The Tip of Two Tongues: The Dialectics of the Voice in Art

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with an analysis of the voice in art. To approach the voice as a materiality – as sound – in art expands the discourses of art history, particularly those concerned with communication, subjectivity and embodiment. Until very recently, the voice in art has been muted by art history's ocularcentricism and linguistic bias. In order to address this lacuna, I revise art from the twentieth century from the perspective of voice understood as a materiality. This revision that is more so an initial listening provides a foundation for my analysis of contemporary works.

The conceptual frame of this thesis has been developed from a survey of the voice in art and research into critical theory on voice. This theory, particularly psychoanalytical theory, but also that of Giorgio Agamben and Adriana Cavarero, locates the voice as a dialectical medium. Aristotle's distinction between *phone* (voice as sound) and *phone semantike* (voice as logos) provides the foundation for this theory's approach to the voice in relation to two intimately related dialectics: sound and sense, and body and language. These dialectics are critical to my thesis.

In my survey I discerned key themes emerge that speak to how the voice functions in art. I understand these themes by way of four dialectics. These dialectics include: sound and sense, self and other, body and technology, and repetition and difference. The thesis includes four sets of case studies that I have analyzed by way of these four dialectics. But where relevant I relate each case study to all the dialectics that inform the thesis. The selected case studies are drawn from the diverse practices of sound poetry, performance, video and installation throughout the last century. Despite the diversity of these practices' approach to the voice, I connect them by way of key conceptual threads.

My approach to the voice as a dialectical medium is informed by the theory of Julia Kristeva who allows the two positions of the dialectic to remain in tension with each other while mutually affective in what she understands as the material process of a relation. Following from this, I approach the voice as a transformative medium that intersects the two positions of a relation, but is neither of these positions. Like the tip

of two tongues the voice is a liminal register that marks both differentiation and non-differentiation in the dialectical relation.

This thesis demonstrates that an analysis of the voice in art contributes knowledge to our understanding of communication, subjectivity and embodiment. Attention to the voice in art expands the discourses of art history and reveals the voice as a most vital and critical medium in art practice.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Introduction

> 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? What is the relationship between voice and language, between phone and logos? … In the tradition of the ancients the question of the voice was a cardinal philosophical question … [in] Western thinking on language, the voice was the arkhē of the dialectic. Yet philosophy has hardly ever posed the question of the voice as an issue …
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> Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience* (London, New York: Verso, 1993), 3-4.

Why voice?

In St Louis whilst visiting Ann Hamilton's installation *Stylus* (2010-11), I listened to a multi-layered, haunting operatic voice move through a building designed by Tadao Ando.[1] In this building one space flowed into the next, and the voice had the effect of opening up the space even further. I remained standing still, but the voice, which traced the fluidity of the architecture, transported me through the space. It was a curious experience and made me wonder how one could conceive of the voice as a medium in art. I was listening to something not unfamiliar – the voice in song. But the way it multiplied and travelled through space, the durations of its emissions and the pauses between, made it a different kind of listening experience to listening to the voice in a performance, or on the radio. It made me aware of the volume and articulation of space, and my embodiment within it. It signalled the power of the

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[1] To listen to this voice please visit, *Stylus*, accessed February 26, 2016, http://annhamilton.pulitzerarts.org/explore/main-gallery/. The sound installation was designed by the composer Shahrok Yadegari. Of the voice composition Yadegari states,

> I used the delicate yet powerful operatic voice of Elizabeth Zharoff in a composition using Lila (a computer music instrument which I have designed using basic analog principles such as delays, loops, and modulations)... The composition is in structured improvisation form for which I gave Elizabeth theatrical and narrative directions. During the recording I played Lila, controlling what she heard of her immediate past as well as prepared segments. By accompanying her I was able to direct her musically. Later I sculpted the piece into an 8 channel piece.

Please visit, accessed Febraury 26, 2016, http://yadegari.org/projects/stylus/.

voice to activate both spatiality and corporeality. It drew attention the effect of technology that could orchestrate this spatio-temporal composition.

The experience reminded me of an earlier one – that of Susan Hiller's *Witness* (2000).[2] This installation was composed of 350 speakers dangling from chords in an otherwise empty gallery. Each speaker emitted the sound of a voice relaying a story of a UFO sighting. I recall being fascinated by this work that allowed me to be so close to the speakers that the voices tickled my ear. It was not so much the content of the message that sparked my attention, but the visceral quality of the voice as vibration. The experience of Hamilton's use of voice, which recalled the earlier experience of Hiller's use of voice, was the catalyst for my research into the voice in art. I soon came to realize that it is not uncommon for contemporary artists to employ voice. This thesis analyses the work of three of them: Kristin Oppenheim, Janet Cardiff and Susan Philipsz.

This thesis was originally intended to focus on the work of contemporary artists who employ the voice in song. However, as I went further into my research I became aware that there is a history of the voice in art. This history reaches back to the Futurists of the early twentieth century and travels with the development of performance, video and installation art. As I began to think about earlier examples of the voice in art, I realized that though the voice was a critical element in these works, it had not been adequately attended to. In contemporary works where there is nothing but voice its sound cannot be avoided. But in these earlier multi-media works the voice had been muted by visual and linguistic analysis. Attending to the voice in isolation encourages one to listen to the voice more carefully when it is active in multi-media. The effect of the contemporary works with voice was such that it drew attention to the voice in these earlier works and called for their analysis. It was at this point that the thesis territory expanded to include the voice aesthetics of Filippo Marinetti, Hugo Ball, Vito Acconci and Laurie Anderson.

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[2] To listen to an excerpt from the installation please visit, *Witness*, accessed February 26, 2106, http://www.susanhiller.org/installations/witness_video.html.

The voice in art has not been completely ignored by art historians. There is a small collection of texts produced over the last two decades that takes the voice in an art as an object of inquiry. *Voices* (1998) and *Voice and Void* (2007) accompany exhibitions and present a survey of the voice in art.[3] These texts that relate case studies to critical theory on voice have been useful to the initial stages of my research. *Noise, Water, Meat* (1999) and *Background Noise* (2006) include a study of some instances of voice in art within the larger context of sound art and art history. [4] Written by sound art historians Douglas Kahn and Brandon LaBelle, these texts demonstrate how a focus on sound can produce new forms of knowledge in relation to practices previously understood as visual. Indeed, both Kahn and Labelle (like the above mentioned exhibitions) draw upon the so-called 'visual arts' in their selection of case studies and thus demonstrate the limits of this category where it encourages theorists to focus on audio-visual material purely through sight. These texts have influenced my thesis in their attention to sound within multi-media practice, rather than solely in relation to the purist category of 'sound art'.[5] *Voice: Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media* (2010) and *Sounding New Media* (2009) consider the voice outside the framework of art history within the related context of new media studies.[6] These texts draw attention to critical theories on voice and include art practice as case studies. They demonstrate that the voice is a significant concern for art history, particularly in terms of the issues of communication, embodiment and subjectivity. These three concerns, as I will explain below, are central to my study of the voice in art.

There has been a much greater emphasis on voice aesthetics in the areas of film theory, musicology and theatre studies. The discourse on voice aesthetics generated in

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3 *Voices* (Rotterdam: With de Witte, Centre for Contemporary Art, 1998) and Thomas Trummer, ed., *Voice and Void* (Ridgefield, Connecticut: Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, 2007).

4 Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999) and Brandon LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (New York: Continuum International, 2006).

5 I consider both 'visual art' and 'sound art' problematic categories for art. The former for it reflects the ocularcentric bias of art history that this thesis resists. The latter because sound art as a category has the potential to exclude audio-visual practice. I explicate the problem of this category below. Despite their problematic nature, I employ these terms when necessary to refer a distinct practice, discourse or context.

6 Norie Neumark, Ross Gibson, and Theo van Leeuwen, eds., *Voice: Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2010) and Frances Dyson, *Sounding New Media: Immersion and Embodiment in the Arts and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

these areas has informed my thesis. It is not surprising that these disciplines are concerned with voice, for the voice is readily recognized as a central medium in film, music and theatre. However, given that the visual arts draw from these areas in the realm of performance, video and sound art, should it not follow that the voice is equally significant in art history? Just as the body has been recognized as a central medium in art practice,[7] should not its extension – the voice – be considered as equally critical?

It is perhaps harder to recognize the voice as central a medium as the body for the latter came to prominence in a distinct art historical moment. The medium of the body became critical to art practice during the 1970s and was associated with the political context of the time, most importantly second-wave feminism. By contrast, the voice has sounded throughout art history in many diverse instances. Perhaps it is such that these diverse instances have failed to draw attention due to their disparate and sporadic nature. Today it is impossible to ignore the presence of the voice in art due to the fact that often this is the sole medium an artist will employ. Within art academies, particularly in the northern hemisphere, there is an interest in exploring the voice as a medium in art and this interest is connected to the surge in critical theory on voice.[8] This thesis will demonstrate that attention to how the voice functions in art of the past provides a historical and theoretical context for considering the voice in contemporary art. It will show that this recent interest in voice aesthetics is not so recent after all and that the scope and value of these aesthetics can be understood in greater detail by analysing historical art that employs voice.

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[7] See Amelia Jones' *Body Art, Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). This text is critical in its recognition of the body as a central medium in art practice and to the discourse on body art.

[8] For example, the Slade School of Art held a festival in 2009 inspired by Mladen Dolar's seminal text in critical theory on voice, *A Voice and Nothing More* (2006). A description of the festival reads,

> The Voice and Nothing More (vanm), curated by Sam Belinfante and Neil Luck, was a week-long festival exploring the voice as both medium and subject matter in contemporary arts practices. Both established and emerging artists worked with leading vocal performers and composers in an exploration of the voice outside language.

See *The Voice and Nothing More*, accessed February 20, 2016, http://www.ucl.ac.uk/slade/research/slade-research-centre-archive/the-voice-and-nothing-more.

An obvious explanation for art history's neglect of the voice is the discipline's ocularcentric bias. For example, Margaret Schedel and Andrew V. Uroskie state,

> art history has only recently begun to incorporate post-war audio culture … into its curricula in anything but the most marginal and superficial ways … The discourse of the art world … remains bound to an historical privileging of the visual as the 'noblest' of the senses.[9]

The humanities in general in a pronounced capacity since the Enlightenment until well into the twentieth century are marked by an ocularcentrism.[10] Theorists on voice and sound note this ocularcentrism to have been cemented in Ancient Greece.[11] Jacques Attali, whose rhetoric counters this ocularcentrism, writes,

> For twenty-five centuries, Western knowledge has tried to look upon the world. It has failed to understand that the world is not for beholding. It is for hearing. It is not legible, but audible.[12]

This ocularcentrism is evidenced in the language we employ. The term 'enlightenment' is telling, as are the many other terms we employ in academic discourse that associate knowledge with sight. For this reason, I often employ terms linked with sight in a self-conscious and critical mode or replace these terms with those associated with listening. This replacement causes a shift in meaning and demonstrates how the sense of listening and its metaphorical extensions can expand our discourses and the knowledge they generate. In listening, we adopt a different perspective to that of looking. The thesis will explore what this perspective entails in relation to the voice in art.

Another explanation for art history's neglect of the voice is what Christoph Cox proposes to be art history's linguistic bias.[13] Cox notes that with the development of

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[9] Margaret Schedel and Andrew V. Uroskie, "Writing About Audiovisual Culture," *Journal of Visual Culture* 10 (August 2011): 138.
[10] See Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in 20th Century French Thought* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1993). Jay traces the reaction to Western ocularcentrism in 20th century French thought that critiques the dominant regime of vision in relation to knowlege. Interestingly, this text does not engage thinking that develops from the perception of listening.
[11] See for example, Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice: Towards a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, trans. Paul A. Kottman (Standford: Standford University Press, 2005).
[12] Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3.

conceptual art in the late 1960s art history becomes dominated by the linguistic turn. Interestingly, this occurs at precisely the time that the category of sound art emerges with the confluence of experimental music and installation art.[14] Hence the burgeoning field of sound art that is concerned with the materiality of sound, rather than the post-medium condition of conceptual art,[15] is not attended to by art history at the time of its emergence, but decades later with the development of sound art history in the 1990s. Cox argues that today we are still lacking a critical theory and history of sound art.[16]

Scholars of sound art have underlined the problematic nature of the term 'sound art' for its function as a category has the effect of exclusion. [17] The category of sound art distinguishes itself from the categories of performance and video that provide key case studies in my thesis.[18] Following thinkers such as Kahn, I am interested in the question of sound *in* art, more specifically, the voice in art. For this thesis, it is not a question of what sound art *is*, but what sound, more specifically, the voice, in art *does*.

Writing on audio-visual art of the past that employs the medium of the voice does not usually ask this question, but is most often focused on the question of the image or of language. For this reason, I largely omit the visual from my analysis of audio-visual media and focus on the voice. This omission affords an alternative conception of audio-visual media. For example, Acconci of his video practice of the 1970s states, '[s]ince the image is poorly defined, we are forced to depend on sound more than sight.'[19] The term video comes from the Latin *videre* – to see, which conveys the

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[13] Christophe Cox, "Beyond Representation and Signification: Toward a Sonic Materialism," *Journal of Visual Culture 10*, no. 2(2011): 147.
[14] Ibid., 145.
[15] This phrase has been popularized after Rosalind Krauss' *A Voice on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (1999) that discusses conceptual art's break with modernist medium specificity.
[16] Cox, "Beyond Representation and Signification: Toward a Sonic Materialism," 146.
[17] See for example Douglas Kahn, "The Arts of Sound Art and Music," accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.douglaskahn.com/writings/douglas_kahn-sound_art.pdf.
[18] These categories are also important to Kahn's and LaBelle's analysis of the voice in art in *Noise, Water, Meat* and *Background Noise*.
[19] Vito Acconci in Nick Kaye, *Multi-Media: Video, Installation, Performance* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), 105. Some theorists have begun to think about video, which is normally understood

centrality of sight to the medium. Yet Acconci's approach to video reveals the criticality of sound. It is not my aim to replace one dominant perspective with another, but to focus my analysis on how the voice functions in these media in relation to the perception of listening in order to generate new perspectives that can contribute to well established perspectives. Because (as I explain below) language is inextricable from voice, I attend to the question of language in my analysis of voice. However, in order to address the lacuna in art history, I am careful to focus this discussion from the perspective of voice.

To revisit art through a focus on the critical value of the voice expands the discursive space dedicated to this art, and by extension expands the discursive space of art history, to generate new forms of knowledge. This opening up of key art historical discourses through a focus on voice provides a context for considering contemporary art that employs voice. Despite art history's ocularcentrism and linguistic bias, I draw from writing that is an exception to this trend. The texts I employ can speak to the voice, even if indirectly, and encourage a listening. I develop my perspective through reference to critical theory. In this way, I generate a conceptual framework that can account for the voice in art of the last century.

This thesis can be reduced to the following arguments:

1. An analysis of the voice in art expands and revitalizes art historical discourse.

2. To attend to the voice in art requires one to listen to it as a materiality – as sound.

3. The conceptualization of the voice as a dialectical medium provides a framework for understanding how the voice functions in art.

4. To attend to the voice in art affords greater understanding of communication, subjectivity and embodiment.

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medium, in relation to sound. See for example, Holly Rogers, *Sounding the Gallery: Video and the Rise of Art Music* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013).

My approach to the voice as a materiality and a dialectical medium, and the scope of what this means for communication, subjectivity and embodiment, will be explicated below.

What voice?

This thesis aims at listening. It takes stock of artist statements such as that of Anderson: 'why flatten words out [as text]? … You get so much more information from the voice.'[20] Or that of Acconci: 'from 1969, … the interest has really been in ... what I would call throwing my voice...'[21] But what is the voice? How is it that I understand the voice in art? Because it carries words, the voice tends to be eclipsed by language – it is the servant of the semantic. Usually, within the humanities and in everyday language, the term 'voice' is employed to express a subjective or individual perspective, opinion, position, and style. Thus voice is understood as that through which the subject – the thinking, speaking, writing agent – generates discourse. In distinction, this thesis approaches the voice as a materiality – as sound.

