, in the

¹⁷See Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Selected papers. Volume 1* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 528–31, 542–4.

¹⁸Heidegger, *Being and time*, 172–175.

sense that it sets up a protected, dissimulated interior opposing an exterior—private opposing public, sacred opposing secular.

Because every circumambience, as a surrounding region, has its midst, every circumambience also has its own meteorology, its particular weather and climate, its distinctive temperature profile. Meteorology is concerned with “mobile and shifting phenomenon... unstable, unpredictable, indeterminate”,¹⁹ and with the production of diverse emergent events—precipitation, condensation, crystallization; in particular regions—aerial (wind), aqueous (rain, snow, hail), luminous (aurora, rainbow), igneous (lightning, shooting stars). It is in every way equivalent to the Enlightenment concept of ambiance, in which the predictive reading of weather developed within the general eighteenth-century scientific and natural history project of precise empirical calculation of natural phenomena. This grew out of early interest in the occasional reporting of odd and unusual meteorological events such as the sighting of fireballs, shooting stars, earthquakes and northern lights, through to the systematic and synchronized study and modelling of climate, seasonal and diurnal weather patterns. The collation and analysis of standardized data paralleled shifts in intellectual, epistemological, social, cultural and political registers, moving away from regional and parochial to generalized national and transnational registers and scales of interest.²⁰ Taken to a logical extreme, descriptions of weather extended to characterize distinctive qualities of nations, ethnos, cultural identity and moral character as a way of aligning regional physical conditions with a moral topography to produce taxonomies of human being. But such correspondences are already evident in Homer, who draws connections between the weather, mood and emotion.²¹ Dante, too, sketches an atmospheric meteorological cartography in the *Inferno*. As Niels Wilde notes:

[T]he entire topography of the *Inferno* is divided into affective spaces of emotional weather, climatic zones described by the use of meteorological phenomena (storms and whirlwinds, rain and fog) and airborne affective outbursts (screams of terror or songs of joy)... atmosphere is neither a series

¹⁹Niels Wilde, *Mood and meteors: a reconstruction of Heidegger's atmospherology*, in *Human Studies* 43, 2020, 371.

²⁰See Vladimir Jankovic, *Reading the skies: a cultural history of English weather, 1650–1820* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

²¹Wilde, *Mood and meteors*, 371.

of shifting moods nor a bunch of mere feelings but an inescapable space we always find ourselves within.²²

Climate and weather are affective atmospheres: they contribute to the general mood of a setting, they impact on our moods and they trigger “a common atmosphere of attuned elementality”.²³ The word climate is revealing. It derives from Latin *clinare* and the etymon *KLEI, to lean, slope, slant. Climate is a function of declivity, of orientation and exposure to the multiple conditions that produce it: sun, light and shade, wind, rain and so forth. The topography of a setting is made of the inclinations and declinations of the ground, the slopes that face to or away from the sun, into a river valley or forested grove, through the undercroft of a multistorey building, up to an exposed ridge, towards the open bituminized expanse of a car park. Yet place is not defined solely by spatiality but also by temporality. Every place is located and situated, but every location and situation has a distinctive temporality conveyed by its particular durational character, by the very specific rhythms, processes, pulses, tendencies, cycles and transactions of all the multiple components, conditions, parameters, interactions and conjugations that take place there. Evidently, there is no atmosphere without time, without the passage of time, without the dynamics of weather and weathering that give every atmosphere its own ambiance, its own temporality. And just as every place has its characteristic temperature profile and intrinsic temporality, every place also has its characteristic, measurable temperament.²⁴ Inclination and declination have human as well as topographical and temporal registers. I might be inclined towards a worldview or to decline an invitation. Weather can be inclement or clement, and I might show clemency to another. To incline towards, to be clement, is to demonstrate a tendency towards or a propensity for.

A further classical trope in Western epistemology, promoted rhetorically by Aristotle in the *Politics*, is the tight connection between cultural character, soul or spirit of an *ethnos*—whether at the level of person, community or nation—and the characteristics of the place in which a specific culture develops, notably its environmental conditions, weather or climate:

²² Wilde, *Mood and meteors*, 371.

²³ Wilde, *Mood and meteors*, 369–383.

²⁴ de Figueiredo Neves et al., 6.

Let us now speak of what ought to be the citizens' natural character. Now this one might almost discern by looking at the famous cities of Greece and by observing how the whole inhabited world is divided up among the nations. The nations inhabiting the cold places and those of Europe are full of spirit but somewhat deficient in intelligence and skill, so that they continue comparatively free, but lacking in political organization and capacity to rule their neighbours. The peoples of Asia on the other hand are intelligent and skilful in temperament, but lack spirit, so that they are in continuous subjection and slavery. But the Greek race participates in both characters, just as it occupies the middle position geographically, for it is both spirited and intelligent; hence it continues to be free and to have very good political institutions, and to be capable of ruling all mankind if it attains constitutional unity.²⁵

Environmental or climate determinism—that cultural, social and behavioural traits characteristic of a particular people are aligned to the situational circumstances of a particular territory—has a long and troubling history, traceable at least to Plato, where *ethos* and *ethnos* are aligned with *topos* and *techne*. That alignment produced an indelible echo in the long history of architecture, evident in Greece with the development of the architectural orders, but equally evident, however subliminally, in the determination of national architectures into the present. An instance in ancient Greece is the Dorian *ethnos*, associated with a Dorian homeland in the remote wooded mountains of northwest Greece/Macedonia and then in the Peloponnese; the Dorian people descended from the mythical Dorus, son of Helen; the Doric dialect; the Doric order of architecture and the Dorian mode of music. These all display a characteristic atmosphere of severity, scant ornamentation, simplicity, uprightness and stylistic elegance: qualities ultimately attributable to the temperament, comportment and ethics of the Dorian people—that is, to how a people are, together, in place, how their being there, or their being-the-there, in that way contributes to the atmosphere of the place as well as to what is produced by those people in that place.

²⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*. Book 7, 1327b.

HALO

Further in his *Meteorologica*, Aristotle deals with the phenomenon of the auroras, and from there to the halo, aureole or nimbus that appear to “fringe” the planets and stars.²⁶ His objective is to give a physical explanation for a meteorological phenomenon based on precise optical and elemental conditions that produce it and to venture a taxonomy of natural signs for predicting the weather. But the halo, aureole or nimbus has a parallel life in the symbolism of art common to Christianity and Buddhism and to First Nations’ depiction of ancestral beings such as the *Wandjina*, who are notably associated with rain clouds.²⁷ In that symbolic context, the halo signals an emanation of the spiritual power and presence of a sacred being: angel, saint, demiurge, deity. Giorgio Agamben has signalled the close relationship between the halo and clothing. In *Nudities*, Agamben refers to Adam and Eve “clothed in glory”:

Though they were not covered by any human clothing before the Fall, Adam and Eve were not naked; rather, they were covered by clothings of grace, which clung to them as a garment of glory (the Jewish version of this exegesis, which can be found for example in the Zohar, speaks about “clothings of light”). It was this supernatural clothing that was stripped from the two after their sin.²⁸

This emanating circumambience of light is the *Shekinah* of divinity—a word from the Rabbinical literature that means dwelling or settling (of the Glory of God), from *shakan*, to install, abide, dwell. The word is formative in *mishkan*, the house, tabernacle or temple of God that is not so much a construction as a circumambient presence or exhalation whose meteorological correlates are fire and the cloud:

When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire

²⁶ Aristotle, *Meteorology*, Book 1, Parts 7 and 8.

²⁷ See Arndt, W., The Australian evolution of the Wandjinas from rainclouds, in *Oceania* 34. 3, 1964, 161–169.

²⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Nudities*, transl. David Kishik and Stephan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 57.

on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.²⁹

Iridescence and obnubilation, the presence of divinity shines and obscures, reveals and conceals. Its palpability is akin to light diffracted as in glare, as in the “silver lining” or corona that fringes the edges of clouds, the sun and moon and planets and stars. The phenomenon is caused by light penetrating and scattering within a porous, dispersed medium, such as droplets of water in clouds (affecting the intensity of their whiteness) or air molecules in the sky (affecting its colour). Glare is from *GHEL, shine, gleam, glitter. It can refer to brightness so intense that it blinds, or to the equivalent violation of the fierce gaze. As mentioned earlier, *GHEL is formative in melancholia (Greek *melas*, black, and *khloros*, greenish-yellow, gold)—the sheen of “black gold” that is simultaneously light and dark, effusive and meditative, viscously liquid and ponderously grave.

As Agamben implies, there is a close correlation between the halo and clothing, such that clothes are not supplementary but rather an inherent, emergent and radiant aspect of the being they clothe. They are the surfacing of that being: the being made palpable. Likewise, the halo reveals and presents the being whose emanation it is. Here the halo joins a complex lexicon around the idea of ornament and equipmentality. Ornament—like decoration and cosmetics—is foundational not superadded; it relates to order, to the effective outflowing of order. Ornament is order articulated, manifest, brought into visibility. It is the atmosphere of order as palpable *ekstasis*. Likewise decoration, whose cognates decorous and decorum make clear the aesthetic and ethical stakes involved. To decorate is to enable something or someone to come into their own, to signal the calibre of the being, or to calibrate the material reality of a place or a form to its inherent propensity and potential. Cosmetics, too—from the Greek *kosmos*, order—is, like ornament and decoration, a visible sign and outflow of character: the means by which a being presents itself to view. Because of this, ornament, decoration and cosmetics are a matter of technology, understood with Heidegger as know-how, as the means deployed to bring something into presence, to un-conceal and reveal, but always in such a way and at the same time to re-veil, to re-cover, to maintain that thing in potential, not to fully disclose it, not to violate the being it by rendering it

²⁹ Exodus 24:15–18.

over to bare life. And this is precisely why techne, technology, technics and architectonics are fundamentally a question of erotics.

As a consequence, ornament functions equipmentally. Something ornamented is equipped, is made ready to act, to be, to exist, to do. This also means that ornament is akin to the power and energy of operability. The halo does not simply signal a presence; it constitutes the effective force of that presence. Like the multiple arms and implements wielded by Hindu gods, each of which (drum, cymbal, thunderbolt, club, spear, etc.) arms the deity and amplifies their power.³⁰ There is a fascinating link here with the figure of the apparatus more generally and with the prosthesis more specifically. Machine and prosthesis magnify the “natural” capacity and capability of the organism: they “clothe it in glory”. The cyborg, augmented reality and the posthuman are all extensions of the same ambit, together with the inextricably linked atmospheres of fascination and horror they provoke.

Halo is from the Latin and Greek *halos*, ring of light, disc around the sun or moon and disc of a shield. The halo shines, shimmers, radiates, glows. It is the exuded, luminous sign of inner beauty. But the halo also darkens, in the same way that gleam and gloom are cognates, resolved in the ambiguous and suspended state of the gloaming. The thick darkness in which God dwells is not an absence of light, but rather light so excessive, so radiant and splendid, so powerful that it blinds. Another name for this ambiguous emanation that is simultaneously illuminating and occluding is the nimbus. The word means a “bright cloud surrounding a divine or sacred personage”; from Latin *nimbus*, cloud; *nebula*, mist, vapor, fog, smoke, exhalation; Greek *nephos*, cloud; Sanscrit *nabhas*, vapor, cloud, mists, fog, sky; and Old English *nifol*, dark, gloomy—all from *NEBH, cloud, darkness, blackness. Interestingly, these etymons are related to Coptic *noubti* “to weave”, and Nubian *nub*, gold, which returns to Latin *aureole*, golden, but also to the theme of technology deriving from Greek *techne*, weaving. That is, the cloud, while it darkens, also shines: what occludes at the same time clears, what withdraws at the same time forwards, what retreats also advances, what conceals also reveals, what hides shows, what dissimulates simulates, what makes unmakes.

A further name for this scintillating concealment is aura: from Latin and Greek *aura*, breeze, wind, upper (moving) air; in turn from the etymological root *WER, raise, lift, hold suspended, and turn, bend, roll. Hence

³⁰ See my *Theorising the project*, 240.

the tight thematic relation between wind and winding that Hopkins recognized “on river & wind-wandering weed-winding bank”.³¹ In the spiritualism of the nineteenth century, the aura referred to a subtle emanation around a living being or to the circumambience of a charismatic or charming person. In Christianity, Greek *kharismata* and Latin charisma both refer to the desirable *ekstasis* of grace around beings touched by the Holy Spirit, on whom are conferred the divine favours or gifts of healing or teaching. The etymon *GHER, to desire, to grasp, implies an association with what is desired—again, the melancholic luminosity of black gold.

Here, two treatments of the aura are instructive. Walter Benjamin’s use of the motif in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*³² shifts the focus from the natural history of Aristotelian meteorology, where it refers to an apparent rim of luminous vapour around celestial bodies, to a metaphysics of presence, where it refers to the emanation of an inner spiritual force. For Benjamin, the aura signals a measure of authenticity that irradiates from an original work of art, but which is erased in its reproduction or representation. A copy renders inauthentic presence. The simulacrum is counterfeit and counterfactual. The aura—the “magical” inner life of things, their *allure* (of an object, a face, music)—is annulled when a thing is mechanically reproduced (the photograph of a face, a mass-produced object, a musical recording).³³ Mechanical reproduction of a work of art depreciates “the quality of its presence”, “jeopardizes” its authority and interferes with its authenticity and uniqueness.³⁴

The aura of an object is a function of its being embedded in “the fabric of tradition”³⁵—that is, in customary symbolic, ritual and ceremonial practices, “first magical then of the religious kind”,³⁶ within which its effective power was guaranteed. Sequestered from their traditional circumstance, such cultural and cultic objects lose their aura. Their cultic use value is converted to exhibition value and exchange value. Consequently, they become bare objects and empty signifiers, subject to universalizing

³¹ Gerard Manley Hopkins. *Binsley Poplars: felled 1879*.
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44390/binsey-poplars>. Accessed 8 February 2022.

³² Walter Benjamin, The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction, in *Illuminations*, transl. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 217–252.

³³ Benjamin, *The work of art*, 220.

³⁴ Benjamin, *The work of art*, 221.

³⁵ Benjamin, *The work of art*, 223.

³⁶ Benjamin, *The work of art*, 223.

taxonomies that classify them into types and thematic categories (drums, spears, shields, fabrics, etc.) that can now be ranged across the dioramas, vitrines and virtual reality projections of museums. Nevertheless, Benjamin asserts that, in the “revolutionary means of reproduction”, the “ritualistic basis” or “cult value” of objects “does not give way without resistance”³⁷; and he sees in the portrait photograph a palpable vestige of the aura of the absent one or the departed which “constitutes their melancholy, incomparable beauty”.³⁸

Following Benjamin, Giorgio Agamben reads the halo as sign of the inner potentiality of matter that supersedes or exceeds the circumscribing boundaries of form. In *The Coming Community*,³⁹ the halo emerges as a sign of the infinitesimal difference or liminal discrepancy between the factual and the transcendent worlds: a cipher of the “tiny displacement” and “supplemental possibility” that characterizes the messianic world, the world saved, which appears as an irradiation:

The halo is this supplement added to perfection—something like the vibration of that which is perfect, the glow at its edges... One can think of the halo, in this sense, as a zone in which possibility and reality, potentiality and actuality, become indistinguishable... This imperceptible trembling of the finite that makes its limits indeterminate and allows it to blend, to make itself whatever, is the tiny displacement that every thing must accomplish in the messianic world. Its beatitude is that of a potentiality that comes only after the act, of matter that does not remain beneath the form, but surrounds it with a halo.⁴⁰

HAZE

In *The Matter of Air: Science and the Art of the Ethereal*, Steve Connor recalls the rapid development of atmospheric and meteorological sciences in the nineteenth century and John Tindall’s interest in the optical effects of atmospheric phenomena: the perturbations of space that are not “in” the atmosphere but constitutive of atmosphere as a cosmic space continually traversed by impulses and radiations, the sum of which he called “the

³⁷ Benjamin, *The work of art*, 225.

³⁸ Benjamin, *The work of art*, 226.

³⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *The coming community*. Transl. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

⁴⁰ Agamben. *The coming community*, 54–55.

temperature of space".⁴¹ In a fascinating chapter that deals with the conceptual value of the phenomenon of haze—a theme integral to the concept of atmosphere, and specifically the indeterminate and ambiguous conditions that accompany it—Connor writes:

As of indistinction itself, it is not possible to distinguish absolutely the features and functions of haze—to draw the line between mist, haze, fog. I mean nevertheless to try to make out the terms of a general affinity between modernism and the nebular. I will try to show that modernist haze was a phenomenon not just of ambivalence, but, more exactly, of interference, an accidental mixing of registers and channels.⁴²

Connor argues that haze developed as an aesthetic category in Modernity:

In one sense, haze was the residue of the past, which threatened to dissolve all distinctions, thwarting the subject's attempts to achieve clarity and distinctness. But the very indistinctness of haze was also, for a significant number of modernist artists, an objective, a vocation and a provocation.⁴³

This was of course antithetical to earlier conceptions of the hazy, misty, vaporous and miasmatic:

Nineteenth-century depictions of fog, the most extended and uncompromising of which is, of course, Dickens's at the beginning of *Bleak House*, inherit the vaporous sensibility of the medieval and late modern world, for whom mists and fogs are held to be the unhealthy halitosis of the ground, constituting a funerary air, full of infection, as opposed to the ethereal lucidity of the upper air.⁴⁴

Here is Dickens:

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses

⁴¹ Connor, *The matter of air*, 190–191.

⁴² Connor, *The matter of air*, 177.

⁴³ Connor, *The matter of air*, 178.

⁴⁴ Connor, *The matter of air*, 179.

of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the fire-sides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little prentice boy on deck. Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds... The raw afternoon is rawest, and the dense fog is densest, and the muddy streets are muddiest near that leaden-headed old obstruction, appropriate ornament for the threshold of a leaden-headed old corporation, Temple Bar. And hard by Temple Bar, in Lincoln's Inn Hall, at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery.⁴⁵

Dickens uses the metaphor of fog to satirize the interminably labyrinthine incarcerated bureaucracy of the High Court of Chancery, “mistily engaged” in a pointless and circular hermetic legal system, snagged in a concatenated and imbricated “matted” spatiality that promises no justice, no way through. Dickens’ is a radically aporetic milieu:

Never can there come fog too thick, never can there come mud and mire too deep, to assort with the groping and floundering condition which this High Court of Chancery, most pestilent of hoary sinners, holds this day in the sight of heaven and earth... On such an afternoon, if ever, the Lord High Chancellor ought to be sitting there as here he is with a foggy glory round his head, softly fenced in with crimson cloth and curtains, addressed by a large advocate with great whiskers, a little voice, and an interminable brief, and outwardly directing his contemplation to the lantern in the roof, where he can see nothing but fog. On such an afternoon some score of members of the High Court of Chancery bar ought to be as here they are mistily engaged in one of the ten thousand stages of an endless cause, tripping one another up on slippery precedents, groping knee-deep in technicalities, running their goat-hair and horse-hair warded heads against walls of words and making a pretence of equity with serious faces, as players might. On such an afternoon the various solicitors in the cause, some two or three of whom have inherited it from their fathers, who made a fortune by it, ought to be as are they not? ranged in a line, in a long matted well (but you might look in vain for truth at the bottom of it) between the registrars red

⁴⁵ Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, Chapter 1. In chancery. <http://www.online-literature.com/dickens/bleakhouse/2/>. Accessed 14 February 2022.

table and the silk gowns, with bills, cross-bills, answers, rejoinders, injunctions, affidavits, issues, references to masters, masters reports, mountains of costly nonsense, piled before them. Well may the court be dim, with wasting candles here and there; well may the fog hang heavy in it, as if it would never get out; well may the stained-glass windows lose their colour and admit no light of day into the place; well may the uninitiated from the streets, who peep in through the glass panes in the door, be deterred from entrance by its owlish aspect and by the drawl, languidly echoing to the roof from the padded dais where the Lord High Chancellor looks into the lantern that has no light in it and where the attendant wigs are all stuck in a fog-bank! This is the Court of Chancery, which has its decaying houses and its blighted lands in every shire, which has its worn-out lunatic in every madhouse and its dead in every churchyard...⁴⁶

In this darkly atmospheric depiction, Dickens' savage association of fog with defilement, pollution and dirt—its propensity to creep, hover and droop, to invade the human body and cause it to wheeze—leaves no doubt as to the nefarious esteem with which the vaporous was held. At the very centre of this leaden, hoary, netherworld of fog is the groping and floundering, “most pestilent of hoary sinners”, the High Court of Chancery, presided over by the Lord High Chancellor, with a foggy glory or aura round his head and members of the Bar—slippery, groping, pretentious—tending to matters misty and nonsensical. The Court is dim, lit by wasted candles, colourless and nocturnal, and a fog hangs heavy: a place of heart-break, best avoided. In Modernity, by contrast, the ambiguity of haze was appropriated as a characteristic condition of and a privileged compartment towards the in-between: the interstitial zone that eclipses dualities and opposites and where boundaries become indeterminate.⁴⁷ Likewise, in *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life* (1874), Nietzsche deploys what Connor calls “the necessity of a certain ‘obnubilation’” (an encompassing cloud), *umschliessenden Dunstwolke*, to his valorization of the unhistorical compartment that is foundational to an insightful and vividly illuminating suprahistorical sense⁴⁸:

The unhistorical is like an enveloping atmosphere in which life generates itself alone, only to disappear again with the destruction of this atmo-

⁴⁶ Dickens, *Bleak House*.

⁴⁷ Connor, *The matter of air*, 181.

⁴⁸ Connor, *The matter of air*, 183.

sphere... Should a person be in a position to catch in many examples the scent of this unhistorical atmosphere, in which every great historical event arose, and to breathe it in, then such a person might perhaps be able, as a knowledgeable being, to elevate himself up to a superhistorical standpoint... If he were a cold demon of knowledge, then he would spread out around him the ice cold atmosphere of a terrifyingly superhuman majesty, which we would have to fear and not to revere... When the sense of history rules without restraint and drags with it all its consequences, it uproots the future, because it destroys illusions and takes from existing things the atmosphere in which they alone can live... All living things need an atmosphere around them, a secret circle of darkness. If this veil is taken from them, if people condemn a religion, an art, a genius to orbit like a star without an atmosphere, then we should no longer wonder about their rapid decay and the way they become hard and barren. That is the way it is now with all great things which never succeed without some delusion. But every people, indeed every person, who wishes to become mature needs such an enveloping delusion, such a protecting and veiling cloud. But today people generally despise becoming mature, because they honour history more than living. Indeed, people exult over the fact that now “science is beginning to rule over living.”... history is itself capable of deceiving the young about their most beautiful privilege, about their power to cultivate in themselves with complete conviction a great idea and to allow an even greater idea to grow forth out of it. A certain excess of history is capable of all this. We have seen it. And this is the reason: through its incessant shifting of the horizons of significance, through the elimination of a surrounding atmosphere, it no longer allows a person to perceive and to act unhistorically. He then draws himself from the infinity of his horizon back into himself, into the smallest egotistical region and there must wither away and dry up. He probably achieves cleverness in this, but never wisdom.⁴⁹

Connor points to the particulate nature of haze, fog and mist. The effects they produce derive from the scattering of light which dissolves the defined edges of things, deconstitutes their individuality and enables them to merge into an encompassing circumambience that evokes something of the indefinite in both time (the eternal or simultaneity) and space (the infinite or ubiquity). He does not mean this immaterially, metaphysically

⁴⁹Frederich Nietzsche, *On the uses and disadvantages of history for life*, 1874. <https://leudar.com/library/On%20the%20Use%20and%20Abuse%20of%20History.pdf>. Accessed 14 February 2022.

or even metaphorically, but in reality, concretely and within matter itself as a materialization of the impalpable⁵⁰:

Haze is itself an interference phenomenon... its optical effects come about because of the scattering of light rays by minute droplets of water suspended in the air... it also embodies... an interference of registers, a compounding of light and matter. Haze represents the interchange between the palpable and the impalpable, light made semi-solid. ... Haze is a pervasive, versatile mage of the signifying resistance—a resistance out of which signification comes—of the atmosphere. And, of course, interference became a new experience and a new metaphor for the unpredictable relations of things... the scientific apprehension of immateriality—the dissolution of solid matter into particles and forces in late nineteenth-century physics—then modernism began to see that a world of energies would be a world without permanent forms or distinctions.⁵¹

Of particular interest in Connor’s reading are the related qualities of interference, resistance, suspension, scattering and materialization—that is, of atmosphere as a “signifying resistance”, a densification of sense through disintegration and complexification, or folding-together-into, which erases the individuating contour of things, rendering a scene indeterminate and thus magnifying its atmospheric potential. The paintings of Vuillard and Pari-Lewis analysed above are striking pictorial analogues of this materialization of atmosphere.

In another register, both shocking and revealing, is Alphonse Bertillon’s *Instructions for Taking Descriptions for the Identification of Criminals* (*Instructions signaletiques*) of 1893 (Fig. 6). The publication featured a *Tableau des nuances de l’iris humain* (table of the nuances of the human iris),⁵² as one component of a complex organic taxonomy of human types (classified by size, form, head, forehead, ears, nose, eyes, torso, limbs, fingers), here examined according to a forensic iridological assessment of the iris (form, colour, “tone of its nuance”). The iris is a complex muscular structure (a diaphragm to the aperture of the pupil)—comprising the aureole, closest to the pupil, and the peripheral area between the pupil and the white of the eye that controls the amount of light reaching the retina

⁵⁰ Connor, *The matter of air*, 185.

⁵¹ Connor, *The matter of air*, 192.

⁵² Alphonse Bertillon, *Instructions signaletiques* (Melun: Imprimerie Administrative, 1893). <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/wf8qfm5c>. Accessed 14 February 2022.

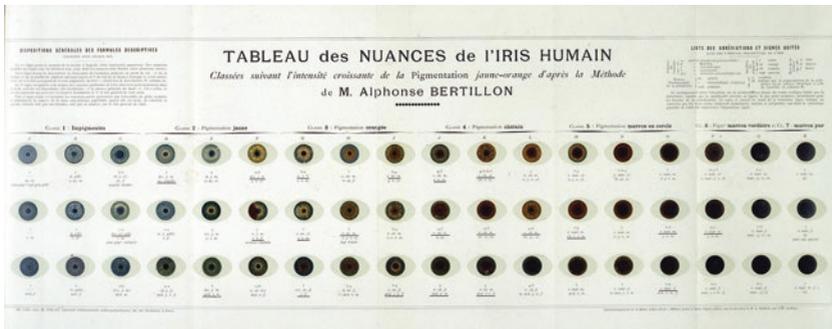


Fig. 6 Alphonse Bertillon. Tableau des nuances de l’iris humain, in *Instructions Signaletiques*, 1893. Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

by dilation and enlargement—hence a system of opening and closing, darkening and lightening whose haloed appearance lent itself to the biometric determination of human temperament.

Aside from the eugenic tenor and the eventual consequences of this physiognomic cartography, the enterprise prompted numerous parallel investigations. One of the most fascinating was Francis Galton’s *Composite portraits of criminal types* of 1877 (Fig. 7). Galton’s 1863 *Meteorographica: methods of mapping the weather* consisted of barometric recordings and was the first comprehensive weather map of Europe building a set of interconnected data points that could be used to predict the future behaviour of complex systems. In 1879, Galton turned his attention from the weather to the human subject and applied his method of “pictorial statistics” to build a “system of composite photography”⁵³ directed at a taxonomy of human types: criminal, tuberculosis patient, scientist, Jew. His *Essays in Eugenics* of 1909 was directed at “the possible improvement of the human breed”. In Galton’s *Composite portraits*, multiple superimpositions of different faces were registered to the same scale to produce a single image. His aim was to reveal generalized biometric information about subject types, rather than to depict any specific human being: “all that is common remains, all that is individual tends to disappear”.

⁵³ See Lila Lee-Morrison, Francis Galton and the composite portrait, in *Image* 162, 2019, 85–99: <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783839448465-005/html>. Accessed 14 February 2022.



Fig. 7 After Francis Galton, *Composite Portraits of Criminal Types*, 1877. The Galton Archive, University College London, Special Collections. (Drawing Michael Tawa)

Rather than represent an actual subject—a criminal type—Galton sought to provide indices for predicting what “the man who is liable to fall into crime” might look like. The rationale for image selection evidently arises; though more interesting here is the fact that these haunting yet realistic faces are of human beings who do not exist. Their ghostly, spectral contours⁵⁴ are produced by inter-transparent overlay, and by the natural misalignments of circumstances that produce indeterminate, shifting borderlines—not an outline but a blur, a zone of indistinction that dematerializes the sharp delineation of a face into a haze of vapor trails. The depicted phantasm subsists somewhere between appearance and disappearance, presence and absence: a human parallel to the atmosphere of inter-tidal zones of an estuary where salt and fresh water, water and land blend and become indeterminate.

⁵⁴Theo Anthony, *All light, everywhere* (Future Image Solutions, Super LTD, 2021). <https://alllightexpanded.com/>. Accessed 14 February 2022.

SCENOGRAPHY

In the current literature on atmosphere in architecture, a common trope is the analogy of scenography or *mise en scène*, popularized by philosopher Gernot Böhme. Ubiquitous and widely cited, to the extent of assuring for it a generally unchallenged exclusivity, how accurate or useful might be this reading of architectural atmosphere? We might well imagine the architect or urban designer as a scenographer, a conjuror, a prestidigitator and scenographic atmosphere as simulation and illusion. We can imagine a panoply of simulated effects: sound and light shows, smoke and fog machines, projections and soundscapes within spaces; theatrical sets designed only to be seen from specific points of view, under specific conditions of artificial light turned off and on according to predetermined scripts; or the *mise en scène* of a film, tightly controlled by the director's scenario, script, camera, shot, framing, dynamics, depth of field, dialog and soundtrack so as to overlay, condense and intensify potential sense in the image and its sequencing. All of this undoubtedly produces atmosphere; but it is atmosphere as momentary illusion and ephemeral spectacle, atmosphere as wholly predetermined and construed to deliver predicted effects (ambiance) and affects (atmosphere). It is scripted atmosphere under the guarantee of total control. We can wonder at the opening ceremony of an Olympic Games; lose ourselves in the inveigling mist of Diller, Scofidio and Renfro's Blur Building (2002): "an architecture of atmosphere—a fog mass resulting from natural and manmade forces"⁵⁵; be transported into the pulsating data-driven immersive sound and light environments of Ryoji Ikeda's Test Pattern (2008)⁵⁶; or thrilled by the extraordinary car chase in Cary Joy Fukunaga's No Time to Die (2021). But these are all staged, very tightly framed and regulated to a strict plan, to a strict coherence. As such all of them are foreclosing and prohibitive: they are not open to reverie. Unlike the *skene* of the ancient Greek theatre—draped between physical and metaphysical, human and divine, and functioning as an apparatus of concealment/unconcealment—this scenography hides nothing, since what is seen is all there is to see.

Böhme does distinguish between the reception and the production of atmosphere, which he posits as an opposition, opting to favour the latter. Yet in what sense are these two registers of atmosphere effectively opposed

⁵⁵ <https://dsrny.com/project/blur-building>. Accessed 10 January 2022.

