

SOURCE <http://cec.concordia.ca/econtact/Figures/McFarlane.html>

eContact! 7.3

Glenn Gould, Jean Le Moyne, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: Common Visionaries

By Matthew McFarlane

First appeared in the GlennGould Magazine, Volume 8, Number 2
(<http://www.glenn Gould.ca/magazine/8.2.2002.html>)

Matthew McFarlane is a freelance journalist from Montreal. He received a B.Mus. in performance (cello), an M.A. in musicology from McGill University and a Graduate Degree from Concordia University. He adapted the present article from one of two non-thesis papers he wrote in partial fulfillment of the latter degree. Like Glenn Gould, he has done a variety of work, including documentaries, for CBC Radio One and Radio Two. He is currently associate producer with CBC Radio 2 in Vancouver where he works for the CBC Radio Orchestra and the regional show Westcoast Performance.

Glenn Gould has been heralded as one of the most brilliant pianists of the twentieth century, and is famous for his enigmatic character, but what many scholars fail to address is that he was also a gifted and imaginative radio producer. The finest and most carefully crafted examples of his radio art are the three documentaries, all created for broadcast by the CBC, known as his Solitude Trilogy: *The Idea of North* (1967), *The Latecomers* (1969), and *The Quiet in the Land* (1977). In the last of these documentaries, Gould's exploitation and manipulation of the voices of his human subjects creates extraordinary contrapuntal textures; moreover, his choice of topic, an isolated Mennonite community in Manitoba, provides interesting insight into his own ideas about spirituality. Already well known for the technical manipulations of his recordings, he was criticized harshly by some for betraying his subjects by piecing together fragments of their conversations to create pseudo-fictional characters. Controversy aside, this technique, now commonplace, gives us some idea as to how Gould may have felt about the Mennonite community, and reveals his own spiritual and philosophical inclinations. In radio as in his recordings, he had no qualms about using technology to help create what he could not otherwise achieve, and thereby transcending the boundaries of reality.

In his radio broadcasts, Gould interviewed interesting personalities both musical and otherwise. One such figure, known to have influenced him, was the Quebec theologian and theorist Jean Le Moyne (1913-96), whose ideas he first discussed in a 1968 CBC radio program. Le Moyne, echoing the theories of the French theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), praised the growing network of machinery in all facets of society in the 1960s. He anticipated that, in time, all machines would be so interconnected that they would eventually be regarded as individual components of a larger mechanical organism. This concept (foreseeing, among other things, the Internet) corresponds perfectly with Teilhard's ideas about the unity of machinery and spirituality—and there are countless such parallels between the two men's work. Gould, whose musical and radio works demonstrated the growing capabilities of technology, never made any direct references to Teilhard, but he was certainly familiar with Teilhard's writing, and Elizabeth Angilette already noted this connection in her 1992 book *Philosopher at the Keyboard: Glenn Gould*. Furthermore, Gould put Teilhard's principles into practice by pushing the technological limits of radio and the listening capabilities of its audience.

Born in Montreal, Le Moyne obtained a bachelor's degree from the Collège Sainte-Marie, in 1933. He became interested in Christian thought and travelled throughout Europe researching contemporary Catholic philosophy. He worked for Montreal's largest daily newspaper, *La Presse*, for Radio-Canada (the French-language equivalent of the CBC), and for the National Film Board of Canada. He entered public life in 1969 as a member of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's cabinet, and was named to the Canadian Senate in 1982.

Gould did not say when he first met Jean Le Moyne or first encountered his work, though Vincent Tovell noted, in a recent interview, that it was Le Moyne who first approached Gould. As Tovell recalled, Le Moyne was flying into Toronto sometime in the early 1960s (ca. 1962? WHY? CBC?) and had expressed a desire to meet Gould, whose musical and technological proclivities were already well known. Tovell picked up Le Moyne at the

airport and delivered him to Gould's apartment (ON ST. CLAIR??); the friendship that resulted was to have a large influence on Gould's life. He and Le Moyne were both recipients of the Canada Council's Molson Prize in 1968, and in November of that year Gould used an interview with Le Moyne in a radio program for the CBC series *Sunday Supplement*, a program dealing with issues raised by the recent release of the synthesizer performer Walter Carlos's *Switched-On Bach* album. (The program's producer, Janet Somerville, conducted the interview in Montreal, though she used questions written out in advance by Gould.) Gould based much of the interview on subjects raised in Le Moyne's book *Convergence*, a collection of essays first published in French, as *Convergences*, in 1962, in English in 1966. Gould referred often to *Convergence* in later years—for instance, in a 1976 interview with Bruno Monsaiegeon on the subject of Mozart.

Le Moyne's theory of the "charity of the machine" originated in the thinking of Teilhard de Chardin. In a chapter entitled "Teilhard, or the Reconciliation," in *Convergence*, Le Moyne, at first shocked by Teilhard's new ideas, later sees them as liberating and breathtaking:

At first an alert sounded on the heresy-detector and jangled through the reactionary warning system. The inevitable resistance of habit and of scholastic security suddenly stiffening under threat. The shock of semi-scandal. But also an irrepressible fascination, tempting to the highest degree. And soon the prolonged dizziness of liberation and joy. At last the Incarnation permeating the entire universe and perfectly containing us! Finally, Easter and Ascension, finally Pentecost and its time, our time!

