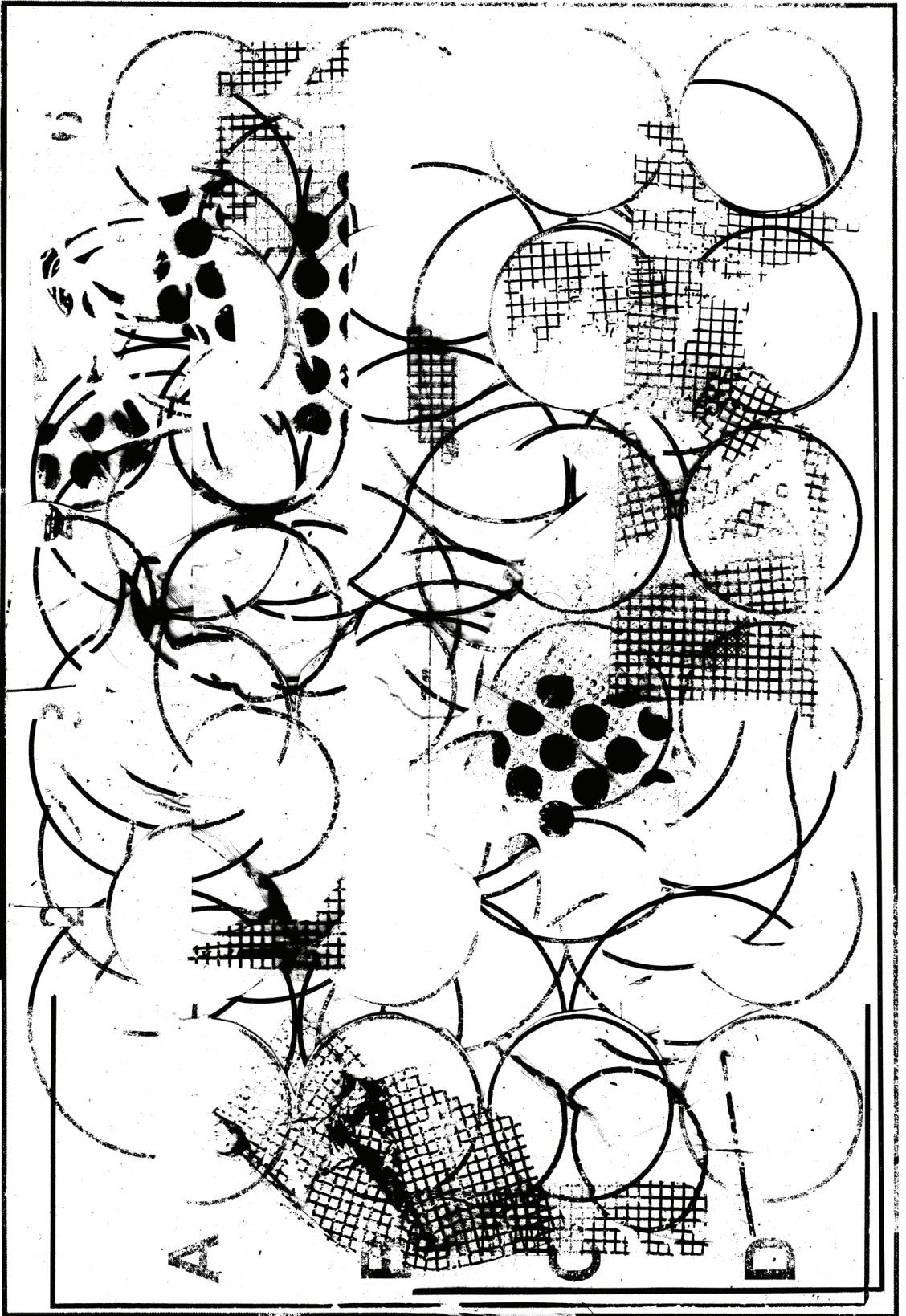
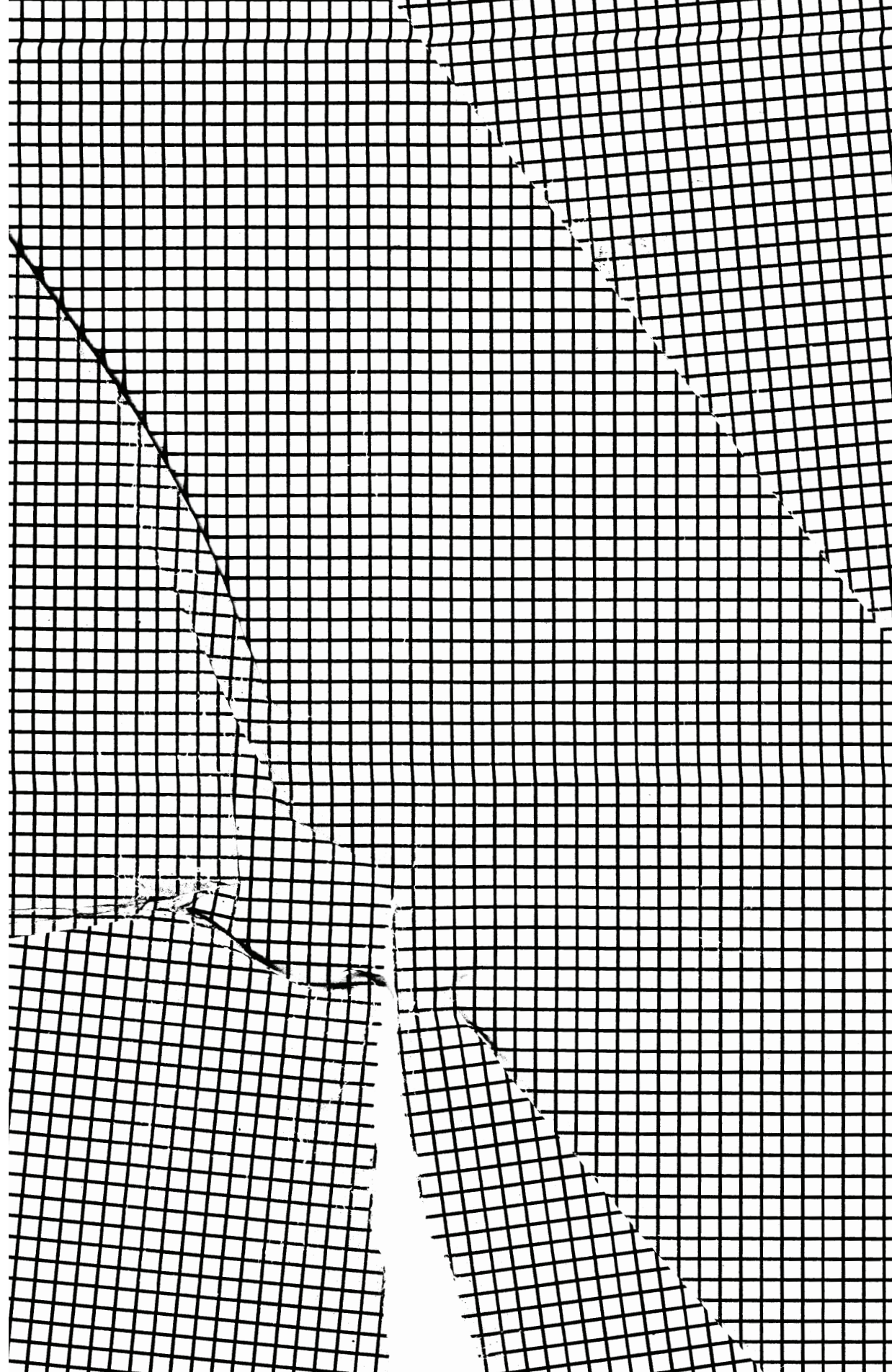


COUNTERFLOWS
ON PAPER 2022





CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION Alasdair Campbell and Fielding Hope	07
INTRODUCTION Joel White	08
LAUGHTER'S TALK Lotte L.S.	11
SYNCOPE. A CHARACTER STUDY Jess Higgins	17
INTERVIEW Hafez Modirzadeh & Alexander Hawkins	21
SAMPLING DIASPORIC HERITAGE: A HISTORY OF ARAB MUSIC SAMPLES IN FRENCH RAP Hajer Ben Boubaker	36
NOT THIS, NOT THAT Christopher Law	40
KILOJOULES Romy Danielewicz	45

ARTWORK / COMICS

Zeloot	10 19 31
Shakeeb Abu Hamdan	23 27 29
Jacqui Smyth	39 44
Robert Reddick	16
Cameron Morgan	06 20
Olivia Furey	32 33 34 35
Oliver Pitt	Cover

COUNTERFLOWS ON PAPER 2022



For 2021's Counterflows At Home festival we asked our comrade in arms Joel White to curate a publication for us, inviting writers and illustrators to contribute and respond to Counterflows in any way they thought appropriate. The results were so good that we have asked Joel again to produce the second Counterflows On Paper zine.

There is an important history of zines in the music world. The connection between words and sounds goes way back, allowing a space for self and collective expression, rejecting the conventions of the big publishing houses that were cautious in their approach to the language of the moment. It also allowed a connective glue between interconnecting arts and cultures: sound, text, poetry, visual art, politics and more spilling onto folded and stapled paper. For my part (Alasdair), the era of Punk is where I noticed the explosion of D.I.Y print: connecting the crunching sounds of the Sex Pistols and the righteous bravado behind the idea that "anyone can do it", the photo copied black and white, badly printed grainy images and hand scrawled statements of the 1970s opened up the prospect of other ways to do things.

Obviously, Counterflows On Paper is not quite of the same era as Punk, but we nod our heads with respect to the likes of Sniffin' Glue, Ripped and Torn and the many, many more handsome zines that will always get produced as people want to share their art and culture. For this year we expand our appreciation for these traditions, welcoming independent labels and small publishers to share their wares in the CCA foyer between 12-6pm on the Sunday of the festival. There's a slew of people who work with written word performing at the festival too: Roy Claire Potter, Nat Raha, aya and others. It's easy to demarcate all this into "they do this, they do that, they're in the poetry world, they're in the music world, blah blah blah", but to us it's all part of the same thing: an ecology of people, artists and communities on the margins coming together. A tangled web of expression that we're honoured to bring to life one more time.

Alasdair Campbell and Fielding Hope

INTRODUCTION

For not very long in 2019 I kept a record of songs that were in my head when I woke up in the morning. On a random week in May you can find such delights as:

Aqua – *Happy Boys & Happy Girls*

Quinie – *Up and Awa and Awa With the Laverick (catch Josie at this year's festival as part of the Ghost Tunes project!)*

Walk The Moon – *Shut Up & Dance With Me (this is the one I'm most embarrassed about)*

Steely Dan – *My Old School*

Jay Versace Singing '*AHHHH THIS IS ALL THAT*'

Lightyear – *Nuff Cutts (Sample lyric: 'I got crooked teeth, and not much hair, I still blow on ice cream')*

Lighthouse Family – *High*

I am not sure what this says about my listening and social life pre-pandemic, but like many things, the songs dried up when the world slowed down. 'Don't write about the bloody pandemic!' a voice inside me implores – but it is still here, squatting in my brain like the Lighthouse Family, probably 'Forever (you & me)'. It was in the context of not being together physically that we made a Zine last year for Counterflows, with the loving support of Fielding and Alasdair, and a score of amazing writers, illustrators and artists. This year, for our second attempt at 'Counteflows On Paper' (a name to accompany what was 'Counterflows at Home'), most of us will be together again

in person. This feels celebratory, if muted, in a world where the pandemic is clearly not 'over', and we're all still trying to remember what it means to put on, attend or play gigs.

I find this mood of cautious joy echoed in the pieces we commissioned this year, with everyone again given free rein to write about whatever they wanted, in whatever way they liked. The results have been similarly wonderful, reminding me how precious it is to have room for writers and artists to be given space to try out ideas, and write or create in ways that are not predetermined.

