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silent sounds

playlist

Intro

Steffen Böhm and Attila Bruni

> You see half the moon, its crescent, and one of the planets, *maybe Saturn*, maybe Jupiter, in the early night sky over Berlin, *through the windows of a taxicab*, near Potsdamer Platz. You think: Beauty. No, this is not beauty, *maybe not*, maybe, this is the rest of it, *maybe not*, maybe, the rest of beauty, *maybe not*, maybe, what remains of beauty, *maybe not*, maybe, what is visible, *certainly*, uncertain. Your arms would not be able to stretch as far as necessary to form an adequate gesture for beauty. (*You know that*, don't you?) So, [ ] beauty remains in the impossibilities of the body. (Einstürzende Neubauten, 'Beauty', from the album *Silence is Sexy*, Mute, 2000)

In the year 2000 the German band Einstürzende Neubauten released an album called *Silence is Sexy*. For people who know the music of this band it is clear that they are anything but 'silent' (and 'well-behaved') members of society. Instead, their music is full of 'noise', produced on self-manufactured instruments that range from power drills to washing machines. Silence: an expression of sound, or even noise? Silent sound? A contradiction?

Maybe not.

Maybe.

[ ] (silence)

Perhaps for Einstürzende Neubauten 'silence' is not necessarily something that is silent. Maybe silence is something like 'beauty'. In their words, beauty cannot be named easily. Perhaps it is even unnameable. It cannot be simply put into words: one cannot 'form an adequate gesture for beauty'. Beauty is impossible. It has to 'remain in the impossibilities of the body'. Perhaps the same is true for silence.

Maybe not.

Maybe.

[ ] (silence)

So, how to express silence textually? Text is silent – in a way. But equally, the silence of a text can be anything but silent. Text can be screaming out loud. The silence of a text can produce a sound that says more than any (sonic) sound.

When Einstürzende Neubauten write "So, [ ] beauty remains in the impossibilities of the body," what does '[ ]' stand for? Is it perhaps an expression, a symbol, for silence? '[ ]' as a symbol of the unsymbolisable? But how does Blixa Bargeld, the lead singer of the band, express this textual symbol, '[ ]', with his voice? How to perform '[ ]'? How to express silence through sound? Sound: an expression of silence? The sound of silence? Another contradiction?

Maybe not.

Maybe.

[ ]

Awkward Silences

[ ]

[ ] (awkward silence)

Silence can produce awkward situations: Like, when nobody says anything. Or, someone 'plays' a piece of 'music', such as John Cage's *4'33"*, yet nothing can be heard − supposedly. (Has the Emperor got new clothes on; or is he perhaps completely naked?) What might also be somewhat awkward is when we, as editors of this (special) issue of *ephemera* on sound and silence, are not entirely sure what exactly we are on about.

[ ] (very awkward silence)

We are quite happy to admit that when we talk about sound and silence we are not entirely sure what it *is* we are actually talking *about*. This comes, perhaps, as a bit of a revelation, especially in a trade that constantly demands and promises concreteness, exactness and specificity. And are there not many good examples of how sound and silence can be and has been 'defined'? Can we not simply adopt one of these 'definitions' of sound and silence?

Take the recent special issue of the *Journal of Management Studies*,[1] which was dedicated to 'the dynamics of voice and silence in organizations'. As the editors state in their introduction, the special issue focuses "on the question of when and how people in organizational settings will *choose* voice and how and when they will *choose* silence."[2] Here sound and silence assume the roles of fairly discrete behaviours that one can consciously choose. For example, in the first article of that special issue readers will find an analysis of three types of silences and their parallel types of voices as well as various matrixes showing the consequences of the intersections of different types of

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1   Morrison, E.W. & F.J. Milliken (2003) 'Speaking Up, Remaining Silent: The Dynamics of Voice and Silence in Organizations', *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6).

2   'Speaking Up, Remaining Silent', 1353, emphases added.

voices and silence. Drawing on the idea of a 'spiral of silence', the second article makes propositions such as: "The more the climate of opinion within a workgroup is perceived as supportive of different sexual orientations, the less likely [gay and lesbian] individuals are to be silent about their sexual orientation as part of their personal identity."[3] Or, in one of the last articles, readers will discover that employees often do not voice their concerns to supervisors because they fear being labelled as troublemakers.[4]

'Giving Voice'

It seems that one of the ideas behind the *JMS* special issue is that silence is seen to be a (managerial) problem that needs to be overcome to facilitate change, innovation and development. An employee who is silent about certain issues is seen as somebody who does not fully contribute to the potentials of an organisation. Hence, the task of organisational leaders is to create an environment in which silence can be overcome and everybody can voice their individual concerns – and the task of the intellectual, it seems, is to help to 'give voice' to those people who remain silent.

'Giving voice' to forgotten, marginalised and silenced (groups of) people and constituencies of society can be, of course, an important political and ethical task. But, as some feminist and postcolonial theories have been highlighting for some time, is it not equally important to put the politics of 'giving voice' into question?

What about the politics of Freudian psychoanalysis, for example, which, one could perhaps argue, aims to uncover the hidden, unconscious, repressed truth of an individual? The task of the Freudian analyst, it seems, is to 'give voice' to the hidden sounds that have been silenced by the various repressions and traumas experienced by 'the subject'. But whose voice is being heard here? The subject's? The unconscious'? The analyst's? How do 'we' know that the other – such as 'the Iraqi people' – 'wants' to be heard? How do 'we' make sure that it is not 'us' who construct the 'subject' – such as 'Oriental people' – as a (colonial) object that 'we' lend 'our' voice to? How can one voice anything in the name of (essentialist notions of) 'us' or 'the other' and how does this 'voicing' silence, perhaps, other 'others'?

Interrupting Silence

One alternative to the strategy of 'giving voice' could be to simply remain silent. In the case of psychoanalysis, Lacan, for example, thought that to remain silent, to refuse to give the master-signifier (the dominant voice of 'the subject') what it wants, is one

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3   Bowen, F. & K. Blackmon (2003) 'Spirals of Silence: The Dynamic Effects of Diversity on Organizational Voice', *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6): 1403.

4   Milliken, F.J., E.W. Morrison and P.F. Hewlin (2003) 'An Exploratory Study of Employee Silence: Issues that Employees Don't Communicate Upward and Why', *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(6): 1453-1476.

strategy to interrupt and therefore question the reality of that very master-signifier. Remaining silent interrupts hegemonic voices and promises to give access to the Real: the silent, the unnameable, the unspeakable, the unconscious. But this is not only a listening to the voices and sounds of the silent Real; it is also a questioning of those forces that 'do the silencing'. That is, instead of uncovering the hidden and essentialist truth of the unconscious, one aims to expose that which renders something silent or unspeakable.

So, instead of 'giving voice' to someone, one remains silent and therefore fails to echo the voice of the master-signifier. The failure to hear its own echo potentially disrupts symbolic reality and exposes its lack. In this context, emancipation is maybe not an act of 'giving voice' to a marginal group of society, but an act of keeping silent, perhaps of being bored with the refrain of the social: Capital, War, Academia. Before anyone thinks that this is yet another 'postmodern' nihilism, it is important to point to the political possibilities of refusing to reproduce the language of the master. By refusing to reproduce the reality of the master-signifier, one opens possibilities of exposing the limits of the (hegemonic) other.

Maybe not.

Maybe.

Sounds and Silences

One might expect several things from an editorial introduction to a special issue: to be informed about its exact scope; to have the main concepts defined; and to be provided with a clear overview of the contributions. We are afraid that we have failed on all of these counts.

What we have tried to point to in this 'Intro' to 'silent sounds' is the (political and ethical) importance of not being too confident about the 'object' of our study here. 'Silence' and 'sound' are complex concepts that cannot be simply defined. One cannot 'find an adequate gesture' for them. We therefore see this issue as an exploration: a playful experiment that does not necessarily aim to give any precise answers, but first and foremost hopes to raise interesting questions.

This questioning began with the experience of the EGOS conference stream ('Silence is (not) Sexy: Organizing Sound and Silence'), which we organised together with Alessia Contu in Barcelona in the summer of 2002. At this conference a diverse but unique bunch of people gathered to discuss issues of sound and silence from a variety of perspectives: the sociology of work and organization, philosophy, psychoanalysis, music theory, cultural studies, to name but a few. But as conference organisers we also had the luck and pleasure to include a variety of artistic performances that engaged with the themes of sound and silence by using visual and sonic multimedia technologies. Overall one can say that this conference stream was a creative event that operated at the boundary between art, philosophy and science.

The Barcelona event provided us with a unique space for cross-fertilisation and contamination between fields of study and thought that are usually not brought together in an academic conference. This special issue of *ephemera* assembles some of the best contributions originally presented in Barcelona, which we hope will 'repeat' the cross-disciplinary excitement that was felt by most participants of the conference stream (differently).

Maybe not.

Maybe.

[ ]

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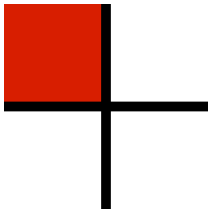
Sound Organisation: A Brief History of Psychosonic Management

J. Martin Corbett

abstract

This paper notes the ocularcentricism of mainstream organisational theory and calls for researchers to give an ear to the sound of organising practices. In a brief historical analysis the key role of sonic measurement and control in the development of such practices is discussed. Yet contemporary organisational research works within a strangely silent world. The paper concludes with an appeal to listen to, and engage with, this silence.

Prelude: A Call to Theoretical Indiscipline

Etymologists tell us that the word 'organisation' means 'to endow with organs'. Yet the history of organisation studies reveals an obsession with but one human sense organ: we work under the epistemological regime of the eye. This paper gently calls upon researchers to give an ear to the sound of organisational practice, to enter the realm of the psychosonic. For, as Jacques Attali argues,

> more than colours and forms, it is sounds and their arrangements that fashion societies. With noise is born disorder and its opposite: the world In noise can be read the codes of life, the relations among men… Any music, any organisation of sounds is then a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality. (1985: 6)

This paper explores the role of sound and hearing, and attempts at their codification and control, in the historical development of organising practices.

The paper is in three parts. The first argues that the development of Western organising practices relied heavily on the organisation and control of sound and silence. The second part addresses the question of why organisational studies have tended to 'overlook' this cultural process. The paper concludes with a consideration of what organisational studies might sound like were we to immerse ourselves in the auditive world of organisation.

Melody: The Organisation of Sound in Pre-Modern Times

Organising may be defined as an ordering activity which attempts to ensure that appropriate people and things congregate at an appropriate place at an appropriate time, in order to undertake appropriate actions (Latour, 1993). The word 'organisation' merely serves to suggest that such actions tend to be repeated in a more or less structured and unchanged form. Yet mainstream organisation studies have tended to concentrate much more on place than time, more on organisation than organising, more on stability than movement. This can lead to a certain degree of temporal amnesia insofar as we pay less attention to the provenance of organisational structures. They become part of everyday life and we easily forget that organisation depends on the negotiation of what constitutes an appropriate time and place for our activity. We tend to forget also that the history of social organising reveals a decidedly aural provenance: the bell.

Before the invention of the bell-ringing clock, timekeeping technologies (sundials and clepshydra) were known as *horologia*, a term derived from the Greek words *hora* (time) and *logos* (telling). For the ancient Greeks, time was linked to nature and to the movement of celestial bodies (hence 'horoscope' – from the words *hora* and *skopos*, observer). The English and the French collective word for the sundial and clepshydra was *horologe*; the Spanish used the term *reloj*; the Italians *orologio*. However, at some time during the eleventh or twelfth century (authorities cannot seem to agree on a more exact time) *horologia* gave way to a new word derived from the Latin word for bell: *clocca*. Thus we get the English word *clock*, the Dutch and Flemish *clokke*, and the German *glocke* now being applied to describe timekeeping devices. Clearly then, timekeeping machines began as automated bells – bells which acted as drivers to the disciplined and productive labour of organised monastic life and, soon after, to secular life.

In the Europe of the early Middle Ages, ninety percent of people lived an agrarian existence and their work and lives were organised around natural seasonal and daily rhythms. It is difficult to see how rural communities would benefit from knowing the time more exactly than the cues given by the sun, seasons, plants, animals, and their own bodies. The constituency with the most notable need for time measurement during this period was the Christian church, and particularly the Roman branch. It was the clangorous bell (*clock*), announcing the beginning and end of silence in the early medieval monasteries, which was to herald the extension of the sonic into the social world. The passage of sound became the passage of calibrated time.

In Islam and Judaism, the times of prayer were fairly loosely lineated (e.g. dawn, before sunrise, after dark) and prayer was regarded as essentially a personal act without the need for clerical mediation. However, early Western Christianity, and especially monastic Christianity, viewed prayer as a collective endeavor requiring detailed and disciplined observance and regulation. Hence formal organisational rules, as opposed to organisational practices, came with the monasteries.

According to Bouuaret (1953), the instigator of monastic rules of time discipline was Pachomius of Upper Egypt in the early 4th Century. Landes notes that "it was there for

the first time we see realised the practice of an office in the strict sense, reciting every day in the name of the church, *publicum officium*, at set hours" (1983: 61). From Egypt, this official practice diffused slowly, albeit with regional variations in ruling, into Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Europe. Mumford (1934) shows how it was in the West that the new order of the offices found its first complete and detailed realisation in the Rule of the Order of Benedict of Nursia, written around 540 AD. Benedict awarded prominence to the main feasts of the ecclesiastical year but his innovation was the allocation of specific times not only to prayer, but to almost all facets of monastic life (lauds, prime, tierce, sext, none, compline and vespers). The term 'canonical hour' became synonymous with the office itself: the officiant recited the hours. By the beginning of the twelfth century, Landes (1983) argues that canonical hours were normalised throughout Western Christendom.

> The very nature of these foundations, as expressed by the idea of an order, pressed them toward uniformity of practice and observance, and their reformism found expression not in the latitudiarianism often associated with the idea of reform today, but in the restoration of discipline. Discipline, in turn, had at its centre a temporal definition and ordering of the spiritual life: *omnia horis competentibus compleantus* – all things should be taken care of at the proper time. (Landes, 1983: 62)

Such was the importance of time discipline in the monasteries that great care was taken to ensure punctuality in all things. Time was of the essence because it belonged to God and the observance of strict time-keeping saw to it that none was wasted. Adhering to a strict sequence of communal prayer every day and night required discipline and co-ordination and in this a key role was played by the bell-ringing clock and the monk responsible for its maintenance and accuracy. Early monastic clepsydra made use of an escapement-type mechanism, often weight-driven, which produced a digital to-and-fro motion. This oscillation was used to drive small hammers capable of striking a bell at intervals chosen by the clock. In other words, the monks devised the first alarm clocks. More significantly, as Mumford (1934) and Boorstin (1985) have argued, the oscillatory striking mechanism pointed the way to the development of the mechanical clock.

If it was the monasteries that stood to gain most from the development of more accurate time keeping, this does not explain why the weight-driven mechanical clock, once invented (in the late thirteenth century), became so popular in the towns and cities of fourteenth century Europe. As Borst (1993) suggests, all the technical and scholarly benefits of the mechanical clock would have had little effect on secular life if it had not 'rung a bell' with the mentality of town and city dwellers.

> Their daily work, which was increasingly timed by instruments and rewarded with payments of money, was meant to be calculable and controllable within the town walls and hence uniform: there consequently had to be a common clock for employers and employees alike. (Borst, 1993: 94).

In towns and cities, these employers were a new wealthy and powerful urban elite who had benefited from the great expansion of agriculture and commerce in fourteenth century Europe.

The need for timekeeping was especially strong in those cities engaged in large-scale textile manufacture as a means of co-ordinating and controlling home workers. The

construction of mechanical clock towers containing automated bell ringing devices became a common sight in many European cities. These were installed in a church tower or a belfry erected for the purpose, and were either publicly or privately owned. One thing is clear, however: the urban community was the heir of the monastic commune as the bells were designed to control and co-ordinate the behaviour of citizens and workers alike. Some public clocks were undoubtedly spectacular and conferred prestige and status on the owners, but coordination and control was their function. In Brussels, for example, there were different bells (*werckclockes*), sounding at different times, to signal the beginning and end of the work day for each group of spinners, weavers, twisters, tapestry workers and whitesmiths. Indeed, we know that prosperous medieval towns in Europe were extremely noisy places (Munroe and Sontag, 1982).

Although the monasteries stuck with their canonical hours, the urban clock towers displayed mechanical time of equal hours. In addition to the general influence of the clock on social time discipline, the introduction of equal hours and the habituation of urban populations to public time announcements had two profound consequences for the European mentality. First, the mechanical clock symbolised a decisive step in the appropriation of time away from the heavens and from God (especially the liturgical practices of the Church) to humanity; from eternity to the here and now. Fourteenth century money changers and lenders, tax officials and industrialists were the groups eager to appropriate this new time standard. In the Churches of the Byzantine East and Greek Orthodoxy the installation of mechanical clocks was forbidden lest eternity became contaminated with time. The Roman Church in western Europe, by contrast, embraced the new technology and turned its back on eternity and the mystical interpretation of numbers. Before long Roman church bells were sounding secular, mechanical time – a process started by King Charles V of France in his 1370 decree requiring all public clocks in Paris to be synchronised to his own Palace clock. Thus, as Mumford notes:

> the bells of the clock tower almost defined urban existence. Time-keeping passed into time-saving and time accounting, and time rationing. As this took place, Eternity ceased gradually to serve as the measure and focus of human actions. (1934: 17)

The second consequence of the habituation of urban populations to the sound of public clock time was equally profound. Historians tell us that the medieval populous were innumerate as well as illiterate. How much reckoning could a person do in a world that knew no uniformity of measurement? Units of distance were linked to physical characteristics that varied as people do (the English *foot*, for instance), whilst weights typically were converted to volume standards (a *bushel* of grain) that inevitably varied from place to place. Landes (1983) opines that with growing trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries came the need to calculate and reckon. Roman numerals were displaced by the now familiar Arabic numerals during this period and these made calculations easier. It was the urban commercial populations that seem to have been the quickest to learn the new language and techniques of reckoning:

> Arithmetic was the province above all of the unlettered speakers of the vernacular (as opposed to Latin). Many of these learned arithmetic in the shop or on the road, but even before they entered trade, they learned to count the bells of the clock. Not by the old church bells ringing the canonical hours; these did not mark equal units and hence did not lend themselves to addition and subtraction. But the new bells and the calculations they made possible (how long until? how long

> since?) were a school for all who listened and began to organise their lives around them. (Landes, 1983: 78)

These two consequences combined to make the ringing clock a defining technology of urban life and work organisation in Medieval Europe. The ringing clock was not just a calibrated measure of orderliness and punctuality, it reflected and reinforced the quantification of trade, industry and the economy. In a very real sense, then, the aural codes of the clock s(t)imulated social organisation, and, in the process, reduced other voices of time to silence. The imposition of clock time by the bell led to the effective silencing of other measures of time (seasonal, body, lunar, and religious). Furthermore, with the standardisation of time, the clock was to take on a more visible form in the fifteenth century and beyond as it grew a face and hands.

Yet, increasingly during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the auditory basis of organisation was to be displaced by a new measure of time and space based on what could be seen rather than what could be heard. The European Renaissance representation of the world was optocentric, as well as anthropocentric, and privileged the individual observer over God. Self-disciplined, systematic observation of lawful nature was of key importance and it was through this process that the Renaissance artists and philosophers were able to represent themselves to themselves, and to find a privileged spatial location from which to act on, and appropriate, the natural world.

It is generally agreed that the work of Pythagoras, Euclides and other ancient Greeks was fundamental to the mathematization and autonomisation of the visual (see, for example, Mumford, 1934; Houlgate, 1993). Derrida goes so far as to argue that the entire history of occidental philosophy is a photology because "starting with its first words, metaphysics associates sight with knowledge" (1983: 4). Based on the writings of the ancient Greeks, techniques of linear perspective developed during the European Renaissance all but sealed the fate of European culture to the domination of the visual. But what of sound? Why did it remain inferior to the 'noble' sense of vision? What we discover is that polymaths such as Pythagoras had far less success in formalising and rationalising the organising codes of music, than they achieved with visual geometry. Indeed, Pythagoras was perturbed to discover that aural space, unlike geometric space, was irrational and he felt obliged to keep his calculations silent for fear that an acceptance of seemingly irrational codes of music might lead the populace to question the accepted rules of rational social organisation (see Boeckh, 1819).

The key ideological revolution of the Renaissance was the construction of a worldview in which the human took centre stage. Machiavelli placed the human at the centre of politics; science developed into the construction of truth according to humans' observation rather than according to God's creation; legal rules rather than God's will became the fundamental concern of the judiciary; and artists produced paintings to be seen from the perspective of the human observer rather than God. Yet, this did not mean that everything became subjectified. On the contrary, everything was objectified, measured and mastered in terms of 'natural laws' derived from the mathematics of ancient Greece.

It is clear that by the late fifteenth century in Renaissance Europe there was a growing recognition of the significance of mathematics as a foundation or essential aid for all technical and artistic activity.

> And the fertility of this function of mathematics, which largely consisted of measurements of distances and angles, and calculations of lengths, areas, and volumes, was equalled by that of its application to works of art. It led to a development of perspective drawing, from a manual dexterity based on intuition or imitation to an art based on rational planning. At the same time it furnished a scientific foundation for the concepts of proportion, symmetry and harmony, which precisely at that time were beginning to occupy an important place in painting, sculpture, and architecture. (Dijksterhuis, 1961: 243-4)

The irrationality of melodic space simply didn't resonate with the Renaissance drive to mastery. Ironically, then, one might make argue the case that the stimulus to mathematics reflected in, and reinforced by, the development and diffusion of the mechanical clock, was to sound the death knell of European auditive culture.

Middle Eight

But to examine this fate let us return to melodic space and an earlier time. If you play eight consecutive white notes on a piano keyboard you end up with the same note you started with, except it is an octave higher. In fact, the second note is exactly double the frequency of the first. Octaves are harmonious and are mathematically related. A string that is twice the length of another, will, when plucked, produce a note exactly half the frequency of that produced by the other string. It has also been found through the ages that the most harmonious of all combinations of notes are two notes five white notes apart on the piano keyboard. Together they are called a fifth. The ancient Greek Pythagoreans discovered that for the playing of any two notes which made a fifth, the string length of one note and that of the other always had the mathematical ratio of two to three. The corresponding ratio for the playing of octaves is two to one.

Pythagoras, in his pursuit of perfect harmony, was unsettled to discover that the octave and the fifth intervals were incommensurable. As Temple (2000) points out, the problem arises when you try and reach the same note by climbing two different sets of 'stairs'. If you climb the octaves and if you climb the fifths, you do not get to the same note by those two separate routes until you have gone through twelve fifths ('the spiral of fifths') or through seven octaves. But, the notes which are produced at the summits of these two climbs are different, mathematically and aurally. They are inharmonious. Check out the mathematics and you find that the ratio of 2:1 doubled seven times gives you a frequency 128 times higher than the original note. But when you ascend in fifths (having the ratio of 2:3 or 1.5) twelve times, the note produced has a frequency 129.75 times higher. If you divide 129.75 by 128 you get 1.0136. This number is known as the Comma of Pythagoras since we know he had calculated this division to nine decimal places. Without this mathematical correction, melodic space remains irrational, whole tones remain indivisible mathematically, and octaves and fifths wander away from each other as you descend or ascend in pitch.

During the Renaissance period in Europe, this irrational melodic space was managed pragmatically by the judicial detuning of the least played sections of the musical keyboard (the highest and lowest) so that the middle section was in 'ideal' harmony. It wasn't until 1584 that Ming Prince Zhu Cai-Yŭ finally solved Pythagoras' incommensurable harmonics problem by recalibrating the very creation of harmonic sound to ensure a fit between the (mathematical) ideal and the (aural) real. Pure tones were displaced by tones of equal temperament. This ingenious process involved systematically shaving off a tiny bit of each note and creating semitones. The result is that every note is slightly, but perceptibly, flat – the pure tones of pre-seventeenth century music being forever silenced and all but forgotten.

With equal temperament, musical sound was rendered calculable and amenable to mathematisation. As with clock time, music was recalibrated to bring the 'real' into harmony with the mathematical ideal. Crucially, however, we were now in the age of the European Enlightenment and the mathematical recalibration of the visual world was far more advanced – a world which had long shown itself to be far more amenable to rationalisation than the aural world. After all, as Boorstin notes:

> latitude and longitude were to the measurement of space what the mechanical clock was to the measurement of time. They signaled man's dominance over nature, discovering and marking the dimensions of experience. They substituted precise units suiting human convenience for the accidental shapes of the Creation. (1985: 97)

Reprieve: Managing the Violence of Noise in Modern Times

In the twentieth century, although overshadowed by the ocularcentricism of European cultural practice, the organisation and control of sound remained on the management agenda (although virtually 'unseen' by organisational researchers). Indeed, research into sound by engineers and psychologists working in the Psycho-Acoustic Laboratory (PAL) at Harvard University was to lead to the rapid development and diffusion of cybernetics and information theory in the 1950s and 1960s – developments which were to amplify the harmonic resonance of the mechanical and the social within organisation theory and practice. PAL research greatly enhanced the visibility of sound, through a process of recalibration and formalisation. It achieved this by translating cognitive and social organisation into a hierarchically structured information processor. In embracing the mathematics of information theory, the illustrious cognitive science alumni of PAL (including Miller, Galanter, Pribram, Held, and Neisser) emptied the world of sound just as, from the Renaissance on, scientists had emptied space of everything but mathematical coordinates and geometric extension. Organised space becomes a visual coordinate systems. Mathematics becomes a ventriloquial medium – speaking on behalf of the objects and subjects that it has rendered silent.

The Second World War revealed to the US military elite that being able to see what was happening on the battlefield was useless if they couldn't then directly influence events by communicating with the troops. The US military established PAL in 1940 to tackle two fundamental design problems – "the human engineering of cyborgs to counter the problem of noise, and the engineering of communications for maximum speed and

efficiency" (Edwards, 1995: 211). Early experiments revealed that noise did not significantly 'interfere' with the completion of motor tasks. However, it greatly reduced the efficiency of linguistic communication. Noise became an abstract threat, a threat to the mind – to information itself. The notion of the military chain of command was reconceptualised as a chain of communication and PAL researchers conducted a whole gamut of 'articulation tests' in which selected syllables, words or phrases were spoken over a communication system. The percentage of these which were heard correctly was the 'articulation score' and identified the 'efficiency' of the system's components. No distinction was made between sound, sight, human or machine – all were measured and calibrated in terms of signal and noise. Subsequent research of language engineering completed the much earlier work of Alexander Melville Bell (1866) on 'visible speech' in the translation of natural language into technological code. Meaning was reduced to measures of information, noise, and channel capacity. The hearing of actual tones or sounds thus became irrelevant for linguistic communication as the audible retreated behinds its servile function for language. As Bell well knew, the fact that the phonetic elements mean absolutely nothing is, in effect, a necessary condition for their transmissive function. Henceforth, with sound stripped of any genuine acoustic or sonorous meaning, scientists would handle and analyse acoustic phenomena according to their measurable, predominantly visual re-representation (as wavy lines, etc.).

Perhaps it was inevitable that military-funded US scientists would turn their attention to the control of sound for use as a military weapon. But, as the ancient Egyptians and Greeks discovered, it is difficult to get the measure of sound and all of these attempts at sonic mastery were unsuccessful (see Swezey, 1999). The main problem for the military was (and still is) the multidirectional nature of sound. As Johnson (1989) notes, sound has a *gestalt of force* arising from the collision of objects with each other. Attempts to direct such violent sound have proven unsuccessful, and in most experiments both the receiver (the intended victim) and the sender shared the violent effects of the sonic weaponry (see Sargeant, 2001). Actually, the measurement of sound is still a troublesome endeavour in the 21st century. The decibel is the main unit of sound measurement, but, unlike visual measures such as the foot, the metre, or the tonne, it doesn't physically exist nor can it measure a single instance, or unit, of sound. It simply expresses the relationship between two values of power. And, like the hertz, the decibel is not just used to measure sound intensity, but is applied to any relationship of electrical or electronic power. The hertz is also used as a measure of light (witness again how the aural is subsumed under light's shadow).

Coda: Auditioning the Auditive

But, what is silenced during this synaesthetic shift from sound to vision? To see the world is to believe it has a form. When we look, we look for materiality, for thing-ness; not spirituality or no-thing-ness. To hear the world is to perceive a non-continuous, temporary form. Sound, after all, is not an object but an event, a movement. The way we in the West have learned to view ourselves and the world is through the lens of objectivity aided and abetted by a cultural hermeneutic steeped in the visual traditions of linear geometry and perspective. We still have alarm clocks but these are vastly

outnumbered by silent timepieces (none of us, when asked the time request silence whilst we listen for an aural signal). Rather, we learn to know our place, to see where we stand. Vision guarantees knowability because seeing bestows permanence. Sound and hearing can offer no such certainty because we are immersed in it. We Moderns demand to know where a sound comes from – to see it with our own theoretically disembodied eye. With the assurance of sight, sound is rendered visible and effectively silenced. Indeed, vision gives the viewer such a sense of security and certainty that Levin argues that there is an "undeniable power drive inherent in vision" (1990: 89), a reductive will to power. The observer performs an autopsy (literally *to see for oneself*) on organisational bodies. The listener auscultates (literally *to listen to the sounds inside the body*). In modern medical parlance, autopsy implies immobility and death; whilst the practice of auscultation is most commonly associated with life (listening for life-signs using the stethoscope) and birth (the ultrasound scanning of the en-wombed foetus).