Convergence and the *Sunday Supplement* interview doubtless influenced many of Gould's ideas on technology, and perhaps Le Moyne sparked an interest in Teilhard's writing. The collection of books that was in Gould's possession at the time of his death showed a more than indifferent interest in Teilhard's writing. He had six of Teilhard's books: *Letters from a Traveller* (first published in French, as *Lettres de voyage*, in 1956/first published in English in 1962), *The Divine Milieu* (*Le milieu divin*, 1957/1960), *The Future of Man* (*L'avenir de l'homme*, 1959/1964), *The Phenomenon of Man* (*Le phénomène humain*, 1955/1959), *Hymn of the Universe* (*Hymne de l'univers*, 1961/1965), and *Science and Christ* (*Science et Christ*, 1965/1965). As well, he owned the 1969 English edition of Bernard Delfgaauw's *Evolution: The Theory of Teilhard de Chardin*. Though Gould never specifically mentions Teilhard, it seems all too likely that Teilhard's writings had a profound impact on his life and, in particular, on his radio documentaries.

In the remainder of this article, I examine *The Quiet in the Land* in the context of Gould's musical and extra-musical activities and writings, with the ultimate goal of revealing technological and spiritual parallels in the thought of Gould, Le Moyne, and Teilhard de Chardin.

*

In 1967, Gould was commissioned by the CBC radio series *Ideas* to create a documentary to commemorate the centennial of Canada's Confederation, and he responded with *The Idea of North*, which dealt with a part of the nation that held a particular interest for him. The first part of the Solitude Trilogy was born, and with it Gould's first use of the advanced musical and mechanical techniques of what he called "contrapuntal radio." All three documentaries of the trilogy involve social groups living in isolation. *The Idea of North* was produced in mono sound, thus limiting Gould's ability to produce the sort of sonic effects that he would use in *The Latecomers* and *The Quiet in the Land*, both of which were produced in stereo. It should be noted that *The Idea of North* represented Gould's first semi-independent technical work in radio; he had written scripts for earlier documentaries, but had never before participated so completely in the editing process.

In *The Latecomers*, Gould's subject was the geographic and historically isolated island-province of Newfoundland. This second documentary allowed him to develop further his contrapuntal technique as well as his editing skills. He began to change the context of his characters' comments, actually isolating and realigning words to create alternative meanings, and he began sometimes to edit out idiosyncratic quirks in his characters' speech. While this procedure is now commonplace, in his day it was quite radical, and he commented on it in a conversation with the pianist Arthur Rubinstein published in 1971:

Well, we spent—this is no exaggeration—we spent three long weekends—Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, eight hours per day—doing nothing but removing "um"s and "uh"s, "sort of"s and "kind of"s, and righting the odd syntactical fluff in his material. We figured at one point we were making four edits of some kind in every typewritten line. There were thirty lines of double-spaced page, so that's a hundred and twenty edits per page. And there were fourteen pages of his testimony, so we made a conservative guess that there were sixteen hundred edits in that man's speech alone in order to make him sound lucid and fluid, which he now does. We made a new character out of him. You see, I don't really care how you do it. I don't think it's a moral issue. I don't think that kind of judgement enters into it.

Gould felt strongly that if technology facilitated the correction of human error one could employ it liberally. As he wrote in "Music and Technology," an article from 1974:

If, for instance, one stumbled into an interview with a character who said, "Well, like, man, I sorta don't wanna go out on a limb to, like, answer da question, you know, because, like, well, it

takes all kinds, you know, and, well, either you dig it or maybe not, am I right? But like man, if I were to give a real conclusive answer, I'd say that—well, could be, you know." If he said that, it might be tempting not to cut it, to keep it intact as a portrait. If, however, one happened to deduce that what he was really saying was "To be or—like, uh—not to be," and those words were bound within that quote, then I really think that "like, uh" should go.

Here, Gould's editing philosophy clearly implies that he finds it acceptable to edit personal interviews as long as the fundamental opinion of the subject remains intact. Nevertheless, his theories do not correspond with practice in *The Quiet in the Land*, where he boldly alters his subjects' meaning. Bradley Lehman, reviewing the documentary for the January 1997 edition of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, brought to light the controversy Gould's technique caused: many of those who participated felt that he had misrepresented their opinions. Gould went as far as to fabricate fictional conversations between his subjects, giving the impression that he is reporting factually on an interview with a Mennonite group when in reality he has constructed the dialogue himself.

Gould's creation of a false sense of dialogue between his subjects is most advanced in *The Quiet in the Land*, which, as Geoffrey Payzant wrote, in *Glenn Gould, Music and Mind*,

contains some of the most felicitous of these techniques, including several "imitations" in the strict musical sense, where words in one voice are echoed by another voice in a carefully measured interval of time, in another register and tone-quality. In this work Gould seems to have solved problems of combining complexity with clarity which were unsolved in earlier documentaries.

