

# I Am Sitting in a Ruin

## INTRODUCTION

A stanza possesses two lexical definitions. The first explanation, a grouped set of lines, delivers ostensible rhythmic meanings, and the second, "room," quite literally, translates from Italian. Retrieving the etymology of the word, I find it is rooted in the Italian *stanza*, originally "standing place"—a *place* of roomful thoughts. A stanza linguistically pierces the confinement of concrete space, radiates its histories, and blurs the physical boundaries. Its effect is lasting and irreplaceable presuming our history is linear and has been appropriately documented. And as a room, the stanza will carry time forward even when it is left with only the tiniest debris. And if not? Stanza then becomes ephemeral; the block of verse will only sing in the wind and be gone in the wind. I imagine a stanza is full of memory (histories, if you may), the memory defined by corporal internment, or rather, the never-ending prose of self-pity that emerges when sitting figuratively inside a stanza.

Thought and definition aside, my fascination with stanzas comes from the incapability of connecting my mental spectrum with substantial space. Why is the room designed to be rectangular? For what reason does someone inhabit a box for almost one third of their life? I feel a sense of detachment all the time when I'm sitting inside my room. The room feels familiar yet strange. What terrifies me the most is that every so often I cannot remember the exact positions of randomly placed objects, and it always takes me a few minutes to remember the precise locations of them. I'm met with the feeling that perhaps I never owned anything. Maybe elements that constitute my room have never left any traces in my memory; it is not a room for me to live, not a place for my "standing" thoughts. This has mainly happened during the Coronavirus pandemic, with one having to endure isolation for a good two weeks, or sometimes even months. One's living space becomes a set of repetitions of housekeeping rituals, feeding oneself, and fulfilling immediate fleshly desires. The room extends its functionality, not reduced by efficiency, but confuses the idea of routines—chore is textually elaborated. I have to carefully alter my position and move around to get the most comfortable posture to be able to respond to my emails. As the burden of processing every trivial

ritual becomes more tedious, the room no longer rests, and melancholy permeates. I started researching online for ideal homes, those beautiful houses built on sunny Spanish valleys with looping chambers. I also began frantically rearranging my room, nudging the dresser twenty centimetres to the left, placing a tissue box slightly farther or closer to my laptop, replacing my chair with the one in the dining room, shifting the direction of lamps, and so on.

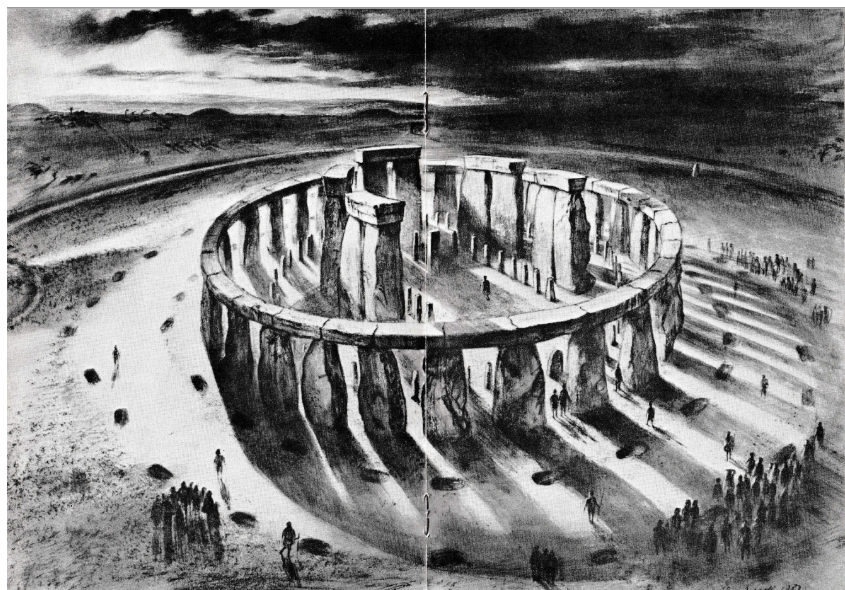
These mundanities which appear in a room do not supersede its traditions; it is still a worldly space with human desires. The closeness of looking into someone's room is voyeuristic, yet it offers certain clues of the owner's intuition. The intuition accumulates into habit, then exposes a panoptic view of emotions. Gertrude Stein said: "Paragraphs are emotional not because they express an emotion but because they register or limit emotion."<sup>1</sup> The room is emotionless, but the habits are emotional because they limit or register emotion. The dichotomy of a stanza informs its emotion when read out loud as verse: the poet's audacity accretes instinct. Whereas the emotionless stanza is showing off, displaying the owner's taste and habit.

