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A Literary (Techno)science
The Silent Speech of Erkki Kurenniemi's 2048 Performance

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ABSTRACT
Beginning in the late 1970s, Finland's Erkki Kurenniemi (1941-2017) actively labored to archive every possible aspect of his life. He took photos, made videos, and collected his tram tickets, receipts, body hairs, etc. Kurenniemi believed that within the next forty years, computer technoscience will have advanced sufficiently that it could be programmed to interpret the data of his archive and—on his 107th birthday, 10 July 2018—resurrect his consciousness. For Kurenniemi, this project was an experiment in the realms of neuroscience and artificial intelligence. However, it can also be seen as an experiment in aesthetics, or in what Jacques Rancière calls the "aesthetic regime" of art—an aesthetic-political historical framework imbued with the dynamics of democracy, where "everything speaks." This article reframes Kurenniemi's work within the aesthetic regime of art to draw attention to the "silent speech" and "aesthetic unconscious" (Rancière) of the work and what is the literary nature of Kurenniemi's experiments with (techno)science.

KEYWORDS
Aesthetics, Archive, Finland, Erkki Kurenniemi, Literary, Performance, Philosophy, Jacques Rancière, Technoscience

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During his human life—we have yet to see what he will be in his post-human life—Erkki Kurenniemi (1941-2017) was not a principal figure in the debates surrounding the possibility for computers to simulate human consciousness, although he clearly aligned with those that believe such is eventually possible. For decades, Finland's Kurenniemi speculated on this proposition. In an interview conducted by filmmaker Mika Taanila, he explains: "We think of the brain as a neural net computer. We're rapidly discovering how the brain works. There are still big open questions, but I'm sure they will be solved too. These include the essence of consciousness, character personality or identity and all the features traditionally connected to a biological, living being … and to man in particular. They are all universal, independent of underlying material. In other words, as soon as it's technically possible, our consciousness, mind and personality can enter a computer. Man can be simulated with adequate precision, meaning that you and your closest friends think that you are alive, conscious and have retained your personality, although its house of dust no longer exists."[1] Arguably the most striking evidence of Kurenniemi's commitment to this proposition was the project that dominated the last five decades of his life—what, for our purposes here, I refer to as the "2048 Performance." In the late 1970s, Kurenniemi actively began collecting physical artifacts of his daily life: everything from tram tickets and receipts to body hairs. He claimed to take about twenty thousand photos a year, though he believed that he should double that. He was preferential to video recording, but for practical reasons, he typically utilized still photography, all of which he stored in computer files. Also, he generated dozens of journals, in which he wrote anything that came into his mind. Kurenniemi was, to use his word, "manic" about archiving his life, because he believed that technoscience[2] will have developed sufficiently that

1 Taanila 2002, 299. Taanila conducted this interview in conjunction with his documentary on Kurenniemi, *The Future is Not What It Used to Be.* Larger portions of the text, inclusive of this quote, also appear in the film.

2 I borrow the term "technoscience" from Bruno Latour, who early in *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society* uses it as a replacement for the longer "science and technology" (1987, 29). The concept refers to practices that bring technological development

computers can use this archive to reanimate his consciousness on his 107th birthday, 10 July 2048.[3]

Kurenniemi did not provide any clear detail on the technoscience requisite for the 2048 Performance. What he did provide constitutes either broad generalities about the nature of the technologies required or grand circumscriptions like his notion of "supermegatechnologies"—an extrapolation on information technologies, biotechnologies, and nanotechnologies.[4] His vision for the final format of the project seems to be based purely in electronic digital technologies and not a hybridization of body, organs, and technology, the likes of which Stelarc describes in his work on the deconstruction of the body—although Kurenniemi and Stelarc seem to be cut from the same futurist cloth.[5] That said, Kurenniemi's lack of specificity does not rule out the possibility that biological or other organic materials will be a part of the final/inaugural performance.[6] Whatever the format, the gap between current technology and the necessary technology is still wide. After all, Kurenniemi's project depends upon a computer that has yet to be invented. This lack of technological detail notwithstanding, Kurenniemi positions his project as a technoscientific one, an experiment on the relationship of mind, body, and technology.[7] Be that as it may, there are a number of scholars who have become interested in the project, less for the contributions it might make to the debates between computer scientists and philosophers of mind, and more for the other implications presented by the project.

