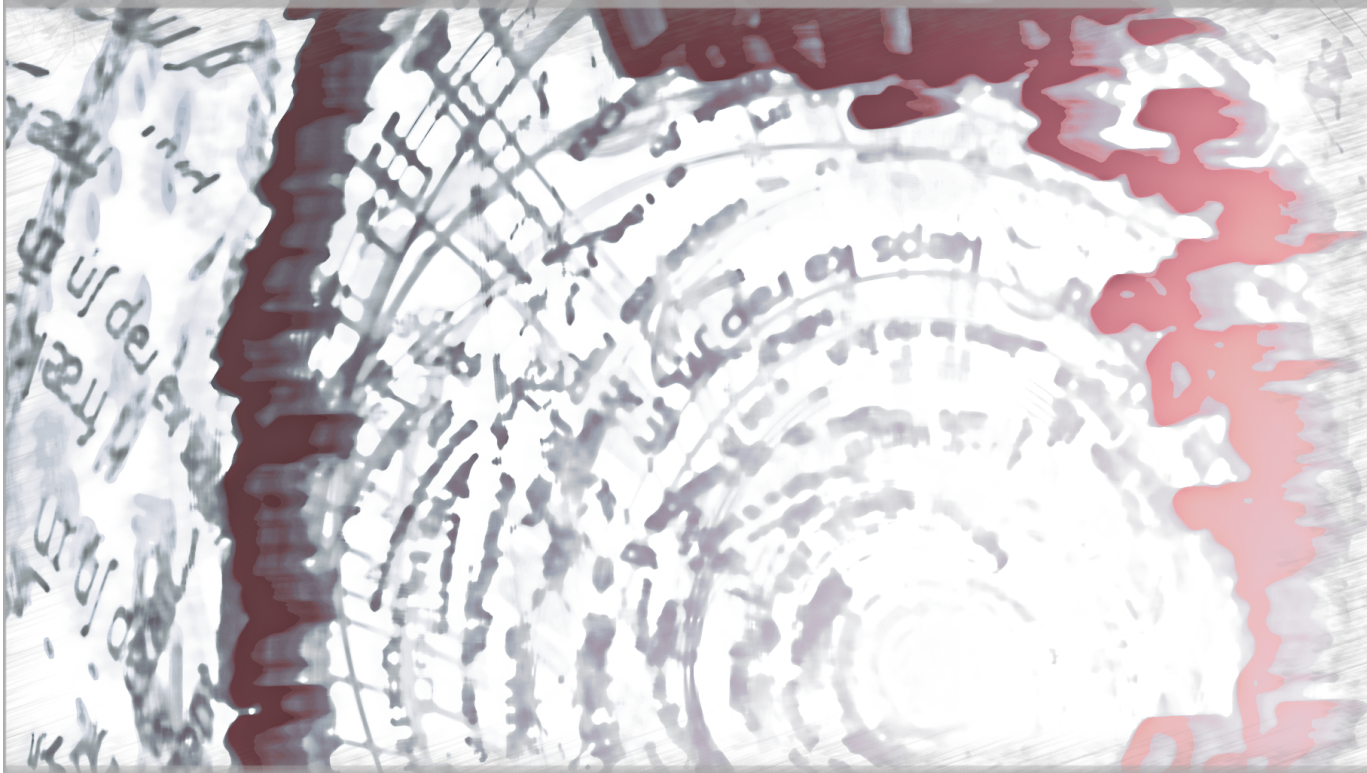


Allegory of Terms (2020)

for high voice and piano with preparations



Andrew A. Watts

COUNTERPOINT
PRINTWORKS

CP-045

Program Note

Allegory of Terms is an effort to create musical drama from an abstract narrative. In this case, single terms were listed in an order evoking a linear arc. Each term was then given a valence between -4 and +4 (intuitively assigned) based on the severity of positive, negative, or neutral emotions associated with that term. These valences were mapped on to probabilities in a Max/MSP algorithm to aid in the development of the form and rhythms. The more negative the valence, the more fragmented and chaotic the rhythmic treatment of the term; the more positive the valence, the more faithful and sustained treatment of the term. Ultimately, the goal is to invite a linear story with pure expression, but without specificity.

This piece was made possible by Stacey Fraser and a 2020 commission from California State University San Bernardino.

The text and cover page image was created by Andrew A. Watts.

Instrumentation

High voice

The singing range is relatively compact, between C4 (262Hz) and D5 (587.33Hz). The part may be performed by anyone who is comfortable with this singing range (typically soprano or mezzo-soprano voices). Some simple piano playing, a repeated single chord, is also required of the singer at the work's end.

