

Ming Tsao
Resistance and Difficulty

There are subjects
And these are given
There is a place
And a history
And these are given too.
And before this, there are people that one knows, a
language that one learnt or was forced to learn
All given.

You make a choice
It can't be undone; everything that has happened
remains for all time.
Listen, watch, more often, more closely.
Work for it; produce the work with us.
It means nothing otherwise.
This isn't art; in fact it's the last nail in the coffin.
It's just the world
And who owns that?
(Danièle Huillet¹)

The question concerning musical substance [*Gehalt*] has great bearing on my own compositional thinking particularly since the idea of substance suggests the related idea of content [*Inhalt*]. What composed music is and what it can mean are two different but related phenomena. In the following pages, I would like to touch upon these terms in order to present my poetics of musical composition.

The substance of music, I believe, is made intelligible to us through the resistance that it offers to our awareness. Resistance is an inescapable given, entailing its counterpart in difficulty: one experiences difficulty when one encounters resistance. And this priority of *givenness* allows the creative imagination to “give substance to what is needed but not simply wanted, to offer both the difficulty of contrivance and also a profound assurance that this difficulty corresponds to genuine resistance in the larger context of the outside world.”² Indeed, resistance reaffirms what is given and substantial;³ without it,

1 George Clark and Redmond Entwistle, “We do everything for this art, but this art isn’t everything: Notes on Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub” in *Vertigo Magazine*, Vol. 3, Issue 6, 2007 (Summer), pp. 1-2.

2 J. H. Prynne, “Resistance and Difficulty” in *Prospect*, Vol. 5 (Winter, 1961), pp. 30.

3 Resistance in an artistic work is also intimately connected with its “force” and “energy.” “Force, as the liberation of entrapped energy, finds its counterpart in an energy definable as the application of force to a resistant object.” Brian Ferneyhough, “Il Tempo della Figura,” in *Collected Writings*, ed. James Boros and Richard Toop (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Pub-

difficulty becomes merely “topological subjectivity,” a play of surfaces.

This sense of givenness is what I refer to as “how things are,” when a composition’s tensions embody “both the process and its difficulties, and the resistances proper to its substance.”⁴ “How things are,” suggests a sense of material identity and uniqueness governed by the formula “forward to nature”—a nature that is essentially historical.⁵ Yet it is music’s autonomy that provides the possibility for substance and can point toward a composition’s eventual meaning as “that which exists through itself.”⁶ This existential orientation of the musical work, I believe, is important both to how musical substance, as well as content, can establish itself.

Resistance and difficulty are paramount to how music can achieve substance through the “imagination’s particular function to admit, draw sustenance from, and celebrate the ontological priority of this outside world” and in return to create “entities which subsequently become part of the world, an addition to it.”⁷ The autonomy of the composer’s creation establishes the priority of the world and at the same time makes it accessible. Resistance reaffirms music’s capacity for substance by making one aware of the external world and our place in it, where the experience of music can “impart a renewed thrust to our engagement in the domain of the social.”⁸ Substance in music, as well as for art in general, “does not seek to describe, but to enact.”⁹

In my compositions, such an orientation is predicated on Helmut Lachenmann’s concept of a *musique concrète instrumentale* that refers not to Pierre Schaeffer’s sense of a *musique concrète* and its counterpart of an *acousmatic listening*—where one forgets the source of a sound and focuses only on the sound itself—but on the contrary prioritizes the concrete musical experience of producing sounds on instruments and musicians engaged in a most intense form of communication and flow of energies. One hears the conditions under which a sound—or noise—is produced, what materials and energies are involved and what resistances are encountered. These conditions are managed so as to give “innumerable motivated echoes of non-arbitrary confirmation” to the senses, mirroring Alexander Pope’s *style of sound* in poetic discourse as a “signifying code which is potentially sense-bearing, or at least sense-confirming

lishers), 1995, p. 35.

4 J. H. Prynne, “Resistance and Difficulty” (see footnote 2), p. 30.

5 Theodore Adorno, “The Dialectical Composer,” in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 206.

6 Robert Creeley, *Tales Out of School* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 43.

7 Prynne, “Resistance and Difficulty,” (see footnote 2), p. 30.

8 Brian Ferneyhough, “Barbarians at the Gates” (Paper read at Goldsmiths College, London, 2002), p. 3, unpublished manuscript.

9 Charles Olson, “Human Universe” in *Collected Prose*, Donald Allen and Benjamin Friedlander (ed.) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 162.

and sense-enhancing.”¹⁰

Musical substance exposes something about the essence of the concrete musical experience, of “how things are.” This is why in my work I never mix instrumental music with prerecorded music or live electronics. In such a context, I often find that no element retains its authenticity; sounds are mixed together in a way that violates the premise that reality is richer than our imaginations, and we impoverish our art otherwise.¹¹ My goal is to produce a *materialist sound*—a sound world outside of consciousness rather than one fully endowed with consciousness, thus giving listeners room to make up their own minds. *Unconcealment* in my music means revealing those spaces that these sounds inhabit—spaces we are unaware of because listening is too often prescribed in certain ways—and allowing a listener to dwell in those spaces.

The relationship between dwelling and composition is clarified when we search for contexts in which we respect sound’s own nature, when composition beckons us toward the nature of sound, both in its acoustical as well as its historically sedimented meanings.¹² The musical-concrete experience, with sufficient intensity, can set free the compositional work—as musical substance—and thus contribute to the sum of the world’s availability. Musical substance is predicated on music’s autonomy in such a way that “adds to the ontological priority of the world by revealing the incommensurability between perception and world, invention and reference.”¹³ This incommensurability shows itself in my work through my patience with the musical materials, endlessly reworking the same materials to reveal their contradictions, “bearing hidden things toward their truths.”¹⁴ These contradictions juxtapose the materiality of sound

10 Alexander Pope, *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.*: Vol. V (London: Adamant Media Corporation, 2003), p. 61. “The reader’s experience of such *echo*, when grasped and understood, is thus a closely selective response to signifying patterns and relations within the wider frame of cultural meaning.” Prynne emphasizes a reading that is socially and historically determined and “can be intelligibly active as a practice of inscribing new sets of sense-bearing differences upon the schedule of old ones.” J. H. Prynne, *Stars, Tigers and the Shape of Words*, The William Matthews Lectures 1992 (London: Birkbeck College, 1993), pp. 3, 6, 34, 60.

