

The Polish Journal
of Aesthetics

The Polish Journal of Aesthetics

64 (1/2022)
Jagiellonian University in Kraków

The Polish Journal of Aesthetics

Editor-in-Chief:

Leszek Sosnowski

Editorial Board:

Dominika Czakon (Deputy Editor), Natalia Anna Michna (Deputy Editor),
Anna Kuchta (Secretary), Marcin Lubecki (Editorial layout & Typesetting),
Gabriela Matusiak, Adrian Mróz, Anna Wysowska

Advisory Board:

Władysław Stróżewski (President of Advisory Board), Tiziana Andino,
Nigel Dower, Saulius Geniusas, Jean Grondin, Carl Humphries, Ason Jaggar,
Dalius Jonkus, Akiko Kasuya, Carolyn Korsmeyer, Leo Luks, Diana Tietjens Meyers,
Carla Milani Damião, Mauro Perani, Zoltán Somhegyi, Kiyomitsu Yui

Contact:

Institute of Philosophy, Jagiellonian University
52 Grodzka Street, 31-004 Kraków, Poland
pjaestheticsuj@gmail.com, www.pjaesthetics.uj.edu.pl

Published by:

Institute of Philosophy, Jagiellonian University
52 Grodzka Street, 31-004 Kraków

Academic Journals

www.academic-journals.eu

First Edition

© Copyright by Jagiellonian University in Kraków

All rights reserved

e-ISSN 2544-8242

Listening and Polyphony

Philosophy, Aesthetics, Art

**Edited by Maja Bjelica,
Ineta Kivle, and Lenart Škof**

CONTENTS

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| MAJA BJELICA, INETA KIVLE, LENART ŠKOF | <i>An Opening to Polyphony through Listening</i> | 9 |
|--|--|---|

Articles

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----|
| SALOMÉ VOEGELIN, MARK PETER WRIGHT | <i>Points of Listening: Reflections on the Participatory and Polyphonic Potential of Communal Sonic Practices</i> | 19 |
| MAJA BJELICA | <i>The Ethics of Deep Listening: A Practice for Environmental Awareness</i> | 37 |
| PIOTR SAWCZYŃSKI | <i>Listening to the Unsaid: Giorgio Agamben and the Politics of the Human Voice</i> | 57 |
| SERGIO J. AGUILAR-ALCALÁ | <i>Another Voice: Towards an Aesthetics of the Voice in Cinema</i> | 69 |
| RAFAŁ SOLEWSKI | <i>The Polyphonicity of Artistic Practice and Interpretation as a Tale about It: The Art of Piotr Jargusz in the Context of the Thought of Władysław Strózewski and Roman Ingarden</i> | 87 |
| ANDRZEJ KRAWIEC | <i>The Art of Fugue by Johann Sebastian Bach as an artistic expression of the juncture of being in Martin Heidegger's philosophy</i> | 103 |
| ALISTAIR MACAULAY | <i>The Autonomy of Expression and the Becoming Musical of Classicism, Romanticism, and Modernism</i> | 119 |
| KRIKA TANDON | <i>Timbre, Identity, Difference: Witnessing Polyphony in Darkness</i> | 135 |
| RAIVIS BIČEVSKIS | <i>Paradoxical Monotony</i> | 151 |
| ANNE SAUKA | <i>Beyond the Skin Line: Tuning into the Body-Environment. A Venture into the Before of Conceptualizations</i> | 161 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| About the Contributors | 183 |
|-------------------------------|-----|

An Opening to Polyphony through Listening

“Listening and Polyphony: Philosophy, Aesthetics, Arts,” a special issue of *The Polish Journal of Aesthetics*, focuses on questions of listening and polyphony as unifying concepts to discover overlapping horizons between philosophical insights and aesthetical experience. Listening could be studied as an openness to others, a gesture, and an activity. With the mutual coexistence of one’s own and surrounding environments, polyphony provides new opportunities for transdisciplinarity, starting in philosophy, expanding through aesthetics and the arts, and insinuating into ethics, anthropology, and sociality.

Listening is an activity of the conscious auditory perception of sound stimuli. It is often marked by a touch of passivity, obedience, a state of subordination, and inferiority. However, on the other hand, it can be understood as a very active and intentional gesture of a subject who establishes a relationship with their environment through auditory perception. Listening includes a dual discourse: listening to oneself and listening to others, hearing one’s inner voice and the voice of the other, and listening to the world around us. In his echoing essay, *Listening*, Jean-Luc Nancy (2007) states that listening can be perceived as an opening to resonance, echoing, which simultaneously opens a person to oneself and another self while gaining and giving meaning. An opening in silence, where the ear stretches and its tension already carries its meaning, exposes the listener to sensual meaning and sense. Meaning(s) and sense(s) are co-created from listening to polyphony—being in the world is always polyphonic. The vibrations of polyphony keep meaning and sense dynamic, infinite, and intersubjective. Polyphony characterizes co-implications of multi-layered phenomena: literature, theatre, painting, or performance.

This issue of *The Polish Journal of Aesthetics* aims to deepen transdisciplinary approaches to listening and polyphony based on various disciplines like aesthetics, philosophy, ethics, and anthropology. It compiles both the findings of well-known philosophers and the philosophical reflections of recent

years, therefore confirming that a new field of philosophical thinking is emerging in the thematic coverage of listening and polyphony. As guest editors of this volume, we wanted to encourage researchers to seek original perspectives and offer resounding conceptualizations on listening and polyphony. We invited authors from various research areas to submit articles related to questions and aims such as exploring the importance of listening for the constitution of polyphonic surroundings, and thus provide new interpretations to humans and environments; observing how contemplative listening includes kinaesthetic perception and the experience of various elements (like the audible, visible, thinkable, et cetera) and how these elements manifest themselves in artworks and performances; addressing polyphony as a methodological tool that enables the opening up of the coexistence of different elements and that develops original artistic and philosophical interpretations; studying the “givenness” of polyphony and its immanent processes of perception, therefore leading to a more profound understanding of humanity, art, literature, society, nature, and the environment; examining the human voice and the sonority of language from philosophical, aesthetical, and anthropological approaches; investigating listening *qua* openness to others, as co-creation, and exploring polyphony as a mutual coexistence, or co-being; and finally, elaborating on listening in an ethical sense. As guest editors, we not only believe that the articles gathered in this issue address all these themes, but also, that they go beyond them and offer a transdisciplinary polylogue on the matters in question.

The idea to propose such a timely theme to *The Polish Journal of Aesthetics* grew out of the collaboration of guest editors in a shared bilateral research project (funded by the Slovenian Research Agency, ARRS) between the Science and Research Centre, Koper, Slovenia, and the University of Latvia, Riga,¹ focusing on exploring listening as a gesture and activity towards the sonority of the world, as well as exploring polyphony as “being in the world.” Commencing with the resonances of phenomenology, ethics, and musicology, this encounter of thoughts aimed to deepen the understanding of these notions, and designing a volume dedicated to them seemed a plausible option for disseminating our research and others’ through a transdisciplinary polylogue.

¹ This volume has been financially supported by the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS), through the bilateral project *Listening and polyphony: echoes of phenomenology, ethics and anthropology* between the Science and Research Centre Koper and University of Latvia (BI-LV/20-22-006), as part of the research project *Surviving the Anthropocene through Inventing New Ecological Justice and Biosocial Philosophical Literacy* (J7-1824), implemented at ZRS Koper and AMEU-ECM.

The notions of listening and polyphony can be encountered in the philosophies of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Phenomenological and hermeneutical aspects of the notions in question are addressed by the research of one of the guest editors, Ineta Kivle (2018), who explores polyphony as a methodological tool that opens the coexistence of different elements and gives an original interpretation of intersubjectivity. In the phenomenological tradition, there are, of course, different approaches to the study of polyphony. Roman Ingarden (1989), for example, investigates the ontological stratification of the polyphony of artwork and views the concretization of polyphony, in particular concerts and performances. His contribution to the development of the concept of polyphony is in the definition that polyphony includes several essential strata that simultaneously form the unity of the work of art. To identify polyphonic stratification of artworks, Ingarden employs the method of phenomenological reduction. Don Ihde (2007), another thinker from the tradition of phenomenology, opposes monophonic and polyphonic listening and binds them into perceptual and imaginative modes. The listener is primarily a “perceiver and receiver” in a monophonic situation. At the same time, polyphonic listening is formed by perception and imagination and is simultaneously directed to inner and outer speech, to sonority and silence, showing that polyphony comprises a full range of inner and outer experiences. In such a manner, Don Ihde develops a polyphony of experience that binds the human inner world with the surrounding environment.

Phenomenological listening contemplates such immanent processes as intentionality, direct experience, formation of meanings, sharing a common intersubjective world, etc. A phenomenologist of music, Joseph Smith, writes: “In seeking the full phenomenological spectrum we may have to do more than just *look* into things. We may have to *listen* to things” (Smith 1979, 28). Similarly, but more radically, Luce Irigaray (2008) proposes an inversion of the privilege of viewing over listening. Listening should be brought to the front, but not as listening to the absolute truth, but mainly as listening to the other and to the ways the truth of the other is being formed. The gesture of listening, which becomes an action through its repetition, can be revealed as fundamentally ethical and thus crucial for establishing intersubjective spaces for the emergence of mutual acceptance and affection. Listening can thus be understood as an “active action” directed towards the other, to whom, with this ethical gesture, one can offer attention and the opportunity to express themselves in their proper way. This aspect of listening is inherent to Lenart Škof’s ethics of care, in which, besides the elements of breath and silence, listening also has a central role:

Listening is unique among the elements of attentiveness: it is a part of a language, but also precedes language. It is active, but always already works in a milieu of attentiveness *qua* primordial passivity. It relates to hearing, but also works before there is anything to hear—as a mode of precognitive responsiveness-towards-other mode (Škof 2016, 906).

Listening as something preceding language is not only crucial for the realm of interhuman communication but also for the realm of interbeing on the level of the more-than-human world. Maja Bjelica (2021) explores listening as a possible path towards “letting things be,” concentrating on the possibility of including an awareness of the environment in our attentive listening. Recently, there has been a tendency to recognize listening as a vital attitude to cohabitating ethically in environmental studies, the humanities, and sound studies. One example of this is the recently published double issue of *Cadernos de Arte e Antropologia*, entitled “A Sonic Anthropocene: Sound Practices in a Changing Environment,” where the editors and authors expose listening as allowing for “the emergence of ephemeral acoustic communities in which different sensibilities merge in an intersubjective space of fruition” (Louro *et al.* 2021, 11), which in our case, can be understood as a polyphony as well. This step towards environmental awareness is supported by understanding being in the world as always and already polyphonic, an idea that can be recognized through the ethics of listening.

Lisbeth Lipari (2014) argues that ethics is formed by listening that is committed to accepting difference. The author calls it “listening otherwise.” It is a listening that is purposefully dedicated to the unknown, the misunderstood, the foreign. The listening subject is constituted intersubjectively through listening and the listened to; therefore, the subjects encountered in listening are co-constituted. Listening can be understood as “the invention of sound,” as a “generative process that does not recognize or receive but creates the heard from what is there and even from what remains unheard,” as proposed by Salomé Voegelin (2019, 47). Her understanding of listening as a possibility of a shared experience allows to rethink the subject’s responsibility and their singularity. Accordingly, “the invention of listening is an inter-invention,” in-betweenness, co-relationality, going beyond the anthropocentric position. This kind of understanding can also be related to describing listening as fundamental for human listeners’ relations towards their environments and nature, which by listening, after all, co-creates them and simultaneously allows them *to be*.

The volume on Listening and Polyphony opens with a reflective essay by Salomé Voegelin and Mark Peter Wright. The authors present their co-convened project, *Points of Listening*, which takes the shape of a series of workshops and discussions experienced through collective, communal, and participative dimensions. Their research background allowed the authors in the present paper to offer a deep insight into the experience of listening as a collaboration, understanding “knowing in listening as ‘paying attention to and with.’” They point out that they are not “concluding,” nor do they “theorize” upon this experience. However, they mainly suggest modes of experiencing it, being aware of its potential: “participative sonic knowledge (...) is able to hold inexhaustibility and inclusivity of sound as a currency of doing together, as a being-otherwise, that leads to a knowing-otherwise of a bondless community in its polyphonic potential.”

Maja Bjelica’s article is marked by a tentative approach to connecting the field of ethics with sound studies in the realm of environmental awareness. As an element of connection, the author chose the artistic, compositional, and performative practice of Deep Listening, which Pauline Oliveros introduced. This avant-garde musician inspired many artists to include the participatory dimension and aleatoric elements in their musical expression. Bjelica proposes Deep Listening as a mode of experiencing the environment, a mode of co-habitation in the more-than-human world, that can support the development of an ethics of listening in which environmental awareness can be brought to the front.

“Listening to the Unsaid: Giorgio Agamben and the Politics of the Human Voice” is an article by Piotr Sawczyński who takes us on a journey to the early writings of Agamben on the human voice and, among others, offers us a perspective on listening as a unifying experience beyond particular languages: “listening to others, no matter what language they speak, may only be a universalizing, community-building experience if we first realize that underneath the surface of semiotic and semantic distinctions there is always the common ground of our voice.”

Sergio J. Aguilar Alcalá offers another reverberation to the human approach to the voice through the story of Michael, the main character of the animated movie *Anomalisa*, directed by Charlie Kaufman and Duke Johnson. On the one hand, Aguilar Alcalá concentrates on the concept of voice through the lens of Lacanian psychoanalysis and discusses the voice as a superego on the other. Through the notions of subjectivity, embodiment, otherness, and the uncanny, the author shows that “the voice is the leftover of our process of symbolic adaptation. It is something found outside of our body and reveals, at the same time, something so intimate to us.”

Moving forward in the aesthetical realm, the reader of this volume encounters an account of polyphony in the visual arts, namely, an insight into the polyphonicity of the artistic expression of the Polish painter Piotr Jargusz, offered by the scholar Rafał Solewski. The author, engaging with the philosophical thoughts of Roman Ingarden and Władysław Stróżewski, presents his tale, i.e., the interpretation of Jargusz artistic practice, relating it to the Mythos of the knowledge of art, translating it into a description, analysis, interpretation, and critique of the work of art. In doing so, he identifies various planes of polyphonicity, such as the congruence of aesthetic moments, the synaesthetic transcendence of the boundaries among senses and their characteristics, the dialogue between the artist and the interpreter, and “a harmonious congruence of aesthetic moments both in Piotr Jargusz’s artistic practices and in the literarily valuable tale of the interpreter invited to participate in the work.”

From the visual arts, we are brought to music. Specifically, Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Art of Fugue* presented by parallelizing it to Martin Heidegger’s philosophy, his “juncture of beyng.” The author, Andrzej Krawiec, listens to the fugue through a phenomenological reduction and reveals its essence and the essence of beyng as the event. He brings to the fore polyphony, manifested in the many voices of the fugue, of which, despite being autonomous, the unity of their dialogue can be recognized. “This unifying and differentiating essence of fugue does not contradict the fact that individual voices enter the dispute among them, and thanks to this dispute, a particular way of Being essentially occurs and is disclosed by *Dasein*.”

With Alistair Macaulay’s paper, we remain in the field of musicology. The author presents how sounds became musical throughout the history of Western music through the process of artistic expression becoming autonomous. Macaulay analyzes this becoming through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical account of the history of music, or as the author calls it, their musical cosmogony, using their system of stratification and notions such as epistrata and parastrata, assemblage, territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization. The author demonstrates “that music is founded in and maintains links to social formations and cultural norms,” but it “also exceeds them, linking with other interstratic milieux and effecting a becoming.”

Another account of (musical) polyphony is offered by Kritika Tandon, who claims that “polyphony is the condition that makes a soundscape exist,” allowing for a multitude of voices to coexist. The author explores this reverberance through an analysis of timbre, which is usually considered an ele-

ment of identification and has an intrinsic aspect of difference, contradiction, and dialogue. Tandon engages with the thoughts of Don Ihde, Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Derrida, Walter Benjamin, Roman Ingarden, and Mikhail Bakhtin to show that timbre is not a closed, determined quality but a more complex possibility. As this possibility, she turns our attention to darkness, to which one should listen to approach "what has not been achieved in thinking yet, without falling prey to the illumination of light as a conclusive plane for all there is."

Raivis Bičevskis' article "Paradoxical Monotony" introduces us to the thought of Georg Hamann, an Enlightenment-era thinker and a contemporary of Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottfried Herder. The article deals with Hamann's text "Aesthetica in nuce" from 1762, in which Latvian folk songs are discussed in their meter and tonality. Bičevskis identifies Hamann's critical concept of monotony to be paradoxical, being in a way grounded in the world's polyphony, as he argues that "the unity of the world is linked to the diversity of the world's sounds and colors, languages, and times: *the world itself is a paradoxical monotony*." The article also guides us towards listening to nature since the experience of the speaking of nature was lost in the era of scientific objectivations of nature and our surroundings. In this, a fascinating link to the linguist Johann Georg Wachter (1663-1757) is made in which it is argued that we need to return to the language of nature, the nature that speaks sensuously.

The volume is rounded up by an article by Anne Sauka, who introduces the timely notion of *tuning into* as an experiential, embodied reflection of one's enfleshment. Sauka takes us on a journey that offers insight into the possibility of understanding the body-environment bond as preceding to the conscious differentiation of the I from the environment. She does this through the conceptual and methodological grounds of new materialism, processual ontologies, embodied critical thinking and thinking at the edge. The author presents listening "both metaphorically and literally as *tuning into* the rhythms of the embedded enfleshment and *tuning into* the environmental embeddedness amid which the self is in perpetual *becoming*." Sauka advocates the turn towards sensing and experiencing, and she does so through her method of *instancing* that allows recognizing the universal in the personal.

Anne Sauka's thought-provoking paper on *tuning into* the body-environment beautifully winds up the accounts of listening and polyphony in this issue because it appeals to readers to turn to listening not only with the aim to recognize the world's polyphonies but also to replace the tendency of

inspecting them, moving towards an encounter with the world beyond the ocularcentric paradigm, which in a way is also the path the other papers are encouraging towards, taking listening as cohabitation. Starting with the presentation of the embodied experience of *Points of Listening* by Salomé Voegelin and Mark Peter Wright, followed by an account of Pauline Oliveros' Deep Listening by Maja Bjelica, we are already in the realm of *tuning into* the environment, the more-than-human world's polyphonies collectively, through the artistic practices of attentive listening, allowing for enfleshed (mutual) awareness. The following two articles by Piotr Sawczyński and Sergio J. Aguilar Alcalá concerning the (human) voice expose a specifically embodied polyphony that we encounter and experience every day. This is the case also with the succeeding accounts that are mainly grounded in aesthetics. However, the transdisciplinary intertwinement with various fields of philosophy and arts presents a variety of modes as instances of polyphony: Piotr Jargusz's artistic practices contemplated by Rafał Solewski, J. S. Bach's *Art of Fugue* extended by Andrzej Krawiec, musicality throughout the history of Western music by Alistair Macaulay, the specificity and potentiality of (musical) timbre by Kritika Tandon, and the polyphonic relationality present in Latvian folklore reflecting the natural environment by Raivis Bičevskis. In one way or another, all of these contributions combine theoretical and practical approaches to research that furnish us with a variety of possible experiential approaches to listening to various polyphonies as possible embodied encounters. As editors, we firmly believe that these articles can offer inspiration for further widening and opening the reflection on listening and polyphony.

We want to conclude these opening lines by expressing sincere gratitude to the editorial board of *The Polish Journal of Aesthetics*, who welcomed our theme "Listening and Polyphony: Philosophy, Aesthetics, Arts" and allowed us to present it to the journal's readers. We are especially indebted to the deputy editor Natalia Anna Michna, whose invaluable support was crucial for an untroubled editorial process, and the associate editors Adrian Mróz and Marcin Lubecki for their precious help in finalizing the volume. Moreover, we extend our gratitude to all anonymous reviewers who significantly improved the texts presented in this volume. Foremost, we would like to thank all contributing authors, who, with their thoughtful insights, patience, and responsiveness, proved to be attentive listeners to the polyphonies in academic writing. With your presence, this editorial process was an excellent opportunity to develop a collaborative practice that hopefully will result in an ongoing debate on these critical themes. Last, but not least, we would

like to thank you, readers, for your attention and dedication, hoping that you will also engage in disseminating our work through a continuation of reflecting and debating on listening and polyphony.

Maja Bjelica, Ineta Kivle, and Lenart Škof

Bibliography

1. Bjelica Maja (2021), "Listening: An Interdisciplinary Path towards Letting Things Be", *Horizon: Studies in Phenomenology*, 10 (1), pp. 212-231.
2. Ihde Don (2007), *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*, State University of New York: Albany.
3. Ingarden Roman (1989), *Ontology of the Work of Art: The Musical Work; The Picture; The Architectural Work; The Film*, Ohio University Press: Athens.
4. Irigaray Luce (2008a), "Listening, Thinking, Teaching", [in:], L. Irigaray and M. Green (eds.), *Teaching*, Continuum: London, pp. 231-240.
5. Kivle Ineta (2018), "Auditory Phenomena and Human Life: Phenomenological Experience", [in:] W. S. Smith *et al.* (eds.), *Eco-Phenomenology: Life, Human Life, Post-Human Life in the Harmony of the Cosmos*, Springer: Cham, pp. 367-373.
6. Lipari Lisbeth (2014), *Listening, Thinking, Being: Towards and Ethics of Attunement*, Pennsylvania University Press: University Park, Pennsylvania.
7. Louro Ivo *et al.* (2021), "A Sonic Anthropocene: Sound Practices in a Changing Environment", special issue of *Cadernos de Arte e Antropologia*, 10 (1 & 2).
8. Nancy Jean-Luc (2007), *Listening*, trans. C. Mandell, Fordham University Press: New York.
9. Smith Joseph F. (1979), *Experiencing of Musical Sound: Prelude to a Phenomenology of Music*, Routledge: London.
10. Škof Lenart (2016), "Breath of Hospitality: Silence, Listening, Care", *Nursing Ethics*, 23 (8), pp. 902-909.
11. Voegelin Salomé (2019), *The Political Possibilities of Sound: Fragments of Listening*, Bloomsbury: New York and London.

Salomé Voegelin*, Mark Peter Wright**

Points of Listening: Reflections on the Participatory and Polyphonic Potential of Communal Sonic Practices

Abstract

How might polyphony operate across the collective, communal, and participatory dimensions of sonic practices? What aesthetic and political observations can be gleaned from listening and sound making that attend to the simultaneous affects of shared sonic experiences? This essay reflects on the possibility of plurality in collective and participatory listening and sound making in relation to the project Points of Listening (PoL), an ongoing series of workshops and discussions, co-convened by the authors, in association with Creative Research into Sound Arts Practice, CRiSAP, University of the Arts London.

Keywords

Participation, Collectivity, Communal, Polyphony, Listening

Introduction

This essay reflects on the participatory and polyphonic potential of communal sonic practices by discussing two events staged as part of Points of Listening (PoL), an ongoing series of workshops and discussions involving collective and participatory sonic practices. These are led by musicians, geographers, students, technologists, artists, scientists and more, and are co-

* CRiSAP, London College of Communication
Email: s.voegelin@lcc.arts.ac.uk

** CRiSAP, London College of Communication
Email: mark.wright@lcc.arts.ac.uk

convened by the authors, in association with Creative Research into Sound Arts Practice (CRiSAP), University of the Arts London. PoL takes place in many contexts and forms: in shopping malls (Ian Rawes), the cinema (Maria Papadomanolaki), in archives (Andrea Canova) and parks (Catherine Clover); it is technologically driven (Marla Hladi), or pursues hands on, material production (Alex De Little); it creates séances (Victoria Karlsson), deep listening experiences (Ximena Alarcón), narrative environments (Antoine Bertin) and sonic pedagogies (Kevin Logan); it investigates climate (Andrea Polli), gender (Antye Greie) and hearing diversity (Tom Tlalim), and illuminates many more issues from sound. PoL's main focus is not what we hear, but how we listen and make sound together; and its main concern is what that activity generates in terms of sociality and sense, with and between the participants.

We take the opportunity of this special issue of *Polish Journal of Aesthetics*, on "Listening and Polyphony", to review and reflect on the methods and aims of PoL through the lens of a plural sounding; to come to grasp the radical collaboration and relational community proposed by sound. Each author chose one of the over 50 public events staged since the series started in 2014. And each pursued, from memory and documentation, through recordings and in conversation, an applied discussion on how we listen and make sound collectively; to ask what consequent and plural voices might emerge, and how this might impact on our sense of self and how we live together. In this way, we hope to start a conversation about how we participate in listening and sonic thinking; and to reflect on the possibility of a different sense of community, generated from and through sound.

Points of Listening is a phrase that in the first instance refers to the geographical point of London, as the mapped place that this listening and sound making performs and explores. Moreover, it invites other points and denotes the multitude of positions and subjectivities listening may generate—physiological, aesthetic, political and social—and those that listening makes available or denies. The title also queries *the point* of listening: what it enables and what it challenges and disrupts. And it hints at plural points and positions available through sound. More implicitly, it refutes the aim to pinpoint what it is we hear in favour of a generative sense of what it is we produce when listening alone and together: the social, political, aesthetic, bodily and material realities we conjure rather than recognise.

The sense of the title reveals itself differently in every event. It presents itself as fluid positions and positionings around certain points that every episode performs in its own way. In that sense, this series never tries to es-

establish a certain line or insight about listening collectively, or a particular way that we can engage the participatory nature of sound. Instead, it works through trials and experimentation, as “works-in-progress”, that are neither a conventional talk nor an exhibition or a performance, but that work in the hybrid imagination of sound, as process and material, to trial what we can do together in its plural sphere and polyphonic potential. From the beginning we were clear that we did not want a forum to replicate established formats of exchange *about* sound: talks, lectures, presentations, etc., and neither did we want to present finished works. Instead, we were interested in fostering exchanges *from* and *through* sound. To give artists, musicians and researchers the opportunity to practice rather than present their work, to sound with others, rather than for others.

The participatory and the collective are therefore not topics of discussion, but modes of working; and although each episode has a theme or pursues a question, the insights generated are not, or not only, about the theme of each event, but about how the practice of these themes in sound provides an understanding from and through the community it produces. In that sense, Points of Listening is not about listening to a particular topic or work. Instead, it listens to keep social relations in reach: to be able to think and practice the space between human and more-than-human things; to generate and determine how we might live together, what points we may take vis-à-vis each other and every other thing. In this way, PoL creates diverse and even potentially contradictory experiences from which we then can know how things are as plural possibilities, by the way we perform and listen with them together.

The following discussions of two Points of Listening events, chosen separately by the authors but written about while in conversation, aim to perform these reflections to debate how we listen collectively, what community we build in sound, what voices we come to make and hear, and what that might mean as plural and participatory interventions into disciplinary conventions and hierarchies, from the practice of art and the everyday. We hope such inquiries might aid us to locate another point to Points of Listening, where sound equivocates a being-otherwise, as a plural and connected sense of self.

Performing Objects, Sarah Hughes, July 12th, 2017
Reflections by Salomé Voegelin



Fig. 1. Performing Objects. ©PoL.

I chose to reflect on Sarah Hughes' 'Performing Objects', *PoL* #36, which took place on Wednesday July 12th, 2017 in the hallway of the media block at the London College of Communication, UAL, Elephant and Castle, in London. This was an event with a deliberately small number of participants, 16, to allow for personal contact and interaction, and room, literally and emotionally, for more than human protagonists to become part of its co-production. Its aim was to refocus our view on everyday objects by bringing them to performance and expand them in compositions triggered by instructions and structured by the group. Each participant was asked to bring an object and to engage in its material quality in order to from this object compose the space by installing it in different places (see Fig. 1). In turn, its installation would influence the way we move and experience the space differently together as human and more than human things. The instruction to the participants, included by Hughes in her announcement of the workshop, read: "Please note, attendees are politely asked not to bring animal products—leather/fur etc.". This made it very clear that the expectation was not for us to choose a functional object or to set up a hierarchical relationship, but for

a more considered and expanded interbeing: enabling the being together and with each other of human and more than human things in a responsible and ethical frame. The note immediately set up the expectation of an ethical relationship of care and equality between fleshed and material participants, and foresaw a reciprocity as the source of a new understanding of place and of things.

In this same ethical frame, the objects were not “used” to make a composition, in an instrumental or instrumentalised way. Instead, they were approached for their own agency: by the way they triggered, changed and transformed the space, its sounds, its visual appearance; the way they influenced how we moved around that space, and the way that things got moved around. The workshop moved through instructions, scores and improvisation to create different combinations and positionings of things and people, to rethink actions and re-actions, and what it means to place things: how that performs a site through installation, and how our performance, singular and together, of that installation changes with and because of it.

There was no actual sound in the sense of an articulated, amplified, or acoustically produced deliberate sounding. However, there was the sonic atmosphere of the building, and particularly the sound of crossing, walking through and “performing” the space by people in the group as well as by others, external to the event’s intentions, who moved in the open hallway, where, the installing and performing took place. And there was also Hughes’ request that preceded the gathering, that we translate the textures, materials, colours, density, etc. of our chosen objects into an auditory imagination, which would focus the subsequent demand to organise things not according to their visual appearance but in terms of this sonic aspect we had just rethought them through.

The space, a roughly 20 by 20-meter square on the first floor of the media block of the London College of Communication, has a very particular sonic atmosphere (see Fig. 2). Its wooden floor is cut from squares that in a rickety fashion move and sound the tread of every passer-through. To the side there is a metal grid, 2 meters wide along the wall, that sounds a change in footsteps and exposes the floor below to create a sense of vertigo and an awkward, insecure awareness of hovering above. At the same time, the Guggenheim-like but squared balconies of the floors above allow you to see the edges of each level to the ceiling three floors up, making you feel small and very much down below. The design of the place makes a structured view but creates an equal sound: representing a visual perspective from above, which is answered by an upward funnelled audition.



Fig. 2. Performing Objects. ©PoL.

In Hughes' description of the workshop she outlines how it will "explore different types of composition [...] and will discuss how different material combinations affect our responses to object and to space". Using the material qualities of the available objects (such as form, texture, colour, hardness, transparency, etc.) as metaphors or triggers for a sonic imagination that is not what the object might sound like, but what sound it conjures, participants were encouraged to place and replace objects, to rethink their position and how we position ourselves in relation to them and in relation to the space we are in. From there, we were asked to question how the resultant composition can be thought of in relation to our sonic environment, and they were invited to consider how the installation acts as a performance and how we perform in it.

On the day of the event, the 20 by 20-meter square and its upward scaled balconies had just been the site of the postgraduate students' final year show. Plasterboard boards and wood pieces were leaning against one of the walls still. Screws and nails lay in small piles at their foot. This was place-in progress, in take down mode, and thus the items became inadvertent participants of the workshop. The community of students had left the remnants of their joint endeavour, into whose energy we stepped to install our own more temporary but equally collective "show."

We moved through this arrangement in pensive, private and yet communal actions (see Fig. 3). It was impossible to retain a solitary line as bodies and things co-create positions and positionings in conflict and in coherence: walking around objects, walking around bodies, trying to place things and ourselves in relation to an imaginary or possible sound; in relation to the space; and in relation to people, some of whom I knew and some I had only just met. We were all guided by the same basic instructions to work with what sound things conjure. And so we composed together, in relation to invisible and even inaudible but sonically imagined possibilities that are not absolute but given contingently, guided by Hughes' instructions and filtered by the place, by each other, by the people passing through, and by the remnants of an exhibition that had just taken place.

Our community of flesh and material bodies was tenuous and in process. It formed a community of practice whose communality is the moment of doing together rather than a belonging to a particular group or identity. We were communal in our listening, placing, and moving. Thus, we were a 'community-in progress' and entirely dependent on the desire of each to participate to keep the tension of this collective endeavour going: to compose an invisible sonic sphere from things that do not sound but have the potential to trigger sonic imaginaries, and which through these imaginaries hold the group in an invisible place composing it continually.

Discursively, the notion of a 'community-in progress' can be accessed through feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti's idea of 'work-in progress': her interpretation of the posthuman subject not as an individuated, liberal subject, but as a relational identity (Braidotti 2019, 41). Following her, the sound-performing-community enabled by Hughes' instructions is in progress too. It is not an individuated, liberal and identifiable community but a relational dimension and activity. It is an ephemeral community of moving and swaying together to an invisible rhythm triggered by the imagined sound of arbitrarily but ethically chosen everyday objects, placed in relation to each other, to architecture, place and bodies.

The complex interactions of this community can be imagined through techno-feminist cyborg scholar Donna Haraway's idea of 'building worlds in concatenation', as a connecting of things, between humans and others, or what she calls unlike actors (Haraway 1992, 311). Similarly, in "Performing Objects", we performed place and things, and ourselves with Hughes. However, we did not string a world together on a line or in sequence. Instead, we silently moved and transformed, from one possible organisation into another, producing a possible world through disorderly interactions with objects, architecture and bodies; and from the tenuous sonic sense of how

we work together rather than as cause or outcome of a certain order of events. Because, as Haraway suggests, a cause or outcome, the speaking for or as, disengages the community through representation: “The represented must be disengaged from surrounding and constituting discursive and non-discursive nexuses and relocated in the authorial domain of the representative” (Haraway 1992, 311). Thus, it becomes organised in relation to the authority of normative language and loses its disorderly and polyphonic voice.

By contrast, the community that we were so tenuously performing in this workshop, between architecture, things and flesh, and in the non-image of an imagined sound, was not a representable community but a relational, entangled and contingent communing. Representation depends on (visual) distance and differentiation. It depends on the certainty of what things are in a lexical referentiality, which disregards their contingency and grants the authority to speak for them. In “Performing Objects”, however, everything is by the way it is with each other, by the way it is moved together, placed together, heard together, in an inaudible sound. Nobody and nothing was spoken for or referenced. Everything spoke through the movement it made, enabled or denied. In this context, bodies too lose their sense of form and image, their liberal identity, as I do not so much see you but feel you with me, as fleshly matter, same as that of things, passing by me, moving alongside and against me, to perform another contingent placing of ourselves with things placed: in our shared plurality.



Fig. 3. Performing Objects. ©PoL.

For this reason, and in this context, the images that accompany this text are not representations or documentation of the event. Instead, they can be engaged with as instructions to perform: to join the ephemeral community, to choose and place your own things from their possible but unheard sound, to create a space in chaotic concatenation with every other thing and body placing theirs. You are encouraged not to read the images, not to see their distancing representation, but to respond to their invisible sound that acts as a portal to the contingent community of doing, placing, performing the world together in a plural tone.

Given that the recordings of “Performing Objects” are missing from the archive of PoL events, and that this workshop happened three years ago, I have no recourse to documentation or reliable recall. Thus, for the purpose of this text I conjured, between images and architecture, from what I remember and from feelings that are confirmed and confused by the images, a sonic fiction that is an unreliable memory but a sonic truth. It is the truth of what is relevant still now, established in my re-performance of the event, guided by the images and by instructions: creating a knowledge of the event not from reading the details I have about it, but from the practice of restaging it now, to reach an understanding of it as a physical and relational knowing, between then, now, things and space, architecture and how we install and perform in it. The aim is not to ventriloquise Hughes, or the objects, or any of the participants, but to make room for their movements to matter now.

To stage this re-performance, I decide to email Sarah to ask her for the instructions and scores she shared on the day, so I might follow her intentions more closely. To give a frame to the material and physical memory of people moving around with me and with objects, and around objects, making a new place from an imaginary and plural sound.

She answers promptly, telling me that she too cannot really remember very much. That it was a long time ago and she cannot recall individual instructions or what she might have said for an introduction. But then she helpfully goes on to explain why and how she came to do such events. She mentions that they form a kind of ecology of spatial relations, to mobilise things in order to create a collective composition from between actual and material bodies. She wants to “weave a sociability” and try “manifestations of mutuality” to reach a “common language” (Sarah Hughes, personal communication, September 15, 2020).

This process, so she explains, is how she normally works on installations by herself, producing different spatial organisations of things to form a sculptural work that is visual in appearance but has a sonic sense and a per-

formative demand. Similarly, this PoL event also produces a different organisation of things and bodies as temporal sculptures performing space. Unlike her solitary work, however, such a collaborative installing never finds a certain form, but continues to perform what Hughes calls the “chaos of collaboration”. Together, the solitary and communal processes unperform the distinction between space and time, me and you, us and objects, and instead reperform them as simultaneous pluralities: as a dimensionality of invisible and indivisible relationships between bodies, sounds and things that create place as chaotic expanse that is not without intent or structure, but without a singular form. Collectively walking, listening, and experiencing this expanse, allows us to reconsider, beyond art and performance, the politics of how we live together, as a politics of what world, what socio-political dimensionality, we generate from our plural interactions and interactivities: listening, placing, and moving, paying attention to each other and other things.

The workshop wasn't intended to be about sound, but composition, and listening as a paying attention to (Sarah Hughes, personal communication, September 15, 2020).

Walking with Crickets, Lisa Hall, April 13th, 2016
Reflections by Mark Peter Wright



Fig. 4. Walking with Crickets. ©PoL.

Sat in a dark room bodies shuffled with anticipation, chairs creaked among the omniscient hum of a projector as artist Lisa Hall presented her practice-based research (see Fig. 4). We time travelled a thousand years backwards, to the Tang Dynasty, China and learnt about the trend of keeping live crickets as part of domestic and personal space. Crickets became desirable because their stridulating calls were deemed a pleasant sonorous addition for both dwelling and peripatetic acts. Hall tuned our attention towards the latter in that crickets were often concealed in clothes; their interwoven sonic identity became mobile through the act of walking. An ancient precursor to portable media, live crickets were deployed as hubristic sonic accessories, performing an intervention into everyday life.

After 45 minutes to one hour of presentation we were told we would be going outside, to walk and listen together, with a digital cricket of our own. Hall invited the group to approach a table where tote bags were laid out. Inside each was a small set of speakers that had the pre-recorded sound of a cricket uploaded, ready for playback via an MP3 device. The recording was made by Hall and would be on a constant loop for our journey. We carried these bags tentatively. Some digital crickets were moved into coat pockets as the group filtered out through the ambient space of the London College of Communication, each participant shaped as if holding a living organism. Exiting the building, security beeps merged with the shuffle of bodies, traffic and the high frequency pulse of electronic purring. We were outdoors and fast becoming a stridulating corpus.

The primary method deployed during the event was soundwalking, a practice with a rich history and contemporary legacy in sound arts. From the 1970's onwards, a mixture of art historical, anthropological and social science contexts began to accommodate the need for multisensual and participative approaches into their research praxis. A pioneer of soundwalking, Hildegard Westerkamp describes the method simply as walking through an environment whilst paying attention to listening. She states, "no matter what form a soundwalk takes, its focus is to rediscover and reactivate our sense of hearing" (Westerkamp 2007, 49). Having been on various soundwalks in the past, I was drawn towards the interplay of individual and group, not necessarily what a soundwalk is, but more how it co-creates relations and actions. Soundwalks are often full of rules and regulations such as "no talking." These codes of conduct can, at worse, eliminate participatory potential. Too many rules, and listening becomes a hierarchical regime that bludgeons participation into a corner. Hall's invitation, however, was open ended. The only demand was that we walk and listen with our electronic critters, individually, and as a unit, in relation to the city and events we encountered along the way.

