

ART AND UTOPIA. Limited Action

Presentation to the media: June 2, 2004, 11:00 a.m.

Opening: June 2, 2004, 7:30 p.m.

Dates: From June 3 to September 12, 2004

Curator: Jean-François Chevrier

Co-Production: Fòrum Barcelona 2004 - Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA)

"Limited Action" (*L'action restreinte*) is the title of an essay by Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898) compiled in *Divagations* in 1897. This formulation designates not only the limits but also the focus of poetic action. "Art and Utopia. Action Restricted" reexamines some of the key moments in the exchange between art and poetry in the twentieth century up until the end of the 1970s. The Mallarmean poetic serves here as a medium for a history of modern art in its relation with language and its dispersion.

Art and utopia. Limited Action sets out to rethink the art of the 20th century from a review of the role of the poet Mallarmé in the construction of the pillars of contemporary creation. Throughout the 20th century two apparently antagonistic phenomena occurred, confronting the will for formal experiment with the tradition of trying to educate society in order to transform it. That is the dichotomy between Marx and Mallarmé, between politics and poetry, which, in the context of this exhibition, is considered a solved problem, since there can be an art which is both poetical and political at the same time. The only utopia is in language, in the limited action of the poetic act.

The exhibition will include 108 paintings, 36 sculptures, 340 works on paper, 140 photos, 24 films, as well as sound works and rare books, from artists like: Joseph Albers, Carl André, Adolph Appia, Guillaume Apollinaire, Hans Arp, Antonin Artaud, Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Alighiero Boetti, Georges Braque, Marcel Broodthaers, Joan Brossa, Trisha Brown, Günther Brus, Francesco Cangiullo, Carlo Carrá, Joseph Cornell, Gordon Craig, Renée Daniels, Gego, Augusto de Campos, Haroldo de Campos, Guillermo de Torre, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Walker Evans, Alexandra Exter, Öyvind Fahlström, Robert Filliou, Hermann Finsterlin, Lucio Fontana, Naum Gabo, Jean-Luc Godard, Julio González, Juan Gris, Philip Guston, Raymond Hains, Richard Hamilton, Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch, Vassily Kandisky, Buster Keaton, Paul Klee, Frantisek Kupka, Fernand Léger, Helen Levitt, El Lissitzky, René Magritte, Stéphane Mallarmé, Edouard Manet, Marinetti, Roberto Matta, Henri Michaux, Joan Miró, Bruce Naumann, Jorge Oteiza, Amédée Ozenfant, Pablo Palazuelo, Salvat Papaseit, Francis Picabia, Pablo Picasso, Liubov Popova, Robert Rauschenberg, Odilon Redon, Ivan Puni, Kurt Schwitters, Tony Smith, Gino Severini, Nancy Spero, Wladyslaw Strzeminski, Antoni Tàpies, Georges Vantongerloo, Jean Vigo, Jeff Wall, Wols and Rémy Zaugg, among others.

At the end of the nineteenth century, after the death of Victor Hugo, the poet can no longer claim to operate directly in the political arena or even designate himself as moral conscience. He can mention the world, but he cannot change it. His activity, however, is not purely contemplative. He realizes an action in a restricted but essential field, which does not belong to him but which he can reevaluate and even redefine. This is the field of language and languages; it is the space of the book as a "spiritual instrument."

In March 1970, the Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers, also coming from the poetic field, declared: "Mallarmé is the source of contemporary art. He unconsciously invents modern space." Broodthaers was thinking above all about the word constellation constructed in *Un coup de dés* (1897). After its belated publishing in book form (1914), the poem effectively became the prototype for all investigations in the confluence of poetry, typography and visual art. Apollinaire's calligrams, contemporary with cubist *papiers collés*, the Futurists' words in liberty, and the word as such of Russian poets are derived almost directly from this poem or differentiate themselves from it through a dynamic of avant-garde radicalization. This genealogy continues with the emergence of concrete poetry in the 1950s.

Plein air impressionism since Manet and the prismatic structure of post-Cézannean cubist painting represent two poles of the Mallarmean poetic. At the same time, the fantastic of Odilon Redon turned to the idea of suggestion, which defines symbolism as well as description and literary narration. The dialogue between art and poetry also opens onto other forms of visual creation such as in photography and film. Beyond that abstraction called "geometric," the emphasis on the essential constituents of painting – point, line, plane, and color – participates in a speculation on the genesis of form that has much in common with poetic language.

Nevertheless, as Duchamp's extra-pictorial activities indicate, the resonance of the Mallarmean poetic exceeds the genealogies of poetry and the visual arts. Mallarmé was also interested in music and the arts of the stage (theatre and dance) while refuting the Wagnerian model of the total work of art. Mallarmé had already imagined an anthropological reconciliation of modern art, liberated from religious representation. But that union was revealed to be just as precarious as the practice of poetry. In the 1930s, the distressing pressure of the times made the model of myth return to the debates as well as attempts at the synthesis between rationalist utopias and a somewhat reasoned neo-primitivism, between constructivism and surrealism.

Immediately after the Second World War, Antonin Artaud's return to poetry corresponds to a necessary strengthening of the myth about the "restricted action" of line and expression. In 1933, Artaud had defined Mallarmé's exemplariness: "Nothingness that is infinitely worked out after having passed through the finite, the concrete and the immediate; music based on nothingness since the sonority of syllables affects one before understanding its meaning." With the war and the concentration camps, nothingness acquired a resonance of terror and the inhuman.

In the 50s and 60s, the publication of Correspondence and fragments on the Book occurs concurrent with the introduction of the linguistic model in the humanities and the emergence of the artistic culture of the neo-avant-garde. Roland Barthes describes a common "structuralist activity" in literature, music and the visual arts. The impersonality extolled by Mallarmé ends in "the death of the author". The book, "total expansion of the letter" (Mallarmé), continues to be the countermodel to the media of mass communication, but it has lost its sacred dimension due to contamination: it has been vulgarized. At the end of the 70s René Daniels's painting *La Muse vénale*, modeled on a poem by Baudelaire, indicates the exhaustion of the cultural alternatives proposed by the neo-avant-gardes. It likewise shows the actuality of a poetic gaze that knows how to detect the anachronisms of the present. "Poorly informed," Mallarmé writes, "is the one who proclaims himself his own contemporary."

