Breathing, Singing, Creating, Writing: Reflections on *Sarx*

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πότε δὴ στομάτων
δείξομεν ἰσχὺν
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When will we unleash the full power of our mouths?
(Aeschylus, *The Libation Bearers* 720)

Introduction

This text emerges from a series of reflections that led to the creation of *Sarx*, a piece I composed over the course of 2024. It was originally conceived as part of a book, where this text would serve as the first section, the second would be a work still in progress (a sound poem titled *Prana*), and the final part would be the piece *Sarx* itself. The version of this text I now present is a modification of the original, integrating specific reflections on *Sarx* . This adjustment aims to make the text function as an analysis of the piece. However, I decided not to alter its original format, which seeks to weave a conceptual and philosophical universe from relatively isolated reflections. This format, less academic in nature, allows the philosophical potency of the work to unfold. Thus, the resulting text is not a musicological study or analysis. On the contrary, it leans more toward a philosophical, perhaps literary, essay. Nevertheless, it is precisely this form of analysis that I find most fitting for engaging with the work that serves as this text's subject.

Breathing

At the heart of *Sarx* lies the very act of breathing. The entire piece unfolds as a continuous act of respiration, where both inhalation and exhalation are integral to its sonic universe. Composed for solo voice, the work is built almost entirely on glossolalia, meaning that the voice and breath do not carry a defined text or a "sung" message. Instead, the piece centers on the raw sonic power of breathing itself. It explores the pure auditory intensity of each inhalation and exhalation, shaped by shifts in the pressure of the trachea. The writing consists solely of this: modulations of the trachea, inhalations and exhalations, and variations in the openness of the mouth. Perhaps it is worth reflecting on the origins of this concept and the inherent potency of the act of breathing as a way to delve into the sonic and conceptual universe of *Sarx*.

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Ψυχή (*psykhé*) is the Greek word that designates the soul, from which our word "psyche" derives, now understood as mind, consciousness, or mental functions. However, in the earliest instances of the Greek language, particularly in Homeric texts, there is no term to designate the soul as the faculty of thinking and feeling. Ψυχή (*psykhé*) has its root in the verb ψυχέιν (*psychein*), which means to breathe. Here, breathing is not just the act of inhaling and exhaling; it is more a kind of corporeal "organism" that sustains the being's life. It is a vital breath that leaves the body through the mouth (or through wounds) at the moment of death—a breath that seems to depart from the human body to reintegrate into the natural air. The *psykhé* is, then, this breath that keeps the body alive. The vital breath.

> τὸν δ᾽ ἔλιπε ψυχή, κατὰ δ᾽ ὀφθαλμῶν κέχυτ᾽ ἀχλύς:
> αὖτις δ᾽ ἐμπνύνθη, περὶ δὲ πνοιὴ Βορέαο
> ζώγρει ἐπιπνείουσα κακῶς κεκαφηότα θυμόν.
>
> ———
>
> "...and the *psykhé* left him, and the shadow spilled over his eyes;
> but it breathed again when around the breath of Boreas

the soul of the one who was dying breathed back to life."
(Homer, Iliad, V 696)

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Heraclitus understood the *psykhé* as the soul of the living human being, separated from the body and bearing qualities that we would today associate with the idea of soul or reason. Here, the *psykhé* is no longer an organism but a faculty related to the ability to understand and use language, to interpret reality beyond sensory perception. The *psykhé* is, then, something that thinks and comprehends, that rises above the immediate experience of the senses. In this way, we find ourselves much closer to the concept of "reason" as we understand it today. It is no longer merely a vital breath that animates the human being, but a rational entity that gives meaning to the world and to life.

κακοὶ μάρτυρες ἀνθρώποισιν ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὦτα βαρβάρους ψυχὰς ἐχόντων.

———

"Eyes and ears are bad witnesses for those whose *psykhé* does not understand language."
(Heraclitus, frag. 107)

ψυχῇ πείρατα ἰὼν οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροιο, πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδόν· οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει.

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"You cannot discover the contours of the psykhé even if you travel all the roads. So deep is its logos."
(Heraclitus, frag. 45)

ψυχῆς ἐστι λόγος ἑαυτὸν αὔξων.

———

"To the psykhé corresponds a logos that enlarges itself."
(Heraclitus, frag. 115)

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We can then think that the *psykhé* is infinite in potential, but it takes shape as it inhabits a person. It is a deep breath, a sigh that seems abyssal. It is not just air; it is also reason, an interiority that possesses its own *logos*, a wisdom that resides in the breath and grows from

within. The *psykhé* is the place where knowledge, expression, and understanding reside. It is the vital center from which human beings shape and give meaning to the world around them. This vital breath is, at the same time, the axis of human understanding, the place where being and the cosmos meet. In the *psykhé*, *logos* originates, and from there the relationship between the human being and their environment is established, between internal comprehension and external reality. It is through this profound interiority that human beings name, understand, and ultimately appropriate the world.