⁵⁶ <https://www.ryojiikeda.com/project/testpattern/>. Accessed 10 January 2022.

in the scenographic concept of atmosphere? After Roland Barthes' "Death of the Author", and the Situationist "derive", a reader is as much producer of the text they enunciate as the author who announces it, a citizen as much producer of the city or building they traverse as the urbanist or architect who designs them. The subject (the reader, the citizen) is equally subject-to as projective-of a text, a city, a building. Subjects have projective agency: they trace their own itinerary through the narrative or tectonic fabric they inhabit; they produce their own course through it, even as it courses through and constitutes them. This renders a text, a city or a building as a contexture, an environment, a circumstance in which subjects find themselves: that is, as an assemblage of conditions that open up to and field multiple narrative possibilities for spatial and temporal infiltration. To enable such an opening, settings need to be large, to contain multitudes.⁵⁷ The sense, in Whitman's poem, refers not simply to multiplicity but to the apparent contradictions that exist in a subject or a situation, the irreconcilability of their multifarious aspects, components or registers, not simply their difference but their indifference to each other. There follows a characteristic inscrutability, unfathomability and ambiguity at the core of what might appear integral and whole—whether it be a story, a city, a film or a human being. A useful corrective is given by Michel Serres, for whom atmosphere is diametrically opposed to scenography:

In scenography, one sees singular appearances, made available at a particular moment, from a particular perspective. An ichnography is the ensemble of possible profiles, the sum of horizons. Ichnography is what is possible or knowable, or producible, it is the phenomenological well-spring, the pit.⁵⁸

Not scenography, then, but ichnography as the order or the ordonnance of atmosphere. Serres prefers a concept of atmosphere in which one senses the labyrinthine tracing of multiple iterated possibilities that resist

⁵⁷Walt Whitman, *Songs of myself*, 51 (1855): "Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself, (I am large, I contain multitudes)". <https://poets.org/poem/song-myself-51>. Accessed 2 January 2021.

⁵⁸Michel Serres, *Le système de Leibniz et ses modèles mathématiques* (Paris: Puf, 1968), 162, my translation. Ichnography is from Greek *ichnos*, trace, track, footprint (the impression made by the sole of the foot; a paradigmatic example or model for others to follow); *iko*, *ikneomai*, to go, move forward, arrive (compare *eikon*, image, likeness, portrait, reflection in a mirror, semblance, phantom image; and *eikenai*, to be like, to look like, to resemble); and *graphein*, to write, engrave, which in Vitruvius is the ground plan of a work: effectively the tracing of a horizontal cross section.

any singular reading and that render any rationale, any geometrical ground inoperative. For Serres, atmosphere is not a finalized, actualized phenomenon, but the affective presence of a diagram of virtualities: an experience of the multiple differentiated and differentiating traces of potential immanent within a circumstance:

[A] potential systematic order (*ordonnance*) that always lets itself be glimpsed while unceasingly refusing itself; the vague cavalier idea of a coherence perceived a thousand times and which reveals its geometric order (*géometral*); the sensation of progressing through a labyrinth while holding a thread, but without a map. Perspectives opened up, points of view multiplied, infinitely iterated possibilities: it seems that we might never reach the exhaustive limits of a synoptic plan: spread out, complete, actual.⁵⁹

The trace of Lacan in the term *géometral* is unavoidable, instantiating, in the midst of Serres' text, an ambiguity by way of the subliminal presence of echoes and resonances that build complexity and ambiguity in the texture of atmosphere. In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan distinguishes between *géometral* (the fixed point of view in the setup of perspectival vision: an optics or scopic regime situated in a space that is not in its essence visual) and topological relations, privileging the latter in his concept of "depth of field" that might be allied to the circumambient environment or atmosphere in which we find ourselves and in which we cast our gaze:

[S]omething that is not simply a constructed relation, the object on which the philosopher lingers—but something that is an impression, the shimmering of a surface that is not in advance situated for me in its distance. This is something that introduces the depth of the field, with all its ambiguity and variability, which is in no way mastered by me. It is rather it that grasps me, solicits me at every moment, and makes of the landscape something other than a landscape, something other than what I have called the picture.⁶⁰

The experience of atmosphere can also be read in relation to Roland Barthes concepts of "second sight" and *punctum* in photography. Second

⁵⁹ Michel Serres, *Le système de Leibniz*, 162.

⁶⁰ Jacques Lacan, *The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 106. See also Lorens Holm, Corbusier: the invention of perspective and the post-Freudian eye, in *Assemblage* 18, 1992, 20–39.

sight refers to the capacity of apprehending or capturing what is not immediately visible in a scene—in a moment caught by the camera that is not a matter of sight but of presence, of something revealed only by being there, in that place, at that time: “the Photographer’s ‘second sight’ does not consist in ‘seeing’ but in being there”⁶¹; and the effect is neither oneiric nor empirical but poignant and phantasmatic.⁶² What second sight delivers is what Barthes calls the *punctum*, that punctuating component of a photographed scene that eclipses its subject matter, that interrupts the viewer’s normative, “sympathetic interest” (the *studium*),⁶³ that surges out of the context of a scene and constitutes its point of turbulence and deconstitution but also a central and pivotal point of productive salience. It is with the *punctum*, rather than with the self-evident narrative or semantic value, that we sense the atmosphere captured by a photograph. For Barthes, the *punctum* cannot be prearranged or predetermined—that is, designed—by the photographer; it can only arrive unwittingly; it can only take place and take its place within the frame of the image at the time of capture:

[F]rom my Spectator’s viewpoint, the detail is offered by chance and for nothing; the scene is in no way ‘composed’ according to a creative logic; the photograph is doubtless dual [that is, composed of a co-presence of the *studium* and *punctum*], but this duality is the motor of no ‘development,’ as happens in classical discourse. In order to perceive the *punctum*, no analysis would be of any use to me.⁶⁴

Again, the detail does not furnish anything of truth value about the scene depicted, nothing about the designs or intentions of the photographer. Rather, it displaces the scene and deterritorializes it, opening it up to multiple possibilities of interpretation:

Hence the detail which interests me is not, or at least is not strictly, intentional, and probably must not be so; it occurs in the field of the photographed thing like supplement that is at once inevitable and delightful; it does not necessarily attest to the photographer’s art; it says only that the

⁶¹ Roland Barthes, *Camera lucida: reflections on photography*, transl. R. Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 47.

⁶² Barthes, *Camera lucida*, 40.

⁶³ Barthes, *Camera lucida*, 43.

⁶⁴ Barthes, *Camera lucida*, 42.

photographer was there, or else, still more simply, that he could not *not* photograph the partial object at the same time as the total object.⁶⁵

Likewise, it cannot be previsioned or anticipated by the observer: “it is not I who seek it out (as I invest the field of the *studium* with my sovereign consciousness), it is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me”.⁶⁶ The *punctum*, “sting, speck, cut, little hole—and also a cast of the dice”, represents a tear in the semantic fabric, a gap or interstice resulting from a distinctive (re)alignment of components within the assemblage that are thereby brought into disjunctive relationship—more precisely, into a relationship of juxtaposition and discontinuity between component parts within the shared space of the image. Such discontinuity produces ambiguity in the image: the *punctum* destabilizes sense, multiplying and releasing the semantic potential of what the image disseverally or disparately assembles or brings together into the frame: “However lightning-like it may be, the punctum has, more or less potentially, a power of expansion... when, paradoxically, while remaining a ‘detail,’ it fills the whole picture”.⁶⁷ The *punctum* is also arresting: its power is in calling attention to itself, displacing the retentional focus of the observer, taking them and the entire semantic content of the image elsewhere. The *punctum* is not a matter of the whole—what Barthes calls the *unary* space of the image—but of a part, of a detail⁶⁸:

In this habitually unary space, occasionally (but alas all too rarely) a ‘detail’ attracts me. I feel that its mere presence changes my reading, that I am looking at a new photograph, marked in my eyes with a higher value. This ‘detail’ is the *punctum*, and through it, the photographer has found the *right moment*, the *kairos* of desire.⁶⁹

The detail, the *punctum*, triggers a supplemental perspective that unclenches an *ekstasis*, an intensive, affective and lacerating emanation of the subject⁷⁰:

⁶⁵ Barthes, *Camera lucida*, 47.

⁶⁶ Barthes, *Camera lucida*, 26–27.

⁶⁷ Barthes, *Camera lucida*, 45.

⁶⁸ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 42.

⁶⁹ Barthes, *Camera lucida*, 59.

⁷⁰ Barthes, *Camera lucida*, 96.

It is often said that it was the painters who invented Photography (by bequeathing it their framing, the Albertian perspective, and the optic of the *camera obscura*). I say: no, it was the chemists. For the *noeme* ‘That-has-been’ was possible only on the day when a scientific circumstance (the discovery that silver halogens were sensitive to light) made it possible to recover and print directly the luminous rays emitted by a variously lighted object. The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here...⁷¹

If it cannot be intended, premeditated, predicted, previewed, how is the *punctum* produced? How does the photographer receive or notice and produce it? How does the observer receive and produce it in turn? Primarily by circumspection: by the practised foresight of the photographer, who does not foreclose the spatial and temporal possibilities inherent in the setup of the image and the moment of capture. Barthes’ *punctum* perforates the photographic image, opening up a threshold that takes its semantic registers elsewhere, shifting its narrative contents, amplifying its propensities to make sense. What Barthes calls the *studium*—the image’s evident sense, its “meaning” and our interest in it—is also an assemblage; it also has an atmosphere. But the *punctum* disturbs that atmosphere by resetting the assemblage, by introducing a new dynamic, by triggering and mobilizing something like a proliferation of sense that exceeds the *studium*, and at the same time produces a novel situation. It unclenches a new, heightened atmosphere that *surprises* us in the precise sense of the word: that is, something grabs us from above and takes us up. A better word might be astonishing or, following Deleuze, outlandish.

⁷¹ Barthes, *Camera lucida*, 80.



Tectonics of Cinematic Atmosphere

ATMOSPHERE AND CINEMA

Cinema constitutes a way of looking at the world, at *a* world—its aspect, its appearance; but it also presents how that world looks, its prospect—by the prospective glance it throws back towards us. The “look” of a film—its ambiance and its atmosphere—eclipses formal and aesthetics registers. It is fundamentally world-forming and therefore both cosmogonic and ethical: cosmogonic and circumstantial because it produces a world in the midst of *and as* the spatiality, temporality and materiality that devolve through its passage, ethical and consequential because the world it brings about is an inhabited world, an affective conjugation of people and place that constructs and promotes particular ways of being there together.

The premise here is that ambiance and atmosphere are not vague categories for cinema and need not be for architecture. Rather, they are in fact producible through deliberate organizational strategies—kinematic and narrative in film, tectonic and material in architecture—according to what might be called “consilient discrepancy”: the coexistence of disseveral systems in unaligned multiplicity that, while never fusing, resonate to produce emergent and consequential conditions.¹ Cinema offers

¹For an earlier treatment of “consilient discrepancy” in cinema and architecture, see my “Consilient discrepancy: porosity and atmosphere in cinema and architecture”, in *Architecture_media_politics_society* 11. 3, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.amps.2017v1i1i3.001>. Accessed 11 February 2022.

architecture an accessible and instructive instance of such consilient discrepancy, because, in it, atmosphere is more fully affective and the ambient conditions that trigger it more evidently analysable. To that extent, cinema provides architecture with comparative grounds for engaging with ambiance and atmosphere through a properly tectonic practice that can enrich the design and experience of architecture.

Consilient discrepancy is evident across multiple registers in film. It can function at the level of narrative, space and time and thus put into question verisimilitude, causality, situational and durational veracity. An example of this is the constitutive disjunctions of Jean-Luc Godard's jump cut montage where sampled film sequences, film and photographic stills, texts and citations, ambient sound, spoken word and music build into complex assemblages of sense (*Histoire(s) du Cinéma*, 1998). It is evident in Nicholas Roeg's multiple, simultaneous temporalities where past and future events interpenetrate and mutually condition the narrative present (*Bad Timing*, 1980). Similarly, we can find it in Michelangelo Antonioni's sequence shots that traverse multiple timeframes across the same space—a technique that enables past and present to communicate and amplify the affective, foundational value of the unseen and off-frame (*The Passenger*, 1975); and in the circumspective glance he throws across the circumstance of places to enable their consequences to emerge (*L'Eclisse*, 1962).² Another example would be David Lynch's labyrinthine existential settings, constituted of interminable slippages between indeterminable and infinitely potentialized spaces of dreams, reverie, imagination, memory and reality (*Lost Highway*, 1997; *Mulholland Drive*, 2001). Likewise, we could cite Michael Haneke's persistent displacement of causality and verisimilitude through ambiguous narrative viewpoints and impossible spatial setups (*Amour*, 2012; *Caché*, 2005); Roy Andersson's radically liminal settings and characters whose lives constitute larval pre- and/or post-human states of existence (*A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence*, 2014); Béla Tarr's spatiality of occlusion and porosity, aporia and passage (*Werckmeister Harmonies*, 2000) and Jane Campion's precise, insinuated build-up of suffocating tension (*The Power of the Dog*, 2021).

In what follows, I take the theme of consilient discrepancy to explore how it contributes to the distinctive circumstance or ambiance of film and how that ambiance makes possible the consequential experience of atmosphere. Various aspects will be referred to in analysing a series of films,

² See my *Agencies of the Frame*, 151–152, 230–231.

chosen because in them the relevant ambient characteristics or tonalities are most prominently foregrounded. These include spatiality, how space and place are set up and manipulated; temporality, how time and duration are set up and manipulated; materiality, how sound/silence and light/dark are set up and manipulated; and narrative, how plot and story are set up and manipulated. In each case, the ambiance produced results from a marked disassociation and disjunction between the various elements of the assemblage. These are maintained in suspension or are allowed to wander indeterminately, producing a consequential affective ambiguity that is pivotal to the experience of atmosphere.

IMMANENCE: ROBERT BRESSON

In his *Notes sur le cinématographe* (1988), Robert Bresson writes of the pivotal role that ambiguity plays in the performance of actors: “what is important is not what they show me but what they hide from me, and above all that which they don’t suspect is in them”.³ Likewise, ideas must be hidden but in such a way as to be found, “the most important will be the one that is most hidden”.⁴

Bresson explicitly excludes the scenographic or theatrical, which are representational and reactive, from genuine cinematography which is presentational, provocative and productive:

There are two kinds of film: those that employ theatrical means (actors, *mise en scène*, etc.) and use the camera to reproduce; and those that employ cinematographic means and use the camera in order to *create*.⁵

The cinematographer builds expression by way of the relationships between and the collocation of images and sounds⁶—not by the mimicry of gestures and the intonation of voices, not by way of analysis or

³Bresson, Robert. *Notes sur le cinématographe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 17, my translation.

⁴Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 33.

⁵Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 18, and 70–71: “Gestures and words cannot form the substance of a film, as they might form the substance of a theatrical play. But the substance of a film could be this... thing or these things that *provoke* gestures and words produced obscurely in your designs/models (*tes modèles*). The camera sees and records them. One thus escapes the photographic reproduction of actors playing their part; and the cinematograph, novel form of writing, becomes conjointly a method of discovery”.

⁶Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 111.

explication, but by way of *recomposition*.⁷ A key tactic is to unbalance or de-calibrate in order to rebalance, to re-calibrate, between people and things, according to novel relationships.⁸ For him, an image has to transform itself as it comes into contact with other images—in the same way that a particular colour will appear different when it is juxtaposed against others: “a blue is not the same blue next to a green, or a yellow, or a red. There is no art without transformation”.⁹ Images, like the words in a dictionary, derive their effective transformational power and value not from themselves alone but exclusively from their syntactical positions and relationships with others. The ambient charge of cinematic sequences, together with the semantic content and atmospheric affects, comes from conjunction, from assemblage, from the consilient consequences of discrepancies between one image and the next, one image and the sounds overlaid upon it, what we see framed and what is unseen off-screen.

To amplify this charge, the actor must be as if in a strange land, an outlandish land whose language he/she doesn’t speak.¹⁰ The true cinematic circumstance of the actor is therefore one of disorientation, of being *dépaysé*—literally “outside of one’s country”—and hence alienated, in a state of aporia or impasse, suspended in a world that is unfamiliar and without recourse. The proper disposition of this state of being is watching, waiting—Jean-Luc Nancy’s listening out for (*être à l’écoute*) and Deleuze’s being on the lookout, being on guard (*être aux aguets*). Likewise, for the cinematographer, this means “to improvise with the unknown”, in unexpected places that can maintain “a tense state of alertness”¹¹—that is, to find circumspectively, without searching, following French painter Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot’s dictum: “one must not search, one must await”.¹² Bresson is after the unpredictable, the unexpected, the unawaited for—or rather what cannot be seen in advance, *l’imprévisible*: “provoke the unawaited-for; wait for it”.¹³ “To film is to anticipate an encounter”, he writes. “There is nothing in the unawaited that is not secretly awaited by you”.¹⁴ “To watch him work”, reflected French filmmaker Louis Malle, “it

⁷ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 19.

⁸ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 45, 27.

⁹ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 22.

¹⁰ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 19.

¹¹ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 36.

¹² Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 76.

¹³ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 100.

¹⁴ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 104.

appeared at the same time very simple and completely incomprehensible. No-one on the set seemed to know what they were doing. For example he would reshoot a very simple shot fifty times; and we didn't really know why he would reshoot it fifty times". "It is a matter", Malle continues, "of being on the lookout for something one doesn't exactly know, that one is unable to spell out; and then when it happens, then I know what it is... Bresson's is a method of searching... he searches alone... and he ends up finding. Its something mysterious and I don't think its something he himself can know in advance".¹⁵

Bresson is after the indirect, the implied and the connoted, rather than the denoted and explicitly depicted: "TRANSLATE the invisible wind by the water that it sculpts in passing".¹⁶ In a related way, it is hearing and sound rather than vision and images that are deep and inventive: a sound can conjure up a complete ambiance—"the whistle of a locomotive impressing upon us the vision of an entire station",¹⁷ for example. At the same time, Bresson considers that silence as a genuine possibility in cinema came with the invention of talkies¹⁸ and advocates exclusively for the exhaustion of everything communicable through immobility and silence.¹⁹ To favour the slow and the quiet is also to produce conditions favourable for circumspective attentiveness and concern.

For Bresson, a film is assembled in the process of filming, rather than afterwards in the editing process. In this way are "formed seeds (of force, of certainty) to which everything else attaches".²⁰ Again, everything is in the jointures, connections and intersections between discontinuous images and sounds.²¹ Images need to be flattened, but without attenuation, dispersal or neutralization of the charge they can bring to the assemblage by way of juxtaposition.²² Bresson seeks expressive charge by compression rather than dilation.²³ In effect, an image can succeed or fail in contributing this charge entirely in terms of adjacency and sequence, entirely in

¹⁵ Jurriën Rood and Leo de Boer, *The road to Bresson*. Frans Rasker Film and NOS televisie, 1984.

¹⁶ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 81–82.

¹⁷ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 77.

¹⁸ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 50.

¹⁹ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 33.

²⁰ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 38.

²¹ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 30.

²² Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 23.

²³ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 95.

terms of positioning within the assemblage.²⁴ In that sense, the visual and acoustic components of an assemblage are mobile and interchangeable and can give rise to indefinite combinations, more or less effective, more or less charged depending on their relative positioning. Consequently, things are not rendered more visible by a surfeit of light but by the novel perspective through which the cinematographer looks at them: it is a matter of novel rearticulation and adjustment, a way of rendering something new by detaching it from its habitual circumambient environment.²⁵

Effectively, Bresson considers the fragment essential to the realization of a non-representational or of a presentational cinema: “To see beings and things in terms of their separable parts. To isolate those parts. To render them independent so as to give them a new dependence”.²⁶ This is most explicit in his propensity to frame characters, gestures, things and places circumstantially, so that they are only partially bordered with no middle distance or background, so that the point of view is oblique and non-totalizing, so that a whole is never given. One might see a sequence of hands exchanging stolen objects, silhouetted against clothing (*Pickpocket*, 1959); of legs and feet walking and crossing, silhouetted against a pavement (*Money*, 1983); the lower parts of a galloping horse, or a lance (*Lancelot of the Lake*, 1974); the hand of a fugitive hovering over a car door handle (*A Man Escaped*, 1956) or the suitcases and lower body of lovers who are separating (*The Devil Probably*, 1977). For Bresson, this is merely a matter of how we in fact experience the world, but it also produces an ambient tension within the frame that produces narrative suspense:

Cinema is not the photographing of theatre; people want to see the whole person, and not their hands or their face or their elbow or their leg. But when I cross a street I see legs walking... that is what the Parisian boulevard is for me; they expect an explanatory dialogue but there isn't one... the explanation comes from the image combined with the sound.²⁷

This method extends to the spatiality and temporality of framing. Space and time are never given whole. The plotting is episodic, and the viewer must work to reassemble the narrative consequentially. The entire

²⁴ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinéma*, 54.

²⁵ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinéma*, 52, 104, 59.

²⁶ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinéma*, 93–94.

²⁷ Rood and de Boer, *The road to Bresson*.

circumstance of a shot is not given whole: we only see segments, partial views and occasional portions of a larger world that remains occluded. Time, too, is not continuous. Sequences may be chronological, but they are broken so we never have a definitive sense of duration, of the time taken up, of how far in time we have come. These disjunctions preserve for space and for time a degree of incompleteness, of potentiality, of inexhaustibility. The whole is always unknowable, it always exceeds the given and it always overflows the limits of the frame.

Similar to Barthes' punctum in photography, what the cinematographer seeks to achieve is that "diabolical principle" that "acts against a work and seeks to demolish it".²⁸ The charge that makes sense of a work, that contributes its semantic force and ambiance, that produces its atmosphere, emerges as a result of internal disestablishment and dislocation: a discrepancy that nevertheless resonates, that nevertheless conciliates. This makes of Bresson's a strategic rather than a narrative or representational practice: "I never say what's going to happen; I simply record what I see".²⁹ He manipulates, organizes and manages the fragmentary components that are assembled to make the film in terms of the potential of their dynamic force or charge value. He withholds, delays and creates expectations to build tension and anticipation.³⁰ He does not give full definition or shows all sides of a story, of people, of things, but chooses to leave margins of indefiniteness that await their term, their conclusion, their solution.³¹ "To film is not to fabricate the definite, it is to make preparations".³²

Characteristic of the acting in Bresson's cinema is a marked unemotional delivery of lines: mechanical, matter of fact, monotonic. The mechanical manner of gestures is pivotal: "you have to say things mechanically; but while you are saying things mechanically, a change takes place inside you and an inversion that renders the mechanical alive". It is "both holding back and speaking mechanically that something suddenly sticks (*s'accroche*)". That is, the desired jointure is achieved unconsciously, by restraint, circumspectively. Blank facial expressions convey matters of great import; the intentions of the actors are suppressed; people seem to be talking to themselves, in monologues. Bresson speaks of his actors as "beings

²⁸ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 50.

²⁹ Rood and de Boer, *The road to Bresson*.

³⁰ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 103.

³¹ Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 104.

³² Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 105.

(*modèles*) rather than appearances (*acteurs*)". As the French actress Dominique Sanda said of her role in *Une Femme Douce* (1969): "the tone with which you had to speak, the voice you had to use, what he does to the voice, what he does to the being... he seems to be searching, not to look at someone directly in the eyes... (I was instructed) to look directly at a person's ear, always at their ear". This adds a characteristic indirectness and elision at the core of every frame: the gaze of actors never meet, the connection between spaces is never made and the relationship between times is never given. The geometry of the framing persists in deferral, in cross purposes, in tangential trajectories.

Nevertheless, there is always a deep intensity, a fixity of the gaze, an inscrutability in the look that conveys, indirectly, something of the internal movements and turbulences that never register on or disturb the (sur)face of the face. In that, inside and outside remain in a permanent state of dislocation and disintegration; or else they are flipped. Bresson's term for the cinematographic performer, *modèles*, is characterized by a movement of internalization or internment, from the outside to the inside, whereas the theatrical actor is characterized by a movement of externalization and representation, from the inside to the outside, from the private to the public, from the secret to the revealed.³³ Bresson's cinematography is resolutely unspectacular, unscenographic and yet affectively atmospheric. In his meticulous recreation of daily life, of mundane events, of quotidian iteration, there is little action, much repetition, an even rhythm that dominates, the mundane sounds of the ambient environment keeping the sequence fixed in its context. And yet, because nothing much happens, because the camera fixes insistently on an uneventful scene, the viewer is prompted to see the immanent in it, to imagine that something is just about to happen. Again, withholding and restraint contribute to an attentiveness that is pivotal for the circumspective gaze, to an atmosphere of anticipation and to an arrival that may never come or, if it does come, that arrives with the force of crisis.³⁴

³³Rood and de Boer, *The road to Bresson*.

³⁴See Paul Schrader, Robert Bresson, possibly, in *Film Comment*, September–October 1977, 26–30.

REVERIE: ALAIN RESNAIS

In the opening sequence of Alain Resnais' *Last Year in Marienbad* (1961), a continuous slow tracking shot begins with an oblique view of the ornately painted curved surfaces of vaulted ceilings framed by marble columns and then moves rectilinearly along the axis of rooms before turning and infiltrating the bays of marble columns: gloomy upper reaches of interiors, now and then interrupted by trompe l'oeil perspectives in the apex of interspersed domes. The voice-over leading into this initial sequence consists in a set of repeated phrases, in French but spoken in the accent of an Italian narrator, over an insistent organ background, fading into and out of hearing (Fig. 1):

...silent rooms... advancing, once again, the length of these corridors, across these salons, these galleries, in this construction from another century, this immense hotel, luxurious, baroque, lugubrious, with interminable corridors succeeding corridors, silent, deserted, overloaded with great cold ensembles of wood panelling, stucco... marble, black glass, darkly tinted paintings, columns, sculpted door frames, enfilades of doorways, of galleries, of transverse corridors which in turn give open out into salons... silent rooms... advancing, once again, the length of these corridors, across these salons, these galleries, in this construction from another century, this immense hotel, luxurious, baroque, lugubrious, with interminable corridors...



Fig. 1 After Alain Resnais, *Last year in Marienbad*, 1961. (Drawing Michael Tawa)

The camera then cuts to a sinuous glass candelabra—infinite refractions of light and the vegetal golden filigree reveal of a doorway, normal to the axis of the space and to the movement of the camera now keeping parallel to the rectilinear geometry of the building. These decorative elements appear to float, suspended in space, against an unsubstantial grey and vaporous background. The camera pans down, framing further glass candelabras as it makes its way from salon to salon, into a mirrored space of infinite inter-reflections, amplified by the bevelled edge of each mirror panel. Resnais fully capitalizes on the parallax effect of oblique panning, parallel to mirrors, that produce a slippage between surfaces, images and spaces to build architectonics of severance, disjunction, displacement and suspension. The juxtaposed vegetal web of filigree ornamentation, hovering in an ethereal circumambience, read like the foliate canopy of a crystal forest rendered radically porous. The architectural mass of the building is dematerialized: nothing appears to have thickness, and everything seems reduced to the infinitesimal thinness of an evanescence. The camera then lowers and turns to follow the axis of an enfilade of halls (Fig. 2), slowing and turning now and again along numbered doors either side, and to frame at full screen an etching of a vast walled garden with trees planted in a grid: a prototype for the actual garden, “outside” the “hotel”, in which pivotal scenes of the film will take place.

The ambiance of the setting builds out two systems: the densely imbricated yet porous gridwork of an orthogonal arrangement that the eye of the observer penetrates and traverses and a folded, relatively sinuous arc of



Fig. 2 After Alain Resnais, *Last year in Marienbad*, 1961. (Drawing Michael Tawa)

decorated skins, overlaid yet opaque, that the eye of the observer skims without penetrating. The interior density and pervasive gloom of the setting—the darkened edges of frames; the blackness against which characters are outlined, or from which they emerge and with which they merge; and the shadowy pockets and angles of rooms—impose upon the space. But they are at the same time leavened by indirect light from indeterminate sources, producing glistening foliage, gilded ornament, reflections off marble floors and sculptures, intense spots of light and the refracted glimmer of candelabras that mark the rhythm of passage and infiltration.

Entering now through blackness, the camera pans across the faces of an elegant audience, formally suited and bejewelled: isolated individuals, staring ahead, implacable, witnessing some salon performance, still wholly interiorized but surrounded by the dioramas and painted scenographies of an allegorical, classical landscape of lawns, flower beds, statuary and balusters depicted in vanishing point perspectives and the axial geometries of artificial gardens. The performance consists of stylized *tableaux vivant*, the actors still, the audience too: the distinction between actor and spectator rendered indeterminate. The performance seems to shadow the opening voice-over—the speaker is the same—and it consign actors and audience to the same netherworld, suspended between wakefulness and dream, life and death:

...as in a marble basin, like these statues these gardens carved into stone, this very hotel, with its rooms henceforth deserted, these immobile characters, dumb, undoubtedly dead for a long time now, who still keep guard on the corners of corridors along which I advanced towards our encounter... immobile faces, fixed, attentive, that have always been indifferent, towards you who are still maybe hesitating, looking at the threshold of this garden.

Where are we? When are we? We might be in the palace of Nymphenburg or Schleissheim, in the Antiquarium of the Residenz, in the hall of mirrors of the Amalienburg hunting lodge or in the Photosonore-Marignan-Simo studios in Paris. The point is that we cannot know. We cannot know if the setting is real, integrated and singular, or if it is a collection of fragments, of unconnected vignettes drawn from multiple settings. Ambiguity contributes to the oneiric and enigmatic ambiance of the film, somewhere between recollection, reverie and dream. It is produced by way of an assemblage built of disjunction between musical track, spoken exchanges or monologues in the form of aphorisms and what we see on screen; by

characters who stand stiff and immobile, like sentinels staring into the distance, across each other's lines of sight—in one tightly framed perspectival view of the garden, human figures cast shadows, but not the trees (Fig. 3); by reflections that betray overheard conversations; by laughter in one setting overtaking a serious conversation in another; by the mix of times, what is before us, recollections of what had taken place at unspecified time in the past, commentaries, fragments of phrases and words: “we always come back here”, one woman says; “we have met before”, says another; “I have the impression of having left you yesterday”, says one man; “what has become of you after all this time”, says another, “nothing”, she answers, “as you see, I am still the same”.

There is evident delay between what we see and what we hear of conversations. Sometimes there is no relation, sometimes the voice heard is infinitesimally out of synch with the speaking character. Likewise what is depicted on screen might be in advance of the voice-over, or follow it—for example, the position of the woman in the garden does not match the

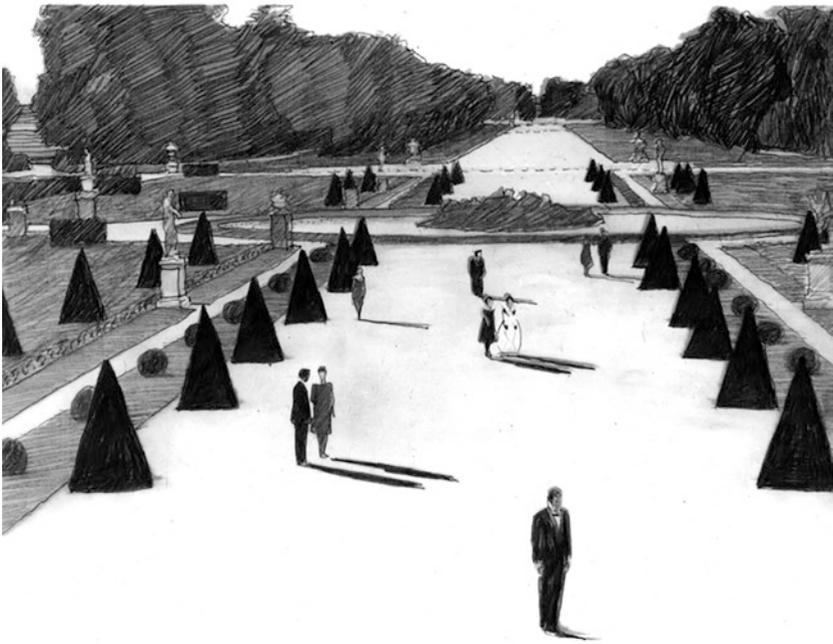


Fig. 3 After Alain Resnais, *Last year in Marienbad*, 1961. (Drawing Michael Tawa)

voice-over that describes it; or rather, it seems as if the woman is following the description given by the man. The camera glides between rooms, between groups in conversation. It frames couples in the distance or spies them in the multiple reflections of mirrors:

“The first time I saw you was in the garden of the” “I don’t think that was me. You must be mistaken.” “It was last year. Have I changed that much; or are you pretending that you don’t recognise me?. You at least haven’t changed. You have the same absent eyes. The same smile.... Do you remember? It was in the gardens of Friedrichsbad. You were alone, apart... you were looking towards the central avenue...” “I tell you again, its impossible, I’ve never been to Friederichsbad.” “Or maybe it was elsewhere, at Karlstadt, at Marienbad, or at Baden-Salsa... or even here, in these salons. You followed me here so that I could show you this image.”