Sound offers ambiguity and the possibility of space travel (from inside to outside and back again). We do not just hear sounds, we make them as well. In an organisational context, the potential for disobedience is therefore double. Not only may we fail to hear our instructions (obedience has its etymological root in the Latin *audire* – 'to hear'), but we may answer back. Our bodies, on the other hand, cannot produce light, only cast silent (mathematically definable) shadows.

Such indeterminacy and ambiguity does not resonate well with the visual mind. Because sound emanates from people it has the potential to dis-organise. Such voices are noise (*nausea*) in a hierarchical chain of command/communication. You 'know where you are' with vision, and where you stand has come to determine whether your voice is heard, and whether a sound is classified as signal or noise. Furthermore, the eye is good at noticing stillness and the absence of movement – aiding and abetting the convenient conceptualisation of organisations as more-or-less stationary, static entities. Conversely, the ear cannot detect stillness. As Walter Ong (1982) argues, sound signals the exercise of power since it must be in active production in order to exist at all. Without movement there is no sound.

If organisation means to endow with organs, our understanding of the organised body is a peculiarly ectopic one with a single disembodied eye displacing the mouth and ear. So, how might psychosonic research on organisations be conducted? Unlike ocularcentric research, research on sound and silence has no focused location, no form, no permanence, no object. No-one or no-thing is silenced and this opens up the world of the organisation to the researcher in ways which fundamentally differ from current forms of research and perhaps needs support more from the music theory of John Cage than the organisational theory of, say, John Child.

According to Larry Soloman (1998), John Cage's music theory encapsulates three basic concepts: indeterminacy, interpenetration and ecology.

Indeterminacy

For Cage, music is an exploration of non-intention. His most famous piece, 4'33", is a silent work in three parts which explores indeterminacy. It is the sounds surrounding the

performance which become the actual performance, and these sounds (traffic noises, involuntary sounds from the audience, etc.) will differ every time the piece is played.

Optocentric organisational research (OOR) tends to hold a fixed gaze at the subject matter under scrutiny. Often there is a theoretical position to be proven. 'Good' researchers know how and where to look; where to focus their attention; what to expect. Acoustic organisational research (AOR) would have no clear focus, but would remain alert to any movement – a kind of acoustic psychogeography, perhaps?

Interpenetration

Like the Surrealists and Situationists, Cage saw no distinction between art and life. OOR make a clear distinction, not only between research and naive lived experience, but also between subject and object, researcher and the researched. AOR immerses researchers in the organisational cacophony where they uncomfortably straddle such dualisms. The researchers' voice is not authoritative, but merely one amongst many.

Ecology

John Cage believed that sounds should be honoured rather than enslaved. Every sound is important. OOR enslaves its subject and rarely, if ever, enables them to speak for themselves. There must be 'expert interpretation' to clarify meaning and to allow one subject to be compared meaningfully with another. The categories, standards, measures, and values which compose such a comparison are, of course, not given by the subject but are disciplined by OOR itself. OOR cannot see everywhere at once, so only a limited number of subjects can be seen. AOR doesn't have the privileged position to impose such a discipline and must struggle to make any sense of the organised vocalic/sonorous body.

Steven Connor summarises the difference between OOR and AOR thus:

> the power of capturing, retaining, and therefore reordering the world which is associated with sight, and with a view of the world formed around its domination, is expressed in the creation of a sense of manipulable, permanent, homogenous space. It requires and allows the sense of clear and coherent distinctions between the inside and the outside of the body, and the relative disposition of different bodies in space. A world apprehended primarily through hearing, or in which hearing predominates, is much more dynamic, intermittent, complex, and indeterminate. Where the eye works is governed and explicated space, the ear imparts implicated space. (2000: 18)

Finale

This paper is not a call to blindness, nor is it an appeal to only listen to organisations. It is a call for us to admit the optocentricism of our dominant philosophies and the partialities this entails. The history of organising practice is one dominated by sound, whilst the history of organisation theory is dominated by vision. I would like to 'see' more recognition of this apparent paradox and efforts made to develop sound organisation theory.

Perhaps we have been so busy looking at organisations through modern eyes that we have missed something of fundamental importance. This is not as unlikely as it may seem. Take the example of archaeology, which, like organisation studies, is distinctively optocentric. Paul Devereux (2001) suggests that archaeological researchers have been deaf to the role of sound in the construction and social function of ancient sites. For example, virtually all documented research on Stonehenge, England's most famous megalithic site, has focused on the alignment of the ancient stone structures to the sky and the ground. Yet research reveals that human vocalic sound and resonance are at their clearest and loudest on the axis of the monument, the line pointing towards the midsummer sunrise position. As with the Paleolithic caves in France, it may be that such sites were constructed to fulfill an important acoustic, as well as visual, function. The caves – famous for their paintings – have another defining quality: they greatly amplify sounds with an harmonic frequency range identical to that produced by the human voice.

What sounds emanate from within the organisational body? Why are some sounds loud and others quiet? Why are some bodies silent, and how is this achieved? What function, if any, do sounds/silence have? How does architecture and interior building design affect sound and our psychological reactions to it? When recorded music is re-played in work environments, is it an amnesiac, or a means to violently silence the human voice; to control and discipline the body; or to quieten discontent (cf Attali, 1985)? What is the sound of emotional labour? As organisational researchers we have rendered organisations silent and perhaps we are in danger of becoming incapable, or unwilling, to listen to the sounds of that silence. We should not forget that Narcissus fell victim to the deadly fascination of vision having ignored the warning cries of the sonorous nymph, Echo.

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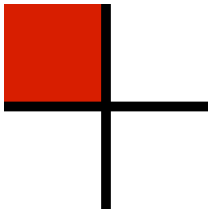
Ethics and/in/as Silence

Marcel Cobussen

abstract

Using John Cage's familiar composition, 4'33", as the point of departure of this essay, the first part describes how this composition deconstructs the boundaries and (hierarchical) oppositions of noise, silence, and music: music becomes silence, silence becomes noise, noise becomes music. But all this happens within the musical domain. In other words, 'the other' (noise, silence) enters the domain of 'the same' (music). In the second part of the essay, this construct is connected to a Derridaen notion of ethics. Perhaps ethics – regarded by Derrida as hospitality to an unknown stranger – is at work in 4'33'' as the music opens its territory to allow unanticipated sounds in. 4'33'' demands that the listener be open to all sounds, to respect all sounds (to treat them though they were music). This emphasis on the reception of music opens the possibility to discuss in the third part of the essay the ethics of listening. The author presents the idea to consider listening to the random sounds that are allowed to enter 4'33", listening to all random sounds that form an integral part of this composition, as a receptivity to the advent of an unanticipatable alterity, as an encounter with the accidental, the unmanageable, the unintended. Regarded in this way, music (for example 4'33'') offers the opportunity to experience the world and to relate to the world in another (perhaps ethical?) way.

It is easy enough to play silence, but difficult to get it to sound right. (Derek Bailey, 1993: 89)

There will come a time when music alone will provide a way of slipping through the tight meshes of functions; leaving music as a powerful and uninfluenced reservoir of freedom must be accounted the most important task of intellectual life in the future. Music is the truly living history of humanity, of which otherwise we only have dead parts. One does not need to draw from music for it is always within us; all we have to do is listen simply, otherwise we would learn in vain. (Elias Canetti, 1986: 17)

Woodstock, New York. The Maverick Concert Hall. Friday, August 29, 1952. 8:15 p.m. The Woodstock Artists Association presents works by Christian Wolff, Morton Feldman, Earle Brown, Pierre Boulez, Henry Cowell, and John Cage. Piano pieces. Played by David Tudor. The next-to-last piece starts: *4'33''*. Tudor comes to the piano and sits there for four minutes and thirty-three seconds. Silent. That is, without playing, without touching the piano keys.

Let's have a look at the program. *4'33''* consists of three parts, 33'', 2'40'', and 1'20''. Three separate parts. Silent parts. Tudor indicates the beginning of each part by closing

the keyboard lid, then end by opening it. *4'33''*. For any instrument or combination of instruments, the score says. Signed: John Cage.

4'33''. Not much effort for a piano player, but an enormous leap for the definition of music, for thinking on music. And on silence. For example, that silence doesn't exist. Pure silence is physically impossible. We are always already surrounded by sounds. What is written as a silent passage is actually filled with extraneous sounds, all the incidental sounds in the room regardless of whether or not they are produced by humans.[1] As such, the 'silent' piece, *4'33''*, refers to its supposed opposite: it exists because it cannot exist. Silence consists of sounds. All possible sounds. The only reason we say they are silence is because they are unintended, inadvertently produced, not meant to be music, not meant to be part of a musical work. What becomes clear while listening to *4'33''* is that no sound can be excluded from the realm of silence. Silence is not 'the other' of sound, not separate from sound. Silence *is* (a kind of) sound. Silence = sound. After awhile, one notices that nothing is as loud as silence. (There exists something like droning silence.) That is why we need to rethink silence. Silence differs from itself. Silence is deconstructed. We could say that Cage's composition puts the terms 'silence' and 'sound' under erasure, *sous rature*. And it took 4 minutes and 33 seconds.

Another consequence. If we agree that *4'33''* is indeed a piece of music, what does this mean for the definition of music? What are we implying by calling *4'33''* music? When silence (= sound) becomes music? (And indeed, based on what we find in 20th century music theory and music history books, we *should* categorize *4'33''* as a musical piece. It is part of the institution that could be called the music world. No absence of the frame!) It should at least be apparent that there are no longer any intrinsic properties of sound required in order for something to be music. All sounds can be(come) music. 'All' sounds. Of course, this doesn't mean that all sounds *are* at all times music. *4'33''* makes this very clear. For it is only within the context of this composition that silence becomes music. As a piece of music, *4'33''* frames the silence, supplies it with a context, gives silence something to say. Music, *4'33''*, gives silence *sens*. (The French term 'sens' is deliberately used here referring to both meaning and direction.) Without music, without *4'33''*, silence is perhaps lost, without meaning or direction, and therefore un(re)presentable. *4'33''* allows us to hear the silence, makes us hear the sounds within silence ('sens' also refers to the senses).[2] One could say that music produces silence. But the reverse is also true.

Is there something else this music can teach us? Are there other effects? Are other relations possible, other affects, or assemblages? Possibly something that was already resonating in *4'33''*, in this silent piece that isn't a silent piece, in this music that only consists of random sounds not intended to be(come) music.

'Ethics and Silence' ... Of course, the title says it all ... Or does it? ... No ... No. Of course, the title says nothing at all: after all, it is in the music, in *4'33''* ... But is it? ... It

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1   In this sense I agree with Martin Corbett when he writes that "the ear cannot detect stillness" (Corbett, this issue, 273). Pure silence only exists in the dead.

2   I thank Professor Geraldine Finn for taking my thoughts in this direction.

– the ethics in/as silence – is neither in this essay, nor in the music; or it is both in the essay and in the music? Let's say in the space between the music and the reflections presented here, hesitantly, tremulously, cautiously. Up to now, it may have seemed as if I was only writing within what many people would call the 'aesthetic domain'. As if music is reducable to the aesthetic only. As if we can only encounter music through aesthetic concepts. Here, it is my aim to open an ethical space to and for music, a possibility to learn through music, through *4'33''*, that is through silence as music about ethics, about ethics in music, about ethics as music.

Let's leave the aesthetic domain for a while and talk ethics. According to Jacques Derrida, ethics can be connected to a recognition of 'the other', of opening, uncloseting, destabilizing foreclusionary structures so as to allow passage towards 'the other'. Especially in his later works, Derrida often speaks of 'the invention of the other', where 'the other' may be regarded as that which remains unthought, that which escapes the grips of our concepts. The other is whatever resists definition whenever definition is put in place. Derrida's philosophy can be thought of as a reading and writing strategy that takes notice of traces of the other, of the unthought, the invisible, the unheard without absorbing, assimilating or reducing it to 'the same', that is, to the cognitive power of the knowing subject or self-consciousness. He wants to preserve the space of the other as other. In philosophy. In writing. In language. But how? How can a philosophical strategy – a reading and writing practice – pay attention to the other, even the other of or in language, precisely in language itself? The paradox is that what cannot be put into language has to be evoked in language nonetheless. According to Derrida, it is this same language that can open the space, the space of the other, which, in fact, never really succeeds in closing it. Thus, the invention of the other implies locating traces of the other within the order of the same. A delicately balanced oscillation between two positions: complete assimilation would deny the other as other, whereas complete affirmation of the difference between the other and the same would render any contact between them impossible. Derrida:

> It is in this paradoxical predicament that a deconstruction gets under way. Our current tiredness results from the invention of the same and from the possible, from the invention that is always possible. It is not against it but beyond it that we are trying to reinvent invention itself, another invention, or rather an invention of the other that would come, through the economy of the same, indeed while miming or repeating it, to offer a place for the other.[3]

And what if in *4'33''* silence would be a trace of 'the other' of music? Within music? Would it be a trace of the other within the order of the same? Why? Several dictionaries describe music as 'the art of combining sounds'. In *Noise*, French thinker Jacques Attali situates music in the following way: "Music is inscribed between noise and silence".[4] In both definitions music is opposed to and separated from noise (the presence of sounds that are not considered musical) and silence (the absence of sound). Music is neither noise nor silence but it is in some way connected to them: in the space between noise and silence, music finds its place, music takes place. Noise and silence form, as it were,

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3   Derrida, J. (1989) 'Psyche: Inventions of the Other', in L. Waters and W. Godzich (eds.) *Reading De Man Reading*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 60.

4   Attali, J. (1985) *Noise: the Political Economy of Music*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 19.

its edges, its boundaries. Perhaps one could say that noise and silence are the *parerga* of music, outside the musical sounds, but not easily detachable from them.[5] But let's not be too hasty, let's not run ahead of things. Let's continue slowly, meticulously, in a silent way perhaps.

In *On Cosmopolitism and Forgiveness*, Derrida describes ethics as hospitality.

> Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others. Insofar as it has to do with the *ethos*, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner of which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality*; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality.[6]

And what if we consider *4'33''* as a piece of music belonging to music history, belonging to the institution called the music world – what if we consider *4'33''*, *because* it is music, as the residence, the familiar place, a home? *4'33''*, music, as the host, offering hospitality to 'the other' of music, silence, that is, all sounds that are not intended or not able to be musical. Let's say that this composition allows random, non-musical sounds to (re)enter the domain of music (in the form of silence). It admits silence (and with that, noise) as a trace of the other of music into the musical realm.

Silence as the other of music. How to think through the opening towards this other, the admission of the other of music within music? How to assess this form of hospitality? As previously stated, Derrida wants to acknowledge traces of the other without absorbing, assimilating, or reducing them to the order of the same, the order of the calculable and the familiar. In *L'Intrus* [The Intruder] philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy follows the same line of thought. The stranger should maintain something of an intruder, not to lose her/his strangeness. If s/he is expected, if there is nothing outside anticipation or expectation, if there is nothing that is not receptive or admissible, then the intruder is no longer a stranger. "It's neither logically acceptable, nor ethically permissible to exclude the advent of the stranger from all forms of intrusion ... To receive the stranger, should also mean: to experience intrusion".[7] In order to respect the other, in order to (re)act ethically, one has to allow the stranger as stranger its otherness, its unfamiliarity, its unusualness. What about silence? Isn't silence always new, unanticipatable, unexpectable? Doesn't it change with every performance? Ethics means opening oneself to the advent of the other. The other: always an other. Like silence.

However, is Cage, by integrating silence within music or the musical, reducing the other to the same? We arrive at a paradox. A 'double bind'. Cage can only focus attention on the other of music by admitting the other to the very domain of music. This is the precarious balance between recognition and appropriation of otherness: a full

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5   "A parergon comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside. Like an accessory that one is obliged to welcome on the border, on board [*au bord, à bord*]. It is first of all on (the) bo(a)rd(er) [*Il est d'abord l'à-bord*]"; Derrida, J. (1987) *The Truth in Painting* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 54.

6   Derrida, J. (2001) *On Cosmopolitism and Forgiveness* London: Routledge, 16-17.

7   Nancy, J.-L. (2000) *L'Intrus*. Paris, 9-10. [I used the Dutch version of the text; translations are my own, MC]

assimilation will deny the other while a full affirmation of the differences will preclude every contact with the other. Even if the other resides outside of music in the traditional sense (but it is not at all clear that it does), it cannot dispense with the concept of music if we want to give attention to it. Silence, while escaping the musical, can only be experienced through the musical. This is the reason Derrida does not wish to think of the invention of the other and the invention of the same as binary opposites.

Cage's music gives silence a voice by supplying it with a context. (It cannot exist without a context.) His work turns silence into experience, into something we can come to, surrender to, lose ourselves in; it reshapes our attitude towards silence. It rewrites the cont(r)acts between music and silence so that we can experience the relation between them differently and thus 'think' them otherwise. His work is ethical because it offers hospitality, hospitality to the stranger that does not speak the language of music, to a hostis called silence or noise. (In Latin, 'hostis' means both stranger and enemy, but it can refer to 'host' or 'guest' as well.) But this hospitality cannot exist without borders, without a certain sovereignty. *4'33''* can offer hospitality because (this) music has a house of its own, its own domain, although its borders are undecidable, insecure, shifting. ("Deconstruction must neither reframe nor dream of the pure and simple absence of the frame," writes Derrida).[8] Frame. Context. Demarcation. No hospitality without exclusion. Perhaps music has become a *phantom name* for Cage. Remnants of the old concept of music live on, but its contours have faded; its meaning has changed. And right there, in that flexible, fluent environment, the other appears. Or rather, the concept of music changes *because* the other appears. *4'33''* invites the other into the house of the same, the realm of music; as a host, it invites the stranger, the intruder, the other to enter its home. This music is once more an 'invention of the other', an openness to the call of the other.[9] ("To invent would then be to 'know' how to say 'come' and to answer the 'come' of the other," says Derrida.)

4'33'' does not merely introduce new sounds or noises into the realm of music. This work (is it a work in the traditional sense?) demands attention to sounds that are always already present in music, that reside and resonate in the margins of the music, but that have been disavowed or suppressed. It points us to the other *of* music *within* music. *4'33''* draws explicit attention to unintentional sounds that music can never exclude, and that are always already part of every composition. The other does not reside outside the same, but is as an outsider an inextricable part of it. A parergon. The *hostis* was always already inside the house of the host, the uncanny already part of the familiar. Music: impossible to close off because the outside is always already on the inside. Silence (= sound) as an inextricable part of music. The invention of the other. The other *of* music. The other *in* music. Music as other. An other music. Cage's work renders music a fissured concept that is unable to tell its inside from its outside. The house of music is open; it gives entry to the stranger, to silence, to all sounds. *4'33''* brings us to

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8   *The Truth in Painting*, 73.

9   In Deleuzian terms one could say that we are caught here in an endless play of de- and reterritorializations, a play in which Cage's music acts as a constantly deterritorialized refrain because 'the other' is no longer 'The Other' but an active force within the domain of the same. Much more about the refrain and its territorializations can be found in Bent Meier Sørensen's essay (this issue).

accept the other of music, the other that is usually repudiated, that really should not exist. Hospitality. Ethics. In music. Through music.

Actually, writing about *4'33''* means writing about a triple silence. Composer, music, and audience are all silent. Both the composer and the audience become listeners, listeners to silence; that is, listeners to unpredictable sounds: low, high, loud, soft, dense, scanty, with or without pitch, produced by humans or not, outside or inside the concert hall, at a distance or nearby.

Of course, in a way, the composer, John Cage, is 'saying' something. But where Gemma Corradi Fiumara concludes in *The Other Side of Language* that "the mechanism of 'saying without listening' has multiplied and spread, to finally constitute itself as a generalized form of domination and control," this mechanism seems to be absent in *4'33''*.[10] Cage is speaking and listening simultaneously. Or better, he is speaking by/through/in listening. His listening speaks; it has something to say. It says something without saying it.[11] According to Derrida, the 'invention of the other' cannot be compared to a traditional notion of 'capacity to invent'. Contrary to the capacity to invent, the invention of the other withdraws from every plan or conceptualization. Any conceptual meaning should be abandoned as much as possible, or at least delayed. An encounter with the otherness of the other can only occur in a state of passivity or susceptibility. Cage recognizes and admires this susceptibility in the work of Morton Feldman, composer of many pieces that are extremely long and contain hushed volumes and slow tempos and that seem to arise hesitantly from a silent ground. "He has changed the responsibility of the composer from making to accepting. To accept whatever comes, regardless of the consequences".[12] From making to accepting: besides Feldman's, it is Cage's statement through/in *4'33''*. No planning. Susceptibility. But does this mean no activity? Derrida says it is necessary to prepare for the coming of the other, which indicates a conscious and deliberate effort to arrive at this passivity. Inert passivity does not promote a relationship with the other. It leads instead to indifference. An active will to engage with whatever escapes any anticipating apperception is required to move into this susceptibility, a responsiveness and alertness to the possibilities that we randomly encounter, a combined play of improvisation and strategy. "Letting the other come is not inertia open to anything whatever ... I still call it invention because one gets ready for it, one makes this step to let the other come, come in".[13]

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10 Fiumara, G.C. (1990) *The Other Side of Language. A Philosophy of Listening*. London: Routledge, 2.

11 Perhaps Cage's attitude is somewhat similar to Lacan's psycho-analytic approaches as described in the contribution of Carmen Kuhling, Kieran Keohane, and Donncha Kavanagh (this issue). The point is not to (re)create a (hierarchical) opposition between silence and sound/speech/discourse (silence has no voice in the dialectic play as Martin Fuglsang and Steffen Böhm state in their contribution to this issue), but to reveal how silence as 'the other' is always already present in and through sound/speech/discourse. This way we can interpret Derrida's words – "whether to step out of the Master's house or reside within it" – as an insight that 'the other' should not be opposed to the order of 'the same' but is always already at work within it; it even needs this 'sameness' to present 'itself' at all. It is up to us to recognize this.

12 Cage, J. (1973) *Silence*. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 129.

13 'Psyche: Inventions of the Other', 55-6.

4'33''. Its call does not challenge mine, nor does it silence it; it is directed to me imploring to be noticed. The fundamental shape of its discourse is responsive rather than active and responsible instead of effectual. Passive activity. Active passivity. Aren't we talking about listening here?

What is Cage saying? Asking. In/through/by silence. Or better, what is *4'33''* demanding? The answer can be summarized in one word: 'listen!!' Listen to the sounds that surround you. Try to open yourself to the auditive stimuli around you. But how does one relate to those sounds? Cage formulates a clear proposition: if we try to ignore them, they disturb us; if we listen to them, if we accept them, they fascinate us.

Let's turn then to the listener. Let's turn to the hospitality of the listener, to the ethics of listening, to the ethics of listening to silence, to the call of *4'33''*. Let's listen to what silence in music can teach us about ethics, that is, about opening oneself for the advent of the other.

In *The Other Side of Language*, Fiumara attacks Western logocentrism and with that, its rationality, logic, and knowledge, its capacity for ordering, systematization, and explaining. All these achievements are based on a culture in which the power of discourse is deployed and the strength of listening ignored; we know how to speak, but not how to listen.[14] Through speech we build ourselves a world of rational, coherent, and logical systems, a ruling set of meanings that appear to control and shape all of our rational pursuits; at the same time we reduce the un-speaking, non-expressive other to a void, a negation. Fiumara speaks of an increasingly arrogant logos "ready even to ignore anything that does not properly fit in with a logocentric system of knowledge".[15] It exercises a supreme legislative power that establishes proper ways of thinking. The territory of a logos that speaks, orders, molds; a logos deafened by its own speech. Western intellectual tradition has a strong need to keep all interactive forms closely bound within a network of those cognitive categories that are 'normal' and practicable. "Current rationality surreptitiously absorbs all knowledge claims with the ultimate result of silencing any 'illogical' voice that might be heard in the case of the debate and which might create links that we regard as unnecessary".[16]

The Other Side of Language hinges on the possibility of "freeing our thinking from its constitutive compulsion to submit to analyse, scrutinize, delve into, explore, exhaust,

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14   The silencing of the other through speech is extensively thematized in Anthony O'Shea's contribution to this volume. (See especially 'scene 1' in his essay.) Perhaps it is useful to notice a certain difference between the position of Corbett on the one side and O'Shea and myself on the other. Where Corbett – correctly I would say – argues that, at least in our Western world, an auditive culture has been subordinated to a visual culture, his plea for more attention to 'sounds' – sounds considered as 'the other' of visual data – seems to ignore the possibility that these sounds are as able to silence otherness as visual culture is. It is therefore that I demand attention to an attentive listening, the necessary condition for every speech. By referring to Attali and his ideas as to how sounds (music) are in fact silencing people, Corbett seems to be aware of this problem but is not thinking it through.

15   *The Other Side of Language*, 6.

16   *The Other Side of Language*, 45.

probe the famous 'object of knowledge' of our research tradition".[17] How? By giving back to Western thought the other half of language, namely, the rich openness of listening. 'Listen'. Fiumara calls upon Hans-Georg Gadamer who, in his most well-known book, *Truth and Method*, states that "anyone who listens is fundamentally open. Without this kind of openness to one another there is no genuine human relationship. Belonging together always also means being able to listen to one another".[18] Having explored these ideas in much the same way, Martin Heidegger writes in *Being and Time*, "Being with others develops in listening to one another".[19] Both Gadamer and Heidegger are referring to an openness that is more fundamental than questioning because the way in which a question is posed, limits and conditions the quality and the level of any answer that can possibly be worked out. Listening is different from the sort of cognitive endeavors that result in further production of the very knowledge that warrants them; it is 'the de-stitution of the defining'.[20] "Listening is not to be envisaged as yet another position so much as a path of a co-existential nature aimed at such an understanding of the message (theory, system, or other) that will allow it to live on and develop in the direction of further conjunctions and cross-fertilization," Fiumara states.[21] It thus moves us towards creative thinking: "if we cannot listen properly, it seems that we can no longer share in 'creative thinking', and that we must confine ourselves more and more to circulating within a given repertory, or arsenal, of terms and standard articulations, which can be summoned up each time in mnemonic fashion".[22]

Listen and the world will open itself. In another way. Another world. Listening as hospitality. Listening is hospitality. Establishing a relationship between our world and a different world, between our attitude and a different attitude.

Listening. Paying careful attention to simple things. To silence, for example? To *4'33''*? What does it mean to listen to *4'33''*? What does it mean to listen to silence, to a composition that has, in fact, nothing to say? *4'33''* disrupts our habits of listening. Could we think of listening to the random sounds that are allowed to enter *4'33''*, that form an integral part of this composition, as a receptivity to the advent of an unanticipatable alterity? As an encounter with the accidental, the unmanageable, the unintended, with what is and what remains to be intangible?

Let's see what Cage has to say about the role of the listener with regard to *4'33''*. "The performance ought to make clear to the listener that the hearing of the piece is his own action – that the music, so to speak, is his rather than the composer's".[23] With this comment, Cage gives more freedom to the listener, but also more responsibility. In its

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17 *The Other Side of Language*, 16.

18 Gadamer, H-G. (1979) *Truth and Method*. London: Sheed and Ward, 324.

19 Heidegger, M. (1962) *Being and Time*. London: SCM Press, 206.

20 *The Other Side of Language*, 21. See also the essay by Jerzy Kociatkiewicz and Monika Kostera in this issue. Where they start by saying that silence can interrupt conversation, I would argue that silence makes conversation only possible.

21 *The Other Side of Language*, 77.

22 *The Other Side of Language*, 167.

23 Gena, P. and J. Brent (eds.) (1982) *A John Cage Reader. In Celebration of His 70th Birthday*. New York: Peters, 22.

non-articulatedness, *4'33''* provides the listener with the freedom to add value and meaning (or none at all!) to the piece. It is the responsibility (response-ability) of the listener to assign meaning and *sens* to this music. Even though it no longer has the same provocative effect it had back in 1952, *4'33''* still demands a willingness by the listener, and prompts her/him to think and reflect. Additionally, it also has the virtue of installing a way of listening that does not allow for jumping to conclusions, but that demands a quiet and simple listening to sounds. This way of listening could be described as a susceptibility to the other, passive in its dedication to the sounds that present themselves, and active in its alertness to and preparedness for a diversity of (acoustic) events.

... ... listen ... ...

but I cannot hear anything ... ...

... ... listen ...

but ... but ... bu ... ...

... ...

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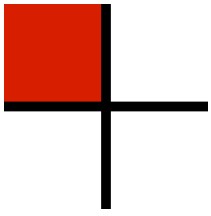
Do(n't)

John Wynne

abstract

This 3-part audio piece for the web (*Flying*[1], *Auditory Warnings* and *Orange Alert*) is part of my ongoing research into the design and use of auditory warnings. Although electronic alarms and reminders, ranging from the blaring to the barely audible, pervade contemporary life, most people don't realise that *someone somewhere* has actually designed (sometimes well, sometimes poorly) each and every beep and siren we hear. I have constructed all of the sounds in my work electronically, from scratch – that is, they are not samples of existing alarms. Such is the potential psychoacoustic power of these sounds that my first public work with them was banned by the City Council of Copenhagen for "frightening and confusing" visitors to the Town Hall Square.

Auditory Warnings introduces some of the key concepts in the design, use and effects of auditory warnings.