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This is the intention behind *Sarx*: to generate a breath, a *psyché*, imbued with intellectual depth, with a logos. To allow breath to inhabit us means ceasing to regard it as an automatic, irrational activity devoid of intellectual, philosophical, or political potency. One way to embody breath is precisely what this piece proposes. *Sarx* becomes, then, a protocol of experience, a potential guide to exploring the logos of our *psyché*—a guide to infusing the very act of breathing with profound power.

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The core of Socratic philosophy lies in the care of the *psyché*. For him, true virtue and happiness could only be achieved through constant attention to the *psyché*, understood not only as the rational or spiritual part of the human being but as the center of their well-being and morality. This care involved a life of self-knowledge, reflection, and moderation, always prioritizing inner cultivation over material or bodily concerns. For Socrates, the soul was the direct link to truth, goodness, and justice, and any deviation from this care was an error that affected the very essence of the individual. Thus, living without attending to the *psyché* was, in his view, a life without true meaning.

> ἐπιμελεῖσθαι μήτε χρημάτων πρότερον μηδὲ οὕτω σφόδρα ὡς τῆς ψυχῆς ὅπως ὡς ἀρίστη ἔσται
>
> ———
>
> Do not worry about bodies or wealth, nor with such strong effort, before taking care of the psyché, so that it may be in the best condition possible. (Plato, Apology of Socrates, 30 a-b)

> φρονήσεως δὲ καὶ ἀληθείας καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ὅπως ὡς βελτίστη ἔσται οὐκ ἐπιμελῇ οὐδὲ φροντίζεις.
>
> ———
>
> You do not take care of the wisdom and truth (*aletheia*) of your *psyché*, so that it may be as best as possible. (Plato, *Apology of Socrates*, 29 d-e)

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In the Vedic tradition, *prana* is the word that designates vital breath, which in turn is the vehicle of the *atman*, the soul:

> And the vital breath is also ritual chant. For speech is truly *Samaveda*: the feminine and the masculine. Hence its natural harmony: just like an ant or a mosquito, like an elegant being or the three worlds, or like the entire universe. Such is indeed the sacred chant. Whoever knows the essence of the chant lives in communion with the rest of beings. For the vital breath is a high chant. Whoever knows the sacred chant will not fear losing their own world. (*Aitereya Upanishad*)

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Breath is the vital force that gives rise to song, the invisible energy that sustains both life and divine expression. Breathing, in this sense, is a sacred act, a direct connection to the divine, as inhaling and exhaling participate in the cosmic rhythm that unites all beings. In this way, when we breathe, we are also singing a song that does not belong to any human language but to a divine language that precedes human language and connects all that exists. Singing, then, is to attune oneself to this primordial breath, to the *prana* that flows through all things. It is an act of communion with the order of the universe. Those who know and understand the sacred song, who can perceive this divine language that permeates us, do not sing only for themselves but for all beings. Thus, song is both a personal and universal act, a way to transcend separation and embrace unity with the universe and its unfathomable mysteries.

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By placing breath at the center of the piece—the rhythmical process of moving air into and out of the lungs—*Sarx* seeks something deeper: an internal rhythm from which the song

emerges. This piece does not aim for an ideal sound or tempo external to the performer's body. On the contrary, it invites the discovery of one's own rhythm, the vital rhythm of the person engaging with the work. It creates a space for resonance and personal synchronicity, one that will inevitably expand to other bodies, generating new rhythms and new sonic universes.

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> The Guayaquí warriors sing at night, around the fire, drawing close to one another [...]. Each warrior sings a melody that in the general cacophony no one can feel or comprehend, a single brutal word of self-glorification: "I, I, I." Sung in the presence of others, this word is, nevertheless, solitary, pronounced into the void of any audience. There, then, language does not belong to humans, and the word does not belong to the subject. (Clarisse Herrenschmidt, *Writing between Visible and Invisible*)

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> Μηκέτι μόνον συμπνεῖν τῷ περιέχοντι ἀέρι, ἀλλ̓ ἤδη καὶ συμφρονεῖν τῷ περιέχοντι πάντα νοερῷ. οὐ γὰρ ἧττον ἡ νοερὰ δύναμις πάντῃ κέχυται καὶ διαπεφοίτηκε τῷ σπάσαι δυναμένῳ ἥπερ ἡ ἀερώδης τῷ ἀναπνεῦσαι δυναμένῳ.
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> ———
>
> You must not only breathe the air that surrounds you, but also think with the intelligence that envelops everything. For the intellectual faculty spreads everywhere and penetrates anyone who can assimilate it, just as the ability to breathe penetrates anyone who can breathe. (Marcus Aurelius, Meditations VIII, 54)

