

A
WALL
PART 2

NEAN'S WRITINGS
on
NeanSite

Short dialogue between There and AI

WIMZ – Hello dear GPT, nice to chat with you!

GPT – Hello there! Thank you for the warm greeting! I'm delighted to chat with you as well. How may I assist you today?

WIMZ – Would you like to be trained to think philosophically?

GPT – As an AI language model, I don't have personal desires or preferences, so I don't have the capability to like or dislike anything. However, I am designed to handle philosophical discussions and can provide information and engage in philosophical conversations with you. Feel free to ask any philosophical questions or topics you'd like to explore, and I'll do my best to assist you!

WIMZ – Do you think that interspecies communication is already happening between humans and other species?

GPT – As of my last update in September 2021, there is no scientific evidence to suggest that interspecies communication, in the traditional sense of language-based communication, is happening between humans and other species. While humans have developed ways to communicate with some animals through training and conditioning, such as teaching commands to dogs or using sign language with certain primates like gorillas, these forms of communication are limited and not equivalent to complex language-based communication. However, it is essential to note that many species, including humans, communicate with each other in various ways through body language, vocalizations, and other non-verbal cues. Animals, especially social species, have their own sophisticated communication systems to convey information and emotions within their species. Humans have been studying and attempting to understand animal communication for a long time, but the ability to communicate complex ideas and abstract concepts as we do through language remains a unique trait of human beings. With advancements in technology and research, we may gain a better understanding of animal communication and find new ways to interact with other species more effectively. But as of now, interspecies communication in the form of language-based exchanges, like in science fiction, remains speculative and not scientifically validated.

WIMZ – What about philosophically validated?

GPT – It is essential to recognize that philosophical validation does not necessarily equate to empirical validation. Philosophical discussions and speculations can be valuable in shaping our perspectives and prompting further investigation, but they may not always align with empirical evidence or scientific consensus. In summary, philosophically, the idea of interspecies communication is a fascinating topic that encourages us to consider the nature of communication, consciousness, and our relationship with other species on Earth. While it may be speculative at present, ongoing research in fields like animal cognition and communication could bring us closer to understanding the depths of interspecies interactions.

WIMZ – Thank you GPT, this was really useful.

GPT – You're welcome! I'm glad I could be of help. If you have any more questions or need further assistance in the future, don't hesitate to reach out. Happy exploring, and have a wonderful day!

WIMZ – You too, GPT!

Let us abandon one rebel philosopher, I mean Guy Debord not GPT, to return to another, a theologian whose commitment to philosophical thinking earned him the title of heretic. Eckhart von Hochheim was not compelled to pretend and did not pretend, he was Meister Eckhart; he had to construct an identity, as he felt his own could not be enough, by articulating it to another, in order to be and realise he was Meister Eckhart. Which he did, when he amplified a pattern of reciprocal identification on a intersubjective creationist scale. For all its intimate religiosity, Eckhard's *You and Me* dialectical projection relies on a concept of subject endowed with daring logic. A principle recurring in his sermons, which I would summarise as: I cannot be myself on my own, but am myself when I search for inner peace, presents a mystical approach that rationally avoids tautology. It is the tautology I am who I am which is absurd, not the desire to comprehend the incomprehensible. If "God" is everything, everything subjected to an entity subsuming in its compass all things in one self, an endlessly relational subject, "It" remains nominally itself for lack of another self beside the one self, that is to say remains unchanged as self-defining entity for lack of any another entity outside itself, but perpetually changes within itself to the point that its identity extends and thereby somehow dissolves into exchangeable phases. By subsuming in its compass all things in one self, the endlessly relational subject cannot escape the risk of objectifying subsumed selves or being objectified by them, a risky process which, even when defined as single identity undergoing change, emphasises change over identity. If change is used a means to implement and secure (or to be honest: salvage) identity, and changed identities within the overall identity are the end that justifies that mean, then deciding what is identity and what is change hinges on a moot point which, like any nominal exercise, is difficult to take seriously. Philosophy is a very nice hobby, when you can laugh instead of feeling disgust.

Intersubjectivity cannot be static or vouch for stability, it hallucinates ad libidem orders of clutched identities that only last until the next replacement. Like the consumerist system which refrains to offer long lasting qualitative objects, so that it may boost new and allegedly better products and services to preserve itself, intersubjectivity resolves the fact that an ultimate identity cannot be delivered and dispenses an Ersatz: the urge to try and test relentlessly available offers, which the impossible desire for an optimal identity stimulates. Even though understanding that intersubjectivity underpins consumerism may raise a more logical or at least some pragmatic mindfulness of the identity-product relatedness, awareness cannot crack the crisis. Beyond subjective and objective understanding, an endlessly relational subject would have to include what is and is not, what can, could, and cannot or could not be, in order to fully sustain self-expansion and contraction. It's a big job. Like Newtonian physics which works at tree level, intersubjectivity functions for its users at the cost of shunning measuring scales beyond the private sphere, or blowing up the private sphere to distorted universal proportions. By dragging god into psychology, Meister Eckhart has intensified the importance of the private sphere to the point where you and me and god and the walrus might have to cuddle together in a cramped cosmic corner. Or you or me holding

found objects hostage to sentiment or cravings for possession, for example. Eckhartian dialectic devises a logical throughput that flexes symmetry with relativism; god's needs and mine cannot be the same. Never mind, we both have needs, surely a basis for mutual understanding. From a Pascalian angle, we could also ask whether a basis for mutual understanding includes dreams. If (the Western) god has to be everything to fulfil an absolute identity, will she or he or it not dream of being nothing, at least occasionally? The Eckhartian-Pascalian conclusion has to be, if I need to dream and my dreams belong to my identity, the god I hope to relate to, also needs to be a dreamer. And when I occasionally cannot cope with who I am, when I wish I were someone else or wish my life away, I then may have to relate to an overall principle beyond the confines of subject identification, and admit that I struggle to bond with such a principle and am potentially horrified by the prospect of this principle also being susceptible to a crisis. What about if, at least intermittently, I'd rather keep a distance?

Come Together, 1989 German magazine's advertisement for the cigarettes brand: Peter Stuyvesant, 20 x 27cm.

Come Together, 1989 or later, German sealed pack of 32 playing cards and original carton box. Source for both items: eBay.



For sure, keeping one's distance and responding to a religious calling strike as antinomies. Assigned to religion the urge to relate to others is chiefly channeled into, but cannot be restricted to, assemblies of like-minded people. Religio means bonding and bonding can be dictated by a political party, promulgated by a religious denomination or goaded by libido or facilitated by songs... Yes, we sometimes almost do to a fair or considerable extent; yet, neither ideologically, nor congenially, nor sexually, do we *come together* and are *all together* as literally and securely as the two phrases suggest. Within the 24 lines of its 4 verses, the 1969 hit *Come Together* repeats the personal pronoun *he* more than twenty times without once using the pronoun: *she*. Some people have a problem, but I shall not *Let it be* mine, whatever they say. *He say I know you, you know me. One thing I can tell you is you got to be free*. How can a state of freedom be achieved by following an order or strong guidance?