1. Gertrude Stein, "What Is English Literature," in *Lectures in America* (New York: Vintage, 1975), p.48.

2. This line is borrowed from Lisa Robertson, who originally writes: "Sometimes *here* has no walls. There are some pieces of corrugated cardboard, a square of tarp and a sleeping bag, a deck of cards for Solitaire." From "Untitled Essay," in *Nilling* (Toronto: Book Thug Press, 2012), p. 73.

## STANZA I

An open space, a room without a roof. A place where gathered and dispersed. A site unknown without precise calculation. Sometimes *here* has no walls;<sup>2</sup> there is only a circle of pillars, ruins of standing boulders. They form a stanza without a roof, a stanza full of assumptions. One of the rocks aligns with sunrise during the summer solstice and sunset during the winter solstice.



Stonehenge after its final rebuilding, about 1400 B.C.



For me, the allure of Stonehenge is in how it encompasses uncertainty in the form of a piece of history. What interests me the most about prehistory is precisely what we do not know about it. The speculative history of megalithic cultures allows one to look back without concrete archeological evidence. The fear of being unable to prove something is diminished and one is left with enough room to speculate on the functions of these monolithic stones.



Early photograph of Stonehenge as ruins.

A slanted and skewed pillar from an early photograph tells how time is an irresistible force pushing forward; in its wake it leaves only ruins shaped by history.

Maybe it is a stretch to characterise the relic of Stonehenge as a stanza, a *standing place*. Its rooflessness offers little refuge against the unpredictable. There is a Welsh megalith called Pentre Ifran, dated around 5300 B.C. It has a proper roof made of the same gigantic pillars to support it as would a stanza. This same kind of megalithic structure has also been found in

France, Australia, and elsewhere. So how did the megaliths come to be so omnipresent? There is one intriguing theory that describes a common sense shared by prehistoric cultures. It suggests that similar architectural forms arrive across different times and locations due to the fundamentally shared human nature of practicing the same belief and perceiving the same natural phenomena. Thus, the cultures that made megaliths could have created these ceremonial sites according to their fascination with mountains, and made an object that relates to their underlying belief systems.<sup>3</sup>

3. Lucy Lippard, "Stones," in *Overlay* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), p. 26.

Archeologists would describe this theory as unfounded and lacking in necessary evidence of a shared perception among prehistoric cultures. Speculation about values and belief systems are avoided, but I believe that there are some interesting connections between ancient sites and natural phenomena. Until now, evidence is found by extracting the original function of these stones from local folklore, etymology, and place names. On the contrary, science is another way to speculate, which is based on archaeological excavation. The evidence found in the ruin site helps scientists to reconstruct the functions of megalithic culture, that itself is a rational "fantasy". This is a scientific fantasy that happened in a room, a room for practicing beliefs, a room of unearthly reverie. It is the privacy of such a cultural practice that I cannot access; however, if we unwrapped the privacy, then the mystery could be made lucid by computer reconstruction. How thrilling would it be to peek inside at what neolithic people were doing in a stanza? As well-known prehistorian Jacquetta Hawkes says, every era gets the Stonehenge it deserves and desires.<sup>4</sup> Stonehenge is a room for an ongoing future, or a stanza of an unseeable past.

4. Jacquetta Hawkes, "God in the Machine," in *Antiquity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 174.

## STANZA II

Once the stanza was full of privacy, but the privacy is gone, only oneiric memory of it is left. The memory accumulates, then it becomes a practice, and a practice shapes the ruins. Ruination is formed to withstand the destruction coming from the outside. Georg Simmel regards ruin as something inherently tragic, but not sad. He thinks that destruction is not senselessly coming from the outside, but is instead a process of realisation of internal tendency in the deepest layer of existence of the destroyed.<sup>5</sup> It is as though a fragment of inherent existence must decay in order to become, unresisting the force coming from all corners; that is a way in Simmel's words to preserve a unity of eternal image and internal effect.