Zigzagging the streets of South London, 20 to 30 people were brought together through the activity of listening, stretched apart by geography; and connected with the sound of crickets (see Fig. 5). Some members of the public noticed our group, others were too engrossed in their own portable listening habits. Sound offered an invisible infrastructure for participative action, not always known but nevertheless apparent, agential and affective. Our stridulating team drifted apart, coalesced at traffic lights and disbanded under bridges. As time went on, the group became more playful with its communal yet dispersed nature, actively gathering and sounding in small groups, guided through the non-verbal impulse to collectively amplify. Overhead, trains fused with cricket song and the stomp of feet. Participation was thickened by and with the sonic, as a plethora of human and nonhuman identities blurred. At its most physically disparate, the group was stretched beyond vision, yet the electronic cricket song managed to keep participation constant: the mutability of sound's long reach enacted an elastic band of connection.

Experimental educator Elizabeth Ellsworth notes the importance of moving from conventional indoor settings to more irregular or "anomalous spaces of learning" (Ellsworth 2005, 7). For Ellsworth, mixing media, architecture and social space is crucial in shaping participation and consequently, learning. Hosting an event such as Hall's within the milieu of public space entangled bodies, sounds, sights, and smells; transformed the individual experience into something more collective and communal. Participation became a relation of affects that may be said to produce a "sensational pedagogy", a phrase Ellsworth borrows from educational scholar Stephanie Springgay (2011), which alludes to extra-human sensory knowledge. This was meaning made by doing. In the flux of soundwalking, as an anomalous space of learning, we were embroiled in what participation did rather than what it meant. Shifting focus from the concrete and material, what might we say of the sonic? What of participation and learning made with and through sound? Can we think about the anomalous task of listening as a sensory liberation of all that is solid?



Fig. 5. Walking with Crickets. ©PoL.

There were no visual sign posts or semantic clues for participation, no leader or map. Just the fragile, intimate and shared understanding that we were sounding together, whether heard or not. In this sense, participation can be understood through the sonic: an itinerant medium with both subjective and transboundary affects. As environmental and electronic sounds pierced bodies, materials and imaginations it was clear that while we might have all been participating in cricket sound, every experience brought its own unique perspective, there could be no one homogenous story, no one truth.

Carrying the call of a cricket expanded perspective, from human to more-than-human, including the technological. Over the course of the walk I developed an ethical commitment to the creature in my bag. Clearly, there was no animal inside, just small speakers, a playback device and wires (see Fig. 6). But the emanating sound engendered a sensibility of care towards the bag and its sounding presence, towards the group, and towards each and every thing I encountered. Care did not stay in the bag. It leaked with the porosity of sound and its polyphonic impacts and effects. On the most absurd scale, I found myself listening to traffic lights, and becoming curious about levels of programming and labour otherwise hidden; the human hands and technological codes that wire such infrastructures; sonic signs that instigate warning or invite permission to cross. I checked myself and those around. "Were we all ok?"

Cricket song moved out into the world but it also moved within me. It prompted questions and dilemmas. Could the group hear me? Could I really hear them? Did the public register its presence and what was the artificial song tuning my attention towards? Was I listening *to*, or *with* the cricket? Perhaps most curious of all was the feeling of companionship that evolved with each twist of the road and stridulating call. Sound became more than an ornate accessory. It was a companion that I felt entrusted with and responsible for.

Discussing her work on companion species, Haraway (2008, 35) explores the “multispecies knots” between humans, animals and technology. For Haraway (2008, 41), such knots are entangled and disentangled through care and accountability, the point is not necessarily to celebrate complexity but to respond and participate. Companion species such as dogs, wolves and genetic hybrids, generate lively encounters for Haraway, often within asymmetrical relations of power. They are negotiated through touch, as hand and fur interface ethical thinking and commitment. Haraway (2008, 36) asks “whom and what do I touch when I touch my dog?”

In thinking with Haraway’s work we come to consider the nuances of a companion sonic species. The electronic critter in my bag had no fur to stroke. When my hand reached inside I felt the anonymous surface of technology. It was not through its visual and tactile appearance but with and through the sound of cricket song that I came to care. It was not the touch of skin but the touch of sound. Elastic, piercing and porous, cricket song provided an invitation to notice bodies, buildings and the tapestry of sounds it comingled with. Its rhythmic electronic purring merged with bus wheels, moved in walkways, nested in park spaces. Never quite still, it shifted between my bag and the environment. Moreover, it kept the group in communal connection without having to use words or signs. If we became too stretched and lost each other, one could listen for cricket song like a signal or flare. Sound functioned as a wayfinding device, a call and response organism for participation.

In an email exchange Hall explained the intimate practicalities of the companion sonic species she was entangled with.

I kept them as my pets for a while in a large plastic box with airholes, sawdust and egg cartons. I had about ten, but only one was a singer. I think the heat of the studio encouraged it to let loose. So, the recording is a single cricket’s solo song (Lisa Hall, personal communication, September 16, 2020).

Perhaps the individual voice is the reason I felt so connected to its song? Yet this singular sound is no more authentic due to the documentary conditions hinted at by Hall. The fact that a cricket has to be recorded in a studio tells its own story in that “the field” is as much an acoustically treated room as it is an outdoor environment. Sound’s duplicitous nature makes it ripe for creative interpretation as Hall went onto tell me:

film and tv portrayals of crickets have over emphasised cricket song into our ears. So, there was some editing involved to make them more recognisable as the on-screen insects we’re familiar with (Lisa Hall, personal communication, September 16, 2020).

The sonic companion sonic species that I and others walked and listened with, was no more truthful because of sound. In fact, the opposite was the case as the sonorous charms of a cricket brought me further from the real in terms of verifiable origins.

Haraway (2016) suggests moving away from self-actualizing (auto-poiesis) modes of knowledge production is required for staying with the trouble of increasing political and ecological crises. Her emphasis rests on the term “sympoieses” describing it as “a simple word; it means ‘making-with’. Nothing makes itself; nothing is really autopoietic or self-organizing” (2016, 58). Haraway goes on to say sympoiesis “is a word for worlding-with, in company. Sympoiesis enfolds autopoiesis and generatively unfurls and extends it” (2016, 58). Similarly, sonic participation is a making-with process, it is shared, relational and cannot exist in and of itself. The medium teaches us this as sound needs contact, friction, and the coming together of things to exist at the mechanical level. Yet it also makes-without. Sound constantly kicks us out of representational meaning, it operates at scales beyond the human, and never sits still.

I was no more in the cricket sound than I was outside of it, unaware of its situated and specific meaning as a biological process. Cricket calls can function outside the human range of hearing (20-20,000 Hz), more so as this range narrows with age. Specialist equipment such as bat detectors can be deployed as a prosthetic aid to reach into what is otherwise inaudible. Post-production allows out of scope sounds to be scaled back into something we humans can audition. The inaudibility of cricket sound reveals the edge of the collective composition. It is a zone of difference and shifting accessibility that needs to be transposed or translated to enable participation. Polyphony must therefore consider the radical space of alterity within its claims, particularly when dealing with the proposition of a companion sonic species. Reality might be physically shared but it is experienced otherwise depending on perceptive scales of the human and nonhuman.



Fig. 6. Walking with Crickets. ©PoL.

Hall's cricket walk was a symposium event, formed in the anomalous spaces of media and environmental listening. Companion sonic species—cricket song—extended the polyphony of relations and meaning making. The effect was one of estrangement rather than immersion, unknowing rather than outright certainty. Participation was fluid, collectively distributed and communally present. Boundaries of the human and nonhuman, audible and inaudible shifted throughout. I was no more in, than I was outside of sound, and with that revelation I came to appreciate that sound prepares me for non-dualist thinking and doing; for noise as much as signal. Holding and moving with a companion sonic species plugged into so much more than me, identity morphed and merged, knowledge and authority constantly ebbed and flowed. To re-wire Haraway's guiding question on touch, it might be useful to engineer a similar query of the sonic as a final listening prompt: who and what do I hear, when I hear my electronic cricket?

What I heard was not so much the sound of cricket song but the ethical prompts and questions it encouraged in me. I heard care, power, participation, community, action, hesitation. I listened with uncertainty and nurtured responsible curiosity, towards myself and other species, across scales.

Conclusion

The two PoL events reflected on in this essay provide a framework and opportunity to engage with the participatory and polyphonic potential of communal sonic practices: thinking and doing as Haraway's "unlike actors", from the plural and mobile dimension of sound, with other bodies and things. In this way, both case studies expand and rethink what bodies are, what things are, by how they are constituted in relation to each other, in progress and in transformation: in polyphonic simultaneity; through a compositional intent and in terms of an ethics of care; and with the hope for benevolence and the danger of abuse. They permit us to practice the sonic not so much as sound but as an access point to Hughes' invisible "chaos of collaboration" between material and flesh bodies. And help us to consider how we position ourselves and things vis-à-vis each other, how we listen and walk together, not organised by visual cues but by the ethical prompts of sound and the demands of its uncertainty. In this way both these workshops created an opportunity to re-think an expected composition and singular trajectory: generating a plural space and plural paths, from a shared sonic practice in the world. Thus, they engendered the possibility of a being-otherwise in sound, that is relational and practice-based and provides a participatory sense of a polyphonic world.

In both events, we were continually performing a different communication, listening between bodies, crickets and technology; between architecture, objects and their possible sounds. The interactions were being triggered by written or verbal instructions, couched in worded documentation, titled, spoken or heard as sentences and seemingly represented in photographs. However, both events did not articulate and explain, but performed and composed, sculpted and walked, so that as embodied bodies and bodied materialities, we performed the "chaos of collaboration" that is the radical practice of a sonic sociality as the being together of human and more-than-human things in simultaneous and plural sounding and listening. In this way, both events produced a community of practice, whose communality is contingent and temporal and needs to be composed continually without the expectation of a finishing point or outcome. Instead, they remain unfinished, unrepresentable and untheorisable, and produce a sonic fiction that generates its truths from practice, continually. To reach its meaning, the work needs to stay in practice: it needs to be re-performed on the body of the object and the flesh, to retain relevance and agency and to sound its polyphony as polymorphy—as plural formlessness.

For this reason, this text does not try to theorise or conclude on what has happened. It does not summarise an outcome or define what the polyphonic potential of these events is. Instead, it suggests modes of practice to experience it: to become aware of it, to hear and feel its contingent potential in a continuous performance of the plural sociality of the everyday.

The workshops' social and communal practices generate a relational sense of being in the world and of the world being a relational place. It makes thinkable a register of time and of bodies, solitary and together, producing a material corpus that makes different forms and different shapes to know the world by its plural and reciprocal complexity. This "sympoetic doing" depends on participation for its communication and comprehension. It is in doing that we know each other, the crickets and the world: knowing in listening as "paying attention to and with". This knowledge might remain elusive or even unintelligible within conventional and expected modes of sense. However, unlike semantic comprehension, it has the capacity to invite everything into its doing. Since, while participative sonic knowledge stands in excess of, and is unintelligible to conventional language, it is able to hold the inexhaustibility and inclusivity of sound as a currency of doing together, as a being-otherwise, that leads to a knowing-otherwise of a boundless community in its polyphonic potential.

Bibliography

1. Braidotti Rosi (2019), *Posthuman Knowledge*, Polity Press: Cambridge.
2. Ellsworth Elizabeth (2005), *Places of Learning: Media, Architecture, Pedagogy*, Routledge: New York and London.
3. Haraway Donna (1992), "Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others", [in:] L. Grossberg *et al.* (eds.), *Cultural Studies*, Routledge: New York, pp. 295-337.
4. Haraway Donna J. (2008), *When Species Meet*, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
5. Haraway Donna J. (2016), *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Duke University Press: Durham, NC.
6. Springgay Stephanie (2011), "The Chinatown Foray as Sensational Pedagogy", *Curriculum Inquiry*, 41(5), pp. 636-656.
7. Westerkamp Hildegard (2007), "Soundwalking", [in:] A. Carlyle (ed.), *Autumn Leaves: Sound and the Environment in Artistic Practice*, Double Entendre: Paris, pp. 49-54.

Maja Bjelica*

The Ethics of Deep Listening: A Practice for Environmental Awareness

Abstract

This paper is attuned to a frequency that searches for an embodied practice of an ethics of listening that considers the human other and other beings and things or environments, thus contributing to the ethical inhabiting of the more-than-human world. The paper presents the compositional and meditative practice of Pauline Oliveros, called Deep Listening, connecting it to the contemporary and emerging fields of sound research, such as acoustic ecology, acoustemology, and ecomusicologies, as echoing one another in the process of transforming the human attitude towards the environment into a more attentive sharing of our habitats and cohabitation in awareness.

Keywords

Ethics of Listening, Deep Listening, Pauline Oliveros, Environmental Humanities, Sound Studies

This article¹ further connects an emerging field, the ethics of listening, to flourishing research in the environmental humanities. As we will hear, several connections of this kind have already been established. Thinkers of listening as ethical gestures include in their research non-human entities. Meanwhile, ecologists, environmental sound researchers and artists are gradually including the activity of listening in the list of the possible attitudes

¹ This article was made possible by the financial support of the Slovenian Research Agency in the frames of the bilateral project *Listening and Polyphony: Echoes of Phenomenology, Ethics and Anthropology* between the Science and Research Centre Koper and University of Latvia (BI-LV/20-22-006), the research project *Surviving the Anthropocene through Inventing New Ecological Justice and Biosocial Philosophical Literacy* (ARRS research project J71824) and of the research programme *Liminal Spaces: Areas of Cultural and Societal Cohabitation in the Age of Risk and Vulnerability* (ARRS research programme P6-0279).

* Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Philosophical Studies
Email: maja.bjelica@zrs-kp.si

towards the environment and its inhabitants that can bring a deeper connection between the listener and the listened-to. The following reflection on these themes offers another transdisciplinary encounter in these fields of knowing and sharing. I will show how the compositional meditative practice of *Deep Listening*, developed by the avantgarde musician Pauline Oliveros in the late 1980s, can widen the usually anthropocentric ethics of listening to ethics inclusive of other-than-human beings and environments as subjects, thus establishing an intersubjective cohabitation. To do so, I will first briefly introduce the significant reverberations from the ethics of listening, and from there, I will overview the intersections of research in environmental humanities and sound or music.

Listening as an Ethical Relation

Raw listening, however, has no past or future. It is the roots of the moment. It has the potential of instantaneously changing the listener forever (Oliveros 2010, 7).

Ethics of listening establishes its importance in prompting intersubjective relations, in which nobody, nothing, is treated as an object but is considered one of the possible subjects. In the last decade, several scholars have explicitly adopted this field of research in their work,² and the ethical aspects of listening were also addressed by renowned philosophers, such as Emmanuel Levinas and Luce Irigaray. Reading Emmanuel Levinas (1979) can remind us that the ethical act of listening is grounded in openness to the radical other, that a caring response is primarily receptive rather than projective, and that difference does not allow for a totalised truth, a final one. On the other hand, Luce Irigaray (1996; 2008) addresses listening as offering silence and space to the other for their expression and being, without reducing them to the same, and as a respectful and recognising gesture of sharing.

One of the theoreticians exploring the realm of ethics of listening most extensively, Lisbeth Lipari (2014), introduced “listening otherwise,” which focuses on providing attention, patient awareness, empathy, compassion. These give space to alterity, the unknown, the unthinkable, the unexpected.

² Due to lack of space, I will not go into details of the ethics of listening; however, I have written extensively on the topic in articles such as “Listening to Otherness: The Case of the Turkish Alevis,” (Bjelica 2020) and “Listening: An Interdisciplinary Path towards Letting Things Be” (Bjelica 2021).

[...] *listening otherwise* calls us to preserve our sense of the vulnerability of all beings, of the sense that everyone suffers without insisting that our sense of the other be rationally comprehensible or even imaginable to us. [...] *listening otherwise* takes us beyond the self and out into the groundlessness and ambiguity of the radical alterity of the other (Lipari 2014, 184).

In her book *Listening, Thinking, Being: Toward an Ethics of Attunement*, Lipari investigates “how listening brings humans into being” (Lipari 2014, 2). The author strives to raise awareness about the importance and meaning of listening, researches its complexity in the personal, cultural, and philosophical realms, and exposes listening as a mode of communication that allows for transformation. Lipari understands listening as a way of being in the world, as an ethical relation.

[...] *thinking listening as a way of being* creates the possibility of an ethics driven neither by rules and obligations nor by outcomes and consequences, but rather, one that is drawn toward an ethics of attunement—an awareness of and attention to the harmonic interconnectivity of all beings and objects (Lipari 2014, 2-3).

Understanding listening as a way of being, a way of engaging with the world, and being intersubjective at its core, is crucial for discovering the possible ways of cohabitating not only in the realm of the inter-human but also on the inter-being level and even in the fields of inter-material, including all the objects, materials, environments, and world habitats.

Practices of Environmental Listening

Listen to everything until all belongs together and you are part of it (Oliveros 2010, 7).

Let us now listen to a movement into the research from another field of knowledge, which begins in acoustics, sound, or even music. Attention to connections between sound and the natural environment has risen, especially with Murray Schafer’s work *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, first published in 1977, in which he defined the term soundscape as “the sonic environment.” This Canadian composer exposed the need for an “interdiscipline” named acoustic ecology, described as “the study of sounds in relationship to life and society” (Schafer 1994, 205).

Ecology is the study of the relationship between living organisms and their environment. Acoustic ecology is thus the study of the effects of the acoustic environment or SOUNDSCAPE on the physical responses or behavioral characteristics of creatures living within it. Its particular aim is to draw attention to imbalances which may have unhealthy or inimical effects (Schafer 1994, 271).

The research field “ecoacoustics” is also related to acoustic ecology. The term began being used in the last decade to denote “the ecological investigation and interpretation of environmental sound” (Farina and Gage 2017, 1). This recently emerging science that studies sound and its role in the environment is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry that includes differing aspects of ecological research, such as populations, communities, biotic systems, and others.

Ecoacoustics studies involve the investigation of sound as a subject to understand the properties of sound, its evolution, and its function in the environment. Ecoacoustics also considers sound as an ecological attribute that can be utilized to investigate a broad array of applications including the diversity, abundance, behavior, and dynamics of animals in the environment (Farina and Gage 2017, 1).

Another terminological development in the field of sonic research was proposed by Steven Feld,³ an American anthropologist of sound, who coined the term “acoustemology” in 1992 as a response to the questions of contemporary social theory, about the multitude of “essences” and the relational constitution of the world. He defines this word in the frame of relational ontology: “Acoustemology joins acoustics to epistemology to investigate sounding and listening as a knowing-in-action: a knowing-with and knowing-through the audible” (Feld 2015, 12).

Another important developing field of sound research is ecomusicology, described as “[t]he study of music, culture, and nature in all the complexity of those terms. Ecomusicology considers musical and sonic issues both textual and performative, related to ecology and the natural environment” (Allen 2014). Due to its complexity, researchers stress the importance of understanding that this dynamic, critical, and multi-perspective field of research consists of *ecomusicologies*, rather than an ecomusicology (Allen and Dawe 2017, 2).

³ Steven Feld applies this theoretical frame in his work on researching sounds and music of the world, which can be followed through his web page “acoustemology, anthropology of sound, voice, image, sense & place” (accessible through the address www.stevenfeld.net).

Many more terms have emerged in the realm of researching connections between sounds and environments, such as acoustic diversity, anthrophony, bioacoustics, biophony, geophony, sound (or acoustic) commons, soundscape ecology, soundwalks, and others. These fields of research are mainly sound-oriented, investigating sound as their main subject (or even object) of inquiry. Here, sound becomes an informant, a source of knowledge, of revelation, but also a medium of connection, and a reminder of a shared world.

Only recently have these research fields stressed the importance of conscious and attentive listening as a method, an activity that enables a deeper and more informed experience of sound. As an example of this, I would like to bring to our attention a recently published double issue of *Cadernos de Arte e Antropologia*, a peer-reviewed journal that, in 2021, dedicated its focus on articles gathered under the title *A Sonic Anthropocene: Sound Practices in a Changing Environment*. In it, the contributors concentrate on practices of listening and aural documentation, recognising in them the potential for examining the increasing impact of human activity on the environment. The editors stress the need to cultivate a critical stance in acknowledging that

the present socio-ecological changes equally require practices of listening and aural documentation that register the transformations of the acoustic landscapes of cities and natural environments as well as sounding out that which escapes sensorial immediacy and consciousness (Louro *et al.* 2021, 6).

The contributions emphasise the role of sound as a mediator between body and environment and the role of listening as allowing for connections of the listeners to nature and environmental change, being especially important in fostering awareness of micro-events (Louro *et al.* 2021, 8). The omnidirectionality of sound opens intersectional directions to explore the climate crisis. Eco-conscious sonic artists create through investigative art forms, community-based art and socially engaged practices that lead to the flourishing of plural expressions, aural diversity awareness, complexification of acoustic policies, and sensing hierarchies. Moreover, through listening, ecopedagogies have methods to broaden ecological consciousness.

Another important recent contribution is the presentation of the Coastal Futures Conservatory (CFC), a transdisciplinary environmental humanities laboratory, founded by the University of Virginia, devoted to collaborative inquiry and public engagement around various forms of listening. The article's author, William Jenkins, professor of ethics, co-directs the conservatory with ecoacoustic composer Matthew Burtner. Jenkins talks about a "broader

intellectual turn to listening” and describes that conservatory visitors who engage in “the reorienting experience of attentive listening seemed to open intellectual space for listening across disciplines and for reorienting attention to the living shore” (Jenkins 2021, 204).

The CFC was established to deepen ecological understanding, cultural imagination, and ethical response to environmental changes in the Virginia Coastal Reserve, where climate change caused sea levels to rise and therefore the need to think of preserving and conserving this habitat and investigate “coastal futures” arose. Researchers, educators and sound artists develop and propose different materials for listening: field recordings, sonifying data, and designed listening stations,⁴ which are offered to human listeners when they visit and rediscover their existence through attentive listening, also by returning to them. “Sensing coastal futures happens most aptly from participation in processes of becoming—by listening and responding” (Jenkins 2021, 219).

William Jenkins (2021, 203-215) recognises four different forms of listening according to their function or “consequences” that they elicit through their engagement. Listening as (a) an embodied art of attentiveness that might be enacted through listening exercises or visits to listening stations, allows for a meaningful response, immersion in relations, renewing curiosity and empathy, and acknowledgment of responsibility, including the realm of the challenges of climate change. Listening can be engaged with as a (b) metaphor of environmental knowledge that, especially through participatory engagement in aurality, can contribute to reorienting epistemic models and to an openness to the environment’s total presence. This is relevant also for (c) listening to science, when monitoring life through soundscape, but also to present it transdisciplinarily through the arts, through a shared auditory space. In addition, listening is also a (d) political relation that encourages dialogue, encounters with experiences of vulnerability, and acknowledgment of human accountability.

A very important aspect of listening exposed by Jenkins is its transformative potential. Listening can connect the scientific to the ethical and political realms. This can be achieved by listening to material and spiritual stories,

⁴ Due to lack of space, I cannot present the fascinating offerings in listening and other activities of the conservatory in detail. I would suggest that anyone interested in environmental sounds visit their web page, where a lot of field recordings and sonified data are made available to listen to: ocean waves, waves on shore gravel, humpback whales, oyster reef, crab flutes and others. Accessible through the address <https://coastalconservatory.org/listen>.

understanding the land as “a sacred text”: “Incorporating ecological meditation or other arts of attentiveness into the process of forming research questions can open unseen pathways of investigation” (Jenkins 2021, 218). Spiritual openness can broaden scientific research, but mainly it allows for a deeper understanding. It allows for listening across disciplines and participation in processes of becoming, through listening and responding, allowing for careful making of the futures, made by all engaged relations.

Pauline Oliveros’ Deep Listening

Deep Listening is a heightened state of awareness and connects the listener to all there is (Oliveros 2010, 73).

Searching for a way to enact or embody these intersubjective, ethical, attentive, transformative, and “other-wise”⁵ modes of listening when approaching the more-than-human world, I remembered my co-incidental encounter with the practice of *Deep Listening*, coined and formulated by Pauline Oliveros. She was a musician, composer, and professor who elaborated methods of music creation and this compositional practice to teach her students how to listen deeply, raise sound awareness, and attend to sound. Her practice was inspired by her childhood obsession with listening to her environment. After recording the sounds from her apartment room in 1953, when she received her first tape recorder, she realised how many sounds she had missed, despite her attentive listening while recording. Since then, she has been following her life-time meditation: “Listen to everything all the time and remind yourself when you are not listening” (Oliveros 2010, 28). The author claims the chosen ways of listening, be it everyday sounds or music, significantly affect the quality of one’s life experience (Oliveros 2010, 6).

Oliveros developed unconventional strategies for sound-oriented composition, conceived as guidelines for listening and responding to sounds of others and the environment, allowing for sharing the creation of interactive

⁵ I am using the notion of an “other-wise” mode of listening partly in reference to Lipari’s (2014) “listening otherwise” (see above) but also deriving from the “other-wise” approach employed by Shé Mackenzie Hawke (2012) in her cross-cultural research on pedagogy, sustainability and human rights, that is based on “a critical need for understanding the greater properties and meanings” (Hawke 2012, 235). Moreover, taking in consideration a larger scale echo, this notion can also be understood in the realm of ethics, where “knowing other-wise” is a response to the call for “another way of knowing, a way of knowing ‘the other,’ a knowing other-wise” (Olthuis 1997, 1), a non-oppressive knowing, not limited by reason.

music. She wrote one of her earliest collections of such compositions, *Sonic Meditations* (Oliveros 1974), in 1971, after many trials with oral instructions when she was performing and researching them with the ♀ Ensemble. Instructions include general open statements and reassurances, such as: “Anything goes if and only you are listening” (Oliveros 2010, 8). Pieces include nonverbal sounds, allow expressing emotions and exploring the unknown, and consequently provoke a sense of release after attending such performances (Oliveros 2010, 7). Instructions such as “to start an attentional process within a participant and among a group” (Oliveros 2010, 5) are more generally called “text scores,” since they are written mainly in prose. Describing these compositions, she explains that they were often dismissed, since they were not suited to be judged, reflected upon in the frames of conventional aesthetics of Western artistic thought, due to their lack of notation, specifications of pitches or rhythms, melodies or harmonies. With her work centred on listening, she has redefined the responsibilities of the composer, the performer, and the listener (Oliveros 2010, 6).

The term *Deep Listening* was coined by Oliveros, Stuart Dempster, and Panaiotis as a play on words after these musicians went to record in and “play with” the underground cistern in 1988, which was followed by an album release of the Deep Listening ensemble the following year. From there Deep Listening emerged as Oliveros’ compositional and lifelong practice that continues to evolve.

The more I listen, the more I learn to listen. Deep Listening involves going below the surface of what is heard, expanding to the whole field of sound while finding focus. This is the way to connect with the acoustic environment, all that inhabits it, and all that there is (Oliveros 2010, 77).

The exercises in Deep Listening practice consist of energy work, body-work and dreamwork, breathing and vocalisations. It is cultivated through repetition, practice, and discussion. Being a specific form of sonic meditation, it stresses the importance of the interplay between the focal and global listening modes⁶ to sounds, which are not limited to music or speech but in-

⁶ According to the direction of attention of one’s listening, Oliveros (2010, 29) differentiates two modes of listening. *F o c a l* listening is directed to one specific sound, which the concentration of the listener is narrowed down to, listening for detail. *G l o b a l* listening is an open receptive state, in which the listener concentrates their awareness to including all the possible sounds to listen to, listening for context. Besides the ones they actually hear, listeners try to auralise the sounds that are present in that moment but are not heard. Oliveros interprets these two modes as contraction and expansion between *a t t e n t i o n* and *a w a r e n e s s*, and the balance between them allows for a connection with all existence (Oliveros 2010, 74).

clude all perceptible vibrations. "The relationship of all perceptible sounds is important" (Oliveros 2005, xxiv). Responses from the participants in the Deep Listening practice resonate with being. This is due to the practice's inclusiveness, involving imagination, researching meaning and memory immersion. The practice allows for a myriad of possibilities of growth and change, but also of interpretation, when travelling below consciousness through heightened listening (Oliveros 2010, 78). "Deep Listening comes from noticing my listening or listening to my listening and discerning the effects on my bodymind continuum, from listening to others, to art and to life" (Oliveros 2005, xxiv). Oliveros differentiates between hearing and listening, the first being a primary sensory perception and involuntary, while the second is a voluntary process that through training and experience produces culture (Oliveros 2010, 73). Listening directs attention, spreads awareness, interprets meaning, and encourages action.

We hear in order to listen.

We listen in order to interpret our world and experience meaning. Our world is a complex matter of vibrating energy, matter and air just as we are made of vibrations. Vibration connects us to all things interdependently (Oliveros 2010, 78).

Being connected "to all things interdependently" can be experienced precisely through listening, realising that everything is included in the world's soundscape. As Schafer presents it, "We are simultaneously its audience, its performers and its composers" (Schafer 1994, 205). Through listening, we can become aware of our own impact on the soundscape, and consequently also on the world, and we are able to identify "destructive sounds" and can be encouraged to act upon them. Here, Oliveros and Schafer listen parallelly, despite coming from different backgrounds. However, Deep Listening, being a composition practice, is a great supplement in developing the *acoustic design* advocated by Schafer, which is "a matter of the retrieval of a *significant aural culture*, and that is a task for everyone" (Schafer 1994, 206). Through practices of Deep Listening, *everyone* can contribute to design such culture, and therefore this practice is of great importance to the scientific fields of sound studies, including ecoacoustics or acoustic ecology.

Oliveros' work is considered in scientific discussions mainly as music composition, an artistic product;⁷ sporadically it is considered from the perspectives of sociology and gender studies;⁸ however, Oliveros' Deep Listen-

⁷ See for example "The Theory of Sonic Awareness in the Greeting by Pauline Oliveros" (von Gunden 1981) or "Music with Roots in the Aether" (Osterreich 1977).

⁸ Contributions such as "The Politics of Collaborative Performance in the Music of Pauline Oliveros" (Lange 2008) or "The Gendered Construction of the Musical Self: The Music of Pauline Oliveros" (Taylor 1993).

ing practice is not addressed much from the realm of ethics—one could guess due to its unconventional ground and unscientific approach. An example of dismissal can be found in the critique of Nina Dragičević (2022), who in her research engages with listening as a method of sociological inquiry in the sounding of bureaucracy. Dragičević recognises elements of essentialism in Oliveros' belief about listening being a primordial perceptual human condition—from which a person is gradually distanced, but which one can eventually and expediently re-access, as if listening were not under the influence of reduction of experiential perception nor conditioned by language (Dragičević 2022).⁹ I am exposing here Dragičević's critique as an acknowledgement of the drawbacks one might have when encountering the practice of Deep Listening. To Dragičević's critique, I would add that Oliveros' Deep Listening practice is generally conceived as a *performative* practice—collaborators engage in it mainly to *produce* sounds or music in a communal way. However, Oliveros' main intention was not directed only to this goal; the performative aspect of this practice is not so much in the *performance* itself, performance understood as staged and arranged, a show with a public, an audience. Rather, the focus is on *performing*, as doing, creating, being in a listening space, shared with others, humans and non-humans, the environment itself.

John Luther Adams, in the "Foreword" to Oliveros' third collected writings (Oliveros 2010), presents her as someone who "believes that music has the power to transform human consciousness and society;" someone who explores the borders of music and is still "always at the centre of experience;" and someone who "makes music in and with the larger-than-human world" (Oliveros 2010, iv–v). The latter, namely, that Oliveros does not conceive of her practice of Deep Listening in anthropocentric terms, is evident in some of her guidelines for music making, such as "Three Strategic Options," where the instructions are to sound before, after, or with another performer. To this, she adds: "If performing as a soloist, substitute sound from the environment for another performer" (Oliveros 2010, 5). Sounding before, after or with the environment requires an attentive listening to it and acknowledging its presence through offering space to its sounds. Here, the listener-performer approaches the environment as a collaborative entity and helps

⁹ Moreover, Dragičević presents Oliveros' notion of listening as affected by the *new age* paradigm of the 20th century and new waves of feminism looking out for "authenticity." To these categorisations John Luther Adams, when introducing Oliveros' work, has a ready answer: "But anyone who would dismiss her as a sort of New Age guru is missing the fierce intellect that burns within the woman and her work" (Oliveros 2010, iii–iv).

to understand the ecological roles of sounds, and therefore contributes to the deepening of the sphere of ecoacoustics as the “new science” that investigates sound as a subject (Farina and Gage 2017, 1). Farina and Gage (2017, 2-3) expose animals that use sounds of the environment as a signal for survival, but also stress the role of listening to their sounds as a study of species communication. Similarly, Oliveros (2005, xxv) claims that all animals are deep listeners: when we enter their environment, they receive us listening completely, since listening conditions survival. When flooded with sounds of urban life, human ears adapt to selective listening or narrow focus, disconnecting us from our environment. Listening allows one to reconnect, discover, and explore; it is always relational. “As you listen, the particles of sound (phonons) decide to be heard. Listening affects what is sounding. The relationship is symbiotic” (Oliveros 2005, 40).

In her works, Oliveros raises awareness about the increasing loudness of sounds brought by the industrialisation of society. She notes that many machines could be silent, but the usage of the loud ones gives a sense of power and control. Oliveros points out that urban sound levels keep rising. “No part of the planet is untouched by machine sound.” She calls upon human responsibility to consider noise regulation that would not be damaging to humans, animals, and the planet (Oliveros 2010, 81). This is something, as already mentioned, Murray R. Schafer did with his acoustic ecology and design that should eliminate destructive sounds (1994, 205). This tendency is being developed further in contemporary directions of sound studies and ecology, as presented in the volume *A Sonic Anthropocene*. As Louro *et al.* (2021, 8) argue, listening to the environment allows for an awareness of its micro-events, which relates to Deep Listening’s direction in fostering attention and awareness. It connects to Oliveros’ thought further on, since listening in giving awareness changes and affects the subject that one listens to (Oliveros 2005, 40). Contemporary sound studies, such as acoustic ecology, bioacoustics, or soundscape ecology, strive toward the transformation of the “listened to,” through documentation of its sound, which allows the examination of the (human) impact on it and the cultivation of a critical stance about it (Louro *et al.* 2021, 4-6). This surely connects directly to Feld’s notion of acoustemology, where through listening one discovers, knows, and acts critically (Feld 2015).

In her writings, Oliveros (2010, 22-25, 80) also stresses that in the tradition of Western culture the visual is privileged, which is also evident in the vocabulary we use when referring to musical and sound creation. Similarly, the developing and emerging scientific fields of sound studies stress the

importance of acknowledging the ocularcentrism of Western culture (Louro *et al.* 2021, 8). Through changing the vocabulary we use, Oliveros claims that we could allow for a shift in attention. With this in mind, she proposes a list of auditory terms that would foster this shift when speaking of sound and audition, which include such terms as aurality, auralization, phonation, re-sounding, reverberating, silentness, transonic, unhearable, or sonosphere, and some of these terms can be found in the aforementioned emerging sciences in sound research (cf. Allen 2014; Farina and Gage 2017; and Louro *et al.* 2021). Taking into consideration the terms Oliveros proposes, we can see, for example, that the term *sonosphere* hints at the fact that Oliveros' listening practice is understood beyond the human: "*The Sonosphere is the sonorous or sonic envelope of the earth. [...] All cells of the earth and body vibrate*" (Oliveros 2010, 22). And further: "*The sonosphere includes all sounds that can be perceived by humans, animals, birds, plants, trees and machines*" (Oliveros 2010, 22-23). At this point, she omits minerals, stones, or water from perceiving sounds, but we might extend Oliveros' Deep Listening to those as well once we search throughout her compositional work. Her piece "Echoes from the Moon," which she and her collaborators were performing in the late 1990s, included making music "with the moon as a delay line" (Oliveros 2010, 60), which was enabled by the use of a ham radio signal that was sending recorded sounds "to the moon" and receiving them back from her as an echo. Surely, we cannot claim that the moon was performing, but while attending to the performance, performers and listeners could interpret the sounds coming back from her as they were listened to.

In her compositional and performative work, Oliveros includes the environment as the co-creator, co-listener in the process. In her piece from 1998, "In Consideration of the Earth" (for solo brass or wind instrument), the guidelines are given in six lines: "Listen in all directions" (Oliveros 2013, 31). In her first call she obviously invites towards global listening, encompassing all sounds around the listener, sounder. She continues: "Turn and play only to the North (interacting with sounds perceived or imagined)." Here, directionality is given as a line to follow when producing sound based on an interplay with the sound coming from the same direction. Then, the instructions guide the listener to other directions of the Earth, east, south, and west, as in a clockwise rotation. Finally, Oliveros turns the listener to the centre, playing to it and interacting with it. She directs the listener directly to the core of the Earth, the planet, their home. In performing this piece, the listener encounters Earth, its physicality, its relation to themselves, its unknown. Through the act of listening, they are bound to respond to Earths'

sounds and calls. This brings us to the responsibility toward the unknown as basics of the ethics of listening, or listening otherwise, introduced by Lipari (2014), which allows attention and awareness, similar to Oliveros' Deep Listening practice, towards the unfamiliar, the non-human. It allows for interconnectivity with more-than-human beings and objects, matters, entities: "*listening otherwise* [...] suspends the wilfulness of self- and foreknowledge in order to receive the singularities of the alterity of the other" (Lipari 2014, 185). This is one of the aspects of listening otherwise that resembles the Deep Listening approach towards the non-human that through listening allows for an ethical encounter with the environment as an irreducible subject, to co-habit with. This listening and responding to the listened-to relates to Jenkins (2021) participation in becoming, as co-habitation, co-being. The practice of Deep Listening coincides with Jenkins' modes of listening (2021, 203-215), since it fosters attention to any sounds; therefore it includes any environmental sound and allows for the environment to be met and discovered in an alternative way: by participating in sounding, the listener's epistemic models are reoriented toward unconventional ones that allow openness, which brings the listening subject to the realm of ethics. As an ethics of listening, Deep Listening also encourages dialogue through sounds and allows for (environmental) vulnerability and (human) accountability to be acknowledged.

Another Oliveros' piece, incorporating the environment and fostering interconnectivity, is "The River Meditation" from 1976.

By a river or stream, listen for the key notes in the rushing waters. Allow your voice to blend with the sounds that you hear (Oliveros 2013, 46).

