

Competenza Maledetta

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I. DISTINCTIONS

LINGUA II: MALEDETTO. COMPOSITION FOR SEVEN VIRTUOSO SPEAKERS.

Clear enough — but how? There are, after all, many sorts of speakers; — but start with two broad categories: (i) SSSpeakers, shall we say, as in “ones who speak” [there’s Alan, for example, or The Deer-slayer, or JFK]; and (ii) speaKKers, “loud-speakers” (still not unambiguous, though the hyphen helps), transducers which convert electric signals to audible sound” (still, God help us, not unambiguous, since the brain evidently initiates muscular activity by means of electric signals — so add a modifier: “analogue transducers which . . .”) [speaKKers, then, as in Goodman, or Pioneer, or JBL].

To these we could add a third: speakeRRs, as in “of the house”; but though political currents will capture us eventually, we for the moment drift by, since speakeRRs are, after all, also SSSpeakers (save, perhaps, for mute speakeRRs, which are impractical at best, and has there ever been one?). And finally there are appealing phonemic transformations, such as the voiced — unvoiced mapping /z/ — /s/ (recalling Roland Barthes, who would like to think he started all this)—“speakers” thereby becoming “speak ‘curse” or, better, the commands “Speak! Curse!”, or the invocation “speak, Curse!” [as in “speak, O Muse!”], the latter inviting, perhaps, a performance of *Maledetto*; these, however, we also overlook.

SSSpeakers and speaKKers, then, and the certain knowledge, from the title, that the former is meant. Whence comes this knowledge? Not from “speakers”, that’s for sure, nor from “seven”,

equally applicable to both. “Composition for . . .” — there’s a thorny one, but I recoil from the idea that it limits its object; and passing over syntactic limitations (“Unfair!” you cry; and rightly so in general, but perhaps not here), we are left with “virtuoso”. Here is A Clue, no doubt about it: though “composition for seven speaKKers” is odd, it seems permissible (suppose seven different speaKKers of radically different shapes and qualities, might they not command titular pre-eminence over a mere “tape”?); whereas “composition for seven *virtuoso* speaKKers” is simply OUT. SpeaKKers cannot be virtuosi; SSSpeakers can, and that’s how we know.

Then: What is it that virtuosi (that is, certain SSSpeakers) do, that speaKKers cannot?

II. ALTERNATIVELY

What can speaKKers do?

Maledetto requires that seven voices be perfectly synchronized with respect to even the most transient phonemes, that the speed with which text is delivered be precisely monitored, that different voices begin and end exactly together despite different densities, that individual voices change instantly and convincingly between different characterizations on successive words, that the dynamic level of each voice in a complex texture be precisely regulated.

SpeaKKers can do all this. Indeed, speaKKers can do all this very well, nigh to perfection; driven by tape (properly composed), speaKKers can perform the sounds *Maledetto* specifies far more consistently than SSSpeakers. And Gaburo, we know, is competent with speaKKers [For Harry, Fat Millie

sucks Lemon Drops — so much for a diet of words], and textual tape-collage is a practical, indeed an established, genre. Yet *Maledetto*, we also know, is not for speakKers but for SSSpeakers (and let CRI create no confusion: that disc is not a composition for speakKers, but a recording of a performance by SSSpeakers); we know it's for SSSpeakers because its title specifies "virtuoso speakers", and there are no virtuoso speakKers. Now, were the consistent performance of specified sounds sufficient for virtuosity, speakKers would be the greatest virtuosi of all; but they're not. Therefore, it's not.

That is: virtuosity is not simply excellent execution, and SSSpeakers, if virtuosi, must do something besides render well the sounds specified. Or, alternatively: *Maledetto*, by specifying "virtuoso" speakers, requires something different from (above? beyond? in addition to?) consistency in performance. What does it require?

III. SOME PREMISES

What do SSSpeakers do?

They speak: that is, they communicate [as does *Maledetto*, a bugle, or *Guernica*: communication embraces more than speech]: whatever is necessary to communication is necessary to speech, and is part of what SSSpeakers do. We need, then, a theory of communication, which I cannot provide; borrowing much from Humberto Maturana, however, and extrapolating in a way pertinent to our problem, I can with slight formality sketch a few premises, to wit:

- (1.0) Observing two organisms communicate (being then an observer), one finds that communication is connotative: a communicative act orients both collocutors (that is: both communicator and communicatee), each to a subset of their domain of possible interactions with the environment; each domain being different, they proceed along independent, though parallel, paths. Observing similar organisms with sufficiently coincident interactions, an observer assigns meaning to the communication: it is "understood" (that is, construed as signifying thus-and-so). "Understanding",

however, is the work of the observer, in his own domain, and cannot be attributed to the observed.

- (1.1) In communication, then, nothing is transmitted, nothing received; both collocutors, autonomous, are oriented autonomously by the communication. But an organism's orientation depends not only on the communicative act, but also on its previous state; this previous state may depend not only on a preceding communicative act, but also on a pre-previous state, *et cetera ad arbitrium*; thus, with respect to a particular orientation, an observer may construe a series of communications as a single communication. Contrariwise, an observer may partition a single communication into discrete constituents, some of which may be principles regulating the conjunction of others: "syntactic" principles, perhaps.

- (1.2) Organisms are self-referring, seeking to maintain the circular processes by which they are maintained: they interact to preserve their domain of interactions. Their lives are cyclic, and require that they predict: at every stage of the cycle there will be a suitable interaction which, following, helps to maintain the cycle. But interactions are with the environment, which changes; hence no interaction, strictly speaking, recurs; hence the organism predicts classes of suitable interactions, not individual ones.

Big breath. More premises:

- (2.0) Self-conscious organisms, among them certain collocutors, among them humans (among them — aha! — SSSpeakers and SSSpeakees), observe themselves as well as others. Self-descriptive, they can represent and interact with their own states and interactions; notably, they can make representations of predictions and classes of suitable interactions and can interact with these in a domain which is purely cognitive: they can stipulate and choose.

(2.1) In particular, then, human collocutors observe themselves communicating. As observers, and only as observers, they “understand”; observing the communications to which they attend, they stipulate a system within which these can be said to signify: they stipulate a language. Their language is their own; whatever its constituents, insofar as it signifies, it is not directly comparable with another’s.

(2.2) Being self-conscious, such a collocutor (a SSSpeaker, perhaps) can stipulate classes of suitable interactions. Being a collocutor, such a collocutor requires that there be at least one other comparable collocutor; this Other, being comparable, can also stipulate. Being an observer, observing the Other, such a collocutor may stipulate that the Other is also an observer: then the Other, being an observer, may analogously stipulate that the collocutor (who is, for the Other, an Other) is an observer.