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In the Greek magical papyri, a collection of syncretic magical-religious texts from Greco-Roman Egypt, the *Liturgy of Mithras* is found. We know that this text belongs to some Stoic school and is therefore linked not only to a particular magical rite but also to a way of life. Among the spells and magical formulas, a luminous passage stands out as a guide for breathing: a kind of ritual protocol that allowed for the inhalation of the divine spirit, the vital breath. This practice triggered an experience that we might describe as "sonorous," where the incantation, the sound that appeased the gods, was not an order in human language or an understandable word. Instead, it was an incomprehensible sound, yet

carefully detailed, in which the phonetics and vibrations produced in the body of the one who uttered it evoked divine energies:

> Draw in breath from the rays three times, drawing in as much as you can.
> [Then] you will see yourself being lifted up and ascending to
> the height, so that you seem to be in midair. You will hear
> nothing either of human or of another living being, nor in that
> hour will you see anything of mortal affairs on earth, but
> rather you will see all immortal things. [...]
> Now the course of the visible gods will appear through the disk
> of god, my father; and in a similar way the so-called pipe,
> the origin of the ministering wind; for you will see it hanging
> from the sun-disk like a pipe. [...]
> And you will see the gods intently staring at you and rushing at you.
> But you at once put your right finger on your mouth and say:
>
> "Silence! Silence! Silence!
> Symbol of the living imperishable god
> Guard me, Silence! NECHTHEIR THANMELOU!"
>
> Then make a long hissing sound, next make a popping sound,
> and say:
>
> "PROPROPHEGGE MORIOS PROPHYR PROPHEGGE
> NEM ETHIRE ARPSENTEN PITETMI MEOY ENARTH
> PHYRKECHO PSYRIDARIO TYRE PHILBA."
>
> And then you will see the gods looking graciously upon you and
> no longer rushing at you, but rather going about in their own
> order of affairs.

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There is, then, a unique power in vocalization itself, in "nonsensical" singing. A conceptual or semantic framework is not necessary for the voice's potency to take root in the body and bring forth other sonic and poetic realities. This is the ground upon which *Sarx* seeks to stand, to establish new forms of power. Much like the *Liturgy of Mithras*, *Sarx* serves as a guide to breathing. Its entire graphic universe functions as a map of the act of inhaling and exhaling, where what is pronounced is predominantly glossolalia. The voice, therefore, does

not convey a specific meaning. Instead, the value of the singing lies in its asignifying sonic force. This allows the performer to channel all their energy into the direct experience of breathing itself, making their body, their own song, fully present.

Singing

The archaic Greek poetry often began by invoking or requesting the song of the Muses, goddesses of art and inspiration. Their presence is sought, for it is they who bring forth the myth about to unfold. Before any tale or feat takes place, the appearance of the Muse herself is fundamental, as all song has a divine origin. The poet does not speak for himself; it is the Muses who express themselves through his voice, transforming into the very song. The presence of the Muses not only invokes inspiration but also the reality of the events narrated, for in their poetic manifestation, things come to life. Thus, the Muses are made present through the poet's song, through the weaving that the rhapsode constructs with his voice and body. This is evident from the very first lines of the *Iliad*, where Homer opens his epic with a call to the Muses:

> μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
>
> ———
>
> The wrath sings, O goddess, of Achilles, the son of Peleus.
> (Homer, *Iliad*, I)

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In the archaic Greek tradition, the word *legein* had the connotation of recounting events, of gathering and presenting a series of facts or memories as a unified narrative for someone else. *Legein* is not just to speak, but to compile, organize, and structure external experiences in order to communicate them coherently to a listener. It is about constructing a discourse, shaping a catalog of stories, and offering it as a comprehensible exposition. However, at the heart of this narrative act, what is central is not the facts themselves, but the impact that these words have on the listener. The word *legein* carries a semantic intention, a desire for what is said to generate meaning in the one who listens. This

intention to create meaning, to provoke interpretation, is what imbues this word with a potential falsehood, a manipulation of language to serve a specific purpose. In the face of this inherent falsehood of the act of "saying," singing arises, as highlighted by a deeply revealing passage from Hesiod: lies are told, articulated through common speech, while truths are sung:

> ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
> ἴδμεν δ', εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι
> ———
> We know how to say (legein) many lies (pseudea) similar to the truth,
> but we also know, if we wish, to sing (gerusasthai) the truth (alethea).
> (Hesiod, *Theogony*, 27-28)

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The concept of λήθεια (*aletheia*), truth, in ancient Greece was not merely the enunciation of something that coincides with reality. The word *aletheia* derives from the union of the particle a-, which denotes negation, and -letheia, meaning "hidden" or "concealed." Thus, *aletheia* implies the act of un-hiding, revealing what was covered or veiled. We can think of singing as a form of un-hiding, an act by which reality unfolds and takes shape through the rhapsode. Singing allows the hidden to emerge, the invisible to take presence. It is a letting-be of the world.

