

The art of wandering around
Rolf Kleinlein and his work as a photographer

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Rolf Kleinlein doesn't walk around easily any more. He now walks slowly, aided at times by an elegant ebony cane crowned with the carved figure of a dolphin breaching. Nevertheless, walking around is at the heart of Rolf Kleinlein's method, and has been since he started taking photographs in his early teens – so it takes far more than a life-threatening car accident prevent him from doing so.

Rolf Kleinlein can not be easily fitted into the normal definitions of a photographer. He is not a fashion photographer, he is not a news photographer, he is not a product photographer. In fact, to many, he is not known as a photographer at all – for the better part of his life, he has been a leading investment banker. Neither is he a philosopher, a journalist, or an anthropologist. He aspires to be all of these, and brings to his photography the quick reflexes of a journalist and the eye of an anthropologist.

What sets Rolf's work apart is his sensitivity to what Tristram Edwards called 'things that are seen' – to the sensuality of geometry, colour, and texture. The dune-like cascade of naked limbs, an acid blue container silhouetted against a yellow beach, the scabby palimpsest of posters eroding on a derelict building, vacuous mannequins staring glassily from behind a shop window – all form part of Rolf Kleinlein's portfolio. Sometimes an idea becomes a theme, and a theme an obsession. The semantics of words partially obscured, partly abraded, partly effaced becomes an

essay on urban poverty. The demi-monde of the store mannequin becomes a dissertation on the fluid boundary between reality and artifice. The turbulent swirl of a dancer's body becomes a tribute to the algorithmic genius of a renowned choreographer. The smooth marble slabs of a building can be a starting point, as can the play of sunlight on the rough timber of a warehouse, or the rusting hulk of an abandoned car.

What ties Rolf Kleinlein's work together is his method. Rolf wanders around. This in itself is not unique – what characterises his method, however, could be called 'wandering around with intent'. Rolf Kleinlein wanders wherever he is, and let's the images assemble themselves in front of his camera's lens. He wanders the streets of New York late at night, he wanders through alleyways and past abandoned rubbish bins. He wanders by shop windows, office towers, cargo terminals. As do all wanderers, sometimes he has to wait patiently for circumstances to arrange themselves. A hot summer's day, late afternoon sunshine throwing the red-painted bricks of a tenement into relief – not a picture you might say. Wait a little. Two nuns walk by, their wimples bleached white by the sun. Three black kids tumble along the wall, playing with a battered Coke can. A well-heeled couple strolls by, and turn to smile at the man with the ebony cane. The wandering circumstances of everyday life rearrange themselves in a geometry of colour, form, and humanity. The wanderer clicks the shutter.

This might sound as though the wandering is a 'plein air' experience – an experience that relies on the unwitting participation of the passerby. Nothing could be further from the truth. The wandering is indeed a method – a method that works as well in the studio as in the street – as well with professional models as with unknown flâneurs. Interior spaces are spaces all the same, and Kleinlein lets his models loose like so many white mice in order to introduce the requisite disorder into the controlled environment of the museum, the warehouse, the theatre. Relentless entropy, art soon devolves into life, and the wanderer is once more in his element, confronting and capturing random moments and chance collisions of form, figure, text, and texture. An awkward adolescent stops in front of a Warhol portrait of Marilyn. She raises her

hands to her head, cocked flirtatiously to one side. Her hair cascades over her breasts. She pouts. The wanderer clicks the shutter.

Rolf Kleinlein's work – inside or outside, with professionals or passersby – is a product of his method, and as such eludes traditional definitions. It is marked by a passion for geometry, a sensitivity to colour, and a playful approach to ambiguity. Unlike the work of many photographers, Kleinlein's photos are not easily exhausted by a first viewing – they can often be returned to repeatedly to reveal new levels of nuance. However they are encountered, they lead the eye deep into the picture, making the viewer, like the photographer, another wanderer.