Tempted by such convergence, such a collocutor may then stipulate a code: a language which he ascribes to the Other and which, preserving symmetry, he stipulates the Other to have ascribed to him. Such a code represents a stipulated class of suitable communications (interactions); when subsequent communications are indeed members of this class and, moreover, prove suitable for both collocutor and Other, the code itself is deemed suitable.

In such circumstances I (now explicitly a SSSpeaker, hence a collocutor) declare collocutor and Other *competent* in the code; further, I declare *competence* to be the ability to stipulate a suitable code.

(2.3) The class of communications represented by a code is stipulated, not actual; hence it may be that a subsequent communication proves suitable but is not a member of the class. Perhaps the observer (a collocutor) then stipulates a new code; but perhaps he instead stipulates an alternative communication, similar

to that which occurred but consistent with the code already stipulated. In the latter case he declares the communicator competent still, but an imperfect *performer*, and the communication imperfectly *performed*; *performance*, then, concerns the difference between the actual and stipulated communication.

IV. DISTINCTIONS AGAIN

Still there? There were SSSpeakers and speaKkers, remember? and I had asked: what do SSSpeakers do, that speaKkers cannot?

The foregoing was (believe it or not) a route to a reply: SSSpeakers stipulate codes, with varying degrees of competence, and perform in accordance with these codes, with varying degrees of skill. SpeaKkers, on the other hand, are built by observers and embody observers’ codes; they do not stipulate their own. SpeaKkers are not, and cannot be, competent.

Mind you, speaKkers *do* perform: they accord with codes, to a greater or lesser degree [witness SSSpeakers’ (usually SSSalesmen’s) pitches that certain speaKkers have “high performance ratings”, represent “yer best performance dollah”]. But when a speaKker does not accord, the observer responds not by stipulating a new code but by declaring the speaKker’s performance faulty [witness SSSitcom gags of yore (was it Desi Arnaz, with his wife behind the console?): “What’s wrong with this radio? When I turn it on I only get Lucy!”]. Even though an observer may ascribe different codes (different “purposes”) to different speaKkers, and even though the code actually embodied may be unknown, discoverable only by experiment, the code is assumed constant: a speaKker, incompetent, is deemed unable to autonomously adjust its “purpose” [witness CComputer CCaricatures: panel one, SSSpeaker (in a rage): “You idiot — you’re fired!”; panel two, CComputer, (stolidly): “Does not compute. Resubmit.”]

Recapitulating: speaKkers cannot be virtuosi; SSSpeakers can. Both speaKkers and SSSpeakers perform. SpeaKkers cannot be competent; SSS-

peakers can. Conclusions, and some answers to our questions: (i) virtuosity has to do with competence, not performance; (ii) speakKers cannot be virtuosi because they cannot be competent; (iii) *Maledetto* therefore requires SSSpeakers, not speakKers — SSSpeakers, moreover, who are virtuosically competent: that is, extraordinarily proficient in stipulating suitable codes.

V. TWO'S COMPANY

Let's be practical.

A composer, let's say, teaches a piece of music to a performer directly: "like this", he says, and dashes off a lick or two on the local clavier. "Urn", she replies, and ventures an analogous phrase on her modified 1934 C melody saxophone, formerly an umbrella stand. "Nnn", he responds, "not ta-dum TAH-doo-dee-yah-dah-doo but ta-dum-DOT too-dee-yah-dah-duh." "Ah", sez she, and ventures again. "Yeaah", comes back, with two quick puffs and crooked smile. They break for lunch.

I, an observer, stipulating my own code for these two Others, declare them (and myself) competent (note well, in passing: I can declare no Other competent in a code in which I am not); their communications have been suitable. What else?

Suppose I partition the exchange, not according to SSSpeaker, but by type of SSSpeech; then I might observe that two, perhaps three, distinct codes have been used: that, for example, though her initial response is otherwise analogous to his first utterance, it entirely excludes the phrase *ulike this*"; or that "ta-dum-DOT [*etcetera*]" does not yield another *uta-dum-DOT [etcetera]*", but rather "Ah" and a second round of saxophony. That is, I might distinguish communicative acts like "like this" (call these ENGLISH) from acts like the clavier lick (call these MUSIC) and from acts like "ta-dum [*etcetera*]" (call these — what? — perhaps SCATTING). And (observant little bugger that I am) I might then conclude: the first and most important orientation produced by a code is to the domain of codes and, in particular, to the domain of a particular code; that is, English orients both collocutors to ENGLISH, music orients to MUSIC, scattling, to

SCATTING. (OK; what else?)

I might also observe that each code's domain is closed: the communication that orients to the code also orients *within* the code. "Like", let us say, signifies that ENGLISH is in use; "like" is also *in* ENGLISH. The clavier's sound orients the sax-player to MUSIC; it also *is* MUSIC. Moreover (also by closure), a code is only indicated by using it: "this is English" signifies ENGLISH; the clavier lick signifies MUSIC; but "this is music" signifies ENGLISH, not MUSIC. (Good; but *what else?*)

Well, gee, I might observe (improvising wildly), most codes (like ENGLISH, or MUSIC) are actually classes of codes: "hey, man, howizzit" orients to a different ENGLISH than "good morning, sir". Codes within a class may themselves be classes (and so on, *ad infinitum*): COUNTRY MUSIC, within MUSIC, includes WESTERN SWING within itself (do you doubt it? — consider what a trumpet, for example, signifies in each of the three). Code-classes are interrelated: one class may carve a subset from another, as when THEATRE, with ENGLISH speech, becomes ENGLISH THEATRE (and ENGLISH THEATRE, needless to say, is not ENGLISH, else, Keaton-like, we should all rush the stage to rescue the heroine). (Again: *WHAT ELSE??*)

OK, then: a shortcut. We're collocutors, you and I: we each stipulate a code, a language which we ascribe to the Other and which, we further stipulate, the Other has ascribed to us. But must we do this anew for every encounter? Can't we generalize instead, ascribing certain languages to many Others, *a priori*, and stipulating that these Others have, similarly, ascribed these languages to us: that is, can't we stipulate that certain codes are shared by a Many which includes you and me? To be sure, the Other of any particular encounter may well have stipulated a language outside our cozy collection; but if not, how easy things are: competence then requires only that each collocutor choose, from the universe of shared codes, that which is suitable in the circumstances. A simple task, relatively speaking: no virtuosity here.

