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# ZIG

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OF THE AGE**  
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# TIME IS CHANGE

People also keep changing both  
bodily and spiritually. We call  
the change life. We are different  
in all phases of life, and the way  
we tell the difference is time.

—Tianyu Jin





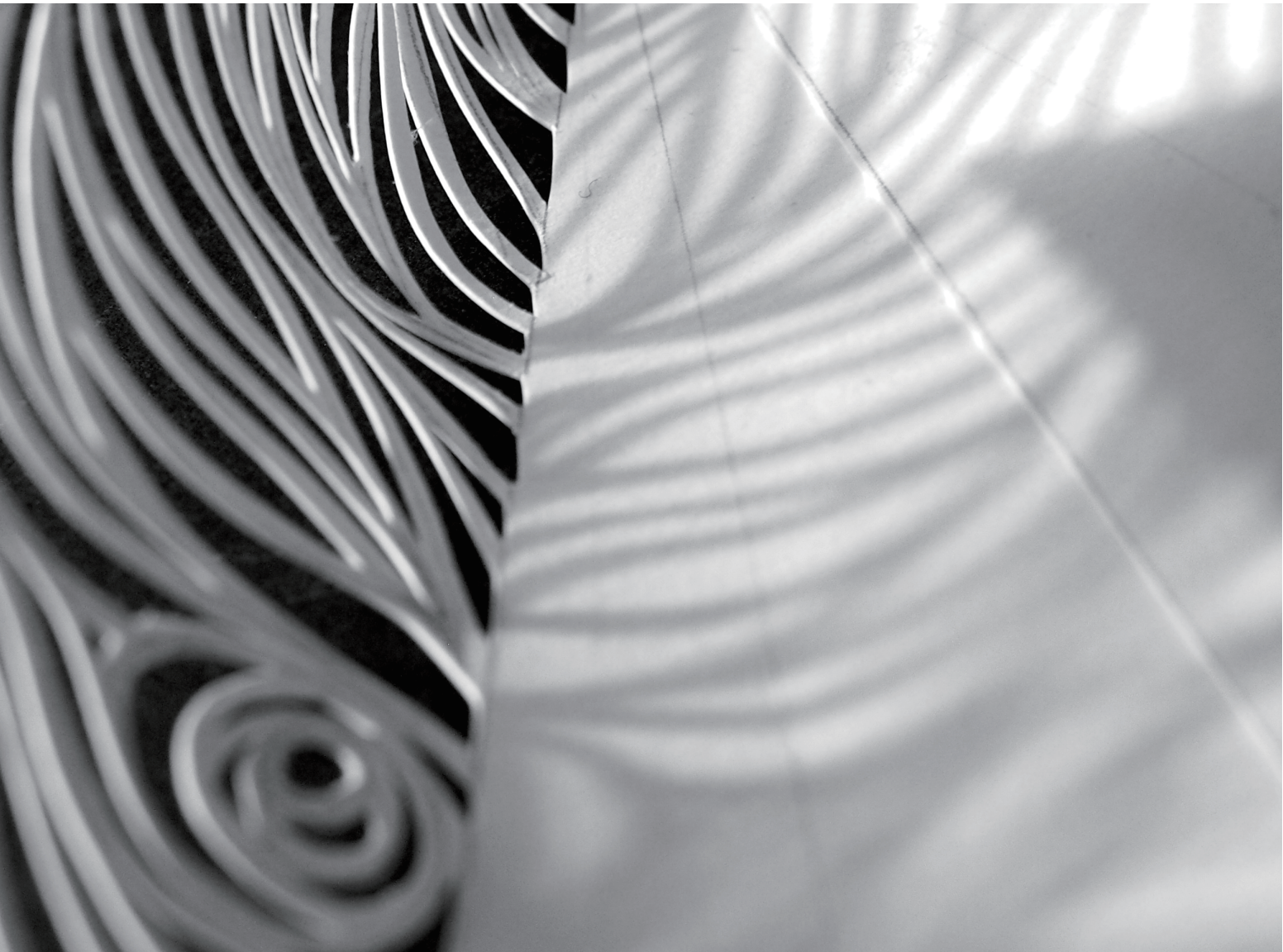
Time is Change.

Does Time Really Exist As A Fourth Dimension Of Space time? Regarding this question scientist should trust more of his senses than his mind. Physical time exists only as a stream of change in physical space. Change does not "happen" in physical time. Change itself is physical time. This is one different and rather correct perspective than the conventional view in physics, in which space-time is the theater or "stage" on which change happens.



The question arises: Why is it that irreversible physical time is experienced as past, present and future? The answer is obtained by analysing the scientific way of experiencing. The human senses perceive a stream of irreversible change. Once elaborated by the mind, the stream of change is experienced chronologically through psychological time that is a part of the human mind.

In the universe the passing of physical time cannot be clearly perceived as matter and space directly; one can perceive only irreversible physical, chemical, and biological changes in material media. On the basis of elementary perception one can conclude that physical time exists only as a stream of change that runs through material space. The terms "physical time" and "change" describe the same phenomenon. Physical time is irreversible. Change A transforms into change B, B transforms into C and so on. When B is in existence A does not exist anymore, when C is in existence B does not exist anymore.



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By observing the continuous stream of irreversible physical change humans have developed psychological time through which we experience the universe. Psychological time is reversible. One can return to the past, in psychological time, through memory. This creates an idea that physical time also has a past, but this is not so. Relativity Theory allows for speculation about time travel. It is possible for someone to travel through a black hole with a spaceship, go back into the past and kill his grandmother? The consequence is that he could never have been born. Travelling into the past through black holes is not possible because physical time is irreversible; the past exists only as psychological time through which it is not possible to travel with a spaceship.

Let's take a look at the relationship between physical and psychological time by carrying out an experiment. Take a ball and allow it to roll down an incline. You can perceive only the movement of the ball in space, but you experience that the ball has also moved through time. How come? Perception passes first through psychological time and then the experience occurs. That's why you experience the movement of the ball in time. But on the basis of elementary perception (sight) one can only state that the ball has changed position in space.

ONE CAN RETURN TO THE PAST THROUGH MEMORY.



# Change does not happen in physical time—change itself is physical time.

In abnormal state of health, there are aberration of subjective time such as acceleration or deceleration of lapse of time. Under some of the mental disturbances , these anomalies become more pronounced. That flux of time may even totally cease. These many sensations usually described as "time are always standing still", or "suspended, arrested" time, or just expand without limit .