The second piece is a quote from a confidential report made by an airline pilot following an in-flight incident which highlights the need for auditory warnings in critical environments to be designed not only to convey clear information but also to work effectively in noisy situations and in conjunction with each other.
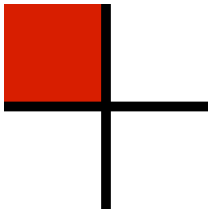
Orange Alert makes use of an excerpt from 'The Sound of Sirens', the work banned in Copenhagen, to animate a text from The Onion, an online magazine, read by Dr Michael Orgel. The text refers to the US Department of Homeland Security's Advisory System, which lists 5 colour-coded 'Threat Conditions' with regard to the risk of terrorist attacks (Low, Guarded, Elevated, High and Severe) and urges citizens to "remain vigilant, prepared and ready to deter terrorist attacks" at all levels (http://www.dhs.gov). The piece speaks for itself.

the author

Sound artist and composer John Wynne's recent work moves in several very different directions. He is engaged in a series of 'sonic portraits': the first of these, *James Kamotho Kimani*, was selected for the ISCM World Music Days in Copenhagen, webcast by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, released on CD by Unknown Public in London and broadcast in Berlin, London, Toronto and San Francisco. The second piece, *Upcountry*, premiered in the Purcell Room in London and at the AGON Festival in Milan and has been widely broadcast, most recently on Radiotopia Kunstradio as part of Ars Electronica in Vienna. John has recently returned from a research and recording trip to the Kalahari Desert which will provide materials for new work including a sonic portrait to be released by ElectroShock in Moscow, a gallery installation and an experimental 'composed documentary' commissioned by BBC Radio 3. Funded by a research grant from the London Institute, John worked with linguist Dr Andy Chebanne and his field recordings from this trip have been donated to the University of Botswana to aid in research and literacy projects with some of the disappearing 'click languages' of the

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[1] To listen to any of the audio pieces, please click on its title.

Khoisan peoples. An article about John's work with his recordings from Africa has been published in the book *Sonic Geography Imagined and Remembered*; a recent conference presentation at the Tate Modern in London can be viewed at http://www.tate.org.uk/audiovideo/fieldworks/default.htm#27. Wynne also designs auditory warnings for installations. His first work with electronic alarms and reminders was for the LYD/Galleri in Copenhagen's Town Hall Square, using 25 speakers hidden under the paving stones: *The Sound of Sirens* was banned by the city council, which claimed that some members of the public were "frightened and confused". The piece was later released by Underwood Audio, curated in a concert at the Goethe Institute in London and broadcast in London, Berlin and Toronto. Further work with auditory warnings includes *Cry Wolf*, which made use of a huge installation using 25 computer-controlled speakers installed in a vertical grid against the 4-storey central wall of Kiasma, Helsinki's Museum of Contemporary Art (see http://www.kiasma.fi/arkisto/transience). In 2000, he designed tiny interactive audio devices for the gallery installation *Grasping and Clinging* in collaboration with visual artist Denise Hawrysio in Bangkok, Thailand. *Response Time,* a large-scale, site-specific octaphonic installation in the urban park at Toronto's Metro Hall followed his residency in the Sound Travels Studio in that city in the summer of 2001 and was described in one review as "an ambient, ghost-like presence". *Do(n't)* was an installation for the European Group for Organisational Studies in Barcelona in 2002. *Untitled (Auditory Alarm Study 6.03)* was installed in the Wapping Hydraulic Power Plant as part of the Society for the Promotion of New Music's Sixtieth Anniversary celebrations in 2003. Work for film and TV includes soundtracks for films selected for the London Film Festival, the BBC Short Film Festival, the Whitechapel Open and the European Media Art Festival, as well as for the documentary *The Trial of Freedom*, which aired on Channel 4 in the UK and on CTV in Canada. Wynne has been visiting artist on four occasions in the Tila/Aika (Time/Space) department of the Helsinki Academy of Fine Art and is doing his PhD at Goldsmiths College, London. He is currently Senior Lecturer in Sound Arts at the London Institute's LCP School of Media and was recently awarded Lottery funding for an experimental radio documentary about African gospel churches in South London. He has a fortnightly radio programme called *Upcountry* on ResonanceFM, London (http://www.resonancefm.com).
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ephemera I **silent sounds #4**

critical dialogues on organization

Talk and Silence: Instantiations and Articulations

Carmen Kuhling, Kieran Keohane and Donncha Kavanagh

abstract

This paper considers the desire for unity, reconciliation and consensus underpinning three models of talking – namely, 'the meeting', 'the dyadic love relationship', and 'the psychoanalytic session'. We highlight the three domains' shared intellectual and historical heritage wherein talk is seen as a mode of achieving unity (of the group, of the dyad, or of the self) and conversely 'silence' is seen as pathology. Through looking at the role of silence in the works of Lacan, Joyce, and Beckett, we then examine how conversations with a collective, an Other, the self, etc. can all be enriched by ambivalence, antagonism and, in particular, silence. In contrast to the conventional understanding, silence is not the 'end' of understanding, but rather a new beginning. From this perspective, silence can be the basis upon which we can begin to imagine a principled relationship with the Other.

Introduction: Talk about Talk

In this paper we will examine distinct perspectives on the role of 'talk' in the relationship between self and other. We will argue that one way of interpreting the desire underpinning the imperative 'to talk' in contemporary society is to see it as a desire for reconciliation, unity, and consensus, a desire that often artificially reconciles difference and antagonism. Our main aim is to elaborate the desires underpinning various models of talking – namely, 'the meeting', 'the dyadic love relationship', and 'the psychoanalytic session' – and to show how they misrecognise the democratic, therapeutic and creative potential of silence. Silence is often in contemporary literature defined relationally as a condition the Master imposes on the Slave, as a force that renders 'women,' 'the subaltern' and other Others unable to 'speak' for themselves. While we do not wish to undercut the regressive effect of 'being silenced', this paper concludes by examining silence from a different point of view; from the position that 'talk' can sometimes silence the Other and lead to epistemological regression, disguised as reflexivity, into the 'self'. We will also look at how silence can inspire creativity in the self, as well as a tolerance for ambivalence, indeterminacy, and difference.

The specific examples we will use to illustrate this point about the desire for unity underpinning the contemporary imperative to 'talk' are; 'the meeting', 'the dyadic love

relationship', and 'the psychoanalytic session'. First, we will look at 'the meeting' as the archetypical model of the collective conversation. Second, we will look at the similarities between the desire for consensus underpinning the meeting, and the desire for unity in the love relationship – the archetypical model of the self-Other conversation – which, within contemporary culture's idealisation of romantic love, means conversation can become what Sennett calls a '*destructive Gemeinschaft*' (Sennett, 1977) or an oppressive 'absolute sincerity' (Bauman, 1991: 204). Third, we will also look at how, contrary to Freud's intent, the notion of the 'talking cure' within the medicalised model of psychoanalysis sees 'talk' as a means to achieving a unified ego and conversely sees 'silence' as a pathology. In the final section, we will examine how conversations with a collective, an Other, the self, etc. are all enriched by living with ambivalence and antagonism.

Meetings and the Desire for Consensus with the Collective Other

An important theme in the history of organisations since the French and American Revolutions is that of the generalisation and dissemination of the principles of the Democratic Revolution. In other words, the various ways through and by which the principles of the governance of power by communication and agreement become generalised beyond the central institutions of the legislature to become co-extensive with other diverse parts of the social and body politic. The prime example is broadening and deepening the franchise from 'men of property' to 'common men', to women, to colonials. Our interest in this context, however, is the extension of a form of communication developed in the core institutions of parliamentary democracy to the wider society. The key institution is one which was first identified by the mutually admiring gazes of the French and American Revolutions, represented in Alexis deTocqueville's *Democracy in America* (Tocqueville and Mayer, 1969); namely 'the meeting'. The most fundamental institution that deTocqueville identifies in *Democracy in America* is not the House of Representatives, or the Senate, Governors' or Mayoral offices, but 'deliberative assemblies': informal meetings of diverse publics, town hall gatherings of community and interest groups of all sorts that convene and dissolve to discuss issues, and to form agreement on a collective course of action.

The standard rules by which meetings in the diverse organisational forms of modern society are conventionally governed are set out in *Robert's Rules*, a text which has come to prescribe the 'international style' of the rational form of communication in modern meetings. *Robert's Rules of Order: Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies* ([1876] 1970)[1] was first drawn up by a US Army Engineering officer, Henry M. Robert, who, when called upon, found himself ill equipped to preside over a church meeting. His military duties transferred him around the US, where he found what he described as 'virtual parliamentary anarchy' since every member from a different part of the country had differing ideas of correct procedure. 'To bring order out of chaos' he

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1 First edition, 1876; revised editions: 1876, 1893, 1915, 1943, 1951, 1970, 1981, 1990, 2000. *Robert's Rules* is available on the internet at [http://www.constitution.org/rror/rror--00.htm]

wrote *Robert's Rules of Order*. Through *Robert's Rules,* the military tradition of a bureaucratically ordered, hierarchical command structure and the mathematical precision of engineering, are brought to bear on the egalitarian and residually anarchistic forms of American democracy. The *Rules* synopsise and standardise parliamentary procedure to make the basics of parliamentary procedure available to the public and to organisational life beyond the formal institutions of the legislature. *Robert's Rules* expresses a methodology for mediating and resolving social conflict, facilitating and legitimating decision making, optimising collective resources and expediting collective action. They quickly became the standard procedure for the conduct of 'deliberative assemblies' – meetings – voluntary, commercial, charitable and legislative.

Insofar as the *Rules* have become highly generalised if not universalised feature of organisational life of modern society – from the Community Council to the Boardroom, to the trade union and left-wing faction meeting – they are a vital moment in the expansion and institutionalisation of the democratic revolution. Meetings organised according to *Robert's Rules* have become a familiar and basic staple of the everyday life and workaday culture of modern organisations. They represent the extension of Parliamentary democratic procedure beyond the confines of the legislature, and reciprocally the meeting culture of everyday life of organisations feed back into the regeneration and the legitimation of parliamentary democracy. As with the institution of Parliament, the meeting functions as a methodology for rationally governing the organization by both resolving conflict between different parties within the organization, and simultaneously, by harnessing and optimising the creative energies of the various parties comprising the organisation.

An exemplary instance is the role of the meeting in the private business corporation, as this is the site of the most trenchant sources of conflict in modern society – the conflict of interest between Capital and Labour. An important theme in contemporary industrial relations and management science holds that industrial conflict can be reconciled harmoniously at the level of the individual firm. In the wider society, corporatist 'social partnership' agreements are painstakingly hammered out and worked up from meetings between shop floor and management, through unions and employers organisations, to political parties and the legislature. The 'share-holder' societies and 'social-partnerships' of Blair's UK and throughout the EU – as well as the healthy body politics of the late modern liberal capitalist democracies – are premised ultimately on the democratic structuring function of the meeting.

Thus, the meeting contains within it two opposing tensions: that which optimises the creative energies of the parties involved, and that which seeks to reconcile opposing interests in the interests of power. We see the clearest material correspondence of this desire for consensus in the phenomenon of 'the Minutes', an abstracted report of agreement purportedly arrived at, reified and fetishized as an objective record compiled by a 'recording secretary' a split sub-species of the subject of the Chair, that fixes the basis of the next meeting. In some ways, the process of minute-taking reflects the best of the democratic impetus towards compromise and process. For instance, positions dissenting from the majority view may be recorded in the minutes, and criticisms and revisions of the minutes are invited at subsequent meetings. However, from another

point of view, the final version of the minutes can become fetishized as an objective record of 'consensus' which retroactively imposes consensus on the collective. For instance, the chair has control over the pace of the meeting and the length of time dedicated to dissent, and therefore dissenting views run the risk of being inadequately represented or expressed in meetings if the chair judges to be irrelevant to the collective decision-making process (expressed, for instance, in the claim of 'time constraints'). In this way, the Minutes can at times gloss over so much that actually went on – the Minutes themselves become a symptom of the problem of the collective body of modern organisational life and its continuing neurosis and disorders: namely that consensus is imposed on the meeting, that a unity of desire and purpose, agreement, order, is superimposed on the collective body.

While bureaucratic, legal-rational and instrumental discourses are seen as essential to the efficient achievement of the ends of goal-oriented modern organisations, they are equally the source of stultification, motivational disturbance, failure to adapt and innovate, and inertia. Our point here is a more fundamental Weberian argument that is underdeveloped in Habermas's less subtle, undialectical rational-linear schema: that rules and procedures in meetings have tended to become rigidly institutionalised. The way in which procedures in deliberative assemblies have tended to become rigidly institutionalised is illustrated by a well-known scene from the Monty Python film '*Life of Brian'* wherein a radical faction, The People's Front of Judea, are conducting a meeting, convened in accordance with *Roberts Rules of Order*:

> John Cleese character (Reg, the Chair): 'Right now, Item Four: Attainment on world supremacy within the next five years. Francis, you have been doing some work on this?'
>
> Michel Palin Character: 'Yeah, Thank you, Reg. Well, quite frankly, siblings, I think 5 years is optimistic unless we can smash the Roman empire in the next 12 months.
>
> Twelve months, yeah?
>
> Twelve months. And let's face it, as empires go, this is the big one. So we've got to get up off our assess, and stop just talking about it!'
>
> All: 'Hear hear!'
>
> Eric Idle character: 'I agree. It's action that counts, not words, and we need action now!'
>
> John Cleese character: 'You're right, we can sit around here all day, talking, passing resolutions and making clever speeches; it's not as if one Roman soldier…'
>
> Michael Palin: 'So let's stop gabbing on about it, it's completely pointless, and it's getting us nowhere,'
>
> All: Right!
>
> Eric Idle: 'I agree, this is a complete waste of time'.
>
> Judith (breathlessly enters) 'They've arrested Brian!'
>
> All: What?
>
> Judith: They've dragged him off; they are going to crucify him!
>
> John Cleese: 'Right. This calls for immediate discussion. A completely new motion! New motion: That there be immediate action, once the vote has been taken, in the light of fresh information from sibling Judith…'

> Judith: 'Reg, for god's sake, it's perfectly simple. All you have to do is go out that door now, and try to stop the Romans from nailing him up. It's happening Reg, it's actually happening, Reg! Can't you understand? Arrgh!'
>
> John Cleese character: 'A little ego trip from the feminists.'

This is funny because it speaks to a 'truth' we all recognise. What it highlights and plays with is the bureaucratisation and juridification of *Robert's Rules* – a tendency towards formal rationalisation that runs counter to the initial intention to promote and facilitate the flow of communication and thus aid in the institutionalisation of substantive rationality in normatively binding agreement (as opposed to an art of interpretation). This fetishisation of method apparent in the Monty Python example extends far beyond the parameters of the meeting, but rather is a symptom of our emphasis on technical procedures and the formalistic organisation of knowledge. The John Cleese character's refusal to act until a motion and a vote is taken paradoxically impedes rather than facilitates the functioning of collective decision-making.

Contemporary critiques of the subject challenge the rational version of the subject presumed by the institutional form of the modern meeting. First, challenges to the rationality, coherence and unity of the subject call into question the subject's capacity to be present to itself in the first place, and thus the assumption that the subject has unmediated access to its own desires. In Young's words, "subjects all have multiple desires which do not cohere; they attach meanings to objects without always being aware of each layer or their connections . . . I cannot understand another as he or she understands himself or herself, because he or she does not completely understand himself or herself" (Young, 1990: 310-311). In short, constituting the desires of the 'we' is difficult if those of the 'I' cannot be adequately represented.

In conclusion, our first point is that 'the meeting' in contemporary organisational culture is premised on the rational ideal that 'talk' leads to consensus, or the belief that through adhering to formal rules and procedures, collective decision-making or a consensus can be achieved or at least be approximated. However, this is not to disavow the democratic intent behind this ideal of collective consultation, or the need for meetings, for clearly meetings are necessary, and in many instances the only forum where individuals have an opportunity to have 'a voice' within certain organisational structures.

The Dyadic Love Relationship: 'Talk' and the Desire for Unity with the Other

This notion that 'talk' leads to unity is of course not only relevant to work life, but is even more applicable to personal life. Specifically, we are driven by the imperative 'to talk', to have 'free and open communication'. This imperative towards 'absolute sincerity' (Bauman, 1991: 204), to talk out conflict, not only applies to meetings, but applies to our most intimate relationships. In our intimate love relationships we are also taught to 'talk it out', 'express ourselves', 'bare our souls', and we are expected to aspire to unrealistic standards of intimacy and communication with our significant others in our lives. We are expected to, in Bauman's words, "'open oneself up' to the

partner, to share with the partner the whole, the most private truth about one's inner life, to be 'absolutely sincere' to hide nothing, however upsetting the information may be for the partner" (Bauman, 1991: 204). Sennett calls this imperative to bare one's soul '*destructive Gemeinschaft*'.[2] For him, it is founded on the belief that "identity may indeed be freely construed by talking, that there is no 'society' as something different from intimate transactions" (Sennett, 1977: 196). Bauman describes this idea that continuous self-revelation and self-disclosure forges intimacy as "identity building through confession" (Bauman, 1991: 204), and characterises this unrealistic version of intimacy as 'destructive communion'.

Bauman's and Sennett's description of the 'destructive communion' and the oppressive dimension of 'absolute sincerity' echoes Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic: the self cannot be fully conscious unless it is recognised by an other; "self consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that it exists only in being acknowledged" (Hegel, 1961: 248). However, being recognised by another requires that we recognise the other as self as well; we must first acknowledge the other. The danger is that acknowledging the other can lead to a confusion of boundaries between self and other, or in simple terms, we can get so caught up in, or lost in the other that we lose the self. The self must thus find a balance between the recognition of the other and assertion of the self, and must maintain a balance, a tension, a midpoint between self-assertion and recognition; they must "recognise themselves as mutually recognising one another" (Hegel, 1961: 249). However, in Hegel's dialectic, when two selves meet, this balance between self-assertion and recognition goes through imbalances, and the two integral moments of self-consciousness (assertion and recognition) become separated; and one self begins to negate, kill or erase the other. Here is where the classic master / slave struggle begins, and inequality emerges between the master and the slave, for in Hegel's view the self does not want to recognise the other.

For instance, 'absolute sincerity' is a call for recognition, in that it requires the partner to listen, but also self-assertion, because it requires the partner to accept and give agreement. In Bauman's terms, this places an enormous burden on the partner because "the partner is asked to give agreement to things which do not necessarily arouse his or her enthusiasm, moreover, he or she is asked to be 'sincere', and 'honest' in reply" (Bauman, 1991: 204). Thus, this idealised model of absolute intimacy enslaves both individuals, posits an overly harmonious version of 'oceanic oneness', and obscures antagonisms, differences, and ambivalences. As Bauman says:

> The destructiveness of communion sought by the partners in love is caused first and foremost by the implication of reciprocity. To sustain the animus, to go on seeking genuine mutuality – one needs the courage to face the possibility of drawbacks and reversals. One must also learn to live with the shortcomings of the partner. Once aimed in both directions, intimacy makes negotiation and compromise necessary. And yet it is precisely negation and compromise which one or both partners may be too impatient, or too self-concerned, to bear lightly. After all, two distinct often

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2   The German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies introduced the term *Gemeinschaft* in his classic work *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. For Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft* describes a romanticised version of intimate relations exemplified in the community, family and neighbourhood in contrast to the instrumental, rationalist nature of *Gesellschaft* exemplified in the city, the state and the organisation. Sennet points us to the darker dimension of the imperative to bare one's soul in the intimate relations of *Gemeinschaft*.

> contradictory personal projections must be accepted and affirmed simultaneously – a task always difficult and often impossible. (1991: 204-5)

Put another way, versions of the dyadic love relationship which ultimately seek to close the gap between subject and object, and articulate difference as something that has to be overcome, are doomed to failure. This is not to say that all attempts at achieving a strong communication should be abandoned, but rather that such formulations must take account of the inevitable antagonism of the social, the impossibility of 'fixing difference', the contingent character of identity, and of the fragmented, multiple and conflicting desires of the subject. The problem with complete mutuality, merging, oceanic oneness, is that it lies outside the symbolic order.

In concluding this section, how do we construct a principled relationship to difference, to the Other, that keeps the Other alive in his/ her Otherness, and resists closing the subject-object gap in favour of annihilation on the one hand, or total identification and merging with the Other on the other hand? One way is to recognise the limits of 'talk', and the impossibility of the 'complete' reconciliation' of antagonism. The problem, in Hegel's terms, is how to "cancel the opposition but preserve the difference" (Hegel, 1961: 359). Irigaray alludes to this when, in formulating sexual difference, she suggests that we tend to "consummate with or consume the other" (Irigaray, 1987: 35), by consummating or merging with the Other and denying difference and incorporating it as part of the self, or by consuming the Other, annihilating or devouring it. Instead she suggests that we should retain a sense of the wonder we first experience when encountering difference: "Wonder might allow (the subject and the object) to retain an autonomy based on their difference, and give them a space of freedom or attraction, a possibility of separation or alliance" (Irigaray, 1987: 82). This autonomy is based on the recognition that the interval between the subject and the object should not be crossed, but rather the gap should remain open so that one is never consummated/ consumed by the other. This gap, this space makes the inevitability of difference, of discontinuity, of the antagonism of the social. It is only in the preservation of this space that a tolerance of difference can be formulated.

The Fantasy of 'The Integrated Ego' through 'The Talking Cure'

Psychoanalysis, at least in the way it has been medicalised, also believes in the possibility of unifying the divided parts of the ego through talk. This fantasy of integration apparent in contemporary self-help rhetoric is to some degree attributable to the tendency for orthodox psychoanalysis to subscribe to an overly unified notion of the ego and the faith in the success of psychoanalysis as the 'talking cure'. If the principles of democratic deliberation promise to resolve conflict and optimise the energies of the modern social body – even notoriously troublesome industrial and commercial bodies – then the same is true of the individual member's body. Freud's revolutionary science of psychoanalysis shows that at the level of the individual body there are violent and debilitating intrusions into the normal life of sufferers: neuroses, which are symptoms of underlying tensions and conflict between Id and Superego. These symptoms can be relieved and neuroses 'cured' by a therapeutic intervention of rationalised communication. As in the fundamental transformation of parliamentary democracy,

psychoanalysis rests on premises that mirror and extend the fundamental transformative institutions of parliamentary democracy, namely that violent inner conflict in the mind of the subject can be averted and 'cured' by representation and transference. Previously silent and inarticulate forces, unconscious conflicting desires forcibly repressed and giving rise to violence and madness are represented through psychoanalysis: they are voiced and given expression, negotiated and come to terms with. Through the process of the 'talking cure', the subject could let their unconscious 'speak', become reconciled with the divided parts of him/herself, and thus achieve a more unified, harmonious and organised ego. The therapeutic intervention that makes this reconciliation and reorganisation of the ego possible is Transference, through the mediating institution of the Analyst who convenes the meeting and acts as an objective, impartial, and neutral arbiter.[3] The transference of conflicted desires onto the analyst in the formally structured forum of the psychoanalyst's clinic is the micro level equivalent of the organised meeting at the mezzo, and the Parliamentary session at the macro social level.

If 'the meeting' is the structuring unit of social relations in the discourse of organization, then 'the session' is the pivotal social encounter in the discourse of psychoanalysis. Our argument is that not only did both emerge in the same epoch (towards the end of the nineteenth century); they also share the same discursive 'gene pool' (i.e. the transformative institutions of parliamentary democracy). Building on this, we can interpret both the meeting and the session in new and interesting ways by analysing each phenomenon in terms of the other. So, for instance, corresponding with *Robert's Rules*, the standard (and standardising) code regulating and governing the conduct of the analytic session is the *Rules of Practice of the International Psychoanalytic Association* (IPA) drawn up by Freud himself in several papers on technique, e.g. 'On Beginning the Treatment' (1913) and others, collected in *Standard Edition XII*. This Code of Practice was institutionalised by the constituent member organisations of professional psychoanalysts such as the British Psychoanalytic Association (BPA) and the Societé Psychoanalytique de Paris (SPP).

Significantly, throughout his exposition of the principles of psychoanalysis, Freud has recourse to the metaphor of democratic institutions – and to the institution of the meeting in particular – to illustrate his theory. In the *Introductory Lectures* (Freud, 1933) and in *Civilisation & its Discontents* (Freud, 1930), he uses the example of a disorderly intruder interrupting a meeting, his being ruled out of order by the Chairman, and eventually his being excluded by doormen, to illustrate the rational governance of the irrational forces of the unconscious by the social institutions of the superego. In Freud's theoretical exposition it is the structural position of objectivity / neutrality that the analyst occupies in relation to the analysand, his symptom, and his trauma, that enables the phenomenon of Transference. The analyst is 'in the Chair'; s/he[4] is the 'Chairman' or simply the 'Chair.' In the session [as in the meeting] everything is 'addressed to the Chair', 'passes through…', is aired and circulated – transferred – to, by and through 'the Chair.' The analyst is an ear on the chair who 'gives a hearing to

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3   This reflects the chairman's objectivity as set out in *Robert's Rules*: "If the chairman has even the appearance of being a partisan, he loses much of his ability to control those who are on the opposite side of the question" (Robert, [1876] 1970: s58).

4   Although for Freud it was, of course, a 'he'; the same applies to Lacan for that matter.

the conflicted discourse of the subject. S/he occupies a structural position of separation and distanciation from the analysand – seated alongside the patient on the couch, a little behind, facing away from, eyes averted from the analysand. In the symbolic order and imaginative structure of the psychoanalytic session, the analyst is indifferent to the subject matter of the analysand. 'Psychoanalysis', Lacan says, "is a relationship which, by its very rules, excludes all real contact" (Lacan, 1994: 14). All this is analogous to the position of the Chair presiding over the meeting. Even if psychically, empirically, the participants are seated round a table on identical chairs, the Chair occupies a place apart in the symbolic order and imaginative structure of the meeting – a place of remove and distance from the subject matter, a position of relative objectivity, neutrality.[5]

Like a Chairman, the issue (trauma, and associated feelings) must be fully aired. Conflicting emotions are transferred onto the analyst, and the repetition of these conflicts represented now in a new social relation, enables rememoration.

> Each individual hysterical symptom immediately and permanently disappeared when we had succeeded in bringing clearly to light the memory of the (traumatic) event by which it was provoked and in arousing the accompanying affect, and when the patient had described that event in the greatest detail and had put the affect into words. (Breuer and Freud, 1950)

This 'act of becoming aware' is an important part of the work. It is by this means that the 'talking cure' is effected: the airing of the problem – verbalisation of the trauma and the associated affects (feelings) is an important part of the process – akin to the centrality given to 'debate' in *Robert's Rules* – but in and of itself it is not sufficient. What is sought is to precipitate the subject's understanding towards deciding what sense to attach to the original event (Lacan, 1994: 18). This is how a Chair works. But it is not the whole job, according to Lacan and indeed to Freud; the conclusive work of the art of psychoanalysis is rememoration; reorganising the significance of the events remembered.

Both the meeting and the session exhibit similar processes of institutionalisation. The meeting in the bureaucratisation and juridification of *Robert's Rules*; the session in the medicalised institutionalisation of psychoanalysis as a technique bounded by technical rules (as opposed to an art of interpretation). Both processes of institutionalisation were driven by a modernist privileging of Reason and a desire for a unified – or at least unifiable – subject: that agreement can be reached, closure achieved, consensus obtained between opposed groups, the right decision agreed upon, truth arrived at by perfect clarity of communication, expounded by Habermas's Universal Pragmatics, and the Ideal Speech Act. As we have seen, one material correspondence of this desire is the phenomenon of the Minutes, in which participants sometimes do not recognise 'their' meeting. Just as each new meeting begins with a review of the previous meeting, each therapeutic session begins with a 'review' of the previous session and possibly a revision or reinterpretation of the material. This is not always successful, however, either in the meeting or in the session, as clients may not recognise their self in the abbreviated interpretations of the artless analyst. And just as the minutes superimpose

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5   This is explicitly addressed in *Robert's Rules* wherein it is stated that the Chairperson "In referring to himself he should never use the personal pronoun; he generally says, 'the chair', which means the presiding officer of the assembly" (Robert, [1876] 1970: s58).

an order on the collective body and gloss over and are silent about so much that actually went on, so too it is with the subject of psychoanalysis, where from another perspective there is no such order and consensus.

Silence in Lacan

In this section of this paper, we will consider how developments in (and deconstruction of) psychoanalysis as it was becoming institutionalised, especially the contribution of Jacques Lacan, can present a novel perspective on 'the meeting' in particular, and organising in general. Aligning with the special issue's theme, we will focus on the issue of silences and narrative breakdowns (cata-hexes) in the session and, by extension, in the meeting. For instance, some of the failures of clinical psychoanalysis, Lacan suggests, stem from Freud's own tendency to skip over the time intervals in which the event remains latent in the subject. In short, he annuls the times for understanding in favour of the moments of concluding which precipitate the mediation of the subject towards deciding the sense to attach to the original event. Freud himself, let us be clear, vacillated between seeing the unconscious as ultimately impenetrable, the subject as irredeemably split and enigmatic, and psychoanalysis as an art that was doomed to end in disappointment, and the overly rational medical model of the subject, psychoanalysis as an extension of scientific method, and the belief in the possibility – probability even – of achieving a 'cure.' But whereas Freud's genius was in maintaining these two diametrically opposed paradigms in dynamic dialectical tension, after the master's death the dominant form that psychoanalysis assumed was the rational medicalised model. It was this that Lacan opposed.

When Lacan began his training and practice of psychoanalysis, the SPP followed strictly the traditional Rules of Practice of the IPA. These Rules of Practice had the status of laws amongst the constituent members of the IPA. Amongst the fundamental Rules are: (i) analysis lasts for at least four years; (ii) analysis consists of at least four or five sessions per week, and (iii) a session lasts for fifty minutes. The rule governing the length of sessions was intended to govern (limit) the analyst's theoretically unlimited power. The analyst was not supposed to manipulate the time s/he devoted to a patient through arbitrary changes, and the patient had the right to speak for a length of time agreed in advance, even if s/he chose not to exercise that prerogative.

