

Kritika Tandon*

Timbre, Identity, Difference: Witnessing Polyphony in Darkness

Abstract

This paper tries to study timbre not only as an attribute of self-sameness for providing identity in sound but as difference, contradiction, and variation. It is divided into two sections: Timbre and Identity, explored through the works of Ihde, Derrida, and Nancy; Timbre and Difference, studied through the works of Benjamin, Ingarden, and Bakhtin. I then take up darkness, a positive openness for the simultaneous existence of voices, as the dimension of timbre in polyphony.

Keywords

Timbre, Identity, Polyphony, Sound, Darkness

Introduction

The discussion on sound mainly revolves around its recognition as that thing, person, or note. To think of it without its attribution to something else would almost seem impossible. The sonority of a thing, a voice, a musical composition, and even noise is mainly claimed to be present only in a temporal duration or in mental activity because of no tangible manifestation. On the other hand, spatial theses provide its materiality as a physical force in the form of waves and vibrations. While both traditions have given a deep understanding of sound and its allied fields like music, they are primarily concerned with an urge to locate it in relation to a source. Exploring such traditions mainly through the work of phenomenologist Don Ihde, this paper tries to move further from these debates by taking up an understanding of

* Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi
Email: kritikata0@gmail.com

sound as a simultaneous occurrence in the soundscape, for which a movement away from perception-centrism is required. This move would mean arriving at a seemingly independent identity of sound (as distinct from its location) that inherently interacts, coexists, and contradicts in a manifold and thereby carries a difference at its heart. For this concern, timbre becomes a significant concept.

Of all other qualities like pitch, duration, tempo, volume, and spatial location, in common understanding, timbre is considered an attribute that helps distinguish different sound products and is said to follow a specific consistency despite relativity in other attributes. Most philosophical systems either take it to be a material mean of sound waves or an immaterial, characteristic style, the latter being explored through the works of Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy. In this paper, timbre is taken mainly at the level of a concept first, even if it is shaped by materiality, feelings, intuition, and other forces. It provides a self-same identity that persists for sound. It also bears similarity to harmony as it evolves out of an invariant pattern of relativity in sound vibrations, producing clear homophony in and for an event.

However, if the domain of sound, the soundscape, already carries many layers of sound events co-occurring, then one will have to consider timbre to be already existing in this polyphony.¹ Instead of a progression of stages that provides the individuation of timbre and homophony, from a preceding stage of polyphony, there will be an attempt to establish here that one needs to deal with polyphony as a zone we are immersed in unavoidably. More than a stage, a situation, a duration, or an aspect, it is the very reality of soundscape. Polyphony is the condition that makes a soundscape exist and be. Without it, there would be only one voice, one tone that sets the rule and diminishes all other voices. But this is hard to think about and almost impossible to happen. No matter how a voice tries to set the norm and form for the rest, the perpetuation of difference is inevitable. Hence, a timbre will have to deal with its interaction with a manifold of timbres and with “dark forces,” which are accused of marring any sense of clarity and concretion. The theoretical framework for polyphony is arrived at via Walter Benjamin, Roman Ingarden, and Mikhail Bakhtin. However, there is also a consistent effort to move further from existing discourses.

To explore these issues in detail, it becomes essential to study how timbre marks the identity of sound as a physical quality and as an immaterial force as it renders objectivity and certainty to identity such that something comes to be called and known as itself.

¹ Whose exact definition for the purpose of this paper will be elaborated in the second part.

Timbre and Identity

1. The Physical Quality of Sound

Sounds are usually confused with the objects which may have produced them when struck or moving. But human ability is already capable of separating and marking differences in these sounds by identifying their auditory textures. Don Ihde explains that even if sounds are primarily heard as sounds of things, it is still possible to differentiate their shape-aspects in the ordinary experience itself.

