THE ROOTS OF SUFFERING

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ABSTRACT

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In his book *Power vs. Force* Dr. Richard Hawkins outlines a logarithmic scale of human consciousness to explain and contextualize all behavior. The very bottom of the scale, 1, represents the attitudinal energy of a person who is just barely alive, and the very top, 1000, represents the level of ultimate Enlightenment, reached by only the great spiritual avatars of human history. There are many levels in between and Hawkins divides his spectrum into three large sections with borders at the critical points of 200 and 500. The realm between 1 and 199 contains destructive energy characterized by such qualities as Shame, Guilt, Grief, Fear, Anger, Craving and unwarranted Pride. These feelings are compelling and can motivate a great deal of behavior, but this self-serving achievement is usually destructive to humanity and causes suffering for subject and environs.

My composition, *The Roots of Suffering*, scored for, 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 Bb clarinets (2nd doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, 3 percussionists, and strings, seeks to musically explore the levels of consciousness that calibrate between 20 and 199. Each of its 5 sections, Shame, Grief, Fear, Anger, and Pride, uses expressive musical devices to illustrate and communicate these qualities. The first minute, Shame, resembles a slow symphonic prelude. The melody is constructed from various instruments sustaining tones to form chromatic clusters emphasizing the minor second. The second section portrays Grief with sighing string glissandi, much in the manner of Witold Lutoslawski’s orchestration. Short, intervallic episodes with glissandi in the violins and violas are interrupted by glissandi in divided cellos, outlining the Shame motive from the first section, and punctuated by aleatoric percussion and piano gestures. The third section, Fear, consists of agitated, sustained trills in the entire orchestra, restating the melodic material of Shame with different rhythms and articulation. A frightful string counterpoint follows, heavy with glissandos and reinforced by busy figuration from the woodwinds. The strings become a swirling, disoriented mass of chromatic sound, eventually joined by the flutes and oboes to form the fourth section, Anger. The brass and low woodwinds emphatically declaim an aggressive unison, atonal chorale melody over the strings and upper woodwinds. The fifth section, Pride, begins with an uplifting, extended tertian fanfare, declaimed by the trumpets and eventually supported by the entire orchestra, to provide a brief respite from the previous violence. This respite is eventually revealed to be an illusion, however, as it crumbles into chromatic madness, building to a terrifying and brutal climax. The transition from insecure self-satisfaction to terror and chaos exemplifies the danger of Pride, its selfish energy yielding endless suffering.

The increase in energy inherent in the rising level of consciousness is reflected in the composition as the musical sections gain more momentum and power over the span of the piece. It ends, however, with a brief, despairing epilogue to illustrate the aftermath of foolish blind devotion and reverts to a reprise of Shame as the cycle of lower consciousness begins again.
2 Flutes [Fl.] (2nd doubles on piccolo)
2 Oboes [Ob.]
2 Clarinets in Bb [Cl.] (2nd doubles on bass clarinet)
2 Bassoons [Bsn.]
Contrabassoon [Cbsn.]
4 Horns in F [Hn.]
2 Trumpets in Bb [Tpt]
2 Tenor Trombones [Tbn.]
Bass Trombone [B. Tbn.]
Tuba [Tuba]

Percussion
- Timpani (30", 28", 25", 23") [Timp.]
- Percussion 1 [Perc. 1]: Xylophone (with hard mallets)
- Chimes
- Percussion 2 [Perc. 2]: Bass Drum
  - 4 Tom-toms (low to high)
  - Tambourine
- Percussion 3 [Perc. 3]: 4 Bongos (2 sets, low to high)
  - Suspended Cymbal (with medium yarn mallets)
  - Sizzle Cymbal (with medium yarn mallets)
  - Small Tam-tam
  - Large Tam-tam

Violins 1, 2 [Vln.]
Violas [Vla.]
Violoncellos [Vcl.]
Double Bass [Db.]

PERFORMANCE NOTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration in seconds</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ca. 5&quot;</td>
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Unmetered passage


Repeat figure in box until line ends.
Observe dynamics inside box on every repeat; observe dynamics outside box only once.
At 52 horns and trombones should coordinate at $q = 75$
and trumpets should coordinate at $q = 72$.

Rest for specified duration

Sustain pitch until line ends

Glissando ad libitum between given pitches

Glissando ad libitum between given pitches in direction of line

Glissando ad libitum from given pitch to indeterminate endpoint in direction of line

Play chromatic fragments of various lengths ad libitum between given pitches in direction of line

Play chromatic fragments of various lengths ad libitum from given pitch to indeterminate endpoint in direction of line

Play passage as fast as possible

Accelerate as stems get more dense; decelerate as stems get less dense

All trills use the chromatic upper neighbor from principle note.

Score is untransposed

Total duration: 11 - 12"
** Play short bursts of 5-10 pitches chosen at random from the specified collection. Do not repeat pitches within bursts. Dynamics should be gestural.

* Do not stop bow between accelerations - keep bowing separate notes, but slowly.
Do not repeat pitches within bursts.

** Play short bursts of 5-10 pitches chosen

### Dynamics

- Ca. 5''
- Ca. 5''
- Ca. 10''

### Performance Markings

- Forte
- Pianissimo
- Fermata

### Time Markings

- Ca. 5''
- Ca. 5''
- Ca. 10''

### Material

- Tom-toms
- Bongos

### Textual Notes

- Do not repeat pitches within bursts.
- ** Play short bursts of 5-10 pitches chosen.
III. Fear

Furiously, with nervous agitation \( \dot{=} 162 \)
IV. Anger

c.a. 4' Like a boiling pot

Enraged, stark and severe \( \text{\textit{j}} \approx 62 \)

\( \text{\textit{mp}} \)

\( \text{\textit{mf}} \)

\( \text{\textit{f}} \)

\( \text{\textit{ff}} \)

Suspension Cymbal

\( \text{\textit{ad libitum}} \)

\( \text{\textit{ad libitum}} \)

\( \text{\textit{ad libitum}} \)

\( \text{\textit{ad libitum}} \)
Fl. 1.2

Ob. 1.2

Cl. 1.2

Bsn. 1.2

Hn. 1.3

Vl. II

Tba.

Vc.

Vla.

Cbsn.

Pno.

ca. 8”

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Flute 2 back to Flute

\( j = 62 \), A bit hesitant, with some rubato

ca. 3”

ff

ff

ff

pp

pp

pp

aa

= 62, A bit hesitant, with some rubato
Get faster and louder. As rapidly as possible pausing slightly between each.

Glissando from given pitch to indeterminate endpoint.

Play chromatic scale fragments to indeterminate pitch, pausing slightly between each.

As fast as possible

fff
V(h). "...goeth before a fall"

Fl. 2, Pic.
Ob. 2
Cl. 2
Cbsn.
Hn. 1.3.
Tpt. 2
Tbn. 1.2
B. Tbn.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Pno.
Db.
Glisando continuously ad libitum between given pitches.
Menacing and growing steadily $\dot{\gamma} = 112$

Musical notation and symbols for various instruments and sections.
Fl. 2.

Pic.

Vc.

Ob. 1.2.

Cbsn.

Fl. 1

Cl. 1

G1. 2

Bsn. 1.2

Hs. 1.3

Hs. 2.6

Tpt. 1.2

Ten. 1.2

Tbn.

Tromp.

Pno.

Tba.

Flute 2 back to flute

ad libitum

ca. 4"
VI(a). Epilogue

Improvisatory; ethereally, without too much density
ca. 4''
ca. 10''
ca. 15-20''

VI(b). Shame (Reprise)

Brooding, dark and despairing, \( j = 60 \)

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