Not just a site of experimentation for technoscientists, the 2048 Performance also provides a site for discussing issues relevant to historiography and aesthetics. The project invites historiographical questions in the fact that the intention of the project extends beyond generating a new computerized consciousness and proposes to reanimate a consciousness that already has a history and historicity to it. This aspect of the project invites a reevaluation of the nature of memory and the role that archives and archiving play in the production of history. Many of these questions have been ably addressed in the small but growing amount of research that has been conducted on the 2048 Performance,

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to bear on scientific investigation and vice versa. In the context of Kurenniemi, this would include the mutual studies occurring between computer science and neurological and cognitive science. It should also be noted, however, that while Latour begins his book with this simple definition, much of the book argues that science and technology never were actually separate and, that being the case, were also always social. I would hope that that resonance of "technoscience" also adds nuance to Kurenniemi's work and, specifically, his 2048 Performance.

3 In *The Future is Not What It Used to Be*, Kurenniemi states, "I register everything with manic precision. Video recording, take notes with a cell phone every minute on the most trivial things: how much a cup of coffee is, what the people in a particular bar look like and so on" (2002, 2:35). Later in the documentary, he again refers to his registering of the archived files as "manic" (42:16).

4 Kurenniemi 1999-2000.

5 See for example, Stelarc 2013.

6 Whether biological materials are utilized in the final performance or not, it does seem that, drawing on Jens Hauser's work on biotechnologies, the biological would likely manifest in some way to ground what is performed as authentically "Kurenniemi" (2013).

7 For an extrapolation on and analysis of Kurenniemi's ideas of reanimation through a technological archive, see Ernst 2015.

localized in two anthologies on Kurenniemi and his work, *Erkki Kurenniemi: A Man from the Future* and *Writing and Unwriting (Media) Art History: Erkki Kurenniemi in 2048*. In these volumes—both of which were published before Kurenniemi's human death in 2017—scholarship on the aesthetic implications of the 2048 Performance is even less abundant, but not less significant. Not surprisingly, that scholarship echoes in its scope Kurenniemi's own theorizing on his artistic practice: embracing the productive entanglement of art, man, technology, and archives.

The present essay intends to follow suit, recognize the entanglement of these various components and tease what implications it can out of it. Beginning as we have with the idea that Kurenniemi intended the 2048 Performance to capture and eventually reanimate his consciousness through technological means, what follows will build upon the historiographical and aesthetic analyses that have already been conducted on the project, in order ultimately to argue that despite and in some ways because of Kurenniemi's attention to the technological, his project is essentially a literary one. Kurenniemi archived in anticipation of a forthcoming performance of his conscious, but there is already in the archive—inclusive of his own writings about the archive—an unconscious that speaks forth literarily. Pursuant to this argument is my contention that Kurenniemi's thinking regarding the 2048 Performance was delimited by the historical conditions of what Jacques Rancière calls the aesthetic regime of art, an historical period (our period) in which all objects, significant or not, are potentially perceived as art insofar as they can be perceived to possess "silent speech," a form of expressivity written within them. Even without the materializing technology of a computer-like device, the artifacts of Kurenniemi's life already speak forth silently and literarily; they are already a performance of Kurenniemi's consciousness.

