

## A Reproduction of La Espiral Eterna by Sertan Şentürk

<http://sertansenturk.com/music/reproduction-la-espinal-eterna/>

A *Reproduction of La Espiral Eterna* is a hybrid algorithmic/organised sound piece with political narrative. I've composed it in April, 2010 and revised in December, 2010. It is based on the original composition, *La Espiral Eterna (Eternal Spiral)* for classical guitar by [Leo Brouwer](#), composed in 1971, and the guitar recording is taken from the "Guitar Recital" album by [Dmitris Regginos](#), released in 2004. The piece has been performed at [KSU New Music Festival](#) in 28 March 2011 in [Kennesaw State University](#).



The piece has a dark, disturbing soundscape aiming to make listeners think by getting sad, helpless, disgusted and shocked either indirectly by the environment they are forced to listen or directly by the meaning of the sounds/voices they hear. Below is a more short text that explains the narrative and the technicality in more insight. I would recommend to read these after listening to the piece as what and how I done in the composition might take away your intimate listening experience.

### ***Narrative Explanation***

*Taking the side of the weak, "A Reproduction of La Espiral Eterna" expresses the clashes between those in power and those who are oppressed. It acknowledges that the struggle will continue forever; forming an "eternal spiral." The piece can be thought to be divided into 9 sections some of which are in contrast with other sections built consistently upon Leo Brower's composition. The tension in the original composition by Leo Brower is preserved and enhanced with applying intense processing on classical guitar (except the seventh section, which was played very fast and did not need any "touch") and organizing sound samples throughout the piece.*

*The first section starts with Subcomandante Marcos's [opening remarks](#) in the First Intercontinental Encuentro Against Neo-liberalism and for Humanity, Chiapas, Mexico, 1996. His speech is reversed in some instances symbolising censorship, ignorance and misinterpretation of his words by the people with coinciding interests), and implying to the care-free listener that there are some wrong-doings in the world, which do not take place in front of their eyes or they have chosen to turn a blind eye on.*

*In the second part guitar is accompanied with huge explosions and continuing to the third section, where weapon sounds and children sounds are used in succession. These sections are literally slams in the face, forming a hysterical situation the listener's cannot escape of. The third section finishes with the "victory" of the war over innocence, establishing a hopeless state... Fourth section is instrumental and a bridge to the next section, allowing the listeners to take a breath and assess what they have been exposed to.*

*Fifth and sixth sections are built around the speeches of political figures. The fifth section consists speeches by politicians such as Truman's announcement of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Netanyahu's justifications of Israel attacking civilian areas in south Lebanon and Ahmedinejat's remark stating "there are no homosexuals in Iran". The speeches create a disturbing blob, aiming to create a negative image on people who abuse power and use any means of justification to oppress people. Note that the piece does not intend to show all the politicians speaking in the fifth section as villains: both Nelson Mandela's and Evo Morales' speeches are two good examples of it, which are both a good indication of how two-faced Western Hemisphere democracies can be. The sixth section shows a different side of the influence of power that it can be used to help people rather than oppressing them. The complete list of speakers, the sources and the transcriptions from the audio are indicated in the end.*

*Seventh and eighth sections are very short and can be thought together and a silent response, a passive resistance to the second part, having the same the tension but refusing to use violence during the*

progression of piece which is turning against those in power. In this sense, it has a minor flash-forward role to the last section.

Ninth, the last section, is the only section where the guitar recording from the original composition is taken out. Instead the background sound is from a natural, peaceful environment. Now, Subcomandante Marcos' speech is unaltered and strong, allowing him to make a proper stand next to oppressed. The piece finally reaches its anti-climax, where it is acknowledged that this struggle will continue forever; forming an "eternal spiral".

### **Technical Explanation**

For Subcomandante Marcos' speech in the first and the last section, I have used Dan Ellis' [phase vocoder](#) in MATLAB to match the audio duration. The amplitude envelope of the guitar recording is applied to the speech for sound level consistency. I have also pitch tracked the speech in the first part using Arturo Camacho's [SWIPEP](#) and recorded the strength of the fundamental pitch. I have reversed the speech in the intervals where the strength stays less than a definite number for a definite time.