It may not work out that way, of course. Suppose I am the communicator; then you (the communicatee) might be oriented by my action to a do-

main altogether removed from codes and languages; you might, for example, run away [Bud Abbott (bear-headedly bewigged and watching Lou hightail it): “I only asked for some honey.”] Or you might be oriented to a particular code-class (ENGLISH, perhaps) but not to the subclass required (GULLAH, or PIGLATIN, or TWELVE-TONE ANALYSIS); perhaps you are oriented to the “wrong” one [Dick Powell (ocularly contused): “He didn’t see the joke”]; or perhaps you reply in a different subclass [Jimmy Stewart (jocularly confused): “Look, mister, cantcha tell me in plain English?”]

Or perhaps my action offers greater difficulties; perhaps you are oriented to the domain of codes, yes, but not to any one class in particular (to none or to many); then, perhaps, you will alter an existing code, or interrelate two that had been distinct, or stipulate a new one altogether, and interact with me on that basis. Not a simple task, now, but it’s mine to manage too; if (as I surely hope) our subsequent interactions are to be suitable (and we are to be competent), we must both press ahead to devise the code each deems the Other to have devised; we must both, perhaps, stipulate virtuosically.

I do get another chance, of course: that’s the virtue of a dialogue. If what you venture is not suitable (but is a communication), it’s my turn to choose, modify, or invent: “Nnn”, I can say, “not ta-dum TAH [*etcetera*]”, and now it’s your chance again. Thus, by successive approximations, confirming, altering, or replacing our stipulated codes, we can evolve a communication (the union of these bits) that is suitable; together we find competence in a code with which neither began. Something, perhaps, has been learned.

Maledetto, alas, is not a dialogue; *Maledetto* is a score. Not to say, of course, that *Maledetto* might not entail an exchange like the foregoing: composer (Mr G) SSSpeaks a lick; “Urn”, replies speaker D, and SSSpeaks an analogous lick on her 1945 whiskey tenor; and so forth. Indeed, *Maledetto* has at times entailed such exchanges, but it need not; there can be a speaker D who never encounters Mr G (or he, she). *Maledetto*, the score, permits a new scenario: Mr G produces a document which, disseminated by others, is discovered by speaker D,

who some time later SSSpeaks a lick; I, observing all, declare the document a score. What has happened?

Suppose a composer is without access to performers: then he will stipulate them. Let him interact with these, his stipulations, as if with Others; humming, grinning, scribbling, let he and they communicate, making and modifying codes as required, until the communication and the codes are deemed suitable (the composer breaks for lunch, but alone). Then let him, as an observer, make a representation of these interactions in the suitable code: a score. Let him depart.

Enter a performer. The score, like other communications, both orients to and is in a class of codes. But it is a monologue, not a dialogue (it doesn’t answer back); it is an observer’s fabrication, like a speakKer, and embodies a code-class which is unchanging. Perhaps the performer is not competent in this class; then the score, for him, is no score at all [“How was I to know it was music?”]. Or perhaps he can select the class to which the score belongs, but not the appropriate sub-class; incompetent but informed, he can then seek instruction [“Hear, ear, what’s this all about?”].

Or perhaps (in most cases to which I attend), observing himself and the document before him, he finds himself competent and selects or constructs a code from the domain to which the score orients him. Denied access to the composer, he too stipulates an Other, to whom he ascribes this code, and interacts with this Other to generate a communication which, in his own domain, the score would represent. In the process, perhaps, he modifies his stipulated code; but always he is constrained by the score: the code he stipulates, in the domain to which the score orients him, must also be, by closure, the code it’s in.

The code is deemed suitable; the monologue ends; the performer performs. Here, finally, is an observable interaction (all that preceded was in the performer’s domain alone); perhaps it is suitable (perhaps not), and perhaps the performer is declared competent (perhaps not) — *but not by the composer*; he has departed, and there’s the rub. A score, we see, possesses a quirky property: though, as a coded

communication, it defines a class of suitable subsequent interactions, these are not between the original collocutors, but between one of them (the performer) and a stipulated Third.

Enter the audience.

VI. THREE IS TOO

We need, I fear, yet another scenario — this time with names, to keep the players straight: here is a composer (call her Penpal), who fabricates a score and departs; the score, variously disseminated, is discovered by an Other (call him Axman), who some time later plays suitable licks for a collection of Thirds. Let's say there are three such Thirds (how convenient), for whom, for simplicity, we proscribe mutual interactions: the first (call him Zero) knows nothing of scores or Penpals, not even their existence; the second (call her Ears) knows of the score but has not encountered it; the third (call him . . . ? oh, call him Smartass) has the score in front of him. And here I sit, the same old observer, vaguely omnipresent and omnicompetent, for the last time reminding you, an Other, that what is said is said in my domain and in my code (not necessarily theirs, not necessarily yours): what now do I observe?

Let's review. Lacking performers, Penpal stipulates one (Penpal's-Axman), interacts with him using a code, which may change over time, and represents these interactions in a score, which both orients him to and is in this code (call it Penpal's-scorecode). Along comes Axman, who, oriented by the score to a domain of codes, stipulates a composer (Axman's-Penpal) and interacts with her in a code (Axman's-scorecode) in such a way that the score is a representation of these interactions. Axman is not, of course, Penpal's-Axman (the latter is a stipulation; the former, real); nor is Penpal Axman's-Penpal. Worse: since Penpal, we have said, has departed, and thus is inaccessible to Axman, and since Axman's-Penpal is inaccessible to all except Axman (and, to be tiresome, since Axman is inaccessible to Penpal and Penpal's-Axman inaccessible to all but Penpal), there is no one who can directly compare the stipulated with the actual: Axman and Penpal test their respective scorecodes

only against the score itself.

Axman's interactions with the score orient him to a new domain of communicative interactions; but these are not with Penpal, but with Zero, Ears, and Smartass. Axman thus stipulates another code, different from his scorecode (call this Axman's-playcode); using it, he performs. This activity orients the three Thirds to their own domains of codes, from which each stipulates analogously: Zero's-playcode, Ears's-playcode, Smartass's-playcode.

For Zero, it's that simple. Knowing nothing of the score or of Penpal, Zero treats Axman's communication like any other: he chooses, modifies, or invents a playcode, determining as necessary whether it is suitable and whether Axman (or he himself) is competent. For Zero, that is, Axman's performance is a communication, but not a performance of Penpal's score.

