Words Found More Added

In 2007, when Jytte Høy stepped down as rector of the Jutland Art Academy in Aarhus, she received a copy of Marcel Proust's monumental *In Search of Lost Time* as a farewell gift. She brought the novel to Berlin, where she kept a studio apartment, and spent the next year reading Proust and waiting for the impulse to resume her own work as an artist. Her intense engagement with the novel was like finding a travelling companion. It renewed her understanding of what details mean, and how time can expand and retract. Metaphorically, Proust's work has long stretches where the landscape doesn't change significantly, and the reader is tempted to pick up the pace before arriving at marvellously concentrated locations that make you want to slow down. Because the story unfolds over so many pages, its characters are given an extra opportunity to evolve and reveal new aspects of themselves. "Proust taught me to write", Høy says. That may be an overstatement. Høy has always used writing as an artistic material, and is an excellent writer herself. But Proust certainly gave her renewed incentive to write and use writing as a material in her rigorous, exacting and profoundly sensitive work.

Høy's approach to reading is two-fold. Like everyone else, she reads for relaxation and entertainment, but she also reads fiction as part of her artistic practice. Literature is an essential artistic conversation partner for her. Her work *Words Found More Added,* a project that stretched from 2011 to 2024, has crystallised into three series of seven works created in dialogue with 21 statements from 20 works of literature.

Dogmas

For the project, Høy set up the following dogmas: she finds the literary work she wants to employ and selects a single sentence from it. The sentence must fit on a single line on an A4 sheet of paper and must generate feelings and images in the reader. In other words, it has to be a good sentence, one that niggles at her like a pebble in her shoe. Moreover, it's a plus, but not a prerequisite, if the sentence conveys something essential about the literary work overall.

As her next challenge, Høy must respond to the sentence with a sentence of her own, as well as a spatial work of art. The response to the borrowed sentence can take widely different forms. It can be a one-liner, precise and sharply spun like a tennis serve, or it can be more contemplative, involved or exploratory. Høy's responses are not infrequently highly ambiguous. Even if her lines are often snappy, reflecting her artistic temperament, coming up with a fitting response is not a speedy process.

The third pillar of her concept is the physical artwork that relates to the borrowed sentence, as well as to Høy's written response to it and the literary work as a whole, but on visual, spatial and material terms. The form of the artwork varies widely, from a sound piece to photography and entire installations. Høy's engagement with canonised works of literature is both profoundly respectful and boldly irreverent. Snatching a sentence, she responds to it both in words and in art. Reading fiction for her work, she decodes the literary engines, diagnosing the textual systems. Regardless of the original language, the quotations are all in English, as are her responses.

Twenty Works of Literature
Twenty literary works are poised, each with its own rich world. Most of the books will be familiar. Some people will have read a lot of them, others fewer. The work may be vivid in memory or vague – as a sensation, a recollected mood, a tone, hinging perhaps on a particularly noteworthy character or the author's life story. Reading Baudelaire in early youth is a different experience than reading him in old age. Personally, I remember a romantic encounter with a Frenchman reciting *Spleen* in a vineyard better than I do the poem itself. That's how it is with literary experiences. Attaching themselves to places and moods, they are both something to share with others and utterly individual.

The oldest text Høy has selected is Sappho's fragments, here in a translation by the Canadian poet Anne Carson. Sappho (c. 630-570 BCE) wrote in ancient Greek (an Aeolian dialect). Nonetheless, the surviving fragments, of a supposed nine papyrus scrolls, are as fresh as if they were written yesterday. The most recent text is Herta Müller's 2009 novel *Atemschaukel* (*The Hunger Angel*). Born 1953 in Romania, Müller belonged to the German minority and grew up under a ruthless communist dictatorship. She escaped shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall and has lived in exile in Germany ever since. Mentally, language has always been her exile or refuge. In many ways, she has developed a singular language for the experiences that she and others like her endured under the dictatorship.