According to the outraged testimony of his participants, there is little doubt that Gould took tremendous liberties with the material of his interviews. But controversy and morality aside, what he created offers far more insight into his own spiritual vision than it would have if he had followed the processes of a traditional documentary.

Among Gould's papers in the Music Division of the National Library of Canada is a "score" for *The Quiet in the Land*, a transcript of the whole documentary, complete with detailed notes on musical examples, sound effects, and editing. (This "score," which differs only slightly from the finished program, is dated 1975, by which time the documentary was largely finished; only because of what Gould called "bureaucratic entanglements" involving the CBC was the première delayed until 1977.) This amazing document provides tremendous insight into the technical, aesthetic, and structural qualities of this documentary. According to his colleagues at the CBC, Gould thought of his radio documentaries as permanent products that would survive to be replayed and studied long after their initial broadcast; in other words, he apparently conceived them for an ideal audience, not for the usual target audience of a radio broadcast, the one-time listener. Still, he could not assume that his audience would someday be able to listen to *The Quiet in the Land* with a "score," or study and replay a recording of the work in order to understand it better. Certainly there are many details in this work that are difficult to notice without the "score" in hand, though Gould was always supremely confident in his ideal audience. Defending his use of counterpoint in his radio documentaries, he told John Jessop, in an interview published in 1971 as "Radio as Music," that "the average person can take in and respond to far more information than we allot him on most occasions."

In order to gather material for the final instalment of his Solitude Trilogy, Gould travelled to Manitoba for two weeks in the summer of 1971, following his favourite highway along the lonely and rugged North Shore of Lake Superior. He spoke with nine members of Winnipeg's Mennonite community. (In the fall of 1972, he also taped the sounds of two traditional Mennonite services—one in English, one in German—at the Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, in Waterloo, Ontario.) At the National Library of Canada, I was able to locate some of the original interview material for *The Quiet in the Land*, including a set of interview questions that Gould wrote out by hand on blank telegram forms from CNCP Telecommunications. He posed fifteen religious and non-religious questions to his subjects, and I was struck that he was more concerned with broad, philosophically based issues than with the motivations of the Winnipeg Mennonite community. The following questions particularly interested me:

1. The Power of Fantasy: Does it bring one to a visualisation of the ideal world, or does it simply distort the "real" world we know and with which we must deal.
3. Do trends, op, pg, etc. sometimes simply represent the triumph of process at the expense of content
6. Is art best produced in a state of removal from the world—restaurant, lounge-car psych.
7. Knowledge of the world: does it impede or stimulate.

Ironically, these are all questions that I would have taken pleasure in asking Gould himself. For example, it is interesting to contemplate what he would have felt about the first question, as he lived in a fantasy world of his own creation. He led a reclusive, almost eremitic existence, and the closed and ascetic nature of the Mennonite community probably attracted him. The third question seemed to spark a discussion among the subjects about television and its effects on the community, and no doubt this would have been interesting to Gould,

considering his own relationship with radio and television and his reliance on the telephone. (Furthermore, he was well aware of the ideas of Marshall McLuhan, though he was both attracted and repelled by them.) Gould was interested in the progress of communication technology and the Mennonite community may have echoed many of his concerns.

The sixth and seventh questions are imbued with a sense of the autobiographical: they are aimed at creators of art, and read as if Gould were interviewing himself rather than Mennonites. He was looking for opposing opinions from his subjects, because he wanted to create within the documentary an intellectual debate reflecting his personal concerns. In "Radio as Music" he was asked whether his documentaries were autobiographical, and his answer was elusive: "They are as close to an autobiographical statement as I tend to get." This remark can be understood as a positive assertion that he embedded many of his own feelings and beliefs in his radio documentaries, specifically *The Quiet in the Land*. Gould obviously felt a great deal of empathy with the Mennonite community: "You value isolation in direct relationship to the degree in which it is forced to combat infringement of community." I wonder whether his comment was not only in sympathy with the Mennonites' isolation but a reflection of his own predilection for a hermit's lifestyle?

For the Mennonites, solitude lies in religious affiliation. All three documentaries of the Solitude Trilogy deal with an aspect of spirituality, a oneness with nature, but *The Quiet in the Land* is the only one that specifically addresses issues of solitude in conjunction with an organized religion. It also tackles the divergent opinions within the Mennonite community, playing those who favour conservatism and isolationism against those who are more liberal and prefer a greater integration with the general society.

*

The Quiet in the Land comprises a prologue and five scenes, and, as in *The Latecomers*, Gould dispenses entirely with a host's narration, thus allowing himself more artistic freedom. The Prologue functions as an introduction both in the geographic and thematic senses. It opens with the sound of someone approaching a church, and Gould's meticulous instructions for creating a sense of geographical space within the stereo spectrum are included in his "score":

In the interval between each auto bypass and during each interval subsequently, the spectator should become aware of effects 4 and 5 emanating from the extreme left. They should first be heard pianissimo as though from behind closed doors, and the traffic flow should be coordinated in such a way as to suggest that the road in question stands between the church and spectator.