ART AND UTOPIA

Action Restricted

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Curator: Jean-François Chevrier

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"Action Restricted" (*L'action restreinte*) is the title of an essay by Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898) compiled in *Divagations* in 1897. This formulation designates not only the limits but also the focus of poetic action. "Art and Utopia. Action Restricted" reexamines some of the key moments in the exchange between art and poetry in the twentieth century up until the end of the 1970s. The Mallarmean poetic serves here as a medium for a history of modern art in its relation with language and its dispersion.

"Art and Utopia. Action restricted" will include works by Joseph Albers, Carl André, Adolph Appia, Guillaume Apollinaire, Hans Arp, Antonin Artaud, Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Alighiero Boetti, Georges Braque, Marcel Broodthaers, Joan Brossa, Trisha Brown, Günther Brus, Francesco Cangiullo, Carlo Carrá, Joseph Cornell, Gordon Craig, Renée Daniels, Gego, Augusto de Campos, Haroldo de Campos, Guillermo de Torre, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Walker Evans, Alexandra Exter, Öyvind Fahlström, Robert Filliou, Hermann Finsterlin, Lucio Fontana, Naum Gabo, Jean-Luc Godard, Julio González, Juan Gris, Philip Guston, Raymond Hains, Richard Hamilton, Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch, Vassily Kandisky, Buster Keaton, Paul Klee, Frantisek Kupka, Fernand Léger, Hellen Lewitt, El Lissitzky, René Magritte, Stéphane Mallarmé, Edouard Manet, Marinetti, Roberto Matta, Henri Michaux, Joan Miró, Bruce Naumann, Jorge Oteiza, Amédée Ozenfant, Pablo Palazuelo, Salvat Papaseit, Francis Picabia, Pablo Picasso, Lioubov Popova, Robert Rauschenberg, Odilon Redon, Ivan Puni, Kurt Schwitters, Tony Smith, Gino Severini, Nancy Spero, Wladyslaw Strzeminski, Antoni Tàpies, Georges Vantongerloo, Jean Vigo, Jeff Wall, Wols and Rémy Zaugg, among others.

At the end of the nineteenth century, after the death of Victor Hugo, the poet can no longer claim to operate directly in the political arena or even designate himself as moral conscience. He can mention the world, but he cannot change it. His activity, however, is not purely contemplative. He realizes an action in a restricted but essential field, which does not belong to him but which he can reevaluate and even redefine. This is the field of language and languages; it is the space of the book as a "spiritual instrument."

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Sponsor of the exhibition: EPSON

Sponsor for communication: CANAL 33 and EL PERIÓDICO

Collaborators: BNF and Grupo Idea

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transform it. That is the dichotomy between Marx and Mallarmé, between politics and poetry, which, in the context of this exhibition, is considered a solved problem, since there can be an art which is both poetical and political at the same time. The only utopia is in language, in the limited action of the poetic act.

This exhibition allows for the realization of a comprehensive survey of the history of modern art—from Odilon Redon to Marcel Broodthaers, including Pablo Picasso, Antonin Artaud and Bruce Nauman, among many others—and presents a transversal vision that goes beyond all traditional categories and labels. In a moment marked by the tendency to organize “exhibition-spectacles,” this exhibition and its conceptualization opted instead for a work of exhaustive research, which, for example, has allowed for the incorporation of previously unexhibited or, until now, rarely seen works and of artists who were central to their moment but who have not received the recognition that they deserve. This is the case with “Tsotsa” by Rodchenko and Kruchenykh as well as “To Guillermo de Torre” by Duchamp, among others. Moreover, the relation that the exhibition establishes between Paul Klee and Buster Keaton offers a clear example for illustrating the unique links that the exhibition establishes between poetry, drawing, performance, dance, theatre and cinema.

For the first time in Barcelona, this show brings together a significant group of key works for the understanding of our immediate past. In some way the exhibition represents a *real museum of modern art* that is seen from the present and is situated in opposition to other more “official” museum models. This museum would also somehow constitute the museum that historical circumstances prohibited from creating in Barcelona.

“Art and utopia. Limited action” will include 108 paintings; 36 sculptures, installations and objects; 340 works on paper; 140 photos; as well as films, sound works and rare books from: Josef Albers, Pierre Albert-Birot, Carl Andre, Guillaume Apollinaire, Adolphe Appia, Hans Arp, Antonin Artaud, Hugo Ball, Giacomo Balla, Rafael Barradas, Ingmar Bergman, Umberto Boccioni, Alighiero Boetti, Georges Braque, André Breton, Marcel Broodthaers, Joan Brossa, Trisha Brown, Günter Brus, Camille Bryen, John Cage, Haroldo de Campos, Francesco Cangiullo, Carlo Carrà, Blaise Cendrars, Clark Coolidge, Joseph Cornell, Edward Gordon Craig, René Daniels, Giorgio de Chirico, Guillermo de Torre, Claude Debussy, Robert Delaunay, Sonia Delaunay, Marcel Duchamp, François Dufrêne, Sergueï Eisenstein, Max Ernst, Walker Evans, Alexandra Exter, Öyvind Fahlström, Jean Fautrier, Lyonel Feininger, Morton Feldman, Esther Ferrer, Robert Filliou, Hermann Finsterlin, Robert Flaherty, Simone Forti, Loïe Fuller, Naum Gabo, Gego, Jean-Luc Godard, Eugen Gomringer, Julio González, Dan Graham, Juan Gris, Philip Guston, Hans Haacke, Raymond Hains, Richard Hamilton, Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch, Ferdinand Hodler, Vicente Huidobro, Max Jacob, J.-M. Junoy, Vassily Kandinsky, Ellsworth Kelly, Velimir Khlebnikov, Paul Klee, Alexei Kruchenykh, Frantisek Kupka, Fernand Léger, Helen Levitt, Sol LeWitt, El Lissitzky, René Magritte, Vladimir Maïakovski, Stéphane Mallarmé, Edouard Manet, Piero Manzoni, Filippo T. Marinetti, Roberto Matta, Mikhaïl Matyushin, Paul McCarthy, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Henri Michaux, Joan Miró, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, F. W. Murnau, Bruce Nauman, Jorge Oteiza, Amédée Ozenfant, Pablo Palazuelo, Francis Picabia, Pablo Picasso, Francis Ponge, Liubov Popova, Ivan Puni, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Rauschenberg, Man Ray, Odilon Redon, Pierre Reverdy, Hans Richter, Roberto Rossellini, Dieter Roth, Olga Rozanova, Joan Salvat-Papasseït, August Sander, Erik Satie, Kurt Schwitters, Gino Severini, Victor Sjöström, Tony Smith, Nancy Spero, Jean-Marie Straub & Danièle Huillet, Wladyslaw Strzeminski, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Yves Tanguy, Antoni Tàpies, Joaquín Torres-García, Tristan Tzara, Béla Uitz, Bart van der Leck, Georges Vantongerloo, Jean Vigo, Jeff Wall, Wols, Rémy Zaugg, Ilya Zdanevitch (Iliaszd).