Consigned to loss, none of these people is able to escape the oneiric confines of the “hotel” they are all destined to interminably wander:

Then, once again, I advanced the length of these same corridors, having walked for days, for months, for years, towards meeting you. There will be no possible end to the walking between these walls, no rest; I will leave tonight, taking you with me... you could not have continued to live in the midst of this architecture, painted in trompe l’oeil, between these mirrors and these columns, among these always swinging doors, these grand staircases, in this always open room...

In the final sequence, accompanying a slow tracking shot through the hotel—heavily furnished, densely populated by seated groups and standing sentinels—a voice-over announces “and once again, I advanced, alone, the length of these same corridors, across these same deserted rooms, along the same colonnades, these same windowless galleries, I crossed these same portals, choosing my way as if by chance, among the tiling patterns of identical itineraries... and once again everything was deserted in this immense hotel, everything was empty, empty salons, corridors, salons, doors, doors, corridors, empty chairs, deep armchairs, stairways, step, step, one after the other...empty corridors vanishing out of sight”.

The entire film appears to be narrated in a past tense, overlaid on a present that is also a reminiscence, an imaginary recollection by characters stripped of feelings, somnambulating, languid and languishing in

forgetfulness, seeming lost in a place that is nowhere, that is a fractured delusion of multiple imagined places:

The parc of this hotel, was a kind of garden in the French style: without trees, without flowers, without any vegetation. Gravel, stone, marble, the straight line marked-out rigid spaces, surfaces without mystery. It seemed at first impossible to get lost. At first. Along rectilinear avenues, between the statues with frozen gestures and the granite paving, you were already now getting lost, forever, into the tranquil night, alone, with me.

TERROR: DAVID LYNCH

For Heidegger, one of the basic moods or attunements of *Dasein* is angst in the mode of fear. The fearsome is always something encountered within the world, something at hand, something we are with (*Mitda-sein*). What is feared has the character of being threatening, potentially harmful, approaching from a definite yet uncanny region which radiates threat. Immanent approaching threat is infinitely near and palpable yet at the same time veiled and in a state of suspension. It may not “get us”. It “bears the revealed possibility (‘not right now, but any moment’) of not happening and passing us by. This does not lessen or extinguish fearing, but enhances it”.³⁵ Fear becomes alarm when what threatens is known and familiar; it becomes horror when what threatens “has the character of something completely unfamiliar”; and it becomes terror when the horrible together with the alarming come suddenly.³⁶

Pervasive in the cinema of David Lynch, these linked moods of dread, threat, horror and angst assail the jeopardized human being who is irremediably thrown into the uncanny regions of a radically alien world. A characteristic instance is in *Mulholland Drive* (2001). Two men are having coffee at Winkie’s on Sunset Boulevard. One of them has invited the other to recount a recurrent dream that takes place there. The one telling the dream is reticent, disturbed; he smiles nervously throughout the scene. As he recalls the dream, the second man becomes increasingly troubled: “they start out that I’m in here. But its not day or night. Its kind of half night, you know. But it looks just like this. Except for the light. And I’m scared... like I can’t tell you. Of all people, you’re standing right over there, by that

³⁵ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 133.

³⁶ Heidegger, *Being and time*, 133.

counter.... And you're scared. I get even more frightened when I see how afraid you are... then I realise what it is. There's a man. In back of this place. He's the one who's doing it. I can see him through the wall. I can see his face. I hope I never see that face, ever, outside of a dream.... That's it". The other replies, "So... you came to see if he's out there". "To get rid of this God-awful feeling". We have not seen the dream, but Lynch films the scene as if we are witnessing it being played out. The soundtrack is pivotal here. An insistent base drone, with discordant over and under-tones, rises in volume and in waves of rhythmic shudder. Shot and counter-shot of the two men establish the fearsome as it is being encountered in the world of Winki's diner. From that fear comes alarm in the sense of impending harm, "approaching from a definite yet uncanny region which radiates threat". Everything happens as in the dream. The one telling it closes his eyes in resignation for the inevitable recurrence of the vision in real time. The men leave the diner and pass through a side lane "in back of" the place. The dreamer is hesitant, sweating, reticent to go on. The camera moves very slowly forward, scanning every object it encounters: a phone booth, a door with a sign indicating the way back to the entrance, a green path and handrails leading to steps down. The men reach a backyard of dilapidated walls and piles of rubbish, on one side of a blind corner to a back lane. The hand-held camera wavers back and forth in shot and counter-shot between the two men looking increasingly troubled and the approaching corner: "a definite yet uncanny region which radiates threat". Shuddering discordant tones are now overlaid with repeated waves of descending strings rising in volume as the man reaches the blind corner. At that point of highest tension, a dark scabrous human figure looms out, the man faints and collapses and the soundtrack immediately shifts to a muffled hum of reverberations and alarmed voices. In this striking sequence, Lynch constructs a charged ambiance involving interacting narrative, spatial and temporal conditions of ambiguity. The dream being recounted becomes an anticipated plotline: we fully know what is to come, and yet the precise details ("there's a man") are withheld. The dream is a recollection of what has yet to take place. The past is a premonition of the future and the future an anticipated recursion of the past. The present is a relay between past and future: a precipitation of the oneiric, of memory. We move from the ordinary and familiar world of Winki's diner into increasingly marginal, destitute regions whose coordinates and contents are unknowable and unpredictable. The familiar becomes alien, and the quotidian is opened up to the uncanny. The circumambient terror of the

scene is built of multiple circulating ambiguities that Lynch choreographs between the ordinary and the extraordinary, the known and the unknown, the knowable and the unknowable, the seen and the unseen, the heard and the unheard, orientation and disorientation.

A more insistent sense of dread suffuses Lynch's *Lost Highway* (1997). One of many themes in this film is the radical instability of human identity, the precariousness of the self and of one's being in the world. It appears that for Lynch, individual existence is neither unified or definitive but only one version or phase among an indefinite set of compossibilities. There is no transcendent self, only an array of disseveral selves emergent as the consequences of circumstances that each one finds itself in. This means that the self is never tied to a singularity and is never contextualized in only one circumstance. Each self is many, and every world is one of a plurality of worlds. Selves and worlds are distinct and discontinuous, but there are points and moments of relay, communication and exchange between them. Space and time in Lynch are never homogeneous. They are turbulent, geometrically and materially inconsistent, extensive and dilated to some degree but also massing here and there at intensities and densities that afford opportunities and gateways between parallel spatialities and temporalities.

This is why the *doppelgänger* is a recurrent theme in Lynch (Fred Madison/Pete Dayton, Renee/Alice, Mr Eddy/Dick Laurent in *Lost Highway*; Betty/Diane Selwyn, Rita/Camilla Rhodes in *Mulholland Drive*; Agent Cooper/Mr C in *Twin Peaks: The Return*). Commonly understood as the double or "duplicate copy" of a living person in appearance or bearing, the *doppelgänger* is both self and other, familiar and alien, reassuring and disturbing—hence uncanny. But the term has a much richer semantic register. The word is from German *dopple*, double, and *gang*, way, journey, passage, going; from *GHENH, to step, stride, go—Old English *gan*, to advance, walk, depart, happen, take place; *GHE, to release; and the cognates went, wend and wind, wander; that is, to pass into another condition or state. The *doppelgänger* thus stands for the ambiguity of the double way, the bifurcation, the impasse of choice, the incompossible circumstance whose consequences are effectively barred.

In *Lost Highway*, musician Fred Madison's troubled demeanour is paralleled by the disturbing architectural ambiance of his house. Its various rooms amount to a labyrinthine folding of space, acoustically dead, radically internalized and sequestered from an outside world that only barely insinuates itself through heavily veiled windows. Fred and Renee wander



Fig. 4 After David Lynch. *Lost Highway*, 1997. (Produced by Asymmetrical Productions. Distributed by October films. Drawing Michael Tawa)

from room to room in a markedly anxious, discomfited manner—Fred appearing to be awaiting some dreadful event to come, Renee trying to make sense of his mood. Lynch films these characters so as to systematically unframe, displace and de-centre them from themselves and from their ambient setting, so as to dissolve their form and contours, to de-individualize them or to liquify the coordinates and borderlines of their distinct identities.³⁷ Later, Fred will transform into his *Doppelgänger*, mechanic Pete Dayton and Renee into Alice, mistress of the manic Mr. Eddy, whose own *Doppelgänger* is the pornographer Dick Laurent. In the final scene, Fred is speeding along a highway when he is again caught up in a shuddering, monstrous substitution of identities (Fig. 4).

In Lynch's cinema, the characters are ambiguous to themselves, ambiguous towards others, ambivalent to the world in which they find themselves, perturbed and ill at ease. Likewise, the world is ambivalent to the characters who populate it. It offers nothing to them other than an uncanny region that denies them any foothold. Some places and some characters do however play a significant pivotal role in unfolding the narrative by destabilizing it. There are recurrent objects, generally perforate, that signal thresholds between worlds and that Lynch's camera penetrates in slow traveling closeup (a severed ear in *Blue Velvet*; a blue cube in

³⁷ See Eric Dufour. *David Lynch: matière, temps et image* (Paris: Vrin, 2008), 84–85.

Mulholland Drive; a radio grille in *Eraserhead*; a cigarette burn in *Inland Empire*). In *Twin Peaks: The Return*, The Red Room functions as a transit lounge or portal: an indeterminate zone in which intersect multiples places and times, where characters exchange their multiple identities, where narrative threads take up their multiple versions. These shifts in character, narrative, worlds, spatialities and temporalities are sometimes triggered by strange characters with a strategic role in the narrative and cinematic apparatus. Species of Magus, or as Eric Dufour reads them, Masters of Ceremony or Grand Imagemaker (*Grand Imagier*),³⁸ these characters are themselves *doppelgängers* of the cinematographer, who produce and project the characters, the narrative, the worlds, the spatialities and the temporalities of the film and unclench a relay between them: the Cowboy in *Mulholland Drive* (“So lets just say I’m driving this buggy, and if you fix your attitude you can ride along with me”) and the Mystery Man in *Lost Highway* (“We’ve met before, haven’t we?” “I don’t think so. Where was it you think we met?” “At your house, don’t you remember?” “No, no I don’t. Are you sure?” “Of course. As a matter of fact, I’m there right now”). What renders these spaces and these characters frightening and uncanny is that in them, the normal coordinates of the world fold into and interpenetrate each other in the manner of a Moebius Strip. Inside and outside elude their oppositional character and become the two interchangeable sides of a single figure; self and other become transparent to each other; past and future lose their linear, consequential relation and become mutually affective in the present. Every position, every moment, every being loses its consistency to become a site of transaction and exchange.

The different worlds that coexist in Lynch’s cinema are qualitatively heterogeneous, parallel though connected by portals located in particular sites or moments. As Eric Dufour notes, each has its own topographies and borderlines that, when seen together, generate an aureole of vaporous circumambiance: “to the clarity that delimits the contours of things and beings and that proscribes any indistinct zone is opposed the obscurity in which delimitations are erased and that produces around distinct things and beings large fringes of indetermination”.³⁹ Such parallel universes are not located in different spatial regions or temporal phases. Dufour sees

³⁸ Dufour, *David Lynch*, 92n; and see George M. Wilson, Le grand imagier steps out: the primitive basis of film narration, in *Philosophical Topics* 25. 1, 1977, 295–318.

³⁹ Dufour. *David Lynch*, 40, my translation.

them neither above nor below the normal world of the film, but rather as so many different perceptions of one and the same universe, as so many different powers or dimensions of this world here, but that we chose not to look at.⁴⁰ Likewise, the *doppelgänger* is not a different character but rather one of many possible iterations, phases and potentialities of one and the same character, whence, again, the indeterminate contours, the ambiguity and the discomfiture it provokes.⁴¹ Deleuze's definition of the actual as being only one compossibility of the virtual, only one cross section through an infinite set of latent potentialities, is apt in this regard.⁴² The reason these alternate worlds and these alternate characters are disquieting and uncanny is precisely because they represent the alterity and unfamiliarity of the same, of the familiar, as simultaneously present and affective: "the other world is nothing else than the moment when our world takes on a disquieting aspect"⁴³ or is subject to an unsettling turn, a discordant tuning.

APORIA: BÉLA TARR

Béla Tarr's *Werckmeister Harmonies* (2000) overlays multiple discrete registers to construct a marked ambiance of irremediable incarceration and impasse, functioning equally at political, aesthetic and experiential levels. Some of these registers are materially and viscerally affective, others abstract or metaphorical; some are explicit and obvious, others faintly sketched or concealed. They remain suspended, postponing reconciliation or closure of meaning. As such, they make possible an interminable deferral and conjugation of sense that is pivotal to the film's atmosphere. One register, in the opening scene, involves choreographing an old tale—the "harmony of the spheres" danced here by a group of barroom revellers in the form of a solar eclipse. The occultation of the sun is described by the protagonist as drawing everything into an "infinite sonorous silence" until an "incomprehensible dusk" and "weight of darkness" descend to still all beings and project them into a space of immanent, impending catastrophe. Cinematically, this catastrophe works principally by occlusions that

⁴⁰ Dufour, *David Lynch*, 39, 43.

⁴¹ Dufour, *David Lynch*, 41.

⁴² Deleuze, The actual and the virtual, in Giles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, transl. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 148–152.

⁴³ Dufour, *David Lynch*, 44.

parallel a statist breakdown, threatened by violent occupation of the town where the film is set, together with a breakdown of civic space. Another register also relates to music, this time to the difference between “just” and “equal temperament”, which are two distinct means of tuning an instrument. In the film, the protagonist János Valuska, through whom we see the unfolding political events, has his counterpart and touchstone in the melancholic György Eszter, music theorist who decries the loss of pre-modern “just intonation”, following Johan Sebastian Bach’s “Well-tempered Clavier” of 1722 that rationalized and in turn disenchanting the musical scale. Bach based his tuning on the work of seventeenth-century court organist and theorist Andreas Werckmeister, specifically his *Orgelprobe* of 1681. As Eszter says:

...music and its harmony and echo, its unsurpassable enchantment is entirely based on a false foundation... Here we have to acknowledge the fact that there were ages more fortunate than ours, those of Pythagoras and Aristoxenes, when our forefathers were satisfied with the fact that their purely tuned instruments were played in only some tones, because they were not troubled by doubts, for they knew that heavenly harmonies were the province of the gods. Later, all this was not enough. Unhinged arrogance wished to take possession of all the harmonies of the gods. And it was done in its own way. Technicians were charged with the solution, a Praetorius, a Salinas, and finally an Andreas Werckmeister...

Further registers are historical, technoscientific and biopolitical, referring explicitly to the sociocultural circumstances of Russia’s invasion of Hungary after the First World War and implicitly to a generalized critique of the advent of Modernity.⁴⁴ Eszter again:

Hence the shameful situation that all the intervals in the masterpieces of many centuries are false. Which means that music and its harmony and echo, its unsurpassable enchantment is entirely based on a false foundation [...] We have to turn our backs on this development of tuning instruments, the so-called constant-tempered, and its sad history and bring back the naturally tuned instrument. Carefully, we have to correct Werckmeister’s mistakes. We have to concern ourselves with these seven notes of the scale, but not as

⁴⁴ One can recognize in the shift from just to equal temperament evidence of foundational political as well as aesthetic tendencies of the Enlightenment, equally familiar to Modernity: calculative reason, rationalization, homogenization, elimination of complexity, avoidance of contingency, a predilection for efficiency and economies of time.

of the octave, but seven distinct and independent qualities like seven fraternal stars in the heavens.

Werkmeister Harmonies is characterized by a palpable ambiguity of boundary conditions. The profiles and borderlines of characters, rooms, streets and squares are effaced by an undecidability in the provenance of light and dark which are deployed interchangeably, so that darkness appears not as an absence but as an excess of light, as a play between gloom and glare. This orchestration of luminous intensity effectively dissolves the normative determinants of space and form—the liminal corners, edges and surfaces that distinguish an inside from an outside. The containing framework of settings in the film does not reflect or absorb light; rather, it is suffused by it—its mass irradiates. Likewise, the streets and squares of the town in which the action unfurls do not differentiate a public from a private domain. They lead nowhere—or rather, they lead nowhere other than into the labyrinthine materiality of the urban fabric, into an ineluctable aporetic condition that is, tectonically and politically, an irreparable entrapment.

The undecidability between black and white, gloom and gleam, glare and clarity in *Werkmeister Harmonies* situates the action in a marginal oneiric world, hovering between reality and virtuality, actuality and potentiality. In this liminal cinematic ambiance, the philosophical, political, ethical and aesthetic dimensions of the narrative assume heightened presence and confer on the film a distinctive atmosphere. The spatiality of the film is not derived formally, geometrically or with an emphasis on lineaments, edges and borderlines. Rather, it emerges as a function of the play between light and dark, shade and shadow, illumination and obfuscation, revelation and concealment. The boundaries of space are not given by material limits but by variable densities in the circumambient context. A pervasive mist or ambient precipitation in exterior settings is matched by the infiltrating glare of interiors or the scintillation of dark surfaces glanced by indirect light sources (Fig. 5).

Further, the architecture of the city and the various buildings depicted in the film are never given as any kind of totality. In this way, Béla Tarr frames a specific conception of the outside. Interiors have no antinomical counterpart—no domestic outside (the outlook from windows is exclusively drowned in either the blackness of night or the vaporized glowering of day). Similarly, there is no civic outside (the public realm is invariably ringed by buildings that give no access to any “beyond”). Alternatively, it



Fig. 5 After Béla Tarr, *Werckmeister Harmonies*, 2000. (Produced by Göess Film (Budapest), Von Vietinghoff Produktion (Berlin) and 13 Production (Paris). Distributed by Artificial Eye. Drawing Michael Tawa)

is tangled in the contained, intestinal porosity of occluded streets and laneways, leading only to indefinite circuits without escape. Labyrinthine, aporetic streets promise no exit; the market square is ringed by facades; and a forked road has two vistas disappearing into an ever-present middle ground. Tarr uses very tight framing, the borders of the frame always insistently constraining and contracting from the outside in to produce spaces charged with a sense of inescapability and to foreground the impending infernal events that will unfold. The light that illuminates interiors amplifies this ambiance, arriving through opaque surfaces of glare that give no prospect to an exterior world. The vectors of this pervasive circumambient and tectonic glare diffract and effectively unsettle the Cartesian coordinates of normative space, threaten scenographic stability and serve to amplify the narrative's evident political tenor.

Tarr's manipulation of light as a cinematic tool effectively creates space by pushing away darkness, whose inevitable reflux returns to smother it once more. The play of light, shade and shadow conveys to this darkness a kind of insistent luminosity. Sometimes, light is directed from off screen

and from concealed sources to skim dim surfaces and cause their crepuscular materiality to shimmer or phosphoresce. The camera is made to move either towards or away from the light. It is not set up as the aperture of a generalized, objective looking, disengaged from the characters and settings before it. It is, in fact, imbricated into the contours, the material texture, the grain of bodies and the geometries of their encounters. This is so much the case that the camera functions as the frontline of either a luminous dilation or darkening inveiglement. Tarr's cinematographic technique is mobilized to tightly control the quality, direction and intensity of light, the boundaries of spaces and the material qualities of surfaces that receive and reflect it, in order to intensify the atmospheric potential of each scene as well as the human and political temper and temperament of the film. This kind of cinematographic tectonics is instructive for architecture since the latter, too, must deliberately organize space, determine its boundaries, construct orientations, create porosities that link interiors and exteriors, admit light of various kinds and have it interact with space and materials, in order to produce distinctive ways of reading and engaging with the world through affective circumstances and their atmospheric consequences.

Time and again, Tarr has the characters in *Werckmeister Harmonies* retreat into or advance out of black to such an extent that the semantic registers of light and dark become interchangeable and radically ambiguous. Light and dark interplay as the expanding, uncluttering, radiant character of the first and the contracting, occluding and smothering character of the second. The darkness, rendered in aerated grainy blacks, functions to produce intermediate zones of various kinds: thresholds and disjunctions between states of being, lives, ambiances, spaces and rooms. There is a recurrent conspiracy between the moving camera and the circumstantial resistances it meets as it shifts from inside to outside, from light to dark, from room to room. There are scenographic moments redolent of de Chirico's imbricated spatialities and ambiguous temporalities of impending dread. Examples include indirectly lit street scenes shot so that prospects are barred, stairs winding up and out of frame and the borderlines of urban settings displaced out of frame and thereby sequestered from the wider world (Fig. 6). Everywhere is subject to the fluxions of external, unknown and unknowable forces. Even the temporality of the film is liminal. Tarr lights it so that it appears to take place, ambivalently, in one of the two twilights. Jacques Rancière has called this intermedial spatiality a "shared, felt tissue" (*un tissu sensible, commun*):



Fig. 6 After Béla Tarr, *Werckmeister Harmonies*, 2000. (Produced by Göess Film (Budapest), Von Vietinghoff Produktion (Berlin) and 13 Production (Paris). Distributed by Artificial Eye. Drawing Michael Tawa)

a milieu that is not between a beginning and an end, (but) that is given across ... an ensemble of points through which pass a global affect: and that is what Béla Tarr's sequence shots (*plan séquence*) construct; ... a cutting up of space by time, but which is no longer defined by an action to be accomplished, a time that no longer measures actions but functions as a felt milieu, without name, without qualities, out of which sensations and emotions can be ... we have to understand it in the sense of the transformation of temporal structure; no more history means no more beginnings and ends, but instead simply doors and windows which no longer serve, as before, to introduce human actors and characters into the story, they are rather thresholds, thresholds across which the exterior penetrates into the interior, or enclosures isolate spaces in which this penetration condenses and diffracts itself, since the milieu is not an encompassed that in turn encompasses by way of a panoramic gaze... The film will be constructed in blocks of time; if there is a cinema of (Deleuze's) time-image this is where it exists, with Béla Tarr.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Jacques Rancière. *Conférence de Jacques Rancière sur Béla Tarr*, my translation. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMwHjXx52zk>. Accessed 30 January 2022.

The spatiality framed in *Werkmeister Harmonies* is a fabricated milieu of emergence. The physical determinants of scenography—walls, floors, ceilings, thresholds, windows, doors, facades, streets, and so forth—are pretexts to Béla Tarr’s cinematic immaterial spatiality. This latter is constituted of an indeterminate exchange between light and dark, the glare of day and of artificial light and the consuming or looming blackness of night. Particular settings are constructed so that they seem to emerge as momentary turbulences, assemblages or alignments of the virtual conditions presented by this ground. The same conditions might, a few moments later, appear to recombine into different assemblages, characterized by different moods, attunements or atmospheres. Here, light is less a “light source” than an incandescent presence, produced by and experienced as diffraction or interference within the ambient milieu. Compounding this affect is a light whose source and provenance are contrived to seem insistently uncertain and indeterminate. What is produced from Tarr’s use of light is a species of a-formal *topos*—a space characterized by relative grain, texture, density, viscosity, porosity and permeability of precipitated luminosity, a space not defined by the constraining shape of a predetermined container upon a contained emptiness but by the fulgurations of darkness meeting the resistance of its own materiality. This atmosphere, ambiance and mood is made possible through the uses of the cinematic medium that sees and manipulates light and dark as immaterial tools or substances to be moulded into and from space.

In one of the film’s most striking scenes, György Eszter crosses the town square in the aftermath of the invaders’ violent insurrection. Following the arrival of the mob, an enclosed wooden cart holding a taxidermied whale was hauled into the square and set up as a sideshow to the “circus” it came with, conveyed surreptitiously in the dead of night. As the protagonist János says:

Uncle Gyuri, let’s go towards the market square and then you can see for yourself the giant whale, as long as twenty metres and you can see into its throat, and it really stinks. All a man can do is look upon it and see how great the Lord’s creative impulse and power, and how omnipotence is reflected in that animal. That’s what has to be looked at, must be seen, Uncle Gyuri.

At the end of the film, following the violent ransacking of the town, the walls of the cart have collapsed, leaving the whale stranded. Eszter approaches the dark, looming mass of the animal and stops to look at the

milky opacity of its eye—his countenance solemn, his mood resigned, his stare vacant and gaping. Eszter’s gaze is ambiguous: at the same time contemptuous and grieving, judgemental and enquiring. The whale too is a resolutely ambiguous, troubling presence. It came, as Tarr said, from elsewhere, “from a far ocean”.⁴⁶ It also came with the mob, mobilized by the obscure figure of the Prince and might be a fallen Leviathan, a cipher of the state apparatus “terrifying and magnificent in its omnipotence apparition”.⁴⁷ It was set up as a curiosity, a ticketed distraction. It stands for nature—but violated, stuffed and rendered artificial: a specimen, lifeless and ponderous. The surface of the whale’s pelt is heavily scarred, worn, encrusted. It bears the welts of time. Its eye is an opaque globe with no depth, no reflection. Eszter looks into the dumbness of that lens: once a door to interiority, it is now impassable, mute (Fig. 7). But the mutual muteness of Eszter and the whale also depicts an encounter between the human being and nature, man and animal, framed by the radical absence of divinity—an encounter conveying the incommunicability between human and animal, the incomprehension of the human in the face of nature and a disruptive intervention into the normative spatiality and temporality of human life. Eszter laments the tragic figure of nature, violated and rendered inoperative by human design—a reading promoted by Mihály Víg’s insistent, melancholic soundtrack. But he is also looking with perplexity into the stubborn capacity of nature to nevertheless recover, transform and persist—silently, and without revealing its own designs.

GRACE: TERRENCE MALIK

The characteristic scenography of Terrence Malik’s cinema is its interstitiality, its marginality. Scenes are systematically shot against early morning or late afternoon sunlight: we are clearly at the edges of the day, just after dawn, just before dusk. Backlit, characters appear in profile and shadow against a shimmering, luminous setting. Light does not fully illuminate but obliquely glances their frame, hair and skin. Their movement reads like a threefold circuitous dance—between the characters and the camera,

⁴⁶Tarr, cited in Nicky Badcoe Hannan, *A Cosmic Wirtschaft: mood, materiality and “metacommunication” in The Cinema of Béla Tarr* (Sydney: The University of Sydney, 2018, PhD Thesis), 170.

⁴⁷Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the state theory of Thomas Hobbes. Meaning and failure of a political system*, transl. George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 6–9.



Fig. 7 After Béla Tarr, *Werckmeister Harmonies*, 2000. (Produced by Göess Film (Budapest), Von Vietinghoff Produktion (Berlin) and 13 Production (Paris). Distributed by Artificial Eye. Drawing Michael Tawa)

between the camera and the light, between the characters and the light—that plays with glow and glare, gleam and gloom and brightness, shade and shadow. The camera functions like an apparatus sensitive to constantly changing circumstances and dynamics, constantly responding by way of shifting spatial plotting: a kind of reactive consequential choreography that is both cartographic and chronographic. Malik's *Knight of Cups* (2015) opens with a voice-over by John Gielgud from the title of John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*. We are in the ambiance of peregrination, a search for homeland:

The pilgrim's progress from this world to that which is to come delivered under the similitude of a dream, wherein is discovered the manner of his setting out, his dangerous journey, and safe arrival at the desired country.

The film is structured in sections, each named after a Tarot card: the Moon, the Hanged Man, the Hermit, Judgement, the Tower, the Hight Priestess, Death and Freedom. The sequence evidently follows that of a staged quest, a peregrination and an initiatic trajectory. Malik studied and

taught philosophy. His thesis was on the idea of world in Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, and his translation of Heidegger's *Vom wesen des Grundes* (*The essence of reasons*) was published in 1969. In *Knight of Cups*, the Platonic and Kierkegaardian resonances of his cinema are focussed on juxtaposing two worlds and two states of being that the protagonist—Kierkegaard's aesthete who looks on, remote and disengaged, if not without interest, and acts at a distance: *actiones in distans*—must negotiate between them and find a way from one to the other, from wingless gravity tethered to earth to winged flight freed into heaven: “We’re not leading the lives that we were meant for... we were meant for something else”; we are “hungry... longing for something other... without knowing what it is”. In Section 1, in an aquarium, fish swim up to the light. A voice-over features Charles Laughton reading a text adapted from Plato's *Phaedrus* on the nature of love; on the recollection of an ancient, originary state; and of life as the recuperation of that lost state⁴⁸:

Once the soul was perfect and had wings and could soar into heaven as only creatures can. But the soul lost its wings and fell to earth, there it took an earthly body, and now while it lives in this body no outward sign of wings can be seen, yet the roots of its wings are still there and the nature of these is to try to raise the earthbound soul into heaven. When you see a beautiful woman or a man, the soul remembers the beauty it used to know in heaven and the wings begin to sprout and make the soul want to fly but it cannot yet, the man is still too weak, so the man keeps staring at the sky like a young bird. He has lost all interest in the world around him.

The *Knight of Cups* is one of the Tarot cards. A knight rides a white horse and offers a golden cup that signifies a message from the heart. The cloak he wears over his armour is decorated with images of fish, symbolizing water and creative consciousness. His boots and casque are winged to signal his imaginative and aesthetic sensibilities, the full possession of his emotions and intuition. The demeanour of his horse suggests inner reflexiveness, calmness, slowness, peace and grace—a contrast to other Tarot cards such as the *Knight of Wands* and the *Knight of Swords* where the horse charges forward in outward action. In the film, the *Knight of Cups* functions as a longed for state to come for the protagonist, a hedonistic script writer, a womanizer, but also one gifted with circumspective

⁴⁸ Plato, *Phaedrus*: 246b ff.

prospects on a world for which he maintains an innocent curiosity and sympathy. While he participates fully in the pleasures of a privileged life, he also seems detached and silent, occupying an alternate spatiality and temporality, observing from a remoteness that keeps him apart: suspended in the turbulence of all that moves about him. His demeanour is that of one awaiting the imminent arrival of a deliverance-co-come, of a transformation-to-come: he is like one awaiting the gift of grace.

Malik's cinematography is entirely committed to this advent. The film begins with images of cosmic scale, a felt sense of the world's slow turning: monumental landscapes, the northern lights against the curve of the earth's horizon—and the human being as a traveller, in wonder, cast infinitesimally small in distorted perspectives of great distance, labouring to make sense, to find a place, a situation. Sequences scanning landscapes of monumental presence and permanence are juxtaposed against ephemeral patterns, momentary effects, evanescent perceptions: dappled reflections, sunlight distorted through water, shadows cast on contours, emotions surfacing across the countenance of a face. Image sequences of the simple joys of ordinary life (a child's abandonment in the surf), the blurred streaks of motion and the shrill shrieks of thrills, laughter and delight (women speeding through a city in an open convertible), are overlaid with voice-overs recounting fabled tales (the early Christian Hymn of the Soul, recounting the story of a knight sent to find a pearl). Juxtaposing the mythical and the quotidian produces a melancholic tonality that suffuses this and many other of Malik's films. It pitches one world over against another, the ideal over against the real, what was over against what is, transcendence over against the Fall. And yet, how the human being still dreams, still desires, still awaits that gift. This is amplified by the film's marginal and transient locations: hotel rooms, back streets of backlots, abandoned office buildings, empty parking lots, vacant multistorey car-parks, lobbies, corporate residences. The framing either abandons human figures in wide perspectives of vast expanse or else captivates them in tight intimate closeup, their faces and figures looming, moving in and out of frame, incomplete, fragmented, often shot obliquely and exclusively using Steadicam, as the camera roves and insinuates itself in through and across the turbulent spaces between figures that are always on the way. Both camera and actors are in an interminable process of delocalization and flight, towards and away from each other, towards and away from indeterminate destinations beyond the frame.