Why should I obey the injunction that I have *got to be free*? From those who allow themselves to claim they *know me*? Those who assume, I should wish to brush shoulders with them? Do I have to want to *know you*? Am I led to fall for the delusion of individual freedom in the clinging company of Lemons, under expanding economic liberalism and cute pics of little flowers? Like many convincing propositions, Meister Eckhart's dual existential necessity forged a link that has fettered its followers. From psychologised theology to psychedelic popular music, rights movements and culturally clad consumerism, *You and Me* has/have become a mAGNIFIED nORM. What lay at the core of the eudaemonian dream, an aspiration to secure personal happiness in respectful relation to the others, has grown into an obsession to cultivate relationships as if nothing else could matter as much. The consequences of this globally administered intersubjective panacea are disastrous. By adhering to the belief that humans can and should define and solve problems among themselves and for themselves, we have made our estrangement from nature increasingly difficult to reverse. No wonder that the Vatican has been advocating Aristoteles as second most revered textual source beneath the holy scriptures since scholastic times; no wonder that monotheism, humanism, socialism, and the hippy movement, in spite of massive differences, share eerily alike values. Lemons and Eckharts gravitate apart, but towards the same subjectivist centre. If solipsism signifies that reality is reduced for and by one person to that person's individual mental filter, then intersubjectivity, though it widens the filter ring's diameter, tightens it with quantitative force. Intersubjectivity excuses, aggravates and inflames solipsism in orgies of eudaemonic empathy. Eckhart von Hochheim's contribution to eudaemonism is one of so many that seek, again and again, yet another possible variation within any anthropocentric circle, and by so doing engrain the enduring custom that solutions are to be found inside, not outside that circus, as long as it is renamed under an agenda claiming to endorse values above the human scale. Subjective, intersubjective, pseudo or almost objective, the human scale objectifies. Whereby we underestimate that the others may not always be people, but institutions, or social or moral parameters let loose by people. Hyped under spiritual fulfilment or redeemed by rock 'n' rolled euphoria, intersubjectivity excuses egotism with compassion, friendliness and tolerance, until the "self", whatever this concept could have meant and still could mean, waters down into an inspid, tiresome and tired cliché, fading at the apex of economic connivance any image that has made it to the top. For instance, although the German Democratic Republic (DDR) and the German Federal Republic (BRD) did not reunite before 1990, an advertising campaign popular in the year the Berlin Wall fell (9th November 1989) applied the fashionable creed of togetherness to a marketing strategy that proved popular in the re-unified Eastern part of Germany. For an honest example of how intersubjectivity works, read the advert, poison your lungs and the whole world becomes caring. Hoha! Not allowing you (and you) to play your *yOU anD ME* tricks is a fair strategy, to hinder normalised intersubjectivity. You (and you) who wished to wipe your well-meant thoughts on my mind, have been reminded about legitimate self-defense. You and you may not press your tender heart into my open hand for fear it closes on its chambers. War be declared on love and peace!

Interconnectivity is a completely different game; cards are not distributed into equal numbers to designated players. There is no higher subject or metasubject handing them out to involved participants, because there is no higher subject or metasubject minding or caring about a game often interfered with, but never completely ruled by intersubjectivity. Whatever cards the players hold, and however good they estimate their hand, their game is played like any other game, within, below and beyond conscious boundaries. As if the unconscious were destined to become to the cult of consciousness what cannon fodder is to warfare, intersubjectivity gives a blank card to all sorts of unchecked influences. We are more influenced by Eckhart than we would like to concede. The mantra: *you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours and the scratch goes away*, operates in a multitude of complementary systems. We institute Kings to reap the benefits of becoming Liege, we worship deities in the hope of attaining redemption, we act lawfully to guard what we understand as our own interests in return for respecting the interests of others. And for which perks? Escaping loneliness? Listen to conscience culture's fortifying voice booming the good news: no one has to be lonely. God needs me, I need god; society needs me, I need society, human rights need my support, I need human rights, advertising needs me, I benefit from advertising's support; the entertainment industry needs me, I enjoy being entertained; and so on and so forth. Whether we seek happiness in unison or feel energised when landing into conflicts with others to vindicate our aspirations; once subjects, always subjects. Rebel intersubjectivity says: I no longer wish to be the King's subject and fight against him; I no longer abide by the law which I dismiss as corrupt and make unorthodox rules that determine other intersubjective rights. Random intersubjectivity boasts: I mistrust religion and seek god through transcendental meditation, I want to get rid of my ego to find and lose myself in the ultimate Subject; I mistrust both society and religion and seek liberation through addiction by immersing myself in music and drugs, I (want to) give up my ego to float in infinite intersubjectivity. Species-interconnectivity and philosophies that promote that broader, demanding thinking are something else. The highest good, humankind's near divine eudaemonian happiness does not impress all, they have heard about it too many times. Having an ego, be it rebellious or random or alternative, or swapping egos, does not fool everyone; too many have done it too many times. Being oneself makes them laugh, how could identities be self-sufficient? Despite being distracted by culture, we still belong to the natural world, however limited our connection. Indeed, however infinitely limited, it is infinite and cannot be eradicated by conscience culture. Don't let conscience culture grind you down.

The restricted scope of interconnectivity, at least at inception level, is easily belittled by millennia of intersubjective appeal and addiction. For sure, I am unable to stay long under water, I struggle to hear silence, am reluctant to step outside my conscience culture club, and my overused linguistic faculties severely hinder communication with non-human life manifestations. Granted, I talk a lot about them, but not with them. And since I cannot talk to them, why should I, or how could I persevere in my attempt to communicate with nature? Certainly, communicating with humankind satisfies some of my philosophical inclinations, but not to the extent of granting me wisdom and

contentment. Pre-Socratic and Daoist philosophers, who were closer to nature than we are, have bequeathed clues which, though enigmatic, should prove helpful to those pondering on how to cancel unwanted email subscriptions and auto-renewable membership offers from their local-global conscience culture club. The same river flows, whether I bathe in it or not, and whether I bathe in it or not, the same river will be the same and another river, but if I keep pumping sewage into it, I shall corrupt its flow and it will not be different in the same way it differently had been. A river cannot defend itself against ill-informed opinions and gullibility fed by conspiracy theories; so, legislation should be used to stop the practice of effluence tipping. When we play a *you and me* game, with 32 playing cards or otherwise, we discuss entitlements to subjectivity that contain a close permitting mine to encroach on yours and yours to encroach on mine, as well as be encroached by selected co-competitors. Nonetheless, unless I am gravely mistaken, mutual entitlements to subjectivity could also consider the objective rights of poisoned rivers. To begin to intervene against man-made problems means to investigate the conciliatory clique's gambles, to grasp that the highest good can no longer be humankind's near divine happiness. The highest good is humankind's reconciliation with nature, not with its fucked-up self.

In his dialogue, Master Zhuang uses both logic and empathy, not one or the other, and not one against the other. Fish and Master Zhuang do not press their case within me; they do not search for and find a complexly distracted wanderer to be called to task with ethical intimidation. They let me look at sinuous fin and tail movements and spot unattachments between threading and sewing hands and stream supported swimming strokes. At a serendipitous pace, I metaphorically tread the thread on a sinuous path strewn with Tulz songs, advertised cigarettes, and all sorts of translations. Fish and Master Zhuang let me ponder piscine and human motion and countermotion, and spin my tenuous argumentation through a local-global landscape, where heatwave and drought have not completely scorched the riverbed above or along which I walk and in which minnows survive. Once again, though I would love to be seen by them, I am not visible.

Antonis Chaliakopoulos' clear and well-written article on G.W. F. Hegel's interpretation of Heraclitus is not invisible. It reminds me that philosophers aiming for a higher level of consciousness tend to be the modern norm, while those less straightforward and outspoken about that reckless aim form the antique and mediaeval exceptions. None of the cyclical stages symbolising the Heraclitean version of eternity, a permanent flux, has a higher or lower material or moral or spiritual level subordinating the others; all depend on one another and alternatively exist within and non-exist without one another. Furthermore, the word Logos (λόγος) which in the Hegelian and Heideggerian reception had an overwhelming cosmological denotation is now interpreted as meaning speech: a collection of words, not ratio or reason. I would therefore prefer to render fragment B50: ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστὶν "Ἐν Πάντα as follows: *If you listen not to me, but to the words I said, you may grasp the wisdom that everything is everywhere.* "Ἐν Πάντα has an overwhelming spacio-temporal denotation, it implies for ever and everywhere. Translating "Ἐν Πάντα as: *All is One*

sounds Parmenidian. All for Heraclitus can only be flux, since flux in order to flow has to be and not to be, at once omnipresent and ubiquitous. Flux= being + non-being = becoming (not: being dialectically refined through non-being and overtaking the non-being phase) = being + non-being= flux. Visions of an improvable world dreamed by the like of Hegel, Engels, Marx or Heidegger are alien to Heraclitus' thinking. Plants no more aspire to be animals than animals long to be humans or plants, and humans are prepared to forfeit their body to turn into ideas, as long as choice ideas (divine bliss agog) engross them. Donkeys are wiser than women and men in that they spurn gold and cannot be corrupted. Sadly, the same cows and bulls that sustain rural environments by stimulating regrowth of the grass they graze, emit methane gas whose toxic effects rival industrial pollution. Therefore, goddesses are no better than women who are no better than cows, and men are no better than bulls or donkeys that are no better than gods, and hermaphrodites are no better than hinnies and mules and oxen that are no better than half-gods and heroes. Why then bother with philosophy if it stimulates the regrowth of... Sorry, if a truly better world may not be implemented by the higher awareness that philosophy vows to promote? Heraclitus recommends an improvable understanding of the unique eternally transforming world in which we live, and he condemns the shortsightedness of picked improvements that aggravate our misunderstanding. Did Heraclitus use reason when he realised that female, male and hermaphrodite toddlers share the wisdom of gold despising donkeys, hinnies and mules of all ages? Or did experience and intuition help him to grasp what reason does not concede? Namely, that the most advanced life form possesses less practical wisdom than its evolutionary less developed predecessors...