A letter from Tuscany

Il Poggiolo, Tuscany, September 7th – October 1st 2001

Dear Friends,

There are several dry stone walls near where we are staying this year. Most of them are walls meant to hold back the yellow earth, to make firm terraces on which to grow grapes and olives. One of them, however, is different. It is higher, massive, and more carefully knit. Its purpose is also less clear. It seems to be a defensive wall, although whom it is protecting, or what it is keeping at bay is not clear. It is older than the other walls, six centuries old, perhaps more. It meanders along the ridge of the highest hill in the area, and is flanked for much of its length by a path leading to the next village many miles away. If one follows the path into the forest, stooping at times under a canopy of undergrowth, some two hundred yards along one is startled by the presence of a straight, high wall. Closer inspection reveals this to be a ruined watchtower, its upper stories overgrown with cedar trees, their roots slowly gnawing away at the stone. The trees make the tower almost impossible to see from any but close range. Inside the tower is a vaulted cellar, and clambering up, the first floor is overgrown. The hewn stone surrounding the tower suggests that the tower was once much taller, perhaps two or three stories high, commanding a view of the entire surrounding countryside. The wall continues several hundred yards further, then ends abruptly, at a right angle leading the wall into the forest. The path continues to drop away steeply, and the remains of a dozen or more steps can be seen.

Our villa is in the middle of nowhere. At night, it is so quiet that you can hear leaves falling from the trees, or after a rain, the individual drops falling against the pine needles that litter the floor of the woods. On a moonless night, the Milky Way is etched against the sky like a luminous haze, and the number of stars defies the imagination. I say it is in the middle of nowhere – this is not strictly speaking true. The villa is the last building on a gravel road that ends in the forest half a mile past the ruined tower – impassable even by the hunters in their Land Rovers. The gravel

road starts just past the border of the provinces of Florence and Siena, and rattles and heaves its way to the small cluster of houses known as Santedame (named after a 15th century shrine nearby), continues past a restored Fattoria which now services the growing number of German, Dutch and American tourists for whom a Tuscan vacation is a must, a tiny 18th century chapel called San Piero, a house labelled on the map and on the house itself as Marciano, now the home of an unnamed rock star, until it finally peters out at the villa and farmhouse where we stay, indicated on the map as Poggiolo. All in all, the bouncing and banging and bumping takes about twelve minutes from the main road, and measures nearly four kilometres exactly.

The villa is a restored farm building, the foundations of which date in all likelihood from the 15th century, perhaps earlier. It overlooks a deep valley to the west, at the bottom of which stands a sturdy stone tower, and on the far slopes of which stand a cluster of farm building devoted to tending the vineyards that cover the slopes. To the east, it overlooks line after line of hills, which turn violet in the sunset. Near the far horizon, towards Siena, can be seen a small settlement, further still, the lights of Poggibonsi. Hidden by the trees is the hamlet of Monsanto, whose church bell marks the time throughout the day. Those who restored the villa did so with exquisite care. There is a large, semi-circular patio with a cluster of cedar trees under which one can sit and read. The fireplace is well-constructed and draws well, making the nightly delight of an open fire a delight rather than a chore. The kitchen is well-equipped and light. In short, a nearly perfect place, completely isolated on the one hand, but half an hour's drive from Florence (38 kilometres) or Siena (22 kilometres) on the other.

Beside the villa is a farmhouse, also an historical patchwork. It seems slightly out of place and awkward, with a crude portico, internal courtyard and piano nobile – oddly overbuilt for the middle of nowhere. Its foundations are also of a certain age, probably 15th century, although the building fabric has been clearly added to, modified, and repaired over the course of the centuries. Bricked-in windows betray their presence by anomalous archwork. The walls are a calico of different masonry styles. On the upper stories can be seen the remains of what is probably late 19th century painting – sgraffiti work, trompe-l'oeuil rustication, a coat of arms showing an azure shield with

the vague outlines of a golden key, surmounted by a Baronet's crown with nine points.