Many of the works are great classics like Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time,* 1913-27). Like them, several other of the works engage philosophically with time and space. Three works are rooted in the Oulipo movement ("workshop of potential literature"), a group of French writers and mathematicians who experimented with language and whose style clearly appeals to the systems-thinking Høy. Several of their books engage with the fragment or the poem and overall are complex, philosophical and serious. Even so, we find in them the same inimitable, sometimes understated humour that is so characteristic of Høy. Where Baudelaire's "Spleen LXXVIII" (from *Les Fleur du Mal*, 1857) cranks up the pathos with "I am a cemetery loathed by the moon", Høy responds with élan and neon-bright big-city rain-soaked reality: "I am the moon pissing in your backyard."

The Green Ray
Jules Verne's *Le Rayon-Vert* (*The Green Ray,* 1882), a lesser known work by the author, is a curious love story. The green ray is an optical phenomenon, a flash or ray of light that sometimes appears when the sun passes the horizon. Verne has fabricated a Scottish mythology about the phenomenon: the appearance of the green ray lets you look into your own heart and the hearts of others. In the story, two brothers are travelling to the west coast of Scotland and the Hebrides with their niece, Helene, whom they try to marry off to a fellow traveller, a scientist. Helene, meanwhile, insists on seeing the green ray first, but her attempts to do so are repeatedly foiled by the scientist. Eventually, an artist joins their company. When the green ray finally appears, Helene is too busy gazing into the artist's eye to see the ray and finds love instead.

To frustrated Helene's cry (after yet another foiled attempt): "'My horizon has gone!' she exclaimed", Høy responds with a single word: "SPACETIME". From the frustration of waiting for a

small vertical line to appear on the long line of the horizon, Høy makes a sweeping gesture, pointing out that space and time combined are infinitely greater.

Høy's visual work is a photo of the sea, with the setting sun just covered by a passing oil tanker. Like the characters waiting for the green ray, I picture Høy repeatedly waiting in vain for the arrival of the inverse moment, where the ship blocks the sun, producing a golden halo.

To the Lighthouse

Senses alert, Jytte Høy works from a powerful sense of logic. She sets up rules, and partly adheres to them. But her works are not thought into existence. They are discovered through an exploratory and intuitive process. In Høy's work, the intuitive and the intellectual probably cannot be separated. At one moment, she is deep inside the writers' works, the next she is pacing around for a response. A visual-art response might appear right before her, such as the table legs, baled with wire, which had been standing around her studio for years after she stubbornly brought them with her when she moved in. Now they cohere as a work of art in response to Virginia Woolf's "'Think of a kitchen table then', he told her, 'when you're not there.'" Young Andrew is telling the painter Lily Brisco what his father, the patriarch and philosopher Mr. Ramsay, is really up to. Høy's work, a circular bundle of wire, mimics the shape of a table or a full moon. The two table legs fit perfectly into the circle, forming a wondrous, enigmatic sign. Combined with Høy's enigmatic words in response, "Four legs on the floor (table). One leg on the table (chicken). Moonlight", they point meaningfully back to Woolf's no less enigmatic sentence.

Autobiography of Red

The scholarly, freely associative writing of Anne Carson, in particular *Autobiography of Red* (1998), has special meaning to Jytte Høy. Carson's sentence reads: "All over the world the beautiful red breezes went on blowing hand in hand." Høy responds, "At the edge of the world they turned blue."

Høy's spatial response consists of a sawhorse holding a narrow strip of metal. A string runs the length of the strip, hanging down on either side, slightly lower on one. The string is red on the horizontal plane of the strip and blue where it hangs down. The colour is accentuated by blue cones hanging at the ends of the string, pointing downwards like short spears.

The work elicits a bodily response in the viewer, like a physical equation resolved in the meeting of text and object, an odd feeling of contentment. Why? Because a red breeze is blowing along the strip, dropping at the corner and turning blue. Because one cone is slightly lower than the other, but you don't know why. Because blue also denotes melancholy, and there is something melancholy about the two weights hanging there so lonely at the ends of the strip. Because you, too, have two hands hanging at the end of your arms that sometimes feel like blue cones you can barely lift. Because the red line is gentle and precise. While Carson's red breezes could essentially blow forever, Høy's sentence stops the flow with a closed statement. The work is super simple and could be packed away in a snap. Just a sawhorse, a metal strip, a piece of string, a touch of colour and two cones – and yet it unfolds an entire landscape.