Kurenniemi's 2048 Performance project brings into a single site, issues related to mind, body, technology, memory, archive, and art. This presents a complex nexus of possibilities for research and theorization. Kurenniemi's project raises questions for many current scholarly discussions. Much if not most of the scholarship that has begun on Kurenniemi's project has been located in relation to the growing discourse on new media arts. This is perhaps not surprising when one recognizes that Kurenniemi first began exploring the possibilities for computers in music and other art forms in the 1960s, the decade that Sean Cubitt and Paul Thomas identify as home to "the early experiments in digital arts" and what would become new media arts.[8] Kurenniemi's career as a new media technoscientist and artist is contemporary with the development of new media and new media arts. In their summary of the current state of new media arts, Cubitt and Thomas offer a description that very nearly describes Kurenniemi and his four-plus decades of work on the 2048 Performance. They write: "As the field matures, the bones of the practice are slowly becoming clear: a passion for archives, documentation, and oral history, for the look and feel of past events and works, some of which are irreparably lost, and a care for the

8 Cubitt and Thomas 2013, 10.

specificity not just of works and practices but also scenes."[9] With its reliance upon the new media arts scholarship that grounds most Kurenniemi research thus far, the present essay recognizes the value that Kurenniemi's project is as a site for new media arts studies. That said, the article locates itself chiefly within the context of the current Kurenniemi scholarship and makes at times references to further work anthologized in Cubitt and Thomas's volume *Relive: Media Art Histories*, the title of which also strongly resonates with Kurenniemi's project. Defining what is meant by "relive," Cubitt and Thomas suggest, "the bringing back to life, to live otherwise […], and to live again."[10] Kurenniemi lives to relive, whatever that might be.

Kurenniemi's Aesthetics

Kurenniemi was a formidable figure of the Finnish avant-garde for over half a century. Through an eclectic array of creative pursuits, he distinguished himself as an innovator in the fields of technoscience, art, and philosophy. In the very early 1960s, Kurenniemi developed an electronic studio for the musicology department at the University of Helsinki. In August 1963, he joined with U.S.-American avant-gardist Terry Riley to create the first Happening in Finland. Soon after, he began his collaborations with noted underground digital musician M. A. Numminen and the band Sperm. Rounding out the decade, Kurenniemi composed music for a number of short non-narrative films. In the 1970s, he headed Digelius Electronics, a company that manufactured electronic products, ranging from dairy automatics to some of the world's first digital musical instruments. Throughout the seventies, Kurenniemi focused intently on developing these musical instruments, called DIMIs, to produce minimalist soundscapes from a variety of visual or biofeedback inputs: a dancer's movements, the movement of a group of actors in a production of Samuel Beckett's *Act Without Words II*, a single actor's facial movements, and also a transcutaneous electrical circuit created by a group of four individuals who would connect their bodies together in a variety of improvised structures. Beginning in these same years and continuing into the 1990s, Kurenniemi was involved in a number of other artistic outlets, including painting and partnerships with Finnish avant-garde artist groups, Dimensio and Datart.[11]

Although not all of Kurenniemi's experiments in technoscience were equally also artistic experiments, and although not all of his artistic experiments were equally also technoscientific experiments, his oeuvre clearly evidences a commitment to exploring the relationship between the two. This is corroborated by Kurenniemi's philosophical writings, in which he regularly theorizes how each informs and transforms the other. Aspects of this are seen in one of his most well-known essays, "Message is Massage," and also in the unpublished "Computer-Integrated Art," but the clearest example resides in "Computer

9 Ibid. 10.

10 Ibid. 22.

11 Taanila provides an effective summary of Kurenniemi's career as a scientist, artist, philosopher, etc. and also the concept of the 2048 Performance, in his documentary *The Future is Not What It Used to Be* (2002).

Eats Art," in which he describes the stages by which the divisions between art, computers, and humans disappear. First, the existing art forms begin to utilize computers to expand their capacities. This leads to new art forms, which eventually become "fused together into an all-encompassing and pure computer art."[12] He further argues that as computers become more human-like, humans also become more computer like, to the point that human and computer will "eventually coalesce."[13] The logical consequence of all of this is that art, computers, and humans enter into a new amalgamated whole.