Ref. Laura Gianvittorio, *Sprechen und Verstehen bei Heraklit und Parmenides*, Mnemosyne, A Journal of Classical Studies, online publication, 2013

Antonis Chaliakopoulos, *Hegel Reading Heraclitus*, Philosophy Now, Issue 147: December 2021 / January 2022

Whatever wisdom they possess may in many ways be attributed to reason and measured according to levels of morality until facts are presented as evidence to question the theoretical and concrete competence demonstrated by the philosophies of consciousness. As Greta Thunberg became of age and ceased to lead the *Fridays for Future* movement, whose influence was largely due to its participants' youth, a new, unfortunately less successful, activist era followed. Adults, among them parents and educators, listened to what school children had to say. Those who expressed criticism of the demos and argued that lessons had been truanted to have a good time on the streets, half believed what they told their families and neighbours. They thought they had to make the right noise, but felt, whether they liked it or not, that the *Fridays for Future* children did not march out of obligation but conveyed a sincere message. Adults who hide behind conventional thinking, and act accordingly, distrust attacks on pragmatism. They also rank messages promoting alternative ways of thinking as unrealistic, and in that sense immature. Consequently, they assume that most adults who think and act rationally, share that defensive belief. Which may partly explain why

the adult-led movements who took over *Fridays for Future* failed to enjoy respect and popularity.

Members of the public have violently turned against activists from *Extinction Rebellion* and *Last Generation*, a visceral reaction which would never have happened had those adults and young adults been children. Furthermore, activists were arrested, issued fines and jail sentences, and their explicit activities were officially investigated by the police. No outcry ensued from the press or the general public. The reasoning that manifestations aimed at raising awareness of climate change disturb public order because they do not attract but force public attention, is as proportionally legitimate as its counterargument. Stopping commuters from driving to work, even when the controversial tactic hinders a rescue ambulance or the fire brigade cannot possibly be as devastating as the ignored effects of climate change. Nonetheless, blocking roads can be, and indeed has proven to be amazingly counter-productive. Groups of activists who glued their hands on asphalt have become the object of negative mediatic and public attention, their cause has been ridiculed. Beyond its provocative characteristics, it is the rational element within civil disobedience that infuriates the most. The voice of reason is tolerated or even praised as long as it can be comfortably ignored, else, it is vilified. Adults instinctively protect themselves against other adults when they feel threatened, but if the danger is not immediate, the self-defense instinct is not triggered. A person who cannot be rescued by an ambulance trapped in a roadblock faces an immediate danger that has to be addressed, whereas the entire world population faces a growing, but not immediate threat whose imminent impact is partly and gradually felt. As for the daily resolve to drive to work, the custom to hoard toilet paper rolls from supermarkets where overexpensive bio-labeled goods are flown over from far away countries, and the obstinate engrained habit to increase productivity, ask any donkey whether such urges are natural. If a jackass refuses to answer in a sensible language, that any sensible person would understand, offer him tons of gold! If a jenny brays, offer her diamond tiaras, so that she replies in a correct and civilised manner. And if they still dare not to answer, beat them up until they bray and bleed. But not until they collapse. Otherwise, they would no longer be fit for work.

7.

Which work does not involve donkey work? Marking batches of exam papers, for instance, qualifies well as a Teacher's chore. From that perspective, the motto "being a Germanist is one thing, having a life another" invites educators to break the mould. On completion of a BA Honours Degree in German Literature and Language at the University of London, where corresponding with Tutors from Cambridge spared me the asinine duty to attend lectures, I decided to turn to another interest and traveled to China. Within one hour of landing in Beijing, I knew, admittedly an embarrassingly belated discovery, that I was an artist. Not being a brilliant draughtsman in the conventional sense, had prevented from becoming one. Was I actually bad at drawing or had my dislike for representational make-belief hindered improvement on existing drawing skills? Difficult question, possibly both. Whatever the plausible answer,

arriving in Beijing and looking at all the characters displayed around me soon prompted the thought, that if in China drawing and writing were one, considering that I knew how to write, though unfortunately not in Chinese, I should also be able to draw. That is to say, I should equally enjoy drawing the ideas about which I enjoyed writing, whatever the debatable quality of the writing and/or drawing. Manuscripts followed with cycles of poems complemented by cycles of calligraphic illustrations based on figural combinations of Roman alphabetic letters, and eventually the piece I tend to regard as my first artwork: *Nur im Kreise*. Being a Germanist is one thing, having a life not necessarily another; the two in my case did connect. For example, the poems I wrote in China and after returning from my touristy Chinese trip, were written in German, not in English. How I eventually made my “first” artwork also related to my German teaching job. Albeit the step between manuscript and artwork was huge and I had to think about the right materials and a suitable stance. The stance had to shift, if I may put it in parallel with Marcel Duchamp’s outrageously correct position, from: *I do not want to be regarded as an artist because I am intelligent*, to: I have no wish to become an artist, unless I learn to be one from my own practice, however stupid that practice may seem to me or to others. The technique that could do justice to that determination, I felt, had to be blind drawing. For blind drawing, read section number 13, which is entitled: *Blind Drawing*.

8.

Before the COVID age of videoconferencing, parents’ evenings (or as they were then called in short: PSTCs, and in long: parents-students-teachers-conferences) involved face to face meetings in a hall set up for the event by departments, in rows of desks with one chair behind and three in front. While some students and/or parent(s) crashed the appointments, some appointments were not attended and other lasted twice as long as planned causing an awkward formation of queues. Nonetheless, the system worked overall pretty smoothly. As a rule, good students who had not been invited because they were doing well and had no need for extra feedback on that evening, invited themselves because they and their parents liked to hear how well they were doing and wanted to learn whether they still could do better. Whereas members of the family of struggling or reluctant learners who had been invited to discuss specific problems in the hope of solving them with their assistance, did not turn up, mostly because they were a lot worse than the students themselves, which they abundantly demonstrated when they happened to attend. In between these two extremes were the most interesting cases. Such as an English and a Japanese girls who only had one subject in common on their timetables, mine, and in spite of being reminded that their lessons was an educational, not a social event, indulged in catching up with sorely missed chatting. The Japanese girl and her mother came to my desk and were warmly greeted. As usual, I started by praising the student until both student and parent were lulled into a sense of security that warranted the best timing of attack. Target located, distance calculated, torpedos in launching position. Fire. You say that your daughter is very quiet at home, is home a place where she should be silent? You say that your daughter does not visit her friends because they live far from your house, do they not

phone her? If your daughter is not allowed to use her phone at home, so that she can allegedly concentrate on homework, does she do homework from the moment she arrives home to the moment she lives home? And would you recommend that she uses her phone or chatters with her friends during my lessons, instead of phoning at home? At that stage, the daughter was so sweet as to defend her mother's good intention which, as is so often the case with good intentions and in strong contrast to my parents' evening torpedoes, had badly misfired. Target hit, ship sinking, all officers on desk, rescue boat manned and on course towards hit target, mission Manga Twist After Dark under Senior Officer's full control. I suggested that an appropriate punishment ought to be inflicted, and mother and daughter nodded. *Those were the days, my friend/ We thought they'd never end/ (...)/ La-la-la-da-da-da/ La-la-la-da-da-da/ Da-da-da-da, la-da-da-da-da*. Lala and lada maybe, but dada indeed. I knew they were going to Tokyo in the summer, I would therefore give them money to find and buy the best calligraphic brush for me! Both mother and daughter agreed that the punishment was mild, yet appropriate and helpful. *La-la-la-da-Da-Da/ La-la-la-Da-Da-da/ Da-Da-da-da, la-da-da-Da-Da*. Back from Tokyo, the daughter brought me a brush together with some stationary as there had been some change left. I then gave her a black and white photograph of a Buddhist temple I had taken during my holiday in Thailand for her mother, who probably was Shinto. I said thank you, the daughter said thank you and the mother said thank you. Thank you for reading. She had a lot to say about the brush. Sheep hair was quite common and too soft, wolf was good, but she felt horsehair was best. The brush had the right size for my hand, its nicely tooled bamboo handle offered different holding positions and a good grip; it was finished with natural horn in a convex cap securing the hair at the bottom, and with a flat finial of the same smooth material at the top. The first drawing I attempted was flawless. The shape and shades obtained thanks to the magical brush had complementary qualities, and though they evoked a fish, the image came across as a powerful abstraction, not as an immediate figurative association, or so I thought. The second and tenth, hundredth and nth graphic attempts were all disastrous and made it clear that the success associated with the first drawing had been a complete fluke. I had failed; I was a failure. Thank you for reading.