The speed of the psychological time does not always follow physical time, it depends on one's well-being. The more relaxed you are the slower the speed of psychological time is. In the modern society time passes quickly, in so-called primitive societies time passed slowly. In an altered state of consciousness, such as meditation, or ecstatic dance and deep prayer, psychological time stops.

The understanding of physical time has changed a lot over the ages. For ancient Greeks, Indians, and Mayans, time was considered a cyclic phenomenon; time moving in circles, with no beginning and no end. When Judaeo-Christian civilization arose in Europe, another understanding of time became prominent - time going forward in a straight line. According to this civilization, time has its beginning with God’s creation of the universe and will have its end with the Last Judgement. In Newtonian physics, physical time is an independent quantity (absolute time), running uniformly throughout the entire cosmic space (absolute space). In the Theory of Relativity, time is no more an independent physical quantity - it is linked with space in four-dimensional space-time. Here physical time is understood as a stream of irreversible change that runs through physical space.

The understanding of time have been different over the ages. For ancient Greeks, Indians, and Mayans, time was considered a cyclic phenomena. In Judaeo-Christian civilization as linear phenomena. In current scientific thought the concept of linear time is still prevalent. Stephan Hawkins says: "The conclusion of this lecture is that the universe has not existed forever. Rather, the universe, and time itself, had a beginning in the Big Bang, about 15 billion years ago. The beginning of real time, would have been a singularity, at which the laws of physics would have broken down. Nevertheless, the way the universe began would have been determined by the laws of physics, if the universe satisfied the no boundary condition. This says that in the imaginary time direction, space-time is finite in extent, but doesn't have any boundary or edge. The predictions of the no boundary proposal seem to agree with observation. The no boundary hypothesis also predicts that the universe will eventually collapse again. However, the contracting phase, will not have the opposite arrow of time, to the expanding phase. So we will keep on getting older, and we won't return to our youth. Because time is not going to go backwards, think I better stop now."

Some recent cosmological models describe universe is a self-renewing system. Big bangs are cyclic. Transformation of the energy of matter into the energy of the space and vice versa is in a permanent dynamic equilibrium, universe has no beginning and no end. It is made of one energy that appears as space and as matter. In the cosmological model of dynamic equilibrium time is a cyclic phenomena, a permanent dynamics between matter and space. It has no beginning and no end.

We can measure with clocks speed and duration of change. By Newton and in Theory of Relativity time is an abstract physical quantity that can not be perceived clearly. Here time is visible. According to this understanding the "t" in physical formulas means "duration of change". This is the actual meaning of Special Relativity: time is relative, its speed changes with the speed of the inertial system. The faster the speed of the system the slower is the speed of time (change). That's why the twin that remains on the Earth is getting old faster that his twin brother that travels with the fast space-ship through the universe. In the fast space-ship the speed of biological change is slower than on the Earth. So when he comes back home he is younger than his brother.

The doubt that "space-time" is the ultimate arena of the universe was raised by Dirac and recently by Julian Barbour: "On a beautiful October afternoon in 1936 I ravelled to the Bavarian Alps with a student friend, Jurgen. We planned to spend the night in a hut and climb to the peak of Watzmann at down next day. On the train, I read an article about Dirac's attempt to unify Einstein's theory of relativity with quantum theory. A single sentence in it was to transform my life: "This result has let me to doubt how fundamental the four-dimensional requirement in physics is". In other words Dirac was doubting that most wonderful creation of twentieth-century physics: the fusion of space and time into space-time."

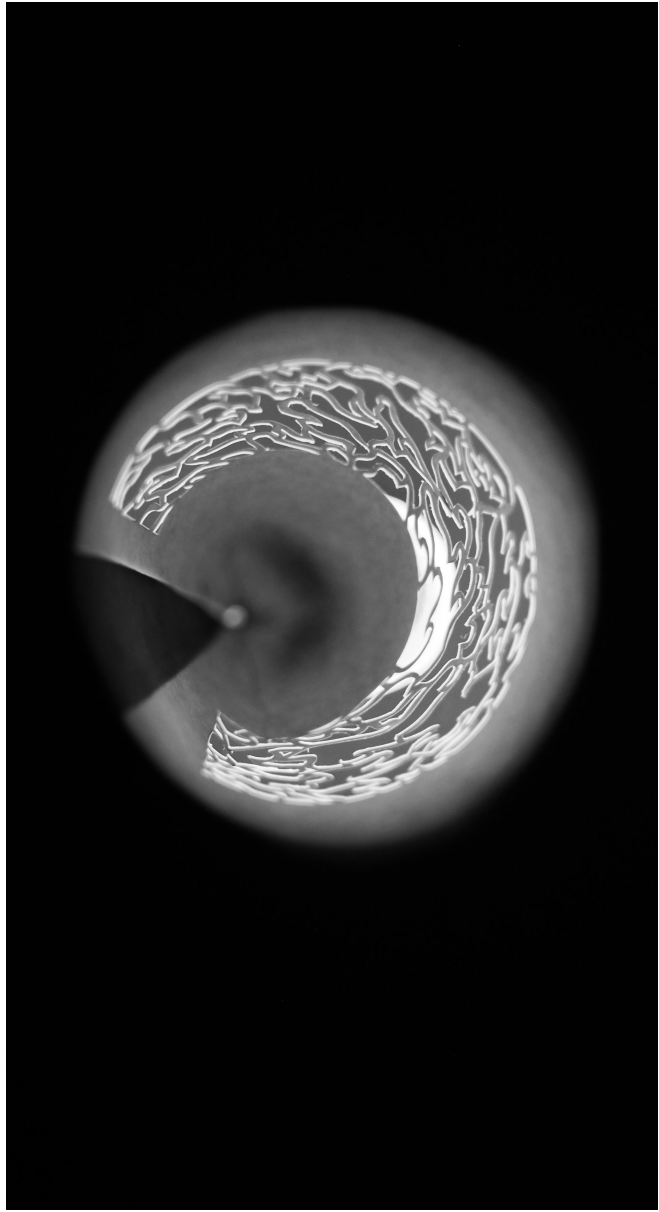
In his book "The End Of Time" Barbour discusses brilliantly about time, but his final conclusions are against the elementary perception and seems to be wrong: "In fact, 35 years on from that failed attempt on the Watzmann, I know believe that time does not exists at all, and that motion itself is pure illusion. What is more, I believe there is quite strong support in physics for his view. I have a vision and I have to tell you about it." Barbour's idea that motion is an illusion is against elementary perception and can not be considered as valid. Motion is the fundamental nature of the universe.