(Effect 4 refers to "congregational ambience," Effect 5 to an "E Flat Major hymn from [the] English service.")

The church setting is established with a hymn followed by the introduction of Reverend Aaron Toews, a Mennonite minister, who represents the more conservative side of the Mennonite community. Here Toews describes his religious community's beliefs: "We believe in the teaching of the Lord, and in the teaching of the Apostles, and Paul said in his epistle to the Corinthians, 'you have to separate'." (All of my quotations from *The Quiet in the Land* are from Gould's own "score.") After our introduction to Toews we meet Professor Roy Vogt, and for the first time we hear one of Gould's simulated conversations, this one on the subject of separation. Vogt comments:

I think it still means something to them over there, whereas over here it would be just impossible to do anything of the kind, you know. And how important that is, would be very difficult to say, I guess. I never really felt the strong separation that people might think of when they think of Mennonites. In fact, I never really felt that I was separated from the rest of society, anyway.

At this point in the conversation, Gould introduces the first of two very different pieces of music that serve very different roles and add a level of intertextuality to the documentary: Janis Joplin's "Mercedes-Benz," from her 1971 album *Pearl*; and Bach's Suite for Unaccompanied Cello No. 4 in E-flat Major, as recorded by Pablo Casals. "Mercedes-Benz" is important historically, in that Joplin recorded it four days before her death from a drug overdose, on 4 October 1970. The song, in which she asks God for material goods—a Mercedes-Benz, a colour TV, "a night on the town"—is appropriate in the present context, as Gould is creating an environment in which his characters seem to converse about the influence of television and materialism on the Mennonite community. The Bach quotation, too, is filled with meaning, albeit of a very different kind.

Incidentally, all of the cello excerpts are drawn from the Sarabande of the Cello Suite No. 4—with one exception. The liner notes from CBC Records' 1992 release of the Solitude Trilogy describe this particularly puzzling exception as being from Bach's Cello Suite No. 5 in C Minor, but this is simply untrue. At first, I concluded that Gould had taken Casals' original recording of the Sarabande from No. 4 and, through some especially brilliant splicing, created an entirely new bit of "faux-Bach." Indeed, the words Howard Dyck utters just before this cello passage suggest as much: "And that's really what great art is all about, isn't it? I mean, that's what a fugue, ultimately, is all about—using, if you will, the techniques that the composer had at his disposal and making something of it which is really quite other-worldly." Later I learned that, for this one passage, Gould actually *composed* some Bachian music of his own, also in E-flat major, and hired the Toronto cellist Coenraad

Bloemendal to play it; in fact, Bloemendal recalled, in a recent interview, that Gould even instructed him to perform this little composition in a “Casalsian” style. Bloemendal performs this short passage marvellously, but I wonder why Gould felt that there was no appropriate excerpt of genuine Bach for this situation? I can imagine Gould might have been excited by such a challenge, and curious to see if anyone noticed, but perhaps his intent was more serious than that. (BASED ON E-flat-major SARABANDE??)

Joplin’s “Mercedes-Benz” and the *faux*-Bach cello material continue until the end of Prologue, which Gould brings to a close with the conclusion of the “Sarabande” from the Cello Suite No. 4. The complex web of meaning created by the interplay of these disparate musical examples is fascinating: the Joplin represents the ills of society, while the Bach represents the Mennonites’ conservatism even within a changing society. And yet, the juxtaposition of (what is meant to be) a non-religious Bach composition with Joplin’s evocation of God for material gain is subtly ironic. CHECK WITH RECORDING

The Prologue differs from the other scenes of *The Quiet in the Land* in that its musical structure is less apparent. All five scenes commence with the same two characters, Reverend David Neufeld and Professor Clarence Hiebert, who represent (like Toews and Vogt in the Prologue) the competing and conflicting religious and moral conceptions within the Mennonite community. Scene 1 offers an example of one of Gould’s rare editing mistakes. Hiebert says, “And yet, on the other hand, there are those who preach about breaking up the ghettos, as some of them would refer to the smaller villages and the towns, saying that one should not pile salt—that salt is meant to be *dispersed*.” (The italics in all quotations from the “score” are Gould’s own.) It is obvious that the word “ghettos” has been spliced into this sentence; you can hear a slight click before the word, and the intonation of the word does not correspond with the previous words. Since Gould was normally a perfectionist when it came to splicing out material he did not like, we may assume that this was a particularly challenging section to edit. This slight break in the verbal flow does, however, give us insight into how Gould spliced in order to modify the meaning of an interview subject’s comments.

In Scene 2, Gould creates a jazz-bar atmosphere using source material that includes a jazz band, the tinkling of glasses, and the murmur of conversations in the background. In this scene, Gould’s character’s discuss individual and communal restraint as a part of the Mennonite religious tradition, and the ambience of the jazz bar, representing a locus of debauchery, is pointedly juxtaposed with their words, imbuing the scene with a sense of irony and playfulness that simultaneously detracts from and enhances the import of the words. The moral conservatism of the participants makes this one conversation hardly suited to such a setting.