For Ears, on the other hand, matters are more complicated. Knowing a score exists, but lacking it, Ears may stipulate one (Ears's-score); knowing of Penpal, who has departed, Ears may stipulate her (Ears's-Penpal); interacting with these stipulations, Ears, like Axman, may stipulate a code (Ears's-scorecode). In practice, natch, things aren't so tidy: Ears's stipulations are affected not only by the performance but also by her recollection of other scores and Penpals; moreover each stipulation depends on the others, so that all may be linked in a cycle of continuing adjustment. But a judgment about suitability or competence interrupts things, however briefly: what happens then?

Axman, Ears knows, is performing a score. But the only score available to Ears is Ears's-score (should she stipulate another, *that* becomes Ears's-score); then Axman, for Ears, is performing Ears's-score (which, to be sure, Ears ascribes to Penpal). That is: Ears stipulates that Axman has interacted with Ears's-score using Axman's-scorecode and has thereby been oriented to a domain of interactions which necessarily includes the performance Ears hears.

However, Ears has interacted similarly with Ears's-score, and is oriented similarly to a domain of interactions; and this, Ears may claim, ought similarly to include the performance. Suppose it does;

then Axman's playing is consistent not only with Ears's-playcode but also with Ears's other stipulations: Ears declares Axman's-scorecode suitable for Penpal's score (really Ears's-score, ascribed to Penpal), and Axman competent to perform it.

But suppose it does not: then the performance, even if suitable in itself (that is, consistent with Ears's-playcode), is not suitable as a performance of the score. Now, perhaps Ears consequently adjusts her stipulated score or scorecode (the cycle begins again); or perhaps she stipulates an alternate performance, similar to that which has occurred but consistent with her other stipulations: Axman is competent, she declares, but has performed badly. But if not these, one alternative alone remains: Ears declares that Axman's-scorecode is unsuitable, and that Axman is incompetent to perform Penpal's score.

What then for Axman? He cocks an ear to think; and perhaps, from an unexpected corner, he hears a wily voice:

Hark ye, good Axman — a word in your ear: be prudent Without Ears, you're in trouble (performing is your livelihood). Would you have her declare you incompetent, or a bad performer?

I know, I know: perhaps she's generous: perhaps she'll reconsider, revise her stipulated score or codes. Or maybe you're tough, your reputation established; perhaps you can silence her, or drown her out But can you chance it?

Listen, Axman: you have an advantage; use it. Though Ears knows of the score, she's never seen it; all her judgments rest on what she stipulates. Go her one better: deduce her stipulations (score and scorecode) and base your performance on them. Do this well and you're sure to be favored; your competence will be unquestioned.

Sure, it's true that Ears's-score is not Penpal's score; though Ears will find things suitable, Penpal ("your Penpal) wont Strictly speaking, I suppose, you're not performing Penpal's piece at all, but Ears's — but does that matter, good Axman? We can keep it mum, you and I, and Penpal's gone — there's nothing to fear there. So rest quiet, my friend: I tell you, there's no way your game can be unmasked by Ears alone.

A wily voice, and correct: Axman is safe when in Earsshot only; exposure requires a Smartass. Smartass extends Ears's domain in a crucial way: having the score before him, he yields Axman no

advantage. Smartass and Axman proceed along parallel paths, interacting with identical scores; unless Axman has performed badly, differences in the domains to which each is oriented can be attributed only to differences in the codes and Penpals each has stipulated. The claims of both are equivalent: if Axman's-scorecode (evidenced in his performance) differs sufficiently from Smartass's-scorecode, Smartass may declare Axman incompetent to perform Penpal's score; if Smartass's-scorecode (evidenced in his declaration) differs sufficiently from Axman's, Axman may declare Smartass incompetent.

It's a deadlock. Only Penpal could intervene helpfully, but Penpal, we all agree, has departed. For Axman and Smartass, intractable, the dispute shifts from the domain of language to that of politics. [Is Smartass a powerful critic? — *watch out, Axman!* Is Axman a popular hero? — *shut up, Smartass!*] Though at any moment a newly-stipulated code can extend the dialogue, without one it can go no further; future interactions will be regulated not by principles of communication, but by power.

But for Axman there comes again that insinuating voice:

Ah, but Mr. Axman, one more word, good sir, just a wee word more: though Smartass has the score, you can still go him one better, tricky though it be. Stick to the score, yes, but deduce Smartass's other stipulations (his scorecode and Penpal); use these for your performance, not your own. Do this well, as before, and again your performance will nestle into his domain; happy he'll be, and you, clever Axman, can be certain of competence.

Why hesitate? Who's to know? Penpal is gone, and even were she not, how could she discover that the Smartass-scorecode you've deduced is not really your own? Moreover, good Axman, to be blunt aren't you a wee bit arrogant in clinging to your own code? What if you're wrong? Admit it if you were wrong, and if Penpal were here, she too would find you incompetent; she'd side with Smartass. Think about it can you really be sure your stipulations, not Smartass's, are the suitable ones? In truth, good sir, you can't, and that's the bottom line.

I tell you, Axman, in so unempirical a situation, the safest guide is consensus — stick with the Smartasses around you. Sure, you lose something. I grant it your Penpal (Axman's-Penpal) will find you incom-

petent, and in your own code your performance will be unsuitable — but these are minor matters. Your Penpal is a stipulation; Smartass is real, and possibly quite powerful. Would you be competent in your own domain but incompetent in your collocutors'? Why? Who is Penpal, after all, to require this of you?

Penpal, indeed, has problems of her own. She's no dummy; she can stipulate this whole scenario, from the score to Axman's persuasive Voice. What is she to do?

Axman's crudest ploy, which requires an audience exclusively of Ears, is easily discouraged: Penpal publishes and distributes her scores, thereby making Smartasses of the Ears for whom Axman plays. Once Smartasses can be found anywhere, Axman can only perform as if for them; techniques suitable for Ears alone will have to be abandoned.

But the subtler tactic, in which Axman stipulates Smartass's-scorecode rather than his own, is less easily met. Perhaps Penpal responds with cunning: perhaps she makes her score in such a way that, although neither Axman's-scorecode nor Smartass's-scorecode will be suitable, Axman's deduction (Axman's-Smart-ass's-scorecode) will; she second-guesses Axman, tricking him into competence despite his maneuvers.

But then Smartass (who is also no dummy) might reason similarly, stipulating at the outset the code he ascribes to Penpal: Smartass's-Penpal's-Axman's-Smartass's-scorecode. Then Axman, wittingly or un-, will go him one better (Axman's-Smartass's-Penpal's-Axman's-Smartass's-scorecode), and Penpal will have to triple-guess Axman, stipulating in such a way that this last is suitable, though the others are not; but then Smartass might again reason similarly, stipulating at the outset . . .