5. Georg Simmel, "The Ruin," in *Two Essays* (New York: The Hudson Review, 1958), pp. 371-385.

Shattered rocks and unrecognisable ground signal dialectics from the inside and the outside; sometimes, it has the sharpness of yes and no.<sup>6</sup> Yes, as an affirmation of pastness; no, as a rejection

6. Gaston Bachelard writes:  
"Outside and inside form a dialectic of division, the obvious geometry of which blinds us as soon as we bring it into play in metaphorical domains. It has the sharpness of the dialectics of 'yes' and 'no,' which decides everything." From "The Dialectics of Outside and Inside," in *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 211.

7. Kader Attia, "Signs of Reappropriation", in *Colonial Modern: Aesthetics of the Past, Rebellions for the Future*, (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2010), pp. 58-64.

8. Ibid

of assumption. I don't intend to assert a canonical idea here to picture how holistic primeval civilisation was. Instead, I want to examine bits of history that have resurfaced on top and consider how these accounts might constitute "factual" credence today. So please allow me to have a roomful of fantasy by elaborating on ruins and modernism.

Ghardaia, a city situated in the middle of Algerian Sahara, is known for "Signs of reappropriation"; the minimal lime and gypsum architecture is a thousand years old, And it has been reappropriated into street toilets by its inhabitants. Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, known as Le Corbusier, found the poetics in this vernacular architecture and could not hide his admiration for its simplistic form. The style reveals many directions of Le Corbusier's manifesto, the Athen Charter, such as the "terrace roof" and the "free facade."<sup>8</sup> In the globalisation of modern architectures, these elements are westernised from their non-western origin, such as the concept of the "terrace roof" which comes from people needing fresh air in the hot Sahara. The perception of Le Corbusier is present; the past of these architectures seem insignificant to him. Thus, can we call him an intruder of privacy? Or perhaps modernism is the real intruder. The accreditation of world heritage is merely another interpretation of the post-colonial legacy. A white man defines modernism through architecture, in which modernism was built in the shadow of the hegemony of western thought.

These buildings have survived a millennium; the weathering marks are deep and clear. Most of the residential blocks and mosques are poorly preserved, left as ruins of undulating parapets. Le Corbusier's appreciation of ruins has recalled another layer of history, not the local history, rather his own fantasy on the building's shape and its linkage to his modernistic vision. The stanza in an architect's eyes is rectangular—defined by rigid lines and emancipated ego—and it does not contain the full history; what is replaced is the architect's imagination which indulgently resides within these stanzas in Ghardaia.

### STANZA III

Remembrance has a Rear and Front –  
'Tis something like a house –  
It has a Garret also  
For Refuse and the Mouse.  
—Emily Dickinson<sup>9</sup>

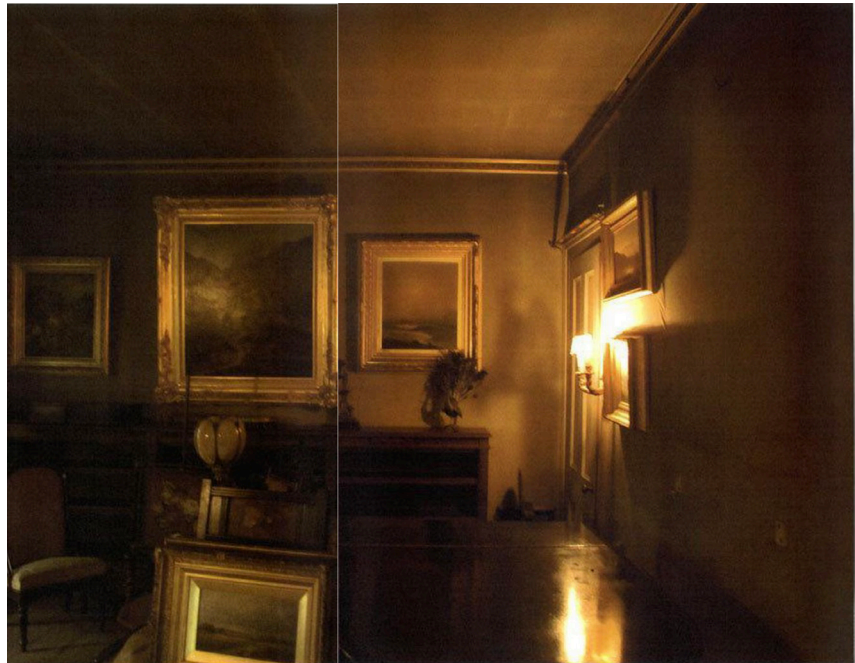
9. Emily Dickinson, Remembrance has a Rear and Front — (1182), *Wikisource*, available from: [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Remembrance\\_has\\_a\\_Rear\\_and\\_Front\\_%E2%80%94](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Remembrance_has_a_Rear_and_Front_%E2%80%94), (accessed 17 October 2020)