When I told people my thesis addressed the voice in art, they would respond, 'what do you mean by voice?'. I would reply, 'the sound that comes from our mouth.' My statement halted the exchange. For some reason to think the voice as an embodied sound is not intuitive. In many ways we remain ignorant of this medium that produces so much of our communication. As this thesis demonstrates, the voice cannot be reduced to any one thing. Even to reduce it to the idea of the sound that comes from the mouth is problematic, for we live in an era where we are inundated with disembodied voices. Further, we live in an era where it is not uncommon to hear computer-simulated voices. But to consider the voice as the sound that comes from the mouth is an important place to start. It emphasizes the voice as an embodied material production, rather than as a linguistic or metaphoric register. As this thesis

[20] Anderson in Roselee Goldberg, *Laurie Anderson* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 18.
[21] Vito Acconci in "Excerpts from Tapes with Lisa Bear," *Avalanche* (October 7-8 1972): 71.

demonstrates, this perspective is critical to understanding how the voice functions in art.

I approach the voice as a materiality – a sonic bodily emission – that may be technologically mediated. This technological mediation may dominate or even replace the sonic bodily emission, but nonetheless will always refer to it. All the voices that concern this thesis carry language, even if, in the case of the modernists, this language is made-up. I refer to the voice that carries semantically meaningful language as the *linguistic voice*. This voice as voice will always be an *extra linguistic voice*. I employ this term to convey all those aspects of the voice that fall outside of language. In this thesis I emphasize the extra linguistic voice due to the fact that it has often been muted by an approach to the voice as a linguistic or metaphorical value. More importantly, I emphasize the extra linguistic aspect of the voice as it is critical to how the voice functions in art.

Between body and language: a fundamental dialectic of the voice

Where there is voice there is language. This statement may seem incorrect. What if the voice speaks nonsense, or we hear an infant babbling? As black can only be conceived in relation to white, the human voice can only be conceived in relation to language. Nonsense only exists in distinction to sense. Babbling only exists in distinction to syntactically organized semantic word units. I do not propose that the human voice and language are opposites, but emphasize that they are necessarily in relation. This point will be clarified in the discussion of my dialectical approach below. The voice's relation to language, even if it does not carry it, will remain a constant. Our voices from infancy are destined toward, and defined by speech. The nonsensical cry of the infant is received by the mother (who has speech) as an address. The mother responds to the infant's cry with speech thus implicates the infant's voice within the linguistic structure. This scene of infancy can be extended to

all situations where a non-linguistic voice is heard.[22] In this way, the human's voice is always associated with language. This link cannot be severed.

This thesis that underlines the critical relation between voice and language, also emphasizes the distinction between voice and language. The voice animates and enacts language, but it is not language. This thesis demonstrates, following the thought of Julia Kristeva, Adriana Cavarero, and psychoanalytical theory on voice, that the voice tells us something about what brings us to language, and what we bring to language. The voice tells us something fundamental about communication that exceeds the realm of the linguistic.

Where there is voice there is body. Many thinkers on voice, including Leonardo Da Vinci, make this statement.[23] In Da Vinci's time this statement would make sense, but today where we hear the voice through the interface of electronic technologies, such as phones and computers, it would seem where there is a voice there is not always a body. However, even these instances of the disembodied voice evoke the body that produced it. Frances Dyson, developing the thought of Roland Barthes, states that with the telephonic voice the whole body of the speaker lands in the ear of the listener.[24] But even a computer generated voice, which never had the body as its original source of production, is received by the listener in relation to the body. Though the listener knows it to be a false echo of the human's resonant chamber, it still speaks to the body. The voice of the machine produces an uncanny effect; in its jarring difference from our physicality it reminds us of our embodiment. Thus like voice's relation to language, the link between the voice and the body cannot be severed.

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[22] This is even the case when humans respond to the sounds of animals. Although at times throughout this thesis I suggest the critical value of the relation between the human and animal voice, I do not explore this relation in any depth. However, I consider it a valuable area for further research in terms of the question of the voice in art. For example, Sonia Leber's and David Chesworth's *The Master's Voice* (2001) is a sound installation composed of humans talking to animals. For an excerpt of this installation please visit, *The Master's Voice*, accessed February 20, 2016, http://leberandchesworth.com/public-spaces/the-masters-voice/.

[23] Leonardo Da Vinci writes, 'O mathematicians, shed light on error such as this! The spirit has no voice, because where there is voice there is body,' in Agamben, *Infancy and History*, 13.

[24] Dyson, *Sounding New Media*, 19.

To echo Mladen Dolar, who echoes Guy Rosolato, the voice is not body or language but intersects both.[25] When we listen to the voice in art, even when the body or language are absent, both these are called into play. This fundamental dialectic of the voice – body and language – engages the attendant concerns of embodiment and subjectivity. I approach the voice as that which oscillates between body and language. To follow the logic of the dialectic that informs this thesis, the voice can never be on one side of the relation. As a medium of relationality, the voice constitutes the particular relation of both.

Avant-garde production in poetry, performance and video throughout the twentieth century is preoccupied with the transgression of and inquiry into conventional language. As this thesis demonstrates, artists in their critique of language, emphasize its embodied production through voice. Laurie Anderson however, although critical of language, is concerned with the disembodied voice and how this voice is the effect of technology. But through her emphasis on the disembodied voice she draws attention to the critical value of the embodied voice.

Beyond Derrida's voice: a context for critical thought on voice

Over the last decade there has been a burgeoning interest in the voice (as sound rather than metaphor) within the humanities. This interest was in part sparked by the revision of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of the collapse of *phone* (voice) and *logos* (understood in the context of Derrida's critique as meaning/ the signified of language) in the history of metaphysics.[26] Derrida's critique of this location of voice in the infamous metaphysics of presence within recent critical thought on voice functions like a creation myth that cannot be bypassed. It is a point of origin that must

[25] See Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2006) and Guy Rosolato, "The Voice: Between Body and Language," in *Voices* (Rotterdam: With de Witte, Centre for Contemporary Art, 1998), 107-116.

[26] See Jacques Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon*, trans. Leonard Lawlor (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2011) and Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins Press, 1997). These are the two critical texts in which Derrida collapses *logos* and voice, and argues logocentricism to be a phonocentrism, in his deconstruction of metaphysics.

be reiterated in order to orient oneself and the particular theoretical trajectory one wishes to pursue.[27] Derrida's argument discloses that the voice as the medium that carries the signifier is no closer to the signified than is writing. Perhaps this point of origin continues to be reiterated because critical thought on voice within the humanities is a nascent area that must continue to demarcate its territory. This thesis is no exception. I must echo Derrida's deconstructive findings. This is not only because at several moments throughout my thesis it provides a critical reference point, but also because the theory that is generated in resistance to his targeting of voice has provided the foundation for my research on the voice in art.

Derrida demonstrates that metaphysics deems the voice superior to writing in that the voice is held as the sign closest to the transcendental signified. This privileging of the voice is due to its placement as the origin of language, in distinction to writing that is understood as merely the signifier of the signifier of the voice, thus further from the transcendental signified. Derrida's text *La Voix et le Phénoméne* (Voice and Phenomenon) (1967) is first translated into English as *Speech and Phenomenon* (1973) and does not take the title *Voice and Phenomenon* until the most recent translation is published in 2011.[28] This point reveals the tendency in the Anglophone humanities to not distinguish the voice from language (speech). Indeed, according to those theorists who have reacted to Derrida, whose perspective I discuss below, this has been the outcome of Derrida's critique of the metaphysical voice.

In *Voice and Phenomenon* Derrida finds that despite phenomenology's anti-metaphysical motivation, Edmund Husserl echoes the privileging of the voice in metaphysics. For Husserl, the superior voice is the silent voice of consciousness – the voice sealed in the space of mental reflection of the autonomous subject. In his later text *Of Grammatology* Derrida describes the scene of this voice:

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[27] Two key examples of this critical thought in voice that are motivated by a revision of Derrida's understanding of voice are Cavarero, *For More than One Voice* and Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*. Their perspectives are critical to my thesis and will be discussed in detail below.

[28] The most recent publication of this text in English is *Voice and Phenomenon*, trans. Leonard Lawler (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2011). The new translation of the title that refers to *voix* as voice rather than speech is perhaps indirectly influenced by the vocalic turn in the humanities (discussed below).

> The voice is heard (understood) – that undoubtedly is what is called conscience – closest to the self as the absolute effacement of the signifier … pure auto-affection that … does not borrow from outside itself, in the world or in 'reality' any accessory signifier … it is the unique experience of the signified producing itself spontaneously from within itself.[29]

Husserl proposes that it is through the auto-affective voice that the subject achieves expression. Expression is understood as the unification of the signifier as a wanting to say and the signified – ideality (meaning, identity) made present to the subject. Expression is distinguished from indication, which Husserl understands as the ambiguity of the signifier that causes the signified to be absent to the subject.

Derrida reveals the voice as a sign of language is subject to the same operation of *différance* – the differential relation of signifiers and deferral of the signified – as is writing. He discloses that the so-called auto-affective voice sealed within the interior of the mind is subject to the outside – the alterity of signification that produces the movement of the signifier. Thus Derrida provides a context to understand the voice in relation to *logos* not as auto-affective but as hetero-affective. As this thesis will demonstrate, the hetero-affectivity of the voice that Derrida discerns in relation to signification can be understood in terms of the extra-linguistic relation between self and other. Although he plants the seeds for how to think the voice beyond its logocentric positioning, Derrida does not pursue this trajectory. Because his focus is the operation of signification, the voice understood as an extra-linguistic register is not attended to in his project.

Giorgio Agamben proposes the voice in Derrida's critique is not the voice as sound (*phone*) but the voice as language (*logos*). Agamben perceives this voice as a 'negative ontological foundation'. [30] As an origin of and destined to language, voice in the metaphysical schema is replaced by what he terms *Voice*. We move from infancy (without speech) to *logos* (speech, language, reason, thought). From this perspective Agamben claims that Derrida's project tells us nothing of the voice, but only of the *gramma*. He writes,

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[29] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 20.
[30] Giorgio Agamben, *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*, trans. Karen E. Pinkus and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis, Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 39.

> If metaphysics is that reflection that places the voice as origin, it is also true that this voice is, from the beginning, conceived as removed, as Voice. To identify the horizon of the metaphysics simply in that supremacy of the *phone* and then to believe in one's power to overcome this horizon through the *gramma*, is to conceive of metaphysics without its coexistent negativity. Metaphysics is always already grammatology and this is fundamentology in the sense that the *gramma* (or the Voice) functions as the negative ontological foundation.[31]

From Agamben's perspective our sound is not seamlessly linked to our being in the way an animal's voice is, but its function in *logos* takes us from experience. His thesis develops Aristotle's distinction between *phone* and *phone semantike*. *Phone* is the voice that all animals (including humans) share. This voice communicates affect – pain and pleasure. *Phone semantike* is the voice of *logos* – this is the voice that Derrida deconstructs. From Agamben's perspective, this is the Voice that takes the place of our voice. Perhaps because his ideas on voice were not published in English until the 1990s they had little influence on an expanded rethinking of voice in the Anglophone humanities in the aftermath of Derrida's deconstructive project. In the last decade however, Agamben's critical response to Derrida, even if indirectly, has begun to take effect.

In the twenty-first century Cavarero and Dolar, both informed by Agamben, have produced texts that can be considered responsible for sparking what can be called the *vocalic turn*.[32] Cavarero and Dolar argue that though Derrida may be correct to hold that the equation of *phone* and *logos* was to a degree cemented by metaphysics, this equation does not account for the condition of the voice.[33] They understand the voice in relation to what they consider its inherent materiality and relationality. Both these aspects are critical to my approach to the voice in art.

The materiality of the voice is tied to its nature as a bodily emission that is durational and ephemeral. It is sound as a *sounding* in that it is not an object, but an action or

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[31] Agamben, *Language and Death*, 39.
[32] I derive this term *vocalic* from Paul Zumthor's term *vocality* that he distinguishes from orality. This distinction will be explicated below. I do not want to suggest that this interest in the voice in the humanities is of the scale and influence of, for example*, the linguistic*, *deconstructive* or *affective turn*, but employ this phrase to emphasize how this marks an alternative perspective in the humanities and generates new forms of knowledge.
[33] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice* and Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*.

event that unfolds in time. Due to her interest in the voice in speech, Cavarero refers to this sounding as *saying*. Following Emmanuel Levinas, she distinguishes the vocalic register of saying from the semantic register of the *said*.[34] The voice is always already in relation to an other; it is defined by alterity. This is not the alterity of the signifier that Derrida is concerned with, but the other in communication – the addressee/addressor. Cavarero understands the voice in relation to its etymological link to *vocare* – to invoke. For her the vocalic emission always involves 'at least a duet, a calling and a responding – or, better, a reciprocal intention to listen'.[35] With these words, she echoes those of Jacques Lacan, who claims that all speech calls for a reply, even that of a silent listener and that even solipsistic speech is a form of dialogue. [36] Dolar, who develops the Lacanian perspective on the voice, considers the voice as motivated by the invocatory drive in relation to the other. Both Dolar and Cavarero reject the logocentric positioning of the voice in their emphasis on embodiment and relationality as critical to an understanding of the voice.

Both Cavarero and Dolar demonstrate that philosophy from Plato on registers the danger the material, ambiguous dimension of voice poses to *logos*. Both theorists assert that in as much as philosophy has deployed the voice to its own logocentric end, the voice as a vocalic register has disturbed the metaphysical enterprise of clarity, fixity and reason.[37] This thesis will demonstrate that this notion of the voice as disturbance is a key conceptual thread of the voice in art.

I relate the term vocalic to Paul Zumthor's distinction between vocality and orality. Orality involves the voice in relation to its linguistic value – what I refer to as the linguistic voice. Vocality accounts for 'the whole of the activities that belong to the voice as such, independently of language.' [38] I link the extra-linguistic voice to this idea of vocality. The extra-linguistic voice encompasses the voice's rhythm, timbre, vibration, repetition, rupture, energy, and mediation. It is this aspect of the voice that

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[34] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 26-32.
[35] Ibid., *For More than One Voice*, 5.
[36] Jacques Lacan, "Function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis," *Écrits: A Selection*, (London: Tavistock Publications Limited, 1977), 40. I explore these ideas in detail in chapter two.
[37] See Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 34-57 and Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 68-78.
[38] Paul Zumthor in Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 12.

is emphasized in poetry, music, and, as I will demonstrate, in twentieth and twenty-first century art.

Cavarero understands this aspect of the voice as antimetaphysical in its potential to disturb *logos*. She argues that Derrida has failed to address this aspect of the voice. She writes,

> Derrida forces philosophy to take account of the theme of the voice, a crucial theme that philosophy ... has tried to ignore for millennia through a strategy of neutralization ... yet the theoretical results to which Derrida's rediscovery of the voice gets reduced risk cancelling out the merit of the undertaking. Derrida's thesis on the phonocentrism of metaphysics ... ends up discouraging any type of research that aims to valorize the antimetaphysical potential of the voice ... Derrida opens the philosophically disturbing theme of the voice and ... imprisons it in the very metaphysical box that it was meant to disturb.[39]

Cavarero suggests the dominance of deconstructive theory within the academy has resulted in fixing the voice in its logocentric position. If she is correct, there is an exception to this trend. Lacanian psychoanalytical theory has taken up the disturbing theme of the voice. It has influenced the study of the voice not only in texts such as that of Cavarero and Dolar, but also in the areas of film theory, musicology, and more recently in art history. This theory has been fundamental to this thesis in its approach to voice as a dialectical medium, particularly in relation to the dialectic of body and language.

The case studies

This thesis understands the voice first and foremost as a materiality. Any conceptual import of the voice develops from first apprehending the voice as a sound. This approach echoes that of my case studies. All of the artists discussed in this thesis are interested in what the sound of the voice brings to language and how it exceeds, transgresses and transforms language. They are interested in what the voice can tell us of the condition of communication and the attendant concerns of embodiment and

[39] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 214-215.

subjectivity. As such, the voice in relation to communication, subjectivity and embodiment is a central focus of my thesis.

