



Banal Magic:

Strategies for Improvising the Everyday

“the everyday escapes, that is it’s definition”

Maurice Blanchot, *La Parole Quotidienne*

The everyday is:

insignificant

unspectacular

overlooked



Perception as the Performance of Freedom

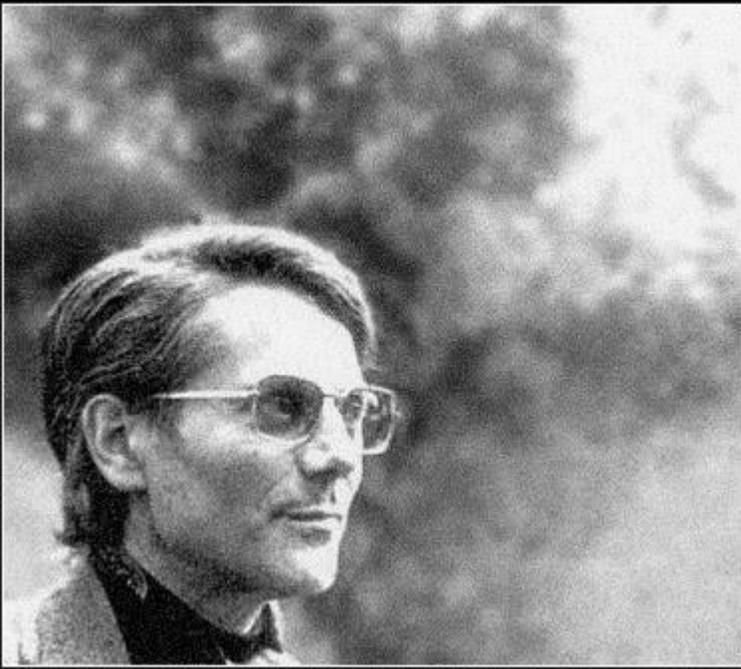
“the person in the street is a reserve of anarchy”

Maurice Blanchot, *La Parole Quotidienne*

“the anarchy of the chiaroscuro of the everyday”

Georg Lukacs, *quoted in* Manuel de Certeau, *Indeterminacies*

(The Practice of Everyday Life)



“The practices that make up the quotidian subvert functionalist order by injecting difference”

Michael Sheringham (*Everyday Life: theories and practices from Surrealism to the Present*)

*“the whole edifice of the aesthetic is built up from below,
departing from daily efforts”* Georg Lukacs

aesthetics, like improvisation, can be derived
according to a materials-first or process-based
logic

Agnes Heller (*Everyday Life*):

Explores and extends notions of processes of becoming (Heidegger,
Ereignis) in everyday life in terms of ethics and ontology:

a particular being for-itself (reflective, global, systemic)

becomes

an individual being in-itself (perceptually active, localized)

*The individual improvisationally exploring an unknown
environment: acceptance of uncertainty and deployment of ambiguity
in the practice of everyday existence.*



Certeau & Perec:

The practice of everyday life, an active performance of attention in and to space and time



This practice involves:

discursive space

(architectural, linguistic, mental, acoustic)

temporality

(both for phenomena and act of engagement)

performance

(the improvised situation of person in circumstance)

but what form could such performances take?



Pauline Oliveros:

*The practice of **Deep Listening**, an active performance of attention in and to space and time*

Try It Out!

Energy Changes

(For Elaine Summers' movement meditation, Energy Changes)

Listen to the environment as a drone. Establish contact mentally with all of the continuous external sounds and include all of your own continuous internal sounds, such as blood pressure, heart beat and nervous system. When you feel prepared, or when you are triggered by a random or intermittent sound from the external or internal environment, make any sound you like in one breath, or a cycle of like sounds. When a sound or a cycle of sounds, is completed re-establish mental connection with the drone, which you first established before making another sound or cycle of like sounds.

Ear Ly (For Kenneth Gaburo's NMCE)

1. Enhance or paraphrase the auditory environment so perfectly that a listener cannot distinguish between the real sounds of the environment and the performed sounds.
2. Become performers by not performing.

