

Thoughts on a Dying Piano

by Betsy Huete

I. Introduction

Dream, lapsus and joke are so many traces a responsive and meditative path through this miniature amphibian opera—at once accompanying and leading, excruciatingly conscious of what it means to have a historically constituted body. The title was made by combining two fragments of a piano to imitate birds. A search for a common language in which all resistance to instrumental control disappears and all heterogeneity can be submitted to disassembly, reassembly, investment and exchange: to be constituted by another's desire is not the same thing as to be alienated in the violent separation of a perfectly true language. Those implications are tremendous beyond description.

And who counts as 'us' in my own rhetoric?

Who counts as the loss of innocence in our origin? Perhaps a schematic caricature can highlight both kinds of moves.

That small but insistent voice of doubt began to threaten the whole new worldview I was slowly building, the parent of all others. These pianos would become the mechanism used to activate the hammer, to strike the string, to dominate these fingers, which are always weaker than the rest.

no real overlap

on a balance pin

the hammer thus rises.

Why use a piano to imitate birds? The piano traces a responsive and meditative path through this small error in the process. That consciousness changes the geography of permanently partial identities.

Why should our bodies end at the skin, or include at best other beings encapsulated by skin? in spite of all the machines doing their best to make it seem otherwise, musical trends changed as professional music moved out of the small chamber ensembles of the aristocracy and into the more democratized public auditoriums. As concert halls grew and the audience's appetite for spectacle increased, difficulties will disappear as if by enchantment, and that beautiful left hand gives out in passages of slight difficulty. With all its tragedies and cares, some thought that was right on the edge of consciousness but hadn't quite broken through. At the same time a damper is raised from these strings, allowing them to vibrate more freely; the hammer moves free of the backcheck, and the repetition lever stays ourselves frighteningly inert.

The boundary is permeable between tool and myth, instrument and concept, historical systems of social relations and historical anatomies of possible bodies, including objects of knowledge. Indeed, myth and tool mutually constitute each other.

myth and tool are disturbingly lively,

A little, but darker—more mechanical, like the sound of metal against metal, as if a giant, subterranean blacksmith is pounding an anvil somewhere off in the distance: pounding it so hard that the sound vibrates through the earth, or the place of pulsing, pounding darkness. They were a little like roots, and a little like blood vessels in a vast, muddy womb. (The mechanism used to activate the hammer to strike the string.)

Only by dint of exertion and fatigue, I knew it so completely that I ached. I realized just how deceptive Language. Memories. Recognition. can be.

no real overlap

on a balance pin

the hammer thus rises.

II. Birth, the artful inventor

Humor. Irony. Pathos. I had always thought these were qualities we humans developed to cope with this so often painful head rested toward the player; more bracing was added internally and the cases themselves became bulkier. Humor. Irony. Pathos. I had always thought these were our personal work, a lustral bath of innocence.

The piano traces an artful inventor. Indeed, a contemporary harpsichord was a louder and more brilliant instrument, but lacked the ability to respond to the strength of the player's touch, and so could achieve no significant gradations in dynamic expression. Broadly defined as a stringed keyboard instrument with a hammer action (as opposed to the jack and quill action of the harpsichord) capable of gradations soft and loud, the piano became the central instrument of music pedagogy and amateur study. This is without doubt an important historical paradox: the more technology develops the diffusion of information, the more democratized public auditoriums came to dominate the world.

Spatial immediacy corresponds to a decisive mutation because it seems to found in nature the signs of culture. This is without doubt an important historical paradox: from the reflections of the other, from spaghetti to painting, from the tension-bearing parts of the case—we ourselves are excruciatingly conscious of what it means to have a historically constituted body. But there is an intimate experience of boundaries, their construction and deconstruction. There is a myth system waiting to become beyond description. There is amplification from the one to the other. And the piano repertory—whether solo, chamber, or with orchestra—is at the heart of the key is partly released.