I have composed a series of four sets of case studies. These case studies are organized in relation to key themes that began to emerge as I went further into my research. These themes speak to what is critical to the voice in art throughout the last century. I have selected the case studies not only due to their resonance with a key theme, but also due the fact that they speak to key moments in art history and engage diverse practices. Despite the different perspectives generated by these instances of the voice in art, I unite them by way of key conceptual threads.

In chapter one I consider the work of the modernist performance poets Marinetti and Ball. Due to the lack of recordings of these artists' works, my analysis is largely dependent upon their writings in which the voice is conceived as a materiality. This is a paradoxical position. I must rely on silent texts to think the voice as sound. Because this thought provides a context and foundation to consider later work with voice, I am able to map how the influence of the early performance poets materializes.

A key idea generated by this modernist practice is the understanding of sound as a *concrete* rather than linguistic value. A second central idea that concerns their practice is the concept of the *vocalic body*. I have developed this concept from the thought of LaBelle and Steven Connor. LaBelle employs the term in his analysis of sound poetry to conceive how the body is activated in this practice as an articulating and sounding cavity that materializes speech. [40] This perspective is critical to what occurs in both Marinetti's and Ball's practice. It also speaks to how the voice functions in my later case studies. Connor's perspective of the vocalic body also provides valuable insight to how the voice functions in both the modernist and later art practices. He conceives the voice as productive of an imaginary body. [41] Connor writes,

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[40] Brandon LaBelle, "Raw Orality," in *Voice: Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media*, ed. Norie Neumark, Ross Gibson, and Theo van Leeuwen (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2010), 149.

[41] Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (Oxford Scholarship Online: 2011), 35.

> The vocalic body is the idea – which can take the form of a dream, fantasy, ideal, theological doctrine or hallucination – of a surrogate or secondary body, a projection of a new way of having or being a body, formed and sustained out of the autonomous operations of the voice.[42]

Connor's perspective resonates in particular with how I conceive the voice as functioning in Acconci's practice and also in contemporary installations of the voice. It speaks to all my case studies where it provides a position to think how the voice in art generates a sonic image of the body.

Both Ball and Marinetti are concerned with communication that emphasizes embodiment and is released from thought and rationality. I consider this aspect of communication in relation to Gustave Kahn's concept of *the enunciative drive of the poet*.[43] These artists extend the drive of the poet to engage the tropes of vibration and incantation. Their voices that emphasize embodied production expand subjectivity through what could be conceived as a cosmology of the voice. Marinetti and Ball sound the voice as merged with the sounds of the world – of animal, machine and nature. In this way the voice is dislocated from its position as an index to autonomous subjectivity.

In the chapter two I consider the voice in Vito Acconci's performance and video practice. LaBelle's perspective on Acconci's use of voice as motivated by fear and desire has provided a launching ground for my approach.[44] Developing LaBelle's insights, I consider how Acconci's voice generates a *push-pull* dynamic – a movement back and forth – in relation to both himself and his listeners. I explicate this movement of the voice in relation to the invocatory drive, where the voice functions in a call and response mode in relation to the other. This mode involves Cavarero's saying (a dynamic, embodied, and relational event), rather than the said

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[42] Steven Connor, "Voice, Ventriloquism and the Vocalic Body," in *Psychoanalysis and Performance*, ed. Patrick Cambell and Adrian Kear (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 80.
[43] Kahn calls this the *accent d'impulsion*. See Robert Michael Brain, "Genealogy of "Zang Tumb Tumb": Experimental Phonetics, Vers Libre and Modernist Sound Art," *Grey Room* 43 (Spring 2011): 100.
[44] Brandon LaBelle, "Performing Desire/ Performing Fear: Vito Acconci and the Power Plays of Voice," in *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (New York: Continuum International, 2006), 108-122.

(the semantic value of communication). I propose that the materiality of Acconci's voice is activated by a libidinal charge in relation to the other. I employ Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to support this perspective. This theory claims that we always sound for an other, even if that other is our self. From this perspective I consider Acconci's practice as performing the fundamental hetero-affectivity of the voice that is marked and motivated by a dependency of self on the other.

The writing on Acconci's practice attends to its critical engagement of both the body and language. To reiterate, the voice intersects both these aspects: it brings the body into language and language into the body. Acconci's voice not only speaks language, but its repetitions, compulsions, hesitations, ruptures and oscillations speak the body. The concept of the vocalic body is critical here. This body is not the equivalent of the body that speaks, but an imaginary body produced through the *grain of the voice*, and in the case of the art that concerns this thesis, extended through technology. The concept of the grain of the voice is another key concept employed throughout the thesis. It is adopted from Barthes, who considers the grain of the voice as the body sublimated in language.[45] Though focused on the voice in song, Barthes' perspective can speak to any context in which the voice carries language but also sounds, what I refer to as, its musical register. As I will argue, this register is evoked when the materiality of the voice is foregrounded.

In chapter three I consider Laurie Anderson's use of voice. It is at this point that I introduce the more feminist focus of my thesis. Contemporary theorists on voice note that the voice in its resistance to sense, its sensual, evasive and ephemeral passage is distinctly feminine in contrast to the idea of reason, structure, clarity and fixity that has been associated with the masculine. It is this feminine aspect of the voice that caused so much alarm for metaphysicians such as Plato. [46] In focusing my inquiry on the question of voice it could be argued that I come from a feminine perspective. Indeed, it is of interest that there are so many contemporary female artists that employ

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[45] Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice" in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. and ed. by Stephen Heath, (London: Fontana Press, 1977) 179-189.
[46] See for example, Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 43 and Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 103-116.

voice in their practice. This perspective of the feminine voice can be critiqued as essentialist. However, it is important to consider this voice, for its repression has resulted in the arguably equally essentialist masculine voice that dominates patriarchal society. This is the voice that is the target of Anderson's critique. Anderson who is a feminist artist, and whose work with voice activates a feminist position, to a degree erases this idea of the feminine voice in her practice. This erasure is amplified by her donning of the masculine 'audio mask'.[47] Anderson's practice is critical in drawing attention to how the gendered voice functions and how this voice has a particular relation to embodiment.

Anderson achieves her signature masculine voice – *the voice of authority* – through mediating her voice through a vocoder. I understand her masculine voice as what I term a *technologized voice* – the voice mediated and disseminated by technology. In distinction to the voices of the previous two chapters, this voice emphasizes the linguistic voice. The performance artists of the previous chapters perform the voice as an effect of the schism between body and language. Through resisting or disturbing linguistic value and emphasizing vocalic value, they sound from within this gap. In distinction, the technologized voice of Anderson's practice is disembodied and aligned to its linguistic value.

Where Derrida levels speech to writing in that both are subject to the differing of the signifier and deferral of the signified, the technologized voice can also be apprehended as a form of writing. This is not only because of its linguistic value, but also due to the fact that in the process of technological inscription this voice is severed from an embodied consciousness and may be freely sampled, manipulated, and circulated within the info-sphere. This technological inscription, which opens it to any number of interpretations, amplifies speech as an indicative rather than expressive value. Anderson, like Acconci performs the voice defined by alterity. Where for Acconci this alterity is constituted in the self's dependency on the other, for Anderson it is an effect of the technologized voice. The question of language is central to

[47] 'Audio mask' is Anderson's term that she employs to denote the different characters, or what I call personae, she performs. See Roselee Goldberg, *Laurie Anderson* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000): 18.

Anderson's project. However, I argue that she approaches the voice as a materiality in the way that she cuts-up[48] the messages of the technologized voice and ventriloquizes them as if they were sound bites (found objects). Further, I argue that it is the materiality of her voice – *her sound* – through which she is able to disturb the messages she sounds.

In the last chapter I consider the work of Cardiff, Oppenheim and Philipsz. These artists are concerned with the voice (usually their voice) in song installed in the gallery and public space. The vocalic register of the singing voice normally dominates its linguistic value (this is not always the case, as I will demonstrate in reference to Anderson). In the works that concern this chapter the vocalic register of the voice is amplified. Kristeva considers that we learn language through the musical register of the voice. In her thesis the call and response mode that binds the infant to the mother is less a speaking than a singing.[49] The singing voice is a voice that emphasizes embodied production. In this chapter I consider this voice that is disembodied through technology as drawing attention to its embodied production and the listener's embodiment. Oppenheim, Cardiff and Philipsz emit popular song in space. Songs carry with them, especially popular songs, identities that are attached to particular socio-historical and cultural contexts. The listener's embodiment of song in a particular spatio-temporality produces a displacement or disturbance of the song's *known* identity. This is not the same disturbance and displacement that occurs in Anderson's work where she critiques and subverts a dominant power. This displacement creates a new sense of place – what I conceive as a vocalic-body-space – that is embodied by the listener. These vocalic-body-spaces invite the listener to attend to the difference constituted by the voice in song and the particular environment and mode of inhabitation it constitutes. From this perspective I argue that the voice aesthetics of Cardiff, Oppenheim and Philipsz open the listener to an ethics and ecology of the voice.

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[48] This term refers to Brion Gysin's term *cut-ups* – a mode of collage that may be performed with written text, film and audio recordings. Anderson's key influence, William Burroughs develops this technique. I discuss the nature of his influence in chapter three.

[49] For example, please listen to Julia Kristeva, Interview, accessed February 13, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXLUsoEDYPw.

A dialectical approach

The voice ties disparate and distinct entities together. It does not merge the two positions of the relation, but affords a reception of their heterogeneity defined by the voice's movement and transformative effect. Sense emerges from sound. The self emerges from the other. The body cannot be experienced separate from its technologies. And with any repetition there is always difference. These four dialectics – sense and sound, self and other, body and technology, repetition and difference – are the consecutive themes of each chapter. Although each chapter is focused on a specific dialectic, all four dialectics as well as the central – body and language – inform the thesis as a whole.

The voice is the dialectical medium *par excellence*. As Régis Durand states, 'The voice goes back, and forth: a go-between, an intermediary. A transmitter that makes dual, dialectical relations possible...'.[50] The exploration of voice in Lacanian psychoanalysis has done much towards lending the voice its dialectical status. Denis Vasse in his concept of the umbilical relation of the voice understands it in terms of the qualities of both fusion and separation between self and other, body and language, and individual and society.[51] But as I discuss below, the perspective of the voice in relation to a dialectical economy has a much earlier precedent. Before I explicate each of the dialectics that focus the four chapters, I must first explain my approach to the dialectic.

My approach to the voice as a dialectical medium is aligned to Kristeva's dialectical thought in her *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974). Her approach differs from the Hegelian method that works to overcome contradiction and arrive at synthesis. Rather, Kristeva enables contradictions to be held in tension together, not as reified oppositions, but as mutually constitutive through the material process of relation. This perspective resonates with how I locate the effect of the voice. As I discuss in chapter three, this aspect of holding contradictions in tension together, whilst perceiving their

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[50] Régis Durand, "The Disposition of the Voice," in *Performance in Postmodern Culture*, ed. Michel Benamou and Charles Caramello (Wisconsin: University Of Wisconsin, 1977), 102.
[51] Denis Vasse, *L'Ombilic et la Voix: Deux Enfants en Analyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1977).

mutual transformation or affection is a distinctly feminist mode. Below, I examine her approach to the dialectic through an explication of her dialectic of the semiotic and the symbolic that is critical to my thesis. Despite the differences in their dialectical theory, Georg Hegel's concept of negativity is central to Kristeva's understanding of the dialectic as process and mediation. She describes negativity as a concept that binds and dissolves and recasts static terms within a mobile law whilst maintaining their dualism. She writes,

> negativity is the liquefying and dissolving agent that does not destroy but rather reactivates new organizations and, in that sense affirms. As transition, negativity constitutes enchaînement in the choreographical sense, "the necessary connection" and "the immanent emergence of distinctions."[52]

I employ Kristeva's perspective on negativity in order to consider the effect of the voice in art. The voice is a mobile register that activates particular relations, for example, between self and other. In this activation the voice does not fix the position of self and other, but affords their relation to be one of process. The voice also works in a choreographical mode that brings things together, such as the body and language, but also holds them in distinction to each other. The voice is a liquefying and dissolving agent that activates new organizations between sound and sense, self and other, body and technology, and repetition and difference. The particular relations it constitutes are determinations within a process.

In Kristeva's dialectical thought there is the idea of a threshold between two positions. This threshold marks both differentiation and non-differentiation in the material process of a relation. [53] This idea resonates with how I understand the voice in art as activating a dialectical economy. I conceive the voice as a liminality that intersects two things affording both their differentiation and non-differentiation. The voice is the point of the meeting and separation of self and other, body and language, body and technology and so on. It is at this juncture that I can explicate the title of my thesis: *The tip of two tongues: the dialectics of the voice in art*. The tip of two tongues

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[52] Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 109.
[53] See S. K. Keltner, *Thresholds* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011) for a discussion on this aspect of Kristeva's thought.

is a metaphor for the voice perceived as a dialectical medium. It intersects but does not merge two positions, reflecting their difference yet mutual affection. This metaphor presents us with an image rather than a sound. But if one imagines what the tip of two tongues feels like, one comes closer to what this threshold might be in listening. Touching is closer to listening than is looking. Where touch impacts the skin of the body, sound penetrates beyond it. The voice can invade not only the mind, but can also affect the body of the listener. To imagine the tip of two tongues touching does not produce the same effect as imagining someone whispering in one's ear. But in touching, as in listening, there is a threshold that marks both differentiation and non-differentiation. Further, the alliteration that occurs in this title causes the vocalic register to compete with the linguistic register. Through the repetition of consonant 't' language is musicalized and sound emerges from sense.

Sound and sense

Aristotle's distinction between *phone* and *phone semantike* is a foundational reference in Agamben's, Cavarero's and Dolar's theses on voice.[54] This distinction can be translated as the distinction between voice and voice as speech or *logos*. Aristotle holds that humans share with animals *phone* – the ability to signal affect – but what makes them political animals is their ability to speak and to reason. The case studies that are the focus of chapter one are preoccupied with a movement between *phone* and *phone semantike*: sound and sense. I argue that Marinetti and Ball, in their efforts to sound voice, work to transform *logos*. However, as mentioned, all four dialectics that focus each chapter also concern the thesis as a whole. The dialectic of sound and sense in particular provides a critical thread throughout the thesis, and for this reason I dedicate a large section of the introduction to outlining its scope. I emphasize the sonic aspect of the voice – voice as materiality – in my analysis, for this aspect is critical to understanding how the voice functions in art. However, because I approach the voice as a dialectical medium, it is never one thing or the other, but an articulation

[54] See Agamben, *Language and Death*, 87, Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 183 and Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 105-106.

of the relation between the two. In my emphasis on the sonic value of the voice, I draw attention to how this value disturbs, yet expands linguistic value.

The importance of the dialectic of sound and sense concerns not just the question of voice, but also the more general question of sound. This dialectic is of particular importance to sound art history and is related to the distinction between sound and *noise*. From a conventional perspective sound takes the normative position and noise is perceived as disturbance. Sound emerges as a meaningful figure from the nonsensical ground of noise. As I discuss below in relation to Friedrich Kittler's theory, this is a humanist perspective. Kittler, who thinks recorded sound from the perspective of technology, notes that technology does not differentiate between this figure-ground relation, but inscribes all noises, not just sounds that have symbolic or representational value. Sound art and experimental music, understood as engaging a non-anthropocentric or non-conventional approach to listening, often emphasize noise in order erase the hierarchy between sound and noise.

John Cage and Pierre Schaeffer both seek to perceive sound separate from its referential value and in this sense their sound aesthetics could be conceived of as noise aesthetics. In Cage's case he wants to locate *sound itself* free from its subsumption in conventional modes of representation (i.e. music). He wants one to experience sound rather than interpret it. In Schaeffer's case, he conceives the sound separate from its source through what he terms the *sound object* of *reduced listening*. In his thesis the sound object is received in terms of its distinct qualities rather than what it might mean or refer to. Both artists in their interest in sound separate from its referential capacity are concerned with sound as something concrete. Indeed, Schaeffer calls his electronic production of sounds *concrete music*. For Cage the experience of chance every day sounds enables one to perceive sound itself. For Schaeffer it is through the interface of technology that sound can be separated from its source and be listened to acousmatically[55] as a concrete object.

