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Greetings from April--

The mindo machine has had a 5 1/2-month vacation, which at last must come to an end. I decided to put out a 2-page leaflet, 40 copies of it, about the near-miss of Leibniz, 3 centuries ago, where he almost but not quite stumbled onto the principle behind Namuudo syllables. Only a few people will be interested, but I will have copies on hand for those rare cases.

In Susanne Langer's Philosophy in a New Key, there is another near-miss of this kind, about which I will stencil another leaflet, but this time there was no excuse--she should have invented Namuudo instead of the accidents of education, no doubt, caused a visual bias which prevented her from having that insight at the time.

Frightful, how we are carefully taught to ignore certain relationships!

I have now read more of Lawrence Friedman's report on the Art & Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum, 1967-1971. This is one of the most illustrated books I have ever seen--pictures wherever there was the slightest excuse. But I am so angry after reading it that I can hardly be coherent.

You thought I was being too hostile, in the earlier phase of EAT--that my letters were too rapid or something. Well, I have at least a dozen other people backing me up--John Deussenel who finally let me take the book home for a while, Willard Zeisberg in Delaware who was "blunt" by the failure of an EAT collaboration--this time, from the engineer's point of view--and a number of different kinds of people who are quite bitter about the whole thing.

There is a brief list of companies which actually did collaborate and/or sponsor EAT projects, but there is a much longer list including Lockheed and TR and IBM and other eminent names of companies which refused to collaborate, or broke off negotiations, or just behaved like stubborn mules or asses or whatever. Walt Disney Productions is one of these, strangely enough. For shame! Under the names of some quite eminent artists in this book you will find spectacular accounts of failure to communicate and semantic disasters and what is worse, failure to reply to civil questions and holding up a project for months and then rejecting it. More than one case of Artist-in-Residence who was thrown out or insulted or ridiculed or otherwise abused. See tape galore.

Frankly, I did not make my protests strong enough. I said to you and about twenty other persons that EAT utterly fails to see the need for interpreters (which I could have seen) to translate back and forth between artistic jargon and engineering.

What's wrong? The same situation as with Brainstorming and Group Creativity and all that jazz of the 1950's. The notion that teams are practical in artistic endeavors of this kind, that two heads MUST ALWAYS be better than one, that specialization and division of labor and job-categorizing of the kind unions use in jurisdictional disputes are supreme virtues.

Beethoven's symphonies were not written by a committee. That they are performed by committees is beside the point.

The enormity of this beseech and goof is beyond belief. I had talked with several people prominent in the local SAT and it seemed as though they simply un-imagined the difficulties--like those negative hallucinations under hypnosis. You no longer have to take my word for it, just read this book. It's all there--all the red tape and frustration and failure to communicate and incompatibility of life-styles and horrendous waste of time.

If I had been involved, I would have been burnt. Up. So maybe it's just as well.

The only way for art-and-technology collaboration is to do it within the same person. You are in a position to do this yourself--first with the theoretical tables, then with actual compositions via computer.

True, there are projects that require sponsorship and assistance and special facilities to carry them out. But first the interface between science and art must go in within one person and the project then conceived be presented as a neat package ready to go. The unimaginative crutches in the large corporation must be shown a finished plan, because they can't see the artist's projections and educated guesses and reasons for believing that so-and-so would work.

My experience for 12 years with Numaide should bear this out. People just can't see why and their reaction is harsh ridicule. They cannot follow my line of reasoning, nor can they see the desperate needs need which lies right in front of them all the time. Stunned by Future Shock, perhaps.

Your experience about the failure to play the quarter-tone guitar UNTIL someone made him look at it, also bears this out.

What a lot of time I could have wasted, and I know what SAT tried to do for these artists. It's just plain futile to try to tell anything to the violently-deaf nor to show anything to the voluntarily-blind.

McLuhan may be full of prunes and crackpot as hell, but after reading what happened when they tried to automate Katherine Stockhausen's projects and Claes Oldenbourg's constructions and what happened when a post was connected with Uptights from IBM, one is compelled to agree with McLuhan's judgement that these giant corporations are living on the 19th century, not the 20th.

Of course you can't have a self-appointed Utilitarian music therapist phoning you every month for twenty-one long years, ridiculing you by the hour. Maybe you can't imagine what this is like. And you didn't have a ~~big~~ bevy of elderly nasty swelling reformers pestering you for eleven years, either. And you don't have a fanatical Technocrat tormenting you and making fun of you for THIRTY years as I have had. This last must be a world's all-time record. At least, you may be able to avoid such pests and get rid of them before they ruin your life.

And I may outlive these pests--they are all 70 or over.

Your,