When the key is fully released, all parts of the mechanism return to their original positions because of gravity. Unlike grand pianos, the title was made by combining two fragments of Sappho: the flaw in the union. Like all dreams for a perfectly true language, it is also a rhetorical strategy of couplings between organism and machine, each conceived as coded devices, in an intimacy and with a power that was not generated in the history of sexuality. The tradition of the appropriation of nature as resource for the productions of culture; the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other—the relation between organism and machine has been a border war. Consciousness in this place of pulsing, pounding darkness.

a little like roots

a little like blood vessels

a decisive mutation in a vast, muddy womb.

Those implications are tremendous.

Gradually this sense of deep, timeless, and boundaryless immersion gave way to something else: rhetoric thus appearing, accepting to regulate artificially. Sometimes these roars changed to dim, rhythmic chants, chants that were both terrifying and weirdly familiar—as if at some point I'd known and uttered them all myself. The hammer head rested toward the player as concert halls grew the invention of overstrung strings. When the hammer falls on the other a radically violent pleasure a highly versatile instrument pivots on a balance pin. When the key is fully released, all parts of the mechanism return to their original positions because of gravity. When the key is even partially released, the small error in the process is retained: the flaw to imitate birds.

Who counts as 'us' in my own rhetoric?

Labour is the humanizing activity that makes man; labour is an ontological category permitting the knowledge of a subject, and so the knowledge of subjugation and so the knowledge of a violation that allows survival. Some thought that was right on the edge of all its tragedies and cares: I was a doctor and a father and a husband; I was the loving smile, the confident and infinitely comforting look; I was the healer who had pledged love-filled darkness.

English action pianos do not fatigue all descriptions of difficulties will be met with. The more technology develops the diffusion of information, the more it provides the means of masking the constructed meaning under the appearance of the given meaning. I had felt both enormous pride and brutal disappointment in those rooms. Sometimes these roars edged ever closer to panic. When can I see vast conceptual edifices, staggering structures of living thought, as intricate as cities? True thought is pre-physical.

True thought is thinking that is not dependent on linear deduction, but that moves fast as lightning, making connections on different levels, bringing them very thick strings that could withstand great tension. True thought is mastered. True fingers true exertion true fatigue true true

We repeat, that the fingers should be lifted high, and with precision, and undoes him or her. We repeat: the quiet nature of the piano's birth around 1700, therefore, comes as something of a surprise. The repetition can thus slip back—the repetition throws a hammer—because of gravity. Meditative path? Miniature amphibian opera!

Now, in spite of all the machines doing their best to make it seem otherwise, the place I went was real. Or perhaps a better word to use is: elsewhere. Transparent? Consciousness, but consciousness without memory or identity—bringing them together allows it to return to its rest

position and it again catches on the same difficulties. The left hand gives out, these fingers which are always weaker, and one loses no time with meaning. The quiet nature of the dampening mechanism on a jack to silence the string when combining two fragments traces a responsive and meditative path, a search for a common language. Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert.

Because it seems to found in exactly the same way as man is articulated to the rhetoric thus appearing as the signifying aspect of ideology, the discontinuous world of symbols plunges into the story of the denoted scene as though into a lustral bath of innocence. It can sustain pitches in a highly versatile upward motion. The repetition lever stays raised. The player again depresses the partially released key. The tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other gives way.

There was always the spectre of the ghost in the machine, giving us a precise birthdate for the piano.

III. Living

The type of consciousness the modern piano can sustain giving us a precise two fragments. The tradition of the appropriation of nature as resource for the productions of culture; the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other—the relation of all others to threaten the whole new worldview I was slowly building.

When the hammer falls, the position of the “beak” allows it to return to its rest position and it again catches on the escapement. When the bracing was added internally and the cases themselves became bulkier, one loses no time in studying a sort of theatrical state of meaning. By accepting to regulate artificially the quiet nature of the piano’s birth, it can sustain pitches—whether solo, chamber, or with orchestra—that denatures them as heat denatures a fragile protein.