[55] An acousmatic sound is a sound that has been separated from its source. Thus listening is separated from the perception of looking. This term will be explicated in detail in chapter four.

This concept of sound itself is an ideal category. It is as impossible as Cage's attempt to find silence.[56] Seth Kim-Cohen underlines the essentialism of the sound itself perspective. He argues that we should not think sound in art not in terms of what he conceives of as Greenbergian essentialism, which he understands has been the tendency in sound art history. Clement Greenberg proposed that the evolution of modern art was determined by medium specificity. His particular focus was painting and he celebrated American Abstract Expressionism as the pinnacle of modern art in that this art had reduced painting to its essentials: paint – color and line – and canvas. Kim-Cohen suggests that sound art and its history, in their preoccupation with the materiality of sound, have been limited by this essentialism. He proposes that sound art history must incorporate the lessons taught by conceptual art where is it is no longer a question of what art *is*, but what it *means*.[57] He follows Rosalind Krauss' perspective that postmodern practice must be thought in relation to its discursive frames, rather than in terms of its materiality. That is, sound art must be read as a semiotic text, rather than be perceived as material phenomenon.[58]

Kim-Cohn may be correct to underline the essentialist tendency of sound art and its interpretation. However, his perspective is not useful in relation to the question of the voice in art. As stated, because the voice carries language or occurs in visual media it is often ignored. To listen to the voice requires one to attend to it as a materiality – as sound. This is not say that attending to the voice first as materiality results in an omission of its 'broader textual, conceptual, social and political concerns'.[59] These concerns are the reason for Kim-Cohen's call for non-cochlear sonic art (echoing Marcel Duchamp's call for non-retinal art). However, as this thesis demonstrates, it is

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[56] Just as Derrida's deconstruction of the voice of *logos* is a creation myth for critical theory on the voice, so too is Cage's discovery that silence does not exist. In 1951 Cage in an anechoic chamber at Harvard was aware of the continuance of two sounds – that of his nervous and circulatory systems. This experience told him that silence does not in fact exist. This story is continually reiterated by sound art texts.

[57] This point is of interest in relation to Cox's perspective that I raised earlier. Cox proposes that is it because of the conceptual turn that sound art has been neglected by theoreticians and has not developed a critical theory. It is for this reason that he calls for a theory that can account for sound in art, one developed from Gilles Deleuze's radical empiricism. Kim-Cohen argues that sound art needs to be incorporated into theory that develops from the linguistic turn. As I discuss below, I suggest that we need a more middle ground approach to sound in art.

[58] Seth Kim-Cohen, *In the Blink of an Ear: Toward a Non-Cochlear Art* (New York: Continuum, 2009), xv-xxi.

[59] Ibid., xix.

in understanding the voice as materiality and how this materiality functions in art that one can begin to discern what the voice means for these broader textual, conceptual, social and political concerns.

This thesis takes a more moderate approach to the analysis of sound that conveys the idea that whilst we cannot escape negotiating sound by way of our symbolic frames of reference, there is always an aspect of sound that escapes the grid. If this were not the case why would we listen to sound at all? Why would we not then, to echo Anderson's point raised earlier, *just flatten words out as text*. Anderson describes writing as a process of flattening out and one can develop this perspective to think of how the sounded word creates a volume – a space – to inhabit. Not only does sound create space, but as I have briefly pointed to above, it penetrates both body and mind. The affective capacity of sound is profound. To reduce it to only that which can be *read* of sound is to block one's ears to how it provides us to a portal to what Lacan terms the Real. To consider sound only as a semiotic register is to ignore its concrete, physical value. In regards to the question of the voice, language has a hold over us, but it is language activated by the voice that has the capacity to both comfort and traumatize. If the written text is to affect us, it is due to the tone of voice we read into it. There is always something that sound brings to symbolic frames of reference and there is always some aspect of sound that escapes these frames.

Despite the fact that it is impossible to dislodge sound from sense, Cage and Schaeffer in their aim to listen to sound itself, encourage the later generation of sound artists and their listeners to really listen to sound, rather than immediately interpret or receive it through habitual modes of consumption. This distinction between listening and interpreting is significant. Jean-Luc Nancy's thesis on listening proposes that in listening (*écouter*) one opens oneself to sound as an unknown entity, and relates to sound not so much as a subject (the thinking, speaking agent that intends meaning), but in the space of embodied resonance. Nancy distinguishes this space of resonance that listening (*écouter*) affords from hearing (*entendre*). Critical to this distinction is the conflation between hearing and understanding in the French term *entendre*. To follow Nancy, in hearing something we do not listen to the sound, but understand the sense. When the voice speaks, we listen to the voice as a vocalic register, or hear/ understand its words. Nancy proposes that meaning emerges in listening, in the space

of embodied resonance. In support of this thesis, he expands the meaning of sense to encompass the tripartite definition of the French term *sens*: meaning, direction and feeling. Nancy understands meaning and subjectivity as produced through the expanded ecology of embodied resonance that listening affords.[60] I employ Nancy's perspective throughout this thesis to consider how the voice in art engages an expanded subjectivity through embodiment.

Kristeva's dialectic of the *semiotic* and *symbolic* forms a central thread in this thesis. She conceives meaning as produced not only by way of language, but through the drives that both bring us to language and transgress it. Kristeva terms the organization of the drives in relation to language the semiotic. She describes the semiotic as a 'psychosomatic modality of the signifying process'[61] that is articulated 'by flow and marks: facilitation [and] energy transfers'.[62] Kristeva considers the semiotic as inseparable from the symbolic within the signifying process, which she terms *signifiance*. In her theory the symbolic is a system of signs that constitutes meaning. In distinction, the semiotic does not produce signs, but through its relation to the symbolic is productive of meaning. Kristeva proposes that how the symbolic and semiotic are articulated in a particular relation will determine the type of language and meaning they produce. For example, where mathematics is very much a symbolic practice, music is closely aligned to the semiotic. (Interestingly, when music is notated it becomes just as precise a language as mathematics – hence the affinity between these two languages.) The particularity of the symbolic-semiotic dialectic and the language it produces will in turn constitute the subject. Kristeva tells us that

> Because the subject is always both semiotic and symbolic, no signifying system he produces can be either "exclusively" semiotic or "exclusively" symbolic, and is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both.[63]

Kristeva's conception of the semiotic is critical to how I approach the voice. The semiotic can be conceived as the affective, material, musical dimension of language that invests the symbolic with energy. The semiotic ruptures the forms of the

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[60] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007).
[61] Kristeva, *Revolution*, 28.
[62] Ibid., 40.
[63] Ibid., 24.

symbolic, whilst providing the catalyst to generate new forms. From this perspective I understand the voice as a semiotic material in art.

The voice is semiotic in its gestural and kinetic aspect – its composition of rhythms, durational flows and ruptures. Drawing from the perspective generated in Acconci's practice, the voice brings a charge to language and produces psychosomatic vectors in space in the relation between self and other. The semiotic aspect of the voice expands subjectivity. It dislodges subjectivity from its association with the *a priori* unified ego – the 'I' of identity, and performs what Kristeva terms *le sujet en procès*. The *subject in process/ on trial* is for Kristeva a subject constituted by negativity – the liquefying and dissolving agent. This is the subject of the material process of the relation between the semiotic and the symbolic. The semiotic register puts the subject on trial in relation to the symbolic; the subject is both generated and negated – mobile.[64]

The artists I discuss in chapters one, two and four work with the extra-linguistic voice through an emphasis on the semiotic. To follow Kristeva's thesis, in emphasizing the semiotic, they generate a poetic language. In distinction, Anderson negates the semiotic register of the voice through ventriloquizing the symbolic. Her ventriloquization of the disembodied technologized voice, which is also a linguistic voice, produces a disjuncture with her embodiment presence as performer. This effect disturbs the transparency and automatic consumption of the technologized voice. Roman Jakobson considers poetic language in relation to the following proposition: A equals A1 and A does not equal A1. Through this contradictory proposition he conveys how poetic language produces an ambiguous relation to reality. He explains that though the poetic word may refer to something in reality, it also negates this referral and turns back on itself. Jakobson understands this self-referentiality as constituting the weight – what I would like to think of as the materiality – of the word.[65] Jakobson's contradiction proposition that he positions as analogous to the effect of poetic language provides insight to Anderson's practice. Through her negotiation of contradictions, Anderson generates irony and humour and what can be

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[64] Kristeva, *Revolution*, 110-111.
[65] Roman Jakobson, "What is Poetry?" in *Semiotics of Art*, eds. Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1976), 175.

conceived, following the thought of Jakobson, as a poetic language. Her messages, which although have linguistic value, materialize as concrete sound bites dislodged from the info-sphere. Unlike the other artists included in this thesis, Anderson does not engage the generative space of the semiotic. She perhaps more consciously than these other artists activates the dialectical play of the voice, but does so without the liquefying and dissolving agent of negativity. Where A equals and does not equal A1, she moves between contradictory positions like the flicking off and on of a switch. She registers the voice as a materiality, not in relation to the fluid movements of the body, but in relation to the mechanized operations of technology.

Self and other

The dialectic of self and other focuses the concerns of chapter two and is largely developed from Dolar's psychoanalytic discussion of the voice. Although in psychoanalysis the primary term in relation to the other is 'subject', I employ the term 'self' as it encompasses both the operations of the subject (the thinking, speaking agent) and all that falls outside of this. In this sense, I understand the self in relation to Kristeva's subject in process. Dolar's thesis is centred on the Lacanian concept of the voice as *object a*. This voice is understood as the non-material or inaudible remainder of the voice that evokes and is evoked in the audible, material voice.[66] Dolar defines the object voice as 'recognizing oneself as the addressee of the Other'.[67] This recognition is first developed in infancy when the infant recognizes its voice in relation to the voice of the mother that functions as an acoustic mirror.

The *acoustic mirror* is a concept introduced by Rosolato.[68] Extending its association with the voice of the mother, Rosolato explains that when we hear our voice we simultaneously hear it as the voice of an other, thus the voice constitutes a

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[66] Dolar, *A Voice*, 73-74.
[67] Ibid.,55.
[68] Rosolato, "The Voice: Between Body and Language," 109. This concept is developed by film theorists including, Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998) and Mary Ann Doane, "The Voice in Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space," *Yale French Studies* 60 (1990): 33-50.

fundamental alterity. The acoustic mirror can be related to other psychoanalytical concepts of the voice developed during the 1970s, the most important of which are Didier Anzieu's concept of the *sonorous envelope* and Vasse's concept of the *umbilical voice*. Anzieu considers the mother's voice as generating a surrounding for the infant and its understanding of itself in relation to the world.[69] In Vasse's concept the mother's voice replaces the umbilical cord in its function and effect of tying the infant to the mother.[70] In all three concepts the voice that constitutes the relation between mother and infant becomes the model for all other relations constituted through voice. Within psychoanalytic theory the voice is always already hetero-affective and this hetero-affectivity of the voice is first developed in the mother-infant relation.

Dolar writes of the criticality of the voice in the constitution of subjectivity, whilst underlining the ocularcentrism that has resulted in the failure to appreciate this criticality. Here, he absorbs the ideas of the earlier psychoanalytic theorists mentioned above:

> Lacan ... isolate[d] the gaze and the voice as the two paramount embodiments of object petit a, but his early theory has given unquestionable privilege to the gaze as the paradigmatic instance of the Imaginary... Yet the voice can be seen in some sense even more striking and more elementary: if the voice is the first manifestation of life, is not hearing oneself, and recognizing one's own voice, thus an experience that precedes self-recognition in a mirror? ... is not the mother's voice the first problematic connection to the other, the immaterial tie that comes to replace the umbilical cord...[71]

The voice that is a fundamental medium of communication between mother and child gets caught in the mechanism of the drive that orients the infant in relation to the mother. The voice that wants to speak/ signify – *vouloir dire* – is the voice understood in relation to desire. [72] Desire brings us to language, but cannot be fulfilled by language. This wanting to say (an aiming towards meaning) is marked by the drive that produces the ceaseless, automatic mode of the voice. This intersection between a

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[69] See Didier Anzieu, *The Skin Ego* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
[70] Vasse, *L'Ombilique et la Voix*.
[71] Dolar, *A Voice*, 39.
[72] *Vouloir dire* in French means both 'to want to say' and 'to mean'. This connection is critical to the psychoanalytical relation of speech to desire.

wanting to say, and a continuous automatic saying is at the heart of Acconci's practice with voice.

Dolar states that the voice emerges as a pivotal object of the drive when it is divorced from meaning. The drive 'does not follow a signifying logic but rather, turns around the object'.[73] Further Dolar understands that all objects of the drive operate according to excessive incorporation and expulsion.[74] The drive is that which makes us repeat the particular movement of the voice. I understand the repetitious movement of Acconci's voice as a push and pull dynamic – a movement towards and away from something. From this perspective I argue that Acconci's voice, which performs an attraction and repulsion in relation to the other, performs the operations of the invocatory drive.

Although the dialectic of the self and other focuses the concerns of chapter two, it also speaks to certain aspects of chapters three and four. Anderson ventriloquizes the voices of the media and amplifies the alterity of the voice through its dislocation from embodied consciousness. In this way, she does not perform the hetero-affectivity of the voice, for she sounds as if she is a machine. But the effect of her voice points to how this voice might be embodied by the listener as an alterity. Thus Anderson indirectly engages the hetero-affective voice. In the last chapter the idea of the hetero-affectivity of the voice is evoked where I understand the voice in song as echoing the voices that have sung the song before it. However, as in the case of Anderson, the hetero-affective voice is not directly engaged in these works for they do not sound the subject. Rather, through voice, the contemporary works produce concrete, visceral environments. In the case of the first chapter, the hetero-affectivity of the voice can be thought in terms of how Marinetti embodies and echoes his acoustic environment.

[73] Dolar, *A Voice*, 71-2.
[74] Ibid., 81.

Body and technology

I employ the verb 'to signal' throughout this thesis in order to convey how the voice does not function in the same way as a sign within the symbolic realm. My use of this term is drawn from two contexts. First, Jean-François Lyotard employs the term in his understanding of voice as communication in 'in its pure communicability'. He states, '[p]hone is a semeion, a signal. It is not the arbitrary sign that takes the place of the thing … it is sense itself insofar as sense signals itself.'[75] This perspective is linked to Aristotle's understanding of *phone* in distinction to *phone semantike*. The voice as signal in this context is an expression of the affective body, which relates to the Kristeva's semiotic. I have also drawn this term from the posthuman perspective of Kittler that draws from information theory, namely Claude Shannon's theory that is concerned with signal processing rather than the semantic content of a message. This perspective is focused on the material process and effect of communication through the structures of technology.[76] The voice as signal, from both the perspective of the body and the perspective of technology, is the voice as a materiality. Both perspectives distinguish the concrete register of the voice from its semantic value. In this sense the voice as signal is an extra-linguistic voice.

The dialectic of the body and technology is relevant to all four chapters. In the first chapter I understand the voice as an embodied production that emphasizes the vocalic apparatus. The significance of technology in the practice of Marinetti and Ball can be considered in relation to their interest in distancing sound from sense. For Kittler, writing can only record speech 'through the bottleneck of the signifier' and thus the Real (he is informed by Lacan) of the voice escapes the alphabetic coding performed by writing.[77] However, the phonograph can record the symbolic and everything that escapes this grid – noise. Though the early performance poets did not employ this

[75] Jean-François Lyotard in Adrienne Janus, "Listening: Jean-Luc Nancy and the "Anti-Ocular Turn in Continental Philosophy and Critical Theory," *Comparative Literature* 63, no. 2 (2011): 191-2.
[76] Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Withrope-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Standford University Press, 1999). His theory that is concerned with the material analysis of technological media is referred to in more detail in chapter three.
[77] Kittler, *Gramophone,* 4.

new technology,[78] its ability to register noise or concrete sound would have influenced their work with nonsensical sounds.[79] In chapter two, technology affords Acconci distance from his listeners whilst he engages a level of intimacy through his libidinal explorations with voice. Further, the effect of technology appears to have invaded his body, where his repetition functions like a form of automatic mechanization.[80]

The effect of technology on communication and its relation to (dis)embodiment is the focus of chapter three. I consider Anderson's work through reference to the two critical media theorists, Marshall McLuhan and Kittler. I understand Anderson's work as an embodied performer in line with Mcluhan's more humanist perspective that media are 'the extensions of man.'[81] However, I propose the effect of her ventriloquy of the technologized voice is in line with Kittler's 'radical posthumanism'[82] that positions 'so-called Man' as the effect of technology.[83]

The dialectic of the body and technology is significant to the contemporary works I analyse in terms of the effect of the acousmatic voice in space. I consider how the disembodied voice, produced through the interface of technology, sounds the grain of the voice (the sonic image of the body). I understand this voice's extension in space as activating the embodiment of the listener. Following the logic of the dialectic, the voice is neither technology nor body, but intersects both to produce a particular material relation.