Let's face it: there's no safety in regression.

Perhaps there is safety in convention. Penpal (like we, before her) can stipulate a priori that certain codes are shared by Many, and can choose from these for her score. If she is competent and her code suitable, her score will orient Many to the code she has stipulated; then aberrant Axmen, oriented differently, will be overcome by Many Smartasses. In this case, consensus really does count, since Penpal

herself has invoked it; moreover, in this case Axman gains nothing by stipulating from Smartass's domain rather than his own, for if both Axman and Smartass are among Many, their domains of shared codes are by definition the same. Clearly there is safety in convention; the Many among whom Penpal places herself will enforce the code she stipulates. Virtuosi are not only unnecessary but undesirable.

But this safety persists only as long as the Many. It may happen that the shared domain later ceases to include Penpal's code; then, if Penpal's score is to remain suitable, it must orient a collocutor (an Axman, Ears, or Smartass) to an extraordinary code differing from those shared: one dimly recalled, perhaps, but no longer commonly used; or one constructed from bits of existing codes, or deduced from artifacts or ambience; or even one newly invented, a response to the score alone. Virtuosity is now a virtue.

Our resourceful Penpal (no dummy, remember) can predict all this, and recognize the hazard: a communication coded for Many is easily misconstrued when Many's codes change. Preferable, perhaps, is another path altogether: Penpal can communicate *from the outset* in a way which will require extraordinary stipulations from her collocutors. Perhaps she uses a conventional scorecode which nonetheless, with the score, orients Axman to extraordinary playcodes: Axman plays, and Smartass listens, virtuosically. Or perhaps the scorecode itself requires extraordinary stipulations: both Smartass and Axman display virtuosic competence. Either way, Penpal exchanges the immediate security of Many's company for a continuing tradition of virtuosity which may perhaps offer more consistent protection.

But then again, it may not; for in these circumstances, Axman's strategy again becomes viable:

Psst! Axman! It's all well and good, this extraordinary competence — you're a clever fellow! But hold on a second: your cleverness only counts if Smartass makes an effort too. Will he? Think, now: why shouldn't he? Isn't he more likely, after all, to just cast about for a conventional code-and, not finding one, to declare you incompetent? Worse yet: if the scorecode is at issue, he's likely to declare Penpal

herself incompetent-and in this case, even the most virtuosic performance will be useless.

C'mon, Axman, be sensible: align yourself with Smartass's domain. If he's rejected Penpal's score, don't play it; if he approaches it with conventional codes, choose from these-forget the extraordinary one you've ascribed to Penpal. It's a far more prudent course, really it is-and after all, in the end, no one can know for sure what you or she has done. That's where real safety lies.

The Voice speaks sense, as usual. Axman interacts directly with Smartass, and only indirectly with Penpal; it's Smartass who judges his competence and who directly affects his life. Ignoring rejected scores, or performing in accord with Smartass's codes, is both strategic and safe; moreover, this tactic, discreetly employed, is undiscoverable by Smartass or any other collocutor. Against it, in fact, stand only Axman's own stipulations — in particular, the uncertain possibility that the competence declared by his stipulated Penpal would also be declared by Penpal herself. And this self-secured competence — confined, Axman fears, to his own domain — is more curse than accomplishment; it compels a choice between self-consistency and effectiveness, between the unpeopled world of the score and the immediate, influential world of Smartasses: a helluva decision.

And yet: this dilemma is Axman's own making; it depends, in the end, on his own unexamined stipulations. Smartass is an Other to whom Axman ascribes a code, and codes entail an assumption that collocutors are comparable. Why, then, does Axman stipulate that Smartass's-scorecode necessarily differs from his own? Smartass, no less than he, can be a virtuoso; Smartass too can stipulate with extraordinary competence from the domain to which Penpal's score (or Axman's performance) orients him. In denying Smartass's virtuosity, Axman denies that Smartass is an autonomous Other like himself; his arrogance lies not in affirming his own competence but in stipulating a difference between collocutors that eventually allows power to replace communication.

But then: Smartass's situation *is*, after all, different. He's no performer; unless he confronts Axman, or another Smartass, his competence is not at

issue. On the face of it, he seems unlikely to press forward virtuosically: the accessibility and ease of conventional codes are too attractive. By confining himself to a shared domain, Smartass loses only the new code and the orientation it and the performance will produce — and who can tell him such a loss is significant? Surely Axman's misgivings are justified, and his dilemma inescapable.

And yet, again: I say that Smartass *is* a comparable Other, even if he spurns virtuosity. All that Axman foresees, Smartass too can foresee; if the chain of interactions continues through him, so also does the responsibility. Suppose Smartass does confine himself to shared codes — or, more strictly, suppose his interactions orient Axman to the stipulation that he is so confined. Then Axman indeed has no escape: he must necessarily stipulate that Smartass's domain differs from his own, that Smartass is not comparable, and that he himself must choose between consistency and communication. For Smartass (as for Axman, you, or I), all this is predictable, as is the recourse to power that it permits.

Alternatively, Smartass can orient Axman to the stipulation that he is *not* so confined: but how? Not by guile; attempts to second-guess lead to attempts to triple-guess, *et cetera ad infinitum* — and there's no safety, you'll recall, in regression. No, there's no alternative to nerve: Smartass must truly open his domain to codes which are extraordinary, including *a priori* even those not yet stipulated. Suitability, for the moment, is irrelevant; at issue is not whether he and Axman are virtuosos, or even competent, but only whether they are comparable: whether each's domain can embrace extraordinary codes analogous to those embraced in the Other's.

Though inviting, such a course carries a burden: every score thereafter, every performance, calls for virtuosity. No longer can the suitable simply be extracted from the shared or familiar; all codes become available at all times, including those newly invented or inventable. If, in the end, a stipulation falls within the domain of shared codes, it will be despite its conventionality, not because of it.

The burden of virtuosity is carried by Axman and Smartass alike. Axman's tactics are vitiated,

and the Voice muted: if Smart-ass's domain is comparable to Axman's own, Axman gains nothing by assuming it for himself. But though Axman's dilemma dissolves, new demands are precipitated: each collocutor, sharing with an Other the obligations of virtuosity, must ascribe to him the competence he stipulates for himself, and each must strive to attain the competence he stipulates the Other to have ascribed to him. Both collocutors' stipulations are thus conjoined in a cycle which continuously expands; to constrain it is to confine the domain of codes and thus to restipulate the difference both have rejected.