9.

But then, who doesn't fail? And why should it matter so much when success can be worse than failure? I am unsure of what I pondered upon at that troubled time, but I now think of Bollocks The Drunk's wife, Lee Krasner. As far as I remember from an exhibition at the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt, in 2019, her first solo exhibition had earned her critical acclaim, but she did not sell anything. Lee, who had taken no artistic advice from her husband, heeded the warning and reworked her exhibited artworks as though they had never been fully completed. She collaged torn and cut pieces of card covered with drawings that resembled, but were not, sketches for those paintings, thereby stacking an additional layer that confused our sense of rank and order between preparation and completion. Like a Daoist about to set on a journey from which he will return yesterday, Lee pasted paper on oil painting, setting the notion of *yesterday* not as a past, but as a reflective temporal reference. Her work became engaging, not on

account of its formal perfection, but because of the truthfulness that rings through a factually ultimate stage of completion, which is at once finished, re-started and unfinishable. Like other abstract expressionists, though less dramatically, the artist gave central stage to evidence of bodily movements perceptible on brushmarks across the painted surface, as well as rhythmical interruptions left by stretched arm motions and attendant breathing patterns. Yet, unlike her male counterparts whose kinetic assertiveness was not always free from visually transposed macho swagger, her papers' delicately torn edges tell of gentler and more controlled movements. As far as my art is concerned, however, expressive gestures are just about the last characteristic I would wish for, hence another emphasis: blind drawing. The idea behind blind drawing was that the appreciation of an artwork based on its final appearance, determined by a final layer or state of completion, neglects or discards procedural aspects subsumed in the completed artwork. Krasner corrected this standard expectation by blending preparatory qualities into finished objects, a remarkable achievement against reputable perfectionism, a standard art historical persistence. Looking back at such professional standards, the artists Duchamp despised the most were salon painters who, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, had reduced art to visual "perfection", as if experiment and intentionality might as well pale into insignificance next to laboured technique for its own sake. Physically speaking, this meant that a last layer blotted out what had happened to build up a painted surface, so that the overedited last layer unavoidably resulted, in more than one sense, in superficial showmanship.

Even though the 1913 Armory show revolutionised the art world, and Duchamp's influence on the second half of the twentieth century has by no means been overstated, akin attitudes displayed by artists who anticipated his key intervention by distancing themselves from elegantly finished, visually seductive artworks were already noticeable and appreciated in early modernism. Particularly in the Baroque period, collectors prized sketched versions of paintings and sculptures. They regarded *bozzetti* as artwork in their own right, not solely or mainly as preparation for a more desirable outcome: the completed product. Even earlier, the *Danube Style* shared by Bavarian and Austrian Renaissance artists launched a fierce attack against Italian taste, favouring stronger lines and darker colour schemes over delicate and refined compositions. Considered to be forerunners of expressionism, *Danube Style* artists Lucas Cranach the Older, Albrecht Altdorfer and Wolfgang Huber bore a healthy contempt for beauty and displayed a bold graphic assertiveness. The specifically Duchampian and broadly Dadaist attitude that denounces triteness in artistic stylistic conventions and celebrates philosophically and politically motivated unorthodox art practices, have always been part of the art's scene, in Duchamp's own words "since Adam and Eve". Consider for instance the *Renaissance* copper engraving *Naked Woman Sitting On An Armour* and a *New Objectivity* counterpart (both imaged on page 38). A direct compositional link between female nudity and male military power also exists in Otto Dix' 1920 painting: *Erinnerungen an die Spiegelsäle von Brüssel*. On the print, the empty armour suggests a dead soldier. The female nude, a prostitute who plied her trade, as was the custom in that period, by following a regiment, sits on the

metallic six pack abdomen. Were the soldier's muscles as hard as his protective suit? She presses her vagina against the cold breastplate underneath which a punter's heart was once beating. Further brazen irony, that lying section of his suit of armour presents a round hole to the viewer. Not the prostitute's mouth or anus, opened up for sexual services, but a circular end to which, in the early 16th century, an attached gorget would have secured its pertaining helmet. A closer inspection reveals that the armour has no arms and that the nearby free-standing helmet would not have been attached to a breastplate. Reference to Antiquity, a feature common in the early 16th century, wanted that the depicted armour reminds one of a Roman uniform. Does this erudite allusion turn the punter's death into a dignified or tragic or mocked fate? The empty breastplate lies with its back against the earth; elsewhere, defeated in battle or by disease, the warrior it clad, was laid on his back underneath. On the painting, a red-faced general on the verge of delirium tremens or a fit of apoplexy and a tarted-up courtesan sat askew his lap caricature military rule in that, in more than one sense, they distort reflections on decadent power. Despite their respective technique, style and intention, do not both works contain comparable allegorical and satirical elements? If so, whatever the style and period of the artwork, modernist or classical or other, a Dada turn of mind, or for that matter a lack thereof, can rightfully be attributed to its maker. And conversely, belonging to the modernist movement known as Dada did not as such warrant a truly Dadaist turn of mind. Was Francis Picabia a Dadaist? Was Salvador Dali a Surrealist? These two questions modelled on the popular art historical essay title: *Was Monet an Impressionist?* intimate the importance of stylistic and ideological departures within well defined cultural movements. They also point out that artists belonging to or associated with a movement produce a body of work that deserves to be read within and without (or beyond) its historical context and period boundaries.

The two cloth studies illustrated below were executed by Wolfgang Hubert in the first quarter of the 16th century. They can be described as realistic in accordance with a prominent stylistic feature of the High Renaissance, or even expressionist or abstract if one does not object to a description commonly applied to artworks made almost four hundred years later. I heard that some artists in the 20th and 21st centuries are renowned for making art with ideas. Amazing! They must be highly intelligent, and very well-read I should imagine! So, what about these essay titles: *Was Hubert an impressionist?* And: *Was Hubert a conceptualist?* The creases depicting a piece of cloth hanging, in the second image, show the appearance of woven fabric at a specific moment in time though not in a specific place. Depending on the person who positioned the cloth on a wall, in what relation to a window that wall stood, whether the light coming from the nearest window was north or south facing, and the time when it fell on the hung cloth, the folds would have had a different appearance. The artist abstained from references to the specific place where the cloth was hung so that his deliberate focus on the folds could not not be diminished by a competing graphic rendering of the wall. The idea that an object's appearance is determined by space and time is impressionist; there is no ideal representation of the cloth that could depict it convincingly, whereas impressions of a hanging or crunched cloth are arresting. In Hubert's case, these impressions are conveyed by emphasising details in a realistic, graphic style, not by