In the opening sequence, we see the protagonist suddenly appear in the desert. How did he get there? Who is he? An alien, as in Nicholas Roeg's *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976)? An amnesiac: "I wonder where I was all that time". A sleepwalker?: "but when the Prince arrived, the people poured him a cup that took away his memory. He forgot that he was the son of the king, forgot about the pearl, and fell into a deep sleep". An insistent pedal point repeats the melody of Arvo Part's *Symphony no 4 "Los Angeles"* over ambient sounds of the city below: sirens, rumbling, hums, or else over the sounds of wind, of shuddering, wavering and echoing. Wide-angle lenses distort and lengthen the background perspective and amplify the figures and faces that occupy the screen. Such distortions streak or smear edges, cause them to flow, felt or fuse. They also amplify the precarious situation of human beings in a vast, detached universe in which they have yet to make a place.

A generalized sense of waiting prevails, of attending to the arrival of uncertain conjunctures: sunlight streaking through a bay window; a sea storm; a plane flying overhead; an unexpected Elvis impersonator passing by; the juxtaposition of a ruined homestead on the edge of a busy interstate highway; distorted refractions of a body swimming underwater in a submerged illuminated pool; muddy streaks of clouds overshadowing the desert setting sun; or Skidrowers encountered on the pavement, playing table games. Like the characters who wander into and out of Malik's frames, the film itself is a searching drift. Where is it looking? What does it find? Apparently, "the cameras are on all the time...". Malik films in such a way as to await what might arrive in the midst of circumstances, in the interstices of happenstance, so as to capitalize on the opportunities and affordances consequential on a set of aligned contingencies: clear sky + desert expanse + distant range in dark silhouette + oblique rays of sunlight through a cleft in nearby hills + long shadows of boulders across a gravel-strewn ground + actors' faces in dark profiles against the setting sun + warm sunlight glancing the rim of a generous head of wheaten hair, producing a golden aureole.

Throughout, there is never a whole scene; only fragments, segments of episodes, partial gestures, streaked figures traversing the frame. One is never sure whether one is at the beginning, middle or end of a sequence, a relationship, a process or an event. Prolific jump cuts disconnect the narrative: the Prince is seen from high above under a shower; then walking along a turbulent beach watching a woman; then speeding along an expressway among the tangle of overpasses rushing past; then in a film

screenwriters meeting discussing the shooting of a shoe store scene; then a mountain looms against the setting sun, shot so the glare plays with the borderline that dissimulates it; then in the laneways of a film lot... Sound is also disjunct, both in terms of the soundtrack itself and in terms of how various sounds are conjoined to the images they overlay: ocean waves; a voice-over on a scene whose dialogue is muted; later dialogue overlaid on a prior scene, and vice versa; sound cut to silence over images of energetic motion; sound in real time over slowed-down images...

Unlike Bresson, and certainly unlike Tarkovski, Malik's cinematography is all in montage and editing. The film is assembled post factum, where conjunctions can be tested and the potential charge sparking between shots and between shots and sounds can be trialled. And yet this process, like the screenwriter trying to make sense of the world and of his quest for redemption, like the camera seeking exactly what it is that it should be filming, the narrative follows Malik's own cinematographic pursuit: "my son", says the King whose son the Prince has set out to find the mythic pearl, "you are just like I am... can't figure your life out... can't put the pieces together... just like me". Later, we hear this: "I suppose that's what damnation is... the pieces of your life never come together..." The point of view is unstable, inconsistent. The camera alternates—first objective and then subjective: we see the prince, and then we see what the prince sees; we see the eyes of the women he loves looking deeply in. The camera is distracted, always drawn to what is happening at the edges of the frame or off screen. And yet the camera is implicated into the folds of the action and the circumambient setting; it is inveigled, palpably there, surrounded by the landscape: by water, by music, by the embrace of a lover. Water features heavily in *Knight of Cups*—as ocean, rain, pool, aquarium; in any case as a medium of immersion and emergence, signifying immersion in faith as opposed to the distantiating perspectives of reason.

SUSPENSE: JANE CAMPION

In Jane Campion's *The Power of the Dog* (2021), the main character, Phil, presents himself as the personification of a tough Montana stockman. He appears to wish ill upon Peter, the delicate and apparently helpless son of his brother's newly married wife, Rose, who he surreptitiously unsettles and terrorizes. But vicious ridicule of Peter gives way to nascent attraction after Phil glances Peter spying on him, naked in a secret waterhole, where Phil occasionally retreats to indulge his repressed urges. There is a hint of

Phil's homosexual relationship with his deceased cowboy mentor, the beatified Bronco Henry, who "taught me everything I know" and with whom he once shared a camp bed ("you mean, naked?" asks Peter). Phil's brother, George, intimidated as "fatso", is his opposite, calm, upright and honourable, whereas Phil—in his disrespectful demeanour, the cynicism of his speech, his propensity to lurk in the family's gloomy mansion, his manner of riding—is anxious, agitated and treacherous, driven by an indeterminate angst. These apparently straightforward geometries and symmetries of character—between Phil and his other self, between George and Phil, between Phil and Peter—are systematically undermined and flipped as the film progresses. Peter eventually conspires a theatre of seduction for Phil, leading to his murder.

The Power of the Dog is impeccably crafted by Campion in the great tradition of narrative cinema and the cowboy genre. At the same time, Campion systematically undermines the typology by unsettling it from within, gradually and imperceptibly. The film is suffused with a very slowly building sense of impending yet indeterminate catastrophe; everything in it contributes to this ambiance and to the atmosphere of suspense and dread that the ambiance produces: the mode, tempo and repetitiveness of the music; the precise and deliberative choreography of camera and actors; the studied, almost stylized characterizations and gestures; the systematically slow temporality and pace of everything from the footfall of actors in dark reverberative rooms to the glancing of sunlight across the surfaces of distant mountain ranges; the tightly controlled framing, in isolation and in conjunction, of interior and exterior scenes; the discontinuous yet seamless editing; and the multiple juxtapositions between the vast and the fine-grained, the human and the animal, male and female, skin and flesh, the contained and the abject, artifice and nature, architecture and landscape. Other ambiguities pivotal to the ambiance of the film are between the homophobic and homoerotic temperaments that conflict the character of Phil: the contrast between his gruff, disdainful and pragmatic exterior and his reflective, poetic and musical moments; the disjunction between his punching a horse in the face and his impeccable care in handling cattle; between love and hate, fraternal devotion and jealous contempt in his relationship with George—or between filial and incestual love in Peter's relationship with Rose; between Peter's delicacy and his morbid capacity for violation and calculated murder.

In all of these aspects of the film, there predominates a persistent quality of consilient discrepancy that builds indeterminacy, uncertainty and suspense. We know from the very beginning where the plot is heading: “For what kind of man would I be if I did not help my mother? If I did not save her?” says Peter in voice-over at the opening; but we are left, until the very end, not knowing who will be saved, who damned and at whose hands. And at the very end, as Peter scans the biblical verse that gives the film its name, we are left equally uncertain: “Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog”.⁴⁹ This verse is as ambiguous as the film itself. The Psalm is a prefiguration of Christ—implicitly in its persistent tone of deliverance, and explicitly in Verse 1, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me”, which pre-empts Matthew 27:46. Maybe Peter is a Christ figure; maybe he delivers Rose from Phil; maybe he delivers Phil from himself. In the Hebrew text of the Psalm, to deliver (*natsal*) can be read in two opposing ways: to free-from and to consign into, as Christ delivers the faithful from the world of toil and equally as Judas delivers Christ into his torment; soul (*nephesh*) signifies vivifying breath or spirit, that is, vitality, life; sword (*chereb*) means drought, ruin, desolation and, by implication, a destructive implement; darling (*yachid*) means one, singular, (my) only one, by implication beloved, but also lonely; power (*yad*) means the open hand, again with a double sense of gathering and saving, dispersing and condemning, giving and taking; and dog (*keleb*) means to yelp or (forcibly) attack; and, apparently euphemistically,⁵⁰ a male prostitute.

Beside the evident narrative, musical and temporal ambiguities, the way Campion frames space and constructs a distinctive ambiguous spatiality equally contribute to the ambiance of the film. This works at several levels. The contrast between the vast, arid and mountainous setting and the only ever precarious foothold that human beings and their designs have in that landscape. Buildings appear as stranded and opaque fixed objects, shipwrecked on a continuous, turbulent surface (at one point, Rose is seen making a futile attempt to plant a flower bed against the outside wall of her house; no doubt to “soften” the edge). Individual buildings never cohere into anything like a cluster or village; and the space between them is a perilous and impassable, dusty or muddy expanse. Other external

⁴⁹ Psalm 22:20.

⁵⁰ J. Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Riverside, Iowa Falls, undated), 55.

locations of the film are spaces radically separated from each other; they never form a contiguous, unified landscape. Phil's secret waterhole is an uncharacteristic oasis dissimulated within the Montana desert (in fact the Maniototo Plain of Central Otago, New Zealand): we never see where it is or how he reaches it.

The same holds for the interiors of Phil and George's house. A counterpoint to the vast and luminous ranges that ring the homestead, the interiors form a sombre, resolutely interiorized world apart. Its spaces are a discontinuous set of isolated situations—bedroom, kitchen, hallway, stairwell, dining—seemingly unconnected and with no transition between them or between the house and its external setting. Even the internal edges of interior spaces are drowned in a pervasive circumambient gloom. Buildings present sharp, definite, dark outlines and shapes against the landscape and sky; a quality mirrored in the way *Campion* deliberately captures in still shots groups of discontinuous, staggered vignettes of the outside world and the ranges beyond through darkly rimmed, sharp frames. In that way, space is flattened and rendered scenographic; views are given the character of two-dimensional images, and the vastness of the setting is neutralized by being radically interiorized. In the same way that the "house" is made up of a series of rooms whose interrelationships are never given, the links of continuity between one external setting and another are severed so that the context takes on the quality of a fragmented collection of discrete locations that never amount to anything like a consistent integrated place. The provisional hold that these human beings have on the land functions politically and ethically to signal their status as aliens and usurpers. It functions psychologically to shadow the different kinds of repressions and regressions that characterize Phil, Rose and Peter. It functions aesthetically to signal the foundational disengagement of human beings from, and their contempt for a country from which they draw their livelihood and substantial wealth. It functions dramatically and narratively by the marked sense of unresolved tension it contributes to the suspense of the plot. It functions spatially to exaggerate the irremediable dislocation of inside and outside as two irresolvable worlds. It functions temporally by juxtaposing the slow passage of time and relative permanence of the remote natural setting with the awkward restlessness or deliberate purposefulness of the human lifeworld.

A recurrent motif in *Campion's* films is the attention to the intimate proximity and fine grain of things—a cinematic materiality generally produced through closely framed shots where quiet, ambient conditions of

luminosity, sound and slow time predominate, where the marks and traces of the material texture of the world, of human hands, of reverie and emotion and of desire, surrender and erotics hold us in their sway. In *The Power of the Dog*, they are occasional, but their juxtaposition against the scale of the setting, the smouldering build-up of tension and the big themes of sin, salvation and deliverance give them an especially powerful charge: a horse shivering flies off its back; blood beading on golden shafts of wheat; wheatfields swaying in the wind; Phil, bare skinned, wet, caressing Bronco Henry's translucent scarf against the sun; and Pete running his hands on Bronco Henry's saddle. Such juxtapositions produce the kinds of ambiguities and dislocations that contribute significantly to the film's suspenseful ambiance. The atmosphere that we might sense of dread and impending violence owes a great deal to the slow, reflective and viscous pacing of these moments: as if we were waiting upon some inevitable moment of crisis and catastrophe, which in the mainstream would be delivered over through aggravated spectacle and radical clamour but which is here only indirectly inferred. There is a strange quality in the film's ending that adds a further dimension of ambiguity. The lead up to Peter's penultimate perfect murder of Phil takes up almost the film's entire running length of 2 hours 8 minutes. Phil's poisoning and his subsequent illness, death and burial are covered in barely 20 minutes. The final scene of Peter reading Psalm 22:20 and glancing obliquely down through his bedroom window to the relieved embrace of Rose and George outside takes up 1 minute 30 seconds. The asymmetry at the core of the film's denouement is somewhat like the sudden rush and sucking of water draining a full bath. The evanescent finality of it is what persists. It is a question of ends and of endings. The conclusion is definitive, terminal; and there is no recourse. Ultimately, the unanswerable question is in whom does the power of the dog reside—in Phil, who is explicitly monstrous and meets his death, or in Peter, whose monstrous temperament is first dissimulated but emerges at the last? The answer is left in suspense, and its wavering insolubility characterizes the atmosphere of the whole film.



Tectonics of Architectural Atmosphere

ARCHITECTURE AND ATMOSPHERE

There is a long history of architecture inspired by and drawing on the cinematic medium and its various qualities—whether formal, atmospheric or narrative. However, architecture is not able to carry the kinds of narrative layers or manipulations of temporality that are possible in cinema. As a result, the link between the two disciplinary practices can arguably only ever be metaphorical at best. Yet, there is in architecture a capacity to engage with, emphasize and construct the kinds of ambiguities, ambivalences and consilient discrepancies possible in cinema to yield ambient conditions that can unclench experiences of atmosphere. This capacity, exercisable through precise architectonic crafting, can produce equally affective architectural ambiances of consilient discrepancy in which anticipated stability and resolution are challenged by wavering spatiality, temporality and materiality that condense into palpable atmosphere.

A common quality of enduring architecture, a quality that renders buildings and designed environments worthy of valuing, is a certain density of register, of connotative potential (we might say of “meaning”). Such density constitutes what might be called atmosphere or circumambience. It is built by overlay and juxtaposition so that several possibilities of sense coexist as compossibles, simultaneously or side by side, each equally valid, each equally valuable and which together produce concatenation and intensification. This kind of heightening renders a work resilient and

adaptable, since its integrity does not depend on one or another singularity but on the natural capacity of a network to adjust itself to circumstance. Sense proliferates, as do functions, agencies and capacities to produce differently. The work is indefinitely flexible, adjustable and recombining—its shape shifting propensity antithetical to the necessity for archetypes and hierarchies. Such characteristics of enduring valuableness apply across multiple degrees—from function to aesthetics, metaphor, allegory and symbol. The more registers and degrees are engaged with by a work, the more multiple the conjugations it fields and operates, the more resilient it will be to the vagaries of what constitute value at any given time. Hence it will endure because it will be cared for, and it will be cared for in recognition—not of its usefulness, although that goes without saying, but of its compelling longevity.

As previously argued, atmosphere is the affective, consequential circumambience produced by a circumstance and experienced circumspectively by a mooded human being. What affects the being atmospherically is an encounter with the consequences of a circumstantial ambience, of a circumambient setting. Ambience is an emergent condition—a resonance produced by the interaction between various components and layers of an assemblage that are maintained in a state of ambiguity. In an affective sense, emergent circumambience is the monstration, outward emanation or *ekstasis* produced by the precise internal constitution of an assemblage. Critical to producing the affective resonance of an ambience, and hence to the experience of its atmosphere, is the character of consilient discrepancy: that is, the presence in it of multiple components and layers that are in various states of disjunction, disassociation, fragmentation, suspension and indetermination but that nevertheless produce a distinct and palpable charge, vibration or reverberation—an experience of coincident concordance emerging from the radical difference and interminable deferral of multiplicity.

Consilient discrepancy is evident across multiple registers in architecture: geometrical, proportional, spatial, formal, material, technological, programmatic, typological, functional and so forth. The coincidence of multiple irreconciled geometric systems, metaphorical references, programs of use, building typologies and the like can so destabilize an architectural setting that it begins to waver and become indeterminate. Such indeterminacy keeps the semantic fabric of architecture in suspense, enabling it to stay indefinitely open to interpretation, reconstitution and emergent sense. It is evident in medieval architecture, for example, where

it commonly occurs in the interstices between rational and irrational geometric systems—for example, when ratios such as 1:1, 1:√2, 1:√3 and 1:√5 that are intrinsic to the cube are overlaid to produce a kind of indeterminate energy and liveliness that can be sensed within space. It can also be produced by spatial containment and materiality as, for example, at Chartres Cathedral where a discrepancy exists between the telluric density and deep gloom of the building and the subaqueous crepuscular deliquescence delivered by its windows, which suspend one's experience between two dissonant extremes of atmosphere.

These sorts of consilient discrepancy are not restricted to medieval architecture. Frank Lloyd Wright and Alvaar Alto's residential projects deploy multiple, simultaneously overlaid axial orientations, symmetries, degrees of containment and variabilities to produce complex, interwoven relationships that build coincidence and consilience out of discrepant systems and components. The work of Sigurd Lewerentz provides other instances of consilient discrepancy, as at St. Peter's, Klippan (1963–1966). Here, the major space appears square and geometrically rational, but is not. The tactics that produce this effect give the space a double quality of apparent stability tempered by barely perceptible instability and thus a marked degree of ambiguity and indeterminate vacillation. In a similar vein, Peter Markli's La Congiunta, Giornico (1992) overlays several geometrical alignments and symmetries within a disarmingly simple, axial basilican form. Again, the outcome produces an ambiguous, tremulous space that contributes greatly to its atmosphere of the sublime. As we saw earlier, Peter Zumthor's St. Benedict can equally be read in terms of consilient discrepancy working across several registers—notably semantic or symbolic and technical or architectonic. The building's encircling columns appear to be in suspension and the floor plane to hover, unfixed and mobile, within the space. The interior is sequestered from its surrounding context and yet deeply responsive to ambient light conditions that can radically alter its spatiality. Architectural qualities that contribute to the meditative atmosphere of the room parallel implicit semantic resonances that refer to the Church's origins in the Judeo-Christian Tabernacle and its metaphorical function as a vehicle of salvation. The discrepancy between these multiple registers affords a condition of anticipated emergence as various ambiguous layers of the assemblage come into relation and begin to conjugate sense.

SUSPENSE: TYMPANAE

Ambiguity resulting from the erasure of contour and the dematerialization of form evident in turn of the century paintings by Vuillard and the music of Debussy parallels an altogether different kind of ambiguity, closer to Empson's taxonomy and properly architectural this time, which can be gleaned in the extraordinary tympanae of Romanesque churches. Here, ambiguity takes place at the interfaces of multiple semantic registers, each distinct in itself and yet together producing a singular effect of indeterminacy. These are the central, so-called Royal Portals, generally featuring a relief of Christ within the mandorla or *vesica piscis* and each adopting a distinctive ambiance related to the theological framing of the building at the time and place of its conception, realization and consecration. Two striking examples of tympanae are at Vezelay and Autun, both ascribed to the twelfth-century sculptor Gislebertus or his atelier. Gislebertus was infamously the first artist to sign his proper name, incising "Gislebertus hoc fecit" (Gislebertus made this) at Autun.

The tympanum of Saint Lazare, Autun (1130–1136), depicts the last judgement and the weighing of souls. Three bands arranged vertically as a logical and temporal sequence represent three phases of the last judgement: on the lintel, a general treatment of the resurrection; above, the process of judgement; and on top, the fulfilment of judgement in heaven (Fig. 1). The horizontal left-right symmetry is reserved for the saved and the damned, respectively. The central figure of Christ as judge resolves these two spatial divisions and gestures, and around the *vesica piscis* that encircles Christ are inscribed the words *omnia dispone solus meritosque coronato. Quos scelus exercet me iudicis poena coerces* (I alone dispose all things and crown the deserving. Those whom crime binds are punished according to my judgment).¹ The tenor of the language is resolutely juridical, rather than metaphysical or theological, and stresses a punitive and mundane rather than transcendent, salvational or redemptive aspect of the law and the event of judgement. Don Denny highlights the tribunal mood of the Autun Tympanum:

In this judgment of Christ there was little chance of clemency and no hope for subsequent appeal; it was, in a present and dramatic form, a foretaste of

¹Don Denny, The Last Judgment tympanum at Autun: its sources and meaning, in *Speculum* 57. 3, 1982, 540.



Fig. 1 Gislebertus, Tympanum of the Royal Door, Cathedral of St Lazare, Autun, 1125–1135. (Photograph Michael Tawa)

the Last Judgment. The sense of the *judicium dei* is reflected in unusual features of the Autun tympanum sculpture. The immensity of Christ's figure, much larger relative to the whole composition than in other Last Judgments of the period, corresponds to the dominance of Christ as the sole and feared agent of judgment in the church trial.²

Amplifying the effect are several tectonic qualities of the sculptural program. Not only in the oversized Christ figure but more significantly in the formal treatment of his body, gestures and clothing, evident in the severe mood and countenance of his face.

The tympanum is encountered in a partially enclosed, very shallow and high narthex or portico (not completed until the end of the 12thC), so that its effect is one of looming over the viewer. The urban context is such that distant, still contemplation of the work is not possible; one comes to it obliquely from the tight, narrow curve of the rue Notre Dame/parvis Chanoine Denis Givrot, climbing a flight of very steep stairs, looking up

²Denny, The Last Judgment tympanum, 543.

on the way in, and quickly. It leaves a disturbing, subliminal trace in the mind that nevertheless lingers, colours and affects the ambiance of the place.

The lintel inscriptions, respectively, to the right (saved) and left (damned) of the absolute juridical vertical axis assumed by Christ leave no doubt: *quisque resurget ita quem non trahit impia vita et lucebit el sine fine lucerna diei* (“thus shall rise again everyone who does not lead an impious life, and endless light of day shall shine for him”) and *terreat hic terror quos terreus alligat error nam fore sic verum notat hic horror specierum* (“here let fear strike those whom earthly error binds, for their fate is shown by the horror of these figures”). There is no grace here, and Don Denny refers to Emile Mâle’s *L’Art Religieux*, in which a distinctive mood of the work is noted, due to the absence in it of any symbol of the passion: “He is a judge, he is not a redeemer, who comes to remind men that he has suffered for them and that they have held his sacrifice in contempt”.³

The dour mood of Gislebertus’ work at Autun is paralleled by an equivalent ambiance inside the cathedral: a dark, gloomy interior, amplified by the liver-pink colour of the limestone, constrained natural light, a radically compressed urban setting that splices the building deep into the town fabric, and a resulting overweening sense of the disconsolate and tragic condition of human being, fallen and confronting irremediable retribution.

By contrast, the central tympanum of Sainte Madeleine, Vézelay, ascribed to Gislebertus or his “school”, depicts the Ascension of Christ and the Pentecost—two separate events considered tightly connected in Christian theology: on the one hand, transcendence and ascension and, on the other, the descent of the Holy Spirit and the missionary enterprise of spreading the gospel with the light of the spirit bestowed by Christ to the apostles. Adolf Katzenellen writes:

The Vézelay tympanum is a complete, encyclopaedic Mission of the Apostles, in which these tasks and the bestowing of power to perform them are merged. The content of the tympanum has its sources in the Acts and in the Gospels, in the prophecies of Isaiah and in geographical writings of antiquity and of the Middle Ages which describe the appearance of foreign and monstrous races.⁴

³Denny, *The Last Judgment tympanum*, 547 fn. 39.

⁴Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *The central tympanum at Vézelay: its encyclopedic meaning and Its relation to the First Crusade*, in *The Art Bulletin* 26. 3, 1944, 147.

The Vezelay tympanum was executed between the first and second crusades—respectively, 1096–1099 and 1147–1150; and it was there that St Bernard preached the second crusade in 1146 and Richard the Lionheart and Philip II Augustus left for the third crusade in 1189⁵ (Fig. 2). The dismal political and brutal reality of the crusades is here countered by a theological analogue: the salvational hope invested in carrying out the Great Commission of the resurrected Christ to his disciples and the freeing of the Holy City for Christianity. This mood of hope is palpable in the interior ambiance of Sainte Madeleine. The building is constructed of warm, chalky sandstone that radiates yellow, orange and red in full sun. Light is admitted high into the upper reaches of the building and around the ambulatory and allowed to bounce and refract off high solid walls, producing an occluded porosity that renders the interior somewhat in the manner of an external clearing in a forest or an eroded mountain gorge.



Fig. 2 Gislebertus (?), Tympanum of the Royal Gate, Cathedral of St Madeleine, Vezelay, 1120–1150. (Office de tourisme de Vézelay, Creative Commons Attribution CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons)

⁵ Katzenellenbogen, *The central tympanum at Vézelay*, 148.

These ambient qualities effectively spatialize the interior to a high degree, amplifying its dilation and expansion as light interacts with air and dust to condense a kind of circumambient luminous mist in which the interior is plunged.

The Romanesque sculptural program is characterized by a marked stylistic naivety, simplicity and humility in the countenance of figures and animals depicted. Foliage is deeply carved, dense and effusive, with hope and promise in their arabesque concatenations. Human and animal become indeterminate in the mutual kindness of eyes and awkwardness of youthful limbs. The mood is joyous, carefree and unencumbered. At the same time, grotesquely emaciated figures of devils looming out of carved voids, or dissimulated behind foliage, baring fangs and claws, surprise or nab the damned out of their reverie. The play of hope and fear, salvation and damnation, love and contempt is staged right across the sequence of column capitals that frame the interior.

As for the tympanum itself, the work is suffused with a series of apparent contradictions which produce a complex play of opposites that are ultimately left in suspense. The ambiguity this creates is fundamental to the work's ambiance. Dominated by an enormously scaled Christ, the composition looms, as at Autun, but the mood is radically different. The figure of Christ is elongated the full height of the *vesica piscis*, which it appears to press against and hold open by the double framing of the vertical axis of his standing, the folds at the hips and knees and the horizontal spread of his open hands. This monumentality—one could say, precisely, the “monstruosity”—of his hands, and the assertiveness of their command (“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’”⁶), is countered by their softness, their giving, welcoming and solicitous gesture. Christ says “go out” and “come to me”—or, rather, “come to me in your going out”. The scene depicts the resurrection of Christ and his ascension through the clouds: hence the stress on the vertical axis, linking earth to heaven, incorporated in the body of Christ. At the same time, the scene depicts the commissioning of the apostles to go out into the world, to spread out horizontally across it. Finally, the scene depicts the giving of

⁶Matthew 28: 18–20.

the Holy Spirit by Christ to the apostles on “the day in which He was taken up, after He had given commandments through the Holy Ghost unto the apostles, whom He had chosen”.⁷

The ambiance of these two scenes, and the atmosphere they produce, is not the result of dematerialization or of anything vague in their tectonic manipulation. Rather, ambiance and atmosphere emerge from very precise organization and control of geometry, from the articulation of symmetries and asymmetries between horizontals and verticals, by the marked superposition of layers and by the orchestration of dynamic trajectories, tendencies and directions. An underlying geometric skeleton of squares, triangles, trapezoids and circles builds a complex archetypal schema that underlies a proliferating monstration of human and natural beings, emerging out of an animate, “compressible, extensible matter”.⁸ Beings and creatures, forms and patterns advance and withdraw from a turbulent, undulating ground.

The backbone of both tympanae is the vertical *axis mundi* incorporated as the body of Christ, setting up a symmetry between left and right, moon and sun, damned and saved. Christ’s body functions as a discriminating borderline that separates and bridges two worlds, two destinies and two peoples. The bridge is also a vehicle, a naval apparatus that ferries the saved to “yonder shore”; and the axis will be mirrored in the extent of the nave joining and sequestering outside and inside, earth and heaven. The composition pivots on the *umbilicus mundi*, the navel of Christ who is also cosmic geometer, wielding the compasses that discriminate essence from substance in manifesting creation. Prominent in the characterization of Christ is an emphasis on the principal joints: the neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, waist, knees and ankles. The joint—in Greek *goneus*, angle (polygon means many-angled, or many-kneed), from the etymon *GEN, generate, produce (genus, gene, generation)—is the locus of production: a point, gate or relay of actualizing energy, of transferring power, of realizing potential. The strength of the body is in the joints, not in the limbs; and the joints are the first to go. Each joint in the body of Christ is subject to a bend or fold, giving prominence to its three implementational instruments: the head at the neck, the hands at the wrists and the feet at the ankles. Reinforcing this cartography of jointure is an explicit patterning of

⁷ Acts 1:2.

⁸ Marthiel Mathews, Gislebertus hoc fecit, in *Gesta* 1. 2, 1964, 22–28. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/766619>. Accessed 15 February 2022.

swirls and undulations in the gossamer fabric that barely covers the body. Folds of cloth spiral around distinct parts of the body: distributed centres that might be the equivalent of the Hindu *chakras*—vital points, protuberances or knots that constitute the body not as constructed skeletally but as a distributed network of conjugating energy.

There is a connection here between the tonalities of these two remarkable works and the name of their architectural type, the “tympanum”. Moods are types of temperament, and there are parallels between the ambiance of these tympanae and the ambiance of the church spaces they front. In that sense, the two tympanae are two different pedal points, drones or keynotes for the entire architectonic program that they broadcast externally into the public domain. But why are they called tympanae? Two related senses suggest themselves: one deriving onomatopoeically from the sound of a drum (Greek *tympanon*) and the etymon *TEM, stretched, giving cognates tambour, timbrel and drum, and the other from the way a drum is played, the manner in which it is made to emit sound—from Greek *typtein*, to strike, beat, (s)tamp. The connection to the idea of type as a distinctive configuration, a figure delineated upon or relieved from a ground, and more generally a distinctive manifestation of paradigmatic *eidos* or archetype, marked in successive impressions of prototype and stereotype that are respectively further alienated from the form, is implied in the Latin *typus*, figure, image, form, kind; from Greek *typos*, blow, dent, impression, mark; mould, die; figure in relief; general form, character. These related senses in turn derive from the etymon *TUP/*STEU, push, stick, knock, beat—cognate with steep and stoop, as in to beat down, fall, drop, condescend, but also to stutter/stammer.

In the onto-typology of *Theaetetus*,⁹ Plato ventures a metaphor of the soul as a neutral, yielding wax tablet, made ready to receive “memorial imprints” (*typoi*). What we remember are stamps (*typtein*), impressed and sealed in the soul, made available for the recuperative operation of memory; what we forget never manages to leave such impressions and remains irrecoverable. Yet Plato’s ambiguous characterization of recollection is fraught by the indeterminacy of *typoi* imprinted in the soul. His characteristically bewildering account of how memory works threatens the apparently simple logic of the metaphor, which in the dialogue is made to proliferate in an atmosphere of increasing perplexity and ambivalence:

⁹ Plato, *Theaetetus*, 191c–192c.

Socrates: Please assume, then, for the sake of argument, that there is in our souls a block of wax, in one case larger, in another smaller, in one case the wax is purer, in another more impure and harder, in some cases softer, and in some of proper quality.

Theaetetus: I assume all that.

Socrates: Let us, then, say that this is the gift of Memory, the mother of the Muses, and that whenever we wish to remember anything we see or hear or think of in our own minds, we hold this wax under the perceptions and thoughts and imprint them upon it, just as we make impressions from seal rings; and whatever is imprinted we remember and know as long as its image lasts, but whatever is rubbed out or cannot be imprinted we forget and do not know.

Socrates: We must begin our discussion of the matter by making the following distinctions: It is impossible for anyone to think that one thing which he knows and of which he has received a memorial imprint in his soul, but which he does not perceive, is another thing which he knows and of which also he has an imprint, and which he does not perceive. And, again, he cannot think that what he knows is that which he does not know and of which he has no seal; nor that what he does not know is another thing which he does not know; nor that what he does not know is what he knows; nor can he think that what he perceives is something else which he perceives; nor that what he perceives is something which he does not perceive; nor that what he does not perceive is something else which he does not perceive; nor that what he does not perceive is something which he perceives. And, again, it is still more impossible, if that can be, to think that a thing which he knows and perceives and of which he has an imprint which accords with the perception is another thing which he knows and perceives and of which he has an imprint which accords with the perception. And he cannot think that what he knows and perceives and of which he has a correct memorial imprint is another thing which he knows; nor that a thing which he knows and perceives and of which he has such an imprint is another thing which he perceives; nor again that a thing which he neither knows nor perceives is

another thing which he neither knows nor perceives; nor that a thing which he neither knows nor perceives is another thing which he does not know; nor that a thing which he neither knows nor perceives is another thing which he does not perceive. In all these cases it is impossible beyond everything for false opinion to arise in the mind of anyone. The possibility that it may arise remains, if anywhere, in the following cases.