The shape-aspect is not the only thing that is given in the richness of simple auditory presentations. If the game is allowed to continue so that one learns to hear things in an analogue to the heightened hearing of the blind man's more precise listening to the world, a quickly growing sophistication occurs. A ballpoint pen gives quite a different auditory presentation with its plastic click from that of a wooden rod... The very texture and composition as well as the shape-aspect is presented in the complex richness of the event (Ihde 2007, 62).

For Ihde, human listening is powerful enough to concentrate on the auditory presentation of a sound event to identify differences in auditory shape, surface, echolocation, and interior of things, especially when exposed to them repeatedly; a practice that is particularly helpful when things lie beyond the horizon of vision. His work places importance on the auditory dimension and perception for identifying details in a sound event and coming up with a figuration, rather than relying on immediate observations acquired from vision as final assumptions about a thing.

Mechanical vibrations of an object interact with disturbances in the medium and produce the effect of timbre in the listener, thereby helping them to reckon the quality of a sound stimulus or a sound source. In the essay "Prospects of Timbre Physicalism," Alistair Isaac (2018) identifies sound as an event and timbre as its quality. He also says that to grasp timbre, one has to find an invariant pattern from the combinations of relative degrees of sound vibrations and waves (like every piece of hail falling on a roof has a timbre). Taking a gross value from an individual vibration, the timbre of every mode—that constitutes an event and combines to form an overall pattern of vibrations—establishes similarity.

While navigating the everyday soundscape, timbre as a physical quality helps the identification process through the physical properties of sound events. However, the transference of a thing heard to an exact and expected

listening experience might not be the case. Then there are also instances when a person is not well acquainted with their milieu and comes across events not heard before, in a familiar milieu, or migrating to a new one. Errors, inaccuracy, attributing a sound to something different, and hearing an event that may not have happened are impossible to avoid. Furthermore, these cannot be understood by relying on physical properties alone.

Listening also involves learning of the inside of a thing or a person, a leap over surface presentation. As Aristotle has said, sound and hearing enable the learning of rational discourse, making it intellectually superior out of all senses, with every word moving over from an acoustic product into a "thought-symbol."² Going further into the depth of the other or the self will require listening to the interior beyond material qualities. This case would mean that timbre is more than an acoustic quality as it transforms into a style and characteristic manner in which a thing presents and becomes itself.

2. Style and Identity in the Linguistic Voice

The linguistic voice is a sphere where sound follows the direct procedure of being audible through hearing and the indirect one of enabling thought and signification. The attempt here is not to mystify and venerate its invisible nature that pushes any possibility of theorising into the ineffable. There is a struggle in every ordinary or extraordinary experience to acquire meaning and expand our learning. Out of necessity, boredom, or loneliness, an individual who can make sense will also meet others to enter into group formations. In a world full of signification, language becomes vital to share existence and provide a "threshold to the interior" of the self and the other. Along with making sense and sharing what we have to say, listening to the other's voice offers an entry into their interior, an awareness of what life experiences they have been through, to arrive at a character they can withhold. Moving away from appearances, what we look like, the other also enters with a voice into the one who listens. This entry provides another reason why the discussion here moves from the acoustic aspect of sound towards thought itself, where words and their combinations can significantly convey (along with other purposes) rather than having their importance placed in the origin from which they come.

² "Indirectly, however, it is hearing that contributes most to the growth of intelligence. For rational discourse is a cause of instruction in virtue of its being audible, which it is, not directly, but indirectly; since it is composed by words, and each word is a thought-symbol" (Aristotle 1931, 2; see also Aquinas 2005, 23).

Learning of oneself can be enabled in self-reflection when a voice interacts with itself through language. In the *Meditations*, Descartes begins from an empty space, where he doubts whatever knowledge he has had about the body, soul, sense-perception, and imagination. He then says, "Thinking? At last I have discovered it—thought; this alone is inseparable from me. I am, I exist—that is certain. But for how long? For as long as I am thinking" (Descartes 2009, 82). Descartes is confident that his existence is truthful only in his indubitable thought in this series of statements about his identity. He also says that sense-perception and imagination, which rely on the senses and physical things/images, respectively, are prone to error and deception, but "I" still consider "myself" to be having them as long as "I" think. To enter into a monologue in one's mind about the certainty of personal identity is also to honestly believe in one's existence as distinct from the rest.

