(The white paintings caught whatever fell on them; why did I not look at them with my magnifying glass? Only because I didn't yet have one? Do you agree with the statement: After all, nature is better than art?) Where does beauty begin and where does it end? Where it ends is where the artist begins. In this way we get our navigation done for us. If you hear that Rauschenberg has painted a new painting, the wisest thing to do is to drop everything and manage one way or another to see it. That's how to learn the way to use your eyes, sunup the next day. If I were teaching, would I say Caution Watch Your Step or Throw yourself in where the fish are thickest? Of course, there are objects. Who said there weren't? The thing is, we get the point more quickly when we realize it is we looking rather than that we may not be seeing it. (Why do all the people who are not artists seem to be more intelligent?) And object is fact, not symbol. If any thinking is going to take place, it has to come out from inside the Mason jar which is suspended in Talmage, or from the center of the rose (is it red?) or the eyes of the pitcher (looks like something out of a movie) or--the farther one goes in this direction the more one sees nothing is in the foreground: each minute point is at the center. Did this happen by means of rectangles (the picture is "cut" through the middle)? Or would it happen given this point of view? Not ideas but facts.

M. C. Richards and David Tudor invited several friends to dinner. I was there and it was a pleasure. After dinner we were sitting around talking. David Tudor began doing some paper work in a corner, perhaps something to do with music, though I'm not sure. After a while there was a pause in the conversation, and someone said to David Tudor, "Why don't you join the party?" He said, "I haven't left it. This is how I keep you entertained."

LECTURE ON NOTHING

I am here, and there is nothing to say. If among you are those who wish to get anywhere, what silence is that I go on talking. Give any one thought a push, it falls down easily. Shall we have one later?

But Or we could simply decide, not to have a dis-

cussion. But what ever you like. But now there are silences, and the words make help make

I have nothing to say and that is poetry and I am saying it as I need it. This space of time We need not fear these silences, is organized.

LECTURE ON NOTHING/109
we may love them
talk
just as I make
of milk
and need the
empty glass
moment
anything
As we go along
an idea may occur in this
or not.
gard it as something seen
though from a window
while traveling
If across Kansas
Arizona
almost too interesting
being interested
in everything.
needs the Kansas in him
nothing on earth.
It is like an empty glass,
is it corn?
Kansas has this about it:
and whenever one wishes one may return to it
Or you may leave it forever and never return to it
for we possess nothing is the realization
Anything (since we do not possess it)
and thus
We need not destroy the past:
seem to be
would it be a repetition?
and since we don't, it is free

This is a composed
It is like a glass
glass
Or again
may be poured
at any
(who knows?)
I have no idea
whether one will let it.
Re- momentarily
as

What I am calling poetry is often called
I myself have called it form.
Continuity is a demonstration that is a proof.

This form sense is from that which is bound up with
memory:
themes and secondary themes;
their development;
the climax;
the recapitulation;
that one may own one’s own home.
But actually,

Which enables us to fly or to stay

— to enjoy each.
But beware of for any moment

Come down in a vacant lot
Or a sunset
Possessing neither
the telephone
And the continuity can be said.

Hearing or making this in music is not different
Only simpler — than living this way

Simpler, that is, for me, — because it happens

That music is simple to make comes from one's willingness to accept
the limitations of structure.
Structure is simple because it can be thought out, measured.
It is a discipline which,

Accepted, in return accepts whatever, even those
Of ecstasy, which, as sugar leaves train horses,
How could I

Lecture on Nothing/111
better tell what structure is than simply to this talk which is
contained within a space of time approximately
forty minutes long

That forty minutes has been divided into five large parts, and
volving a square root is the only possible subdivision which
permits this micro-macrocosmic rhythmic structure
which I find so acceptable and accepting.
As you see, it makes very little difference what I say or even how I say it.
At this particular moment, we are passing through the fourth
part of a unit which is the second unit in the second large part of this talk.
It is a little bit like passing through Kansas.
This, now, is the end of that second unit.

Now begins the third unit of the second part.

Now the second part of that.

Now its third part.

Now its fourth (which, by the way, is just the same length as the third part).

Now the fifth and last part.

You have just experienced the structure of this talk from a microcosmic
point of view. From a macrocosmic point of view, we are just passing the halfway point in the second
large part. The first part was a rather rambling discussion of form, and continuity.

when it is the way we now need it. This second part is about structure: how simple it is
to accept its limitations. Most speeches are full of ideas. This one doesn’t have to have any
But at any moment an idea may come along. Then we may enjoy it.