I became interested in Emily Dickinson's poems when I first saw Annie Leibovitz's *Pilgrimage*. The book illustrates great details in Dickinson's homestead: an image of the dimmed living room suddenly cropped in the middle, only showing half the painting



10. Annie Leibovitz, *Pilgrimage*, (New York: Random House, 2010), pp. 38-47.

on the wall, and a book of cactus and dogwood specimens pressed by Dickinson as a girl.<sup>10</sup> The grotesque layout echoes the same impact of Dickinson's work; the surprising hyphenation and unique syntax give a four-line stanza of contradictory yet coherent impressions.



Dickinson homestead

11. She originally writes about Dickinson and Robert Browning as follows: "Dickinson and Browning were both instinctive masters of the art of dramatic monologue. Their secretive natures knew soliloquy's power to conceal as it reveals messages." Susan Howe, *My Emily Dickinson*, (New York: New Directions Books, 2007), p. 71.

12. Diana Fuss, "Interior Chambers: The Emily Dickinson Homestead." in *The Sense of an Interior: Four Writers and the Rooms that Shaped Them*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1998), p.19.

I believe that Dickinson's voice transcended her experience when she kept herself in isolation. Susan Howe thinks that Dickinson was an instinctive master of the art of dramatic monologue. Her secretive nature knew soliloquy's power to communicate through concealing.<sup>11</sup> As many critics pathologise Dickinson's self-imposed separation, the quasi-maniac state of Dickinson withdrew herself with grief over the loss of a secret lover, guilt over her illicit love for her brother's wife, and resignation over the demands of her tyrannical father. Another reading of her seclusion is that Dickinson spent her whole life fighting against patriarchal culture, seeking asylum from the demands of domestic servitude that made writing all but impossible.<sup>12</sup> Even the most compassionate comment ascribes quarantine as something deeply obsessive even for the poet's need for privacy and condition of artistic production.

In a concrete architectural plan of the homestead, Edward Dickinson, father of Emily, looked close to Andrew Downing's general design plan for the gentlemen's country house. Structurally reinforcing the ideal of a democratic and self-contained subject. The intricate vision includes accentuation of the individual rooms and their assigned functions to an ever-changing household dynamic:

In what we should call a complete villa, there will be found, in addition to this, a private bed-room, or dressing-room, or a lady's boudoir, an office or private room for the master of the house, on the first floor; and bathing-rooms,

13. Andrew Downing, *The Architect of Country Houses*, (New York: Dover, 1969), p. 138

water-closet, and dressing rooms, on the second floor.<sup>13</sup>

The sheer scale and the details of the homestead enabled Dickinson to retreat to a palpable seclusion and complicates the reoccurring conceptual problem in her writings; the spatial metaphor employed upon subjects of time, joy, melancholia, despair, and immortality. Dickinson's poetry continually surveys objects in their spatial arrangements and often operates in minimalistic interiors.

They shut me up in Prose—  
As when a little Girl  
They put me in a Closet—  
Because they liked me “still”—<sup>14</sup>

14. Emily Dickinson, They shut me up in Prose — (445), in *Poetry Foundation*, available from: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52196/they-shut-me-up-in-prose-445>, (accessed 28 October 2020)

For Dickinson, the stanza does not only apply to the rule of verse; the four-line stanza describes the musical rhythms, but represents the confinement of physical space; or in this case, a metaphorical containment of one's will as *a little girl*.