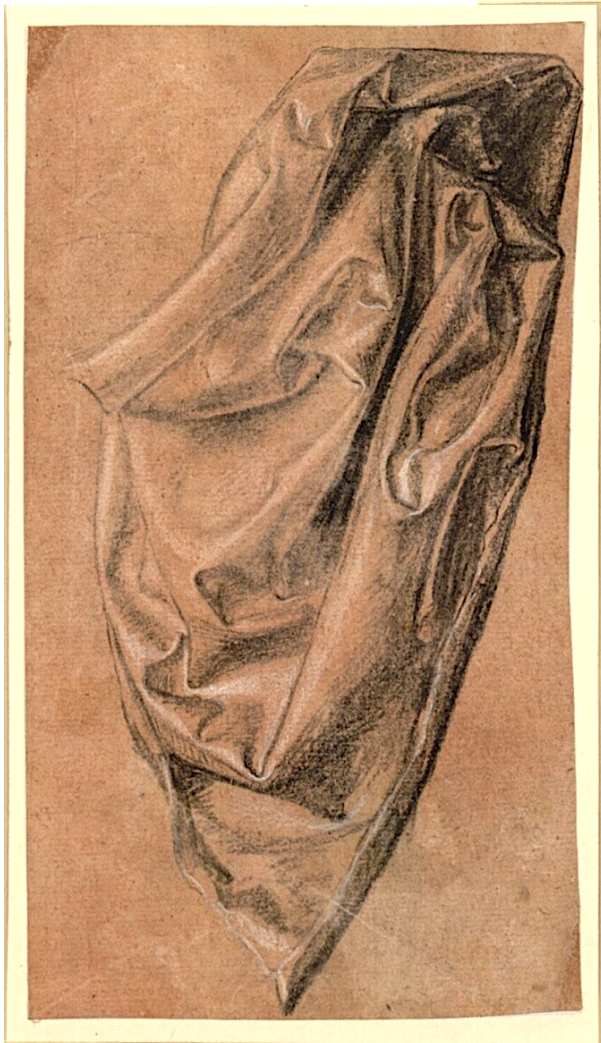
evoking plastic and chromatic contrasts through pictorial means in an impressionist manner. The presentation of a realistic rendering of a hung or crunched cloth on an abstract spatial plane, i.e. the removal of its immediate background (wall or table), achieves an impossible (non-phenomenal) juxtaposition of realistic and empty space, which is the artwork, that is to say a conceptual space materially obtained by a partly disregarded and partly intense treatment of the image support. The idea that an artwork made of paper is paper strikes as conceptualist; the idea to let (prepared) paper artistically function with and without drawing within the same space on the same support follows a yin-yang as well as a conceptualist logic. The first drawing truncates the cloth's length and skewers the overall composition by darkening two folded corners on the left hand-side. Both effects maximise the contrast struck by accurate realistic drawing on voided background, so that the cloth may be read as a ghostly, slightly avian figure caught in mid-flight. Black and white chalk have frozen the drawing in space, and the date of execution therewith inscribed in the upper right corner has frozen it in time.

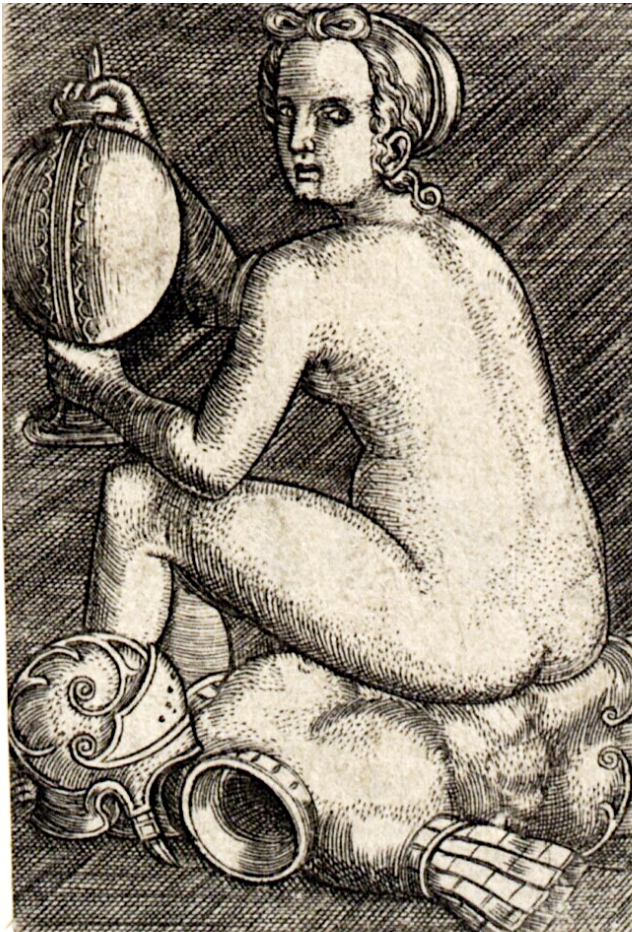
Wolfgang Huber, *Geknittertes Tuch (Rucked Up Cloth)*, black chalk drawing with white highlights on brown-red prepared paper, 17,3 cm x 14,8 cm, collection of the Albertina Museum, Vienna, inventory number 26161 Albertina Museum Wien

Wolfgang Huber, *Hängendes Tuch (Hanging Cloth)*, black chalk drawing with white highlights on brown-red prepared paper, 21,1 x 11,7cm, collection of the Albertina Museum, Vienna, inventory number 26160 Albertina Museum Wien

Anonymous artist, *Nackte Frau, auf Rüstung sitzend (Naked Woman Sitting On An Armour)*, copy of Barthel Beham formerly attributed to Albrecht Altdorfer, copperplate engraving, early 16th century, same dimensions for plate and paper: 5,2 cm x 3,5 cm, inventory number DG1926/1743, collection of the Albertina Museum, Vienna, Albertina Museum Wien

Otto Dix, oil painting on a silver background on canvas, 124 cm x 80,4 cm, *Erinnerungen an die Spiegelsäle von Brüssel*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, inventory number AM 1999-178, bought in memory of Siegfried Poppe, 1999, image credits: © Adagp, Paris, © Georges Meguerditchian - Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI /Dist. RMN-GP, image reference: 4R11213 [1999 CX 0303]





Before I might consider embarking on the formidable task of writing the *Experimental Prolegomena To A Dada Te Ching*, let me catch my breath and suggest that Dada and Dào (Tao) meet on one path, and that the sections of that path where they most prolifically cross over, which I am immediately naming Dadao, castigate eudaemonic self-importance and praise inter-species contentment. Just so that you know.

MARble

+

marTYR

So. Let us direct our glance onto a Dadaoist example of contentment, e.g. marble + martyr. And as one sculpture says more than a thousand characters, let us choose two and thus shorten the unwritten *Dada Te Ching* by two thousand words. Two, because Bernini's preparatory model for the marble sculpture of the *Blessed Ludovica Albertoni* and that sculpture inside the Chapel for which it was commissioned both exhibit Dadaoist characteristics. Looking at the final work, viewers keen on *fine pornographic arts* will be tickled by Ludovica's multiple orgasm. In accord with their peeping experience, keen viewers will justify the interpretation that her frozen convulsions render a staged or deeply felt, or hysterical or intolerable pleasure. Whereas adepts of sadomasochism will from their bruised and/or bruising experience call attention to the melting point where pain and pleasure become indistinguishable. Patients receiving treatment for obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) might exclaim that Gian Lorenzo Bernini had already carved a marble statue theatrically exhibited in a chapel and depicting a similar ambiguous ecstasy. Why did the sculptor revisit a theme, he had addressed before 1650 in a first version: *Santa Teresa In Estasi*, without adding significant change more than twenty years later? Like the early treatment of the theme, its recurrence dwells on obsessive belief. Faith has taken over Teresa's/Ludovica's whole person and has spread from mind to the entire body.