The Zine begins with Lotte L.S.'s gorgeous essay on Laughter and Silence, which takes in everything from Peggy Seeger and Talk Talk, to the playwright Sarah Kane and filmmaker Marleen Gorris. We then move, with the pace of a soporific train carriage, to a story by Jess Higgins', where voices and tenses collide, and a singing showroom allows for prefigurative lyrical slippages: *Everywhere I turn I misread the word "furniture" for "future"*. In keeping with the number of 'slightly unlikely duos' playing this year's festival, we devote a section of the Zine to a freewheeling and endlessly insightful conversation between Hafez Modirzadeh & Alexander Hawkins, performing at the Festival together on the Saturday. Hajer Ben Boubaker then charts a personal and decolonial history of arabic sampling in French Hip-Hop, linking back nicely to Hussein Mitha's piece from last year. Christopher Law follows this with a piece that considers the work of poet Simone White, particularly her writing on Trap music and selfhood, asking: What work do we expect and desire music to do in composing 'us', making us present? The Zine ends with a piece by Romy Daniele-

wicz that touches on liminality improvisation, and much more.

The written commissions are accompanied this year by visual work from Zeloot, Shakeeb Abu Hamdan, Jacqui Smyth, Cameron Morgan and Robert Reddick. Jacqui, Cameron and Robert have been involved with the brilliant Project Ability visual arts charity, based in Glasgow. Olivia Furey, also performing this year at the festival, has also contributed a series of hilarious comic-style 'memes', which give a few indications of what to expect from her always unpredictable performances. Oliver Pitt has again turned the Zine from a confusing folder of word documents into a beautiful physical thing, printed by our friends at Good Press.

I would like to extend a huge thanks to everyone who contributed work this year, along with Alasdair, Fielding and Sarah for help reading over things. I look forward to chatting over the words within this Zine together, in a physical room this time, and to all waking up with some (more) interesting songs in our heads once again.

Joel White



LAUGHTER'S TALK

Lotte L.S.

Imagine a town running
(smoothly?)
a town running before a fire
canneries burning

Daphne Marlatt, *Steveston*

Between 1958 and 1964, the communist folk singer-songwriter and labour organiser Ewan MacColl, and folk musician Peggy Seeger, collaborated with BBC producer Charles Parker to make eight 'radio-ballads' - weaving together song, instrumental music from studio sessions responding to recorded material, sound effects; and, perhaps most significantly, the voices of participants and subjects - what MacColl and Seeger called 'actuality'. Until then, radio documentaries had always used professional actors, trained radio speakers, or prepared scripts.

The focus of the radio-ballads ranged from the workers who built the M1, coalminers, boxers, and a train driver who died trying to stop a runaway freight train in Derbyshire. The third episode *Singing the Fishing* (1960) documented workers among herring fishing fleets in East Anglia and Northeast Scotland, and the industry's changing technologies - recording 250 tapes of conversation with fisherfolk and their families¹. It went on to win the Prix d'Italia for radio documentary in 1960, and was broadcast in 86 countries. The episode's theme song *The North Sea Holes* begins:

*Come, all you gallant fishermen that plough the
stormy sea
The whole year round on the fishing grounds,*

*On the Northern Minch and the Norway Deeps,
On the banks and knolls and the North Sea Holes
Where the herring shoals are found.*

*It's there you'll find the Norfolk boys and the lads from
Peterhead,
There's Buckie chieils and men from Shields,
On the Northern Minch and the Norway Deeps,
On the banks and knolls and the North Sea Holes
Where the herring shoals are found.*

*From Fraserborough and Aberdeen, from Whitby,
Yarmouth Town,
The fleet's away at the break of day
To the Northern Minch and the Norway Deeps,
To the banks and knolls and the North Sea Holes
Where the herring shoals are found.*

Women had a more prominent role in *Singing the Fishing* than the first two radio-ballads, partly due to the nature of the work, and partly to the greater influence Seeger took as the series went on (despite this, MacColl later reflected on the denied recognition of Seeger as a creator of the radio-ballad, more than the 'music arrangement' she was credited with). *The Fishgutters' Song* looks back to a time before the waters of East Anglia were overfished; when, every year from 1860, thousands of women—a mixture of ages but often young and unmarried—would leave their homes in the Scottish Highlands to follow the migrating shoals of herring down the east coast through England, to finish in the seaside towns of Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. At its peak in the early 20th century there were as many as 9,000 women making this annual journey, employed by curing compa-

nies to gut and process the fish.

These itinerant crews of women-only workers often laboured from before sunrise to past sunset on the bustling quaysides of Yarmouth in late autumn, at long troughs called *farlins*, working in teams of three to gut, salt and pack herring into barrels, then transported to one of the many smokehouses in Yarmouth: to be smoked and salted as kippers, bloaters or red herring, or pickled as rollmop. Toiling with salty wet hands, frozen-over barrels, slippery fish and a sharp gutting knife known as a *futtle*, some women were nevertheless able to gut 60 herring a minute: “Knife point in / twist an rive / gills an gut / wan move. / Left hand / fish tae basket. / Nixt een,” as the Shetland poet Lauren Johnson wrote in *Rhythms*. The pay was more than most domestic work on offer to women at the time; a higher rate was paid for gutting than packing, but many teams of three chose to share the money equally. Much archival work undertaken since has focused on the relentless graft of the “herring lassies,” as well as the camaraderie, gossip and song—often Gaelic—soundtracking their labour, brief freedom from familial constraints, and relative financial independence the work provided them.

In 1936, 3,000 of the female fish workers in Yarmouth, and 1,000 more in Lowestoft, organised a wildcat strike to demand a shilling a barrel for their piece work, a raise of twopence. According to the *Daily Worker*, “[they] suddenly threw down their gutting knives and rushed through the curing yards, their numbers growing as they shouted their demands.”²² Their action brought Yarmouth to a standstill, with 1,000 drifters left idle in the harbour. Strike-breakers weren’t reasoned with but had the seawater hose turned on them (done in turn to the strikers by the cops). After just two and a half days of striking—during which the smell of tonnes of stinking fish left uncut at the quayside grew stronger—the women won their fight for higher pay from the curing companies. North of the border, agitation too was rife, with 30,000 people marching in Lanarkshire against the gov-

ernment’s new means test-based Unemployed Regulations, and tens of thousands of Lanarkshire miners walking out in solidarity with miners on strike in Blantyre.

In footage from the strike, tightly-knit crowds of herring lassies stream down the packed streets of Yarmouth, ululating, whooping and chanting slogans. They can be seen laughing in the faces of shocked passers-by: their “tongues’ gutting-knife / would tear a strip from the Lowlanders’ mockery -” as the poet Ruaraidh Mac-Thòmais wrote originally in Gaelic, in *Clann-nighean an Sgadain (The Herring Girls)*. Mairi Macdonald remembered cops sent up from London, on horses galloping through the curing yards, attempting to chase the strikers away, and seeing two women being dragged into a police van: “They arrested them, accusing them of being the ringleaders. There was no such thing. They were not doing a thing, just like ourselves, shouting and laughing and all that.”²³ In the footage, they stop to chant, “We want more money!” and then the howls of laughter begin again. One woman stands directly at the front, the top half of her body bending backwards, shaking with laughter.

One of the few films I watched last year was Marleen Gorris’ *A Question of Silence* (1982). Three women, strangers to one another, collectively and wordlessly kill the male owner of a clothing boutique in Amsterdam—who confronts one of them for shoplifting—with the stilettos and coat hangers and mannequins that adorn the shop. We watch as they return to their domestic and working lives: a child-laden housewife, a waitress, and a secretary, and are soon arrested. They do not protest their arrest, nor do they speak to anyone about the murder: not the cops, family and friends, colleagues, or the female psychiatrist, Dr. van Den Bos, who is appointed by the state to determine why they acted. As Amelia Groom wrote in an essay accompanying an online screening of the film by *Another Gaze*, “In the beginning, the women are all isolated in their varying conditions of silence - but the silence gradually becomes more collective, and more like an active practice.”²⁴

Like the striking herring lassies’ laughter, silence can force visibility as much as participation in the discourse it offers brief relief from. Particularly now, when to refuse to speak—speak *up*, speak *to*, speak *about*, speak *for*—is to be seen to skulk in the chorus, against which Epictetus, the Greek philosopher born into slavery in AD 50, warned. But in *A Question of Silence*, the three women do not hide in the chorus, but construct their own: public, shared, tightly-coiled in its intimacy.

At their trial, the three women remain silent throughout the proceedings—far-away looks of boredom on their faces—when the male prosecutor asserts that gender is irrelevant to the act: of course, it would have been the same if three men had killed a woman, he says. At this, the women on trial begin to laugh - a laughter that ripples across the room, spreading to every woman in the courtroom, including the female witnesses in the public gallery who have refused to testify to the murder. It is not provocative or brazen laughter, nor is it bitter, aghast or the cynical laughter that comes from assumed moral superiority; it is not laughter that can be explained or appropriated to justify or defend a position - in the same way that Dr. van Den Bos tries and fails to pathologize their action: their fathers did not beat them, they are not working from any identified ideology, no one man has gravely wronged them in the past. It’s hard to articulate exactly what kind of laughter it is—almost joy, the thrilling violence of clarity—that reverberates throughout the court, the law, this site of language’s authority: there is nothing to do but laugh. Because, as Dr. van Den Bos tries to explain to the confused male judge: “It’s really quite funny—” but the room is so loud with uncontrollable laughter he cannot hear her. Laughter ruptures time; interrupts it, relinquishes progression - but ‘progress’ is premised on patriarchal time. The three women on trial are eventually removed from the court, still laughing, while the other women in the courtroom walk out together, leaving the baffled men to continue with the trial on their own. There are no

further directions.

The playwright Sarah Kane’s *4.48 Psychosis*—left completed in her flat when she overdosed in 1999—is a text without a single speech cue, and barely any stage directions. There is no cast list, almost no descriptions of the characters. No music, no sound other than speech. In the play, a patient who seeks treatment for her depression concedes the absurdity of her mental state: “I have become so depressed by the fact of my own mortality that I have decided to commit suicide.” Later she relays a comic dream: “I went to the doctor’s and she gave me eight minutes to live. I’d been sitting in the fucking waiting room half an hour.” Like many of her plays, *4.48 Psychosis* is driven by language; by, as a poem by Danny Hayward puts it: “one evening in December / I had an idea about how language is itself a kind of abuse”. By the gaps between language left silent—silence’s talk—rather than spectacle, narrative or tragedy.

Kane’s writing has been famously vilified (and more posthumously, celebrated) for its interrogation of violence (which, I’d argue, underneath lies an interrogation of love: how far will we go for one another? What are we prepared to do? How far is too far? How much pain is too much? Can love ever be more than just our own egoising - a projection of our own creation, rather than actuality? Kane’s work in regards to love is mostly discussed in terms of privatised love—the romantic love between two consenting, or as in much of her writing, unconsenting, individuals—but really they’re questions about society, collectivity, the institutionalisation of loneliness under democracy; about desire, need, obligation and obedience and choice; the mediation of every relationship by the structures that seek to end us. And within that, the impulse to feel everything). In Kane’s work laughter is never far away, but the joke is on ourselves: what Ken Urban calls, “the body’s cruel joke.”²⁵ In *Cleansed* (1998) a faux-doc-tor called Tinker tests love in pairs. He forces Rod to watch his lover Carl have his tongue cut off, then his hands, then his feet. Kane’s stage directions read:

“Tinker cuts Carl’s hands off, Carl tries to pick them up, he can’t, he doesn’t have any hands.”