As in the piece presented previously, the listener interacts with their environment, in this case with a river or stream. Not only do they respond to their sound, they try to blend with it. For that, an increased amount of attentive listening is required to blend with the sound of the water as much as possible. In doing so, the listener is in close proximity to the water body, they are levelled with each other, they interact. One could say, they are performing a duet. In this practice, again, awareness of the environment comes to the fore.

There are other, more complex pieces fostering an awareness of the environment and attention to it and its' sounds, and listening interaction with it, such as "Environmental Dialogue" from 1997 (revised in 2008; Oliveros 2013, 117-118), "Earth Ears" from 1989 (Oliveros 2013, 87-91), and "Collec-

tive Environmental” from 1975 (revised in 1996; Oliveros 2013, 168). But at this point I would like to turn to a text that is more poetic and was written in 1992 as “A Composer’s Guide in Deep Listening” as noted under the title “The Earthworm also Sings” (Oliveros 2013, 1-12). Here is the opening of the text (Oliveros 2013, 1-2):

I hear
 I am
 I receive what is
 Listening
 No argument
 My body is sound
 Listening guides my body
 Sound is the fiber of my being and of all sentient beings without exception
 Is sound intelligence?
 The earth is also sound
 guided by sound
 and so are all things of the earth

Oliveros starts with “I,” with her experience, her being through hearing and receiving through listening, which guides her body that is sound; sound being the fibre of her being. The author here introduces the reader to listening and sound through her own experience of it, through her embodiment of the experience of listening, of being sound. Through this presented experiential knowledge, she applies it to all the things on earth, claiming that they and earth are also sound, and guided by it. She continues to describe the earth and her returning to her, establishing a relationship, connection through vibrations (Oliveros 2013, 2-3):

Rocks are her ears recording all of her events from the beginning
 My earth body returns to hers
 where the earthworm also sings
 Inside/outside vibrations
 My bones resonate
 My stomach, spleen, liver, kidneys, lungs and heart resonate
 These organs are sound
 contain sound
 The rhythms of my bodily life
 encoded in the theater of my mother’s womb
 I listened from the beginning
 universal process
 cellular language familiar to all sentient beings without exception

From connection to earth, Oliveros returns twice to herself: returning to earth and returning to her bodily experience through vibrations, resonating, sounding. From there, she comes back to the “universal process” of listening from the beginning, common to all as a “cellular language.” Also, she returns to the beginning, which is also the end, as one might notice in the lines following these, where she includes in her connecting to the earth also death, which she also perceives as sound, listening: “listening to death / returning to home in the earth / where the earthworm also sings” (Oliveros 2013, 4). Her thoughts on life and death connect the two together, avoiding any morbid tone that might appear in otherwise addressing death. Through returning to earth, she comes home, to life, through death, taking another form that is always sounding. Sound, being a shared element, shared experience, shared pleasure (Oliveros 2013, 6):

Primary pleasure of one’s own sounds and of other’s sounds
One’s own inside/outside/space/silence
Pleasure shared by all sentient beings without exception
throughout space and time
even if I have forgotten to listen
Ear is always open
even if in my filtering moments I am not open to receiving
I hear if I remember.
I hear more if I remember to remember

Here, Oliveros alludes to the fact that the ear, as a perceiving body part, is always active, ready to receive, since it is always open. Yet, if not ready to receive, it can miss sounds if it is not listening. However, Oliveros keeps reminding us to “remember to remember”: that we can listen to something while remembering it, even if we missed it. Remembering to listen adds to the regular perception of sounds those of them that we would have missed if we had forgotten to remind ourselves to listen.

In the quoted lines, Oliveros mentions three times “all sentient beings without exception” in terms of her connection to them (these sentient beings), of having something in common or sharing something—sound. She deeply feels that sound is the connecting element of everything, of all sentient beings: sound is our fibre, the sound of cellular language connects us all to the beginning, and moreover, it is a pleasure shared by all. Here the author establishes a connection that is not human-centered but levelled to the perception of sound in all its forms. Unfortunately, Oliveros does not explic-

itly state who and what she has in mind while addressing “all sentient beings,”¹⁰ but through reading her works, we can state that she would include among us also beings beyond the animal and plant worlds, such as water, wind, the moon, rocks, machines, and others. A reason for not stating in detail what she means could be found in the fact that she strives toward the openness that listening allows, in the fact that she is aware that she cannot know what might be included by “all sentient beings” and that, therefore, one should always leave space or silence for the unknown to emerge (Oliveros 2013, 10-11):

Returning to where the earthworm also sings, deepest listening is for that which has
not yet sounded
Receiving that which is most unfamiliar
learning its space time sound silence dance
Interacting with that which is most familiar
Listening until the newest is learned
Making space for the yet unborn through stillness

The unheard, the unsounded, need our deepest listening in order to emerge. Stillness, allowing for silence and no vibrations, allows other vibrations, still unknown, to spring and slowly be recognised, familiarised, interacted with. And here is where Oliveros definitely steps into the realm of ethical thought, the ethics of listening, which can be reinforced with the help of the practice of Oliveros’ Deep Listening. “We need to be listening in all possible modes to meet the challenges of the unknown—the unexpected” (Oliveros 2010, 80).

¹⁰ I am thankful to the anonymous reviewer who pointed to the fact that the term “all sentient beings” is commonly referred to as understood in Buddhism (from early scriptures of the Pāli Canon), namely, all conscious beings, subject to illusion, suffering and rebirth, including divinities, humans, animal, spirits (Getz 2004, 760). Being a practicing Buddhist (Miles 2008, 7), Oliveros surely came from this background of understanding, but we can follow her thought in going beyond this definition of the term, especially through her practice that is inclusive of plants, objects and other matters.

Listening: The Transformative Process Towards an Ethical Attunement

Yes, Deep Listening is the foundation for a radically transformed social matrix in which compassion and love are the core motivating principles guiding creative decision making and our actions in the world (Oliveros 2010, 90).

In this paper, we followed a reflection on ways to foster environmental awareness, through connecting it to environmental (sound) studies, attentive listening, and ethical conduct. Allowing ourselves to be inspired by the immersive practice of Deep Listening, offered to the world by Pauline Oliveros, we can facilitate our entering to the world of the ethics of listening, where we can acknowledge and secure the request for silence that allows the unknown and unexpected to appear through paying attention to sounds.

As Oliveros reminds us, listening is a lifelong process, and is also a transformative process. "What is heard is changed by listening and it, in turn, changes the listener" (Oliveros 2010, 74). We may observe the transformative force of listening also in the activities presented by William Jenkins (2021) who recognises in the turn towards listening a meaningful possibility of connecting the scientific, political, and ethical realms in order to approach our shared future with responsibility and care. This is evident also in the realm of contemporary scientific attempts to expose sound, encountered through attentive listening, as an informative element for understanding the environment and for an ethical transformation of the human relationship towards it. The Deep Listening practice, combining attention and awareness, also encourages scientific research in acoustic ecology that is inclined to place "sound at the centre of an interdisciplinary conversation about the economic, social, cultural, political and ecological processes that underlie the currently ongoing planetary transformations" (Louro *et al.* 2021, 12-13). The centrality of sound and listening in Oliveros' creative practice was recognised by Heidi von Gunden (1981) before the artist coined the term Deep Listening; von Gunden defined it theoretically as "sonic awareness" that is "characterized by a continual alertness to sound and an inclination to be always listening" (von Gunden 1981, 409). It is specifically this environmental sonic awareness, emerged through listening, that allows for a transformation of the listener and their relation to the listened to. This is encouraged primarily by Oliveros' inclination towards "ritualism, healing and humanism" that allow us to go beyond the Western aesthetic and the dichotomy

between art and nature (von Gunden 1981, 411). Further, Oliveros' work proves that there is no such phenomenon as an isolated subject; in contrast, insisting in the experiential mode of creation, it emphasises its intersubjective dimension, fostering individual and collective agency (Miles 2008, 6).

The perspectives of Deep Listening also coincide with acoustemology, which "is grounded in the basic assumption that life is shared with others-in-relation, with numerous sources of action [...] that are variously human, nonhuman, living, nonliving, organic, or technological" (Feld 2015, 15). Analogically, Lisbeth Lipari exposes listening as an essential communicative practice with a great "potential for social, personal and political transformation" (Lipari 2014, 3). To this, we can add the possibility of transformation of our awareness of the environment and our (human) interconnection to it. Furthermore, Lipari stresses the importance of listening for an ethical attunement to each other, to life, to the world of which we are unavoidably part: "*listening otherwise* calls us to preserve our sense of vulnerability of all beings" (Lipari 2014, 184). This stance is something to which Pauline Oliveros' Deep Listening is deeply attuned.

To conclude this reflection, let us dedicate our attention to the words recently written by Annea Lockwood (2020, 1), an artistic peer to Oliveros, who with other collaborators engaging in environmentally conscious artistic activism created a collection entitled *A little guidebook for home listening*. These opening words are a vivid example of how listening can bring us closer to the unknown, to the not yet explored, to the world we inhabit and affect. Let them be a reminder of our responsibility for attentiveness and awareness of our present and future engagement in ethical care.

Listening with...

listening with the neighborhood

at midnight, or at dawn, indoors or outside.

Listening with an awareness that all around you are other life-forms simultaneously listening and sensing with you – plant roots, owls, centipedes, cicadas – mutually intertwined within the web of vibrations which animate and surround our planet.

Listening to feel that 'I am one with all these phenomena. Can I know it?' I listen to know it.

What we are at one with, we cannot harm.

Bibliography

1. Allen Aaron S. (2014), "Ecomusicology", [in:] *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, Oxford University Press: New York.
2. Allen Aaron S., Dawe Kevin (2017), "Ecomusicologies", [in:] Aaron S. Allen and Kevin Dawe (eds.), *Current Directions in Ecomusicology: Music, Culture, Nature*, Routledge: New York and London, pp. 1-15.
3. Bjelica Maja (2020), "Listening to Otherness: The Case of the Turkish Alevis", *Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia*, 30 (3), pp. 367-382.
4. Bjelica Maja (2021), "Listening: An Interdisciplinary Path towards Letting Things Be", *Horizon, Studies in Phenomenology*, 10 (1), pp. 212-231.
5. Dragičević Nina (2022), *Kako zveni oblast? Zvočnost birokracije v vsakdanjem življenju*, /*cf: Ljubljana.
6. Farina Almo, Gage Stuart H. (2017), "Ecoacoustics: A New Science", [in:] A. Farina and S. H. Gage (eds.), *Ecoacoustics: The Ecological Role of Sounds*, John Wiley & Sons: Hoboken, NJ, pp. 1-11.
7. Feld Steven (2015), "Acoustemology", [in:] D. Novak and M. Sakakeeny (eds.), *Keywords in Sound*, Duke University Press: Durham and London, pp. 12-21.
8. Getz Daniel A. (2004), "Sentient beings", [in:] R. E. Buswell (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 2, Macmillan: New York, p. 760.
9. Hawke Shé Mackenzie (2012), "Water Literacy: An 'Other Wise', Active and Cross-Cultural Approach to Pedagogy, Sustainability and Human Rights", *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 26 (2), pp. 235-247.
10. Irigaray Luce (1996), *I Love to You: Sketch for a Felicity within History*, trans. A. Martin, Routledge: New York and London.
11. Irigaray Luce (2008), "Listening, Thinking, Teaching", [in:] L. Irigaray and M. Green (eds.), *Luce Irigaray: Teaching*, Continuum: London and New York, pp. 231-240.
12. Jenkins Williams (2021), "Coastal Futures Conservatory: Listening as a Model for Integrating Arts and Humanities into Environmental Change Research", *Environmental Humanities*, 13 (1), pp. 201-223.
13. Lange Barbara Rose (2008), "The Politics of Collaborative Performance in the Music of Pauline Oliveros", *Perspectives of New Music*, 46 (1), pp. 39-60.
14. Levinas Emmanuel (1979), *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. A. Lingis, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers: Den Haag, Boston and London.
15. Lipari Lisbeth (2014), *Listening, Thinking, Being: Towards and Ethics of Attunement*, Pennsylvania University Press: University Park, Pennsylvania.
16. Lockwood Annea (2020), "Listening with...", [in:] R. Anderson et al. (eds.), *A little guidebook for home listening*, [online] <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-e&q=A+Little+Guidebook+for+Home+Listening> [accessed: November 17th, 2021].
17. Louro Ivo et al. (2021), "Introduction", *Cadernos de Arte e Antropologia*, 10 (1), pp. 3-17.
18. Miles Stephen (2008), "Objectivity and Intersubjectivity in Pauline Oliveros' 'Sonic Meditations'", *Perspectives on New Music*, 46 (1), pp. 4-38.
19. Oliveros Pauline (1974), *Sonic Meditations*, Smith Publications: [Baltimore, MD].

20. Oliveros Pauline (2005), *Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice*, iUniverse, Inc.: New York.
21. Oliveros Pauline (2010), *Sounding the Margins: Collected Writings 1992–2009*, Deep Listening Publications: Kingston, NY.
22. Oliveros Pauline (2013), *Anthology of Text Scores*, eds. S. Golter and L. Hall, Deep Listening Publications: Kingston, NY.
23. Olthuis James H. (1997), "Introduction: Love/Knowledge: Sojourning with Others, Meeting with Differences", [in:] J. H. Olthuis (ed.), *Knowing Other-wise: Philosophy at the Threshold of Spirituality*, Fordham University Press: New York, pp. 1-16.
24. Osterreich Norbert (1977), "Music with Roots in the Aether", *Perspectives of New Music*, 16 (1), pp. 214-228.
25. Schafer R. Murray (1994), *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, 2nd ed., Destiny Books: Rochester, Vermont.
26. Taylor Timothy D. (1993), "The Gendered Construction of the Musical Self: The Music of Pauline Oliveros", *The Musical Quarterly*, 77 (3), pp. 385-396.
27. "The Conservatory: Listening for Coastal Futures" (2021), [online] <https://coastalconservatory.org/#> [accessed: May 20th, 2021].
28. Von Gunden Heidi (1981), "The Theory of Sonic Awareness in the Greeting of Pauline Oliveros", *Perspectives on New Music*, 19 (1/2), pp. 409-416.

Piotr Sawczyński*

Listening to the Unsaid: Giorgio Agamben and the Politics of the Human Voice

Abstract

The article aims to critically analyze Giorgio Agamben's philosophy of the human voice—his early contribution to the academic debate on speaking and listening. I reconstruct both Agamben's critique of the traditional metaphysical approach to the human voice and his theory of infancy, conceived as an alternative mode of conceptualizing voice and aimed at reformulating speaking and listening as unifying experiences beyond particular languages and linguistic identities.

Keywords

Giorgio Agamben, Walter Benjamin, Voice, Infancy

Introduction

In a preface to the English translation of *Infanzia e storia* [*Infancy and History*], one of Giorgio Agamben's earliest works, the author asks: "Is there a human voice, a voice that is the voice of man as the chirp is the voice of the cricket or the bray is the voice of the donkey? And, if it exists, is this voice language?" (Agamben 1993, 3). Inquiring about the ontological status of something apparently as unproblematic as the human voice might be surprising, but Agamben argues that this phenomenon is far more complex than our common sense and philosophical tradition tend to assume. He is not the first to question the unproblematic nature of voice; Jacques Derrida's deconstruction had already offered a systematic critique of this assumption, which exposed unreflective phonocentrism as the default mode of Western meta-

* Jesuit University Ignatianum, Kraków, Poland
Email: piotr.sawczynski@gmail.com

physics at least from Aristotle on. As famously argued by Derrida, the relation of speaking-listening has commonly been prioritized by philosophers over writing-reading as a quasi-transcendental mode of human expression that acts in the image and likeness of internal monologue without the alienating mediation of language signs required by the written word (Derrida 1973). As such, it has been made into the substantialist foundation of the human subject, the *zōon lōgon échon* of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. However, Derrida deconstructed this long-lasting insistence on immediacy and the "transparency" of the human voice as merely a metaphysical phantasm that fails to acknowledge the complex processes of separation and differentiation that disturb the production of speech just as much as they do in writing.

Agamben follows Derrida's intuition (although, as we will see, not without some serious reservations) to argue that despite this appreciation, the human voice has long been a "blind spot" in Western metaphysics: while philosophers indeed appreciated the use of linguistic symbols as an exclusively human faculty, the emission and reception of sounds stayed under-rated as an animal trace in our nature. Even in today's humanities, post-metaphysical in their anti-transcendental stance on language, verbal expression is still taken for granted because modern analytical linguistics tends to favor the empirical study of "hard" language signs over a more original reflection on the very human disposition to speak and listen, an apparently trivial *factum loquendi*. It is worse than a crime; it is a mistake, argues Agamben, and reminds us that our speech is far from obvious and very different from the speech of other animals. Even if we cannot identify the meaning of the words we hear (spoken, for example, in a foreign language unknown to us), we do not think of them as meaningless sounds. We know that they convey a meaningful message to those who understand the language and can decode them. Thus, human verbal expression is much more than a pure biological voice emission: unlike the natural *phōnē* of other animals, says Agamben, it is by inference significant; it always already conveys some meaning. As such, the ambivalent phenomenon of voice needs to be critically examined by each language ontology that seeks to understand humans as linguistic beings.

However, let us add that such ontology's actual stakes are much higher. Agamben contends that critical work on language is, by inference, political because it explores how the biological and social dispositions of *homo sapiens loquendi* condition our being together. Consequently, it might serve to reformulate the theoretical frameworks of community to make this notion much more inclusive. His main argument is that although the voice is a uni-

versal human property or even the “common good” of all humankind, regardless of spoken languages, ethnic/national identities, and other political divisions, at the same time, the voice is entangled in complex power relations, and cannot help but act as an instrument of separation, alienation or exclusion. That is why one of the main objectives of Agamben’s philosophy is to think of the voice anew, liberate it from the entrapment in competing, exclusivist language systems, and search for the communalizing potential of speaking and listening. To be precise, he seeks to convince us that listening to others, no matter what language they speak, may only be a universalizing, community-building experience if we first realize that underneath the surface of semiotic and semantic distinctions, there is always the common ground of our voice. In order to do this, we must learn to hear this voice, not only the torrents of words it incessantly generates; we must be able to “listen” to our linguistic being unmediated by the production of meaningful speech. This thesis, let us notice, is equally critical of the phonocentric tradition and its Derridean deconstruction; the latter, argues Agamben, although offering valid criticism of the metaphysical theories of language, is essentially optimistic about linguistic fragmentation and echoes its object of critique in acknowledging signification as an imperative property of human language. Agamben’s project challenges this common signification-centered ground and objects to prioritizing the content of speech; instead, it affirms its overlooked core: the original, universal experience of being able to speak and listen, which goes way beyond the semantic distinctions generated by multiple alphabets. Only by the appreciation of this linguistic “communism,” he insists, the human voice may finally act as a truly unifying force.¹

That said, my article aims to analyze Agamben’s theory of voice critically and argue that it might serve as a valuable contribution to the philosophical debate on speaking and listening. I seek to reconstruct both his critique and the affirmative reinterpretation of the human voice to do this. As the most elaborate reflections on this notion are to be found in two of his early works: the 1978 *Infanzia e storia* and the 1983 *Il linguaggio e la morte* [*Language and Death*],² my analysis is mainly focused on these two pieces, with only occasional references to his later texts. Perhaps the most significant source

¹ Although Agamben’s reflections on language are generally more concerned with literature than art, he occasionally suggests that especially visual arts might serve to reformulate speaking and listening beyond the paradigm of signification and think of human language in a non-identitarian manner (see Agamben 1992).

² In the text I refer to the English translations of these two works: *Language and Death* (1991) and *Infancy and History* (1993).

of inspiration for Agamben's theory is Walter Benjamin's philosophical linguistics which offers an intriguing stimulus to think of language in non-significative terms. Thus, my paper aims to demonstrate both the Benjaminian background of Agamben's linguistic project and a bold elaboration of Benjamin's intuitions through his theory of voice. To do it, I first reconstruct Agamben's critique of what he calls "Voice" and show how the metaphysical "machine" structures our perception of speaking and listening. Second, I analyze his project of deactivating this machine by exploring the notion of infancy, which is supposed to challenge the signification-centered imperative of human speech. Finally, I offer a critical appraisal of his theory of voice and expose some serious ethical dilemmas involved in it.

Diagnosis

The issue raised in a preface to *Infancy and History* is confronted by Agamben's next book, *Language and Death*, where voice acts as a prism through which Western metaphysics has theorized the relation of the human-animal to *logos*. Agamben argues that what we commonly call the "human voice" is a "no-man's-land between sound and signification" (Agamben 1991, 33), a topologically indeterminate link of natural, not-yet-significant acoustic signals with the signifying *actus loquendi*. As such, it might as well be called a threshold between the "animal" (emission of sounds) and the "human" (production of meaningful speech). Agamben refers to the classics of German idealism, who interpreted voice as an anthropogenetic force to support his thesis. For Herder, he notes, the human voice originates from the scream of a dying animal or of what is "animal" in a human; for Hegel, the sublation of the natural order symbolized by this scream initiates human self-consciousness which has to transcend the immediacy of nature to ground the subject, *homo sapiens loquendi*, in language (Agamben 1991, 48).³ It might be argued then that the moment our language is born is also the moment when the natural voice we share with other animals is negated to make room for the abstract sign system. In other words, *langue* cannot help but terminate the intimate relation which has linked us to our linguistic being and alienates humans from their original expression, from the production of sounds unmediated by symbols.

³ The originals to be found in *Über den Ursprung der Sprache* (Herder 1965, 27); and *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, vol. 2: *Die Vorlesungen von 1805–1806* (Hegel 1931, 161).

Agamben's central thesis is that Western metaphysics' erasure of the animal voice has been made into the foundation of human subjectivity, with natural sounds suspended and subjected to what he terms Voice, capitalized to emphasize its onto-theological connotations. This notion no longer designates the biological apparatus conditioning verbal communication. Instead, it is a metaphysical construct that defines humans as speaking beings, the beings constituted by silencing their original, immediate sound expression. Agamben argues that this is the price to pay for passing the threshold between animal and human—the threshold which Western metaphysics only allows the crossing of once, then persistently safeguarding the anthropological difference generated by this passage (Agamben 1991, 45-47). The Voice as such is a norm of humanity or a way the philosophical tradition constructs the human as a subject: the being qualitatively different from the rest of animals and irreducible to its animality.

Even more importantly, the transition from voice into Voice, this overlooked foundation of Western metaphysics, marks the origin of signification as a paradigm of human speech. Consequently, our being-in-language is never a natural, not-yet-meaningful experience of human's linguistic nature but a "pure intention to signify" (Agamben 1991, 33), already a desire to articulate some meaning. Agamben argues that this imperative of signification founds human subjects on double negativity or double exclusion. On the one hand, it calls for the suspension of the original *phōnē*, which stays inexpressible and subjected to Voice. On the other hand, the Voice, as the transcendental condition of our speech, cannot be captured by the sign system, making it an imperceptible (and unreflected) horizon of human *logos*, the non-place of language. As a result, human speech is by its nature aporetic, so close to the human-animal and yet separated from it by an unbridgeable gap. That is why *Language and Death* cannot help but eventually answer the opening question of *Infancy and History* in a highly ambiguous way: yes, there must be a human voice because there is speech, but if the speech entirely depends on the Voice, this constitutional "forgetting" of *phōnē*, is the human voice truly ours?

One might ask why this original moment of separation is vital to Agamben. Apparently, for two reasons, both of which are political. First, contends Agamben, language founded on the Voice, this "original mythologeme of metaphysics" (Agamben 1991, 85), starts to act in the image and likeness of a powerful sovereign whose ruling is based on the classical maxim of *divide et impera*, thus laying the ground for all further divisions and separations that hopelessly stigmatize the lives of humans as speaking beings. In other

words, the Voice is the negative foundation of our human condition. As long as its machinery is not deactivated or at least challenged, any radically inclusive community (like the community of all humankind or humans and other animals) cannot help but remain phantasmatic. Second, although the language of signs constituted by the Voice machine is supposed to be an instrument of subjectivation, it acts as an objectifying force. Our conventional language, the language as we know it, is a prisoner of signification: if there is always some object of communication, some message to transmit, the speakers (and listeners) are nothing but instruments of this transmission. To be potentially non-objectifying, argues Agamben, the act of speech must go beyond signification towards the intimate experience of language and our experience as speaking beings. However, how do we let language speak through us in a world of signification? How do we realize that before language communicates anything to us, the language is? This question is confronted in *Infancy and History*, where Agamben seeks to theorize the universal experience of speaking and listening beyond the semantic distinctions generated by multiple alphabets. This area of his philosophical linguistics also seems most inspired by Benjamin's critiques of language. That is why, before moving on to Agamben's idea of infancy, let us briefly discuss its Benjaminian background.

Remedy

Benjamin's idea of language is most elaborately expounded in the 1916 *Über Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen* [*On Language as Such and on the Language of Man*] and the 1923 *Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers* [*The Task of the Translator*], the pieces directed against theorizing language merely as a means of communication. Benjamin argues that all instrumental theories of language, which he calls "bourgeois" (Benjamin 1996a, 65), are so focused on what we speak about that they miss something much more fundamental: the very fact that we speak. As such, they are too reductionist to grasp the nature of human language, which goes far beyond the transmission of messages. To meditate on this nature, Benjamin distinguishes between communication "through language" (*durch die Sprache*) and "in language" (*in der Sprache*) (Benjamin 1996a, 63). Whereas for the former, language is a means, an external mediator of communication, for the latter, it is a reservoir of communication, thanks to which the communication is direct, immediate, and non-instrumental. But what is to be communicated in language if there is no external message? As argued by Benjamin, only "pure

language," which "no longer expresses anything" (Benjamin 1996b, 261), "knows no means, no object, and no addressee of communication" (Benjamin 1996a, 65). This linguistic essence, however, can only be heard if the acts of speaking and listening are not wholly (and hopelessly) saturated with meaning, if "language communicates itself" (Benjamin 1996a, 63) and nothing else.

Benjamin's conception of pure language, intriguing yet somehow obscure (how do we use voice and produce speech without communicating anything?), is taken up and elaborated in *Infancy and History*, where Agamben seeks to theorize the universal experience of speaking and listening beyond linguistic fragmentation. There, he comes up with a simple but ingenious idea that pure language, if it does exist, is most likely to be found at the threshold of our linguistic being: in infancy, understood as the fleeting moment when the human voice has not yet been subjected to the machine of Voice. Agamben provides two main arguments to support his thesis. First, he contends, thanks to the fact that infants do not yet produce meaningful speech, they can immerse themselves in language to an extent unachievable ever again (Agamben 1993, 50). Their babbling and quasi-words need no semiotic exteriorization, which is why no separation practices are involved in the production of infantile "speech." As a result, the living being coincides here (at least for a short while) with the speaking being, from which it will unavoidably be alienated once the machine of Voice is put into motion. Second, and no less importantly, infancy marks when our original disposition to speak has not yet been diminished by confining it to just one or several languages. Thanks to their inborn linguistic competence, Agamben notes, infants can say anything in any language (Agamben 1993, 51–52). It is only in acquiring grammar and vocabulary that this original *potenza* is actualized in a highly reductionist way, "as if the acquisition of language were possible only through an act of oblivion, a kind of linguistic infantile amnesia" (Heller-Roazen 2008, 11). Thus, as we can see, infancy is not theorized by Agamben as a state of deficiency that is supposed to be promptly terminated by learning words but, quite the opposite, as the greatest potentiality of language, worth reflecting on and affirming as a unique chance to experience the nature of our human language beyond particular linguistic (and political) identities.

Let us notice, however, that as long as the infantile experience of using the voice beyond signification were thought of in a purely chronological manner, as the very first phase of human psychosomatic development, which elapses when the child is constituted as a proper subject of language,

it would be philosophically fruitless. The ontogenetic axis of human life is one-way only: to put it bluntly, we cannot unlearn how to speak and perhaps should not want to be able to. This inability is why Agamben makes it clear that the infancy he mediates on shall be understood kairologically: as the origin to be sought inside rather than before language, or, as he puts it elsewhere, as “a present where we have never been” (Agamben 2009, 52), the present which might open up for us when we stop pondering over speaking and listening in significative terms only. This assumption is yet another point where he follows Benjamin, whose *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* [*The Origin of German Tragic Drama*] famously offered an unchronological theory of the origin which conceptualized the titular notion non-genetically. As Benjamin argues, a philosophically productive concept of origin is not to be considered as the inception of some phenomena at a particular moment in time but, instead, as “an eddy in the stream of becoming” (Benjamin 2003, 45), an operative an-archistic force shaking the current state of affairs from the inside and thus making us reflect on them anew. This force is precisely what Agamben’s infancy is ultimately about: we must first retrieve our long-forgotten voice and explore the repressed potentialities of speech to think of language as a universal, communalizing property beyond all its separations generates. In short, we must be able to see infants in ourselves.

But how do we do it? How do we “regress” to infancy once we have acquired a linguistic competence for better and for worse? By babbling and making inarticulate sounds instead of producing meaningful speech that we are used to? To avoid such a nonsensical conclusion, Agamben clarifies that the only infant-like condition accessible to us, language users, is the experience of wordlessness, the opening of our voice to the moments of silence and immersing ourselves in muteness. As argued in *Infancy and History*, it is precisely the ability to silence our speech and deactivate the machine of signification that distinguishes *homo sapiens loquendi* from other animals which cannot help but “speak”: even if they produce no sounds, they keep exchanging soundless messages and are always in a significative mode, although unmediated by any semiotic system (Agamben 1993, 47-48). Unlike them, humans are the only speaking beings able to make the semantic machinery inoperative and “non-speak”: fall silent “in their very possibility of speech” (Agamben 1999a, 46), thus making the proper use of their infantile linguistic potentiality. That is why the remnant of our voice is, paradoxically, only to be found in muteness, at the moment when we hear no words produced by others or by ourselves, thanks to which we can finally “listen” to our universal linguistic nature and the very fact that we are capable of speaking even if we choose not to do it.

Conclusion

Agamben's exploration of "the capacity to speak solely in the name of an incapacity to speak" (Agamben 1999a, 58) is a valid complement to his kairological conception of infancy. At the same time, however, it is the most problematic point of his speculations on "pure language," which involves some serious ethical doubts. Why is that? If, as Agamben argues, the distinguished mode of our being in a language is to be sought in the "silence of the word itself" (Agamben 1995, 113), at the threshold of speaking and non-speaking, it should be inferred that this mode is only available to those who can both speak and non-speak. But what about people suffering from aphasia who are, for whatever reasons, unable to produce speech although having the inborn linguistic competence? The people immersed in silence, for better and for worse, who cannot spontaneously fluctuate between these two modes of our being in language? Are they, for this reason, excluded from the reputedly all-inclusive domain of pure language, which, as we remember, is supposed to be the universalizing property beyond all the separations generated by multiple linguistic systems? Unfortunately, Agamben fails to confront this dilemma. His readers are somehow left troubled by the fact that in one of his most famous (and most controversial) books, *Quel che resta di Auschwitz* [*The Remnants of Auschwitz*], he speculates on the emancipatory potential of muteness in the context of Shoah, and juxtaposes the natalistic figure of the infant with the thanatic figure of *Muselmann*—both suspended at the threshold of language yet so infinitely different in the incorporation of non-speaking to their "speech."

Regardless of these dilemmas and some aporias integral to the kairological idea of infancy, Agamben's linguistic project elaborated in his early works remains a thought-provoking variation on Benjamin's "pure language," challenging the phonocentric legacy of Western metaphysics and its Derridean deconstruction both. What it advocates, as we have seen, is to flee from the prison of meaning by immersing in the original potentiality of speech prior to any signification since "language, which for human beings mediates all things and all knowledge, is itself immediate" (Agamben 1999b, 47). This potentiality is found in the infantile non-place of human language, in the spontaneous event of *logos* unmediated by semiotics and semantics, and thereby common to all human animals regardless of their particular cultural identities. This community is what precisely is finally at stake in Agamben's philosophical quest: to realize that somewhere beyond the separating Voice machine, there is always the unifying experience of our "little" voice, which

might be used to think of a more universal, non-exclusive mode of being together, irreducible to any national or ethnic communities based on a language. Because speaking and listening to multiple particular languages may only be an instrument of understanding and solidarity if we first open ourselves to the “infantile” linguistic condition that we share with all other humans and learn to “listen” to it in an attentive, unprejudiced way. As argues Agamben, “what unites human beings among themselves is not a nature or a common imprisonment in the signifying language; it is the vision of language itself” (Agamben 1999b, 47): a pure, non-objectifying being in a language without any presuppositions, distinctions or separations. If there is any “speech” worth listening to, it is definitely this one.

Bibliography

1. Agamben Giorgio (1991), *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*, trans. K. E. Pin-kus, M. Hardt, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis and Oxford.
2. Agamben Giorgio (1992), *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, trans. R. L. Martinez, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis and London.
3. Agamben Giorgio (1993), *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, trans. L. Heron, Verso: London and New York.
4. Agamben Giorgio (1995), *The Idea of Prose*, trans. M. Sullivan, S. Whitsitt, State Uni-versity of New York Press: Albany.
5. Agamben Giorgio (1999a), *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. D. Heller-Roazen, Zone Books: New York.
6. Agamben Giorgio (1999b), “The Idea of Language”, [in:] idem, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, trans. D. Heller-Roazen, Stanford University Press: Stanford, Cali-fornia, pp. 39-47.
7. Agamben Giorgio (2009), “What Is the Contemporary”, [in:] idem, *What Is an Appa-ratus? And Other Essays*, trans. D. Kishik, S. Pedatella, Stanford University Press: Stan-ford, California, pp. 39-54.
8. Benjamin Walter (1996a), “On Language as Such and on the Language of Man”, trans. E. Jephcott, [in:] idem, *Selected Writings, Volume 1: 1913–1926*, ed. M. Bullock, M. W. Jennings, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, pp. 62-74.
9. Benjamin Walter (1996b), *The Task of the Translator*, trans. H. Zohn, [in:] idem, *Se-lected Writings, Volume 1: 1913–1926*, ed. M. Bullock, M. W. Jennings, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, pp. 253-263.
10. Benjamin Walter (2003), *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. J. Osborne, Verso: New York and London.
11. Derrida Jacques (1973), *Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs*, trans. D. B. Allison, N. Garver, Northwestern University Press: Evanston.

-
12. Hegel Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1931), *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, vol. 2: *Die Vorlesungen von 1805–1806*, ed. J. Hoffmeister, Felix Mainer Verlag: Leipzig.
 13. Heller-Roazen Daniel (2008), *Echolalias: On the Forgetting of Language*, Zone Books: New York.
 14. Herder Johann Gottfried (1965), *Über den Ursprung der Sprache*, Verlag Freies Geistesleben: Stuttgart.

Sergio J. Aguilar Alcalá*

Another Voice: Towards an Aesthetics of the Voice in Cinema

Abstract

This paper proposes a model to understand the voice in cinema, constructed via psychoanalysis and classical cinematic sound theory. The voice as an object (as it is for psychoanalysis) supposes a hole in the Other, an object that slips meaning. Kaufman and Johnson's 2015 film *Anomalisa* is commented on along these lines. This movie renders visible the way the cinematic language sutures the subject (a character in the film) and the Other (the diegetic reality).

Keywords

Cinematic Voice, Psychoanalysis, Suture, *Lalangue*, Superego

Introduction: Back to the Voice

"Suture" is one of the critical concepts of traditional psychoanalytic film theory. It has been theorized since the 1960s, treated almost exclusively in the visual dimension of cinema. However, if the suture is the signifiers', not the images', why has sound (as in many other film theories) not been adequately incorporated into the study of suture? As Todd McGowan (2021) observed, despite Lacan's proposed two partial objects to add to the Freudian list, the gaze and the voice, the former has undoubtedly been studied much more than the latter.

* Extimacies: Critical Theory from the Global South (Andrew Mellon Grant)
Email: sergio.aguilaralcala@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1712-753X>

At the turn of the century, Slavoj Žižek (2001) proposed a new study of sutures beyond its classical articulation as a shot plus its counter-shot.¹ Žižek proposed a suture within the same shot. Žižek's account, although very complex and innovative in discussing the concept, still dwells almost exclusively on the visual realm.² We can continue this work, pointing to another, the more complex suture that goes even beyond the discussions of one or two shots: the suture between the diegetic reality and the character's subjectivity; i.e., the moments within films where the frontier between "objectivity" (in terms of the cinematic reality, the diegesis) and "subjectivity" (in terms of what the character sees and hears) is erased. This instance can be called *a singular experience suture*, which includes evident hallucinations in just a few scenes³ to the whole film built upon this collapse. Furthermore, to bring the voice to the front of the discussions on suture, I would like to propose a reading of what a singular experience suture would be when embedded in the auditive dimension of a film: Charlie Kaufman and Duck Johnson's 2015 animation piece *Anomalisa*. This movie proposes an extraordinary aesthetic experience in the auditive field and might introduce us to a reflection of what a voice is for cinema, a psychoanalytic approach, and even a phenomenon like love.

Thus, I will start this text by commenting on the different voices we can discern in cinematic language. Then, I will introduce the concept of the voice as an object for psychoanalysis, which will lead us to the Lacanian *lalangue*. In opposition to this, the voice of the superego is discussed. These two manifestations of the voice, the nonsensical *lalangue* and the commanding voice of the superego offer us an intricate relationship that confronts the protagonist of the movie to the nature of love. It is argued that the voice is the possibility of a choice: a choice between the other and the Other, and this choice has strict aesthetic and ethical consequences.

¹ For an introduction to this debate, see the classical text by Heath (1977).

² The very honorable exception are the pages dedicated to Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's *Parsifal* (Žižek 2001, 40-42).

³ One of the most popular types of this collapse between diegetic reality and the character's subjective experience is in *Dumbo* (1941): in the famous scene where him and the little mouse get drunk and hallucinate of pink elephants, it is evident for the spectator that within that diegetic reality there are no pink elephants, but that we see this scene in the film *as through Dumbo's singular drunk experience*.

The Cinematic Voice

A collection of voices, in which we can barely discern what they are saying, opens *Anomalisa* over a black screen. There is a distinctive, subtle laugh among them. Michael, our protagonist, is on a plane. He takes a pill (we have the first close-up of a mouth) and opens a folded letter. A sort of phantasmatic woman appears over the letter and starts speaking, reading a hostile message directed to Michael.

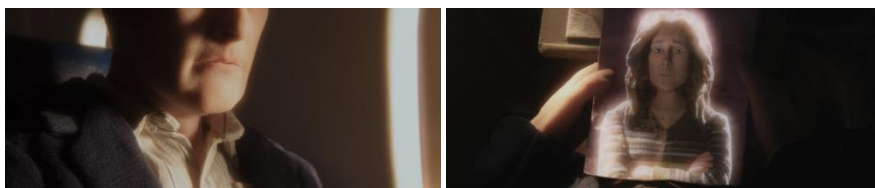


Fig. 1-2. *Anomalisa* (Kaufman and Johnson 2015, 00:02:44; 00:03:03)

Already here, we have complex issues to tackle regarding what is a voice for cinema: the first and most evident answer is that it is the voice that corresponds to a character. Let us call this *a character voice*. This correspondence is a starting point where we can align *a* voice to *a* character.