Theaetetus: What cases are they? I hope they may help me to understand better; for now I cannot follow you.

ANOMIE: KAFKA'S CASTLE

Franz Kafka's unfinished novel, *Das Schloß* (The Castle), published in 1926, follows a surveyor, K, who understands he has been commissioned by regional authorities ruling from an ominous prescient castle that dominates the village in which he finds himself entrapped. K never reaches the castle, and the structure is never fully described in *Das Schloß*. Yet Kafka provides ample indications as to its architectural configuration, which the reader can infer from occasional episodes and fragments on the basis of indirect allusion, analogy, metaphor and allegory. The architectonics of *Das Schloß* contributes substantially to the general ambiance of entrapment and the claustrophobic atmosphere of the novel; and these are mobilized by Kafka for several ends: narrative, psychological and political. In this regard, Plato's account of memory and recollection in *The Theaetetus* might well be an apt description of K's *Stimmung* as he comes to term with his existential situation, his throwness. One of the most evident architectonic aspects of the castle is that it is unreachable—narratively and psychologically but also and physically and spatially. Not only that, the closer one approaches it, the further it recedes:

It was late in the evening when K. arrived. The village was deep in snow. The Castle hill was hidden, veiled in mist and darkness, nor was there even a glimmer of light to show that a castle was there. On the wooden bridge leading from the main road to the village, K. stood for a long time gazing into the illusory emptiness above him... So he resumed his walk, but the way proved long. For the street he was in, the main street of the village, did not lead up to the Castle hill, it only made towards it and then, as if deliberately,

turned aside, and though it did not lead away from the Castle it got no nearer to it either. At every turn K. expected the road to double back to the Castle, and only because of this expectation did he go on; he was flatly unwilling, tired as he was, to leave the street, and he was also amazed at the length of the village, which seemed to have no end; again and again the same little houses, and frost-bound window-panes and snow and the entire absence of human beings—but at last he tore himself away from the obsession of the street and escaped into a small side-lane, where the snow was still deeper and the exertion of lifting one's feet clear was fatiguing; he broke into a sweat, suddenly came to a stop, and could not go on.¹⁰

In fact, it appears to K that all attempts to gain the castle are systematically undermined by a constantly folding spatial phenomenon that both distances the goal and densifies the spatial texture of the milieu, amplifying its labyrinthine concatenations. Borges noted this phenomenon of infinite recession, referring it to the structure of Zeno's paradox "against motion":

A moving body at point A (Aristotle states) will not be able to reach point B, because it must first cover half of the distance between the two, and before that, half of the half, and before that, half of the half of the half, and so on to infinity; the form of this famous problem is precisely that of The Castle, and the moving body and the arrow and Achilles are the first Kafkaesque characters in literature.¹¹

Uncoincidentally, the word "castle" is itself significant. Deriving from Latin *castellum*, fortified village, Old English *castel*, "series of connected buildings fortified for defence", and Greek *kome*, village, the etymon is *KES, to cut, and *kastro-*, a part, share (Greek *keasein*, to split; Latin *castrare*, cut-off). The castle is sequestered from its circumambient environment but also cut off and out of bounds to K. The names of Kafka, K, Klamm and the castle share the velar consonant K, the most common across all languages, and whose acoustic properties—it is termed an ejective plosive and occlusive consonant, produced by obstructing airflow in the vocal tract and with no activation of the vocal chords—parallel the novel's narrative, spatial and ambient characteristics. The castle and its

¹⁰Franz Kafka, *The castle*, transl. Willa and Edwin Muir (London: Secker & Warburg, 1922), 11, 22.

¹¹Borges, Jorge Luis. Kafka and his precursors, in *Other inquisitions 1937–1952*, transl. Ruth L.C. Simms (Austin: University of Texas, 1975), 363–365.

human analogue Klamm are both indeterminate entities, indefinitely mutable and unavailable to K. They present the protagonist with a pervasive aporetic encounter constituted of interminable labyrinthine concatenations. As for “labyrinth”—cipher of the oppressive, nightmarish ambiance of the ‘Kafkaesque’—that word is from Latin *labyrinthus* and Greek *labyrinthos*, maze, large building with intricate passages, many corridors and turns, specifically the structure built by Daedalus to hold the Minotaur. Figuratively, it signals bewildering arguments and confusing states of affairs. One source given is Lydian *laura*, narrow street, constricted passage, alley, quarter. Another is *labrys*, the double-edged axe that symbolizes the ambivalence between life and death. But the Kafkaesque is precisely the experience of a radical and irremediable disjunction between one’s internal mood and the ambient environment in which one finds oneself thrown. Here, the labyrinthine castle takes K to the impasse of decision: life or oblivion, finding or losing, this way or that, orientation or disorientation.

A related architectonic aspect in *The Castle* is that of simultaneous presence and absence, or proximity and distance. The castle looms large, physically and metaphorically; yet, at the same time, it is infinitely distant, unreachable and unattainable. Some, like Peter Goldman, have read this as evidence of an allegorical dimension of transcendence in Kafka’s work:

The Castle revolves around two main poles: the protagonist, who is the narrative centre for the reader, and the Castle, which seems to be the source of meaning for the characters in the novel, especially K. The ambiguity surrounding the Castle (as well as the obscurity of K.’s motivations) raises the question of what transcendence actually means, the meaning of meaning. ... while it is true that K. seeks the domestic goals of job, home, and family, the achievement of his goals depends upon the Castle, which is literally above and beyond the village, remaining more or less inaccessible to the villagers. The concept of transcendence implies that there is something to be transcended or gone beyond. In *The Castle*, K.’s quest requires overcoming various obstacles, the chief of which is the distance between village and Castle. K essentially seeks sanction from the Castle, independently of his other goals; meaning requires validation from a locus external to the self and the immediate community.¹²

¹²Peter Goldman, The meaning of meaning in Kafka’s *The Castle*, in *Anthropoetics* 15. 2, 2010. <http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap1502/1502Goldman/> Accessed 15 February 2022.

But the castle also refers to a more mundane sense of pervasive, invisible bureaucratic power: a vast, dissimulated apparatus (mechanism, *dispositif*, machine) of surveillance and control that no citizen can overcome. The dissimulation is both architectonic: a prospect on one feature of the castle from one point of view might be contradicted by a different prospect on the same feature from another point of view—that is, form is unstable; and it is human: the “supernal” gubernatorial figure of Klamm has the capacity for shape-shifting and his appearance changes under different circumstances and settings—that is, character is unstable.¹³ This motif of dissimulated, ambiguous multivalency has been called Kafka’s “stereoscopic writing” by Isaac Winkel:

In 1911, Franz Kafka encountered the Kaiser Panorama: a stereoscopic peep show offering an illusion of three-dimensional depth. After the experience, he began to emulate the apparatus in his literary sketches, developing a style we might call “stereoscopic,” juxtaposing, like the optical stereoscope, two images of the same object seen from slightly different perspectives.¹⁴

Concerning the shape-shifter, Peter Goldman notes:

Klamm’s physical appearance is a matter of considerable debate among villagers, since it must be reconstructed from various incomplete reports. As we might expect, this fragmentary construction fluctuates in details, ‘yet perhaps not so much as Klamm’s real appearance’! Olga says: he’s reported as having one appearance when he comes into the village and another on leaving it, after having his beer he looks different from what he does before it, when he’s awake he’s different from when he’s asleep, when he’s alone he’s different from when he’s talking to people, and—what is comprehensible after all that—he’s almost another person up in the Castle.’¹⁵

Indications for the ambient setting of *The Castle*, and the atmosphere it provokes, can be gathered from at least three aspects of the novel: explicit descriptions of the castle itself—generally of its external aspect in

¹³ See Stanley Corngold, *Kafka and the ministry of writing*, in Stanley Corngold and Benno Wagner, *Franz Kafka: the ghosts in the machine* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2011), 2.

¹⁴ See Isak Winkel Holm, *Kafka’s stereoscopes: the political function of a literary style* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020); and <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/kafkas-stereoscopes-9781501347825/>. Accessed 14 February 2022.

¹⁵ Goldman, *The meaning of meaning in Kafka’s The Castle*.

the landscape and village setting; explicit descriptions of rooms, streets, buildings and other architectural features of the village K finds himself in; and the circumambience of the novel, evident, for example, in the observations, relationships and dialogues (spoken and unspoken) that transpire between characters—specifically between K, the villagers and representatives of the authority of the castle; descriptions of characters' emotional states; the tenor of a landscape or a moment in time; and the observations and thought processes of a minor character. Aaron Goldstein's architectural analysis of *The Castle* is revealing:

Descriptions of architecture throughout the novel reinforce the hopelessness of struggle between the individual and the bastion of authoritarian power... Kafka tactfully (and believably) creates impossible architectural spaces of alienation in which K.'s consecutive disappointments play out. The unique, ambiguous architecture of the Castle, for example, whose crammed cellular offices manifest themselves externally as an aggregated architectural meta-form, a leviathan structure composed of countless small dwellings (which K. initially mistakes for a village), produces an image of solidity which reasserts the impenetrability of the offices and individuals contained within. Access is complicated even further by the village's labyrinthine street grid and the extreme sectional relationship between the elevated Castle and village, a terrain which K. laboriously negotiates multiple times. Kafka's impossible architectures also extend into the domestic sphere. K., exhausted on his trek up to the Castle, seeks refuge in an outwardly unremarkable village dwelling, whose interior unravels before him upon entry, revealing a vast and varied series of spaces which seem to contradict the scale and character of the dense village fabric in which the house is situated. K. rests momentarily in this space, but is then hastily removed by its occupants. Finally, architecture is linked to temporality in the narrative. Kafka uses enclosure to stretch time, as in the scene in which K. waits for Klammer, the elusive Castle official whom he pursues obsessively throughout the novel. K. reclines and waits inside the luxurious interior of Klammer's private sleigh, a secluded nest of comfort within the hostile village. Time slows as K. occupies the sleigh interior, but he soon spoils the momentary tranquillity and warmth and is shaken out of his dream-like state brought on by this rare space of intimacy. He propels himself out into the harsh wintry night almost as soon as he had escaped it, and finds himself where he started.¹⁶

¹⁶Aron Goldstein, *The Castle*, by Franz Kafka, in *Ex Libris, Architecture and World Literature*, <http://blogs.cornell.edu/exlibris/2014/03/21/the-castle-by-franz-kafka/> Accessed 5 August 2020.

In Kafka's architectural imaginary and imbricated, convoluted tectonics—evident elsewhere in *The Great Wall of China*, *In the Penal Colony* and *The Trial*—have been widely noted by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986); in texts by Theodor Adorno, Georges Bataille, Walter Benjamin and Maurice Blanchot; and reprised in Michael Hanneke's film *Das Schloß* (1997); Orson Welles' *The Trial* (1962) and Alain Resnais' seminal *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961). The haptic and experiential tectonics that characterize the setting of *The Castle* also, at a further allegorical level, characterize the human condition envisioned by Kafka. The spatial settings of Kafka's essays and novels are typically labyrinthine regions of constraint, entrapment and inoperability. In *The Castle*, K is unable to reach his destination (his destiny) and finds himself consigned to an interminable oscillation between various buildings, rooms and streets of the village. This entrapment can be read in terms of the theme of *aporia*: literally "to have no way through", to be in an impasse, to have one's way blocked. And this in turn implies another theme, that of *porosity*—the antithesis of *aporia*—which refers to the interstices, hollows, gaps and voids that leaven matter and make existential being possible. The play between porosity and *aporias*, between affordance and prohibition and between liberty and incarceration has its analogue in the architectonic play between void and solid, interiority and exteriority, that constitute architecture's foundational act:

Now, he could see the Castle above him clearly defined in the glittering air, its outline made still more definite by the moulding of snow covering it in a thin layer. There seemed to be much less snow up there on the hill than down in the village, where K. found progress as laborious as on the main road the previous day. Here the heavy snowdrifts reached right up to the cottage windows and began again on the low roofs, but up on the hill everything soared light and free into the air, or at least so it appeared from down below. On the whole this distant prospect of the Castle satisfied K.'s expectations. It was neither an old stronghold nor a new mansion, but a rambling pile consisting of innumerable small buildings closely packed together and of one or two storeys; if K. had not known that it was a castle he might have taken it for a little town. There was only one tower as far as he could see, whether it belonged to a dwelling-house or a church he could not determine. Swarms of crows were circling round it. With his eyes fixed on the Castle K. went on farther, thinking of nothing else at all. But on approaching it he was disappointed in the Castle; it was after all only a wretched-looking town, a huddle of village houses, whose sole merit, if any, lay in

being built of stone, but the plaster had long since flaked off and the stone seemed to be crumbling away. K. had a fleeting recollection of his native town. It was hardly inferior to this so-called Castle, and if it were merely a question of enjoying the view it was a pity to have come so far. K. would have done better to visit his native town again, which he had not seen for such a long time. And in his mind he compared the church tower at home with the tower above him. The church tower, firm in line, soaring unflinchingly to its tapering point, topped with red tiles and broad in the roof, an earthly building—what else can men build?—but with a loftier goal than the humble dwelling houses, and a clearer meaning than the muddle of everyday life. The tower above him here—the only one visible—the tower of a house, as was now apparent, perhaps of the main building, was uniformly round, part of it graciously mantled with ivy, pierced by small windows that glittered in the sun, a somewhat maniacal glitter, and topped by what looked like an attic, with battlements that were irregular, broken, fumbling, as if designed by the trembling or careless hand of a child, clearly outlined against the blue. It was as if a melancholy-mad tenant who ought to have been kept locked in the topmost chamber of his house had burst through the roof and lifted himself up to the gaze of the world.¹⁷

Three possibilities are implied in The Castle's labyrinthine tectonics: they pre-exist K, and he simply finds himself thrown into its folds and porosities; they are produced by the bureaucratic apparatus and are at the same time interminably dissimulated; or else they are a projection of K's *Stimmung*. According to Giorgio Agamben,¹⁸ the ambiance of impasse and *aporia* that characterize the situation of K in *The Trial* is that of his self-slandering, the accusation he levels at himself and which the court receives but does not initiate:

Every man brings a slanderous trial against himself. This is Kafka's point of departure. This is why his universe cannot be tragic, but only comic: guilt does not exist, or rather, the only guilt is self-slander, which consists in accusing oneself of a non-existent guilt (which is to say, of one's own innocence—and this is the comic gesture par excellence)... There is slander, in fact, only if the accuser is convinced of the innocence of the accused, only if he accuses without there being any guilt to establish. In the case of self-slander, this conviction becomes, at the same time, both necessary and

¹⁷ Kafka, *The castle*, 18–20.

¹⁸ Giorgio Agamben, K, in Justin Clemens, Nicholas Heron and Alex Murray, *The work of Giorgio Agamben: law, literature, life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 13–27.

impossible. The accused, insofar as he slanders himself, is perfectly aware of being innocent, but, insofar as he accuses himself, is equally aware of being guilty of slander, of deserving his brand. This is the Kafkaesque situation par excellence.¹⁹

Agamben notes the conceptual link between the accusation or indictment of slander (*temeritas*, from *TEM, blindness, darkness, obfuscation) and strikingly parallels the tectonics of Kafka's castle with the Roman *castratum* (a fortified palace or castle, a military camp) established at the crossing of the *kardo* (north south axis related to the poles) and the *decumanus* (east-west axis related to the meridian and the apparent course of the sun) that establish the "*constitution limitum*: the fundamental division of space according to the *kardo* and the *decumanus*".²⁰ And this is why K is a surveyor, whose purpose is to measure boundaries and limits. The measuring thread, yarn or line used by a surveyor is also the weave and contexture of the castle itself, as well as the texture and fabric of the narrative. And the entire novel is framed around the radical ambiguity and undecidability of borderlines (social, spatial, political) that ceaselessly constrain and confuse K. As Kafka himself wrote, "There is a destination but no way there... what we refer to as way is hesitation".²¹ For Agamben, as a land surveyor, K is identified with the *kardo*; and his function is to either confirm or transgress boundaries—in this case the boundaries of governance.²² *Kardo* also means hinge: that on which the oppositional setup pivots and whose disfunction renders their communication inoperative.²³ In his diaries, Kafka is explicit on the theme of limits, specifically in relation to pursuit, escape or errancy—that is, a perpetual state of wandering, of ambivalence with respect to the limit, of an "assault on the frontiers":

It is not the borders between the gardens and the houses of the village (which, in the words of the chairman, are already "marked out... and duly registered") that he has come to attend to. Rather, since life in the village is, in reality, entirely determined by the borders that separate it from the castle and at the same time keep it bound to it, it is above all these boundaries that

¹⁹ Agamben, K, 14.

²⁰ Agamben, K, 22–23.

²¹ Kafka cited from the Notebooks, in Mendelowitz, Edward, *Existential Psychology East-West* (Denver: University of the Rockies Press, 2008).

²² Agamben, K, 23–24.

²³ Agamben, K, 26.

the arrival of the land surveyor calls into question. The ‘assault on the last frontier’ is an assault against the boundaries that separate the castle (the high) from the village (the low)... Not a question... of a conflict with the divine, but of a conflict with the fabrications of men... regarding the divine... It is their borders, the separations and the barriers that they have established between men, and between men and the divine, that the land surveyor wants to call into question.... What interests the land surveyor is the boundary that divides and conjoins them and that he wants to abolish—or rather, to render inoperative. For where this boundary materially passes no one seems to know; perhaps, in reality, it does not exist, but passes, like an invisible door, within each and every man.²⁴

If Agamben is right, it is K’s mood (of self-slandering), the manner in which he is in the world, that determines the ambience of the novel and which Walter Benjamin read earlier in terms of the oppressive reign of the law:

What may be discerned, more tenderly subdued, in the activities of these messengers is the Law that reigns, in an oppressive and gloomy way, over this whole group of creatures. None has a firm place in the world, or firm, inalienable outlines. There is not one that is not either rising or falling, none that is not trading qualities with its enemy or neighbour, none that has not completed its period of time and yet is unripe, none that is not deeply exhausted and yet is only at the beginning of a long existence.²⁵

For Deleuze, the spatiality of Kafka’s novels—specifically *The Trial* and *The Castle*—hinges on the denudation or at least the infinite deferral of interiority that shadows the sustained postponement of a resolution (the trial in one; effectively attaining the castle in the other); as well as the

²⁴ Agamben, K, 24–26.

²⁵ Walter Benjamin, Franz Kafka on the tenth anniversary of his death, in *Selected Writings Volume 2: 1927–1934* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 799. See also Benjamin’s reference to Willi Haas’ reading of this mood as irremediably at odds with the divine: “Kafka goes back ... to Kierkegaard as well as to Pascal; one may call him the only legitimate heir of these two. In all three, there is an excruciatingly harsh basic religious theme: man is always in the wrong before God ... Kafka’s upper world, his so-called Castle, with its immense, complex staff of petty and rather lecherous officials, his strange heaven, plays a horrible game with people ... yet man is very much in the wrong even before this god.” Walter Benjamin, Some reflections on Kafka, in *Illuminations*, transl. Harry Zorn (New York: Schocken Books), 141.

tripartite affective tonality manifest by K: the feelings (*Gemut*), passions or intensities of fear, flight and dismantling:

K will realize that even if the law remains unrecognizable, this is not because it is hidden by its transcendence, but simply because it is always denuded of any interiority: it is always in the office next door, or behind the door, on to infinity (we can already see this quite well in the first chapter of *The Trial* where everything happens in the “room next door”)... it is strange to see the degree to which K doesn't feel any guilt and doesn't feel fear and doesn't flee; he is completely audacious and he offers a new tonality that is very strange, a sense of dismantling that is simultaneously that of a judge and that of an engineer, a veritable feeling, a *Gemut*. Fear, flight, dismantling—we should think of them as three passions, three intensities, corresponding to the diabolical pact, to the becoming-animal, to the machinic and collective assemblages.²⁶

Deleuze reads *The Castle* as a vast imbricated apparatus: a labyrinthine assemblage (*dispositif*) geared to the strategic implementation of power, self-concealed by a proliferating dissimulation:

This functioning of the assemblage can be explained only if one takes it apart to examine both the elements that make it up and the nature of its linkages. The characters in *The Trial* appear as part of a large series that never stops proliferating. Everyone is in fact a functionary or a representative of justice (and in *The Castle*, everyone has something to do with the castle), not only the judges, the lawyers, the bailiffs, the policemen, even the accused, but also the women, the little girls, Titorelli the painter, K himself. Furthermore, the large series subdivides into subseries. And each of these subseries has its own sort of unlimited schizophrenic proliferation.²⁷

Maurice Blanchot gives a parallel reading of the infinite proliferation that produces the spatial constriction and claustrophobic ambiance of the novel:

If K choses the impossible, it is because he was excluded from everything possible as the result of an initial decision. If he cannot make his way in the world, or employ, as he would like, the normal means of life in society, it is

²⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: toward a minor literature*, transl. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 45–46.

²⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: toward a minor literature*, 53.

because he has been banished from the world, from his world, condemned to the absence of world, doomed to exile in which there is no real dwelling place. To wander, this is his law. His dissatisfaction is the very movement of this error is the only hope that is left him, the only truth that he must not betray, and to which he remains faithful with a perseverance that makes him thus the hero of inflexible obstinacy... The impatience that escapes the temptation of figures also escapes the truth of what they figure. The impatience that wants to go straight to the goal, without passing through the intermediaries, succeeds only in having the intermediaries as goal and in making them not what leads to the goal but what prevents one from reaching it: obstacles infinitely reflected and multiplied.²⁸

Deleuze's proliferating assemblages and series at the level of characters are paralleled by an equally proliferating spatial organization. Kafka's labyrinthine tectonics constitute an interminably deterritorializing setting, at once porous and aporetic, of spaces that indefinitely fold, between outside and inside, between upper and lower. What is pivotal in the way these series operate is that their components, terms or segments are articulated around multiple attachments, links and connections that function as relays:

These terms are distributed throughout the ordinary series, at the end of one series or at the beginning of another, and so mark the manner in which they link, transform, or proliferate—the manner in which a segment adds on to another or is born out of another. These special series are thus composed of remarkable terms that play the role of connectors, since in each case they augment the connections of desire in the field of immanence.²⁹

The relays act as gates, doorways or switches that cause the segments “to constitute an extraordinary series that proliferates in its own way, that traverses and resonates through all the segments. Not only is each one at the turning point of several segments ... but there is even more: each... is in ‘contact,’ in ‘connection,’ in ‘contiguity,’ with the essential—that is, with the castle, with the trial, as ultimate powers of the continuous”.³⁰ The various characters—not merely in any one novel but also across multiple novels—embody distinct qualities that one might normally find assembled in one particular human being, but which here are radically disassociated

²⁸ Maurice Blanchot, Kafka and Brod, in *Friendship*, transl. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 249–250.

²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: toward a minor literature*, 63.

³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: toward a minor literature*, 63.

to become emblematic or characteristic of a type or the mood of individual characters: for example, the qualities of sister, maid and whore distributed among the various female characters in *Metamorphosis* (sister), *Description of a Struggle* (the maid Annette), *The Trial* (the washerwoman), *Amerika* (maid) and *The Castle* (sister).³¹ A parallel disassociation, mutation or shifting of the programmatic dimension of various spaces in the novel adds to this sense of infinite serial proliferation—for example, the bar, in the midst of whose boisterous clamour K sleeps shortly after arriving at the village. One reading of this kind of disassociation is that it resists the sorts of singularities that the bureaucratic machinery seeks to institutionalize and that therefore function as a kind of resistance or relay for fleeing, for challenging and/or escaping the constraining apparatus:

The points of connection between series or segments, the remarkable points and the singular points, seem in several respects to be aesthetic impressions. They are often sensible qualities, odours, lights, sounds, contacts, or free figures of the imagination, elements from a dream or a nightmare. They are connected to chance... They intervene to determine new couplings, and cause the proliferation of series; and the substitute notes that they can enter into innumerable polyvocal combinations, forming segments that are more or less near each other, more or less distant.³²

Kafka's spatial scenography is made up of multiple contrivances and contraptions geared to deception: situational devices, apparatuses and machineries whose configurations and motions constitute the scenographic substance and fabric of the village and the castle but that also produce the phantasmatic dissimulation that effectively obscures their mechanisms and designs. In *Amerika*, Kafka reprises this kaleidoscopic spatiality:

Karl soon got used to his new circumstances in his uncle's house... Karl's room was on the sixth floor of a building, whose five lower floors, and three more which were subterranean, were taken up by his uncle's business concern. The light that came into his room through two windows and a balcony door never ceased to astound Karl when he emerged from his little bedroom in the morning... A narrow balcony ran along the entire length of the room. But what would probably have been the highest vantage point in Karl's

³¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: toward a minor literature*, 64–65.

³² Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: toward a minor literature*, 69–70.

hometown here did not afford much more than a view of a single street, which ran in a dead straight line between two rows of lopped-off houses until it vanished in the distance where the massive forms of a cathedral loomed out of the haze. In the morning and evening, and in his dreams at night, that street was always full of swarming traffic. Seen from above, it appeared to be a swirling kaleidoscope of distorted human figures and the roofs of vehicles of all kinds, from which a new and amplified and wilder mixture of noise, dust and smells arose, and all this was held and penetrated by a mighty light, that was forever being scattered, carried off and eagerly returned by the multitudes of objects, and that seemed so palpable to the confused eye that it was like a sheet of glass spread out over the street that was being continually and violently smashed.³³

The same labyrinthine, proliferating dissimulation applies at the small scale of furniture:

In his room there was an American writing desk of the very finest sort, one of the kind his father had been longing for years, and had tried to find at an affordably cheap price at various auctions, without ever having been able to afford one with his small means. Of course his desk was nothing like those so-called American desks that turn up at European auctions. For instance the top part of it had a hundred different compartments of all sizes, so that even the President of the Union would have found room for each of his files in it, but even better than that, it had an adjuster at the side, so that by turning a handle one could rearrange and adjust the compartments in whatever way one wanted or needed. Thin lateral partitions slowly descended to form the floors of newly created compartments or the ceilings of enlarged ones; with just one turn of the handle, the appearance of the top would be completely transformed, and one could do it either slowly or at incredible speed, depending on how one turned the handle. It was a very modern invention, but it reminded Karl vividly of the nativity scenes that were demonstrated to astonished children at the Christmas Fairs at home.³⁴

Likewise, it applies to the functioning of the spatial apparatus as an enabling bureaucratic infrastructure:

³³ Franz Kafka, *Amerika: the missing person*, transl. Michael Hofman (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2007), 23. <https://kingauthor.net/books/Franz%20Kafka/Amerika/Amerika%20-%20Franz%20Kafka.pdf>. Accessed 28 August 2021.

³⁴ Kafka, *Amerika*, 23.

It was a sort of commissioning and forwarding business, of a kind that Karl thought probably didn't even exist in Europe. The actual business consisted of intermediate trade, but not delivering goods from producers to consumers or even to retailers, but the supplying of goods and raw materials to the great factory cartels, and from one cartel to another. It involved buying, storing, transporting and selling on a vast scale, demanding constant telephone and telegraph communications with its customers. The telegraph room was not smaller but actually larger than the telegraph office of his home town, through which Karl had once walked guided by a fellow pupil who knew his way around it. And wherever one looked in the telephone room, the doors of telephone booths were continually opening and closing, and the sound of so many telephones ringing was quite bewildering. The uncle opened the door of the nearest booth, and in the fizzing electric light sat an employee, quite indifferent to the sound of the door, his head gripped by a steel band that clamped the headphones to his ears. ... People were criss-crossing the middle of the floor, in all directions, at great speed. No one offered a greeting, greetings had been abolished, each one fell into the tracks of the man ahead of him and kept his eyes on the floor, across which he wanted to make as rapid progress as possible, or else he picked up, at a glance, single words or figures from the fluttering piece of paper he held in his hand. 'You really have achieved a lot,' said Karl, on one of his visits to the business, the full inspection of which must take many days, merely to take in each individual department.³⁵

The general bewilderment extends to the domicile, which becomes a privileged site of incarceration where front and back, up and down and left and right become so interwoven as to constitute a pervasive aporetic machinery of entrapment:

Now it was just a matter of finding his way down to the salon, where, in his initial distraction, he had probably also left his hat in some unsuitable place. He would take the candle with him of course, but even with its light, it wouldn't be easy to find the way. For example he didn't even know whether this room was on the same floor as the salon or not. Klara had kept pulling him on the way here, so that he had been unable to look around. He had also been distracted by the servants with their candelabras, in short, he really didn't know if they had climbed one flight of stairs or two, or none at all. Judging from the view, the room was quite high up, and he tended therefore to imagine that they had climbed some steps, but then there were steps

³⁵ Kafka, *Amerika*, 28, 32.

leading up to the front door, so perhaps that accounted for the height on this side of the house. If only there was a glimmer of light from a doorway or a faint voice in the corridor. His wristwatch, a present from his uncle, showed eleven o'clock as he took up the candle and went out into the corridor. In case his search should be unsuccessful, he left his door open, so that he would at least be able to find his room again, and thereby, in an extreme emergency... He made slow progress, and the way back seemed to be twice as long. Karl passed great stretches of wall that had no doors at all, so that one couldn't imagine what lay behind them. Then it was one door after another, he tried several of them, but they were all locked, and the rooms evidently unoccupied. It was an extraordinary waste of space... there were so many empty rooms, whose sole purpose was to make a hollow sound when you knocked on their doors... Suddenly the wall on one side of the corridor came to an end, and was replaced by an ice-cold marble balustrade. Karl put the candle down on it and carefully leaned forward. Empty darkness blew towards him. If this was the entrance hall of the house—by the light of the candle he saw what seemed to be a bit of vaulted ceiling—why hadn't they come in through it? What was this large and lofty room for? It was like standing in the gallery of a church up here... The balustrade did not go on for very long, and soon Karl was swallowed up by the enclosed corridor again. Suddenly it made a sharp turn, and Karl walked smack into a wall, only the vigilance with which he held the candle upright kept it from falling from his grasp and being extinguished. As the corridor seemed never ending, without a window anywhere and no sign of movement either high or low, it occurred to Karl that he was going round in a circle, he hoped to come upon the open door of his room soon, but neither that nor the balustrade returned.³⁶

Deleuze highlights the “insurmountable discontinuity” of/in the fragmentary character of Kafka’s writing, narrative and scenography.³⁷

We might begin by saying that these blocks, instead of distributing themselves around a circle in which only several discontinuous arches are traced, align themselves on a hallway or a corridor: each one thereby forms a segment, which is more or less distant, on this unlimited straight line... in fact, if it is true that each block-segment has an opening or a door onto the line of the hallway—one that is usually quite far from the door or the opening of the following block—it is also true that all the blocks have back doors that are contiguous... And even here we’re simplifying things: the hallway can be

³⁶ Kafka, *Amerika*, 25.