Piano with preparations

Poster tack should be used to prepare (mute) specific strings inside of the piano in advance of performance. A full, grand piano is highly preferred given the physical aspects of the string layout. Additionally, an Ebow is required to sustain string vibrations and initiate beating frequencies between near unisons.

Note: The text is set in an intentionally desemanticized manner throughout the piece. The ambiguous, fragmented nature of the vocal part should be maintained. The original English text used in the generative speech algorithm, shown below, is only for the benefit of the performers (i.e. to better understand the expressive intent behind particular phrases and the context for the pronunciation).

TEXT (as English terms and as IPA):

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| sta-sis | steɪ-sɪs |
| tinge | tɪndʒ |
| fra-gil-i-ty | frə-dʒɪl-ə-ti |
| lapse | læps |
| cor-rup-tion | kə-rəp-ʃn |
| in-fra-c-tion | ɪn-fræk-ʃn |
| af-flic-tion | ə-flɪk-ʃn |
| pun-ish-ment | pʌn-ɪʃ-mənt |
| ex-ile | eg-zɑɪl |
| i-so-la-tion | aɪ-sə-leɪ-ʃn |
| in-car-cer-a-tion | ɪn-kɑr-sər-eɪ-ʃn |
| med-i-ta-tion | med-ətɪ-ʃn |
| re-demp-tion | rə-demp-ʃn |
| rec-on-cil-i-a-tion | rek-ən-sɪl-i-eɪ-ʃn |
| a-tone-ment | ə-toun-mənt |
| ex-on-er-a-tion | ɪgz-an-ər-eɪ-ʃn |
| ca-thar-sis | kə-θɑr-səs |
| a-poth-e-o-sis | ə-pəθ-i-ou-sɪs |
| sta-sis | steɪ-sɪs |
| in-dem-ni-fi-ca-tion | ɪn-dem-nə-fi-keɪ-ʃn |
| lam-en-ta-tion | læm-en-teɪ-ʃn |
| sta-sis | steɪ-sɪs |

Performance Notes

Duration (approx.): 6'00"

Accidentals apply only in the measure and register in which they appear.

Grace notes always occur before the beat or note they are going to.

Diminuendo al niente/Crescendo da niente



An *arrow* means transition (gradual) between the mode of tone production of the first element and the last element of the sequence.



Stems connected to *glissandi lines* are used merely as guides to help indicate the meter (i.e. where the beat is in relation to the slide). Please do not accent these.

HIGH VOICE

Sprechgesang is a cross between speaking and singing in which the tone quality of speech is heightened and lowered in pitch along melodic contours indicated in the musical notation. Whereas, *Sprechstimme* is animated speech with indeterminate pitch and gestural prosody.

PIANO PREPARATIONS: *Poster tack* is to be applied before performance to the following strings to mute (shown as "x" note-heads):

The use of *Ebow* on strings inside the piano will be for the following pitches to produce frequency beating between harmonic and ordinary notes.

Frequency beating technique*

*The resultant pitch from L.H. harmonic is also shown above as a near unison (beating frequency) with R.H.

written for Stacey Fraser and Aron Kallay

Allegory of Terms

Andrew A. Watts (2020)

4/4 ♩ = 60 Mercurial

High Voice

Sprechgesang *pp* *p* *pp* **3** *ppp* *ppp*

Sung

ster - sis tindr

prepared, muted strings

Piano

ppp *p*

pp *una corda*

p *tre corde* *sfz*

A ♩ = 66 Plunged into Chaos

Sprechstimme

4/4

ff *sffz* *p* *sffz* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *sffp* *sffz* *ff* *sub p* *sffz*

frə-dʒɪl-ə-ti læps ti læps kə-rəp-fŋ ɪn-ə-flɪk-fŋ pʌn-zarl aɪ-sə-leɪ-fŋ ɪn leɪ sə aɪ zarl eg-zarl

fræk-fŋ ɪf-mənt

Pno.

ff *mf* *sffz* *ff* *mf* *ff* *f* *p* *sffz*

6

p *ff* *sffz* *p* **3/4** *mf* *fff* **2/4** **3/4**

Voice

ai sə ai-sə lei-ŋ lei ŋ in in ŋ ŋ ŋ in - kar sə kar -sə - ŋ

Pno.

p *ff* *f* *ff* *p* *fff*



B ♩ = 60 Presence of Mind

Sung

fp *espress.* → *fragile non vib.*

9

3/4 **4/4**

Voice

med - - - - - ter - - - - - ŋ

Pno.

