

a [lecture-performance] in 3+ parts

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to note:

[' // ' marks my [dis]fluencies/ 'um's, in line with my speaking]

[occasional words hy-phen-et-ed for reading ease]

word[s that]count: 5,993

a precursor, a note on / 'lecture' (?) on 'lecture-performance' for seminar

in-between, 'um' & contingencies

[spoken on 10 November 2021]

I thought I would begin by speaking a little about speaking, about lecture-performance. To mull over this art practice, not didactically// but to air my uncertainties [& to also quote experienced critics who are probably (maybe) less uncertain than I am].

In 2013, theorist & art-critic Vangelis Ath-an-asso-pou-los noted that 'lecture-performance occupies an important [yet] ambivalent position'.¹ // He surmised that any attempt to trace the history of, or declare specific traits of 'lecture-performance', isn't feasible, that there is a nebulous quality underpinning the work // - that it sits at an 'in-between'.² Much like 'lumphood', this genre [or not-quite genre] is a space for becoming & unbecoming; a space for oscillation & reverberation - a site of friction, of various modes & topics rubbing up against each other, with vastly differing methods being taken by artists.

In recent years the 'speaking artist' has been said to take an authoritative, pedagogical position. Patricia Milder states that 'the best lecture-performances always seem to originate from artists who believe that teaching itself is a central component of their artwork'.³ While widely disputed, the suggestion that lecture-performance is a means for artists to share a knowledge [a form of knowing] // is pertinent. [or even, (for me, at least) to share a 'not-knowing', a mulch of incomplete thought - unfurling said mulch so it may enrich other half-notions. Hito Steyerl's lectures are a good example of buttery thought-y mulch, a generative spreading of critique, comparison, commentary - which becomes a bit muddy.] I use lecture-performance as a way of thinking through my practice; writing as I speak/speaking as I write [the very acts of writing & speaking have always felt performative, as I do both (nervously) with reception in mind]. Unlike conventional artist interviews or statements, which are often positioned as 'context'/'documentation', as external to the 'work', // lecture-performance blurs the distinction between 'artwork' & 'speaking about artwork'.

In 2019, in conjunction with her exhibition at Tate St Ives, Otobong Nkanga presented a 'performance lecture' - humming, sitting, reciting poetry, // throwing paper. Nkanga's work interweaves body & vocality with image & sculpture. Within lecture-performance in general, the artist's voice is frequently anchored by objects - the blackboards of Joseph Beuys, the institutional walls touched by Andrea Frazer, // the bridge haunting Mark Leckey. Richard Deacon's lecture-performances have been rooted within video cameras, speakers & screens, toying with technology as a means of expanding [or concealing] voice & body. The objects & conditions of lecture-performance are innumerable & yet in 2013 Rike Frank jotted down 3 facilitating conditions: 'the presence of the lec-

¹ Vangelis Athanassopoulos, 'Language, visuality, and the body. On the return of discourse in contemporary performance', *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, 5.1 (2013), 1-10 (p. 2) <<https://doi.org/10.3402/jac.v5i0.21658>>.

² Ibid, p. 2-3.

³ Patricia Milder, 'Teaching as Art: The Contemporary Lecture-Performance', *A Journal of Performance & Art*, 33.1 (2011), 13-27 (p. 13) <https://doi.org/10.1162/pajj_a_00019>.

turer, the attendance of an audience and the social gathering that ensues'.⁴ This doesn't stand as a rule of thumb, & Frank uses // David Antin's 'talk pieces' as an example of how that triad structure often shifts, flattens, breaks down - depending upon the circumstance, or artist intention.

There's no doubt that the consideration given to voice, presence & persona within lecture-performance has an // affiliation with stand-up & teaching & theatre & even activism. The language of lecture-performance can also been imbued with disrupting, revolutionary energies; Sharon Hayes, for example, occupied the street - approaching the passersby & imploring active listening. Arguably Greta Thunberg's 'blah blah blah' would sit quite nicely as a contemporary example of lecture-performance, and in fact, in 2010 Martin Creed said that through his work he just wanted to go 'Blah!'.⁵ //

'um', like 'blah', is an expression [exclamation as opposed to explanation]. I prefer 'um' to 'blah', ['blah' is usually dismissive, which has its uses, but not for me]. 'um' seems to acknowledge the speaker as well as the listener; it seeps inwards & outwards, a pause without pausing, pure vibration like an engine ticking over waiting to take the next turn. Maybe lecture-performance is about these disfluencies; lending [some] fluency to disfluency, or sitting somewhere *in between* the two, like Steyerl's mulchy texts. This 'in-between-ness' of lecture-performance [as visualised by the hyphen] is maybe due to the [contextual] structures which squeezed it out; my use of lecture-performance was a contingency resulting from the onset of the pandemic, a way of maintaining art practice & its reception via online recordings. Were lecture-performances conceived a means for artists to occupy the lecture hall/powerpoint/stage/podium [the containment structures] on their own terms? To use the allotted 'artist talk' space/time arena at their disposal [to make something indisposible, something other than a career-affirming spewing out of their CV]?

Essentially the sheer glut of variation, the veering iterations of lecture-performance & the 'speaking artist' make it, perhaps ironically, very difficult to speak about - at least for me, hence my ramblings and digressions which I thank you for listening to [& maybe I will thank you again once 'these three + *n*' lecture-ish parts end].⁶ //

⁴ Rike Frank, 'When Form Starts Talking: On Lecture-Performances', *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, 33 (2013), 4-15 (p. 5) <<https://doi.org/10.1086/672015>>.