Another of Gould’s artificially constructed conversations begins when Mrs. Esther Horch comments, “For instance on a Sunday afternoon when most of my neighbours feel they ought to drive 90 miles to the lake, you know, to have fun, I think I’m having a much more satisfactory afternoon in my backyard, *reading a book*.” To which Mrs. Wanda Toews replies, “Well, I agree with you, I think that we Mennonites have frequently put emphasis too much on outward things and have lost the essence of our whole religious experience.” Simultaneously, Professor Vogt discusses the need for moderation among his Mennonite friends: while admitting that they have broken some of the rules by drinking and participating in games, he feels that as a group they are more moderate than his non-Mennonite friends. This statement would have certainly appealed to Gould’s own deep-seated conservatism.

I interpret the italics that Gould marked in his “score” as key passages in his subjects’ text as well as indicators for contrapuntal exchange; they also mark some of the conflicting comments of his subjects. For instance, in the jazz-bar scene, Professor Vogt discusses how many bottles of rye were needed for a Mennonite party as opposed to a non-Mennonite one, to which Mrs. Horch responds that “some people may need these kind of crutches.” Nevertheless, while some of the subjects seem to reject the jazz bar as too decadent or indulgent, Vogt suggests that Mennonites must begin to appreciate what others in the rest of society enjoy, thus facilitating Mennonite participation in a wider community.

Gould’s most famous technique in the documentaries was his use of speaking voices in counterpoint. In *The Quiet in the Land*, he usually employs no more than two voices at one time. The first three scenes predominantly feature just one voice, with the exception of the jazz-bar scene, which features two voices in conversation. Scene 4 is the pinnacle of the documentary, musically speaking. Here, everything is intensified: not only are four voices heard, but the conviction of his subjects’ opinions increases substantially. Bradley Lehman has commented on the sense of conflict in this particular scene, interpreting it as “Concern with others’ well-being; peace position; social concerns and politics; conflict.”

While preparing this article, I first listened to the documentary without the “score” and without supplementary descriptive or explanatory material. What struck me upon acquiring a copy of the “score” was that I had been missing out on many of the subjects’ words, because of the often complex contrapuntal textures. The inability to focus on certain subjects in the most complicated passages makes it difficult to understand how we should interpret Gould’s intention and motivations. Perhaps he assumed that most listeners would have ears as astute as his own and would therefore have no problem absorbing simultaneous conversations.

Scene 4, like the others, begins with two subjects, Father Neufeld and Professor Hiebert.

Neufeld's first words deal with Passover and the Last Supper, and he quotes Jesus: "How I have longed to eat this Passover with you." His quotation echoes similar comments by Hiebert, and Gould searches for unity in their statements. Below, I have underscored key phrases in both Neufeld's and Hiebert's comments. While the meaning of each statement differs, there is a clear correlation between the vocabulary that each man uses. In earlier scenes, Gould had edited and rewritten their conversations to force disagreement and debate between them; in this scene, however, he brings their ideas closer together.

Neufeld: Jesus lived in a time of conflict and it seems to me that there was an inevitableness that, in that context, one such as Jesus taking the position that he did, was bound to end in death.

Hiebert: It appears to me that the idea of the incarnation of Jesus—his coming to earth and being among people—is the newer and better understanding of what the ["in the world but not of the world concept is"]. It is not simply you know, do we have him on the road to heaven ...

The textual correspondences between the characters' voices continue in this scene. In previous scenes, Gould had understandably created artificial discourses between his characters to highlight conflicting opinions within the Mennonite community. But in Scene 4, I would argue, he attempts to set aside the differences among his subjects. So, rather than creating conflict here, he takes an aural photograph of the Winnipeg Mennonites as a community divided but remaining intact.

Because of its dense contrapuntal texture, one is forced to regard Scene 4 more as music than as documentary. Musically speaking, because of Gould's timing and his wonderful use of counterpoint, there develops a sense of aesthetic unity in which the individual voices merge to create a cohesive sound image. I would argue that Gould is attempting a kind of healing process among his subjects, stripping their conversations down to their most elemental words, and so, in a sense, trivializing their discrepancies. Clashes are erased—and with them, meaning. Gould creates beauty out of the ruptures within the Mennonite community; he brings the members of this community together, inventing harmony out of dissonance.

Howard Dyck's final words in Scene 4 demonstrate some of the universal concepts of the Mennonite community:

I think that the all embracing cause, of course, is brotherly love, as Christ taught, *and traditionally, this is what* Mennonites have tried to do. It can all be related to this if there is genuine concern for your fellow man. The questions become academic then—the question of causes—because there are simply obvious things to do. Whether it is a popular thing to do or not is not important. I've always been taught from earliest childhood not to throw papers on the streets because it's God's creation, that you're spoiling it if you do.

Neufeld's opening and Dyck's closing statements are the only ones in Scene 4 that do not occur simultaneously with the voices of other subjects, and this is more a reflection of Gould's contrapuntal and musical intentions than a statement about the characters' relative status within the Mennonite community. The scene is also important because it is the only one in the documentary in which comments from all of the participants are used.