At the end of the nineteenth century, after the death of Victor Hugo, the poet can no longer claim to operate directly in the political arena or even designate himself as moral conscience. He can mention the world, give the world a verbal equivalent, but he cannot change it. His activity, however, is not purely contemplative. He realizes an action in a restricted but essential field, which does not belong to him but which he can reevaluate and even redefine. This is the field of language and languages; it is the space of the book as a "spiritual instrument."

In an era in which progress is measured by information, the book is often assimilated to the newspaper, but it should be differentiated from it in the same way that poetic language is differentiated from the instrumental definition of language as a medium of communication and propaganda. In 1921, the Russian poet Ossip Mandelstam parallels Mallarmé when, in the context of a postrevolutionary society and culture, he writes: "Social differences and class antagonisms are little compared to the separation that presently exists between the friends and enemies of the word."

■ I.

This exhibition reexamines some of the key moments in the exchange between art and poetry in the twentieth century up until the end of the 1970s. The Mallarmean poetic serves here as a medium for a history of modern art in its relation with language and its dispersion. In March 1970, the Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers, also coming from the poetic field, declared: "Mallarmé is the source of contemporary art. He unconsciously invents modern space." Broodthaers was thinking above all about the word constellation constructed in *Un coup de dés* (1897). After its belated publishing in book form (1914), the poem effectively became the prototype for all investigations in the confluence of poetry, typography and visual art.

Appollinaire's calligrams, contemporary with cubist *papiers collés*, the Futurists' words in liberty, and the word as such of Russian poets (Velimir Khlebnikov and Alexei Khurchonykh) are derived almost directly from this poem or differentiate themselves from it through a dynamic of avant-garde radicalization. This genealogy continues with the emergence of concrete poetry in the 1950s.

Plein air impressionism since Manet and the prismatic structure of post-Cézannean cubist painting represent two poles of the Mallarmean poetic that were already achieved in the concentrated form of the sonnet (especially in *Une dentelle s'abolit*) at least ten years prior to *Coup de dés*. Both Braque's and Picasso's cubism were described as "hermetic" as were Mallarmé's poems. Gino Severini speaks of a "divisionism of forms" and a "copenetration of planes" analogous to the task of the word within poetry. The collaboration between Juan Gris and Pierre Reverdy participates in this bipolarity of plastic writing. At the same time, the fantastic of Odilon Redon turned to the idea of suggestion, which defines symbolism in its opposition to impressionist optics as well as description and literary narration. The promotion of an oneiric imagination in the twentieth century is inscribed in this tension between the optic and the symbolic. Here collage and montage procedures, both derived from the Dada movement and utilized by post-cubist constructivism and surrealism, obtain historical depth. The dialogue between art and poetry – exemplarily condensed in Miró's *Pinturas-poema* – also opens onto other forms of visual creation such as in photography and film. Rodchenko illustrates Mayakovsky's *Pro Eto* with photomontage, and the abbreviated signs of Paul Klee become similar to the disarticulations of the burlesque. Beyond that abstraction called "geometric," the emphasis on the essential constituents of painting – point, line, plane, and color – participates in a speculation on the genesis of form that has much in common with poetic language. With Marcel Duchamp, a Mallarmé admirer and reader of Jules Laforgue, symbolist suggestion was actualized with mechanomorphic irony.

■ II.

Nevertheless, as Duchamp's extra-pictorial activities indicate, the resonance of the Mallarmean poetic exceeds the genealogies of poetry and the visual arts. Mallarmé was also interested in music and the arts of the stage (theatre and dance) while refuting the Wagnerian model of the total work of art. What is more, the speculative demand of *Coup de dés's* author aspired to reestablish mystery in poetic experience amidst the vestiges of faith and the ornaments of the everyday. This breach defines the opening of modern space against a symbolist background: from the hieratic undoing of the stage's great reformers, Edward Gordon Craig and Adolphe Appia, to the gestural "activities" of American *post-modern dance*, by way of the association between the biomechanical and grotesque in Meyerhold.

In 1925, the collaboration between Hans Arp and El Lissitzky for *Die Kunstismen (Les ismes de l'art, The -isms of Art. 1924-1909)* testifies to a common search for synthesis in modern art at the two extremes of the European continent despite the differences in language. Likewise, the exemplariness of Sophie Taeuber's trajectory is explained by the way it surpasses the division between the fine and applied arts, establishing a new continuity between traditionally separated spaces: the studio, the domestic environment, the stage and the dance floor, at human or reduced scale. This trajectory corresponds to the most demanding formal investigations in the arts of the everyday in postrevolutionary Russia, represented above all in the work of Ludmila Maikovskaia and Varvara Stepanova.

■ III.

Mallarmé had already imagined an anthropological reconciliation of modern art, liberated from religious representation. But that union was revealed to be just as precarious as the practice of poetry. Apropos of Georges Braque, Carl Einstein wrote at the beginning of the 1930s: "Art only has meaning in so far as with it one defines and also creates a vision of the world, a myth. That is why the old optic has for a very long time no longer corresponded to

psychic structure." The same author confirmed "the decline of rationalized man" and denounced the superstitious belief in a utopia of technological progress. In the 1930s, the distressing pressure of the times made the model of myth return to the debates as well as attempts at the synthesis between rationalist utopias and a somewhat reasoned neo-primitivism, between constructivism and surrealism. Echoing the work of James Joyce, photography (Walker Evans, August Sander, Raoul Hausmann, Josef Albers, Helen Levitt) became the privileged medium for a poetic anthropology of the quotidian and the sacred.