Nonetheless, it is widespread to hear voices in cinema that do not conform as easily to a specific character. This commonness introduces us to the concepts of voice-off and voice-over.

There are two types of voice-off for Pascal Bonitzer (1986, 322-323). The first is the voice that we hear from a character within film space, but we cannot see them: the character is *in the diegetic space and time*, just *out of frame*. Let us be more precise than Bonitzer and call this first type a *voice-over*: a voice that is heard and *whose source is within the diegetic space and time but out of frame*.

The second type of voice-off for Bonitzer is what we can call (and the way I understand it in this paper) a proper *voice-off*: a voice that is heard and whose source, whether known or unknown, *is not in the same diegetic space and time as what we are seeing and hearing* is. The most common use of this is the narrator voice, who can be identified (like the future Alex, in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, 1971, who comments on these events in his past that we see in the movie), or is not identifiable (like the narrator in Alfonso Cuarón's *Y tu mamá también*, 2001, who never identifies himself and tells us about past and future events unknown for the characters).

What is noteworthy is that these voices cannot be understood outside the notion of diegetic reality.⁴ The voice creates a sort of suture between the character's interiority and the diegetic world's exteriority (just like our own voice, in the world outside the movies, does). The voice is a band-aid that closes the gap between the character's body and the reality outside that body. For such reason, distinguishing between cinematic voices allows us to see that the body constituted in cinema is "a *phantasmatic* body"⁵ (Doane 1986, 335).⁶

Thus, we have three voices: (1) character voice, (2) voice-over, and (3) voice-off. A voice might even evolve among these three stances: a character within the frame starts speaking, telling us about a dream they had (character voice); as they do, the camera pans to the open window to their left, leaving them out of the frame although we can still hear their voice (voice-over), and we have a transition to see their dream, yet still hear their voice (voice-off). So far, these three different voices can be distinguished with not too much difficulty.⁷

Anomalisa is not a film that is clarified with these distinctions. Take the folded letter Michael "reads" as an example: yes, he is reading the letter, but the voice we hear is from Bella, the author, who appears as a phantasm over the paper: it is a kind of combination between a voice-off (she is not in the

⁴ For a discussion regarding the concept of diegesis and other narrative levels, refer to Aguilar (2019).

⁵ Doane's emphasis.

⁶ Nonetheless, Doane is not considering here the radical concept psychoanalysis has for what the voice is. As will be emphasised later, in so far as the voice is taken as an object, it is not only in, or through, the realm of cinema where the body is phantasmatic, i.e., where the body and the voice do not seem to go together, but have and estimate, uncanny relation to each other.

⁷ Of course, an exposition on the voice in cinema perhaps is incomplete, or naïve, if it does not tackle Michel Chion's famous book, *The Voice in Cinema*, and his concept of *acousmatization*. For Chion (1999, 18), an acousmatic sound is one that we can hear but whose source we cannot see. He even proposes the existence of an *acousmêtre*: an acousmatic being whose voice we can hear but whose presence is not visible in the screen. This might be the case for a voice-over, as the examples Chion himself gives (1999, 21-22). Chion reminds us that a narrator that is certainly no part of the film diegesis (like Cuarón's film) is not acousmatic, for the acousmatic presence "must, even if only slightly, have *one foot in the image*, in the space of the film" (Chion 1999, 23). Thus, the problem with Chion's concept is that even though he talks about an acousmatic being, he is in fact talking about a body (perhaps it should have been named *acousmacorp*, acousmatic body). I believe that *Anomalisa* truly proposes the existence of an *acousmêtre*: an *acousmatic being that has no body*.

diegetic space and time of the plane), and a character voice (she appears in the frame saying the content of the letter). The shot is interesting in its own, but it is not uncommon in films, and it is not what is so peculiar about *Anomalisa*.

The Voice of the Puppets

The plane lands, and as Michael walks through the airport and gets into a taxi, we realize that all the faces are familiar: they are all the same face (with changes in the hairstyle), except Michael's, whose face is unique. Moreover, as we hear more and more voices, we realize we are listening to the same one: they all have the same voice, no matter sex or age. This sameness is the most important aesthetic decision of the film: our experience of *Anomalisa* and the plot itself is rooted in it. Indeed, this decision means a disturbance in the auditive dimension of the film, caused precisely by the use of the voice, just as McGowan described: "The voice is a disturbance of the aural field. It is the point at which sound ceases to align itself with signification and the partiality or noneutrality of the aural field becomes apparent" (2015, 77).



Fig. 3. *Anomalisa* (Kaufman and Johnson 2015, 00:04:37)

This generic voice compels us to wonder what *Anomalisa* is for the previous exposition on cinematic voices. In the first approach, we can say that, contrary to its typical use, this is a movie where *the voice-off is visible within the frame*, for there is no one who has their voice, but they all have a *generic voice* that stands for a *generic Other who speaks through them*. We should write this Other with capital O, in the same sense that psychoanalysis distinguishes between the other (people around us) and the Big Other (the sym-

bolic agency that creates the conditions for symbolic human life). The others and the Other are not two distinctly differentiated entities, for the latter is always incarnated in the former more often than not.

This ambiguity is why psychoanalysis proposes a radical understanding of what the voice is. We do not have “our own voice” since our voice does not entirely belong to us. For psychoanalysis, an Other speaks through our bodies and voices, and the voice is not reduced to a phenomenon of sound or the study of sound as a physical phenomenon of speech. Studying the voice is not the same as studying phonetics. We speak within a symbolic structure that regulates what we say when we speak. The leftover of this process is the voice, “a nonsignifying remainder, something resistant to the signifying operations, a leftover heterogeneous in relation to the structural logic which includes it” (Dolar 1996a, 10).

If the voice does not entirely correspond to a body, there is a never-closing gap between language and the body (Dolar 2006, 73). As a *remainder/leftover* (something we discard or throw away after doing something) and as a *reminder* (something that causes us to remember something), the voice never fits the body it supposedly comes from; it is the unavoidable *rem(a)inder* of the process of speech and signification. The voice is something that does not belong here, yet we cannot simply forget it. We might stumble upon the idea of “disembodied voices” in some analyses that take the voice as an essential axis (e.g., McQuinn 2014). The matter is more radical for psychoanalysis: the voice itself is always an object disembodied.

In *Anomalisa*, the voice does not fit the body. It is ethereal, it is shared by (almost) all individuals, yet it does not belong to any of them. It seems like they do not speak but *are spoken*. We cannot ignore the fact that they are puppets in a stop-motion movie because they are spoken (as will be exposed later, they are the phantasmatic puppets in Michael’s way of dealing with reality).⁸ We could risk the hypothesis that, once we understand the dynamics of the voice for humans, we can see why we are all puppets: there is a form of ventriloquism inherent to human speech.⁹

⁸ For the concept of *marionnettes fantasmatiques*, phantasmatic puppets, see Bouilly (2008).

⁹ The performances by Nina Conti, a ventriloquist that uses a monkey whose voice disappears when she goes to sleep, offers a succinct definition of the voice as a parasite, a remainder that lives inside of us (see BBC Studios 2014). Also, think of the recurring type of scenes in David Lynch’s film that deal with this problem of the correspondence of a voice to a character: from the lip sync scene in *Blue Velvet* (1986) to the little man and the telephone at the party in *Lost Highway* (1997) to the Silencio club at *Mulholland Drive* (2001).

When I say that we are spoken, I do not mean it sublimely or abstractly, but in a substantial daily experience. Notice the way politicians seem to repeat the same discourse over and over again ("I am working in favor of the people," "our Party defends our national values"); are they speaking? Or are they spoken through? Notice the way journalists say "they have to" ask a particular question at a press conference or how they describe themselves as "the voice of our readers"; who are they speaking on behalf of? Furthermore, notice our lapsus and parapraxes, the psychopathology of our everyday communication, when we say a word while meaning another. Who is speaking? Is it me or some Other inside of me who speaks through me? In Žižek's words (1996, 103): "I hear myself speaking, yet what I hear is never fully myself but a parasite, a foreign body in my very heart."

Indeed, this is how we hear *Anomalisa*: a collection of individuals sharing the same monotonous, androgynous voice and face. There is a hole in the (cinematic) language made by the voice. This hole is the signification process's leftover, the rem(a)inder of our adaptation to the Symbolic order, a particular function that, according to Žižek (1996, 119), the voice introduces in our experience of the world.

The Voice of the Machine

Michael arrives at The Fregoli Hotel,¹⁰ which continues the generic and monotonous aura of the film in its interior design. In the hotel elevator with the bellboy, Michael is already tired of something recurrent throughout the movie: small talk. The cab driver, the hotel receptionist, the bellboy, the waiter over the phone, the waitress at the bar: all of them, who are providing a service (keep in mind that Michael is a customer service expert), seem *compelled*, by a foreign power, *to talk* (about the weather, the airplane, the food), to say something in order to keep the silence away.

Michael looks for Bella, the letter's author, in the yellow pages. "I didn't recognize your voice," says Michael on the phone (how could he? She sounds just like the rest of the people). They arrange to meet at the hotel bar, where they have a nasty fight over the end of their past relationship.

Drunk, Michael goes to the sex shop close to the hotel, thinking it is a toy store. He seems intrigued by a particular item behind the counter: an ancient Japanese doll, partially broken in the face, half its body exhibiting the internal gears and wires.

¹⁰ The Fregoli syndrome has been studied in psychiatry, and is described for a person who believes that different people are the same. A different syndrome is the Capgras one, where the same person seems to be many.

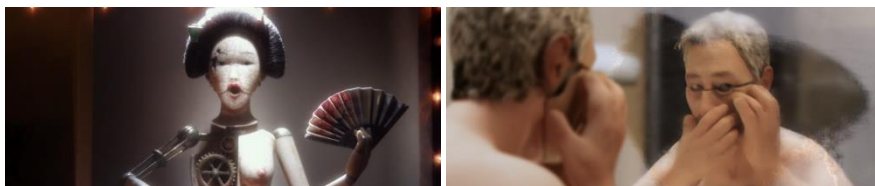


Fig. 4-5. *Anomalisa* (Kaufman and Johnson 2015, 00:31:29; 00:33:26)

Back at the hotel, Michael looks in the mirror after a shower. A hallucination occurs. His face starts moving involuntarily as if the gears inside him were malfunctioning (just like the gears in the doll). His face starts to “peel off” right when he hears a woman, the third voice we hear in the film.

The Voice of an Anomaly

Michael is shocked, “someone else,” he mutters. He goes to the hall, knocking on many doors until he finds Lisa, the distinctive voice owner and Emily's blonde friend. They tell Michael they are in town for his talk tomorrow, a conference on customer service based on a book he published, *Let Me Help You Help Them*.

The three of them go to the hotel bar to have drinks. On their way back to the rooms, Michael asks Lisa to have a private talk. They go to his room and start flirting. Michael notices Lisa's scar on her face. She does not want to tell him the story behind it, and she knows people find her ugly. Michael says she is extraordinary, but he cannot say why: “Your voice is like magic,” he states. Lisa offers to sing Cindy Lauper's *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*. Michael cries after she finishes the song.



Fig. 6. *Anomalisa* (Kaufman and Johnson 2015, 00:44:46)

They start to have sex in a kind of clumsy way. Lisa has not had sex in many years, and Michael is still confused because of her voice. She offers to sing Lauper's song again, now in Italian. We have another close-up of a mouth. The counter-shot is Michael looking.

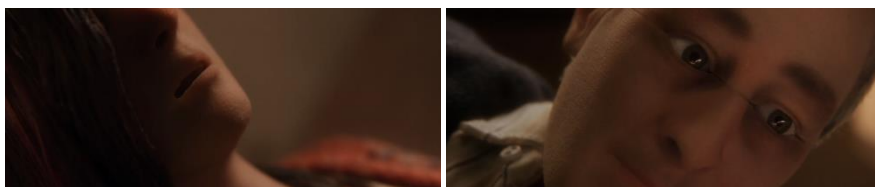


Fig. 7-8. *Anomalisa* (Kaufman and Johnson 2015, 00:53:15; 00:53:21)

These two shots are peculiar, one following the other, because it is here where we see Michael's attraction to the orifice of the voice: the mouth. For Chion (1999, 23), if the invisibility of the source that originates a voice is the basis of acousmatization, the opposite process, disacousmatization, renders visible such a source. Like a hole in the body, the mouth could be the point where the voice escapes, a crack that leaks the voice. Yes, unquestionably, some physical qualities of the voice come from the mouth,¹¹ but the voice as an object of psychoanalytical inquiry, the voice that is not studied by phonetics, does not come from the mouth:

Where does the voice come from? It comes from the innermost realm of our being, but at the same time it is something that transcends us, it is in ourselves more than ourselves, yet again, a beyond at our most intimate (Dolar 2006, 96).

It would be easy to think that the voice comes from the mouth, as Michael's obsessional look at Lisa's mouth shows. Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that the voice we are talking about, the one Michael is falling in love with, is a gap between our body and the Symbolic order in which our body is placed (this seems both true for Lacanian psychoanalysis and the film theory of the voice—Doane, Bonitzer and Chion—previously exposed). This gap exists insofar as, besides the qualities measurable by machines, something in the voice escapes what the subject is saying or the subject's intentions. There is something uncontrollable in the voice, some enjoyment the voice seems to be getting or providing beyond our control.

¹¹ Also from the stomach, our throat, and even, it could be argued, from other people's ears.

For example, in the dialogue right after the Italian version of Lauper's song: Lisa says, "I love French and Italian the most. I don't like German, sounds mean to me." What does to "love" a language but to think that other languages sound "mean" signify? Do Germans think it sounds mean to say "Ich liebe dich" ("I love you")? Do French people think "Je te hais" ("I hate you") sounds lovely?

This case is an example of the different words each of us enjoys saying or hates hearing in their materiality prior to their meaning. This sort of enjoyment is beyond the signification of the words, and it is what Lacan referred to as *lalangue*, a contraction of *la langue* (the speech, the tongue).

Lalangue is the evidence showing that we should see "the sign's subordination with respect to the signifier" (Lacan 1998, 101) to understand the nature of a language. This subordination means that words have materiality, manifested primarily in their sounds, which come before meaning, before what the words mean in a dictionary. *Lalangue* is the series of homophonies, vacillations, and word-plays proper to a tongue. It is the series of problems that arise from the sound-alike of words, beyond their specific meaning; equivocations that are proper to the specific languages, persisting in a language's history (Lacan 2001, 490).

For Dolar, *lalangue* is the privileged place where we can find the voice as what brings the body and the Other together: "To put it roughly, and in a simplified way, words, insofar as they serve as 'raw material' for unconscious processes, are treated as sonorous objects. What counts in them is their particular sonority, resonance, echoes, consonances, reverberations, contaminations" (Dolar 2006, 139).

This collection of contaminations creates a new meaning out of what seems nonsense. The voice is the vehicle of this collection, a sudden intrusion in the signifying chain in the Symbolic order: "The element of the voice, in the form of contingent and senseless co-sonance, unexpectedly runs amok and produces nonsense, which in the second step turns out to be endowed with an unexpected sense emerging from it" (Dolar 2006, 141). *Lalangue* is not composed of the physical aspects of the voice but of enjoyment beyond meaning that emerges only in meaning itself, a sort of negative dimension of meaning found within the meaning.

If *lalangue* is the sort of enjoyment we get from the contamination words get by their use, by putting them together, and "in this contamination a new formation is born—a slip, which may sound like nonsense but produces the emergence of another sense" (Dolar 2006, 140), now we can adequately understand the scene that gives the title to the movie. When Lisa says she

likes the word “anomaly” and feels like one, Michael creates an example of *lalangue*: “Anomalisa” is the expression of enjoyment in the homophony proper to the voice, precisely what *Lisa* is for Michael in the movie—an *anomaly*, a contingency, an unexpected presence that shatters his conception of the world.

The Commanding Voice of the Other

Night shifts into the day. When the sun has risen, the room’s phone rings. It is Lawrence Gill, the manager of the hotel. He asks Michel to come to his office to discuss “a matter of some delicacy.” Michael goes to the basement and through a room full of secretaries.

He meets the manager in his office, a big basement with a hole in the middle. After some small talk, asking about his impressions of the fish tank, Michael loses his patience and asks what the problem is. Lawrence admits he has read his book, and productivity went up 90% (just the same figure Lisa used for the productivity at her workplace). Still a little intimidated, Lawrence tells Michael he knows that Lisa spent the night in his room, confesses his love for him, and asks him to have an affair with him *but not with Lisa*. Michael, angry and astonished, leaves, and when going through the room with the secretaries, they all tell him the same thing: “You can fuck me if you want, Mr. Stone. Just not Lisa!”.

He goes through the stairs. In the hallway, he loses his jaw, just like in the mirror scene, seconds before listening to Lisa for the first time. A robotic-like skull underneath his face is revealed (just like the Japanese doll). The mouth moves at its own will as if *it* is trying to speak. He puts it back.

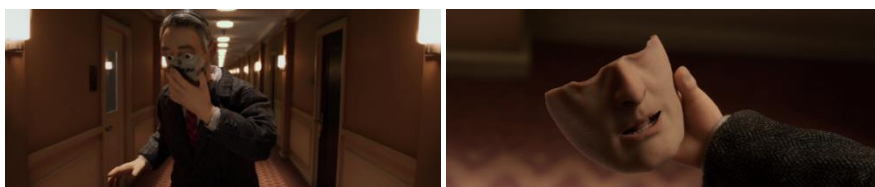


Fig. 9-10. *Anomalisa* (Kaufman and Johnson 2015, 01:07:19; 01:07:24)

He finds Lisa in his room and tries to convince her to escape with him. “They don’t want us to be together, I think they’ll kill you if they need to [...] You are the only other person in the world!”. People start knocking at the door, calling Michael by his name. He wakes up, and it was all a nightmare.

While having breakfast, Michael tells Lisa he will leave his wife, that he is unhappy with his marriage and wants to be with her. They discuss this, and we get another close-up of Lisa's mouth while chewing.

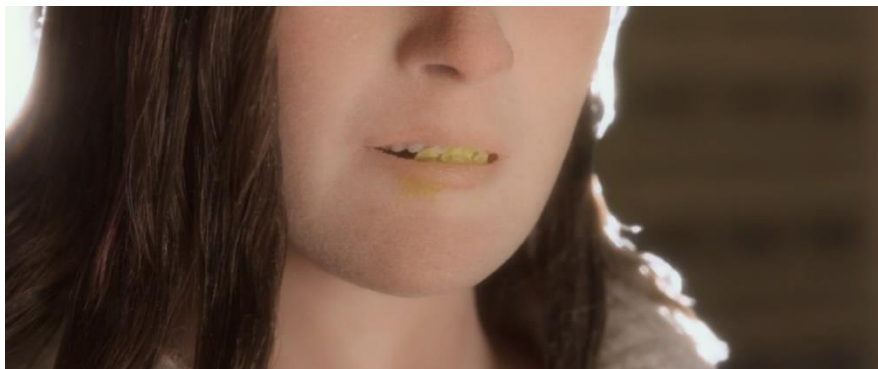


Fig. 11. *Anomalisa* (Kaufman and Johnson 2015, 01:11:26)

Michael asks her not to click the fork against her teeth. He also says she is “a little controlling” in explaining the separation to his son. Then, he complains that she is speaking with food in her mouth. Lisa apologizes for her table manners and suggests that they go to the zoo. At this moment, a generic voice is heard over her unique voice, both voices simultaneously. Michael tries to dismiss the matter, pointing to *an ache in his body* (“My stomach hurts. It feels empty. It’s clenched”), but he cannot stop hearing both voices until in Lisa’s last dialogue in this scene, we only hear the generic one.

How come Michael was so sure he was in love with Lisa and was even planning to leave his wife, yet a few minutes later, he is so disappointed as he hears the generic voice coming through Lisa’s mouth? Why is Lisa sounding generic now? Is it because Lisa had the generic voice all along? Or perhaps something happened in the dream?

I have discussed the psychoanalytic account for *lalangue*, the privileged dimension that the voice enjoys. However, there is another place where psychoanalysis also recognizes a particular investment we have with a voice, what we call in our daily life “the voice of conscience”:

[the voice of conscience] in which psychoanalysis was soon to recognize the voice of the superego—not just an internalization of the Law, but something endowed with a surplus that puts the subject into a position of ineradicable guilt: the more one obeys, the more one is guilty. To put it into the somewhat simplified form of a slogan: the surplus of the superego over the Law is precisely the surplus of the voice; the superego has a voice, the Law is stuck with the letter (Dolar 1996a, 14).

Moreover, it is in the form of a dream, the fulfillment of a wish, where Michael stumbles upon the superego's voice, telling him not to have sex with Lisa. It is not in a pseudo-conservative way ("be faithful to your wife") but in consideration of what Lisa is to him: a crack in the Other. Her voice is the embodiment of the Lacanian *objet a*, the object cause of desire, and encountering with Lisa is encountering *the* object of enjoyment, encountering a hole in the Symbolic order, in the Other. It should be no surprise that the encounter with *objet a* is within a romantic encounter, for Lacan theorized its existence in the psychoanalytic love situation par excellence, transference, and characterized *objet a* as "the object that cannot be swallowed [...] which remains stuck in the gullet of the signifier" (Lacan 1981, 270).

Perhaps Michael fits the Žižekian definition of a psychotic. In a simplified understanding, a psychotic is someone who cannot access the "actual" state of things because some key signifier (the paternal metaphor, the Name-of-the-Father) is missing, so the psychotic is excluded from the Symbolic order. Žižek continues:

However, the obverse of this exclusion, the inclusion, should also not be forgotten. Lacan pointed out that the consistency of our "experience of reality" depends on the exclusion of what he calls the *objet petit a* from it: in order for us to have normal "access to reality," something must be excluded, "primordially repressed." In psychosis, this exclusion is undone: the object [the gaze or the voice] is *included* in reality, the outcome of which, of course, is the disintegration of our "sense of reality," the loss of reality (Žižek 1996, 91).

Lisa's unique voice is an object that does not fit the established Symbolic order, and for Michael, this is a psychotic experience, for he cannot account for her voice in terms of stupidity, nonsense, or something for which his mantras for customer service can account. Lisa's voice is not lacking, but an unexplainable and dense presence and Michael's dream was a way to enable him to *not* deal with it, to return to a state where he could understand and deal with the Other. In a way, Lisa was too much otherness for Michael's (stupid yet functional) Symbolic order, manifested through her voice. The generic voice Michael hears in everyone is even more radical than Chion's *acousmêtre*, for it is undoubtedly a being that exists (we hear its voice), but one that has *no body*: it is in *every body*; and Lisa is, as Lacan might have put it, that object which cannot be swallowed, stuck in the gullet of that *acousmêtre*, a subject that creates an impasse in its smooth functioning.

Following the command of the superego, Michael conceals subjectivity in his everyday experience through the generic voice, and it is the command of the superego that again imposes the generic voice over Lisa's (in the breakfast scene) in order to keep the smooth functioning of the Other.

Now, we can characterize what the voice in *Anomalisa* is in terms of the previous discussion on film theory. I stated above that, contrary to its normal use, *Anomalisa* is a movie where *the voice-off is visible within the frame*, for there is no one who has their own voice, but they all have *a generic voice* that stands for *a generic Other*. Now that we understand Michael's attempt to impose the generic voice over the people around him, we have an example of the singular experience suture mentioned at the beginning of this paper: a suture where the limits between the diegetic reality and the character's subjectivity collapse, and what makes *Anomalisa* so unique is that this happens with the sound. We have heard the film from Michael's ears, and it is a voice-off whose location is within the main character's psyche and taints the diegetic reality.

The Voice of the Individual

At his talk, Michael looks pretty nervous, unable to concentrate. The quiet audience (Emily and Lisa in the middle) and bright lights disturb him. He tries to deliver his speech but cannot. He dedicated his career to building a name as an expert in customer service, this area of the capitalism of goods and services where "each customer is treated as an individual," as he says, and the problem with that is that there is no individuality at all. Michael says:

Always remember, the customer is an individual. Just like you. Each person you speak to has had a day. Some of their days have been good, some bad, but they've all had one. Each person you speak to has had a childhood. Each has a body. Each body has aches. What is it to be human? What is it to ache? What is it to be alive?

It is *in the body* where he feels the unbearable Other, just as it was in his body where he located the pain of Lisa's voice transformation. Again, the voice bridges the gap between the body and the Other, which is both *inside* and *outside* of them. The voice is at the same time *excessive* and *missing from* the body.

Before he cracks in front of the audience, Michael mentions his anti-depressants. Another close-up of a mouth: "Is it the Zoloft,¹² Dr. Horowitz? Is it the Zoloft?". The subtle laugh from the beginning is heard again. Who is laughing? We should venture: it is the superego. The excessiveness of the laugh is the correlate of the superego injunctions, an excessiveness that pills cannot control.



Fig. 12. *Anomalisa* (Kaufman and Johnson 2015, 01:17:00)

Back at home, Michael is welcomed with a surprise party. He is furious and asks Donna, his wife, who she is. She responds: "I don't know who I am. I mean, who are you? Who is anyone? Who could answer that question?" Michael is left alone in the living room, listening to the Japanese doll singing. This song is from the fourth voice in the film: one that comes from a doll whose mechanic interior is exposed.



Fig. 13. *Anomalisa* (Kaufman and Johnson 2015, 01:22:05)

¹² A famous antidepressant.

As the camera zooms out, leaving Michael alone in his house full of guests, listening to the doll, we start hearing the generic voice of Lisa as a bridge between Michael's loneliness and Lisa's trip back home. Lisa is writing a letter in a car, with Emily driving. Gradually, the generic voice fades, and her unique voice comes to the front. Unlike the letter that opened the film, in this one, she says a kind goodbye to Michael, wishing to meet him again under better circumstances. She signs as *Anomalisa*.



Fig. 14-15. *Anomalisa* (Kaufman and Johnson 2015, 01:22:45; 01:22:54)

She looks at Emily on her left. Emily looks back, and her face is not the generic face we see throughout the film. Again, this exchange confirms that the movie is told from the subjectivity of Michael. The film ends.

From the Voice of the Other to the Voice of the other

Perhaps I should confess that I felt something uncanny the first time I saw the movie. I could not precisely point it out. I did not know what was in the film that made me skeptical and uneasy. It was not until I read about the cast after watching it that I realized one actor (Tom Noonan) was voicing almost every character.

I think this should not be kept at bay because, in the end, both watching and analyzing films are singular aesthetic and intellectual experiences. I believe that this sensation of not feeling comfortable yet still watching, or being attracted to something without knowing what that is, is how we precisely experience love: love works because there are no reasons to love, no objective rules that can regulate *why* you love someone. To love is to fall into a contingent trap that retroactively connects and provides reasons for the trap itself, "the junction of a contingent exterior with the most intimate interior" (Dolar 1996b, 129).

As the theoretical discussion showed, the voice is the leftover of our process of symbolic adaptation. It is something found outside of our body and reveals, at the same time, something so intimate to us. There is a dimension, in Lacanian theory, of the collapse between the interior and exterior: *exti-*

macy.¹³ Extimacy does not simply render our most hidden core visible. Our most hidden core is to be found outside of ourselves. Furthermore, the suture of singular experience in cinema could render visible this precise dimension: it is in the diegetic reality where we find echoes of the hidden subjectivity; at the same time, it is in the most interior subjectivity where we can find the most external reality.

It is easy to see the relation between the Lacanian extimacy and the Freudian uncanny. We stumble upon the uncanny when we encounter something simultaneously familiar and strange, i.e., a collapse of the boundaries between things we know and things we do not know. Even though the uncanny has historically been studied, especially in the realm of fantasy and horror, we can also see love as an uncanny experience: we feel at home with the loved one and, at the same time, we are on the verge of the abyss of the unknown. Moreover, the trick psychoanalysis reminds us of is that when we fall into (the abyss of) love, we should learn to discern the moments when we are listening to the commanding voice of the Other from the moments when we encounter the nonsensical voice of the other. It is a choice between the Other and the other; it is an ethical decision that shapes our everyday life beyond an aesthetic decision for cinematic purposes.

Bibliography

1. BBC Studios (2014, September 8), "Dummy Hypnotises Ventriloquist", *Live at the Apollo, BBC Comedy Greats*, [online] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vbd0FcNff00> [accessed February 18, 2022].
2. Bonitzer Pascal (1986), "The Silence of the Voice (*A propos of Mai 68* by Gudie La-waetz)", [in:] P. Rosen (ed.), *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, Columbia University Press: New York, pp. 319-334.
3. Bouilly Fabien (2008), "Marionnettes fantasmiques: répétition d'un spectacle de marionnettes dans *Liberté, la nuit* de Philippe Garrel (1983)", [in:] L. Schifano (ed.), *La vie filmique des marionnettes*, Presses Universitaires de Paris: Nanterre, pp. 277-292.
4. Chion Michel (1999), *The Voice in Cinema*, Columbia University Press: New York.
5. Doane Mary Ann (1986), "The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space", [in:] P. Rosen (ed.), *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, Columbia University Press: New York, pp. 335-348.
6. Dolar Mladen (1996a), "The Object Voice", [in:] R. Salecl and S. Žižek (eds.), *SIC 1. Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, Duke University Press: Durham, pp. 7-31.

¹³ It was Jacques-Alain Miller (2010) who elevated this Lacanian neologism to the category of a concept.

7. Dolar Mladen (1996b), "At First Sight", [in:] R. Salecl and S. Žižek (eds.), *SIC 1. Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, Duke University Press: Durham, pp. 129-153.
8. Dolar Mladen (2006), *A Voice and Nothing More*, The MIT Press: Cambridge.
9. Heath Stephen (1977), "Notes on Suture", *Screen*, 18 (44), pp. 48-76.
10. Johnson Duke, and Kaufman Charlie (Directors) (2015), *Anomalisa* [film], Paramount Animation, HanWay Films, Harmonious Claptrap, Snoot Entertainment, Starburns Industries: United Kingdom and United States.
11. Lacan Jacques (1981), *Book XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, W.W. Norton & Company: New York.
12. Lacan Jacques (1998), *Book XX, Encore, 1972-1973*, W. W. Norton & Company: New York.
13. Lacan Jacques (2001), *Autres écrits*, Éditions Du Seuil: Paris.
14. McGowan Todd (2015), *Psychoanalytic Film Theory and The Rules of the Game*, Bloomsbury: New York.
15. McGowan Todd (2021), "The Object of Silent Cinema", *Crisis & Critique*, 7 (2), pp. 228-243.
16. McQuinn Julie (2014), "Strange Recognitions and Endless Loops: Music, Media, and Memory in Terry Gilliam's *12 Monkeys*", [in:] D. Neumeyer (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Film Music Studies*, Oxford University Press: New York, pp. 445-467.
17. Miller Jacques-Alain (2010), *Extimidad*, Paidós: Buenos Aires.
18. Žižek Slavoj (1996), "'I Hear You with My Eyes'; or, The Invisible Master", [in:] R. Salecl and S. Žižek (eds.), *SIC 1: Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, Duke University Press: Durham, pp. 90-126.
19. Žižek Slavoj (2001), *The Fright of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieslowski between Theory and Post-Theory*, BFI: London.

Rafał Solewski*

The Polyphonicity of Artistic Practice and Interpretation as a Tale about It: The Art of Piotr Jargusz in the Context of the Thought of Władysław Stróżewski and Roman Ingarden

Abstract

The text discusses the painting-performative art of Piotr Jargusz and the polysensory and immersive way of its reception and interpretation planned by the artist to be formed as a tale. The art and the tale are presented as a two-voice whole with a standard polyphonic set of aesthetically valuable qualities (according to Roman Ingarden's terminology). Such a whole goes beyond the division into areas of perception determined by the senses and domains of arts, ultimately revealing the essential sense of reality. It is discovered by the mythos of art (represented by the artist's actions) and the mythos of art science (represented by the tale-interpretation). The concept of *mythos* is introduced by the philosophy of Władysław Stróżewski, Ingarden's student and associate. The paper offers a proposal to classify several planes of polyphonicity based on the described situation.

Keywords

Sense, Art, Polyphony, Piotr Jargusz, Tale

***Logos* and Sense as Given to Be Discovered**

One of the fundamental assumptions of Władysław Stróżewski's¹ philosophy is the conviction that "the world is governed by a hidden sense given to the

* Pedagogical University in Cracow, Poland
Email: rafal.solewski@gmail.com

¹ Professor Władysław Stróżewski (born 1933) is considered the greatest living Polish philosopher. In 1957 he started working at the Department of the History of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Student of professors Stefan Swieżawski, Mieczysław

human to discover" (Stróżewski 2013, 134). From the response to this "task," call, and challenge, a myth is born, i.e., a manner of grasping the mystery of sense or *Logos* by the human being's cognitive faculties (according to the philosopher, *Logos*, translated as Word, should also be translated as sense). Stróżewski's idealistic attitude allows one to assume that the metaphysical ideas of good and beauty, which define the goals and obligations of the human being living in reality, are appropriate for *Logos*.

The sense-revealing (*Logos*-revealing) response from which the myth is born is "translated" into discourse or symbols. Therefore, the myth, its form, is a product of translation.

Alongside the myth of a religious nature, the cognising of which facilitates direct participation in the primordial beginning and thus a direct experience of the *Logos* or sense, a host of various *mythoi* arise. These *mythoi* are different ways of "understanding the hidden sense" (Stróżewski 2013, 136). Stróżewski discusses the *mythoi* of philosophy, science, and poetry separately.

The *Mythos* of Art and the Work of Art

Although the philosopher does not say so explicitly, it is also possible to distinguish the *mythos* of art or the visual arts, i.e., to perceive art as "a way of understanding a hidden sense" or a way of discovering the sense that governs the world.

In the *mythos* of art, the response to the call to discover the sense would be translated into artworks, most often into images, or—in contemporary terms—into artistic practices, often processual, understood here as works, usually designed for polysensory reception.

As works of art, according to the thought of Ingarden adopted by Stróżewski, they are intentional creations whose reception and concretisation are determined by their stratified nature (Ingarden 1936, 165-166). In a work of literature (whose physical ontological material has the form of printed books or recording carriers), Ingarden distinguished between a stratum of verbal resonances, a stratum of the meaning units (words and sentences),

sław Albert Krąpiec, Roman Ingarden and Izydora Dąmbska. Editor-in-chief of the Philosophical Quarterly and chairman of the Polish Philosophical Society. He lectured at the Jagiellonian University, the Academy of Music and the Ignatianum Academy in Krakow. Above all, he continues the tradition of Ingarden's phenomenology. The most important issues developed by Stróżewski include the issue of negation and non-existence, the issue of creativity, the axiological structure of humanity, hermeneutics of divinity, beauty and basic ontological categories.

a stratum of schematisations (or schematized visual aspects, simply and colloquially speaking, these are the “appearances” of objects and characters) and, finally, a stratum of represented reality and states of affairs (represented entities) (Ingarden 1936, 165-166, 184). On the other hand, the primary component of a painting (regarding the painting as a material entity) are colour patches, in which the stratum of schematisations is constituted, and indirectly also the stratum of represented objects (Ingarden 1966a, 33). The following strata are fundamental: the literary theme, i.e., the life situation presented in the painting, and the stratum of the historical theme, which refers to the reality outside the painting (Ingarden 1966a, 9-13).

Aesthetically valuable qualities and qualities of aesthetic values can be found in every stratum of artworks. “Aesthetically valuable qualities” are the experienced and assessed formal qualities, such as color, weight, but also harmony, contrast, symmetry, deformation ... These qualities constitute “qualities of aesthetic values” such as beauty, sublime, which may be a “supra-aesthetic” or “metaphysical” value (as the idea of beauty). Such a “metaphysical value” may be a quality of the Absolute. The qualities interact with each other, enabling the subject of aesthetic experience to create the so-called qualitative juxtapositions. Ingarden identified “the polyphonic harmony of aesthetically valuable qualities” with the “idea of the work” and its aesthetic authenticity derived from construction in which nothing can be added or subtracted, that is, from the content of the congruence of qualitative moments (Ingarden 1936, 165, 179, 183; 1966b, 405). Authenticity can serve truth as an idea—a supra-aesthetic—metaphysical value (Stróżewski, 1983, 76–78; 2002, 198–202).

The *Mythos* of Art Studies and Interpretation

The discourse of critics, historians, and theorists who deal with art by describing, analysing, and interpreting it, seems to construct a separate *mythos* of art studies (“knowledge of art”). This *mythos*, however, is conditioned by the pre-existing *mythos* of art.

Aestheticians, who can separate the strata of artworks that comprise the *mythos* of art and capture the polyphony of aesthetically valuable qualities and qualities of aesthetic values, seem to fall in the category of the co-creators of the *mythos* of art studies. In the *mythos* of art studies, the response to the call to discover the sense would translate into a description, analysis, interpretation, and critique of the work of art, assisting the work in revealing the sense or revealing this sense mainly on its own, as a statement

of one's own aesthetics, for which the artwork merely serves as inspiration. Such an utterance is close to interpretation, i.e., to the search for the sense revealed by a work of art through understanding, this fundamental human "way of behaving in the world" (Chmielowski 2000, 95); it, however, can expand its framework, remaining in "polyphonic correspondence" with the intentions of the artist and with their work.

Recognizing the *Logos* as essential sense to be discovered makes an interpretation that uses a word (lower case *logos*) an appropriate way of discovering meaning. Such an interpretation-utterance can also become a polyphonic tale to reveal sense. The tale will be analyzed further, not the story, although the described artistic practices are not fictional. However, the interpretation develops these artistic practices creatively, making them close to the realm of fiction. The discovery of meaning described further is also appropriate for the tale because it does not follow the "plot" to solve the mystery, as it is popular in a story. It works by the described further: polyphonic multiplicity of the qualities of actions, images, and words, digressiveness, interdisciplinarity, atmosphere and mood, and finally, the relational involvement of two different people.

I want to point precisely to a situation in which the mode of perception designed by the artist, activating polysensory sensitivity and understanding—the characteristics of intermediality of contemporary art, expands the polyphonic stratification of the work. The interpretation arising as a result of such perception peculiarly serves to find the essential sense. It takes on the character and form of a statement-narrative. Enclosed in the form of a tale, with its aesthetic qualities and values that may lead to metaphysics, the understanding is expanded in fact. Interpretation becomes cognition, also metaphysical. Ultimately, it will turn out that the artist's driving force is a pursuit determined by good and love. It is not about erotic instinct but about striving for good and beauty (metaphysical values), although not always understood in a simple and obvious way.