*

Jean Le Moyne's writings reflect a conviction that humanity had reached a point where machines were going to connect all individuals together, and it is precisely this connection of humanity and machinery that Gould explores in Scene 4 of *The Quiet in the Land*. In the 1968 *Sunday Supplement* interview, Le Moyne, eerily predicted the advent of the Internet and networked machinery:

The network of machines and techniques that encompasses the earth is the ensemble of all the networks: the radio network, the television network, the oil network, the hydraulic network, the railroad network, telephone, telegraph, and all that. So that today it is almost impossible to consider a machine isolated from the rest. It is part of all the rest. So that there is only one machine in fact encompassing the earth. And this has a meaning: that machine, stemming from the activity of man, is between man and nature like a second nature, offering to us its mediation. We cannot go to nature now without going through the network.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin similarly believed that technology could be a part of a biological evolution. He produced a theory of humanity as a convergence of several elements, positing that humanity could be seen as one entity as opposed to several. He thought that our production-oriented relationship with the machinery we use was also part of the collective humanity. In *Activation of Energy (L'activation de l'énergie, 1963/1970)*, Teilhard wrote:

With hands we are in the domain of the machine; machines are discovered by the individual; the tool is handed on from the individual to the group. Then there appears this machine-entity whose joint developments are so fully integrated that moral behaviour and the machine cannot progress divorced from one another.

Teilhard argued that the individual alone would be unable to understand all of technology and its capabilities but that, as a group, humanity could develop and utilize it. For him, modern communication was remarkable because it changed the way we interact with each other. He points out that the only biological difference between humanity and technology is the artificiality of what has been produced:

Technology has a role that is biological in the strict sense of the word: it has every right to be included in the scheme of nature. From this point of view ... there ceases to be any distinction between the artificial and the natural, between technology and life, since all organisms are the result of invention; if there is any difference, the advantage is on the side of the artificial.

This relates well to Gould's practice of editing. In Teilhard's sense, Gould was not misrepresenting the subjects he interviewed, but rather was using their source material to create new characters who, thanks to the possibilities of technology, were more interesting and more engaging than the original subjects had been. The mediation of technology, he once wrote, "could transcend the frailty of nature and concentrate on a vision of the ideal."

In *Toward the Future (Les directions de l'avenir, 1973/1975)*, Teilhard envisioned that the omega-point of our existence was the evolution and integration of technology and humanity—what he called the "probability of a critical point of ultra-reflection ahead of us." He predicted a new human—what he called the "ultra-human"—through a marriage of humanity and machine. In some senses, this is what Gould was able to create: through a technological process—editing—he was able to bend his subjects to conform to his own vision, and to help create a multi-faceted approach to listening.

In *The Future of Man*, Teilhard argued that machines are not only useful and helpful but create, in human beings, a sixth sense:

What has really let loose the Machine in the world, and for good, is that it both facilitates and indefinitely multiplies our activities. Not only does it relieve us mechanically of a crushing weight of physical and mental labour; but by the miraculous enhancing of our senses, through its powers of enlargement, penetration, and exact measurement, it constantly increases the scope and clarity of our perceptions. It fulfils the dream of all living creatures by satisfying our instinctive craving for the maximum of consciousness with a minimum of effort! Having embarked upon so profitable a path, how can Mankind fail to pursue it?

Without knowing it, and influenced by Le Moyne's devotion to Teilhard de Chardin's work, Gould became a living example of what Teilhard described. In his documentaries, he created something that had never been heard before, something that challenged his listeners' senses. In his liner notes for CBC Learning System's 1971 LP release of *The Idea of North*, he wrote, of his controversial contrapuntal scenes:

The point about these scenes, I think, is that they test, in a sense, the degree to which one can listen simultaneously to more than one conversation or vocal impression. It's perfectly true that in that dining-car scene not every word is going to be audible, but then by no means every syllable in the final fugue from Verdi's *Falstaff* is, either, when it comes to that. Yet few opera composers have been deterred from utilising trios, quartets, or quintets by the knowledge that only a portion of the words they set to music will be accessible to the listener—most composers being concerned primarily about the totality of the structure, the play of consonance and dissonance between the voices—and, quite apart from the fact that I do believe most of us are capable of a much more substantial information intake than we give ourselves credit for, I would like to think that these scenes can be listened to in very much the same way that you'd attend the *Falstaff* fugue.

Gould claimed to have first realized the power of technology over music when as a young boy, he was practicing and the housekeeper came into the room and turned on a vacuum cleaner, with the surprising result that he was then able to play a passage that, until then, had given him trouble. CHECK Recalling Teilhard's unity of human and machine, this incident suggested to Gould that "a certain mechanical process could indeed come between myself and the work of art that I was involved with."