Immediately after the Second World War, Antonin Artaud's return to poetry – after the failure of his 1930s efforts in theatre—corresponds to a necessary strengthening of the myth about the "restricted action" of line and expression. In 1933, Artaud had defined Mallarmé's exemplariness: "Nothingness that is infinitely worked out after having passed through the finite, the concrete and the immediate; music based on nothingness since the sonority of syllables affects one before understanding its meaning." With the war and the concentration camps, nothingness acquired a resonance of terror and the inhuman. Wladyslaw Strzeminski produces his collage series *À mes amis les Juifs* (*To my friends the Jews*) and Rossellini realizes the film *Germany Year Zero*. In European art circles centered on *art informel*, primitivism is more than ever underwritten by a desire for exorcism (Henry Michaux, Wols, Jean Fautrier). Antoni Tàpies dramatizes Miro's writing. In the United States, what Rauschenberg revives at the end of the 1940s is rather the legacy of Dada and Duchamp transmitted via John Cage, while another American painter living in France, Ellsworth Kelly, continues the trajectory of concrete art.

■ IV.

In the 50s and 60s, the augmentation of the Mallarmean corpus (with the publication of *Correspondence* and fragments on the Book) occurs concurrent with the introduction of the linguistic model in the humanities and the emergence of the artistic culture of the neo-avant-garde. Roland

Barthes describes a common "structuralist activity" in literature, music and the visual arts. The impersonality extolled by Mallarmé ends in "the death of the author": a slogan-formula for conceptual art inspired by structuralism, of which texts from all fields were collected and published in the 5th and 6th numbers of *Aspen* in 1967. Inspired by information theory and the structure of serial music, Umberto Eco substitutes symbolist suggestion with "the open work," which he defines as "a field of interpretive possibilities." Yet restricted action still has to differentiate itself from the new technological utopias in an era of economic expansion. In *La Ricotta* (1963), Pier Paolo Pasolini makes Orson Welles say: "I am a force of the past." From his retirement on Utopia Parkway, in New York, Joseph Cornell renews the poetic object and the surrealist marvelous, relating them to the symbolist imaginary.

The book, "total expansion of the letter" (Mallarmé), continues to be the countermodel to the media of mass communication, but it has lost its sacred dimension due to contamination: it has been vulgarized. The inclusive logic summed up by Jean-Luc Godard – "Everything should be put in a film" – contrasts with the "archaic silence of the book" (Walter Benjamin) whose plastic equivalent is Tony Smith's black cube *Die* (1962). Parallel to Broodthaers and his *Peinture littéraires*, another poet-artist, Öyvind Fahlström, proposes a synthesis of the Mallarmean tradition transformed by surrealism (Roberto Matta) and popularized by pop. The detours of play and humor disrupt the confrontation between the pictorial and the conceptual. Dieter Roth's *Mundunculum* responds to Piero Manzoni's fixed *Alphabets*. With his *décollage* posters, Raymond Hains finds in the street the proof of a Matisse-Duchamp-Schwitters alliance under the sign of Mallarmé.

At the end of the 70s René Daniels's painting *La Muse vénale*, modeled on a poem by Baudelaire, indicates the exhaustion of the cultural alternatives proposed by the neo-avant-gardes. It likewise shows the actuality of a poetic gaze that knows how to detect the anachronisms of the present.

"Poorly informed," Mallarmé writes, "is the one who proclaims himself his own contemporary." Artaud denounced the "lie of being". *Mettre au monde le monde* (Alighiero e Boetti) does not participate in the production of material goods or signs: formal invention is a symbolic activity, a concrete work within language. Drawing participates in this activity, as Philip Guston's graphic work since 1967 shows (often realized in collaboration with poets); and it is likewise demonstrated by Nancy Spero's 1969 variations on the "written drawings" of Artaud and the *Image-poem* by Günter Brus in homage of Odilon Redon. In his photographic work since 1978, Jeff Wall revisits the tradition of the painted theatre in order to interpret the conditions of speech and narration, like all a poetic expressive acts, in the enigmatic environment of the everyday.

TO "WHOMEVER...!"
Jean-François Chevrier

(1)

Many art historians, discussing the origins of abstraction, have studied the symbolist background of modernism. Mallarmé's work seems central to this reconstitution. In the 60's, the tendency was rather to take Mallarmé out of symbolism, showing how his thought went far past the aesthetics or the ideology of the literary and artistic movement situated in the 1880's. Already in the years around 1910, numerous participants in or observers of avant-garde art had attached Mallarméan poetics to the most advanced forms of post-Cézannian art, and cubism in particular. We cannot now reexamine the effects of that poetics upon modern art – the object of this exhibition – without taking into consideration these two moments of the interpretation called "modernist" in the 1960's and 1910. But we have also

to take into account what has been omitted or marginalized from that interpretation. In order to do this, it is not sufficient to invoke Symbolism as an alternative system. We have to make an attempt to single out the exceptional "cases," the most significant ones. Odilon Redon, for example, had been almost systematically neglected by the theoreticians of modernism. Yet, Mallarmé was not only a close friend of Manet, he was also very interested indeed by the suggestive art of Redon, whose plentiful echoes can be traced during the entire twentieth century.

(2)

The effects of Mallarméan poetics cannot be reduced to the myth or the legend of a poet in search of the absolute, even if this image benefits from a long tradition invented by the nineteenth century in the flush of the first Romanticism. The effect of this poetics depends above all on its extraordinary openness, of which the modernist theory represents only a limited interpretation. Mallarmé is not the herald of the "pure poetry" celebrated by Valéry. However effective, the modernist thesis of a poetry that would have as an essential or exclusive object language itself reduces and stultifies the poetics of Mallarmé. In reality, the force of this poetics has been to reveal, after the great romantic explosion, a tension between the idea and the actuality. This tension is only partially reflected in the opposition between the ideal and the daily. The Mallarméan idea is an interpretation of the power of abstraction of language concretized in poetic writing. It is summed up in the famous saying: "I say: a flower! And besides the oblivion to which my voice relegates any shape, insofar as it is something other than the calyx, there arises musically, as the very idea and delicate, the one absent from any bouquet." But we mustn't get it wrong, Mallarmé loved flowers. The poetic flower is not only a rhetorical fact, it is a synthesis of the experience of all bouquets." Actuality itself we have to understand in the sense in which Émile Zola speaks of "actualism," referring to impressionism. It is also for Mallarmé a dimension of experience which sends us back to the misunderstanding of the subject and of its own

impossibility of defining itself entirely by the conventional forms of the daily. Mallarméan actuality is a criticism of the daily and of the *présence à soi*. "Misinformed, anyone who would proclaim himself his own contemporary."