About this, Jacques Derrida, in the essay "Qual Quelle: Valery's Sources," reflects on Paul Valery's observation of this statement, where Descartes reveals a significant value characteristic of only himself and can be attributed only to him. For Valery, it is the style and timbre of Descartes' voice through which he risks himself as the "I" by exposing himself onto the stage of even his mind. It attempts to link language, voice, and writing by establishing timbre as the style of a linguistic statement whose importance exceeds any value of truth or reality the statement may seem to carry. "In its irreplaceable quality, the timbre of the voice marks the event of language" (Derrida 1982, 296).

Timbre is established here as the unique character and style that marks an individual's personhood in what they say (in internal and external speech and writing) and how they say it. Timbre is the risk the "I" takes in all its loneliness to expose itself. However, Derrida further says that the timbre of "my" voice and the style of "my" writing will always reach "myself" as the other and never as the *source's* actual presence. For him, the self can hear itself speak only as the other, and any attempt to identify with this "I" in speech and writing (where speech is another form of writing inscribed on the body) only aims at fulfilling the desire for autonomy. The voice reaches the self as the other, almost in abstraction from the source.

While Valery and Derrida provide timbre a certainty as a unique yet recurring identity, they do not adequately define timbre as a style and risk. Echoing Derrida's observations of Valery's *Notebooks*, Jean-Luc Nancy, in the book *Listening*, says: "Timbre is the resonance of sound, or sound itself. It forms the first consistency of sonorous *sense* as such, under the rhythmic condition that makes it resound..." (Nancy 2007, 40). For him, timbre is the

body's resonance that announces its arrival prior to any signification in language. He describes sense as resonance, reverberation, and echo within a resounding body (a vessel) that becomes a subject. Timbre marks the subject's arrival, the one who listens to itself and its own resonance prior to understanding itself. Resounding within and taking the resonance outwards is a step towards self-identification, not perhaps at first as a thinking being, but as the one who talks and makes an effort to listen. Nancy tries to separate language or any signification from mood, emotions, and feelings because any sense of resonance prior to signification in language carries an air of authenticity for being seemingly spontaneous and not rehearsed. For him, timbre is "The means by which a 'subject' arrives—and leaves itself..." (Nancy 2007, 42). In the twin act of producing sound and listening to it, the body as a vessel turns into a subject.

At this stage, it is crucial not to confuse sound to be the same as timbre, like the way Nancy does. His stress on the primordial sound of birth, death, dance, or *jouissance* ahead of signification as the inaugural event for the subject also ends up reinstating the onto-theological premise where the world begins in god's breath in which the word is prepared as the primary source for all life and death. Moreover, this paper tries to avoid falling in such a direction. While timbre gives identity to be shared internally and externally, one can never tell whether it is the first of all events; the breath and cry in which birth and death occur. An individual can neither go back to their birth nor reach their death in a given instant of life where they can only strive to project themselves. A deep pensive breath, murmur, head-talk, cry, and silence for preparing to speak or write are just as important as what one says.

The positions on timbre as an immaterial style of personal identity by Valéry and Derrida and as an inaugural sound of the subject in murmur by Nancy seem to subsequently place timbre where they try and claim to be steering away from. On the other hand, timbre is a quality that creates an identity to be shared irrespective of where the "I" begins or ends. If it is a wager one has to take to associate with the self, then the subject emerges in both murmurs and structured language. It becomes essential to move ahead of timbre as only an idiosyncratic manner of presentation towards how thought risks shifting from subjectivity and material tuning into the formal unity of a concept that contains oppositions and differences within. At the same time, it is also essential to question the safe familiarity that timbre as identity gets wrapped in and listen to all contradictions that try to influence or break it down.