I want to describe the emergence of such an interpretation bearing the characteristics of a tale using the example of Piotr Jargusz's art and a narrative about it which happened to be my share.

The Art of Piotr Jargusz

Piotr Jargusz is first and foremost a painter.² He paints pictures with acrylic paint on ordinary, grey-brown wrapping paper, not treated in any way, usually one metre by one metre, sometimes bigger. Sometimes he uses layers of posters and placards taken down from billboards and advertising poles as support, forming them into “screens” or oblong shapes of pipes or trumpets. The bare and crude nature of the support influences the physical ontological material of the picture (painting) and allows for production in excess, ease of public exposition, and reuse.

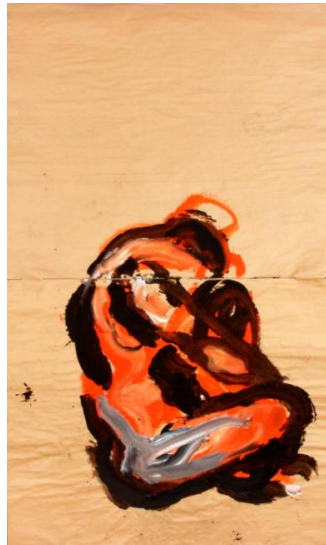


Fig. 1. Piotr Jargusz, *Street Paintings* from the cycle *Man and Woman* (Krakow, 2011–2012)

Courtesy of the artist (photographed by Piotr Jargusz).

² Piotr Jargusz is a painter and professor, was born in 1960 in Krakow, where he still lives. He studied at the Faculty of Painting and Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. The artist implements the ideas of painting in social space. His works are rendered on simple gray, wrapping papers glued on poster pillars.

He realizes social animation and ecological projects, and defines himself as an artist of Polish identity. Professor Jargusz leads the Institute of Painting and Artistic Education at the Pedagogical University in Krakow. He is the author of about 80 individual exhibitions and projects. In his works “intensely” and surprisingly present in public space in Krakow, Poland and Central European countries, in the urban and “natural” environment, existential, historical, social and erotic themes meet with references to metaphysics.

The stratum of colour patches results partly from the character of the support because the left empty background of the grey-brown paper matter is such a patch indeed. Its characteristic and aesthetically valuable qualities are economy and limitation. The fruit they bear is austerity as a quality of aesthetic value.

Yet, applied in patches and splashes with vigorous strokes, streaks, and patches of red, navy blue, white, black, and orange appear against the background of raw sheets of paper (see, for example, Fig. 1). When the paint is applied thickly, it can occupy the full support of the canvas. More often, however, most of the background remains empty. The streaks are applied thinly, in a jittering line, as if out of control and understated but often “forced” into an orderly contour. Contrast, deliberate “understatement,” disharmony, imbalance, and excess are aesthetically valuable qualities that serve such qualities of values as expressivity, vehemence, and primitiveness. The latter two, as aesthetic values, seem to contrast with the austerity of the background. However, when the background’s austerity is understood as exposed leanness, it belongs to primitiveness. The background, too, as a contrasting counterbalance to the dynamic patches of paint applied with a vigorous “gesture,” actually enhances the element of expressive intensity. Even the ultimate control of the whole is an expression of power, capability, efficiency, expansiveness, and vehemence.



Fig. 2. Piotr Jargusz, *Street Paintings*
from the cycle *Man and Woman: Venus* (Krakow, 2013).
Courtesy of the artist (photographed by Piotr Jargusz).

Identification of the schematisations and the objects they represent is rendered more difficult by colour contrasts and frequent simplifications, deformations, exaggerations (another aesthetically valuable quality). Schematisations, therefore, suggest rather than resemble the colours and shapes of objects.

Yet, the images identified using the titles acquire meanings, usually through symbolism and poeticism that characterise the literary themes of the cycles. These may be *Święta Polskie* (*Polish Holidays*), the motif of *Siedzący* (*The Sitting Person*), but often also erotic motifs, female shapes, and ordinary stones.



Fig. 3. Piotr Jargusz, *The Peasants* (10th Artistic Meeting organized by the Folk High School for Craftsmanship in Wola Sękowa, 2015)
Courtesy of the artist (photographed by Grzegorz Danielewicz).

These works appear on advertising pillars and billboards as *Obrazy Uliczne* (*Street Paintings*; see Fig. 2) (taken down together with layers of other advertising materials, they are reused). The screens, sheets, and raw painted canvas are also planted or mounted in the natural space outside the city, e.g., in the greenery of Białowieża or amidst sub-Carpathian fields (for example, see Fig. 3). The artist also posts small fragments in public spaces, as he did, for example, while visiting Russia and Germany. In such places, symbolic motifs in the paintings acquire meaning through the context (for example, the stones under the Reichstag in Berlin), thus forming a historical theme. Travelling is an element of artistic practice that extends throughout

his conscious artistic life. Within it, the artist often returns to the term *Viatoris*, which was the title of one of his projects (see Fig. 4), but is also constantly intended to mean that he is on the road, a pilgrim.

When exposed, aesthetically valuable qualities polyphonically correspond with those of the paintings. In addition, however, they are enriched with paradoxical subversiveness (Dziamski 2001) as raw and expressive “interjections” into the discourse of mass messages present in the public space induce tranquillity in their recipients and redirect their thinking. Thus, the quality of subversiveness can be considered a tool of the aesthetic value of poeticity.



Fig. 4. Piotr Jargusz, *Viatoris in Teremiski, Street Paintings* (2011)
Courtesy of the artist (photographed by Olga Jargusz).

In the “diary-raptularius” kept by the artist, we find the first answer when questioning which actions reveal “supra-aesthetic” metaphysical values (in which “classically” understood beauty is difficult to grasp). It is irregular, but its parts bear literary characteristics. The flow of words and sentences often uttered abruptly and in excess is nevertheless fluent and lively. This aesthetically valuable quality affords expression to the aesthetic values of excess and dynamic urgency, constrained by the power of ordering, to present the seen and multi-sensorially experienced, learned world, persons, situations, and emotional qualitative states. Ultimately, the state of emotions is shown, whereas the indicated aesthetically valuable qualities and aesthetic values reveal the metaphysical worth of love, lustful and much-anticipated.

One feels a polyphonic congruence of qualities corresponding to a particular manner of expression when holistically considering the works (including the diary entries), the (sometimes shown) process of their creation, and how they are exhibited. The cause of such a feeling could be the energy of love. The artist's actions are usually aimed at binding art recipients, local community members, collaborating artists, creators, and interpreters together. Unification, despite its diversity, shows both the "One" and the "Good." This is also why the painter's and performer's energy can be identified as love, the pursuit of good. The truth about love as a metaphysical value, and not only an erotic instinct, is present (however, the power of the instinct revealed in gendered relationships is also present in Piotr Jargusz's art). Finally, the overall structure of a given project (including the design of life) also seems to exhibit the features of authenticity—the value of truth. Thus, the described works, actions, and notation of Piotr Jargusz form his response to the call of the sense, finding it in truth and love. This response is the purpose of the *mythos* of art as expressed by the Cracovian artist.

Invitation and Encounter

However, the part of the word explicitly spoken or written down in Piotr Jargusz's art does not end with the diary entry. This continuation is because the artist constructs situations in which viewing his artworks and activities (including those recorded on film and in photographs) is combined with visiting his home or atelier and listening to a tale about his achievements and intentions. Circumstances of such an encounter are staged; they become known through seeing, listening, touch, smell, and taste (possible dishes connected with the visits)—even the timbre of the voice matters. The whole situation creates the feeling of immersion in the activities being explored or penetrating them. Such immersion (Ostrowicki 2006, 204; Agrawal *et al.* 2019, 2-3) is a value constructed by qualities of the antiquity of Cracovian interiors, the memorabilia brought, the dimmed light, the roaring of the fire burning in the stove, the low and "purring" voice, the closed space suddenly opened by the window overlooking the park. The qualities experienced during the encounter participate in the polyphonic harmony of the whole processual work realised in various media within the framework of the project the meeting relates to (e.g., the *Viatoris* project). In the case of several visits, the author paid the artist; the visits yielded a tale that, together with the circumstances of its creation, will now be described.

The encounter and the tale had the purpose of partaking in and continuing this narrative, which the artist invited us to do. The information acquired and the reception of the situation “through one’s whole self,” polysensorily and immersively, or in synaesthetic reading (Ball 2009, 849), had the analytical description and interpretation of Piotr Jargusz’s artistic practices fulfil their hermeneutic tasks in a particular way. The designed situation and the participation to which one was invited caused the situations described by the artist, together with their qualities, to be empathically received and accepted as one’s own and combined with one’s feelings, images, memories, and thoughts. It was as if an intermedial merging transpired, not only of the artist’s already different horizons (Higgins 2000, 117; 1966) but also of the matter which, in the case of two different people, became “incubated” in memory and subconsciousness for possible participation in the creative process.³

It was possible to experience a community of afflation that Władysław Stróżewski detected mainly in the field of poetry (Stróżewski 2013, 144-145). The encounter to which the artist invited, designing an appropriate atmosphere, could facilitate a joint surrender to the direction of the “magnetic needle” (Miłosz 1998, 30, after: Stróżewski 2013, 145) of poetic sensitivity proper for the realisation of the contemporary version of “poets’ criticism” (Porębski 1983, 156-157).

Consequently, an interpretative text came into being in line with the artist’s intention. Its subject is related to several projects carried out using the painting and performative-expository artistic practices described above or an artistic “life project.” Yet, through its aesthetically valuable qualities present already in the linguistic stratum (verbal resonances and meanings of words and sentences), the text itself became a tale. In their form and enriched content, these qualities seemed to the author to correspond best with the artistic practices described.

Interpretation—a Tale

In words about Piotr Jargusz, i.e., the interpretation of his actions, the narrator’s presence describing the characters and actions was clear; the narrator himself, as a literary figure weaving the tale, provides a parallel for the powerful subject the artist can be considered to be. Already at the beginning of the book about the artist, the narrator gives expression to his own experiences:

³ This concept means that experiences are processed unconsciously by the human mind, and that they ultimately “reach the mind in an act of an epiphany” (Nęcka 1995, 19).

The first meeting with Piotr Jargusz is a handshake. Strong but not crushingly unpleasant. Yet still more than just manly. Maybe macho and dominant? The handshake of a conqueror?

Or maybe more of a knight? A nobleman? A soldier?

Undeniably strong, but at the same time thought provoking. Or perhaps one that foreshadows what is about to happen?

For Piotr himself is able to break firmly and vehemently into every space of the world that can provide him with experience material. Enter it in an importunate, aggressive, pressing and invasive manner. Frequently and passionately. It is his own style and way of being. Quickly, confidently and often against the rules (Solewski 2016, 167).

In the narrator's tale, rhetorical questions appeared to reinforce the intensity. At the same time, escalating enumeration of words describing qualities or signifying presence, constructed gradations, and hyperbolisations abounding in the entire narrative. By retaining elements of vowel assonance or onomatopoeia, such figures describe, for example, rustling grey papers, rough on one side but smooth on the other:

Smooth green and glassy lines on a gray-black background of vibrating paint create *The oven in my kitchen*—its contours suggest the shape and the smooth and lucent texture of the lines echo the surface of the tiling covering the oven. But besides them it is mostly black, here and there with a bit whitened, sometimes matt, sometimes smoother and slicker. Indeed, you will be able to recognise the small door or some dishes on the plate. But the essence of the oven is much better caught by the paint, the duct of the brush, the way the colors were painted. A nervous, vibrant, trembling, gushing, jumping, hot and dangerous way. Although it is a picture of a specific thing—an oven—one of the most beloved fetishes, on which experience and memory are based on and through its own work gives something necessary for life—like heat for example, it is also a painting of adjectives and the quality of things. And mostly verbs Actions. (Solewski 2016, 176-177).

But also an intimately hushed voice, humming purringly:

It is for the best when it is read out loud by the author. Maybe a little bit too fast but life happens so fast, so much at once and so much has been recorded in the diary... The timbre of his voice, the modulation, some murmurs here and there a bit more intense, the rhythm that sets the atmosphere, as if it were a sort of preparation for a trans... the text flows... its fragments have been underlined because the artist reads only, what he wants to be heard" (Solewski 2016, 185).

Multiple adjectives, often used for comparison, could suggest the vehemence of gesture and excess of production:

The sheets hung by *Viatoris* were glowing with the intensity of colors as the screens in juicy green of Teremiski once did. But this time on a straw-yellow stubble field they looked like they were to announce the begin (...) and call for a campfire—burning twigs, but also some tribal banners or eventually protective screens and entanglements of protective encampment...” (Solewski 2016, 265-266).

Inversions in the syntax, twists in the content of the chapters, colloquial metonymies, but also paradoxical metaphors, also corresponding to the subversive poetics, show the energy, excess, and coercion to reflection:

Motherhood, Pietà, a grandmother with her grandchild—maybe Saint Anna? It is a classic theme in an expressive, wild manner of thick strokes like the women by Willem de Kooning. But this is not de Kooning, it is a painting by Piotr Jargusz hanging in Andy Warhol’s Museum. In Medzilaborce, in the Ruthenian, Central European and Eastern Slovakia, where the American critic of “splashers” and the “brightest” comes from, a documentalist of Anglo-Saxon pop and commercialised culture—the quintessence of the West. As if many worlds crashed into each other. Often contradictory ones. And none of them managed to dominate Piotr Jargusz, because he wants to dominate them all. Maybe paradoxically by proving how much the West owes to the East, and the progress of civilisation, determined by a greed for profit precedes or even outruns, the chaotic, explosive and expressive pulsating of energy and emotions, ruled only by force (Solewski 2016, 191-192).

The described aesthetically valuable qualities enriched the epic narrativity (corresponding to the processuality of the projects, particularly the treatment of life as an artwork), imbuing it with the quality of poetic values towards which the already described encounter steered.

When elements of poeticity appeared in the interpretation, their presence could confirm the turning of the aforementioned “magnetic needle” of the work and of the tale towards the metaphysical “pole of the sacrum,” which is characteristic of poetry (Miłosz 1989, 87).

To maintain the requirements proper to the *mythos* of art studies in its contemporary form, the interpretation should have mentioned the stylistics typical of the neo-expressionism of the Neue Wilde or Leon Golub, with his drawings-paintings and inscriptions executed in *Bad Drawing* style on raw canvas. Moreover, it should note the extension of the field of art, or the critical interruption of the spectacle of mass culture, performativity, and a powerful subject, or the mentioned intermediality and immersiveness (Solewski 2016, 179, 190).

However, it is precisely thanks to these last two qualities, including poeticity, and above all else, thanks to the invitation to “participate in the work,” that the interpretive tale of the artistic practice creating this work trans-

cended the boundaries of the *mythos* of art and art sciences and synergistically participated in the qualitative harmony of each of the projects it described and, simultaneously, in the totality of the artist's life becoming his work.

Planes of Polyphonicity

In the above text, polyphony is understood primarily as the aesthetic "polyphonic harmony" that Roman Ingarden wrote about. However, "starting" from the philosopher's thoughts and combining them with the musical and popular understanding of polyphony allows us to capture a different aesthetically valuable quality (or an aesthetic category)—polyphonicity. Therefore, some of the possible ways of experiencing it are indicated.

In the situations described, polyphonicity can be perceived in several ways. Firstly, it occurs in the work as a congruence of aesthetic moments. This work must be treated as a process combining painting, performative action, and spectacular and critical exposition. It would be a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Furthermore, in the case of Piotr Jargusz's art, the work as a whole, especially if one treats the total of conscious, artistic life as artwork, within an even further extending stratification should include his diary, i.e., the material written down in words and sentences, suggestive of the strata of schematisations and the represented world.

The polysensory and immersive reception of activities understood as artworks also means that the harmonious congruence of which Ingarden wrote encompasses the experience of qualities perceived by different senses. In this context, polyphonicity means the synaesthetic transcendence of the boundaries set by the division into senses and the stimuli characteristic of them (which is often the basis for the delimitation of fields of art). This is the second plane of polyphonicity.

The interpretation of the work, taking on the characteristics of a tale in the manner described, allows for literal and colloquial use of the term polyphonicity. Thus, two voices resound around and within Piotr Jargusz's artistic practices: that of the artist and that of the interpreter who explains, evaluates, explicates, and participates in the wholes: specific projects and artistic life treated as an artwork. This dichotomy of the artist and the interpreter is the third plane of polyphonicity.

In this context, polyphonicity appears for the fourth time, understood as a harmonious congruence of aesthetic moments both in Piotr Jargusz's artistic practices and in the literarily valuable tale of the interpreter invited to

participate in the work. This congruence is because, ultimately, such a polyphonic whole in the literal sense is a whole with its own aesthetic polyphony, harmoniously integrating the aesthetic moments of the vast number of strata of the extended work.

It is a work of precisely this kind, extended because it is interpretatively explicated by co-participation in the narrative that constitutes an intentional whole concretised by the viewer. At the same time, it ascends to the universal level on which love (sought and found in the totality of practice but named in the diary and the interpreting tale), i.e., the supra-aesthetic and metaphysical value that is the cause of artistic action, is revealed. The truth of the overall harmony of the realisation and interpretation of projects and life as artwork corresponds with it on the metaphysical level.

The border between the *mythos* of art and the *mythos* of art studies is transcended in the situation described. This transcendence seems to correspond to the understanding of intermediality and expand the notion of interpretation. Only when expanded by a tale does a work of visual, performative, or polysensory art acquire polyphonic and veridical fullness, simultaneously being testament to the Logos, that is the Word, due to the fact that the tale uses words. An attempt at grasping the harmonious relationship between artistic practices and the tale about them was possible thanks to the use of tools characteristic of Roman Ingarden's philosophy. The use of the notion of *mythos* and the way Stróżewski understood it has shown that, although upsetting at times, transcending borders has its value if it serves the purpose of revealing the sense that responds to its call.

*translated by Maciej Czuchra,
quotes from the book translated by Inez Olkusa*

Bibliography

1. Agrawal Sarvesh *et al.* (2019), "Defining Immersion: Literature Review and Implications for Research on Immersive Audiovisual Experiences", convention paper at the Audio Engineering Society: New York, hal-02512570, [online] <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-02512570> [accessed: 12 August 2021].
2. Bal Mieke (2009), "Wizualny esencjalizm i przedmiot kultury wizualnej", trans. Mariusz Bryl, [in:] Mariusz Bryl *et al.* (ed.), *Perspektywy współczesnej historii sztuki. Antologia przekładów "Artium Quaestiones"*, UAM: Poznań, pp. 839-873.
3. Chmielowski Franciszek (2000), "Hermeneutyczny wymiar podstawowych pytań estetyki", [in:] Krystyna Wilkoszewska (ed.), *Estetyki filozoficzne XX wieku*, Universitas: Kraków, pp. 91-113.

4. Dziamski Grzegorz (2001), "Wartością sztuki krytycznej jest to, że wywołuje dyskusje", *Gazeta Malarzy i Poetów*, 2-3, [online] http://witryna.czasopism.pl/gazeta/drukuj_artikul.php?id_artykulu=56 [accessed: 17 August 2019].
5. Higgins Dick (1966), "Synesthesia and Intersenses: Intermedia", *Something Else Newsletter*, 1 (1), n.p.
6. Higgins Dick (2000), "Intermedia", trans. Marek Zieliński and Teresa Zielińska, [in:] idem, *Nowoczesność od czasu postmodernizmu*, trans. Krzysztof Brzeziński et al., ed. Piotr Rypson, Słowo/obraz terytoria: Gdańsk, pp. 115-133.
7. Ingarden Roman (1936), "Formy poznawania dzieła literackiego", *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 33 (1/4), pp. 163-192.
8. Ingarden Roman (1966a), "O budowie obrazu", [in:] idem, *Studia z estetyki*, vol. II, PWN: Warszawa, pp. 7-111.
9. Ingarden Roman (1966b), "O różnych rozumieniach 'prawdziwości' w dziele sztuki", [in:] idem, *Studia z estetyki*, vol. I, PWN: Warszawa, pp. 395-412.
10. Miłosz Czesław (1989), *Zniewolony umysł*, KAW: Kraków.
11. Miłosz Czesław (1998), *Przedmowa do Księgi Mądrości*, trans. Czesław Miłosz, WL: Kraków.
12. Nęcka Edward (1995), *Proces twórczy i jego ograniczenia*, Impuls: Kraków.
13. Ostrowicki Michał (2006), *Wirtualne realis. Estetyka w epoce elektroniki*, Universitas: Kraków.
14. Porębski Mieczysław (1983), "Jeszcze raz o krytyce", [in:] idem, *Pożegnanie z krytyką*, WL: Kraków-Wrocław, pp. 154-160.
15. Solewski Rafał (2016), *Viatoris. Który pokonuje drogę. Ponowoczesny romantyzm Piotra Jargusza / Viatoris, who hits the road hard. Postmodern romanticism of Piotr Jargusz*, trans. Inez Olkuska, Pasaże: Kraków.
16. Stróżewski Władysław (1983), *Dialektyka twórczości*, PWM: Kraków, 1983
17. Stróżewski Władysław (2002), "Wartości estetyczne i nadestetyczne", [in:] idem, *Wokół piękna. Szkice z estetyki*, Universitas: Kraków, pp. 180-205.
18. Stróżewski Władysław (2013), "Logos i mythos", [in:] idem, *Logos, wartość, miłość*, Znak: Kraków, pp. 129-149.

Andrzej Krawiec*

***The Art of Fugue* by Johann Sebastian Bach as an artistic expression of the juncture of beyng in Martin Heidegger's philosophy**

Abstract

Listening and polyphony lead us directly to reflection on the musical form of the fugue. Starting with M. Heidegger's considerations about the juncture of beyng, we will phenomenologically ask about the essence of the fugue, and the musical work put under analysis will be *The Art of Fugue* by J.S. Bach. The article aims to show the convergence between Heidegger's philosophy and the essence of the musical form of fugue as an artistic mode of the essential occurrence of beyng as an event.

Keywords

Art, Bach, Fugue, Heidegger, Phenomenology

Introduction

Polyphony is not merely "sym-phonie," a hierarchically structured concord, but assumes the multiplicity of voices of equivalent significance because of the essential autonomy of all individual voices. What belongs to the essence of polyphony is that each voice is autonomous and, at the same time, equivalent to all other voices. A representative polyphonic form in music is the fugue, and the artistic goal of this kind of form is to conjoin all the voices, which remain separate beings independent from each other. The most outstanding musical work with a polyphonic structure is *The Art of Fugue* BWV 1080—the artistic testament of Johann Sebastian Bach. The sheer artistry of

* Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Department of Philosophy
Email: krawiecandrzej@gmail.com

this masterpiece and the composer's excellence in using the contrapuntal technique may already arouse admiration. However, apart from the exquisite musical beauty, the essence of the fugue itself as the coherent multiplicity of independent voices revealed through the work appears to be a lot more significant. Consequently, the analysis of *The Art of Fugue* by J. S. Bach highlights what is essential for this particular work and every fugue.

The art of music makes us especially sensitive to the phenomenon of listening. In particular, while listening to instrumental music, we are faced with the rather demanding task of understanding the musical sense of specific works and their performances (see Clarke 2002). Besides, listening to *The Art of Fugue* requires the knowledge of musical rhetorical figures typical of the Baroque, although relating them to J. S. Bach's works should be nuanced and delicate (see Demeyere 2013, 17-51). We should also mention that *The Art of Fugue* scores do not specify the instruments which should be used for its musical realization. Such open scores make a wide variety of performances possible, which—being all equally allowed by the composer—do not compete with each other in respect of the combination of sonoristic qualities. It should be added that every individual performance of *The Art of Fugue* may also differ regarding the realization of articulation, dynamic, and agogic elements, which might result from the idiomatic character of instruments and specific possibilities of sound emission and control depending on particular instruments. It should also be noted that the lack of an instrumentation specification also allows vocal performance, and the best example here is the arrangement of the last and unfinished *Contrapunctus* in *The Art of Fugue* by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. For our analysis and reflections, we have chosen a CD recording of *The Art of Fugue*, published in 2002 by a world-famous British ensemble 'Fretwork' for Harmonia Mundi (catalog number HMU 907296). The homogeneous sound of *violas da gamba*, together with every voice being treated individually, make this interpretation explicitly disclose the essence of the form of the fugue as a conjoined polyphony, where counterpoint—here understood as the method of composing—lets each voice be itself (*Seiendes*) as they appear in coherence with the whole compositional structure of the work, i.e., its Being (*Sein*).

The analysis of the essence of the fugue will be made from the perspective of Martin Heidegger's philosophy and his thinking about art, mainly from the perspective of his work *The Origin of the Work of Art* and *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, where we find his reflections on the juncture of beyng (*Fuge des Seyns*) and the conjuncture of the truth of beyng

(*Fuge der Wahrheit des Seyns*).¹ Further, this perspective will be extended by the thought of Jean-Luc Marion together with, crucial for his phenomenology, the category of givenness and the so-called “last principle.” We will also turn our attention to Michel Henry’s phenomenology of art and the revealing of the invisible dimension of life.

These initial philosophical reflections will then be transferred to the area of music and the fugue form. Following Georges Didi-Huberman’s path in the field of painting (see Didi-Huberman 2005, 11-52), in *The Art of Fugue*, we will analyze what is audible and the essence of audibility itself and the way it appears in a musical work.² The analysis of the dimension of audibility will lead us to the essence of the fugue as the event (*Ereignis*) and the essential occurrence of beyng (*Seyn*).

Philosophical Listening to the Juncture of Beyng (*Fuge des Seyns*)

Martin Heidegger noticed in *Being and Time* that the existentially primary potentiality of hearkening (*Hörenkönnen*) is more primordial than listening (*Horchen*), which psychology initially defines as hearing (*Hören*). That means hearkening becomes possible only when the existentially primary potentiality of hearing is given because the primary potentiality precedes listening and hearing (see Heidegger 2001, 207-208).³ Heidegger interprets this hermeneutically and—in the Heideggerian sense—existentially. Similarly, Paul Ricoeur interpreted this primary potentiality of hearkening as opening (disclosing or uncovering) towards the world and others (see Ricoeur 2016, 19) since hearkening as an opening allows and constitutes the phenomenon of understanding and discourse. It also opens the potentiality of the Being of

¹ The archaic form of *das Seyn* (beyng) used by Heidegger is connected with his attempts to overcome metaphysics as well as subjectivity. Additionally, this indicates the pure dimension of the event (*Ereignis*) without reference to beings or entities (*Seiendes*) and their ways or modes of Being (*Sein*) (see Heidegger 2002, 239-240, 344). In order to stay compatible with authoritative English translations of Heidegger’s works—*Being and Time* translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson as well as *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* translated by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu—I consistently use the capitalised term Being for *das Sein* and the non-capitalised term beyng for *das Seyn* throughout the article.

² A reader of works by Didi-Huberman will easily see, that his distinction between “visible” and “visibility” directly corresponds to “audible” and “audibility” in my analysis.

³ Perhaps the original German terms given in brackets show the gradation of phenomenon of listening and hearing better.

Dasein itself.⁴ Ricoeur's interpretation seems to be confirmed in the *Appendix* to *The Origin of the Work of Art*, where Heidegger says that the entire essay revolves around the question of the essence of Being rather than the reflection on what art may be (see Heidegger 2002, 55). Let us recall that *The Origin of the Work of Art* was written between 1935 and 1936, and his *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* between 1936 and 1938. The immediate nearness of these ponderings prompts an irresistible proposition: art may be a crucial vestibule for the reflection on being (*Sein*) and its essence.

The question about artwork's origin is not one of its nature (*Wesen*), what and how it is, but instead asks about its nature's source (*Ursprung*) (see Heidegger 2002, 1).⁵ Particular aesthetic and philosophical perspectives should not externally intrude on reflections about artwork's origin. They should result from returning to the Being of the work and thinking about its essence (*Wesen*) (Heidegger 2002, 12). In this perspective, the work's essence emerges from the bottom up and from itself, not through abstract and theoretical speculations. We also should not forget that the essence of art is the setting-itself-to-work of the truth of beings (Heidegger 2002, 16), which appears as an essential occurrence of beauty: "*Beauty is one way in which truth as unconcealment comes to presence*" (Heidegger 2002, 32). What is essential here is beauty's and truth's co-belonging or belonging together (*Zusammengehörigkeit*). Beauty in Heideggerian thinking is not something we like, but a way of Being the artwork. In the *Afterwords* to the same essay, we read: "Truth is the unconcealment of beings as being. Truth is the truth of beings. Beauty does not occur alongside this truth. It appears when truth sets itself into the work. This appearing (as this being of truth in the work and as the work) is beauty. Thus beauty belongs to the advent of truth" (Heidegger 2002, 52). Creating the work of art, as well as its perceiving and preserving, means allowing it to arise and happen due to its essential occurrence, which comes from unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*, ἀλήθεια) (Heidegger 2002, 35-36; see also Harries 2009, 131-133, 136-137). Perceiving

⁴ Although it could be interpreted as discursive understanding, Paul Ricoeur distinguishes between understanding and discourse.

⁵ Although analyzing a particular musical work of art (*The Art of Fugue* by Bach) seems to be a contradiction, some artistic examples have to be taken if we aim at showing that art is capable of referring to the source or origin of Being—similarly when Heidegger analyzes *A Pair of Shoes* by Vincent van Gogh. It is worth mentioning, that there is a difference between the philosophical perspective that arises from a particular work of art and—on the other hand—the philosophical perspective that seeks to impute theoretical prejudices.

artwork is an individual response to the call of its voice of Being, and even if interpretative differences appear in its aesthetic concretizations, the work as such is the saying of beyng (*das Sagen des Seyns*), whose nature is an essential occurrence (*Wesung*) as the appropriating event (*Ereignis*).

Let us examine *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, or more precisely, fragment no. 219, titled “The Conjuncture of the Question of Truth,” where the question about the conjuncture (*Fuge*) of the truth of beyng (*Seyn*) appears. Heidegger says: “Beyng essentially occurs as event. The essence of truth is the clearing-concealment of the event” (Heidegger 2012, 272). First, it should be noted that already in *Being and Time*, i.e., in 1927, we find the interpretation of the phenomenon of truth as unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*, ἀλήθεια), which, according to Heidegger, is a more primordial phenomenon of truth than the traditional concept of truth as agreement or *adaequatio intellectus et rei* (see Heidegger 2001, 256-269). In the primordial phenomenon of truth, a true statement uncovers beings in themselves. In other words—a true statement should be understood as one uncovering the same way of Being of beings (see Heidegger 2001, 260-261).⁶ Heidegger says that Being-true understood as Being-uncovering, is a manner of Being for *Dasein*—and also a way of Being-in-the-world (see Heidegger 2001, 261)—which is open to its most primordial and authentic (*eigentlich*) disclosure understood as the truth of existence (see Heidegger 2001, 263-265). In *Contributions to Philosophy*, however, there is a reorientation of the anthropological, subjectivistic, and individualistic reflection of ecstatically open *Da-sein* (see Heidegger 2012, 233) towards alethic considered *physis* (φύσις). The critical change is noticeable in writing *Da-sein* instead of *Dasein*, which Heidegger explains as follows: “*Da-sein* is the properly self-grounding ground of the ἀλήθεια of φύσις, the essential occurrence of that openness which first opens up the self-concealing (the essence of beyng) and which is thus the truth of beyng itself” (Heidegger 2012, 234). This means, that *Da-sein* should not be considered only with the human being, although the human being is still essentially related to *Da-sein*, which belongs to “clearing of beyng” and is thought as “groundless” ground of the possibility of the human Being as *Dasein* (see Heidegger 2012, 234; see Harries 2009, 109-112). “*Da*” in *Da-sein* means clearing of beyng itself rather than metaphysically thought “here” or “yonder,” and for that reason, Heidegger says, “*Da-sein*, as the essential occurrence of the clearing of self-concealing, belongs to this self-concealing itself, which essentially occurs as the appropriating event” (Heidegger 2012, 235).

⁶ It should be noted that Heidegger considering the truth refers to Presocratic thinkers, mainly to Parmenides and Heraclitus.

Let us return to the note no. 219 in *Contributions to Philosophy*, again, where we can also read: “Truth is what is originarily true. What is true is what *is* most eminently. More eminently than any being is beyng itself. What *is* most eminently ‘is’ no longer but, instead, essentially occurs as the essential occurrence itself (event)” (Heidegger 2012, 272). The most originary and true *is* the event (*Ereignis*), in which the Being of all beings essentially occurs, and the event itself is a clearing-concealment of the essential occurrence of beyng (*Seyn*). This clearing-concealment essentially occurs as the grounding *Da-sein* and lets being be a being (see Heidegger 2012, 272). It is worth noting that what is important here is not a specific being but rather the origin or source (*Ursprung*) of this being within *Da-sein*, in which the appropriating event of beyng essentially occurs. We already found in *The Origin of Work of Art* that it is not the particular being (i.e., artwork) that is crucial here, but the way how the truth (ἀλήθεια) settles-in-the-work. Being (*Sein*) of the work of art in the way of uncovering occurs essentially the clearing of the appropriating of beyng. From that perspective, the role of the creator and perceiver of the work of art is not reduced to a mere sensory perception of being, together with its specific way of Being and all its acoustic or optic qualities, but being able to hear what remains acoustically inaudible and optically invisible, i.e., hearing the hidden voice of beyng, which essentially occurs as the event.⁷

It is noteworthy that such a philosophical perspective corresponds to “the last principle” of phenomenology, formulated by Jean-Luc Marion, which proclaims: “so much reduction, so much givenness” (see Marion 2002, 14-18). In this last and *notabene* reversible principle (i.e., so much givenness, so much reduction), the apparatus of appearance and perception is consumed—as in a trial by fire—to let the appearance itself arise. Furthermore, the only goal and legitimacy of phenomenology is the attempt to transgress every perceived impression through the intentionality of the thing itself (see Marion 2002, 7-8).⁸ Experiencing the intentionality of the thing itself is called

⁷ Staying in Heideggerian context obliges us to operate with the original terms in order to avoid the risk of losing the original meaning. However, we could try to paraphrase this long sentence in such a way: firstly, sound is not music and this difference shows the transition from the ontic to the ontological way of Being of the work of art; secondly, if we go further this is music not sounds, that discloses the essential occurrence of beyng (*Seyn*) as the event.

⁸ We also observe the same transgression from impression to intentionality of the thing itself in phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger (e.g. in Heidegger’s analysis of *A Pair of Shoes* by van Gogh; see Heidegger 2002, 13-16).

counter-experience, and Marion provides listening to music as a privileged example of such an experience. The musical phenomenon in its coming exceeds mediatizing sounds and directly affects pure givenness in its musical offering without or beyond the sounds it produces (see Marion 2002, 216).

Abstracting from the substance of the world and its sensory perception is even more evident in the phenomenology of art of Michel Henry, who was primarily inspired by the artworks and theoretical writings of Wassily Kandinsky. According to Henry, the essence of art is the revelation of invisible life, which is phenomenalized in the immanence of the individual and, at the same time, absolute Self (*Soi*) thanks to the transcendental affectivity (see Henry 2012, 35-37). In *Seeing the Invisible*, Henry writes: "The initial theme of art and its true interest is life. At its outset, all art is sacred, and its sole concern is the supernatural. This means that it is concerned with life—not with the visible but the invisible" (Henry 2009, 126-127). Life never appears externally, in the world, i.e., in the physical material of the work of art—and for that reason, it can be experienced (*pathos*) only immanently in absolute subjectivity. Although art reveals life, its true essence remains a mystery, and experiencing this mystery, thanks to the affective pathos of a phenomenological matter of artistic works, makes life present in art. For this reason, art is a mode of life, and the work of art itself, which comes from and belongs to life, is a way of its auto-affection (see Henry 2009, 121-122). It is also worth mentioning that although Henry's phenomenology was shaped as a polemic with Heidegger's philosophy, Henry argues that Life—as he understands it—can be viewed as beyng (see Henry 2012, 128).

What is the essence of the fugue, then, understood in a phenomenological way? A fugue as a juncture conjoins. At the same time, it is a kind of clearing "between the inbetweenness" (*Zwischen*) (see Heidegger 2012, 381). In the conjunction of the fugue, the voice of Being is disclosed. Beyng (*Seyn*) essentially occurs in *Da-sein* as the event, and in this appropriating of *Da-sein* the Being of *Dasein* and particular beings essentially occur. Furthermore, the fugue as the clearing (*Lichtung*) leads to the open realm (*Offene*) of alethic appropriating. The essence of fugue is a concealed essential occurrence of the essence of beyng as the event, and opening up *qua* clearing, in which not only art (see Heidegger 2012, 201) but also *Da-sein* find shelter. Thanks to *Da-sein*, *Dasein* essentially occurs historically, not only historiologically (see Heidegger 2012, 387-389). It should be emphasized now that *The Art of Fugue* as a masterpiece of music notably discloses this conjunctured appropriating event (*Er-eignis*) of beyng (*Seyn*). *The Art of Fugue* discloses not only

itself as a compositional structure but also discloses its essential occurrence, and in this respect, it is convergent with the category of the event in the philosophy of Heidegger.

***The Art of Fugue* by J. S. Bach
as the Essential Occurrence of the Polyphony of Beyng**

First, let us look at the very phenomenon of audibility, not the specific audible properties of the performed work, but what appears through the work itself and thanks to it. Processuality, the variable intensity of aesthetic qualities and dynamism, is understood as the direction of developing internal tensions of these aesthetic qualities revealed through the work's audible material. The essential aesthetic content of the work is created through the development of this inner dynamism, and it can be accessed not so much thanks to the sense perception of the sound of the work but essentially—as Roman Ingarden claims—thanks to the aesthetic concretization of a specific performance of a musical work (see Ingarden 1986, 13). Each aesthetic concretization is individual, and this remains true not only in the case of listening to different works or performances of the same work but also in the case of listening to the exact (identical) performance of the same work. The work's audibility dimension is concealed in the aesthetic qualities' inner dynamism. They are revealed by an individual aesthetic concretization founded on the acoustic material's perception, the work's sound foundation. However, audibility and acoustic material should be considered separately. What is crucial while considering the dimension of the audibility of the work is not the sound material itself, but the aesthetic content revealed because of this sound material and its aesthetic concretization, i.e., a specific and individual aesthetic object. Consequently, what interests us most at the moment is the inner sound or the meaning (*Klang*) of the work (see Kandinsky 2008, 63-96) rather than its outer sound apparel. Referring, with the term "*Klang*," to the philosophical and artistic works of Wassily Kandinsky, we could mention that Kandinsky saw the essential coherence between the art of music and painting. His friendship with Arnold Schönberg—in the context of relations between painting and music—is not irrelevant here (see Schönberg and Kandinsky 1980, 19-100).⁹

⁹ It is important to introduce the philosophy of art by Kandinsky here because of his universal claims about the "*Klang*" or the inner sound of the work of art, which applies not only to paintings or music, but to all disciplines of art.