11 I liken the mixing of electronics with instrumental music to Straub’s complaint about post-synchronized sound in film: “Mixing, Straub explains, creates a ‘soup,’ a broth that submerges everything together. No element retains its authenticity.” Straub-Huillet use direct sound only (i.e., where sound is recorded on location) when they are filming. Tag Gallagher, “Straub Anti-Straub,” *Senses of Cinema*, Issue 43, 2007, p. 3. Straub’s use of the term “authenticity” is connected to the statement of Heidegger’s, “the authentic that is always the inauthentic,” where “the inauthentic means here not the exotic, the sensational, the never-before-seen but rather the opposite: the inauthentic is the permanently essential, simple, and oneness of beings” (Julian Young, *Heidegger’s Later Philosophy* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], pp. 59 ff.).

12 Martin Heidegger, “...Poetically Man Dwells...” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Albert Hofstadter (trans.) (New York: Perennial Classics, 1971), pp. 213–214.

13 Ryan Dobran, “Introduction,” *Glossator: Practice and Theory of the Commentary*, Vol. 2, ed. Ryan Dobran (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2010), pp. 8.

14 Quotation of Heidegger found in Birgitta Johansson, *The Engineering of Being: An Ontological*

with exposed conventions and rhetorical devices in order to defamiliarize common vehicles for expression. As Jean-Marie Straub once remarked, “If you have a great deal of patience, it is charged with contradictions at the same time. Otherwise it doesn’t have the time to be charged. Lasting patience is necessarily charged with tenderness and violence.”¹⁵

Lachenman often speaks of “defamiliarization of the familiar,” not merely for the sake of producing “strangeness,”¹⁶ which in less capable hands can result in mannerism, but in order to overcome the everyday inconspicuousness of the world that can be revealed in the musical experience.¹⁷ In my music, this is brought forward through the idea of John Keats’ *negative capability*—when one is “capable of uncertainties, doubts, without any reaching after fact and reason”¹⁸—as another way of readmitting the familiar by giving oneself over to the materials of experience and knowledge: not forcing connections and making no presumptions, where the “pressure of the composing will is varied by delicacy because the energies are dialectical and not extruded from personal-ity or point of view.”¹⁹

Music should offer an alternative to the dominance of reason and abstraction. This is why I don’t use programs such as Open Music in the compositional process, as such programs can surrender to computers the component of resistance: difficulty is made merely abstract and artificial. For this reason, it is also important that the use of metaphor and other aestheticizing tendencies in the working out of my material are viewed critically as interferences, which might turn consciousness away from the material rather than towards it. Ezra Pound, in his discussion of Cavalcanti’s poetry, lamented the loss of a “radiant world of moving energies” with “magnetisms that take form, that are seen, or that border the visible” where one has not reduced all energy to “unbounded, undistinguished abstraction.”²⁰

The dialectics of resistance and difficulty give rise to the idea of complexity in my work. I aim for an expanded listening that results from a complication within the musical syntax, and not a “reduced listening” that seeks to dis-

Approach to J. H. Prynne (Sweden: Swedish Science Press), p. 38.

15 Tag Gallagher, “Straub Anti-Straub,” p. 2.

16 See Lyn Hejinian, “Strangeness” in *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 138.

17 Helmut Lachenmann, “Hearing [Hören] is Defenseless—without Listening [Hören]: On Possibilities and Difficulties,” trans. Derrick Calandrella, *CIRCUIT Musiques Contemporaines*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2003, p. 30.

18 John Keats, *Complete Poems and Selected Letters* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), p. 492 and Charles Olson, *The Special View of History* (Berkeley: Oyez, 1970), p. 32.

19 George Clark and Redmond Entwistle, “We do everything for this art, but this art isn’t everything,” p. 2. “Nothing taken for granted, nothing merely forced,” J. H. Prynne, “Poetic Thought,” in *Textual Practice*, 24 (4), 2010, p. 597.

20 Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays* (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 154.

integrate syntax, so that overlapping structures and their directional energies can liberate the sounds to have a “bounds out of bound”²¹ and discover “new reflex slants and ducts and cross-links that open inherent potentials previously unworked.”²² Resistance and difficulty are both subject to reappraisal that is always to be repeated as soon as any sign of hardening appears. The idea of “locus,” or “vortex”—in Pound’s sense of a “radiant node or cluster from which, through which, and into which ideas are constantly rushing”²³—can thus emerge as “a work-internal assembly of forces” and a “virtual topology of possibilities.”²⁴

Complexity is intimately linked with musical substance and arises from these “perspectival causal energies” that occur in the “momentary successive or overlapping chaotic vortices of perturbation,”²⁵ an excess through which a core of meaning may or may not be recuperated by a listener. Indeed, Pound, with an etymological error, liked to derive the German word *dichten*, to make poetry, from the adjective *dicht*, dense, an important quality of complexity.²⁶ Complexity almost naturally accompanies a substantial sense of indeterminacy (in the sense that organization to an extreme degree yields a tendency towards the chaotic),²⁷ and one must strive for that precarious mixture of what is constructed and what is by chance. The sense of indeterminacy that I follow in my own work derives less from Cage, who chooses to forget the historical sedimented-ness of his materials, but more from those works of Webern whose sense of indeterminacy comes “from the absence of the composer as sovereign subject,” whereby “the pure sound to which the subject is drawn as its vehicle of expression is freed from the violence that the shaping subject otherwise inflicts on the material.”²⁸ This quality of “non-violence” that Adorno senses in Webern’s atonal music is achieved through minimal changes between reduced yet familiar figures that are a priori embedded in a network of relationships.²⁹ What is surprising in such a methodology is that relationships can be perceived

21 Robert Duncan, *Bending the Bow* (New York, New Directions, 1968), p. ix.

22 J. H. Prynne, “Poetic Thought” (see footnote 19), p. 597.

23 Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: The University of California Press), p. 146.

24 Brian Ferneyhough, “Barbarians at the Gates” (see footnote 8), p. 7.

25 Brian Ferneyhough, “Parallel Universes,” in *Collected Writings* (see footnote 3), p. 77.

26 Michael Hamburger, “Introduction,” in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments* (London: Anvil Press, 2004), p. 51.

27 Theodor Adorno, “Berg’s Discoveries in Compositional Technique,” in *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1998), p. 184.

28 Theodore Adorno, *Sound Figures*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 98, 101.

29 As Prynne notes with respect to the nature of language (equally applicable to these works of Webern): “There are tendencies to culminate and synergize, percolating by reticular connections and antagonisms across the channels of prescribed signification so as to challenge and displace the whole fabric of interpretation but not at all to extirpate it.” J. H. Prynne, “A Letter to Steve McCaffery,” in *The Gig*, No. 7, November, 2000, p. 44.

as “spontaneous,” suggesting to the listener a certain degree of freedom in the sounds, although Webern holds in tight relation this music’s spontaneous affect and the necessity for “secondary diagnosis.”