His first professional experience with recording was on Christmas Eve 1950, when he made his first radio broadcast for the CBC. While many musicians have always found the experience of recording technology to be foreign and alienating, Gould always felt very positive about the process. In his 1971 conversation with Arthur Rubinstein, he commented, with reference to Le Moyne's notion of the "charity of the machine," that the recording process is

not there to hurt people, to hinder them, to impede them, to get in the way of human contact. It is there to speed it, to make it more direct and more immediate, and to remove people from the very things—the self-conscious things, the competitive things—that are detrimental to society in fact. I believe in that idea. I believe that technology is a charitable enterprise; that when one makes a recording, as you did with the F-minor [piano quintet by] Brahms, you are influencing not only many more people numerically than you could perhaps in a concert, but influencing them forever.

This is very similar to ideas about technology expressed in Teilhard de Chardin's work. In *Activation of Energy*, he wrote that "there appears this machine-entity whose joint developments are so fully integrated that moral behaviour and the machine cannot progress divorced from one another."

Many people criticized Gould in his day. They felt that his recording process was unethical, that it alienated the listener from what should be a "true" musical experience; they also argued that, because of the editing, recordings were noticeably "mechanical." To disprove this, Gould conducted a series of experiments in which he asked groups of musicians,

technicians, and laypeople to identify where splices were located in his recordings and how many were in each example. The highest guessing percentage was just 3.4 percent, a result he attributed to a “Battleship” phenomenon—referring to the popular two-person board game in which each player guesses the position of his opponent’s battleship. (Gould reported these findings in his 1975 article “The Grass Is Always Greener in the Outtakes: An Experiment in Listening.”)

One of Gould’s favourite examples of editing involved the A-minor fugue from Book I of Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*. After recording the fugue, in 1965, he discovered that no one take was completely satisfactory, but that, by intercutting between two different takes, he could create an ideal performance—a performance that was impossible to recreate outside of a recording studio. In this case, Gould was serving as both performer and technician, and in his 1966 article “The Prospects of Recording” he foresaw that the performer’s technical ability to edit his own recordings would someday be transferred to the listener, creating a more critical listening public able to choose what and how they wanted to listen:

At the centre of the technological debate, then, is a new kind of listener—a listener more participant in the musical experience. The emergence of this mid-twentieth-century phenomenon is the greatest achievement of the record industry. For this listener is no longer passively analytical; he is an associate whose tastes, preferences, and inclinations even now alter peripherally the experiences to which he gives his attention, and upon whose fuller participation the future of the art of music waits.

In some respects, Gould’s predictions and hopes about a “new listener” are beginning to come true today.

Gould used the radio medium to achieve a sense of musical and artistic ecstasy. In a 1962 article, “Let’s Ban Applause!,” he wrote:

The purpose of art is not the release of a momentary ejection of adrenaline but is, rather, the gradual, life-long construction of a state of wonder and serenity. Through the ministrations of radio and the phonograph, we are rapidly and quite properly learning to appreciate the elements of aesthetic narcissism—and I use that word in its best sense—and are awakening to the challenge that each man contemplatively create his own divinity.

Geoffrey Payzant defines ecstasy, for Gould, as “a delicate thread binding together music, performance, performer and listener in a web of shared awareness of *innerness*.” Similarly, Teilhard de Chardin, in *Toward the Future*, described the same feeling as “human energy.” He wrote:

In the first place, so far as I understand art, it is a universal perfection which appears as a luminous fringe around every form in which the vital is realized, as soon as the realization attains the perfection of its expression. There is a supreme art in the fish, the bird, the antelope.

In man however, art, true art, becomes something more than this. It ceases to be a fringe and becomes an object, something endowed with a special life. It becomes individualised; and it then appears in the world as the form assumed in the world by that particular exuberance of energy, released from matter, which characterizes mankind.

Teilhard is suggesting that art comes first, that the development of scientific thought originates in artistic creation. He asked, “Is art simply a sort of expenditure and dissipation, an escape of human energy? Its characteristic being, as is sometimes said, that it serves no purpose? Or is the contrary true, that this apparent uselessness hides the secret of its practical efficiency?” He felt that the artist, because of his ability to ignore science, rationality and practicality could create items that pushed the human mind. Art’s role in human thought was to create and to inspire: “In short, art represents the area of furthest advance around man’s growing energy, the area in which nascent truths condense, take on their first form, and become animate, before they are definitively formulated and assimilated.”

Teilhard believed that humanity was continuing to evolve both in a physical and a spiritual sense. Eventually, humanity would achieve a point in which there would be widespread global consciousness, because, he said, “the human mind is continually rising up collectively—collectively, because of the links forged by technology—to the appreciation of new dimensions.” This linkage of humanity and technology would eventually spur the creation of the “ultra-human” through a gradual evolution (or not so gradual, as we have begun to see) that he called “Noogenesis.” Alongside Noogenesis, Teilhard further envisioned the evolution of what he called the “Noosphere” (a term now commonly accepted in English). The Noosphere represents collective human knowledge accumulated in a above the earth, a ring of human consciousness that grows alongside our biological integration with technology: the evolution of machinery allows the Noosphere to grow and develop and be used more properly. In *The Phenomenon of Man*, Teilhard writes:

The recognition and isolation of a new era in evolution, the era of Noogenesis, obliges us to distinguish correlatively a support proportionate to the operation—that is to say, yet another membrane in the majestic assembly of telluric layers. A glow ripples outward from the first spark of conscious reflection. The point of ignition grows larger. The fire spreads in ever widening circles till finally the whole planet is covered with incandescence. Only one interpretation, only one name can be found worthy of this grand phenomenon. Much more coherent and just as extensive as any preceding layer, it is really a new layer, the “thinking layer,” which, since its

germination at the end of the Tertiary period, has spread over and above the world of plants and animals. In other words, outside and above the biosphere there is the Noosphere.