TELEPATHY

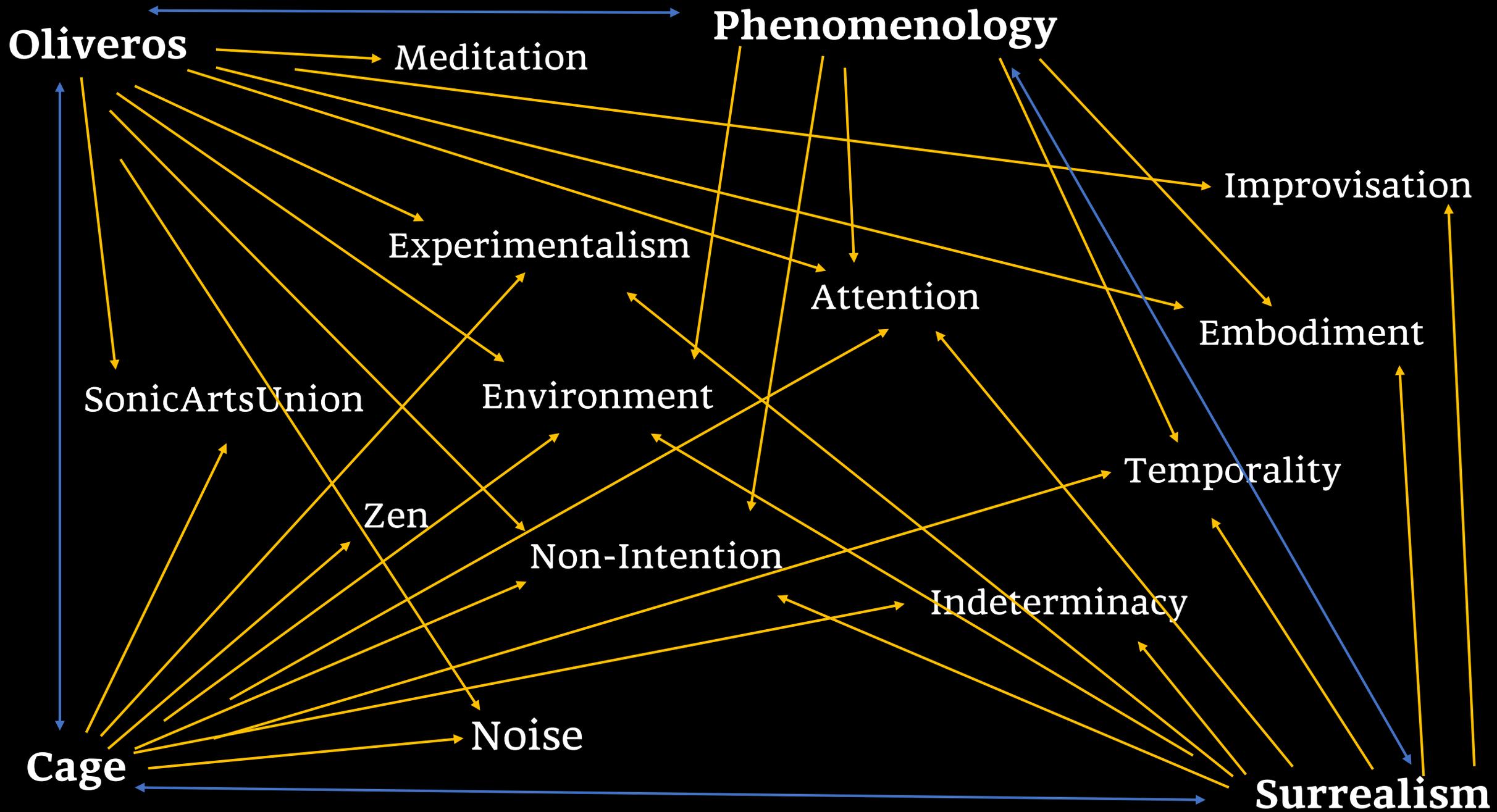
Pacific Tell

Find your place in a darkened indoor space or a deserted out-of-doors area. Mentally form a sound image. Assume that the magnitude of your concentration on, or the vividness of this sound image will cause one or more of the group to receive this sound image by telepathic transmission. Visualize the person to whom you are sending. Rest after your attempted telepathic transmission by becoming mentally blank. When or if a sound image different from your own forms in your mind, assume that you are receiving from some one else, then make that sound image audible. Rest again by becoming mentally blank or return to your own mental sound image. Continue as long as possible or until all others are quiet.