In his 1900 essay *Laughter*, the philosopher Henri Bergson describes humour as rigidity and repetition. A kind of jilted repetition is at the core of Talk Talk’s 1991 album *Laughing Stock*, their final release before silently disbanding. Often working in total darkness, with windows covered up and every clock removed from the studio—“no daylight, no timeframe,” the engineer Phill Brown commented—the band recorded hours upon hours of improvised performances by 50 musicians, which were then stitched together to become the final record. Most of the music recorded never made it to the final album: around 80% was erased. They spent two days recording a string quartet, and kept just one moment: a mistake the cellist had made. Another time they brought in a large gospel choir, at considerable expense to the record label Verve (an imprint of Polydor), captured some “astonishing singing,” and then erased it all the next day. Looking back, Brown said, “It takes strong discipline to erase 80% of the music you record. Few have the discipline to get rid of ‘stuff.’” Polydor, who had agreed not to drop in on studio sessions, were apparently “guttled” at the record and its expected commercial failure. One music journalist recalled a play-back debuting *Laughing Stock* to retailers, organised by Polydor at The New Serpentine Gallery: “Nobody knew where to look as [frontman] Mark Hollis’ muted blues confessional purposely disintegrated into shivering feedback.”⁶ Something similar was held in a planetarium in Paris, which Hollis attended, and said it wasn’t too bad - because when the lights went out, it was close to the perfect way to listen to his music: with your eyes closed - laughter in the dark.

Laughing Stock marked Hollis’ own lingering descent from laughter into silence: he released only one more record, a self-titled swansong in 1998, before his death in 2019 at the age of 64. A luminous quietude reverberates throughout his solo album, alongside an awareness that

silence is not synonym for nothing, for absence: it is a presence. Sonically, this means you can hear every little movement: the creaking of the chair he sat in while recording, the breath moving in and out of the body, an instrument dying midway through a track; sighs, pauses, hesitations. A question of silence is also a question of language. Just as important is the sound that could have been actualised, but was not. Clearly taking influence from Miles Davis, Hollis once said: “The silence is above everything, and I would rather hear one note than I would two, and I would rather hear silence than I would one note.” A friend remarked that Hollis always sounds on the verge of crying when he sings. The musician Jenny Hval said that the track *After the Flood* on *Laughing Stock* is “like crying”: a journey to the end of night. But I think, too, he sounds like he could be on the verge of laughing.

Reflecting back, a singer featured on MacColl and Seeger’s *Singing the Fishing* observed: “It wasn’t possible to regard the ‘actuality’ and the songs as separate components which could be created independently and then assembled into a finished product; they overlapped and intertwined.”⁷ A process that could do little but reject the affirmation of private, individualised time: real daylight bouncing off real walls in a real room. To work, to strike, to write, to erase, to cover every window and remove every clock, to laugh, to speak silence - time itself is not different, but our experience of time is. Life is presumed directional: we grow old, hot water grows cold, we awake to find ourselves in the morning, still alive, saying, I’ve been sitting in the fucking waiting room half an hour! Neither the need to legitimise yourself through speech, or silence. Only the interruption of laughter: the residue of the room.

* * *

1. Available to listen at Bandcamp: <https://ewanmac-coll.bandcamp.com/album/singing-the-fishing>.

2. Documented in *Homage to Caledonia: Scotland and the Spanish Civil War*, by Daniel Gray (2008).

3. Documented in *Herring Tales: How the Silver Darlings Shaped Human Taste and History*, by Donald Murray (2015).

4. Available to read online: <https://www.another-screen.com/silence-laughter>.

5. *An Ethics of Catastrophe: The Theatre of Sarah Kane* (2001).

6. Recalled in *Talk Talk: Silencing the Scams*, published in *the Melody Maker*, by Steve Sutherland (1991).

7. Documented in *Peggy Seeger: A Life of Music, Love, and Politics*, by Jean Freedman (2017).

SYNCOPE. A CHARACTER STUDY.

Jess Higgins

dreams



Three sisters, Constance, Clemence and Cadence are on a sleeper train. Clemence is moving to a new city and her sisters have agreed to accompany her. Cadence needs a holiday, and Constance has just left a bad job, she had some free time and thought she could go along for the ride. During their journey, Constance dreams she invented a new tense.

~

I was in motion, as often I am, when I came to meet a horizon. I'd never met a horizon before and so I ask it *where did you come from?* And the horizon tells me *I came from the future.* And then I say something like *is this all there is?* I looked about me and the horizon was thoroughly ordinary. And then here I am, a street. I was a street and all over my body there were satellites, sprouting like mushrooms from my gutters and my ledges. Their antennas reaching gracefully toward the sky from elliptical concave basins. All this conductive skeletal matter was shimmering, pulsing and carefully nestled under my arms and behind my ears.

I ask around to see if anyone has any good ideas for naming my new limbs. I learn two terms which I quite enjoy. In architecture, the word "articulation" is used to describe *the manner or method of jointing parts such that each part is clear and distinct in relation to the others, even though it is joined.* The word "ante-choir", I grin, is a small plot within a church which lies between the railing and door of a screen-like structure. The choir themselves either enter or spend most of their time here, I'm not quite sure at this point. Entrances are often complicated things. Like the extraverbal haze which is the space between greenroom and stage, that phenomenal reckoning of arrival.

So, I was a street. All soft grey tones, mossy green carpark and cordoned zones. I was pot holed and patched together. Woozy orchestrations of form gather and disperse at my feet, while the birds rest and relax on me, settling in my hair. My body was a system of private commodities and enclosed publics, through which I find ambiguous thoroughfares and incidental acoustics. Syncopated declarations and antiphonal groans rattle the attention of my putty like tendons as they tense and release in gentle rhythms. Here I am, a promenade of humming parts, grasping at the trouble of remaining upright in a system.

~

Clemence and Cadence are playing cards across the turquoise plastic table. The train twists through silhouetted landscapes, lights in the distance are turned into streaks by the train's motion. Constance turns and mutters something in her sleep, "ffff ffff", Cadence giggles. While she's distracted Clemence places her hand down on the cards with a "SNAP". Cadence rolls her eyes and pushes the cards away, it's a boring game anyway. Clemence gets her diary out of her bag. They leave the cards splayed in front of them.

~

All around me, the sky tickles at the seams of the thoroughly ordinary horizon, slightly worn as horizons often are by the time you meet them. Coated in exhaust fumes and scratched by the grazes of passing objects, it holds its peeling outline as an unbearable measure of disinterested time. Like a sleeping lion, it lies there, monolithic and muted as the wind snakes through its folded scenery. Until, a pinch, a poke, a purr. With the wind's roving touch, everything erupts. That is, bursts of laughter bloom at the edges of the thing. And in that laugh-

ter, canned or capacious, a revelation of liveliness. We're really shaking things up, the wind harks. And the horizon turns to crusty peelings which coat the pavement, here and there. As the commotion dies down, the horizon's flakes shudder and remember themselves hardly dressed for the weather and all of its ambiguous grammar.

I look up, again, and there I was, again, a fungus. I was spreading. I had friends all over the world. I knew many people and I was very popular, but then again we all were. I wasn't a public figure or familiar with anything like infamy. There are no public figures, just mushrooms. I glance across to my many friends and I was a vapour like substance. I smelt sweet, and maply. I was sticky. I touched myself and got myself everywhere. A whisper in my ear changed everything and I came to understand that the language I live is broadly speaking a slime.

The breakfast trolley rolls past. Cadence is sleeping too, now. Clemence picks her sisters a pastry and a coffee with a nod and a thank you. Finishing the sentence in her journal she furrows her brow, looks for a word. "Epoch" she gasps. Shuts the book. Outside an indecisive sky hangs above her new home. Cadence wakes with a start "I feel I am repeating myself!" Now, Clemence laughs. Cadence frowns, jerks her shoulders and reaches for her breakfast.

Next comes a well known phrase. The familiar conjugal proposition, a smooth voice at the end of a dramatic pause which says: *but that wasn't the end of that.*

Or, *That Would Not Be The End Of That.*

I was sleeping, when this was going on, the off-beat melodrama of it all, and as dreams often go in the next breath I am something else, once again.

I appear to be employed as a furniture salesperson. It's a busy day in the showroom and I'm new here. Everywhere I turn I misread the word "furniture" for

"future". Each mark on the wall or floor in their performance of boundaries and directions became a scaffold, telling declarations of furniture, and so in my misapprehension, the future. Now, before my very eyes, the showroom is a commotional architecture of velvet desire and dull anticipations. The floor arranges itself into an inventory of peeling potency, all nonchalant chips in gilded frames. *Is this ex-display?* shoots through my body. I scramble to reply. I want to say where it's been and where it's going but each -eme of a word stumbles and trips on its way out of my mouth. I remember learning that the conjugation mechanism takes a verb and applies a person, number, gender, tense, mood, aspect, voice. I pick the scabs of person, number, gender, tense, mood, aspect, voice. I slip in and out of familiar phrases and retorts, drafting a step in the narrative urge between the me and the you who would like to buy the furniture.

We circle, we are intersecting spirals of information. We meet a pause where known language makes itself strange. Eventually I sing: *yes, it will be for you.*

The showroom intercom picks me up. *For you for you for you* swells in periodic drifts, humming in bedframes, cabinets and screens. I hear it sung back. We carry for you down the back corridors, those secret mechanisms ordinarily hidden by our breathy elaborations, only hinted at by the stage doors we emerge from, dramatic and sensational. Each imprint of a sole on the linoleum crafts a new encounter that could be described as locomotion. A pull and a push where we meet ourselves, again, until our voices become a shriek, a whine, a new kind of punctuation and all of the furniture is ours.



HAFEZ MODIRZADEH
&
ALEXANDER HAWKINS:
INTERVIEWING EACH OTHER



This year's festival sees composer, saxophonist and theorist Hafez Modirzadeh in Scotland for the first time, presenting work on saxophone in collaboration with pianist, composer, and organist Alexander Hawkins. The piece they will perform this year focuses on Hafez's "chromodal" concept, a cross-cultural musical approach developed from American jazz and Iranian dastgah heritages, which involves eight piano keys re-tuned and the remainder left in equal temperament. In the lead up to the festival, we organised for the two of them to meet on Zoom and have a conversation of their own devising. Here, we print as much of Hafez & Alexander's extensive and constantly insightful chat as possible:

A: So, as a starting point Hafez, I feel that when I listen to your music I can hear all sorts of things. Jazz, the Andalusian influence, the Persian influence, Gamelan sounds, and I know you've studied with Turkish musicians. But what really strikes the listener, is they are presented with an original, a holistic, sound world of itself, which has assimilated influences, but then transcended them into its own sound world. So before we talk about some of the specific musics, if you could just kick us off by giving us some kind of potted version of how you feel your music has arrived at this place.

H: I consider this an arrival point. These particular facets for these specific re-tuned pitches on the piano, and all of those influences or inspirations, they all go into the expression that takes years to marinate. But what's interesting about this arrival point is there has been a profound compelling to understand how we co-exist together and are interrelated

and interconnected through song and the practise of sound. You can learn so much about every subject on earth just by contemplating sound. I wanted something that would allow these foreign pitches, these foreign tones, to be introduced inside of the equal tempered system that's represented on this piano, and let something beautiful come through it. Not something just novel or abstract, something genuinely heartfelt that folks who are not used to these other pitches could sit with and enjoy and feel something of a connection to them. So that they wouldn't say - well this is just out of tune. The intention is to co-exist together, and make something harmonious out of it, and beautiful. It's an experiment with sound. If that's what the heart feels, can we do that with these instruments, and systems. So these very pitches are almost arbitrary. They come out of ratios from the overtones series. But they are just arranged in a place where, honestly it wasn't like I was hearing this before. I believe that you feel before you hear.

A: Yeah, and just to spell it out for anybody who's not coming at it from the technical point of view. When we talk about equal tempered, what we are saying is each of the twelve different notes on the piano are evenly spaced and the theory being that you can play in any key and they will roughly feel the same. And when Hafez is talking about facets, these are a book of compositions that has run as a stream throughout your work. And various [elements] of these have made use of re-tuning. The twelve equal semi-tones are sort of a prison in a way.

H: I think there is a way that we can talk about equal temperament, equality, and equity and empathy and how these are

related. And we can speak in these terms that can be metaphorical, or symbolic. Definitely, this is for everyone.

A: I wonder if there are some analogies with Milford Graves' liberating rhythmic pulse from a metrical grid and moving it towards a one-zone heartbeat. We can talk about the extent to which music needs decolonising from these 12 semitones. But the resultant music that you have come up with is so beautiful I prefer to think about it in positive terms. Of this alternative universe and just all the possibilities being beautiful and valid.