³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a minor literature*, 72ff.

angled, the little door can be connected to the line of the hallway, in such a way that things become all the more surprising.³⁸

This narrative and scenographic construction has its architectural parallel in the enfilade: a series of discontinuous rooms are dis/connected via a corridor, to which they open by separate doors in one direction and, at the same time, directly linked by an enfilade of connecting doors in another direction. The enfilade's political register sets up a hierarchy between served and servant by way of two parallel networks. As Pier Vittorio Aureli notes, referring to Robin Evans' essay *Figures, Doors and Passages*,³⁹ this structure maintained privileged sequential and continuous access for the family while relegating the servant class to discontinuous and discrete access from an occluded adjacent territory. The pervasive network of servant doorways, corridors and stairwells function as an apparatus or machine, concealed from the main living spaces in which circulation does not occur by way of corridors but exclusively by way of the linear and singular—literally one to one, or one by one—connections of the enfilade. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the corridor replaces the enfilade and over time becomes the major mode of circulation, prompted by a generalized political concern to segregate the underprivileged and atomize or individualize society. The corridor is “a device for removing traffic from rooms”, writes Evans, tracing its origin to 1597, and its apogee at Coleshill, Berkshire (1650–1667), designed by Roger Pratt, who believed that “the passage was for servants: to keep them out of each other's way and, more important still, to keep them out of the way of gentlemen and ladies”.⁴⁰ The architectonic correlate of these political manoeuvres was the compartmentalization and segregation of spaces and rooms, each individually linked only by its door to a common corridor: a typology widely codified and promulgated in the proliferation of nineteenth-century statist institutions—hospitals, schools and prisons—so forensically critiqued by Michel Foucault.⁴¹

³⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a minor literature*, 73.

³⁹ Pier Vittorio Aureli, The myth about corridors. <https://www.behance.net/gallery/2104080/The-Myth-About-Corridors>. Accessed 25 August 2021. See also Robin Evans, Figures, doors, passages, in *Translations from drawing to building and other essays* (London: Architectural Association, 1997), 55–92.

⁴⁰ Evans, Figures, doors, passages, 71.

⁴¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison* (New York: Random House, 1977).

The plans of architecture are in direct relation to the collective lifeworld and life patterns of those who inhabit and use it⁴²—that is, an architectural plan conveys a distinctive way for human beings to be together—what Evans calls “a particular temperament towards others”⁴³—and for human beings to be together in place. Hence every architectural plan has both topological and ethical registers. As well as describing abstract and quantitative spatial dimensions and relationships, plans also describe circumstantial, qualitative, situational and social relationships, together with their consequences.⁴⁴ The separation of circulatory space from lived space in the widespread adoption of the corridor lends its origins in the reinforcement of social division and hierarchy and in the atomization of society to the circumstantial ambiance produced tectonically.

Thoroughfare rooms that one passes through, with three, four or more doors, maximize interconnectivity and facilitate continuous infiltration of shared space. Circulation and inhabitation are not qualitatively distinct.⁴⁵ Terminal rooms, on the other hand, with only one door, facilitate exclusion, isolation and retreat and effectively separate circulation as a pragmatic function from life pattern as social and cultural experience. Evans cites Alberti’s instruction that mostly in public but also in domestic buildings, “it is convenient to place the doors in such a Manner that they may lead to as many Parts of the edifice as possible”.⁴⁶ He observes that this “generally meant that there was a door wherever there was an adjoining room, making the house a matrix of discrete but thoroughly interconnected chambers”.

With the enfilade, there is no generalized distribution of movement. The field of the house is an open and expansive spatial network, organized rhizomatically and non-hierarchically according to the circumstantial conditions of the site: orientation, topography, access, views and so on. Such a porous setting is “relatively permeable to the numerous members of the household, all of whom—men, women, children, servants and visitors—were obliged to pass through a matrix of connecting rooms where the day-to-day business of life was carried on”.⁴⁷ In such settings, as Evans

⁴² Evans, *Figures, doors, passages*, 57.

⁴³ Evans, *Figures, doors, passages*, 57.

⁴⁴ Evans, *Figures, doors, passages*, 62.

⁴⁵ Evans, *Figures, doors, passages*, 64.

⁴⁶ Leon Battista Alberti, *On the art of building in ten books*, transl. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach and Robert Tavenor (Boston: MIT Press, 1991), Book 1, Chapter 12.

⁴⁷ Evans, *Figures, doors, passages*, 65.

notes, “company was the ordinary condition and solitude the exceptional state”.⁴⁸ Spatial organization according to a rhizomatic network, matrix or web provides an expansive system of inter-connectivity, enabling the crossing of paths, encounters, exchange, pause, retreat and delay: essentially producing an ethics of conviviality. Compared with a hierarchical, linear system of individual rooms along a corridor, it affords “filtration rather than canalization”.⁴⁹ Christopher Alexander’s motto that the “city is not a tree” is relevant here, as is Deleuze and Guattari’s treatment of the rhizome opposing the arboreal. In arboreal tree-like patterns, components are only connected to others not immediately adjacent to them along indirect branching patterns distributed according to a symmetrical, hierarchical form. Arboreal spatial organizations promote an ethics of avoidance, eschewing interference, friction and the irritations of unsolicited encounters.⁵⁰ The rhizomatic enfilade, together with its extensive network of passages, back stairs and lobbies, is a porous system providing multiple pathways of infiltration, facilitating contact, but also evasion, escape and flight, while the corridor system, better suited to entrapment and incarceration, reduces communication and contact. Evans sees this “closeted and compartmentalised architectonics” deriving from moral puritan grounds,⁵¹ concluding that:

The matrix of connected rooms is appropriate to a type of society which feeds on carnality, which recognizes the body as the person, and in which gregariousness is habitual. The features of this kind of life... was challenged in the seventeenth century and finally displaced in the nineteenth by the corridor plan, which is appropriate to a society that finds carnality distasteful, which sees the body as a vessel of mind and spirit, and in which privacy is habitual... The cumulative effect of architecture during the last two centuries has been like that of a general lobotomy performed on society at large, obliterating vast areas of social experience. It is employed more and more as a preventive measure; an agency for peace, security and segregation which, by its very nature, limits the horizon of experience—reducing noise transmission, differentiating movement patterns, suppressing smells, stemming vandalism, cutting down the accumulation of dirt, impeding the spread of

⁴⁸ Evans, *Figures, doors, passages*, 66.

⁴⁹ Evans, *Figures, doors, passages*, 69–78.

⁵⁰ Evans, *Figures, doors, passages*, 71.

⁵¹ Evans, *Figures, doors, passages*, 75.

disease, veiling embarrassment, closeting indecency and abolishing the unnecessary; incidentally reducing life to a private shadow-play.⁵²

Here we see how the precise tectonic organization of architectural settings comprise affective ambiances that are pivotal to the production of specific atmospheric effects.

CONSILIENT DISCREPANCY: FLORES PRATS

William Empson's treatment of ambiguity in literature highlighted the role of multiple and simultaneous senses of a word or phrase in producing uncertainty of interpretation and hence richness of semantic potential. One characteristic of ambiance in a work of literature, film or architecture is the coexistence of several different senses that remain disparate, unaligned and unreconciled, or "discrepant", while at the same time contributing to an overall circumstantial quality, or "consilience", that can be experienced as atmosphere.

The presence of consilient discrepancy⁵³ in a work of architecture contributes greatly to its ambiance. Two projects by the Barcelona-based architectural office of Ricardo Flores and Eva Prats are exemplary in this regard. At both the Mills Museum (1999–2002) and Casal Balaguer (2009–), Flores Prats play out a tectonic of porosity through which space and materiality are thoroughly worked into and relieved of gravity and mass. Ostensibly, these projects are renovations. The Mills Museum, situated in an old miners' neighbourhood, called for the recuperation of a ruinous seventeenth-century flour windmill and its conversion into a regional museum. The key architectural intervention involved capitalizing on existing cavities and perforations within the existing fabric by "reboring" them and adjusting their positions and dimensions to create altered light sources and expanded clearings for new exhibition chambers (Figs. 3 and 4). The technique recalls the reboring of woodwind instruments to alter and perfect their tuning and timbre or indeed of the cylinders of internal combustion engines to heighten their performance. By working into the masonry fabric of the building; easing into existing openings,

⁵² Robert Kerr, cited in Evans, *Figures, doors, passages*, 89–90.

⁵³ See my *Vaporous circumambience: towards an achitectonics of atmosphere*, in *Interstices* 15, 2021, 12–24, <http://interstices.aut.ac.nz/ijara/index.php/ijara/article/view/194>. Accessed November 13, 2015, and my *Agencies of the frame*, 258–309.



Fig. 3 Flores Prats, Mills Museum. Palma de Majorca, 1999–2002. Interior. (Photograph by Duccio Malagamba. Used with kind permission of the architects)

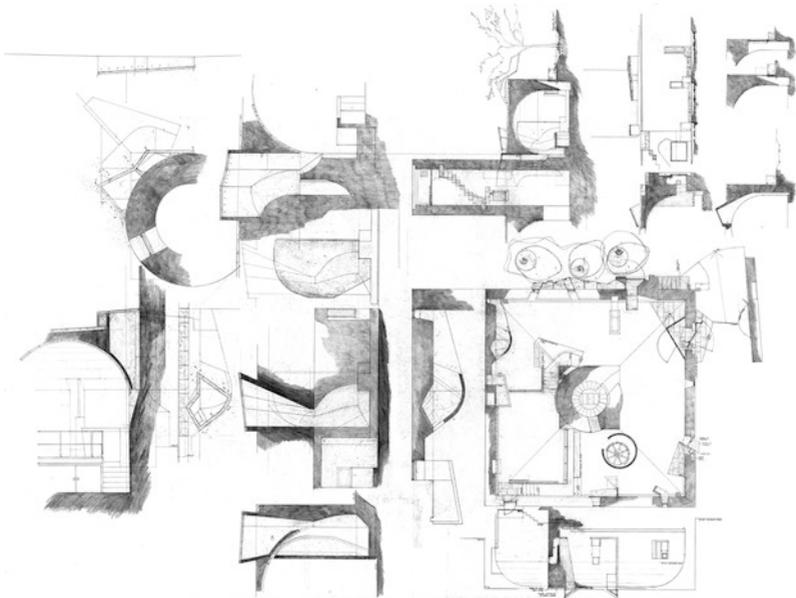


Fig. 4 Flores Prats, Mills Museum. Palma de Majorca, 1999–2002. (Assembly drawing. Used with kind permission of the architect)

shafts and hollows; and folding surfaces into and out of the walls, the architects have created new light sources, light shelves, recesses, pedestals and screens that function internally for illumination and display and externally for benches, ledges and steps within a reactivated public domain.

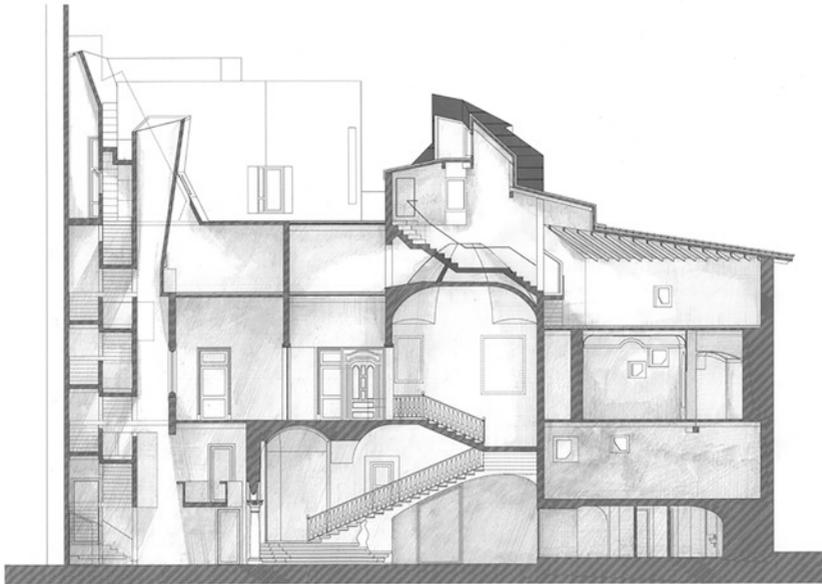
These interventions literally breathe into, aerate and leaven the mass. Surgically incised into the existing fabric, they do away with the need for internal divisions, since spatial zoning is achieved virtually by a repartition of light and dark (Fig. 5). These latter function as foundational architectural materials that organize the spatial narrative and exhibition sequence. The net effect is of an interior in an interminable process of being turned inside out. The density and weight of walls and vaulted roofs is dematerialized by the in-folding and exfoliation of surfaces. Inside and outside faces become indeterminate; the boundary is rendered as a zone of indiscernibility; and the substance of the architectural fabric is vaporized by a pervasive, illuminated porosity of incisions, cuts, slits and notches. The provenance of light is masked by multiply folded surfaces of different



Fig. 5 Flores Prats, Mills Museum. Palma de Majorca, 1999–2002. (Photograph by Hisao Suzuki. Used with kind permission of the architect)

shades of illumination—as it is by the multiple reflections and refractions which together imply that it is the material of the wall itself producing and emitting light.

Likewise, at Casal Balaguer, the existing fabric dating back to the tenth century is subjected to the insertion of a new circulation network, geometrically continuous but experientially discontinuous (Fig. 6). It punctures the building, first horizontally and then vertically through to the roof by appropriating an existing, smaller courtyard. In this case, the intervention functions as an apparatus to interconnect different programs for the new exhibition and concert centre. However, it also creates gaps—new light wells, skylights and windows—that effectively disassociate and articulate the multiple histories and styles of construction that had merged over time.



16
 PROYECTO EJECUTIVO DE REHABILITACIÓN DEL
 CASAL BALAGUER
 C. UNIÓN 3. PALMA DE MALLORCA
 SECCIÓN A.
 TRANSVERSAL POR TORRE Y CÚPULA.
 M. GUCH, RICARDO FLORES, XISCO PÉDRA Y EVA PRATS, ANSA
 DISEÑO 001/0
 0 1 2 3
 ESCALA 1/50

Fig. 6 Flores Prats. Casal Balaguer (2009–). (Cross section. Used with kind permission of the architect)

The play of light, shade and shadow puts into relief and relieves the building's different zones and narratives from a palimpsest in which they had become buried. New interstitial volumes render the building porous, perforate and ultimately aporetic. All is passage within a generalized impasse that both promotes and blocks any way through. The resulting spatiality is one of folds and returns that occlude any direct prospect, any vanishing point—a spatiality of stairs, balusters, surfaces and passageways that lead and disappear through clefts and fissures into unknown recesses.

The captivation of space into its own materiality and substance produces a significant ambiguity. Void space, which commonly lies over and against mass and functions to foreground it, is here itself massified and rendered substantial. Likewise, light, which commonly counterpoints darkness and functions to indicate the lineaments of form, is here identified with the void that it suffuses and condenses into palpable atmosphere. The indeterminacy between mass and void and darkness and light destabilizes and dismantles the formal and material grounds of the building. Concatenated spatiality is built out of light, shade, shadow and darkness—out of degrees of gloaming. The absence of prospect, and the identity of space with the exfoliation of perforate matter, also contests normative distinctions between form and context that are here indistinguishably and simultaneously produced out of the one luminous substance.

These projects by Flores Prats evidence an extraordinary tectonic work of crafting space from crepuscular materiality that is both radiant and dim. It produces sufficient discrepancies to complexify the architectural encounter and cause our reception of it to waver. Some of this ambiguity is inherent in the semantic potential of the components that make up the architecture. The relative status of walls, windows, doors, passages, shafts and wells is integral to a complex of meanings that could be usefully read in terms of etymology—specifically the etymons *WEL, meaning “to turn, roll, fold, wind” (wall, welt, weal, wealth, well(up), fold, flatten, field), and *PER, meaning “through, lead, passage” (port, portal, porosity, bore, pierce, aperture, periphery, perimeter, border, fjord, forest, ford, afford).⁵⁴ As in the materiality of a sponge, everything is opening: doorway, mouth, channel, access; and in a sense, the *ostia* of sponges, their constitutive orifices, parallel the *osteria*, hostels, hospitality—associated

⁵⁴ See my Mortarium: a provisional lexicon for masonry, in *Materiality: brick and block in contemporary Australian architecture*, ed. Ron Ringer (Horsley Park: Dry Press Publishing, 2015), 540–53.

with Hestia, goddess of the hearth—cognate terms drawn from the etymon *WES, “to dwell”. Dwelling is not incarceration but the condition of having access.⁵⁵ These senses circulate in Flores Prats’ incisive formal and material program as a kind of tectonic atmosphere, though they are never explicitly named and always subsist as discrepant sub-texts and undertones open to indefinite conjugation.

Here, we are always in the middle of things, *in media res*: we are always in the midst, *interstitium*, between the walls. The texture of this intermittence is permeable and permeating. It is made of interminable folds, intervals within intervals and interludes where sense is dramatized and played out (Fig. 7). This kind of wound up, intervallic topography and spatial structure foregrounds the being-together-*there* of human being, its *placedness*. As a result, tectonics engages with ethics and the atmosphere of space with the dispositions of solicitude, care and attentiveness to the other in its arrival.

The topography of the porous, the interstitial and the inter-ludic must be resolutely ethical; and its ambiance suffuses these interiors by foregrounding adjacency and intimacy—that is, the nearness of beings to each other and to the worlds they simultaneously find themselves in and produce. The incavated spaces of Mills Museum and Casal Balaguer orchestrate an ambiguous play between inside and outside, between mass and hollowness, and into the porosities of matter that vaporize the architectonic mass. Again, the interactions between darkness, shadow, light and glare are mobilized to render the borderlines of spaces ambiguous and indeterminate. The outside is not another world visible beyond the walls. Rather, the interval is all there is, and this interval is not a third zone between one boundary and another. It is the necessary condition of space itself, of space as spacing and porosity through which it constantly defers closure and maintains its infinite finishing.

Consilient discrepancy—the coexistence of disseveral systems in unaligned multiplicity that, while never fusing, still resonate to produce emergent conditions—is a palpable characteristic, tonality or temperament

⁵⁵ In this respect, Walter Benjamin’s reading of Naples, and by implication of the city, is instructive. See Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacin, Naples, in *Reflections*, trans. Edmond Jephcott (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovic, 1978), 163–73. See also Benoît Goetz, *Théorie des maisons: l’habitation, la surprise* (Paris: Édition Verdier, 2011), 122: “Cities are enormous madrepore in whose tangle, and in the midst of whose concrete or chalky matter, there will never pass enough passages and bridges and canals and ventilating chimneys and flowing spaces and interstices and clearings” (my translation).



Fig. 7 Flores Prats. Casal Balaguer (2009–). (Photograph Adrià Goula. Used with kind permission of the architect)

in architecture. The unresolved state of those systems constitutes an essential prerequisite for atmosphere and ambiance—a state of indeterminacy that keeps a system from closing and therefore keeps it open to interpretation and engagement. In the architecture of Flores Prats, the tectonic orchestration of light and dark produces environments in which the boundary between opposites wavers and becomes indeterminate.

The spatial tactics evident in these two projects by Flores Prats show us how darkness and light, density and porosity and gravity and levity—preponderant qualities of cinema—can be mobilized to ambient effect. Architectural space is then less a case of sedimentation, construction and assemblage than it is of a hollowing, disgorgement and evisceration of matter. Consilient discrepancy lies in the palpable and apparently contradictory coincidence of gravity and porosity, blockage and access. The interior is turned inside out and delivered over to a circumambient, unseen luminosity that both surrounds and permeates. These tactics and affects—forming part of an architectonics of atmosphere—suggest ample domains of unexploited expressive potential that need not be sourced in the extraordinary or the spectacular but rather—and properly *radically*—within the core conditions of architecture as such.



Anatomy of Atmosphere

ADVENT

Coming. Latin *adventus*, coming, approach, arrival; from *ad*, to, and *venire*, come—from *GWA, go, come. Compare *WE, blow, and Latin *ventus*, wind (that which comes and goes); *inventus*, invent, come upon, devise, discover, breathe into; French *eventer*, let out, expose to the air; *eventail*, fan; Middle English *fent*/French *fente*, split, outlet (for water or air).

Adventure, avenue, become, circumvent, come, convent, covenant, event, intervene, invent, prevent, provenance, revenant, souvenir, venue, welcome, vent, fent.

AGENCY

Strategic force. Latin *agere*, mobilize, do, achieve, perform, drive forward, maintain in motion; from *AG, drive, draw forth, draw out, move.

Act, agenda, agent, agile, agitate, agony, ambiguous, anagogical, coagulate, cache, cogent, exact, examine, exigency, exiguous, strategy, transaction.

ALLEGORY

Spoken otherwise. Greek/Latin *allegoria*, describing one thing under the guise of another; from Greek *allos*, other, another, different, beyond, and *agoreuein*, to speak; from *agora*, assembly—hence to speak otherwise.

Agora is from *GER, gather—hence gathering place, place of assembly, assembly of citizens, of the politeia.

Aggregate, agora, category, congregate, egregious, gregarious, panegyric, segregate.

AMBIANCE

Encircling ambit. Greek *amphi*, roundabout; Latin *ambiens*, going around—from *AMBHI, around, roundabout, and *IRE/*EI, go—hence, what goes around, encircles, circumscribes; surroundings; ambit. French *ambiance*, atmosphere, mood, character, quality, tone.

Ambit, ambivalence, ambition, ambulant, be, begin, between, perambulate, preamble.

AMBIGUITY

Indeterminable alternation. Latin *ambiguus*, equivocal, having a double sense; by implication, uncertain, doubtful, undecidable, indeterminate; open to multiple interpretations; debatable; from *AMBHI, around, and *AG, drive, draw forth, draw out, move—hence, to go/wander about/around; to hesitate, waiver, shift, change. Sanskrit *abhita*, on both sides; *abhi*, towards; Greek *amphi*/Latin *ambi*, around, round about.

About, alley, ambience, ambient, ambivalent, ambit, ambition, amble, amphora, amputate, ancillary, between, circumambulate, perambulate, preamble.

ANTICIPATION

Foreshadowing, *taking care of* ahead of time, taking possession beforehand. Latin *ante-*, before, and *capere*, take, grasp, seize—*KAP, grasp; Latin *capax*, receptivity, ability to hold much, capacity, to be large enough for; Gothic *haban*, to have, hold—*KHA, space, gape, chaos, chiasm.

Advance, advantage, accept, capable, capture, end, except, have, incapacity, inception, intercept, occupy, participate, recuperate, until.

APORIA

Impasse. Greek *aporia*, difficulty, perplexity, want of means; *aporos*, impassable—from *a-*, without, and *poros*, passage; from *PER, lead, pass over, go through.

Aporetic, bear, bearing, comport, deport, emporium, export, fare, ferry, firth, ford, import, importune, opportune, opportunity, passport, periphery, perimeter, porch, pore, porosity, port, portal, portico, transport, wayfarer, welfare.

APPREHENSION

Grasped in advance. Latin *ad-*, to, and *prehendere*, grasp, take hold of, seize (in the mind, by the body)—in turn from *prae-*, before, and *hendere*, seize, take, cling (to); from *GHEND, get, reach, hold, contain; French *apprendre*, learn, teach, come to know, find out.

Apprentice, beget, comprehend, comprise, enterprise, prison, surprise.

ASSEMBLAGE

Brought together as one. Latin *assimilare*—from *ad-*, to, and *similis*, like, resembling, of the same kind; hence to make like, compare, copy, imitate, feign; gather together. *SEM, one, as one, together with.

Assimilate, ensemble, resemble, same, seem, similar, simple, simulate, single, some, verisimilitude.

ATMOSPHERE

Vaporous circumambience. Greek *atmos*, mist, vapor, fog, and *sphaera*, sphere.

ATTUNEMENT

Resonant attention. Latin *tonus*, sound (of a monochord/stretched string, plucked); Greek *tonos*, pitch, accent, taught/stretched string; *tenein*, stretch—from *TEN, stretch, put into tension, render thin; Sanskrit *tantram*, loom; *tanuh*, thin; *tantra*, system, doctrine (as a matrix of practices); Greek *tasis*, a stretching, tension; *tenos*, sinew; Latin *tenere*, to hold, grasp; *tendere*, stretch; *tenuis*, thin, rare, tenuous.

Attend, attention, attenuate, contain, detain, diatonic, entertain, extend, intend, distend, maintain, obtain, pertain, retain, sustain, temple, temporal, tender, thin, tenuous, tenant, tenement, tenet, tent, tense, tenure, tune, tone, tonic.

CHARACTER

Characteristic, distinguishing trait, defining quality. Old French *carecter*, symbol, mark, brand; drawing used in sorcery; alphabetic letter, graphic symbol standing for a sound or syllable; *caratere*, feature, character; from Latin *character*/Greek *kharaktēr*, engraved mark, symbol or imprint on the soul, instrument for marking, defining quality, individual feature; *kharassein*, to engrave—from *kharax*, pointed stake.

CIRCUMAMBIANCE

Turned to an encompassing ambit. Latin *circum*, roundabout, in a circle; Greek *kirkos*, circle, ring; from *SKER, turn, bend; and *AMBHI, around, from *EI, to go.

Arrange, circle, circumflex, circumscribe, circumspect, circus, corona, crest, curb, curve, rank, ridge, rink.

CIRCUMSTANCE

What stands around, encompassing situation, setting. Latin *circum*, roundabout, and *stare*, stand, through the etymon *STA, stand, be firm, established—cognate with Greek *stasis*, standstill, stable unmoving being. The sense of unessential, of little consequence, dates from the twelfth century.

Consist, distance, ecstasy, establish, estate, exist, history, insist, instant, instauration, institute, interstice, obstacle, resist, rest, solstice, stable, stage, stance, standard, stasis, state, stature, status, staunch, stay, steer, store, stud, substance, system.

CLIMATE

Slope, inclination, declination. Old French *climat*, region, part of the earth; from Latin *clima*/*climatis*, region, slope of the earth; *clivus*, declivity; *declinare*, to lean down/out; *inclinare*, to lean in, cause to bend; Greek *klima*, region, zone, inclination, slope—from *KLEI, to lean, slope, slant.

Climax, declination, inclination, clinic, proclivity, clinamen.

COALESCE

Increase together. Latin *coalescere*, unite, grow together, become one in growth; from *com-*, together, and *alescere*, suckle, be nourished; hence increase, grow up.

Altitude, enhance, exalt, proliferate, world.

COLOUR

Prominent complexion that shows, ornaments, occludes and, by doing so, preserves. Old French *color*, complexion, appearance; Latin *color*, colour of the skin, hue; *colos*, covering, *celare*, hide, conceal; Sanskrit *varna*, colour, covering—from *KEL, cover, conceal, save; Sanskrit *cala*/Greek *calia*, hut, house, hall, nest; Greek *kalyptein*, cover; *koleao*, sheath; *kelyphos*, shell, husk; Latin *cella*, small room, hut; *celare*, hide, conceal; *clam*, secret; Old English *hol/holu*, hole, cave, husk, pod. *KEL, prominent, hill; Latin *collis*, hill; *columna*, projecting object; *cellere*, raise; Greek *kolonos*, hill; *kolophon*, summit. Compare Greek *kbroma*, surface of the body, skin (colour); ornaments, embellishments, makeup; *kbros*, surface of the body, skin; *kbroizein*, to stain, colour, touch the surface of the body. Possibly from *GHREU, rub, grind, grit (the skin and the material that produces pigment).

Apocalypse, ceiling, cell, colonnade, column, colon, conceal, excel, hall, hell, helm, helmet, hill, hold, hole, hollow, housing, hull, occult.

COMPLEXION

Braided together. Old French *complexioun*, temperament, natural disposition of body or mind; particular blend or combination of primary qualities (hot, cold, dry, moist) or humors (blood, phlegm, choler, black choler); temperament, character, makeup; colour or hue of the face; from Latin *complexio*, combination; *complexus*, surrounding, encompassing; *complecti*, encircle, embrace—from *com*, with, together and *plectere*, weave, braid, twine, entwine; from *PLEK, plait. Greek *plekein*, plait, braid, wind, twine; *plektos*, twisted; Latin *plicare*, fold, twist; Old English *fleax*, flax fabric, linen.

Accomplice, application, apply, comply, complex, complicate, complicity, deploy, display, duplicate, duplicity, employ, explicate, explicit, exploit, implicate, implication, multiply, perplex, plait, plexus, pliant, ply, replicate, reply, simplex, splay.

CONJUGATION

Join together. Inflexion of a verb; from Latin *coniugare*, to yoke together; *com*, with, together, and *iugare*, join; from *iugum*, yoke; *YEUG, to join.

Adjoin, adjust, conjoin, conjunct, enjoin, disjointed, join, joint, junction, juxtapose, subjugate, subject, yoke, yoga.

CONSEQUENCE

What follows together. Inference, conclusion drawn from circumstance. From Latin *consequi*, to follow after (continuously, without a break), ensue; *com*-, together, and *sequi*, through the etymon *SEKW, follow.

Associate, dissociate, execute, persecute, persue, second, segue-way, sequel, sequester, subsequent, suite.

CONSILIENCE

Concurrent, coincident leaping together. Latin *consilient*-, from; *com*-together; and *salire*, leap, jump; Latin *saliens*, Greek *hallesthai*, to leap, flow, run.

Salient, resilience, assail, assault.

COUNTENANCE

Held together. Old French *contenance*, demeanour, bearing, conduct (French *demener*, guide, conduct, live, dwell; from *de*-, completely, out, and *mener*, lead, direct; compare menace and monster through the *MEN, prominence, projection); Latin *continentia*, restraint, abstemiousness, moderation: literally “the way one contains oneself”, from *continere*, hold together, enclose; *com*-, with, together, and *tenere*, hold, keep, possess; from *TEN, stretch; Latin *tendere*, extend; compare Old French *tens*, time, period, era; occasion, opportunity, weather; Latin *tempus*, an interval/stretch of time.

Contain, continent, tenet, tenable, tenement, incontinent.

CRISIS

Decisive point or state of things; imminent condition of change. Greek *krisis*, turning point; from *krinein*, discriminate, separate, decide, judge; *KREI, to sieve, distinguish by separating.

Critic, criterion, discern, discreet, decree, discriminate, excrement, secret.

DEFER

Delay, put off, postpone, transfer. Latin *differre*, differentiate, carry apart, scatter, disperse; from *dis-*, apart, away from; and *ferre*/Greek *pherein*, bear, carry, ferry—from *BHER, bear, carry.

Bairn, barrow, bear, bier, birth, burden, circumference, confer, differ, differentiate, indifferent, ferry, fertile, furtive, metaphor, offer, periphery, prefer, proffer, proliferate, refer, suffer, transfer.

DENSITY

Thickness, compactness, impropriety. Latin *densus*, thick, crowded, cloudy, turbid; Greek *dasy*, shaggy, thick with leaves, difficult to penetrate. Ambiguously, the likely derivation is Latin *tenere*, hold, from the etymon; *TEN, tense, stretched, rendered thin.

Condense, intense, attenuate; contain, detain, diatonic, distend, entertain, extend, intend, maintain, obtain, portend, retain, sustain, temple, temporal, tenacious, tend, tendon, tendril, tenet, tenon, tense, tension, tent, tenure, thin, tone, tonic.

DISCREPANCY

Severed contrariety. Latin *discrepantia*, discordance; *discrepare*, sound differently, differ; from *dis-*, apart, off, and the etymon *SKER, cut, sever.

Carnage, curt, excoriate, scabbard, scar, scarp, score, scrape, shard, share, shear, shore, skirt.

EKSTASIS

Astonishing, stand out. Latin *extasis*, Greek *ekstasis*, entrancement, astonishment, insanity; removal from a proper place; *existanai*, displace, put out of place, drive out of the mind; from *ek*, *ex*, out and *histanai*, place, stand; in turn from the etymon *STA, stand, make firm.

Apostasy, circumstance, consist, constant, constitute, destination, distance, ecstasy, establish, estate, history, instant, instauration, institute, interstice, obstacle, solstice, stable, stage, stance, stand, stasis, state, station, statue, stay, stead, stem, steer, store, stud, substance, system.

EMERGENCE

Unforeseen marginal breach. Latin *emergere*, bring forth, rise up, come forth; from *ex-*, out, and *mergere*, dip, sink, plunge, immerse; from *MERG—margin, edge, bring, border: hence to come out/exceed/eclipse a boundary, a withholding limit. Gothic *marka*, boundary, frontier—from *MEZGO, dip, sink, wash, plunge, absorb. Compare solicitous, from Latin *solicitare*, disturb, rouse, trouble, harass, provoke, unclench; *sollus*, whole (distinct, alone); *citus*, aroused; *ciere*, shake, shimmer (glitter, glisten, shine), shudder, tremble, agitate, move.