The secret of composition does not lie in its notation—an area where Morton Feldman mistakenly placed the first appearance of a “hardening”³⁰—but rather in the energy that notation, as a topology of possibilities, can invoke in order to mould the material, through a field of forces, in a process of progressively greater appropriateness.³¹ A composition must be kept continually dynamic and open;³² it must remain a “high energy-construct.”³³ The projected force of a composition’s energy will influence the form of the work because the intensity, duration, and gestural characteristics of this force can only be transmitted through formal elements such as phrasing, meter and rhythm, thus allowing a composition to discover its own form during the gestation process. Feldman’s late works achieve this sense of musical form engaged in a process of “self-discovery” with his changing (chromatic) fields against patterns that are continually repeated, producing “harmonic shocks” that open up into a new field or landscape.³⁴ The repetition of Feldman’s patterns and textures, as with the repetition of themes and melodies of his spiritual mentor Schubert,³⁵ creates a rare and beautiful kind of charged stasis through a gathering together of color and force.

Giving oneself over to the materials so that a composition can discover its own formal tendencies is rooted in the ideas of an *informal music* and Charles Olson’s *composition by field*.³⁶ If, according to Olson, “form is never more than an extension of content,”³⁷ then the energy that is projected is automatically part of music’s *content*: insofar as music transmits energy it is also “about”

30 Morton Feldman, “Darmstadt Lecture, July 1984,” in *Morton Feldman Says: Selected Interviews and Lectures 1964-1987*, ed. Chris Villars (London: Hyphen Press, 2006), p. 198. “The degree to which a music’s notation is responsible for much of the composition itself is one of history’s best kept secrets.” Morton Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street Collected Writings of Morton Feldman* (Cambridge: Exact Change, 2000), p. 144.

31 “The secret of composition is the energy which moulds the material in a process of progressively greater appropriateness.” Theodore Adorno, “Vers une musique informelle,” in *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music* (see footnote 27), p. 282-283.

32 When considering the idea of “openness” in relation to my own compositions, I prefer Prynne’s use of the term “leakages” between the composition and the outside world that can mark out the deeper drifts of history.

33 Charles Olson, “Projective Verse,” in *Collected Prose* (see footnote 9), p. 240.

34 Theodore Adorno, “Schubert (1928),” trans. Jonathan Dunsby and Beate Perrey, in *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Summer, 2005), p. 11.

35 Feldman once described his music as having to do with “mourning Schubert leaving me” and the effortless quality of Schubert’s atmospheres. See Morton Feldman, “Darmstadt Lecture, July 1984” (see footnote 30), p. 197.

36 Theodore Adorno, “Vers une musique informelle” and Charles Olson, “Projective Verse.”

37 Charles Olson, “Projective Verse” (see footnote 30), p. 240.

that energy.³⁸ Composition by field moves the creative work toward perceptions rather than ideas: the tension and flow of energy between perception and sound.³⁹ It is not an “automatic” writing and can subject itself to constant revisions.⁴⁰ The necessity for this type of compositional poetics would be its limitless capacity to draw things into the composition in order to exhibit “a quality of inexhaustibility, of the profusion of ideas which constantly regenerates itself and flows in superabundance.”⁴¹ Similarly, an informal music, as I interpret it, is very much dependent upon the concrete musical experience as the coincidence of unique compositional contexts with a strong sense of material identity. Yet an informal music requires one to be rigorously open to the vast network of connections of each musical sense-unit (“to behave, and be, instant by instant, aware of some several forces just now beginning to be examined”)⁴² so that a composition addresses not only an awareness of its own conditions—what it means to listen to, compose and to perform music—but what it means to cog-nize and to exist in a larger social context as well.

If musical content is “about” energy, then this energy must be organized in some way so that meaning is grasped by a listener. This is why I find Brian Ferneyhough’s idea of the *figure* key to an informal music: the figure can act as a seismograph that traces the lines of force applied to the central nervous system of highly pressurized musical materials. Such music is not a question of reproducing or inventing forms, but of harnessing forces.⁴³ At the center of a musical gesture is no nucleus of tangibility but instead a system of relationships. What matters is what happens between gestures, between sounds. Lines of force arise in the space between these objects—“not space as temporal lacuna, but

38 Charles Stein, *The Secret of the Black Chrysanthemum* (New York: Station Hill Press, 1987), p. 26. Olson’s statement “form is never more than an extension of content” does not mean that form is determined by content—organic form—but that “form literally extends the content, makes it grow, projects it outward into neighboring areas” (Rosmarie Waldrop, “Charles Olson: Process and Relationship,” in *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 23, No. 4 [Dec., 1977], p. 478). Such a compositional process projects its “content” as “perspectival energies” out into the world, which forces us to “reperspectivise the world of everyday existence which confronts us beyond the limits of the work,” (Richard Toop, “On Superscriptio: An Interview with Brian Ferneyhough, and an Analysis,” in *Contemporary Music Review*, 1995, Vol. 13, Part I, p. 3). However, an informal music or composition by field is not without roots in organicism: “To induce difficult grafts to grow they have to be kept alive, connected to at least some conditions relative to their original environment; in a morgue the principal arts are identification and taxonomy” (J. H. Prynne, “A Letter to Steve McCaffery” [see footnote 29], p. 44).

39 “One perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception.” Charles Olson, “Projective Verse” (see footnote 33), p. 240.

40 Charles Stein, *The Secret of the Black Chrysanthemum* (see footnote 38), pp. 104–105.

41 Theodor Adorno, “Berg’s Discoveries in Compositional Technique” (see footnote 27), p. 195.

42 Charles Olson, “Projective Verse” (see footnote 33), p. 240.

43 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minnesota: The University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 345.

at that moment of conceptual differentiation in which identity is born"⁴⁴—and can generate *figural energies* established in the act of moving from one discrete musical gesture to another. By giving oneself over to the materials, these lines of force become apparent and can be harnessed. Straub once remarked during the filming process that one must intelligently respect the existing space in order to take in its lines of force.⁴⁵

Ferneyhough's figures emerge from a field of serial processes yet are graspable and not abstract in their gestural implications. Unlike a traditional musical gesture that rarely leaves its descriptive context, the figure congeals and dissolves into a field of processes as pure energy and, as such, it is linked more closely to Cézanne's notion of sensation than mere gesture. "If you look at a Cézanne canvas, it doesn't provoke sensations in you, you see in there sensations materialized."⁴⁶ Sensation is itself constituted by the vital power of rhythm and meter, and it is in rhythm that Deleuze locates the logic of sensation, a logic that is neither cerebral nor rational.⁴⁷ Ferneyhough's metric and rhythmic materials project the action of invisible forces that make the instrument by means of which motion is measured apparent. He directly composes the sensation, or as Deleuze would write of Cézanne, he records the "fact."