⁵ Martin Creed, and others, *Martin Creed: Works* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), p. xvii.

⁶ 'three + *n*' taken from the introduction of Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, (London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 5.

'precursor...' transcription

16/11/21

why is performance there at all?

- a denial of the authority of the lecturer?

[// as a pause: mistake; 'um' *
When speaking -
- Keeping
- note of my
displacements]

"BOTH THE LECTURE AND THE ESSAY KNOW THAT ERRING IS A KIND OF ECANACY" → something happens

FINANCIAL CRASH 2008 =
CONTEXT
↓
SURGE OF EVENT BASED CULTURE

continues to
"emergence of (what came to be called) lecture-performance [to be] situated at the convergence between discourse and theatre in the visual arts of the 60s".
[]

When the lecture hits the page, becomes more solid?
Can't gloss over as easily as spectra

it's a site of friction, of various modes and topics rubbing up against each other,

↓
SERVICE ECONOMY

CAUSALITY

(cumulative; need to be water tight? NO HOLES IN ARGUMENT)

stance, often

STANCE
tone.

prompting the 'not-winning'

More messy than this!
not as definitive!!

NOT KNOWING ALSO CRUCIAL!!

I am it in here?
DUSTY + MUDDY + AIRING OUT + DUMPING.

HER BODY HAS A PRESENCE?

complete

Once this part of the performance was

Being an artist IS performative.

→ Speaking and writing feel very performative

I DO NOT CARE FOR MY BODY'S PRESENCE; EMPHASIS ON THE VOICING OF MATTER!!

[the body]?

'precursor...' transcription pt.2

Many Cappello "Lecture": the lecture as an object? or as a type of voicing
 -> Response to Virginia Woolf's "Why?" - a sounding board; vibrations + energies
 // - , lay on the floor,
 , much to the audience's enjoyment.

objects -

[or concealing,]

and underpinnings.

David Antin's -shifts,

NOW ONLY EXIST AS TEXTS!!

Mark Lecky

and I'd

potential;

'blah_

FURTHER CONTEXT.

[mass]

TO 'ERR'

['Blah!'.] What about uni?!

// I hope some of you might offer your thoughts on the medium, and share how you feel about lecture-performance (in general, or in relation to Beckey's video).

A ONE WAY 'POWER' flow? audience there to absorb not to contribute?
 ↳ "why not let them talk to you and listen to you, naturally and happily on the floor?" do this!!

"pretentious" "manipulative"
 VANITY?
 hate this, not intention at all.

⌞ staples⁷

puncture, monoculture & rubble

[spoken on 3 February 2022]

What are the structures which give rise to & contain lumps?

Par-a-doxi-cally, a lump is only acknowledged as existing when it has lost its lumphood; to declare a lump [to trace an authoritative formal boundary where lump must sit] means lump loses formlessness, thus loses lumphood. Who enacts the demarcation of lumps? What produces & holds the 'in-between' space where lumps & lumpen energies [are perceived to] exist?

Is this 'in-between' space a rift, gap, or even a hole?

'Sculpture is the art of the hole and the lump', after all

& thank you Rodin for this slogan, or precept. I don't mind clichés [but I am suspicious of them].

This one in particular is embraced as doctrine - from Henry Moore to Barbara Hepworth.

Accepted, cherished, // revered.

The two formal elements are considered as diametrically opposed, shaping a classic binary within art history. The 'hole' being hollow, the 'lump' full - concave vs. convex, positive vs. negative. One imposes, one concedes; lump impedes seeing, holes aid sight. Donald Judd declares that they are 'the same thing', while simultaneously positioning them as oppositional.⁸ Looking past presupposed boundaries, 'lump' & 'hole' are both often the remains of something having happened, the result of a process - that which is left behind & later recognised [but please note my uncertainty in mentioning this threadbare topic, I am touching base & hoping something lifts off].

& ultimately why does this matter? Or, rather, to what matter is it most *felt*?

A ⌞ enacts lumping while imposing holes; it is // itself neither a 'lump' or a 'hole', but a facilitator. It is in the moment of ⌞ing, when the trigger[?] is pulled, that the lump & hole form in tandem. [the action is jarring, it jolts my body, a // brute force felt & heard.] This gesture generates a harsh soundscape of lumping; the pinning down, holding in, puncturing reverberates outwards. When Barthes spoke of his 'punctum', [the 'speck, cut, little hole' which arises from the image to wound & pierce him] I wonder if he also syn-chron-ously heard the camera - heard the loading & shooting & capturing of matter.⁹ The immense violence of puncturing can never be understated [& so maybe Barthes' 'wound' or 'bruise' in part stems from a sympathy with the body [of matter] detained].

I, too, felt [and feel] this sympathy, or maybe more-so empathy. In the act of compulsively [& hesitantly?] ⌞ing lengthy thorny lines across MDF boards, I became sickeningly conscious of my body - no longer oblivious to how my enduring fascination with 'lumphood' is 'skin deep' [no, actually, deeply *beyond/under/in* skin]. The action of ⌞ing has been an evo-cation [a summoning force], thinking [feeling] back to having a line of 16 ⌞s across my lower stomach.