Structure without life is dead. But Life is un-seen.
expresses itself.
- Each moment is absolute, of a remarkable sound.
- Blackbirds rise from a field making
- because I accepted the limitations of an art.
- conference in a Virginia girls’ finishing school,
- allowed me quite by accident to hear the blackbirds.
- as they flew up and overhead, there was a social
- calendar and hours for breakfast,
- I heard them sound ex-claim.
-I also met America’s youngest college president
- However, she has resigned, and people say she is going into politics.
- Let her.
- Why shouldn’t she? I also had the pleasure of hearing an eminent music critic
that he hoped he would live long enough to see the end of this craze for Bach.
- A pupil once said to me: I understand what you say about Beethoven, and I think
- I agree, but I have a very serious question to ask you:
- How do you feel about Bach to the end of the
- Now we have come part about structure
- However, it occurs to me to say more about structure.
- Specifically this: We are
- now at the beginning of the third part LECTURE ON NOTHING/113
is not the part about material. clear from that as we have seen, ginning to get devoted to structure. But I'm still talking about structure. that structure has no point, and, nowhere.

Unless some other idea crops up a-bout it that is all I have to say about structure.

Now about material: is it interesting? But one thing is... which is to be nothing. If one is making something the one making must love and be patient with the material, which is precisely something he chooses. Otherwise he calls attention to the material, whereas nothing is anonymous. The technique of handling materials is, on the sense level what structure as a discipline is on the rational level: a means of experiencing nothing.

I remember loving sound before I ever took a music lesson. And so we make our lives by what we love. (Last year when I talked here I made a short talk. That was because I was talking about something; but this year I am talking about nothing and of course will go on talking for a long time.)

pupil said, after trying to compose a melody using only three tones, "I felt limited."

Had she con-cerned herself with the three tones—

her materials she would not have felt limited

and since materials are without feeling, there would not have been any limitation. It was all in her mind, whereas it be-longed in the mind.

It became something nothing by being.

Should one use the

Now there's a question of one's time that ought to get us somewhere.

It is an intel-lectual question and

autobiographically.

I shall answer it slowly.

I remember as a child loving all the sounds.

I liked them especially when there was one at a time.

A five-finger exercise for one hand was Later on I full of beauty gradually liked all the intervals.

As I look back I accepted the major and minor thirds. Perhaps, of all the intervals, I liked these thirds least.

Through the music of Grieg, I became passionately fond of the fifth.

Or perhaps you could call it puppy-dog love for the fifth did not make me want to write music: it made me want to devote my life to playing the works of Grieg.

When I heard modern music, I took, like a duck to water, to all the modern intervals: the sevenths, the seconds, the tritone, and the fourth. I liked Bach too a-bout this time, but I didn't like the sound of the thirds and sixths. What I admired in Bach was the way many things went together.

As I keep on re-membering, I see that I never really liked the thirds, and this explains why I never really liked Brahms.

Lecture on Nothing/115
Modern music fascinated me, the seconds, always, seventh, even now and then, sometimes there were lights, and that was a decided first to the ear off it, I was free to hear, low sound even when both are called by the working alone.

Studying with a teacher, their are not just a sound. Tenacity.

I worked at it, feeling for it: deceptive cadences. To imply the presence of a tone not actually landing on it. The whole question is modern music. However, with all its modern intervals, the mind had fixed it. According to that one had to sounds that were void having progressions that would not actually present to the ear. Did not appeal to me that the separation of the mind and ear was necessary. Not only contemporary, not the clean slate but "avant-garde." They had not been intellectualized; directly and didn't have to go through any abstraction

intervals: fourth and that pleased me not intervals at There were so many involved, and being Writing it at putting the mind on it doing it alone, is different from a After several years of lonely,

I began to feel

I learned that the sounds but they imply not actually present to the ear.

I never liked tonality. But I never had any there are some progress in such a way present; then What is being but the mind

But in order to so that one had to sounds that were Avoiding I began to see the sounds. This made me I used noises the ear could hear them about them

I found that I liked intervals. I liked noises just as much as I had even more than I liked single sounds.

Noise, too. Dis-credited against and being American, I have been trained to be sentimental, on the side of the underdog. I got police permission to play sirens. The most amazing noise ever found that was produced by means of a coil of wire attached to the pickup arm of a phonograph and then amplified. It was shocking, really shocking, and thunderous. Half intellectually and half sentimentally, when the war came a-long. I decided to use only quiet sounds. There seemed to me to be no truth, no good, in anything big.