(3)

The effects of Mallarméan poetics have also had a negative result. The criticism of actualism in the name of the idea could be interpreted in the sense of a going past the present and of a utopia, but it has also appeared as a retreat of the artist into his ivory tower. The avant-gardes (all the "isms" of art since futurism) have been tempered to oppose to Mallarmé the idea of an immediate projection into the future, a sort of transfiguration, a utopian irradiation of the present. These esthetic and political utopias have often developed through an interpretation of the model of the "total work of art" (the *Gesamtkunstwerk*) Wagner put forth. Mallarmé did not believe in the Wagnerian solution. His scepticism results from his conviction the nihilism stemming from the death of God cannot be surmounted by the reconstitution of a belief system as the foundation of a new community. This scepticism is the irreducible condition of a utopian thought which constantly reinvents rupture, against the temptation of an imaginary closure. Mallarméan poetics is thus the critical measure of avant-garde utopias. It implies a viewpoint of anthropological reconciliation (the human community ought to be able to get along without the idea of God) but each human being in his singularity multiplies "a singularity constructed on the multiplicity of internal pulsions", each individual ceaselessly experiences his own finitude and the dissatisfaction resulting from it. This individual experience is the basis "stripped of its theological foundation" of an interaction between the one and the many, the individual and the crowd. Utopia tends to resolve this interaction in an imaginary community. For Mallarmé, the community remains in the future, the artist glimpses it in the flash of poetry, the "lightning streak" which illuminates the dark depths of the virtual. The great tradition of "concrete art" in the twentieth century,

whatever utopias have underlain it, depends on this possibility of actualizing a virtual richness.

(4)

The avant-garde utopias never stopped mobilizing the leftover mythologies, or, in a more ambitious mode, the perspective of a new mythology. André Breton sidelines Mallarmé, who inspired him greatly in the beginning, when he was imagining the building of a modern myth. Before surrealism, for Apollinaire and the futurists, the modern myth was summed up by the figure of an Icarus who triumphed over gravity and his destiny. The human being, that is to say, man without woman, was going finally to be able to transfigure his flesh and his finitude by projecting himself into a mechanical Eden. But Mallarmé had already reduced the polytheism of the "Gods of Yore" to a solar drama of death and resurrection. This reduction corresponds to a quest for sobriety opposed to romantic eloquence and great utopian bursts of energy. It is a dissolution of myths, an evacuation of iconography and of the accessories of mythological representation in favor of the fundamental elements of an action limited to the scene of writing. For the attraction of myth there is substituted a table, a sheet of white paper (the model of the "empty paper" where the poem is formed and sketched out), the pen and inkwell ("with its drop, in the depths, of shadows relative to something existing"). This scene of writing is the "theatre of our mind." It's the revelation of a matricial emptiness responding to the nothingness of abolished beliefs. After the Second World War, in 1947, Artaud radicalized the Mallarméan position by refusing to participate in the esoteric exhibition organized by Breton. The person who had, in the 1930's, imagined bringing about the power of revolutionary anarchy in a "theatre of cruelty," concentrates from now on all his poetic action in what is traced and punched out. Occupied with "remaking a body," he incarnates the concrete poetry of Mallarmé in an experience of suffering like a *travail* of the flesh. This actualization of "limited action" separates itself from all the appeals to an irrational depth, formerly evoked by fascist

ideologies and nazi terror. With the precise and specific violence of Artaud, Mallarméan sobriety is accomplished in the exorcism of terror.

(5)

Around Mallarméan poetics, there has been a great deal of discussion about art as a substitute for religion or the sketching out of a new communitarian link; about enigma and the occult, the value or legitimacy of "obscurity," the mysterious and the marvelous, secrecy, circles and secret societies. But modern utopias take into account the great number and individuality of the mass, thinking norms, standards, prototypes. Adapting themselves to the criteria of industrial society and to the triumph of mechanization, utopias have chosen to be constructive and productive. Marcel Duchamp was the one to transpose Mallarméan mystery into the image and the metaphoric circuits of the machine. In so doing, the creator of the *Grand Verre*, an expert in mystifications of all sorts, never stopped adjusting little anti-utopian machines, proposing an ironic version of *fin-de-siècle* eclecticism opposed by the ideologues of "Modern Style." So he has been seen as the father of post-modernism. But he is as ill-fitted to this role as is Mallarmé to that of the ancestor of modernism.

(6)

In reality, what lasts, from Mallarmé to Duchamp, but also, in a longer history, from Baudelaire to Jeff Wall passing through Marcel Broodthaers, is this anarchic freedom of art opposed to the search for a collective style. This freedom was affirmed with the great innovation of literary symbolism, the polymorphism of a literary symbolism, the polymorphism of free verse, in a break with the norms of prosodic tradition. In 1967, George Kubler, the author of the *Shape of Time* (1962) said this: "When flow and change are ignored, and when development is disregarded, style remains useful as a taxonomic convenience. But wherever the passage of time is under

consideration, with its shifting identities and continuous transformations, the taxonomic notion, represented by the term style, becomes irrelevant." That explains why modern art consecrated a mysticism of formal innovation, in the idea of rhythm. Going far past the cadence of productive activity, rhythm "organic or mechanical, but also lyric and cosmic" has been celebrated as the alternative to the project of a Modern Style supposed to have the same capacity of synthesis as the great styles of the past. Unlike Modern Style, rhythm permits us to integrate the anarchic diversity of individual freedoms as well as the game of difference, beginning by sexual difference. Associating poetry to dance and music, rhythm is the condition of a space of language overflowing the spatial fixation of the object and the reification of the image. The mobility of reading set to work in *Un Coup de dés* manifests the uncertainty and variation principle that characterizes the public aspect of the modern work. Mallarmé admits that this relation participates in "communication," but he adds that the work, rather than forcing attention to itself or supposing a public made to order is addressed to whomever...

SELECTED TEXTS (REPRODUCED IN THE EXHIBITION ROOMS / WALLS)

Mallarmé is the wellspring of contemporary art... Unwittingly he invented the modern space.
MARCEL BROODTHAERS, 1970

To write –

The inkstand, crystal as a conscience, within its depths its drop of shadow relative to having something be: then take away the lamp.