Demarcation, emarginate, landmark, march, mark, remark, remarkable.

FOLD

Bend back, wrap up, furl, complexify, densify, produce porosities, full cloth, aerate. From the etymon *PEL, fold, plait, pocket; skin, hide, pelt; thrust, strike, drive; Latin *polire*, make smooth, embellish, ornament, decorate, improve, refine; *politus*, refined, elegant, accomplished, cultured, polite; *pullulare*, sprout, come forth, grow, multiply, increase, enrich. Compare *PLEK, plait; Greek *plekein*, plait, braid, wind, twine, twist.

Full, impel, compel, expel, propel, polish, polite, pullulate, ply, multiply, complex, complexion, complicate, complicity, deploy, display, duplicate, explicit, flax, perplex, pleat, pliable, replica, reply, splay.

FRAGMENT

Broken bit. Latin *fragmentum*, remnant, piece broken off; *frangere*, to break, shatter, fracture (by striking, dividing, violating, destroying)—from *BHREG, to break, Compare Sanskrit *bhraj*, breaking-forth (out of the mountain).

Break, breach, diffract, refract, infraction, infringe, fractal, fraction, fragile, frangible, brake, brick.

GARDEN

Hortus conclusus. Greek *chortos*/Latin *hortus*, (enclosed) yard, court, garden; from *GHA/*KHA, gape, yawn; *GHER, seize, grasp, hold, contain, gird. Compare Greek *khaos*, *khasma*, abyss; French *jardin*/Anglosaxon *geard*, yard, enclosed garden; Gothic *gards*, house; *garda*, field; Greek *choros*, round/ring dance; *chorde*, chord, string of gut, yarn; *GwHER, to glow; Sanskrit *gbr*, to shine; and the *garbhagriha*, the central space of a Hindu temple in which the deity is installed, from *garbha*, seed/womb and *griha*, grasp/house.

Court, girdle, curtain, horticulture, orchard, gear, garb, yarn, yard, corner, corn, grain, kernel, horn, hornet, cardiac, cordial, accord, concord, cord, chord, accord, charm, horn, cereal, crescent, increase, accrete, accrue, crew, cruel, crude, genesis, generate, genius, genuine, cosmogony, kind, gender, generic, general, generous, gnostic, gnomon, know, yarn, yard.

GESTURE

Manifest comportment. Latin *gesta*, bearing, disposition, posture, carriage, conduct, gait, comportment—hence an ethical condition (how we are/ behave, in a particular place, with/ before others); Latin *gesta*, French *geste*, action, deed, exploit; Latin *gerere*/*agere*, impulse, act, drive forward, do, perform—from *AG, to drive, draw out, draw forth, move. Compare Old English *gast* (ghost, guest)—that is, breath, spirit, soul, appearance, apparition, spectre—and guest/host, that is, a chance comer, stranger, alien. “Be my guest” = go right ahead—that is, act, perform. French *gestion*, *agencement*: (strategic) management, in the sense of the coordination or administration of governance; how motion and action are governed in a state, a collective, a mind, a body. Gesture is twofold: drawing out from and indicating/pointing out towards—that is, projection, trajectory, trajectory, destination, destiny.

Action, actor, agency, agenda, exigency, navigate.

GLEAM

Radiant glimmer. Old English *glaem*, brightness, splendour, radiance, beauty; Proto-Germanic *glaimiz* and Old Saxon *glimo*, brightness; Middle High German *glim*, spark; German *glimmen*, glimmer, glow—from

*GHEL, shine. Greek *khloros*/Latin *galbus*/German *gelb*, greenish-yellow; Greek *kholos*, bile, gall, bitterness, wrath; Old Irish *glass*/Breton *glas*, green.

Chloride, choler, cholesterol, gall, gild, glad, glance, glade, glass, glee, glide, glimpse, glimmer, glisten, glitter, gloaming, gloom, gloss, glow, glower, glum, gold, jaundice, melancholy, yellow.

GLOAMING

Obscure glow. Old English *glowan*, to glow red hot, shine; Proto-Germanic *glo*, blaze; German *gluben*, glow, glitter, shine; Danish *glo*, stare, gaze upon; Old English *glomung*/*glom*, twilight)—from *GHEL, shine. Compare Latin *crepusculum*, dusk, dim, indistinct; *creper*, obscure, uncertain; Proto-Italic, *krepos*, twilight. The gloaming is dusk, a partial darkness between day and night, light and dark. See Middle English *dosc*, obscure, not bright, darkening, shadowy, drained of colour; Old English *dox*/*duco*, dark haired, dark coloured; Swedish *duska*, misty; Latin *fuscus*, dark; Latin *fumus*, smoke; Italian *sfumato*, smoked; Sanskrit *dhusarah*, dust coloured; Old High German *dusin*, pale yellow; German *Dunst*, mist, vapour—from *DHEU, dust, smoke, vapour.

GLOOM

Sombre, glistening darkness. Scottish *gloom*, glum, sullen, moody, frowning; from Middle English *gloumen*, become dark; Low German *glum*, gloomy, troubled, turbid; Norwegian *glome*, stare somberly; Middle Low German *glum*, turbid; Dutch *gluren*, to leer. Compare Latin *caliginem*, mistiness, fog, gloom, obscurity, dimness, dark, and Greek *kolla*, glue; colloidal—in the sense that the darkening of gloom is due to densification and complexification in the texture of something, which consequently thickens and becomes glutinous, viscous, sticky, gooey. The etymon *GHEL, to shine, is shared with gleam and gloaming.

IMMANENT

Menacing prominence. Latin *immanere*, indwelling, remaining within; from *in-*, into, in, upon, on, and *manere*, dwell, remain, tarry—from *MEN, remain. Compare advent, from Latin *ad*, to, and *venire*, come; and emergence, from Latin *ex*, out, and *mergere*—from *MERG, margin. See also *MEN, projection, prominence.

Amount, demeanour, emanate, eminence, manor, manse, mansion, menace, mons, montage, mountain, mouth, permanent, promenade, prominent, remain, remainder, surmount.

INDETERMINATE

Undeterminable prominence. Latin *in-*, not, *de-* out, off, *TER, term, boundary, limit and *MEN, projection, prominence; *determinen*, settle, decide upon, define, fix the bounds of, limit in time or extent; *determinare*, enclose, bound, set limits to; from *in-*, not, opposite of, *de-*, down, away from, off, and *terminus*, end, limit—from *TER, peg, post, stone, boundary marker, goal; Sanskrit *tarari*, pass/cross over; Greek *terma*, boundary, end point, limit; *horos*, boundary, horizon; Latin *terme*, time limit, appointed period or place, duration; Old English *termen*, term, end; Roman *Terminus*, presiding deity of boundaries and landmarks. Compare Latin *terror*, great fear, dread, alarm, panic; *terrere*, terrible, filled with fright; *tremulus*/Greek *treein*, tremble, shake; *tremein*, shiver, quake—from *TRES/*TREM, tremble/*TROS, make afraid; Latin *terra*, earth; and French *terroir*, characteristic qualities of a place, atmosphere, ambience—from *TERS, dry, barren.

Term, terminal, terrestrial, terrace, terrain, terrene, territory, terror, torrent, torrid.

INTERSTICE

What stands between limits. Latin *interstitium*, interval, space between; from *inter*, between, and *stare*, stand—from *STA, stand, make/be firm; equally from *in-*, in, into, in between, *TER, boundary, limit, term and *STA, stand.

Interval, instant.

MARGIN

Marked borderline. Latin *marginem/margo*, edge, rim, brink, border, boundary, limit term—from *MERG, boundary, border. Compare “mark”, trace impression, signature; through words related to edge districts (generally damp or swampy; hence the term is cognate with Latin *mare*, water and *mater*—Greek *meter*—mother) and to the markers that delineate and signal them, such as pillars, posts, cairns; Proto-Germanic

mark, forest, frontier; German *Mark*, boundary land; *merken*, mark, note; Old High German *marchon*, limit, plan out; Old French *merchier*, mark, note, stamp, brand.

Demarcation, emarginate, landmark, march, mark, remark, remarkable.

MATRIX

What enables emergence. Latin *mater*, Greek *meter*, Sanskrit *matar*, mother; Latin *matrix*, womb, procreative, generative region; nourishing/enabling context)—from *MA/*ME/*MEN/*MED, measure. The etymon *MAN is particularly rich and gives rise to a complex lexicon around five related ideas: abiding or remaining (manor, manse, mansion, *ménage*, menial, immanence, permanence, remainder); remembering and thinking (admonish, amnesia, commemoration, comment, dement, demonstrate, mania, memento, mental, mention, mentor, mind, mnemonic, *Mnemosyne*, money, remembrance, reminiscence, human, man [as the being who remembers, who weighs up, who discriminates]); projecting (amount, demeanour, eminence, mane, menace, monster, monstration, montage, mount, mountain, mouth, promenade, prominence, promontory, surmount); measuring and making (demand, command, emancipate, maintain, manage, mandate, manoeuvre, manifest, manipulate, manner, manual, manufacture, manuscript, recommend, remand).

Mat, matter, mattress, mother, mud.

MELANCHOLIA

Gloaming blackness. Greek *melankholia*, sadness, sullenness, gloom, excess of black bile, gall; *melas*, black and *khole*, bile (secretion of the spleen and one of the body's four humours), gall, wrath; *khloros*, pale green, greenish yellow; *kholos*, green, yellow—from *GHEL, shine.

Chloride, choler, cholesterol, gall, gild, glad, glance, glade, glass, gleam, glee, glide, glimpse, glimmer, glisten, glitter, gloaming, gloom, gloss, glow, glower, glum, gold, jaundice, melancholia, yellow.

METAPHOR

Carried over with. Latin/Greek *metaphora*, carry over (the sense from one word to another); change place with; Greek *metapherein*, transfer, carry over, change, alter (the sense of a word)—from *meta-*, over, across, higher,

beyond; after, behind; among, between; changed, altered; in the midst of, in common with, between; *ME, in the middle; German *mit*, with, together, among; and *pherein*, carry, bear, ferry; *BHER, carry.

MILIEU

Middle place. French *mi-*, half, in between, mean; and *lieu*, place, situation, setting, position, rank. Greek *mesos*, Latin *medius*, between, from the middle. The etymon is *MEDHYO, middle; related to *MED, measure. Latin *locum*, *locus*, place, locality, region, country, degree, rank, order—translating Greek *topos*, place, region, space; topic of a speech (Greek *logos*, from the etymon *TOLKW, to speak; LEG, collect, gather and *LOK, fasten, lock).

Amid, intermediate, mean, medial, mediate, meditate, medium, middle, midst, moiety, mullion; allocate, analogy, catalogue, dialog, dislocate, lectern, lecture, legal, legislate, legitimate, lexicon, local, locale, location, locality, logic, neglect, privilege, prologue, sacrilege, tautology; atopy, dystopia, topic, topography, utopia.

MOOD

Calibrated inner disposition. Old English *mod*, heart, frame of mind, disposition, spirit; Proto-Germanic *mōda-*; Old Saxon *mod*, intellect, mind, courage; Greek *medomai*, mindfulness, inwardness; Latin *meditare*, reflect on, consider; *modus*, measure, manner; *modestus*, moderate, modest; *modernus*, modern; *mederi*, heal, cure; Old English *metan*, measure out, mete out, allot—from *MED, measure, calibrate, apportion; Old English *mod*, heart, frame of mind.

Accommodate, commodious, commodity, immediate, manner, measure, medial, mediate, medical, meditation, medium, mete, middle, midst, mind, mode, model, moderation, modern, modest, modulate, mold, mould, remedy, model, modern, modest, modulate, mold, mould, premeditate.

PERTUBATION

Thorough disturbance. Latin *perturbare*, cause disorder in, confuse; from *per*, through, forward, and *turbare*, disturb, confuse, cause turmoil; *turbare*, confuse, bewilder; *turba*, turmoil, crowd; *turbidus*, muddy, opaque, unclear.

Disturb, turbid, trouble, turbine, turbulent.

POROSITY

Opportunity of passage. Latin *poros*, pore, passage, way, journey; from *PER, forward, though, in front of, lead, pass over.

Aporia, export, fare, ferry, firth, fjord, ford, import, important, importune, opportune, opportunity, porch, pore, port, portal, portico, practical, rapport, support, transport.

POTENTIALITY

Suspended compossibility. Latin *potentia*, power, might, force, authority, influence; *potens*, powerful; *potis*, ability, capability, availability, possibility; *POTI, powerful, lord.

Despot, host, possess, possibility, potency, potentate, power.

REMEMBRANCE

Prominent recollection. Latin *mens*, mind, understanding, reason (as capacity to weigh up, measure); *memini*, I remember; Old English *gemynd*, memory, remembrance, conscious mind, intellect—from *MEN, to think, compare, weigh up. Compare *ME/*MED, measure; and *MEN, project, prominent. Sanskrit *manas*, mind, spirit; *matih*, thought; *Manu*, progenitor of the human race; Greek *memonā*, yearn; *mania*, madness; *mantis*, seer, diviner.

Amnesia, anamnesis, automatic, mania, memento, mental, mind, mnemonic, Mnemosyne, reminiscence, demonstrate, summon, premonition, prominent, monster, monument, muse, museum, music, dimension, geometry, immense, mensural, month, Monday, moon, metre, parameter, perimeter, semester, symmetry, money, monitor.

REVERIE

Awakened dream. Old High German: *warten*, to look out for, to expect; *WER = perceive, to be(come a)ware of; to be wary, cautious, prudent, guarded, reserved; to watch out for; and *WER, cover, shut, close, seal-off, conceal, protect—hence to become aware of (and to safeguard) what is concealed. Compare weir, dam, fence, enclosure, defence, protection; guard(ed/ian), warder, keeper, custodian. Old French *raver*, variant of *resver*, to dream, wander, rave, stray, rove.

Aware, guard, rave, reef, regard, reserve, revere, rove, steward, warden, wardrobe, ware, wary, weir.

RHYTHM

Articulated flow. Greek *rhythmos*, measured movement, calibrated flow, proportion, symmetry, arrangement, order, form, shape, disposition; from *rhein*, flow, *rheois*, flowing stream—through the etymon *SREU, flow—and the dental stop T/D, arrest, come to a halt, discontinue; from the etymon *DHE, set, put, do, establish, perform, bring about.

Catarrh, diarrhea, rheumatic, stream. Artifact, artifice, benefit, counterfeited, deed, edify, edifice, effect, efficacious, façade, fact, factory, feat, manufacture, surface, surfeit, theme, thesis.

SHIMMER

Concealed gleam. Proto Germanic *SKIM, from *SKAI, gleam, shine; Old English *scimian*, glisten, shine; *scinan*, shed light, be resplendent; Gothic *skeinan*, to shine, appear; likely from the Greek *skia*, shadow, shade, cloud, sky; *skene*, stage, tent—all from *SKEU, cover, conceal.

Chiaroscuro, hide, hoard, huddle, obscure, scene, skein, skin, skim, sky.

SPACE

Span. Latin *spatium*, room, area, distance, stretch of time; interval; ground, land, territory—from *SPA, span, distance between thumb and little finger; French *espan*, hand's width; Middle Dutch/German *spannen*, join, fasten, link, connect; *SPEN, draw, stretch, spin; encircle with the hands; form an arch over something; Latin *pendere*, hang; *pondus*, weight; *pensare*, think, consider, weigh up.

Span, spanner, spatiality, spin, suspend.

SUBLIME

Passage under the lintel. Latin *sublimis*, raised, elevated, lofty, exalted, eminent; from *sub-*, under, up to, and *limen*, lintel, threshold, sill. Sanskrit *upa*, near, under, up to; Greek *hypo*/Latin *sub*, under, below; Latin *limitare*, bound, limit, fix; *limes*, boundary, limit, frontier, embankment

between fields; *limen*, threshold; *limus*, transverse, oblique; Greek *leimma* residue, remnant, remainder—from *leipo*, leave (behind), forsake, lag, lack.

Delimit, limit, liminal, limitation, subliminal, sublimation.

SUSPEND

Hang up from under. Latin *suspendere*, hang up, kill by hanging; render uncertain, doubtful; stay, stop, interrupt, set aside temporarily—from *sub-*, under, and *pendere*, hang, weigh; *SPEN, span, draw, stretch, spin; *ponderosus*, heavy, full of meaning; *pondus*, weight; compare French *pondre*, lay/place (an egg); Greek *pauein*/Latin *pausare*, stop, hold back, arrest; hesitate (due to uncertainty); French *pausee*, pause, interruption.

Append, appendix, compendium, depend, expend, pendentive, pendular, ponderous, pension, penthouse, perpendicular, ponder, poise, pause, propensity, space, span, spanner, spatiality, spin.

TECTONICS

Art and tact of arrangement. Greek *tektonikos*, building; *tekton*, builder, carpenter; *techne*, art; from *TEK, weave, fabricate, fashion, arrange, dispose, assemble, join, connect. Cognate with tact and touch through the etymon *TAG, touch, handle; Latin *tangere*, *taxare*, touch.

Architect, contact, context, integrate, tact, tactic, tactile, tangent, taxis, technic, technology, text, tissue, touch.

TEMPER

Moderated (perilous) tension. Latin *temperare*, Old English *temprian*, observe proper measure, restrain within limits, moderated, modified, mixed in due proportion, regulated, governed. Compare Latin *temperamentum*, proper mixture, a mixing in due proportion, modified, blended; self-restraint (against excess) and *temperatura*, character or nature of a substance; tempering, moderation; *temperare*, mix in due proportion, modify, blend; restrain oneself; and *tempus*, time as the proper and opportune time or season (for something)—all from *TEN, stretch, measure (by stretching a string/chord) and *PER, which has three main related senses: (1) forward (Sanskrit *pari*, around, about, through; *pra*, before, forward, forth; Greek *peri*, around, about, near, beyond; *pera*, across, beyond; Latin *prae*, before; Old English *fore*, before, in front of; German

vor, for); (2) through (Greek *poros*, journey, passage, way; *perein*, pierce through; Latin *portare*, carry; *porta*, gate, door, passageway; *portus*, port, harbour, entrance; *peritus*, experienced; Old English *faran*, to go, journey; Old Norse *fjord*, inlet, estuary); (3) experience (Latin *experiri*, try; *periculum*, trial, risk, danger, peril).

Distemper, intemperate, temenos, temperate, temperance, temperament, temperature, temple, tempest, temporality, time.

Afford, appropriate, before, frame, furnish, improve, paradise, paramount, perform, perpendicular, pervade, pierce, porosity, principle, principal, problem, produce, profane, profit, profound, proper, propinquity, provide, proud.

Aporia, comportment, deport, export, fare, ferry, ford, port, import, opportune, opportunity, porch, pore, porosity, portico, portiere, transport.

Empiric, experience, experiment, expert, fear, parlous, peril, pirate.

TIME

Sequestered expanse. Greek *temnein*, cut; *tomos*, volume, section of a book, piece cut off and delineated—from *TEM, cut; severed place or region; *TEN, stretch; space strung, marked out and measured; Greek *temenos*, sacred area, place cut off; Latin *templum*, consecrated ground, sacred precinct (as cut off from a profane expanse); Latin *temporalis*, of time, for a time; *tempus*, season, moment, proper time, opportunity (cognate with Greek *kairos*, opportunity, opposing *khronos*, calculated time); Proto-Italic *tempos*, stretch, measure; an interval or stretch of time.

Atom, contemplate, dichotomy, epitome, temporal, temple, tension, tome, tone.

UNDECIDABLE

Ambiguously imbricated. French *indécidable*, indeterminable, from *in-/un-*, not, and Old French *decider*; Latin *decidere*, decide, determine, settle; from *de-*, off, and *caedere*, cut, strike down, fell, slay. The etymon is *KAEID, strike. What is so intertwined or knotted as to be incapable of being unravell'd. Ambiguous, uncertain, hesitant, wavering. What cannot be cut off, sequestered, decided.

Cut, *caesura*, chisel, circumcision, concise, excise, incise, precise, scissors, suicide.

WAVER

Tremulous vacillation. Old English *waefre*, *weyveren*, indecisive, restless, wavering; *wafian*, wave, fluctuate—from *HUEBH, move to and fro, undulate, weave; *WEGH, go, move; *WEIP, turn, vacillate, tremble; Latin *vibrare*, set in tremulous motion, move quickly to and fro, quiver, tremble, shake; Old English *wipan*, wipe. Compare Old English *wefan*, weave, interlace yarn; devise, contrive, arrange; German *weben*, weave.

Vibrant, vibrate, waive, waiver, weave, wipe, whip.



Postscript

Raymond Burnier's frontispiece photograph to Stella Kramrisch's seminal *The Hindu Temple*, first published in 1949 and still in print, fairly well resumes everything I had wanted to say about atmosphere, cinema and architecture (Fig. 1). The scene is of Amarakantaka in Baghelkhand:

From the days of the '*Matsya Purana*' to the present, this sacred site enveloped in its dust and the smoke of its fires, the pilgrims congregated there. The throng of the people and their leisure fills the space between the shrines in worship—or in ruins. There, under the trees, and nest the water, their clothes have been spread to dry; the various daily actions performed outside the temples are as much part of the life at the Tirtha as the rites of 'drying up' (*sosana*). The impurities of the subtle body and purifying the bodily elements (*bhutusuddhi*) of the *Sadhaka* who has entered the temple.¹

Common to many Hindu temple towns, the site is a fabricated, dense and complex field of buildings: a network of shrines and structures dedicated to the diverse gods of a multiple, polytheistic world view that is at the same time balanced on the threefold mutual unity or *trimurti* of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. In this case, *Amarakantaka* is locked into and locks or mobilizes a territorial circumstance, from which it draws its mythic and effective ritual significance and efficacy as a pilgrimage site. It

¹ Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu temple* (Calcutta: The University of Calcutta, 1946), 365.

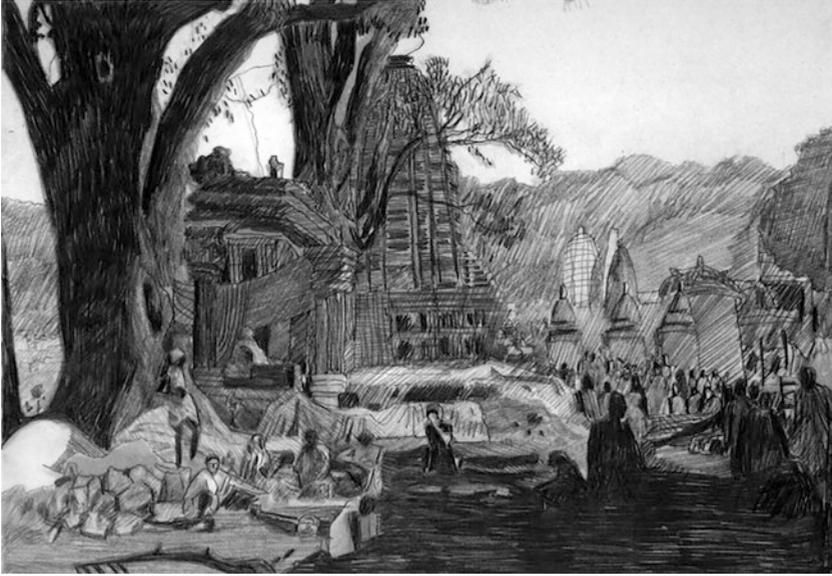


Fig. 1 After Raymond Burnier. Frontispiece, in Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple* (Calcutta: The University of Calcutta, 1949. Drawing Michael Tawa)

is located at the meeting of the *Vindhya* and *Satpura* ranges about the *Maikal Hills*, where the *Narmada*, *Son* and *Mahanadi Rivers* flow west, east and north. Multiple ritual and ceremonial practices coincide there, producing spatialities and temporalities that concentrate and condense or that expand and dilate across the hours, the day and night, the seasons and the years. Around these temples and shrines, comportment and activities are precisely codified and programmed. But the interstitial space between them—an extended contexture of platforms, walls, ledges and steps, interspersed by the massive trunks and broad, darkly shading foliage of Banyan figs—remains largely unprogrammed and open to the multiple possibilities of the everyday, to the makeshift and to happenstance.

This generalized ambiance functions as an assemblage—spatial, temporal, social, ceremonial, ritual, symbolic—as a circumstance, as an infrastructure, discrepant yet open and available, enabling and affording the

unfolding of latent, consilient and resonant potential. What unfolds across the day is consequential on the propensities offered by the setup, as these are interacted with by the human beings who populate it. From the numerous activities that take place here, and that interact in fluctuating moments of juxtaposed concord and cacophony, emerges an atmosphere running the full elemental and sensory gamut: sight, fire and smoke; touch, air and haze; taste, water and mist; smell, earth and aroma; hearing, ether and vibration. Periods of calculated, intense attentiveness to the proper sequences and due processes of ritual alternate with times of indefinite extensivity and languor. Interiorized reflectiveness, absorbed meditation, somnolence, sleep or reverie rhyme with periods of sustained, expansive circumspection. What there is of architecture here does not impose or insist; rather it withdraws. It waits and attends to the indefinite possibilities of gathering and dispersing and to the indefinite combinations and conjugations of program and process. The architectonics of the circumstantial here set up an open infrastructure of solicitation and neighbourhood.

Were this still image to be animated as a cinematic sequence, one could imagine the camera functioning as an apparatus of circumspective attentiveness to what might come into and out of the frame or as a mobile and wandering cadre scanning or tracking the situation, delaying provisionally here and there to dwell on one or another of the indefinite array of life-worlds harboured in the midst: watching, waiting and looking out for combinations and conjugations that might produce a charge, a tension, a productive amalgam of people and place, a potentially resonant assemblage or ambiance.

Should I find myself there, in a mood attuned to the circumstantial ambiance of the place, I might have an intimation of something like the fragrance of the sacred. I might be affected by an altered expanding spatiality of wavering borderlines that refuse classification or by an altered dilated temporality that eclipses chronological time. The insistent and ambiguous inextricability of sacred and secular; of divine, human, vegetal and animal; of the sweet and the acrid; of the sharp and the hazy; of the solid and the vaporous, conspire to produce a distinctive meteorology, a characteristic climate, a temperature, a time and a tonality that I might sense as circumambient atmosphere. Yet the apparent vagueness and ambivalence of such an *ekstasis* look to be wholly dependent on a series of very precise coincidental conditions. I could ascertain these through a

process of accurate mapping: the site, its orientation, the spatial layout, the season, the time of the day, the specific ceremonies and rituals associated with the various temples and shrines, the number of people, their position, their provenance, their faith, the collectivities they form, the elemental and material substances and processes they handle and implement and the multiple sounds they produce. Cinema and architecture make room for these things, enable them to come forth and in so doing become genuinely atmospheric.

REFERENCES

- Adorno, Theodor W. 1967. "Notes on Kafka." In *Prisms*. Transl. S. and S. Weber, 243–71. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Agamben, Giorgio. 2011. *Nudities*. Transl. David Kishik and Stephan Pedatella. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 2009. *What is an apparatus? and other essays*. Transl. D. Kishik and S. Pedatella. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 2000. *Means without ends. Notes on politics*. Transl. V. Binetti and C. Casal'ina. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 1999. *Potentialities*. Transl. D. Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 1991. *Language and death*. Transl. Karen E. Pinkus with Michael Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 1990. *The coming community*. Transl. M. Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 2008. K. In Justin Clemens, Nicholas Heron and Alex Murray. *The work of Giorgio Agamben: law, literature, life*, 13–27. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Alberti, Leon Battista. 1991. *On the art of building in ten books*. Transl. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach and Robert Tavenor. Boston, MA: MIT Press.
- Anthony, Theo. 2021. *All light, everywhere*. Future Image Solutions, Super LTD. <https://alllightexpanded.com/>. Accessed 14 February 2022.
- Antonioni, Michelangelo. 1996. *The architecture of vision. Writings and interviews on cinema*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Arndt, W. 1964. The Australian evolution of the Wandjinas from rainclouds. *Oceania* 34. 3: 161–169.

- Aristotle. *Meteorology*. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/meteorology.html>. Accessed 11 February 2022.
- . *Politics*. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html>. Accessed 10 January 2022.
- . *Nicomachian ethics*. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>
- Aureli, Pier Vittorio. 2014. The myth about corridors. <https://www.behance.net/gallery/2104080/The-Myth-About-Corridors>. Accessed 25 August 2021.
- Peponis, John, Sonit Bafna, Salim Dahabreh and Fehmi Dogan. 2015. Configurational meaning and conceptual shifts in design. *The Journal of Architecture* 20.2: 1–26.
- Baldwyn Smith, E. 1971. *The dome. A study in the history of ideas*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Barthes, Roland. 1981. *Camera lucida: reflections on photography*. Transl. R. Howard. New York: Hill and Wang.
- . 1977. *Image music text*. Transl. S. Heath. London: Fontana Press.
- Bataille, Georges. 1997. Kafka. In *Literature and evil*. Transl. A. Hamilton, 149–169. London: Marion Boyars.
- Baudelaire, Charles. 2016. *Le spleen de Paris*. Bibebook. https://www.bibebook.com/files/ebook/libre/V2/ baudelaire_charles_-_le_spleen_de_paris.pdf. Accessed 11 February 2022.
- Bégout, Bruce. 2020. *Le concept d'ambiance*. Paris: Seuil.
- Benjamin, Walter. 1969. Some reflections on Kafka. Transl. R. Livingstone. In *Illuminations*. Transl. H. Zorn, 141–145. New York: Schocken Books.
- . 1999. Franz Kafka on the tenth anniversary of his death. In *Selected writings volume 2: 1927–1934*, 794–818. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- . 2007. The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. In *Illuminations*. Transl. H. Zohn, 217–252. New York: Schoken Books.
- . 1985. *The origin of german tragic drama*. Trans. J. Osborne. London: Verso.
- Benjamin, Walter and Asja Lacis, 1978. Naples. In *Reflections*. Trans. Edmond Jephcott. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovic, 163–73.
- Bennett, Michael. 2020. *Pathfinders. A history of aboriginal trackers in NSW*. Sydney: Newsouth Publishing.
- Bertillon, Alphonse. 1893. *Instructions signaletiques*. Melun: Imprimerie Administrative. <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/wf8qfm5e>. Accessed 14 February 2022.
- Blanchot, Maurice. 1997. Kafka and Brod. In *Friendship*. Transl. E. Rottenberg, 240–251. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Blattner, William. 2005. 'Temporality.' *A companion to Heidegger*, eds. H. L. Dreyfus and M. Wrathall, 311–324. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Böhme, Gernot. 2018. *The aesthetics of atmospheres*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- . 2017. Atmospheric architectures: the aesthetics of felt spaces. Transl. and ed. A. Chr. Engels-Schwarzpaul. London: Bloomsbury.