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Thus, in singing lies the truth—not the true in terms of a message; we do not "sing truths." The song is not the vehicle of a verifiable message. Instead, singing is truth in itself; it is the letting-be of the world, the unveiling of the hidden, the presence of bodies. Singing is the very event of truth. Therefore, perhaps the most important question is not "what to sing?" but rather "how to sing?" and perhaps also "where to sing?"

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In this sense, *Sarx* completely abandons any interest in the semantic content of what is sung, shifting the poetic power of the piece toward how to sing, rather than what to sing. The focus lies on the force—the sonic and bodily intensity—that emerges in the very act of reading or performing the piece, rather than on its "content." *Sarx* explicitly rejects the idea of a work as a container of meaning. It does not convey anything, hold any meaning, or “intend to say” something. *Sarx* is simply the act of breathing, gaining strength and potency through the act of performing the work itself.

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In his renowned essay "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger proposes that this unveiling, this letting-be of the world, *aletheia*, is the goal and essence of all works of art. The work is not merely a representation or an artifact; it is a process through which being itself reveals itself. For Heidegger, artistic creation is closely linked to the Greek concept of τέχνη (*tekné*), which, according to him, "does not mean either manual craft nor art, and much less the technical in the current sense [...]. It is a way of bringing forth the being, inasmuch as it draws what is present out of concealment and conveys it within the unveiling of its aspect. [...] We can characterize creation as that letting something emerge, becoming something brought forth, produced" (Martin Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art*). Thus, the act of creating art is an act of revelation, an unveiling of the hidden, allowing being to emerge in its entirety.

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The essence of singing, of the voice, and of all artistic creation does not reside in what it "says" or communicates. It is not about a message that the listener or spectator interprets. Reducing the creative act to a conceptual interpretation is ultimately an act of concealment, a denial of the being of things. It is to tame what emerges from the depths of the *psykhé*, the soul, the ineffable. Thinking about what art "means" obscures the gaze of the act of creation and renders the body and presence invisible. Art has nothing to do with semantics. It does not mean anything. It is not a code that must be deciphered, nor a message waiting to be understood. Rather, it is an event, an unveiling, a letting emerge of what was hidden. Any attempt to understand art from a semantic perspective is, in the end,

a failure, because it conceals its deepest truth: the creative experience, the body that sings, the divinities that become present in the act, the unveiling of other possible worlds.

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> Before signifying something, every utterance of language points to someone who speaks. This is crucial and has not been noted by linguists. (Paul Valéry, *Cahiers*, p. 466)

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What *Sarx* reveals is not so much music or organized sound, but rather the one who sings—the body and voice of the person reading and performing the work. Through the act of singing and reading, the voice unveils its presence. What is revealed in the performance is the performer themselves: their breath, their voice, their song, their body. *Sarx* does not seek to represent a greater idea hidden within the materiality of the piece. There is nothing that *Sarx* represents. *Sarx* is presence itself—a body making itself present in physical space through the movement and alteration of particles and atoms, as the song manifests through breath. No signification. No representation. Pure sonic and bodily materiality.

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For a long time, the dominant theory regarding the origin of language was the so-called compositional theory. This hypothesis holds that a possible protolanguage was composed of sounds that, like rudimentary words, represented simple units of meaning. This protolanguage lacked a defined grammar and functioned in a primitive way, where isolated sounds served to convey direct meanings. However, a reinterpretation of archaeological evidence has given rise to an alternative theory known as the holistic theory. This new perspective suggests that language did not originally emerge as a means to transmit information or knowledge in a structured manner, but rather as an imitation of nature. Through sounds, humans sought to mimic their environment, not only to understand it but also to become a part of it. Over time, and similar to what we observe in other primates, song became a fundamental social tool. It was not a means to convey ideas or coordinate actions, nor to construct political or cultural systems. Instead, song served a socializing function based on the simple pleasure of singing in company, a form of group cohesion that

still persists in our modern practices. From this perspective, it is plausible to think that language as a system of structured signs and meanings was a late invention in human evolution. In its early stages, the protolanguage likely had much more in common with what we now consider "music" than with a language in the strict sense. The musicality of the primordial sounds emitted by the voice would have been essential for social interactions, long before the grammatical and semantic complexities that now characterize human language emerged. Hominoids sang long before they spoke.

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> But, in fact, who speaks in poetry? Mallarmé wanted it to be Language itself. For me—it would be—the Living and Thinking Being (a contrast, this one)—pushing self-awareness toward capturing its own sensitivity—developing the properties of this in its implications—resonances, symmetries, etc.—on the string of the voice. Thus, Language arises from the voice, rather than the voice from language.(Paul Valery, *Cahiers*, p. 293)

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Making singing and the voice a truth, an *aletheia*, implies abandoning semantics as the center of all discourse to position our efforts in presence, in touch. The strength of a voice, of a song, lies not in the message it conveys, but in the intensity of the presence that allows itself to be in the world and in the connections that it enables.