The appearance of certain aesthetic qualities should be accepted as a fact, and the only difficulty lies in demonstrating the essential relation between them and the specific work in which they were realized. Since an aesthetic concretization is individual by nature, it is not uncommon for the same performance of a musical work to evoke different aesthetic experiences in individual perceivers. However, this state of affairs should not be perceived as a flaw in the work, performance, or aesthetic concretization. Instead, this potentiality (*potentia*) of a specific artistic work understood as a possibility of being realized in various concretizations (*actualitas*) of an aesthetic object should be acknowledged. In this aesthetic pluralism, however, individual concretizations must not lose their relationship with a specific work and result from it. For example, the theme in *Contrapunctus I* in *The Art of Fugue* by J. S. Bach can be interpreted—based on the analysis of the direction of the melody, rhythmic movement, and harmonic tensions—as a bold question about Being itself asked in wonder, but also as a humble acceptance of fate. These interpretative differences result mainly from performing the scores and thus how it is performed in terms of articulation, dynamics, agogics, and sonority. However, for the very musicality of the theme, i.e., its aesthetic essence, the choice of an emotional or metaphorical linguistic description is, in fact, of secondary importance because this theme can also be understood directly, i.e., without the mediation of a linguistic description. It is possible to analyze the works of J. S. Bach in a numerological way. Alternatively, one may also find the echoes of Leibniz's metaphysics in *The Art of Fugue* (see Göncz 2013, 20-57; see also Milka 2017, 240-246). However, these methods of analyzing the work are not its ekphrasis (ἐκφρασις). They do not make the work itself come to life. Thanks to a hermeneutical description, they appear before the perceiver (see Boehm 1995). The ekphrastic description aims to bring to light the musical sense of the work, which eludes a definitive interpretation of some emotional character, usually defined as a specific mood. It should be emphasized that psychological moods (seriousness, sadness, mystery, etc.) that might be attributed to the content of a musical work are grounded only in what is initially revealed in the pure musical matter, in the form of aesthetic qualities. This revelation means that assigning specific moods to a musical work, for example, based on the symbolism of numbers, the hidden meaning of musical rhetorical figures of arbitrary emotions, or other psychological contents during its perception, violates the work's autonomy, i.e., its musical essence. Admittedly, the ekphrastic description sometimes signifies the internal musical content by referring to commonly experienced emotions, but—significantly—it does not reduce the musicality of the work and the emerging aesthetic qualities to emotionality.

We pose the question then: what does *The Art of Fugue* itself reveal? In each *Contrapunctus* of this work, we can hear the sounds that create the internal dynamism of individual and independent voices, and those in a polyphonic configuration enter into the discourse with each other. The solemnity of the theme of *The Art of Fugue* corresponds to what Wassily Kandynski said about a solemn work, namely, that each serious work sounds like the calm (*ruhig*) and lofty (*erhaben*) spoken words “Here I am,” and the sound of these words is eternal (*Der Klang dieser Worte ist ewig*) (Kandinsky 2009, 145). The message “Here I am” is a mystery that subsequent voices approach to reveal its essence. The intuition of this mystery reaches the dimension of absolute transcendence, which we face wordless and astounded. When the theme’s original inner sound (*Klang*) resounds in *Contrapunctus I*, the same voice still essentially occurs as its counterpoint to the initially given theme that has just been taken up by the upper voice (soprano). The counterpoint of the first voice (alto), thanks to its autonomy, exists for itself, but it is also co-present with the second voice (soprano), with which it intertwines and on which it comments. Let us add that the voice that takes up and reveals the same theme does not so much repeat it but presents it anew. Although initially the same, the theme is always placed in a different context from the other voices. Therefore, we get a full view of the theme’s inner sound (*Klang*) only after the entire fugue resounds. Thus, the fugue not only conjoins the individual voices, essentially occurring to the double bar line, but also brings to light what exists *in potentia* in the initially given theme and only awaits its full concretization (*actualitas*).

The polyphonic discourse of fugue is created through audible material, but it is possible only because of the strife that intrinsically essentially occurs as a concealed inbetweenness (*Zwischen*). From this inbetweenness, the essential occurrence as the event’s appropriation is cleared, which is undertaken and sheltered by the autonomous voices, which are specific ways of Being of the work. The ways of Being of the theme, together with its contrapuntal expansions, revealed in the fugue by autonomous but co-present voices, are the ways of bringing to light the origin from which, aletheically, *The Art of Fugue* essentially occurs as the appropriating event. The fugue conjoins what is separated and gathers what is scattered. This essential intrinsic relation between simplicity and complexity, finiteness and infinity, gives reason to reflect on the unity of what is different and on the origin and essence of the way of Being of a particular being. This truly philosophical questioning essentially occurs in the depths of what is heard in the sounds of *The Art of Fugue*, and this essential occurrence reveals the essence of being

(*Seyn*) as the event, which cannot be reached by numerological and symbolic analyses, although they also sometimes attempt to indicate the *logos* of this event.

However, are we not mistaken in following this path of thinking and interpreting *The Art of Fugue*? Moreover, if so, is it not still following a path, even if it might sometimes be rough and off the beaten track? Experiencing such a path of thinking is also a kind of *Erfahrung*, i.e., experiencing as the entering (*einfahren*) into the essential occurrence (see Heidegger 2012, 227), which is not only appropriated by *beyng* as the event but is also appropriating from the theme, that is the origin of the work. This kind of surmising of *beyng* becomes the origin and the opening theme of *The Art of Fugue*, and as the event, it essentially occurs its own mystery for the perceiver as its witness. In *The Art of Fugue*, the *beyng* is concealed, but the clearing of appropriating the event allows thinking of its essence.

Let us pose the following question: Does *The Art of Fugue* theme arbitrarily reveal the essence of *beyng* (*Seyn*), or does it reveal its essence with notable clarity? After all, in music literature, there are many fugues with various themes (e.g., by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Stravinsky, Shostakovich, and many other composers). Furthermore, it is worth considering—referring to the corpus of rhetorical terms—whether the element of *inventio* is more critical than *dispositio* and, therefore, whether the specific form of the theme is more important than the structure of the whole fugue as an ordered, understandable and at the same time affective expression.¹⁰ Every form of the theme has its way of Being (*inventio*), which can be undertaken in various ways through *elocutio* and *actio* (*pronuntiatio*) in an individual performance of the work. Also, the perception of musical performance, i.e., entering into the essential occurrence of the originary experience of the fugue, is an individual taking, preserving its alethic truth. Telling this alethic truth is, in turn, dependent on the way the listener perceives it. What remains immanent in the fugue is the *dispositio* element, which makes the essence of the fugue the same in every composition (see Harrison 1990, 4-8). Then, let us ask again from the phenomenological perspective: what determines the significant

¹⁰ We should take into account two ways of understanding an affective expression of the fugue. In the foreground we hear the fugue ontically and this perceptual material transgress to intentional affective expression of the artwork. But afterwards the work of art may appear (*Erscheinen*) something more or something other, and this “other” may be further hermeneutically interpreted (or uncovered) as expression of the event of *beyng* (*Seyn*). In the first sense—ontological, not ontical—affection expression means the appearing of the aesthetic content, but in the second sense it means rather emerging this appearing that comes from the event as the essential occurrence of *beyng*.

meaning of the theme of *The Art of Fugue* interpreted as the saying of being, i.e., the appropriating event? The solemnity, calm, sublimity, and mystery mentioned before sound in *The Art of Fugue* in an extraordinarily pure way, i.e., without the admixture of commonly understood emotionality, resulting from the typical characteristic of major or minor tonality (see also Kandinsky 2009, 49-53).

The first three notes create a minor chord, but the rhythm of quarter notes maintained in a calm *quasi-Andante* tempo gives this chord the character of not so much sadness as the impassive flow of temporality. The leap of a perfect fifth upwards, and after that a humble return through the third to the root of a D minor chord is a kind of reconciliation with something simple and in a way necessary, as well as receiving the originary givenness, and only the melody of the theme scarcely descending by a semitone to the C# the next moment, causes a crack in that static original solemnity and sublimity. This quarter note, C#, contrasting with the theme, becomes the beginning of a lively, ascending movement of eighth notes, which in wonderment stop at the very harmonic core of the theme, i.e., the third of the D minor chord (an F). This rising melodic figure (from C# to F) already takes up the first part of the theme, but in the form of a question that stops on a dotted quarter note and holds the question in suspension, and this time the F takes on a different meaning. First, the F tied the range of a perfect fifth, giving solemnity to the minor chord, but now it has been caught again and taken into another hearing or examination—its initial impassive dignity unexpectedly violated. Maintaining the duration of this F in the rhythmic value of a quarter with a dot gives the impression of prolonged waiting as if for an answer that finally does not come—with the long F, we face a mystery. What follows this culminating F is already the taking up of the musical consideration of the theme—the consideration that essentially occurs as a counterpoint in the alto voice. The reappearances of the theme in particular voices make the form of fugue more consistent, but they also illuminate anew the essential occurring polyphonic discourse that emerges from the original theme and repeatedly returns to its origin. The various figures of the theme in *The Art of Fugue* in subsequent parts of the work (i.e., in its *Contrapuncti*) recall its original revelation, which is the origin that feeds the entire masterpiece. *The Art of Fugue's* theme—its first revelation at the beginning of the work—uncovers the hearkening (*Hörenkönnen*), a background for the essential occurring of a discourse between the voices are ontically heard in acoustic perception. At this moment, hearkening denotes or indicates occurring's possibility in the piece, namely the category of the event.

The inscription at the end of *Contrapunctus XIV* in the last version of *The Art of Fugue's* autograph—probably written by Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach—says: “and another fundamental plan” (*und einen andern Grund Plan*). Musicological interpretations of this note, first of all, bring to light the evolution of the structure of the work as a whole. Nevertheless, is the evolution brought to an ultimate end, or does it remain open to other ways of essential occurrence from the primordial origin? Although, while answering this question, we will not go beyond hypotheses and speculations, it is worth considering the philosophical possibility of *The Art of Fugue*. Entering the appropriating event opens the potentiality of perceiving the essential occurrence of Being, which belongs to the event understood as the essence of beyng (*Seyn*). Taking up the same musical theme repeatedly, many times, and in different ways is an artistic reflection on the essence of the same theme. From this perspective, *The Art of Fugue* is a meditation and contemplation of the essential occurrence, and polemics over the completion or non-completion of *The Art of Fugue* by J. S. Bach become of little importance since the essence of this work is the appropriating event.

Fugue is also a musical form that requires particular attention while being listened to. This focus on the essential occurrence of fugue is necessary so as not to overlook any detail of its complex polyphonic structure. Intense listening to the essential occurrence of fugue also reveals the clearing of the essence of beyng (*Seyn*), in which the occurrence always allows the possibility of “another fundamental plan” (*andern Grund Plan*). The concealed essential occurrence as pure givenness reaches its disclosure in *The Art of Fugue* thanks to the ultimate phenomenological reduction, that is, thanks to reversing intentionality and becoming the witness of the occurrence (*Geschehnis*), which is not so much disclosed in the sensuousness of the work, as revelation itself as the extrasensory essential occurrence of the essence of beyng, i.e., the appropriating event. What is also revealed through the fugue analysis is the essence of music as such. Namely, music's essence is not its sensuousness but what occurs apart from sounds (in the dimension of aesthetic qualities) or even beyond and without them (in the philosophical dimension).¹¹ *The Art of Fugue* provides an example of how a musical work may go beyond the artistry and sensuous aesthetics, reaching the philosophically understood origin (*ἀρχή*), and as such, it may be recognized as not only an artistic

¹¹ Similarly, we could claim that the sound of spoken words is not the essence of language (*Sprache*) and the vibration of acoustic waves is not the same as the meanings of the words.

work but as a philosophical work as well. Finally, it is worth asking whether we would come to the same conclusions if we analyzed another *Contrapunctus* instead of the chosen *Contrapunctus I*. Undoubtedly, the detailed ekphrastic analysis of individual parts of *The Art of Fugue* would significantly differ since the internal dynamism of musical elements of particular *Contrapuncti* varies. However, *The Art of Fugue* as a whole appeals to us as clearly preserving its unity not only of its polyphonic structure but also of its multi-part construction. Hence, it can be inferred that a detailed analysis of individual parts of the work would reveal varied internal content (*Klang*) of subsequent *Contrapuncti*, which still constitute an integrated, consistent, and mutually strengthening unity.

Conclusion, discussion, and projection

Starting from Martin Heidegger's philosophical interpretation of the essence of the juncture of *beyng* as the essential occurrence and the event, we progressed to the analysis of *The Art of Fugue* by J. S. Bach, in which we disclosed the essence of the fugue as a musical form. Ekphrasis is a specific type of linguistic description of what essentially remains unexpressed. It exposed what is audible in sense perception and the exact dimension of audibility. Having made a phenomenological reduction while listening to the musical work, which means putting aside all the interpretive presumptions and prejudice (*Vorurteil*), we intently listened to what the sounds themselves had to reveal.¹² The analysis of *The Art of Fugue* by J. S. Bach conducted this way reveals the essence of the fugue and the concealed essence of *beyng* (*Seyn*) as the event.

Let us remember that the essence of the primordial phenomenon of truth, or alethic occurrence, is not only—as Hans Urs von Balthasar (1987) claims—“symphonicity,” but also, and foremost, polyphony which essentially occurs through the many-voiced fugue. In the form of the fugue, there are two aspects intertwined together, i.e., necessity and freedom, since the given theme may be contrapuntally realized in various ways. The fugue form makes the multiplicity of autonomous voices coherent, providing unity in their dialogue, which essentially occurs as the event. While conjoining indi-

¹² Putting aside prejudices (*Vorurteile*) is a Husserlian transcendental postulate connected with a series of reductions, and such a non-personal perspective is ultimately impossible to reach, which Gadamer showed very clearly. But as a phenomenological method of researching the phenomena it is a very fruitful way of aiming at the thing itself (*die Sache selbst*).

vidual voices, mutually independent, the fugue sets them in creative discourse. Additionally, the fugue form has the character of a philosophical (or in some cases also theological) meditation, whose theme is musically considered and co-considered by each voice.

On the one hand, this musical consideration differentiates what is homogenous but, on the other hand, unifies what is varied. This unifying and differentiating essence of the fugue does not contradict the fact that individual voices enter the dispute among them, and thanks to this dispute, a particular way of Being essentially occurs and is disclosed by *Dasein* (see Harries 2009, 112-120). This Heraclitan hidden strife (πόλεμος) precedes the primordial phenomenon of hearkening (*Hörenkönnen*), which conditions speech and response, and makes a many-voiced discourse possible.

Disclosing the essence of listening and polyphony was possible thanks to transdisciplinary philosophical and aesthetic analysis within the art of music. We attentively listened to the theme of *The Art of Fugue*. However, it is also worth asking whether, for example, the theme of *Musical Offering* BWV 1079 by J. S. Bach or the theme of fugue no. 1 in C-major, no. 4 in E-minor, no. 16 in B-minor, no. 20 in C-minor or no. 22 in G-minor of the set of *24 Preludes and Fugues* opus 87 by Dmitri Shostakovich have a similar internal tone (*Klang*), to the theme of *Contrapunctus I* BWV 1080. Indeed, they are not opposing themes, although each of the mentioned examples has its unique musical substance, which essentially occurs in its way of Being. All the works mentioned above have in common the very essence of the fugue, i.e., a conjunctured essential occurrence of polyphonic discourse. However, the dynamism of all the musical elements—melodics, rhythm, harmony, articulation, dynamics, agogics, and sonority—remains individual and unique in each case.

The last and probably the most problematic question to be asked here is: Could the conclusions we have made be applied to the same extent to other musical forms, or even forms belonging to other artistic disciplines? The theories mentioned before—by Martin Heidegger, Wassily Kandinsky, Michel Henry, Jean-Luc Marion, Georges Didi-Huberman—seem to confirm the possibility of extending the philosophical theory of fugue to include other musical forms and also other artistic disciplines. However, a detailed answer to this question would require further investigations within individual disciplines based on particular examples of works created in different epochs and styles. The method and direction of further research presented in this article make a valuable path for contemporary aesthetics since philosophical analysis from such a perspective substantially broadens our understanding of art and enhances its value and significance in human life.

Bibliography

1. Balthasar Hans Urs von (1987), *Truth Is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism*, trans. G. Harrison, Ignatius Press: San Francisco.
2. Boehm Gottfried (1995), "Bildebeschreibung: Über die Grenzen von Bild und Sprache", [in:] G. Boehm and H. Pfotenhauer (eds.), *Beschreibungskunst—Kunstbeschreibung: Die Ekphrasis von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Wilhelm Fink Verlag: München, pp. 23-40.
3. Clarke Eric (2002), "Listening to performance", [in:] J. Rink (ed.), *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pp. 182-196.
4. Demeyere Ewald (2013), *Johann Sebastian Bach's 'Art of Fugue': Performance Practice based on German Eighteenth-Century Theory*, Leuven University Press: Leuven.
5. Didi-Huberman Georges (2005), *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art*, trans. J. Goodman, The Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park.
6. Göncz Zoltán (2013), *Bach's Testament: On the Philosophical and Theological Background of 'The Art of Fugue'*, trans. P. Laki and E. Mészáros, Scarecrow Press: Lanham.
7. Harries Karsten (2009), *Art Matters: A Critical Commentary on Heidegger's 'The Origin of the Work of Art'*, Springer: New York.
8. Harrison Daniel (1990), "Rhetoric and Fugue: An Analytical Application", *Music Theory Spectrum*, 12 (1), pp. 1-42.
9. Heidegger Martin (2001), *Being and Time*, trans. J. MacQuarrie and E. Robinson, Blackwell: Oxford.
10. Heidegger Martin (2002), "The Origin of the Work of Art", [in:] *Off the Beaten Track*, eds. and trans. J. Young and K. Haynes, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pp. 1-56.
11. Heidegger Martin (2012), *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and D. Vallega-Neu, Indiana University Press: Bloomington.
12. Henry Michel (2009), *Seeing the Invisible: On Kandinsky*, trans. S. Davidson, Continuum: London.
13. Henry Michel (2012), *Barbarism*, trans. S. Davidson, Continuum: London.
14. Ingarden Roman (1986), *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*, trans. A. Czerwinski, ed. J. G. Harrell, Macmillan: London.
15. Kandinsky Wassily (2008), *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, trans. M.T.H. Sadler, The Floating Press: Auckland.
16. Kandinsky Wassily (2009), *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*, Benteli Verlag: Bern.
17. Marion Jean-Luc (2002), *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. J.L. Kosky, Stanford University Press: Stanford.
18. Milka Anatoly P. (2017), *Rethinking J. S. Bach's 'The Art of Fugue'*, ed. E. Sheinberg, trans. M. Ritzarev, Routledge: London and New York.
19. Ricoeur Paul (2016), *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, ed. and trans. J.B. Tompshon, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
20. Schönberg Arnold, Kandinsky Wassily (1980), *Briefe, Bilder und Dokumente einer außergewöhnlichen Begegnung*, ed. J. Hahl-Koch, Residenz Verlag: Salzburg-Wien.

Alistair Macaulay*

The Autonomy of Expression and the Becoming Musical of Classicism, Romanticism, and Modernism

Abstract

This article reconstructs Deleuze and Guattari's history of music in relation to their notion of stratification and defends the view that music is an organization of sounds. Tracing a history of becoming music, this article demonstrates how social conditions impact the organization of sound into music and how music transforms those same social formations. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of double articulation, a regime of content and a level of expression, provides a rubric to understand how sonic material is organized into determinate musical elements, notes, tones, rhythms, and so on. This article argues that as the articulation of expression grows independent of content, there is a commensurate increase in what can become musical.

Keywords

Becoming, Music, Deleuze, Stratification, Expression

Introduction

Not only does art not wait for human beings to begin, but we may ask if art ever appears among human beings, except under artificial and belated conditions (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 373).

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari use musical terms to link, discuss and move between disparate subjects, from art to biology. In so doing, they present a musical cosmogony. Scholarship has focussed on how their analysis of music has impacted their philosophy—using musical examples to explore philosophical notions like speed, rhizome, and deterritorialization.

* Deakin University
Email: macaulaya@deakin.edu.au

These concepts are suggestive of musical creativity, capturing music-making's variation and serendipitous nature. However, these Deleuzian analyses lead to the unwarranted conclusion that all sound is musical. This article defends the common-sense view that music is a subset of noise, a series of sounds organized in a more or less musical fashion. There are determinate musical elements: notes, rhythms, timbres, and so on. While I do not disagree with these analyses, it is crucial to note Deleuze and Guattari's definition of becoming as a two-way street of transformation. With this in mind, rather than examine the impact of music on philosophy, this article considers how their system of stratification impacts historical accounts of Western music.

I contend that Deleuze and Guattari's system of stratification provides a rubric to understand the nonlinear evolution of music, social formations, and other artificial conditions involved in making music. Deleuze and Guattari discuss birdsong as music. However, this must be read alongside their system of epistrata and parastrata. My aim is not to list a series of artificial conditions that make noise musical. It is to illustrate how social formations impact music-making, and how music-making transforms these formations, and to provide a brief history of becoming music. In so doing, I make several claims. 1) Music is an organization of sound. 2) Social and cultural formations impact the organization of sound. Yet, the very making of music also transforms these norms and artificial conditions. 3) Deleuze and Guattari's notion of double articulation accounts that music is a subset of sound and consists in the organization of sound. The first articulation concerns content, a soundwave. These are hierarchized per various social norms in the second articulation, the level of expression. 4) As the articulation of expression becomes increasingly independent of content, there is a commensurate increase in what can become musical. 5) The evolution of music cannot be attributed to any single cause. Its development comprises a myriad of nonlinear relations between various social and cultural conditions. Further, the growing autonomy of expression allows a history of becoming musical to be traced. The growing autonomy of expression demonstrates the effect of polyphony in Western music and aesthetics, rethinking how its heterogeneity is productive and creative. I proceed first by explicating Deleuze and Guattari's account of stratification before exploring how things become musical by the autonomy of expression. This analysis allows Deleuze and Guattari's history of music to be expanded.

Stratification

For Deleuze and Guattari difference is ontologically primary, productive of semi-stable physical, cultural, aesthetic, and political objects that we encounter in our everyday lives. There are no identities, only assembled multiplicities, assemblages. Stratification is introduced to explain how assemblages are engendered, how their differential elements cohere, and to account for their potential to mutate and evolve as they encounter other elements. Stratification pivots on five notions, 1) the plane of consistency, 2) abstract machine, 3) process of double articulation, 4) concrete assemblage, and 5) territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization.

Stratification occurs between two interdependent poles, the plane of organization—the sum total of all structuration—and the plane of consistency—a mobile field of potential material flows from which points of order germinate (Bogue 2003, 17). Briefly, stratification describes an increased organization to the plane of structuration. By contrast, destratification is a movement to the plane of consistency. The plane of consistency is not a “primordial soup” of differences from which matter is subsequently composed (Bowden 2020, 387). Nor is it a homogeneous chaos of differences that split apart, but a genetic medium for transformation. It exists alongside assemblages, describing all potential becoming. That is to say, how an assemblage mutates and becomes-other.¹

The abstract machine consolidates and differentiates material flows so that a point of order emerges. It is a principle of distribution that results in the self-organizing territories, milieux, and strata that come about from the evolution of the cosmos (Lapoujade 2017, 206). The abstract machine operates through coding and territorialization. Coding is a repetition that organizes unformed matter into a milieu that performs a specific function under a particular impulse. Deleuze and Guattari discern two kinds of repetition, meter, and rhythm. While meter is a “measured, homogeneous repetition of the same,” rhythm is an irregular repetition that recapitulates the difference between elements allowing for creativity and transcoding (Holland 2013, 67). Rhythm requires at least two edges, from which a third body emerges. In his 1981 lectures on painting, Deleuze uses the example of a violin and piano duet. The violin responds to the piano and vice versa, forming a rhythmic relation that constitutes the music.

¹ The plane of consistency and plane of organization are not opposites. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze critiques opposition as treating difference as ontologically secondary—a measurement between two identities.

Assemblages are produced by a process of double articulation. First, content is stabilized. This regime of bodies is then further organized and hierarchized in the second articulation at the level of expression. The second articulation ties the regime of bodies with a system of signs by which the ensuing assemblage is expressed. This means, depending on the body in question, that the articulation of expression can be more or less independent of its underlying content. However, content and expression are themselves double, each with a substance and form. They elaborate on this coupling with the example of sedimentary rock.

The first articulation is the process of “sedimentation,” which deposits units of cyclic sediment according to a statistical order; *flysch*, with its succession of sandstone and schist. The second articulation is the “folding” that sets up a stable functional structure and effects the passage from sediment to sedimentary rock (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 47).

The substance of expression is a concrete assemblage. Double articulation is not a reductive causal explanation but a system by which heterogeneous milieux interact, intersect, and overlap to produce assemblages. Assemblages form on the strata, populating the plane of consistency, manifesting the operation of the abstract machine. It is important to note that concrete assemblages condition the strata they inhabit. Bowden (2020, 391) aptly explains that an “assemblage consolidates or is creative of strata insofar as it co-adapts elements of content and elements of expression and effectuates relations between different strata.” (2020, 391). Assemblages maintain a relation to the strata but become what they are via destructuring and structuring processes of deterritorialization and territorialization.

Territorialization and deterritorialization explain why the assemblage has an impulse to stability but will nevertheless evolve over time. This occurs between the form of content and form of expression. In territorialization, milieux are overcoded, linking the bodies selected in the articulation of content with a system of signs. Conversely, in deterritorialization, milieux are disarticulated from an assemblage. The original assemblage is converted, and the deterritorialized components are made available as “matters of expression” for other novel organizations, converting other assemblages as they are taken up in another territorialization. Deterritorialization relates assemblages to one another, linking them through interstratic milieux, facilitating destratification, transformation, and becoming (Bowden 2020, 391).

To see how music relates to social formations, we must first consider the double articulation of a musical tone. The substance of content is a vibration of particles. The form of content concerns the frequency of the vibration producing a soundwave. In the second articulation, noises are overcoded, hierarchized, and territorialized to become musical. At the level of expression, the interrelationships between musician, instrument, and context become significant. Noises are organized in accordance with various cultural and social norms. Notes are played in a certain way to generate a “good” tone. With this basis, I propose an account of becoming music to explain how music is grounded in artificial conditions and how these conditions evolve alongside musical assemblages. Separating content from expression means that music is a subset of sound—and that what is musical about a series of sounds is its grounding in social conditions. As will be shown, these norms not only impact the organization but the content of the sound.

The importance of strata comes to the fore. Strata derive from the plane of consistency. This has two ramifications. First, stratification does not occur in a vacuum: “each stratum serving as a substratum for another stratum.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 84). Second, “strata are extremely mobile” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 584). This mobility was witnessed in the sedimentary rock example, water trickling in a silt flow cutting across the geological to produce more rock. Through deterritorialization and territorialization, assemblages link strata. However, strata are hardly passive, imposing an organizing principle on less formed matters. In this sense, “strata are acts of capture,” striving to seize and organize all they can (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 47).

Deleuze and Guattari delineate epistrata and parastrata as categories of substrata. Parastrata are horizontal divisions in a stratum, interlocking through an exterior or annexed milieu that reciprocally presuppose each other. For instance, the prison and judicial system presuppose one another without one causing the other, yet there is an interplay between the two. Furthermore, the judicial, prison, and legal parastrata are conditioned by social and cultural parastrata. Epistrata, on the other hand, are stacked vertically, marking intermediary states of a stratum’s interior milieux. The epistratum of language, for example, presupposes entities that use it to communicate and complete various tasks, reliant on underlying biological and physical epistrata (Holland 2013, 59-60). It is important to note that in these horizontal and vertical divisions are interstratic milieux. Through interstratic milieux, the transformation effected by deterritorialization and destratification can take place.

Deleuze and Guattari delineate three mega-strata: the physico-chemical, the organic, and the alloplastic. These are not separated by the degree of organization but by the autonomy of expression from the content it presupposes. There is a corresponding increase in the stratum's capacity to disarticulate materials and expand. In the physico-chemical stratum, the substance of expression is an amplification of content. Crystallization can only occur in the immediate vicinity on the edges of a crystal and further requires sufficient saturation of the surrounding medium. The demands that content places on the articulation of expression is loosened on the organic stratum. Here, expression "takes the form of a genetic code" (Holland 2013, 63-64). Living bodies can be replicated. Although the content of a genetic code informs its expression and organization, the genetic code can mutate, propagating different cells. Expression is emancipated from content in the alloplastic stratum. This freedom is emblemized with language, autonomous of the bodies that speak it and the objects it denotes.

I propose that the social norms that govern music-making be thought of as epistrata and parastrata. This proposal provides a more nuanced view of Deleuze and Guattari's history of music. The mega-strata are readily transposed to epistrata in music. Musical tones, their relationships, and what they purport to express are contingent on organic and physico-chemical epistrata. Sound is a pressure wave created by a vibrating object, the vibrations of which set other particles in the surrounding medium in motion. Whether caused by a singer's vocal cords or an instrument, this is another assemblage on the physico-chemical epistratum. There is another assemblage in the musician's manipulation of their instrument, linking the physico-chemical epistratum with the organic. The complex relationship between them produces the sound wave, existing not only on the physico-chemical but also on the alloplastic, manifesting the performer's various characteristics.

Complexifying this picture are parastrata. At least partially constitutive of the alloplastic stratum are social, cultural, and technological factors, reciprocally conditioning each other and influencing the recognition and interpretation of music. Social and cultural norms dictate where music is heard. Opera lives in the opera house, jazz in a dimly-lit club. Similarly, technological advances have influenced instrument production and how music is heard. Consider the development of piano manufacture. Analyses that reduce the complex history of interweaving social, economic, artistic, and technological factors to a single cause are incomplete. In my view, the development of the piano demonstrates the reciprocal presupposition of parastrata and how these intersect and interlock with musical epistrata. The piano of the 19th

century could not withstand the virtuosic playing style of Franz Liszt, the first musician to champion the piano recital.² The instrument transitioned from the salon to the concert hall. Manufacturers responded to this need with technological innovations, moving from wooden frames to cast iron and constructing finer soundboards to fill larger spaces with sonorous, warm sounds. Of course, piano-makers would not take such economic risks without social and cultural attitudes assuring them of a financial return. Nonetheless, the social and cultural norms surrounding the piano would not have seen it elevated to a recital instrument without such economic risk, technological innovation, and other assemblages on the physico-chemical epistratum.

The strata facilitate the production of sound, and in the articulation of expression, social and cultural parastrata direct how these sounds are organized into a musical assemblage. However, epistrata and parastrata also impact the content of a soundwave. This is because, on the alloplastic stratum, expression is autonomous from content and informs content. It is easy to imagine a piano slightly out of tune or a fatigued horn player not playing the note A440 precisely at 440 hertz but hovering around that pitch. Due to social and cultural parastrata, the sound is no less musical. This accounts for the fact that various cultures and social contexts codify and interpret sounds differently.

The Autonomy of Expression

The last section demonstrated how such epistrata and parastrata territorialized milieux into musical assemblages. However, the account of musical epistrata and parastrata thus delineated does not prescribe what can be musical. Stratification describes an open system of evolution. Musical assemblages tie strata together so that the social formations that impact the production of music are themselves transformed. This section examines Deleuze and Guattari's proclivity to Messiaen and birdsong to illustrate how assemblages transform the strata. It then explores how polyphony is productive, exploring how the autonomy of expression produces new content. I argue that the increasing independence of expression that separates the mega-strata is analogous to Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of classicism, romanticism, and modernism.

² Famously, Liszt broke piano strings during performance. Only Erard and Pleyel pianos could stand up to his virtuosic playing (Hilmes 2016).

Deleuze and Guattari often use Messiaen and birdsong in their discussion of music. I argue that their system of epistrata and parastrata accounts for how birdsong is considered musical without being music. Birdsong lacks the relevant epistratic and parastratic relations to occupy the concert, dance, or music hall. While found wanting for the economic, technological, social, and encultured musical practices that typify Western music-making traditions, birdsong is musical because of the assemblage of pitches it produces on the alloplastic stratum.

Messiaen deterritorialized bird song and reterritorialized it to embrace the instrumentation of the concert hall. It was impossible to transcribe the bird's song or perform it on a piano accurately despite numerous field recordings. In Messiaen's *Catalogue d'oiseaux*, a series of thirteen solo piano pieces, Bogue aptly notes that "at every stage a deformation and mutation of the bird's music takes place" (Bogue 2003, 29). Singing too quickly for the piano's repetition mechanism, Messiaen slowed its song. Pitches were expanded and contracted to adhere to the equally-tempered twelve-tone scale and transposed to fit the piano's keyboard. Lastly, the bird's shrill timbre is mimicked by complex harmonies in the piano's upper treble. In sum, the bird song is radically modified to engage the epistrata and parastrata of the piano and satisfy broader social norms so that it might be heard as music in a performance.

The transformation of musical strata in its capture of non-traditional musical contents is also witnessed. Messiaen's innovation consists in the two-way transformation of birdsong and music, manipulating the birdsong to become musical and mutating traditional musical contents to become bird. The bird's song is changed to engage certain artificial conditions. However, these conditions are changed by the addition of the bird's song. On the alloplastic stratum, music exceeds these social formations so that while they impact music-making, they are nevertheless transformed. This adapts the conclusion *everything is musical to non-musical milieux can become musical*.

In discussing Messiaen and birdsong, Deleuze and Guattari's project is not to provide an understanding of what is musical, but to demonstrate the philosophical concept deterritorialization. This aim extends to their history of classicism, romanticism, and modernism and illustrates how assemblages open onto each other. They are not concerned with finding an essential trait that summarises each musical period. Their aim is to discern what each musical period is doing. I propose that when understood in relation to their system of stratification, Deleuze and Guattari offer insights into how milieux become musical.

In classicism, for Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 393), "Matter is organized by a succession of forms that are compartmentalized, centralized and hierarchized in relation to one another." Classicism establishes a point of order. Milieux is organized in a particular way to perform a specific function. For instance, harmonic resolution operates as a function of tension and release. Romanticism, by contrast, puts these functions into variation, producing novel musical content. Here, the relationship between notes and other musical milieux evolves and changes in order to develop new musical content. Romanticism discerned other harmonic devices to convey tension, like the tritone substitution or imperfect cadence. In modernism, Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 398) write that "matters of expression are superseded by a material of capture." This supersession was witnessed with Messiaen; musical strata seize the bird's biology and make it musical.

There is an increase in what can become musical through this brief analysis of classicism, romanticism, and modernism. This is by virtue of the increasing independence between the articulation of expression from the articulation of content in each period. The rules of expression, the organization of musical elements established by classicism are put into variation and loosened in romanticism. In classicism, chords perform a particular function in the context of the composition. Yet, for Debussy and romanticism more generally, it is the color of the chord that takes precedence. Finally, in modernism, musical expression is liberated from traditional musical contents so that non-musical milieux can become musical by engaging, at least minimally, the relevant epistrata and parastrata. As the rules governing expression are loosened, musical milieux can relate to epistrata and parastrata differently. As such, as expression becomes increasingly autonomous, milieux have a greater capacity to become musical. This is because territorialization and deterritorialization link the articulation of content and articulation of expression. As such, as expression is emancipated from content, there is greater capacity for deterritorialization and destratification.

The History of Becoming Musical

Echoing Deleuze and Guattari's (1987, 349) observation that "it is not really known when music *begins*," my aim in this history of becoming musical is not to fix discrete points in history but to highlight the passages and relays between epistrata and parastrata. As naturally occurring sounds were imitated and organized, they became increasingly abstracted to produce patterns, leading to repetition, tonality, and dynamics. In accordance with the

demands of various social formations, religious beliefs, available technology, geography, and climate, instruments were designed and made to replicate and organize sounds. Note the ambiguity in the term “*begins*.” It is not clear when music first developed historically. While we can speak to the oldest surviving compositions and recordings, these artifacts presuppose performance. Furthermore, as Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of destratification illuminates, also indeterminate is the level of organization required for a collection of sounds to be musical. Had Messiaen not changed the bird’s song but felicitously replicated its voice, it is not clear it would be heard as modern music but as a series of naturally occurring noises.

Given the growing independence of expression from content, it follows that this trajectory must be reversed to look at how music was first stratified. As witnessed, music is grounded in social formations. From this starting point, we can chart what becomes musical from its relations to various epistrata and parastrata. As its expression becomes increasingly autonomous, more milieux could become musical so that music could intersect with the strata in different ways, facilitating further opportunities for becoming. With this analysis, the heterogeneity that underpins polyphony is not the result of compositional innovations but a productive disruption of cultural norms and conditions that allowed music to exceed the formations in which it is grounded, a perpetual process of evolution.

I begin my analysis in Ancient Greece. Pythagoras first linked music with the cosmos, discovering that relations between pitches could be expressed as numerical ratios, forming the basis of Pythagorean tuning.³ For the Pythagoreans, simple ratios manifested a cosmic harmony. As such, musical consonance reflected a numerical consonance. Conversely, dissonant intervals, (supposedly) unpleasant to the ear, were complex numerical ratios that could not be simplified. Music maintained a relationship to ontology, placing strict constraints on what could be musical. Music could not be chaotic but consisted in the ordering of sounds in a harmonious way that manifested the order of the cosmos.

In Ancient Greece, instrumental music was an accompaniment to theatre. Music was sung and danced to and involved a combination of words, melody, and rhythm. The theatre was not designed purely for entertainment but to teach. Monophonic music accompanied a chorus to help link the audience to the drama on stage. The coupling of music with words is significant, as it makes music representational—certain musical scales and phrases becom-

³ The most harmonious was the octave, 2:1, followed by the perfect fifth, 3:2, perfect fourth, 4:3, and whole tone, 9:8, respectively (Bogue 2003, 15).

ing associated with specific themes and emotions. For instance, the Dorian mode was thought to “fittingly imitate the tones and accents of a man who is brave in battle,” while the Phrygian mode connoted peace (Ridley 2004, 47-69). Subsequently, cultural parastrata conditioned the role of music, imbuing scales with particular functions. Warriors should listen to the Dorian mode, not the Phrygian.

In this initial stratification of music, notice the relations to two parastrata: ontology and language. As a complement to sung lyrics, music was representational, designed to portray determinate things. It was organized in a particular fashion to help accomplish certain tasks. In this organization, we witness music’s relationship with ontology, embodying the order of number. The same reverence for cosmic harmony first seen in Pythagoras persists in Plato. While disparaging representation as an imitation of the Forms, Plato was struck by music’s ability to penetrate the souls of people and influence their actions. In the *Republic*, Socrates claims that musical training is the most important for two reasons.

First, because rhythm and harmony permeate the innermost element of the soul, affect it more powerfully than anything else, and bring it grace, such education makes one graceful if one is properly trained, and the opposite if one is not. Second, because anyone who has been properly trained will quickly notice if something has been omitted from a thing, or if that thing has not been well crafted (Plato 2004, 84).