The coming inseparability between art, computers, and humans is a central theme in Kurenniemi's oeuvre. With this in mind, it might seem odd that his most ambitious experiment, the 2048 Performance, does not seem to be directly connected to questions of artistic practice. The project does not resemble traditional types of artistic works, the types that Kurenniemi engaged throughout his career: music, dance, theatre, and painting. However, as Lars Bang Larsen and also Geoff Cox, Nicolas Malevé, and Michael Murtaugh evidence, the 2048 Performance aligns well with the trajectory of artistic development that Kurenniemi had plotted. In his essay "The Unbearable Non-Artist from 'L'Homme machine' to Algorithmic Afterlife: Non-Cartesian Cybernetics and Aesthetic Embodiment in Erkki Kurenniemi," Larsen recognizes that while Kurenniemi did engage in the creation of art works, the fragmentation and "sense of incompleteness" that "pervades all that Kurenniemi touched in his working life" has rendered a Kurenniemi that is a "fractured whole" and that has made of his life a work of art.[14] The implication of Larsen's analysis is that the 2048 Performance is the culmination of a lifetime of work leading to the collapse of "life," "art," and "work." Cox, Malevé, and Murtaugh, in "Archiving the Databody: Human and Nonhuman Agency in the Documents of Erkki Kurenniemi," relate how the Brussels-based artistic collective Constant utilizes mechanized computational media technology to engage Kurenniemi's archive in the formation of a new online artistic creation, titled "(preliminary work towards) an online archive."[15] Constant's work engages Kurenniemi's "fractured whole"—to borrow Larsen's phrase—in a textual dialogue that both writes and un-writes Kurenniemi while also writing and un-writing this new work of art.[16]

Taken all together, Larsen and Cox, et al. describe a 2048 Performance that is clearly a step toward fulfilling Kurenniemi's prophecy of the dissolution of the definitions that separate artists from works of art and also that separate one work of art from another and one artist from another. In his futuristic thinking,

12 Kurenniemi 1972-82, 98.
13 Ibid. 103-05.
14 Larsen 2015, 113.
15 In Cox, Murtaugh, and Malevé, the authors render the title of the project "(Preliminary Work) Toward an Online Archive" (125). I have opted to render it as it appears on the project's website (Constant n.d.).
16 In "Australian Video Art Histories: A Media Arts Archaeology for the Future," Ross Harley asks, "[C]an we imagine a media arts archaeology for the future that capitalizes on the open access culture of today's Internet culture and technology?" (2013 221). Constant's use of (a portion) of Kurenniemi's digital archive to both write and un-write Kurenniemi provides another way to imagine an answer.

Kurenniemi sees this as a move toward redefining the entire state of art. One way of interpreting Kurenniemi's claim for the dissolution of the contours that give definition to art is to posit that art as a category disappears, but this does not seem to be Kurenniemi's position. Larsen intimates a different interpretation when he identifies Kurenniemi as a "non-artist."[17] What I read Larsen to mean vis-à-vis this epithet is not simply that Kurenniemi was not an artist, but rather Kurenniemi was an artist that was also not an artist—that he creates art works that are not art works. Such is readily conceivable in an age where everything can be a work of art. If this was Kurenniemi's sensibility, then what he described as a future state of art is actually further evidence of a state of art that Rancière argues has already been with us for over a century, what he calls the "aesthetic regime of art"—an historical condition by virtue of which art can be seen in everything, even and perhaps especially in those things/objects that do not have a place in the traditional taxonomy of art objects.

Kurenniemi's theorizing regarding the future state of art was such because his thinking was delimited by the conditions of the aesthetic regime of art. There is a sense, then, that what Kurenniemi imagined was/is in large part already here, even without the patina of science fiction that often attends Kurenniemi's speculations.[18] One clear example of this is "A Video Letter to the Future," which Kurenniemi made in 1990, for the express purpose of being presented as a part of the 2048 Performance. In an excerpt from the video, Kurenniemi stands in a room with a handful of friends and discusses with them the reason for the document: "Should we underline it or is it clear that here and now we're doing a posthumous video, a work of art, or a collective work based on the idea that it will be a part of my vast collection of tapes on similar and many other situations. The premiere will be in 2048. July 10, 2048." One of Kurenneimi's friends then asks where this premiere will take place, to which Kurenniemi responds, "On the net, no particular place. You can watch it anywhere with a headband video. Any channel. No commercial breaks."[19]