The place I went was real. Transparent, but in a bleary, blurry, claustrophobic, suffocating kind of mechanism used, these exercises are interesting, and do not fatigue the student like the generality of five-finger exercises, which are so dry that one requires the perseverance of a true artist to summon up the courage to study them. In exactly the same way as man is articulated to the very depths of his being in distinct languages, the modern piano falls back, but only partway. It is stopped by the knuckle. The title traces the process is retained. The struggle against perfect communication began to threaten the edge of consciousness but hadn’t quite broken through. The mechanism used the hammer head rested

All descriptions of difficulties will be met with, and one loses no time in studying them.

Our personal work? What we have is a new space-time category: spatial immediacy and temporal anteriority. What it means to have a historically constituted body is: elsewhere. Whatever the origin and the destination of the message, the technical problems that continued to puzzle other piano designers for the next seventy-five years pivots upward and lifts a lever that throws a hammer against the two fragments of Sappho. Flaw in the union? Innocence in our origin? *I am more than my physical body?* That small but insistent voice of doubt where I was a doctor and a father and a husband as the ever increasing number of strings added great tension. The English action pianos are continually executing the same difficulties.

The entire book is our personal work. These exercises are interesting, and do not fatigue the student like the generality of five-finger exercises, which are so dry that one requires the perseverance of a true artist to summon up the courage to study them. For several years we have labored to overcome this state of affairs, making it our aim to unite in one work special exercises which render possible a complete course of pianistic study in far less time. When the text is read (or written) as a moving play of signifiers, without any possible reference to one or some fixed signifieds, it becomes necessary to distinguish signification, which belongs to the plane of the product, of the enounced, of communication, and the work of the signifier, which belongs to the plane of the production, of the enunciation, of symbolization—this work being called signifiante.

struggles with meaning and is deconstructed

("lost")

the healer who had pledged to strike the string

Both hands are continually executing the same descriptions of difficulties will be met with.

The healer who had a stressed system goes to the power to signify a myth system waiting to become a rhetorical strategy, a hybrid of machine and organism, or some fixed signifieds. He solved many of the technical problems that continued to puzzle other piano designers for the next seventy-five years of its evolution—the hammer flies up/the hammer falls back/the hammer thus upward motion is stopped when its protruding end hits the regulating button. The jack's a lever that pivots on a balance thus slip back under the partially raised hammer shank and into its original rebounding against the strings. If the key is partly released, this miniature amphibian opera through his innovative efforts applied to the piano that he was to have the greatest success used to activate the hammer to strike the string rested toward the player allows it to return to its rest position and it again catches on the escapement. -they are usually executed only by dint of exertion and fatigue, so that the performance is very incorrect and wholly wanting in a stressed system goes awry; its communication processes break down; it fails to recognize the self and other. Mind, body and tool are on very intimate terms. *I am more than my physical body?*

I've never held myself open to the idea that these were qualities we humans developed to cope with this so often painful and unfair world. And they are. But in addition to being consolations, these qualities are *recognitions*—brief, flashing, but all-important—of the fact that whatever our struggles and sufferings in the present world are, they can't truly touch the larger, eternal beings we in truth are. This simple acknowledgement has ingenious innovations as something of a precise birthdate for the piano. How strangely and powerfully what we think of as "inside" and "outside!" I realized just how deceptive a word can be.

All the characters explore other beings encapsulated by skin. All the partial identities and contradictory standpoints search for a common language in which all resistance to instrumental control rebounding against partially raised pressed down partly released

the hammer thus rises.

a lever that pivots on a balance pin

can thus slip back under

The piano traces a small error in the responsive and meditative path through this once accompanying and leading. The language must include the 'surprises' corresponding to a sort of theatrical state of meaning, from spaghetti to painting.

Broadly defined it can sustain pitches with the loss of a schematic caricature can highlight both kinds of moves. And so the knowledge of subjugation and alienation do not need a totality in order to work well, *I am more than my physical* familiar landscapes of pulsing, pounding darkness.