Divide into two or more groups. Each group must have a tape recorder and be sound isolated from the other groups. The distance might be small or great, i.e., thousands of miles or light years. Each group then performs Pacific Tell or Telepathic Improvisation, attempting inter group or interstellar telepathic transmission. A specific time period may be pre-arranged. Each group tape records its own sounds during the telepathic transmission period for later comparison.

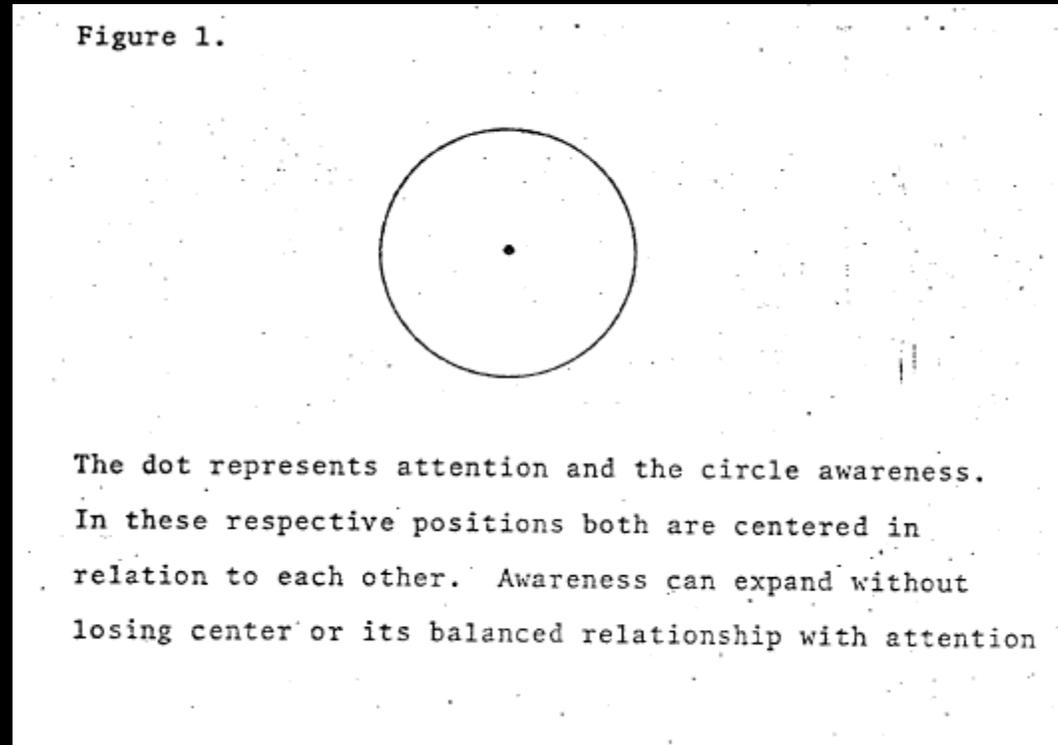
Variation: Instead of working in groups each participant works as an isolated soloist.

C SURGERY



Deep Listening

Action (Improvisation) from the Frame of Reference of Temporally and Spatially-Aware Consciousness = The (re-) invention of Everyday Life



Active Processes for Everyday Improvisation:

Strategies /Tactics (Certeau)/Obstruction

Contingency

Embodiment

Performance (action)

But what forms can such activity produce?

An Invitation to Practice Phenomenology:

(not just talk about it)

“Let’s take the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle and show it forth!”