Position of an object in physical space can be defined with three coordinates. That's why in daily life we experience it as three dimensional. Three dimensional Euclid geometry corresponds better the nature of the physical space than other geometries do. In cosmology physical space is experienced through different mathematical models: three-dimensional infinite Euclid geometry, four dimensional geometry of Minkowsky, four dimensional finite spherical Riemann geometry. Cosmologists should develop awareness that mathematical model and physical space are two different things.









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Scientific understanding of time and space should be revised on the basis of elementary perception. Einstein says: Reality is a feature of theory used to understand the world, rather than a feature of the world itself. One is in danger of being misled by the illusion that the "real" of our daily experience, "exists really", and that certain concepts of physics are "mere ideas" separated from the "real" by an unbridgeable gulf. ■



# MUSIC IS LIQUID ARCHITECTURE



Photography by Lynn Langmade  
Architecture by Zaha Hadid  
Article by Charles Jencks

As abstract art forms based on the rhythm, the proportion and harmony, architecture and also music share a very clear cultural lineage. Now, through digital expression, architecture can also attain new heights of creative supremacy.

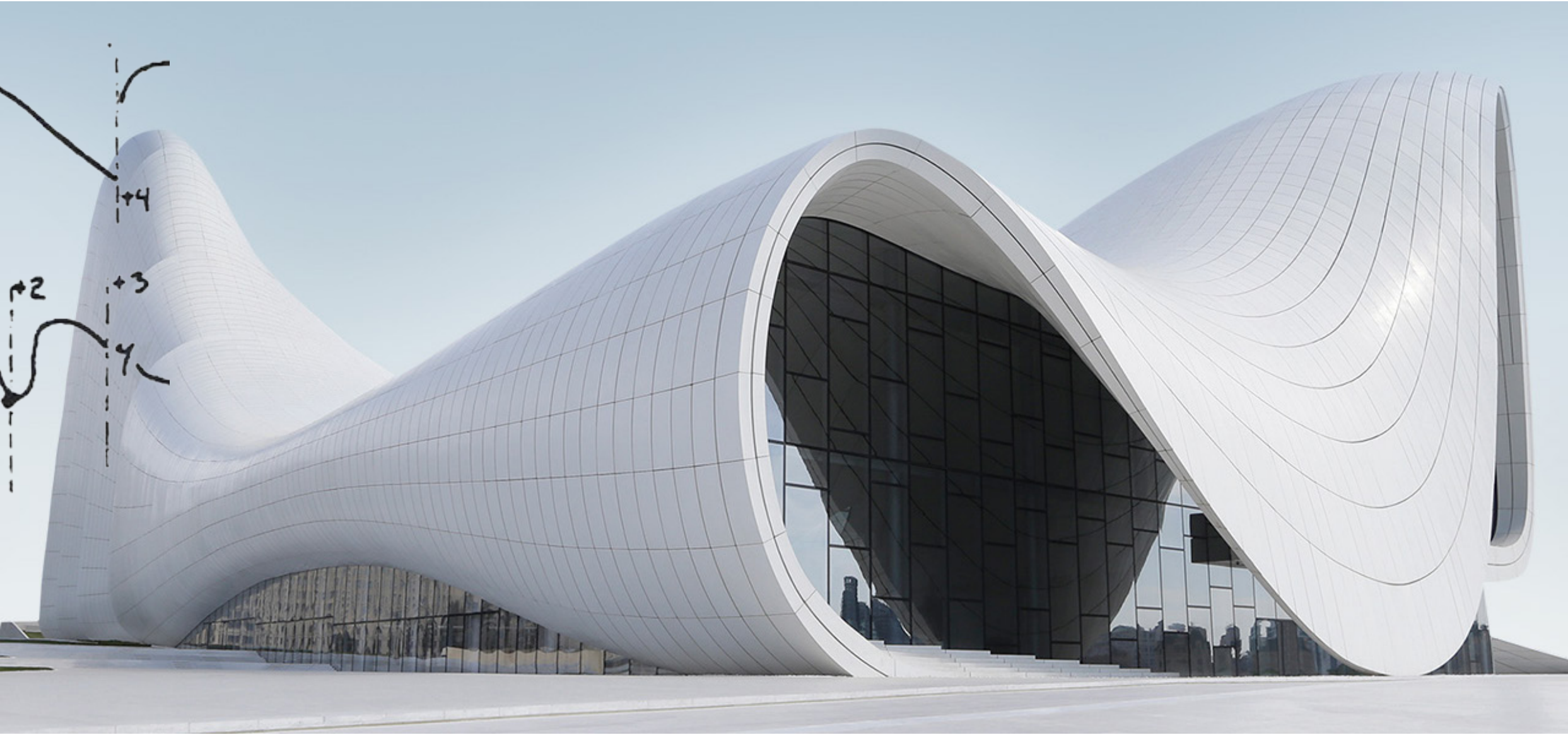
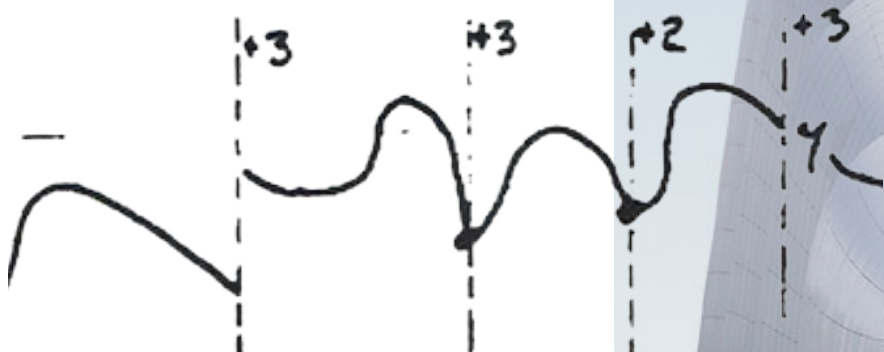


‘All art’ Walter Pater famously observed in 1877, ‘constantly aspires towards the condition of music.’ Why the music envy? Because, the standard answer goes, in abstract music the form and content — or in its case the sound and sense — are one integrated thing. Pater’s aphorism became a good prediction of the zeitgeist and the goal for abstract art in 30 years as the painters in Paris and elsewhere pursued a kind of visual equivalent of musical themes, and Expressionist and Cubist architects followed suit. Indeed architecture as ‘frozen music’ had a long history of tracking its sister, the parallel art of harmonic and rhythmic order. Many qualities unite these two art forms — and quite a few make them different — but it is the former I find compelling today. Their shared concerns can be seen in ceremonial architecture from the ancient Brodgar Stone Circle to concert halls, in structures that heighten the senses and make one perceive more sharply and emotionally. In an era when museums and other building types emerge as a suitable place for musical ornament, and when expressive shapes can be produced digitally, architecture could reach its supreme condition once again and become its own particular kind of music.

