



* On Images and Enactments *

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Music, Gesture, Language as Sequential Cacophony of Accumulative, Concurrent, Emergent Particularities of Meaning

If objects and events are approached as manifesting concurrent multiplicity, rather than in simple sequences of singular status, they become most difficult to describe or 'think.' A simultaneity of presence, relation, and action is most readily represented in images, such as photographs. Description tends to take the form of narrative sequence. Sequentially mechanistic models of cause and effect are the most practical modes of knowing 'what has happened.' It is ordinary to think in terms of progressive sequences. However, even in these narratives of evidently singular events a quality of 'concurrent presence and relation' can be discerned. The comments offered here address the tension between narrative sequence and its accumulative references that compose the complex dynamics of knowing meaningfully.

Knowing Particular Instances in Reference to Preceding, Surrounding, and Implied Ones

Through inherent efforts to perceive and 'make sense of' self and world, the 'operations of consciousness' sort perceptual data into various categories for identification and interpretation. The diversity and complexities of how seemingly separate entities of objects and events compose each other and interact are necessarily reduced to enable distinctive, categorical differentiations. Some fundamental distinctions of difference appear elemental to knowing meaningfully. Analytic reflection upon these mental processes for 'how things are' specifically distinguished, reveals how such knowing actually derives from intricate 'webs' of associations, references, and criteria. However, the more complex aspects of those references tend to remain 'in the background' of

conscious awareness, providing the bases for making distinctions and noticing presently existing or occurring phenomena without being overtly acknowledged.

Music, gesture, and language illustrate the accumulative and convergent origination of references for knowing and ‘making meaning.’ In each of these contexts for expression any given ‘moment’ (note, pose, word) is particularly perceivable. Specific feelings and meanings can appear to arise in awareness in response to those particular, immediate perceptions. However, the sequential ordering of notes, gestures, and words provides the implicit contexting for how any particular instance of the sequence is experienced. Notes that have ‘appeared’ prior to, and an expectation of those that will ‘appear’ next, are inherent ‘qualifiers’ of the perception of ‘a note’ as being musical. The sense of how ‘a piece of music’ or ‘a dance’ or ‘a sentence’ is memorable and meaningful derives in large part from its sequential ordering or specific elements. There is a sense of a ‘whole’ that ‘flows’ as a consequence of succeeding instances. Thus, in any given moment or instance of that sequence (any ‘now’ of its on-going ‘flow’) what has preceded and what has yet to ‘become present’ are in effect composing the particularity of the present instance and its potential meaningfulness.

Acknowledging the Accumulative Concurrency of Past, Present, and Future Instances in Making Meaning

The instances of such sequential presencing (and expectations or what seems implied) are thus ‘accumulative’ in consciousness, though in an evidently rather ‘background’ fashion. Past arrangement and implications context every present instance in relations to all preceding and emerging ones. There is then, a sense in which the music, dance, or language ‘occurs concurrently,’ is present as an interactivity of past, present, and future particularities. Even what is ‘left out’ is an element of ‘what is.’ Pauses, changes in tempos, and silence also effect perception and interpretation of ‘what happens.’ In addition to this concurrency ‘within’ the seeming linearity of such ‘time phased’ expressions, there is the extended contexting of references in consciousness to other ‘pieces’ of music, dance, or language. Multiple criteria for identifying and interpreting the immediate formulation of sound, movement, or speech are ‘ever present’ and intrinsically interactive with each other in one’s perception and sense of meaningfulness in consciousness. This condition can be imaged as having ‘breadth.’ The ‘immediate moment’ thus ‘spreads out laterally’ in terms of what factors and criteria are accumulatively ‘composing’ it. If one’s immediate awareness attempted to ‘encompass’ all those concurrent particularities of contextual references the experience might be one of discontinuous multiplicity or cacophony.

Thus establishing some definitive awareness of ‘what is happening’ tends require delimiting immediate acknowledgement of that myriad web of past, present, and future

references for the sake of maintaining a specific, practical focus upon the more immediate events. The habitual character of this narrowing or limiting of the dynamical complexity of references for perceiving distinctions, and interpreting these in some meaningful manner, can also restrict one's understanding of the multiplicities of actuality and their concurrency in any instance of being or becoming. A fuller appreciation of the intricacies of how meaningfulness emerges in, from, or around any given instance thus tends to require some extra-ordinary attention to the 'concurrency of sequencing.' Though the radically complex, mutually contingent, potentially cacophonous multiplicity and interactivity of past, present, and implied or future aspects of phenomena appear as essential references for knowing and understanding, these are readily ignored by ordinarily practical emphasis upon linear progressions.

However, reflective analysis upon various aspects of sequential development and its implications (musicology, choreography, literary studies) does not seem likely to necessarily induce a more tangible appreciation of that concurrency. The most dynamically appropriate manner of enhancing awareness of it would seem to involve a related experience of such meaningfully multivalent concurrency. Encountering music or language in relation to images or fixed poses suggests a way to induce a more overt experience of the association of dynamically sequential and simultaneously concurrent elements. Perhaps the most vivid experiential mirror for this accumulative concurrency would derive from some sense of one's own personal identity and status or existence as 'arising out of' such interactivity of past, present, and implied or expected references for 'being this person now.' It seems reasonable to assume that 'artful' performances of music, movement, and language often 'serve just such a purpose' for human knowing of the complexity of selfhood by mirroring this complexity of sequential and concurrent context for 'making meaning.'

Further elaboration of these notions in Chapter One of text **Manifesting the Many in the One** on page of that title

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Leslie Emery