⁷ [not ⌞ Staples™, although I acknowledge this company's corporate focus on providing containment structures/solutions for structuring]

⁸ Donald Judd, 'Specific Objects' in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings 1959-1975* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975), pp. 181-190 (p. 188).

⁹ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage Books, 2000), p. 27.

[My body was the producer of lump - lump fell through a hole/was cut away from the embodied structure (my body structure). Where else would you see a long line of \neg s if not across a wound? (the *underbelly* of a chair, I suppose)]

But the body contained the lump & now the wound contains the body; the body-structure has become held together by the wound-structure. In an attempt to pin down Julia Kristeva's 'abjection', Rosalind Krauss questions 'what would it be [...] to think "abjection" apart from the objects of disgust'?¹⁰ What if we instead think of the 'abject' as 'operational', // 'as a process of "alteration"'?¹¹ Would 'abjection' then begin to extend outwards from explicit images or forms, & become more about process? More about the becoming/un-becoming, the acknowledgement of that which has been cast off [cast out/outcast]? And so [maybe] the \neg is more abject than the wound. The wound is assimilated & integral, but the \neg s are torn out, disregarded & disposed of [as soon as they'd completed the task of holding my body back together].

This capacity for 'holding together' underpins the \neg . In many ways a \neg produces a corpus (noun: a *collection* but also a *mass/structure/body*); or, rather, a 'corpse-of' something having happened or uttered, a rigid body held still. The fastening of one [body/mass] to another [body/mass] is usually imposed to produce a linearity, // a chronology. When documents or papers are \neg ed together there is the assumption that this ordering allows them to be more functional; allowing them to be read, one to the next, to the next. We are taught to begin at the uppermost document & slowly delve down into the under layers; in doing so we hope to move from a state of '*not knowing*' towards '*now knowing*'. This ordering implies a 'use', an insight into, a *knowledge* of.

Sustaining knowledge is at the foundation of record centres, libraries & archives.¹² Within these institutions there is an immense anxiety in maintaining the order[ing of matter], which is only made worse when the structures that are meant to uphold order begin to give up, or give in. Joan Irving voices this anxiety when discussing 'inherent vice', which refers to a fundamental defect that has the potential to betray a structure.¹³ The \neg has this 'vice'. Archival standards advise that \neg s 'corrode, stain, distort and tear the material, and therefore should be removed.'¹⁴ The structures maintaining order can also threaten order; the \neg has a time limit, from the moment of puncturing, its very substance threatens to ruin [& be ruined]. Rag[g]ed by time, the form crumbles - is this a return to lumphood? [Do lumpen energies & forces exist in a cycle of transformation *into* form & then, this // eventual crumbling transformation *out of* form?]

But where do the \neg s go when removed from matter [when they stop mattering for the archive]?

[& what happened to the (now disembodied) \neg s that held me (my body) together?]

¹⁰ Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide*, (New York: Zone Books, 1997), p. 245.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 245.

¹² Jennifer Koslow, *Public History*, (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2021), p. 104.

¹³ Joan Irving, *Caring for Your Cherished Objects*, (Blue Ridge Summit: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2021), p. 104.

¹⁴ 'Pins, Clips and Staples', *surreycc.gov.uk* <<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/culture-and-leisure/history-centre/depositors/conservation/damaging-fasteners>> [Accessed 2 January 2022].

In a discussion between Lucy Gunning, Jo Melvin & Victoria Worsley, there is the suggestion that archiving involves a ‘cleaning up’ of material, until the ‘frenetic energy of [...] disorder goes’.¹⁵ But what exactly is taken out, excavated or abandoned in the process of destroying such *energy*? [my \neg s, I suppose?]. Gunning suggests that these omissions become ‘something *in-between*,’ to which Melvin responds that ‘the *in-between* is an archival problem’, further questioning how archivists might ‘authorise those ellipses’.¹⁶ But how do you account for, or permit, in-between-ness within a system built only for knowing [built only for immediacies, not intermediacies]? Maybe the issue *is* the attempt to officiate, to structure that which does not require our structural ‘support’, [our detached domineering project]. The ordering [or, removal] of such ‘frenetic energy’ disregards that this energy probably had its own ordering, akin to how Elizabeth Grosz speaks of ‘chaos’ as not ‘as absolute disorder but rather as a plethora of orders, forms, wills - forces that cannot be distinguished from each other’.¹⁷ In establishing a *singular* order/force [in establishing monopoly (monocracy, or monoculture?)] there is a loss of entwine, a loss of cross-fertilisation, of composting & mulching; the ‘energy’ does not need to be clear-cut, [& certainly clear-cutting is as sharp, as violent, as puncturing].

Within forestry, clearcutting infers the absolute clearing of an expanse of land; not only for harvest ing trees, but also for uprooting masses of ‘unmanageable’ trees to be replaced with a fast-growing [economically fruitful/ecologically fruitless] monoculture.¹⁸ This industry essentially ‘destroy[s] the forest as a diverse and self-producing system’, & is a reflection of [product of] imperial, capitalist onslaught, of ‘thinking in terms of monocultures’.¹⁹ [isn’t archiving also a mono-culturing?] Extractivism, erasure & dominance certainly exist as modes within both archiving & silviculture; there is less emphasis on *sitting with* material energies, & more emphasis on *standing over*. The extensive bracketing, labelling, or [to use Melvin’s phrase] authorising of an expanse limits its ability to be expansive; rigidly determining a presence ensures that such presence cannot shift, or grow beyond its sanctioned territory [at least not without running the risk of being cut down, cut out, put to *waste*]. & actually, despite the notion that clearcutting totally empties out the land, there often remains a large amount of slash (a piling up of woody *waste* material) which must be removed & destroyed via burning. [would corroded \neg s (& my body’s \neg s) sit amongst this slash? Within the lumpen disorder, the dirt & debris left in the wake of ordering?]