Which brings us slowly back to the mystery of the defensive wall. The wall ends well down the forest path, some distance past the remains of the watchtower. But where does the wall end on the other side? After closely following its meander out of the forest, it seems to cross under the path, or rather, the path seems to have obliterated it at some point in the past, only to continue along the outer edge of the farmhouse, thence following the line of the hill into the forest on the far side of the villa. Are these the remains of the wall that once might have defined the border between Siena and Florence? Was this perhaps a small fief, loyal to Florence, charged with keeping the enemy at bay? This could put the date of the wall back several centuries, sometime before the final capitulation of Siena to Florence in 1555, perhaps as far back as the Sienese victory at the Battle of Montaperti in 1260. Contemporary maps show the border following the road to Santedame/Serelle, then continuing somewhat further south, so perhaps this is just an idle and unfounded conjecture, although it is well known that the loyalties of the Chiantiagiana seesawed between the two City States for centuries, and the boundaries were fluid and unstable. The same maps, however, show even the dry stone walls that make the long unused terraces, and both villa and farmhouse are located precisely. However, even at 1:10.000 there is no trace of the wall, nor of the tower.

Our days and nights are not all consumed by archaeological speculation, of course. In fact, more than any of the previous times we have stayed in Tuscany, our exploration has been shaped more by gastronomy than by history. Given the remoteness of the villa, and the difficulty in returning at night due to the quite dramatically uneven stone and dirt road, we have fallen into the lovely habit of enjoying a long lunch at one of dozens of local restaurants, trattorie, or locande, followed by a smallish dose of much-appreciated culture, and returning to the villa to enjoy the sunset and a simple meal prepared at home. Evenings end in front of the fire with a glass of vin santo with cantucci, or red wine with gorgonzola and pears. This year has had some new discoveries – il Pestello, on the road to Castellina from Poggibonsi, the Locanda di Pietracupa, just before the turn-off to Soville along the road to San Donato, La

Capannina, just after the SP 101 forks towards Tavernelle – as well as our old favourites, la Piazza, the Bottega in Lornano, the Osteria di Fonterutoli. We also visited one of our favourite seafood restaurants, l'Arsella, in Marina di Pisa – an unspoiled family restaurant with the freshest fish imaginable. We have also discovered some new wines – including the Super Tuscan reds of Cennitola (Etruska, Arcimbaldo) and some wonderful 1997 Chianti Riservas Centinaia and Verazzano. The key to both Tuscan food and Tuscan wine lies in the quality of the ingredients, and the simplicity of the preparation – complication spells disaster.

There have been exceptions to this strict regime. We had the good fortune to be invited to the dress rehearsal of Donizetti's *opera buffa* Don Pasquale by its Director, Jonathan Miller, which was an absolute delight. The cast was excellent, the Donizetti trivial in the extreme, but the shallowness of the plot and the superficiality of the music was more than redeemed by Jonathan's staging of the entire opera in an oversized Doll's House. This was more than just a bit of throwaway stage trickery – it transformed the way in which the actions of the characters could be read. Instead of relying on the horizontal plane to create movement, and presenting each act and each scene in sequence, one after another, the action of the entire opera was transposed to the vertical. In this way, the viewer could enjoy multiple scenes simultaneously, and enjoy the complications of the plot visually as well as intellectually.

Otherwise life has been modulated by the rhythms of the country – by the sunrise and sunset, the baying of the hounds and the firecracker banging of the hunters' shotguns. The mornings see their Land Rovers parked down the slope by the farmhouse, evenings we find the tracks of the *cinghiale* deep in the sand along the edge of the patio. Our host tells me that there is a fox with two whelps that visits occasionally, but we have yet to see them. At night we can hear the animals moving in the bush, but the darkness is so complete that we have never actually seen them either. This is the fourth year we have spent so many weeks in Tuscany, although it has been many years since we first started visiting. This year the weather has been wonderfully autumnal – cool nights, changeable days that go from bright sunshine to torrential rain in a matter of hours – a welcome break from the relentless stifling heat we have known from other visits. Nevertheless, in three weeks, we have had heavy rain on

only three mornings, and only one day without sunshine at some point. Happily the days all seem to bundle the clouds together at one or the other end – either the day starts with brilliant sunshine and gradually clouds over towards nightfall, or the day starts grey and hazy, with the sun dispersing the clouds by mid-afternoon. The rain, with only the three occasions, has fallen at night. This is the way life should be.