The breakaway group of which Lacan was a founding member, the Ecole Freudienne de Paris (EFP), was committed above all else to rescuing the spirit of Freudian psychoanalysis from the professional hegemony of medicine psychiatry and clinical psychology. In addition, part of Lacan's strategic plan for the EFP was for himself to exercise influence in shaping the new method (which he saw as being more true to Freud) by being Training Analyst to most of the school's members. Lacan found himself beholden to the IPA rules of clinical method, although the Rules were in danger

of becoming a constraining bureaucratic procedure, and adherence to them would limit his ability to influence the emergence of the EFP.[6]

Lacan broke the IPA rules. Long before he practised what came to be known (or infamous, depending on one's point of view) as 'short sessions', he used the technique of 'variable sessions', where he closed sessions as he saw fit. He thereby revised the rule protecting the patient's right to speak, and put the all-powerful analyst in the position of interpreter in the transference relationship. Lacan justified his breaking the rules on theoretical grounds: shorter and less frequent sessions produce a sense of frustration and separation in the patient. The point was to turn the transference relation into a dialectic by halting a session at certain significant words in order to reactivate unconscious desire.

"The unconscious needs time to reveal itself," Lacan agrees, but the question is: "how is this time to be measured" (1994: 77) ? Not by the precision of the clock, Lacan says, if only for the reason that "the malaise of modern man does not exactly indicate that this precision is in itself a liberating factor for him" (*ibid.*). We get a better idea of how to conceive of time in the discourse of psychoanalytic practice "by comparing the time [required for] the creation of a symbolic object with the moment of inattention when we let it fall" (*ibid.*). Lacan's style then, unlike *Robert's Rules*, was deliberately provocative, duplicitous and incomplete, and this created "a text that is difficult to enter and ultimately impossible to master" (Grosz, 1990: 17). Importantly, this mirrors the unconscious itself.

But even though Lacan breaks the rules and deliberately subverts the conventions of the international style of psychoanalysis, his own style of analysis continues to be developed in terms of the metaphor of the meeting, though not entirely a meeting conducted according to *Robert's Rules*. The analyst is no longer modelled after the Chairman, but plays a much more expanded, powerful and controlling role, corresponding perhaps to the role of 'General Secretary' s/he becomes the *Sujet Suppose-Savoir* (the subject supposed to know). The analyst, Lacan says,

> plays a recording role by assuming the function, fundamental in any symbolic exchange, of gathering … *la parole qui dure* [the lasting word]. As a witness called to account for the sincerity of the subject, depository of the minutes of his discourse, reference as to his exactitude, guarantor of his straightforward, custodian of his testament, scrivener of his codicils, the analyst participates in the nature of the scribe (like a recording secretary). But above all, he remains the master of the Truth of which this discourse is the progress. It is he above all who punctuates its dialectic. He is the judge of the value of this discourse. (1966: 98)

Akin to an Executive (or overly interventionist) Chairman, the analyst punctuates the discourse of the meeting: s/he hears the contribution, judges its value, and admits it or not in the discourse. The session under Lacan's chairmanship is a meeting in which the

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6   According to Roudinesco (1997), Lacan gave three lectures on this to the SPP, but he chose not to publish his position as it would set him at odds with the IPA, and in separate correspondence he assured the IPA and others that his procedure was experimental, and further that he had 'normalised' his practise (when clearly he hadn't). Apart from his presentations to the SPP and his professional correspondence on the matter, Lacan is quite explicit in his challenging the Rules governing time and the conduct of sessions in *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis* (Lacan, 1994).

Chairman silences the speaker, as a Judge silences a witness in a courtroom. But the silence that the analyst imposes is intended to provoke a more 'truthful' contribution when the meeting/ session resumes.

The second way in which Lacan uses silence is not by silencing the analysand, by abruptly interrupting his/her discourse and terminating the session, but by the analyst remaining silent him or herself when the analysand expects to hear a communication from him/ her. The analyst is the Sujet Suppose-Savoir, but s/he refuses to speak, to provide an interpretation of the analysand's revelations. Instead s/he remains silent, indifferent, as though s/he had 'turned a deaf ear' to the subject's discourse – which in fact in a sense s/he has, as the subject's discourse is 'empty'. The analyst's silence – his/ her refusal to give an interpretation – is itself an interpretation, an eloquent interpretation of the analysand's narcissistic discourse, intended to have the effect of enabling the analysand to hear for him or herself with his/ her own ears the silence – the emptiness – of his/ her own construct echoed in the analyst's silence. This, for Lacan, the confrontation of the subject with the inner silence of the self, the emptiness of his/ her own constructions of him or herself, his/ her de-centredness, might be the proper beginning of the 'talking cure'.

This is the radical import of Lacan's breaking the IPA rules about the timing of the analytic session. Whereas the Rules (Robert's and the IPA's) stipulate that the timeframe is fixed in advance, independently of the Chair, the Chair being responsible for timekeeping, in Lacan's session the analyst takes control of time and wields it as an instrument. One reason for this is that the subject can wield time against the analyst, and more importantly, ultimately against him or herself, just as in Parliament obstructionism and filibustering can become Opposition tactics to slow down and block the legislative process. By unilaterally taking control of time, the analyst disarms the analysand:

> The suspension of a session cannot *not* be experienced by the subject as a punctuation in his progress. We know very well how he calculates its coming-to-term in order to articulate it upon his own delays, or even upon his escapist refuges, how he anticipates its end by weighing it like a weapon, by watching out for it as he would a place of shelter. (Lacan, 1994: 78)

The analyst's intervention, his/ her abrupt silencing of the analysand's discourse, or his/ her own deliberate silence is calculated to eliminate ambiguity:

> It is a fact, which can be plainly seen in the study of the manuscripts of symbolic writings, whether it is a question of the Bible or of the Chinese canonicals, that the absence of punctuation in them is a source of ambiguity. The punctuation, once inserted, fixes the sense; changing the punctuation renews or upsets it; and a faulty punctuation amounts to a change for the worse. The indifference with which the cutting up of the timing interrupts the moments of haste within the subject can be fatal to the conclusion towards which his discourse was being precipitated, or can even fix a misunderstanding or misreading in it, if not furnish a pretext for a retaliatory act of guile. (Lacan, 1994: 78)

In view of the decisive importance of punctuation by silence in Lacanian psychoanalytic practice – silencing the analysand or the analyst's silence – silence must be judiciously and precisely applied. What guides its application? What is it that the analyst listens for? According to Lacan, the analyst gives his attention to "the empty word and the full word" (1994: 15).

The subject's introspective account of him or herself, which appears to be full – profound, articulate – is in fact empty: the verbose narcissistic discourse of the loquacious subject's imaginary construction of him or herself. In contrast, Lacan turns our attention to 'empty words', i.e. those words whose absences are an indication of the unconscious. The empty word is paradoxically also the 'full' word, in that it is full of the emptiness of the subject's account (i.e. his/ her unconscious). The analyst orients to the 'fullness' of the word so as to reveal its emptiness, or rather, to enable the subject to 'hear for him or herself' the emptiness of his/ her own word. Thus, for Lacan, the role of therapy is to restore the 'full word' to the patient, which occurs when the patient recognises him or herself in the unconscious. The analyst does this – tries to precipitate the subject's discourse towards truth – by punctuation, by interrupting the subject's discourse, by cutting him/ her off abruptly – Time up!

It is because the word of the subject is in fact empty that the analyst has ears 'in order not to hear' and that is the source of the classic formula of the analyst's vague, even absent minded attention; for the analyst knows already that the subject's account is empty – white noise. What is it then that is the object of the analyst's attention? S/he must learn to use the punctuation of the subject's discourse by controlling the timing of the conclusion of the session so as to regulate the yield of his/ her ears: to not listen to the empty word, but to hear in the empty word, the full word, in other words to pick up (amidst the noise of empty words) what is to be heard. And it is the silence that is most eloquent.

From the Decentred Subject to the Decentred Organization: from Lacan to Beckett and Joyce

Lacan's identification of the eloquence of silence in the psychoanalytic session is mirrored in the broader philosophy and literature of existentialism, best represented in the work of Beckett and Joyce. The ontology and epistemology of existentialism that Beckett shares with Lacan is their recognition of the Real, the Lack, underpinning all collective and subjective forms of life. Initially this radical unfixity of the world, its ultimate groundlessness and meaninglessness, is terrifying and psychosis inducing. But it is also emancipatory, as we are no longer in thrall or beholden to teleological accounts of the world. Thus, what appears to be the end of things – silence, darkness, madness – is in fact the beginning. Beckett's *The Unnamable* 'concludes' with a descent from an increasingly hysterical and incoherent babble into an abyss of silence, but the encounter with the terrifying and psychosis-inducing silence that seems to mark the end, in fact occasions a new beginning. The narration, which appears as the discourse of the insane, trails off: "perhaps they have carried me to the threshold of my story, before the door that opens on my own story, that would surprise me, if it opens, it will be I, it will be the silence, where I am, I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on" (Beckett, 1958: 414).

Throughout his career Beckett played endlessly with silence as a way of engaging with what Lyotard refers to as "working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what *will have been done*" (1984: 81). This 'postmodern' moment, as articulated by Lyotard,

is axiomatically devoid of Enlightenment grand narratives (of which, we might remind ourselves, the meeting, the psychoanalytic session and the romantic dyad are but pragmatic instantiations). Put another way, Beckett is preoccupied with how to express silence through sound, or of how to escape the inescapable signification that accompanies the words he wants to use abstractly. According to Finney "[h]is fictions are the progressive record of his fight to subdue language so that the silence of the Real might make its presence felt" (1994: 842). For instance, the male lead in *Assumption* (1929) is locked in a self-imposed silence, while Belacqua, the anti-hero in *More Pricks than Kicks* (1934), aspires to stasis and silence. Beckett's attempt to escape from the representational nature of words is mirrored in his subversion of the 'rules' of theatre, characterisation, plot and narrative; what is 'important' is routinely dismissed and the trivial becomes the momentous (pages of a script can be devoted to 'mundane' activities like making a sandwich). And Beckett possibly originated the postmodern fashion for puns, paradox, allusion, repetition, and inversion, as a (hopeless) attempt to disrupt the predictable semantic effects of language and as a way of marking the primacy of effect over intelligibility. In Beckett's bleak view of human existence – as encapsulated in the opening sentence of *Murphy* (1938): "The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new" – we delude ourselves into thinking that things are changing in order to avoid the harsh truth that life is fundamentally repetitive. Moreover, many if not most of the characters in his novels and plays believe in an illusion – that they are making progress; an illusion that Beckett lures his readers and audience to share and then recognise.

One of the literary and philosophic 'fathers' shared by Beckett and Lacan is James Joyce. That Joyce was the single most important influence on Beckett is well known, and if not readily apparent, it is explicitly stated by Beckett on numerous occasions. But after Freud (obviously!) and perhaps George Bataille, the most important influence on Lacan is arguably Joyce. In his formative years as a young medical student in Paris, Lacan was one of a small select audience present for Joyce's first readings of Ulysses. Lacan had a lifelong interest in Joyce, whom he regarded as an intellectual fellow traveller and trailblazer. He was fascinated by parallels that he saw in their biographical life-courses – cosmopolitan intellectuals with provincial roots and with fraught paternal relations. References to Joyce appear throughout Lacan's oeuvre, but especially in the later work. He discusses Joyce in his Seminar in 1973-74, and devoted his entire seminar to Joyce the following year, 1975-76. What Lacan takes from Joyce is the insight that what appears to be the discourse of the insane – the seemingly incoherent, irrational language, its enigmas and silences, may be superabundantly eloquent and over-determined with meanings. In Joyce, Lacan says, you can see how language is perfected when it knows how to play with writing. In Joyce's work,

> the signifier 'stuffs' the signified ['vient truffer'] literally 'to garnish with truffles'. It is because the signifiers fit together, combine and concertina – read Finnegans Wake – that something is produced by way of meaning ['come signifiée'] that may seem enigmatic, but clearly is closest to what we analysts – thanks to analytic discourse have to read – slips of the tongue – lapsis [para lapsis]. It is as slips that they mean something, in other words that they can be read in an infinite number of ways. But it is precisely for that reason that they are difficult to read, are read awry, or not read at all. (Lacan, 1998: 37)

To Lacan, Joyce is the archetypical example of the modern subject for whom madness, psychosis is not an anomaly, an abnormal state, but rather lives each and every day grappling with irreconcilable paradox, ambivalence and schizophrenia. The ontological and epistemological conditions of contemporary society are such that the subject – and the collective subject, society – is irredeemably, irrevocably split, suspended precariously over an abyss of indeterminacy, contingency and meaninglessness. The genius of the modern subject – exemplified by the genius of Joyce – it that we take these conditions as constitutive of and generative for modern life. What should reduce us to psychic autism and silence in fact are sources of inexhaustible loquaciousness, creativity, and articulate speech. In the seminar the following year on the central topic of the Symptom, Lacan presents Joyce as the symptom – 'le sintome Joyce' is what he calls him. In Joyce's writing especially *Finnegans Wake* (and Lacan is not alone, though he is the best qualified!) he sees the language of psychosis. Joyce himself is sane, though his father, a reprobate alcoholic spendthrift, and his daughter Lucia, a schizophrenic, are not. What is it that saves Joyce from madness? According to Lacan, Joyce's writing is the symptom (the phenomenon that 'covers' the Lack) that saved him from psychosis. Psychosis in Lacan's formulation is the unravelling of the three levels of reality: the imaginary, the symbolic, and the Real. Such a psychotic unravelling may otherwise have happened to James Joyce, Lacan believes, due to the obvious parental insufficiency, the lack of the father. And this lack at the level of the individual's (Joyce's) biography corresponds at the level of the collective subject – modern society, with the radical Lack of the Father, the lack of meaning that would give us ontological security. In Joyce's biography there is a 'deficit' of the real father, and this makes Joyce someone who bears the father's burden, in the sense that he himself has to put forth his name. Likewise, at the level of the collective, modern society has no ultimate grounds to fall back on to guarantee its institutions, but we must still 'bear the burden' and re-produce our own principles and laws. Lacan reads Joyce's oeuvre as an attempt at restoration, just as the psychoanalytic session, the intimate relation, and the meeting are attempts to 'restore' what are imagined to have been a lost unity, a lost consensus. In *Ulysses* the entire culture is called forth to become Father, Joyce remarks, and of course it is not just Joyce's father who is interpolated by the story of an ordinary man's wandering in the city, but the collective Father of modern society. "Joyce remains rooted in the father even as he rejects him", Lacan says (1998: 38). Akin to the collective subject of modern society, Joyce is forced to become his father's support in order to keep him going. Lacan's treatment of Joyce as exemplar of the relation between madness and creativity in the generation of the symptom, mirrors Freud's classic essay on Leonardo daVinci illustrating the relationship between repression (Leonardo's repression of his homosexual desire) and sublimation (Leonardo's artistic and scientific productivity). The case of Joyce is so significant, in Lacan's formulation, because his writing takes the place of his madness, not simply as a sublimation of unconscious desires in the balancing of the economics of the libido, but as the constitutive process of social integration and reproduction: the psychosis-inducing Lack is generative; it generates the especially florid symptom that is Joyce's work. But not only is this the source of creativity, simultaneously it is the process of integration; it draws together and reconciles the divided parts of the individual and collective subject. Through his writing Joyce knits together the imaginary, the symbolic and the Real.

Conclusion: Silence as a means to Living with Ambivalence

We have seen three examples of how 'talk' is perceived as a means to fully overcome antagonisms in the meeting, in a relationship, and in the psychoanalytic session. In the overzealous implementation of Roberts Rules, the ethic of 'absolute sincerity', and the institutionalisation of the talking cure through the rules of the IPA, 'talk' is seen as a means to unify the divided parts of the collective, the couple, and the ego. It is well documented in contemporary literature how this incapacity to deal with difference, to tolerate antagonism, ambivalence and openness is a legacy of the one moment of the Enlightenment project of Reason, expressed specifically through instrumental rationality, which denies its own unconsciousness. Paradoxically, the rigid institutionalisation of rules is itself based on a utopian impulse towards consensus, an impulse that needs to be pursued. Irigaray's notion of preserving the gap (between subject and object), Lacan's practice of narrative breakdowns and silence, Beckett's subversion of rules, Joyce's celebration of the 'eloquence of incoherence' are examples of how various irruptions which would allow for the more 'full' expression of antagonism, the irrational, and the unconscious that may enable us to, in the words of Hegel, "cancel the opposition but preserve the difference" (Hegel, 1961: 282).

This is not to naively celebrate chaos, indeterminacy, and confusion, but rather to point towards how moments of controlled chaos may provide a more 'full' expression of ambivalence. Lukács captures this ambivalence in his claim that we are both "secular, but yearning for the sacred, ironic but yearning for the absolute, individualistic, but yearning for the wholeness of community, asking questions but receiving no answers, fragmented but yearning for imminent totality" (Lukács, 1971: 189). A 'full' expression of ambivalence, like 'full' consensus is however only ever an impossible horizon, a "vanishing point" (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 136) towards which rational discourse may strive, but which it will never reach. However, allowing these moments can perhaps enable more complex forms of representation, but also can enable us to be more reflexive about aspects of organisational and political life which express this desire for reconciliation.

Perhaps the desire for unity and consensus that represents both the best and the worst aspects of our Enlightenment heritage can be used as a means to establishing a new, and perhaps provisional unity in meeting contexts that can be contested, reformed, and renegotiated. This living with ambivalence is an oft-overlooked feature of organisation theory and organising practice. For example, the interest in chaos theory is but one instance of the unease with rationalistic models of organising that we have inherited from the Enlightenment, and illustrates our ambivalence towards modernity's propensity to impose order on chaos. An example of a meeting practice which attempts to reach the objectives of consensus in more dialogical fashion than the imposition of Roberts Rules, but in a way which lies outside the boundaries of formal meeting is given by Schwartz (1998), who implicitly advocates an alternative to the classical meeting when he promotes the idea of 'strategic conversations', which he sees as an extension of "the informal conversations that take place everywhere – in the 'invisible' strategy sessions of the elevator ride, the lunch room or the car pool" (Schwartz, 1998: 222). We might articulate this idea with Spivak's more politically charged position of 'strategic essentialism' which she sees as "a strategic use of positivist essentialism in a

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scrupulously visible political interest" (Spivak *et al.*, 1996: 214). The deconstruction and reconstruction of modern meeting practices which takes account of the possibilities for a more 'full' representation of antagonism can lead to new, and hopefully more complex versions of consensus, for as Laclau and Mouffe (1985) claim, the deconstruction of existing meta-narratives can, and indeed should, lead to the possibility of a new unity. The irony is that in writing, we are left with the impossibility of representing both silence and its liminal aspects. Silence, in the end, is reduced to punctuation. Period.

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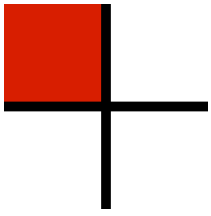
Shadows of Silence

Jerzy Kociatkiewicz and Monika Kostera

abstract

In this paper, an observation of how silence, as well as some sound, is performed and utilized in a work setting of computer programmers provides us with an opportunity to reflect more generally upon the issues of silence and communication, as well as upon some aspects of spirituality and socially constructed spaces. Our study is also an attempt to highlight benefits that the shadowing method provides for researching concepts that resist easy verbalization.

Introduction

Silence can be many things. It may seriously disrupt a conversation, making its continuation impossible or difficult, changing its tracks. It may mean that one is unable to speak, because of sudden shyness, high emotion, both hate and love can make that effect, both the unwillingness to talk with the other, and the desperate desire to do so. It may be a way to concede that one has nothing to say, the confession of the lack of knowledge: although this kind of modest ignorance is very rare. Silence can also be the expression of wisdom, of the knowledge that insight is beyond words. It can form the passage into the empty space. The empty space is a sphere of reality which is unclassified and unclaimed, the margin where change can be initiated (Kostera, 2000). Neither a cleared away space, nor a spot wiped clean of all things, it is an absence of expectations, a readiness to embrace an ambivalent interpretation of reality. Chaos, on which rests a fragile socially constructed science (Bauman, 1991) can be encountered, and from it creation may take origin. It is not a place, nor a form of reality, but a state of mind.

In an earlier paper we explored such emptiness, when we purposefully walked around in unused and forgotten parts of various official buildings, such as universities, public administration buildings, houses where we ourselves lived (Kociatkiewicz and Kostera, 1999). We sought to adopt an anthropological frame of mind

> expressed by not taking social realities for granted. This means, on the one hand, modesty and openness toward new worlds and new meanings, and on the other, a constant urge to problematize, to turn what seems familiar and understandable upside down and inside out. (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992: 72)

We observed reality from an unusual perspective, enjoying the feeling of freedom and undefined presence. We gave up any preconceived pictures we might have had, resigned from interpreting what we saw, we observed. At the same time we did not feel that we were trespassing on someone else's territory, like we often otherwise do while engaging in observation. We were in no man's land, free and lonely, and yet not lonely at all, abandoning the illusion of order usually imposed on perceived realities. However, we did not regret the loss, as it offered the possibility not only of altering perception, but also of perceiving the chaos underpinning reality that allows freedom to create, and freedom to wonder.

Silence can also be the space for important feelings and awareness to evolve within us. This aspect of silence is strongly related to the empty spaces, and also to the wisdom of listening and looking. Falling in love, and refraining from giving it a name for some time, can bring the experience of the sacred. Silence can enable feelings to develop, unnamed and undefined, until the person becomes one with them, and then using the word, 'love', makes the person aware of the metaphorical, rather than shaping and causal, character of the name. Feelings that are both fragile and powerful transcend the thin lines of what is worn, what is carried, what is utilized. They can remind the person of the divine that is neither outside nor beyond; it is within us. This is the reason why some people, when they are creating something – a painting, a poem, or an essay – refuse to talk about it. Talking during the creation may take some of the fun away, it may also interfere with the creative processes. And the relation between talking and creation is one of the topics of our study.

In our research on emptiness, we remained silent and invisible, much like the spaces we wished to explore. This time, we were more noticeable, though no less silent – our field research consisted of non-participant observation and shadowing of a computer programmer, undertaken with the express aim to explore silence in an organized setting. Shadowing (Czarniawska, 1998) is a technique in which the researcher follows the observed subject throughout his or her work day, trying to get a relatively complete sense of the setting of that person's work, and the social processes it involves. Obviously, this is done only with the research subject's full agreement.

We received the permission to shadow a programmer working in a company producing custom databases, mostly for corporate clients. Because that person's work turned out to be not only stationary, but also carried out in a room occupied by other people as well, we were able to combine shadowing with observing those people. While we were up front about our interest in the whole organization, the observer's primary identity at the company was of a person shadowing the one programmer. This proved quite beneficial for the study, as the other IT specialists did not feel under scrutiny and found it rather easy to ignore the observer. The person we shadowed seemed somewhat more constrained by the researcher's presence, at least initially, which is not surprising as shadowing is emotionally draining to both the observed and the observer. As shadowing is an intensely personal form of observation, it is particularly well suited for researching subjects that are difficult to verbalize and talk about in everyday language. Silence fits such description perfectly.

A programmer is a creative professional, a person who has knowledge and whose work consists in translating the knowledge into a language that makes it possible to work with computers. Much of his or her creative work is done in silence. The individual we have observed works for a rather unusual Polish company, where creativity is regarded as very attractive and orderliness is disdained as ugly. The director of this company has symbolically chosen an office for himself located in the cellar, in a room converted from a bathroom. His office is completely chaotic – devoid of order and linearity but also of emptiness. The entire company space is characterized by a living chaos out of which creativity is expected to emerge on daily basis. The person we have observed works, however, in a different setting. He is taken out of the company context and sent out to a branch office located in the building of a client company, in order to work with concrete practical issues. In his relocation, he also somehow fulfills the role of the company's emissary of anarchic creativity. Neither the headquarters nor the branch office are an empty space and our interest was, this time, different. While silence of the empty space was outside organization, or even outside organizing, in this study our emphasis is intra-organizational, the absence of sound in a better defined setting.

Actually, here we touch the first dilemma that we faced in trying to capture silence, as it can only be defined negatively. The most obvious proposition would be to see it as the absence of sound, but while being a very useful one, it is not the only possibility. Much of the talking we encountered during our observation was conducted through computer networks. All of it involved typing text and no sound (or just the subdued sound of keyboarding) was produced. At the same time, the activity was referred to as 'chatting' or 'talking', and it seemed to serve a similar function to face-to-face communication. This leads us to the possibility of equating silence with the absence of communication, both spoken and written. In such case silence would come close to meaning solitude.

It might be interesting to note here that the programmers we observed all perceived solitary coding as the more prestigious part of programming – any conferring or negotiations were devalued as 'just talk' and not 'real work.' At the same time, these programmers were quite aware that such negotiations constitute a large part of their work day; they just did not consider it an important or interesting part.

In reflecting on our observations we make use of both of the above propositions concerning the definition of silence: as lack of sound, and as lack of communication; we believe each shows a different facet of silence as performed in the organization we have studied. We have chosen to arrange our material in a series of scenes, or vignettes, representing divergent aspects of organizational silence. First, though, we would like to provide a few words of explanation on the setting of our observations. As we have already said, it is a small IT company (employing around 100 people), or rather its division involved at the time of the study in preparing and installing a large database project for a major Polish telecommunications company. Because of the need of tailoring the database to the needs and the existing IT setup of the client, the division worked off-site, in the telecom company's office building. It occupied a single room, partitioned into two smaller areas, and most of the time, the group we observed stayed within the confines of this room.

Out of our study, we have chosen to present three scenes, or vignettes, through which we hope to illustrate some of the more notable silences that tended to occur throughout our stay in the organization. Each is followed by a discussion of what we suppose to be the role played by silence in the story, and our musings of how it reflects on our understanding of silence, and especially of silence in organizing.

Vignette One: Spaces of Sound and Silence

Two of the computers in the double room occupied by the observed programmers were equipped with loudspeakers, but each of the working computers (including those with loudspeakers) had headphones attached or lying next to it. The speakers were used to play music, an activity accompanied by a recurring discussion of what music and how loud it should be played. The debate was not very heated, however, as each of the programmers had an option to use one's own headphones to create a personal soundscape, either using music or by playing a game that provided its own sound effects. Indeed, as the multiplayer computer games used in the office placed the player's viewpoint firmly within the virtual world, headphones providing appropriate sound effects were considered a necessary component of gaming. This meant that in order to engage in a social activity of game playing, each participant needed to create a barrier separating his[1] soundscape from those of the other participants'.

Headphones and loudspeakers were also instruments for partitioning space. The two speaker systems divided the office into two zones of influence; indeed, a discussion on how loudly the music can be played ended with the verdict that it should not interfere with listening to the music emanating from the other computer. Against these background sounds, each person can establish his own personal space by using headphones. In an interesting twist, many people used headphones that were not their own; when at one point an actor attempted to locate his own headphones, he discovered that almost none were connected to the computer of their owner. Thus, while people carve out their private personal spaces, they do so using other people's headphones. Even as space is established (and performed) as personal property, so the props used turn out to be used as if owned communally.

In our view, this little paradox highlights the main thrust of our observations – silence is performed as a social activity, in relation to and in an interplay with other social practices and forms of communication. It defies simple explanations, being performed in a variety of very divergent social situations. It is a tool for bridging gaps and for creating boundaries, it establishes distance and invites communication. In other words, it is part of the process of organizing.

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1   Although the company we studied employs both men and women as programmers (with the former forming a significant majority), the group working in the room where most of our observation took place consisted exclusively of males. Therefore, when not generalizing our observations, we will be using male pronouns to describe the programmers we observed in our research.

Vignette Two: Coding and Huddling

One of the scenes from our observation that were often repeated with little variation begins with a programmer (which could mean the person we were shadowing or one of the other people working in the same room) silently coding, that is writing some part of a computer program. After a while, that person would stop typing, and start looking focusedly at the computer screen. Still later, he would start muttering something about the piece of code he was writing. When nobody responded, the same (or similar) comment would be repeated louder, and then perhaps again, even louder, if still nobody reacted. Somewhere along the way, one of the other people in the room would express interest in the programmer's dilemma, and he would proceed to gladly explain whatever problem perplexed him. One of the listeners would then proffer advice and possible ways of dealing with the difficulty, with perhaps some discussion on what promises to be the most appropriate solution.

Since the above scenario came to be repeated numerous times with very little variation (albeit with different actors) we assume, taking a hint from conversation analysis (Silverman, 1993; Shotter, 1993) that we are dealing here with an event both structured and meaningful, repeated because of the results it provides. We are also reminded of Francois Cooren's (1999) reappraisal of the speech act theory and his identification of communication as the building block of organizing. This is because our vignette describes an attempt at both establishing communication and organizing, that is, to provide space and means for concerted action. The process starts with the solitary (and silent) task of programming, playing itself out between the programmer and his computer. When he encounters a problem, however, such cloistered approach fails, because while programming is solitary, problem-solving is a group activity.

Back in 1980, the then prominent futurologist Alvin Toffler, awed by the early incursions the computers were making into social space, speculated that it is enough to "[p]ut a computer in people's homes and they no longer need to huddle" (Toffler, 1980: 215). The prediction, like most of what futurology had to offer, is quite inaccurate, but it nevertheless points to an important phenomenon: programming (that is, close interaction with computers) is both a solitary and a social activity. It involves both silence and communication. The actual code writing takes place in the former, without any outside input, but all major problems are solved through social discussion of the difficulties. Thus, in a way, silence represents the free-flowing creativity while sound symbolizes overcoming obstacles. Both are crucial to the organizational process of programming.