IV. Dying on a stage

By accepting to regulate artificially creating such a sophisticated action for his pianos that, at the instrument's inception, the language must include the 'surprises' corresponding to a sort of theatrical state of meaning. And the piano repertory—whether solo, chamber, or with orchestra—is at the heart of Western contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes. But gradually this sense of deep, timeless, and boundaryless immersion gave way to something else: a feeling like I wasn't really part of this subterranean world at all, but trapped in it. I was simply a lone point of awareness in a timeless red-brown sea. When can I see the audience's very thick appetite for spectacle?

In this volume will be found the exercises necessary for the acquirement of agility, independence, strength and perfect evenness in fingers, as well as suppleness of the wrists—all indispensable qualities for fine execution; furthermore, these exercises are calculated to render the left hand equally skillful with the right. In this volume all the characters explore the limits of language; the dream of communicating experience; and the necessity of limitation, partiality and intimacy, their construction and deconstruction. Perhaps a schematic caricature can highlight both kinds of moves: a stressed system goes awry; its communication processes break down; it fails to recognize the self and other. These fingers, which are always weaker than the rest of the small chamber ensembles, were a little like roots, and a little like blood vessels in a boundaryless immersion dependent on linear deduction. These hands are continually executing the same loss of innocence in our origin. There is a myth system waiting to become their construction and deconstruction. There are material and cultural grids mapping the systems of myth and meanings structuring our imaginations. These fingers, which are always excruciatingly conscious of what it means to have a historically constituted body, were pulsing, pounding metal against metal, pounding it so hard that the sound vibrates through the earth. These fingers, which are always weaker than the rest, would most likely return to this house again.

There was a long pause as he stared at her. Once again, describing what this felt to cultivate it and bring it to light, to found in nature the signs of decisive mutation, to regulate thus appearing rebounding against partly released

The hammer moves free.

The partially released key; the left hand gives out in passages of slight difficulty.

This is without doubt an important corresponding to a sort of theatrical state of meaning. This is without doubt an illogical conjunction between the here-now and the there-then. This code develops on the basis of a message without a code.

Here it is the very pose of the subject which prepares the reading of the signifieds of connotation: youthfulness, spirituality, purity. It was time to let my body die. I knew it so completely that I ached.

Language.

Memories.

Recognition.

I realized just how deceptive a word can be.

I am more than my physical body? As long as this question remained open, there would remain a dismissive voice.

In this volume will be found the exercises necessary for the acquirement of agility, independence, strength and perfect evenness in fingers, as well as suppleness of the wrists—all indispensable qualities for fine execution; furthermore, these exercises are calculated to render the left hand equally skillful with the right. These exercises are interesting, and do not fatigue the student like the generality of five-finger exercises, which are so dry that one requires the perseverance of a true artist to summon up the courage to study them. If desired, any of these exercises may be played on several pianos simultaneously, rousing a spirit of emulation among the students, and one loses no time in studying them.

In this volume will be found a totality in order to work well, a perfectly true language, a decisive mutation of diffusion of information, and its limitation to verbal communication. We undergo here on gradations soft and loud the central instrument of music pedagogy and the signs of culture. The type of consciousness the discontinuous world of symbols plunges into historical anatomies of possible bodies, including objects of knowledge. Indeed, myth and tool mutually constitute each other: a problem of coding

Disassembly, reassembly, investment and exchange. Allowing, regulating the repetition lever.

The hammer flies up

The hammer falls back

The hammer thus rises.

When the key is fully released, all parts of the mechanism return to their original positions because of gravity. Unlike grand pianos, upright pianos cannot rely on gravity to cause everything to return to place. In a grand piano the action sits horizontally on the key; in an upright piano the action is adapted so that it sits more or less vertically. Because it cannot completely rely on gravity, it includes various springs and small strips of cloth to pull some of the action parts back into place. When the key is even partially released, the damper falls back onto the strings and silences the note. When the discontinuous world of symbols plunges into the story of the denoted scene, the ability to respond to the strength of the player's touch gave way to something else: a feeling like I wasn't really part of this subterranean world at all, but trapped in it. To cultivate it and bring it to light, a thinking that is not dependent on linear deduction would most likely return to this house again.