As a friend wrote me after his building in Frankfurt was evacuated after a bomb scare following the horrific attack on the World Trade Centre, ‘We live in strange times’. Sitting in Tuscany watching the worst terrorist attack in recent history unfold live on the television was a counterpoint of the most troubling and macabre kind. Monday, September 10th, we had just settled into the first week of our Tuscan break. I worked all morning as usual, and we had a lovely lunch at the Osteria de Fonterutoli – all was as it should be. Tuesday September 11th, we were driving back to Poggiolo shortly after four, having visited a small Romanesque church, Sant’Agnese, on the old Francigena, when I received an SMS – ‘Terrorists are crashing hijacked ‘planes into World Trade Centre + Pentagon, Happy holidays!.’ I sent back a message to say ‘you must be joking!’ He wasn’t, unfortunately – ‘No joke’ was the curt reply. Although the villa is isolated, and has no ‘phone, it does have an old television. The rest of the afternoon and evening we stayed glued to the screen, watching the same awful images of toy-like planes crashing into the Twin Towers, then exploding with the all too real effect of 90.000 litres of kerosene bursting into flames. The slow motion collapse of what were once the tallest buildings in the world was burned into our – and countless million other – brains around the world. This is not the way life should be.

The sun, the blue skies, the grapes ripening under the vines in the fields are all the same. But nothing will be the same after the Tuesday attack. The attack will be a watershed, a defining moment, like the assassination of JF Kennedy in 1963. Everyone of a certain age remembers where he was when JFK was shot. A new generation will remember where they were when the Twin Towers collapsed. Some, unhappier than most, will remember both. The reaction to the attack recalls another event of the 60s, the Cuban Missile Crisis. I was only six years old at the time, but what I remember is the fear. Grown-ups, who from my point of view should be

immune, being themselves so big and sure of themselves in all matters of importance to a child, were frightened. My Father talked about needing to buy a gun. Other grown-ups, sitting around the table listening to the radio, talked about a Third World War. Once again there are those talking about the Third World War, only this time, I am frightened. I am frightened most by the irrationality of the rhetoric – not just its cowboy belligerence and jingoism, but its unreason.

The attack was not an act of war in any known sense; it was an act of terrorism. Those who committed it have no constituency, represent nobody, and have neither political legitimacy, nor political programme. Their demand, which has not yet been articulated, seems to be the complete withdrawal of non-believers from the entire Middle East. But this is not the demand of a country, or of a people. The Lebanese have never asked such a thing, nor the Saudis, nor even the Iranians. Wars can only be conducted by nation states, and have as their goal specific goals. As Von Clausewitz said, ‘war is the continuation of diplomacy by other means’. Wars have political ends, for people who have constituted themselves politically. Politically does not of course mean democratically, however, until Osama Bin Laden represents someone – even as a despot – his attack cannot be sanctioned with the name of war. It is a crime – a brutal and horrible mass murder – but should be treated as such, not ennobled by the name of war. What would be accomplished if America were to declare war on Afghanistan – a country already living beneath any known poverty line, and subject to Taliban fundamentalists? What would it mean to win such a war? Would terrorism be defeated? On the contrary, it would strengthen the voices against America – both throughout the Islamic world, and in China, where America’s foreign policy is seen, often quite rightly, as Imperialism masquerading as universalism.