H: We are careful not to use the term 'new' that much because, Milford, our ancestors, indigenous music; the people are still here. And at the same time, equal temperament, that's another system. Such beautiful music and representations come from that but when we get into the education of it, we assume that's the common language that everyone's going to be conditioned with, and it gets dangerously like a chromatic supremacy. That's not where we start with the overtones series. We start with what's natural that doesn't have any nationality, like the fraction of colours that come out of light and it's the same with a fundamental tone. There are many partials of overtones ... maybe you can explain that.

A: Well, imagine a note played on a piano. When you sound that note various higher partials of the sound also speak. In concrete terms, you hear the fundamental note that is being played, but you also perceive the note which has half that wavelength, and then half that wavelength again, and then half that wavelength again. [At this point, Alexander plays note on a piano in his room] So this is our fundamental. That sound is complex, it's not a sine wave, it's not a dull sound. The complexity is that at a much quieter volume we are also hearing this note, this note, this note, this note, this note, this note, this note [he plays increasingly higher notes] and so on. So much of the beauty in music, and the special resonance and vibrational impact it has, comes from the interplay of these higher partials. And I think one of the beautiful things

about music is, we talk about vibrations so on and it is mystical and magical, but it is also concrete, it's not something exclusive. You don't need to be in the club to appreciate the vibrational impact of music. There are vibrations and these magical partials and these are some of the partials that I feel that you are liberating, you're making more audible with your altered tunings of the piano in a way.

H: Like you mentioned Milford Graves, you could mention Ornette Coleman, Thelonious Monk, these great African American purveyors of sound over time, but we could also go back to Bach, and before and after and everything in between. We are variations and every one of us is different, like a grain of sand. But within your fundamental resonances are all these ancestral partials, primary, secondary, tertiary. Clearly at some point then, we share these sympathetic strings.

My father is from Iran, my mother is from New York City of Russian, Polish, Irish, Cape Malay [descent], these are all partials, they are resonant. I am born in the United States and it was Charlie Parker that made me pick up a horn and play. So that led me through those communities and so those partials, of all of those ancestral memories in those communities, they start resonating inside. The proof of the pudding is that you can be anywhere on this planet and hear sounds that are resonating from other ancestral partials and they'll resonate those partials inside of you. That is quintessentially human. We are, with these pieces, decentralising the authority. It is all about power, if we put the power at one temperament, it's like saying you have to feel things through this filter, lens, context, tuning or temperament, but we all have our own temperaments and as you said it's more pulsive than periodic. Our pulse waxes and wanes like the tides, and depending on our biology, and this is where Milford Graves work comes into play with the heartbeat, it plays out into the music and the music of the ancients that go up to today. They work together like two poles on an axis, that dance between the two. It's not just black or white. So with these



black or white keys on the keyboard, if you introduce these other partials, if your heart says something beautiful can co-exist, harmonious, these are not out of tune. These are right out of nature like all of us. And sure enough, you put it in the hands of like-hearted artists and musicians, it will come out beautiful.

A: *Absolutely, I think it's interesting to think that equal temperament is a relatively modern construct even as far as classical music goes. I mean, when Bach wrote 'The Well-Tempered Clavier' it was because stuff wasn't equally tempered before and people would use specific keys to evince specific feelings. So equal temperament, let's say it reigns supreme for 175 years, perhaps.*

H: What you said there, it connects with this idea of a struggle for power. The colonial period of the last couple of hundred years, in order to commodify human beings, to quantify, would look at folks as semi-human, or half, or three fifths or whatever it is. And then this is where I begin to realise that in our language we begin to talk about semitones, half steps, you know, and this idea of quantifying sound and then affixing, or fixating on that, and codifying that, and then institutionalising that, inside of a chromatic supremacy. I think this gets very far away from Bach, like the original.

A: *Oh yeah, absolutely.*

H: The indigenous sounds, they are always among us seeking to transcend all of these. Getting to the quality of being human, you can be all shapes and sizes. There can be no such thing as a half step really, or a semitone, they are all whole in themselves. It's part of a mentality that has stuck through a time when we were doing this to each other. And we are still doing this, if we look at sound in that way, right?

A: *Yeah, it's really interesting when you look at some of the masters from the so-called classical traditions of music, after Bach. There is a prevailing orthodoxy, but then*

there are these instances of people struggling against this. Various passages in Beethoven where he is trying to transcend the instrument he is imprisoned by, these are kind of beautiful moments. I feel that there is a kinship with your own playing, and players like Parker or Johnny Hodges, who didn't play quantised music. Sure sometimes Parker hits the note right down the middle of the orthodox tuning, but sometimes it's smeared, its bent, its vocalised and I feel that probably these other traditions were always there, just marginalised in a way.

H: I mean marginalised in certain educational circles, but in and of themselves, they thrive. When you have any history of any hegemonic cultural forces trying to corral people together and put them through a certain way of thinking, it becomes resistance to keep those temperaments and those sounds. Not necessarily consciously, that's just the indigenous nature of being human is that we are going to have all kinds of temperaments. My first experience with something other than equal temperament was when I was 18 years old. I went to San Jose State as a freshman in college and sat down at Lou Harrison's gamelan and heard these sounds. And at that time, for the last few years, it had only been Charlie Parker, and Bud Powell and Miles and Trane and then I heard that, and that started me asking questions because I was enjoying another aesthetic. I recall Charlie Parker said that when he started to find his language, his way, he was at a Harlem chili house in 1939 [...] he said he heard those upper partials, he found the chordal extensions, which are basically these upper partials of the series and brought them into his melodic lines. When he started introducing those upper extensions into his lines, he started finding his way through the changes and I thought, 'Wow! That is what we would call modernism.' What it is about being human is that we can feel with our mind and think with our hearts, they're not disconnected. When I went to conservatory, I stayed one semester because I was told I wasn't hearing everything I was playing. At that

time, I thought, well wait a minute, but I can feel everything I can play, and I am trying to work through some different sounds so I have to play them first. Then I began to go back and understand that's how it would work when Monk would say: 'sometimes I play tunes I never heard before.' You have an idea and it has to come through your instrument. To hear what music is to come out of you, you have to play things that you've never heard before, in order to hear them.

A: *Sometimes in interviews, you get asked the question, 'well, what's next for Hafez?' Okay there are concrete plans, like I want to record this group, but I think there is a sense that if you knew what was next for your music, you wouldn't be looking in the right places.*

H: That's money, when we quantify the career. Think about the hassle it would be to re-tune a piano. Most of us just want to go from gig to gig, and say 'oh, you got the piano set?', here we go, and move onto the next concert. It becomes a form of capitalism.

A: *It ties in with what you are saying about being told in an educational institution you weren't hearing what you are playing. We get this a lot with the educational institutions in our country, it's this kind of educational industrial complex. You need to be able to assess it, so you need to have rules, because you need to get your next paycheck from the funder. It makes me think of the idiom in Greek, the future is behind you. We tend to think of the future of being ahead of you, but they have this idea of the future being behind you because you can't see it and you don't know what it is. That is an interesting spin, that playing things and investigating what you don't know is the way forward.*

H: Well yeah, there's also separating things into the improviser and the composer. These binary oppositionals that become fixed, they become part of the educational industrial. And you are absolutely right academic culture all over the world is kind of the same. There's something that happens to us, we want to codify

to the point of choking ourselves. We're only supposed to codify in order to break through, keep collapsing the pyramid that we built, so that the base can expand and expand. The only reason we don't is for somebody to stay in power, that is the only thing I can think of. Someone needs to stay in power, or their ilk needs to stay in power. So it's like we are going to fix, and fixate, and own this idea, but Ornette used to say 'No-one can own an idea, right?'. I mean, ideas are a lot like the air, you know.

A: *Yeah I think that's one of the things you represent because, I feel, that what we are talking about is not something inherent in academic study. We are talking about academic study done badly. I think about Anthony [Braxton] teaching at Mills [College] or Wesleyan [University], or Roscoe [Mitchell] or Wadada [Leo Smith] or Milford [Graves]. All these people, you know, Nicole [Mitchell] ... so it's not inherent in the academic enterprise. It's just academia done badly.*

H: Yeah, it's true, what you are mentioning there, a lot of these folks now are not being tokenised. We are moving ahead to a place where we are starting to see in order for true integration to happen, amongst all of our temperaments, disintegration has to happen. And that disintegration scares a lot of people. But we have to trust in composting. That you take the scraps of old academia done poorly, and then just put the remnants of it in the ground and something new will grow up out of that. Now here's the careful transitional part we are in now, is that institutions are hiring Antony Braxton, Tyshawn Sorey, Vijay Iyer, Nicole [Mitchell] ... and that does plant the seed for things to change. When Albert Ayler said, 'Music has nothing to do with people, it's a natural force', I realised there is music with a capital M and music with a small m. The music with the small m is running around after being the 'professional'. But Albert Ayler I think was talking about the capital, the large M. The 'Music' that, as Inayat Khan talks about, contains the larger Self, so through another kind of

education you extinguish the smaller self for the larger One.

Lou Harrison, his cultural value systems were more expansive than just equal tempered value systems. So he was marginalised and his gamelan was made an elective. He left the semester I came because apparently they wouldn't give him enough units to teach that would allow him health benefits. This is already an established great master but it's what he represented culturally. It didn't matter racially if he were white, black, it was the quality of his spirit.

So going back to this keyboard, this quantifiably equal tempered keyboard, equal temperament. First you need equity before you can have equality. Before you can have equal temperament maybe we need equitable temperament. Which means that these 8 pitches that are coming in, well they have to be raised to a level that is not just funny and novel, not just to tokenise or marginalise them, but to use them in a fairly weighted manner. From equity, we understand that we are coming from a place of empathy. Empathy is very scary because that takes us into where our spirits are becoming each other's. And so the path from empathy, to equity, to equality, reaches equal temperament by a sharing of power, so that it is no longer power actually.

With academia introducing folks like Nicole, its going to have to reach a point where those power structures that determine how students learn, can be shared, transformed so that the privilege is distributed fairly so that everything can change. Right now, we are in a stage where there are still people who are deeply afraid of that. And so they would rather simply invite you into the house [...] George Kirby was a great Black comedian who grew up during segregation and would say, 'in the south, it's get as close as you like, just don't get too big. In the north, it's get as big as you like, just don't get too close.' And I thought about that and I thought, in academia, I have experienced both. I think that probably our teachers and cohorts and colleagues, like Roscoe and Wadada, or Nicole and Vijay,

they see that as well, and then it's up to each of us to decide how we are going to strategise, manoeuvre and negotiate our own way through it all.

A: Because that's the thing, music is big. There's room for everything and it seems to be this hegemony, that orthodoxy, it seems to be entrenched by that classic racist idea of fear. That your bit of the cake is going to disappear. But music is big, there is room for all of it.

H: Ornette used to talk about racism in terms of sound, casteism, really, more so than racism. This idea, he would talk about by removing notions of caste from sound, how we create this with our categories. Even the language can get imposing, you know, when we talk about bars and keys, or scale degrees. And then in jazz we'd get terms like 'cutting' sessions or 'dropping bombs', 'taking no prisoners', and so on.

A: What you say about Ornette, because I mean, you knew each other. You were close, is that right?

H: Yes, well I was very fortunate. I should preface this by saying that Ornette could make one feel as though they were singularly the most important person in that moment, and it was beautiful. But sincere too, it was genuine, there was no agenda at all. So the couple of years that I had a friendship with Ornette, and he didn't like for me to call him a mentor or a teacher as he didn't like that hierarchy, it was very special. Every time I would show up there wouldn't be anyone else around in his place and we would have days ... where he could sit on a stool contemplating sound for hours and hours without even a bathroom break. I reached a place in my music, on my horn, that was coming out, after 30 years, sounding similar to Ornette's harmolodics. So although I wasn't directly influenced by Ornette's music, I could find it by going through Persian music, integrating Persian tones which, by the way, are found in the upper partials of the overtones series.



So, anyway, Ornette really enjoyed the fact that through Persian music working through jazz, putting those tones together, it was coming out, in a way that was like a kindred sound. He found that interesting because it affirmed something about being human together.

