RADICAL STRUCTURE:2

David Toop

The Dismemberment Routine/Texts/Works

The Lizard is Cut into Nine Transformations

When the lizard is cut into nine segments then the parts will fail to coalesce. Thus posited, the destruction of the creature is irrespective of context to an impermissible degree — our animal must be cut into nine 'transformations.' Such vicissitudes are not subject to the terminal. On the contrary, we are dealing with the endless transformational processes which overshadow the triviality of mass. We, as humans, are creatures with hands to grasp. We exist in a medium of maximal visibility. Therefore, we feel and see 'things'; spaces to be filled; static and volitional masses in occupation of such spaces. Our language is, in consequence, a reification of process itself. Our appreciation of solids and quasi-solids is of a relatively high order and, indeed, imposes itself upon perception, accounting and expression to the degree that it masquerades as a cosmology.

It will be apparent, though, to even the most casual observer that such a cosmology cannot prove adequate where it is necessary to enter the realm of metaphor to assimilate the non-object/the intangible/the event. To reverse the perspective for a moment, Gregory Bateson states (Bateson, 1966): 'I personally do not believe that the dolphins have anything that a human linguist would call a "Language". I do not think that any animal without hands would be stupid enough to arrive at so outlandish a mode of communication. To use a sytax and category system appropriate for the discussion of things that can be handled, while really discussing the patterns and contingencies of relations, is fantastic.' Bateson's observation concerning environmental factors as a determinant in communication and, presumably, conceptualisation stems from his perception of dolphin vocalisation in all its elaboration, subsuming semiotic systems — for example kinesics — common to many terrestrial creatures. A portion of the dolphin's vocalisation functions as the fast-feedback signalling known as echo-location, a means of measuring relative proximity with time.

We have the factor of time as an all-embracing principle and it is in these terms that current art-forms display a traumatic break with the received tradition. The significance of such a shift within the field of music is pronounced. As the perfect time-based medium, music has been betrayed and stands as an example of the seemingly impossible feat of transmuting process into object. The consequences are evident in the spectacle of music as a high-entropy consumable. It is remarkable, then, that the consequences are repeatedly vilified where the root factor is ignored or misunderstood. Despite the pressure exerted upon sound-workers by a space-based, object-oriented ideology there are nevertheless pockets of resistance.

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A consistent application of *process* will be subject to eventstructural principles and will inevitably fail to generate 'Form' — as used by music theorists, historians, etc. 'Form' in this sense thus becomes irrelevant to improvisation —

only of consequence to the object-builders — and is replaced by 'radical structure.' As Evan Parker wrote: 'Music criticism often refers to the "architecture" of a work. On this analogy I should like to state that I'm interested in snelter more than monument.' We can be sure that the doctrines of the 'mental furniture industry' will ensure that structure will not be perceived in general except in this gross aspect of 'form.' Static, developmental, mythical and narrative form will continue to hold sway within the space-based milieu.

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All sonic phenomena signify on a proxemic level to some degree — music, speech, paralanguage, animal vocalisation, audible energy loss from machines, meteorological sounds, etc, all occupy social space — a term devised, as far as I know, by Ragnar Johnson (Johnson, 1975). To avoid creating a duality, it should be stressed that there is no need to use terminology pertaining to space since we are dealing with relationship. It is the context and structure of such sonic phenomena which determine their precise significance for social relationship.

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The Leaf-Hole Cricket (Oecanthus brevicauda) chews a pear-shaped hole near the centre of a leaf, puts its body through the hole, rests its forelegs on the surface of the leaf and scrapes its elytra, thus increasing the amplitude of its song. The Mole Cricket (Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa) digs a loudspeaker-like burrow then sits, head first, in its burrow and stridulates, thus increasing the amplitude of its song. The Howler Monkey (Alouatta palliata, etc) has greatly enlarged hyoid bones which form a resonating chamber in its throat, thus increasing the amplitude of its song.

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the mouth cavity as resonator/openclosemouth

stones were struck rubbed together using

a vessel of water as resonator/immerse the stones

flutes were dipped in water vessels and air vessels.