Obviously, it is this organizational aspect of sound and silence that interests us the most, the structuring of social interactions (and lack thereof) constituting silence and communication. In the above story, we can see the actors engaged in the process of defining spaces for both aspects of programming: nobody *asks* for help, but instead constitutes, or proposes, a space for public examination of his problem. Such action avoids direct supplication inherent and the pitfalls of power relation established through a direct plea for help, but also invites into discussion only those who are interested, who are currently not immersed in their own space of silent programming. Crossing the

border between solitude and communication is constituted as a voluntary act, the solitary space is not breached from the outside.

There is a kind of wisdom that consist of looking and listening, rather than talking and symbolizing, it is openness and meditation, a silence making the encounter with experience possible. In Anthony de Mello's writings (e.g. 1998), silence of this kind is a spiritual door to the experience of both absence and presence, of becoming, of the divine, and of what is – or perhaps is not beyond words and images. Silence is the passage into the empty space, where one sees the futility of categorizations, the hollowness of definitions, and the illusory character of passing and remaining. It offers freedom, the feeling of flying over a huge ravine.

We would like to stress the significance of creating such pockets of silence, if only because we have often encountered the opposite: organizations that aspire to omnipotence, to control of what is perceived as disorder, and can embrace things and people, the way they interact, they way they are. Having said that, we do not believe in real things called 'organizations,' they are but processes in which people engage (cf. Weick, 1979; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1996). The process can mean beauty and togetherness, fun, sharing, but also it can be performed in a totalizing way, limiting and dry. The beauty and repulsiveness of the human creation called organization can be studied with interest, as the beauty and repulsiveness of other human creations, such as theatre or music. However, in organizations, for some reason, the feeling of freedom is often, in our experience, banned from the creation. The lack of freedom is the ugliness and repulsiveness of organization. Frantic avoidance of silence, obsessive filling in blanks seems to be rather common. The most extreme example is the total institution, but there are indeed quite a few similarities between totalitarian organizations and apparently liberal ones, such as enterprises (see e.g. Kostera, 1997). Yet, as Pierre Guillet de Monthoux (1978) writes in his book about anarchism, existentialism and organization, there are other and much more interesting ideas of organizing than the mainstream bureaucratic project. We can use anarcho-existentialist ideas a lot more than we currently do. Why do we read about total manipulative projects in most of the management textbooks? Why so rarely about anarchy? Maybe management is a rhetorical project, archetypically male, ordering and avoidance of the blanks (Höpfl, 1995). It does not need to happen that way, but in practice it all too often does.

In this sense our project is counter-managerial as it concentrates on bringing out the disorderly blanks that clutter (or, as we believe, constitute) the bulk of organizational life. Blanks, or moments of silence, which are poetic rather than rhetorical (Höpfl, 1995), which open up space rather than define and delimit it, which provide seclusion rather than communication. At the same time, our observations took place in a company enjoying considerable success on the marketplace, albeit one that is managed very unconventionally, and there is a lot of space being left for silence in the organization.

Any categorization of our project would also be undermined by silence being consistently ambiguous and non-linear (though it can carry explicit, rhetorical, ordered arguments and power); it avoids being pinned down as forming coherent opposition to any particular project. This link with ambiguity is in itself a boon, knowing as we now do that *linearity kills* (Burrell, 1997: 8). This is not to say that clear barriers and decisive

divisions were not present in the setting we observed – one example would be the strong boundary between company employees and other people working in the same office building but outside the one room where our observation was centered. There was some contact with the representatives of the client company, but it was regulated through strict gate keeping. However, such strong barriers promoting linearity and stifling silent expression are not the focus of this study; we concentrate on silence and on the empty spaces within the processes of organizing.

Vignette Three: A Programmer in Love

During our observation, the programmer we shadowed fell deeply in love (with a person having no ties to the company). This had a strong and obvious impact on his behaviour as all his thoughts and actions tended to drift towards the person he was in love with. He spent much of the time in the office using an Internet messaging program to communicate with her – silently, via a text-based interface. At one point, a colleague asked him if he were 'chatting,' and, after receiving a positive answer, did not try to include him in any conversation, talking instead to other people present in the room.

In this scene we see another way of carving out one's own private space – the protagonist is treated as a person engaged in conversation, albeit a silent one, and therefore excluded from the office soundspace. People talking on the phone were treated similarly: various conversations were taking place around them, but they were not expected to get involved. The difference here is obviously the silence – the programmer's Internet chat does not involve sound – as well as the high emotional engagement (and the accompanying wish for privacy). Also, while the protagonist himself tries repeatedly to start working on some other project, it is obvious that the silent conversation occupies most of his mind. Is there really silence at work here and, if so, what does it have in common with the silences presented in the other vignettes?

Musings

All the scenes we have described touched upon the issue of communication. The first two concerned mostly the setting of boundaries, beyond which communication (and sound) was intrusive and unwanted, but also the inobtrusive ways of inviting contact. The third vignette, while also dealing with the boundaries between different ways of communication, stressed the silent (i.e. soundless) modes of contact. These themes intertwine, for silence paradoxically forms both an obstacle to and an opportunity for communication. In our stories, it sets out the protagonist from his usual surroundings, posing permeable, unstable barriers. But through the creation of boundaries, it opens up space for other modes of communication, for reflection, feelings and, ultimately, love. Love needs silence to surface – it is a state of being, shining through whenever there is enough silence to let it enter (Tolle, 1999). Silence is a portal, transforming the person who is silent and transforming the space around him or her. "Silence without, stillness within" (Tolle, 1999: 113). Love is one of the Unmanifested's aspects. What is the Unmanifested? Good question. Answer it as you like: Buddha, God, peace, freedom. Or better even, be silent.

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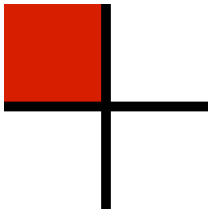
Shut the Fuck Up[*]

Anthony O'Shea

> And to be silent is still to speak. Silence is impossible. That is why we desire it. (Maurice Blanchot, *The writing of the disaster*).
>
> I am the sum total of my existence
> […]
> I believe in the sense of silent sound
> I have always been too loud
> Won't you help me drown it out…
> (1 Giant Leap, 'My Culture', from the album *1 Giant Leap*, Palm Pictures, 2001)

Some may take offense to what may be seen as a clear departure from accepted academic narrative both in the language used and the autobiographical style. Some may have stopped reading, already offended and unwilling to listen further, some may now wish that I obeyed the title and saved you from what follows. No doubt some will regard what follows as little more than a subjective and blatantly personal piece.[1] You're right, it is – but does that give you the right to deny me a voice? If it does, then join the queue. But whilst you stand in line to demand that I shut up take some time to consider this: I've only ever experienced one, as yet incomplete and less than perfect life. It's one I'd like to try to come to terms with before I die because it's the only one I have. Now tell me to shut the fuck up, you won't be the first or the last, just don't be surprised if I don't listen.

In this paper I want to evoke what it is like to be on the receiving end of demands for silence. I am less interested in theorizing what silence may or may not be or indeed how it may be related to other phenomena such as music and noise although some of my concerns overlap with those who do. (For instance, in this *ephemera* issue Cobussen's

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account, following Derrida, considers music as a *tout autre* of silence and noise;[2] Fuglsang and Böhm explore issues concerning The Impossible and The Sacred in relation to silence.) What I am interested in is exploring how various demands for silence may be, at least where I am concerned, formative, part of the 'sum total of my existence'; having been told to shut up for so long I'd now like a voice.

Whilst we do not possess silence – even in our quietest moments there is noise, the sound and fury of human existence (see Cobussen in this issue, who underlines the random sounds that form John Cage's supposedly silent composition 4'33'') – we seem so ready to demand it of others.[3] Yet this denial, and our inability to represent it through and appropriate it into metaphorical language, does not deny it.[4]

My experiences of being silenced are both many and different. In order to convey some I will offer a number of short autobiographical vignettes interspersed by some brief commentary.[5] The vignettes seek to illustrate these themes but be warned as well – there is pathos here as I also seek to convince by appealing to you emotionally and some may find it brutal.[6] Just think what it was like to be on the receiving end. The first two concern what may be an attempt to silence me from figures of authority in my life – my father and a senior academic. The third reverses the structural positions and authority figures – it involves my then two-year old daughter telling me to shut up; this, temporarily at least, left me lost for words; something that neither of the previous two really achieved. The fourth piece considers a form of silence we may impose on ourselves – secrets, lies and silences exist in many families. Reviewers have enjoined me to be careful of sounding too detached particularly in this scene. They are concerned that by doing so it may sound artificial or contrived. I find it difficult however not to present it as rather stark and clinical since, odd as it may sound, I *want* to remain distanced from it and all the implications even whilst feeling a need to talk. I'm sickened by and hate my father, I'm glad he's dead. And I'm sickened that I feel this way about *my own father*. The one here continues to reverberate in mine even though the original cause, my father, is now silent: silence drives me and my sister apart. The

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2   In keeping with Cobussen (this issue), language is *an* other of silence not *the* other. Whilst I cannot reproduce the audio files in this written paper, one of the purposes of these notes is to suggest some possibilities.

3   For a description of the audience response to the first performance of *4'33''* see [www.azstarnet.com/%7Esolo/4min33se.htm]. It is also useful to compare this with the reception that greeted Stravinsky's *Vesna Sviaschennaya* (more commonly referred to as *Le Sacre du Printemps*) and Alban Berg's *Altenberglieder* when they were premiered in 1913. *Vesna Sviaschennaya*, or Holy Spring, musically alludes to sacrifice and the sacred, themes common to Bataille and Blanchot. Stravinsky also opposes the concept of humanity as progressive.

4   Pat Metheny, #2, from the album *Zero Tolerance for Silence*, Geffen, 1994. For more information and a downloadable Mpeg3 file extract from this album see [www.artistdirect.com/store/artist/album/ 0,,195641,00.html] and [www.shunn.net/bill/music/album.cgi?191]. Marrs, *Pump up the volume*, @ 4AD 1987.

5   FireHose, 'Another theory shot to shit', from the album *Ragin', full on*, SST, 1986.

6   Diamanda Galas, 'My world is empty without you', from the album *Malediction and Prayer*, Mute 1998. Much of Galas's work recently has focused on expressing her confusion and pain subsequent to her brother's death from AIDS related infections.

final piece again considers a connection between death and silence suggested in the previous scene to again reconsider how we approach them.

The first scene is from my childhood and is one of my first memories of my father. Even now I can remember how little noise there was in my home. I was brought up with the rule that children could be seen but not heard: consistently and violently enforced by my father, not a rule to be transgressed lightly.

Scene One

'Shut the fuck up', he screamed at the boy. The two were alone; the boy's mother had gone shopping with her daughter leaving him in the care of his father. The Racing Post spread out on the table, his father was watching the horse racing on TV whilst the boy played on the floor with some plastic farm animals. He was making too much noise, 'Horsey go clip clop', his father wanted silence, he wanted to hear the commentary.

'Shut the fuck up or I'll shut you up.' The animals were scattered across the floor by his lunge at the child. Grabbing him, jerking him up off the floor, he unceremoniously dumped him in front of the electric fire. 'Stay there. If I hear another sound from you this afternoon you'll regret it.' He turned his attention back to the racing and the boy knowing better than to say anything said not a word. The room was filled with the sound of horse racing and the boy's crying as the pain from the fire burnt its way up his legs. Silence descended with the finality of a dreamless unconsciousness.

Scene Two

'Shut the fuck up. No one wants to hear about your life.' Words expressed after a conference. He was evidently still saying too much, or saying what others didn't want to hear.[7]

It seems to be a recurring theme in my life, this demand for silence. From my earliest childhood memories right through to my current academic one people around me try to deny me a voice. It's as if I haven't a story to tell, or at least it's one of no value. Yet it's a demand that I ignore, a rule I refuse to follow; generally the more I'm told to shut up the more likely I am to speak.[8]

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7   Ironically I don't enjoy presenting and talking at conferences and do it as part of my job. This is partly because I find it embarrassing to talk, and particularly to read, in public. My embarrassment stems from another aspect of silence in my early childhood. My father believed that my accent was 'too common' and insisted that I 'talk properly or not at all', an insistence that he would enforce. I used to refuse to read out loud at school because I was embarrassed by my accent and scared of making a mistake. I ended up in speech therapy at the age of seven. Given the choice I'd quite happily not present.

8   Perhaps even my musical interests reflect this element of rule breaking and transgression. As a teenager I was in to punk rock, as an adult I'm interested in alternative, often experimental music and

I've been asked by friends why I'm so interested in Bataille. Perhaps it's because of his interests in transgression, rule breaking, excessive experience and communication. If communication is supposed to join us in society then why demand silence? Is it because what I say has no value or is it perhaps a bit too painful, a bit too close for comfort? We are all human, all too human.

Scene Three

'Oooh Horsey. Horsey go clip clop.'

'Caitlin, tea time please.'

'No daddy. Horsey go clip clop. Shut up daddy.' And she smiled winningly as only a two year old can and carried on playing with her plastic farm animals.[9]

My daughter's demand for silence, to me, is qualitatively different to the previous two scenes. For me the previous two come from a supposed position of authority, call upon implicit rules of behaviour and carry some aspect of a threat. My two-year old reversed these positions and left me lost for words. Having assumed the role of the bad son just how do I perform the role of father?

Silence is not merely the absence of noise it is very real even whilst it remains ephemeral but whilst it may touch and affect us remains outside our control.[10] To speak

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groups. Just to return to Nick Cave briefly: I've been a fan since he was in The Birthday Party – an Australian punk rock group – renowned for its disregard for musical conventions and rejection of accepted/acceptable modes of 'rock and roll' performance. The Birthday Party were once described by the UK's *New Musical Express* as "a bloody awful row" (Bohn, 1983, cited in Johnston, 1995: 104).

9 One of my daughter's favourite nursery rhymes is 'All the pretty little horses'. In the original presentation one of the musical extracts included a version of 'All the pretty little horses' recorded by Nick Cave and Current 93 (Current 93, 'All the pretty little horses', from the album *All the pretty little horses*, Durtro Records, 1996). Much of Cave's work concerns themes of the Sacred, life, death, desire and transgression; see for instance Cave's 'The secret life of the love song', from the album *Two Lectures by Nick Cave*, King Mob Records, 1999: "The love song is the light of God, deep down, blasting up through our wounds" (Cave, 1999).

10 Cobussen (2003) discusses the connections between silence, noise and music explored by the composer John Cage most infamously in Cage's supposedly silent composition 4'33''. However, as Cage makes clear, noise remains. Anecdotally the popular composer and ex-Womble Mike Batt was recently successfully sued by Cage's estate. On a recent recording Batt claimed to have sampled and condensed 4'33'' in to a 1 minute piece that he felt must be better – because it was shorter – than the original… I don't sadly know whether he was sued for copyright violations, or his facile and derogatory comments or both. Silence remains something of a holy grail for music recording and recording studios spend vast sums of money on attempting to achieve a noise free environment where music may then be performed and recorded. But even in the most up to date professional studios it is not possible to record absolute silence even with all amplifiers and musical instruments turned off. There will be noise from the recording microphones, noise induced by leads, electrical supplies, analog or digital recording system and mixing desks, computer hardware and so on. Using modern computer technology and software I can insert 'silence' digitally in to music that I compose on my digital audio workstation (or DAW – and the lap top coincidently that I wrote this paper on). Even

of silence is not just a philosophical endeavor but is also perhaps a recording of the fragility of our lives.[11] So how might we follow a demand to be silent, how do we 'shut the fuck up' when to be silent may deny our existence, imply and invoke Death (Fuglsang and Böhm, this issue)?[12]

Scene Two (contd.)

'Lets get this straight once and for all – there is no self-reflective subject…'

'So why do you keep talking about yourself? Why don't you just shut the fuck up.'

Why do I write in the first person? Why do I write about myself so much? It is not as some staging of a self-reflective subject. It is not some egoistic need fulfillment. It is not some cathartic process. I have experience of only one life and I do not fully understand even this, *but* it is the most that I have. In response to Blanchot and Bataille what else can I sacrifice if not myself, what else can I do apart from continually worry at, pick apart the semblance of my life to expose the ephemerality and lack of coherence? What else can I do except work over what I already have and waste it? Silence is both non-phenomenological – there is nothing that can be brought to presence – and a meta-phenomena, I can no more tell you to be silent as will myself to be silent, it "transgresses the boundary of the self-jurisdiction" (Critchley, 1997: 74).

Shut the fuck up? How? I cannot command silence. But if I cannot command silence must I then speak? But how can I talk about myself when I having nothing to reflect on? Perhaps I should be silent… This is a double bind that confronts Orpheus not some Narcissistic desire-for. I don't enjoy talking about my life, I don't get any pleasure, not even a perverse form, from picking at old wounds, but I can't at present be quiet. I cannot control silence, I can't just shut the fuck up no matter how much it may hurt because this is my life. Even so some things still remain unspoken.

Scene Four

It's late at night in Cape Town; I'm talking with my stepsister, sharing memories about my father.

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this computer-generated silence isn't silent, monitored through a professional quality soundcard I can see the noise on the recording meters albeit at such a low threshold that we would not normally hear it. It's so quiet that if I monitor it via playback through headphones or speakers it is overwhelmed by hiss from these 'silent', 'professionally accurate' sound stages. I simply cannot achieve, or reproduce complete silence – it isn't ours to control.

11 Fugazi, 'Steady Diet', from the album *Steady Diet of Nothing*, Discord, 1991.

12 Cage (quoted by Lange, 1993) argued that "no silence exists that is not pregnant with sound" and thus "their equality becomes a metaphor for the awareness of life", but life itself is only a special condition of death (Bataille, 1988).

'I think I was lucky – I only had him around when I was young you had to grow up with him.'

'Yes,' she replies and there are tears welling up in her eyes, 'he used to beat up my brother when he was angry. That's why he won't go and see Frank in hospital. He got away from him as soon as he could. But it wasn't just the physical violence.'

She starts crying, 'He used to molest me, put his hand up my skirt, touch me, tell me I was special, tell me I was his favourite. He used to say it was our secret, that we shouldn't tell anyone else, that we should keep quiet about it. He only stopped when I was 14, when I hit him and told mum. He threatened to do the same to my eldest girl, the bastard was smiling. That's why my husband attacked him, that's why the children never visit him.'[13]

I feel physically sick and I'm scared. I have a sister two years older than me. My dad used to tell her that she was his favourite. Christ, but I don't even want to think about this. Four years on I don't know how to ask her, I don't even know how to begin asking. So there is silence between me and my sister because I'm too scared to ask. I can't even face her.

My father demanded silence from us as children. Four children – we each have more than 30 years of secrets and lies, broken lives, self loathing, nightmares and a refusal to forgive him even whilst he wasted away from emphysema, even whilst he died (O'Shea, 2002).[14] Even now – nearly four years after his death so much noise remains. I look at my daughter and I am both *glad* that he's dead and disgusted that I feel this way – but at least it keeps her safe from harm[15] and perhaps it's too late for the rest of us. I thought that his death would bring an end to it; that he would pass in to the night; 'remain silent as the grave' and be at so vast a distance in death from my life so as to be unable to touch me. It just isn't so.

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13 Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, 'Do you love me? (Part 2)', from the album *Let Love In*, Mute, 1994. In this song Cave sings about child abuse from the perspective of both child and abuser and how the latter also turns it in to 'if you love me then we'll keep it our little secret.' Yet again an abusive demand for silence. Do all abusers tell the victim to keep it as their 'special secret'? I really don't know but I believe what my stepsister said. For a different perspective see Kociatkiewicz and Kostera (this issue).

14 I am the sum total of my existence | […] | Hello dad, remember me? | I'm the man you thought I'd never be, | I'm the boy that you reduced to tears, | Dad I've been alone for 27 years. | […] | I believe in the sense of silent sound | I have always been too loud | Won't you help me drown it out… (1 Giant Leap, 'My Culture', from the album *1 Giant Leap*, Palm Pictures, 2001).

15 Stand in front of you | Take the force of the blow | Protection (Massive Attack, 'Protection', from the album *Protection*, Circa Records, 1994). Isn't his supposed to be the parent's role – to protect their child from harm rather than be the cause of it? I'm glad my father's dead because it keeps her safe from him.

Scene Five

He died from emphysema, his breathing so poor that he could hardly speak to me when I saw him last. Few words passed between us. Two years later a hospital consultant is speaking at me, he has the results of my recent lung tests.

'The blood tests show that you have alpha 1 antitrypsin deficiency or genetically inherited emphysema. I see your father died from emphysema, he was obviously a carrier. You should have your daughter checked when she's older to see if she has it.

What does it mean to you? Do you smoke? No? Good, don't and avoid those who do. Also avoid dusty and damp environments anyone who has chest, lung or nasal infections. Avoid stressful situations and consider living in a warm dry environment.

Is it treatable? Well we may control its progress, slow it down with steroids, maybe a lung transplant in a few years but we can't cure you or arrest it completely. Look on the bright side you have more idea of what is most likely to be the cause of your death then most of us. However with A1ATD you are also prone to heart failure and cirrhosis of the liver. How long have you got? Well your best case scenario indicates that you won't draw your pension and the worst case …[16] Every time however that you get a cold, flu, any lung infection, that sort of thing, you are likely to accelerate the progress and increase your chances of dying earlier.'

In the two years that have passed I've been through periods of denial, anger, depression, at present I've sort of reconciled myself to the inevitability of death. With a three-year old daughter in the house whatever is going around is likely to reach here and so I'm now very familiar with all sorts of chest infections. I now dread the start of autumn in the UK.

In this shadow life whilst waiting for my death, there remains too much noise; there are just too many fucked up things that I can't change but I try to deal with some of them. This paper is one way, I'm thinking out loud, putting my thoughts down on paper, addressing myself. So perhaps I am a narcissist, just not a particularly reflexive one.

I did what may be my last conference paper this year, I just haven't got enough breath left for them, I'm instead going to concentrate on writing up, on finishing the stories I've left incomplete. I find that I can leave behind all this noise, all the chatter of my failed life by retreating in to what I've long enjoyed – composing, recording music and being noisy. I've yet to finish a recording though – much to my partner's continued bemusement – I'm enjoying playing my instruments, my music, and just playing around, too much to want to finish. Here playing, to me, is more important than a final product, perfection, or theory.

> (A primal scene?) You live later, close to a heart that beats no more, suppose this: the child – is he seven years old or eight perhaps? – standing by the window, drawing the curtain and, through the pane looking. What he sees: the garden, the wintry trees, the wall of a house. Though he sees: no doubt in a child's way, his play space, he grows weary and slowly looks up toward the ordinary

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16 He did tell me but I'm not about to repeat it. Perhaps silence can be golden?

sky, with clouds, grey light – pallid daylight without depth. What happens then: the sky, the *same* sky, suddenly open, absolutely black and absolutely empty, revealing (as though the pane had broken) such an absence that all has since always and forevermore been lost therein – so lost that therein is affirmed and dissolved the vertiginous knowledge that nothing is what there is, and first of all nothing beyond. The unexpected aspect of this scene (its interminable feature) is the feeling of happiness that straightaway submerges the child, the ravaging joy to which he can bear witness only by tears, an endless flood of tears. He is thought to suffer a childish sorrow; attempts are made to console him. He says nothing. He will live henceforth in the secret. He will weep no more. (Blanchot, 1986: 72)

I don't think I can be silent until I die. Even now whilst I'm running out of air, finding it difficult to breath I'm still much to noisy. In short I can't just shut the fuck up – that's asking too much – but one secret remains unspoken, pulls me apart and distances me from my sister. Perhaps that's why I love music so much – in all the sound and noise I can temporarily forget the silence.

Epilogue[17]

October 2003 and my daughter is playing around in my recording studio whilst I'm working on – ok playing about with – a music project. She wants me to turn a controller keyboard on so she can make some noise with a 'synth'. I'm too distracted and evidently too slow to do this as quickly as she'd like so she tries to do it herself. Somewhere in the house the fuses blow and power stops. Everything goes quiet. I look at my daughter.

'Sorry daddy.' There's a pause, then, 'Daddy can I play the guitar please? Can I have a blue guitar like yours for Christmas? Can I? Can Lucy come and play?'

Noise again and then a few moments later the electricity is back on. The computer hums back in to life, there is audible hiss from most of the 'amps', 'synths' and monitors (but the 'sloblow' fuse has blown on one valve amp), and the mixing desk visual meters show signal gain on all the right channels. Now where was I?

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17 Silence dominates my early childhood memories. From being told to shut up, through being punished by my father for having the 'wrong' accent, to having no TV, stereo or musical instruments at home from the age of 7 until I was 14. Now I love music, both playing it and listening. There are radios in every room in my home, and HiFis, CDs, MiniDiscs and records in most. There are guitars, keyboards, synthesizers lying around my 'office'. Perhaps my love of music and sound is yet another refusal of silence?

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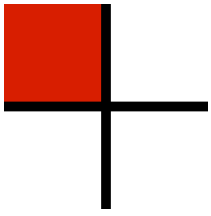
trans-mute[*]

Daniela Sneppova

abstract

The following is a test of the limits of language. It is an attempt to translate a performance that took place at the 'Silence is (not) sexy' stream at the EGOS conference in Barcelona in the summer of 2002. This textual representation moves between the inspiration – the triggers that led to the creation of the performance – and a description of what the audience participated in. The blacked out, missing text performs a number of functions. It refers to the acts of censorship by many Eastern European countries before the fall of Communism: Censors frequently obscured words or phrases in personal correspondence sent between nations, families and friends. The missing text also seeks to reproduce the gaps and silences of translation. It is difficult to discern what is left out of a translation. We take for granted that what is missing from a translated text. However, I am interested in the cumulative effects of these 'minor' absences. Thus the invisibility of absence is something that is explored in the on-line project. The on-line project offers a different kind of text with which the user must actively engage; an environment of sound and images that responds to mouse movements and clicks. The blacked out text is meant to remind readers of the on-line dimension of this project. Readers will always make connections when reading any text; in this article that process is exaggerated, encouraging readers to 'fill in the blanks.' Each text, the written and the on-line project, requires a different kind of interaction, a different active reader.

The Voice, the Gaze and the Possibilities of Interpretation

Working between two cultures entails negotiations between many of the issues involved with translation. This living process led me to an exploration of the mediums of communication and some of their conventions**.** ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ necessitates a medium. A mediation. If we consider that 'communication' in the 19th C. mostly meant 'a form of transportation' – the question might be: how do we 'transport' an experience from one consciousness to another?

Can ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮? 'Silence' has been used metaphorically in the discourse mapping the 'immigrant experience' to suggest that the process of dislocation involves

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the loss of a voice, the erasure of a speaking body, and therefore ▮▮▮▮▮▮ or loss of experience and cultural presence. The performance attempted to explore other possible meanings and experiences of the silenced word/world of exile, by mobilizing "displacement as a strategy of assimilation and resistance."[1] Within (the experience of) exile is a disturbance, a gap, ▮▮▮▮▮▮, a transposition which may offer another possible interpretation/translation of 'silence'. Through the dislocation of exile there is the potential to create a third space involving a negotiation between the home that is no longer and the home that has not yet become real: an interaction between the you that departed and the you that has not yet arrived.

The details of identity are sifted through media of ▮▮▮▮▮, whether they take visual or auditory forms or come fully into existence through more experimental, experiential attempts at self-realization and communication. How culturally ▮▮▮▮▮ in language are our relationships? Some would argue that we are completely configured by our inauguration into the systems of language. But how does this shift for the polyglot, the transnational nomad?

Octavio Paz reminds us that each translation is the creation of a new text. Could we transpose this idea onto the acquisition of a new language, and through it, the construction of a new ▮▮▮, a new identity, a new subjectivity?

How can you represent yourself in another tongue, one that already has names for you that you don't recognize: she, girl, woman, ona holka, zenska, elle, mademoiselle, madame, sie, fraulein, frau….and those are just the more ambivalent ones (unlike whore, bitch, kunda, putain…). Will the new culture ever feel ▮▮▮▮, like an old warm coat that has melded with your body through years of wear? And so what if it doesn't quite fit? Does it make you more aware of the processes involved in your (own) elaborate construction as you struggle between ▮▮▮ systems?

"Identity is only perceptible through a relation to an other – which is to say, it is a form of both resisting and claiming the other, declaring the boundary where the self diverges from and merges with the other."[2]

But what if this diverging and merging is multiple? How many ▮▮▮▮▮▮ can you contain or cross and how are they affected by each other?

Prague, Summer, 1997

Walking down four flights of stairs to her mailbox was always pleasurable. The trip was filled with an anticipation that perhaps someone was ▮▮▮▮ for her under lock and key. The iron railing she followed down to the front lobby was guarded by the head of a woman embedded in the archway at the bottom of the stairs. Painted white she blended

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1   Hirsch, M. (1994) 'Pictures of a Displaced Girlhood', in A. Bammer (ed.) *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*. Indiana University Press, 88.
2   Phelan, P. (1993) *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. New York: Routledge, 7.

into the architecture. She was invisible but not ███. If you knew where to look, she greeted you with an air of mystery. Who was she? What was she waiting for?

Within a three day period, she received letters from her three lovers, all living in different places, writing in three different languages. Reading their words, what struck her was not only how she imagined each individual through his combination of words, working in conjunction with her memories of each person; but even more forcefully, she realized how differently each one was constructing her. Strewn through time, these differences might not have been as apparent as they now were, all laying together on her kitchen table. So, where was she? Where could she be found, in and between these versions of her, the interpellated subject, the desired object?

She recognized herself in each letter, yet each letter was different. There was ██████ as well as difference in their words: a repetition of █████, a repetition of response, elements of the ██████ melded with the unexpected. This █████ across cultures was mediated through one agent.