And, I tell you, it *is* a curse, this constant expansion; triumphs are eroded by each successive round of virtuosity. Still, this cursed competence represents communication's only consistent defence against the seductive simplicity of power. It links into a company three autonomous and comparable observers: virtuoso performer and virtuoso auditor, committed to a competence that is challenged as soon as achieved; and virtuoso composer, who precipitates their commitment by fabricating a score for which only extraordinary codes are suitable. The score, and the score alone, constrains this company; it is in the score that true power resides.

VII. COMPETENZA MALEDETTA

And so to *Maledetto*. What are we (Ears, Smartasses, Axmen alike) to make of such a score and its performance?

Watch, now: in they tramp, a troop of Ears, jostling and jawing, set for a show by NMCE III. Perhaps, clever folk, they can exbreviate this acronym to New Music Choral Ensemble; then they're ready, in particular, for some MUSIC. Before them sit seven performers on various household/musical objects, lit by four floor lamps. Complications already: MUSIC does not involve floor lamps; nor do its players arrive before the audience; nor do they perch on chairs, pillows, stools, instrument cases. Clearly this is not MUSIC but THEATRE; but then, theatre is not what is performed by a new MUSIC ensemble. What gives?

Well, there are the floor lamps, THEATRI-

CALLY suggesting a home: perhaps this is HOME MUSIC or, to be more properly generic, SALON MUSIC. Or, resolving the conflicts THEATRICAL presentation of SALON MUSIC: SALON MUSIC THEATRE, perhaps. Or even — Eureka! — a sort of OPERA (SALON OPERA?), a conclusion substantiated by the title, *Maledetto*: good Italian word, the language of Verdi, composer of *Rigoletto*, note the rhyme, of course it's OPERA, why didn't we see it before?

(Too far, you say? Am I going too far? Consider: a near-translation of "maledetto" is "curse", which intersects the keyword "screw" with the phonemes /s,k,r/ and a homographic "u", exhausting the content of both it and the key-word; so why not "curse" (or "curses", or "accursed") as a title, facilitating comprehension and affirming the phonetic basis of the work? Why not, indeed, unless "maledetto" has other, preferable attributes: good Italian word, the language of Verdi, composer of *Rigoletto, et cetera ad libitum al fine . . . ?*)

So it's OPERA, then, OPERA for the salon — make that CHAMBER OPERA — and from NMCE's incipit, obviously NEW (AVANT-GARDE, if you wish) CHAMBER OPERA. But, dammitall, OPERA is staged, memorized, acted, whereas here, alas, before each performer is a stand and score: this work, largely static, will be read. Are we back to CHAMBER MUSIC, then? — or perhaps they haven't learned it completely, poor dears (ain't it a shame how new pieces get such minimal rehearsal) — so a kind of NEW CHAMBER OPERA READING, then. Never mind: let the performance begin.

OK. From the start, it's clearly not OPERA, but more like THEATRE (words, that is, not song); moreover, they've certainly learned it completely (hell, it's *hard*), so the scores aren't there for a READING: back to CHAMBER MUSIC again. But then there seems to be a LECTURE underway as well, a kind of ILLUSTRATED LECTURE — an avant-garde CHATAUQUA, if that's possible; on the other hand, some performers appear to assume characters, as in THEATRE (we've been here before), and there are many instances of purely sonic, MUSICAL textures (and here). Then there's rhyme,

alliteration, meter, the components of POETRY, and occasional excursions into STORY-TELLING.

Had enough? Look, it's no good: conventional codes, conventionally applied, simply won't do.

A drama critic came from one paper, and a music critic came from another one. The drama critic didn't review because he thought the program too musical to appear in his column. The music critic didn't review because he thought the program too theatrical to appear in his column.

Right *Maledetto* is tough on Ears; does it help to be a Smartass? Look at the score, then: dynamics regulated by conventional Italianations (MUSIC); tempo specified by word speed and other Italianarities (SPEECH, plus MUSIC); inflection indicated with attitudinal adjectives (THEATRE); text as text (LECTURE), as reading (POETRY), as monologue (MELODRAMA), as dialogue (THEATRE), as counterpoint (MUSIC), as melody (SONG). Plus a complex set of graphics whose connection to performance is not immediately obvious (perhaps POETRY, subclass CONCRETE; or MUSIC, subclass EYE). In sum: not much help for Smartasses here.

Never mind, plunge ahead: seize one of these classes — MUSIC, let's say — and Pin It Down. MUSIC, as in CONTEMPORARY, clearly; but then (rats) there is ornament (BAROQUE), canon (RENAISSANCE), hocket (MEDIEVAL), expression (ROMANTIC), design (MANNERIST), permutation (SERIAL) — to say nothing of JAZZ, STOCHASTIC, MILITARY, IMPROVISATORY, LITURGICAL (or at least, to say very little).

All right: try it as a performer, then — speaker D, perhaps. Are you part of a MUSICAL ensemble? Yes. Are you to assume a character, as in THEATRE? Yes. Do you read your text as POETRY? Yes. Do you declaim speeches as a MONOLOGUE? Yes. Do you COMMAND? Yes. Do you interact with other performers? Are you independent of other performers? Are you on a set? Are you on a stage? Are you in control? Are you being controlled? *Had enough?*

Face it, Smartasses, Axmen: you might as well be Ears. Performer or audience, literate or ill, *Maledetto* puts it to us all the same: virtuoso stipulation, virtuoso competence. There's nothing to

do but get started: let's each of us, for a start, try to employ the diverse codes we share in new and extraordinary ways. Too much trouble? — then you've chosen, inevitably, to transform language (*Maledetto*'s language, sucker) into a truncheon.

“There is little doubt as to whom Gaburo's malediction is directed at: the audience. This helpless body had to sit through a half-hour long discourse on the history and utility of the screw. Yes, I said screw. It is unlikely that even a kindergarten audience could be amused by this and the other cutesy, not-quite-obscenities sprinkled throughout the program. My reaction was — screw it.”

Multiple codes, then: how about constituents? Recall: certain constituents regulate the disposition of others — that is, they specify structure; maybe these are common to all *Maledetto*'s codes? That *would* be a help, eh?

OK; begin by discerning varieties of structural constituents: markers, for example, affect others directly [in ENGLISH, certain morphemes determine the tense or voice of others]; dividers, on the other hand, only sometimes appear explicitly [as punctuation is used to phrase PROSE]; then there are accords, largely inferred, which regulate simultaneity [harmony may govern MUSIC]; and finally, logics, almost exclusively inferred, which regulate sequence [as, heretofore, increasing brevity has characterized these PARENTHESES]. OK; choose one of these (the rest shall return) and consider its occurrence in *Maledetto*: dividers, for example.