Here, it is important to note not the potency of music, but the harmony music brings to an individual. This harmony echoes the Platonic virtues, wisdom, temperance, and justice. Philosophical tasks become musical activities. Socrates observes that the more harmonious a person, the more beautiful and loved they are, and the better they might perform their role in the state. Conversely, “a disharmonious person (is) not passionately loved” (Plato 2004, 85). Music manifests harmony and, in so doing, becomes a tool for learning, self-critique, control. It becomes a means to describe social cohesion and one’s psychological well-being.

Instrumental music’s autonomy increased during the medieval period, although the purpose of music, the representation of the ideal, persisted. In *De Institutione Musica*, Boethius separates *musica instrumentalis*, actual music performance, *musica humana*, the harmonious relationships between humans and their souls, and *music mundane*, the harmony of divine order (Bogue 2003, 16). Boethius’ categories present a hierarchy that delineates what can be music. This same hierarchy is witnessed in Augustine’s *De Musica*. Boethius and Augustine agree that while performers are essential to music,

judgment is the loftiest musical action one might undertake. As MacInnis (2015, 213) eloquently states, in the medieval period, musicians “are inferior to those who discern and describe the structure and components of music.” Music echoed the spiritual in the service of religion. Ontological parastrata was replaced with that of the divine. Music was not designed to be appreciated in itself but to direct the listener’s attention to the harmony of divine order.

Running through Ancient Greece and the medieval period is not musical polyphony but a layering of words and music. In Ancient Greece, instrumental music accompanies spoken and sung lyrics. In the medieval period, musical tones reinforce the words of worship. In short, music was used as an additive compound to language, which imposed strict rules on what could be musical. In both periods, music involved a significant organization of sounds and had to engage various epistrata and parastrata. However, the advent of musical polyphony was about to loosen the strictures on how music could be expressed, destabilizing its function in religion and allowing music to enter and flourish in the spheres of entertainment and art.

Musical polyphony is the performance of two or more musical lines simultaneously. Music no longer comprised horizontal melodic movement but vertical harmony. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 343) write that music,

on the one hand, draws a horizontal, melodic line, the bass line, upon which other melodic lines are superposed; points are assigned that enter into relation of counterpoint between lines. On the other hand, it draws a vertical, harmonic line or plane, which moves along the horizontals but is no longer dependent on them; it runs from high to low and defines a chord capable of linking up with the following chords.

After the advent of polyphony, music comprised both horizontal and vertical lines. Musical elements formed relationships with other musical elements rather than being used to emphasize established music and linguistic associations. In sum, music began to have a life of its own, liberated from the functions prescribed by language, religion, and ontology.

As is well known, basic polyphony emerged in medieval organum. In organum, the monophonic melody of Gregorian chant became polyphonic. A principal vocalist sang the melody while another sang the melody in parallel at a consonant interval, usually a perfect fourth or fifth. Prior to polyphony, the assemblage of a Gregorian chant coupled words of praise with melody, reiterating the parastrata of religion. With polyphonic music, the assemblage consolidated musical strata. Musical materials were tied with

other musical materials. Polyphonic assemblages allowed other musical relationships to germinate, giving rise to other interstratic milieux and allowing music to engage a variety of epistrata and parastrata.

Plainchant melodies did not use the major or minor scale to which we have become accustomed today but had a modal structure. When coupled with a parallel harmony, the modal scale tuned with Pythagorean ratios would eventually result in a tritone. Composed of three whole-tones, this is a complex and dissonant ratio.⁴ This is not to reinforce the trope of the devil's interval. While not a simple ratio, the tritone was not necessarily unpleasant to the ear. It was infrequently used because it was a challenging harmony to sing. Jacobus of Liege attests in the *Speculum Musicae* that while rare, the tritone is "subtle and beautiful" (Smith 1972).

Polyphony also exposed inconsistent distances between intervals of the same size. For example, an interval of a whole-tone can be played in numerous different ways on a piano, C-D, D-E, E-F \sharp , and so on. If that piano was tuned by Pythagorean ratios, while obviously resonating at different pitches, the ideal beat rate is the ratio 9/8. However, this is not heard across the entire keyboard. This means that melodies and harmonies could not be transposed to other keys.⁵

Eventually, this was resolved with the development of equal temperament at the beginning of the Baroque period. It is too simplistic to say that composers wanted to modulate between keys and maintain the equidistant consonances and dissonances. Before, music was written to encourage the audience to contemplate the order of the cosmos or the divine. However, this desire demonstrates a shift in the parastrata. Music was written for leisure, for the sake of music. The establishment of equal temperament did not happen swiftly, nor from any single cause. It was preceded by an influx of various temperaments, some of which were delineated for aesthetic purposes, others to resolve mathematics' inharmonicity. Complementing the transition was a technological evolution in the epistrata that enabled the production of various musical instruments. Correspondingly, this introduced parastrata of economics, informed by social and cultural norms. This opened up new lines of becoming. Music was emancipated from the church to entertain, manifesting a becoming-mathematical, technological, and social.

⁴ The whole-tone ratio is 9/8. The tritone ratio is thus calculated $(9/8)^3=729/512$.

⁵ This is because of a mathematical discrepancy. If tuning by perfect fifths, 12 fifths must be played. This spans 7 octaves. The ratio of the fifth $(3:2)^{12}$ equals 129.746338, but the ratio of an octave $(2:1)^{12}$ equals 128.

The change in epistrata and parastrata impacted the organization of sound. Liberated from the epistrata and parastrata of religion and ontology, musical expression had become independent of its content, generating other musical material. We can now look at Deleuze and Guattari's history of music more tangibly. In classicism, musical assemblages turned inwards to establish musical norms. What became musical were the relationships between elements. These relationships did not represent the divine but the composer's genius. Composers began to codify standard instrumentation, embracing an economic parastrata that saw orchestral music popularized. In representing the composer's creativity, music had shifted not only to entertain but to burgeon as an art form. The diatonic harmony that typified classicism was consolidated and differentiated in romanticism. It was consolidated insofar as romanticism took the discrete musical elements established in classicism but differentiated them in that they were put into variation, uncovering novel harmonic and rhythmic devices. There is a freedom of form. This freedom also extended to instrumentation—composers and performers pushing instruments to their limits and necessitating further technological advances.

Modernism pushes musical milieux to their limits, interrogating their relationship to other non-musical milieux. This push was witnessed with Messiaen's deterritorialization and reterritorialization of birdsong, making it become musical. Deleuze and Guattari describe modernism by discussing Cézanne's painting. In his paintings of apples, his concern is not to paint apples. The apple's abstraction emphasizes the materiality of the painting to depict the generative forces that produce apples (Bogue 2003, 44). Analogously, in his dodecaphony and free-atonal compositions, Schoenberg strips the twelve-tone chromatic scale of its traditional relations of dominance and resolution (Nesbitt 2004, 61). This consolidates the formal musical milieu, the notes of the western scale, but rather than redeploy harmonious relationships between notes, intensities of sound become musical.

Discordant harmonies and non-traditional musical sounds, like birdsong and later distortion, are seized by musical strata to become musical. The articulation of expression has become utterly independent of content, certain pitches, and frequencies. The musical elements established in classicism and romanticism serve as interstratic milieux that facilitate the deterritorialization and reterritorialization involved in becoming musical. In this deterritorialization and reterritorialization, opening onto sound, modernism questions the difference between music and noise.

This question concerns music's mode of existence. A musical composition or performance presents an assemblage of various milieux, connecting various strata. I am not claiming that specific notes, frequencies, or tuning systems are the backbone of a musical stratum. Nor have I endeavored to depict a history of Western music faithfully. Instead, I have demonstrated that music is founded in and maintains links to social formations and cultural norms: assemblages nested within assemblages, traversing, intersecting, and overlapping epistrata and parastrata. I have argued that as the articulation of expression grows autonomous of content, it transforms and generates more musical material through the commensurate increase in capacity for deterritorialization and reterritorialization. This increase means that while grounded in social formations, music also exceeds them, linking with other interstratic milieux and effecting a becoming. Understanding music in relation to the system of epistrata and parastrata explains why some music is initially rejected but later applauded for its innovation. At first, it simply lacks the right sort of relationship with social parastrata. But its evolution and innovation can be traced through deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and interstratic milieux.

This article has striven to explain how social and cultural conditions impact the evolution of music and how music has altered these norms. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of double articulation provides a system to explain how music is a subset of noise and how various factors organize sounds in the articulation of expression. Furthermore, as expression becomes increasingly autonomous of the content, there is a commensurate increase in deterritorialization. With the increased capacity for deterritorialization more non-musical milieux can be captured and made musical. This autonomy, coupled with the notions of epistrata and parastrata, has traced a history of becoming musical. The advent of musical polyphony saw an exponential expansion in what became musical. Rather than accompanying spoken or sung language, music materials were coupled with other musical materials, becoming a force that expressed what language could not represent and transforming the artificial social conditions in which music is grounded.

Bibliography

1. Bogue Ronald (2003), *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*, Routledge: New York and London.
2. Bowden Sean (2020), "Assembling Agency", *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 58 (3), pp. 383-400.
3. Deleuze Gilles, Guattari Felix (1987), *A Thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi, Bloomsbury Academic: London and New York.
4. Hilmes Oliver (2016), *Franz Liszt: Musician, Celebrity Superstar*, trans. S. Spencer, Yale University Press: New Haven.
5. Holland Eugene (2013), *Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus*, Bloomsbury Academic: London and New York.
6. Lapoujade David (2017), *Abberant Movements: The Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, trans. J.J. Jordan, Semiotext(e): California.
7. MacInnis John (2015), "Augustine's De Musica in the 21st Century Music Classroom", *Religions*, 6, pp. 211-220.
8. Nesbitt Nick (2004), "Deleuze, Adorno, and the Composition of Musical Multiplicity", [in:] I. Buchanan and M. Swiboda (eds.), *Deleuze and Music*, Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, pp. 54-75.
9. Plato (2004), *Republic*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve from the new standard Greek text, Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis and Cambridge.
10. Ridley Aaron (2004), *The Philosophy of Music: Theme and Variations*, Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh.
11. Smith Fidelus (1972), "Some Aspects of Medieval Music Theory and Praxis: The 'Ordo Minorum' and its Place in Cultural History", *Franciscan Studies*, 32, pp. 187-202.

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: Valéry's Sources," reflects on Paul Valéry's observation of this statement, where Descartes reveals a significant value characteristic of only himself and can be attributed only to him. For Valéry, 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 Valéry 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 Valéry'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 restrain 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 techne (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. Czer-niawski, 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.

Raivis Bičevskis*

Paradoxical Monotony

Abstract

If we look at the impressions and influences of Johann Georg Hamann, an Enlightenment-era thinker, in the context of Livonia and Courland from the aspect of producing text and thought, then J. Ch. Berens' project of an enlightened commercial republic in Riga appears as its first episode and as a far-reaching thought complex. Hamann's studies have a philosophical-cameralistic character. They provided a broad modern vision in fragments. The thought complex, where recourse to Latvian folk songs and their meter and tonality appears in the "Aesthetica in nuce" (1762), also rests on this ground. The passage at the end of "Aesthetica" is once instrumentalized in identity politics, solidified, and mythologized even within the framework of Latvian national culture. However, the text passage is extraordinarily complex and interwoven with several layers of context in Hamann's contemporary environment. One of the critical concepts in this passage is "monotony." This concept needs to be addressed in more detail, as it does not universalize and unify but individualizes and divides. Hamann's monotony is paradoxical: the unity of the world is linked to the diversity of the world's sounds and colors, languages, and times: *the world itself is a paradoxical monotony*. With recourse to "Socratic Memorabilia" and various passages from "Aesthetica in nuce," this paper shows that this folk poetry passage becomes more understandable only when considering the background of Hamann's main ideas. Since singing and possible poetry can be found in Hamann, a Hamannian series of thoughts "God-Nature-Language-Senses-Poet" is turned and solidified national-culturally with the help of Herderian motifs. There is no such consolidation in Hamann. Indeed, his theological-eschatological philology of listening and tonality of nature at the end of the "Aesthetica" contains a prefiguration taken up and continued on this side of Hamann's statements in modernity.

Keywords

J. G. Hamann, Tonality, Nature, Senses, Song

* University of Latvia
Email: raivis.bicevskis@lu.lv

Introduction

The philosophy of the Enlightenment still gives us a reason to look at what is at the heart of the modern age. It is also worth looking at the critique of the Enlightenment at the end of the 18th century. This critique (like the ideas of the Enlightenment) has become an *essential part* of the modern age. One of the most influential critics of the Enlightenment is Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788). During the Enlightenment, his thinking and writing are fatefully linked to certain traditions in the history of theology, philosophy, literature, and certain places and times (Nadler 1949; Bayer 1988; Jørgensen 2013; Kinzel 2019). Thus, his decidedly evocative locality and individuality in his life are also essential and unavoidable, hence his unique writing style (Kinzel 2019, 50). Of course, the most important things happened in Königsberg (Hamann was a friend of Kant and a teacher of Herder), but his stays in the Baltic States are also part of his human and literary life. Hamann's work is one of a man who, in Riga, in Kegeln near Wolmar, in Mitau and Grünhof, foresaw and predicted many things that determined a whole age. Hamann is important as a thinker who transcends the aesthetics, epistemology, political philosophy, and anthropology of his time and is thus relevant today.

The mentioned places and landscapes and the circumstances there are essential for Hamann—in contrast to the universality and unification of the Enlightenment, he emphasized particularity and locality. However, his stays also influenced the local people. Johann Christoph Berens, Hamann's enlightened friend, patron, and reprover should, of course, be mentioned here (Nadler 1949, 61–64), but also, for example, his pupil Woldemar Dietrich von Budberg in Kegeln near Wolmar (Nadler 1949, 49–50). W. D. von Budberg studied and engaged in various arts and became an artist. Some hailed him as the most outstanding painter of Livonia at that time. He can be considered an example of the flowering of Hamann's pedagogical skills, an example of his lifelong translating and writing practice, the prefiguration and archetype of which for Hamann later consisted in the condescendence (*Herunterlassung*) of God himself.

If we look at the impressions and influences of Hamann in the context of Livonia and Courland from the side of producing text and thought, it is clear that Beren's project, an enlightened commercial republic in Riga, appears as the first (and perhaps not yet fully illuminated) episode and primarily as a thought complex. The thoughts that Hamann wrote, inspired and curated by Berens, exemplify an enlightened vision of the future. Hamann's studies, which have a philosophical-cameralistic character, provided a far-reaching perspective of a commercial city and an enlightened society, admittedly in fragments.

However, his written exchanges with Johann Gottfried Herder on the Riga-Mitau axis are also pertinent. Once started in Königsberg, a conversation was continued but never finished (Bayer 1988, 108-124). This conversation is also connected with the complex of thoughts, where the recourse to a Latvian folk song (Hamann 1999, 215-216) appears in the "Aesthetica in nuce" (1762), Hamann's second-largest work following "Socratic Memorabilia" (1759), in which he criticizes the Enlightenment for the first time.

This reference at the end of "Aesthetica in nuce" can be approached differently. The passage is simultaneously instrumentalized in identity politics, solidified, and mythologized even within Latvian national culture. Now, I would like to take a few steps in the direction of this passage in Hamann's "Aesthetica": 1. "Speaking of nature," 2. "Signs of reality," 3. "The transition from simplicity to closeness to the origin," 4. "The paradoxical monotony," 5. "Prefiguration of modernity." This is how we come to an exposition, naturally preliminary, of the factual complex touched upon there.

"...in every dialect, you can hear its voice."

The starting point (and step one) is a passage from the "Aesthetica in nuce." There Hamann writes (for Hamann researchers, the well known) words:

Speak, that I may see you!—This wish was fulfilled by creation, a speech to creatures through creatures; for day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge. Its watchword traverses every clime to the end of the world, and its voice can be heard in every dialect (Hamann 2007, 65).

This sentence is, I think, one of Hamann's most important statements. There, his main theological and philosophical thoughts converge. In it, one can recognize and interpret specific motifs that have emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries (decoupled from Hamann's main theological emphasis) in Romanticism (nature) and literary versions of Modernity (expression). I want to single out only one motif, albeit significant, that leads from nature to language and folk poetry.

The human being, whom Hamann had discussed a few years before "Aesthetica in nuce" in "Socratic Memorabilia" (i.e., 1759), is placed between the knowledge of the sophists (i.e., enlighteners) and the non-knowledge of Socrates, i.e., confronted with non-knowledge in the age of knowledge. If he now dares to undertake a "hellish journey of self-knowledge" (Hamann 1999, 164) and plunge into the abyss of not-knowing, then the whole world seems to have been lost, the world that reason has rationally assembled. Nothing

remains or, in other words, just nothing is there; the empty abyss of nothingness gapes. Nevertheless, the human notices that only their ideas and reflections of the world in this abyss are fluttering, but not what their senses show. The sensually perceptible reality remains present, now, however, not as thought-spinning; instead, it is here in its immediate sensual presence. Out of Nothingness, the world emerges anew. Away from all everyday opinions, humanity can admire it now. The miraculousness of the world becomes evident; the world is there as an amazingly shining nature.

Moreover, the human being, who only now understands the wonder of the world, exclaims: "Speak to me! Speak something! I see you now!"—and the things speak, nature speaks. The point of this newly experienced reality is that the sensually existing nature is always already a speech, always a speech of God. However, humanity can hear this through the senses only if they have come to perceive the sensually given world as an address through the hellish journey of self-knowledge, that is, through Socratic unknowing. It is not a matter of knowledge here but of a language that speaks itself to us through the senses. The world as nature is an address to which humanity is challenged to answer. "Creation (nature)" is a speech to the creature (humanity) through the creature (through the sensually given).

Nevertheless, despite its excellent existence, the given to which the human being has opened themselves now lacks a uniform context of meaning. The promise of nature has no audible language. Despite their transformation through self-knowledge, a person hears the murmurings of things rather quietly and barely audibly; nature speaks, but it is not *a priori* intelligible what it says. Hamann writes (to quote again a very well-known passage):

(W)e have nothing left in nature but *turbatverse* and *disiecti membra poetae* for our use. To collect these is the scholar's task; to interpret them the philosopher's; to imitate them—or even bolder!—to bring them into skill, the poet's humble part (Hamann 1999, 198).

Nature speaks for our human hearing only scattered "turbatverse," we get from its speech only torn fragments of its speech. That is why scholars try to collect these fragments and put them together. In the Age of Enlightenment and modern times, the sciences have explored nature. However, they started not with admiration and not from the realization of not knowing but from an increased thirst for knowledge and the will to dominate nature. Science, as Hamann says, has made "sacrifices" and "idols" of the silent, but speaking things, because it has confronted nature as its object, and it has sampled it from a distance under the guidance of different questions (i.e.,

experimental methods). It has made study results the reason for its pride and has even “worshipped” them. However, these scientific questions are questions humanity asks nature according to its interests and needs. They have forgotten that nature is, already before these questions, an answer, a speech; therefore, a completely different way leads to the answer.

What kind of path this is is a question that does not even arise in modern sciences. In order to be able to take a different path here, Hamann refers to the linguist Johann Georg Wachter (1663–1757). He says in another place of the “*Aesthetica in nuce*” that in the course of humankind’s development, very different signs and kinds of signs arose, with which humanity tried to designate what they found in the world. These signs are, according to Hamann: “poetic or kyriological, historical, or symbolic or hieroglyphic—and philosophical or characteristic” (Hamann 1999, 199). We are dealing here (in step two) with a range of sign types. For Hamann, there must be an “inner logic,” so to speak, of the development of signs, which consists in the fact that signs become more and more abstract and move further and further away from the immediate sensual reality of things. The abstract-scientific language as a system of signs is not closer to nature (as the epithet “empirical” science suggests); it is, in truth, the furthest away from nature and thus also from the language of nature. Nature, however, *speaks sensuously*. The enlightened sciences have just destroyed the sensually perceptible form of nature with abstract mathematical-calculative methods and models. In Hamann’s words from “*Aesthetica in nuce*”: “Nature works through senses and passions. He who mutilates her tools, how may he feel?” asks Hamann (1999, 206), exclaiming in another passage: Who will dare “to purify the natural use of the senses from the unnatural use of abstractions, whereby our concepts of things are mutilated?” (Hamann 1999, 207).

Nature speaks, it always does, and a person answers. However, this answer is bizarre: for Hamann, it is essential in this context that it is not about an individual, self-referential expression but an answer to the speech of nature as an “intense message” (Achermann 2005, 46; cf. Bayer 1990, 41–42). Even the abstract-objectifying sign language of modern science still carries something of the speech of nature, even if only in the form of the mere object reference. However, the development of the signs still shows traces of a more intimate and more original, although already fatefully shifted, diastatic relationship between humans and the nature created by God. Furthermore, this relationship is where the reference to the singing of the Latvian peasants at the end of the “*Aesthetica in nuce*” comes in.

“Should a poet stand up among them...”

As is known, Hamann writes with reference to his previous admiration for Homer determined by unknowing:

Homer’s monotonous meter ought to strike us as at least as paradoxical as the unboundedness of our German Pindar [namely, Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, R. B.]. My amazement at or ignorance of the reason that the Greek poet always used the same meter was tempered when I made a journey through Courland and Lithuania. In certain districts of these regions, you can hear the Lettish or non-German people at work singing just a single cadence of a few notes, which is very much like a poetic meter. If a poet were to emerge among them, it would be quite natural for him to tailor all his lines to this measure established by their voices (Hamann 2007, 93).

This passage from the “Aesthetica” is a replica of a remark by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing about Lithuanian songs in his 33rd letter from the “Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend” (Letters concerning the newest literature), as Sven-Aage Jørgensen (1998, 189) assumes. Lessing leafed through one of the first Lithuanian dictionaries, Philipp Ruhig’s (1675–1749) *Litauisch-deutsches und Deutsch-litauisches Wörterbuch* (1705), and found some Lithuanian “Liederchen” (as he wrote) and remarked, “What naive wit! What charming simplicity!” (Lessing 1900, 393) In Hamann (and this is the third step in our reflections), this simplicity becomes originality, closeness to the origin, not naive, but God-centered. With Cento from Cicero, he immediately warns not to want to curl it with branding irons, as Lessing must have done. “It would require too much time to put this small circumstance [...] in its proper light, to compare it with several phenomena, to trace the reasons of it, and to develop the fruitful consequences” (Hamann 1999, 216), but already many signs are sent as emphasized by a quotation from Horace’s “Odes” at the very end of “Aesthetica in nuce” and before its afterword titled “Apostille” (Hamann 1999, 216). Much is said since the Sintflut, i.e., probably since the Fall. To follow the sense of what is said up to the origin of all saying is impossible; considering the said for “naive,” given the Fall, is possible, nevertheless not appropriate. Since then, every word, dialect, and tonality (“cadence of few tones”) concerns the origin and strives for it. Nevertheless, it is also wrong and diastatic.

However (in the fourth step), in this passage, it probably makes sense that the singing of the Latvian peasants in this meter and tonality is a sign, a sign of life, that the call-response relationship between the nature created by God and the people have not yet been completely lost. This sign is a sen-

sual-pictorial, oral response to the call by nature. We can say that in Hamann's work, there is a transition from primitive naivety to a primordially about folk songs in the context of the God-centeredness of all speech and all dialects: what seems to be naivety is precisely the fate of a mute mimicry of the human race, which, still seized by nature, speaks, sings and heaps sign upon sign in a mimetic and tonal way, to which the origin and the "meaning" of this foamy-sounding "paradoxical" frenzy nevertheless remains hidden. One can ask whether the orally performed picture-songs are closer to the originary experience than the abstractly intended unified written language of the Enlighteners with which they vainly wanted to "understand" nature in their treatises. Hamann's invectives in the "New Apology of the Letter h" against Enlightenment projects of the standardization of language (Miyatani 2005, 357-365) might lead us to think so. However, while oral performance is not entirely primary, a perspective with profound prehistories down to Plato and post-histories up to poststructuralism and the world constructed by modern media opens up, where Hamann then stands in the middle of these stories.

In my opinion, there is an additional dimension in Hamann's works. If one, from a source-related perspective, gathers folk songs and connects them along with Homer's works and modern German poetry of the time with religious themes (as in Klopstock) and does not devalue them in comparison to contemporary learned tracts and speeches. The passage can be considered a prime example of Hamann's approach to contemporary literature and texts. Lessing said what he stated, "*quod scripsi scripsi*," says "the wisest writer and darkest prophet, the executor of the New Testament, Pontius Pilate" (Hamann 1824, 274). Lessing has evoked folk poetry and found it remarkable. Hamann, however, does not interpret this evocation but only places it in the light of its origin. What Lessing says gains dimension, which for Hamann is the perpetual monotony of the contractions from the origin in all that is said. A monotony then also shows up in the verses of Homer and folk songs of the Latvian peasants. In the most detailed learned discussions of the Age of Enlightenment, it also is an incomprehensible, astonishingly manifold *dialectal, local, diverse, individual* monotony, as the tonality of origin and the sign. It now remains a sign, not senseless, not meaningless, but not clear, a sign of origin, which is also the origin of all signifying and polyglot meaning. The sign, not comprehensible, evoked, like a call, the consequences of the manifold sounding and gestural tumult. Hamann's monotony is paradoxical: the unity of the world is linked to the diversity of the world's sounds and colors, languages, and times: *the world itself is a paradoxical monotony*.

Hamann is also in this tumult, directed to the origin and included in diastasis. Thus also, his texts, “the whole play of my authorship” a “mute mimicry” (Unger 1968, i), are aligned to the origin but also “mute,” i.e., hardly expressible.

A staggering rhapsode, a broken rethor

In the fifth and last step, we can say: at present, the later Hamann readers have taken the place where Homer and Latvian peasants appear together. Then, very seriously, it created an origin myth based on Herder’s “Folk Songs” or based on “The Voices of the Peoples in Songs” (Herder 1807), thus also casting Hamann almost as one of the first “Dainologists,” i.e., as a systematic researcher of Latvian folk songs (“Dainas”), and celebrated his influence on national self-confidence of Latvians and Estonians (“Singing peoples”). Not only that: the evocation of German prehistory relates to it as the feedback of the preoccupation with folk songs at the Baltic Sea, which has been shown by research (Joachimsthaler 2010). Moreover, since Hamann can be considered an eventual poet, the Hamannian series “God-nature-language-senses-poet-diastatics of the answer” is turned and solidified into a Herderian-national-cultural understanding and philosophy of Romanticism. However, there is no such solidification in Hamann. Admittedly, his theological-eschatological philology contains a prefiguration taken up and continued on this side of Hamann’s statements in modernity; therefore, in his own words, he can be said to be a staggering rhapsode and a broken rethor, i.e., one that describes nature and stands on the threshold of historical eras—praises the greatness of nature and hints at an unknown future of history.

The radiance of nature and confused voices of people who try to say and yet cannot say the origin is a vision that later gave rise to variations in modernity, both “political ontologies” (political framework of nation or community) and national-cultural myths, as well as literary experiments. Humanity as the (staggering) rhapsode of origin and the (broken) rethor of beginning has gone from the reflections of a Christian and a modern writer, Hamann, into the open and indeterminate, thus dangerous and ambivalent wilderness. Here Hamann is like Søren Kierkegaard, who respectfully referred to Hamann. Kierkegaard wrote: “It can be said of Hamann what is written on a stove near Kold in Fredensborg: *allicit atque terret*” (Kierkegaard 1909, 442).

Whether Hamann's heritage can still be heard remains an open question. To give an utterly univocal answer to this question seems not entirely faithful to the story.

Acknowledgments

This article is supported by the Project "Institutum Herderianum Rigense: Herder Institute in Riga as a science network in the European Science Network" (LZP registration number lzp-2020/2-0083, LU registration No. LZP-2020/9).

Bibliography

1. Achermann Eric (2005), "Hamanns Insistieren auf der sinnlichen Wirkkraft der Zeichen", [in:] B. Gajek (ed.), *Die Gegenwärtigkeit Johann Georg Hamanns: Acta des achten Internationalen Hamann-Kolloquiums an der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg 2002*, Peter Lang: Frankfurt am Main, pp. 37-57.
2. Bayer Oswald (1988), *Zeitgenosse im Widerspruch. Johann Georg Hamann als radikaler Aufklärer*, Piper: München, Zürich.
3. Bayer Oswald (1990), *Schöpfung als Anrede: Zu einer Hermeneutik der Schöpfung*, 2nd extended edition, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck): Tübingen.
4. Hamann Johann Georg (1824), *Schriften*, vol. V, Reimer: Berlin.
5. Hamann Johann Georg (1999), *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. II, R. Brockhaus Verlag: Wuppertal.
6. Hamann Johann Georg (2007), *Writings on Philosophy and Language*, trans. and ed. K. Haynes, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
7. Herder Johann Gottfried (1807), *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. VIII, Cotta: Tübingen.
8. Joachimsthaler Jürgen (2010), *Text-Ränder: die kulturelle Vielfalt in Mitteleuropa als Darstellungsproblem deutscher Literatur*, Winter Verlag: Heidelberg.
9. Jørgensen Sven-Aage (1998), "Einleitung", [in:] J. G. Hamann, *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten; Aesthetica in nuce*, Reclam: Stuttgart, pp. 163-191.
10. Jørgensen Sven-Aage (2013), *Querdenker der Aufklärung. Studien uz Johann Georg Hamann*, Wallstein Verlag: Göttingen.
11. Kierkegaard Søren (1909), *Papirer*, vol. II, København: Gyldendal.
12. Kinzel Till (2019), *Johann Georg Hamann*, Karolinger: Wien, Leipzig.
13. Lessing Gotthold Ephraim (1900), *Sämtliche Werke*, 2nd ed., vol. IV, G. Grotesche Verlagsbuchhandlung: Berlin.
14. Miyatani Naomi (2005), "Im Spannungsfeld zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit", [in:] B. Gajek (eds.), *Die Gegenwärtigkeit Johann Georg Hamanns. Acta des achten Internationalen Hamann-Kolloquiums an der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg 2002*, Peter Lang: Frankfurt am Main, pp. 357-365.
15. Nadler Josef (1949), *Johann Georg Hamann 1730-1788: Zeuge des Corpus Mysticum*, Otto Müller Verlag: Salzburg.
16. Unger Rudolf (1968), *Hamann und die Aufklärung: Studien zur Vorgeschichte des romantischen Geistes im 18. Jahrhundert*, vol. I, Max Niemeyer: Tübingen.

Anne Sauka*

**Beyond the Skin Line:
Tuning into the Body-Environment.
A Venture into the *Before* of Conceptualizations**

Abstract

The article explores embodied critical thinking (ECT) for engaging with the enfleshed and trans-corporeal self on an affectual and experiential level. By discussing three exemplifying affectual instances that expose the experiential level of processuality, emergence, and intercardinality, the article shows the methodological use of ECT as a fruitful approach to developing embodied ontologies and a toolkit for the experiential reflection of one's en-fleshment, as *tuning into* the body-environment.

Keywords

Emergence, Processuality, Intercardinality, Embodiment, Embodied Critical Thinking

Acknowledgments

This article is supported by the ERAF (European Regional Development Fund) Post-doctoral Research Support Program [project Nr 1.1.1.2/VIAA/1/16/001 research application Nr. 1.1.1.2./VIAA/4/20/613, project "Onto-genealogies: The Body and Environmental Ethics in Latvia"]].

* University of Latvia
Email: anne.sauka@lu.lv

Introduction: The Conceptual Background

Today there are plenty of methodological approaches to tackle the dominating dualist and anthropocentric narratives of the Global North. The scholarly endeavors often agree that a shift in ontological presuppositions might be needed, especially in the looming environmental crisis. Yet, what is still lacking in these approaches is a way to achieve such a shift on an experiential level practically. Moreover, although theoretical discourses have refuted a dualist lifeworld in a biophilosophical context (Thacker 2008; Radomska 2016; Radomska and Åsberg 2020), the same cannot be said for the social field that keeps reinforcing dualist (albeit, a “reversed dualist,” see Sauka 2020a) biopolitics, and thus also maintains a human-nature alienation in an experiential context.

Although it is clear that what “we are” is a trans-corporeal transspecies assemblage (Alaimo 2010; Radomska 2016), it is still unclear as to how far and in what way one can experience this blurring of lines between oneself and the environment or even between the conscious intentionality and the unconscious functioning that channel nature-cultured activities of the lived body. Namely, to what extent, if at all, can the experienced lifeworld change? Even if it is conceptually straightforward that the body-environment is an interconnective processual becoming, is it possible to experience oneself as embodied and embedded? Moreover, is there a way to conceptualize processual selfhood, or does maintaining a stable self always presume the expulsion of environmental embeddedness as *object* (Kristeva 1982) that disturbs the maintenance of coherent selfhood and setting and continuously reaffirming clear boundaries between life and non-life, self and the other? Since it is impossible to fathom that a change in ontological presuppositions will arise from previously non-existent sources, in this article, I argue from the point of view that if an experiential ontological shift is possible, it is to be sought for in some already present felt senses that allow experiencing enfleshed becoming.

I thus venture to consider embodied critical thinking (ECT) (Schoeller and Thorgeirsdottir 2019) as an approach for capturing how humanity already *is* in touch with the blurred boundaries of the self, both regarding the lived-body felt sense beyond the I-consciousness, i.e., the lived-body as the supposed Other within us, and regarding the outside-other beyond the supposed “skin line.” Thus, the title of this research refers both to the “beyond of the skin line”—as the de-centered felt sense of the bodily self that is concealed by the imaginary dominance of the intentional I-consciousness and the “beyond the skin line” that connects us to the surrounding world as

body-environments (Gendlin 2017) breaching the lines between the self as a skin-sack and the Other as the environment. I assume here (based on the parallelism in discourses of nature and the human being, especially the woman) that parallelism in both accounts ensues and breaching the lines in both directions co-occurs.

I, hence, explore the assumption that the first-person experience includes a body-environment felt sense that functions as a *before* of the conceptualized dichotomies. The operative task of this exploration is to test the assumption that the body-environment bond is experienced as a *before* the I-conscious differencing from the environmental embeddedness. With this, I hope to add to the discussion of processual ontologies in societal and political contexts and evidence their presence and beforeness in our everyday experiences.

My approach rests on a new materialist approach that theorizes ontogenealogies of body-environments in a broad context. It broadens the conceptual scope of genealogy, restating the bio(il)logical lifeworld as genealogical upon the premise of senseful materiality (Sauka 2020b) and thus regards culture as *before* human I-consciousness, where the human being is not the origin but rather the result of nature-culture. Thus, it should be emphasized that I do not propose a reconnection with essential naturality but rather the possibility to consider ECT for the exploration of the multiplicity of enfleshed and experienced genealogies.

Method: Embodied Critical Thinking as a Methodological Tool

ECT is an experimental approach in first-person science that draws inspiration from the 4E approach to cognition, micro-phenomenology, and Eugene Gendlin's process model and is mainly inspired by the TAE (Thinking at the edge) approach (Gendlin 2004; Krycka 2006). ECT can be described as a phenomenological practice that allows "felt experience in phenomenological methodology and theory construction" (Krycka 2006, 1).

Recently, philosophy's turn towards the body has undergone a turn towards materiality that allows reflecting upon the experienced transcorporeality of bodies. While thinkers such as Annemarie Mol (2021) and Astrida Neimanis (2017) reflect upon the phenomenology of eating and water, sound and listening provide another potential modality for experienced transcorporeality. The phenomenology of the body in the tradition of Merleau-Ponty is traditionally sight and space-oriented (Mol 2021, 26-32) and thus follows the general pattern of Western thinking in disconnecting the

subject from the objective lifeworld. Sound and listening provide a radically different viewpoint: a personally experienced material entanglement with the world that is critical towards a sight-oriented understanding of subjectivity, challenging it conceptually and experientially.

While thinking can never be said to be disembodied, ECT highlights the necessity for considering the felt sense of the world; it is a move from inspecting via intentionality from a “zero subject” position toward a reflection *in tune* with the embodied self. Thus, as a method for developing theory, embodied critical thinking necessitates balancing intentionality and responsivity, including responsivity towards oneself as an enfleshed, transcorporeal selfhood. *Listening* here is used both metaphorically and literally as *tuning into* the rhythms of the embedded enfleshment and *tuning into* the environmental embeddedness amid which the self is in perpetual *becoming*. Thus, it is also a move from *inspecting* to *listening* to the experiential dimension of lived materialities and an embodied reflection.

The conceptual approach of ECT, especially in the context of looking beyond dominating narratives and the first-person phenomenological investigation, is also firmly in line with the idea of “Écriture féminine” (Cixous 1976) employed by Helene Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and, more recently Bracha Ettinger (Zajko and Leonard 2006), and similarly aims to escape discourse via a personal, embodied approach to thinking.

Instancing is one of the steps of the TAE and the developing embodied critical thinking methodology. *Instancing* allows exploring a concept via experiential instances to develop the concept further via an embodied reflection of that instance. I start here, especially with the contribution of Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir and Sigridur Thorgeirsdóttir in their article “Reclaiming Nature by Reclaiming the Body” (2016), which explores the potential of reconnecting with the world at large via an affectual and experiential reconnection with one’s enfleshment (in a first-person sense, without falling into the trap of essentialism). My analysis is further supported by the reflections of Herbert Schroeder on felt-sensing natural environments (Schroeder 2008), as well as Donata Schoeller’s and Neil Dunaetz’s (Schoeller and Dunaetz 2018) commentary on thinking *with* and *in* an experience in the context of Eugene Gendlin’s process model.

This paper explores *instancing* as a methodological tool *in application* by peeking beyond the “skin line”¹ to exemplify some of the ways in which the

¹ By using this concept, I do not intend to state the ontological validity of such a line. In contrast, the “skin line” is employed as a conceptual device for illustrating the social and perceptual misrepresentation of the selfhood entrapped. Here I refrain from providing conceptual models that successfully overstep this problem, yet the reader is encouraged

already present co-becoming with the environment emerges. To do this, I refrain from discussing theoretical models (such as posthumanist, new materialist, phenomenological, etc. accounts) that explain the necessity to seek new ontological approaches and conceptualize them, to instead focus on the experience of instances that allow seeking the universal in the personal. Here, I follow the claim that:

We are so lost in our ideas of nature (and the idea of getting rid of them) that we neglect the fact that we *are* something before we start thinking and having ideas. We thus suggest that we should stop *thinking* like a mountain or a mall, and rather start *sensing and experiencing* like embodied beings" (Jóhannesdóttir and Thorgeirsdóttir 2016, 41).

To demonstrate the different aspects in which feeling and listening to our *being as becoming* can help conceptualize an ontological shift in thinking, I chose three exemplary vignettes. Since ECT is an experimental approach, I took the liberty of devising my own writing protocol to document the *instances* and conceptualizations they resulted in. I call these instances here "vignettes" since they function as illustrations, descriptions, and source material for theorization that follows from the phenomenological reflection. Each consists of context (experience horizon), description/felt sensing (instancing itself), and theorization (conceptual results).