Nor is the attack about religion, despite the fact that its perpetrators are themselves religious fundamentalists. The killing in Ireland is not Christian, despite the fact that the killers use religion to mask and justify their political motives. Islam didn’t attack the World Trade Towers – a small band of Islamic criminals did. Their faith is largely the result of their being born in a particular place and time. The Koran doesn’t sanction murder any more than the Bible does. But I am afraid that the rhetoric will bring about the very thing it proclaims to be fighting – a religious war.

Even more frightening than the consequences of muddled thinking leading us to the brink of war, is the possibility of the measures used to combat terrorism internally undermining democratic society. It is not a long stretch from tightened controls to internal passports to a police state, in which the remedy against a future suicide attack is worse than the cure. The attack was in fact a consequence of democratic liberalism's greatest weaknesses – its trust and tolerance. How many times have I sat with the pilots on a long transatlantic flight? Dozens. On six occasions I have been allowed to sit in the jump seat as we landed in Toronto, Paris, San Francisco. One pilot proudly told me of his policy of inviting children and their parents routinely to the cockpit. These days are now impossible to imagine, and the generous trust of the smiling pilots is already a thing of the past. In a time of zero tolerance, the pilots will be barricaded into their cockpit, locked behind two solid doors, just as El Al pilots have been for two decades. Trust and openness are the hallmarks of a healthy democracy, now eclipsed by a fearful cynicism that sees America's greatest virtues as naïve. The enemy of democracy is fundamentalism – of any stripe. The convictions that unleashed the kamikaze attack on the Twin Towers – a blind and unquestioning fundamentalism – are the same that would make homosexuality illegal, insist on prayer in the school, and make deviance of any sort a crime. Bin Laden and Bin Robertson are but variations on the same theme. It would be a tragedy of the worst kind for America to fight Bin Laden only to embrace Bin Falwell.

Let us return, however briefly, to Tuscany, where our holidays are nearly at an end. The sky is cloudless today, and in the sun it is almost hot, although the breeze is delightfully cool. Italy remains a land where 12th century churches, 15th century frescoes, and a landscape in which no square metre is untouched by the human hand, combine to sustain a culture of civility, grace, emotion, and intelligence. How can such a culture be preserved in the face of a rising tide of terror and barbarism? How can culture be preserved, nourished and sustained if we are in fact about to enter another Dark Ages? These questions – now more important than they were only three weeks ago – must now be on the top of our agenda, if humanity and the things we value most are to be protected.

All my warmest regards,

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Grandfathers, Fathers, Sons
Some reflections on exile

*Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
che la diritta via era smarrita*

In the middle of our journey of life
I found myself in a dark wood
wherein the right way had been lost

Dante's inferno Canto I

Paris, 1990

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In the year 1300, Dante turned 35, the midway point in the number of years allotted us in the Old Testament. "The years of our life are threescore and ten" it is written, and from this watershed our future and our past stretch out equally each side towards the horizon, and decisions taken puddle around us, as if hesitating between the past and the future. Dante's life too hesitated a moment, then, after 18 months of Florentine civil strife, broke in two as he was forced into exile by the defeat of the republican White Guelf Party by their enemies the Blacks; the Guelfs themselves having overthrown their rivals the Ghibellines 35 years earlier.

This is my own 35th year, and following Dante I shall take the time to reflect briefly on the halfway point in my mandated years, and share these thoughts with my friends of longstanding. I beg their indulgence in advance for what may seem both unwarranted and introspective, but, knowing how way leads onto way as we face the twin paths diverging into Frost's yellow and autumnal wood, I shall not ask their pardon, but take the opportunity as it has been given.

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita

After a manner of speaking I have had three grandfathers.

My father's father was dead before I was born. By all accounts he was a difficult man, and each of his three sons found their own way to put a great distance between their lives and his. The eldest went to Arabia for thirty years, the middle son embraced the Catholicism abhorrent to his father, and ended his days face down on a dirt road, not far from the Rhodesian lepers he had shepherded for over twenty years. The youngest son took the first boat he could find in Portsmouth harbour to Canada, never to return. 'Fist', the grandfather I never knew, left an indelible mark on his sons.