But quiet sounds were like loneliness. Permanent, I thought love, or friendship. Independent, I must say values, at least from Life, Time and Coca-Cola, but something else is happening. I still feel this way. I begin to hear the ones I had thought worn out. Obviously, they are audible as the old sounds worn out by as the new sounds. Thinking had worn them out. Suddenly they are fresh and now, "If you think you are a ghost. Thinking the sounds brings us back or."

"There was once a man LECTURE ON NOTHING/117
standing on a high elevation. A company of several men who happened to be walking on the road noticed from the distance the man standing on the high place and talked among themselves about this man. One of them said: He must have lost his favorite animal. Another man said:

No, it must be his friend whom he is looking for. A third one said:

He is just enjoying the cool air up there. The three could not agree and the discussion went on until they reached the high place where the man was standing up there. Have you not noticed anything?

The second man said:

No, air. The third man asked:

Are you not enjoying the fresh breeze up there? I am not.

The man on high said:

... if you say no questions... I just stand.

... there are no answers then, of course, makes the final answer, whereas the questions, busy. I take all the tones how he wrote, there are, people told me:

... Now I'm fifty.

The man on high said:

... there are questions up until then, leave out the ones I don't want, and leave out the others.

... You'll see when I've seen nothing, and there are.

... have you not lost any friend? I have not lost my friend.

... Are you not enjoying? No, sir. What, then for all our pleasure we were nowhere.

... we are having.

... slow.

... of being sleepy.

... slow.

... the pleasure nowhere.

... If anybody let him go to sleep.

... at the beginning of the this talk.

... that we are getting as the talk goes on.

... that we are getting as the talk goes on.

... that we are getting as the talk goes on.

... that we are getting as the talk goes on.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part of the fourth large part... More and more nowhere... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

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Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

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Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.

Here we are now of the fourth large part of the third unit of the fourth large part... Slowly we are getting.
Here we are now of the fourth large part

More and more nowhere.

Slowly we are getting nowhere.

It is not irritating to think one would like a little bit after the middle of this talk.

Here we are now of the fifth unit of the fourth large part.

More and more that I am getting nowhere.

Slowly we are getting nowhere.

It is not a pleasure to be somewhere else. Here we are now at the beginning of this talk.

I have the feeling that we are getting as the talk goes on and that is a pleasure.

That is a pleasure.

If we are irritated nothing is not a but suddenly and then more and more (and then more and more) Originally and now, again.

If anybody there is the pleasure nowhere.

Let him go to sleep.

Here we are now of the fourth large part

More and more nowhere.

Slowly we are getting nowhere.

It is not irritating to think one would like a little bit after the middle of this talk.

Here we are now of the fifth unit of the fourth large part.

More and more that I am getting nowhere.

Slowly we are getting nowhere.

It is not a pleasure to be somewhere else. Here we are now at the beginning of this talk.

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More and more nowhere.

Slowly we are getting nowhere.

It is not irritating to think one would like a little bit after the middle of this talk.

Here we are now of the fifth unit of the fourth large part.

More and more that I am getting nowhere.

Slowly we are getting nowhere.

It is not a pleasure to be somewhere else. Here we are now at the beginning of this talk.

I have the feeling that we are getting as the talk goes on and that is a pleasure.

That is a pleasure.

If we are irritated nothing is not a but suddenly and then more and more (and then more and more) Originally and now, again.

If anybody there is the pleasure nowhere.

Let him go to sleep.

Lecture on Nothing/121
that I am getting
Slowly
nowhere

slowly
we are getting
which will continue
it is not a pleasure
if one is irritated
it is a pleasure
it is not irritating

pleasure

of being
is sleepy

Here we are now
of the fourth large part
More and more
nowhere.

slowly
we are having

the pleasure
nowhere.

If anybody
let him go to sleep

at the beginning of the
of this talk.
I have the feeling
That we are getting
as the talk goes on
and that is a pleasure
nowhere.

It is not irritating
to be somewhere else.
Here we are now
beginning of the eleventh unit of the
of this talk.
we have the feeling
nowhere.

as the talk goes on
we have the feeling
That is a pleasure
If we are irritated
Nothing is not a
but suddenly
and then more and more
(and then more and more
originally
and now, again

Here we are now
of the fourth large part
More and more
nowhere.