Here we go then: Speaker A, exemplarily ENGLISH, heptasects the constituent that is the whole of *Maledetto* into tidy divisions, numbered and well-headed — 1. Introduction, 2. Pre-Technical, 3. Use, 4. History, 5. Technology, 6. Nomenclature, 7. Economy; these are themselves divided and re-divided in exemplary ENGLISH fashion, with pauses, paragraphs, periods, punctuation. Group C, on the other hand, trisects the same elemental constituent MUSICALLY, into litanies, canons, and developments; five subdivisions of each, further divided by texture and voice. Speaker B is simple: he POETICALLY quintasects the big *M*, into a terraced uniformity of curses. Speaker D . . . , well, speaker D divides *M* in four (count 'em, 4) ways: drunkenly, into twelve units (contrasting: 3 + 1 + 3

+ 2 + 2 + 1); naively, into three (terraced); dramatically, into seven (3 + 2 + 2); and a tripart string of thirty-nine interjections (11 + 14 + 14). *Had enough?*

Wait just a sec — there may be help on the way. B, C, and D are fairly well removed from exemplary ENGLISH; what good are paragraphs to them? They require unconventional dividers, and they've got them, in literal enclosures (S, C, R, E, W: no surprise here). Alas — these match only a few other divisions; worse yet, they define two additional partitionings: into units of five (necessary SCREWS) within any one voice, and into units of more than five (sufficient SCREWS) among all voices.

We might as well accept it: practically nothing matches up. A given constituent of *Maledetto* not only signifies in a multitude of codes, but also is beatable in a multitude of structures; “it obviously follows”, let's say, (signifying variously in LECTURE, STORY-TELLING, POETRY, HUMOR), opens the sixth of seven divisions of *Maledetto*, concludes the second of three, is partway through the second of a different three, is midway through the fourth of five, and ends both necessary and sufficient SCREWS. The same goes for other structural constituents (markers, accords, logics): lots of *sätze*, nary an *ur*. Still want Out? Go ahead, then — take one syntax to be central, regardless: speaker A's exemplary ENGLISH, perhaps, which is surely familiar to you. The rest? — well, they must be filigree, ornament, nonsense; you might as well write them off.

“*Maledetto* is a work that combines a precise technological language with nonsense language not unlike some of the hermetic poetry of Gertrude Stein that reveals largely in sounds rather than meanings. Such is art today.”

Multiple codes, multiple structures: COUNTERPOINT, then, another way Out, a code-above-codes? After all, they've told us how that works: it's a switching scheme — click, think on't as MUSIC; click, as THEATRE; click, this is the sixth division; click, it's the end of the second. Dextrously bounding from code to code, we'll cover them all; all we need is agility (not virtuosity), and we can

stick without loss to our shared domain. Tally-ho!

Except that: at issue is not how we attend, but what we stipulate. Though we may attend to an utterance first as MUSIC, then (click) as THEATRE, we can stipulate that it's both, throughout: MUSIC-AND-THEATRE. Our game isn't to adopt this code, then that, or even to devise a system for trying them all, but rather to stipulate in a domain that includes this, *and* that, and also *this-and-that*. In this domain, arithmetic lies: Two isn't one plus one, it's Two.

Twos, in fact, make things somewhat manageable; some already appear in the codes we share. Consider dividers, again: speaker A, in his elegant ENGLISH, punctuates conventionally, signalling the ends of units, while speaker D interjects commands and comments, signalling their beginnings. Shall we call D and A diachronic complements, then, with respect to dividers?

Consider markers. Speaker A, natch, uses ENGLISH markers; regulating tense, voice, quantity, quality, these morphemes affect primarily the ends of words, limiting them by requiring conformity with ENGLISH syntax. Speaker B, cursing steadily, need not conform; his markers (phonemes) appear at his constituent beginnings, limiting them to those which alliterate. Call B and A diachronic complements, then, with respect to markers.

Consider accord. Speaker A lectures soloistically; independent and indifferent, he is unconcerned with simultaneity. Group C is an ensemble, preoccupied with synchronization; accord is central to their task. Call C and A synchronic complements with respect to accord.

D/A, B/A, C/A, then: the Ones in each Two have complementary structures. Lefs be clear about this: complementation is not a constituent of D's code alone, nor of A's, but of a new code stipulated for the Two, D/A. Another example? — go up another round: here's a Three which consists of Twos (D/A, B/A, C/A) which a stipulated code might characterize as similar (all Three Twos are complements); but similarity isn't necessarily a constituent of the codes already stipulated for each Two alone.

Neat, and not overly burdensome, this evolving architecture: the stuff of catchy generalities and

fetching diagrams. Still, it hides a trap: though reflection and discrimination help us climb the tree, a pair of limbs at a time, they also predispose us to the qualities and relations in our shared codes — complementation, perhaps, or similarity. There's less virtuosity here than it seems.

Maledetto, fortunately, makes more unreasonable demands: it asks for instantaneous stipulations and immediate judgments — no time for architecture, nor for reflection. Risky rather than reasoned, these throw us (we hope) into *Maledetto*'s own stipulated domain, in which appear all the codes to which it orients — not merely singly, or in pairs, but in all conceivable groups and relations. That's a beginning, at least, and it's necessarily virtuosic.

Half an example, then: the opening.

All 7 speakers are already present (on-stage) as audience enters. Except for speaker A, the members of the group are articulating phoneme[s]. They do so quietly, randomly, thin-texturedly and contra puncta I ly. They do so in varying densities, mixing in and out of each other's transmissions. They form beautifully shaped phrases. They do so for as long a time as is necessary to settle the audience down, and to create a salon/living room atmosphere. Speaker A takes a very long time before entering, and when he does, his first phoneme (the S of screw) should seem to come from the group. The remaining members of the group continue to articulate phoneme[s], as noted above, under his opening address.

A does not hiss, then, while the others do: complementation already. But A emerges from the hiss as well; a new relation: extraction. Then again, the hiss continues *under* A, and eventually dies; another relation: suppression.

The hiss is a constituent of MUSIC (articulated quietly, contrapuntally, beautifully), and also a constituent of ENGLISH (the first phoneme of the keyword). Both ways, it contributes to a logic: it's the first of four constituents, the key-phonemes /s, k, r, u/, which punctuate the whole and which all but A articulate; proceeding from unvoiced to voiced by way of plosive and semi-vowel, these four suggest a scenario: in *Maledetto*, B, C, and D gradually acquire a voice, establishing parity with A only at the end. Yet another relation, then: political evolution.