Timbre and Difference

1. Polyphony of Soundscape

Sound—the heard, the invisible yet accessible in the aural dimension—is a phenomenon said to inhabit the realm of temporality. It is the aural that cannot be held by the hand or fixed by the eyes as it presents itself and says goodbye. If life stands as proof of time and time is a measure and motion for life, then one of the most consistent ways of understanding time is by a diachronic temporality that sustains the moving in and passing out of all phenomena. To gather a definite and sure sense of the movement of one's existence, a listening subject travelling through soundscape also creates sonic markers in everyday routine as a linear movement while being immersed in the manifold of sound events. This surety can be translated here as a certainty and clarity in articulating one's persistence in time. Being alive could then mean being able to pluck sounds from their variety through listening, keep their mental images and then let them go to be a thing of the past, which can be just remembered but not accessed as it was.

A temporal bias for the aural world is a matter of convenience as an antithesis to the spatial realm of vision or touch. Rather than finding the identity of sound as a temporal phenomenon, it becomes necessary to provide it a spatiality different from its reduction to a materialism of objects, waves, and vibrations. For this, polyphony can be posited as an inevitable condition for soundscape. Here polyphony is taken as a multi-layered plurality of voices and tones which interact through coexistence and contradiction. It is strictly taken in the sense of *punctus contra punctum*, a musical note against note, a melody that contradicts another melody when played simultaneously. Then one will have to consider the simultaneity of sound events interacting in coexistence or contradiction within the soundscape. This consideration does not negate time but only questions it as (uni)directional.

An essential understanding of spatiality can be taken from Walter Benjamin's suspicion of the givenness of the present in his notes from the book *On Hashish*. He talks of "the colportage phenomenon of space" where "we simultaneously perceive all the events that might conceivably have taken place here" (Benjamin 2006, 28). Such an act would then require a distance while at the same time being immersed in the occurrences of a given moment. He recollects his experience in the French city Marseille:

There were times when the intensity of acoustic impressions blotted out all others. In the little harbor bar, above all, everything was suddenly submerged in the noise of voices, not of streets. What was most peculiar about this din of voices was that it sounded entirely like dialect (Benjamin 2006, 55-56).

Instead of attuning himself to one voice, it seems as though he could listen to all layers of voices and other sonic events within a given moment, such that the polyphonic conversations in French also lost the language's formal structure to become a collective language of a social group. Such a description can mean a derogation of dialect itself as an inferior "cacophony" that replaces the lucidity of language, or it could mean a collective spirit formed by people interacting. Either way, little does the phrase "din of voices" help us understand polyphony, for it merges all voices into a singularity, even if spatial simultaneity is acknowledged here. Moreover, if the juxtaposed or contraposed sounds are unified into a synthesis of a higher order, which claims an angle, an explanation more learned than the contradictory autonomous voices, it will defeat polyphony as a structural principle of soundscape.

It could be said that the unintelligible character of cacophony bears similarity with composer György Ligeti's concept of micropolyphony, which gives a double contradiction to musical composition: an audible outer layer and an internal inaudible structure (Bernard 1994, 227-253). It also builds a dense polyphony of voices and musical parts, where each part in itself is vertically loaded with counterpoint. Unlike tonal music that moves in a linear progression, micropolyphonic composition then seems to have a spatial existence in a given instance. Like this, even though the internal layers lack clarity and cohesion, cacophony is also heard and identified as dissonance. However, out of curiosity or musical listening, an effort is still required to listen to the micropolyphonic texture, even if its internal architectonic remains unascertainable. On the contrary, by rendering a simultaneous variety of voices as cacophony, there is a tendency to shut oneself to them and express aversion.