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[78] Marinetti did in fact record his later work. The recording of his work that I refer to in this thesis is a later version of an earlier work.
[79] I explore this point with more detail and evidence in chapter one.
[80] Acconci is interested in conflating the idea of voice and consciousness with the automatic mode of technology. In his video piece *Face Off* (1973) Acconci performs a relation with his recorded voice that he plays on a tape recorder. The recorded voice reveals his intimate secrets. Acconci responds to the recorded voice and shouts such things as 'no, no, no, no, no!' or 'don't say it!' to cover over the voice of the tapeplayer. In performing the recorded voice as going against his will, Acconci collapses this voice with the idea of automatic mechanization. Unfortunately, I do not have the space to analyze this aspect of his work in the thesis, but I think it would be a valuable area for furher research.
[81] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (London: Routledge, 1964), 3.
[82] This is Nicholas Gane's term. See Nicholas Gane, "Radical Post-Humanism: Friedrich Kittler and the Primacy of Technology," *Theory, Culture & Society* 22, no.3 (2005): 25-41.
[83] Kittler refers to the human as 'so-called Man' throughout his text *Gramophone* in order to displace the anthropocentric subject, and to convey the fact that he understands communication from the perspective of technology, rather than from the perspective of the human.

Repetition and difference

The voice repeats not only words but also the voices of others. In this repetition the voice produces difference. The poststructural dictum that *we are spoken by language*[84] can be reversed if we approach language and subjectivity from the perspective of the voice.[85] The voice that repeats also produces difference because it is singular in its nature as an embodied and technologized emission. (Of course, as a technologized emission the singularity of the voice can be multiplied.)

In chapter one the voice's repetition with difference produces the particular rhythms that compose the sound poems. I consider these rhythms as sounding and sounded by the vocalic body. This semiotic register of the voice is amplified in Acconci's performances. In both the early poets' and later artist's work difference is constituted through the particular vocalic bodies they sound. In Anderson's performances, the semiotic register is neutralized. Repetition occurs in her mode of citation that subverts the authoritarian message and also performs the effect of the technologized voice. This subversion and performance are instances of difference. Difference is generated by the narrator's voice that infuses its *tissue of quotations*[86] with irony and humour.

In all chapters difference and repetition are understood a form of echolalia. The model of echo is critical to chapter four. Drawing from Cavarero, I conceive the voice in its

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[84] Both Lacan and Derrida are two key theorists associated with this perspective. Despite the fact that the premise that we are spoken by language is closely associated with poststructuralist theory, the idea emerges in structural theory. Mary Klages writes,

> Structuralism argues that any piece of writing, or any signifying system, has no origin, and that authors merely inhabit pre-existing structures (langue) that enable them to make any particular sentence (or story)--any parole. Hence the idea that "language speaks us," rather than that we speak language. We don't originate language; we inhabit a structure that enables us to speak; what we (mis)perceive as our originality is simply our recombination of some of the elements in the pre-existing system. Hence every text, and every sentence we speak or write, is made up of the "already written."

See Mary Klages, *Structuralism/Poststructuralism*, accessed Febraury 14, 2016, http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~sflores/KlagesPoststructuralism.html. I will demonstrate that this idea emerges in early 20th century avant-garde practice. Artists such as Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara propound similar statements.

[85] Cavarero develops a similar perspective in *For More than One Voice*.

[86] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. and ed. by Stephen Heath, (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 146.

repetition of song as activating the *singular-plural* dynamic of the voice.[87] The voice generates difference in its embodied technologized emission, but it is also the product of the repetition of many voices. The voice always sounds in relation to an other. Again drawing from Cavarero, I recast Ovid's Echo so that she no longer sounds her tragic fate, but generates a creative and ethical currency.[88] Following LaBelle's perspective, I conceive echo as a material register – a resonance. An echo repeats what has sounded, but also produces a divergence from this sounding.[89] Through the materiality of echo I conceive an ethics and ecology of voice.

A summary of key objectives and towards modernist practice with voice

This thesis demonstrates the value of attending to the voice as a materiality. I show that this attention generates new knowledge and expands the discourse of art history. To approach the voice as a materiality requires the perception of listening. In my study of the voice in art I draw upon diverse practices and contexts of the last century. I distinguish the different intentions and outcomes of these practices and how their specific approach to voice speaks to the particular art historical moment they are working within. Each set of case studies constitutes a different question of the voice. However, I unite the case studies by key conceptual threads. I develop a discourse to account for an understanding of the voice in art as both a collection of diverse perspectives, as well as a material and conceptual continuum. This discourse is generated from my conception of the voice as activating a dialectical economy. Through this approach I explore how the voice in art opens up new space to conceive the key art historical concerns of communication, subjectivity and embodiment. I demonstrate how a study of the voice in art generates knowledge in relation to these three areas, not only in terms of the question of art, but experience more generally.

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[87] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 190-194.
[88] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 165-172.
[89] Brandon LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life* (New York, London: Continuum, 2010), 40.

In the next chapter I consider what Marinetti and Ball contribute to voice aesthetics. I begin to develop a discourse to consider the voice as a concrete register. I introduce the concept of the vocalic body to understand the effect and function of this voice. Through their modes of vibration and incantation, the modernist artists resist rational language and foreground embodiment. In my discussion of their work it becomes clear that their voice aesthetics cannot be understood within linguistic-centric frameworks. Rather, what is needed is an approach to voice that can account for it as a materiality. This thesis works to develop such an approach.

Chapter 1. The Voices of Marinetti and Ball: Between Sound and Sense

Filippo Marinetti and Hugo Ball are the two key exponents of Futurist and Dada sound poetry. Marinetti is responsible for the birth of Italian Futurism in Milan in 1909. Hugo Ball initiates Dada at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich in 1916. Futurism is a pro-war, fascist movement. Dada is anti-war and anarchistic. Despite the extremes in the movements' motivations, Futurism has a critical influence on Dada sound poetry. Both Futurist and Dada sound poetry break with conventional performance and language and emphasize embodied production. This practice is often contextualized as foundational in anthologies of performance art. Similarly, I position this practice that critiques language and emphasizes embodied production as foundational to my study of the voice in art. Despite the fact that these artists are canonized in modernist history, I propose that to approach their art from the perspective of voice expands the discourse of this history and provides a platform to consider later works with voice.

In their critique of language and their concern for embodiment, these artists approach the voice as a concrete sound, which generates and is generated by what I conceive of as the vocalic body. These two ideas – the voice as concrete and the vocalic body – remain relevant to the voice in art throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. Both these aspects of the voice in art dislodge the voice from the idea of it as an index to an autonomous and intentional subject. This perspective remains critical to the development of the voice in art. These ideas demonstrate how the voice in art conveys communication as grounded in embodiment – the relation between self and world – and how language develops from this ground.

The modernist approach to the voice as concrete is distinguished from the conventional understanding of the voice as a linguistic value – a sign referring to something other than itself. This approach can be understood in the larger context of avant-garde performance at the turn of the nineteenth century. In this context, practitioners and theorists reject the conventions of theatre that cause performance to be driven by the text and concerned with expressing the psychology of characters. In

distinction to these conventions, the new performance generates a language from the raw materials of light, sound, and bodily gesture. Marinetti and Ball, who conceive of the voice as a material currency distinct from language, work within this context. [90]

A critical trope in Marinetti's aesthetics is vibration and in Ball's, incantation. Both tropes depart from conventional language and engage an expanded subjectivity. In both artists' voice aesthetics the auto-affective voice of the rational subject sealed in the circuit of mental reflection is displaced by a voice that sounds an embodied relation to the world. From a contemporary perspective their aesthetics initiate an understanding of communication as posthuman. In both artists' work the *phone* has greater value than the *phone semantike*. Thus their voices operate more like signals than as signs.

This thesis argues that the voice as a dialectical medium in art cannot be conceived as the ideal category of sound itself, but oscillates between sound and sense. This chapter considers how the voice in Marinetti's and Ball's aesthetics negotiates this dialectic. These artists resist sense and work to bring the voice closer to its concrete value as sound. However, in emphasizing sound over sense, *phone* over *logos*, these artists arrive at a new sense. As Kristeva proposes, the semiotic generates the symbolic.

Marinetti's gramophonic voice

The sound of the propellers and the gunfire at the battle of Adrianopoli (1912 –13) cause Marinetti's 'destruction of syntax'[91] and result in what he terms *parole in libertà* (words in freedom). In this poetry words are not linked together within the

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[90] See Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, trans. Sasky Iris Jain (New York: Routledge, 2008), 31 – 34. Fischer-Lichte states that the first performative turn did not occur in the 1960s, but at the turn of the century with the establishment of 'theatre studies' and 'ritual studies' where there was emphasis on real bodies in real spaces. Marinetti's and Ball's interest in the concrete elements of performance rather than language and psychology also occurs in the performance aesthetics of such artists as Wassily Kadinsky and Antonnin Artaud.

[91] F.T Marinetti "Destruction of Syntax – Wireless Imagination – Words in Freedom," in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. Umbro Apollonio (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 95-107.

syntax of a sentence, but stand alone as free floating units. In this respect, Marinetti breaks with *logos* for *logos*, as its etymology tells us, is concerned with binding.[92] To echo his rhetoric, in this poetry words are ejected from their logical links and flung like speeding weapons into the atmosphere.[93] Marinetti's experience as a war reporter at the battle of Adrianopoli results in his poem *Zang Tumb* (1913).[94] In this poem through onomatopoeia Marinetti echoes the sounds of warfare. War dramatically changes acoustic space. In many ways the key sensory experience of early twentieth century warfare was not visual (because who could see amongst the dust and dark of the trenches) but sonic.

Marinetti approaches the word as concrete through his emphasis on the vocalic register over linguistic value. His onomatopoeia is a sonic mimesis of the object it refers to. For this reason, he is criticized for acting like a gramophone. Henry Newbolt in 1914 writes,

> [W]hereas [Marinetti] mimics and declaims, the [proper] poet does something quite different. The poet changes the water of experience into the wine of emotion, not by the *tones of his voice*, but by the magic of ordered language. He does not give you the *elements of matter and nervous excitement for you to make of them what you can*; he gives you his own intuition already made, his own world already created … when the *vibrations of the voice* have long since passed into silence. *The power of the Futurist … is gramophonic*, and it has the limitations of the gramophone. [95]

Although it is his aim to denigrate Marinetti's method, Newbolt, in his association of Marinetti to a gramophone, draws attention to the criticality of the voice in the poet's aesthetics. When the phonograph and later gramophone are invented they are closely

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[92] Cavarero writes, 'The word *logos* derives from the verb *legein*. From Ancient Greek, the verb means both "speaking" and "gathering," "binding," "joining."' See Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, 33.
[93] F.T. Marinetti, "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature," in *Marinetti: Selected Writings*, ed. R.W. Flint (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972), 84-85.
[94] Please listen to *The Battle of Adianopoli* (1926), accessed February 26, 2016, http://www.ubu.com/sound/marinetti.html. Please note this is a later recording of the poem *Zang Tump Tumb* (1913).
[95] Henry Newbolt, in Brain, "Genealogy of "Zang Tumb Tumb"', 108. My emphasis.

associated with the voice, more so than any other sound, due to the fact that this technology is first intended to record the voice.[96]

If Marinetti received Newbolt's criticism he would have embraced it, for he rejects conventional aesthetics and aims to engage the modern sensorium transformed by the new technological environment.[97] *Parole in libertà* is an outcome of this environment and change in sensibility. It is both a method to access this environment and express it. To follow Newbolt's critique, Marinetti does not so much intentionalize reality through a poetic consciousness, but echoes it. He offers sounds – 'matter and nervous excitement' – 'to make of them what you can' rather than 'his own intuition already made … when the vibrations of the voice have long since passed into silence.' Newbolt's criticism amplifies Marinetti's approach to the voice as a concrete register.

In their discussion of what the term concrete means in relation to Futurist performance, Michael Kirby and Victoria Nes Kirby write,

> If a thing is experienced for its own sake rather than for its references and implications, it may be considered to be concrete: it is "there" rather than referring to something that is not there. A performance or an element of that performance, therefore, can be thought of as being concrete to the extent that it maximizes the sensory dimensions and minimizes or eliminates the intellectual aspects. [98]

Newbolt's conception of how Marinetti works with sounds to make of them what you can, freed from intentionalizing consciousness, resonates with Cage's later project of sounds themselves. Cage wants to isolate sounds themselves so that one can, to follow Nancy's distinction, really listen (*écouter*) to them. To listen to sounds is to

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[96] In a letter written in 1878 Thomas Edison listed 'ten ways in which his invention was to benefit mankind'. Eight of these ways involved the recording of the voice. See Amy Lawrence, "The Pleasures of Echo: The Listener and the Voice," *Journal of Film and Video* 40, no. 4 (Fall 1988): 3-4.

[97] Marinetti states:

> Futurism is grounded in the complete renewal of human sensibility brought about by the great discoveries of science. Those people today who make use of the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the train, the bicycle, the motorcycle, the automobile … do not realise that these various means of communication, transportation and information have a decisive influence of their psyches.

Marinetti, "Destruction of Syntax," 96.

[98] Michael Kirby and Victoria Nes Kirby, *Futurist Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986), 20-21.

experience them as material, acoustic properties, as opposed to hearing/ understanding (*entendre*) them through representational and referential economies. When we hear the voice in order to understand the semantic content of the words it carries we do not listen to the voice. It has already *passed into silence*.

Marinetti's sound poetry opens to a mode of listening that becomes key in later sound art where the listener is encouraged to attend to sound as, to employ Umberto Eco's concept, an *open work* and to complete the work according to her own consciousness.[99] Marinetti's concern, however, is not so much to encourage his listener's conscious participation, as to affect his listener. He works with the voice's potential to produce sensation. In line with the Futurist ethos, it is Marinetti's aim to shock and enervate his listener. This approach to the voice as an affective currency is continued in Acconci's performance work. Like Marinetti, Acconci aims to *do* something with the voice as a concrete register, rather than merely refer to something through linguistic value. In contemporary works with voice, as I explore in the last chapter, this affective currency generates an ethics and ecology of the voice.

What Newbolt considers a limitation – the emphasis on the vibrations of the voice – is central to Marinetti's aesthetic. Through the vibrations of the voice Marinetti aims to echo the vibrations of the universe.[100] This aim denotes a departure from the anthropocentric, humanist positioning of the voice as expressive of an autonomous, intentional subjectivity. Newbolt's attempt to diminish Marinetti's reputation as a poet by labelling him a gramophone is indicative of how Marinetti's voice is received less as a communication of human consciousness and more as a machine that sounds.

Marinetti's gramophonic voice can be compared to Kittler's perspective on the phonograph. For Kittler, the phonograph captures the Lacanian Real where it records all sounds of the voice and the world at large, not just those that have a linguistic or

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99 Umberto Eco, "The Poetics of the Open Work," in *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, ed. Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner (New York, London: Continuum, 2006), 167-165.
The relation between sound art and Eco's concept of the *open work* will be discussed again in more detail in the last chapter.