Everything I write out is more of the tonal properties transcribed rather than the rhythmic aspects - that's something I find more felt and very hard to fix onto paper. I brought this up once with Bobby Bradford, who was an early collaborator of Ornette's. I said, 'Bobby I can't get out of Bird's way of phrasing.' Because that's what galvanised my system, what made me want to play, was hearing Charlie Parker. And then he said, 'Oh yeah, for all of us, once you hear Bird, that kind of rhythmic style of phrasing, good luck coming up with something better than that!'

A: Yeah, right! Interesting, I am just thinking of Parker, did I read somewhere that you knew Sonny Stitt as well?

H: Yeah, I mean when I was young, these were important moments. When I was about 15, I heard Charlie Parker on record, it was the Dial sessions, Volume one, his Lover Man sessions, the eve of his breakdown, when he was strung out ... And I heard that and for some reason that was what really galvanised my path. How he was able to struggle through physically playing and with such beauty at the same time. Then I would go to the public library and get more records, hearing Louis Armstrong next to Lester Bowie or someone else. So all this transcends chronological teaching of this music, this aural tradition on record that resurrects spirit. I mean how are you going to tell me not to listen to Charlie Parker before I listen to Lester Young? I would put on free jazz with Ornette and Eric Dolphy at the same time as I was listening to Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five, you know? And it was all coming from the same spirit. So that's the quality of Music with the capital M!

Now here is the thing I want to tell

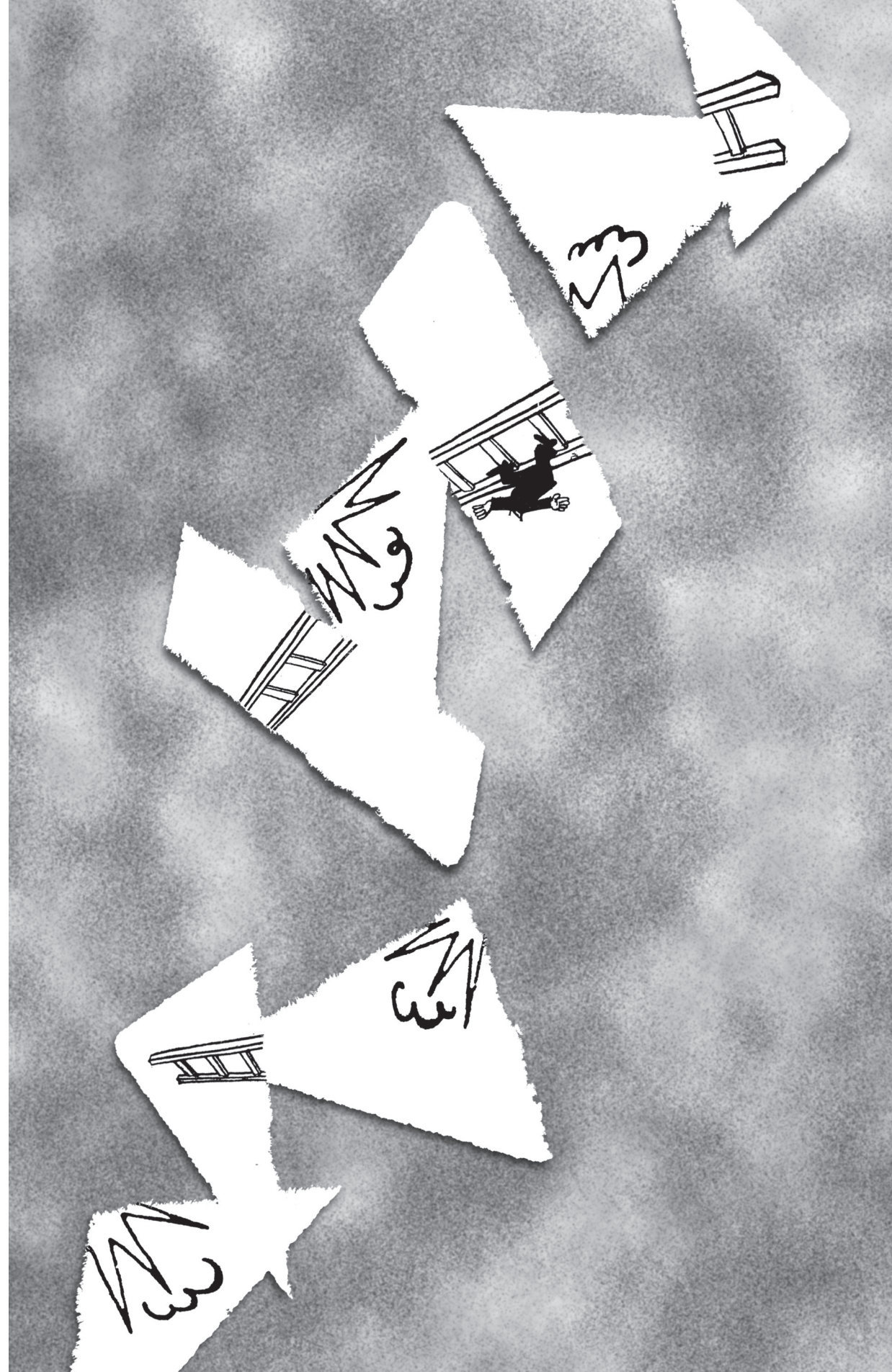
you [about Sonny Stitt]. I had picked up a Dizzy Gillespie album, everything that had Bird, you know. And this one record said it was Charlie Parker, but it was Sonny Stitt. And I was like, 'Wow! This guy, they thought he was Charlie Parker.' So he happened to be playing, up in the city, up in San Francisco. And I took a bus up there and then I had my brother pick me up because I couldn't drive yet, to take me home. So I stayed through from 9-9.30pm to like 2.30am. He and Red Holloway were playing.

A: Oh wow!

H: Yeah, and there was a great rhythm section from Oakland. It was a small club and I felt really anointed there because I was a young kid ... I couldn't even get in, you know? I mean we had Holloway telling the bouncer, 'He's okay, he's my son, he's with me.' He got me in. So the whole experience of watching them talk and play, that started me out. Up until I was 45 years old, so 30 years later, coming to Ornette to get affirmation of what I was trying to do, that's pretty much the bookend of it.

A: That's funny that you mentioned Ornette in that way because I had scribbled down some things when I was listening through the music with the scores yesterday and just beginning to get the sound I scribbled down 'In All Languages', you know that Ornette record? And I don't know what my point was but it feels germane, like it's what we are talking about in some sense.

H: Yeah, after we got to play in public together, Ornette finally said 'you have to be satisfied, Hafez, you got resolution of the soul' A loving, generous spirit, you know, I listened to everything he recorded and I couldn't hear him repeat himself until around 'Sound Museum'. Only then, I started hearing things coming back around. But for like, 40 years, I mean, he never repeated himself on record. And I remember he said he liked talking to me because, 'Well, so far you are not repeating yourself.'

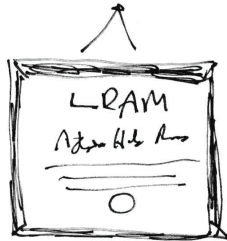


A: [Laughs] I mean, we talk about mid 50's Sonny Rollins, and that's one of the things that just blows my mind about Sonny's music: the flow of ideas is just astonishing. And no repetition, like say on that track *Lover Man* with Coleman Hawkins, he seems constitutionally incapable of phoning it in, he can't repeat himself. Because, for sure, he could play those changes, but he just was incapable of repeating himself.

Well, I'm really looking forward to [the festival] and it will be a real privilege for audiences over here to hear this music live. I mean, it's beautiful that the festival is able to provide the instrument that we need.

H: Yes, [and I hope] we can have another session later where we talk about all this more, this is always a highlight for me. And I really do want to extend my thanks to the festival and Fielding. I am so excited, I am bringing my wife and my youngest, and it's our first time over there. And after the festival we are going to make our way over to Ireland. It's going to be very nice and a real pleasure to meet you and to hear your music, and to hear the breath of our expression together.





Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for submitting to Counterflows. While we think stomping on multiple bags of tortilla chips is a really innovative and thought-provoking idea for a performance, we just don't have space for next week's festival. Please keep in touch and apply again next year.

Cheers,

The Counterflows Team



Signed by my name + academic credentials

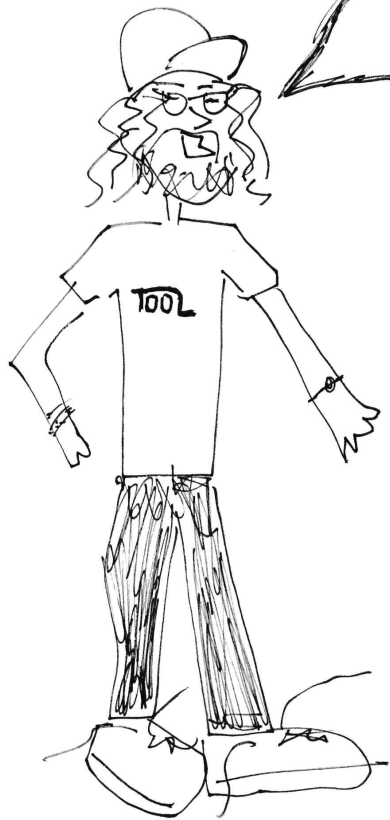
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* That feel when its after 11pm and you tune into Radio E to hear something profound in some shape or form, only to be confronted by the sickly rubbish of a sound artist producing excrement in sound form and you feel the immediate urge to google her, find her email and tell her to do something more worthwhile like road sweeping as she has nothing but ROT to offer.*



What the fuh?!? Who does Counterflows think they are rejecting me???. I'm going to be part of a movement, I make Jason Kahn look like a busker. I'm just thinking too outside the box for them!! Hope everyone enjoys watching Usurper fling marbels with spoons for the millionth time! They don't know what they're missing!!

When the support act asks can they use my amp...



WWhaAAA! No way man its Like a cUstOM BUILT dELuxE rEPLICA of a J Maskis MARSHALL amp. Am I HeCK LETTING the sUPport akt bORROW it. Da fuh Man ?



Love how my fone blows up right b4 I go on to play my NOIZE SET

(by the 4 friends who clicked "attending" on the event page.)

-MICHELLE

AW! What this was TONIGHT? Jimmy has to go get math grinds. Will def be at the next one, hope it goes well! Xxxxxxx

-SARAH

Hi girlie! omg im so Sorry I cant make it, im just so tired! How long u in town for? I can buy you coffee in d morn xxx



-BASS PLAYER

I lost my sheet music

-BOYFRIEND

A bear is in my garden and im afraid to leave the house.

SAMPLING DIASPORIC HERITAGE: A HISTORY OF ARAB MUSIC SAMPLES IN FRENCH RAP

Hajer Ben Boubaker

To Bach, who shares with me the two sides of the same coin

It is no secret that France is the Western country with the largest community from North Africa. The reason for this presence is obviously to be sought in a colonial history that caused, as in all empires, the presence of diasporas from peoples subjected to colonial brutality. I am a small particle of this history and of this diaspora. The political and cultural history of the Maghreb community is complex, rich and made up of successive stages. This presence is expressed in a multitude of aspects of French history and of course in its musical history. French hip-hop is widely performed by people of colour, from countries in North Africa, West Africa or the Caribbean. They are not the only ones - of course, there are white rappers, producers, DJs. Nevertheless, people of colour largely influence the themes (racism, police violence, colonial history), the language and the music used. The presence of samples of Arab music in rap can be explained both by the influence of American rap and by the influence of diaspora music in France. It is not a question of reducing their use to only rappers from Arab countries: such samples and influence go way beyond a single community. Passionate about Arab music, I became interested in the phenomenon and worked in collaboration with DJ Bachir on a series of podcasts devoted to the subject. Bachir, a rap DJ from the French scene, knows the subject well. He helped put together a foundational mix-CD devoted to The Bomb Squad (to put it simply, the team of producers who shaped the sound identity of Public Ene-

my) and another devoted to the duo The Nonce. He's part of the 'Abcdr du son' team, the leading magazine about rap in France. Bachir is also passionate about Maghreb music, hosting the Toukadime, a radio show devoted to North African repertoires, with his partner DJ Karim. This is perhaps a natural path for people who were the first DJ-diggers of North African musical heritage in France. We met around our respective works, after I created the Vintage Arab podcast, the first French podcast entirely devoted to telling Arab music from a musical but also political and historical point of view. This is why we have combined our two brains to flush out and tell the rap story and the Arab musical story hidden behind these samples.