To process the guitar recording taken from the "Guitar Recital" album by Dmitris Regginos, I am first using a low-pass filter with variable cut-off frequency, which related to the fundamental pitch in that instant. I am using Miller Puckette's [fiddle~](#) to get the instantaneous pitch in Max/MSP. On top of the original guitar audio, I recorded the downsampled, filtered versions audio and also passed the filtered audio through amplitude modulation and absolute distortion.

I have used Protools as the mixing environment. I have manually mixed and panned the samples and the guitar recordings so they would match the progression I envisioned for the piece. I have taken the samples from [freesound](#) and the speeches of the political figures from Youtube.

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## **Speeches in "a Reproduction of La Espiral Eterna"**

### **Subcomandante Marcos:**

In the piece: 0:00 - 1:23, 5:48 - 7:06

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxRDwA9SXbw>

Transcribed in the video.

### **Obama:**

In the piece: 3:10 - 3:41

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwJPOfIQKwA> 10:04 - 10:39

We often seek advantage over others. We cling to outworn prejudice and fear those who are unfamiliar. Too many of us view life only through the lens of immediate self-interest and crass materialism; in which the world is necessarily a zero-sum game. The strong too often dominate the weak, and too many of those with wealth and power find all manner of justification for their own privilege in the face of poverty and injustice.

### **Trocki:**

In the piece: 3:16 - 3:40

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xv--EVbmMys&NR=1> 1:27 - 1:38, 2:44 - 2:57

This trials developed not from communism, not from socialism, but from Stalinism, that is from the irresponsible despotism of bureaucracy over the people.

... A counter-trial is necessary, to cleanse the atmosphere of the germs of the deceit, colony(?!), falsification and frame-ups whose source is Stalin's police.

**Mandela:**

*In the piece:* 3:21 - 3:34

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5s8xkjG8bx4&feature=related> 2:33 - 2:54

*i have committed myself to the promotion of peace of the country but i've done so as part and basal of the decisions and campaigns which have been taken and launched by ANC.*

**Morales:**

*In the piece:* 4:56 - 5:15

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fzn4cfuugzY&feature=related> 4:58 - 5:16

*(Our brothers and sisters did not come to take)... hectares of land or mines, they only come to improve their economic situation. Moreover when they're affected by these climate change how is it possible they'll be expelled from Europe.*

**Kenan Evren:**

*In the piece:* 3:31 - 3:41

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMIvLW7ijZs> 0:05 - 0:32

*The armed forces had to take over the government to put the democracy, which cannot control itself, on a firm ground.*

*"Silahli kuvvetler kendi kendini kontrol edemeyen demokrasiyi saglam temeller uzerine oturtmak icun yonetime el koymak zorunda kalmistir."*

**Dalai Lama:**

*In the piece:* 3:35 - 3:46

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3wHx4NLHzE> 8:06 - 8:18

*I jokingly tell people now today people from China is something very wonderful led by communist party without a communist ideology.*

**Truman**

*In the piece:* 3:42 - 3:47

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POPmlHlaOtM&feature=related> 0:01 - 0:06

*The first atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima, a military base.*

**Netanyahu:**

*In the piece:* 3:44 - 3:49

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNcZNpW2ngo&feature=related> 1:27 - 1:37

*Responsible governments do not give immunity to terrorists simply because they hide among civilians, you try to minimize civilian casualties.*

**Ahmedinejat:**

*In the piece:* 3:49 - 3:51

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-sC26wpUGQ> 0:11 - 0:13

*In Iran, we don't have homosexuals.*

**Gandhi:**

*In the piece:* 4:04 - 4:22

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSWzFz-tGrM> 2:45 - 3:04

*in the midst of death life persists. In the midst of untruth truth persists. In the midst of darkness light persists. Hence god is life, truth, light/ He is love. He is the supreme good.*

**Dalai Lama:**

*In the piece: 4:21 - 4:33*

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3wHx4NLH7E> 8:36 - 8:52

*Important is society, people, yourself. So you should act according to oneness of humanity and sense of group responsibility, sense of community.*

**Martin Luther King:**

*In the piece: 4:32 - 4:47*

Source: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUP\\_ISA030c&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUP_ISA030c&feature=related) 0:00 - 0:18

*I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."*