In addition to the brief insight the excerpt provides into what Kurenniemi imagined of the 2048 Performance, the excerpt reveals how Kurenniemi's thinking reflects the conditioning of the aesthetic regime of art. He refers to the video as a work of art, but the video, such as it is, does not much resemble what might traditionally be called art. "Traditionally" here does not mean to refer to so-called classical art or art works that more culturally conservative patrons would agree to classify as art. The avant-garde digital music that Kurenniemi was making in the 1960s challenged the typical musical forms of the age, but at the same time, that music satisfied the empirical requirements for what qualified as music. It just did not meet the taste requirements of all listeners.

17 Larsen 2015, 113.

18 While Rancière develops and historicizes his theory of the aesthetic regime primarily in the context of French literary and artistic history, an argument can be made that the shift to the aesthetic has also occurred in Finland over the last few centuries. Evidences of this shift, other than in relation to Kurenniemi, can be seen in comparing, for example, the aesthetic philosophies of Fredrik Cygnaeus, Yrjö Hirn, and Karle Sanfrid Laurila. See *The History of Finnish Aesthetics from the Late 18th Century to the Early 20th Century* (Kuisma 2006).

19 *The Future is Not What It Used to Be*. 2002, 44:09.

For example, one can easily imagine many claiming that Kurenniemi's 1968 piece "Antropoidien tanssi" is not really music, but with its rhythm, timbre, etc., Kurenniemi's avant-garde digital music still meets the demands of what might "traditionally" be called music.[20] What is curious about the "A Video Letter to the Future," on the other hand, is that it does not satisfy the traditional demands of a definition of art. With its handheld-camera jerkiness, its lack of visual or narrative composition, its absence of edits, and its general haphazardness, the video seems to be more a home movie than a work of art.

Kurenniemi's video is closer in definition to what film scholar David E. James refers to as a "film diary." In his work on Jonas Mekas, James delineates between a "film diary" and a "diary film." Mekas, like Kurenniemi, shot lots of footage of his life. He was making a diary of his life, but rather than writing it in linguistic language, he was recording his diary on film. He was making a film diary. This contrasts with the diary film. James explains that later in his life, Mekas began to take unadulterated footage, cut it, and stitch it back in such a way as to create an object that then becomes a film, an object subject to the economy of the cinema. In sharpening the definition between the film diary and the diary film, James explains that the film diary is a practice that "privileges the author, the process and the moment of composition"; it has a "commitment to presentness, to the process of perception, to the antiartifactual use of the medium, and to all these as the means of the renovation of the individual."[21] In his analysis, James teases out the complexities of this distinction and their implications relative to Mekas's work, but at the basic level, James indicates that the film diary would not traditionally be considered an art work, but that the diary film would.

Following from this taxonomy, insofar as Kurenniemi's "A Video Letter to the Future" is a piece of film diary, it does not meet the traditional demands of a definition of art—same as the home movie of my own wedding reception would not meet those demands. Yet, Kurenniemi calls it art. More than just a rhetorical romantic flourish, Kurenniemi's conceptualizing of the video as a work of art evidences a historical shift in what constitutes art objects. Rancière marks the shift as the move from the *representative regime* of art to the *aesthetic regime* of art. As noted above, Rancière posits that whereas at one point historically there was a clear division between what did and did not constitute a work of art, that division is no longer as clear. In the former there are distinct kinds of artistic modes and also distinct rules governing the aesthetic nuances and dynamics of those modes. Such rules follow from a matrix of inclusion and exclusion that, according to Rancière, underwrites how we receive both art and politics. He refers to this matrix of inclusion and exclusion (and indeed any matrix of inclusion and exclusion) as a "distribution of the sensible." Thus the move from the *representative regime* to the *aesthetic regime* is a redistribution of the sensible, a move that allows some things to disappear from discursivity and others to appear. It is the unique distribution of the sensible in the aesthetic regime that allows anything the capacity for expressivity, for what Rancière