In my compositional process, I always begin with a metrical patterning, as a result of *measure-taking*, since a metric scheme can impose a sort of intensity of interpretation upon the musical grammar.⁴⁸ Measure-taking—both in the sense of surveying as well as reaching for the unknown from what is made manifest⁴⁹—does not proceed from an abstract standard of measure but through a concentrated perception that remains a listening. As soon as I begin to listen to the metric progression ("the *kinetics* of the thing"⁵⁰), it reveals its own vectors and affinities and pulls the composition into its own field of force, often in unforeseen directions. My meter schemes always emphasize the alternation between the short and long durations, similar to Pound's "weights and durations" in poetic meter.⁵¹ Then rhythm is chiefly used as a means of insisting

44 Brian Ferneyhough, "Il Tempo della Figura" (see footnote 3), p. 35.

45 Daniel Fairfax, "Straub/Huillet–Brecht–Benjamin–Adorno," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, Vol. 29, 2012, p. 41.

46 Tag Gallagher, "Lacrimae Rerum Materialized," in *Die Früchte des Zorns und der Zärtlichkeit* (Vienna: Viennale, Vienna International Film Festival, 2004), p. 10.

47 Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minnesota: The University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 37.

48 William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (New York: New Directions, 1966), p. 28.

49 Tag Gallagher writes the following in the context of the rigorous way in which Straub/Huillet rehearse with the actors' manner of speaking in their film *Quei loro incontri*: "Meter, rhythm and pitch have, by dint of months of rigorous practice, taken on musical form, become physical, sensual, and real—so that waiting for meter seems a sublime acquiescence to the gods." (Tag Gallagher, "Letter to Helmut Färber," in *Lumen*, Vol. I. [Forests, 2011], p. 2).

50 Charles Olson, "Projective Verse" (see footnote 33), p. 240.

51 Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (New York: New Directions, 1934), p. 199.

upon, and then limiting the possible implications of the metric scheme. In this sense, rhythm in my music can be a violence that imposes itself like a “texture of beats.”⁵²

This “texture of beats” lays the foundation for my gestural materials to produce what Chinese calligraphers call “flying white” (*feibai shu*) or “thirsty brush” (*k’e-pi*) strokes as they are shaped by rhythmic materials, that is to say, “the hairs of the brush start to divide and you see the hairs writing its trace over the paint surface as a very legible, even vehement form of calligraphy, declaring both the direction and the force of brush movement.”⁵³ This style of gestural mark making against the *rhythmic grid* becomes aggressively irregular, placing intense pressure on the sounds that yields a tortured syntax and an intense compression of energy. These gestural deformations, as carriers of musical energy, can encompass the musical equivalent of enjambments, elisions, frequent stops or shifts of direction, and other threats to the continuity and integrity of the musical line.⁵⁴ Such extreme expressionism in the gestural materials, which activates an entire system of discontinuities and breaks, elicits a listening which confirms our relation to the “thereness” of the world by directing focused attention to the physical production of sound and the concrete musical experience. In my music, extreme expressionism (pointing to the physicality of the performers) is often placed alongside a “documentary” approach to sound (pointing to the sound’s materiality) that forces a division in the layers of signification and the musical ways of establishing meaning.

The essence of composition, as I see it, finds and sets the musical contours in writing of “how things are,” while also “activating a system of discontinuities and breaks which interrupt and contest the intrinsic cohesion and boundary profiles of its domain, so that there is constant leakage inwards and outwards across the connection with the larger world order.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, a poetics of musical composition must ultimately approach a threshold that pushes the edges and frontiers outwards, “reestablishing life on marginal territory, and making lines of contact between marginality and the domestic security which usually suppresses such knowledge.”⁵⁶ I find this position far more powerful today than music situated in, and intimately occupied with the strangeness of

52 “Schumannian rhythm...imposes itself like a texture of beats; this texture can be delicate, yet it has something atypical about it.” Roland Barthes, “Loving Schumann,” in *The Responsibility of Forms*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 297.

53 J. H. Prynne, “A Discourse on Willem de Kooning’s *Rosy-Fingered Dawn at Louse Point*,” in Juliet Steyn and John Gange, eds., *Beautiful Translations* (London: Pluto Press, 1996), p. 46.

54 That is, “by attacking syntax syntactically” (Theodore Adorno, “Parataxis: On Hölderlin’s Late Poetry” in *Notes to Literature, Volume 2*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson [New York: Columbia University Press, 1992], p. 136).

55 J. H. Prynne, “Mental Ears and Poetic Work,” in *Chicago Review*, Vol. 55. No. 1 (2010), pp. 126-127.

56 N. H. Reeve and Richard Kerridge, *Nearly Too Much: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), p. 27.

its native terrain, “when objects and sensations become detached from themselves” which in many ways can alienate the listener.⁵⁷ The danger of such strangeness is that the listener is rendered passive by being alienated from the social and cultural forces that the musical composition can open up.

Such a threshold, I believe, is approached in Klaus K. Hübler’s 3. *Streichquartett (Dialektische Fantasie)*, where the mobilization of the figure or figural energies no longer provides a way of perceiving, categorizing and mobilizing concrete gestural configurations.⁵⁸ Such categorization relies upon a hierarchization of oppositions in order to direct the lines of force that give momentary apperception of the figure. Material that is hierarchically organized, as in Ferneyhough’s music, can give rise to the figure as a way of apprehending meaning (transformation, development, deformation, etc.). Hübler’s deconstruction of Classical string technique demonstrates the speciousness of a hierarchy of oppositions (such as left-hand/right-hand, down-bow/up-bow, sul tasto/sul pont., col legno/arco, etc.) by denying the possibility of comprehending the “more important” element of the hierarchy in the absence of its “less important” counterpart. Hübler’s decoupling of the musical parameters necessary for a Classical tone production on string instruments, in combination with a more traditional left-hand figuration, prevents any stable hierarchy of oppositions to emerge (including any lasting figure that can be tracked throughout the composition).⁵⁹ In addition to “silent” material that is only visually executed by the musicians during a performance, such a lack of hierarchy presents a perceptual series of interactions between presence and absence of rhetorical figures, where the material is always in a state of “becoming” and “disappearing.”