The first use of explicitly 'arab' musical sounds in hip-hop - mainly violonade and darbouka - goes to Imotep, the producer of the Marseille group IAM, who sampled popular Arabic songs, with an early focus on the repertoire of the Lebanese diva Fayrouz. Fayrouz occupies a prominent place in the appearance of Arabic music within French hip-hop. The first attested use of a Fayrouz song dates back to 1990. Rapper Lionel D' interprets "Pour toi le beur" (which means in slang "For you the young arab" - beur is a french slang word from the word "arabe") on a sample of the song "Aatini el nay" (Give me the flute an adaptation of a poem by Khalil Gibran) by Fayrouz. Lionel D is a rapper with a decisive role in anchoring the hip-hop movement. From 1988, he hosted DJ Deenastyle on Radio Nova with Dee Nasty. At the time, the radio show hosted and helped discover the majority of Parisian rappers, includ-

ing NTM, Assassin, Mc Solaar and even the rappers of the Ministry A.M.E.R. Very easily recognizable for an Arabic music lover; Fayrouz's sample retains the original rhythm and borrows from the dramatization of the original song, marked by the nay (Arabic flute) and the violins. This creates a theatrical air that perfectly suits this piece of anti-racist rap, where Lionel D - of Afro-Caribbean origin - expresses his solidarity with the Arab community in the face of the racism it suffers in France. The choice of the sample is therefore not due to chance. However, the first influence is in the United States. Indeed, the song is very inspired by a famous New York rap song Paid in Full, by the iconic Eric B and Rakim.

This trend would be reaffirmed over the years: far from turning its back on American rap, French hip-hop would draw on its own heritage, a heritage that borrows heavily from diasporic stories, to interpret American standards. We find the same phenomenon in a cult album of French rap: Mauvais œil by the group Lunatic, the first record from an independent rap label certified gold in France. Fayrouz reappears on one of the hits from the album entitled "Pas le temps pour les regrets". Producer Geraldo uses an excerpt from the song "Zahret el Madayn" (The flower of the cities) by Fayrouz. This song occupies a symbolic place in Arabic music. Released after the Arab defeat during the 1967 Arab-Israeli six-day war, Fayrouz sings a tribute to the city of Jerusalem and the Palestinian people. This title was written on the orders of President Nasser, with the desire to remobilize following this debacle, which permanently traumatized the political life of Arab countries. Lasting over 8 minutes, the title is broken down into several musical atmospheres, notably inspired by Christian songs from the region - with strong references to both the Christian Arab songs and Koranic references - alongside an atmosphere of military operetta. This musical style had been well represented in Egyptian music of the time, since the 1952 coup by the Free Officers who overthrew the monarchy of King Farouk. The

military operetta becomes one of the musical avatars of political and nationalist song. Fayrouz uses for the first time "the military style" in Zahret El Madayen. It is this part of the song that was sampled by Geraldo. While Lionel D's sampling leaves no doubt about the origin, Geraldo's work in cutting the loop is such that it is difficult to recognize Fayrouz. By borrowing from the military atmosphere of the Fayrouz sample, Lunatic manages to produce a title close to the American rapper Mobb Deep with an oppressive atmosphere made possible by the violins.

"Zahret el Madayen" is used again by rapper Haroun, from the famous Parisian rap group La Scred Connexion. In the title "Au front" (On the front), the rapper samples the song and manages to create a similarly militaristic atmosphere. The peculiarity of Haroun, a rapper of Tunisian origin, is that the original Fayrouz song was listened to by his parents. He therefore borrows directly from his cultural and family heritage.

The place given to cultural and family heritage within the work of rappers with an immigrant background is a question that has long troubled me. If there is a sound that tells a whole section of the cultural history of North Africans in France, it is "Tonton du Bled" from the group 113.

A title that has become a classic of French rap, a cult piece for an entire generation, "Tonton du Bled" ("Uncle from the bled", bled is an Arabic word meaning "homeland/country") is taken from the album "Les Princes de la ville" produced by the late DJ Mehdi. Full of humorous references, carried by the flow of the French-Algerian rapper Rim'K who wrote the lyrics, "Tonton du bled" powerfully tells a family and summer tradition that the children of North African immigrants know well: the return to "bled" (from the Arabic word 'balad' meaning "country/homeland") during major holidays. A return that, before the arrival of low-cost airline companies, was often done by car. Families went on vacation to Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco by car before taking the boat in the ports of Marseille, Italy

or Spain. A joyful, but nostalgic piece, “Tonton du bled” feels the experience and teems with references to Algeria, both in the lyrics with the use of Arabic expressions, quotes from places in Algeria, and culinary practices. It recounts the strong and lasting bond of children born in France with the land of their ancestors.

The track went viral and topped the charts in 2000. The rhythm and lyrics, now known throughout France, were based on a sample borrowed from the Algerian repertoire. While the song was already written, Mehdi struggled for some time to find the “right loop” to sample. This was until Rim’k brought back to the DJ several vinyl records belonging to his father, including that of Ahmed Wahby. The title Harguetni eddamaa (“a tear burned me”) belongs to the repertoire of asri music, a musical style originating from the city of Oran in Algeria. Ahmed Wahby, a monument of Algerian music, occupies a special place for the migrant community. Like many Algerian singers of his time, Ahmed Wahby made a career in France with the Maghreb community living in the country during the interwar. Rim’k also has a special place for children of North African immigration. He is the one who brought a dual culture into world of French popular music: rap culture, despised and ignored by the bourgeois musical world, and that of North African music. By giving his words to our life experience, and by putting “le bled” at the top of the charts, Rim’k opened the door to a generation of rap and R&B artists who continue to inspire. He is not the only one but remains undeniably “the uncle of the bled”, a member of our family. I cannot help but see here a direct connection with the rich heritage of North African music in France. This story, on the margins of the official history of music in France, took place in districts of Paris, Marseille, Lyon. It gave rise to a parallel music economy and to the expression of an experience made up of suffering but also of joy. It recalls the existence of a community of political but also cultural destiny that knows how to open up to the world by claiming its own history.

This legacy lives on. I explore the incredible echoes of this music and sampling culture with DJ Bachir, in our podcast “Rapza” (the term “rabza” in French slang means “Arab” and we have chosen to replace the “b” with the “p” to create a contradiction between the word “Arab” and the word “rap”). Moreover, the influence of North African and Middle Eastern music continues. The 2010s were the years of the influence of raï, the musical style from western Algeria, on rap and R&B in a trend called “raï&B” which gave rise to duets between raï artists and R&B or rap artists. In this period of rising racism in France, and in a Europe that leaves more and more room for the ideas of the far right, the existence of transnational sound heritage seems essential. This was evidenced recently by the Belgian rapper Moroccan Hamza who sampled a classic of North African immigrant music in France in “Juste une minute” (2017). Behind this song hides a work by the famous Algerian singer-songwriter, Dahmane El Harrachi, already covered by Rachid Taha “Ya Rayah”, a version that became a global hit. More than an Algerian song, this title is the anthem of the first North African immigrants in France.

This multiple crossing of the borders of the title recalls the multiple lives of a community that continues to deeply mark French cultural practices and beyond.

Further listening:

Hajer’s podcasts and some of the songs mentioned in this piece can be heard at the following links:
<https://soundcloud.com/vintagearab/rapza-une-histoire-de-samples-arabes-dans-le-rap-13>
<https://soundcloud.com/vintagearab/rapza-une-histoire-de-samples-arabes-dans-le-rap-23>
<https://soundcloud.com/vintagearab/rapza-une-histoire-de-samples-arabes-dans-le-rap-33>
<https://soundcloud.com/vintagearab/rapza-bonus-la-rumeur-cest-flou-peut-etre-bien-que-cest-fait-expres>

soo ui smyth

26.6.16



NOT THIS, NOT THAT

Christopher Law

What does it mean to assume the existence of audiences? To welcome them (us?) back to our (your) spaces, events, gatherings? What work do we expect and desire music to do in composing 'us', making us present? These are questions that, if they really are questions—by which I mean, if we don't presume to have the answers in advance—music alone can't respond to. We have to place music in relation to other, less imposing fields in order to think through how bringing together relates to holding apart. At least I do, for now.

Begin with an act of listening.

About halfway through a 2018 episode of the podcast Make (No) Bones—I don't think the show is going anymore—a synthesizer modulates thoughtfully in the background while the American poet Simone White says that 'the work of poems is to reorganise [...] our thinking about how words mean anything'. The ample room afforded by this conception of poetic work gives rise, maybe unsurprisingly, to all manner of accidents. This is for the best, White says. Poets (and their readers and listeners, presumably), even those without 'specific interests in non-linear time', end up engaged in a play with temporalities: 'we come, if we have any interest in sort of experimenting with language, we accidentally come to the information, somehow, that what you are actually doing is like spinning, right; like you're engaging in an action of spinning of meanings so that the whole process of allusion or whatever, in a traditional literary sense, is no longer the game that you're in'. White's reference to spinning pits poetic 'work' in relation to less celebrated forms of labour, an insight that's traditional enough in its own right. The link between text and textile has been attractive to writers and theorists for

centuries not only because of the words' common etymological root, but because of their shared materiality: what's spun is wrought together from discrete trajectories but thereafter entangled, not easily undone. Non-linearity makes me think too, though, of what Walter Benjamin referred to as the 'Penelope work' of weaving: the patient labour of undoing, in the night, what the day has made: writing as remembrance and return but also as forgetting and disavowal, deliberate or otherwise.

The 'spinning of meanings' also suggests a turn of the wheel, an element of chance. When we read or listen, write or talk, we can't any longer determine a specific origin for our locutions; they could come from anywhere. I've written out and punctuated White's remarks as I hear them, trying to bear in mind the accidental nature of all this:

Whereas allusion does ask us to participate in a kind of historical development which can be tracked, right, when you're interested in kind of like a more deconstructive project of language, then it doesn't really matter, you know what I mean, like, how you—what the antecedents are or whatever. It's like, the brain is a tricky place and that's actually the thing that you're most interested in: you're interested in the individuals, you know, the voice's capacity to send you across its own field of reference—and plus your own—and so those things together are, like, kind of magical, and, so, that doesn't have anything to do with influence, really, or a past or future which could be, you know, organised by any kind of discipline. It's like it is a kind of simultaneity, and I think that's fun.

As an index of, among other things, her own interest in American individualism and pragmatism, White's 'and plus your own' refuses to let the self

recede fully, even as it gives up any veneer of total autonomy or control. It's reminiscent for me—or maybe I just came across them at similar times—of William James's claim that 'the world is made of consciousness as well as atoms' and specifically the way that it is taken up by another contemporary American poet, Peter Gizzi, who affirms 'the right to simply read the world in terms of my own instrument, my body and what it has taken in as sensory data—to be the ethnographer of my own nervous system.'¹ It recalls too a short essay of John Berger's, entitled 'Field'. The 'field' in question is no longer 'a space awaiting events', Berger writes, but an 'event in itself', one that, suddenly—as if accidentally—'gives birth to a happiness which is instantly recognisable as your own'. 'The field that you are standing before,' the text concludes, 'appears to have the same proportions as your own life.' There's a slippage between pronouns in White's comments (perhaps a result of the fact they were spoken, but no less interesting for that), something at play, it seems, across these intertextual nodes: 'we', 'you', 'I', 'our', 'your', 'my'. I'm not sure, reading and listening to these passages again, if White is imagining audiences for (her) poems, or if she is conceiving of the poetic field as made up of so many consciousnesses, 'individuals' who may or may not come together into something else. It feels like a question, though.