There appears a repulsion towards pursuing the polyphony of sound in its manifold. Even after providing a solid thesis for the stratified polyphonic nature of literature in other writings, in the book *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*, Roman Ingarden iterates that polyphonic stratification can never be aesthetically appealing in music as it is in literature:

A stratified structure, which is proper to literature, is altogether alien to musical works. As a consequence, the latter lacks the polyphony of heterogeneous aesthetically valuable qualities and of the qualities of aesthetic values themselves (Ingarden 1986, 50-51).

Ingarden's polyphonic four-layered "strata" found in literature concerning the diversity of elements constitute diverse sounds, their meanings, and objects presented; homogeneous elements where each sound of a word corresponds to a meaning; a retained singularity of each fundamental element; and an organic connection among them to form a whole. Contrarily, for this view, diversity, and heterogeneity in music cannot be stratified within and outside a musical work as all its elements are to follow "an extremely compact and cohesive whole" (Ingarden 1986, 51).

Ingarden's work on the identity of music is pertinent as it highlights the need to separate a musical work from its score, notation, conscious experience as well as distinct performances, which are marked by individual artistic interpretation of the work, dynamics in artistic technique, and the emotional make-up of the artist as well as of the listener. He does attribute spatial simultaneity to the musical work through a "quasi-temporal structure" where all its parts exist together at once even if they appear to be in succession but never in a process that succeeds in temporal phases as in the case of its performance. While he agrees that a heterogeneity of musical and non-musical components can be found in a composition, there is still a lack of instantaneous stratified diversity of constitutive elements as found in literature. So he believes polyphony does not become music. According to this position, music needs to have a closed structure as each sound will bear no relation to music itself if taken at its elementary level and hence will lie outside the composition.

One can argue that musical sounds are composed in a progression different from the prevalence of layers in a soundscape, so why should they enter the present discourse. However, music is part of the soundscape, not merely as a socio-cultural product but by having a cluster of sounds contributing to its very existence. It is not in a creative vacuum. Ingarden's argument against the layered diversity in music would also seem inadequate in front of polyphonic musical traditions practised in various parts of the world. So one cannot hold any higher ground to argue against their compositional structure and aesthetic values.

To run away from polyphony, as a general condition of soundscape and a particular compositional style in music, towards a homogeneous collision of sonic variety into a linear harmonic progression is to fear aural diversity. It is also a suspicion of diversity into an uncertainty, an unintelligent "cacophony" with no aesthetic viability. To clear this conundrum, Mikhail Bakhtin (1999) presents a position favouring musical polyphony of contrapuntal melodies acting as a metaphor for literary polyphony in his work *Problems of*

Dostoevsky's Poetics. He argues for the simultaneity of many voices in Dostoevsky's novels, where heterogeneous ideas interact on various planes through coexistence, contradiction, or both. Even an individual character, who becomes an embodiment of an idea rather than an objective mortal fact of reality, carries double contradictions. There is no progression of the rise and fall of the history of the human spirit. The many voices, tones, and accents do not merge into synthesis to reach a common ground of a monologic ideological inference drawn from the narrative. Such polyphonic elements make Dostoevsky's work more spatial than temporal, where the past and future are irrelevant in the present moment unless there is an incomplete action or retaliation for an event a character remembers as harm to its being. The present moment is heavy with diverse, autonomous interactive voices and ideas, all engaged in a struggle with a sense of speed to overcome time *in time*. The present moment is all one has.

And since a consciousness in Dostoevsky's world is presented not on the path of its own evolution and growth, that is, not historically, but rather *alongside* other consciousnesses, it cannot concentrate on itself and its own idea, on the immanent logical development of that idea; instead, it is pulled into interaction with other consciousnesses. In Dostoevsky, consciousness never gravitates toward itself but is always in an intense relationship with another consciousness. Every experience, every thought of a character is internally dialogic, adorned with polemic, filled with struggle, or is on the contrary open to inspiration from outside itself – but it is not in any case concentrated simply on its own object; it is accompanied by a continual sideways glance at another person (Bakhtin 1999, 32).