You noticed, one does not write luminously on a dark field; the alphabet of stars alone, is thus indicated, sketched out or interrupted; man pursues black on white.

This pleat of somber lace which retains the infinite woven by a thousand, each according to the thread or the prolongation, its secret unknown, assembles distant interlacings where there sleeps some luxury to take account of – a ghou, a knot, some foliage – and to present. With the indispensable nothing of mystery, which remains, expressed little.

STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ, "Limited Action", 1897

Lace passes into nothingness,
With the ultimate Gamble in doubt,
In blasphemy revealing just
Eternal absence of any bed.

This concordant enmity
Of a white garland and the same,
In flight against the pallid glass,
Hovers and does not enshroud.

But where, limned gold, the dreamers dwells,
There sleeps a mournful mandola,
Its deep lacuna source of song.

Of a kind that toward some window,
Formed by that belly or none at all,
Filial, one might have been born.

STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ, 1887

A nothingness resolving into infinity after transit through the finite, the concrete and the immediate; music founded in nothingness – we are struck by the sound of the syllables before we grasp their meaning; a music so lovely you want, deem, wish yourself fated its son, created its son, its presence signifying and symbolising the very image of creation from zero: in nothingness no sound, yet sound there is, because like nothingness and nothing the music still resounds, because everything seems born of nothing, because where there is nothing there is first of all sound, because the sound can still be born, and the music is also the image of the harmony and the numbers governing all creation. In Mallarmé there exists an aesthetics of a transcendental poetry and of poetry itself – yet also, in an overt, willed, utterly conscious way, the idea of several concrete realities, present and presented at the same time.

ANTONIN ARTAUD, 1933

The sphere is the perfect form. The sun is the perfect star. Nothing in us is as perfect as the head, ever raised towards the sun and striving towards its form; and if not the head, the eye, the mirror of that star it so resembles.

ALFRED JARRY, *Minutes of the Sands of Time*, 1894

Outside, like the cry of space, the traveler perceives the whistle's distress. "Probably," he persuades himself, "we are going through a tunnel – the epoch – the last long one, snaking under the city to the all-powerful train station of the virginal central palace, like a crown." The underground passage will last (how impatient you are), as long as your thoughtful preparation of the tall glass edifice wiped clean by Justice in flight.

Stéphane Mallarmé, "Limited Action", 1897

The vanished adolescent of our early years, destined to haunt the lofty or thoughtful mind with the mourning he so willingly wears – I recognise him struggling beneath the pain of appearances: because Hamlet brings to life, on stage, the unique protagonist of an intimate, mysterious tragedy, the very sight of his name exerts over me, over you as you read it, a fascination close to anguish.

[...] Shakespeare's play is so skilfully shaped in terms of our inner theatre – prototype of all the others – that it can adjust to today's productions or ignore them with equal indifference.

STEPHANE MALLARME, "Hamlet", 1886

10.9.68 Wed. Duchamp/Delacroix

item : a "distant cousin" of the Debussy dreaming

queried in real life about Debussy seeing or knowing him Duchamp has spoken of his inaccessibility, "like Einstein."

consider the dream interpreting it (granting it significance beyond the enigmatical) in the light of the "OBJECT" ("l'objet") curiously observed in some kind of perspective, tradition

Delacroix — Redon — Duchamp

Redon had followed Delacroix one night out of hero worship (MEL

LERIO) Duchamp openly acknowledged Redon as an influence

"le royaume de l'objet" surrealism

own penchant for collecting from way back leading into preoccupation with 'l'objet'

Duchamp, Delacroix # 2

note : own spontaneous outgoing admiration for Delacroix — the 3 Escholier tomes before knowing Duchamp period of cellar atelier working on the 50s Delacroix's "Journals". The Nadar reproduction on the bulletin board — the "Journal" entering into the fiber of daily life — afternoons in Flushing Main St. — snack + library pattern (the old library same site)

"Delacroix's Handkerchief" consider as a title for a crystallized vision of the random notes as an article

JOSEPH CORNELL, Personal diary

Between Hamlet and the rest of the world I want not a single point of consonance, not the least hope of reconciliation.

EDWARD GORDON CRAIG, *On the Art of the Theatre*, 1912

In a world free of the need to dominate out of fear, we would no longer dare to assert our tiny physical ego as the optical arbiter of spiritual realities for a world not made of physical limitations.

RAOUL HAUSMANN. "We are not photographers", 1921

.....
(more information / français:)

23 juin 1916

J'ai inventé un nouveau genre de poésie, la « poésie sans mots » ou poésie phonétique, où le balancement des voyelles est évalué et distribué seulement selon les valeurs de la série initiale. J'en ai lu les premiers vers ce soir. J'étais habillé d'un costume que j'avais tout spécialement conçu pour cela. Mes jambes étaient prises dans une sorte de tube en carton bleu, brillant ; cette espèce de cylindre m'enserrait étroitement jusqu'aux hanches de telle sorte que j'avais l'air d'un obélisque. Par-dessus, je portais un énorme col-manteau découpé dans du carton, recouvert de papier rouge-carmin à l'intérieur et de papier doré à l'extérieur. Il était fixé au cou de telle façon qu'en relevant ou en abaissant les coudes, je pouvais le faire bouger comme des ailes. En plus, j'étais coiffé d'un chapeau de chaman, genre haut de forme, mais très long et avec des rayures blanches et bleues.

Sur les trois côtés de la scène, et tournés vers le public, j'avais installé des pupitres de musique sur lesquels j'avais disposé mon manuscrit, dessiné au crayon rouge, et je célébrais tantôt devant l'un, tantôt devant l'autre. Comme Tzara était au courant de mes préparatifs, ce fut une véritable petite première. Tout le monde attendait avec une grande curiosité. Alors, ne pouvant marcher avec ma colonne, je me fis porter sur la scène, plongée dans l'obscurité, et je commençai lentement et solennellement :

gadji beri bimba
glandridi lauli lonni cadori
gadjama bim beri glassala
glandridi glassala tuffm i zimbrabim
blassa galassasa tuffm i zimbrabim...