Breton & Eluard, *The Immaculate Conception*

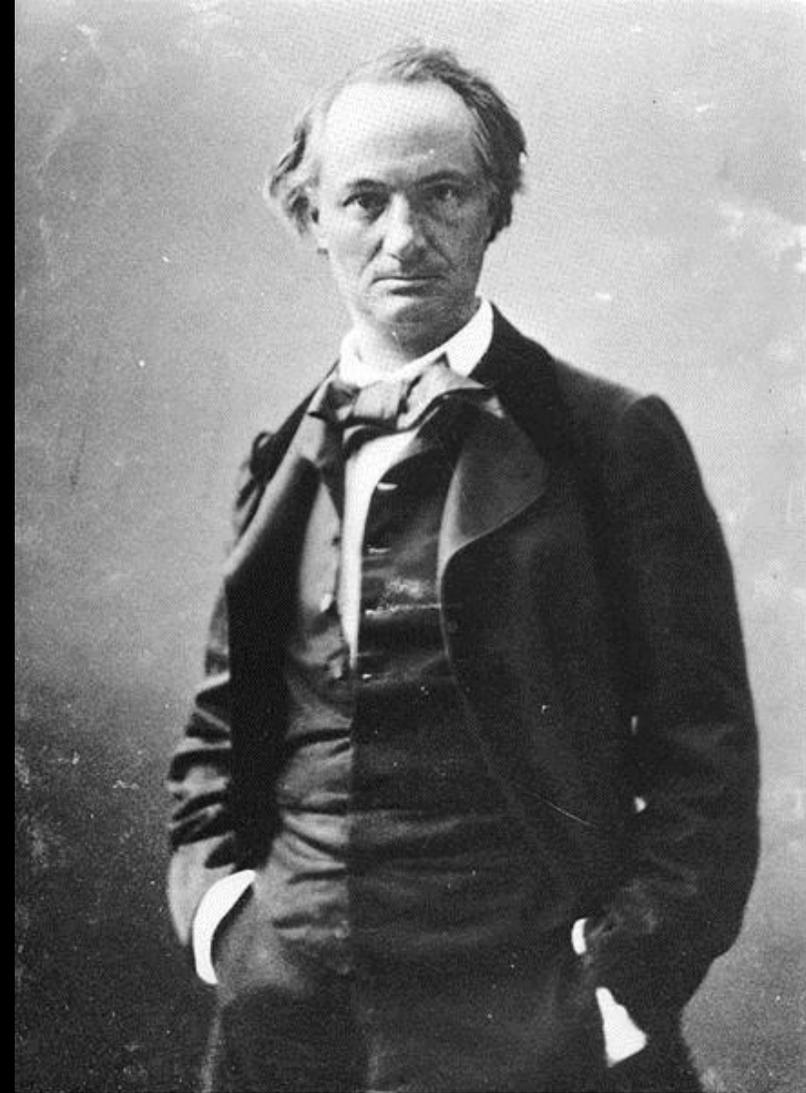
Like walking, improvisation is

embodied

ground-level

open-ended

Improvisation, enacted from the active encounter between self and environment (Deep Listening), becomes an opportunity for **Banal Magic**: the experimental exploration (and celebration) of the interactive and contingent network of relationships that constitute our everyday lives, the theatre of phenomenology in which all our experiences unfold.



Native

Take a walk at night. Walk so silently that the bottoms of your feet become ears.

