Resonance and/as Responsibility (How are We to Hear this Sounding?)

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Preface

*This text was composed for oral presentation: written by ear to be (read as) heard. It stages an experiment (“expérience”) with sound, and, as a written text, with the sight of sound on/off the page in order to at once solicit and perform the relationship between resonance and responsibility it seeks to explicate and expose. It begins therefore with a listening exercise consisting of the first 33 seconds of a popular song, which is not identified in the text in order to preserve the integrity of the experience (experiment) upon which the success of the paper depends. **It is important therefore that you read the text aloud and listen to the accompanying sound recording only as and when instructed to do so**, letting the rhythm and sonority of the first and subsequent listening examples, and the spacing of the words on the page, set the pace and tone of your own—resonant and response-able—reading. The sound recording is not an optional extra: it is not included as an example you can listen to at any time but is absolutely integral to the com-position (the “sens,” i.e., the meaning and direction) of the written text. **So please do not cheat!** Read the text aloud and listen to the sound recording only as and when instructed to do so at sections 1, 7, and 11. Source material and scholarly references are provided in the endnotes, which should not be consulted until **after your first uninterrupted reading** of the paper. Thank you!*

**Resonance and/as Responsibility
(How are We to Hear this Sounding?)**

1. *Please listen* [[click here](#)]

2. **How are we to hear**

this sounding
of the knell¹

giving a sign
of the giving
of signs²

without benefit
of clergy³

3. **Let us stay**

with the resonances
of this first hearing

in order to get closer
to this essence
of the event⁴

entendre
entre

comme laisser
résonner

plus que
raisonner

understanding
hearing (*entendre*)
by resonance

rather than
by reason

in order to
be more
response-able

4. A response-ability

or a decision
cannot be
founded

or justified
by any knowledge
as such

without a leap
between two
discontinuous

and radically
heterogenous
orders⁵

silence
and
sound

rupture
e(s)t
retournement

such unpredictability
is precisely

what constitutes
the condition
for ethical engagement

and undecidability
as to if and how
to respond

is the condition
for making a
responsible decision⁶

5. Let us not therefore

abandon this
first hearing

let us listen
from further away

in order to try
to be more
responsible

for our reason
as well as
for our heritage

and to try to
attune ourselves
to them

in a more
responsible
manner⁷

6. How then

are we
to hear

this sounding
of the knell

which speaks
in the mode
of calling⁸

giving a sign
of the giving
of signs

let's listen
again

in order to
try to be

more response-able
to its call

7. *Please listen* [[click here](#)]

8. **Everything is summoned**

from an intonation
and even earlier still

from what gives
its tone to the tone

a rhythm⁹

listening
we surmise

that not musical meaning
but human breathing

brought music
into the world¹⁰

in – halation
ex – halation

in – spiration
ex – spiration

re – spiration

the archē
is always
a return

everything
begins

by sending
back¹¹

rhythm
resonance
reverberation

music says
we
directly

regardless
of intention¹²

no man
is an island
entire of itself

every man
is a piece

of the continent
of the main¹³

at once unique
and in relation¹⁴

always already
in vibration
with an other

therefore
never send
to know

for whom
the bell tolls

it tolls
for thee¹⁵

9. **It calls**

to you
and me
to come
à venir

come listen
come hear
here
hear

the call
of the other
is a call to come

à-venir

to the future
to come

and that happens
only in multiple voices¹⁶

undecidable
between

one
and
other

an inheritance
is never
gathered together

is never
one
with itself

its presumed unity
if there is one

can consist only
in the injunction

to reaffirm
by choosing

the injunction itself—

it always says
choose and decide

from among
what you inherit—

can only be one
by dividing itself

tearing
it self
a part

dif-fering
de-ferring
it-self

by speaking
at the same time

several times
and in
several voices¹⁷

10. I do not

write *about*
these voices

I try to let them
take over

and keep
speech
through me

I try
to let them
speak

the music
of voices

if there is any
I do not sign it

I cannot
precisely
have it

at my disposal
or in my control

if there is
any music

first of all
I listen to it

it is the experience itself
of impossible appropriation

the most joyous
and the most tragic

so let's listen

let's listen¹⁸

11. *Please listen* [[click here, play Track 1 \(purchase required\)](#)]