Since at least the sixth century BC, music and architecture have been intimately joined by a cosmic connection, the idea that they both are generated by an underlying code. This order, revealed by mathematics and geometry, was first espoused by Pythagoras who lived in southern Italy, and it led to many Greek temples designed on proportional principles revealing not only supreme beauty but ‘the music of the heavenly spheres’ — either God or nature. The idea was so appealing that many later designers tried to capture the notion with new materials. For instance, as Rudolf Wittkower argued, Renaissance architects saw the cosmic connections in simple ratios such as 1:1 (a sound repeating itself, or the architecture of a square room), and 2.

So far so simple, one could explain these analogies by vibrating strings and, as Pythagoras was supposed to have heard, a blacksmith hammering away with instruments of different size. He and others compared the harmonic results to the rhythms of a well-proportioned building, and the code of musical architecture was born. Perfect geometrical figures were equated with perfect whole numbers and then with the perfect harmonic sounds they produced (called ‘the perfect octave, the perfect fifth; the perfect fourth’ and so on.

Architecture is a variably perceived art. It is correctly experienced from several distances and speeds of movement, a property exploited by Peter Eisenman with another staccato composition, his monumental field of separated cubes in Berlin, both an abstract urban pattern and a memorial. Like the Greek temple, it induces the feeling of finality by the absolute contrast between sunlight and blackness. As one explanation for the design, Eisenman described a mood of fear that he experienced when lost in an Iowa cornfield without any cues of orientation or scale. His endless, undulating ground of large concrete blocks naturally expresses this feeling of panic, when one descends into its agoraphobic abstraction. Like the Greek temple, it makes effective use of an isolated, staccato beat — Light/Dark, A/B — but now to send another message: presence/absence. This meaning is further emphasised as you see people suddenly appear and disappear randomly, as they walk through the Holocaust memorial, coming into view suddenly only to vanish. Such naturalistic meaning is as violent as a trumpet blast followed by stillness, or a shriek by silence, and it exploits another convention common in music. Just as the funeral dirge has a remorseless build-up to the inevitable declining notes, so the memorial’s blank coffins thump up only to steadily trail away, like the descending line of a dirge. When music and architecture use such natural and conventional meanings in so simplified a form they raise emotions to a high pitch. The Gothic cathedral proves the point, especially while music is being performed on the inside.



# “In abstract music the form and content are one integrated thing.”

By the year 1200 architectural drawing and musical notation were more common, and a few examples of both survive. The composer Pérotin, working at Notre Dame in Paris, introduced a notational system of long and short notes so he could signal basic rhythms - Dum-ti, Dum-ti, Dum-ti, Dum — just as Gothic architects were working out complex alternate bay rhythms - A,b, A,b, A,b, A. Note in this example both music and building start here on the long stressed element (Dum or A) and then skip forward on the half-beat (ti or b). Note the nave elevation of Notre Dame where these rhythms are marked in several ways, such as the engaged colonnette on every second pier (which also marks the sexpartite vault above), A,b. The parallels between architecture and music are extraordinary. Pérotin and his musicians were working out the harmonies of three and four melodies stacked above each other. These often moved in great blocks creating harmonic chords pleasing to the ear. Architects were also stacking three or four levels in equivalent chords pleasing to the eye. The architectural melodies did not run in as strong opposition as the music. They were smoothed along and ran parallel in horizontal chunks; but there are decorative elements that give the architecture a subtle counterpoint. These sub-rhythms are particularly evident if you examine the evolution of Gothic across time, as shown in the diagrams. These drawings bring out the way four levels of Noyon and Laon are synthesised into the classic three, at Chartres, and then further squeezed and stretched upwards, as the wall dissolves in ever greater light at Reims and Amiens. Little mouldings buzz along the horizontals that accentuate the melodic lines, while more and more colonnettes whiz up the verticals accentuating the harmonies. The great architectural dialectic of horizontal versus vertical forces starts here and culminates in the early skyscraper.

The musicians of Notre Dame loved the architectural polyphony, and even outperformed it. Their experiments with four voices, and simultaneous clusters of chords, are more complex than the nave elevation and much cheaper to build in music than stone. They emphasised harmonic ratios such as 3:2 (called with explicit Godly overtones, ‘the Perfect Fifth’) and 4:3 (‘the Perfect Fourth’) and drew them on lined bars as if they were the cornice lines drawn by the master builder. Again consider the analogy where it works and breaks down. The five horizontal lines of musical notation — the staff — and their four spaces between are roughly like the parallel horizontal ‘melodies’ of the four-part nave elevation, reading left to right as one approaches the altar: except the musical melodies cross the five lines, while the ‘chords’ of architecture stay mostly locked between the string courses. Pérotin and the musicians of Notre Dame pushed on to ever more subtle harmonic relationships of 5:4 (‘the Major Third’) which was more upbeat and happy than the poignant ratio of 6:5 (‘the Minor Third’) which became common to the melancholic laments, their Miserere.

There is nothing exactly equivalent to these heightened emotions of happiness and sadness in the architecture except, maybe, the stained glass and gargoyles, or an outbreak of fan vaulting, or any artistic accent so essential to mood and meaning. The phrases in scare quotes (‘Perfect Fifth’) are hard to learn at first because they refer first to physical notes on the keyboard and only afterwards to the underlying ratios and sounds you hear. But the insights and terms have also led to subsequent innovations in Western harmonics right up to the present, and even become standard ideas for global music. And one could point out that the jargon of architectural relationships, the ‘triforium’ and ‘colonnettes’ or today the ‘spandrel’ and ‘I-beam’ are equally esoteric, but important for the deeper effects.

This raises an important point about perception. Great music and high architecture are sometimes most appreciated when they are imperfectly understood, which is not to say that the composers of each were not aware of their craft. But it is to say the emotional experience of each is very different from the analysis, a point brought out when you enjoy a building inattentively as part of a background (the argument of the philosopher Walter Benjamin and mass culture theorists). Again, examine the contrast between architecture and music in Notre Dame. Where do you stop, look and listen hard, as you are supposed to do with a symphony? Probably where you rest on a seat and contemplate the space of the nave as it rushes to the altar, an experience quite different from viewing the side elevations. The first are solid and stone relationships set in sequence, now it is the void and space seen as a whole, and contemplated with the entire meaning of the church (the heavenward gesture, the structure like oen communal ‘boat’, and associations such as primeval forest). So in this holistic grasp the two arts seem opposed. We take the space in at a glance, while music is necessarily experienced in parts over time, and the two media are as opposed as light waves from acoustic waves. Such oppositions have been emphasised since the 19th century, and more of that later; but what about another positive link beyond harmonies and proportions?