15. Emily Dickinson, My Life had stood-a loaded Gun — (764), in *Poetry Foundation*, available from: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52737/my-life-had-stood-a-loaded-gun-764>, (accessed 28 October 2020)

“My life has stood—a Loaded Gun—”<sup>15</sup>

Certain morbid lines appear in her poems as a longing urge of this desolate world where life is a void of death, labour, and unfulfilled desire. “I am the space where I am,” says Bachelard.<sup>16</sup> Dickinson seems to experience the self as a shelter that keeps the sheer immensity of her anger. The life of Dickinson dwells in interiority, that is, the privacy needed to feel safe. She can always retreat and compromise, but Dickinson's room is always shielded away from prosaic entanglement; that is where her thought grows, and her emotion pervades.

16. Gaston Bachelard, “Corners,” in *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p.137.

Ancient Greek referred to life as it happens in space as *apeiron*, meaning unbounded. While to Dickinson, it is a door ajar. I am pretty sure the Greek would chart a course to the unbounded by going outward, not inward. But when unboundedness is chasing after you, you cannot escape outwardly because it is already inside. But what if the inside is already burning? Dickinson chose to avoid. The room she built is filled with knowledge which sweeps all things away and holds onto the immensity for herself. It is not the knowledge of being reclusive; it is the silence of one's voice to advance in private, regardless of perils.

## STANZA IV

When the room turns inside out, the interiors and walls are exposed, as is the thought of chasing the unbounded. What exactly defines the unbounded? It is the will to negate the institution by confining oneself to a room. The desk, the chair, and the bed are condensed into a single consciousness, for someone to write and rest. The stanza then becomes an extended place—no longer to stand or to shelter from the exterior harms,

instead, it is a space for one's immense urge to convince and prove.

17. Virginia Woolf, "One", in *A Room of One's Own*, (London: Penguin Books), p. 5.

"A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction," writes Virginia Woolf.<sup>17</sup>

In the essay *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf introduces the innocuous "friendship" of two fictional characters—Chloe and Olivia. "Chloe liked Olivia," is a potent but straightforward interruption in Woolf's stream of consciousness. She continues, "Do not start. Do not blush. Let us admit in the privacy of our own society that these things sometimes happen. Sometimes women do like women."<sup>18</sup> After that, Chloe and Olivia share the same laboratory, a room equipped for scientific research, teaching, also a place where they do not have to embrace perennial domesticity. In this very room, the authorised—literally sanitised—environment of the laboratory sobers the reader by eliminating women as sexual beings and instead employing the language of modern science. While in this room, rationality overcomes sensation, so that Chloe and Olivia only engage in collegial responsibility; the romance between two women is masqueraded. In this room, Chloe can like Olivia for the first time in the history of literature. But who is Chloe, and who is Olivia? "Cleopatra did not like Octavian," says Woolf. Chloe is Cleopatra, and Olivia is Octavian; a parable borrowed from a piece of ancient Greek history. But Octavian is not a woman; he is Caesar of Triumvirate, who defeated Cleopatra's husband Anthony and forced her to ingest poison. In this room, there is no history, and no Anthony and no Caesar. Chloe does not have to align with one of the men to save her own life.

18. Virginia Woolf, "Six", in *A Room of One's Own*, (London: Penguin Books), p. 86.

A room intertwines with desire, discourse, love, knowledge, and sexual preference. The shared laboratory of Chloe and Olivia pertains to volatility, not only scientifically but also sentimentally. Such an undercurrent in its pure form is imaginary—imaginary not in the Lacanian sense, as he would describe those spaces as specifically symbolic. The numbers used to describe space, to divide and multiply, only demonstrate the content of a room; its materiality is, nevertheless, measurable and constitutes our perception of a room. The methodical way of describing a room is ultimately useless, as both Woolf and Dickinson could not care less about the formal size of a room. They are sitting in a stanza, not a room. Inside their stanzas, they can finally achieve the freedom to fantasise and write.