White is speaking in the podcast about her book *Dear Angel of Death*. Published in 2018 by Ugly Duckling Presse, the volume contains two groups of poems followed by a long eponymous essay.² Its prose enacts some of the strategies White gives voice to in the remarks transcribed above. Discourses and genres spill over into one another; black ink gives way to uncanny navy blue; images creep in unheralded; playlists go on for pages (I started putting one together but it was taking me ages). There are all caps ('DEATH * DROP * PAIN'). At points, White is direct in a way I find funnier than almost anything else: 'Let me say right now that Aldon Nielsen confuses

me when he says "African traditions of expressivity" like I am supposed to know what that means.'³ But the humour takes place within a context so dense with love and esteem for almost everyone cited (how could you use a phrase like that!), it makes it almost impossible not to reflect on your own assumptions, shortcuts, stupidities, fallbacks. 'What if I gave it that much respect?' is the question that lets in the essay's stunning, concluding discussion of Trap music, a conversation that still escapes me here, partly because I'm stuck on something else and partly because I continue to struggle, happily, with thinking through that argument.⁴ All of this means, in any case, that it's often hard to know where one voice disappears and others begin.

This can be a cause for sinking feelings: overlooking the fact you have read something before, realising that an idea is not (just) yours. White is searching for stuff on one volume of Nathaniel Mackey's *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate* and realises she has forgotten Fred Moten's essay on the same text. Forgetting, though, is a necessary part of poetic work, a happy accident. It has a pull that can't be done away with: 'That forgetfulness is so much a counterpart of reading, that forgetting exercises untold power over a text-that-is-being-written, is so obvious. Probably, forgetfulness is the wrong word because what's actually at stake when I lament the inevitable lapse and incapacity that accompanies the work of writing is precisely the denial of the repetitious tread of eternal first steps that moved me to write this essay in the first place.'⁵ One thread of White's argument here, as I understand it, is that there is a 'lapse and incapacity' that's inherent to writing: we're never fully in possession of language, our thoughts and actions are always accompanied by something that undoes our intentions ('ruins' them, as she puts it later⁶). Another, maybe trickier t(h)read, related to those 'eternal first steps': even if we recognise these difficulties, we mess things up when we frame them as inevitable, to the point that we never actually get going

or allow ourselves refuge. The field gets enclosed, shut down, in advance, as the possibility of reading is denied. ('What would a recording of ideas, so punctilious, so exact, a writing without precedent or following, become? Is it possible to read a writing that never rests?')

'For me, it has come apart along the seam of the Music.' A restless and repetitious and non-starting writing, a writing that positions innovation exactly as this persistent beginning-again—White names it the 'trope of the "up and out"' and connects it to a 'familiar poetic discourse of ascent/descent'⁸. But this upness and outness, so goes the argument that develops across the essay—from the very start, as White says—isn't really about poetry at all, but about music, or 'the Music' (capitalization designating not just a practice but a looming investment in that practice and enforcement of the investment). The reduction, for black people, of all ways of being to music is something the essay works both to identify and to resist in favour of a thinking about what poetry might do and—though I won't get here—a thinking about a future (White hears it in Trap) that escapes the Music: 'The objective is that, for me, language that goes off doesn't aspire to the condition of music; it aspires to itself.'⁹ This tension is described more simply elsewhere: there are 'possibilities proposed for black personhood by way of performing and listening to music (that is, of music-based theories of radical black personhood)' and there are 'possibilities proposed by way of writing'¹⁰. What's important is not to collapse the two into each other, or at least not to take their 'convergence' or 'divergence' for granted. Is there an audience for this? There is 'being together', there is 'being seen together', there is 'an order that values being seen together'; composition—our togetherness—can be an imposition¹¹.

I have barely got started on this, as I said. I am very sure that I am still tied up in expectations about what White terms 'literary critical "reading"' and 'professional habits of criticism and thought', such that I still struggle to get, in Trap,

those future sounds that escape legibility, and to get the things that get written about them. But holding stuff apart, this essay suggests, seems important in the context of a Festival: our imminent getting together again, my fun, your happiness. White talks about 'the work we have asked the Music to do', and 'how that work might be done elsewhere'. Is the fact that there is a 'poetic thing' and not just a 'musical thing'—a 'pretty wonderful claim', she makes out—actually where White wants to leave things? I don't know, don't even know if that's a relevant question. But I love reading this text, this field, because I'm not sure where its loving ends and its critique begins, just that everything loved or critiqued is, like one of Mackey's balloons whose reading gets forgotten, 'rough poetry' that takes up its own space, as it does in the world, before an 'audience'. Which is the point—the way you're folded into it, both inhering and going beyond, taking up space. Leave it at that and listen for a bit.¹²

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John Berger, 'Field', *About Looking* (Vintage, 1989), pp. 199-205

David Grundy, 'Zero Hour: Simone White and D.S. Marriott', *Journal of Foreign Languages and Cultures*, 3.2 (2019), 88-103. Open Access: <http://jflc.hunnu.edu.cn/info/1268/1569.htm>

Peter Gizzi, interviewed by Ben Lerner, 'Poetry at the Threshold', *Poetry Foundation* (2012). <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69780/poetry-at-the-threshold>

Simone White, *Dear Angel of Death* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2018)

* * *

1 <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69780/poetry-at-the-threshold>

2 I'm not sure that essay is the right word. The text is based partly on White's 2016 PhD dissertation, and to read even a sentence is to have the feeling—which isn't as common as it might be—of taking in many years of research, reading, writing: a dizzying experience of simultaneity in its own right.

³ 91

⁴ This is despite learning from White's readers, among them David Grundy and Dhanveer Singh Brar.

⁵ 100

⁶ 111

⁷ 92

⁸ White suggests that Mackey and Harris have 'set out to become stranded'. I wonder if they have; wonder how many have set out to become stranded and achieved it: where would they be, now?

⁹ 112

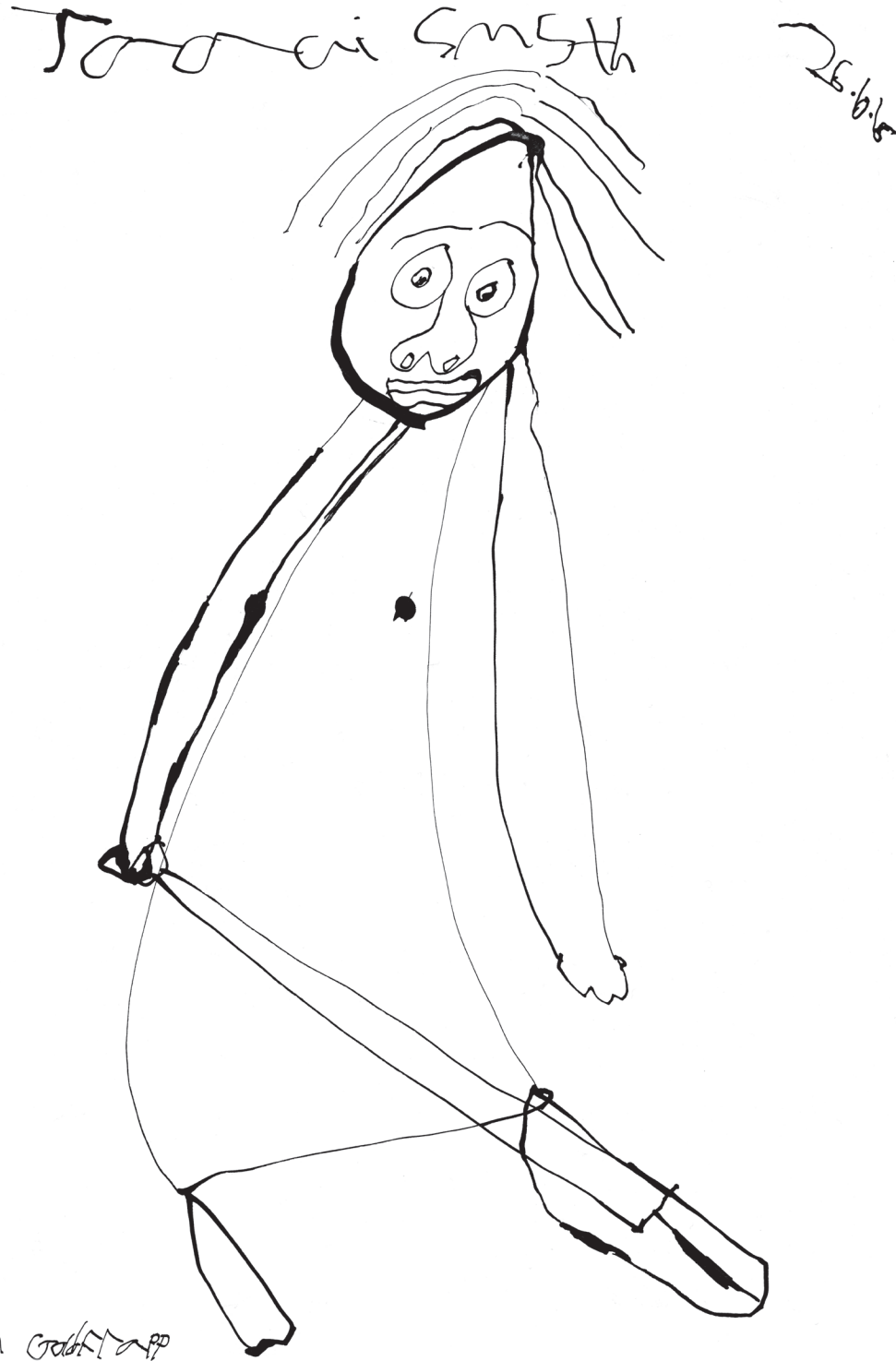
¹⁰ 111

¹¹ 79

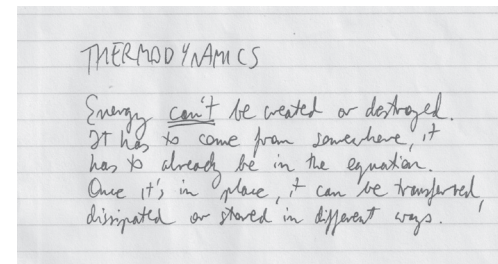
¹² Thanks to Helen, Jonathan, Lili and Rob for conversations that made this possible.

KILOJOULES

Romy Danielewicz



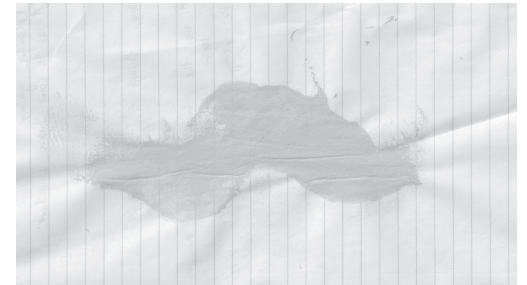
I committed to writing a text on improvisation, and came across the problem of why it is so difficult to make something out of nothing. Then I started copying entire passages from GCSE revision pages – this is essentially where the below originates.



Despite crushing hard on anything-maths and especially the little γ symbols, I still occasionally have nightmares about having to re-sit science exams. To sublimate this and many other anxieties, I will apply the concept of energy transfer to four ideas: improvisation, staying warm, hospitality and hot feelings.

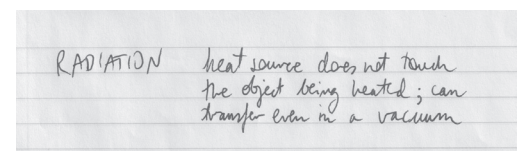
IMPROVISATION

As I try to come up with this material / collection of index cards / performance script / make of it what you will, I make tea which I don't drink, contort my body to Fleetwood Mac, massage a leaf to remove dust, take advantage of being home alone to go nuts with wall paint testers, and text furiously until I begin doing what can only be described as squats, completely unprompted and 'for fun'. This surprises me, and I continue gyrating in a circular motion for some time before I give in to my complete lack of attentiveness and go heat up some food.