Above all it is the heightening of emotions which in music, and with cathedrals and concert halls, is a common goal. Musicians are often taught the six basic moods, and modes, they can stress sadness, joyfulness, fearfulness, tenderness, love and anger and emotional articulation could be defined as a purpose of music. With architects today it is sometimes the reverse, especially when they are taught to avoid explicit moods and attain a neutral background; or avoid any explicit meaning. But in spite of this they still respond to the funeral dirge and dance music. The ultimate holistic experience? Sydney Smith famously gave the secular definition of heaven as ‘eating foie gras to the sound of trumpets’ a kind of super-synthaesthetic peak-experience to which an atheist architect added ‘but only in the nave of Notre Dame’, a waspish answer that brings out the power of emotional architecture. You only have to listen to monks chanting in the ‘acoustic ears’ of Le Corbusier’s Ronchamp to hear the point; or, less grandly, to sing aloud in a tiled shower. The reverberation of overtones captures the synergy. The cosmic codes that are performed by such music and architecture do not require beliefs so much as the ancient idea that we are tuning-forks for holistic experience. With the rise of modernity, however, this tradition of anonymous, collective design and musical composition was partly displaced by the named architect and composer, sometimes a celebrity. New notational systems aided this development after 1500 along with new materials, new instruments and

the emphasis on the individual creator.

In *The Story of Music*, 2013, Howard Goodall tells this tale of expanding virtuosity and the composers who became public figures, impresarios such as Vivaldi. As the example of Michelangelo shows, the same pattern occurred with celebrity artists and architects. Their personal styles and motifs competed with the traditional modes, which then started to feel stiff and old-fashioned. For every Monteverdi who invented new madrigals and forms of opera there was the corresponding Borromini, the author of new spatial concepts and formal moves in architecture. Competitive innovation has gone on since the 17th century and today, in architecture at any rate, we have a bloom of personal styles dominating the scene, albeit working within various modernisms. Reyner Banham called Le Corbusier ‘The Last Form Giver’ in 1968, and foresaw the end of this tradition, but his prediction proved wrong. From Ando to Zumthor, from Eisenman to Gehry to Hadid to Libeskind to Wolf Prix and back again; from Koolhaas to Herzog & de Meuron, or in engineering from Calatrava to Balmond; from the recent generation of digital designers, the ‘90s Blobmeisters such as Greg Lynn to the 2000s Parameters such as Patrik Schumacher; from curved to angular fractals wherever you look new languages of architecture are proliferating, idiolects are defined, and form-givers flourish. Critics understandably chide these Starchitects, but the jibes and moralising have not halted their proliferation any more than did Banham, and they miss an opportunity to see the growing genre in one different way and explain it to the public.

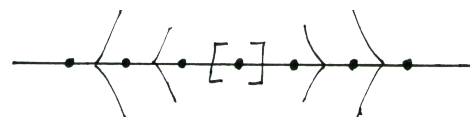
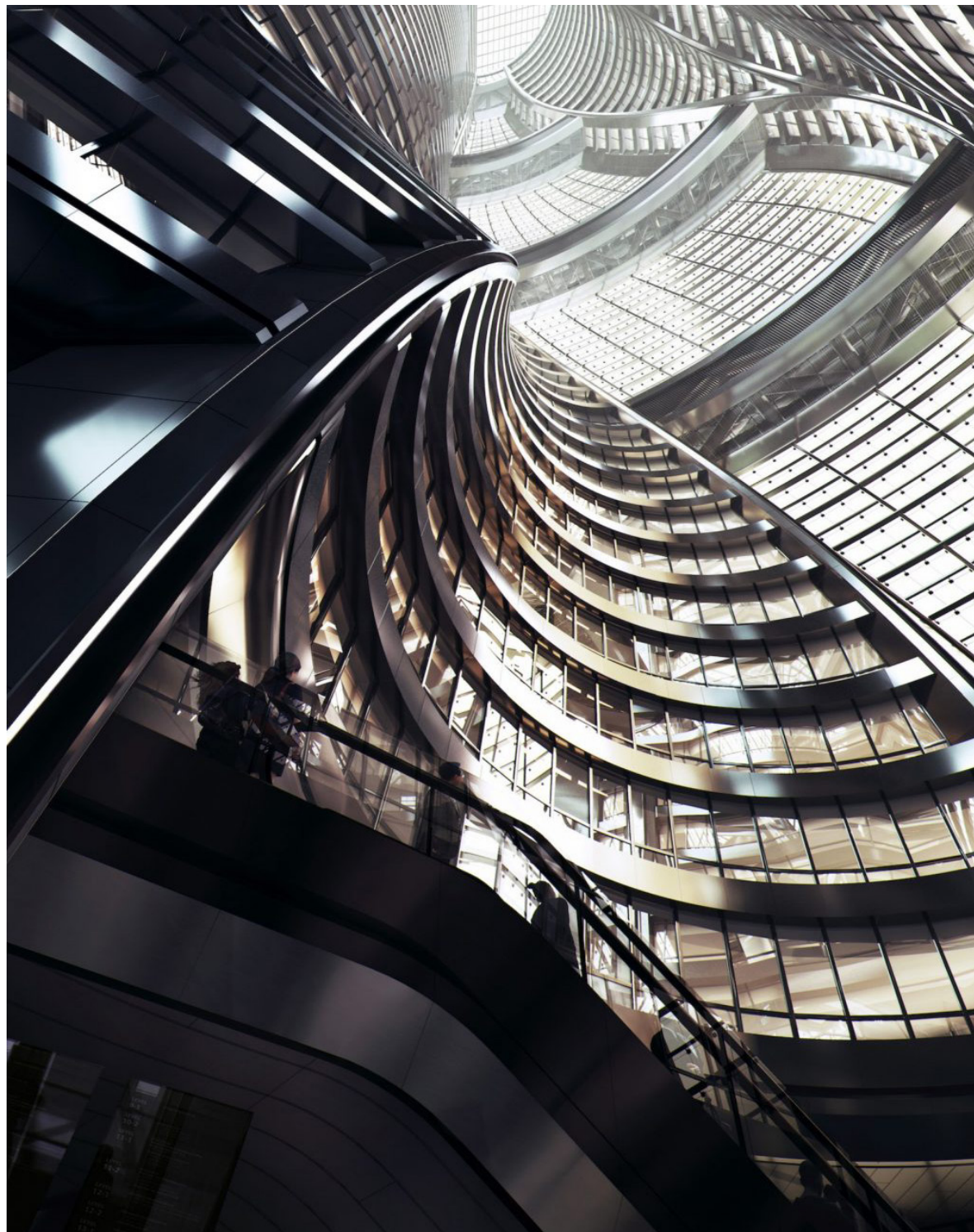
Besides, fame and notoriety are less valuable than the new architectural music, and this burgeoning movement asks to be criticised as such, in its own terms. Some designers have explicit music in mind: Libeskind, Gehry, Prix have composed parts of their buildings with inspiration from Schoenberg and ‘60s pop music; while others are pushing explicit compositional forms: Eisenman, Koolhaas and Hadid. Let us return to where architecture and music have similar intent: extreme emotional arousal.