Is *waste* the ‘disorder’ that archivists ‘clear up’? Speaking of archiving & collecting, Susan Pearce considers ‘rubbish’ as ‘material to which no socially coherent value attaches’, the ‘area of dirt and muddle’.²⁰ This resonates with the distinction Leen Katrib notes between ‘ruins’ & ‘rubble’, as one

¹⁵ Lucy Gunning, Jo Melvin and Victoria Worsley, ‘Tangentially: the Archive and the Bathroom’, *Tate* <<https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/09/tangentially-the-archive-and-the-bathroom>> [Accessed 4 February 2022].

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), p. 5.

¹⁸ Isabelle Fremeaux and Jay Jordan, ‘Flourishing’, *e-flux* <<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/124/446244/flourishing/>> [Accessed 21 February 2022].

¹⁹ Vandana Shiva, *Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology* (London: Zen Books Ltd., 1993), pp. 5-28.

²⁰ Susan Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*, (London: Routledge, 1995) p. 386-7.

is deemed worthy of preservation & the other destroyed, both existing within a 'hierarchy of imperial debris'.²¹ Katrib isn't calling for the rubble to be conserved or structured [in any current archival sense] but rather questions how the restoration of 'ruins' displaces populations, displaces material histories & then destroys any record of such displacement [is *this* the archival ellipses Melvin speaks of? Is this the burning tree slash?].

That which doesn't fit, or disrupts order, is thrown out into the rubble [into the compost & chaos].

But maybe this is where the potential [the energy] lies.

Rethinking Walter Benjamin's conception of history as a 'pile of rubble', Hito Steyerl suggests that instead of overseeing this rubble, [as archival theory implores] rather 'we are the rubble [...] this pile of scrap'.²² Amending our vantage point may encourage less demarcation & more entwinement ['co-' rather than 'mono-']. This is exactly what Katrib hopes her speculative 'rubble archive' might achieve; it proposes that energies could be generated within the muddle, seeing 'ruination as a productive entry point' for reassessing the oppressive urge to hold material as singular.²³ Aligning with Steyerl's 'task of unfreezing the forces congealed within the trash of history' [allowing forces to spill out of stagnation] perhaps 'rubbish', 'rubble' & 'trash' can be synonymous with generative exchange.²⁴ Essentially, whereas // archiving 'lumps of the real world' can be a brutal threat to fluctuation [to shifting bodies & lumpen life-force], Katrib's 'rubble archive' instead accepts the 'um' in 'lump'.²⁵ There's no empty ellipses to authorise, but instead a constant h[umm]ing or m[um]bling, an 'um-ing' which holds energy, a potentiality ['um' is like shifting alluvium, which once settled, often produces a fertile ground[ing, encouraging germination & off-shoots]].

In order to tap into this rubble archive, maybe I should refuse to ellipse the corroded \neg s? Maybe I should allow the [so-called] 'inherent vice' to unfurl, or ooze into a given structure [like tree sap carrying nourishment & generating energies] so that it *all* becomes rubble. And really [maybe] this would be less violent than a sudden removal/disposal [the \neg s initial puncturing was violent, but removing is equally as gut-wrenching, as visceral; wrenching out that which cannot be put back in].

Is to remove one[self or \neg] a violence? [Is this why I envelop myself in material, & in these words?]

²¹ Leen Katrib, 'On Archiving Rubble', *Future Anterior*, 15.2 (2018), 32-45 (p. 34) <<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aft&AN=143814959&site=ehost-live>> [Accessed 7 January 2022].

²² Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), p. 56.

²³ Katrib, 'On Archiving Rubble', p. 40.

²⁴ Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen*, p. 57.

²⁵ Susan M. Pearce, 'Museum Objects' in *Museum, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study*, (Washington D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), p. 4-5.

transcription

Walking into an exhibition space
- feels; coherent and rich and interesting that being in the space 3 FEB 2022
- very present + present: = more clear than being in a format.

The 'control' of listening experience; impeding of the text; important to be through a group rather
- you need to see the work; rather than a computer to make the work accessible
- beginning and end?

grinding
Saw it
more as
a scheduled
performance

could experience without the actual and still experience; yet gives more of a personal experience

VOICE OF MONOLITH
OR MONOCULTURE

control and display; pushing to think about display
-> feature; of the voice; allowed for some experiment

MONOCULTURE OF THE MIND

touching base & hoping something lifts off
MORE DESCRIPTION NEEDED? BE MORE EXPLICIT + MORE DETAIL!!
OR, AM I JUST SITTING IN BETWEEN IMPLICIT/EXPLICIT? ^{am in the in-between space}

STRUCTURING & SOLUTIONS - ATTACHMENT + CONTAINMENT

Both elements in site as the people in the large scale!
! worked elements; like a doll house.