For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky's novels neither harmonise multiple voices into a single ideology unfolding a unified world of objects nor eulogise the rise and fall in the historical evolution of a unified individual or collective spirit. It is neither an individualistic subjectivism and solipsism nor a dialectical progression. Dostoevsky's work is an open-ended dialogue of many equally valid voices juxtaposed and contraposed to each other. Any homophony of one voice or tone of a character/author/reader, running with an undercurrent of harmony cannot be imposed and sustained. In a way, every consciousness carries an autonomous voice equally important as any other. Nevertheless, because an individual consciousness is also internally dialogic, there are clashing voices within a subject. A "genuine polyphony" becomes a structural and artistic principle for constructing the whole as multi-centred and multi-accented. There is a recognition of the other as an autonomous subject, having a fully valid voice, consciousness and ideology, even if there is animosity.

The articulation of polyphony here is vital for its transfer into the soundscape. For polyphony to exist, there will already be a plurality of sounds and voices that combine, interact, and contradict but are not merged into the unity of an event, an individual will, or an objective thematic explanation. While the plurality that is already there does not depend on its acknowledgement from an individual listening subject, the latter will still have to be more attentive, patient, and observant to reach a polyphonic understanding of a soundscape. But this cannot be established as a condition and structural principle by simply listening to individual sounds alone.

2. Timbre and Heterogeneity in Polyphony

While a polyphony of sound events occurring at many levels within a given moment is a governing principle of the soundscape, it is not a priori for an individual who has to work hard and cultivate an ability to listen to other voices patiently. This ability requires a combination of introspection and observation from internal and external experience. However, the auditory angle is still prone to prioritising the progression of a single voice, tone, and accent into the philosophical culmination of a monologic idea. Any development of formal and artistic principles cannot rely on the ear or eye alone. Thus it is crucial to go beyond sense-perception into a way of thinking that can deal with many ideas.

Timbre as a concept and an auditory quality becomes essential here for it fits into both the practices of listening and how thoughts develop into concepts. As a quality, it installs a unique identity of a sound's voice and acknowledges its difference over the rest. Nevertheless, it is not a final stage for perpetual self-sameness. Every voice, tone, and thought is bound by its internal contradictions and external contradictions with other voices. So the struggle with polemics is unavoidable, which cannot be satisfied by just positing an antithesis. As per the polyphonic principle, just like the diversity of voices cannot be reconciled into a dialectical evolution of a few positions, contrariness cannot be reconciled into the unity of a single antithesis. The many contrary voices are to be observed within the urgency of a single moment itself as one has no time to set them into a temporal progression, one after the other.

As explicated in the first section, most studies on timbre host it as a consistent quality that marks identity and certainty for a sound or its source of production to remain as itself and not something else. The timbre of a person, a musical instrument, or even a thought follows a telos of merging into

an individual plane; into a concretion. This end explains why there is a narrowing down to one formal ground as a recurring point from any diversity. Friedrich Nietzsche calls the principle of identity a “logical semblance” (Nietzsche 1968, 281). As the ever-changing world is in a state of *becoming*, form, species, duration, and even an idea appear as if enduring a state of equilibrium and preserving similarity within themselves. In case a difference or something new appears, we try to preserve the unity of the form. This conservation is also a functional property of timbre, for it tries to attain consistency in relativity. However, becoming as a concept tends to imply a temporal path for things to fade away eventually, and for an actual diversity on a polyphonic ground, the many layers in spatial simultaneity are not to disappear even if they change. So how could consistency in all differences be accommodated within timbre while we refrain from an immediate attraction towards one voice, tone, or way of thinking for a homophonic unity?