20 Kurenniemi 1968.
21 James 1992, 147 and 161.

calls "silent speech." Silent speech is, Rancière explains, "the capability of signification that is inscribed upon [the] very body [of things], summarized by the 'everything speaks' of Novalis, the poet-mineralogist. Every sensible form, beginning from the stone or the shell, tells a story."[22] Thus, although "A Video Letter to the Future" does not meet the formal artistic criteria that the representative regime has established for what qualifies as art, the video—even with and in its audible features—"speaks silently" in the same way that "everything speaks." Even a prosaic home movie, simply capturing a conversation with the most minimal of directorial shaping speaks as art in the aesthetic regime of art; for the aesthetic regime reports that there is always, somehow, something there, "silently speaking" beneath the surface of traditional representation.[23]

Understanding the potential for everything to speak in the aesthetic regime then provides historical context for the various implications that Cox and his co-authors and also Larsen tease out from Kurenniemi's work on the 2048 Performance and indeed everything that is a part of Kurenniemi's archive. Constant's archive project that Cox, et al. describe as an entanglement with Kurenniemi's archive scarcely follows "representative" definitions of artistic works, yet Constant, which presents itself as a "non-profit, artist-run organization," moves forward with full confidence in its project's potential to speak silently in some manner or another.[24] Larsen keeps his discussion focused on Kurenniemi himself, but recognizes, as noted above, that Kurenniemi was already an amalgamation of partial forays into a wide variety of practices. Larsen refers to these as "crossings" and writes, "In terms of aesthetic experience, these crossings cannot be understood in the specialized sense of making of art works—neither what is typically rubricated as visual art, nor what is called computer art."[25] Instead, Larsen argues, the type of art that Kurenniemi created is a non-art, an art that does not fit into "representative" categories of art but that nonetheless, in its "fractured whole[ness]," manages to speak silently forth. Similar claims can be made of each and every artifact comprising the archive Kurenniemi is amassing as part of the 2048 Performance, and the same can be said of the project itself, including its promised performance in 2048. Each receipt, each hair, each ticket stub, each video, each doodle, each audio recording, each note has the potential to speak silently forth, expressing some emotion, some beauty, some information, some history.

The Aesthetic Archive

The notion that the artifacts of Kurenniemi's archive are also art objects perceived to speak silently is homologous to the concept of archives more generally. Archives are collections of artifacts believed to convey through some

22 Rancière 2009b, 34.

23 Rancière discusses three distinct historical areas: the ethical regime of images, the representative regime of art, and the aesthetic regime of art. While each does have a moment of historical emergence that is sequential, there is significant overlap between the three, and they inform each other. Rancière develops his theories on these areas and their implications over a number of his writings. See, for example: 2004, 20-23; 2009a, 19-44; 2009b, 34-35.

24 Constant 2016. Cox, et al. also refer to Constant as artists (2015, 125).

25 Larsen 2015, 113.

representational measure information, history, meaning, etc. Archives are already conditioned to some extent on the idea of a silent speech, speech waiting to be brought forth by some mechanism of heurism or interpretation. This mechanism could be visitors to the archive or, in the case of Kurenniemi, a computer or computer-like machine that makes manifest the latent content of the artifact. This is precisely the process that Kurenniemi imagined with his 2048 Performance. The archive he collected of his life comprises objects whose silent speech awaits extraction and manifestation by yet-to-be-realized computer-like machines. The product of this process is Kurenniemi's consciousness.

As those who have analyzed Kurenniemi's approach to and theorizing of his archive in relation to the 2048 Performance have observed, his conceptualization of the function of his archive was rife with questions of an historiographical nature. In her article "Fleshly Intensities," Susanna Paasonen recognizes, building from the work of Friedrich Kittler, that the technological processes of archiving have a formative effect on the representational outcomes of the archive. She writes, "The perceptions and observations that Kurenniemi recorded in order to reproduce his consciousness are media-saturated and inseparable from the technologies used to record them."[26] The silent speech of Kurenniemi's archive is inextricably a product of the technologies of archiving, meaning that the material contingencies of the technologies used to capture and store the artifacts, do not neutrally re-present silent speech but rather necessarily delimit it.