12. **Listening we are**

the ideal
mother

mother as
(an) idea(l)

attending to
the baby's cry

alert to
its puling inscriptions

and

we are
the baby

listening to
the mother

for signs

of affection
and attention

for reciprocity
for world¹⁹

undecidable

between one
and other

between call
and response

separation from
and attachment

to the
mother

*mama –
don't go*

*daddy –
come home*

the voice
(of the)
music

the music
(of the)
voice

cuts
both
ways

as authority
over the other

and as exposure
to the other²⁰

a present
(*présence*)

constituted as
a between

symbolic gesture
and
primal scream

neither one
and other

rupture e(s)t retournement
séparation e(s)t rencontre
résonance e(s)t réponse

invocation
reciprocation
solicitation

the *zwischen*
reconstituted

in each fresh
meeting

and therefore
always novel

always
calling

for a
fresh
response²¹

one that
follows

not
by logic

but by
affinity²²

affect
and
résonance

13. Listening we surmise

that not
musical
meaning

but
human
breathing

brought music
into the world

in – halation
ex – halation

in – spiration
ex – spiration

re – spiration

the rhythm tone
of flesh and blood
and breath and bone

existence
hangs

on a push
of the lungs

which is at
the same time

an in – vocation
of the other²³

testimony (to)
of response
ability

of (to) approach
to (from)
the other

entre deux
la voix
s'inscrit

dans la
rupture
ombilicale

l'ombilic
e(s)t
*clôture*²⁴

l'oreille
e(s)t
ouverture

music
says we
directly

resonance
and/as
response

(ability)

14. Mother

you – me
I – you

I – you
you – me
I – you

father

you – me
I – you

I – you
you – me
I – you

children

you – I
I – I
I – you

15. This is not a game

through which
mastery
is acquired

trajectory
not entity

seems to make
the self

Freud's grandchild
keeps the self
going

through
the repetition

of throwing
the cotton reel out
to an extreme

and hauling
it back²⁵

fort – da

gone – away
here – to stay

*[all my troubles
seem so far away
oh I believe
in yesterday]*

*rupture
e(s)t
retournement*

*ouverture
répetition
écart*

*qui fonde
le discours
du sujet²⁶*

16. Music re-turns us

to the
primal scene

of loss
and
resolution

re – calls
re – members

re – peats
re – plays

re – presents
re – pairs

the sonorous
unseen
in between

of becoming

one self
and as (for)
an other

as resonance
and response
(ability)

to the call
of the (m)other

a presence
constituted
as a between

music comes
and goes

music comes
to pass

music comes
as always
already passed

the moment
it is produced²⁷

fort-da

it comes from the other
and it is addressed
to the other

it begins from the other
and it goes back
to the other²⁸

double
entendre
entre

raison e(s)t résonance
silence and sound

one and other

17. We must stay

within the difficulty
of this *passage*²⁹

undecidable
between

what is
and

what is
not

to be
or not
to be

imaginary
real
symbolic

one
and
other

the *lalalanguage*
of the mother
tongue³⁰

sonorous
unseen

and the discourse
of the father

neither one
and other

nor
therefore
avoid

the order of
the disorder

produced
within it³¹

here
there

hear
where

le son
leçon
du son

the sound
of sound

on the
threshold
of *sens*(e)

that cannot
be anticipated
calculated

scripted
or scored

18. *A jouis-sens(e)*³²

of *résonance*

that requires
a different kind
of listening

corps-à-corps

double
entendre
entre

limbs lungs
lips larynx
teeth tongues

throat
belly
chest

and a corresponding
suspension of concepts

of categories and rules
of reason and right

to rid ourselves
of the habit

of always
hearing

what we
already
understand³³

to undergo
the experience
of sound

without the
mythology of
a system³⁴

to give sound
a chance

son chance
sens chance

chance son
chanson

to give sound
the time
it needs

to speak

19. A kin-aesthetic ethic

of resonance and
as response ability

of affect
and attention

to the sonorous
presemantic
libidinal

materiality
maternity
of *sens(e)*³⁵

the
sense of
becoming

the
becoming of
sense

in the
alternating
rhythm

of the
saying

and the
said

of the
said

and the
unsaid³⁶

to allow
to pass

into
writing

what has
until now
been proscribed³⁷

as the agency
and effect of
femininity —

the originary
mousikē

of language
and thought —

the braided polyphony
coiled up
in every voice³⁸

undecidable
between

one and other

rhythm and tone
of flesh and blood
and breath and bone

the very song
that since Plato

metaphysics has
sought to repress³⁹

the history
the mystery
and the now⁴⁰

resonance and
response-ability

corps-à-corps

a presence (present)
constituted as
a between

20. This is not a game

through which
mastery
is acquired

writing it
at first
is difficult

putting the
mind on it

takes the
ear off it⁴¹

it is the experience
itself of impossible
appropriation

the most joyous
and the most
tragic

response-ability

without
finality

without
end

so let's listen

yes

let's

listen

Notes

¹ "How are we to hear this." Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, *Rogues*, 136.