My mother's father I knew better. A gentle man, a man of quiet pursuits, of community service, of roses. Worn smooth by decades of domestic erosion, my grandfather was generous and secretly playful. His teasing, sotto voce humour was his way of revenging himself on the brittle regime imposed on him at home, by my grandmother, who never forgave him for being the instrument by which her adolescent aspirations were seemingly thwarted. More specifically, I doubt she ever forgave him for making her a mother again in her late thirties, obliging her to raise a son when she had her heart set on enjoying a certain independence.

My third grandfather was not related to me by blood, but by temperament, and stood in for the other two.

When I first met Brigadier Maurice Lush, he was over sixty years my senior. We met at my Uncle's club. He arrived in the company of his wife, many years younger than he. He pushed her wheelchair slowly, intentionally, and we took turns cutting Diana's lamb into bite-sized pieces. She had suffered a stroke at seventy-seven, and despite moments of lucidity in which she would tell jokes, sing old ditties, and sip ginger wine, more often than not she lived in a land far from ours. Since our first meeting I saw Brigadier Lush nearly every two weeks, without fail. We rarely talked about his long past, a past marked by service to the British Empire - as governor of the Sudan, of Tripolitania, as commissioner for the resettlement of the Jews after the second war.

No, we talked about politics, about elections, about history - and he proved to know more about Canadian politics than I did.

He had a stroke at ninety-three, and I saw him shortly afterwards - angry, bitter, almost contemptuous of the pity we unwillingly showed him. He was such a strong man, a model of English morality; now a marionette with his face contorted, his strings cut. I sat with him the evening before he died. His eyes were closed, seemingly in sleep, and his grand-daughter-in-law and I spoke to him as though he were still awake. The next day, I grieved through him the death of the grandfather I never met, the grandfather whom I had left in Montréal, and him, Brigadier Maurice Lush OBE.

Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura

In Memoriam: Michael Granville Bradburne

September 20, 1931 - May 7, 1994

Why is it that every time I begin to busy myself around the house; nailing boards here, installing lamps there, that I think of my father? Goodness knows he was not what was called "handy". Nevertheless, to please my mother and to occupy himself, he built, at various times, a rock garden and fountain, a small patio, a front wall to our suburban house. I remember him doing these things, and I remember the forays to abandoned construction sites on the lookout for patio flagstones, in the company of our paunchy and jovial neighbour. How old was I then? When do I begin to remember actually knowing my father? If he were a more recent friend, I could date our first meeting. But as a first son, his memory of me far outstretches mine of him. When did we first become friends? When I was six, perhaps, I remember talks, and walks together, long walks through the Caledon Hills in fall time, in search of lost model airplanes. I remember learning from him the secrets of skipping stones on flat water; how to evaluate the aptness of a particular stone's weight, or roundness, how to size up its likely trajectory, how to get the greatest distance from its flight, the greatest number of hops until it sunk exhausted below the surface of the lake. Yes, maybe I was six, and he thirty. Thirty. So much younger than I am now, and he already with three of his eventual six children. How little he must have known, how unwise, if I can extrapolate backwards from my own ignorance, which even now is so entire as to make me wonder about the wisdom of having a first child at thirty-five. How young we were as friends, my father and I, how unknowing in our exploration, how focused in our curiosity.

Che la direkte via era smaritta

My own paths forked the year I turned thirty five: forked in time, in space, and in direction.