Lost Time
From Marcel Proust's great novel, Jytte Høy selected the best known sentence, the eventual opening line: "For a long time, I went to bed early." The novel's narrator goes to bed early because it's in bed, rocking between asleep and awake, that he gains the desired access to memories of the past, the whole world that was, which he labours to recreate in the form of the novel. His early bedtime points to the novel's primal scene, where the narrator is a child waiting in his room for his mother's kiss. Plus, it points to the author, Marcel Proust, who had the walls of an entire room covered in cork, so he could rest undisturbed by noise and be better protected from asthma while writing in bed. The sentence is notably short: Proust is the master of the long sentence, clause dizzyingly following upon clause. Høy's response points to the book as a perpetual motion machine, the daily cycle biting its own tail: "Early Morning Late Night Late Morning Early Night".

Early morning, late night, late morning or early night – it makes no difference when you're in a windowless cork-lined room, striving to make your work catch up with time, as Proust did until he died on 18 November 1922, leaving behind a manuscript full of scribbled corrections.

Like other works by Høy, the physical work consists of a replacement base or pedestal in the form of a black sawhorse, here with a hanging grey glass-blasted metal ring inscribed both inside and outside with her sentence. Resembling the hoop of a barrel, the ring completes the day turning in on itself. You feel an impulse to lift it off the sawhorse, as if it's just hanging there, waiting for you to activate it.

No Response
Responses come in many forms, but the French writer Jacques Roubaud's *Quelque chose noir* (*Some Thing Black,* 1986) stumped Jytte Høy. Roubaud wrote the book, consisting of texts, poems, fragments and reflections, after the premature death of his wife, the photographer Alix Cleo Roubaud (1952-1983), from a pulmonary embolism at age 31. The sentence that stumped Høy reads: "You were dead. and this did not lie." Faced with the fact of the dead body, there are no lies, no possible revisions, just the insurmountable, undeniable absence of presence. A hand with "blood coagulated at the fingertips, like dregs of Guinness in a glass", "no language game could budge this certainty. your hand hung down from the bed", Roubaud writes in the all-encompassing paralysis of grief, where writing, graphically, is full of gaps, and even initial capitals are impossible. Confronting Roubaud's statement, Høy responds, "No words found." A very precise response that also relates to the work as a whole, where the author struggles to find words, his faith in language and poetry shattered.

Against the undeniability of death and the languagelessness of profound sorrow, Høy's spatial work presents a touching response. The work is a three-dimensional skull as tall as a person, constructed from 230 galvanised steel elements. A skull is what remains, no matter what you look like, who you are or how much you lie and pretend. Why construct a skull from lengths and angles of steel? Standing before the work, we physically feel the persistent feat of assembling meaning after death has struck, building a new structure painstakingly around a void. The work's insistence on creating a shape, expanding into empty space, is a staggering tribute to the mathematician Roubaud's work. It is itself a monumental and unsentimental work of mourning.

Hello Everybody!
"In the world, there are doors." The line is from *Stigmata*, a 1998 book by Hélène Cixous, a French writer, thinker and professor known for developing an *écriture féminine*, writing that reflects the female subject. In response, Jytte Høy writes, "Hello Everybody!" Her art response is the same statement, printed on a stamp and written in neon. Cixous's sentence and Høy's responses form an active, dynamic triad. In the world, there are doors. Doors can be opened. You can shout, "Hello Everybody!" A stamp is pasted on a letter. A hello is shouted from one end of the world to the other, passing through mail slots.