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> Language does not belong to the relationships that can be revealed in the structures of formal logic: it is contact through a distance, a relationship with what is not touched, through an emptiness. (Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalidad e infinito*, p. 190)

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The intention of *Sarx* is not to communicate or convey something. It is not to transmit knowledge. Instead, the purpose of this piece is to enable contact through unveiling—to make a body present in a space and, through the very act of breathing, create a territory

where connections can occur. In doing so, it deterritorializes both the voice and the work itself.

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Every word is therefore a song. The word dwells in its semantic impossibility, and in this impossibility, what is revealed is the potential of the presences of those who speak, of those who sing, and of the connections that these make possible.

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> If we call music the experience of the Muse, that is, the experience of the origin and the occurrence of the word, then in a society defined by a particular era, music expresses and governs the relationship that people have with the event of the word. But this event—the archi-event that constitutes man as a speaking being—cannot be articulated in language: it can only be evoked and remembered musically or musically. […] This impossibility of accessing the original place of the word is music. In it, something is expressed that cannot be said in language. This is immediately evident when music is made or listened to: the song first celebrates or laments an impossibility of expression, the painful or joyful, hymn-like or elegiac impossibility of accessing the event of the word that constitutes humans as human. (Giorgio Agamben, *¿Qué es la filosofía?*, p. 147)

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Frequently, the development of speech is conceived as a linear evolutionary process, where an expressive function, considered primitive, first appears, attributed to infancy. Not surprisingly, the word "infant" comes from the Latin *in-fans*, meaning "without speech." This stage is characterized by calls, screams, or cries that express emotional states without a clear intention to communicate something to someone and are rather products of the emotions themselves. According to this view, the expressive function would gradually give way to a "superior" indicative function, where language is used with the intention of provoking a specific reaction in the receiver, whether to inform, command, or interact in a more complex manner. However, this linear and hierarchical view overlooks a fundamental dimension of vocalization: in every scream, in every sound emitted by the body, there exists

a movement of particles, a physical alteration in the surrounding space. The act of emitting sound, whether a scream or a word, is not simply an emotional or communicative phenomenon, but a material act that affects the external world. Every sound emission generates concrete physical reactions and, therefore, transforms the space in which the body is present. One cannot dissociate the act of communicating from the bodily presence that accompanies it. There is always a body behind the voice, and that body manifests and makes itself felt in the physical space through its sound. Thus, every sound emitted by the voice is not only an act of language but also a way of inhabiting the space, a manner of being and existing in the world.

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> Pure intense sound matter, always in relation to its own abolition, deterritorialized musical sound, a scream that escapes from signification, from composition, from song, from speech, sound in a position of rupture to detach itself from a chain still too significant. In sound, the only thing that matters is intensity. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 15)

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Listening and speaking are, first and foremost, physical phenomena. Every time a body emits sound, it moves particles in the air, generating waves that travel until they impact the eardrums of another body. This process is nothing more than the transmission of energy: one body pushing against another. In this sense, the object of sound and music is physical. It involves the interaction between moving bodies, the organization and displacement of these entities in a shared space. Music, then, loses all its power if we think of it from a semantic perspective, as the transmission of signs, rather than as the manifestation of a material presence. Bodies resonate, vibrate, and affect the space in which they exist. Music is, above all, the presence of bodies.

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Music is, therefore, a praxis: a concrete action that makes bodies visible, palpable, and tangible in space. It is a way of being in the world, of territorializing and deterritorializing,

of occupying the air and the space around us. Music is about the presence of voices, of bodies inhabiting a space. Music is a system for organizing bodies. Music is a political praxis.

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Sarx seeks to be a political praxis insofar as it makes a body present in physical space. By proposing a cartography where voice, breath, and body unfold, a political praxis takes shape. In truth, any cartography of the spirit, the *psyché*, or breath is inherently a political project. In this piece, the body becomes present as it traverses the pathways outlined by the score, which functions as a map, a cartography.

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> A [musician] is not a [musical] man, but Deleuze a political man, and he is a machine man, and he is an experimental man (who in that way ceases to be a man to become a monkey or a beetle or a dog or a mouse, becoming-animal, becoming-inhuman, because in reality it is thanks to the voice, to sound, thanks to a style that becomes animal, and there is no doubt that through sobriety). (Deleuze y Guattari, *Kafka,* pg. 17)

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So if the question is not what to say through music, we should ask ourselves how to make music then? What is the act of sound creation? How can we enhance and enable presences?

Creating

We can understand musical creation and, in reality, all creative acts as the formulation of protocols of experiences. It is about producing a set of actions, conceptual processes, and states of being that are initially formulated in the body that designs them. Individual manifestations, born from the particularity of the one who formulates these protocols, but at the same time potentially common, in that they can be deployed in other bodies. These protocols are more like maps, cartographies of an individual cosmos that unfolds in other

bodies, generating common contacts and movements. A work does not only exist at the moment it is conceived; it activates, unfolds, and renews each time another body embodies it, revealing and making present a cosmos that was not there before. Each time one body encounters another through a work, through a protocol of experiences, it generates new maps, new cartographies. Every work is always a reinvention of the world, a different way of inhabiting that opens new possibilities of being and belonging. Thought of this way, the strength of a work would then lie in the potency of the protocol itself that occurs in the original body of the one who designs it, in the depths of the creator's search for the soul. One could then think that a search for the personal is also a search for the common.