- . 2016. *Architectural atmospheres*, eds. P. Ursprung and C. Borch. London: Taylor and Francis.
- . 2013. Atmosphere as mindful physical presence in space. *OASE Journal for Architecture*: 21–32.
- . 2000. Acoustic atmospheres: a contribution to the study of ecological aesthetics. *The Soundscape: Journal of Acoustic Ecology* 1. 1: 15.
- Bonfand, Alain. 2003. *Le Cinéma de Michelangelo Antonioni*. Paris: Éditions Images Modernes.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. 1975. Kafka and his precursors. In *Other inquisitions 1937–1952*. Transl. Ruth L.C. Simms. Austin: University of Texas: 363–365.
- Bresson, Robert. 1988. *Notes sur le cinématographe*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Butler, Judith. 1997. *The psychic life of power: theories in subjection*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Carr, Flora. 2018. The Power of the Dog: release date, cast and trailer for Jane Campion's Netflix western. In *Radio Times*, 30 November. <https://www.radiotimes.com/movies/the-power-of-the-dog-release-date-netflix/>. Accessed 16 February 2022
- Carus, Carl Gustav. 2002. *Nine letters on landscape painting, written in the years 1815–1824; with a letter from Goethe by way of introduction*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute.
- Connor, Steve. 2010. *The matter of air. Science and the art of the ethereal*. London: Reaction Books.
- Conrad, Joseph. 1910. *Heart of darkness*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. 1977. *Selected papers. Volume I*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Corngold, Stanley. 1988. *Franz Kafka: the necessity of form*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- . 2011. *Franz Kafka: The ghosts in the machine*. New York: Princeton University Press.
- . 2004. *Lambent traces: Franz Kafka*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- de Figueiredo Neves, Gustavo Zen, Nuria Pérez Gallardo and Francisco Arthur da Silva Vecchia. 2017. A short critical history on the development of meteorology and climatology. In *Climate* 5.23, 1.
- DeLanda, Manuel. 2006. *A new philosophy of society. Assemblage theory and social complexity*. London: Continuum.
- . 2012. Emergence, Causality and Realism. In *Architectural Theory Review* 17.1: 3–16.
- . 2010. *Philosophy and simulation. The emergence of synthetic reason*. London: Continuum.
- Delatte, Armand 1932. *La catoptromancie grecque et ses dérivés*. Paris: Librairie E.Droz.
- Deleuze, Gilles. 2006. *The fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*. London: Continuum.

- . *What is philosophy*. 1994. Transl. J. Tomlinson and G. Burchell. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*. 1989a. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. London & New York: The Athlone Press, 1989.
- . *Cinema 2: The Time Image*. 1989b. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. London & New York: The Athlone Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. 1986. *Kafka: toward a minor literature*. Transl. D. Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 1993. *A thousand plateaus. Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Transl. B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, Giles and Claire Parnet. 2002. The actual and the virtual. In *Dialogues*. Transl. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam., 148–152. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Denny, Don. 1982. The Last Judgment tympanum at Autun: its sources and meaning. In *Speculum* 57. 3.
- Dickens, Charles. *Bleak House*. <http://www.online-literature.com/dickens/bleakhouse/2/>. Accessed 14 February 2022.
- Dubois, Ted Alan. 1983. *Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart's ideen zu einer Esthetik der Tonkunst: an annotated translation*. Los Angeles: University of Southern California, PhD Dissertation.
- Dufour, Eric. *David Lynch: matière, temps et image*. Paris: Vrin, 2008.
- Dufrenne, Mikel. 1973. *The phenomenology of aesthetic experience*. Transl. E.S. Casey Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Elpidorou, Andreas and Freeman, Lauren. 2015. Affectivity in Heidegger I: moods and emotions in Being and Time. In *Philosophy Compass* 10: 661–671.
- Empson, William. 1949. *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- . 2020. *The structure of complex words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Evans, Robin. 1997. *Translations from drawing to building and other essays*. London: Architectural Association.
- Ferriss, Suzanne. 1990. The Avoidance of What's Difficult: Critical Response to Hopkins' Henry Purcell. In *The Hopkins Quarterly*, 17: 49–62.
- Flores, Ricardo and Prats, Eva. 2014. *Thought by hand: the architecture of Flores Prats*. Mexico City: Arquine.
- . 2008. *Through the canvas: architecture inside Dutch paintings*. Barcelona and Sydney: ACTAR and The University of New South Wales
- Foster, E. S. 2021. *The Works of Aristotle*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927 https://archive.org/stream/worksof aristotle07 arisuoft/worksof aristotle07 arisuoft_djvu.txt. Accessed 9 September 2021.
- Foucault, Michel. 1994. *The order of things. An archaeology of the human sciences*. New York: Vintage Books.
- . 2008. *The birth of biopolitics: lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*. Transl. G. Burchell. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

- . 1980. *Power/knowledge. Selected interviews & other writings 1972–1977*. Transl. C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham and K. Soper. New York: Pantheon.
- . 1977. *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. New York: Random House.
- Freeman, Lauren. 2014. Towards a phenomenology of mood. In *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 52.4: 445–476.
- Freeman, Lauren and Elpidorou, Andreas. 2015. Affectivity in Heidegger II: temporality, boredom, and beyond. In *Philosophy Compass* 10.10: 672–684.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1914–1916. *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume 14. London: The Hogarth Press.
- Gandy, Matthew. 2017. Urban atmospheres, in *Cultural Geographies* 24. 3, 2017: 353–374.
- Gardner, W.H. and Mackenzie, N.H. 1970. *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goetz, Benoît. 2011. *Théorie des maisons: l'habitation, la surprise*. Paris: Édition Verdier.
- Goldman, Peter. 2010. The meaning of meaning in Kafka's The castle. In *Anthropoetics* 15. 2 <http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap1502/1502Goldman/> Accessed 15 February 2022.
- Goldstein, Aron. 2014. The Castle, by Franz Kafka. In *Ex Libris, Architecture and World Literature*, <http://blogs.cornell.edu/exlibris/2014/03/21/the-castle-by-franz-kafka/>. Accessed 5 August 2020.
- Gombrich, Ernst H. 1995. *Shadows: the depiction of cast shadows in western art*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Greenblatt, Stephen, et al., eds. 2006. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Griffero, Tonino. 2010. *Atmospheres: aesthetics of emotional spaces*. Transl. S. De Sanctis. Surrey: Ashgate.
- Griffero, Tonino and Marco Tedeschini. Eds. 2019. Atmosphere and aesthetics. A plural perspective. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 77–92.
- Grivot, Denis and George Zarnecki. 1961. *Gislebertus, sculptor of Autun*. New York: Orion Press.
- Guénon, René. 1927. *Le roi du monde*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Hannan, Nicky Badcoe. 2018. A Cosmic *Wirtschaft*: mood, materiality and “meta-communication” in the Cinema of Béla Tarr. PhD Thesis, Sydney: The University of Sydney.
- Hanssen, Beatrice. 1999. Portrait of Melancholy (Benjamin, Warburg, Panofsky). In *MLN* 114.5: 991–1013.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1977. *The question concerning technology and other essays*. Transl. William Lovitt. New York: Harper & Row.
- . 1995. *The fundamental concepts of metaphysics: world, finitude, solitude*. Transl. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- . 1962. *Being and Time*. Transl. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- . 1992. *Parmenides*. Transl. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hesiod. *Theogony*. <https://users.pfw.edu/flemingd/Hesiod%20Theogony.pdf>. Accessed 29/07/2021.
- Heuser, Alan. 1968. *The shaping vision of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. New York: Archon Books.
- Holm, Isak Winkel. 2020. *Kafka's stereoscopes: the political function of a literary style*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Holm, Lorens. 1992. Corbusier: the invention of perspective and the post-Freudian eye. In *Assemblage* 18, 20–39.
- Huntington, Edith and Hamilton Cairns. 1999. *Plato. The Collected Dialogues*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ilnitshi, Gabriela. 2002. 'Musica mundana,' Aristotelian natural philosophy and Ptolemaic astronomy. In *Early Music History* 21: 37–74.
- James, Edgar S. 1996. *Australian dictionary of biography*. Melbourne University Press, Parkville.
- James, John. 2007. *In search of the unknown in medieval architecture*. London: Pindar Press.
- Jankovic, Vladimir. 2001. *Reading the skies: a cultural history of English weather, 1650–1820*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jullien, François. 1995. *The propensity of things. Towards a history of efficacy in China*. Transl. Janet Lloyd. New York: Zone Books.
- Kafka, Franz. 1922. *The castle*. Transl. Willa and Edwin Muir. London: Secker & Warburg.
- . *The trial*. 1925. Transl. D. Wyllie. New York: Dover.
- . *The trial*. 1971. *The complete stories*. New York: Schocken Books.
- . *The trial*. 2007. *Amerika: the missing person*. Transl. Michael Hofman. Harmondsworth: Penguin. <https://kingauthor.net/books/Franz%20Kafka/Amerika/Amerika%20-%20Franz%20Kafka.pdf>. Accessed 28 August 2021
- Karhausen, Lucien. 2011. *The bleeding of Mozart*. Exlibris.
- Katzenellenbogen, Adolf. 1944. The central tympanum at Vézelay: its encyclopedic meaning and its relation to the first crusade. In *The Art Bulletin* 26.3: 141–151.
- Kelly, Joseph L. 2009. Doubt, hope, and the comfort of the apocalypse: Hopkins concludes the Christian narrative with That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection. (Graduate English Association New Voices Conference. https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_conf_newvoice_2009/5. Accessed 10 February 2022.
- Kite, Stephen. 2016. *Shadow-makers: a cultural history of shadows in architecture*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

- Krebs, Angelika. 2017. *Stimmung*: from mood to atmosphere. In *Philosophia* 45: 1419–1436.
- Kristeva, Julia. 1989. *Black sun: depression and melancholia*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lacan, Jacques. 1968. *The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Latour, Bruno. 2003. Atmosphere: atmosphere. In Olaf Eliasson, The weather project. Exhibition catalogue. London: Tate Modern, 29–41. <http://cast.b-a-p.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2009/09/Latour.pdf>. Accessed 20 February 2022.
- Lee-Morrison, Lila. 2019. Francis Galton and the composite portrait. In *Image* 162, 85–99. <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783839448465-005/html>. Accessed 14 February 2022.
- Lipps, Theodor. 1909. *Leitfaden der Psychologie*. Leipzig: Engelmann.
- Lowe, Pat. 2002. *Hunters and trackers of the Australian desert*. Dural: Rosenberg Publishing.
- Marks, Laura U. 2000. *The skin of the film: intercultural cinema, embodiment, and the senses*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- . 2002. *Touch: sensuous theory and multisensory media*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mathews, Marthiel. 1964. Gislebertus hoc fecit. In *Gesta* 1.2: 22–28. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/766619>. Accessed 15 February 2022.
- Martin, Robert L. 1995. Musical “Topics” and expression in music. In *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 53.4, 421 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/430976>. Accessed 18 September 2021.
- Massumi, Brian. 2002. *Parables of the virtual: movement, affect, sensation*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- McKim, Kristi. 2013. *Cinema as weather: stylistic screens and atmospheric change*. New York: Routledge.
- Memmott, Paul. 1998. Tracking soakages in the Wakaya Desert with Yellowshirt. In Wright, A. (ed). *Take power, like this old man here: An anthology of writings celebrating twenty years of land rights in Central Australia, 1977–1997*. Alice Springs: Jukurrpa Books.
- Mendelowitz, Edward. 2008. *Existential Psychology East-West* (Denver: University of the Rockies Press).
- Meng, Catherine. 2007. *Tonight’s the night*. Apostrophe Books.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 2012. *Phenomenology of perception*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Murnane, Gerald. 2014. *A million windows*. New Hampshire: David R. Godine Publisher.
- . 2021. *Last letter to a reader*. Sydney: Giramond Publishing.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc. 2011. *Partir—le départ*. Montrouge: Bayard.

- . 2002. *Être à l'écoute*. Paris: Galilee.
- . 2005. *The ground of the image*. Transl. Jeff Fort. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Olmsted, J. M. D. 1944. Historical note on the “noeud vital” or respiratory center. In *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 16. 4: 343–350.
- Orsoni, Michel. 1998. Point of view: a question of atmosphere. Paris: Vis A Vis International.
- Pallasmaa, Juhani. 2011. *The embodied image*. Chichester: Wiley & Sons Publishers.
- . 2005. *The eyes of the skin: architecture and the senses*. New York: John Wiley.
- . 2001. *The architecture of image: existential space in cinema*. Helsinki: Rakennustieto.
- . 2015. Space, place and atmosphere: emotion and peripheral perception in architectural experience. In *Lebenswelt* 4.1: 230–245.
- John A. 1976. Origins and development of the ichnographic city plan. In *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 35. 1: 35–50.
- Pisters, Patricia. 2003. *The matrix of visual culture. Working with Deleuze in Film Theory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Plato, *Theatetus*. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0172%3Atext%3DTheat.%3Asection%3D191c>. Accessed 11 February 2022.
- . *Timaeus*. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0180%3Atext%3DTim.%3Asection%3D54d>. Accessed 11 February 2022.
- . *Phaedrus*. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0174%3Atext%3DPhaedrus%3Asection%3D227a>. Accessed 21 February 2022.
- Pope, Alexander. 1733–1744. *Epistle to several persons*. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44894/epistles-to-several-persons-epistle-iv>. Accessed January 2021.
- Porter, Tom. 2004. *Archispeak, an illustrated guide to architectural terms*. London: Spon Press.
- Ranciere, Jacques. 2007. *The future of the image*. Transl. G. Elliott. London: Verso.
- . 2004. The sublime from Lyotard to Schiller. In *Radical Philosophy* 126: 8–15.
- . *Conférence de Jacques Rancière sur Béla Tarr* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMwHjXx52zk>. Accessed 13 November 2015.
- Riegl, Alois. 1929. *Gesammelte Aufsätze*. Augsburg und Wien: WUV.
- Rood, Jurriën and Leo de Boer. 1984. *The road to Bresson*. Frans Rasker Film and NOS televisie.
- Schmitt, Carl. 2008. *The Leviathan in the state theory of Thomas Hobbes. Meaning and failure of a political system*. Transl. George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- Schrader, Paul. 1977. Robert Bresson, possibly. In *Film Comment*, September–October 1977: 26–30.
- Serres, Michel. 1968. *Le système de Leibniz et ses modèles mathématiques*. Paris: Puf.
- Shaviro, Steven. 1993. *The cinematic body*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Sheehan, Thomas. 2014. *Making sense of Heidegger: a paradigm shift*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd.
- Simmel, Georg. 2007. The philosophy of landscape. In *Theory, Culture & Society* 24: 26.
- Simmons, Alexander. 2012. Erik Satie's Trois Gnossiennes in the French Fin de Siècle. Birmingham: The University of Birmingham, PhD Thesis.
- Sloterdijk, Peter. 2011. *Bubbles: Spheres I*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- . 2014. *Globes: Spheres II*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- . 2016. *Foams: Spheres III*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Steblyn, Rita. 1983. *A history of key characteristics in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries*. Ann Arbor: DM Research Press.
- Steinberg, Michael P. 2014. Music and melancholy. In *Critical Inquiry* 40. 2: 288–310.
- Strong, J. Undated. *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible* (Riverside, Iowa Falls).
- Sun, Tzu. 2000. *The Art of War*. Transl. Lionel Giles. Leicester: Allandale Online Publishing.
- Suriano, Matthew A. 2016. *On an architecture of atmosphere*. Master of Architecture Thesis. https://rshare.library.ryerson.ca/articles/thesis/On_an_architecture_of_atmosphere/14644488. Accessed 11 February 2022.
- Tanizaki, Junichiro 1977. *In praise of shadows*. Transl. Thomas J. Harper and Edward G. Sidensticker. Stony Creek: Leete's Island Books.
- Tarkovsky, Andrey. 2006. *Sculpting in time*. Transl. K. Hunter-Blair. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Tawa, Michael. 2011. *Theorising the project: at thematic approach to architectural design*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- . 2010. *Agencies of the frame: tectonic strategies in cinema and architecture*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- . 2020. Atmosphere of the sacred: the awry in music, cinema, architecture. In *Modern architecture and the sacred*, ed. Ross Anderson and Max Sternberg, London: Bloomsbury.
- . 2017. Consilient discrepancy: porosity and atmosphere in cinema and architecture. In *Architecture_media_politics_society* 11. 3. <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.amps.2017v1i1i3.001>. Accessed 11 February 2022.
- . 2016. Recuperative architectonics: matter, memory, immanence. In *Materiality and Architecture*, ed. Sandra Loschke, 213–231. Abingdon: Routledge.

- . 2012a. Vaporous circumambience: towards an architectonics of atmosphere. In *Interstices* 15: 12–24.
- . 2012b. Being (in the midst of) two: interstice and deconstitution in cinema and architecture. In *Interstices* 13: 32–43.
- . 2002. Place, country, chorography: towards a kinaesthetic and narrative practice of place. In *Architectural Theory Review* 7. 2: 45–58.
- . 2015. Mortarium: a provisional lexicon for masonry. In *Materiality: brick and block in contemporary Australian architecture*, ed. Ron Ringer, 540–553. Horsley Park: Dry Press Publishing.
- Thonhauser, Gerhard. 2021. Beyond mood and atmosphere: a conceptual history of the term *Stimmung*. In *Philosophia* 49: 1247–1265. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-020-00290-7>. Accessed 11 February 2022.
- Tzu, Sun. 2000. *The Art of war*. Transl. Lionel Giles. Leicester: Allandale Online Publishing.
- van der Waerden, Bartel L. 1978. The Great Year in Greek, Persian and Hindu astronomy. In *Archive for the History of the Exact Sciences* 18.4, 359–384.
- Vankelevitch, Vladimir. 1976. *Debussy and the mystery of the instant*. Paris: Plon.
- Vernant, Jean-Paul. 1983. *Myth and thought amongst the Greeks*. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.
- Voitinskaia, Anastasia. The many moods of musical modes. <https://www.musical-u.com/learn/the-many-moods-of-musical-modes/>. Accessed 14 February 2022
- Walliser, Stephan. 1977. *That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection: a case study in G. M. Hopkins' poetry*. Basel: Franke Verlag Bern.
- Wigley, Mark. 1998. The Architecture of Atmosphere. In *Daidalos* 68: 18–27.
- Wilde, Niels. 2020. Mood and meteors: a reconstruction of Heidegger's atmosphericology. In *Human Studies* 43.
- Williams, Raymond. 1985. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wilson, George M. 1977. Le grand imagier steps out: the primitive basis of film narration. In *Philosophical Topics* 25. 1, 295–318.
- Wimsatt, James I. 2006. *Hopkins's poetics of speech sound: sprung rhythm, lettering, inscape*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Witasek, Stefan. 1904. *Grundzüge der allgemeinen Ästhetik*. Leipzig: Barth.
- Wood, Michael. 2016. We do it all the time: Empson's intentions. In *London Review of Books* 38: 3: 7–9.
- Zumthor, Peter. 2006. *Atmospheres: architectural environments—surrounding objects*. Basel: Birkhäuser.

INDEX¹

A

Advent, 16, 176, 185, 231, 240

Agamben, Giorgio, 138, 139,
142, 210–212

Agency, 5, 9, 151, 194, 221, 231, 239
Allegory, 98, 194, 204, 231–232

Ambiance, 1, 4–9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 21,
26, 37, 40, 41, 43–89, 93,
95–97, 100, 103, 110, 111, 117,
122, 125, 128, 133, 135, 136,
150, 157–159, 161, 163, 166,
167, 171, 172, 175, 177–179,
181, 183, 188, 189, 191, 193, 194,
196, 198–202, 204, 206, 210, 212,
213, 220, 222, 228, 230, 232, 241

Ambiguity, 3, 6–9, 26, 33, 34, 43–54,
59, 82, 94, 112, 117, 120, 145,
151, 152, 154, 159, 167, 171,
172, 175, 177, 188, 189, 191,
193–196, 200, 206, 211, 222,
227, 232

A Million Windows, 24–27

Andolan, 14, 15

Anomie, 9, 204–222

Anticipation, 15, 23, 27, 74, 80, 163,
164, 232

Antumbra, 22, 33

Aporia, 9, 158, 160, 175–183, 209,
210, 233, 244, 247

Apprehension, 49, 64, 147, 233

Aristotle, 95, 105, 131, 136, 138, 205
The Art of War, 78

Assemblage, 4, 5, 8–10, 19, 20, 22,
38, 43, 56, 59, 61, 63, 68, 71,
72, 74, 76, 84–87, 112, 117,
125, 132, 151, 154, 155,
158–162, 167, 181, 194, 195,
213, 214, 230, 233

Atmosphere, 1–39, 43–48, 50, 52, 57,
63, 85–88, 96–98, 103, 110,
113, 115, 117–155,
157–191, 193–248

Attunement, 2, 7, 11, 19, 65, 67, 83,
85, 88–96, 98–100, 110, 125,
170, 181, 233–234

Aureli, Pier Vittorio, 219

¹Note: Page numbers followed by ‘n’ refer to notes.

B

Barthes, Roland, 151–155, 163
 Baudelaire, Charles, 7, 106, 126–128
 Being-*the*-there, 7, 68, 89, 92–101
 Benjamin, Walter, 107, 109, 141, 142,
 209, 212, 212n25, 228n55
 Bennett, Michael, 77
 Bertillon, Alphonse, 147, 148
 Blanchot, Maurice, 209, 213
 Böhme, Gernot, 2–4, 150
 Bresson, Robert, 9, 159–164, 187

C

Camera Lucida, 153n61, 153n62,
 153n63, 153n64, 154n65,
 154n66, 154n67, 154n68,
 154n69, 154n70, 155n71
 Champion, Jane, 9, 158, 187–191
 Casal Balaguer, 9, 222, 226,
 228, 229
 The Castle, 9, 204–222
 Character, 8, 16, 19, 24–26, 44, 47,
 52, 56, 60, 67, 68, 72, 79, 87,
 88, 90, 91, 97, 100, 106, 111,
 112, 117, 129, 131, 135–137,
 139, 158, 162, 167–170,
 173–175, 177, 179, 180, 182,
 183, 186–188, 190, 194, 202,
 205–208, 213–215, 218, 232,
 234, 235, 246
 Circumambiance, 8, 52, 174, 234
 Circumstance, 5–8, 13, 20, 26, 29,
 37, 41, 43, 59–66, 68, 70, 72,
 74–76, 78, 79, 84–87, 96,
 105, 112, 117, 119, 132, 137,
 141, 149, 151, 152, 155, 158,
 160, 163, 172, 176, 179, 183,
 186, 194, 207, 215, 234,
 236, 238
 Climate, 2, 9, 50, 62, 86, 87, 90, 101,
 102, 132, 134–137, 234–235
 Coalesce, 235

Colour, 7, 9, 21–23, 51, 58, 77, 87,
 91, 97, 100, 102, 104, 106, 118,
 125, 129, 139, 145, 147, 160,
 198, 235, 240
 Complexion, 79, 105, 109, 117,
 235–236, 238
 Conjugation, 29, 40, 64, 133,
 133n15, 136, 157, 175, 194,
 228, 236
 Consequence, 5–7, 19, 41, 52, 59–65,
 74, 78, 84, 140, 146, 148, 158,
 160, 172, 179, 194, 220,
 234, 236
 Consilience, 195, 222, 236
 Consilient discrepancy, 9, 157, 157n1,
 158, 160, 189,
 193–195, 222–230
 Coogee Beach, 20–21
 Countenance, 82, 85, 182, 185, 197,
 200, 236
 Crisis, 78, 164, 191, 237

D

Dasein, 66–69, 73, 92–101, 170
Das Fastenschleiertuch, 26–27
Das Schloß, 9, 204, 209
 Debussy, Claude, 7, 114, 115,
 126, 196
 Defer, 21, 68, 228, 237
 Deleuze, Giles, 21, 35, 80, 81, 83, 87,
 155, 160, 175, 180, 209,
 212–214, 218, 221
 Density, 21, 30, 46, 49, 52, 56, 58,
 65, 118, 122, 123, 126, 167,
 172, 177, 181, 193, 195, 224,
 230, 237
 Deterritorialization, 25
 Dhurabbin Country, 21–23
 Discrepancy, 7, 14, 44, 132, 133, 142,
 160, 163, 195, 227, 237
Doppelgänger, 172–175
 Dürer, Albrecht, 107–109

E

- Ekstasis*, 14, 20, 29, 35, 52, 70, 113, 139, 141, 154, 194, 237–238
 Emergence, 6, 14, 34, 70, 82, 93, 103, 118, 181, 187, 195, 238, 240, 242
 Empson, William, 7, 45–51, 196, 222
Être aux aguets, 80–83, 160
Être à l'Écoute, 83, 160
 Evans, Robin, 219–221

F

- Flores Prats, 9, 222–230
 Fold, 26, 32, 65, 81, 83, 121, 122, 125, 174, 187, 200–202, 210, 214, 227, 228, 235, 238
 Fragment, 12, 79, 162, 167, 168, 186, 204, 238

G

- Galton, Francis, 148, 149
Gamaka, 14–16
 Garden, 73, 84, 86, 97, 166–170, 211, 239
 Gesture, 6, 12, 44, 47, 88, 107, 109, 124, 134, 159, 159n5, 162, 163, 170, 186, 188, 196, 197, 200, 210, 239
 Gislebertus, 196, 198, 199
 Gleam, 104, 120, 122, 139, 140, 177, 183, 239–240, 242, 245
 Gloaming, 11, 34, 104, 140, 227, 240, 242
 Gloom, 104, 120, 140, 167, 177, 183, 190, 195, 240, 242
Gnossiennes, 113, 114
 Grace, 9, 138, 141, 182–187, 198
 Griffèro, Tonino, 2, 3
 Guattari, Felix, 209, 221

H

- Halo, 1, 8, 33, 44, 129n8, 138–142
 Hangal, Gangubai, 12, 13
 Hangal, Krishna, 12, 13
 Haze, 20, 27, 125, 130, 142–149, 216
 Heidegger, Martin, 2, 3, 7, 11, 65, 66, 68–71, 86, 91–96, 100, 110, 135n19, 139, 170, 184
 Hopkins, Gerard Manley, 7, 16–20, 49, 52–58, 57n56, 120, 141

I

- Immanence, 9, 159–164, 214, 242
 Indeterminate, 26, 29, 38, 44, 50, 92, 117–119, 123, 129, 130, 135, 142, 143, 145, 147, 149, 167, 174, 175, 181, 185, 188, 194, 195, 200, 206, 224, 228, 230, 232, 241
 Inscape, 7, 49, 52, 54, 56–58, 57n56, 57n57, 120, 125
 Instress, 7, 49, 52–59, 120
 Interstitial, 20, 22, 36, 118, 122, 145, 227, 228

K

- Kafka, Franz, 9, 204–222
 Kahn, Louis, 61, 62, 62n65
Karnataka, 12–14
 Knight of Cups, 9, 183, 184, 187

L

- Labyrinth, 152, 206
Last Letter to a Reader, 25n6
 Last Year in Marienbad, 9, 98, 165, 166, 168, 209
 Lost Highway, 9, 158, 172–174
 Lynch, David, 9, 158, 170–175

M

- Macbeth, 107
 Maier, Elke, 26–28
 Malik, Terrence, 9, 182–187
 Margin, 163, 238, 240–242
The Marriage of Figaro, 113
 Matrix, 220, 221, 233, 242
Meend, 14–16
 Melancholia, 7, 11, 13, 25, 48, 55,
 101–115, 127, 139, 242
 Melancholia 1, 107, 108
 Memmott, Paul, 76
 Metaphor, 7, 40, 45, 49, 53, 85, 94,
 98, 99, 114, 117, 144, 147, 194,
 202, 204, 237, 242–243
 Meteorology, 7, 131–137, 141
Miasma, 130
 Milieu, 85, 93, 121–123, 130, 144,
 180, 181, 205, 243
 Mills Museum, 9, 222–225, 228
Mise en scène, 2, 3, 150, 159
 Mood, 1, 2, 5–7, 11–13, 25, 27,
 41, 43, 44, 48, 55, 63, 67,
 68, 81, 82, 85–115, 117,
 121, 122, 126–128, 131,
 134–136, 170, 173, 181,
 182, 196–200, 202, 206,
 212, 215, 232, 243
 Mooded, 5, 7, 52, 85, 86, 88, 89, 91,
 97, 98, 194
 Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, 113
Mulholland Drive, 9, 158, 170,
 172, 174
Murki, 15
 Murnane, Gerald, 25, 26
 Music, 7, 11, 12, 14–16, 58, 59, 81,
 88, 98, 109–115, 126, 137, 141,
 158, 176, 187, 188, 196, 244
- N**
 Nabi, 117
Nichomachean Ethics, 105

O

- On the lookout, 7, 80–84, 92,
 160, 161

P

- Pallasmaa, Juhanni, 3, 4
 Pari-Lewis, Renata, 7, 120–124, 147
Paris Spleen, 127
 Perturbation, 243
 Plato, 32, 34, 44n1, 57, 137, 184,
 202, 204
 Porosity, 54, 121–123, 158, 178, 179,
 181, 199, 209, 210, 222, 224,
 227, 228, 230, 233, 238,
 244, 247
 Potentiality, 5, 35, 65, 72, 75, 105,
 142, 163, 175, 177, 244
The Power of the Dog, 9, 158, 187,
 188, 191

R

- Rembetiko, 11
 Remembrance, 242, 244
 Resnais, Alain, 9, 98, 165–170, 209
 Reverie, 3, 9, 26, 41, 58, 119, 125,
 127, 128, 150, 158, 165–170,
 191, 200, 244–245
 Rhythm, 4, 49, 56, 58, 64, 81, 93,
 125, 127, 136, 164, 167, 245

S

- St Benedict Chapel, 36, 38,
 39, 98, 195
St Lazare Church, Autun, 9, 196, 197
St Madeleine Church, Vezelay, 9,
 198, 199
 Satie, Eric, 7, 113–115, 126
 Scenography, 2, 3, 8, 9, 123–125,
 150–155, 167, 181, 182,
 215, 218

- Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 7, 45
 Shadow, 20, 22, 27–36, 40, 55, 84,
 104, 122, 129, 167, 168, 177,
 178, 182, 183, 185, 186, 190,
 212, 227, 228, 245
 Shimmer, 12, 122, 133, 140, 179,
 238, 245
 Space, 2, 3, 5, 8, 18, 20, 22, 26, 27,
 33, 36–40, 44, 47, 53, 58, 59,
 66–69, 75, 81, 84, 88, 91, 94,
 98, 102, 103, 106, 110, 118,
 119, 121–123, 125, 126, 129,
 134–136, 142, 146, 150, 152,
 154, 158, 159, 162–164, 166,
 167, 170, 172, 174–181, 185,
 189, 190, 195, 202, 208, 211,
 214, 215, 218–220, 222, 227,
 228, 228n55, 230, 232, 239,
 241, 243, 245–247
Stimmung, 2, 7, 67, 68, 85–92, 95,
 99, 100, 110, 134, 204, 210
 Sublime, 48, 195, 245–246
 Sun Tsu, 78
 Suspense, 9, 162, 187–191,
 194, 196–204
- T**
 Tarr, Béla, 9, 98, 158, 175–183
 Tectonics, 4, 5, 9, 10, 14–16, 19, 22,
 32, 40, 56, 61, 123, 151,
 157–191, 193–230, 246
 Temperament, 8, 9, 13, 85, 101–105,
 107, 109, 111, 136, 137, 148,
 176n44, 179, 188, 191, 202,
 220, 228, 235, 247
 Temperature, 2, 4, 8, 9, 13, 85, 102,
 103, 106, 132, 134–136, 247
- Temporality, 3, 6, 8, 13, 22, 49,
 50, 80, 87, 91, 93, 94, 98,
 103, 118, 119, 128, 133n16,
 136, 157–159, 162, 172,
 174, 179, 182, 185, 188,
 193, 208, 247
Terroir, 102, 241
 Terror, 3, 9, 135, 170–175, 198, 241
 Theaetetus, 202–204
 Thonhauser, Gerhardt, 2, 3, 86, 99
 Time, 1, 11, 44, 88, 117, 158, 194,
 232, 247
 Tracking, 7, 73–80, 83, 165, 169
 Tympanae, 9, 196–204
- U**
 Undecidable, 34, 44, 63, 232, 247
Une Femme Douce, 9, 164
- V**
 Vuillard, Eduard, 7, 118–120, 126,
 147, 196
- W**
Wandjina, 138
 Waver, 12, 54, 133, 171, 194, 227,
 230, 248
 Weather, 7, 20, 23, 87, 88, 102, 132,
 134–136, 138, 148, 236
Werkmeister Harmonies, 9, 177, 181
- Z**
 Zumthor, Peter, 3, 4, 36,
 38–40, 98, 195