I live in Paris, a city I had fallen headlong in love with when I first came to France in a fit of spleen in my late adolescence. Here I lived again, like a balloon adrift from exhaustion after my time in London at the Architectural Association, where I spent three years of hell far from the woman I loved, cocooned in an Englishness that was both cloying and irresistible. Not quite irresistible. I stayed two short weeks in London after completing the architectural degree that cost me my last ties to Canada, and soon looked out on the grey tin roofs of Paris, shaved my beard, and changed my life. Climbing the hill up rue Gay Lussac under half of the last mild winter moon, where I lived for a time thanks to an American literary critic, I would turn the corner towards my tiny apartment, buried at the back of the second courtyard of a dog-eared building. Paris reveals herself at night. A heavysset middle-aged man in a plaid jacket scowls at the traffic on rue St. Jacques, his arms folded one under the other. On the steps of the church, St. Jacques du Haut Pas, an elderly woman in a mouse-brown overcoat kneels in prayer in front of the locked door, her head bent to one side.

In many respects, Paris is like any other big city - loud, abrupt, full of bustling pedestrians and impatient drivers. Dense, corrupt, filthy, imposing, Paris can hold her own with London, New York and Tokyo. There are times of year, however, when Paris comes into her own, and melts into the past, another, older rhythm is heard faintly before being washed away by the winter rains. The time is the autumn, and Paris streets again echo with the shouts of merchants and schoolchildren. It is a nostalgic season, waiting for winter. Memories of autumns past, of the dry blue cornflower sky, the brittle cold air of early morning, hands thrust deep in pockets to warm the fingers. Paris is a city where all memories converge.

In 1989, my life had changed for good. I live in double exile in Paris. In exile from Canada, where my father brought me up as an English child, unwittingly, teaching me cricket and good manners before he had time to fully assimilate to the North

American way of life. I was lucky in a way. When I was born my father was English as English could be - a plummy accent, Old Etonian, a pilot with the RAF. By the time my sister was five, he was wholly and happily Canadian - no English accent, his OE tie buried in a bottom drawer, flying just a dream to be exercised when he took us to local airshows. My father had become Canadian. I, however, wandering lost in the 100 Aker wood, was to wait nearly thirty years before I discovered where I was brought up, and where I would never belong. A double exile, neither Canadian nor English. The clear path that lies ahead of most children who speak one language, have two parents, four grandparents and one home, was obscured by the happy and complicated circumstances of my upbringing.

Thus I find myself in Paris, with a Russian wife and an international job, and the clock that measures the space of my aspirations is a European clock. If there are to be children, they will be complex, but not in exile. They will speak Russian, and English, but they will be French. To live in Paris, to be French, to walk on the paving stones worn smooth by Descartes, Voltaire and Molière, cannot be such a bad thing after all. And there is always Paris, the City of Lights, solid capital of France, haunted only, perhaps, by its shadow, the City of Dreams.

In the City of Lights the market beats time for the seasons no better than in autumn. First oysters appear, boxed in thin slatting and straw, tiny and barnacled outside, inside like earlobes emerald and glistening. Then the *rentrée triomphale* of wild mushrooms, heaped up under striped awnings: *trompettes de mort*, *lactaires*, *cepes*, *pleurottes*, *chanterelles*, *girolles*, mushrooms of all shapes and colours and sizes. They arrive from the wet lowland forests, from the stubbled fields, from the endless woods that ring Paris. As if in festive preparation for Christmas the market is hung with wild game like feathered ornaments. Woodcocks hang in soft grey pairs, partridge, fat grouse and tiny quails sit in neat rows. Pheasants and wild ducks jostle each other in long rows under the flapping awnings, their feathers improbably wild and colourful under the late afternoon sky. Wild boar and deer too will soon adorn the shops, splayed out beside piles of corn; whole boar, bristling and malevolent, their black eyes closed to the passersby. The market is a clock as faithful as the phases of the moon, as reliable as the sun's sinking towards its hivalnal nadir, as palpable as the

chill air and the clouds of breath that hang in the still fall air, and then disperse, like memories over an obscure path that forks into a yellow and irrevocable wood.