ATTACHMENT

reversed. MONOPOLISING NOTION / BINARY

LISTEN
but
just
to
listen
to
the
system
just
to
listen

different ways of thinking about text:
liberal text and system text
what sort to read for things on the wall?

the wall is the performance;
structure or opposed to it

transcription pt.2

Felt hindered by the word about; to give an option and a choice of the
and; to give a note is very obscure; WISH WAS IN HEADPHONES ->
IN BETWEEN TOPICS / IN-BETWEEN KNOWING + NOT KNOWING.

TRAVERSING MANY TOPICS IN NOT
MUCH DETAIL - IS THIS PROBLEM OR
THE WORK ITSELF?

state of moving and moving through; need to move through here?
IS THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NEEDED?
Does my body need to be here?
Over

OUTCAST / CAST-OFF
the 'inherent vice' of monoculture is its shadow.

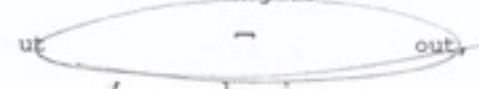
[SHOULD BE USING 'I'? HOW TO USE ANYTHING ELSE!]

reduction from structure -> thrown out from structure;
like in monoculture when a crop becomes infested.
note how the structures are returning to interdependency

Maybe; uncertainty here!!
contains t

in discussing Julia Kristeva's 'abjection'

force us to question our preconceptions?
BECOME MADE ABOUT PROCESS
object



capacity for holding together = crucial; a staple of the staple
The land
of the space; the live

Produce some
bits of stuff;
followed
fixed
staples
system
- against
system
- Tenacity
Strange
in jobs of
handmade
-> dependent
perhaps of
the
-> what's the
work?
-> the work?

movement on a separate plane
'BUEBUE' -> 'wondering what light to the inkling
a demand to keep up with the edges? a primary what does the
word fix in the production
-> lingering words
the work
-> close to stay with the work until the
word was produced.
-> the production

transcription pt.3

HAUSE; the voice is engaging; moved by the voice is story.

disparities,
 what's the
 relation

→ our expectation? do we privilege voice and then overcode the material;
 → a lecture-performance;
 gross so much so
 important

Started seeing lump everywhere;
 was only starting to

counted.
 function
 differently as

['gaps'; adjust
 looking at landscape;
 the space
 taking

→ internet
 personally about
 the landscape to think
 taking

Keeps my focus of what records;
 search to approach
 → internet

'not knowing' t
Knowledge production & meaning creation are
obsessed with pinning down, with lumping together disparate bodies
order to 'make sense' of, or rather, to impose digestible logic upon
them.
Barkun's idea of seeing and taking apart; seeing the lumps in the pieces
serves a fundamentally different purpose',



'disrupt' = removal to avoid
overcoming → **MONO**
culture

lumpen energies

WHAT WE HEAR INTO AND WHAT TO PLAY WITH.

SPACE HERE

let go of lump and let go of style and lump and what would happen?

ARCHIVES!!! MORE NEEDED!

LUMP Having the framework. Around the work;
the 'lump' is keeping it down; holding to; a dubben; hold onto
+ names and how we talk
about the units.

I never learned;
So many different voices -
not interested in the shapes
in the infrastructure; style line as /u
it is not from the space; started
venturing about maps; physics and
Peter Squam;
Henderson

┌ boxes

containment, energies & supporting structures

[spoken on 4 March 2022]

A pasteboard ┌ found in the attic of my mum's house relies upon corroded ⊖s (upon holes & lumps, in conjunction) in order to exist. It is not our ┌, we have lived in the house since 2009 & never encountered it. The 31.5 by 24 by 13 honey-toned edges are coming away from themselves, curling & peeling while the packaging tape's stick becomes unstuck [laying bare gaps once concealed]. The ┌ is contained by text of different registers; slick biro indentations, gritty charcoal gestures [only residual dust in parts], a mottled blue, black & red printed script coating 5 of the 6 sides. While powdery with age, the authoritative stamps still cling to an integrity ['CERTIFICATE OF BOX MAKER THIS BOX CONFORMS TO ALL'] - a jurisdiction held over the ┌'s papery terrain. But the corroded ⊖s still hold the most authority as they are a precondition, [a pre-existing structure] supporting the ┌'s form & usage [or expected use-value].

Just like ⊖s, ┌es facilitate lumping. ┌es [as objects & as images] fulfil their purpose [to be filled] via the lumping together disparate material - through containing matter. Despite being formally more definitive, the contents of a closed ┌ is more indefinite; like Schrödinger's ┌ perhaps, as the in-nards are both dead & alive - not something, not nothing, some lumpen non-thing. Lucy Razzall's exploration of ┌es touches upon how death is ┌ed up; the 'visceral reminder of mortality had to be contained, and hidden from sight [becoming] "a lumpe of filth, a ┌ of pallid putrefaction"'.²⁶ Concealing lumps within ┌es is maybe to // exclude from life that which is difficult to acknowledge. But it also could be to respect, or even to conserve - lumping together & ┌ing up not to rot, but to maintain, to delay degradation via segregation.

Alongside the ┌ found in my mum's attic were documents relating to the two previous owners of the house. I am reminded of Derrida's discussion of the Greek *arkheion* (the underpinning of 'archive') as the 'house, domicile, address' of the magistrates who oversaw/authorised the law; the archons were not only responsible for the physical maintenance of documents, but also their interpretation - the documents *lived* through them.²⁷

The documents in my mum's attic included death certificates.