Opening the door to the cited work reveals another deeply existential narrative, an initial trauma. Cixous was born in Algeria to Jewish parents and lived the first three years of her life there. When her father was drafted during the war, the family, including three-year-old Hélène, gained access to Cercle Militaire, a gated garden for officers. To the child, it feels like being admitted to the Garden of Eden, but when she approaches the other (blond) children on the swings, she learns that she has not gained access to their community. Eager to join in the play, the child listens to what the other children are saying, "There must be a key, a password, a code, a shibboleth." When she makes out that they are talking about "stamps", she is delighted. In her intellectual home, there are stamps from around the world. But the reaction from the other children is that she's a Jewish liar and that all Jews are liars. The child is left with an unsolvable dilemma: return grovelling with the stamps, submitting to the others (humiliating herself and her people), or return without the evidence (the stamps), proving that she's a liar (humiliating herself and her people).

Høy's response, "Hello Everybody!", is taken from Cixous's hyper-intertextual work, only it's a quote by the Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva (1898-1941). In turn, the whole work by Høy – borrowed sentence, response sentence and physical artwork – is also about how we constantly borrow each other's words and concepts when opening physical and mental doors.

Over the Top
"I accepted him, Nelly. Be quick, and say whether I was wrong!" In *Wuthering Heights*, Miss Catherine, 22, asks her nanny, Nelly Dean, if she was wrong to agree to an engagement with Edgar Linton of the neighbouring farm, Thrushcross Grange. Høy's sphinx-like response mimics the novel's dynamic universe: "Over the Top or Down Under. To the Right or to the Wrong." Crisscrossing like Thrushcross Grange, it may be a very accurate response, because the genteel Linton is literally *over the top*, but he is also *down under* compared to Catherine's true love, who forever remains the impossible Heathcliff.

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) is a raw and actually rather unpleasant novel about hate and love, inherited trauma and violence. Høy's art response takes a more humorous approach. The work is a mobile, a forest of identical WRONG WAY traffic signs photographed in New York. Every day we face choices we have to make, and some days are like being inside Høy's mobile. You experience the work with your body. To orient yourself, you have to move around, turn on your own axis. Do any of the signs point THIS WAY? No, but there's a "Chance Street", snapped in London. As part of the maze, you cannot see the structure.

Nonetheless, we have to laugh at ourselves a little bit, at our belief in authority. As if there were one true way. But we also have to be open to the fact that life is essentially hard to navigate..

Sculptor

“Four children. A dog. A little ray of sun. The 96. It is two o’clock.” The quote is from Georges Perec’s 1975 book *Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien* (*An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris*), where the author spent three days (18-20 October 1974) recording everything he saw happening in the Place Saint-Sulpice in Paris. Jytte Høy’s response takes place five fictional minutes later. In a short, jam-packed sentence fragment, she maximally activates Perec’s passive scenery,“ It is five minutes past two. A dog. Is eating a child. In the sunshine.” Perec aimed to record the inconspicuous, while Høy shows how little it takes language-wise for reality to become abominable.

Høy’s physical work is a photograph of herself sitting in the last café remaining in the square from Perec’s day. A poster on the wall of the café reads, “Plac G org s P r c” (in 1969, Perec published the novel *La disparition*, which does not contain a single “e”). Wearing a heavy sweater and sunglasses, Høy squints at the beam of sunlight highlighting three pointed peaks, like dog’s teeth, on the wall behind her. I keep returning to her hands. They are broad and strong, a sculptor’s hands.

A Greater Perspective

Jytte Høy has an instinct for places, a powerful sense of the room she enters, and likewise of the spaces her works establish in a room. Describing herself as an observer of patterns, she needs to venture far and feel the world in her explorations. This sensitivity to patterns and textures, spaces and materials, is evident in her work. The snap of a sentence recalls the rubber bands the artist used to work with, her casual way of letting a wire drip as it feeds power to a neon sign, or the button delicately placed as a feminist nod to Raymond Queneau’s exercise in style. Leaping from the close and intimate to a greater perspective with the dynamism of literature, a sentence soars from a glance to a universe, from specific personal observation to the philosophical vertigo that Høy masters. Her works are concrete and relatable. They are what they are. You feel them with your body, while they touch the jagged edge of existence, creating connections you never imagined.