Remembering Gordon Pask

Sometimes things catch you off guard. I heard of Gordon's death in June 1996 towards the end of a protracted dinner conversation from Jonathan Miller, another of the remarkable characters with whom Gordon shared the Cambridge quads. I was shattered. Words cannot fully express how sad I was to learn that Gordon, Stafford's 'Easter', had passed away. Gordon was very important to me, and his passage through my life marked it very deeply. Gordon was also a good friend to me, as he was to many others, but I had often been frustrated by the difficulty of showing my gratitude to him in the years since I left England in 1989 – and now it was too late.

I met first Gordon at the Architectural Association in 1986. Gordon was treated with awe by most students, who keep a rather frightened distance. Slouched against the bar in an Edwardian cape, a monocle trailing across his rumpled, dottle-speckled white shirt he did not fit any of the normal preconceptions. Nonetheless, I was soon inexorably drawn into the heady world of p-individuals, conversation theory, of knot theory – topological diagrams of re-entrant thoughts of drinking cold coffee, with notes for a future cabaret scribbled alongside. I encountered along the way not-quite-ordinary speculations about chemical calculation and computer love, as well as quite extraordinary thinkers such as Stafford Beer, Heinz von Foerster, Seymour Papert, and Cedric Price – all part of the constellation swirling around Gordon Pask.

Gordon was always a source of support for my own heterodox ideas. He encouraged me to write, and write courageously. He supervised my AA Diploma thesis, 'The Strange Attraction of Chaos' a thesis shaped and extended during our conversations together at the bar of the Architectural Association, the Morning Room of the Athenaeum, and the dottle-spattered study at his home. He gave me the strength to persevere at the Architectural Association, while I pursued a direction that was not at all that period's 'flavour of the month' in architectural styles. Gordon's ideas harked both backwards and forwards – from Price's Fun Palace, Archigram, Joan Littleton, Richard Gregory's Exploratory, Nick Negroponte's MIT – to a cybernetic world of interaction and conversation.

My indebtedness to Gordon goes further still. I first visited Vienna in 1988 because of Gordon, in order to present the paper based on my thesis. I first went to Amsterdam in 1989 because of Gordon, to give another paper he urged me to write – a paper that has since become notorious in the field of informal science education, ‘Real Truths: truth-telling and the Doing of Science’ (The Three Generations of Science Centres). Since then the paper has been quoted, cited, and debated at the largest gathering of science centre professionals in the world, the ASTC. I lived and worked in Amsterdam from 1994 to 1997, as Head of Design of newMetropolis – a built example of what a ‘third generation’ science centre might be – a science centre based on many of the ideas that Gordon had sown. I started and finished my doctorate at the University of Amsterdam under the supervision of Gordon's friend and colleague Gerard de Zeeuw. In hundreds of greater and lesser ways, Gordon marked – and continues to mark – my life.

Now I am in Frankfurt, where I direct a museum of applied art in which teenagers test websites and computer games, where children teach LEGO robots to dance, and where our bistro stays open until past midnight with a selection of over fifty open wines. Gordon would have felt at home here, seeing his vision of a soft cybernetic future blossom in greater and lesser ways. An Edwardian dandy, Gordon was half a century ahead of his time. His work at the BCL, at Concordia, at the ICA, all prefigured the world we live in now, a world of massive parallel computing, and many-to-many communication on a global scale by means of the Internet.

Gordon's death, while inevitable and inexorable, is no less tragic for its having been regretted in advance. No-one who knew Gordon in his later years could ignore the multi-coloured cascade of pills that spilled from his pockets as he searched for his pipe scraper, nor having to help pour him into taxis after long evenings and longer bar tabs. Gordon lived his life to the limits – and inevitably found them. However, looking back, it is the twinkle in his eye, his incessant doodling, the quickness of his mathematical intelligence, and the sharpness of his wit that will be remembered.

In the spirit of the times we spent together - at the Stadtsoper in Vienna, at Christmas in Clapham, amongst Gordon's books, papers, and the ubiquitous pipe dottle, I hope this tribute helps fill in some small way a world made emptier by Gordon's passing.

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