When a stanza is built as a refuge, it also serves as a vessel to carry time forward. A stanza is not a physically defined room; it is someplace for thoughts to advance with history. As soon as a stanza becomes an ideological space, it starts connecting the dots in time. That kind of history is not documented linearly, rather, it coexists in a parallel time, reverberating into the present. A stanza is not private anymore; it is shared by the like-minded.



## STANZA V

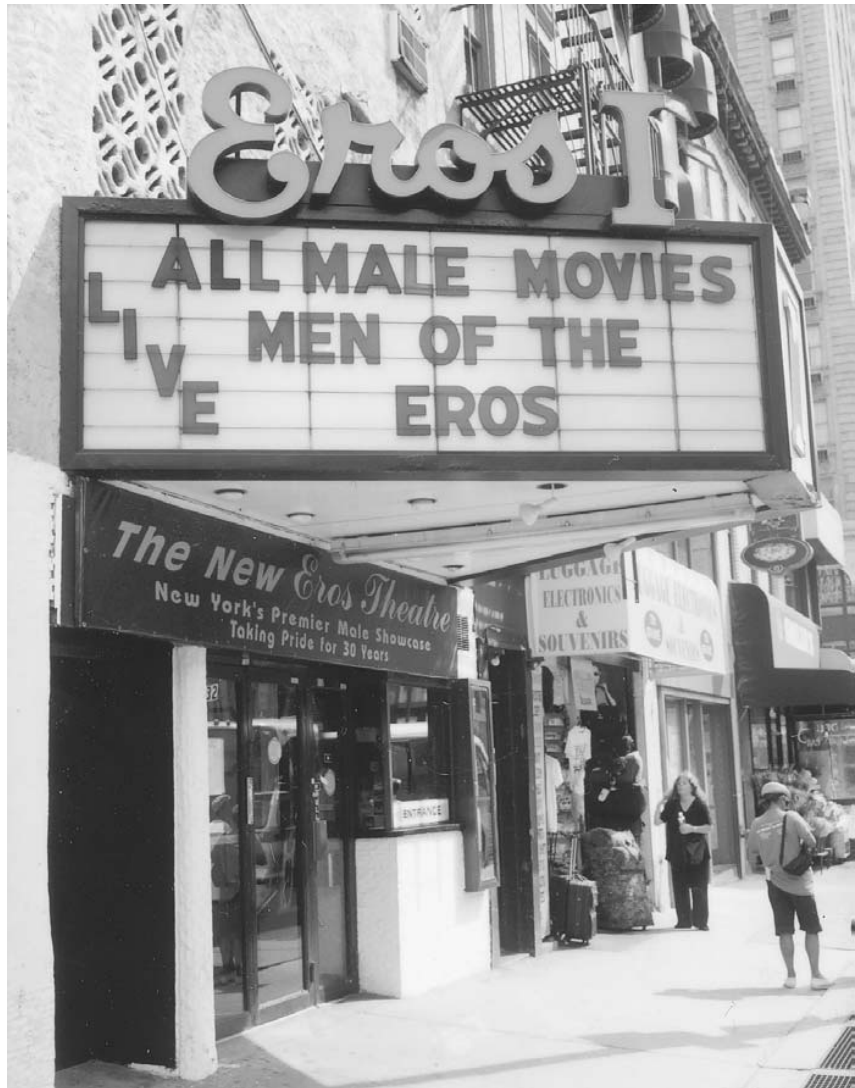
During quarantine, my room has become more than my office and my bedroom. It has also become a room to practice my fitness routine. I roll a mat across the floor and put on my gym clothes. Following the instructions on my phone screen, I try to precisely follow every rep to enhance my core strength and break up my muscles to regrow later. This tedious routine actually never bores me. I look at myself in the mirror and see slow but promising progress, and my body gradually becomes poised more than ever. If I am fit, I think to myself, I will have more leverage on the dating apps. For that specific moment of working out, I silence my thoughts and only count the remaining reps. For a brief second of lifting the dumbbell, I think of my body's long-overdue thirst to engage sexually with some other man. The repetitions I do morph into a reassuring thought about my dominance over my own body; my desire is formulated by the lines and façades of the room.