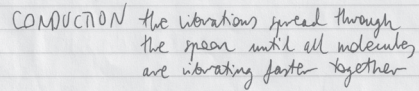


Last Autumn I started attending and was part of the formation of the Autonomous Improvised Music Society. As someone who can't play any instruments, read music or understand theory this has really opened a new chapter. I mostly sit there enveloped in a collective fugue state, erratically caressing a snare drum or banging out marching bands rhythms into a CASIO with the volume turned down as low as possible because so-called 'patriotic songs', usually in major keys and bombastic range, constituted 90% of my musical education and I'm still paying the price (the other 10% being domestic hip-hop, maybe there is hope for me still?).

Rather than being an invitation to follow, which is how I have come to understand a lot of music, the improvisation group allows a state of participation whilst drifting. Disruption is welcomed, and the group largely eschews melody – this is just my impression of it but the minute someone tries to lead the proceedings in the direction of a song, someone else consciously steers away from it. Even then, something happens that wasn't there before.



STAYING WARM



CONDUCTION the vibrations spread through the space until all molecules are vibrating faster together

I can feel the wind through my single-glazed window, which is fine. Just something I noticed. If I put my hand to it, I'm practically outside, at one with all the cars that just switched on their headlights. I just washed the windows, which adds to the illusion. I have not taken any meter readings lately because I prefer to exist in this illusory space in which my heat doesn't come and go, and is just an aspect of the various autonomies I enjoy.

The Isle of Eigg has been completely energy self-sufficient since February 2008. It harnesses its power from the weather through a combination of wind turbines, hydroelectric generators and solar panels. Although power is 24/7, the residents are required to comply with the maximum use limit of 5kW at any one time. You can still make a cup of tea while the washing machine is on, but blow-drying your hair just then would be a stretch.

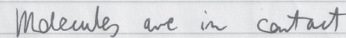
The idea of limits is very appealing to me. Most outlines of communist societies include some idea of restricting consumption or property, and although anyone I know who actually lived through socialism would never agree with me, I think this kind of restriction could be liberating. Restricting cravings resists restlessness. The maximum use limit encourages at least some degree of focus, as well as co-operation and mutual aid in that it ensures there is enough energy for the (just under) 100 people that live on Eigg.

Self-sufficiency and community ownership of the island came out of essentially anti-capitalist desires: to ease dependence on absent landlords and polluting generators. However, the community buyout came as a result of a £750,000 anonymous donation of personal wealth, and the use of energy from renewable sources is also

bound up in industrialism. In what is essentially a closed system, even tapping out or going off-grid involves a reliance on what's already there.

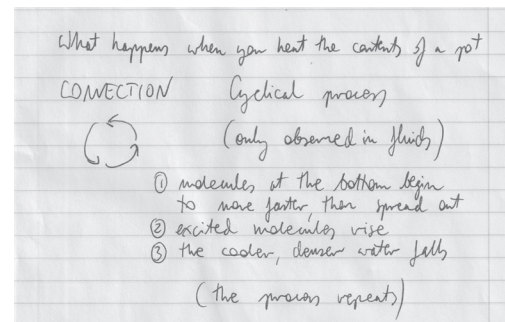
Although maybe the system of financial transactions isn't as closed as we think – I suppose it's never been a problem when extra zeroes are effectively added on at the end of financial transactions. When I think of global capital, I think of a vampiric ghoul siphoning its life force from those who are alive without generating anything new, and there's nothing hot about it at all.

HOSPITALITY



Molecules are in contact

I became interested in heat when exchanging stories of energy transfer with a friend. As a catalyst for some art application that never came through, my friend recounted the story of a pair of long johns, given to him by his dad on a visit to frost-gripped Kraków, where his family had lived before their migrations in the 1890s. In response to this, I recalled the time shortly after I migrated to London in 2010 and for the whole summer ate so poorly and rested so little that my then long hair started to fall out in clumps, an energy transfer manifesting as loss rather than presence. The two stories made me think of calorific gains and expenditure, heat and its transfer – the hypothesis being that energy that drives practices and collaborations relies on similar entanglements.



What happens when you heat the contents of a pot

CONVECTION Cyclical process (only observed in fluids)

- 1 molecules at the bottom begin to move faster, then spread out
- 2 excited molecules rise
- 3 the cooler, denser water falls

(the process repeats)

To catalyze our thermodynamic experiment, we had planned to get snowed-in at an off-grid cabin in a highland forest where we would need to generate our own heat. But the funding was never given, the trip didn't happen, and I have been sad about the proposal buried in my Leviathan of a hard drive. I decided to dig it out to look at it again. But I can't really think of anything when I look at it – if the first step is not taken, no matter how hard you conceptualise you cannot infer what the next steps would be. The ideas remain stewing deep down where only the search tool can reach, or possibly cooling down in some mega-server in the steppes of Kazakhstan.

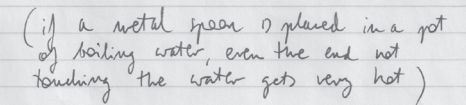
In the current climate, what kind of hospitality, what kind of environment do we need to allow things to happen? I personally don't think arts organisations have a role to play here, definitely not in their current form and maybe not at all. The whiteness of our institutions, their classist, exploitative and frequently opportunistic practices (who is hot goods, the kind of curating that leads to burnout) – all of these parameters make me think that perhaps it is better to de-focus from their work, coming out in search of togetherness instead. I'm telling myself, you can't burn bridges where there are none, you can only build them out of fire.

HOT FEELINGS

Some things can be recounted with momentum because of the hot feelings they evoke. Tomorrow I am coming out of self-isolation, for which I have been partly grateful as it has given me the opportunity to avoid hearing people's takes on the war in Ukraine. While I feel slightly readier now to open myself up to different solidarities, the fact remains that Eastern Europe is a mindset you would have had to suck out of the still hot ancestral bones to form even a rudimentary understanding.

The amount of times I had to explain things about Russia's particular brand of

imperialism. And yes, the ongoing energy crisis has evoked the political complexities that heat is contingent on. Why do we hold on to pre-existing forms even though we know they are harmful and obstructive? I don't know, you tell me, all I know is that we are all complicit, and maybe acknowledgements are not useful, and it is only actions that can be heard at all.



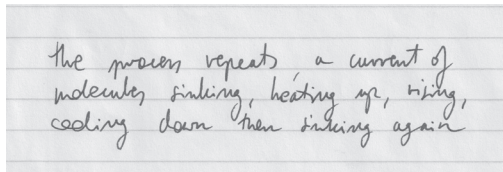
(if a metal spoon is placed in a pot of boiling water, even the end not touching the water gets very hot)

ONE OTHER THING, AN EVERGREEN SHRUB

The last thing I wanted to write about is this phenomenon of adaptogens, things that are meant to make you more able to adapt to difficult conditions over time. One example of them is Ashwagandha, an evergreen shrub that grows in India, the Middle East, and parts of Africa and which I have been taking in the form of 1200 mg of powder locked in a capsule made out of brown rice. For a while after I started to take it, I couldn't make up my mind what exactly it was that Ashwa, as I dubbed it, was doing to my system, and concluded that, being energising, it contributed largely to the insatiable urge to party that overcame me last year. Later on, upon taking it again after a break, I learnt online that I had not been correct and that Ashwagandha is, in fact, taken to reduce stress and has a sedative effect.

It is worth noting that Ashwagandha is also, potentially, a salve for inattentiveness, although maybe this aspect of my functioning is something I want to keep – I am keen for a sort of 'a turn to non-coherence' as a way of expressing the way we live and process information now. The hormone-producing status of my powder capsule is likewise contested, with multiple voices arguing for or against its supposed role in either testosterone or estrogen production. I decide that it is safe for me to stay within the loose bounds of

this sort of liminality, both for the sake of my gender presentation but also just a general feeling of things always being contingent on each other, on our environment and on our needs, a feeling that I suppose brings a sense of reassurance through its embrace of complexity.



Taken by Antanas Sutkus in Kuršių nerija (as far as I can tell)

Thank you to Rowan Markson who provided some highly calorific conversation in the early days of these ideas

This publication was produced as part of Counterflows Festival 2022, Glasgow.

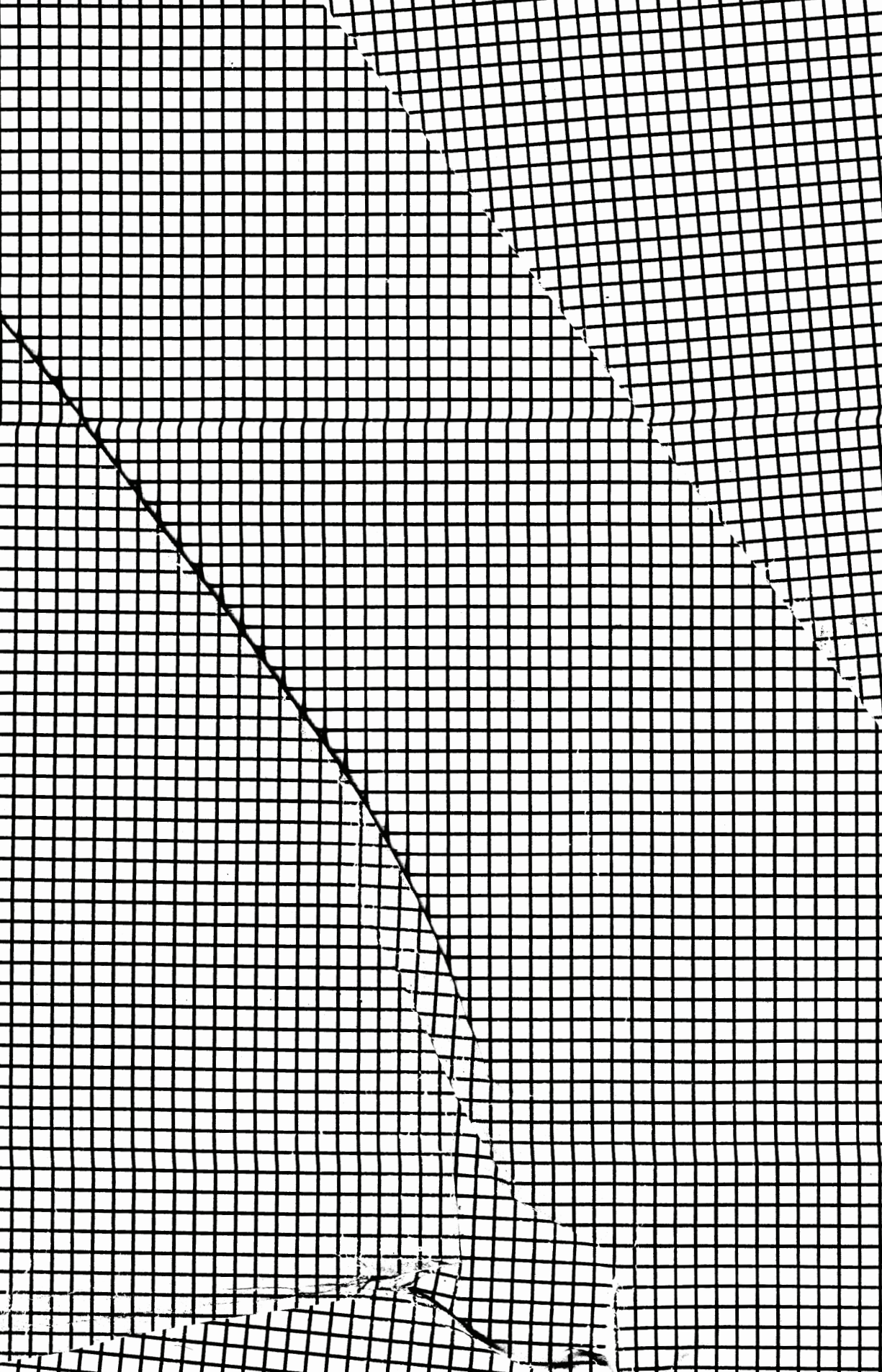
Printed by
Sunday Print Service at
Good Press, Glasgow.

Edited by
Joel White.

Design and cover illustration by
Oliver Pitt

Thanks to Heather Lander at Project Ability for help sourcing work by Cameron Morgan, Robert Reddick and Jaqui Smith.





COUNTERFLOWS
APRIL 2022