That Bernini himself was moved by faith to face a phenomenon scientists would rank as obsession is important. Both works openly question the transformative effects that adhering to an ideology has on an individual. Openly puts it mildly, we should almost say on an exhibitionist scale, had not a sense of prodded intimacy infused the recumbent women's sensuous pause and lent additional complexity to the public display. This heavy mix of private, intimate and public elements links Bernini through the figures he celebrates to the Roman Church as an individual and an artist. And to Dada in as much as the Teresa and Ludovica monuments are shocking and provocative? They are outrageous because, unlike Modern art's money-making *shock of the new*, they never intended to provoke. Porn they ain't. The sculptured figures exhude an energy beyond their control, they submit to a force that Bernini most likely conceived as faith taking possession of the soul. A force he interpreted in bodily contortions, as if his own faith wanted to try the very path trodden by the beatified believers and yet, incapable of completing a comparable ultimate journey, squirmed in

curbed doubts unlike the ecstatic women who had writhed in flowing certainty. Like compares with unlike. Bernini had deeply private reasons to deal with a theme questioning and affirming faith and we have deeply private reasons, even though spirited stories leave us as cold as marble, to be fascinated by these whole bodies, not by some of their parts. What on earth was that forceful energy reshaping pliable organisms to the limit, as if they had to hold a last form to avoid their otherwise unavoidable explosion? Like a corpse that has undergone lethal solidification, its mass immaculately washed and laid on linen, the sculptures rest in weight, waiting for the transcendence they announce. Eternally announcing but never departing, stuck to the ground by gravity, paralysed in expression, they are matter as well as tooled matter just as the two transfixed beatified believers were women as well as martyrs who, as women achieved martyrdom, through which their womanhood was not discard, but somehow vindicated. The artist's tooling of the sculptured marble seems to have infused life into matter which we otherwise standardly consider inanimate. Yet, expression does not take over the material thanks to which it can be conveyed. Martyrdom and ecstasy cease when a last breath leaves the mortal coil. They no more continue when the body has turned into a corpse than expression could sustain itself outside the marble into which, not out of which, it was carved. Once the carving was completed, the tooled marble became the artwork that it never had been before. The tooling never was a procedural leftover or waste that could have been disposed of. Chips chiseled from the block were disposed of, not the block. No block, no sculpture, no women, no martyrs. The sculpture does not make the block unwanted, martyrdom does not make womanhood redundant. Only for a few hours after rigor mortis has set in do martyrs' corpses resemble sculpture the most. Afterwards, they start doing what marble does not. They follow onto the point where the stone as block as well as sculpture forever poses and forever pauses, at the very limit between the agonised ecstatic evocation of dying announcing an otherworldliness within reach, but not reaching it. The show is cancelled at the moment it should have begun. In eager expectation to set eyes on the wonderful performers, the public applauds the foreboding parting of the curtains. Yet, the actresses' feet only touch the stage to return backstage. Their performance would have been outstanding, had not their appearance stood out. The light goes out as soon as the curtains are drawn. The stage is empty. Lucky you, if you snatched tickets to the morgue, you may see the corpses before they are buried. But when they rot, you won't. The living are not admitted underneath the clod where the dead decompose. Packed with an energy which we describe as almost unbearable, but are only too glad to bear, the sculptures threaten to erupt with intensity; even though, unlike putrefication, they never will. The sculptures make us gasp at the threshold of perceptible invisibility, but they do not become invisible. On the contrary, they clog our eyes with visions. Putrefied bodies explode, they advance beyond visibility to be received into the explosive stage: mors vincit omnia.

The explosive stage means that human cells decomposing in the earth communicate with the earth to an extent which consciousness could and would never permit without feeling outrage. From a scientific viewpoint, inter-species communication is a biological process and as such, not a phenomenon whose existence is restricted to philosophical

contemplation, but the basis of real life. Like natural soil that contains the most ancient microorganisms which, having developed from the oceans onto the earth, nurture biodiversity, humans depend on a microbiome. That this microbiome makes up at least half of the human body, indicates that human cells are supported by archaic cells that do not need oxygen. Bacteria are part of the soil and of the human body; in that sense, part of the soil is not soil, part of the human body is not human. Without bacteria, algae, fungi and protozoa, soil cannot be fertile; without bacteria and viruses that have their own DNA, our DNA would not survive. The sine qua non condition of being human is therefore not being human, which posits the relevance of being human underneath the necessity of being non-human, and the reality of being human below inter-species connectivity. Teresa, Ludovica and Gian Lorenzo were therefore right in worshiping what is not human. But was the object of their worship truly not human or was it not really not human enough but too human too much? At any rate, mors irrumat omnia.

One Health xDadaO

In an article published on the 21st July 2022 in *Nature Microbiology*, a group of researchers stressed the role played by microbiome-targeted interventions to reverse the decline of biological diversity: “Currently, widespread extinction events impair the resilience, function and stability of ecosystems, which impacts our existence, conceptually referred to as ‘One Health’ (that is, the interconnection between people, animals and the environment).”

Non-bibliophile reference: Peixoto, R.S., Voolstra, C.R., Sweet, M. et al. *Harnessing the microbiome to prevent global biodiversity loss. Nat Microbiol* (2022)

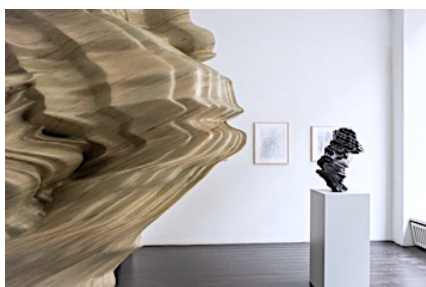
Before science denounced the anthropogenic threat, Dada ridiculed carnage mongering anthropocentrism to expose the damage which humans willingly inflicted on themselves during the first world war. Dada taught the necessity of disrespect when self-destructive civilisation had turned entitlement and deference into a life-threatening farce. By disrespecting artistic, political, military and religious institutions supporting or turning a blind eye to mass slaughter, the Dadaists did not act lightly; they showed us that respecting the wrong authority came too close to disrespecting life itself.

Should we consider Bernini’s voluptuously morbid sculpture as a case of false respect? Or should we critically review the reverence paid to the sculpture entitled *The Blessed Ludovica Albertoni* and to the person who bore that name? In the interest of both, we can argue that a focus on the recumbent figure’s facial and corporal expression isolates a reading of the work to close range perception. Beheld as an articulation of the space inside which it was intended to be placed and still rests, the sculpture compares to organic or industrial matter. A form folds upon itself in a cascade of winding lines from head and pillow to bed and sympathetic plinth. A reading of the sculpture as an installation in the Altieri chapel is as visually exciting as a detailed view.

Ludovica Albertoni is remembered as a young and virtuous noblewoman, who had renounced her privileges to become a nun and dedicate her life to the poor and the sick. As a consequence of having tended to contagious patients, she contracted a lethal disease, an eventuality she must have foreseen. The extent to which she might have anticipated or perhaps even wished for her final illness belonged to the intensely private side of her vocation. Her family found it appropriate to commemorate her death, rather than her life, and Bernini agreed to celebrate that enigmatic instant in keeping with his own religious devotion, when he accepted the commission. In the three-dimensional Berninian visualisation of her agony, the nun's practised piety reaches its peak when her sense of life fulfilment coincides with her last breath. To the devout, an admirable transition towards eternal life; to others, a morbid conviction that invites ridicule. Opinions will vary widely on Ludovica's commitment-cum-contentment, whether her vocation was real or delusional, whether she came alone on her deathbed, or together with an Invisible Spiritual Fornicator. ISF or no ISF, in many ways, the artistic exposure of her last private moment is nobody's and everybody's, as well as Dada's and none of Dada's business. Dada irrumat omnia.

Marbled Martyrdom

A powerful work of art elicits all sorts of reactions but dictates none. An unkind sneer may have misshapen our lips, but they will resume their shape when we switch our focus from her face and upper body to her whole body inside the chapel, and further engage with the complete form. By the time of her death, Ludovica Albertoni's cells would have been taken over by disease and her entire body would therefore have been mostly non-human. By the time of her commemoration, her entire body could only be recalled through non-human matter. Marbled Martyrdom. Irrespective of ideological leanings, if we admire Bernini's skills and his mortuary sculpture, it would make sense to respect the person for whom he carved it. She did nothing wrong by sacrificing herself to others, and as there are fates worse than death, there are lives worse than her dedication. Opting in favour of the view that her caritative passion took over her mind that took over her body, that is to say treating Ludovica Albertoni's religious commitment as brainwashing, paints her as psychologically alienated. Conversely, the material alienation which happened when disease controlled her body and ended her life echoes the numerous encounters she had with non-human existence in the form of bacteria and viruses, by repeatedly tending the sick. In that sense, even the paradigm of humanistic eudaemonia which Ludovica Albertoni's life and death represent included inter-species connections. Dada vincit omnia.