² "Giving a sign ... signs." Para-cited from Emmanuel Lévinas, "God and Philosophy," 184.

³ "Without ... clergy." Para-cited from Frank O'Hara, "New Directions in Music: Morton Feldman," 215.

⁴ "Let us ... event." Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, *Rogues*, 135.

⁵ "A responsibility ... orders." Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, *Rogues*, 145.

⁶ "Such unpredictability ... decision." Para-cited from Amit Pinchevski, *By Way of Interruption*, 10.

⁷ "Let us not ... manner." Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, *Rogues*, 136.

⁸ "Speaks in the mode of calling." Para-cited from Martin Heidegger, "Language," 199.

⁹ "Everything ... rhythm." Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other*, 48.

- ¹⁰ “Listening ... world.” Para-cited from Morton Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, 61-2.
- ¹¹ “Everything ... back.” Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, *Rogues*, 108.
- ¹² “Music ... intention.” Para-cited from Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 167.
- ¹³ “No man ... main.” Para-cited from John Donne, “Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions.” Meditation XVII, 1674. *The Oxford Book of Quotations*, 190.
- ¹⁴ For “uniqueness and relation” with reference to voice see Adriana Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, pp 16, 17, 198 and *passim*.
- ¹⁵ “Never send ... thee.” Para-cited from John Donne, “Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions.” Meditation XVII, 1674. *The Oxford Book of Quotations*, 190.
- ¹⁶ “The call ... voices.” Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, “From *Psyche*,” 343.
- ¹⁷ “An inheritance ... voices.” Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 16.
- ¹⁸ “I do not ... listen.” Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, “Passages—From Traumatism to Promise,” 394-5.
- ¹⁹ “Listening ... world.” Para-cited from Wayne Kostenbaum, *The Queen’s Throat*, 32-3.
- ²⁰ “The voice ... other.” Para-cited from Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 80.
- ²¹ “The *zwischen* ... response.” Para-cited from Emmanuel Lévinas, “Martin Buber and the Theory of Knowledge,” 65.
- ²² “One that ... affinity.” Para-cited from Morton Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, 74.
- ²³ “Existence ... other.” Para-cited from Adriana Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 169.
- ²⁴ “*La voix ... clôture*.” Para-cited from Denis Vasse, *L’Ombilic et La Voix*, 16-17.
- ²⁵ “This is not ... back.” Para-cited from Marion Hobson, *Jacques Derrida. Opening Lines*, 166.
- ²⁶ “*Ouverture ... sujet*.” Para-cited from Denis Vasse, *L’Ombilic et Le Voix*, 95.
- ²⁷ “The first obvious quality of the voice is that it fades away the moment it is produced. *Verba volant, scripta manent*.” Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 59.

²⁸ “It comes ... the other.” Para-cited from Juan-David Nasio, *Five Lessons on the Psychoanalytic Theory of Jacques Lacan*, 135.

²⁹ “We must ... passage.” Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, “Différance,” *Margins of Philosophy*, 22.

³⁰ “*Lalangue* is something that one sucks, it is the maternal part of language that undergoes *jouissance*. *Lalangue* remains intimately linked to the body, and is thus eminently charged with meaning, full of meaning,” Juan-David Nasio, *Five Lessons on the Psychoanalytic Theory of Jacques Lacan*, 5.

³¹ “Nor ... within it.” Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, “Différance,” *Margins of Philosophy*, 4.

³² “Lacan coined the neologism *jouis-sense*, enjoyment-in-meaning—the moment at which the singing voice cuts loose from its anchoring in meaning and accelerates into a consuming self-enjoyment,” Slavoj Žižek, “I Hear You With My Eyes,” 103-4.

³³ “To rid ... understand.” Para-cited from Martin Heidegger, “The Nature of Language,” 58.

³⁴ “Without ... system.” Para-cited from Morton Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street*, 80.

³⁵ “Sonorous ... *sens(e)*.” Para-cited from Adriana Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 102.

³⁶ “Alternating ... unsaid.” Para-cited from Emmanuel Lévinas, “God and Philosophy,” 186.

³⁷ “To allow ... proscribed.” Para-cited from Adriana Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 142.

³⁸ “The braided ... voice.” Para-cited from Jacques Derrida, “Voice II.” *Points*, 162.

³⁹ “The very ... repress.” Para-cited from Adriana Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 142.

⁴⁰ “The history ... now.” Para-cited from William Parker, cited by Daniel Fischlin and Ajay Heble, *The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation and Communities in Dialogue*, 4.

⁴¹ “Writing ... off it.” Para-cited from John Cage, “Lecture on Nothing,” 116.

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