3. Darkness, Polyphony, Timbre

Rather than a solemn unity of a sound event that sustains further, timbre is now to be thought of as an urgency within a single moment. It is a struggle to guess the interrelationships of all world content available at a given moment. There is no progression or evolution in stages to arrive at identity in the urgency of this present. The polyphonic impulse, which Bakhtin calls “to concentrate in a single moment the greatest possible qualitative diversity” (Bakhtin 1999, 28), needs to be implied in timbre to broaden its formal understanding. Timbre is not a finished self-sufficient quantity; it is always a complex possibility already coexisting with polemical qualities. So it will have to carefully observe contradiction to turn into an open-ended dialogue of differences.

The surface presentation where variety is objectified, unified, and reconciled into a causal chain leading to an ultimate idea is hardly sufficient. All that is there in variety is bound to meet and clash. So, moving over from the realm of concretely defined objects, one will have to enter the dark. It is where difference is heard but cannot be seen; moreover, it is where variety is tough to reconcile. One can always find solace and harmony in the concepts of god or the unknown, so there must be a god or their voice wherever it is dark. However, this effort mainly puts a momentary restraint on the fear of darkness and all its forces. One needs to gather some courage through the polyphonic impulse of observing diversity in the dark and not chase safety in an isolated idea.

Darkness could be the domain of polyphony where many simultaneous events and their qualities having their respective mannerisms can come to the foreground at once and be grasped clearly as a manifold instead of following a causal genesis that would take a defined path. It lets an entry into multi-directionality and diversity by always being there. Darkness is then not a negative; it is not an absence of knowledge or an antithesis to the clarity of illumination, for it bears its lucidity. In most religious belief systems, the dark is defined as a mortal stage that one has to overcome to reach the final stage of divine illumination. The “dark forces” then gather either an esoteric mystification or an evil attribution, which the clarity and purity of illumination must negate. Nevertheless, there are also times when it is ascribed as the only field of hope and freedom.

While the night lurks of grief, in the poetic verses of *The Universal Tree and the Four Birds*, Ibn ‘Arabi (2006) also describes it as the only duration of aspiration when he can take a flight away from the cycle of worldly suffering and move in any direction into the cosmic realm to reach the ultimate destination; just as the Prophet went on a Night Journey on his horse and entered into the heavens.

So that I might bring to light what lies hidden in night’s core (‘Arabi 2006, 24).

The night is a duration when the anatomical body is not a limit, and the self can fly in all directions with greater freedom, although the focus is still to reach the divine light. It could be said that more freedom for the self and less suspicion can result in broadening mental capacities to discover many elements which the dark has to offer instead of shutting oneself to them by finding contentment in the safety of the logos while anticipating light. So one will have to move away from any inclination toward the divine voice or light at the moment.

However, only concerning light, Martin Heidegger also takes up the concern in favour of darkness in the *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures*.

Let us calmly admit: the provenance of the basic principles of thinking, the place of the thinking that posits these propositions, the essence of the place named here and of its location, all of this remains veiled in the dark for us. This darkness is perhaps in play for all thinking at all times. Humans cannot set it aside. Rather they must learn to acknowledge the dark as something unavoidable and to keep at bay those prejudices that would destroy the lofty reign of the dark. Thus the dark remains distinct from pitch-black as the mere and utter absence of light. The dark however is the secret of the light. The dark keeps the light to itself. The latter belongs to the former. Thus the dark has its own limpidity (Heidegger 2012, 88).

He describes darkness as the place of origin where thinking stays and gets to posit itself as thinking. While it is veiled and hidden from human thinking, it still has a constant presence hovering as a secret to which its apparent opposite, illumination, belongs because one must wait patiently in the dark to see the light appear. One must pay attention to the dark and listen to what has not been achieved in thinking yet, without falling prey to the illumination of light as a conclusive plane for all there is. The argument itself posits darkness in an affirmation that humans cannot run away from, but the focus on it being a concealment in perpetual relation to light does not fully serve the purpose of polyphony in the soundscape.