Hübler’s fluctuating presence and absence of rhetorical figures without resolving them into a hierarchy of value reveals what Derrida refers to as *différance*; this is a quality I try to bring into my own compositions with respect to transcribed material from historical sources. Quotation and transcription provide much of my material, respecting each transcribed fragment’s lines of force, whose energy is carried over into the composition *at hand* (“with all the sense of immediacy and physicality which that phrase contains”).⁶⁰ Quotations allow a composition to provide shelter for “sounds in exile,” that is, sounds which have exhausted whatever energy that was once attributed to them and now

57 Brian Ferneyhough, “Barbarians at the Gates” (see footnote 8), p. 2.

58 Klaus K. Hübler, 3. *Streichquartett (Dialektische Fantasie)* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1982-84).

59 Klaus K. Hübler, “Expanding String Technique,” trans. Frank Cox, in *Polyphony & Complexity*, ed. Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, Frank Cox, and Wolfram Schurig (= *New Music and Aesthetics in the 21st Century*, vol. 1) (Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 2002), pp. 233-234. Hübler’s decoupling of parameters is dialectical in the sense that it is always positioned in relation to the historicity of his materials (not only the left-hand figurations, but the bowing patterns as well).

60 “Urgent and inescapable once we have commenced our ‘trek,’” Jay Basu, “The Red Shift: Trekking J. H. Prynne’s ‘Red D Gypsum,’” *The Cambridge Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2001, pp. 19-36.

only persist as congealed, fossilized clichés.⁶¹ Mahler's music provides a shelter for these kinds of sounds—"his banalities, the true fossils of tradition"—whose quotation marks "waft away in the darkness"⁶² as he wrestles these quotations into "exacerbated deviations from high musical language."⁶³ My saturation of a composition with these references, which I call *Spätklang*—"the ashes of burned out meanings"⁶⁴—a reference to Paul Celan's *Spätwort* (and to Adorno's *Spätwerk* as "ruptured fruit")⁶⁵ in order to evoke their *toxic* currency, brings them back into the space of composition by structurally blending them together with noise and sound into a *Strukturklang* so that I can build music from this used up and now "toxic stuff" of our inherited (and colonializing) musical culture.⁶⁶ Such a *Strukturklang* can invoke an "inbetweenness of multiple sense-consitution and confuse simulative invention and discursive reference."⁶⁷ The current allotted space in contemporary composition is too limited to a postmodern mixing of trivia and profundity (for example, the numerous compositions that "mix" noise with quotations and references from canonized composers such as Mozart and Schumann) but never blend, "because the activity they jointly provoke is adversarial and mediated by valuation" whereby "a trivial emulsion can be induced to form by use of apt detergent, e.g. humor... thereby further reducing value to fetish."⁶⁸

The allusion to tonal materials in a composition must offer more than an alternative to materials conditioned by noise, serial and stochastic processes, computer technologies, etc. where the quotations behave primarily as small

61 An allusion to Celan's "words in exile." Paul Celan, *The Meridian: Final Version—Drafts—Materials*, ed. Bernhard Böschstein and Heino Schmull, trans. Pierre Joris (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 85.

62 "We live in an era where one legitimizes oneself lengthily to the outside, so as not to have to justify oneself to oneself. In that sense, poetry ... preserves for itself the darkness of the 'illegitimate'; it presents itself without references, without indications, thus without quotation marks." Paul Celan, *The Meridian: Final Version—Drafts—Materials*, *ibid.*, p. 85.

63 Theodor Adorno, "Mahler, Centenary Address, Vienna 1960," in *Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music* (see footnote 31), p. 86 and *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 16.

64 Paul Celan, "Edgar Jené and The Dream About The Dream," in *Collected Prose*, trans. Rosmarie Waldrop (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 6.

65 In order to get to the idea of "late work," an important perspective for my musical poetics, one has to stop in front of the "late sound" by coming to terms with a composition in which waste and rubbish become more and more integrated ("blended" not "mixed") into the materiality of the composed music. (Pierre Joris, "Introduction" in Paul Celan, *Breathturn*, trans. Pierre Joris (Los Angeles: Green Integer, 2006), p. 17.

66 Lachenmann's "structure-sound" conveys a sense of a formal projection of sounds in a "palpably temporal space" where the border between sound presentation and form presentation becomes more fluid. Helmut Lachenmann, "Klangtypen der Neuen Musik," in *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996), pp. 18, 20.

67 Ryan Dobran, "Introduction," *Glossator: Practice and Theory of the Commentary* (see footnote 13), p. 3.

68 J. H. Prynne, "A Letter to Steve McCaffery" (see footnote 29), p. 46.

islands of humanist consolation. Rather than “dodging them into alley-ways while they pass, or lingering in safe places like gardens” these materials—“the revealing residue which refuses to disappear”—should commingle and challenge “the notion that either is the other’s residue, excess or rubbish.”⁶⁹ As Reeve and Kerridge write in their lively study of Prynne’s poetry: “Rubbish is what results from the smash-up, when different discourses do not occupy the cultural places to which they have been directed, but cross the tracks and collide” (Examples 1 and 2).⁷⁰

Rubbish is
pertinent; essential; the
most intricate presence in
our entire culture; the
ultimate sexual point of the whole place turned
into a model question⁷¹

In some instances, the apparent quotation can offer the severest of contrasts with moments of lyricism, such as the impassioned shouts that surface through the lyricism of the late Beethoven works “as if the composer’s hand were intervening with a certain violence.”⁷² These “shouts” in late Beethoven are used less as material to be developed and act more as invocations, similar to the way in which the poet Hölderlin calls out historical names as signs in his later poetry to achieve an aura of concentrated significance.⁷³ As Prynne notes, “the calling up of such exclamatory powers in the language of passion is a form of acknowledgement and dialectical holding to the locus of a demanding but possible truth, at least as much as simply the expression of some feeling about a moment particularly stressed by the pressures of experience.”⁷⁴ Such an impassioned shout allows for its own “responsive shift,” by marking “the boundary of one discourse where it is momentarily exceeded by another.”⁷⁵ One can hear

69 N. H. Reeve and Richard Kerridge, *Nearly Too Much: The Poetry of J.H. Prynne*, (see footnote 56) pp. 9-10, 13.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

71 Excerpt from J. H. Prynne’s *L’Extase de M. Poher*. J. H. Prynne, *Poems*, p. 162. Prynne’s “model question” is “a question that stays open,” and “does not come to an end,” one that points toward open, empty, free spaces. Paul Celan, *The Meridian: Final Version—Drafts—Materials* (see footnote 61), p. 10.