Les accents se faisaient plus lourds, l'expression s'intensifiait en appuyant sur les consonnes. Je me rendis vite compte que mes moyens d'expression — si je voulais garder mon sérieux (et je le voulais à tout prix) — n'étaient pas à la hauteur du faste de ma mise en scène. Dans le public j'aperçus Brupbacher, Jelmoli, Laban, Mme Wigman. J'eus peur du ridicule et je fis un effort sur moi-même. Je venais d'exécuter, devant le pupitre de gauche, *Le Chant de Labada aux nuages* et, devant celui de droite, *La Caravane d'éléphants* et, m'appliquant à battre vigoureusement des ailes, je me tournai de nouveau vers le chevalet du milieu. Grâce aux lourdes séries de voyelles et au rythme traînant des éléphants, j'avais réussi à obtenir un effet croissant. Mais, comment finir ? Alors je m'aperçus que ma voix, n'ayant plus d'autre choix, avait adopté la très ancienne cadence de la lamentation sacrée, le style de ces chants liturgiques qui répandent leur plainte à travers toutes les églises catholiques, de l'Orient à l'Occident.

Je ne sais ce que cette musique m'a suggéré. Mais j'ai commencé à chanter mes séries de voyelles dans le style récitatif de l'Église et je ne m'efforçais pas seulement à rester sérieux, mais à y contraindre aussi mon auditoire. Pendant un instant j'eus l'impression de voir surgir de mon masque cubiste le visage d'un petit garçon, pâle et troublé, ce visage mi-effrayé mi-curieux d'un garçon de dix ans qui, pendant les messes funéraires et les grand-messes de sa paroisse était rivé, tremblant et avide, à la bouche du prêtre. Alors, comme je l'avais demandé, la lumière électrique s'éteignit et, couvert de sueur, je fus soulevé et emporté de la scène, comme un évêque magique

Hugo Ball, *La Fuite hors du temps. Journal 1913-1921*. Monaco, éd. du Rocher, 1993, 144-146 [Hugo Ball, Die Flucht aus der Zeit]

The Castle Question

The human psyche in its most universal manifestation has developed such a fixation on the Gothic castle and everything that goes with it that we absolutely must establish what the equivalent is for our time. (All the evidence suggests it is not a factory.)

ANDRÉ BRETON, "Limits not Frontiers of Surrealism", 1937

Poetry is not a special activity, but a state, a becoming of the whole world. The unconscious and its language – myth – demonstrate the absence of any fit between human events and ordinary reality.

CARL EINSTEIN. *Georges Braque* (1931-32), published in 1934

Bo-beh-oh-bee, sang the lips
Veh-eh-oh-mee, sang the glances
Pee-eh-eh-oh, sang the brows
Lee-eh-eh-ay, sang the visage
Gzee-gzee-gzeh-oh, sang the chain,
Thus on a canvas of some correspondences
Beyond dimensions lived the Face.

VÉLIMIR KLÉBNIKOV, *Té li lé*, 1908-1909

Any painterly plane is more alive than any face hung with a pair of eyes and a smile. A painted face in a picture is a pathetic parody of life, this allusion being a thin reminder of the living thing. A plane, by contrast, is alive, for it has been born. A coffin reminds us of a corpse, whereas a picture suggests a living thing.

KASIMIR MALÉVICH

A truly creative vision is configured from the tensions and distensions of the basic relationships of a body, be it man, beast, plant, stone, machine, part or whole, big or small: the vision is never the centre coldly and mechanically observed.

Raoul Hausmann, "We are not photographers", 1921

.....

(more information:)

While removed from nature, this picture of a gutter is in a sense very human. It is Baudelairean. I wish was alive to see it. The secret of photography is, the camera takes on the character and the personality of the handler. The mind works on the machine.

Walker Evans, légende d'une photographie de la même série parue dans *Art in America*, avril 1971

Some kind of protest had to be made against the intolerable idea of the torture of one man by another, of the human body and the face disfigured by man himself. The horror had to be registered, stigmatised for all eternity.

It had to be repeated in loathsome close-up, it had to be turned into something beautiful. No gestures. No gesticulation. Just stunned reproach. No movement, apart from that of the image invading the mind, of the tortured face arising out of the depth of shadow, looming at us; apart from that of the faces of the martyrs wheeling through our heavens like stars, like satellites, like moons.

FRANCIS PONGE, "Note on Fautrier's Hostage paintings", January 1945

Exorcism – reacting powerfully, like a battering ram – is the prisoner's true poem.

HENRI MICHAUX, *Ordeals, Exorcisms* (preface), 1945



(more information):

Joan Miró et André Breton

Constellations, 1959

Ed. Pierre Matisse, New York

Introduction et "Proses parallèles" par André Breton

23 planches couleur (reproductions de la série de 1940-41), non reliées

Emboîtement : 47,5 x 38,3 x 5,3 cm

La série de 23 *Constellations* reproduites dans cet ouvrage a été réalisée par Miró entre le 21 janvier 1940 et le 12 septembre 1941, à Varengeville (Normandie) puis à Palma-de-Majorque.

Les textes ont été écrits par Breton à Paris, entre octobre et décembre 1958.

Sur les murs des petits bourgs, des hameaux perdus, ces beaux signes à la craie, au charbon, c'est l'*alphabet des vagabonds* qui se déroule : un quignon de pain, peut-être un verre à trois maisons après la forge ; château : gare au molosse qui peut sauter la haie. Ailleurs le petit homme nu, qui tient la clé des rébus, est toujours assis sur sa pierre. À qui veut l'entendre, mais c'est si rare, il enseigne la *langue des oiseaux* : « Qui rencontre cette vérité de lettres, de mots et de suite ne peut jamais, en s'exprimant, tomber au-dessous de sa conception. » Sous les ponts de Paris, le fleuve monnaie, entre autres méreaux, le souvenir des priapées au temps où le chef des jongleurs levait tribut sur chaque folle femme. Et chacun de nous passe et repasse, traquant inlassablement sa chimère, la tête en calabasse au bout de son bourdon.