It is hard to say that everything dark is concealment because we will be inclined towards illumination as a revelation. Any study of the former need not rely on its relation to the latter and be kept a mystery forever. Darkness as the domain for polyphony is where diversity presents itself and remains diverse. It is not hidden but bursting with the fullness of all it offers. As a constant presence, it is not a place of origin traced backward, as that would consume us in a spiral of the search for logos, or a stage to be overcome, as that would limit it into an inadequacy. It is just there. Any interrelationships we build from its diversity are unstable the more we open ourselves to it and the more it opens to us.

Timbre needs difference and contradiction to survive in the long run, for as an enclosed self-same identity, it will soon be gone. So we will have to enter the dark to grasp many layers of timbre, thinking, and ways of being, each of which reveals its independent lucidity. Any character identity within this diversity emerges from a state of contradiction at its heart. Corruption, intermixing, and interaction haunt the lawlessness of the very law of purity for any genre of physis and techné (see Derrida 1980, 55-81). A sound becomes itself while mixing with others, which are similar or dissimilar. It is by entering into the darkness that each timbre strikes in its clear identity but is unsure of itself and breaks down during its encounter with others. Since it lies within difference and contraposition, it will have to welcome them in any case. Homophony of a single voice generating the dominant melody of historical evolution resides within polyphony. The key is to carefully and patiently listen to every other voice. One can extract and follow a homophonic idea or inference from this rich plurality through the unity of objects and retract towards isolation. Alternatively, one can participate in this plurality and become one of its voices, listening within and outside oneself to various events and ideas juxtaposed and contraposed. To enter into the diversity of equally valid and fully independent elements is to be open to it

and not withdraw towards homophonic contentment in prioritising only one of all elements. Perhaps if we listen carefully, the inherent egalitarianism becomes clear for all voices speaking at once, each with its own equally valid forte.

Bibliography

1. Aquinas St. Thomas (2005), *Commentaries on Aristotle's 'On Sense and What Is Sensed' and 'On Memory and Recollection'*, trans. K. White and M. Macierowski, The Catholic University of America Press: Washington D. C.
2. 'Arabi Ibn (2006), *The Universal Tree and the Four Birds*, trans. A. Jaffray, Anqa Publishing: Oxford.
3. Aristotle (1931), *Parva Naturalia*, trans. J. I. Beare and G. R. T. Ross, Clarendon Press: Oxford.
4. Bakhtin Mikhail (1999), *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. C. Emerson, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
5. Benjamin Walter (2006), *On Hashish*, Belknap Press: Cambridge.
6. Bernard Jonathan W. (1994), "Voice Leading as a Spatial Function in the Music of Ligeti", *Music Analysis*, 13 (2/3), *Twentieth Century Music Double Issue*, pp. 227-253.
7. Derrida Jacques (1980), "The Law of Genre", *Critical Inquiry*, 7 (1), *On Narrative*, pp. 55-81.
8. Derrida Jacques (1982), "Qual Quelle: Valéry's Sources", [in:] idem, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. A. Bass, The Harvester Press: Sussex, pp. 273-306.
9. Descartes Rene (2009), *Selected Philosophical Writings*, trans. J. Cottingham, Cambridge University Press: New York.
10. Heidegger Martin (2012), *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: Insight into That Which Is and Basic Principles of Thinking*, trans. J. A. Mitchell, Indiana University Press: Bloomington.
11. Ihde Don (2007), *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*, State University Press of New York: New York.
12. Ingarden Roman (1986), *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*, trans. A. Czerniawski, Macmillan Press: Basingstoke.
13. Isaac Aistair M. C. (2018), "Prospects of Timbre Physicalism", *Philosophical Studies*, 175 (2), pp. 503-529.
14. Nancy Jean-Luc (2007), *Listening*, trans. C. Mandell, Fordham University Press: New York.
15. Nietzsche Friedrich (1968), *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, Vintage Books: New York.