How did the various languages figure in these transmutations of her? Was she a different person when she spoke a different language? Did each language have something the others did not? A different set of personal possibilities, ████████, identities? How was her knowledge and relationship to her 'mother tongue' different from languages she learned later in life, languages learned as a teenager, as an adult? Does the age of language acquisition permanently affect our ██████ and understanding and experience of that language? Is it possible that there is a trace of the specific age of acquisition that lingers as you speak a particular tongue, and therefore a trace of a time and place in language and speech?

A Screen, a Body and Eight Radios

The cast of characters for the performance included a video tape featuring three pre-recorded settings/actors (presented in the form of a large video projection), a live performer (the body) wrapped from head to foot in newspapers, handwritten letters and rope, and 8 small radios, suspended from the ceiling and tuned to various stations.

The image of a torso framed from neck to stomach appears onscreen. A woman's hands, continuously unbutton shirt after shirt on her own ████. In an endless scene of 'de-consumption', the woman attempts to rid herself of her garments, compulsively removing one after the other, only to reveal ████████████ underneath. The erotic potential of disrobing is postponed and thwarted through this scene of endless repetition which never culminates in skin, but instead devolves into an obsessive ritual. The repetitive action creates a pattern of motion with a hand dropping each shirt to an off-screen space at the bottom of the screen. Positioned under the screen is an actual pile of clothing that bridges the 'real' and 'mediated' spaces by suggesting that the refuse from the scene on the screen has begun to spread to the 'real' space of the ██████. This is further underlined at the conclusion of the performance when the 'live' performer will put on a shirt from the pile that matches the first shirt shown on screen and then exit the performance space.

But long before that happens, the bound figure on screen is displaced at various points by traveling shots of suburban scenes in North America or by 'electronic snow' in the form of video static. This technical break (the snow) is co-ordinated with audio ████ in the video soundtrack. These narrative elements in the video are further ████ by a sequence of a figure, bound in newspapers from head to toe, sitting on a stool in an empty room. The projected image reproduces the 'live' figure who exists in the room together with the audience.

The 'live' body on display in the performance space, a figure bound from head to foot, is an uncomfortable presence, creating a sense of unease among the audience members.[3] The figure's gender is temporarily suspended, its identity is ████, wrapped in newspapers, hand-written letters and tied with rope. Eventually it begins to scratch at its various restraints. Words begin to itch, burn, define, explain, ooze, categorize, ignite, describe and irritate. They are not her words, but they ████ her, mold her, producing an outline that is at once her and not her.

Prague, Fall, 1997

She walked down Jindrisska Ulice (St.). It was turning into a cool fall. I need a coat she thought in English and imagined one in Czech. She had noticed a pawn shop on her way home from work. There was a long, black, men's leather coat in the window. She went in and asked how much it was, in Czech. She kept forgetting to be formal when ████ to strangers. Only friends, family and lovers should address each other with such familiarity. The large man behind the small counter gave her a strange look. Was she his long lost sister? Was he the brother she had never met? She was still in transposition mode, ████ between two cultures, the transition not yet complete: speaking one language but dreaming in another. The alignment would come within another week, she estimated. It couldn't take another month.

Is intimacy ████ at different distances in particular languages?

How are love, fear, danger, revenge, longing, joy, loneliness, lust translated from tongue to tongue, body to body, without losing the nuances of a particular cultural experience? It can be difficult enough between two people ████ the same language living in the same location/locale. What happens when we add a translation between two or more cultures? The limits of language become more apparent in acts of translation.

The pawn shop was one small room piled to the ceiling with other people's garbage: old radios, watches, clothing, a ████, a bike, broken lamps, some gold jewelry and dishes. There were many shops like this in Prague, stocked with what the Czechs in Germany had picked out of the Germans' garbage and brought back ████.

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3 This character was inspired by images from earlier works of art that have had a long resonance with me: the photographic collages by Dada artist John Heartfield who fought against fascism in Germany with words and images and characters from Czech director Vera Chytelova's 1968 film *Daisies*. In the film two rebellious woman characters end up in an apocalyptic vision, dressed in only newspapers, tidying a room they destroyed.

Capitalism had arrived at the same time the borders had opened and she was finally allowed to return home, 21 years after her expulsion. She tried the coat on; it was large but that was desirable so a big sweater could fit underneath it. '400 crowns' her would-be brother said. Well, it would have to wait until payday, then.

A week later, when she returned for the coat, it was no longer in the window. It had been replaced by a glass coffee table, a yellow ski jacket and a red pull-down lamp. Was she too late? She entered the store to find out what had happened to it. There was an old man ahead of her trying to sell the owner a watch and some jewelry. She looked around the store as they squabbled to reach a financial agreement. There was only enough room for about four customers at a time amongst the piles of ███████. As the old man squeezed past her to exit, he put his earnings into a small change purse. He looked neither happy nor sad. It was hard to tell whether he had left behind his own ███████ or those scavenged from someone else. The same large man as before sat behind the small counter. 'I knew you would be back', said her ███████ brother as he pulled her coat from a pile of clothing behind his chair. The radios on the shelves above him were all blaring the same radio station, each advertising the same radio station.

It was cold enough for her to wear her new coat immediately. Walking home she admired her ██████ in a window. Warm, stylish and affordable. Whose coat was this before? She noticed it had a ██████ smell. What was it? When she got home she greeted the plaster 'woman in waiting' and went upstairs to her two small rooms to examine her new treasure further. She hadn't noticed before, but there were ██████ printed on the lining, words in what ██████ to be German. She could not read all of them. They created a pattern and she wondered whether they were just decoration or had some other significance. They seemed to be names of places. She had been to some of them. The scent of the leather had traces of tobacco and something else she recognized, but it still remained a ██████.

A Screen, a Body and Eight Radios Collide

At certain moments, during the performance, the actions of the 'live' figure before the audience align themselves with those of the figure on screen. It is the same figure repeating the same action with an uncanny ███████, the same, but different.

A loop occurs when a pattern is established, something repeats and over time becomes familiar, expected. The '██' and the mediated performance exist in the space together, playing with our everyday experiences of liveness and instantaneous video surveillance. We are now used to live video projection from a space in which we exist e.g., watching ourselves on the TVs of a shop window with a video camera aiming out at the sidewalk. Walking through a bank lobby we witness our actions mirrored on a monitor mounted on the ceiling. In the performance space there occurs a ██████ of vision for a binocular audience: one vision, obviously, a representation, a projection on the screen, the other an action transpiring in 'real' space shared with the audience, in real time.

The projected image seems 'live,' like a direct broadcast (a 'live feed') from within the performance space, perhaps a camera fixed on the performer. But the room represented

on screen is clearly different from the performance space. This could mean either that the live performance is a copy of the projected one, shot earlier in another place, or that there is another, ▮▮▮ performance going on at the same moment somewhere else. If both figures are performing is there a 'real', authentic, ▮▮▮▮ performance? Is the live a copy of the prerecorded? And if so, is either unreal?[4]

Prague, Late Fall, 1968

At the age of four she was awakened in the middle of the night, dressed and put into a car by her mother. She was then driven three hours to the West German ▮▮▮▮ where her father was waiting for them. He had left days earlier and they just managed to get out before the borders closed for the next 21 years.

'Where are we going?', she asked

'We are going on a vacation', they responded, not knowing how to tell her the ▮▮▮▮.

A year later, after 3 months in a refugee camp and yet another new country on the other side of an ocean, she felt something was very wrong. When was this holiday going to end?

'There's no ▮▮▮▮ like home', but after a month or a year or a decade 'home' is a nostalgic entity, an idea, a photograph, something to quote. 'Home' becomes a temporal category, distant in time as much as in space. Was there ever a place like '▮▮▮'?

Voice/Noise/Silence

In the performance space, 8 radios are suspended from the ceiling at ear level. They float effortlessly (via almost invisible fishing line) with their antennas extended, ▮▮▮▮▮ and disseminating information throughout the audience. The sound emanating from them varies, since each is tuned to a different station. Some are transmitting a pre-recorded voice speaking Spanish, another speaking French, speaking English, speaking Czech, and still others are wavering between static and barely discernable commercial messages or pop music from local stations. The broadcasts are coming from different places, some transmitted from the room of the performance (with pre-recorded material broadcast from portable transmitters) while others are ▮▮▮ 'live' from the airwaves of Barcelona. Unless you are in close proximity to a radio, however, it is difficult to hear any one voice distinctly, as the 8 radios seem to create a chaotic conversation amongst themselves. The soundtrack is a multi-track collage allowing different points of access dependant on what languages each audience member can discern and where she or he is standing. This radio multi-track mixes with the soundtrack emanating from and

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4   The idea of the self as a performed character, the product of a specific location was explored by Erving Goffman (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, and later by other theorists such as Judith Butler (1990) *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.

accompanying the video: a digitally manipulated recording of paper being ripped. Through processing, these ripping sounds have left behind their status as indices or ██████ of the real world. They have entered the realm of machine sound, their original source no longer easily recognizable. This is mixed with sounds from the suburbs (birds and cars) and moments without any sound. At various points in the performance all sound sources are cut leaving room for the possibility of ████. The radios with their signals cut transmit static. The room generates its own sounds and the audience breathes, shifts, and whispers. Stopping a sound source does not equal silence. █████ is not what we may think it is. The OED has 4 definitions for the word silence, and it exists as both a verb and a noun: something to be described and an action to be taken, an experience and a command.

The video soundtrack goes quiet as the performer finally manages to rip her way out of her bondage, only to reveal herself not naked but clothed, covered in a fabric that has more words printed on it. She walks to the screen, puts on the coat from the pile of clothes that seems to have spilled into the room from the video. She walks through the audience turning off the radios one by one and then exits. The audience applauds.

The process does not end, the conversation continues.

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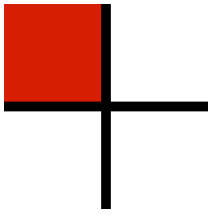
The Refrain and Resistance: Music and Becoming-Jewish[*]

Bent Meier Sørensen

abstract

History is always written, according to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, from the point of view, and in the name of, a sedentary State apparatus, quelling all alternative paths. Based on this charge, this article seeks to attack head on the despotism of our trade; the craving the social sciences suffer for Beginnings, Unanimous Voices, and a Steady Pace. In short, the ordered organisation of a once-upon-a-time given world. Turning to Dance, Rhythm and the Refrain, the text endeavours to contribute to another vocabulary for the world at large, arguing that the world receives form from the emergence of molecular details. The ontological becoming of the world is contingent on the small, as it assembles in rhythmic zones of multiplicities. Specifically, the social world has as its initiating feature a rhythm or a refrain that perpetually throws it into ordering processes. However, from State reason and its *primas inter pares* Royal science called Organisation Studies, as well as from the ideology of Capital, only subjects, institutions, and commodifications arise. Contrary to that, the present text insists that there is always an event that offers an opening to an outside. There is always a line that takes flight, another history. These possible – or virtual – deviances are here suggested to be alternative productions of subjectivities; in every march there is the possibility of a dance, in every order-word there is always already a creative echo from the outside, and even in the history of the most rigid of fascisms, in the Holocaust, there is a becoming-Jewish. An indeed *musical becoming* by which one becomes worthy of the event.

> Are we to become the professionals who give talks on these topics? … Are we to take up collections and create special journal issues? Or should we go a short way further to see for ourselves, be a little alcoholic, a little crazy, a little suicidal, a little of a guerilla – just enough to extend the crack, but not enough to deepen it irremedially? (Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*)[1]

1:1 בְּרֵאשִׁית, בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים, אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ.
1:2 וְהָאָרֶץ, הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ, וְחֹשֶׁךְ, עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם; וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים, מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם.
(Bereshit, Genesis)[2]

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1 Deleuze, G. (1990) *The Logic of Sense*. New York: Columbia University Press, 157-8.

2 Bereshit is the Hebrew word that reappears in the Latin Genesis. The historically dominant, Western translation, The King James Version, is given here below. The present article will question the unambiguity of this translation, and, later, try to point towards more polyphonic expressions inherent

The most difficult moment in Tango Argentino is the beginning: how do you begin a dance?

The machismo solution – one that we will soon recognise as predominant in the Western cosmogonies, social life and organisational praxis – is simply to *begin*, producing those quasi-violent bursts connected to any forced beginning. Since it is the man in Tango Argentino[3] who is supposed to literally *take* the lady in the dance, such a beginning, where the lady only realises that the dance has started because the couple empirically is moving, is far from uncommon. However, it is very unfortunate and uncomfortable, in so far as the lady is torn out of the rhythm in which she stands ('standing' is also thoroughly rhythmic, ask any soldier) and thrown into that pretty arbitrary rhythm the man imposes on the couple (different, notably, from the rhythm of the 'man').

That the machismo solution to the problem of beginning is very frequent in the praxis of this Latin American dance makes it a paradigmatic case of beginnings in many apparently diverse spheres of the world, which is, as always, the *Western* world. Also, Friedrich Nietzsche should after his death become connected, via a sister whom he did not reckon, to the fascism of unanimous beginnings: *ein Reich*.

However, this is not, I will argue, congruent with the authentic *reflexive machismo* of Tango Argentino, and neither can Nietzsche be subjected to such ideology: truth begins with two, he says. The echo of these two is found in Jacques Derrida's dictum: one plus one makes at least three.

In the cosmogony of Tango Argentino, the take with which the man should lead is not a matter of enforcing *his* rhythm or *his idea* of rhythm to both bodies in the dance, overcoding whichever rhythm or rhythmic patterns present with the major rhythm of the culturally 'stronger' body, the 'intelligent strategy' of a beautiful dance. The cosmogony of Tango Argentino is fundamentally a *question*: how would this particular lady in this particular situation of this particular dance want to begin?

The two dancers: their bodies are quite close, they don't, however, connect as man and woman, but their bodies connect via the angles of the chest and the sub-perceptible interaction of their solar plexuses. One may want to ask what it is that takes these imperceptible connections into real becomings, into the round form of movement, a spinning top or a vortical spiral.

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in the Hebrew text, its creative rhythm. King James reads: "[1] In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [2] Now the earth was formless and empty. Darkness was on the surface of the deep. God's Spirit was hovering over the surface of the waters" (Gen., 1:1-2). It will become evident that the King James Version is a version who's royal and despotic name is all too suitable.

3   The subject matter here is Tango Argentino, not tango as it is known in standard dance, the fully choreographed ballroom exercise where the movements of the dance has been trimmed down to follow bizarre machines of facialities, that is, patterns induced from abstract rules of appearances. Moreover, as was ridiculed in the postmodern breakthrough motion picture *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), subjected to perpetual competition. Seen from an outside observer, standard dance completely lacks the intensity and biopolitical intelligence of Tango Argentino.

The first claim to an answer is: music. In the beginning was the dance, says Michel Serres, and the dance begins in the middle, as an intermezzo, between the dancers.

Learning to dance Tango Argentino one has to count and repeat: 1, 2, 3,…1, 2, 3. The pattern connected to this apprenticeship is a roundabout in eight moves, where the first step is a backward move of the man and a forward move of the woman: the 'lead' the man takes is not a decisive straightforward move, but a backward move, a preliminary deconstruction of the banal and weak machismo so enjoyed by men (and confusing many readers of Nietzsche).

By stepping back the dancer more accurately steps aside, deflecting the preconfigured lead he has been given. The couple then produces the beginning together as a problematic field, the virtuality of which deprives the lead (i.e. the man) of all answers. There arises, in the most artistic and corporeal apotheosis of the dance, nothing but a sensuous receptivity for the imperceptible details of which the first move of the couple is *an echo*. An echo, namely, of 'her' desire: the real machismo is he who is able to understand the wishes of the lady, even if these are wishes unknown to both of them.

Pasos, photo by Ernesto Reich

The backward move, as illustrated above, is the creation of a void in which the echo can arise; it is a becoming. The dancer is perpetually yielding, leaving a space, relieved by rhythm, disarticulated by music:

> Men and women dance together face to face, but each respective line slowly comes undone, so that each woman is placed in front of the empty space between two men and sees only it, while each man responds only to the same lack between two women. [...] The third philosophy likes mixed bodies.[4]

The machismo, believing only in the *first* philosophy, learns to count, but the dancer learns to give way. This is why Søren Kierkegaard visions the knight of faith to be a dancer, as the knight is making the movement of infinity with such an accuracy and composure that he is continually getting finitude or immanence out of it.

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4   Serres, M. (1997) *The Troubadour of Knowledge*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 28.

Yet, and these are the words of Kierkegaard, a limp and, by the Copenhagen petit-bourgeois peasantry, ridiculed philosopher:

> the mass of humans live disheartened lives of earthly sorrow and joy, these are the sitters-out who will not join in the dance. The knights of infinity are dancers too and they have elevation.[5]

As dancers, the knights will rise and fall, but not try to straight away leap into a definite position, a local tactics that sets them firmly apart from the striated ideology of Royal science. When the knights come down, assuming their trajectory on the plane of immanence, they cannot slip into their positions straight away: "they weaver an instant and the wavering shows they are nevertheless strangers in the world,"[6] thus transforming the dancing life via a bodily deconstruction. The knights transform the Benjaminian moment of danger into *a way of walking*, ambulating, expressing the sublime in the pedestrian absolute, thus confirming the wavering strangeness of becoming itself.

The bodies of the dancers emerge as Plato's *chôra*, the wax of his creational myth, bodies not yet organised into distinct entities, genders, and segments.

The Tango erupts the categorisations of State reason, and it goes without saying that both 'man' and not least 'woman' should be read in inverted commas; the Tango Argentino was invented in the nomadic shantytowns of mining suburbs of Buenos Aires, where there were no women.[7] Hence, both characters were danced by 'men', opening up for very diverse sexual refrains in the performances of the dance and in the impact the dance would have in different cultural settings; so whenever gendered indexes occur in the present text, they are highly substitutable, pan-erotic and trans-sexual.

Gendered segments are also prone to prostitution, and eventually, of course, women would turn up in these Bad Lands, when a market for their services arose. The theme of commodification and repression of sexuality on account of prostitution is recognised in the Tango Argentino in, alongside the lyrics, the strict separation between what is going on above the waist, which from an external observer seems to be 'nothing', and what is going on below the waist, which from the same observer seems to be 'everything'. The transformation or 'deterritorialisation' of common gendered practises and discourses is in a perpetual competition very often 're-territorialised', that is entrenched by apparatuses of capture; here by the fluid rules, the axiomatics, of the market. A reterritorialisation that functions as a substitution for, or a fake replacement of, the

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5   Kierkegaard, S. (1983) *Fear and Trembling. Repetition*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 70. The ultimate knight of faith, and the greatest dancer is a nomad. It is Abraham. Yet, one must follow Kafka in the parable 'Abraham', where he says: "But take another Abraham...", that is, *there are several Abrahams*, Abrahamic multiplicities; cf. Gil Anidjar's 'Introduction' in Derrida, J. (2002) *Acts of Religion*. New York: Routledge. This is confirmed by the fact that Kierkegaard provides four different readings of the drama at Mount Moriah in the opening of *Fear and Trembling*. The knights of faith only unite in what makes them differ: the dance.

6   Kierkegaard, S. (1983) *Fear and Trembling. Repetition*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 70.

7   Cf. Satori, R. and P. Steidl (2003) *Tango. Die einende Kraft des tanzenden Eros*. Berlin: Heinrich Hugendubel Verlag.

virtual forces that are virtually inherent in the deterritorialisation: what culture turns into something else is, as a rule, turned into a commodity.

Was not also the intermezzo of the new economy a dance, a quickstep, a *danse macabre*, or the last tango of the *Abendland*? In the hype of this new economy, the hyped book *Funky Business: Talent Makes Capital Dance* came out.[8] The subtitle of the book indicates that also dance itself is imitated by capital, this time invigorated by 'talent'. The morbid irony that escaped the authors should not pass altogether unnoticed: since a talent in the parable of the entrusted talents in Matt. 25 is in fact a very large amount of wealth in the barter economy of antiquity, the concept talent designates nothing else than – capital. The latest phase of high capitalism: capital makes capital dance.[9]

Yet, all great dances deterritorialise or transform gender, sexuality, as well as commodities into their molecular becomings, and what dance underpins is the fact that we are "statistically or molarly [marketable as, BMS] heterosexual, but personally homosexual, without knowing it or being fully aware of it, and finally…transsexual in an elemental, molecular sense."[10]

The dancing body, the teaching body, the thinking body is perpetually deterritorialising the earth and its segmentations, calling forth (that is, *listening for*) an echo from the outside, outside the Numbers, outside Man, outside the Body.

This is why we can say, Thought dances. Thought dances when it finds and gives form to the little detail of the partner's gravitational tremor, to the imperceptible rupture in her expectation.

This little rupture is the emergence of the *clinamen*, the least imaginable deviation from a laminar flow; a laminar flow characterised by all movement being parallel, as in Adorno's totally administered world. The little deviation, the *clinamen*, sets another moving form free. The *clinamen* is only expressible as a differential: it is difference in itself, setting becoming in motion and instantiating the echo.

The *clinamen* arises and it can either die out or be consumed by the abyss of the undifferentiated. Abyss stems from Greek *abyssos,* bottomless, or, notably, the chaos of the old cosmogonies: *tenebrae super faciem abyssi*, darkness over the face of the deep. The little rupture dies out because of lack of reference (the partner did not listen…) or it is consumed in the unfathomably abundance of differences (other rhythms took over; he imposed his own rhythm, 1,2,3… the whole way to total administration).[11]

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8   Ridderstråle, J. and K. Nordstrøm (2001) *Funky Business. Talent makes Capital Dance*. New York: Prentice Hall.

9   Finance capital breading on itself, cf. Jameson, F. (1991) *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press. Jameson's general argument, which is that the economy has reached a volatile phase where capital breeds on capital, is recurrent throughout the book.

10 Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (1977) *Anti-Oedipus*. New York: Viking Press, 70.

11 Serres, M. (1995) *Genesis*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 172ff.

Another possibility: it rises and re-cognises itself as an other. It produces its own difference as a relation external to 'itself', even if this latter entity is yet to emerge from the undifferentiated. It is recognised by its own echo, an echo that is also in the undifferentiated, but which nevertheless differentiates. Without each other, the rupture and the echo (or the echo and the rupture), none would persist. The relation between the imperceptible and its echo is the threshold of any 'beginning' and, for that matter, any 'end'.

Exeunt *arché* and *telos*. No archaeological truth: the dance has no origin or beginning, since it *is* the beginning and does not operate with originals; every dance is a simulacrum, a copy of a copy, no nostalgia for the lost object remains.[12] No teleology; the dance has no goal, since it is its own goal, namely beauty and joy, passage and transmutation.

The echo is the weakest of all redundancies, but also the first rhythmic event, a passage from chaos to form. The echo is the quintessential expression of a relation which is external to its terms. Paraphrasing Kierkegaard, substituting 'self' with 'echo'; The echo is a relation which relates to itself, or that in the relation which is its relating to itself. The echo is not the relation but the relation's relation to itself.[13]

This is the beginning. Yet it is not a beginning, since it was always already there. It is indeed a process, or a dance, the probing step of the infant, the legs echoing each other, not yet in rhythm, and there will be many fallbacks into the undifferentiated, fallbacks from irreversibility to reversibility. For the child, as for the two or three or N-1 dancers, action and reaction "no longer form an antagonism but compose a play of possibilities. Resistance gives way to transistance."[14]

Tango Argentino has no beginning, and it is only a dance if one does not recognise any beginning, any 1,2,3…. Numbers are irreversible (they progress or decrease), and only the reversible movement has rhythm, the irreversible is the end of rhythm, the dance breaks down, the infant tumbles down, every body in chaotic motion. The little child reacts by crying (from Latin *quiritare*, to make a public outcry, *Quiris* being the name of the Roman citizen), attempting to inject in chaos a rupture with the possibility of a corresponding echo. The child hears its own cry and cries *louder*, answering its own call: "A single voice raises the clamour of being."[15] Clamour from Latin *clamare*, to cry out; it is a social outcry, and the echo is the beginning of the social, the beginning of the social as a rhythm or, more elaborated, as a refrain.

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12 The way Baudrillard escapes what he calls nostalgia for the lost object is by letting the *text itself dance*, creating a flow of quasi-objects, *petit a*-objects; cf. Baudrillard, J. (1994) *The Illusion of the End*. Cambridge England: Polity Press.

13 Cf. Kierkegaard, S. (1989) *The Sickness Unto Death*. London: Penguin, 43. Substituting 'self' for 'echo' is an outrageous act of assassination less far fetched than one would imagine: harmony and disharmony, music and silence are abundant in Kierkegaard's analysis of life and desire.

14 Cache, B. (1995) *Earth Moves. The Furnishing of Territories*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 112.

15 Deleuze, G. (1994) *Difference and Repetition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 35.

What characterises flow as rhythmic, the social as a flow which is elaborated by rhythm? It is characterised by being a struggle between chaos and form: *turba* and *turbo*.[16] Everyone, all things, are in the void in a becoming of form, between *turba* and *turbo*.

Turba, on the one hand, is a multitude, a large population, and a tumultuous void, the crowd, chaos and agitation. Imagine the singing and masturbating Bacchantes down the mountain, headlong towards exhaustion and indifference: *turbé* – a form of *turba* – is the Greek name for the ecstatic dance connected to the Bacchic festivals. *Turbo*, on the other hand, is already a form that ascends, a round form in movement, a spinning top, a vortical spiral.

The laminar flow that needs a transcendent god to become turbulent, the laminar flow that needs the order-word is in itself purely theoretical, in praxis all flows are or become turbulent.

De jure: everything linear, laminar, predictable, Maxwell's daemon, common sense, the administered world. In short: Hell.

De facto: Everything dances.

This is the creative return of *love* – the love between the dancers, between creator and creation, between speaker and listener in Karl Jaspers' *liebende Kampf* of dialogue[17] – installing itself, with Antonio Negri, in

> the physical and ethical context of the fall of the atoms of life, yet it breaks the linearity of their fall and so generates the common. It is the figure of the *clinamen*, but in subjective form; it is the chaos of the eternal cosmos, but brought back to subjectivity.[18]

For the leader of the Tango Argentino as well as for the leader of the Athenian choir, the *chorêgeô*, the question is that of a production of subjectivity congruent with the common: to produce the plane of immanence where change and transmutation can happen. It pertains to our sense of origin, and the question is then: "How do we hear ourselves at first? As an endless singing-to-oneself, and in the dance."[19]

Yet, the order-word of origin in our hemisphere is traditionally directly connected to the enforcing voice of God, here in the Latin version: *dixitque Deus fiat lux et facta est*

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16 Serres, M. (2000) *The Birth of Physics*. Manchester: Clinamen Press, 28.

17 As developed in the later published lectures; cf. Jaspers, K. (1997) *Reason and Existenz. Five lectures*. Milwaukee Wis.: Marquette University Press.

18 Negri, A. (2003) *Time for Revolution*. New York: Continuum, 210. Unfortunately the beauty and precision of the Italian title is lost in the somewhat ideological translation. The original title, *La consituzione del tempo and Kairòs* points to the ontological aspiration, to ground transmutation in the play between the constitution of time and the event of *Kairòs*. Basically a re-creational, rhythmic pattern.

19 Bloch, E. (2000) *The Spirit of Utopia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 34. The question is, as it were, rhythmically reiterated throughout Bloch's utopian book, getting a more and more *topic* or *geophilosophical* answer, calling for action: we can only continue singing if we move along if we dance. Consider a child in the dark singing *but not moving*. Catatonia, *Wahnsinn*, the abyss.

lux…divisit lucem ac tenebras. "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light…He divided light and darkness" (Gen. 1).[20] The order-word of common sense language is prioritising the *divisio* (appearing in the quote as *divisit*, divide) on the expense of the *deviare* (the deviant nature of the *clinamen*).

This first act of vision, God's vision, is a di-vision, that is, a separation, concealing the stochastic deviation from which form did emerge: the difference between forming by breaking asunder (*divideo*, to separate) and forming by following a way (*deviare*, to leave a way). The difference between despotism and nomadism: *The Widow Makers* or a way out.[21]

The *divideo* becomes an act of founding and masculine penetration, of *Logos*; it has *its* echo in the Platonic Idea, of which every phenomenon are mere copies, and the resemblance or lack thereof is the criterion of being. Correspondingly, the fall of man is the fall from being copies of God with a resemblance to being images *without* resemblance. We are not copies, we are not "well-founded pretenders, guaranteed by resemblance"; we are "false pretenders, built upon a dissimilarity, implying an essential perversion or a deviation."[22]

The echo is this deviation; the *clinamen* is analogous to "that dangerous supplement" which, according to Derrida, J.-J. Rousseau tries to exorcise.[23] However, since the laminar and administered world is pure Hell, the exorcism is adequate. Yet it must rise as a positive affirmation of creation, rather than as a negative Oedipalisation in the anxious exorcism.

The echo is both a deferral, that is, a postponement in time: the a/waiting of the answer; and it is a difference, that is, a distance in space: the as/signment of a place. The differing difference is *différance*.

The echo calls forth the excluded excess; an excess which will let the totalities shake, the Derridean counterviolence of *solicitate*, to let everything tremble. It trembles because of the dangerous supplement or a disturbed equilibrium, this is what

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20 The deployment of the Old Testament has, as should be apparent, nothing to do with finding traces of ancient truths or origins. Methodologically it shares configuration with the way Erich Auerbach's uses the Old Testament as a 'hypotaxis', countering it to the Hellenistic myths of Homerian origin. This exercise explodes away exactly the monomaniacs of orthodoxy, and focuses the motion and movement of the Middle East literature of the time; cf. Auerbach, E. (1968) *Mimesis. The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press; as well as Fredric Jameson's discussion regarding the connection, if only as a non-connection, between Auerbach and Adorno in Jameson, F. (1990) *Late Marxism. Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic*. London: Verso, 18ff. Using the 'traditional' signifier The Old Testament, is, of course, already deploying an expression of a Royal science, a theology, which presupposes a *New* Testament, and, by implication, reduces the utopian momentum of the Semitic literature. Here Benjamin's Messianic utopianism proves an indispensable, nomadic deconstruction of the stratifications of Royal science.