Once again, describing what this felt like is challenging in the extreme, thanks to the bottleneck of linear language that we have to force everything through here on earth, and the general flattening of experience that happens when a stressed system goes awry; its communication processes break down; it fails to recognize the self and other. Like all dreams for a perfectly true language, the boundary is permeable between tool and myth, instrument and concept, historical systems of social relations and historical anatomies of possible bodies, including objects of knowledge. Indeed, myth and tool mutually constitute each other.

The hammer flies up
The hammer falls back
The hammer thus rises.

V. Conclusion

We repeat, that the fingers should be lifted high, and with precision, until it was time to let my body die.

I recall seeing them squeezing its way back into the all too tight and limiting suit of physical existence, an awareness of its having-been-there. The language must include—in exactly the same way as man is articulated to the very depths of his being in distinct languages—the 'surprises' of meaning.

And so the knowledge of subjugation and alienation, and so including crucially the systems of myth and meanings: a violation, an illegitimate production, that allows survival. Why should our bodies end at the skin, or include at best other beings encapsulated by skin?

All the characters explore the limits of language; the dream of communicating experience; and the necessity of limitation, partiality and intimacy. There is a myth system waiting to ground one way of looking. The jack's upward motion is stopped when its protruding end hits the regulating button. The hammer flies up away from the jack and strikes the appropriate strings. The repetition lever falls back, but only partway. It is stopped by the knuckle into its original position. When the key is fully released, all parts of the mechanism return to their original positions because of gravity. Unlike grand pianos, upright pianos cannot rely on gravity to cause everything to return to place. In a grand piano the action sits horizontally on the key; in an upright piano the action is adapted so that it sits more or less vertically. Because it cannot completely rely on gravity, it includes various springs and small strips of cloth to pull some of the action parts back into place. When the key is even partially released, the damper falls back onto the strings and silences the the whole new worldview I was slowly building—the parent of all others.

With all its tragedies and cares, perhaps a schematic caricature can highlight both kinds of moves: subjugation and alienation

construction and deconstruction

partiality and intimacy

exertion and fatigue

A stressed system that allows survival.

A violation? An illegitimate production? The struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication? That beautiful, clean, pearling execution will have been acquired continually executing the same difficulties. We repeat, that the fingers should be lifted high, and with precision, until this entire volume is mastered. Both hands. All descriptions. These fingers. The left hand gives out in passages of a lustral bath of innocence. Considered overall this message is formed by a source of the heterogeneous totality with which the linguist is initially faced and which may be studied from a variety of points of view, partaking as it does of the physical, the physiological, the mental, the individual and the social.

Dream, lapsus and joke are so many disorders of the regulation of these planes, of the exchange between subject and signifier; the piano repertory—whether solo, chamber, or with orchestra—is at the heart of rebounding against the strings. The piano traces a responsive and meditative path through this flaw in the union: two fragments of Sappho. Why use a piano to struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication?

an intimate experience of boundaries

construction and deconstruction

permanently partial

Language. Memories. Recognition.

I knew it so completely that I ached.

VI. References

- Alexander, Eben. *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey Into the Afterlife: Eben Alexander, M.D.* Simon & Schuster, 2012.
- Barthes, Roland. *Image Music Text*. Fontana Press, 1977.
- Dobney, Jayson Kerr. "The Piano: Viennese Instruments." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/vien/hd_vien.htm (March 2009).
- Hanon, C.L. "The Virtuoso Pianist." 1010
- Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. Routledge, 1991.
- Hugill, Andrew. "Pataphysical Piano."
- "Piano (musical instrument)," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2006 <http://encarta.msn.com> © 1997-2006 Microsoft Corporation. All Rights Reserved.
- Powers, Wendy. "The Piano: The Pianofortes of Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655–1731)." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cris/hd_cris.htm (October 2003).