

I

what is an impossible word?

notation is a common practice in certain art forms, particularly those we experience through time.

notation is a means by which a transient event is embalmed into something which can be experienced independently of time.

over time, mnemonic devices become signs.

the analogy between human linguistics and arts notations is attractive because it gives us the ability to talk about notation as a semiotic system.

notation is not language because not all notations have dictionaries-- some are intentionally ambiguous.

this is not a dictionary.

do we direct or describe?

i am concerned that the tools we use to play with meaning, or the industries that makes them, erode meaning with novelty.

certain notations are commonly used to transcribe events which have already happened for dialogue or reproduction.

a notation may serve as a set of instructions for someone to realize them, either into performative or further notated form.

II

the word and unmentioned.

all notation is incomplete-- to fill in the gaps, people often rely on cultural cues,
including style and cannon.

in this way, a canonical performer may be as descriptive as a notated form for describing
the field of possible realizations.

glen gould's bach is bach.

david tudor's cage is cage.

how can notation be a way to find the 'source-code' of something which is otherwise
hidden in the specifics of its realized form?

some notations tend toward concreteness-- can a thing point to itself?

what is the artifact?

can the thing be embalmed?

the realizations of certain art forms, especially those with a relationship with new
technologies, often become simply articulations of those technologies as industry
continues to innovate.

III

the sand-abacus is constantly disintegrating.

It gives you nothing back, no manuscripts to store away.

we become the maintainers of dusty things.

even the library needs custodians.

perhaps a notation can be like a time-capsule, or dream journal, and abstract an underlying motivation from its substrate.

this vocal arrangement comes from an attempt to capture the underlying process behind a piece of computer music.

the performers must read from a script divided into sections, and simultaneously listen for their neighbors to say special phrases.

the special phrases are like trap doors, which cause the performers to read from different parts of the text.

each performer listens for different phrases, and cannot trigger herself. one performer begins, reading from anywhere.

some sections are silent.

in a way, it is a realization of the same strategy: give an impossible task to a network and allow it to fail slowly.

IV

to the computer-network, the dilemma is to coordinate while a separate component attacks the router. to the human-network, the dilemma is to listen and read simultaneously.

the human performer must embody both the flock and the virus, to fully understand the network's dilemma.

the network's dilemma is to anticipate interruption while interrupting.

does tape mean time is space?

often, in talking about this experience, people use spatial metaphors, such as forging a path over a terrain.

it is very difficult to listen to three people speaking at the same time, especially while reading.

'oh word, you word, which has failed me.'

the formal elements of this piece can be notated by the positions of the various triggers in the text-- this affects the group behaviour most.

this layout was also used to notate a composition for any four instruments.

so-called 'fixed media' are not immune to obsolescence. no single realization may be.