Moreover, the concern Paasonen raises about how Kurenniemi's very desire for the archive compromises the transparency he maintains for it. Paasonen correctly reads Kurenniemi's drive for creating the archive as emblematic of what Jacques Derrida refers to as "archive fever."[27] "Kurenniemi's 'archive fever' is fueled by an awareness of imminent loss. His process of accumulating and storing records of everyday events have been a means of warding off erasure and the limits of human existence—their temporality is geared simultaneously toward both annihilation and eternal life (in 2048, and after)."[28] As noted above, Kurenniemi was "manic" about archiving his life. He has been living his life in manic anticipation of its posthumous performance. As Paasonen suggests, if Kurenniemi's drive to archive was part of the consciousness that he was archiving, it would stand to reason that it would be part of the consciousness to come. [29] We should expect that the silent speech that someday emerges as Kurenniemi would be equally as manic, a consciousness rabid with "archive fever."

This is not, however, likely what Kurenniemi imagined as his future. He did not likely see his archive as the feverish attempt to generate an equally feverish future consciousness. Perhaps he did, but then his project becomes less interesting in terms of a transhumanist experiment and more like another

26 Paasonen 2015, 35.
27 Derrida 1995.
28 Paasonen 2015, 36.
29 Ibid.

cautionary tale.[30] To be sure, Kurenniemi's vision of the future Kurenniemi does have a science-fiction-like resonance to it, but it also seems to be less dystopian. Kurenniemi's response to the speculation that computers will eventually be able to produce human consciousness was, as noted above, that such is possible but only insofar as actual human consciousness becomes more and more computer-like. He contends that there is a double move that will bring these two together, letting them meet somewhere in the middle. Thus, it could be that what Kurenniemi imagined as the state of his consciousness as performed in 2048 will be the result of this double move, but there also seems to be enough romanticism in his thinking, in his "archive fever," that his future consciousness will have an existence still imbued with the hope of humanism. There is a clear sense from what Kurenniemi describes about the 2048 Performance that the Kurenniemi of the future will have a life that still has meaning. Kurenniemi seems to imagine that while Kurenniemi will (again) be in the world of 2048 and beyond, that world in all of its nuance and potentiality will also be in the Kurenniemi in that world.

A Literary Kurenniemi

Kurenniemi's project is archival, but it conceives of archive in a way that pushes beyond artifacts as conveyances of fact and situates them as opportunities for something more resonant with human experience, with human consciousness and thought. At the same time, however, the archive remains subject to the disimpassioned and contingent representations of pure materiality. The point of tension between these two trajectories is precisely the tension at the center of the aesthetic regime, at the center of what that regime presents as art. In his short volume *The Aesthetic Unconscious*, Rancière articulates a difference between writing and what he calls "living speech." The latter he associates with the representative regime; writing he associates with the aesthetic regime. He explains that intrinsic to writing is "silent speech": "the contradictory mode of speech that speaks and keeps silent at the same time, that both knows and does not know what it is saying."[31] The contradictoriness is the tension noted above, it is the point of division between thought and what Rancière refers to as "non-thought." He writes: "For the silent revolution that we have called aesthetic opens the space in which an idea of thought and a corresponding idea of writing can be elaborated. This idea of thought rests upon a fundamental affirmation: there is thought that does not think, thought at work not only in the foreign element of non-thought but in the very form of non-thought. Conversely, there is non-thought that inhabits thought and gives it a power all its own. This non-thought is not simply a form of absence of thought, it is an efficacious presence of its opposite. From whichever side we approach the equation, the identity of

30 Although there are certainly aspects of Kurenniemi's theorizing on his 2048 Performance that might be considered more posthumanist than transhumanist, I use the term "transhumanist" to foreground that much of Kurenniemi's theorizing about his project is imbued with a sense of overcoming death. In this, I draw upon definitions of "transhumanism" provided by Damien Broderick (2013, 434) and Rosi Braidotti (2013, 91).

