

# FREE / FIXED complementarity

## fixed

—in the most limited, specific sense—**what is written down or notated**—like any kind of notation, be it old or new musical notation, a language script, or type of mathematics, etc. But in the more general sense fixed means **conditioned by the past or some form of memory.**

Because notation of any form is always a projection of the known, and because it is always an abstraction based on thought, it can only in a limited way represent the concrete, actual living movement it is abstracted from, or represents. Without the essential "free part" of the complementarity, the fixed or notated part tends to wander off on its own, or worse, be broken apart.



## free

—in the most limited, specific sense—**not written down or notated**—like improvised graces around a given melodic pattern, or filling in the harmonic counterpoint of a figured bass, or playing patterned riffs above chord changes, etc.

But in the much more general sense—**not conditioned by the past or memory.**

Ultimately, real perception is listening "free of the map or notation," undivided, not conditioned by the known. Notice, that all one can say about this is **WHAT IT IS NOT.**

In other words, we only know when it is NOT there. This isn't as mysterious as it sounds. It's similar to how we only know about perfect balance in skiing

**when we lose it;** Or, we focus on intonation only when **a note is NOT** in tune.

Otherwise, there's just the **undivided movement** of skiing, or playing.

The loss of *free / fixed complementarity* is a feature of Western culture generally, so it's not surprising that this is the case in the Arts as well.

**fragmentation**—or a 'breaking apart' of a natural, cyclical, back & forth

At the same time, it's not possible to say, "Well, let's be free." That would be simply more illusory projection of thought, which caused the fragmentation in the first place. What we need is a new kind of **self-awareness of "thought in function,"** as a form of music specific meditation, that might lead to a new kind of "truth in function" of in notation.