72 Theodore Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 189.

73 Theodore Adorno, “Parataxis: On Hölderlin’s Late Poetry” (see footnote 54), p. 138.

74 Prynne’s comments occur in the context of emphatical language in English lyric poetry, such as the letter *O*, to distinguish between apostrophe, exclamation, public and private modes. J. H. Prynne, “English Language and Emphatical Language,” in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. LXXIV, 1988, p. 167.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 168.

Example 1: *Serenade* (2012), mm. 220-29⁷⁶

32

Cl. $\text{♩} = 76$

B. Cl.

Ob.

Tpt.

Tbn.

1

2

V.

Vla.

Vc.

32

76 Waste as “noise” (mm. 222-28) expelled from the “smash-up” with materials of Schoenberg’s *Serenade*.

Example 2: *Serenade* (2012), mm. 202-10⁷⁷

[illegible]

77 Waste as *Spätklang* (mm. 204-08) with allusions to Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* expelled from the "smash-up" with materials of Schoenberg's *Serenade*.

this “responsive shift” quite clearly in the beginning of the last movement of the Opus 135 (*Der schwer gefaßte Entschluß*: “Muß es sein? Es muß sein!”), which is why Straub-Huillet use this musical excerpt in their filming of Hölderlin’s third version of *Der Tod des Empedokles* for their own “responsive shift” from Empedokles’ conviction to be “liberated in the flames of Mt. Etna” to the first words spoken by the choir, “Neue Welt.”⁷⁸

Hölderlin allows the objective quality of the language to speak, like late Beethoven where all interstitial (transitional) material is cut away. He creates an intentionless language, “the naked rock of which is everywhere exposed,” as an ideal, a revealed language.⁷⁹ The more Hölderlin in his late work came close to the things of the world (and his ability to capture their essence in poetic images), the more he experienced their separateness and their disparateness (and separation from any kind of narrative through paratactic constructions) approaching the danger that they may signify nothing, pointing only to themselves: as walls, weathervanes. Through paratactic constructions of which the two strophes of *Hälfte des Lebens* is an example, he discovers relations, correspondences, constellations of meaning within the field of history and finally within language itself.

Weh mir, wo nehm’ ich, wenn
Es Winter ist, die Blumen, und wo

Den Sonnenschein,
Und Schatten der Erde?
Die Mauern stehn
Sprachlos und kalt, im Winde
Klirren die Fahnen.⁸⁰

But oh, where shall I find
When winter comes, the flowers,
and where
The sunshine
And shade of the earth?
The walls loom
Speechless and cold, in the wind
Weathercocks clatter.

This second strophe abruptly departs from the ripe summer landscape depicted in the first strophe and passes into winter where “there is no mediation, no transition, between the strophes except the hiatus that separates them.”⁸¹ Their succession is paratactic. The constellation of images in this second strophe suggests “a bareness, emptiness, cold and even death: a hollowing and drying out of fruit in a desert of ice.”⁸² The bleakness of walls and weathervanes replaces pears, roses, swans, and “the flowers, sunshine and shadows of the earth are named but as absences.”⁸³ Nature has been displaced by the ruins of a culture in a state of decay, and the last lines even suggest that the

78 Straub/Huillet’s *Schwarze Sünde* (1988).

79 Theodore Adorno, “Parataxis: On Hölderlin’s Late Poetry” (see footnote 54), p. 137.

80 Second strophe of Friedrich Hölderlin’s *Hälfte des Lebens*, trans. Michael Hamburger.

81 Eric L. Santner, “Paratactic Composition in Hölderlin’s ‘Hälfte des Lebens,’” in *The German Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Spring 1985), p. 167.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

artifacts have lost their human context. In the language of the second strophe, there is a war between the harsh fricatives and sibilants (hissing), ending in the bleak *a* sounds and violent gutturals of the last three lines. In this second strophe we find vowels that give our mouth a different shape than in the first: the long *e*, *i*, *e*, short *i*, *e* (line one of the second strophe); long *e* (beginning with “stehn”), long *a*, *a*, short *i*, long *a*—which “never let the mouth return to the soft roundness of the first strophe’s *o* and *u* sounds” (sounds which “gently open the mouth as if to make ready for nature’s offerings”).⁸⁴ Hölderlin substitutes words, phrases and even the sound color of vowels to make the text suddenly appear in a different light. The first four lines suggest a gradual withdraw from “wo nehm’ ich” to “wo” to nothing (only later reappearing in the “los”), paralleling the absence of the flowers, sunshine and earth’s shade.⁸⁵ Because of the density of the accents, there is no rhythmic arch as in the first strophe. The second half of the second strophe is a series of images linked purely by parataxis, which becomes so harsh (rhythmically) that they have become mute over against one another (“Sprachlos”). Indeed, the “Sprachlos” with its accentuation even conjures the cold harshness of these images.

Serenade, my composition for mezzo-soprano and large ensemble, combines this late poem of Hölderlin with elements of Schoenberg’s own *Serenade* where he too uses parataxis to juxtapose a light serenade style (such as the opening *Marsch*) with the Sonnet *Seine Seele besucht sie im Schlaf* by Petrarca of Movement 4 as well as with the meditative *Lied ohne Worte* of Movement 6. Such juxtapositions in Schoenberg’s work open up spaces charged with tenderness and violence, revealing repressed and concealed relations between various musical discourses. I pick up the revealing residue that refuses to disappear (fossilized clichés and tonal patterns as well as noise) from Schoenberg’s work, the moments that are expelled from such concealed relations, as fragments to frame Hölderlin’s text. Such a framing, I hope, brings out the materiality of the music which bridges extreme expressionistic abstraction with a “documentary” distancing of noise and spoken voice. The voice, through its rhythm and intonation, is spoken in such a way that does not psychologize or romanticize Hölderlin’s language, but allows the words of the text to resonate beyond the conventions of syntax and to connect with the music in unpredictable ways (Example 3).⁸⁶

84 Ibid., pp. 167–68.

85 Ibid., 169.

86 Barton Byg, *Landscapes of Resistance: The German Films of Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 200.

Example 3: *Serenade* (2012), mm. 42-49⁸⁷

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Cl.

B. Cl.

Ob.