Teilhard's Noosphere is a Utopian vision that Gould would have understood perfectly. In "Music and Technology," Gould wrote:

Morality, it seems to me, has never been on the side of the carnivore—at least not when alternative life-styles are available. And evolution, which is really the biological rejection of inadequate moral systems—and particularly the evolution of man in response to his technology—has been anticarnivorous to the extent that, step by step, it has enabled him to operate at increasing distances from, to be increasingly out of touch with, his animal response to confrontation.

The technological theorist Erik Davis, in his 1998 book *Techgnosis: Myth, Magic, and Mysticism in the Age of Information*, explains the importance of Teilhard as we approach a growing union with technology, through the Internet and through what he describes as a new feeling of spirituality:

Teilhard's work must be seen as a visionary response to one of the most pressing existential needs in twentieth-century thought: to find in the sloppy mechanics of evolution a positive basis for human life, some cosmic pattern or pulse that might enable us to see ourselves, our minds and cultures, as more than blind flukes doomed to bow down before the entropic second law.

Gould's contrapuntal radio works reflect Teilhard's vision of networked machines, and can be seen as prototypes for processes more widely permitted by the current digital technologies. By editing and organizing his subjects' comments and ideas as he saw fit, Gould was, in effect, creating musical collages in which the collective knowledge was greater than the sum of its parts. In a sense, this sort of thing is routinely possible today through the Internet, on which music is often posted and then re-mixed by individuals at home, on their PCs. With the development and flexibility of music becoming easier and easier, especially with the MP3 format, Gould's vision of an era of the "new listener" has in fact arrived.

Glenn Gould commented that he developed his contrapuntal radio documentaries in part because "It seems to me terribly important to encourage a type of listener who will not think in terms of precedence, in terms of priority, and collage is one way in which to do it." As on the Internet, there is a sense of information overload in Gould's documentaries: the average listener cannot grasp all of the material it hears. Radio, just by its process of global dissemination resembles Teilhard's noosphere. Gould's radio works resemble a mass of knowledge and ideas as well. There is so much material in Gould's documentaries, that they become overwhelming. In the end, they transcend radio (in its traditional form) and become something else altogether. Formally, they can be considered music, but the meaning imbedded within suggests a more complex union of art and idea. Gould believed that radio as well as all technological tools, should perform a larger task besides providing information. In "Music and Technology," Gould wrote:

Technology in my view, is not primarily a conveyor belt for the dissemination of information. ... For technology should not, in my view, be treated as a noncommittal, noncommitted voyeur; its capacity for dissection, for analysis—above all, perhaps for the idealisation of an impression—must be exploited.

A program like *The Quiet in the Land* stands, in Gould's words, as "a metaphoric comment and not as a factual documentary." Though the documentaries of the trilogy deal metaphorically with solitude, they simultaneously speak of a tremendous need to reach out and touch other people. In fact, Gould's subjects, and his own life, stand in stark contrast to the very medium in which he undertook his most personal form of expression: with radio, historically the first instance of collective human consciousness aided by technology, Gould was reaching out to the community around him.

In *The Quiet in the Land*, Gould created a work that through the use of technology, the contrapuntal style, and the creation of technologically fictionalized characters, independent from the original subjects, becomes not a documentary but an aesthetic experience. Gould commented that each man create his or her own divinity. His subjects' generally conservative and profound beliefs allowed Gould to create through radio his own concept of spirituality. Through the alteration of their spoken text, the process of creating false dialogues and the contrapuntal nature of the documentary (which sometimes is largely intelligible save for important words that he highlighted in his "score"), the work not only became a personal journey for Gould but also a journey into the collective consciousness of the Mennonite community.

In *Toward the Future*, Teilhard wrote: "The more the world is rationalised and mechanized the more it needs 'poets' as the ferment within its personality and its preservative." Gould's poetic vision of music continues to bewilder and fascinate music lovers today, but his radio works, all but forgotten when compared to his popularized recordings, provide a glimpse into the inner recesses of his mind.

(http://www.cbeshop.ca/CBC/shopping/product.aspx?Product_ID=2003-3&Variant_ID=PSCD+2003-3&lang=en-CA)
and the Gould documentaries on Stokowski and Casals
(http://www.cbeshop.ca/CBC/shopping/product.aspx?Product_ID=2025-2&Variant_ID=PSCD+2025-2&lang=en-CA)
are available on CD from CBC Records

Biographie de Glenn Gould / Glenn Gould Biography
(<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=Q1ARTQ0001410>)
SOURCE: Encyclopedia of Music in Canada (<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>)