André Breton

« Prose parallèle » pour *L'Oiseau migrateur* (26 mai 1941, Palma de Majorque). Textes repris dans André Breton, *Signe ascendant*, Gallimard, collection « Poésie », 1968, p. 127-171 ; p. 163

Silence Silence Silence
Silence Silence Silence
Silence Silence
Silence Silence Silence

Silence Silence Silence

EUGEN GOMRINGER, .Silence., 1960

35 adjectives
7 adverbs
35,52% area not occupied by type
64,48% area occupied by type
1 columns
1 conjunctions
0 mms. depression of type into surface of page
0 gerunds
0 infinitives
247 letters of alphabet
28 lines
6 mathematical symbols
51 nouns
29 numbers
6 participles
8" x 8" page
80 lb. paper sheet
dull coated paper stock
.007" paper stock
3 prepositions
0 pronouns
10 size type
Universe 55 typeface
61 words
3 words capitalized
0 words italicized
58 words not capitalized
61 words not italicized

DAN GRAHAM, *Schema*, March 1966 - fall 1967

1. Graphed High, Middle and Low, with each box equal to MM 66-92. The top line or slightly above the top line, very high. The bottom line or slightly beneath, very low.
2. Numbers represent the amount of sounds to be played in each box.
3. All instruments to be played without sticks or mallets. The performer may use fingers, hand, or any part of his arm.
4. Dynamics are extremely low, and as equal as possible.
5. The thick horizontal line designates clusters. (Instruments should be varied when possible.)
6. Roman numerals represent simultaneous sounds.
7. Large numbers (encompassing High, Middle and Low) indicate single sounds to be played in all registers and in any time sequence.
8. Broken lines indicate sustained sounds.
9. Vibraphone is played without motor.

SYMBOLS USED:

B—Bell-line sounds

T—Bell-line sounds

S—Skin Instruments
C—Cymbal
G—Gong

T.R.—Skin Instruments
DELTA—Triangle
G.R.—Gong Roll

MORTON FELDMAN, *The King of Denmark*, 1964

For me, it seems enough that dancing is a spiritual exercise in physical form, and that what is seen, is what it is.

MERCE CUNNINGHAM, "Space, Time and Dance", 1952

All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act.

MARCEL DUCHAMP, "The Creative Act", April 1957

The aim of the artist would not be to instruct the viewer but to give him information. Whether the viewer understands this information is incidental to the artist; he cannot foresee the understanding of all his viewers. He would follow his predetermined premise to its conclusion avoiding subjectivity. Chance, taste, or unconsciously remembered forms would play no part in the outcome.

SOL LEWITT, *Serial Project # 1*, 1966

1. Thence in painting we renounce color as a pictorial element; color is the idealized optical surface of objects; an exterior and superficial impression of them; color is accidental and it has nothing in common with the innermost essence of a thing.

We affirm that the tone of a substance, i. e. its light-absorbing material body, is its only pictorial reality.

NAUM GABO, NOTON PEVSNER, "Realist Manifesto", 1920

For Mallarmé, as for us, it is language which speaks, not the author : to write is to reach, though a preexisting impersonality – never to be confused with the castrating objectivity of the realistic novelist – that point where language alone acts, "performs", and not "oneself."

ROLAND BARTHES, "The Death of the Author", 1967

The art of our time is noisy with appeals for silence.

SUSAN SONTAG, "The Aesthetics of Silence", 1967

When flow and change are ignored, and when development is disregarded, style remains useful as a taxonomic convenience. But wherever the passage of time is under consideration, with its shifting identities and continuous transformations, the taxonomic notion, represented by the term *style*, becomes irrelevant.

GEORGE KUBLER, "Style and Representation of Historical Time", 1967

(More information / français):

Le titre *d'Orientation* vaut pour *about orientation*. Le passage par le français permet une allusion à la section d'Or et à la science mathématique des peintres inspirée notamment d'Euclide. L'idée d'orientation associée à un schéma de perspective renvoie aux travaux du psychologue James J. Gibson, auteur de *Perception of Visual World* (Boston, 1950). En mettant l'accent sur l'expérience de l'orientation dans un espace de mobilité (conduite automobile, pilotage aérien), la théorie de Gibson s'oppose à la géométrie abstraite de l'espace euclidien et redéfinit le champ perceptif comme un environnement.

La ligne sinueuse qui traverse le tableau en son centre dessine un profil biomorphique apparenté aux figures spéculatives de Duchamp pour le *Grand Verre*. Cette apparition, inspirée de la forme d'un mollusque aquatique (*jellyfish*) s'inscrit dans la transparence d'un réseau géométrique. En 1952, Hamilton vise une nouvelle synthèse entre les spéculations sur la dynamique de la vision en mouvement (Moholy-Nagy, *Vision in Motion*, 1948) et la formalisation des processus de croissance (d'Arcy Thompson, *On Growth and Forms*, 1917-1942).

Roaratorio. A Soundscape

« In *Roaratorio* (1979), the second "writing through" *Finnegans Wake* served as both musical material and as structural guide. The work, a composition for magnetic tape, is a translation of Joyce's 628-page novel into sound. Making use of the abundant indices, gazetteers, and other specialized inventories for *Finnegans Wake*, Cage listed all the references to sounds and music in the book, then grouped them into various categories and made chance-determined selections from these. Similarly, a random selection was made from the huge number of place-names found in the book. With the help of others world-wide, Cage then collected all these sounds on tape, finding instances of all the specific sounds mentioned (such as bells, dogs barking, water running, etc.), and recording ambient noises at all the places mentioned.

The tapes were then assembled and mixed. The first step was to record Cage reading the entire text of "Writing for the Second Time Through *Finnegans Wake*." This tape served as the template for the placement to the other recorded sounds. Since Cage's text goes through the entire book from start to finish, and includes running page references to the original, the recorded sounds could be easily superimposed upon the reading of Cage's text at the exact point that they are referred to in Joyce's book. Thus, the piece opens with the sound of a viola d'amore ("Sir Tristram, violer d'amores, fr'over the short sea") and closes with the cries of gulls ("Whish! A gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far!"). Chance controlled the duration of sounds, their relative loudness, and other aspects of the mixing process. Several multi-track tapes were made in this fashion and then mixed together, along with recordings of Irish folk musics, to form a single two-track tape. The effect of this is a thick, joyous collage of sounds, music, and reading — as the subtitle explains, this is "An Irish Circus on *Finnegans Wake*." Although Cage later published an "*a posteriori*" score for the work which generalizes the process so that it could be applied to any book at all, it is hard to imagine any novel that would be as perfectly set by such an incomprehensible, phantasmagoric soundscape as this. »

John Pritchett, *The Music of John Cage*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 179-180