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> Every spiritual exercise is dialogical to the extent that it entails a genuine exercise of presence, both before oneself and before others. (Pierre Hadot, *Spiritual Exercises*, p. 36)

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Sarx is, above all, a protocol of experience. The core of the work—its purpose—is not the performance of an ideal sound presented to an audience. There is no ideal sound. *Sarx* is closer to a spiritual exercise, a personal protocol of experience. It is a cartography of voice and breath, and reading this work becomes a journey through that cartography—a navigation and adherence to a protocol designed to ignite experiences within the body of the one who engages with it. What arises from this reading is not a singular sound meant to be passively heard from an external space by a passive audience. The ear that matters, the body that matters, first and foremost, is that of the performer, the one reading the score. The sonic interactions that occur as the cartography is traversed may unfold in space and enable connections with external audiences. However, neither the creative act of this work nor the act of reading it carries any intent to reach an audience or transmit a message. These connections are to emerge naturally, without any premeditation.

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At the risk of a trivial comment, it may be worth contrasting this sonic cosmos with what we today understand as music. It seems that when we speak of music, we are not referring to any unveiling or deployment of a cartography that would enable other states of being and ways of inhabiting the world. What we now understand as music is more of an umbrella term that refers to the systems of production, reproduction, and distribution of sound and linguistic messages. We talk about "what music says," about orchestras that "interpret" a piece in a concert for a spectator audience, about what a work makes us feel, about consumption. There are no states of being, no deployments of protocols of experiences that enable presences, cosmos, or ways of inhabiting.

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It has always been striking to note the disdain that Plato, and probably Socrates as well, felt for poetry and the troubadours. What often goes unnoticed is that this disdain for poetry coincided with their feelings towards public speakers and sophists. In the Socratic-philosophical universe, where philosophy was not just an intellectual activity but a state of being, a way of living that involved the care of the *psykhé*, the sophists represented something diametrically opposed. For Socrates, the sophists, who engaged in crafting enchanting speeches solely aimed at convincing the masses and mobilizing them towards specific actions, lacked *aletheia*, the pursuit of truth. Sophistry, then, was the antithetical project to Socratic philosophy. While philosophy was oriented toward the care of the *psykhé* and the unveiling of truth, sophistry focused on producing and distributing persuasive discourses. In this sense, rhapsodes, those poets who recited their works publicly, seemed to Plato mere poetic sophists, showcasing a verbal skill that sought not truth but the enchantment of the masses and the massification of certain ethical systems. Thus, in his ideal project of the Republic, Plato expelled them, for he believed that poets and rhapsodes had no place in a society where philosophical truth was paramount and not the art of persuading with empty words. This disdain that Plato held towards poets and sophists seems to foreshadow, in some way, what we now understand as music, in that, being linked to the large media devices of production, reproduction, and distribution, it seeks not to create new ways of being or inhabiting the world but rather to disseminate the same systems of production, distribution, and consumption within which that music is created. In other words, it disseminates a particular ethical system, a sophism.

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> Plato's hostility towards art is highly significant. His doctrinal tendency to view the path to truth as one of knowledge has no greater enemy than beautiful appearance. (Nietzsche, *Posthumous Fragments*, 3[47])

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Bach left incomplete the Counterpoint XIV from *The Art of Fugue*, a work that was never performed during the composer's lifetime. Some suggest that perhaps this work was not intended for live performance but was merely an intellectual exercise. However, we could consider that, beyond being a musical exercise, it was a spiritual one— a protocol of experience, a cartography of Bach's spirit. A couple of centuries later, Glenn Gould, with the modern technologies of his time, recorded this unfinished work on both piano and organ. Asking whether what we hear in Gould's recordings is what Bach "meant to say" would be misguided. The question is not about unraveling the "original message," but rather about the greatness of the power that flows through both. There is something of Bach in Gould and something of Gould in Bach, not because one faithfully reproduces the other's intention, but because they share a common quest, a spiritual power that both embody. The selves of Bach and Gould dissolve.

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In *Sarx*, there is no composer’s voice that the performer merely recreates. In this work, the performer is not a passive, inert body through which the composer speaks. Instead, the reading or recitation of this piece is the unfolding of a shared cartography, where the bodies of composer and performer touch and dissolve into the act of contact itself. The act of reading this work is not so different from its creation. *Sarx* is, rather, a field in constant deterritorialization—pure sonic and bodily intensity.

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> I am the word of the rite, I am the sacrifice, I am the offering and the ritual herb, I am the prayer; I am the purified butter; I am the fire; I am the libation (*Bhagavad Gita*, CV).