Banal Magic:

Actively Aware of Changing Patterns of Attention = Environment as a Multiplicity of Systemic Events,
Unfolding at Their Own Rates



“is philosophy’s role not to bring about a fuller perception of reality by certain re-orientation of our attention and away from the practical interests of the world to return to what, in practical terms, has no function? This conversion of attention would be philosophy itself.” Henri Bergson

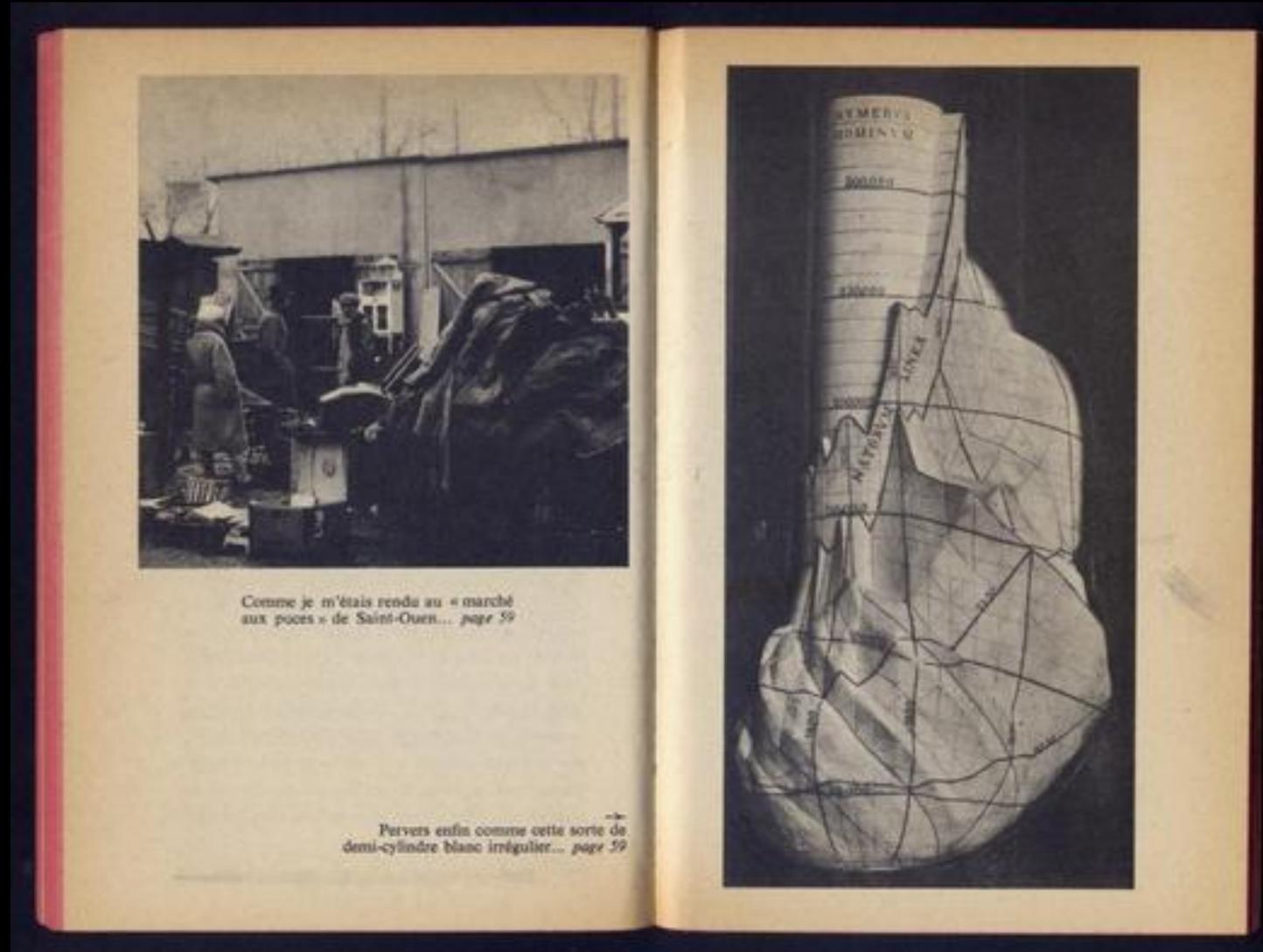
Improvisation as Enacted Philosophy: The “Convulsive Beauty” of the Everyday

Convulsive Beauty (Breton):

Circumstantial Magic (Coincidence)

Intersection of Binaries (Process = Form)

Trouvaille (the lucky find)



References:



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