Am I exhuming the previous owners? // Lifting up & airing out? Bill Brown, when discussing Michael Taus-sig's reading of Sylvia Plath's poems, questions, 'why does death have the capacity both to turn people into things and to bring inanimate objects to life?'.²⁸ I may never have known the previous owners, but I know of them via their authority documents; they exist for me, within/in-between these structures [persisting through the structures].

To be persisting, to be enduring [adjective].

²⁶ Lucy Razzall, *Boxes & Books in Early Modern England, Materiality, Metaphor, Containment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 211.

²⁷ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 2.

²⁸ Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory' in *The Object Reader*, ed. by Fiona Candlin and Raiford Guins (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 139-152, (p. 142).

The aim of a structure is to be enduring & to thus enable the contents to *endure* [verb] - an action, an occurrence. As Raymond Williams has noted, 'in its earliest English uses, from C15, *structure* was primarily a noun of process; the action of building'.²⁹ By the C18, however, structure, 'from its uses in building [and] anatomy [...] expressed something relatively fixed and permanent, even hard'.³⁰ The developed understanding of structures as harsh, or rigid has taken centuries; the slow onset of rigor mortis now seemingly complete, will secondary flaccidity take over? Will contained structures eventually ease up, loosen - be released & thus release that [or *those*] being held within? [could the \perp found in my mum's attic also come loose?]

Writing from containment [an institutional \perp], & reflecting upon [literal & metaphorical] prisons, // Huey P. Newton emphasised the elusive power of people; 'the sustaining force which reaches into and out of the prison. The walls, the bars, the guns and the guards can never encircle or hold down *the idea* of the people'.³¹ Through Newton's critique of mass incarceration & the oppressive structures which enforced [& continue to enforce] capitalist, racist exploitation, the notion that containment of a body does not equate containment of a 'force' comes to the fore. The Black Panther Party is said to have embraced a 'modus operandi of the lumpen' [an offshoot of Marx & Engels lumpen class narrative], a [supposedly] volatile, unstable lumpen lifestyle which contributed to the Party's demise.³² Is such 'lumpenism' [or 'lumphood'] the 'sustaining force' Newton refers to? Chris Booker acknowledges the potential of lumphood to not only overcome a structure/system, but to also overcome the bodies practicing, or using, it - positioning lumphood as an immensely disruptive power, idea, *energy*.

In the 1940s Wilhelm Reich's controversial, pseudoscientific 'discovery' of an omnipresent healing energy [known as Orgone energy] resulted in him building Orgone Accumulator \perp es for people to sit inside; Reich believed such \perp es would harness a universal life-force which could be used to treat cancerous lumps.³³ Olivia Laing uses Reich's \perp & its energy as a thread throughout her book on freedom, lamenting on how Reich 'longed to help people unlock the prison of their body, [however on the 20 March 1957, he] ended up locked in a prison cell himself' [10 years prior to Huey P. Newton's first conviction].³⁴ Reich [unlike Newton] died in prison, 'in a space not all that much bigger than the Orgone \perp itself'.³⁵ And yet despite the structural similarities, the prison epitomises 'surveillance, punishment // and sensory deprivation', rather than the radical healing energy Reich was so taken by. Laing questions whether there is 'any truth in the pervasive belief that confine-

²⁹ Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, (London: Fontana Press, 1976), p. 301.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 303.

³¹ Huey P. Newton 'Prison, Where Is Thy Victory', in *If They Come in the Morning: Voices of Resistance* ed. by Angela Davis (London: Verso, 2016), pp. 60-64 (p. 62).

³² Chris Booker, 'Lumpenization: A critical error of The Black Panther Party', in *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered* ed. by Charles E. Jones (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2005), pp. 337-362 (p. 338).

³³ Thomas Antonic, 'Genius and Genitality: William S. Burroughs Reading Wilhelm Reich', *Humanities*, 8.2 (2019), 1-14 (p. 2) <<https://doi.org/10.3390/h8020101>>.

³⁴ Olivia Laing, *Everybody, A Book About Freedom*, (London: Picador, 2021) p. 199.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p.199, 236.

ment can serve [...] as a space of transformation.³⁶ Beyond the use of ‘transformation’ in reference to the fallacy of prisoner ‘rehabilitation’ [which Newton successfully negates in 3 pages], ‘transformation’ might also infer a shifting of energy, a shift of perspective.

Philip K. Dick’s fictional ‘empathy \perp ’ provides a ‘physical merging with Wilbur Mer-*cer*’ for each user.³⁷ The empathy \perp es allow people to practice Mer-*cer*-ism [a sham pseudo-religion], the aim of which is simply to persist, to endure, together. Through grasping the empathy \perp , a transformation of one body into a community of bodies takes place [all ascending a hill & being wounded in unison]. Regardless of the experience being an illusion/apparition [& despite Mer-*cer* being uncovered as an actor rather than an IRL Martyr-cum-Christ-figure] the literal fusion of perspective, of bodies, of energies, remained to be a charged, fervent outpouring. The \perp is described as ‘an extension of your body; it’s the way you touch other humans, it’s the way you stop being alone.’³⁸ There is irony, perhaps, in how a container enables a person to move beyond self-containment, to tap into something universal [like Newton’s *force*, or Reich’s *energy*], to extend outwards & reach others [note that I’m not overlooking the analogy that could be made with iPhones or Chromebooks, I just don’t want tim cook or larry page to take up // any more space].