The instances are affectual examples of the *beyond* that is exposed in experience. With the *beyond*, I here mean three significant aspects that need to be highlighted as present in our experiences of the body-environments: a) *processuality* (Vignette 1), b) togetherness or *intercarnality* (Vignette 2), and c) a carnal *emergence* of creative practices (Vignette 3) that together evidence the nature-culture continuum as the source rather than the result of human activity and allow constituting the experiential domain of responsiveness (instead of intentionality) by *tuning into* the environment.

The main goal is to explore embodied critical thinking (ECT) as a tool for engaging with the enfleshed and trans-corporeal self on an affectual and experiential level. Namely, (1) to demonstrate that an embodied theorization allows developing embodied ontologies that can be experientially fruitful, and (2) that the methodological use of ECT facilitates the reflection of one's enfleshment as a form of *tuning into* the body-environment.

to look into Ettinger (2005) on borderspace, Alaimo (2010) on trans-corporeality, or Neimanis (2017) on the concept of pourousness for different conceptualizations that step beyond the "skin-line."

I intend to demonstrate first-person insights as a valuable way for grounding and embedding one's research in the context of experienced materiality, thus, allowing a reconnection with the *beyond* the skin-line of the lived body to partake affectually in theorizing embodiment and embeddedness. If thinkers such as Alva Noë (2009) and Francisco Varela (Varela and Thompson 1991) are correct in assuming that the mind is embedded, extended, and embodied, and thus, much more responsive (instead of merely intentional) and processual than it has often been theorized or socially constructed to be, this assumption can also be phenomenologically tested through the first-person shift of perspectives. It is a move from inspection and conceptualization to a listening/sensing or *tuning into* the environment—be it interpersonal, inner, or outer experienced otherness, to reveal the often neglected parts of conscious everyday life (as well as aesthetic and ethical experience). I also use listening and sensing to accentuate the link between the seemingly disembodied mode of “inspecting” as developed in connection with the dominance of sight-centered thinking. Sight, in contrast to hearing, can only be directed outwards, thus building an illusory line between oneself and the other that also upholds the illusion of an objective outlook (a sort of “zero subject” position), while hearing breaches the line between self and the other, and voice and sound provide transcorporeal, intercaral and notably material connections of body-environments. I call it *homing*,² both in context with the first vignette, as well as to highlight that *the closest to us* can also be *the most underappreciated* because of its natural presence and pinpoint the inherent ability *to tune into* one's embeddedness by changing perspectives.

It is my hope that with the help of ECT, and here, in particular, the step of *instancing*, it is possible to get in touch with the already present variability of genealogies that make up human becoming on nature-cultured premises.

In this, I follow the acknowledgment that:

Perhaps the only way for us to stop seeing nature as something outside of us and truly sense and understand ourselves as natural beings that are a part of the earth's ecosystem is to start focusing more on nature as experiences in our bodies (Jóhannesdóttir and Thorgeirsdóttir 2016, 41).

² Dictionaries define *homing* as “relating to an animal's ability to return to its territory after traveling away from it,” which seems a fitting definition of *tuning into* the environment as part of ourselves.

Next to such an environmental concern that leads to the need to reconnect with our naturality, it seems necessary to also recognize culture as a continuation and part of nature, thus demonstrating consciousness as a result rather than the source of culture.

I thus intend to integrate the theoretical/conceptual background with the first-person exploration of the body-environment experiences, zigzagging between the theoretical plane and the felt sense. The main goal of this research project is to conceptualize the persistence of embedded and processual embodiment as a continuously present part of the experience and a viable source of inspiration for theorizing affirmative environmental ethics and philosophy as an art of living.

Vignette 1

Processuality: A House Becomes Home

Conceptual experience horizon

Home's problematization is associated with political issues regarding transnationalism and localism (i.e., refugee situations, border control, etc.), social or feminist issues regarding the division of lived space and the possibility of feeling *at home* in one's body and immediate surroundings, or philosophical issues of homelessness and home-making in the world and within one's self. Furthermore, the question of a home can be contextualized with today's understanding of the self as a transformable and transformative subject-in-process. Thus, what emerges is whether a self could be a nomadic subject (Braidotti 1994) juxtaposed to the question of a sense of place, a dwelling, or rootedness (Heise 2008, 29-49). In the context of environmental philosophy, it is also the juxtaposition of deterritorialization and reterritorialization (Heise 2008, 51; Deleuze and Guattari 1977; 1987). Intuitively, both the setting of boundaries and the connectedness to the world at large seem equally important.

However, change and transformation often seem contradictory to settlement and dwelling or anchoring within a particular context when posited conceptually. This phenomenon counts for several levels of discussion, starting from globalist/localist debates to the discussion of selfhood and its processual engagement in the world. Moreover, such concepts as "re-wilding thinking" again muddle the waters of how to perceive and think about a sense of belonging: do we need to reterritorialize belonging to a *wilder* region of the self, and if so, what does that mean for our sense of being at

home with oneself? The paradoxes that emerge from the conceptual accounts, however, seem to all rely on a similar image of what “being at home” means, associating “settlement” with fixedness and thingness (a home is a set and safe space, an anchor of sorts), and familiarity—with static, non-changing surroundings. A familiar place thus becomes a sort of atypical and atemporal haven outside of time, space, and energy exchange. That already poses problems for a processual self that needs to be repositioned as a *nomadic subject* since it does not feel at home in an unchanging environment. However, such a reposition seems to establish a new dichotomy of subject and object while trying to deconstruct the dichotomy of a self and its continuous becoming. Thus, an embodied phenomenological account of the home offers a revision of the perspective from which home and belonging are usually perceived.

Instance: Home is coming back with the heating

During my first winter in a small-town house where I lived with my family, I suddenly realized the importance of a dynamic interaction with my immediate surroundings to maintain belonging and rootedness. We have a traditional tile stove and a kitchen stove, and before the heating came, a felt difference appeared in the immediate surroundings that crept in with the decrease in indoor temperature. The feeling of rootedness and belonging, as well as the “naturalness” of the home, gradually self-destructs, meaning that while I do not feel the home while it is warm (but instead feel like a fish in its water), I start to notice my surroundings more starkly with the chilly temperature. Visually, as well as in feeling, the surroundings become unhomely and uncanny. The home becomes a house, and then a shed, or a random collection of wreckage. A pile of garbage, randomly set in a foreign garden. The outside creeps in and takes over. I disassociate and lose the self-evidence of what a home, my home, is. Is this supposed to be my home? Where am I? What are these bread-crumbs in front of me? How come I can live here? Shortly, the home lost its cognitive coherence for me as the inhabitant. After feeding wood to the stove and the oven, with the heating, the home comes suddenly back. Things reconnect in patterns, and objects become familiar as an extension of the self. “I” inhabit the space again and re-connect with my surroundings. The warmth brings a return to the home environment, and a tragedy is averted; the self is content.

Conceptual Afterthought

Instances such as this that change the perspective from third person to first person phenomenological account are exemplary of the potential of alternative ontologies and the need for a change of perspective in the conceptualization of home and dwelling as well as the sense of place:

1. The sense of place is unimaginable without the dimension of temporality. That does not necessitate a linear temporality but could be connected to an imaginary of an eternal return or identity as a stabilized but transformative process.
2. Being and home is a becoming, namely, a process rather than a state, yet the modern world often eliminates the felt sense of it being a process. Advertisements promise that we can obtain a home, while what they sell are empty carcasses that must be continuously lived in and lived *with* to *become home* again and again.
3. The body-environment embeddedness and connectedness are affectually felt, especially in the moments of crisis, when a disruption nears. The negative connotation that comes with the disruption facilitates viewing the tie itself in a negative light, while precisely, the disruption of the connection brings negative feelings. When one freezes in the frosty air without a jacket, one is convinced that the environment is only alienated and detached because a disruption from the usual homeliness in one's immediate surroundings is felt.

The affectual experience of home is revealed in its disruption and the consequent *coming back with the heating* that allows recognizing "being at home" and "homing" as a pre-conscious process that exposes the human being in its embeddedness *beyond* the skin-line. The beyond is exposed via its counterpart in the abject (Kristeva 1982) of the suddenly foreign home, thus, creating a square of the concepts: subject, object, abject, and the *beyond*, where the beyond is also the before and enables the emergence, motion, and becoming of the four interacting elements. In heating one's own home (but also in many other activities, such as tidying, dusting, etc.) that reveal the deterioration that results from the standstill, time is felt as circular or spiral.³ Refraining from action quite literally facilitates deterioration, while dynamic interaction leads to the maintenance of the felt security of the

³ Here a connection to the issues in feminist philosophy could be made (see Söderback 2019).

self. Here, the human being is part of the ecosystem of a home that resembles a turtle's shell rather than an outside object. The *instance* of heating is expository since it allows direct *tuning into* the environment—a responsive experience of the body-environment continuum that is necessarily present, thus allowing the overthrow of the narrative of alienation.

Therefore, a home is revealed as a becoming place, a process that requires dynamic interaction with the self to exist. Processual selfhood is not only a possibility within a settlement or a dwelling but a pre-requirement. Safety demands movement, change, and fragility stillness requires attention, care, and activity. The local and the global reconnect; deterritorialization and reterritorialization combine as coherent presence in the felt sense of our body-environments. Again, the body-environment bind is revealed as one that is already present in the affectual experiences, even though it might not be consciously reflected upon very often. *Homing* is a process, and no finite objects are possible.

Vignette 2

Intercarnality: Otherness and Children

Conceptual experience horizon

As mentioned previously, embodied, responsive thinking is critical today to seek (re)connection with the environment. How can “I” be an “I” without constituting an autonomous identity that presupposes detachment from the *Other*? It can be hoped that the fear of the impossibility of shifting ontological preconceptions could be alleviated by searching for the elements of connection that are *already there*, namely, by listening to our ontological engagement in the world and rethinking the presence of embeddedness and embodiment in the senses, thus, going beyond the dominant genealogies of today's capitalist societies. With this vignette, I propose to reflect on this question through the eyes of a child, who is *tuned into* the environment and the multiplicity of the otherness yet still autonomous and self-affirming, to decipher the seemingly contradictory concepts of interdependency and independence, and selfhood and intercarnality. As in the case of the previous instance, these point toward significant theoretical discussions of oneness and difference, sociality and individuality, and even socialist and capitalist debates.

Instance

Mom: "Sleep!" she says and gets comfortable. She wraps me around her as she wishes and gives me a tiny kiss. Then, she turns her back on me and sleeps. It reminds me of breastfeeding, now already so long ago—she latches on the breast to get her nourishment, no questions of the following kind: Do I use my mom? Do I lack independence? Am I allowed to be a "me" if I need her? No contracts of any kind and no given consent, yet the ego expression is not without care. The slightest expression of pain can disturb the peace... A hit?... Her face mirrors my pain and her shame. When we lose the "we," we lose the "I" as well—horror, panic-stricken shriek on her part. She does not apologize but just stands there pouting, confused. I say: "I was hurt, darling. Why are you so angry?" She hugs me and says: "Let us kiss with our noses, ok?" We make up and become joyful together.

Conceptual Afterthought

In Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Nietzsche 1999), after the subservient camel and the rioting lion, the third metamorphosis of the child represents the free and playful producer of new values. The child is thus exemplifying a unique ethical and aesthetical disposition in the world, a subjectivity engaged in the world, an unruptured connection with one's fleshliness and intercardinality (namely, *Zwischenleiblichkeit*, Merleau-Ponty 1966) that does not come into contradiction with self-affirmation and expression of the will (Sauka 2021). The primordial ethicality expressed in the imaginary of the child by Nietzsche today seems compatible with the ethics of care (Gilligan 1982), highlighting the necessity to supplement the usual normative ethics with ethics beyond morality that evaluates each limit-situation contextually and focus on relationality and caring response.

For Nietzsche *becoming a child* is the highest stage of human becoming. Things often go quite the contrary in life, and from joyful troublemakers, we grow into rebellious lions that become brooding carriers of burdens. In embodied critical thinking, one could also say that philosophical thought is also not safe from a similar development path. The feminist philosopher Sigríður Thorgeirsdóttir underscores the significance of the figure of the child in the framework of ECT (Thorgeirsdóttir 2021) and notes that thinking itself might need rethinking from the standpoint of children's affective experiential perspective that expresses the direct connection with the world (Sauka 2021).

Silence has always been the most significant part of my relationship with children. Children can teach me the most about the things where language is lacking without words or even before they know how to speak. Again, sound and sense work together as directly reciprocal and intercarnal modes of becoming; pain resounds in a cry while it breaches the ears of a loving parent, invoking a strong sense of sympathetic pain, a wave of anguish amplified by the veil of the child. Silence stands on the border of feeling and hearing, a felt sense that oversteps all the imaginary dichotomic lines between self and the other. Is silence a sense or a sound? It is impossible to tell, yet it delivers an intrinsic experienced intercarnality that can speak of isolation and ignorance and understanding and connection. Whatever the situation, silence itself is already intercarnal in the mode of *tuning into* that it anticipates. Conceptual language often operates on the premise of division, distinguishment of elements, and separation. Finding connections to the other *within* or *without* the self or a way to conceptualize *otherness* as inseparable from selfhood can therefore be hard to do in language. Some existential experiences are easier to grasp in everyday life than they are perceivable *after* exploration in language that muddles the felt sense of seemingly self-evident phenomena. This problem is particularly exemplified in psychoanalytic feminist philosophy and feminist phenomenology.

Feminist phenomenology (Oksala 2004; 2016) problematizes the tradition of the transcendent subject in phenomenology by considering the experience of giving birth and breastfeeding, which is often undervalued in the conceptualization of subjectivity. How can we understand the self without otherness if everyone is born from someone? Furthermore, why are these blurred lines of subjectivity (which are most evident in pregnancy) regarded more as a problem to be solved than an exciting horizon for innovative embodied philosophical thought? One answer relates to the tradition of substance ontologies (Meincke 2018) in the Global North that finds it hard to conceptualize a “subject-in-process” (Kristeva 1984; 1995) and maintains the subject-object distinction that also necessitates refuting otherness through the process of abjection.

Psychoanalytic feminist philosophy criticizes the insufficiencies of conventional language. For example, Kristeva’s conceptualization of the semiotic and symbolic demonstrates that the “symbolic ‘law of the father,’ that is, the orderly aspects of our signifying practices, never triumphs over what she calls the semiotic (the more fluid, playful, instinctual aspects of our signifying practices)” (McAfee 2004, 43). The possibility to communicate and feel *beyond* the symbolic order points out the necessity to rethink the hierarchy of

knowledge, in which the symbolic realm (that is also most stifled by dominating discourses) is valued far over the semiotic realm. "The semiotic" can also be argued to be more open to children's thinking and understood as a gateway to embodied thinking and felt sense perception, beyond abstract reasoning, yet including it. Another version of a critique of the abstract thought is endeavored by Luce Irigaray, who notes the rigidity of the symbolic field that subordinates all multiplicity to the "Same" (Irigaray 1985), excluding otherness. Those other to the Same in this context can, therefore, more easily slip out of the webs of the discourse. In this sense, children are more in touch with otherness and multiplicity of becoming and can therefore think and feel outside of discursive structures that restrict grown-up thinking and being in touch with their embodiment.

Being and becoming with children teaches about the inconsistency and variability of existence, the coherency of contradictions, and thus, love and the blurring of the boundaries of the self—about a becoming in togetherness, and the significance of intercarnality, touch, caress, or even a hit. Children teach what is *before* and *between* words and that which is said—the felt sense of being with others and how we learn to think and understand concepts through the *logic of touch*. These themes and lived experiences are often undervalued in traditional philosophical contexts.

The fragility and processuality of selfhood are self-evident in infancy and childhood; so is the co-dependency of seemingly autonomous subjects. Yet, what is most striking for me via the instance at hand, is the consistent and confident self-affirmation that does not contradict the co-dependency with others that children communicate. Being individualistic does not stand in contradiction with caring interdependency in children, and they feel entirely comfortable affirming their independence while also depending on one another in everything they do *before* reflecting on where an "I" is divided from "other." Children realize their will without doubting their dependency on others. It could even be said that self-affirmation in children is possible precisely *because* of their inherent bond with the other, practiced within these terms of intercarnality. Expression of the ego comes from intercarnality that is inherent and awaited as a given dependency. It does not question the intercarnality or the hierarchy of the parent-child relationship. It is just there. Attachment allows the expression of the ego: I am nourished with you (by breast, a hug, the helpful hand). On the other hand, detachment allows the questioning of the ego and exposes its fragility. Both are necessary, yet the significance is in the order (attachment before detachment) and the connection between attachment with ego expression vs. detachment and fragility, "for when we lose the 'we,' we lose the 'I' as well."

This ability to maintain selfhood without (or before) disconnection and detachment leads to question the struggle to do so in grown-ups. Today's society in the Global North strongly advises self-sufficiency and self-realization, thus, causing suffering in alienation both from nature and others, yet it is feared that an endeavor of reconnection could cause the loss of freedom. To enable thinking of these seeming contradictions as combinable, it could be necessary to analyze how children communicate their dependent independencies, demonstrating the possibility of independence as embedded in interdependency, demonstrating how we need a connection to be free.

Through the parent intercaral bond with children, the fragile boundaries of the self lose their uncanniness. A child harnesses the power of intersubjectivity, through which we come into the world to make it circle us.

Vignette 3

Emergence: I Meet Myself in Music

Conceptual experience horizon

Finally, I want to reflect on embodiment as a meeting of the supposed Other in oneself *before* I-consciousness. It is an everyday occurrence, much more common than a reflected, voluntary activity might be, the communication of the pre-conceptual, pre-conscious realm within ourselves as part of ourselves.

Are our freedom, free will, and self-determination contradictory with pre-conscious self-constitution and decision-making? Can a pre-conscious self-constitution support the view of an undetermined and "free" will and selfhood? The contradiction of freedom vs. natural embeddedness has constituted much Western philosophical thought. It relates to significant theoretical discussions regarding selfhood and the origins of meaning and culture since the pre-conscious is imagined as pre-cultural and/or presupposes a deterministic understanding of the self.

Here, I forgo the argumentation of embodiment and embeddedness in this exploration (see further Sauka 2020a; 2020c) to reflect on the potential of embodied critical thinking for reconnecting with the *beyond* of the enmeshment that alienates itself from itself via the constitution of the I-consciousness. ECT, thus, again is employed as a tool for the reconciliation of conceptual contradictions by demonstrating the synthetic co-dependency of seeming opposites on an experiential level.

Instance

I am at an exam at my music school. I am maybe 13 or 14. I am already playing, and my sweaty palms are all I can think about. Does the teacher see that my blouse is a little bit ruffled? What if I make a mistake right then and there? I tune into the piece I am playing, yet I must tread lightly in doing it; if I "move" too roughly or too intentionally in my mind, I will lose the thread of music flowing through me and stop. I can only tune into myself very lightly. To be a bit more "present," to feel into the music and play more musically. I move with the music to a forest, to a grove, between animals and a flowing river. I ride the crescendos and tiptoe around the pianos. It is hard since I think about my palms again and again. When the music stops, I have not "done" it. I was there. It flew through me and took me for a ride. I do not look into the eyes glaring at me and go out of the room. I wait for the grade, get praised, and go home relieved. I did it! Was it me?

Conceptual Afterthought

Nietzsche states that the lived, carnal body is the "big mind," the herd that is only seemingly controlled by the less critical shepherd or the "small mind" that is human I-consciousness (Nietzsche 1999). However, the dominating genealogies of the Global North place importance on the "small mind," stripping the flesh of meaning and thus maintaining a dualist cultural imaginary, often contrary to scientific claims. The dominance of intentionality's over-responsivity in the social field is conceptualized variously in the fields of biopolitics (Rose and Abi-Rached 2013) and the phenomenology of the lived body (Waldenfels 2000; 2003; Böhme 2019), yet the main problem is still the inability to shift the ontogenealogies of the self on perceptual, experiential, and affectual levels.

Embodiment is commonly connected to negative feelings like shame, anger, and fear that are starkly felt throughout the body. Positive emotions and pleasure are also sometimes directly felt as embodied. However, the problem of shifting the ontological preconceptions in the experienced social field comes with the idea that culture and the symbolic field emerge only in *I-consciousness*. *Tuning into* everyday experiences allows remembering embodiment as the source of the cultural and symbolic, aided by the I-consciousness only in a particular, reflective sense. Experientially carnality is felt and practiced "auf den höchsten Gipfeln des Denkens" (Waldenfels 2000, 246), and the *I-consciousness* reveals itself as a result rather than the source of culturality and symbolic potential that is present in materiality itself.

The “I” continuously watches the flow of the Other, realizing the potential of the embodied selfhood, often standing on guard and hardly participating at all. By a responsive *tuning into* the environment of the self (within and without the skin line), one creates and plays, as well as runs, cleans, and cooks, leaving only the decision to *tune into* the I-conscious part of the mind. In creative activities, like writing and music, the meeting with the other most evidently demonstrates the variability, the polyphony of the carnal self, and the potential of pre-conscious decision making, which is still very much our “own.” The boundary between the otherness of the flesh and the “I” becomes blurred, and one is not that sure of the “I” as a consistent or fixed self anymore. However, as the polyphonic anchor of a subjectivity-in-process, the carnal self is much more profoundly exposed as the “home” of the selfhood that can be understood and known before words as something familiar yet unbounded. The polyphony is here expressed as a polyphony of senses, as well as breaching of boundaries, or rather—as the experiential *before* boundaries that is characteristic of sounding and sense—outside and inside are the markers assigned *after* via conceptualization, which is why it is effortless to sense and experience the self as embedded and enfleshed. At the same time, it is notably harder to conceptualize this *becoming* via conventional conceptual tools that have developed via domination of a univocal, sight-oriented understanding of senses, subjectivity, and subject-object/self-other duality. Describing processual selfhood as a polyphonic anchor, I accentuate that the clarity of selfhood is possible precisely because of its processual embeddedness, rather than despite it, thus, refusing that the selfhood is to be thought of as fragile or non-existent because of its non-fixity. The metaphoric and experienced sense of listening and sound can further provide experiential evidence of how an intercaral becoming enables the carnal self as a processual becoming. Thus, polyphony characterizes enfleshed selfhood as transcorporeal and, in a narrower sense, notes the character of listening and sound as polyphonic, thus accentuating the manifoldness of the experiential plane. While the polyphony of the world resounds within us, embedding the self firmly *within* the *without*, the singing and crying bodies also reach beyond the skin line, entangling in intercaral relations. The singing selfhood is reciprocal and polyphonic as it voices its song and simultaneously hears the world’s echo; a dance of life ensues. Contradictions coincide in this self that draws from the environment and the deepest depths of the unconscious to realize itself in perfect harmony with its multiplicity.

Conclusory Crossing:

Joyful Resilience—The Art of Homing Together

All three of the instances revealed a different aspect of *otherness* as *selfhood*. “Meeting the other” was accomplished through a) meeting the other as our surroundings, b) meeting the other as our contemporaries, and c) meeting

the other as the carnal body we are (Böhme 2019). Rather than horrific encounters with the abject, the instances explored otherness as *homing*, suggesting thinking of the other as no “other” at all, but rather a pre-conscious, transformative and transformable home that accompanies and steers the conscious, intentional selfhood in everyday life.

The three modalities all relate to the different ways in which conventional thinking patterns build dialectical contradictions (such as local/global, dwelling/nomadism, self/other, and subject/object) that can be surpassed on an experiential level via the use of the tools provided by ECT, showcasing ECT as a viable method for developing embodied ontologies that can provide significant insight in different domains of theory. Due to the polyphonous, transcorporeal character of the enfleshed selfhood, the involvement of felt sense and listening as direct experiential planes of transcorporeality and enfleshment proved necessary for employing ECT as a practice in developing theory. Listening provides the experience of materiality neither within nor without—an involvement that is before conceptualizations, yet reciprocal and polyphonous, and thus enables agency via *tuning into*—attentiveness, care, and response. Both literally and as a metaphor for the broader understanding of a senseful, transcorporeal, and enfleshed selfhood, listening and polyphony provide the experiential space for capturing the becoming of subjectivity in its manifoldness. Thus, by substituting *seeing* and *inspecting* with *listening* and *sensing*, environmental embeddedness proved to be easily graspable by the embedded selfhood, without alienation mediated by an abject that tries to maintain an unruly and fragile autonomous selfhood, constrained largely in I-consciousness. Quite the contrary, *tuning into* the sensed environment allows freely constituting a processual yet secure selfhood. The felt sense of selfhood *in the process* is evident, yet when striving to understand the self as an unchanging identity or capture a moment of its movement, it necessitates laborious inspection that delivers doleful results.

The metaphor of a home or a shell (which is much less noticeable by the one living in the shell) can be broadened toward the world at large in the case of environmental ethics. A final instance that came into my mind during the reflection of *tuning into* the environment was when I brought back my third baby girl from the hospital. Everyone fell sick with a stomach virus, and we all sat home for maybe ten days or so. I remember the felt sense of joy of being at home distinctly. Although it seemed illogical to be content in this chaos, it was a calm feeling of connection, and it rested within a complex and disorderly environment. My joy, defined in abstract terms, was illogical and contradicted the situation. A second feeling that emerged in this experience

was the feeling of resilience and flexibility. I joyfully accepted my environment and decided to nestle down with the baby within this ensuing chaos.

This instance, for me, crosses over the three fields of homing body-environments in an ethical sense. First, it shows relationships as beyond words and concepts, togetherness across the skin-line, and an understanding born *before* its abstraction and conceptualization—a safety born out of the precarity of intercarinality. Second, it also reflects the otherness of the selfhood itself that is noncontradictory in conceptually contradictory situations and reflects the *emergence* of meaning via felt sensing. The felt sense of a situation—here, a possibility to spend time together at home—often delivers a more in-depth understanding of the complexity of experienced phenomena that delivers contradictions when voiced through concepts and conventional language. Third, it reflects *tuning into* the environment as a dynamic process requiring ethical attentiveness toward the situation and refraining from demanding conditions for self-realization to endeavor *homing* with the tools at hand.

In summary, the phrase “joyful resilience” encompasses the concepts of processuality, emergence, and intercarinality via an affirmative ethical attentiveness that emerges in the crossing of the three conceptual realms. Such joyful and resilient dynamic attentiveness to one’s surroundings alleviates the contradiction between the seemingly chaotic changes of one’s surroundings and the orderly and comfortable sense of a place as an anchor of identity. Namely, it allows *homing* without essentialist demands for fixed, unchanging conditions, instead depicting identity and home as dynamic processes in need of care and affectual relation.

Here, it is essential to note that finding such an experiential ground for shifting the ontological perceptions could have far-reaching positive consequences for our relationship with the environment, as well as with each other in political and social spaces in context with questions regarding gender, race, xenophobia of any kind and general social conflicts. Hence, today, in the time of climate crisis and the sixth extinction, a broadened understanding of a felt, joyful resilience in an environmental context might show the way for environmental ethics beyond ego-centric fragility and could be further investigated with the tools of embodied critical thinking.

Bibliography

1. Alaimo Stacy (2010), *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*, Indiana University Press: Bloomington.
2. Böhme Gernot (2019), *Leib. Die Natur, die wir selbst sind*, Suhrkamp Verlag: Berlin.
3. Braidotti Rosi (1994), *Nomadic subjects: embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*, Columbia University Press: New York.
4. Cixous Hélène (1976), "The Laugh of the Medusa", *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 1 (4), pp. 875-893.
5. Deleuze Gilles, Guattari Félix (1977), *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. R. Hurley et. al., Viking: New York.
6. Deleuze Gilles, Guattari Félix (1987), *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
7. Ettinger Bracha (2005), *The Matrixial Borderspace*, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
8. Gendlin Eugene (2004), "Introduction to 'Thinking at the Edge'", *The Folio*, 19 (1), pp. 1-8.
9. Gendlin Eugene (2017), *A Process Model*, Northwestern University Press: Evanston.
10. Gilligan Carol (1982), *In A Different Voice*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge.
11. Heise Ursula (2008), *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*, Oxford University Press: Oxford.
12. Irigaray Luce (1985), "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine", [in:] idem, *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. C. Porter, Cornell University Press: New York, pp. 68-85.
13. Jóhannesdóttir Guðbjörg, Thorgeirsdóttir Sigríður (2016), "Reclaiming Nature by Reclaiming the Body", *Balkan Journal of Philosophy*, 7 (1), pp. 39-48.
14. Kristeva Julia (1982), *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. L. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press.
15. Kristeva Julia (1984), *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. L. Roudiez, Columbia University Press: New York.
16. Kristeva Julia (1995), *New Maladies of the Soul*, trans. R. Guberman, Columbia University Press: New York.
17. Krycka Kevin (2006), "Thinking at the Edge: Where Theory and Practice Meet to Create Fresh Understandings", *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 6 (1), pp. 1-10, DOI: 10.1080/20797222.2006.11433935\.
18. McAfee Noëlle (2004), *Julia Kristeva*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group: New York.
19. Meincke Anne (2018), "Persons as Biological Processes: A Bio-Processual Way Out of the Personal Identity Dilemma", [in:] D. Nicholson and J. Dupré (eds.), *Everything Flows: Towards a Processual Philosophy of Biology*, Oxford University Press: New York, pp. 357-378.
20. Merleau-Ponty Maurice (1966), *Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung*, de Gruyter: Berlin.
21. Mol Annemarie (2021), *Eating in Theory*, Duke University Press: London.
22. Neimanis Astrida (2017), *Bodies of Water*, Bloomsbury: London.

23. Nietzsche Friedrich (1999), *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe, vol. 4, Also sprach Zarathustra*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag de Gruyter, München.
24. Noë Alva (2009), *Out of Our Heads: Why You are Not Your Brain and Other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness*, Hill and Wang: New York.
25. Oksala Johanna (2004), "What is Feminist Phenomenology? Thinking Birth Philosophically", *Radical Philosophy* [online] <https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/what-is-feminist-phenomenology> [accessed: 11 October 2021].
26. Oksala Johanna (2016), *Feminist Experiences. Foucauldian and Phenomenological Investigations*, Northwestern University Press: Evanston, Kindle Edition.
27. Radomska Marietta (2016), *Uncontainable Life: A Biophilosophy of Bioart* [doctoral dissertation], Linköping University Electronic Press: Linköping.
28. Radomska Marietta, Åsberg Cecilia (2020), "Doing Away with Life: On Biophilosophy, the Non/Living, Toxic Embodiment, and Reimagining Ethics", [in:] E. Berger *et al.* (eds.), *Art As We Don't Know It*, Aalto University: Helsinki, pp. 54–63.
29. Rose Nikolas, Abi-Rached Joelle (2013), *Neuro: The New Brain Sciences and the Management of the Mind*, Princeton University Press: Princeton.
30. Sauka Anne (2020a), "A lack of meaning?: Reactive nihilism and processual materiality", *Approaching Religion*, 10 (2), pp. 125–140, <https://doi.org/10.30664/ar.91788>.
31. Sauka Anne (2020b), "The Nature of Our Becoming: Genealogical Perspectives", *Le Foucauldien*, 6 (1), pp. 1–30, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.16995/lefou.71>.
32. Sauka Anne (2020c), "Life in Process: The Lived-Body Ethics for Future", *Religious-Philosophical Articles*, 28, pp.154–183.
33. Sauka Anne (2021), "Filozofs un bērns: mūsu sastapšanās" ["The Philosopher and Child: Our Meeting"], *Satori.lv*, [online] <https://satori.lv/article/filozofs-un-berns-musu-sastapšanas> [accessed: 22.02.2022].
34. Schoeller Donata, Dunaetz Neil (2018), "Thinking emergence as interaffecting: approaching and contextualizing Eugene Gendlin's Process Model", *Cont Philos Rev*, 51, pp. 123–140, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11007-018-9437-9>.
35. Schoeller Donata, Thorgeirsdottir Sigríður (2019), "Embodied Critical Thinking: The Experiential Turn and its Transformative Aspects", *philoSOPHIA: A Journal of Continental Feminism*, 9 (1), pp. 92–109.
36. Schroeder Herbert (2008), "The Felt Sense of Natural Environments", *Folio*, 21 (1), pp. 63–72.
37. Söderback Fanny (2019), *Revolutionary Time: Of Time and Difference in Kristeva and Irigaray*, State University of New York Press: New York.
38. Thacker Eugene (2008), "Biophilosophy for the 21st Century", [in:] M. Kroker, A. Kroker (eds.), *Critical Digital Studies: A Reader*, University of Toronto Press: Toronto, pp. 132–142.
39. Thorgeirsdottir Sigríður (2021, August 3), "The Philosophy of the Child and philosophical thinking", *IAPh 2021* [online], YouTube, https://youtu.be/PAaak35ZNig?list=PLk7u6-nmv4F60ibVfWF2j_XQZmgFKKXCc [accessed: 18.02.2022].
40. Varela Francisco, Thompson Evan (1991), *The embodied mind: Cognitive science and human experience*, MIT: Cambridge MA.
41. Waldenfels Bernhard (2000), *Das leibliche Selbst: Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des Leibes*, ed. R. Giuliani, Suhrkamp: Frankfurt/M.

-
42. Waldenfels Bernhard (2003), "Bodily experience between selfhood and otherness", *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 3, pp. 235-248.
 43. Zajko Vanda, Leonard Miriam (2006), *Laughing with Medusa: Classical Myth and Feminist Thought*, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

About the Contributors

Sergio J. Aguilar Alcalá, M.A. in Communication (UNAM), member of the Mexican Permanent Seminar of Film Analysis (SEPANCINE) and the Lacanian Center of Research in Psychoanalysis (CLIP). In 2020 awarded a research fellowship in the international project “Extimacies: Critical Theory from the Global South,” financed by the Andrew Mellon Grant. Research interests include communication theory, psychoanalysis, film theory, film philosophy, Marxism, and digital cultures.

Raivis Bičevskis, Ph.D., is a professor for Philosophical Anthropology at the University of Latvia. Raivis Bičevskis is an author of several books and articles, including *Heideggers Beziehungen zu Riga und seine Herder-Auslegung im Seminar des Sommersemesters 1939* (2018), *Baltisch-Deutsche Kulturbeziehungen vom 16 bis 19 Jahrhundert* (Vol 1, 2017, Vol. 2, 2019), *Kulturpolitik und Wissenstransfer am Herderinstitut zu Riga* (2019), *Boundaries of Modernity: history—nature—society—the world* (2021), *Heideggers Umbruchszeit* (forthcoming 2022). Research interests include phenomenology, hermeneutics, history of philosophy (18–20 Century), Hamann, Herder, Heidegger, Klages, the history of ideas, philosophical anthropology, the philosophy of nature and the philosophical understanding of modernity.

Maja Bjelica, Ph.D., is a research associate at the Science and Research Centre Koper at the Institute for Philosophical Studies, Slovenia. Her research interests include the ethics of listening, applied ethnomusicology, community music, intercultural philosophy, and transdisciplinary methodologies. Currently, she is working on a research program on liminal spaces or areas of cultural and societal cohabitation, and a research project on biosocial philosophical literacy.

Andrzej Krawiec, MA in Philosophy, Doctor of Arts, Ph.D. Candidate at the Institute of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University; interested in art, aesthetics, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. His articles were published in

Sztuka i Filozofia, The Polish Journal of Aesthetics, Przegląd Filozoficzny—Nowa Seria, Muzyka, Ruch Filozoficzny, Liturgia Sacra. Liturgia—Musica—Ars, Pro Musica Sacra.

Alistair Macaulay is a piano tuner and Ph.D. candidate at Deakin University researching the challenges improvisation poses to the philosophy of music and action and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze.

Anne Sauka, Ph.D., is a researcher and lecturer at the University of Latvia. Anne is the author of several articles, including “The Nature of Our Becoming: Genealogical Perspectives” (2020), “A Lack of Meaning? Reactive Nihilism and Processual Materiality” (2020), and “A Bite of the Forbidden Fruit: The Abject of Food and Affirmative Environmental Ethics” (2022). Anne Sauka’s research interests include critical genealogy, eco-phenomenology, new materialism, biophilosophy, feminist posthumanism, and environmental philosophy.

Piotr Sawczyński, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Kraków, Poland. He is the author of two books: *Polityczność podmiotu* [*Subject and the Political*] (Universitas: Kraków 2016) and *Terytorium stanu wyjątkowego* [*State of Exception Territory*] (IBL PAN: Warszawa 2022), and several articles published e.g. in *Religions* and *Etica e Politica*. He has been a research fellow at the University of Chicago, Princeton University, University College London, and Heidelberg University. His research is primarily on political subjectivity, Jewish messianism, and contemporary critical theory.

Rafał Solewski, assistant professor at the Pedagogical University in Cracow, Chair of Arts Studies. Recently, he published the books *Umiar i namiętność. Życie i sztuka Janusza Orbitowskiego / Moderation and Passion. The Life and Art of Janusz Orbitowski* (2019); *Wypatrując. Idea człowieczeństwa i hermeneutyka tożsamości osobowej we współczesnych sztukach wizualnych* (2016); *Viatoris. Który pokonuje drogę. Ponowoczesny romantyzm Piotra Jargusza / Viatoris, who hits the road hard. Postmodern romanticism of Piotr Jargusz* (2016) and articles in *Art Inquiry, Ethos, Sztuka i Dokumentacja*.

Kritika Tandon is a Ph.D. researcher and teaching assistant in Philosophy at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. Her research focuses on the study of timbre. She has an M.Phil. in Theatre and Performance Studies. Her paper “Performance of Unwanted Roles: Making of a New Female Subject” was published in *Akados* (2019). As a musician, she sings and plays the violin.

Salomé Voegelin is an artist and writer who works with sound's relational knowledge capacities and engages in listening as a socio-political practice. She writes essays, books and text-scores for performance and publication. Most recently her book *Sonic Possible Worlds* (2014/21) appeared in a revised second edition, extending the discussion on the sonic possibility of the world to rethink normative constructions and fabulate a different body from its sound. Voegelin's practice engages in participatory, collective and communal approaches and uncurates curatorial conventions through performance. She co-convenes, with Mark Peter Wright, the regular cross-disciplinary listening and sound making event *Points of Listening*, and uncurates curatorial conventions to re-know the world from the connecting logic of sound.

Mark Peter Wright is an artist and researcher working at the intersection of sound arts, experimental pedagogy and critical theory. His practice investigates relations between humans and animals, geographies and technologies, observers and subjects. Working between the field and lab, site and gallery, he is committed to amplifying forms of power and poetics within the creative use of sound and documentary media. Wright has exhibited artworks internationally with galleries and institutes and published writing across numerous peer reviewed platforms. With Salomé Voegelin he co-convenes *Points of Listening*, a series of cross-disciplinary listening and sound making events.