Architecture and music thus are not only supremely emotional, at moments, but semantic and meaningful at other times. It has probably always been so, but since at least the 16th century, music explicitly has employed pictorial and programmatic themes referring to nature’s moods, such things as rain storms and mountain ranges. Musical genres, as mentioned, developed their special themes for weddings, funerals, making love and war, all the modes and stereotypes that have been transformed from the time of the troubadours to the Beatles. Such pictorial and symbolic music reaches its greatest height with early Stravinsky, although he later disputed the idea. His *Sacre du Printemps*, 1913, uses Russian folk tunes and martial drumbeats to personify the aggressive rhythms of

nature and city life. Here he collages themes together as discordantly as any Cubist, and uses dissonant accents like a 12-tone composer. But unlike the atonal musicians, Stravinsky keeps a compulsive forward movement to his ballet music, by shifting emphasis from one agent to the next — from rhythm to theme to progressing chords. Music must provoke our expectation to want the next moment. Call this latent desire the ‘time-imperative’ of the dramatic arts, those that unfold in a sequence of time.

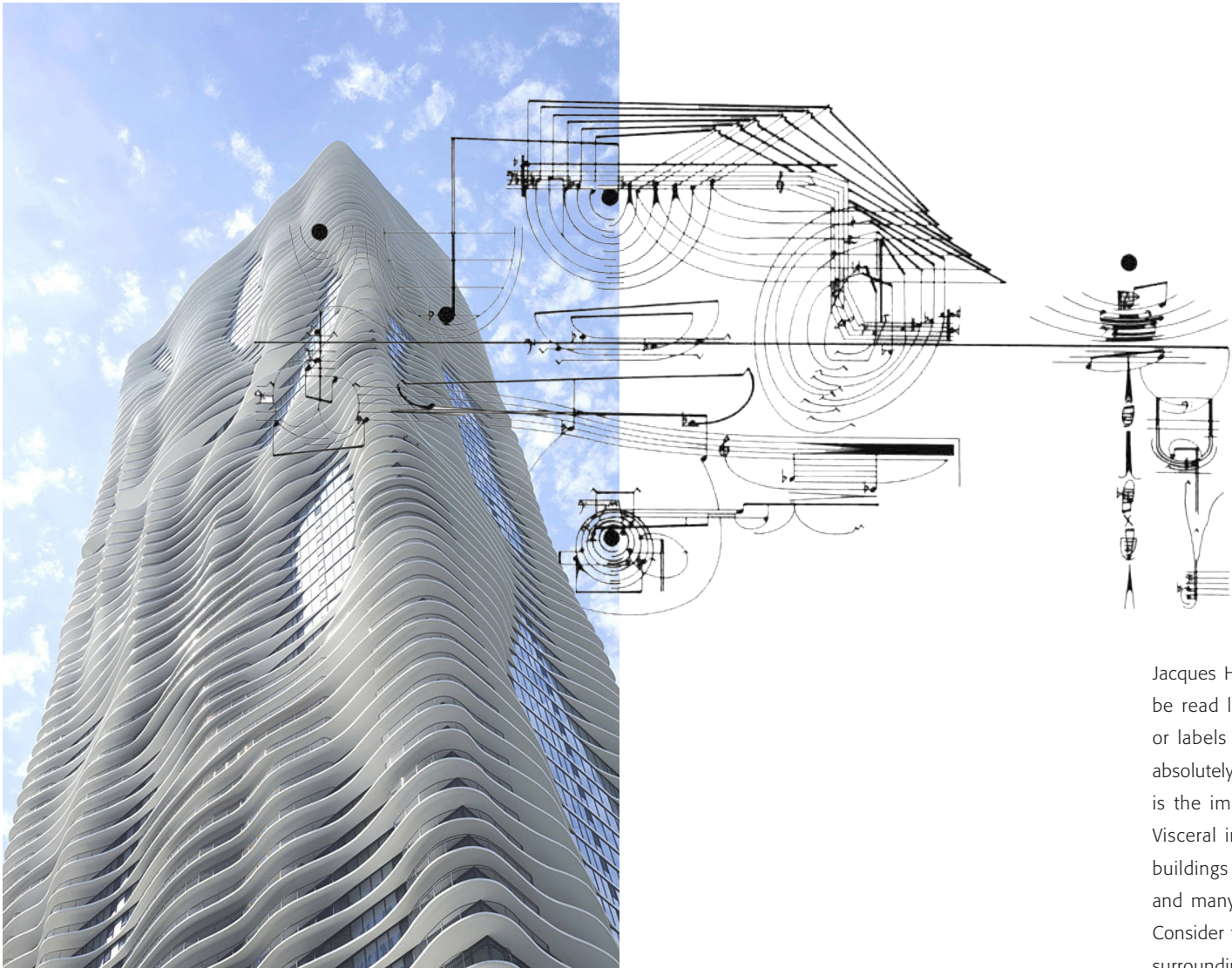
Information Theory has long shown how one momentary perception builds up an expectation of the next moment, and although this forward movement can be resisted and frustrated for short periods, boredom sets in when there is no overall pattern or narrative. Stravinsky showed with *Sacre* that the time-imperative could be satisfied by a quick change from tonality, to rhythm, to tune, to orchestration — any driving pattern as long as the force goes forward compulsively. With his *Rite of Spring* plucking violins in pizzicato, rhythms pick up the stirrings of primitive nature as it grows in springtime. This first section is named by the composer as *Adventure of the Earth*, and the Earth has never been more saturated with sexual energy as it incessantly rebounds into life. The French horns and cellos blow and saw in synchrony with a steady beat — chum ... chum ... chum ... chum ... chum ... chum, followed by violent contrasts up and down like a pagan ritual, with screams followed soon by the soft reassuring note of the single flute. The whole *Sacre* is pictorial, which is one reason that *West Side Story*, many James Bond themes and much movie music has derived from it. For my money *The Rite of Spring* is simply the best abstract and figurative, cosmic and traditional music ever composed. But Stravinsky might have