Tpt.

Tbn.

1

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Perc.

V.

Qtr.

Prso.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

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87 The singer's voice disappears ("Sprachlos") into the "fluttering sound" of prepared vibraphone motors to sonically convey the image of "weathercocks clatter."

This quality of the speaking voice as *sprechgesang* continues in my opera *Mirandas Atemwende*, which follows from my first opera *Die Geisterinsel* based on Shakespeare's *Tempest*, with the character Miranda as the protagonist of the first half who unravels the "foreignness" of her own language as taught to her by Prospero. The libretto begins with Celan's translation of Shakespeare's *Sonnet 105* and concludes with poems taken from his collection *Atemwende*, where the very integrity of the German language is put into question. Celan's translation of Shakespeare into German, with its particular emphasis on sound and the materiality of language, is a stepping stone into his own poetry in which poetic expression is clearly alienated, broken and bordering upon mute. Miranda's unraveling of language comes through her sheltered use of language on the island, Prospero's garden, and is built on the "ashes" of Prospero's language.

MIRANDA.

"Schön, gut und treu" so oft getrennt, geschieden.

In Einem will ich drei zusammenschmieden.⁸⁸

The values that Prospero has taught Miranda, "schön, gut und treu," are kept separate as virtues to abide by. Miranda's *Atemwende* is a metaphor for her invented language ("Ich find, erfind")⁸⁹ that intends to forge the three virtues together into a single image. It is a symbol of her opposition to the "enlightened" worldview of Prospero who embodies the language of reason that divides, separates and classifies, including the division between the "is" and the "ought" that separates fact from value.⁹⁰

MIRANDA.

"Schön, gut und treu"—stets anders und stets das.

Ich find, erfind—um sie in eins zu bringen,

sie einzubringen ohne Unterlaß.

I use Celan's own poetry for Miranda's text, whose words are forged together from fundamentally different categories (such as "Wortmond" or "Wunden-spiegel"), to create a metaphorical language that escapes Prospero's garden of rational discourse and reestablish the necessary relationship between fact and value in order "to press truth into having the power of consequences."⁹¹ Miranda's *Atemwende* symbolizes a "radical poetic reorientation and solstice

88 Excerpt from Shakespeare's *Sonnet 105*, trans. Paul Celan.

89 "I discover, invent" as interpreted in Peter Szondi, *Celan Studies*, trans. Susan Bernofsky and Harvey Mendelsohn (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 5.

90 In Celan's translation, this opposition is conveyed quite literally through *schieden* [divided] and *schmieden* [forged].

91 Charles Olson and Robert Creeley, *Olson–Creeley Correspondence* (Vol. 9) (Boston: Black Sparrow Press, 1985), p. 213.

of breath by means of which poetry is actualized. It signifies a step beyond the void and beyond silence to the possibility of a radically new kind of meeting.”⁹² As Celan states in his *Meridian* speech: “The attention the poem tries to pay to everything it encounters, its sharper sense of detail, outline, structure, color, but also of the ‘tremors’ and ‘hints,’ all this is not, I believe, the achievement of an eye competing with (or emulating) ever more perfect instruments, but is rather a concentration that remains mindful of all our dates.”⁹³ Miranda’s final lines from the Willhelm Friedrich Gotter libretto of *Die Geisterinsel* that I quote in my opera, “Ich will alle meine Sinne anstrengen,”⁹⁴ mirror Celan’s sentiments, to become more “mindful of all our dates” (which the Geisterchor, as spirits of the island, remind her of), that is, to have a greater awareness of one’s relationship to time which Prospero’s more “perfect instruments” have reduced to an abstraction of numbers.

Miranda recites Celan’s text “in order to speak, to orient myself, to find out where I was, where I was going, to my reality.”⁹⁵ As Celan notes: “A poem... may be a letter in a bottle thrown out to sea with the—not always strong—hope that it may somehow wash up somewhere, perhaps on a shoreline of the heart. In this way, too, poems are *en route*: they are headed toward. Toward what? Toward something open, inhabitable, an approachable you, perhaps, an approachable reality.”⁹⁶ Miranda’s poetic language becomes the place for such an encounter—a meeting that conquers the self-distance she has acquired through Prospero’s education and her isolation on the island—from which she can construct an identity for herself.⁹⁷ Miranda’s message in a bottle cast away from Prospero’s island is, throughout the opera, underway and eventually picked up by Fernando, who is unable to decipher it. Miranda’s voice comes to symbolize fragility through this possibility of an unanswered poetic invocation.

Miranda, through Celan’s poems, seeks communication, contact, connection outside of the island: “there are / still songs to sing beyond / mankind.”⁹⁸ Celan’s poems almost always have a “you” (*dich*) to whom the poems are addressed. “The poem wants to head toward some other, it needs this other, it needs a counterpart. Everything, each human being is, for the poem head-

92 Nicholas J. Meyerhofer, “The Poetics of Paul Celan,” in *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Spring, 1981), p. 77.

93 Paul Celan, *The Meridian: Final Version—Drafts—Materials* (see footnote 61), p. 9.

94 “I want to exert all of my senses” from Willhelm Friedrich Gotter, *Die Geisterinsel* (North Charleston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), p. 10.

95 Paul Celan, “Speech on the Occasion of Receiving the Literature Prize of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen,” in *Collected Prose* (see footnote 64), p. 34.

96 *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

97 Miranda’s language causes a “responsive shift” in her perception of the island (and its history before Prospero) that she now feels she must preserve.

98 Excerpt from *Fadensonnen* in Paul Celan, *Breathturn* (see footnote 65), pp. 96-97.

ing toward this other.”⁹⁹ Miranda reaches for this other in the absence of Prospero who is now gone, a counterpart to which she can be underway and headed toward. Indeed, Miranda embodies poetic discourse from the beginning—the desire to forge Prospero’s words into a new language that cannot divide and classify, one that explores the very limits of consciousness and establishes a necessary relationship to truth. In this sense, Miranda, becomes fully aware of her potential—as poetic discourse—for propelling and allowing action. Through Miranda, poetry and music become *the* necessary force to counter Prospero’s art by offering an alternative that is not dominated by instrumental reason and accepts the island as it is (and not to be cultivated into a garden), revealing a history far older than when Prospero arrived whose stewardship Miranda now feels responsible for.

MIRANDA.

Stehen, im Schatten

To stand, in the shadow

des Wundenmals in der Luft.

of the stigma in the air.

Für-niemand-und-nichts-Stehn.
Unerkannt,
für dich
allein.