The structure of our desire, conflict, and displacement of emotions are central to the mathematical deduction of a room. However, under such a categorical way of dimension, here lie our naked bodies. It is a stanza of interclass consciousness. I remember David Wojnarowicz's tape journal where he recounts how sexual he would become when looking at guys walking outside his apartment's windows. He immediately wants to crawl onto their bodies, and dreams of two aroused bodies stripped bare and entangled together.<sup>19</sup> The voyeurism turns inside out—from his window to the streets, so does the room; it no longer confines the desire but instead creates shared instincts between two totally different minds. Stanza comes in; it inhabits the intensity of the owner and plunges down in bodily impulse.

19. David Wojnarowicz, *Weight of the Earth: The Tape Journals of David Wojnarowicz*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2018), p. 27.

In the book *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, Samuel R. Delany writes of his sexual encounters in adult movie theaters near forty-sixth street in New York in the 70s and 80s. A venue for people who seek out and appreciate social contact in goodwill. Many of Delany's incidents are sexually charged, and most of them are heartfelt where real conversations happened between two men from distinct social classes. The screening room with rows of seats inside the cinema erased the boundary between private and public, especially under a strict city law prohibiting public sexual activities. The room under Delany's accounts is an interclass confluence, a dark room where the working-class queers briefly divulge their privacies. The peculiarity of these theaters does not only end in the agendas of the incoming crowds but also shows that the neighborhood was such a different place back than—there were no glass facade office buildings and luxury apartment complexes in sight. It was not until the mid 90s, under a sham concern for AIDS, public sex became illegal

as a matter of “public decency.” The stigmatisation of gay sex propelled the city to dismantle adult movie theaters, and gave rise to social elites who advocated for “safe sex” during the AIDS pandemic, or undoubtedly, straight sex.



*Eros I*, located between Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth Streets, alternated gay videos with live male dancers.

The room in Times Square is gone because it did not withstand the siege—the invincible force of gentrification. Different to these queer rooms, certain institutions were invented by the middle class, spaces which preferred specific mannerisms: The regimented and binary defined body, and the concept of a decent way of public behaviour showing how one should present oneself. That is the design of the public space, like the boulevards and public squares. As Aaron Betsky notes, architecture is the central part of the middle-class activity, it gave us a model of a perfectly planned world in which efficiency, organisation, and usefulness reigns supreme, creating a perfectly proportioned and “moral” environment.<sup>20</sup> Of course, the queers do not behave themselves within these didactic urban designs. They are *flâneurs*, sauntering and seeking every possible cruising spot.

20. Aaron Betsky, *Queer Space: Architecture and Same Sex Desire*, (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1997), p. 8.



On the southwest corner of Forty-second Street and Eighth Avenue, two young men talk among the passersby. To the picture's top right corner, the building across the street on the right side housed "Gay Strip Show and J/O Club." A year after this picture was taken in October 1996, the building was demolished.

The real estate developers not only bulldozed the secrets of the queer rooms but also stole their liberatory possibility. The liberating power found in these intermediate spaces were appropriated and blended into mainstream culture, where it became useful for advertising, lifestyles, and the real estate industry. This is particularly obvious when you navigate yourself through various porn sites; you will find yourself in things like "queer yuppie loft," where Josef Albert's squares are made into a rug, and a replica of Piet Mondriaan hangs on untapped sheetrock. In the end, what is so lofty about a loft? And what is so real about real estate?

21. Gaston Bachelard, "The House. From cellar to garret. The significance of the hut," in *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 9.

"Memories are motionless," says Bachelard.<sup>21</sup> They register in different corners of a room. No matter how many times the architecture is removed and regenerated again, the memories will stay.

The core of a queer room is privacy, a place for people to disarm their thoughts, and the disciplining of the body turned inside out. The movie theater in Times Square represented a stanza full of divisions, it was a place where all social classes could exchange freely, and not only in a sexual way. It was also where the unprivileged could attain certain equality that they couldn't find anywhere else. Such power of convergence transforms desire into a more profound engagement. That is why divisions are so powerful in a theatre's darkroom. That is, a stanza where privacy and community remain necessary and paramount.