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Technology is process, of course, and symbolic process at that. The literature tells us that it was not unknown for African drums and New Guinea flutes to be fed. Nor is this unknown in contemporary American music (Young, 1960).
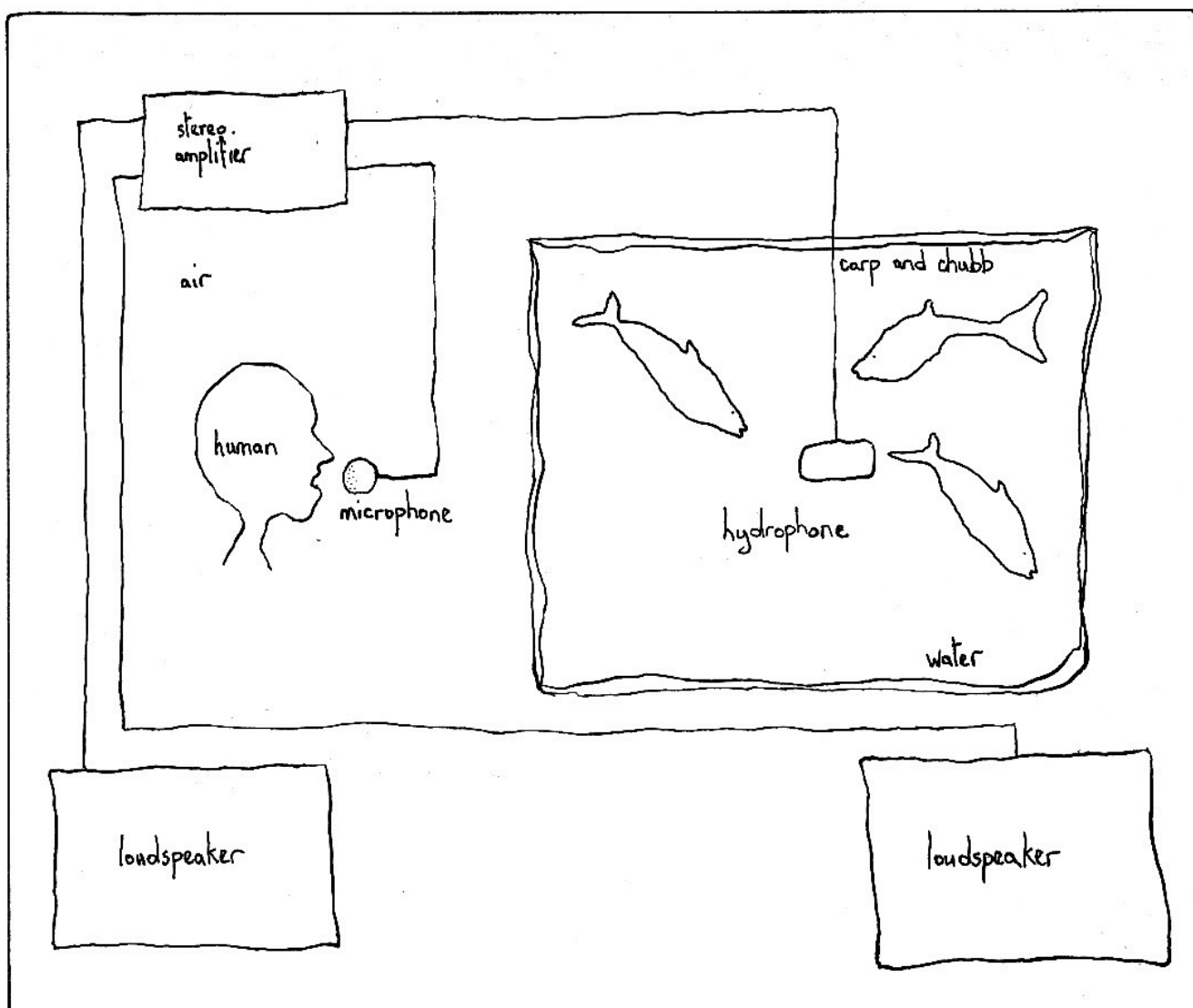
David Toop *The Dismemberment Routing*

The business of encoding/decoding is the consensus problem with radical structuring, and that is only to say that the 'message' is not addressed to anybody in particular but anticipates 'context as half the work.' It is both ethno/anthropocentric to deny this music: if our ears are sufficiently attuned to alien communications then our listening experience of alien messages is open and searching. Music as we know it, has been encoded toward semi-hermetic social groupings — groupings created and sustained by the negative attitudes generated by space-based derived fundamentals. With a time-based language we are ecologically motivated.

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Certain species of bird (*ie* shrikes) are famous for their alternate duetting in which male and female sing an interlocking series of different notes. Observations have been made of one partner singing the whole song by itself if the partner is either temporarily or permanently absent. Clear examples are found in Nigeria, Ethiopia and South Africa, of music existing as a 'product' of social relationship (naturally, it is not a product until entered into a retrieval system). The music I have in mind is the flute ensemble music of these areas, in which players contribute equally to a cyclic melody. Each flute has only one or two notes and the melody thus necessitates rhythmic sequence from all the players. One way in which this music remains a *social* music, *ie* a proxemic and context-bound process, is documented by Samual Akpabot in his treatment of the Kara flute ensemble of the Birom people of Northern Nigeria (Akpabot, 1975). Included in the notation of such an

ensemble performance:
Player 1 stops to do a little dance
Player 2 stops to blow his nose.
Player 3 stops to urinate and spit
Player 4 stops to laugh at 3 and chat with the crowd
Player 3　stop to argue
Player 4
Player 5/drummer/ stops to tune his drum.

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