disagreed. He famously wrote, in his 1935 autobiography, a classic version of the abstractionist dream that has been quoted many times: ‘I consider that music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature, etc ...’ In effect, music is essentially just notes, chords and complex sound experienced over time. On a reductive level and for a creative artist in any field, such formalism has a truth and is understandable; but as Stravinsky perfectly well understood (and mentioned), it is not how listeners hear music. Perception is doubly-coded by form and content, and it is why learning and intelligence grow by connections between the two areas. I emphasise the point of double-coding (common to all semiotic systems) because it challenges Walter Pater’s aphorism — the singular unity of form and content he finds best expressed in music — and because many architects still labour under Stravinsky’s (and Kandinsky’s) hope for abstraction.



Jacques Herzog has said, ‘A building is a building. It cannot be read like a book. It doesn’t have any credits, subtitles or labels like a picture in a gallery. In that sense, we are absolutely anti-representational. The strength of our buildings is the immediate, visceral impact they have on a visitor.’ Visceral impact they do have, but Herzog & de Meuron’s buildings are indeed at the same time ‘read like a book’, and many other things besides including rhythmical music. Consider their CaixaForum in Madrid, a contextual collage of surrounding buildings and an old brick electricity station on the site. Strong horizontal contrasts divide the collage into three basic voices or four or five melodies (depending on the reading). Rusted cast-iron crowns the top, the middle is brick, and the bottom is a black, voided ground floor, which amounts to a violent Beethoven silence. The basic A/b bay rhythm unifies the volumes and blank windows vertically, and this vertical emphasis is amplified by the volumes at the top. At this restaurant level the building opens up with mashrabiya grills, a recollection of Spain under the Moors, but in musical terms it is a cadenza culminating each chord (and giving a background buzz, what is called a musical ‘drone’). Patrick Blanc’s Vertical Garden to one side is also stressed with an upwards and diagonal emphasis. But it is Herzog’s ‘visceral impact’ of the large contrasting blocks of colour and material — indeed all the primitive themes — that are reminiscent of Stravinsky’s violent musical contrasts, at least to me. And like other readings between architecture and music, this will show some themes in common and some differences.

As often pointed out, a scientific analogy between two things is good if it is reduced to one or two qualities of comparison, whereas a cultural analogy can be better for revealing many parallels, as long as the differences are acknowledged. With columnar and window architecture, with buildings that have structural bays and tectonic articulation, the rhythmic parallel to music is narrowly scientific and precise. While it is true relationships change as you move through a building, you can stand still and read the facades of a bay like a musical score, one of the great pleasures of traditional architecture. Even more musical in rhythmic complexity and delight is the Grand Canal in Venice, which can be experienced as one long symphonic transformation of related themes.

Edouard François, at the Hotel Fouquet, Paris, has been forced by building codes to adopt traditional elements, but he has transformed them into new syncopated rhythms.■

# THE SOUL OF THE AGE

Shakespeare's Sonnet LXXI

Article by James Shapiro



Most scholars what accounts for Shakespeare's enduring appeal and they'll credit a number of factors besides his remarkable artistic gifts. Shakespeare was born in the right place and time: his genius flourished in the richly collaborative world of the Elizabethan theater, and his dyer's hand was steeped in the social and spiritual contradictions of an age poised between the medieval and the modern. While his rival Ben Jonson praised Shakespeare as a writer "not of an age, but for all time," it wasn't until the 18th century that Shakespeare's admirers promoted him as England's unrivaled national poet.

Such explanations are heretical to the noted critic Harold Bloom, a self-confessed Bardolator for whom any attempt to understand Shakespeare historically distracts from the simple fact of Shakespeare's unsurpassed, universal genius. Bloom takes as a given that "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare" is a secular scripture from which we derive much of our language, our psychology and our mythology. He is interested in illuminating why this is so, and his bold argument in "Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human" is that Shakespeare remains so popular and his most memorable characters feel so real because through them Shakespeare invented something that hadn't existed before. Bloom defines this as "personality," inwardness, what it means to be human. In so doing, Bloom adds, Shakespeare invented us as well.

If Shakespeare's drama is secular scripture, Bloom offers himself as its high priest. In trying to substantiate his ideas about Shakespeare's originality Bloom faces the problem confronting any proselytizer: when your object of adoration is beyond comprehension, how do you go about persuading others to believe? His solution is to steer between praise and attack (celebrating Shakespeare's originality and savaging pretty much everything and everyone else, especially those false prophets the feminists and cultural historians).

Bloom cares little for plot, genre or action. And you'd hardly know after finishing this book that Shakespeare was interested in history, politics, law, religion or a host of other concerns that have drawn generations of readers to his work. Only characters matter -- and not all characters, only those who seem to Bloom uncannily real, like Hamlet, Falstaff, Rosalind, Iago, Edmund and Cleopatra, who "take human nature to some of its limits, without violating those limits" and through whom "new modes of consciousness come into being." Hotspur, Puck, Kent and Ariel may be terrific parts, but they are passed over in relative silence by a critical sensibility restlessly drawn to the presiding consciousness of a play.

Bloom's view of history, including literary history, is highly selective. There's no serious engagement either with the suggestion that perhaps Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Virgil, Ovid or Petrarch preceded Shakespeare in creating "personality" (and not simply "character," as Bloom would have it), or with the widely accepted view that the introspective turn of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation stimulated a sense of inwardness.