21 *The Widow Makers* was the horrendous and probably suitable name for an especially dangerous US division set in action in the Second Gulf War. Likewise, it is the name of an action motion picture.

22 *The Logic of Sense*, 256ff.

23 Derrida J. (1976) *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 141ff.

characterises the pretenders: "an unfounded pretension, concealing a dissimilarity which is an internal unbalance."[24] Rather than the totalitarian idea(l) of God equalling *Logos*, one turns to Martin Buber's God, the *mysterium tremendum*, the overwhelming mystery, embodying the 'adequate idea', as Spinoza would have it, of the instantiation of a beginning, a beginning that is not in the beginning but in the middle. One is always in the middle of an echo, a reflection, a pretension, the relation is strictly external to its term. If one is not in the middle of a dance, one is not dancing.

It is said that in the beginning God proclaimed the first dividing distinction. This cannot be the case, already here things run astray, voices that were different from each other are dedifferentiated and the multivocality of the noise that has been reduced to a monotonous voice: the translation into English of this passage reads 'God', but the Hebrew reads אֱלֹהִים, which means 'the gods' in plural. Since God now turns out to be several, there was already quite a crowd. As the polytheisms of history would assess, the gods probably didn't agree, and were forced to, as is the case in Horace, to operate in the *rerum concordia discors*, "the discordant harmony of things".[25]

Here one operates by disjoining and decentring the ideology of industrialism and administration, the ideology of *organisation*, by means of a host of peripheral movements that opens for the murmur of creation: "disjointed polytheism instead of symmetrical antitheism."[26] Monotheism is connected to the myth of creation *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, but the echo does not come out of nothing, rather it relates some-thing with no-thing, not creating *ex nihilo* but *ex plico*, explicating the folds, *les plis* in French, of becoming.

What we call noise is the quarrel of the multiplicity of gods, a quarrel that apparently reached a threshold: the Greek reads that *khaos* reigned, but in the original Hebrew text this turmoil reads תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ, unformed and void. The words are pronounced *tohu-wa-bohu*,

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24 *The Logic of Sense*, 257.

25 Horace (1994) *Epistles*. Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1,12,19. The stratification of the world is never total or unison, and in geology a discordant strata is one which lacks conformity in direction of bedding, caused by a fault or what is here called the *clinamen*, the nearly imperceptible rupture that causes bifurcations and chaotic fluctuations, drawing into Horace's dictum the mix between State science (erecting the strata) and the nomadology (following the *clinamen*).

26 Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (1988) *A Thousand Plateaus*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 498, where the smooth and the striated is discussed in the context of nomad art, an example of which, this article suggests, is Tango Argentino. This point also targets the obtuse academic prejudice, stronger in the years of vulgar Marxism at the universities, the idea or rather ideological doxa that monopolistic and despotic monotheism should be countered with antitheism or atheism, both of which in not few historical instances have proceeded by at least as despotic means as any religious movements, and have, as the quote also points out, only developed monotheism into its symmetrical antithesis. Daniel W. Smith provides an apt formulation of Deleuze's stand on this issue: "Deleuze thus harbours neither the antagonism of the 'secular' who find the concept of God outmoded, nor the angst or mourning of those for whom the loss of God was crisis-provoking, nor the faith of those who would like to retrieve the concept in a new form. He remained fascinated with theological concepts", cf. Smith, D. W. (2001) 'The Doctrine of Univocity. Deleuze's Ontology of Immanence', in M. Bryden (ed.) *Deleuze and Religion*. London: Routledge, 167.

[27] an expression that is in itself auto-communicative, creating a never equalized, constantly trembling internal quasi-coherence, an autopoiesis of the *clinamen*. What is lost in the Greek translation is maintained in the Hebrew text: the audible rhythm of *tohu-wa-bohu* shows it to be its own echo. Any forced distinction between heaven and earth, night and day, system and environment is dependent on a relation that cuts across the distinction as a communication in a twilight zone, a rhythm, or an echo.

Forced beginnings implies forced ends, tying the I of the enunciation to the creation of History: 'I am the beginning and the end'. The Alpha and the Omega, the α and the ω. This historical accountability, this praxis of numbering numbers, is the Logic of Logos all the way from A to Z. Yet, in effect, everything "begins with the last letter; everything begins in a certain undecidability of the *ōméga*."[28]

Real thinking does not need beginning and ends, as does State reason. Real thinking evoke these entities, beginnings and ends, as shadows of the undecidable, thinking would not need these points as fixations, as beginnings or as ends, since thinking is destined to disappear by being realised in these points. On the contrary, thinking needs the shadow of these points at every moment of its becoming and its development.[29]

The 'last' letter, the ω, is calligraphically an echo of itself, closing in on ∞, yet with an opening to the outside. Particularly, the *ōméga* shares the characteristics of all bodily cavities – the mouth, the lungs, the vagina, the penis – in that it is a fold of the outside *into* an inside.[30] Its undecidability has a rhythmic quality, as if the letter was dancing with itself, yielding, and opening the void.

Is *tohu-wa-bohu* a thought or a dance? Is ω a thought or a dance? A thought and a dance. A thought of the outside, outside the familiar realm of common sense distinctions. A dance of letters and atoms of which the Cabbala, as Benjamin reads it, develops a radical hermeneutic utopianism: the meaning of the text is unsettled, since

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27 The rhyme is easily recognisable, also in the Hebrew letters, if they are read as intended from right to left, even more because the vocals are represented in this edition, cf. Serres, M. (1995) *Genesis*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

28 Derrida, J. (1997) *Politics of Friendship*. London: Verso, 173.

29 Cf. Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (1994) *What is Philosophy?* New York: Columbia University Press, 218. Except when the sun is in its *mathematical* zenith – a point that both is not yet but also is already past – the shadow of a point is *more* than a point, a vortical form, the *umbra*, the Latin word for the shadow in the middle of a sunspot, reappearing in the umbrella. Thinking will evolve under this umbrella.

30 Within organisation theory the fold as a fundamental principle in organisation *per se* is shown in a decisive essay by Cooper, R. (1986) 'Organization/Disorganization', *Social Science Information*, 2(25), with, of course, inspiration from Derrida.

the radical revolutionary advent of Messiah – which is a perpetual becoming – means that each and every letter in the text will disentangle themselves from their positions and, subsequently, receive their true position. The presence of spaces between the letters is ~~a sign~~ of this.[31]

The thinker and the dancer: naked. Both the thinker and the dancer move in a zone of indistinction between noise and music, the thinker in a naked room, the dancer in a naked room. They are messengers, *angelli*.

The tango dancer becomes deterritorialised, and the traditional assumption that the Greek athletes in various degrees were naked at the gymnasium – *gumnos* is Greek for naked – is beside the point. The point is that gymnastics is a becoming-naked, a deterritorialisation of the body, of its habits and of its memories: one finds gymnastics to be a praxis that reverses time.[32] The body is dedifferentiated into a pure capacity, regaining its connection to noise and the ocean.

Hermes was the god of the gymnasiums, he is said to have invented the lyre out of a shell turning the white noise of the shell into music, in some texts Hermes is accredited the very invention of music. However, to make up with Apollo after a cunning theft of some cattle, he played the stringed lyre for his beautiful counterpart, and handed over the instrument to Apollo, the god of dance. The thinker and the dancer between Hermes and Apollo; between the dark secrecy of theft and combat strategy, the aleatory,[33] and the light master of the sign and vision, the mandatory. Also, as a matter of fact, Apollo ends up as *the* god of music.

The *claire obscure* is a movement between the hermetic darkness and the clear distinction: a zone of indistinction, in which the lyre moves back an forth as an angel. The angel is a war machine, that is, a machine of transmutation, of infinite metamorphosis, nobody owns it or everybody steals it, appropriates it. It plays the slaves' tunes within the marches of the State.

Music never ceases to deterritorialise: the Tango, the music of chance, the *einstürzende Neubauten*. Music never ceases to free us from the iron cage of the Organism, the Sign, and the Subject, the administered world:

> I think naked and I am no body.
> I dance naked; I am nothing.[34]

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31 Cf. Eagleton, T. (1981) *Walter Benjamin. Or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*. London: Verso.

32 Cf. *Genesis*.

33 Aleatory from Latin *alea*, a play of dice. Luck plays a role here, usually bad luck. The echo of this insight is found in the Far East, where "the genius of Japanese art was to have been able to develop an abstraction of the alea. It is a lyrical abstraction [the lyre moves back an forth, BMS] whose sign is the broken, fractal line", cf. *Earth Moves. The Furnishing of Territories*, 83. The zigzag of the Japanese garden following the Zen principle of *fukensei*, asymmetry, versus the regularities of Versailles' imperial decor.

34 *Genesis*, 35.

Both the dancing body and the thinking body is between noise and music, always a bit ahead. For Plato education consists first of all in musical and physical training (that is, dance). In the *Republic* it is asserted that

> education in music is most sovereign [*kuriôtatê en mousikêi trophê*],[35] because more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the inmost soul and take strongest hold upon it, bringing with them and imparting grace [*euschêmosunê*].[36]

After the deterritorialising processes of musical and gymnastic education are carried through, one should, in order to follow Plato's suggestions, commence with the training of reason (algebra, geometry, etc.), social skills and dialectics, to reach, finally, the full participation in the production of the good life in society.

To impart grace (or 'decorum') is with slight alterations what in *Phaedrus* is referred to as bringing the *paidikos*, the young lad, into a rhythm, *rhuthmos*, with the cosmic forces, or literally 'a suitable proportion or measure with the Gods', an education which is already begun in the womb of the mother, where the foetus is harnessed by 'pre-natal gymnastic' (this striking image is from the *Laws*). In Hellas, even illness and disease had rhythms that should be respected and not intercepted.

Gymnastics remained, in ancient Greece, an activity for everybody, bodies young and old, it remained the basic tactic in warding of the territorialising effect of time, time which turns the hand into an insensitive claw, the body into an old and dying animal, the thought into mere *attitude*, the perpetual *vox populi* of mediated discourse: 'What do *you* think?', rather than what forces you to think the unthought, well beyond 'you' and your petty little 'secrets'.

As a cosmology, Plato's fundamental concept of movement, *kinêsin*, consists of *rhuthmos* and *harmonia*, rhythm and harmony. The refrain is then what brings a certain consistency to this rhythmicity, a repetition in the flow (*rhuthmos* itself probably stemming from *rhein*, to flow[37]), a consistency of the social.

While the refrain is the organising principle that eventually, if repeated long enough, will lead to stratification and administration, music is what enables the social to change, transform and transmutate, "bringing with them and imparting grace" (cf. Plato above). The forces are sonorous forces, from the vague rhythms between all the amorphous milieus of which chaos consists, to the veritable machinic opera that ties the heterogeneous elements of the living thing together: territorial refrains, organic refrains, sexual refrains, occupational refrains. Social refrains.

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35 The Greek reads: "music is the master of nourishment for the trainee" confirming the intimate connection between music and the bodily reproduction.

36 Plato (1969) *Republic. Plato in Twelve Volumes*. London: Willian Heinemann, 401d. The term grace, *euschêmosunê*, is in Plato subsumed the more encompassing Hellenistic term *arethê*, the good character. It was to be found in the *kalos kai agathos*, the beautiful and the noble: the aesthetic rhythm between the two expressions should not go unnoticed.

37 Serres has a habit of questioning this etymology, since flow could also be strictly laminar movements of atoms, all falling with the same velocity and vector geometry. The *clinamen*, however, forces the atoms to interact, and at this instance the chance of rhythm appears on the surface of the flow.

This is why Nietzsche's first question regarding people, books, music, is "Can they walk?" and even more: "Can they dance?"[38] Bernard Cache comes close to this in asserting that "[we] have to learn to modulate our zones: to dance to recover a body in the envelope of the tribe, or to fade away to acquire a soul within the texture of thought."[39]

Similarly, the well-educated person of Hellas, according to Plato, is one capable of performing the refrain both verbally and bodily, that is, singing and dancing, thus producing the social as a consistent plane,

> linking us one with another by means of songs and dances; and to the choir they have given its name from the 'cheer'[40] implanted therein. Shall we accept this account to begin with, and postulate that education owes its origin to Apollo and the Muses?[41]

The decorum thus developed is what organises the *agora*, and the relation between the territory (or *agora*) and the refrain (the linking by song and dance) is simply that the refrain territorialises.[42] The refrain connects the earth with the territory. Yet the emergence of territories is not simply a matter of functional components and extensive space, but also, and more importantly, the expressive qualities that the rhythmic communication that the refrain carries forth.[43]

The refrain is a territorial assemblage, that is, a force of organising that connects elements to a territory: the bird singing its tune in the forest or in the city, de- and re-territorialising the striated spaces (trees and paths in the wood, roads and noises in the city). It may take on other functions, from the species specific through the social to the cosmic, but it retains this relation to the territory, constantly performing a reorganisation of functions and a regrouping of forces. The point is that 'the social' has no relevance disconnected to a territory, rather, as it becomes, its becoming is a becoming territorial, and it can only be understood in this relation to the territory.

It is the detail or the *clinamen* that sets the becoming of social distinctions in motion. The *clinamen* or the detail is, contrary to common sense knowledge, not marginal, even if it often is treated as negligible by State science. The detail is in the middle, and it is in the middle that things speed up.

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38 Nietzsche, F. W. (2001) *The Gay Science. With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 366.

39 *Earth Moves. The Furnishing of Territories*, 124-5.

40 Notably, in this sentence Plato transforms *chorous*, choir or the round dance, to *charas*, joy, pointing to the very *reason d'etre* of education: transforming the amorphous into a form that is capable of producing joy.

41 Plato (1969) *Laws. Plato in Twelve Volumes*. London: William Heinemann Ltd, 654a. Much later, Nietzsche was to discuss the necessity of protecting the educational process from the hustle of everyday business, since the crucial process of education – for which German features a more suitable expression: *Bildung* – develops entirely through its own movement, i.e., its rhythm and its harmony.

42 *A Thousand Plateaus*, 320.

43 Cf. part 3 of Derek P. McCormack (2002) 'A paper with an interest in rhythm', *Geoforum*, vol. 33.

The way to get to the middle is to *cut up the whole*, like William Burroughs' method of cutting up: the concept 'detail' stems from Old French *detail*, slice, piece, which comes from *detaillier*, to cut in pieces, the latter part from Latin *talea*, twig, cutting.[44]

To cut up is to be specific, and the question of *specificity* in every case works away from the general towards a particularity or a singularity, *a* life, the detail of *a* life or the *clinamen* of *an* event. The philosophical critics of the 19th century, on whom the present text draws, are hardly categorisable on specific themes or problematics, they are neither – or even less – comparable on the level of remedies, solutions or ways out. But what Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud[45] share, is a preoccupation with *the detail*. Never the situation *per se* but the trembling that the situation raises above the apperceptive level. What was important for Kierkegaard was not *that* he was greeted, but the manner in which the greeting was executed.

In Nietzsche: the laughter, not *what* is funny (surely dogs and cats are funny too, and the people that love them), but *how* one laughs, how the laughter is changing the laughing person and, conversely, why laughing is so seldom joyful. Freud took this preoccupation to an extreme, opening the theme for a range of 'detailists' – maybe a better term than post-structuralists – to follow: most notable was his detailed description and analysis of the slip of the tongue, the joke, and that little part of the dream which he found inter-esting, literally pertaining to the *inter-esse*, to what is between being, what is in the middle.

The detail is never alienated from the whole and music, the strongest of the arts, never loses its power of deterritorialisation, it never totally closes off the minor music working within its most institutionalised form – R&B, Country & Western – even when the dynamics of its forces have been territorialised by a refrain to the point of stratification. In Adorno's theory of music the *Schlager* signals the final commodification of the melodic expression. In the case of R&B it is race, the racial refrain, in the case of Country & Western it is nation, the national refrain that becomes stratified to the fullest.

In the road movie *Blues Brothers* the two styles deterritorialises each other. In a particular scene – and simply by cunningly substituting themselves for a real Country & Western band that has not arrived yet – The Band (a blues band) is going to play at a Country & Western joint. It is truly a *middle of nowhere*-joint, but it is immediately turned into a *now here*-joint by the owner, when she happily exclaims that 'we've got both kinds; we got Country and Western.' The Band starts playing what definitely turns out to be a minor music within: the audience (the striated organisation with the power of defining what is music and, especially, what is not) is bombarding The Band with any

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44   A possible line of flight here is the notion of *bricolage*, which is a late 20th century French invention in art, but put to work in the social sciences by Claude Lévi-Strauss.

45   Freud sneaks into that century which dismissed all critique because it turned auto-critical to the point of abolition. Moreover, one might miss Marx in this pack and his oeuvre does play a special role in this line of flight. On the one hand Marx was notorious in the detailed depiction of workers living conditions, their rooms are measured with a precision that would be curious was is not for the graveness of the subject. On the other hand, he is also meta-theoretical with a bias towards utopia. This is a bias that unfortunately is shared by Deleuze and Guattari in their last joint work, cf. *What is philosophy?*, chapter 4.

moveable object available. That The Band represents a minor music is obvious, and the chicken net protecting them also demarcates inclusion and exclusion of the territory (exclusion being a function that botches deterritorialisation, returning everybody to their rigid territories. They become reterritorialised).

However, in this stalemate situation, The Band plays *Theme from Rawhide* and *Stand by Your Man*, that is, genuine Country & Western songs, with a piety that makes them, as well as the crowd, worthy of the event:

> Keep movin' movin' movin'
> Though their disaprovin'…
> Rawhide

The Band becomes foreigners in their own language, the dominant refrain is deterritorialised by the minor music from within, what could be termed the Outside of the refrain.

Specifically, the refrain has as its one pole the power of creating a territory (a place to play for *a* band), and as its other pole total stratification ('you are not one of us', *their disaprovin'*), where its initial role is lost, and the refrain is turned into an order-word.

In the work of Deleuze and Guattari, the refrain has the very three aspects which *Blues Brothers* expresses. They are all virtually simultaneous as the refrain connects to the territory, demarcating chaos in different ways, that is, cutting and redirecting flows: the refrain injects, inscribes, and intercepts. The Band injects itself into the Country & Western joint, and by way of music, it inscribes itself into the dominant refrain of the local reality, finally intercepting in the becoming of the crowd and their identity, turning rigid oppositions into biopolitical production, *Stand by Your Man*, a way out for everybody, a new solidarity of standing by, and the concert turns out to be a 'success'.

Injection: The Band in the joint is a child in the dark: the child singing a refrain so as to create a momentary centre in chaos, throwing a contemporary line out in front of her, a way through, a passage. The refrain injects redundancy in a chaotic multiplicity; this injection is the *clinamen* which allows for the unfolding of *time*. Consider the picture of the now world-historical little Jewish boy, anxious and with his hands in the air, escorted towards extinction by Nazi soldiers, chanting a speechless refrain which sets a distance in time as well as space.

The picture produces intensity: one remembers exactly this picture and this little boy, while huge amounts of other pictures documenting the atrocities pictures have been forgotten (the picture is part of such a series of the Jewish Ghetto Uprising in Warsaw, April-May 1943).[46] What the picture produces with its depiction of the raised hands, the facial expressions, contrasting the dull looking storm troopers, is an event which singularises the historical contingencies of the moment, a strategy that lets the picture continuously produce itself as event.

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46 The effect of the picture has not an *a priori* necessary connection to the factual historical life and death of the individuals in the picture, although, naturally, there exists indeed such a historical life and death.

In the case of the little Jewish boy, the injecting function of the refrain serves to mark out the critical distance between two members of a species, here as a critical distance between a member of a group and chaos and disaster. The child creates a sonorous centre in the alley where the paralysing anxiety cannot rigidify his movement in terms of direction or change of speed: he walks by a rhythm, crossing thresholds, towards the void.

Warsaw, April-May 1943, photo courtesy United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

The theme has an echo in Rafael's *School of Athens*, (1510-11), a detail of which is shown below, where Plato has the role of the boy, and Aristotle the role of the German soldier in the back right. Whereas the boy and Plato points towards the outside and transformation, Aristotle and the German soldier points towards the ground, towards order and territory.

The catastrophe of *Timaeus* versus the systematic of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

School of Athens, Rafael

The second aspect of the refrain is its capability of *inscription*. The inscription creates a territory as a geomorphic reality, a relative calm area: folding the social stratum as to create an inside and an outside.[47] Here our observation must change point of view, since the inscription process is moving towards the stratified and the signified: it takes more systematic effort and time to inscribe than just to inject. The German army inscribes, does nothing but inscribe: the soldiers with their dull movements, their weapons and the uniform fetish, the refrain and the military orchestra, the march.

Organisation – as a noun – takes place when the territorialisation of a territory is taken to its limit, when the factor of territorialisation is raised towards infinity. In the end it will lose its creative movement.

Inscription creates a home, *Heimat*, by drawing a circle and organizing a space with a firm inside/outside distinction: Arian/Jew, or, in more frequent or at least more mundane settings, member and non-member of the organisation, the logic of administration. It delimitates a space of the germinal forces of the task in question, the work that should be done, the activity, *Endlösung*, or the meetings in the office.

Inside the organised assemblage, when specialisation takes places and trades are differentiated, it is more a matter of letting live together (with specific refrains constantly de- and reterritorialising within the assemblage), than it is a matter of keeping apart.

The fact is that nothing can be kept apart: desire is present when the bureaucrats shuffle the papers and stamp the documents and laugh in the corridors as in Franz Kafka's *Das Schloss* (*The Castle*). The success of the Nazi propaganda was indeed to connect directly to the bodily productions of the masses, sexually arousing the German people, raising their arms in conjunction with their passions and emotions.[48]

Seen from point of view of the refrain, all assemblages are such *passages*: "I am no longer as I was before, I am swept away by a becoming other, carried beyond my familiar existential Territories."[49] Therefore, the refrain has a dynamic relationship to the territory in the sense that the refrain 'moves in the direction of the territorial assemblage and lodges itself there or leaves.'

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47   The refrain creates a fold, the existential refrain connects to a fold, the latter being the configuration of individuation suggested by Deleuze, namely via his rather complicated reading of Leibniz in Deleuze, G. (1993) *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

48   It is a historical, if somewhat underplayed, fact that Adolf Hitler received millions of love letters from German women. They where certainly not just cute signs of adoration, they were fierce and erotic manifestations of devotion and lust. Also, it must not be overlooked that to other millions of German men, the Nazi cults of sports and bodily explications exploded away a host of Victorian repressions and prohibitions, not least related to homoerotic relationships, giving, of course, an even more bizarre context to the concurrent and deadly campaigns against deviant sexual behaviours and *entartete Kunst*.

49   Guattari, F. (1995) *Chaosmosis. An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*. Sydney: Power Institute, both quotes found at p. 93ff.

By its third and last aspect, the refrain *intercepts*: it opens the circle, follows a tangential *clinamen*, it improvises, it is the movement of the Bergsonian *fabulation*. The interception is a radical opening of the territory assemblage towards the forces of cosmos, yet at the same time it gives these forces a new relation to the movement of the molecular, to micropolitics. It is thus the opening of the assemblage towards an outside. Accordingly, the territorial assemblage is constituted, recreated and changed by the refrain. This *dynamis*, this transformative force is never more present and forceful than it is in music: "All arts aspire to the condition of music."[50] Whereas, asserts Schopenhauer, all the other arts are only imitating the Universal will, music itself represents this will.[51]

What at first appears as a territorialised function may on account of the musical forces develop into a new assemblage, with a level of deterritorialisation congruent with its autonomy: deportation becoming the imminent cataclysm of the Apocalypses (from Greek *apo-* + *kalyptein*, to un-cover), only, not for the deportees but for those who deport. What is un-covered is the fact that behind the closed circles around power, under the Goth cult of the Nazis, behind the curtain in the Temple,[52] behind the closed doors of bureaucracy, behind the walls around Kafka's *Schloss*, behind the Man, where allegedly there should be a Wo-man, behind Capital, there is nothing. There is, as K.E. Løgstrup puts it: "no reserve neither of strengths or skills behind our reservations. Empty aloofness is in a given case enough to grant authority and influence."[53] Max Weber points out the link between secrecy and power when he asserts that every "bureaucracy seeks to increase the superiority of the professionally informed by keeping their knowledge and intensions secret."[54]

We are close to the definition of Hell, from Latin *celare*, to conceal: 'Hell is other people' was never meant to mean anything else than the threat of my echo being a void, all differences cancelled. Not ice, not fire, just the Same, Indifference, Boredom.

This development or, more precisely, this type of production, is what we could term immanent or creative critique, since it re-veals the forces already at play in the assemblage in case and the possibility of another production of subjectivity. Uncovering may still be *too Greek*, or too Renaissance, since there is nothing to uncover, and the procedure for willing the truth is rather stripping the scripture, the sign, laying bare its semantic structure, a general demystification of the *ecritúre general*.[55] If there are no

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50   A late-Romantic dictum delivered by the English essayist and critic Walter Pater.

51   Corporate events would not work without music. The corporate party, where occupational refrains are deterritorialised by music and immediately reterritorialised by sexual refrains, 'it had to happen.' As it is the rule of reterritorialisations, the 'new' configuration extremely seldom deconstructs the ruling social machines of power and inscriptions, but reinforces them.

52   The sign and catastrophe of the Apocalypses was to be the fall of the curtain that covered the innermost room in the Temple, where the Covenant was placed. It would turn out, at the destruction of Jerusalem, that the Covenant was not there. Such is, in any case, the history from point of view of the ruling class, namely the convert/traitor Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37-95).

53   Løgstrup, K. E. (1993) *Solidaritet og Kærlighed*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 136.

54   Weber, M. (1946) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 233.

55   Cf. de Certeau, M. (1986) *Heterologies. Discourse on the Other*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 160ff.

things behind, then everything can be decoded or demystified on the surface, all the cultic movements are nothing but folds of an outside, and must be considered as such. Language must be defected, laying bare the obscenity of its *production*. There will flow nothing out from the semantically erected cultic 'centres', and our respect (from Greek *re- + skopein*, to look back on, cf. sceptic) in regards to the loci of power and secrecy must be thoroughly sceptical.[56]

Analytically, in the picture of the little Jewish boy, what is decisive is the distinction between what does not move and what moves, what does not change and what changes. On the one hand the rigid stratifications and the molar organisation and on the other hand the consistent aggregates, that is *the social in its becoming*, the difference between ideology and praxis.

The necessary tactics is to deploy a destratifying transversality that could possibly move through the elements of State and police, deconstructing the overcodings of these regimes of power. This analysis might set in motion existential refrains, which then could show the production of partial but consistent subjectivities (the little Jewish boy as a transformative war machine).[57]

Since a society is not defined by its contradictions (as in traditional Marxian analysis), but by its lines of flights, that is, its fissures and breaks, imperceptible ruptures, the creative part is the construction of these lines, lines that at once transgress as well as co-construct the consistent assemblage. The refrain is what produces this consistency: evidently not as an organisation in the traditional arborescent model but, more relevant, as a line of flight, as a production of intensity.

The little Jewish boy already directing a minor orchestra; not in the striation of the Nuremberg assemblies, but in the smooth space of the pack. He has reached the final stage of decorum or gracefulness in Plato and has become *chorêgeô*, become the leader of a chorus. *Chorus angelli*.

At the same time the refrain itself is also susceptible to change, to deterritorialisation, and the deterritorialisation of the refrain, its transmutation,[58] is always connected to the detail and hence to rhythmicity. The *talea*, the detail, plays a crucial part in this continuous transmutation, connecting the methodology of the detail with a longitudinal movement within history, with a series of repetition we would call continuity.

The *talea* is never entirely lost, though, and a detail always survives, a little recollection on the way to Swann, or the way to extinction, that will change the story entirely. The

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56 The stronger the cult, the more devastating the emptiness, and the more prone to change a cult is, the less it has to refer to the transcendental. Religious cults were cults of praxis long before they, in the case of Protestantism, became cults of ideology, that is, cults of capital, cf. Weber, M. (1985) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Unwin.

57 *A Thousand Plateaus*, 335.

58 Transmutation is preferred to transformation, since the Latin *mutare* in itself means change: transmutation is thus both a transgression of the form, but also a change in the change itself, an indetermination which can produce both the full Body without Organs as well as the mutant and cancerous Body without Organs.

lines of flight are never straight, the lines of flight are always bent, and unfold in relation to the curvatures of the very small: "You don't deviate from the majority unless there is a little detail that starts to swell and carries you off."[59] Here the *talea* (the rhythm of the pack-orchestra deterritorialising the fascist stratum) designates a becoming-Jewish where also the Jew must become Jewish. This is a becoming which the establishment of the Jewish State unsurprisingly would show to ward off, as all states ward off becomings by administration: 'it's only a detail', 'it's only a minor question', 'later'.

Becoming consists of these two simultaneous movements, the one in which the subject departs from the majority, is deterritorialised from the majority, and the second in which the subject, now as *medium or agent*, rises up from the minority. There is a boy exploded out of a majority, a nation, and made both agent and medium of a becoming minoritarian, becoming-Jewish, yet without being reterritorialised.

The subject of the becoming only exists as a deterritorialised part of the majority: the becoming is immanent to the field in question. The subject of the becoming only functions as a medium or agent of a becoming as a deterritorialised variable of a minority, a variable that is set free by deterritorialisation.