What might /s/ signify MUSICALLY? An introduction, perhaps, the first act of performance, fo-

cusssing the attention; or a theme, a sound to recur and be developed; a transition, linking the audience, its rustles and whispers, with that which is performed; or an invitation, a texture which makes a parlor of the hall.

What might /s/ signify THEATRICALY? Domesticity and security, perhaps (steam heat, breezes, smoldering logs); or conspiracy (whispers, silencings); danger (snakes, acids, vapours); melancholy (a quiet rain); or elusiveness (smoke, evanescence). In MELODRAMA, I si greets the villain (speaker A?), while /u/ accompanies a breathtaking rescue; *Maledetto*, then, records the defeat of villainy. But I si is articulated by six speakers acting independently, while /u/ is articulated in unison; *Maledetto*, then, traces the loss of freedom.

One phoneme: many codes, many significations, still more relations — and, yes, of course there are others. It's not a matter of choosing from these, nor of switching among them, nor even of building a hierarchy of subgroups, but of stipulating all at once a new code in which they signify *all together*. Shall I spell this out? Not a chance: such stipulations, necessarily virtuosic, range well beyond the shared domain in which I write. Should *Maledetto* spell it out? But then, good friend, you lose an excellent chance to explore your own virtuosity. Worse: you appeal, once again, for an authority to command you; it's a retreat into power that you request.

“There was such an obsession with mode and mannerism that content went down the drain. It's a fine idea to exploit the rhythm and texture of words, as opposed to their meanings. But, the spectator is bound to ask, to what end? On this program, at least, the disparate elements were never meshed together into some commanding or novel Gestalt.”

And /s/ is just the start. From /s/, the texture, emerge multiple voices: speakers B and D and the quartet C. From /s/, the phoneme, emerges “screw”, a compound constituent of multiple orientations: to the technical (speaker A), the sexual (C), the profane (B), the fouled-up (C), the imprisoned (C), the drunken (D), the cheated (C, D), the oppressed (B, C, D). Multiplicity compounded, again and again, with only *Maledetto* itself as a guide.

One final game, then: *Maledetto* as METAPHOR. Let its characters, like you and I, stipulate codes in response to its multiple demands; let their interactions mirror our own. Who does what?

Speaker A chooses to choose, to stipulate from one domain only. The code he picks is coercive, the most potent because the most universal: his ENGLISH and his screw are both instruments of power. Boss of a controlling code, his is the voice to which the others must tune.

B chooses to choose, too, picking a potentially subversive domain: oaths. But despite the choice, and despite an independent, assonant syntax, he is initially A's alliterative slave ("screw miss pheasant!" he rages dutifully, ruled by A's "six mechanical powers"). Though he eventually gains a measure of independence, he loses strength; by *Maledetto*'s end he's barely audible, though his concatenations are his own ("blouzabelle jadekeep", he mutters, as A discusses "setscrew holding-power").

C is a group: that's a problem already. Its members contend not only with *Maledetto*'s multiplicity but with their own individuality; refusing to confront either, each stipulates only from domains that all share. Together they try alternatives, one at a time: five litanies (political screws); five canons (sexual screws); five developments (social screws). Each is proposed in the hope that it, at last, will be *right*; each, discarded, suggests a more extreme successor. Eventually C's pursuit of conformity leads it to deny its own capabilities; embracing machine language, these SSSpeakers declare themselves speaKkers, and thus unable to stipulate. Although, in the end, they disengage from A, they remain unchanged: opting for OUT, they're in perfect unison.

D complements C: she's one voice acting as four. Stipulating in more than one domain, D alone can interact with the others; her code alone expands. D1, well-screwed, is self-descriptive; independent of A, she intermittently cajoles group C, jostling, mocking, and despairing at their efforts. D2 revels in subjunctives: "if we were to . . .", she muses, and her pause entices B into a brief departure from cursing. D3 tackles group C directly, strategically

adopting its changing codes; she fractures its words phonetically, transforms them into song, parodies them. Ultimately, caught in C's machinery, she is forced into flat negation: "In screw is a go to (unconditional) statement", C declares; but D denies it: "In screw was a rewind statement".

In her fourth capacity, D affects directly the relations between all four units. Resolutely opposed to A's hegemony "*But*", she repeatedly protests), her interjections mediate between the other collocutors; though on the face of it these six can unite only to articulate bits of the key-word (and that only at A's sufferance), D4 stipulates the possibility of communication and therefore of autonomy. B falls silent, and C gets OUT, but at the end D is still probing, still suggesting, working on a code in which all her four voices speak together: "If we . . .", D4 begins, adopting D2's language, and D1 continues drunkenly ". . . dipped rather deep. . .", simultaneously addressing D3's final rebuke to C. D's conclusion is a call to action: neither a command nor a prescription, it's an inducement to continued stipulation, an invitation to virtuosity.

Is D, then, a heroine? Not really: she's come no further than any of us. Or shall I say, yes, indeed, a heroine like us all? It doesn't matter (though the latter's more flattering): what's critical is our comparability. D is a heroine only in stipulating that we're all comparable, all virtuosi; she's special only because she insists that no one is. Not that that makes things any easier for *us*.

Mebbe we need a *real* hero, eh? — a changer of destinies, who'll take our competence (and problems) out of our hands. Speaker A knows how to do this, and he knows what follows: power rather than communication, with collocutors reduced to instruments. He's a capable speakeRR, a ruler of debates, and he's ready; we could turn things over to him, and give up on *Maledetto*. But don't say he didn't warn us.

In Heron's Pneumatics there is an altar where a fire is lit and the hot air from this altar, streaming through four bent pipes, makes puppets dance. Authorities contend on the strength of such playthings that the Ancient Greeks could have invented the steam engine if only they did not have slaves which made such an invention superfluous. Clearly, this is not true, for

among other things, the engine had to wait for the screw as we know it to be refined.

SSSpeakers, then; and speaKkers. *Keep them straight.*

NOTES

All quotations are from *Maledetto* or other works by Kenneth Gaburo (Lingua Press, Collection One).

“Neurophysiology of Cognition,” by Humberto Maturana, appears in *Cognition: a Multiple*

View (ed. P. Garvin: Spartan Books, New York, 1970), and is reprinted in *The Lingua Press Collection Two Catalogue* (ed. K. Gaburo; Lingua Press, La Jolla, California, 1978).

The Biology of Cognition, an expanded version of the foregoing, and other books and papers by Maturana are available in the publications of the Biological Computer Laboratory, obtainable from Illinois Blueprint Corporation, 821 Bond, Peoria, IL 61603.