

His predicament was peculiar, and especially uncomfortable. Like any other improviser, he could do anything, anything at all, but unlike any other, he had a point of departure, in the form of a secret intention: to exchange those bad bills for good ones. His intention was not to improvise: on the contrary, improvising was what he had to do in order to fulfill his intention. Nevertheless, he had to have the intention to improvise as well, because everything we do, even incidentally, is done with an intention. But the secrecy of his prior intention necessarily contaminated this secondary one, so he had to hide his improvising, which, given the lack of time, meant improvising his hiding. What a headache! As if just improvising wasn't already hard enough! Pulling something out of nothing, straight after having pulled something different from the same teeming, variegated nothing . . . And so on, different every time, to keep it moving forward. Could there really be enough different things in the universe to fill up a lapse of time that was infinitely divisible? Some things could be repeated, of course, but always against a ground of difference. He had to create a series. The natural numbers provided an obvious model, but he couldn't really use them because a natural series of that kind is governed by reason, not improvisation. No one could claim to be "improvising" when counting from one to ten, or reciting the prime numbers. In improvisation one has to keep jumping from reason to unreason, creating the unexpected, and satisfying expectations with what would be expected to confound them. Who could embark on a task like that with any hope of success? Certainly not Varamo. Him least of all. As a public servant, he shrank in horror from hard work, and for him it was second nature to take the easy way out, by delegating where possible. He wondered if, in a case like this, with a biographical series, there might not be some procedure, an automatic mechanism that would generate the circumstance, and spare him the effort of searching for them.

-Varamo

By César Aira

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*