31 Rancière 2009b, 33.

thought and non-thought is the source of distinctive power."[32] Non-thought is the thought yet to be thought in the written of the archive, where it bears the marking of having already been thought. Between the thought and the non-thought is the power that Kurenniemi draws upon in imagining the activation of a future consciousness, of a future domain of thinking again.

Kurenniemi has been feverishly building the archive, and as he sees it, the obstacle to overcome will be a technological one, one that technoscientists will solve by developing a machine that can extract and mobilize thoughts from the artifacts. What Rancière describes in terms of the tension between thought and non-thought, however, is what activated Kurenniemi's belief in the power of archives to mobilize thought in the first place. In the historical conditions of the aesthetic regime, Kurenniemi already saw the thought in the non-thought of the archive, and already began to imagine what it might "mean," even if he did not yet know what it will technoscientifically "be." This imagining, according to what Rancière explains of the nature of non-thought, belongs less to the technological world and more to the literary one. The mechanism for making manifest the latent content of the non-thought is literature. Discussing the materiality of trivia, Rancière writes, "In their striations and ridges they all bear the traces of their history and the mark of their destination. Literature takes up the task of deciphering and rewriting these signs of history written on things."[33] Thus, the act of writing as literature would already be to have moved to the stage of interpretation, of literalizing. By leaving the "signs of history written on things" and amassing them into an archive, Kurenniemi preserved the non-thought of the unconscious as the yet-to-be-thought of a future conscious and, at the same time, signaled that a singularizing of the signs is possible—into a single entity, Kurenniemi. What the archive also does, however, is belie the fact that Kurenniemi's project is at heart still a literary project.

I say "still a literary project," because at one point in the genesis of the 2048 Performance, what Kurenniemi had imagined was an explicitly literary project. In his article, "Dead Computers Tell No Tales: Remarks on the Futures Behind Kurenniemi's 2048 Resurrection," Jyrki Siukonen explains that Kurenniemi first conceived of the 2048 Performance not as a digital performance of video, audio, and text but rather as a novel. After a few failed attempts in the late eighties and early nineties to generate what Kurenniemi called the "2048 novel," he switched formats. Discussing this, Siukonen writes: "It seems to me that what lies at the heart of the project 2048 is not so much a vision of the coming technological progress as it is Kurenniemi's idea that all that has been saved of his life could be turned into literature, i.e. meaningful writing. In his email correspondence with the author Leena Krohn in 2003 he still muses: 'And yet, my notes on small pieces of paper may contain a wealth of information about my world, down to my handwriting, if all that material is analysed with a programme, say, a million times more efficient compared to what we presently have.' The main point here is not whether Kurenniemi himself could have concentrated harder and worked enough to produce textual material that deserves future attention,

32 Ibid. 31-32.
33 Ibid. 34.

but that a computer should be able to interpret and reveal his often rather dispirited and fragmentary notes as something more than trifles, in other words, turn second-hand information into first-rate thoughts."[34] As Siukonen adeptly observes, Kurenniemi's faith in his project's ability to make "first-rate thoughts" out of "second-hand information" is inherently a literary project. Kurenniemi believed not only that the archive of his life can make direct references to the historical events of that life but that every remnant, even the most detrital, and perhaps even particularly the most detrital, can be transformed into something of grand, even literary value.

Repositioning the 2048 Performance as literary rather than technoscientific does not erase the technoscientific ambition of the project. Instead, it takes the technoscientific into consideration as both part of the many materialities across which Kurenniemi's silent speech is written and also as content that will likely be brought forth out of the materialities comprising the project. The technoscientific was part of Kurenniemi's consciousness during his human life, which he continually unfolds in his many writings and interviews, and there is no reason to think it would not be a part of the consciousness to come, as those in the audience to his performance read Kurenniemi's thought against his non-thought, and vice versa. Such a practice moves outside of the sheer materiality of syntactical rules and into the space of meaning, into the space of the literary. This is the space that Kurenniemi occupied during his human life and will continue to occupy in the future, 2048 and beyond. The consciousness of Kurenniemi will ever be literary.

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34 Siukonen 2013, 60.

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