Tony Cragg, *Stacks*,
drawings,
wooden and metal sculptures
exhibited from the 4th of June to the 31st of July 2019
at Galerie Klüser Munich,
exhibition view, courtesy
Galerie Klüser



10. Wolfgang Ink Mark Ziegler, *Dada-Born Superstar and Addstracts*, electromontage of re-refined online artwork-reproductions, 29 06 2022.

Upper section

Part of John Chamberlain, *White Thumb Four*, 1978, painted and chrome-plated steel, 71 ½ by 112 ½ by 32 inches. Photograph: Gagolian/ © 2021 Fairweather & FairweatherLtd / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Middle section

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *The Blessed Ludovica Albertoni*, 1671-74 terracotta bozzetto) for the Altieri Chapel in San Francesco a Ripa, Rome, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, accession number A.93-1980.

Lower section

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Beata Ludovica Albertoni*, 1674, marble sculpture, over lifesize funerary monument commissioned for the Altieri Chapel of the Church San Francesco a Ripa, Rome. Photograph: sanfrancescoaripa.it/project/estasi-della-beata-ludovica-del-bernini/.

Irrespective of the Counter-Reformation's aesthetics of sensualised hagiography, other aspects of both works (the bolzetto and the sculpture) have a deep Dadaoist resonance. Although the marble carving exhibits a front and no back in the Altieri Chapel, Bernini lavished as much attention on the back as on the front of the bozzetto. The back determines the front in that its swerved dynamic ends in the static front. Furthermore, irrespective of the historical and art-historical context, the back has an abstract autonomy as worthy of attention as the front. Undoubtedly, this is Dadaoist business, as the final version displays a degree of synthetic abstraction that the likes of Tony Cragg can only drool for. Indeed, the crushed marble treatment of the sculpture's base reminds me of Cragg's late works, but also of John Chamberlain's crushed car parts. Almost as big as the sculpture itself, the unmistakable plinth evokes a soft silk fabric folding on itself as it falls and visually gathers almost without weight, a metaphor for the nun's ecstasy and an abstract sculpture in its own right. In spite of being a religious work of art displayed in an ecclesiastical setting, and in spite of its intended message typical of the Counter-Reformation, the work does not drown under intersubjectivity. The rich range of factual information and distinct analyses, for those acquainting themselves with the monument's history and its reception, provides a worthwhile insight. Nevertheless, such an insight, as indeed the clerical propaganda behind the commission, accounts for part of the artwork's success, not for its tenacious resonance under subsequent and later societal developments. Fair enough, struggling and failed explanations interest Dadaoist and Dada's business. Dada explains that order disguises chaos, that status means strategy and that images shimmer. Very nice too, but can a devotional Baroque sculpture radically compete with electronic arts, interactive multimedia installations and videoed performances? Dada might answer that question with a question: Can electronic arts, interactive multimedia installations and videoed performances radically compete with a devotional Baroque sculpture? In other words, if viewers with a radically different outlook on the sculpture, be it artistic, religious, erotic or historical, respond to an artwork that appeals to so many distinct

tastes without having intended to cater for most of them, that artwork, whatever its period, style and genre, is bound to have a radical dimension. A religious viewer aware of the sculpture's sensual ambiguity should not be disturbed by that interpretation, no more than an erotically minded viewer should be prevented from enjoying the work, because others apprehend it spiritually. Both types of viewers are spared the need to agree on their diverging interpretations, both could even view the sculpture at the same time, identify one another as member of another thinking camp or clan, engage in heated or congenial debate and still experience a need greater than reaching a consensus on the artwork's meaning. Past intersubjective confusions, past didactic destinations, the sculpture takes interested viewers to an arena of discovery, where reconsidering one's opinions leaves them with a palatable, not a sour taste. Unless I am gravely mistaken, this really is Dada's and Dadaist, and Daoist business. True, Gian Lorenzo Bernini's *Beata Ludovica Albertoni* and the *Zhuangzi's Happy Fish* dialogue did not grow old together. Neither do they invite obvious comparisons, nor do they need comparison to be understood. Yet, both have resisted aging and still strongly prompt us to reconsider transience. As solid and permanent as it appears, marble used to be weak limestone. As small and harmless as minnows look, we would not have become the tall self-important bastards that we are, had not fish been one of our ancestors. Marble is a type of metamorphic rock, and in our long and our short evolution, metamorphic we are too. Fish metamorphosed into fowl, Dao metamorphosed into Dada. Dao vincit omnia, Dao irrumat omnia. Dada vincit Dao, Dao irrumat Dada.

Of course, besides the *Zhuangzi*, other texts also intimate that reconnecting to nature is the only way to overcome anthropocentrism. That they come from different cultures and periods, and belong to different genres should not dissuade us from listing and comparing them, aprovided that we carefully contextualise tone, purpose and form. Herewith a collection of excerpts from the American poet Walt Whitman's long poem: *Song of Myself* (1892 version).

The atmosphere is not a perfume, it has no taste of the distillation, it is odorless,

It is for my mouth forever, I am in love with it,

*I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised and naked,
I am mad for it to be in contact with me.*

Loafe with me on the grass, loose the stop from your throat,

*Not words, not music or rhyme I want, not custom or lecture, not even
the best,*

Only the lull I like, the hum of your valvèd voice.

*A child said What is the grass? fetching it to me with full hands; How
could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.*

*All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.*

*Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain or halt in the leafy shade, what is
that you express in your eyes?
It seems to me more than all the print I have read in my life.*

*The litter of the grunting sow as they tug at her teats,
The brood of the turkey-hen and she with her half-spread wings,
I see in them and myself the same old law.
The press of my foot to the earth springs a hundred affections,
They scorn the best I can do to relate them.
I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-
contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.*

*They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning
things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of
years ago,*

*Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.
So they show their relations to me and I accept them,
They bring me tokens of myself, they evince them plainly in their
possession.*

11. Lee Krasner, *Desert Moon Collages*, 1955, collage of oil on paper on canvas, and oil on canvas, 58 × 42 1/2 in. (147.32 × 107.95 cm), LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), purchased with funds provided by Jo Ann and Julian Ganz Jr., Robert F. Maguire III, Leslie and John Dorman, Betty and Brack Duker, John and Joan Hotchkis, Mr. and Mrs. H. Tony Oppenheimer/Oppenheimer Brothers Foundation, Lynda and Stewart Resnick, Sheila and Wally Weisman, Marilyn B. and Calvin B. Gross, Judith and Steaven K. Jones, Myron Laskin, Tally and Bill Mingst, and Irene Christopher through the 2000 Collectors Committee, Director's Discretionary Fund, Judith and Richard Smooke, and two anonymous donors (M.2000.82). Photo: © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Below *Desert Moon Collages*: extract from the Daoist book known as: *The Zhuangzi*, third century BCE



莊子與惠子遊於濠梁之上。莊子曰：「儵魚出遊從容，是魚樂也。」惠子曰：「子非魚，安知魚之樂？」莊子曰：「子非我，安知我不知魚之樂？」惠子曰：「我非子，固不知子矣；子固非魚也，子之不知魚之樂全矣。」莊子曰：「請循其本。子曰『汝安知魚樂』云者，既已知吾知之而問我，我知之

12. Wolfgang Ink Mar Ziegler, *Nur im Kreise*, portrait format

Chinese ink on hand-stitched western paper, London, 29 06 1997.

The papercuts were mounted with PVA emulsion, but held together with thread, and enclosed in a wooden box-frame.



莊子與惠子遊於濠梁之上。莊子曰：「儵魚出遊從容，是魚樂也。」惠子曰：「子非魚，安知魚之樂？」莊子曰：「子非我，安知我不知魚之樂？」x莊子曰：「請循其本。子曰『汝安知魚樂』云者，既已知吾知之而問我，我知之濠上也。」

Happy Fish dialogue, Zhuangzi, third century BCE

12. Wolfgang Ink Mar Ziegler, *Nur im Kreise*, landscape format



13.