Standing-for-no-one-and-nothing
Unrecognized,
for you,
alone.

Mit allem, was darin Raum hat,
auch ohne
Sprache.

With all that has room in it,
even without
language.¹⁰⁰

The music that accompanies Miranda’s text has many allusions to Schoenberg’s *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* and contains a number of three-voice Rätselkanons (puzzle canons), where the three voices are forged together into a single line (“In Einem will ich drei zusammenschmieden”)¹⁰¹ and emerge and disappear throughout a fairly dense musical texture (Example 4). The presence of Rätselkanons refer to Bach’s own use of them as symbols of the art of alchemy where such base metals as lead could be transformed into gold (alluding to the kind of alchemy through which Miranda’s language is built from ashes). For Bach, “counterpoint, too, was powerful stuff and to be handled with care” and it is through canonic techniques that the essence of music could be discovered (“canons are the original source from which all these kinds of artistic work flow”).¹⁰²

99 Paul Celan, *The Meridian: Final Version–Drafts–Materials* (see footnote 61), p. 9.

100 Paul Celan’s *Stehen*, trans. Pierre Joris.

101 Literally, “I want to forge the three into one.”

102 David Yearsley, *Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 67, 70.

Example 4: 3 Canons

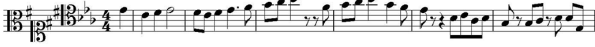
Canon a 3



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Canon a 3



Like Lucile's "Es lebe der König!"¹⁰³ from Georg Büchner's *Dantons Tod*, Miranda's words "In Einem will ich drei zusammenschmieden," act as a *Gegenwort* to Prospero's language and "world."¹⁰⁴ They symbolize an act of freedom, a severing of the cords, and embody what Olson calls "poetic alchemy" whereby poetry becomes a means through which a leap is initiated from thought to action.¹⁰⁵ Miranda's poetics throughout the opera attempt to go beyond the categorical limitations of Prospero's language by forging together a language that had previously been seen as incongruous or contrary. Miranda's dialectical search for an "other" reality brings her to kind of returning home, back to the island, "in order to behold the beautiful wilderness of the other side of being."¹⁰⁶

In the second half of the opera (titled *Calibans Wundantwort*), Caliban attempts to address the wound inflicted by Prospero's language, the wound that remains gaping through Celan's poetry. Caliban's text is several poems by Prynne whose "poetic technique is an attempt to keep open the wound, to keep alive that simultaneous sense of the expelled as self and other."¹⁰⁷ This tech-

103 Lucile, sensing the brutality and terror that destroyed everything about her, shouts spontaneously: "Long live the king!" Paul Celan refers to this quote as a *Gegenwort*, an act of freedom that liberates Lucile from the "puppetry" that all too often characterizes art (*die Kunst*). "Perhaps the poem...can now, in this art-less, art-free manner, walk its other routes, thus also the routes of art—time and again?" Paul Celan, *The Meridian: Final Version—Drafts—Materials*, (see footnote 61), pp. 3, 8.

104 Prospero's world exhibits tendencies toward the symbolic that culminate in his masque with the characters Juno, Iris and Ceres which Prospero describes as, "Spirits, which by mine art / I have from their confines called to enact / My present fancies." William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Cengage Learning, 1999), p. 251. Miranda's *Gegenwort* [counterword] counters Prospero's "world" by providing "a word that comes at us" as a thing and not as a symbol or metaphor that refers away from itself.

105 "It is the *counterword*, the word that cuts the 'string,' the word that no longer bows before the 'bystanders and old war-horses of history,'—it is an act of freedom. It is a step." Paul Celan, *The Meridian: Final Version—Drafts—Materials* (see footnote 61), p. 21 and Judith Halden-Sullivan, *The Topology of Being: The Poetics of Charles Olson* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1991), p. 138.

106 Nicholas J. Meyerhofer, "The Poetics of Paul Celan" (see footnote 92), p. 82.

107 N. H. Reeve and Richard Kerridge, *Nearly Too Much: The Poetry of J.H. Prynne* (see footnote 56), p. 131.

nique mirrors Caliban's sentiments by the end of *Die Geisterinsel* whose final spoken lines, taken from Shakespeare, express "the paradigmatic moment of impulsive feeling which escapes, or rather precedes, the conscious attempt to process and understand it,"¹⁰⁸ an impulsive feeling that is then diagnosed in *Mirandas Atemwende* as "the moment of pain."

CALIBAN:

I am born back there, the plaintive chanting
under the Atlantic and the unison of forms.

It *may* all flow again if we suppress the
breaks, as I long to do,
at the far end of that distance
and tidings of the land;

If we dissolve the bars to it and let run
the hopes, that preserve the holy fruit on the tree,
casting the moist honey, curing the poppy of sleep.¹⁰⁹

Unlike the tension of parataxis between strophes in Hölderlin's *Hälfte des Lebens*, Prynne situates the "tension about and across line-endings" where "there is a kind of dialectical unsettling because line-endings and verse divisions work into and against semantic overload."¹¹⁰ Caliban, like Miranda, is also wounded by Prospero's enlightenment education and the desire to break up the continuum of time with ever more perfect instruments. Caliban's response is to rediscover those natural processes of the island, "the unison of forms," and to let them flow again. "If we arbitrarily break up the continuum of time into fixed intervals, upon which we then project hopes or expectations deferred from the present, we lose contact with natural processes."¹¹¹ Similar to Hölderlin's sentiments in *Hälfte des Lebens*, "'fruit' should not be declared 'holy,'" with the sense of being set apart, usually preserved on a tree. The fruit is a stage in the continuing cycle of the plant's life, not just the final outcome. Whatever lives by continuous change and development, we distort by solidifying—unless we are able to 'let run' what at present we anxiously 'rein in'.¹¹² Caliban's words come from a renewed, heightened attention to the processes of the island ("Listen, watch, more often, more closely"), the vantage point where the final nail is driven into the coffin of Prospero's "art." Caliban's sentiments about a new-found awareness of his language easily mirror those of Huillet's regarding her filmic language: "It's just the world. And who owns that?"

108 Jay Basu, "The Red Shift: Trekking J. H. Prynne's *Red D Gypsum* (see footnote 60), p. 26.

109 Excerpt from J. H. Prynne's *The Wound, Day and Night*.

110 J. H. Prynne, "Poetic Thought" (see footnote 19), p. 599.

111 N. H. Reeve and Richard Kerridge, *Nearly Too Much: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne* (see footnote 56), p. 41.

112 Ibid.