While the peddling of Mer-*cer*’s fraudulent theology could be interpreted as a governmental strategy of distraction, of quelling sedition, the empathy \perp , nonetheless, does provide immediate emotional relief for Dick’s isolated characters. The immense emotional complicity of these \perp es might mean that the ‘ \perp as structure’ thus becomes ‘ \perp as support structure’.

Does this ‘support’ work both ways? Continuing to define ‘structure’, Williams explains how ‘one influential tendency sees not human beings living in and *through* structures, but structures living in and *through* human beings’.³⁹ [Is there an interdependence of structure & structured, container & contents?] // Without something to structure [verb], does the structure [noun] continue to exist? Is the removal of that which is being contained, also, in turn, a removal of the structure’s purpose/function, & thus its existence as a structure? Céline Con-dor-elli speaks of proximity & reliance as fundamentals of support structures, further suggesting that ‘supporting structures are added onto existing dynamics, in order to supplement them’.⁴⁰ Even Michael Craig-Martin, when reflecting upon the use of \perp es within his practice, considers how the \perp has ‘a strong assertive character, highly receptive to the introduction of simple, discrete ideas [but is also] familiar, ordinary.’⁴¹ Assertive yet receptive, structures & supporting structures produce space, hold space, but are also built within the space produced by existing ideas. Structures are a response to apriori principles or intentions, & thus they can easily break down when ideals shift, or when energies build [could the authority of Donald Judd’s monolithic \perp be flattened, or permeated?]. Certainly the \perp es of Dick,

³⁶ Ibid, p. 202.

³⁷ Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, (London: Gateway, 2007), p. 21-2.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 62.

³⁹ Williams, *Keywords*, p. 305.

⁴⁰ Céline Condorelli, *Support Structures* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2009), p. 28.

⁴¹ Michael Craig-Martin, *On Being An Artist* (London: Art Books Publishing, 2015), p. 106.

Reich & Newton were soaked in the energies seeping *through* them - empathy, healing, revolution each passing through the ⊥ structure.

On a formal note, the ⊃s pass through the ⊥ found in my mum's attic, but they are also holding on. The ⊃s support the ⊥, at the expense of their own material integrity; deteriorating but clinging, the proximity is too close. They could never truly be wrenched apart, the material constitution is murky with intimacy. The corroded ⊃s are juicy & thick, spreading into [giving themselves over to] the rigid pasteboard, each ⊃ sinking further into the ⊥ structure [immersed in time]. In speaking of Andy Warhol's time capsules, Anna Pol-etti believes that 'cardboard ⊥es favour storing over storying'.⁴² A deeper understanding of material history undermines this & I'm sure every OOO critic, archivist or new materialist cringes at the suggestion that objects do not hold narratives. Certainly the ⊥ found in my mum's attic is a testimony [an article of sorts], to be read. [I mean this in an expansive sense, but also literally, given its printed text]. The stamps adorning the ⊥ announce 'GLOMMA PAP-&PAPIR SARPSBORG NORWAY', declaring an origin [a beginning]. Glomma Papp (a Norwegian 'wave cardboard specialist in packaging') moved production to Sarpsborg between the years of 1952-54, during which the 'name was changed to Glomma Pap & Papir'.⁴³ The previous owners of my mum's house [as suggested by the documents found in the attic] brought the house 1953, so this is a very fitting narrative; you can assume the ⊥ was used for packing up their belongings, used for transporting & relocating.

And now, through holding on tight to their death certificates, the ⊥ continues to transport the previous owners forward once again, to reach me [& you]. It is maybe 'through [the documents, the ⊥, this lecture-performance & me, that] the phantom[s] continue[s] to speak'.⁴⁴ It is clear that while ⊥es may contain, // conceal, conglomerate matter [& bodies], the force of that matter [& those bodies] can still be felt [or will be felt] by someone [at some point] - *through* the structure. But for me [for now], I am still within this structure [this document-as-support-structure] & I cannot find my way out. Am I seeping further in [like the ⊥'s ⊃s?] Clinging on like the ⊃s I refuse[d] to omit?

⁴² Anna Poletti, 'The Implied Rummager: Reading Intimate Interiors in Andy Warhol's Time Capsules', *Life Writing*, 17.4 (2020), 455-467 (p. 456) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14484528.2020.1768874>>.

⁴³ 'History', *Glomma Papp AS* <<https://glommapapp.no/om-oss/historie/>> [Accessed 19 October 2021].

⁴⁴ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 62.

transcription

4/3/2022

SUE TOMPKINS - NERVOUS BUT SELF ASSURED
'transient sculpture, words hovering in the air like physical things,
then swept aside GIVING WEIGHT TO WORDS
'SMALL UTTERANCE ASSUMES SCALE'
REPLACE ALL WORD 'STAPLE' W/ []

CONSIDER PACE OF SPEAKING } a long listening experience
+ DIFFERENT REGISTERS } [3 variations] - break up into 3 only.

[PASTORATED, GIVE MORE DETAIL]

2009 &

PUT DESCRIPTION HERE!! introduce the box as though
speaking in dialogue with it

expectation

expected value

as-in

disparate material

disparate material

A closed functions differently to an open yet
both can be equally as menacing (as Brad Pitt found out when presented with
Gwyneth Paltrow's head all ed up in that film & I still don't know if I found
the suspense or the outcome more unnerving).

the contents of

offers

indefinite

in terms of its contents;

'DEATH'; energy in death? residual energy?
archives rely on death

HOUSE = ARCHIVE (David's 'archive fever': the house as the foundation
for archive - UNPACKING / PROTECTING /

man's attic war

= ARCHIVING

like
RUCCH;
death
new life

I exhuming

the
archives
lived

To persist; A CENTRAL COMPONENT
To be persisting, to be enduring (adjective).