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Then we could think of writing as the creation of maps, of cartographies that outline protocols of experience. In this light, writing gains strength not so much in "what it says" or in the clarity of the message it conveys, but in the presence it reveals and in the connections it enables. This implies that the power of writing does not lie in its ability to communicate a fixed meaning or a well-articulated message, but rather in its capacity to unfold presences and generate connections. Thus, it would be necessary to consider writing as an activity inherent to life itself and always constant. Not merely as a text written with an alphabet that later becomes a book. Every stroke that maps a life is, in itself, a form of writing.

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We now know that Marcus Aurelius wrote his *Meditations* without any interest in publishing them. They were not texts intended to disseminate his ideas or ethical system. We also know that he wrote in his day-to-day life, as a form of personal ritual, without aiming to create a corpus or a unified system of knowledge. He did not even manage to title his texts, which is why all the titles are later ones assigned by copyists or scholars, although perhaps the most fitting is *Ad Se Ipsum*, "To Himself." For Marcus Aurelius, writing was an activity that accompanied and mapped his very life. It was a spiritual exercise, a protocol of experience.

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Sarx is not composed as a work to be delivered to the world, nor as a message to be distributed and disseminated. It is, rather, the cartography of a body, a voice, a breath. It is a self-reflective activity that, in this seemingly solitary process, also becomes something that can extend to other bodies, other voices, other breaths. Here lies the contact that enables new ways of inhabiting the world.

Writing

In an Egyptian text from the Ramesside period (12th century B.C.) that aimed to encourage aspiring scribes by referencing the classics of the past, we read:

> They did not make pyramids of stone
> nor steles of iron;
> they did not understand how to leave children as heirs,
> to keep their names alive.
> But they made their books heirs
> and the doctrines they taught.
> They had the scroll written by the priest,
> and the tablet to write by "beloved son."
> Their teachings are their pyramids,
> the reed, their son,
> the smooth surface of stone, their wife.
> All men were given to them as children;
> the scribe is superior among them.
> (*Papyrus Chester Beatty IV*)

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For the Egyptians, the pyramids were not only tombs but also literary artifacts. There is a literalness in the tomb. The transition to the underworld functions as a literary process in itself. However, this tomb-text, unlike a book, occupies urban space, shaping the geography inhabited by entering into relation with the existing geographical space. A tomb-book is thus the way in which the Egyptian integrates into a relational space with social memory that is also a memory-object, a memory-stone, a memory-building. A unique characteristic of the Egyptian literary world was that the author of both the tombs and the texts inscribed within them was not the scribes; rather, it was the person about whom those texts spoke. The author of the biography that the tomb represented was the subject of that biography. What mattered in that world of tomb-books was not so much the act of writing itself but life itself.

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In the long history of Egypt, monumental writing, found in pyramids and tombs, was always reserved for hieroglyphic writing, despite the rapid and constant development of manuscript writing for all other textual functions. The word for hieroglyph is *mdt ntr*, which literally means "word of the god." This language of the gods is sonorous, like other writing systems, but it is also figurative and iconic. The Egyptians did not have a clear distinction between a hieroglyphic scribe and an artist. In any case, writing was considered a branch of art. The Egyptians understood that hieroglyphic writing, the language of the gods, was not only a semantic matter but also a visual one that pertained to the sacred and the entire cosmos.

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Monumental writing was also a ritual writing that appealed to memory, to the fixation of the sacred, both through the rite and the monument. Iamblichus stated that the Egyptians considered their texts as a "sacred asylum" and did not allow any changes to them. It was not so much about the meaning or the normative authority of the texts but rather their magical power to bring the sacred into the present during the recitation of the texts.

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It is notable that Thoth, the god of writing, was, in Hermopolitan cosmology, the universal demiurge and the one responsible for regulating the universe. He was akin to a divine mind, a universal principle of knowledge. Another of his titles was "Lord of Divine Words." Plutarch described him as the most similar to the Logos among the gods. The creative instrument of this demiurge was the *zon*, the sound. The Hermopolitan Egyptians considered this to be the most potent creative force that gained presence and materiality as it flowed from the lips. The universe is, therefore, sound materialized; Thoth is the divine power that utters that initial sound which establishes the cosmos where there was once only nothingness, Nun—the flow of non-being, the waters where nothing is distinguished. To nothingness, to the uniform and homogeneous, sound stands in opposition as the first presence, the cry of Thoth that founds the cognizable universe, the intelligible cosmos. Thoth was also the god of magic, for which the correct intonation in singing the incantation is crucial. Only if the voice and sound are true can the magician dominate natural forces.

Thoth, then, also creates writing, endowing it with the same qualities as sound. Writing, like sound, also has its own presence. The written word could give existence to the beings named or grant power over them. It was common for glyphs of dangerous animals to be mutilated in order to neutralize their danger and make them harmless. In the case of sacred manuscripts, it was sufficient to possess them to gain the power that the text articulated; consuming them was even better.

