

## Vox

*N.Baker*

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This is about telephone sex. Two strangers hooked up on phone to exchange erotically charged material. It can be done in many different ways at many different levels. The supposedly most common and vulgar way is to simply exchange obscenities, as in a mutually consenting heavy-breathing call. But for intellectuals that is not enough, the important thing is the road itself, not the goal, although without the goal, the road would not be interesting. The purpose of a goal is to supply illumination. Not less not more. Thus subtle eroticism acquires its allure only obliquely, by hinting and thus stimulating the imagination by exercising it.

Baker is the perfect practitioner of that craft paying meticulous attention to details, not to prove points, but in fact to provide the whole point. As in a dialog by Plato, to put a fancy gloss on what after all is but a trivial exercise, there are digressions within digressions. The main thing is that the approach is slow with a few dead-ends and restarts to keep up the suspense. What will it all lead up to? As opposed to 'Fermata' there is not much of explicit depiction, and as in the case of that book, the emphasis is on masturbatory activity, in fact even the regular intercourse is presented more as shared masturbation as anything else. This might make sense, as the former is more of a wholesome activity, where the sex and the genitals only play ancillary roles, after all regular intercourse can have an ulterior purpose namely procreation thus going beyond itself, while masturbation is a solitary activity, even when shared, with no purpose beyond itself and with an obsessive attention to the sex and the genital, with the final orgasm an unwanted termination and thus ideally to be indefinitely postponed, just as death, but without it as meaningless as immortality. Thus if taking similes literally, the goal of life is death, but the latter is not part of life itself only providing the illumination without which the road of life would be invisible and peter out in meaningless procrastinatory activity. Death is the torch that keeps us on our toes. In the same way the concluding orgasm of a masturbatory session is not part of it at all, without this to look forward to, the exercise would be pointless.

There is a mutual orgasm in the end. And after that the feeling of great emptiness, as opposed in a regular session of mutual intercourse. There is a good-bye an abrupt hanging up and, one presumes, total forgetfulness (although to be honest, the recollections of past sessions become stimulating assets in forthcoming ones, but maybe because they all were flawed and somehow incomplete). Thus the perfect session is an end in itself and can be totally obliterated in memory having served its purpose in its allotted time, no longer part of life. In fact can the masturbatory, or more generally the non-procreative exchange, be seen as taken place outside of time and of life, a perversion with only a tenuous connection to reality of which you take temporary leave, engaging in the most irrational of acts, in fact succumbing to momentary insanity.

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