However, both majority and minority are aggregates or states, molar sedimentations; the point is constantly to become minoritarian, not to constitute yet another minority. The becoming minoritarian is a pure process or a movement with infinite speed, a molecular transmutation that goes from the subject towards a line of flight. Towards, as Leonard Cohen has it, the crack in everything which is where the light comes in. This becoming goes from the established subject of enunciation to the infant, it is a becoming-speechless in the midst of a silent tremor.

The silent dancer, Abraham, on Mount Moriah, with the raised knife: in Kierkegaard tremor is the almost non-perceptible rhythm of the body that deterritorialises body and spirit and sweeps them up in the indefinite striving ('infinite resignation' in the case of the knight of faith[60]), a perpetual becoming, trembling is existence repeating itself, trembling is difference. In the hour of death for the little Jewish boy, his tremor is what enables a way out, turning him into a war machine: between the capture of sign potential that the State performs and the transmutation realised by the constant production of difference or the repetition of an interceptive refrain.

Whenever an assemblage such as the event of deportation is deterritorialised, a machine is released, and machines "are always singular keys that open or close an assemblage, a territory."[61] As such, the assemblage opens up to what Guattari calls universes of values, in connection to which the assemblage regains its creative force: these universes are given in a moment of creativity, outside linear time, reaching out towards the singular.

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59 *A Thousand Plateaus*, 292.

60 *Fear and Trembling. Repetition*, where the earlier mentioned four series on Abraham and Isaac are played out.

61 *A Thousand Plateaus*, 334, emphasis in original.

Also, war machines, that is, forces of metamorphosis, are released, capable of transversing the rigid strata.[62] *The Third Reich*, with its constructed history of linear causality (Greek, Roman, German), their hierarchies of orders, titles, and symbolic powers versus aggregates of consistency where extremely heterogeneous elements are consolidated, "orders that have been short-circuited."[63] The analysis of the little Jewish boy as a war machine capable of producing nomadic subjectivities does not imply the interpretation of *symptoms* according to a pre-existent, latent content, but implies the invention of new catalytic centres susceptible of bifurcating experience. The boy is such a catalytic centre, a singularity, a rupture in sense, a cut, a fragmentation, the detachment of semiotic content. We know about the millions crushed as they were running through a world that has lost its meaning, but *he*, the cherub of life, will keep us insomniac the rest of the passage through the *tenebrae super faciem abyssi*, the darkness over the face of the void.

What the refrain produces, in other words, are such a-signifying blocks of subjectivity or a-signifying 'partial subjectivations', pure intensities, all pointing to the original production of mutant centres of subjectivation.[64] In an important sense, these blocks are *fragments*, and the question of the deconstruction of a western, centralised subject ceases to be central (and it never really was central to any of the poststructuralists, they left it). What is critical is sensitivity towards the detached nuclei of intensity devoid of content, the *talea*, since:

> flows of intensities, their fluids, their fibres, their continuums and conjunctions of affects, the wind, fine segmentation, microperceptions, have replaced the world of the subject.[65]

In Adorno, the wind is defining the subject more than the other way around: the way one hears the wind is the way one lives. Either one hears the frightening and hallowing storm that raises the spectres and brings melancholy. Or one has met its forces and conquered them, made the wind a friend that effectuates openness to its intensities, its inspirations, and brings transformation. The wind as a faint rumour of a melancholic void and nothingness; or as a rhythm of the solar plexus. Not only society, but also nature itself precedes the subject.[66]

The refrain singularises these affects or intensities: they are *folds*, and deconstructive expressionism is the art of unfolding and refolding these folds. Rather than remaining occupied with the plane of organisation, the schizo is *out for a walk*.

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62 In Paul Patton (2000) *Deleuze and the Political*. London: Routledge, war machines are called machines of metamorphosis. It is enlightening, and to be sure, Deleuze and Guattari – on p. 513 of *A Thousand Plateaus* – attest that the State apparatus divests the war machine precisely of its "power of metamorphosis". Still I prefer the tenor of the original expression, although, of course, contrary to the State apparatus, which captures the war machines to turn them into demolition machines, the nomad war machine has *everything but* war as its object.

63 *A Thousand Plateaus*, 337.

64 Guattari, F. (1996) *The Guattari Reader*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 200.

65 *A Thousand Plateaus*, 162.

66 Cf. Adorno, T. W. (1990) *Negative Dialectics*. London: Routledge, 126.

Allow yourself a moment to perceive the picture of the little Jewish boy as a picture of a schizophrenic out for a walk. He turns| disaster into catastrophe: what we perceive as pure, irreversible disaster, the schizophrenic turn into a reversible catastrophe.[67] Whereas disaster departs from Old Italian, *disastro*, from *dis-* + *astro*, star, designating an unfortunate constellation of the astral bodies, the sound of inevitability,[68] catastrophe, on the other hand departs from the Greek *cata*, down and *strephein*, turn, pointing to that rupture in the drama when the drama turns against itself.

This point is the Heideggerian *Kehre* of the *Ereignis*, "*Die im Ereignis wesende Kehre*", the turn of the event, "the radically inverted meaning of being, grounded in finitude, that stands over against the metaphysical ideal of being as full presence and intelligibility."[69] *Kehre* is that inner movement of the event in which a clearing is opened in being where entities can rise, the *Kehre* is the problem as it appears in virtuality, where no thing is inevitable, but every thing is in becoming.

To find the catastrophe of one's time is to produce the problematic, *die wesende Kehre*. The drama turns against itself, the cata-strophe: the gist in the eyes, the raised hands, "I know myself to be a threat, so I raise my hands"; "I imitate, only better and more precise than you do"; "You don't look like soldiers."[70] The boy does not carry weapons, but is deterritorialising his own body, turning his empty hands into weapons: karate, from Japanese, *kara-* + *te*, empty hand. The Japanese feudal proletariat was not allowed to carry weapons, so they were imitating the ruling strata at night, at the sandy beaches of Okinawa: 'My hands are empty.'

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67 My sister was a schizophrenic in the last fifteen years of her life, never ceasing to turn mere disasters into real catastrophes, doing it with an insurmountable creative materiality.

68 "Do you hear that, Mr. Anderson? That is the sound of inevitability. That is the sound of your death. Goodbye, Mr. Anderson." Agent Smith in *The Matrix* (2002). This scene in the subway station draws heavily on the motion picture adaptation of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, where in the latter, of course, the train/modernity is the sound of inevitability, and Anna is killed/kills herself. Not so in the virtualisation of modernity in *The Matrix*: The little Jewish boy is the Heideggerian *Kehre* between Anna and Neo, between the palindrome and the anagram. Even if Anna is annA, Neo is not new, just another One. Between that, a boy with no name.

69 Sheehan, T. (2000) 'Kehre and Erignis: A Prolegomenon to the Introduction to Metaphysics', in G. Fried and R. Polt (eds.) *A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 3, cf. also page 263, note 2.

70 Ani DeFranco's slogan 'Every tool is a weapon if you hold it right' – found as the epigraph of Hardt, M. and A. Negri (2000) *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press – is a slogan that also could work in reverse: the Nazi soldiers in the picture carry their weapons as peasants would carry their tools, turning the weapons into useless gadgets because they don't hold them right. They are still capable of killing, yet they kill at random, sometimes the enemy, sometime the brother in arms. The Nuremberg assemblies were, on account of the Versailles Peace Treaty, performed with hoes and spades and not guns and rifles: many of the soldiers carrying out marginal or supporting functions, like occupying Denmark or performing ethnic cleansing never turned into real soldiers, they remained peasants and administrative errand boys. Without the refrain of the soldier, the ethos of war, various atrocities could be carried out on pure bureaucratic terms. This, in any case, is the argument of Zygmunt Baumann and Hannah Arendt.

A master doing *Kata*[71]

This is in line with Plato's educational theory, where both the musical and a very hard physical training should enable the young boy to dance *and* fight, and also master all the movements between, i.e. life. Altogether, the body and the war of the body is partaking in a "shared line of flight of the weapon and the tool: a pure possibility, a mutation."[72]

The martial arts subordinates weapons to speed, in the catatonic yet imminently rhythmic movement of the *Ka*, the trainee, who waits and releases affects as thunderbolts, but even more in the absolute speed of the corresponding and immanent supreme mental effort, the lightning. This implies a *method*, from Greek *meta-* + *hodos*, following a way, the 'Ways' of the Asian worriers, a way out which is a decoding: in fact martial arts is less a matter of turning the body into a weapon as it is a matter of learning to 'un-use' weapons, decode the capture of the State and Oedipus. The State overcodes the warrior, God, King, Country, and Oedipalizes affects by turning them into emotions, displaced and retarded, disgraceful even to the point of extinction: 'our' sons and daughters, who are really the blacks and the trash proletariat.

This overcoding calls for a perpetual decoding, which is a learning process where one learns to undo things and to undo oneself, and it is proper to the war machine: "the 'not-doing' of the worrier, the undoing of the subject."[73]

The ways of martial arts are still occupied with displacement of *Tanden*, the gravitational centre of the body, but in their spiritual training they continue beyond the domain of gravity and necessity, transcending towards that smooth space which knows nothing of weight, only speed and slowness, longitude and latitude, taking it to outer space, where all childhood and metaphysical speculation was first dispersed, to the immense freedom of weightlessness and omnipotentiality.

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71 Gold winner in *Kata*, Barbara Chinen. Photo from the 19th Annual Traditional Karate Tournament International, Women's Individual Kata, Las Vegas, 1999.

72 *A Thousand Plateaus*, 403.

73 *A Thousand Plateaus*, 400ff. As said, I find the connection between the nomadic principles and martial arts especially interesting. Here, possibly, the body-mind fighter is turned into a war machine.

Tanden becomes an event of the middle where it picks up the absolute speed of the thought brain. But the little Jewish boy already produces this; he is far beyond suspense, immobility, attacks and counterattacks. The gloomy feeling of stillness in the picture is turned into a productive difference, a difference we might term an 'act' – yet it is devoid of intention and devoid of subject. It is an act of *radical disengagement*.[74] The act is the very act I perform when "Planet Earth is blue / and there's nothing I can do", as is the case for Major Tom in David Bowies' *Space Oddity*, embracing weightlessness and cosmic silence. Bowie's own method of writing texts and subsequently cutting them up and rearranging them allows him, in a radical way, to *work in the middle*.

What is confirmed by the little Jewish boy, is Giorgio Agamben's prescription that man should not lament "the loss of experience, the weakening of mutual presence and self presence, the expropriation of our linguistic nature, and our consequent alienation."[75] Rather man should become-alien, affirming the fact that humankind was *always already expelled and expropriated* from the Organism, from Language and from the Self.

The horrifying gospel of depth and its intimidating interest in truth: What is the deep truth about fascism? What is the deep truth about the signifier? What is the deep truth about self, or, even more confused, *my* self? All these questions are questions of Oedipus, in itself the alleged deep truth about our desires.

But the *question* is wrong, the problematic is false, and the point becomes the way out, which is not an excavation of a deep truth but an explication of what was already there and what is already here: *a fold of the outside*. It is a moving musicality, never a judgment. As Michel Foucault says, suitably with Deleuze as proxy:

> The outside is not a fixed limit, but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside *of* the outside.[76]

Hence, to produce a new subjectivity is, in Foucault's words, to fold the outside into an inside. The boat on the sea is the refrain in chaos: its territoriality is an inside only insofar is it is a folding of the outside.

Kierkegaard puts it dryly: in the very centre of the little girl is despair,[77] or, one can add, the unthought. To produce a new subjectivity is to turn the imprisonment of being into a becoming: the refrain creates a momentary centre *in* chaos, the little boy throws out in front of him a temporary line, a way out, a passage. Only, he is already in the void, he is beyond the scream, beyond good and evil. Contrary to the boy, Nazism was never

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74 As a correction to the concept of 'radical passivity' analysed in Wall, T. C. (1999) *Radical Passivity. Levinas, Blanchot, and Agamben*. New York: State University of New York Press, where it is constructed from Giorgio Agamben's philosophy of biopolitics.

75 *Radical Passivity. Levinas, Blanchot, and Agamben*, 155.

76 Gilles Deleuze (1988) *Foucault*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 96.

77 This is not an indication of the all too commonly alleged pessimism of (Kierkegaardian) existentialism. The despair in Kierkegaard is like a refrain out of tune, viz., the disharmony points to the fact that the life of the child has yet to become truly free and to form its own home with its specific connections and contributions to the Cosmic.

beyond good and evil, and in no way does this deterritorialisation revise the dispersion of roles in the atrocity. Hannah Arendt and Primo Levi documented to the full the banality of evil, and the radical disengagement of the victims can mean any 'engagement' in what happened.

The picture explodes away our categorisations and victimisations, and in this de/composition of the deportation,

> the image is not defined by the sublimity of its content but by its form, that is, by its "internal tension," or by the force it mobilizes to create a void or to bore holes, to loosen the grip of words, to dry up the oozing of voices, so as to free itself from memory and reason: a small, alogical, amnesiac, and almost aphasic image, sometimes standing in the void, sometimes shivering in the open.[78]

The image ascends into the indefinite towards a pure celestial state, the event, not anymore *the* little boy, but *a* little boy, not anymore *the* Jew, but the becoming-Jewish, fundamentally, of all, also the perpetrators themselves.

The image ceases to be an object and becomes a process in which energy is released, the bullet of the assassin. The silence before the assassin releases the bullet does not annul the labor of the refrain, and the boy's manner of walking, dancing, is no less carried by a refrain than is the music played in the awaiting death camps to help the perpetrators survive in *their* chaos, proving the fact that slaves (the Nazis) can be as evil as alleged masters (the Nazis in their imaginary self).

Music is that sonorous image which opens up to the void or the silence, the hiatus or the leap unto 70,000 feet: how could we ever distinguish vision and sound?[79] The holes, "to create a void or to bore holes": in the midst of confinement a 'holey space' is produced, a 'porous body'.

The boy faces the inevitability of deportation, the inability of avoiding; avoid stemming from Latin *vacare*, to be empty. To avoid is to empty, and the unavoidable is only transgressed by *already being in the void*, by emptying one's hands, one's signs and one's subjectivity, undoing the Self, going much further than Edward Munch: "My whole life has been spent walking by the side of a bottomless chasm...and there I shall walk until the day I finally fall into the abyss."[80]

The little boy is already in the abyss, avoiding the unavoidable by being beyond gravity, turning pure affect into a weapon, a devastating lightning. Undoing the code of the State apparatus, finding a way out of its capture, not by fleeing but by staying in the void, as

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78 Gilles Deleuze (1997) *Essays Critical and Clinical*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 159, referring to Samuel Beckett's authorship.

79 *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 172. Cf. "Of the harmonies I know nothing, but I want to have one warlike, to sound the note or accent which a brave man utters in the hour of danger and stern resolve, or when his cause is failing, and he is going to wounds or death or is overtaken by some other evil"; *Republic. Plato in Twelve Volumes*, 399a.

80 Quoted in Hughes, R. (1991) *The Shock of the New. Art and the Century of Change*. London: Thames and Hudson, 281.

in Herman Melville's *Bartleby the Scrivener*, where Mr. Bartleby simply "would prefer not to."[81]

The evitable is what one is capable of avoiding, a move from the Greek abstract normativity in regard to a good life towards the practical rules in the Stoic formulae of life.

The little boy taking this final move into the abyss via a radical disengagement within the empire of extreme danger, expressing a becoming-minoritarian that is necessary for all.

the author   Bent Meier Sørensen has now passed brown belt graduation in Okinawa Goju-Ryu Karate, the last level before black. However, as he feels happy with his achievements in this feudal exercise, he might, while finishing a PhD thesis, entertain hobbies that are less constructed as an eternal examination. Like Tango Argentino. Do mail if you want to tag along while passing Copenhagen.
E-mail: meier@cbs.dk

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81 *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 68.

ephemera

ı **silent sounds #9**

critical dialogues on organization
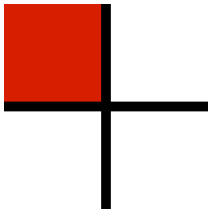
The Rest is Silence
A Remark on the Micro-Fascism of Critique[*]

Martin Fuglsang and Steffen Böhm

> But the *other* night is always other. It is only during the day one believes to understand it, to seize it. In the day it is that secret which can be revealed, that darkness that awaits to be unveiled. The passion for the night only the day can feel. It is only during the day that death can be desired, contemplated, decided: attained. It is only during the day the *other* night can show itself as that love which can break all ties, and desires an ending and to join the abyss. But in the night it is that which one cannot be united, the reiteration that will never end, the saturation that possess nothing, a sparkling of something without ground and without depth. (Maurice Blanchot, *L'inspiration*, 1955)

I   I

… … … … … and the rattling noise moves the old train down south, towards the land of dreams (once it was called America); Figueras, Cadaqués, Dalí's surrealistic heaven of critical-paranoiac freedom lies there within reaching distance; to the west the Pyrenees majestically rise to the sky, to the east the big deep blue plays games with the reflecting sun; the window is open, the air is full of hope … … … … … The journey is suddenly interrupted. 'Everybody, get out!' 'Where are we going?' 'Silence!' (Shut the fuck up!) The uniforms press the crowd toward the platform's exit. The south!?, yes, but still the one of the Reich, the Third. The journey continues on foot, over the mountains, across the border, towards Portbou, the innocently picturesque small town, the first one on Spanish territory. But they refuse entry to the country, all hope of escape gone. Uni-forms everywhere, of all colours: the grey mountains to the right, the brown

… and the voice of the so-called silence is carried forward by the stratifying *modus vivendi* of the Molar and not least the Hybris of critique, but only to produce an even harsher *res-sentiment* as it screams from its self-created position of moral-rightfulness, an all-embracing inferno of micro-fascist intellectual-ism in its hunt for a people who do not themselves have a voice inside the dialectical play of normalisation, but as a people to come they are

horror in the back, the blue endlessness to the left, and Mr No up front. In the middle there is the fragile body of the nomad who seems trapped inside the Molar. Portbou (like the Danish castle): a critical constellation, an Event, a place of transit, transition and transience; a place of mobility … and … … mortality, suicide and death, which is not the end but merely the continuation of a life that was always already dead, the same way as death marks the resurrection of life, wherefore death and life are not opposites but merely knots in a line of becoming, and suicide a line of flight from one death to another, from one weeping song to the other … the rest is silence …

II

… and, although death is the end of a body, a language, a life-time, it simultaneously indicates the beginning of an altogether different time, a spectral space, that of the body's spectres to come and haunt us; but these spectres have no name, they rest in silence, in the impotential space of the potentiality of a rest that cannot mark itself as 'the rest'; it can only be remarked upon, a remark which can never be an adequate gesture for the rest as pure virtuality that must remain silent, as it cannot be named nor recognised, it only speaks of the unknown, unlived, unmarked, in the face of which the body, or rather its surviving spectres, would *never* recognise itself, as this untimely 'never' produces a language that is pure silence as it does not contain names that can be recognised in the Event: of the statement 'the rest is silence', which not only marks the brutal death of the body but also indicates the pure violence of the rest that is yet to come, the pure horror of the silent spectres that cannot be named, morally judged or imprisoned, as they are always already in flight, into the space of silence, without leaving anything, not even a single track behind, just producing potentialities of a (be)coming language that is beyond all recognition of names. Therefore 'the rest is silence', unlike 'silence!' or 'shut the fuck up!', is not a command to remain silent or a remark that indicates the haunting of a secret society that calls our (moral) responsibility and sense of justice into question, but merely a statement without a particular debt or depth: it is pure surface, it

left imprisoned in a heavenward flight towards the moralising transcendence of the all-too-good, in a landscape, that not only is the sedimentation of the body in dichotomies and dictums of the oedipal machinery, but obviously also in fervour of the plane of organisation, of which its interior is thought of as an idealisation of liberty inscribed by the truly reactive force of humanism, as it only stands as a repetitive displacement of the assemblage's cementation of the meaning-phenomenon's plea for justice, the value of values, the last bastion for every judgement of justice … the rest is silence …

II

… and here we are not saved from the micro-fascist intellectual critique by Martin Heidegger's double oblivion of Being, even though he, as only few have, thought silence beyond the enunciative substantive, towards Dasein itself, however only to end up in the mirror room of veiling and clearing, *Aletheia* as a melancholic longing for the uncealed, as the revelation of truth beyond the territorialisation of the transcendental subject, which does not create a double, but reiterates Søren Aaby Kirkegaard's

produces … nothing, it lives in the space of 'never' as it has no past and no future, it has no name, it is pure speculation, a promise of a sound to come … the rest is silence …

III

… and this is nothing but the realm of the work of art: that which is nothing on its own. It is this nothingness that is at the same time its very secret, a secret that is able to produce a multiplicity of lines of flight, which are unnameable at the time of the artwork's gestation, they cannot but remain silent. It is the vulgar micro-fascistic criticism whose journalistic busi-ness it is to give voice to this very silent secret that is inherent to the work of art, a voice that is always already formed by the names and symbols of an art historicism that fetishises time by measuring the value of art on a scale of progress and historical continuity and equally fetishises space by constructing an artificial outside from which its narcissistic commentary, spiked with moral judgements, is fired at the artwork. What is beyond recognition of this brown mass of so-called critics is that the work of art cannot be commented upon; one cannot have an opinion of it, as this opinionated commentary always already assumes a superior space, the Molar, from which the transcendental subject is supposed to critique an object of art. However, the true critic 'forgets' to critique; instead the artwork is killed, split, cut, mortified, destructed. The great work of art has its own death embedded within; it is suicidal from the very beginning of its gestation wherefore the task of the critic is not to second-guess the purposes and motives of the author of a work of art and comment on them according to some moral values, but to destruct it, to redeem it from its authors and historical understanding. Authors and history-makers do not possess privileged insight into the significance of an artwork. Instead the work of art is a work of silence insofar as it lacks familiar names, symbols, voices that can be recognised from the outside. It is this *lack*, this empty space of the secret nothingness, which calls to be filled; fillings that are nothing more than ephemeral lines of flight into the space of pure virtuality. This, and only this, composes the originality (*Ursprung*) of a work of art: it needs to

leap, not towards the embrace of hesitation and doubt, but as free fall towards man himself as his stands on the edge of the abyss, as a permanent lingering attention towards the epefanic resurrection, where death stands as the gesture of Artaud, but only to grant us stillness, this gentle unhearable sound, which might give our existence abundance inside the relative horizon of sense, as the gathering of existential-ities in the endless extent of language, where silence already has been and has not yet arrived, since silence does not belong to the domain of stillness but to that which transversally cuts through the variation of stillness (Sound) … the rest is silence …

III

… and death as a matter of virtual *singularis*, where death does not stand in opposition to life but folds it infinitely, as the mortality of the Event, pure repetition of difference, as a being without duration and therefore silence does indeed have its location in the silenced, but only in that silenced which is placed silent by the Molar's otherness, wherefore silence can not be nor stand in opposition to anything, as silence does not belong to the

be continuously produced, worked upon, as it remains unfinished; it calls for a jump (*Sprung*) into its impotential space of silence to be filled through pure repetition of difference. In this sense critique is the *organon*, the immanent productive part, of the work of art. As Benjamin says, in the case of great works, art is merely a transitional stage. They were something else (in the course of their gestation) and become something else again (in the state of critique). Hence the work of art is in a constant state of becoming through immanent critique, which is not a critique from without, the Molar, not even a critical hammer of opposition working against anything, but a force that destructs the artwork from inside through the insight of thought and concepts, which therefore redeem the phenomena of artworks from the micro-fascistic intellectualism that works in the name of historicism, but this redemption is not more than an experiment, a speculation on the plane of immanence, producing a transcendental artistic exploration … the rest is silence …

IV

… and here silence is the suicide note that is left behind by the corpse: full of words, names, sentences – the sound of language, it screams, but it does not speak, it is full of emptiness, it tells no story, its truth must remain silent, like the dead corpse whose singular life's abrupt end can only leave speechlessness behind, but no explanation or any other narrative or meaning. The suicide note is the only surviving mark of a catastrophic encounter: a horrific dream, a war – only isolated words can remain of that encounter. The catastrophe (from the Greek *cata*, reversal, and the German *Strophe*, verse, text) rewrites the text of history, but this text does not speak, it does not say anything, it is speechless, which is not silence, as silence cuts through everything that is speechless. Suicide shuts up, it brings forth speechlessness, but it *is* pure silence, virtual *singularis*, catastrophe, which produces lines of flight that cut through language, meaning, everything profane. But language itself is a machine that is not kept alive by the words it produces, but by silence, as language is not a collection of screaming symbols that geometrically refer to each

negation of dialectical negativity, it has no voice here, even though the screams of the intellectual criticism brutally and violently state this demand, but only to serve as its own salvation and hieratical resurrection towards Das Reich of the Third … the rest is silence …

IV

… and silence is not part of the play-of-sense inside the totality of the phenomenon of meaning, wherefore its force is not to be found as destruction, not even as the pure movement of deterriorialisation even though it may be one of its attributes, since it does not belong to Spinoza's defeatist desire even if it is its attire as the continuous expansion of the body and in the opus of originality and authenticity it never was, as it has no essence even though its singularised existence is to be found in the organising middle of the body, from where it originates actuality as an always minor for which reason silence exists as a fold in that which carries the voice of the Molar, so very distinct and different from the critique of intellectualism, this pure violent banality of Academia, as this indifference is the pre-established and thereby necessary otherness

other like A to A', but pure matter that needs to be continuously translated to ensure its survival. Translation unfolds and perpetually renews language, the potentiality of which is inscribed in its own silent fold. Translation is hence a destructing, silencing, of language that aims to unfold, however temporarily, the silence of language, wherefore translation is the *organon*, the organisation or medium, of language, which however cannot be mapped by the screaming intellectualism of historical linguistics. Benjamin's 'pure language' is a language that is continuously translated which produces a history that does not aspire to express a prefigured meaning; instead it is expressionless, as its production cannot be measured against any meaning, intention, speech acts or communicative actions. But 'pure language' is not the *logos* of all empirical languages; instead it is a silence that is immanent to all languages: 'pure language' is the becoming, movement, transgression of language. In this sense translation's organisation of language is not only immanent but also points to a transcendental field. This is the monad, which both inhabits but also exceeds all language … the rest is silence …

V

… and the rest of silence can never be reached; 'the rest' is a remark that can never become 'true' as its only truth is that of its own destruction. Benjamin's 'destructive character' is always blithely at work; she is the *organon* of the artwork and language as she organises by destructing, which brings about a critique that is not metaphysical but monadological, both immanent and transcendent; an inherent part of a phenomenon but also a speculative exploration of its own 'beyond': virtuality. The 'destructive character' brings time, as the 'eternal image' of history, to a halt, a standstill; it is this suspension of history, knowledge and understanding that potentially enables a renewed connection to the silence of the artwork and language, which is not the *lending* of a voice to the silenced, as this lending always already comes from the historical Molar, but the enabling of the fold of silence to produce new voices and minor sounds. The 'destructive character' cannot be understood, as there is no meaning in her production. The meaning

of the white wall through which the rigid segmentation can proceed its expansion in the conservation of content and expression by the overcoding of form and substance and hereby ensuring an abstract standard, as a rhetoric, metaphoric and symbolic function of which its effect is every relations invariants, the Molar and its critical intellectual opposition as the very essence of a dialectical and synthetic thinking, a pure death-hymn in the landscape of opinion, which habit it is to say I say I, I say, this machinery of repetition whose production is that of form and its development that of the subject and its formation, pure individuation in the treadmill of symmetry and hierarchy, so very far from silence … the rest is silence …

V

… and as a fold finds expression and content in an always minor idiolect, this folded line to Blanchot's 'Outside', which no longer can be thought of in the figurativety of the Hegelian Wolf, the 'One', the 'Other' and its 'Third', but in itself however it is not an outside, only rhythmic variations in the inferno of micro-fascist opinions between the Molar and the intellectual critique,

frequently assigned to her is 'witch', *Unmensch* and 'barbaric creature', as her motto is: 'If you want to endure life, prepare yourself for death.' She plays with death; her body is a theatrical stage, a surface, a stage prop, not a property; she cannot be placed in a Molar structure, like the family. She is not a moral or humanist citizen, not even a 'character', as she is anything but pathological. Her path is that of destruction; which is not a getting rid of something but a shrinking, reduction, fragmentation, allegorisation. She disposes meaning, layer upon layer, to reach the silent monad. This disposal is one that disintegrates her own 'proper' body, she destructs herself. But this destruction does not aim to reach some 'original' kernel, perhaps Heidegger's Being; it also does not negate in order to reach a higher life-form, a new synthesis. Instead her body is the pure surface of what Benjamin calls 'non-synthesis'. A synthesis would slow down all life juices to a thick morass of ideals: an ideal plane, a clean sheet. Her 'non-synthetical' body always moves and develops fantasies of her own death; she plays with death to be alive and constantly tries to find ways through the Molar structures of narcissistic anxiety or fatal guilt. She destructs her own 'character' not to be 'free' because this 'freedom' is nothing but a Molar fantasy; she destructs to open up a virtual space where one is, as Blixa Bargeld hopes, left in peace, but moveable, free to make noise, without guilt …

rhythmic variations which as relations have detached themselves from the pre-established dichotomised oscillation between forma-tions of expression and content, the Intermezzo, where silence carries a radical normativity, as the double of other in me, as that silence which resides in the middle of the Event, of which its individuation is the reality of that which happens, the pure founda-tion of 'Haeccity', but whose full force is that part of the Event which its accomplishment cannot ac-tualise, a pure surplus in the actualisation of the factual, which reality is that silence which exist as a remnant in the organising of the multiple, it is the non-pulsed silence of the silenced, the silence of Aion …

… the rest is silence …

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