Maybe a stanza for the queers is a question of luxury. When the public is preaching and trying to tear down the walls which



22. Anaximander, Fragment One, *Anaximander Fragment*, available from: <https://www.beyng.com/grk/anax1.html>, (Accessed 10 November 2020).

protect the people inside, they have no choice but to run. The inside of the room no longer holds *apeiron*; it is occupied by the bounded. The pre-Socratic philosopher Anaximander once compared the unbounded and the bounded to the language of justice and injustice. His *Fragment One* says, “Whence things have their coming into being, so they have their passing away, for they give justice and recompense to one another for their injustice according to the ordinance of time.”<sup>22</sup> What type of injustice is it? I can’t help but ask myself. The injustice drove people out of their apartments, prohibited their desires, and killed thousands under the guise of the virus. It is injustice by those who are discriminating against the dying voice and clinging to the prerogative.

## STANZA VI

How can one imagine the sound of a stanza?  
Is it silent or loud?

I remember the 1969 performance piece by Alvin Lucier, *I am sitting in a room*. This piece features Lucier narrating a text and then playing the tape recording back to the room and re-recording again, on repeat. Throughout the process, the voice fades little by little until the resonance takes over, and the voice becomes completely unintelligible. Although this piece is titled as *I am sitting in a room*, here *I* is not the performer, rather the *room*. The original voice is not even fully articulated. He speaks and stammers through the text, and the tape captures the textures and imperfections in his voice until the sound fades away, and the audience is left with a room narrating its own resonance. His voice does not survive and is devoured by the resonant frequency of the room. An *I* does not exist. *I am eaten by a room*.<sup>23</sup> Lucier first performed this piece with a bit of mechanical voice, and after almost fifty years later in MoMA, that voice of him stayed unchanged, only with slight weariness. Remember that Lucier does not make this piece for a specific room, the sound changes accordingly of the room to be performed, the reverberation varies when bouncing between walls and objects until it becomes a sonic ruin. The resonant frequency disintegrates and reinforces according to the dimensions of a room and its acoustic characteristics. By the end of the performance, the unintelligible resonance does not belong to Lucier, but rather the room. The *room* is performing.

23. Edward Strickland, *Minimalism: Origins*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), p. 281

As an endnote, I want to reiterate about the non-existence of a stanza on the concept of history and ruin. A stanza does not exist in the linearity of time, as the idea of our time has been shaped by its passing. The time will leave no trail for us to examine a historical account. What we see inside a stanza

has become ruin, piece by piece—not in the sense of tangible detritus; it is the ruin of our cultures and what the stanza would project as the future. The process repeats itself endlessly until the ruin assimilates into the same sphere as the stanza. What if we have different perceptions of time? Putting a stanza on the antithesis of our spatial metaphor is way too categorical. Instead, I want to open up a new possibility by adopting from the Aymara, an indigenous people from South America—for them, speakers face the past and have their backs to the future; history runs outside of our construct of time. Therefore, history negates historicity—which represents the authenticity of our experience. There is no authenticity in our experience, nor scientific legitimacy to validate our findings. Our activity is apparitional and ruinous; it runs parallel to the stanza. Like *I am sitting in a room*, our lucid voice will eventually turn into the room's resonance; the room's presence is tenable from the beginning, it does pry but *not* interrupt.

Objects which inherit our habits and rituals are emotional since they are infused with our nostalgia. The stanza of Stonehenge; that of Ghardaia; that of Emily Dickinson; that of Virginia Woolf, and that of Samuel R. Delany; they all carry the same capacity of telling a *time*, for a time which is blurred and indefinite. Their emotional objects are reduced to a block of verse—as opposed to the definition of “standing place.” A stanza, where dichotomy is removed, and a block of verse and a standing place ultimately come inseparable.

*We* are the stanzas.

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- p. 2 From What is Stonehenge, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office), pp. 10-11
- p. 3 From What is Stonehenge, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office), p. 5.
- p. 6 Annie Leibovitz, Pilgrimage, (New York: Random House, 2010), pp. 39-40.
- p. 10 Samuel R. Delany, Times Square Red, Times Square Blue. (New York University Press, 1999), p. 59.
- p. 11 Samuel R. Delany, Times Square Red, Times Square Blue (New York University Press, 1999), p. 107.