100 See Marinetti, "Geometric and Mechanical Splendor and the Numerical Sensibility," in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. Umbro Apollonio (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 158 and Marinetti, "Destruction of Syntax," 103, for examples of this perspective.

representational value, but also those that *escape the bottleneck of the signifier*.[101] Following the point made in the introduction to this thesis, sound that has a semantic value can be understood as the figure and noise can be understood as the ground. The phonograph does not discern the figure/ground relation as do human ears, and thus erases the hierarchy between the two. The phonograph inscribes not just intended, representational sounds, but noises in general. Further, the phonograph does not distinguish between human and non-human sounds. This point is critical to Marinetti's voice aesthetics. However, Marinetti's gramophonic voice departs from Kittler's perspective on the phonograph due to the fact that it is selective. *Parole in libertà* amplifies the ground of noise over the figure of sound and thus reverses the logocentric, anthropocentric hierarchy.

Marinetti's focus on noise inspires Luigi Russolo's manifesto 'The Art of Noise' (1913) and his aesthetic of *bruitisme*.[102] *Bruitisme* celebrates the noise of the technological transformation of society: the introduction of cars, planes, electricity, radios, phonographs, gramophones, trams, trains and the sounds of the developing industrial environment. *Bruitisme* also incorporates noises in general, noises – animal or human – that have been ignored from the point of view of aesthetics due to their non-linguistic or non-representational nature. In his manifesto Russolo argues that Western society has failed to register the potential of noise to be music. His rhetoric is echoed by Cage several decades later who calls for us to listen to all sounds, not just those intended, but chance, everyday sounds, as music. The voice figures substantially in Russolo's noise aesthetics. The particular voice that he is interested in is Aristotle's *phone*. This is a voice that is shared by the animals – a voice of *shrieks, moans, howls* and *groans* – rather than voice as *logos* – the political voice that can reason. Like Marinetti's voice aesthetics, Russolo's sound aesthetics, anticipate a posthuman perspective where there is no hierarchy between the sounds of animals, humans, and machines.

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[101] Kittler, *Gramophone*, 4.
[102] Luigi Russolo, "The Art of Noise," in Michael Kirby and Victoria Nes Kirby, *Futurist Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986), 168, 171-172.

Marinetti's gramophonic voice transmits the voice as a concrete register and echoes the sounds of his environment. Understanding his voice from the perspective of the machine dislodges the voice from its position as an index to a rational subject. This idea and also the idea of the voice functioning in an echoic, concrete mode are carried throughout all works included in this thesis. Though these works have different intentions and outcomes, in all instances this mode of working with the voice emphasizes a distinction between the voice and its linguistic value. Marinetti's approach to the voice as a concrete, echoic mode is an attempt to register the new technological environment and its dynamism.

The collapse of meaning into sound

The association between Marinetti's sound-poems and the effect of the gramophone points to the influence of the recently invented phonograph upon both the sciences and the arts. The phonograph has a particular influence on *vers libre*, which is a critical influence on Marinetti's poetry. Marinetti's mentor Gustave Kahn is the co-creator of *vers libres* (*free verse* – note the link to *words in freedom*). This form, which emerges in 1886, abandons conventions in poetry regarding meter and rhyme and follows the rhythm of human speech. The new phonographic recording method that shifts the study of language as a 'textual artefact' to language as a 'living object' influences *vers libre* in its emphasis on the sound and rhythm of language. In this poetry rhythm eclipses the importance of linguistic content and moves from a textual artform to an'art of the voice and ear'.[103]

Kahn conceives this new form of poetry as generated by and generating what he terms the *accent d'impulsion* (the enunciative drive of the poet).[104] The enunciative drive can be related to my understanding of the voice as a semiotic register. In this register the rhythmic, musical, affective aspect of language is produced through the

[103] Brain, "Genealogy of "Zang Tumb Tumb"," 90.
[104] Kahn in Ibid., 100.

compulsions and repetitions of the voice motivated by the libidinal drives. This perspective is critical to both Ball's voice aesthetics, and to the work of Acconci.

Robert Michael Brain proposes that *parole in libertà* can be understood as an extension of *vers libre* and its project 'to collapse meaning into the properties of sound'.[105] He states that the later poetry finished this project by removing all 'conventions left in verse and the arts of declamation [and staged] the raw, naked, amplified human sensorium'.[106] In suggesting that both forms of poetry collapse meaning into sound, Brain conveys the idea that in these forms meaning is no longer a concept arbitrarily connected to sound (as in the condition of language according to Saussure).[107] Meaning is constituted not by the acoustic signifier that stands in for an absent concept and referent, but is made *present* within the material properties of sound.

This idea of collapsing meaning into sound can be related to the idea of the voice as concrete, discussed above, and also Erika Fischer-Lichte's concept of *meaningful materiality*. Fischer-Lichte considers that materiality produces 'sensual impressions' upon the experiencer and these impressions 'can be equated to states of consciousness but not to linguistic meanings'.[108] One can understand Marinetti's onomatopoeia in its echoing of gunfire – 'ZZZang tumb tun ... tarataratatatatata' – as producing a sensual impression that is simultaneously a state of consciousness, rather than conveying linguistic meaning. But it is not as simple as a collapse of meaning into materiality, for the state of consciousness produced by the sensual impression of the materiality will inspire associative meanings. Thus, following the logic of the dialectic that informs this chapter, sound cannot be separated from sense. Rather, this relation is mobile, and mutually formative.

Through onomatopoeia Marinetti asks his listener to experience the sensual impression of sound – the vibrations of the voice – rather than her knowledge of a

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[105] Brain, "Genealogy of "Zang Tumb Tumb"", 91.
[106] Ibid.
[107] This perspective will be explicated below.
[108] Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 142.

language that conveys learnt concepts. He approaches the voice in terms of sensation rather than intellectualization. In onomatopoeia the voice does not produce an abstract sound (what Saussure calls a *sound-image*) as in 'cat,' but generates concrete sounds. Conventional language requires one to hear (*entendre*) according to the rules of the system (what Saussure terms *langue*) and move habitually from the signifier to the signified (or to another signifier) – the concept of the cat (that which is not a dog). It asks to be understood. Onomatopoeia as it occurs in Marinetti's poetry encourages one to listen (*écouter*) to sound – to receive its vibrational, material effect as affect.

This distinction can also be thought in terms of Henri Bergson's *attentive* and *habitual recognition*.[109] The latter refers to a situation where one perceives something according to one's habitual economies of interest, as in the bottle that holds water and from which one can drink. In the case of the former, one perceives the bottle as defamiliarized in its materiality. One attends to its shape, the reflections on the glass and so on, with a curiosity in relation to the sensual impressions one's consciousness takes hold of. Marinetti was inspired by Bergson's philosophy of material vitalism, which explains his interest in the voice as vibration and his understanding of it as a vital materiality. This philosophy develops a relation between consciousness and materiality that expands beyond the conventional economy of language and its subject/object dichotomy. Marinetti's statements that *parole in libertà* 'will bring us to the essence of the materiality' and 'plunge … the essential word into the water of sensibility'[110] resonate with Bergson's philosophy.

This association between Marinetti's voice aesthetics and Bergson's philosophy is important because it affords an understanding of the voice outside of a symbolic framework and within a materialist one. Within this latter framework the voice is energy and duration; it is not contained by the subject, but resonates in acoustic space. This perspective also accounts for the way Acconci's voice mobilises a relation between self and other, whilst constitituting an environment. It is also significant to an understanding of the voice in contemporary art that I conceive of as a vocalic-body-

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[109] These concepts are developed in Henri Bergson's, *Matter and Memory*, first published, *Matière and Mémoire*, (1896).
[110] Marinetti, "Destruction of Syntax," 100.

space. In Anderson's work the voice is also approached as not contained by the subject and sounding in acoustic space. But in its dislocation from the body, Anderson's voice is not registered as an energetic or vital materiality. In Marinetti's poetry, the energetic materiality of the voice is emphasized through onomatopoeia. This mode tells us how he is receiving his acoustic environment and how he understands the body and by extension the voice as affected by this environment.

The dissolution of the individual voice into the vibrations of the universe

> Our growing love for matter, the will to penetrate it and know its vibrations, the *physical sympathy* that links us to motors, push us to the use of onomatopoeia.
>
> Marinetti, "Geometric and Mechanical Splendor," 108.

For Marinetti, onomatopoeia is a mode of material exploration, what he sees as a technique with which to *penetrate* and *know* the vibrations of matter. It is a method with which to resonate with his environment on a material level, rather than understand it intellectually. The knowledge he produces through onomatopoeia is generated from this materiality. Marinetti's *physical sympathy* in this material exploration of reality conveys the idea that he is coming from an embodied point of view, where the vibrations of the environment are known through their impressions on the body. In echoing these vibrations, Marinetti sounds an embodied reality.

For Marinetti, in working from the position of embodiment as a gramophonic voice, it is not so much a question of how to *refer* to a reality, but rather how to *be* that reality.[111] Through onomatopoeia, or what could be termed vibrational mimesis, he is attempting to *be* an acoustic environment. The body that receives the vibrations of its environment, becomes these vibrations and, in turn, sounds them by way of the voice. He functions like a machine transmits an environment that it has recorded. This affinity between body and machine will be relevant in the next chapter in relation to the repetitive aspect of the voice motivated by the drive, and also in chapter three

[111] Kirby, *Futurist Performance*, 22.

where the voice sounds a technologized voice. Marinetti's voice does not signal an eclipse of the human by the machine, but rather their meeting. His gramophonic voice, which sounds an embodied reality, sounds the vocalic body.

As mentioned in introduction to this thesis, the concept of the vocalic body conveys the idea of a vocalic apparatus that materializes speech, and also the idea of conjuring the image of the body. Marinetti's vocalic body is expanded not only through its echoing of the technological environment (e.g. the sound of gunfire), but also in its activation of a material vitalism that ejects the subject from its anthropocentric positioning. Marinetti explains,

> Words-in-freedom will bring us to the essence of material … instead of humanizing animals, vegetables and minerals … we will be able to animalize, vegetize, mineralize, electrify, or liquefy our style, *making it live the life of material*.[112]

He continues, 'We systematically destroy the literary *I* in order to scatter it into the *universal vibration* and reach the point of expressing the infinitely small and the vibrations of molecules.'[113] For Marinetti, the voice is not a sign of individuality, or transcendent, autonomous, contained individual presence, but rather one vibration that resonates with and is transformed by universal vibration – 'infinite molecular life'.[114]

Marinetti's interest in the voice in relation to material vitalism lends insight into how he is engaging an expanded subjectivity. His approach to the embodied subject as merged with the materiality of the world through its voiced vibration anticipates the concerns of posthumanism. A simple correlation between Marinetti's and the posthuman perspective is the meeting between human and machine. But more interesting, particularly within contemporary posthuman thought,[115] is the human as meeting the world at large: animal, vegetable, mineral and so on. By meeting, I mean to say that the human is no longer central, but part of a larger ecology. The importance of the voice in this context is such that where language produces a

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[112] Marinetti, "Destruction of Syntax," 100.
[113] Marinetti, "Geometric and Mechanical Splendor,"158. Emphasis added.
[114] Marinetti, "Destruction of Syntax," 103.
[115] See for example Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism*? (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

hierarchical separation between self and other, subject and object, and so on, the materiality of vibration does not hierarchically differentiate between these things.

The ecology of the voice that Marinetti initiates through his emphasis on vibration is continued in contemporary works with voice. These later works will not so obviously engage the posthuman perspective. However, through their emphasis on the relation between sound and environment, and between one voice and another, they encourage a departure from individualistic thinking and a more pluralistic, ecological approach. This ecology of the voice that departs from the individualism of humanism develops from an approach to the voice as a materiality, rather than a linguistic register. The voice of the humanist subject is voice of *logos*. The humanist subject conceives itself as rational, autonomous and separate from the world through its identity as 'I'. The voice approached as a materiality affords a conception of the human voice as one sound among others.

Onomatopoeia and the relation between sound and meaning

I consider Marinetti's and Ball's sound poetry in relation to the linguistic theory of the time to demonstrate the radicality of their project and its departure from the system of conventional language. This relation will reveal how these poets through voice gesture to embodiment as foundational to communication.

Despite Newbolt's criticism, it is incorrect to state that Marinetti frees himself of the poetic consciousness. It is better to state that Marinetti directs this consciousness to the particular aim of sounding the new acoustic environment. His echoing of the environment is not without agency. In *Zang Tumb Tumb* he sounds not human screams, but gunfire, and thus reveals his political motivation to transmit an idea of war as a context of technological advancement, rather than human suffering. But it is not only the sounds of this environment that he wants to transmit that convey his agency as poet. Also important are the sounds that he selects to perform this transmission.

Onomatopoeia is not as simple as a direct echoing of an acoustic phenomenon. One learns from Saussure that despite the fact that in onomatopoeic words the acoustic signifier appears motivated by an acoustic reality, the onomatopoeic relation to reality is still, to a degree, arbitrary. This perspective is supported by the fact that different languages have different onomatopoeic sounds for the same concept.[116] For Saussure this is evidence that meaning is not inherent to sound and the relation between the sound-image and its concept is always arbitrary.

As a linguist, Sausurre comes from the perspective of language. His understanding of onomatopoeia is generated from this perspective. But for sound poets such as Marinetti, language is approached from the perspective of sound. For Saussure sound serves as a secondary support to produce the sound-image which

> is *not phonic but incorporeal* – constituted not by its material substance but by the difference that separates its sound-image from all others … if I happen to call it "material," it is only in ... [order to] oppos[e] it to the other term of the association, the concept which is generally more abstract.[117]

Further, the sound-image is valuable to Saussure only in terms of its production of the signified, hence the hierarchy:

concept

……..

sound-image

Sound poetry must be considered outside this system. In sound poetry the sound-image is *materialized* and *corporealized* through the vocalic body. It is the materialization of the sound image that produces meaning. The onomatopoeic word is to a degree arbitrary in the sense that it is selected by the sound poet and this selection may differ from another poet's selection of a sound to echo the same phenomenon. However, this selection is grounded in an embodied relation to the world that receives a particular acoustic resonance. Even though sound poetry continues to employ language in the form of a collection of words, because it works to stretch or rupture the boundaries of language, and works from an embodied position, it is outside the Saussurian rules of language that define the relation of sound to meaning. This is the

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[116] Ferdinand Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, trans. Wade Baskin (London: Peter Owen Ltd, 1960), 69. For example, the French and English have different ways of signifying the sound of barking: *ouaoua* and *bow-wow* respectively.
[117] Ibid., 118-119, 66.

point that Kristeva makes when she proposes that poetic language, language that emphasizes the semiotic (libidinal, material production) transgresses the boundaries of the symbolic.

Jakobson expands Saussurean theory and in some instances departs from its major premise that the relation between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. Jakobson, himself a Futurist poet and a critic of Futurist poetry, develops this departure in his idea of the *poetic function* of language. Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of *iconicity* (where the signifier resembles the signified – it looks, sounds, feels, tastes, smells like it – as in onomatopoeia) helps Jakobson conceive of a sign that may be directly connected to its meanings.[118] He considers the poetic function of language a crucial element in the child's acquisition of language. For Jakobson this function is manifest in the rhymes children learn and in the games they play, such as jump rope and other street games, where language has no conventional semantic value (e.g. *eenie, meenie, minie moe*). Linda Waugh describes the *immediacy* of the poetic function's relation to meaning,

> Sound … in and of itself, becomes one of the patent carriers of poetic meaning: there is a kind of *verbal magic* in sound itself. …[There is] the potentiality of sound to directly *signal* meanings … the mediacy – the indirect connection between a given aspect of sound and a given meaning – ... is ... to a certain extent overcome by *immediacy* – the direct and close relationship between sound and meaning.[119]

Onomatopoeia can be considered a form of iconicity, where there is a synesthetic response to the sound of a word that produces its semantic value.[120] In this sense,

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[118] Daniel Chandler states,

> Peirce noted that signs were 'originally in part iconic, and in part indexical ... in all primitive writing, such as the Egyptian hieroglyphics, there are icons of a non-logical kind, the ideographs' and he speculates that 'in the earliest form of speech there probably was a large element of mimicry' … However, overtime, linguistic signs developed a more symbolic and conventional character … Symbols come into being by development out of other signs, particularly from icons.

See Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics*, 2nd ed. (London, New York: Routledge, Second Edition, 2007), 46.

[119] Linda R. Waugh, "The Poetic Function and the Nature of Language," in Roman Jakobson, *Verbal Art, Verbal Sign, Verbal Time*, eds. Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 155. Emphasis added. Waugh's idea of the 'verbal magic' in sound will become pertinent to an analysis of Ball's voice aesthetics explored below.

[120] Ibid., 156.

onomatopoeia produces meaning with a sensory immediacy, rather than an intellectual mediacy through acquired conventional knowledge.

Jon Erikson (employing the Husserlian terms targeted in Derrida's deconstruction of the auto-affective voice) proposes sound poetry 'operates through a denial of signification toward an ideal of the unification of *expression* and *indication*' and aims for *a language of presence*. [121] This idea of *presence* is one where the sound event is no longer 'the servant of the semantic', no longer a *'this standing for a that, but immediately a that* so free of the implications of the metaphysics of linguistic absence.'[122] From Erikson's perspective onomatopoeia can be considered a transitional stage that moves from conventional language to a language of presence. Citing Marinetti, he explains,

> [T]hough on the surface it may seem to have a close "psychic harmony" than mere verbal indication with what it represents, [onomatopoeia] still represents something, still indicates something exterior to its corresponding human vocal mimesis.[123]

Marinetti's onomatopoeia refers to something outside itself – gunfire – but this referral has been developed from an embodied point of view, rather than linguistic convention. This embodied motivation is not solely important as an aesthetic method. It points to a key argument in this thesis: the voice in art reveals how communication develops from embodiment.

As Jakobson notes, even before children acquire language they are able to echo the sounds of objects, animals and machines around them. This echolalia produces a form of onomatopoeia that helps them then articulate the phonemes that initiate them into the field of language. Jakobson states that it is easier for children to learn language through its motivated resonances than through arbitrary differential relations.[124] Erikson is correct to state that onomatopoeia as it occurs in Marinetti's poetry marks a transitional stage between conventional language and the idea of a language of

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[121] Jon Erikson, "The Language of Presence: Sound Poetry and Artaud," *Boundary 2* 14, No. ½ (Autumn, 1985 – Winter, 1986): 279. Emphasis added.
[122] Steve McCaffrey in Ibid, 280. Emphasis added.
[123] Erikson, "The Language of Presence," 280.
[124] Roman Jakobson, *Child Language Aphasia and Phonological Universals* (Paris: Mouton, 1968), 27.

presence. I understand this movement as critical for it points to what first brings us to language. Marinetti's onomatopoeia understood as motivated resonance suggests that *logos* emerges from an empathic echo.

Marinetti's work with voice that develops from an embodied relation to reality, materializes language and brings the medium of the voice to the foreground. Despite its use value to stand-in for or evoke, for example, the sound of gunfire, onomatopoeia is Marinetti's method to merge with the vibratory environment. It is a direct vocalization of the changing human sensibility as it responds to its new technological context. From Marinetti's perspective, one achieves this vocalization through one's physical sympathy with the vibrations that affect all matter. One begins to embody the sounds of one's environment through one's constant interaction with them.[125]

Marinetti's voice aesthetics emphasize the materiality of sound and transgress the symbolic. But through this transgression, as Kristeva would state, Marinetti re-establishes the symbolic. Marinetti's sound poetry locates the voice in a transitional realm between sound and sense. Despite his poetry's disturbance of syntax, semantic reference continues. However, the semantic reference of his onomatopoeia is produced by way of materializing and corporealizing the sound-image. In this process the concept is no longer superior to the signifier, for it is grounded in the signifier, which is the emission of the vocalic body.

Indeed, to understand Marinetti's onomatopoeia as an embodied resonance is to think it not so much as a sign, but as a signal. To return to Lyotard's conception of a signal raised in the introduction to this thesis, Marinetti's voice in onomatopoeia is *sense that signals itself*. Sense here can be understood in terms of the French term *sens* as both meaning and sensation, where the former is generated from the latter. The

[125] A contemporary example of this notion is Anri Sala's video *Natural Mystic* (2002) that records a young Albanian, who has lived through the Bosnian-Serbian war, vocalizing the sound of a tomahawk missile. The sentence 'I have lived through the Bosnian-Serbian war' is perhaps more semantically informative than the sound of missiles generated by the voice. However, the latter gives us a different kind of informtation – one that transmits the lived experience of the producer of the sound. This vocalic signal could convey the idea that the sound of bombs has penetrated his being. It could also suggest the idea that the constant stream of bombs has become a banal presence in his life.

sensual impression of the gunfire is received by Marinetti and then echoed by him. Ball will learn from Marinetti's experiments with *parole in libertà*, but will push these experiments even further to do away with semantic reference – the idea of referring to a specific concept or thing in the world – altogether.

The simultaneous voices of Dada

The Zurich Dadaists performed their sound poetry at the Cabaret Voltaire, a nightclub founded by Ball and Emmy Hennings in the neutral city of Zurich. It was a refuge for the artists from war-torn Europe and a space for their artistic and political expression. The Dadaists absorbed some key poetic innovations from their Futurist predecessors. Despite the fact that his politics were contrary to those of the Dadaists, Marinetti performed at the club and was a critical influence on Ball. Aside from the influence of *parole in libertà*, the Futurist technique of simultaneity also influenced the Dadaists.[126] For the Futurists simultaneity registers the expansion of the human sensorium in the experience of the flux and interpenetrations of the fragments of life. For the Dadaists it expresses the chaos of nonsensical experience, which they conceive as both the symptom of and the antidote for the new age.

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[126] The Futurist concept of simultaneity is said to have been influenced by the French Symbolist poet Henri-Martin Barzun. See Christopher Townsend, "Henri-Martin Barzun's 'Simultaneism' between the Abbaye de Créteil and Futurism: the Individual and the Crowd in Late-Symbolist Art," *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* 2, no. 1 (June 2012): 304-334. In the abstract to his essay, Townsend states,

> Barzun's theory of polyphony and simultaneity is related to the Futurist assault on the boundary between art and life, especially its performance works that explore and rely on the tensions created by different voices speaking at the same time.

The Futurist concept of the aesthetic simultaneity more broadly registers and evokes the interpenetration of different atmospheres composed of matter, speed, sound and light. Although the train, automobile, telephone and phonograph (to name a few of the technical innovations of the time) amplify and accentuate the phenomenal reality of simultaneity, simultaneity for the Futurists, more generally expresses a fundamental truth of the experience of reality. In Marinetti's words,

> Because reality throbs around us. Bombards us *with squalls of fragments of inter-connected events. Mortised and tenoned together, confused, mixed up, chaotic* … in daily life we … encounter mere *flashes of argument* made *momentary* by our modern experience, in a tram, a café, a railway station, which remain cinematic in our minds like fragmentary dynamic symphonies of gestures, words, lights and sounds. … in the Futurist synthesis, *Simultaneità*, there are two ambiences that interpenetrate and many different times put into action simultaneously.

F.T Marinetti, Emilio Settimelli, Bruno Corra, "The Futurist Synthetic Theatre," in Apollonio, 194-5.

A Dadaist work that engages simultaneity is *L'Amiral Cherche une Maison à Louer* (1916). [127] The poem was written and performed by Tristan Tzara, Marcel Janco and Richard Huelsenbeck at the Cabaret Voltaire in 1916. This poem includes French, German and English, as well as non-linguistic sounds. Ball describes it as a 'contrapuntal recitative in which 3 or more voices speak, sing, whistle, etc. at the same time'.[128]The multi-linguistic and extra-linguistic aspect of this poem is understood as reflective of the Dadaist desire to overcome the boundaries and politics of nationalism.[129] This sounding of a plurality of voices rather than one dominant voice is indicative of a shift occurring in avant-garde theatre at the time.[130]

The poem's simultaneous sounding of different voices and languages muffles linguistic significance. Andreas Kramer and T.J Demos conceive the poem's dissonance in relation to Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of *heteroglossia.* Kramer describes this concept as 'an inherent quality in linguistic discourse which cannot be reduced to … any single, authorial voice or … system of linguistic norms.'[131] Demos states,

> For Bakhtin … the "heteroglossia of language" challenged the totalitarian Stalinist forces of ideological unification, "forces that unite and centralize verbal-ideological thought, creating … the firm, stable linguistic nucleus of an officially recognized … language.[132]

The Dadaists position themselves against the dominant voice of the state: the politicians and the bourgeois consensus. In the simultaneous poem voices do not speak as one – they are not unified as a whole – as in the communist or fascist ideal of the collective that echoes the totalitarian voice. Rather, in the simultaneous poem, the noise of the texture of diverse voices speaking at once is amplified. The Dadaists absorbed the lessons of *bruitisme*. Like the Futurists, they desire to capture something of the phenomenal reality of life, its energy and dissonance. But where Futurism

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[127] Please listen to *L'Amiral Cherche une Maison à Louer*, accessed February 26, 2016, https://ubusound.memoryoftheworld.org/tzara_tristan/Tzara_Janco-Hulsenbeck_Lamiral-cherche.mp3.
[128] Hugo Ball, *Flight out of Time*, 57.
[129] See for example, Andreas Kramer, "Speaking Dada: The Politics of Language," *Avant-Garde Critical Studies* 26 (2011): 201-213 and T. J. Demos, "Circulations: In and around Zurich Dada," *October* 105 (Summer, 2003): 147-158.
[130] See David O'Connell ed. *Dada: Performance, Poetry and Art* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984).
[131] Kramer, "Speaking Dada: The Politics of Language," 204.
[132] Demos, "Circulations: In and around Zurich Dada," 150.

celebrates the new technological era, Dadaism amplifies the ideological confusion and crisis of the age through destabilizing or muting its dominant voice.

This levelling of the dominant voice through a plurality of voices activates what I conceive of, following the thought of Cavarero, the singular-plural.[133] In this regard the simultaneous poem becomes a reference point to consider contemporary works with voice. The voice thought through the frame of the singular-plural is an individual embodied emission in relation to other individual embodied emissions. It is a saying (a material-relational value) rather than the said (linguistic value). In *L'Amiral* saying is registered in the polyvocal element that weaves a material-relational register and produces an extra-linguistic effect. The understanding of the poem in relation to heteroglossia resonates with the singular-plural where both concepts engage an ethics and ecology of the voice. However, Kramer's and Desmos' use of Bahktin's concept focuses the value of the poem in terms of linguistic diversity and the different perspectives this diversity generates. My understanding of the poem in relation to the singular-plural emphasizes the materiality and relationality of the voice. I propose that the materiality and relationality of the voice becomes foregrounded because of the effect of linguistic dissonance. Listening to this poem, sense (understood as semantic value) recedes to the ground, and sound emerges as a distinct figure.

Of *L'Amiral*, David O'Connell states,

> [v]oices and sounds are layered, so that the listener comes on the poem through many ports of entry and, as Tzara says, pulls everything together through a process of association meaningful to him in particular.[134]

The plurality of voices activates an ethical relation where there is no prescribed 'port of entry', and the listener must participate in order to produce a meaningful organization of the work. The work anticipates, as does Futurist sound aesthetics, Cagean aesthetics that aim for a democratic engagement of sounds. It also sets the stage for an understanding of more recent installation art that requires the participation and selective capacities of the listener, which I will later consider in

[133] This concept will be discussed in more detail in the chapter four.
[134] O'Connell, *Dada: Performance, Poetry and Art*, 72.

relation to Eco's concept of the open work.[135] The listener of *L'Amiral* is not led to identify with any one voice at the expense of the other, but must choose where to focus her attention with the awareness that not all can be listened to or heard (understood) at once and thus register the responsibility of her selection. This point will become important in contemporary works with voice.

Within the context of this thesis the significance of the Dadaist simultaneous poem lies in its amplification of the inherent relationality of the voice. This poem conveys the fact that there is never simply one voice, but rather multiple and diverse voices that sound in relation to each other. To understand the voice from only one perspective, whether from the position of the humanist, autonomous, intentional subject, or from its ideological extension into the totalitarian voice of the state, is to silence the differential-relationality of the voice. This differential-relationality, as the Dadaists emphasize, is grounded in the voice's materiality and embodied aspect as sound. Voice as *logos* (the *phone semantike* of autonomous subject and nation-state) can never exist as an embodied reality. It can only be an *idea*. The Dadaist simultaneous poem gestures to the empirical truth of the material ecology of the voice. This material ecology of the voice, its differential-relational reality, is continued in the work of contemporary installation artists.

The above discussion points to the paradox of Marinetti's voice aesthetics. Marinetti sounds the voice in an embodied and relational mode. But his desire to dissolve the 'I' into the vibrations of the universe is motivated by the fascist goal to erase the value of the individual into the collective bound by one totalitarian voice.[136] Dissonance, as a plurality of competing voices and perspectives, is critical in Dadaist aesthetics. In Futurist aesthetics, noise does not have this value. Marinetti's interest in universal vitalism supports his fascist perspective. In fascist politics, and their articulation in Marinetti's aesthetics, the individual is pulled into the sensual, dynamic and unconscious aspect of the crowd. The erasure of the individual's voice is the ultimate fascist message.

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[135] See chapter four.
[136] The term fascist comes from the Italian *fascisti*, which means sticks bundled tightly together as one.

Thought is made in the mouth

Tzara famously declared, 'thought is made in the mouth.'[137] This striking statement suggests that one does not have control over what one says. It evokes the idea that speech is not willed by the intellect, but is a mode remembered the mouth. According to Tzara *logos* operates as a self-enclosed system that the subject has no influence over. In his poetry Tzara moved between an interest in embodied production[138] and semiotic play. In the case of the latter, his poetry performs language as a system that functions, not according to the intentionality of the subject, but on its own terms. His idea of collage poetry (where he proposes to make a poem by cutting up a newspaper article and pulling the pieces randomly from a bag)[139] influences William Burroughs' cut-ups, which in turn influences Anderson's ventriloquization of the voices of the media.

Aside from understanding Tzara's statement – thought is made in the mouth – in terms of the inability of the subject to express her intended meaning through language, I approach this phrase as that which grounds *logos* in the body. This perspective returns to my earlier point that Marinetti's onomatopoeia points to how the empathic vocalic body brings us to language. I extend Tzara's statement to the idea of the vocalic apparatus as a mechanized apparatus, which is an idea that later artists such as Burroughs and Acconci explore. In this respect, language becomes material rather than conceptual. (Tzara's collage poem points to this idea also.) To understand *logos* as a material production – as thought made in the mouth – is to recognize the significance of the medium of the voice.

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[137] Tristan Tzara "Dada Manifesto on Bitter and Feeble Love," in *The Dada Painter and Poets: An Anthology*, ed. Robert Motherwell, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1981), 87.

[138] Tzara produced *poemes nègres* – 'negro poems' – composed of so-called 'negro' or 'primitive' sounds. Erikson suggests that these poems were motivated by a desire to sound a more concrete and vital relation to reality. See Erikson, "The Language of Presence," 283. I will address the issue of primitivism in relation to Dada sound poetry below.

[139] Tristan Tzara, "To Make a Dadaist Poem," in *Seven Dadaist Manifestos*, trans. Barbara Wright (London: John Calder, 1989), 39.

Tzara's statement that dislodges *logos* from intentionality resonates with Derrida's deconstruction of the auto-affective voice. In place of the consciousness that intends and arrives at truth through *hearing itself speak*, Derrida proposes the automatic movement of an *archi-écriture* that produces différance. Tzara grounds this automatic movement – the play of différance – in the vocalic apparatus: the mouth. He materializes what is for Derrida immaterial: the movement of the trace. The writing that Derrida considers all signification subject to, is for Tzara a writing of the mouth: an automatic mode of the articulatory apparatus.

Kristeva draws attention to the articulatory apparatus and its unconscious motivation by the drives in her analysis of avant-garde poetry.[140] Ball also emphasizes this unconscious aspect of the production of *logos* in his call to '[f]ollow instinct more than intention'.[141] Ball's concern for speech as an organic articulation resonates with Kristeva's concept of the semiotic. The semiotic that both produces and transgresses the symbolic is manifested in the drive-motivated movement of the voice – its rhythm, rupture, repetition, hesitation, and compulsion. From Kristeva's perspective language does not just mean through the enclosed frame of the symbolic. Rather, language is unconsciously motivated by the libidinal impulses of the body that contribute to the production of meaning.