*the two periods connect THROUGH
these
people,
lived
on
via their
influence

making
history

C15,

physiology and botany,

Williams, Keywords, 1810

transcription pt.2

an ordering of violence; like if an expanse of land [post-marcoterra/clearcutting] was allowed to let loose and regain post-sundural life; no longer site of war -> spreading and keeping.

? Will contained structures eventually ease up, loosen - be released, ~~not~~ end, as such, also
of this... could the box come loose too? >> like my box/the box found in the attic

Encouraging about this, being one in a row.
Transformation: Ca. key for landscape / support theory within philosophy

is it not all my voice? [MORE OF MY VOICE] - maybe more uncertainty? more questioning? } Bring it back to one and oney studies practice

The last nail in the coffin - the last staple in the box = finalized, ultimate form??

moving toward death; the going up of death.

a shift perspective. ~~provides its users with a~~ ~~accompanying mental spiritual identification~~

'Amputation: A Black Feather Party' (.338).

change to ibid? ironic as the box [as a model/shrine] is a lumping mechanism? } Odd that many artists that make use of boxes actually reject classification/being lumped into a movement - i.e. Joseph Cornell, Martin Creed -> BOTH REJECT CLASSIFICATION.

transcription pt.3

the power of energies to produce such authentic experience? the emotions cannot be reduced. a flooding of feeling; may be a synthetic structure, but

ascending

to the wellbeing of many of Dick's characters.

change of / change of or here?

A CHANGE (FUNCTIONAL) OUTPOURING!!!

But I AM GIVING SPACE TO? WHAT? CUT THIS?

Not needed here?

And so, is

an interdependence of some interrelated mutuality structure (noun)

[verb],

has 'a strong asserting character, I

specifice of the box; it almost holds an aura? It is a support system which is conditional for the keeps existence.

10 Dick, Do Androids Dream Electric Sheep?, 1966, p. 62.

ceramically (100 BOXES)

Christo "wrapped box", 1966 - cardboard box wrapped in paper, twine and label sent to people; if the box was opened they found a note informing them that they had destroyed the artwork

OPENING/UNDOING THE BOX, DESTROYS THE BOX

transcription pt.4

don't shy away from the uncertainty/questioning
- the use of questions = places me in the work, entwined with practice

point where I don't think they
 full of time. In
 even archaeologist, conservator,
 The markings upon (language-based, printed
 in red & blue ink, scrawled in charcoal & peal allow
 MORE DISCUSSION TO TAKE
 REMEMBERING OF SECTION
 MORE DETAIL + DISCRIMINATION NEEDED FOR THE PHYSICAL BOX
 MORE MEANING

can still be felt [or will be felt] by someone [at some point] -

END!!
 [Postscript to follow here?]
 - to hold;
 PRECURSOR
 POSTSCRIPT
 not to conclude
 but to land a base - a foundation,
 a rooting [which can be picked up again]
 began: 'Speaking about speaking'
 'writing about [ending] writing?'
 PART OF THE DOCUMENT'S EXPANDING SUPPORT STRUCTURE?
 WHY AM I CLINGING ON?
 just like the 17s I repud to omit from the structure?

THIS DOCUMENT IS A 'SUPPORTING STRUCTURE' FOR LUMPERN, MULCHY THOUGHTS
 what does this structure mean?
 where will this structure take me?
 WHY MULCHY?
 WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES IT ENABLE?
 FROM THE STRUCTURE?

PASSING THROUGH [OR AT LEAST TRYING TO]

The breaking down of matter, the production of heat and energy, the transformation of the stuff of life - Mulch is MY MUM'S GARDENS -

" : / : : () ; - (.) < ||
 " ' : : : < || . / - / > :
 MULCH IS LUMPERN LIFE-FORCE.

a postscript, a note on //

passing through

this 4th part is not to be spoken [but naturally i will write as i speak]. does this therefore not constitute a lecture-performance, as it lacks the performative/lecturing mode? [or, does it push further down into the lumpen in-between-ness of the mode, becoming entrenched within the non-genre?]

on 10 November 2021 i began by speaking a little about speaking & now i am writing a little about [trying to stop] writing

i will not clarify or singularise, because isn't 'shedding light upon' the same as holding material under a spotlight until it melts into something which fits a prescribed narrative? i don't have a prescribed narrative [or a spotlight?], only material structures to hold / be held by / to pass through, & to pass on-

-passing over [like the previous owners of the \sqcup & its \sqcap s], like mulch passing over a plot of land.

[i've thought of 'mulch' endlessly throughout writing/speaking this, because it IS potentiality, it IS energy]. mulch is the very stuff of life decomposing [breaking down], letting go of singularised form/structure so that it may spread & support the growth of new forms/structures - without knowing what those structures might be

maybe i need to let go of this [document] structure, maybe this is the mulchy 'breaking down' in action

with me actively not knowing what this might grow into, or give life to -

[i said before that i might say thank you (but i'm not ready yet)]

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