Slowly
we are getting

It is not irritating
to think one would like
a little bit after the
fourth large part

More and more
that I am getting
Slowly

slowly
we are getting
which will continue
it is not a pleasure
if one is irritated
it is a pleasure
it is not irritating

pleasure

of being
is sleepy

122/SILENCE
That is finished now. It was a pleasure. This is a pleasure.
And now.

"Read me that part again where I dis-berit everybody."
Method is a control note. There is not enough like anyone may.

? 4

I thought there were eighty-eight tones.
You can quarter them too.

If it were feet?

Or can we fly from here?

124/SILENCE

I have nothing against the twelve-tone row; not a structure.
We really do need a structure, so we can see love.
we are nowhere row.
I use the twelve-tone row.
I love it. Much of the music I love.
I love it for no reason.
(I My own music does that suddenly for me.
And it seems to me quickly for me)
I could listen forever
shakuhachi music or the Navajo.

Yeibitchai stand near Richard Lippold's
any length of time Chinese bronzes.

which others have made, the need to possess nothing.
I possess Record collections that is not music.

The phonograph is a thing, A thing leads to other things, not a musical instrument.
leads to nothing whereas a musical instrument.

Would you like to join a society called Capitalists Inc.
(Just so no one would think we were Communists.)
Anyone joining automatically becomes president.
To join you must show you've destroyed tape.
records or, in the case of To imagine you
any piece of music is to miss
and even a long-playing

no point of the point record

Lecture on Nothing/125.
A lady

We have no music in Texas.

Remove the records from Texas and someone will learn to sing.

Everybody has a song which is no song at all:

it is a process of singing and when you sing, you are where you are.

All I know about method is that when I am not working I sometimes think I know something, but when I am working, it is quite clear that I know nothing.

126/SILENCE

Now giving lecture on Japanese poetry. First giving very old Japanese poem, very classical:

Oh willow tree,

Why are you so sad, willow tree?

Maybe baby?

Now giving nineteenth-century romantic Japanese poem:

Oh bird, sitting on willow tree,

Why are you so sad, bird?

Maybe baby?

Now giving up-to-the-minute twentieth-century Japanese poem, very modern:

Oh stream, flowing past willow tree,

Why are you so sad, stream?

Baby?

I was never psychoanalyzed. I'll tell you how it happened. I always had a chip on my shoulder about psychoanalysis. I knew the remark of Rilke to a friend of his who wanted him to be psychoanalyzed. Rilke said, "I'm sure they would remove my devils, but I fear they would offend my angels." When I went to the analyst for a kind of preliminary meeting, he said, "I'll be able to fix you so that you'll write much more music than you do now."

I said, "Good heavens! I already write too much, it seems to me." That promise of his put me off.

And then in the nick of time, Gita Sarabhai came from India. She was concerned about the influence Western music was having on traditional Indian music, and she decided to study Western music for six months with several teachers and then return to India to do what she could to preserve the Indian traditions. She studied contemporary music and counterpoint with me. She said, "How much do you charge?" I said, "I'll be free if you'll also teach me about Indian music."

We were almost every day together. At the end of six months, just before she flew away, she gave me the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. It took me a year to finish reading it.

I was on an English boat going from Siracusa in Sicily to Tunis in North Africa. I had taken the cheapest passage and it was a voyage of two nights and one day. We were no sooner out of the harbor than I found that in my class no food was served. I sent a note to the captain saying I'd like to change to another class. He sent a note back saying I could not change and, further, asking whether I had been vaccinated. I wrote back that unless I was vaccinated I would not be permitted to disembark at Tunis. We had meanwhile gotten into a terrific storm. The waves were higher than the boat. It was impossible to walk on the deck. The correspondence between the captain and myself continued in deadlock. In my last note to him, I stated my firm intention to get off his boat at the earliest opportunity and without being vaccinated. He then wrote back that I had been vaccinated, and to prove it he sent along a certificate with his signature.

David Tudor and I went to Hilversum in Holland to make a recording for the Dutch radio. We arrived at the studio early and there was some delay. To pass the time, we chatted with the engineer who was to work with us. He asked me what kind of music he was about to record. Since he was a Dutchman I said, "It may remind you of the work of Mondrian."

When the session was finished and the three of us were leaving the studio, I asked the engineer what he thought of the music we had played. He said, "It reminded me of the work of Mondrian."