(R.H., ord.) Frequency beating technique*

(L.H. inside piano with elbow on string harmonic) *p* 8va + P5 resultant pitch *sim.*

ebow swell

*The resultant pitch from L.H. harmonic is also shown above as a near unison (beating frequency) with R.H.

12 *, sfp espress.* → non vib.

Voice

rə - - - - - demp - - - - - ŋ.

Pno.

(p still 8va + P5 resultant pitch)

8va resultant pitch

sim.

ebow swell

Red.



15 *, espress.* → non vib.

Voice

rek - - - - - ən - - - - - sil -

Pno.

3

5

18 *(p non vib.)* *pp* **3/4**

Voice

Pno.

(p still 8va resultant pitch) *pp*

Red.

C ♩ = 66 Sudden Chaos **D** ♩ = 60 Profound Clarity

3/4 Sprechstimme *ffz* **3/4** Sung *ffp* **4/4** *espress.* *non vib.*

21

Voice

Pno.

silently put down ebow unbridled, prepared, muted strings

(L.H. inside piano with ebow on string harmonic)

(R.H., ord.) **Frequency beating technique**

p 8va + P5 resultant pitch

ebow swell *Red.*

13:12 *4:3*

ffz *fff*

* Abrupt, violent pedal release.

25

Voice

(p non vib.)

espress. → *non vib.*

5

3:2

5

3:2

3:2

3:2

5

(p still 8va + P5 resultant pitch)

sim.

ebow swell

ped.



28

Voice

espress.

6

6

6

ped.

31

Voice

(p non vib.)

ppθ

Pno.

(p still 8va + P5 resultant pitch)

sim.

ebow swell



34

Voice

OU

Pno.

8va resultant pitch

11
16

37

Voice

Pno.

(p non vib.)

- SIS

(p still 8va resultant pitch)

(\rceil) (\lceil) *ebow swell*



(♩ = ♩)

41

Voice

Pno.

E Stasis
Sprechgesang

F Chaos [final]
Sprechstimme

$\text{♩} = 132$ ($\text{♩} = 66$)

Plunged into

silently put down ebow [*breve*]

thunderous, prepared, muted strings

(tre corde)

ster - SIS

in - dem

pp [*breve*], *pp*, *p*, *pp*, *sfz*, *f*

pp, *sfz*, *f*

Red.

poco accel. (♩ = 72)

44 *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *mf* *ff* *f*

Voice

- nə - fi nə dem - nə - fi nə dem in - dem - nə dem -

Pno.

cresc. *poco* *a* *poco* (*ff*)



poco accel. (♩ = 80)

47 *mf* *ff* *f* *fff*

Voice

- nə dem - nə dem in - dem nə dem - nə - fi - kei - ŋ

Pno.

cresc. *poco* *a* *poco* (*fff*)

poco accel.

(♩ = 180)

G ♩ = 120 (♩ = 60)

Stasis, trance-like

Sprechgesang

sub p

pp , p

50

ff f ffff

5 5 5 3:2

5 8 4 3

5 5 5 5

ker - jŋ ker - jŋ læm^{en-ter} - jŋ

ster - sis ster

ord.

sempre p

3:2 5 3:2 3:2 6:4

cresc.

fff

54

3/4 4/4 5/8 3/4

pp , p pp p

SIS ster - SIS ster - SIS

3:2 3:2

57 $\frac{3}{4}$ pp $\frac{7}{8}$ p $\frac{4}{4}$ pp p $\frac{5}{4}$

Voice

ster - - - SIS ster - - - SIS

Pno.

8va



61 $\frac{5}{4}$ pp p $\frac{4}{4}$ pp $\frac{3}{4}$

Voice

ster - - - - - SIS

Pno.

8va

64 $\frac{3}{4}$ *p* slowly walk toward the piano bench ----- *ppp p* hold for as long as needed to calmly get situated at the piano

Voice *ster* *ster*

Pno. *8va* *6* *6* hold until vocalist is ready to continue ghostly

ped. (no ped.) *ped.* quickly "catch" resonance after attack



H Adagio, a piacere (repeat 12 - 16 times)

67 *pp* *15ma* $\frac{1}{4}$ G.P. $\frac{3}{4}$ (hold until sound completely dissipates)

*Voice (at Pno.) *pp* *15ma* *15ma*

Pno. *pp* *8va* *8va* G.P. *8va* *pp* (hold until sound completely dissipates)

ped. *ped.*

* The finale is a 4-hand piano section with the vocalist playing the top part and the pianist continuing on the lower part.