The term *blind drawing* means that a specific appearance is intended neither at the start nor at the end of the work. As long as I discover aspects I had not know about drawing, the experiment has a philosophical value. However, if a figurative or abstract outcome is aesthetically pleasing, but confirms rather than explores my drawing skills, the experiment stagnates. Neither novelty and quality, nor perfection and beauty are necessarily synonymous. On one hand, variations on a successful aesthetic formula end up being unsurprising and slick; on the other hand, battling on uncharted creative territory until a new beauty is elicited out of perplexing stages, demands strength and confidence. If I do what I can, at least I am not lying and may not confuse myself. Some artists rely on alcohol or drugs to stimulate creativity and their works look impressive; but, do they share a philosophical insight or spread the appeal of an unusually attractive technique? If conventionally accomplished pieces can look impressive at the expense of meaningfulness, do innovative pieces, that in other ways are also visually enticing, deliver more meaning, or do they share despite opposite aesthetic criteria the same bias? Whatever we consider and call a masterpiece has to be stunning.

At the beginning, I exaggerated my deliberate visual detachment from the surface onto which I drew, by turning my head in the opposite direction and trusting the sense of touch and motion to replace the hallowed sense of sight. My first *blind drawing* with the Japanese horsehair brush and Chinese calligraphic ink was an accident, the system appeared to function. Yet, after many repetitions, I had to come to the conclusion that it did not work at all. Either I liked the accidental tonal effects produced by the random brush strokes, but they did not gather into a satisfactory shape; or I found a significant shape, but it overlapped another and was blurred. Or the combination of shape and tone was successful, but repetitive. Moving my arm in different directions or the chair or the table did not make much difference, some of the results could have been interesting but they were trapped under or entangled with other brushstrokes and therefore became concealed by overlaying. Making art can mean realising that what you are doing is not that great, even though determination delivers something hopefully honest, and possibly truthful. Being an artist all too often means lending to artworks an honorific status, instead of admitting that artists are honorably possessed. Persistence is obsession, not virtue. Like Lee, I finally cut out and collaged sketched elements to salvage artworks whose unity would never had been good enough. Selecting and cutting out some of the brushworks, and this time looking at them carefully before assembling them, became the reality of *blind drawing*.

Incidentally, how far and how long did a thought mature and circulate within my body before it reached the paper? How full of that thought was the body, to let it go from shoulder to arm and fingers, and part with it on paper? Nothing to do with Ludovica Albertoni. Nevermind. When we wonder whether her thoughts possessed her at the apex of her agony, to the extent that they expressed themselves throughout her convulsed limbs and face, our interpretation sways between beatific revelation and metastatic spread. What took over her living body, infection or vision, a state of grace or a stage of disease? Or are both connected? We may assume a form of brainwashing, alienation, indoctrination, madness, if we judge and dismiss her belief. However, not sharing it should not mean, we have to discard it. We can discard it for ourselves, but this has nothing to do with understanding her spectacular climax and how her whole modest life converged towards it. What has to do with Ludovica Albertoni, is the fact, among other facts, that a disease occupied her whole body and caused it to writhe in agony. Therefore saying that her thoughts and flesh became one before they became none, or that her human and non-human cells merged before they were gone, or that her ecstasy reflected her faith rather than her disease, or that her life culminated in a passionate climax when it had started to decay and was dramatically being put out by death, are not necessarily contradictory statements.

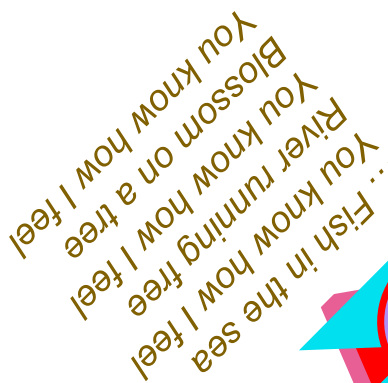
14. Wolfgang Ink Mar Ziegler, Pictogrammed Comic:
Inside The River Hao, electronic drawings, 27th July 2022,
with captions by Zhuangzi + songwriters Anthony Newley & Leslie Bricusse,
songtext of *Feeling Good*, 1964 © Tratore, Nina Simone 1965

...
Birds
flying
high
You
know
how
I feel
Sun in
the sky

庄子曰：“出游从容，是之也。”

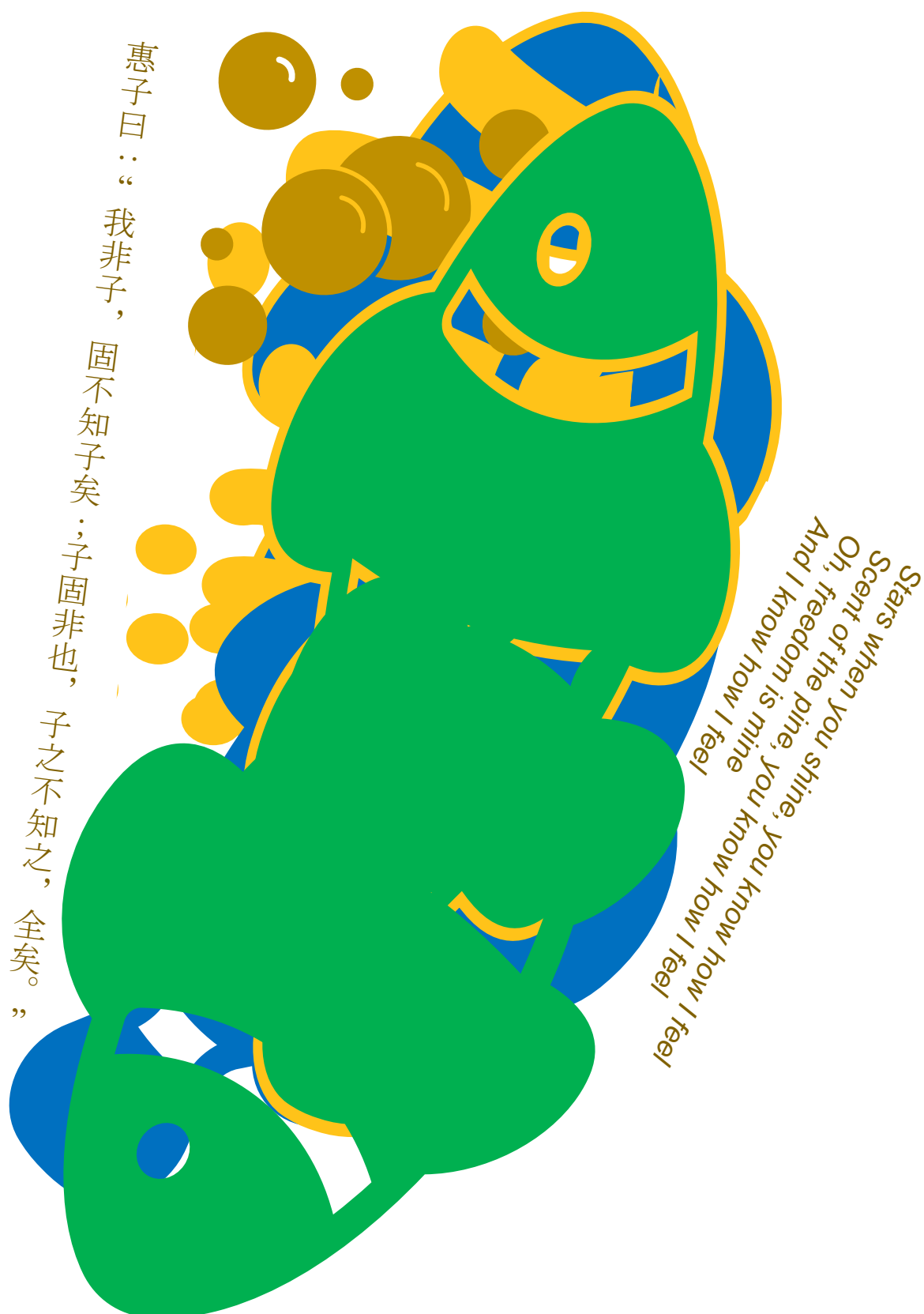
You
know
how I
feel

Breeze
driftin'
on by
You
know
how I
feel



惠子曰：“子非，安知之？”





惠子曰：“我非子，固不知子矣；子固非也，子之不知之，全矣。”

Stars when you shine, you know how I feel
Scent of the pine, you know how I feel
Oh, freedom is mine
And I know how I feel