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In Hittite writing, the hieroglyph that signifies "I" is represented by the profile of a woman pointing towards her mouth.

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In the *Sefer Yetzirah* or *Book of Creation*, one of the foundational texts of Jewish mysticism, God creates the world, but does so through the Hebrew alphabet. The creation of the world is, therefore, a linguistic process. Within this mystical tradition, the Hebrew alphabet transcends its merely rhetorical or semantic function. The Hebrew letters are seen as powerful thaumaturgical entities, possessing an inherent power to generate presences and unveil the hidden. Each letter is a sacred form, with mystical meanings and its own energies, capable of producing realities and revealing the concealed. It is important to note that the author of this text does not use the term "create" (*barâ*), but other verbs such as "to trace" (*jaqaq*):

> Through thirty-two mysterious paths of wisdom
> the Lord of hosts has traced His universe
> in three ways:
> with writing, with the cipher, and with the narrative.
> (*Book of Creation*, I)

•

> The ancients believed that writing partook of the invisible. In fact, language, which is itself invisible, shows that which is beyond our sight, it names the invisible. The written word, which captures language, reveals the invisible and becomes the eternal meeting place between the visible living and the invisible

> eternal. In writing, these two invisible things-language and the gods-are present, visible, immobile, knowable. (Clarisse Herrenschmidt, *Writing between Visible and Invisible*)

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In fact, there are many cultures that have thought of the entire world as a text, as a writing, as the painting of a demiurge:

> With flowers you write the things,
> Oh Giver of Life!
>
> With songs you give color,
> with songs you shade
> those who are to live on the earth.
>
> […]
>
> Afterward you will destroy
> eagles and tigers:
> only in your painting do we live,
> here, on the earth.
> (Nezahualcoyotl, *With Flowers You Write*)

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Then it should be possible to think about and practice writing as strokes of cosmos, cartographies of possible universes. Similarly, reading, beyond being a simple decoding of signs, is the unfolding of these universes, the inhabiting of these cartographies. In this sense, there is no greater difference between reading and writing. Both practices are unfoldings of universes, vital practices.

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The writing of *Sarx* does not center on the decoding of a message encrypted within its lines and colors. It is not a form of writing that seeks to preserve a singular object for the reader to uncover. Instead, the colors, lines, and letters in this work function as inscriptions that sketch a cartography, inviting a body, a voice, to traverse them, to breathe them. This journey opens the possibility for the creation of other worlds, other ways of thinking and inhabiting spaces by deterritorializing them.

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Jewish mysticism places at the center of its practice the study and generation of new interpretations from texts that are considered immutable. There is not so much an intention to decipher a kind of true and absolute meaning of what God meant. Deciphering a divine semantics matters little. The kabbalistic endeavor, the study of tradition, is more about creating new interpretations and, therefore, creating new worlds.

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> Each new interpretation that originates from someone studying constitutes a firmament. All interpretations ascend and become the land of the living, but if a man is not familiar with the mysteries and utters a new interpretation that he does not understand, that perversion ascends and meets a lying tongue, a crack in the great abyss, and will become a false firmament called Confusion. (Zohar I)

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Each reading, each interpretation of *Sarx*, is not the recreation of the same sonic object. On the contrary, it is the generation of a new world. Every reading is, in itself, the formation of a unique world, a new contact that unfolds a distinct reality. It is precisely in the ambiguity of color that this work becomes a space where the bodily particularities of each reader or performer find ground to emerge, to deterritorialize both the writing and the socially ascribed markers of the voice.

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> Writing like a dog digging its hole, and a rat making its burrow. For that: To find its own point of underdevelopment, its own jargon, its own third world, its own desert. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 31)

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> The song, then the voice, did not disappear from books: they sank into them. (Pascal Quignard, *Small Treatises 1*, p. 310)

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Sarx, then, proposes discovering the voice embedded within the text. Yet the voice uncovered is not that of a creator, a composer, or an author. To find the voice of the text is always to create a new voice—one that exists neither solely in the author nor the reader. It is always an unveiling that is simultaneously an act of creation: through contact, a new cosmos, a new voice emerges.

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> Writing has nothing to do with communicating. They are solitary, melancholic, and audacious experiences, incapable of serving as outward elements. […] One can "speak with God," but one cannot "speak of God." (Furio Jesi, *Spartakus*, p. 46)

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No language, no alphabet, no mark can represent the entirety of the cosmos within a being. There is always something that is lost, but it is precisely in this loss that the power of writing resides. It is in this very impossibility that it becomes possible to create and inhabit other universes. Writing, then, does not "speak about something." Writing and reading are always creative acts, meditative spaces, deterritorializations, ways of inhabiting. *Sarx* exists within this loss, fully embracing this impossibility. All of its poetic and sonic unfolding takes place within this impossible space.