You don't have to swallow Bloom's argument whole, however, to value his local insights. The most exhilarating observations -- and the best chapters are littered with them -- have the quality of aphorisms. Even lifted out of context their incisiveness and rightness compel assent: "Who, before Iago, in literature or in life, perfected the arts of disinformation, disorientation and derangement?"; "To be in love, and yet to see and feel the absurdity of it, one needs to go to school with Rosalind"; "Shakespeare's plays are the wheel of all our lives, and teach us whether we are fools of time, or of love, or of fortune, or of our parents, or of ourselves." His nuanced readings of "The Merchant of Venice," "Henry IV," "Hamlet" and "Antony and Cleopatra" are especially strong.

to mourn me i dead  
hear sur sul bell  
to world i fled  
world vil worms dwell:  
ead line, mem not  
writ for love so,  
r thought be got,  
then make woe.  
look pon verse,  
aps pound am clay,  
uch my name hearse;  
love with life cay;  
world look to moan,  
with af i gone.  
ess ra have  
ink love still bright.

to mourn me i dead  
hear sur sul bell  
to world i fled  
world vil worms dwell:  
ead line, mem not  
writ for love so,  
r thought be got,  
then make woe.  
look pon verse,  
aps pound am clay,

YOU SHOULD LOOK INTO YOUR MOAN,

AS MUCH AS MY POOR NAME REHEARSE;

LOOK UPON THIS VERSE,

THOUGHT WOULD BE FORGOT,

AND WITH VILEST WORMS TO DWELL:

ME WHEN I AM DEAD

“A writer not of an age, but for all time.”

You don't have to swallow Bloom's argument whole, however, to value his local insights. The most exhilarating observations -- and the best chapters are littered with them -- have the quality of aphorisms. Even lifted out of context their incisiveness and rightness compel assent: "Who, before Iago, in literature or in life, perfected the arts of disinformation, disorientation and derangement?"; "To be in love, and yet to see and feel the absurdity of it, one needs to go to school with Rosalind"; "Shakespeare's plays are the wheel of all our lives, and teach us whether we are fools of time, or of love, or of fortune, or of our parents, or of ourselves." His nuanced readings of "The Merchant of Venice," "Henry IV," "Hamlet" and "Antony and Cleopatra" are especially strong.

As much as Shakespeare has invented us, critics reinvent him, and in their own image. Bloom is no exception. The qualities of mind and spirit that he clearly values -- the capacity to be self-dramatizing, witty, charismatic, ironic and skeptical -- turn out to be shared by the characters he considers most real. While few readers will disagree with Bloom's choice of Hamlet as one of Shakespeare's two greatest creations, many may be puzzled by the other: Falstaff, "the mortal god" of Bloom's imaginings. I suspect that there's more than a little projection going on here, once we learn that both are aging, charismatic, brilliant teachers, masters of language who are "turned against all historicisms." Once this identification is established, the subsequent one, between Falstaff and Shakespeare's intellect and values, makes a lot more sense.

Focusing so exclusively on the creation of a handful of characters as the key to Shakespeare's greatness -- beginning with "King John" and ending 12 years later with "Antony and Cleopatra" -- puts Bloom in the difficult position of deciding what to do with the many plays that come before and after. Early comedies, histories and tragedies get dismissed as relative failures or faintly praised for anticipating the fully realized personalities

that are to follow. Bloom is even more hard pressed when dealing with the plays written in Shakespeare's maturity, in which inwardness is largely abandoned. With "Coriolanus" he asks: "Had Shakespeare wearied of the labor of reinventing the human?" In "Cymbeline," his Shakespeare is "alienated from his own art" and resorts to self-parody. By "Henry VIII," Shakespeare "undoes most of what he had invented." Bloom never pauses to consider obvious alternatives to his Procrustean theory. Perhaps Shakespeare came to recognize the limits of character and inwardness and sought by other means -- through wonder, improbabilities and larger patterns of death and regeneration -- to render human experience more fully.

"Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human" is unfortunately marred by one compulsion to denigrate. The least deserving victims are Shakespeare's fellow playwrights, who must be squashed in order to portray Shakespeare as author of himself (only Chaucer and Marlowe are recognized as influences). Lyric poets like Blake and Shelley, subjects of earlier, authoritative books by Bloom, are far better suited to his Romantic notions of autonomous genius than is a collaborative dramatist like Shakespeare. The lengths that Bloom will go to insulate Shakespeare from contaminating influence are often absurd. George Wilkins, who may have had a hand in "Pericles," is described as a "lowlife hack." Poor Thomas Kyd, whose enormously popular "Spanish Tragedy" is unjustly rejected as "hideously written and silly," is stripped of his generally recognized authorship of an early and lost "Hamlet" (Bloom insists that Shakespeare must have written the earlier "Hamlet" too). John Webster, George Chapman, Thomas Middleton and Ben Jonson are all written off as second-raters. Bloom sees himself as one of the great defenders of the Western tradition, but he provides plenty of ammunition for revisionists eager to eliminate these major figures from the canon and the classroom.

WAI

orn for me when i am dead than you shall hear the  
hat i am fled from this vile world with vilest worms  
not the hand that writ it for i love you so, that in  
sing on me then should make you woe. o! if i say, you  
und ed am with clay, do not so much as my poor nan  
de cay; lest the wise world should look in to your mod  
none, unless this miracle have might, that in black in  
orn for me when i am dead than you shall hear the  
hat i am fled from this vile world with vilest worms  
not the hand that writ it for i love you so, that in  
sing on me then should make you woe. o! if i say, you  
und ed am with clay, do not so much as my poor nan



no longer mourn for me when i am dead  
than you shall hear the surly sullen bell  
give warning to the world that i am fled  
from this vile world with vilest worms to dwell:  
nay, if you read this line, remember not  
the hand that writ it, for i love you so,  
that i in your sweet thought would be forgot,  
if thinking on me then should make you woe.  
o! if, i say, you look upon this verse,  
when i perhaps compounded am with clay,  
do not so much as my poor name rehearse;  
but let your love even with my life decay;  
lest the wise world should look into your moan,  
and mock you with me after i am gone.  
o! none, unless this miracle have might,  
that in black ink my love may still shine bright.

In his youth Bloom was "profoundly affected" by seeing Ralph Richardson play Falstaff, the haunting performance that "a half century later was the starting point for this book," but he would deny a similar transformative experience to today's young theatergoers, suggesting that "we might be better off with public readings of Shakespeare." Here again the villain is history, since performances of Shakespeare's plays -- from the staging of "Richard II" on the eve of Essex's rebellion to the w zlatest Off Broadway production -- are always rooted in the here and now. Preferring to wrest Shakespeare out of time, Bloom falls back on the fantasy that Shakespeare (fewer than half of whose plays were printed in his lifetime) preferred readers to playgoers anyway, since he "wrote also to be read, by a more select group." While Bloom is right to take to task some of the more feeble productions he has seen in America, were he more familiar with the work of younger British directors he does not mention -- Deborah Warner's "Titus Andronicus" and Sam Mendes's "Troilus and Cressida" are obvious examples -- his estimation of contemporary productions and of these plays themselves would surely be higher.

Had Bloom, one of the most gifted of contemporary critics, stuck to the plays and characters that he deeply understands, this book would have been a third as long and far more compelling. ■