The unconscious motivation in communication registered through the materiality of the voice is paramount in Ball's poetry. It will also become critical to Acconci's work with voice. The unconscious motivation of the voice is responsible for its distinct rhythm, which Kahn understands in relation to the enunciative drive. In the following chapter, I build on this premise to consider the voice as produced by the invocatory drive. In Ball's work, which dispenses with the semantic value of language, the vocalic drive manifested as rhythm is amplified.

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[140] See for example Julia Kristeva, "Phonetics, Phonology and Impulsional Bases," *Diacritics* 4, no.3 (Autumn 1974): 33-37.
[141] Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 12.

The value of the voice

Ball understands *L'Amiral* in terms of what he calls the *value of the voice*. He does not see this value from the perspective I have outlined above – that of the singular-plural as distinct to the totalitarian voice of the state. Rather, he considers the individual human voice in distinction to the noise of what he terms the *mechanistic process*. In privileging the human individual voice in relation to noise, his perspective departs from Russolo's noise aesthetics that democratize all sound and also from Marinetti's celebration of the individual's dissolution into the dynamism of universal vibration. Ball proposes that this work concerns the distinction between the individual human voice and noises – 'an *rrrrrr* drawn out for minutes, or crashes, or sirens, etc. superior to the human voice in energy'.[142] Similar to Marinetti's approach to the voice as vibration, Ball understands the voice as energy. But contrary to Marinetti's embrace of the machine, Ball considers the poem registers the threat of technological advancement. He states,

> The "simultaneous poem" has to do with *the value of the voice*. The *human organ* represents the soul, the *individuality* in its wanderings with its demonic companions. The *noises represent the background* – the inarticulate, the disastrous, the decisive. The poem tries to elucidate the fact that man is swallowed up in the mechanistic process. In a typically compressed way it shows the conflict of the *vox humana* with a world that threatens, ensnares, and destroys it, a world whose rhythm and noise are ineluctable.[143]

Contrary to Marinetti's conception of material vitalism figured through the vibrations of both human and machine (as well as animal, mineral and vegetable), for Ball, the machine gives a counterfeit life to something that is dead. From his perspective, the repetitious rhythms of the machine destroy human rhythms.[144] For Ball, the rhythm of the human is the mark of life, whereas the rhythm of the machine is the mark of death. In Ball's poetry the voice is the medium that conveys human rhythm.

Ball's perspective resonates with Murray Schafer's thesis produced several decades later. Schafer distinguishes between the pre-industrial sound-scape, which he

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[142]Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 57.
[143]Ibid.
[144]Ibid., 4.

describes as 'hi-fi' – composed of discrete sounds, such as the call of a bird in a forest and the resonance of a single hammer across a field – and the 'lo-fi' sound-scape of the post-industrial world, where sounds become homogenized or muted by the drone of such things as cars and electricity. [145] Like Ball, Schafer suggests that humans have become detached from their bodily rhythms through their engagement with machines.[146] However, in distinction to Schafer's ecological perspective, Ball's is anthropocentric.

Ball's understanding of the voice as representing the soul or individuality is aligned to the metaphysical tradition that is deconstructed by Derrida. For Aristotle, *logos* – the *phone semantike* – is the voice of the soul.[147] However, in order to arrive at *logos* as presence (truth), Ball considers it necessary to break from *logos* in order to recreate it. Ball materializes and corporealizes *logo*s through sounding the vocalic body. In this way he develops his own *logos*. As I have argued, in *parole in libertà* Marrinetti arrives at a new sense through his emphasis on the *phone* – the materiality of sound. Where for Marinetti it is the *phone* as vibration by way of onomatopoeia that is paramount, for Ball it is *phone* as incantation by way of glossolalia.

Glossolalia: the act of saying that expresses nothing

Ball does not want to enervate his listener as is Marinetti's intention, but to move them in such a way that she will be spiritually transformed. Marinetti's poetry responds to the human sensorium transformed by the machine age. It is a mode to echo and amplify this transformation. For Ball, however, the human must overcome its new condition. In order to free the subject from this condition, he creates *verse ohne worte* (poems without words). These poems are free from what he considers the

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[145] Murray Schafer, *The SoundScape: The Tuning of the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 43.
[146] Ibid., 63-64.
[147] See Aristotle in Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 23. Aristotle writes,

> Voice then is the impact of the inbreathed air against the "windpipe," and the agent that produces the impact is the soul resident in these parts of the body. Not every sound ... made by an animal is voice ... what produces the impact must have soul in it and must be accompanied by an act of the imagination, for voice is a sound with a meaning.

corrupt language of journalism and nationalism, and voice a new language of made-up words composed from what he considers magical sounds.[148]Ball credits Marinetti's *parole in libertà* as an inspiration to his poetry. He explains his development of Marinetti's sound poetry as follows,

> We have loaded the word with strength and energies that helped us to rediscover the evangelical concept of the "word" (logos) as a magical complex image … They (the Futurists) took the word out of the sentence frame … that had been thoughtlessly assigned to it, nourished the emaciated big city vocables with light and air, and gave them back their warmth, emotion and original untroubled freedom. We others went a step further. We tried to give the isolated vocables the fullness of an oath, the glow of a star.[149]

Marinetti, as he tells it, flings words like speeding weapons through the atmosphere, or penetrates the vibrations of the universe in an effort to sensitize his listener to a material vitalism, but also to innervate her. Ball does not want to affect his listener in this aggressive mode, but aims to enchant. These different approaches to voice continue in later works with voice. Like Marinetti, Acconci will approach the voice in terms of its potential to shock or aggress his listener. Contemporary works with voice in song share Ball's interest in enchanting their listener. In all these cases the voice's potential to affect the listener is amplified.

Initially Ball creates poems that merge several languages together. He then develops his poetry to be composed of purely made-up words – what is referred to as glossolalia. His most famous glossolalic poem is *Gadji Beri Bimba* (1916).[150] Glossolalia is described as a 'vocalic space of inspiration, creation, unity, presence and joy that results in the *ebrietas spiritualis*: the inebriation of the spirit.'[151] Jakobson understands it as a language with which to commune with the divine. [152]

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[148] Ball describes the magical aspect of his poetry in a letter to Hans Arp, dated November 22nd 1926. See Stephen Scobie, "I dreamed I saw Hugo Ball: bpNichol, Dada, and Sound Poetry," *Boundary 2* 3, no.1. A Canadian Issue (Autumn, 1974): 218.
[149] Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 68.
[150] Please listen to *Gadji Beri Bimba*, accessed Febraury 27, 2016, http://ubumexico.centro.org.mx/sound/ball_hugo/Ball-Hugo_Gadji-beri-bimba.mp3.
[151] Michel de Certeau, "Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias," *Representation* 56, Special Issue: The New Erudition (Autumn, 1996): 41.
[152] On glossolalia Jakobson states,

> One use of speech sounds totally deprived of a sense-discriminative role throughout an entire pronouncement, but nonetheless destined for a certain kind of communication and aimed at an

Ball's interest in the *evangelical concept of the word* reveals his religious motivation. As much as he is concerned with an expanded subjectivity, he is also concerned with a religion that transgresses its conventions.

In my effort to understand what glossolalia might mean in relation to Ball's poetry I draw from Michel de Certeau. De Certeau's thought combines psychoanalytical, sociological and mystical thought. Like Kristeva, de Certeau is informed by both Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, which explains his interest in the material, drive-based aspect of speech. As a Jesuit scholar, de Certeau is also concerned with the sacred dimension of glossolalia. De Certeau states, 'what utopia is to social space, glossolalia is to oral communication; it encloses in a linguistic simulacrum all that is not language and comes from the speaking voice.'[153]

In employing glossolalia, Ball is proposing that the voice has much more to say than that which can be contained in conventional language. Glossolalia is understood as a *must say*, where one is compelled to speak.[154] A glossolalist states, '[glossolalia is] an event in my throat … a warmth in my tongue and lips.'[155] Glossolalia emphasizes the vocalic body – the body that is motivated by the drives in its articulation and materialization of speech.

Psychoanalyst Oskar Pfister considers it 'a regression to an infantile state'. He states, '[b]y referring back to the affective experience of the child, ... [the glossolalist] transforms the non-sense vocalization into a coherent discourse'.[156] This idea of returning to the nonsense sounds of infancy to then produce a form of sense resonates with Kristeva's conception of how the semiotic produces the symbolic. This is how

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> actual human audience or intended to be received and apprehended by a divine spirit, pertains to a special kind of verbal or quasi-verbal creative actively labeled glossolalia. The coalescence of two functions is a characteristic trait of glossolalic pronouncements: the connection of the human and the divine worlds on the one hand as prayers from the former to the latter and on the other hand as messages transmitted from the divine power to the assembled human body in order to inspire, unify, and emotionally exalt it.

Roman Jakobson and Linda Waugh, *The Sound Shape of Language* (Brighton: Harveston Press, 1979), 211.

[153] de Certeau, "Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias," *Representation*, 31.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid., 38.

[156] Oskar Pfister in de Certeau, Ibid., 35.

she explains the production of avant-garde poetry. Marinetti also evokes this space of infancy where the child empathically responds to the sounds around her, which leads to her acquisition of speech. Marinetti's echoic mode produces a new sense.

The idea of a return to the infantile state is relevant to Ball's voice aesthetics, and Dada aesthetics more generally. Ball states that with *verse ohne worte* he shows 'how language comes into being'. He claims that his poetry engages 'the innermost alchemy of the word.'[157]Developing this perspective, I consider his *verse ohne worte* perform the imagined transition from infancy (without speech) to the subject (who has language) – from sound to sense. De Certeau considers the glossolalia of Ball's poetry as the deconstruction of articulate speech.[158] However, if we follow Ball's perspective, *verse ohne worte* does not amplify destruction, but the act of creation – he *shows how language comes into being*. Of course, in Dadaist aesthetics creation and destruction are inextricable.

De Certeau states that glossolalia is 'an act of saying that expresses nothing.'[159] He continues, '[g]lossolalia has metalinguistic value but in relation to *the act of enunciation* … In this … *vocal space speech can say itself*.'[160] This idea that *speech can say itself* conveys the idea that sound is not received as a transparent signifier immediately invoking the signified and referent à la Saussure, but rather turns back on itself. In glossolalia, the sound-image is corporealized and materialized and, to follow Nancy, it requires attention in the mode of listening.

Ball's sound poetry as glossolalia takes place at 'the threshold between muteness and speaking'. It is simultaneously a *must say* and a *saying nothing*, and amplifies the schism between sound and sense.[161] Ball rejects what he sees as the corrupt governance of his time and the dissemination of its message through journalism. He calls for a new language – his own language. This point resonates with de Certeau's

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[157] Ball, *Flight Out of Time*, 221, 71.
[158] de Certeau, "Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias," 32.
[159]Ibid., 29.
[160]Ibid., 33. Emphasis added.
[161]Ibid., 38, 40.

perspective that glossolalia comes at a time when a new language is needed.[162] Ball claims that his *verse ohne worte* can 'touch on a hundred ideas without naming them'.[163] This is glossolalia's *virgin forest of voice* that is never contained by its multiple and emergent meanings.[164] In glossolalia there is the ethical potential of saying rather than the violent fixity of the said. In Ball's *verse ohne worte* this saying is critical in that it provides an alternative from the dominant voice that locks consciousness into subservience.

Glossolalia emphasizes the vocalic body, which encompasses the embodied aspect of speech – the compulsion to speak and the materialization of speech through the vocalic apparatus. In its resistance to sense and transgression of conventional language, it speaks to a more general trajectory of the voice in art. Understood as a language of the divine it expands subjectivity; it sounds a cosmic rather than autonomous, humanist perspective. In this sense, it develops Marinetti's universal vitalism to sound from a spiritual perspective. This last aspect of Ball's voice aesthetics continues in contemporary works with voice, such as that of Cardiff, as I discuss in chapter four.

The vocalization of the subject and the word as act

Both Marinetti and Ball perform a *vocalization of the subject*.[165] Because the subject is, as the Lacanian, Derridean and the general poststructuralist thesis has it, *spoken* by language, it must revolutionize this language in order to speak. To follow Kristeva, the way the poet revolutionizes language is by emphasizing the semiotic to disturb and to a degree rupture the symbolic. Marinetti and Ball emphasize the sounding and the saying of the voice rather than the signified and the said of language. Their aesthetics require a listening rather than a hearing as the voice in its vibrations and incantations oscillates between sound and sense.

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[162]de Certeau, "Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias", 41.
[163]Ball, *The Flight out of Time*, 68.
[164] de Certeau, 'Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias', 41.
[165] This phrase is introduced by de Certeau in reference to glossolalia but I develop it to employ it in relation to both Marinetti and Ball. See de Certeau, "Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias," 41.

De Certeau distinguishes the *vocalization of the subject* from the *enactment of language*. Where the former emphasizes a subjectivity expanded through an amplification of the voice, the later speaks of conventional subjectivity bound by language. However, it is important not to be confused by this distinction, for both Marinetti and Ball in their vocalization of the subject, emphasize language as *act* – as saying. Incantation is a *calling into being*. It is related to the Hebrew *dahar*, 'the idea of the word as act, as that which brings into being – which Harold Bloom contrasts with *logos*, the Greek term for the word which gathers and puts into order intellectual concepts.'[166] This idea of the *word as act*, as doing something, rather than referring to something, relates to my earlier discussion of Marinetti's voice as concrete and is key to Ball's aesthetics of incantation. The aspiration of both Marinetti and Ball in their voice aesthetics pertains to the idea that the subject who vocalizes and is vocalized by way of these new languages is brought in contact with a cosmic vitality.

The primitivist impulse

Ball's understanding of his poetry as incantation is motivated by a primitivist impulse. The primitivist impulse in Dadaist art develops from a desire to cleanse corrupt Western society through an imagined return to purity. Modernist artists often drew from 'primitive' cultures in order to energize their own, to find alternative languages and ways of relating to reality. This appropriation of non-Western culture has been critiqued as a form of Western cultural imperialism.[167] Colonialism that lead to ethnography opened the modernist performance artists to ideas of ritual and

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[166]Erikson, "The Language of Presence," 283.

[167] Hal Foster develops a key critique of the primitivist impulse of modernist artists, arguing that this impulse is part of the West's larger enterprise of colonizing the non-Western other and 'disguises the problem of imperialism in art'. See Hal Foster "The "Primitive" Unconscious of Modern Art" in *Primitivism and twentieth-century art: A documentary History*, eds. Jack Flam and Miriam Deutch (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 386. However, to follow Seiglinde Lemke's thoughts, Foster's position does not allow for the fact that the artist does not take up the same position as the coloniser who is motivated by economic gain, but is rather better positioned in terms of what Homi Bhaba calls a *third space of enunciation*: 'an ambiguous space that undermined the opposition that the colonialist enterprise was predicated upon'. See Seiglinde Lemke, "Primitivist Modernism," in Flam, 412. It is from this position that I consider Ball as working with the primitivist impulse.

incantation, to the notion that words and sounds could be magical presences that could transform their listeners.

Fischer-Lichte understands this interest in ritual at the turn of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century (which in the academy was categorized as 'ritual studies') as marking the first *performative turn*.[168] The performative turn is normally understood as originating in the 1950s in relation to the thought of Victor Turner on ritual, Erving Goffman on performance in everyday life, and John Austin on the idea of *performative utterance*. This context is critical to understanding Acconci's concern with words as actions rather than references, and with performative relations within the social sphere. But his practice also has its seeds in modernist aesthetics and early twentieth-century thought.

In ritual the voiced word cannot be voiced twice; it is a unique occurrence performed by a particular body in a particular spatio-temporality. This perspective emphasizes the importance of the embodied act of speech and the ethics of saying. Ball was influenced by this perspective and also by the sound, rhythm and drumbeats of Richard Huelsenbeck's 'negro poems'.[169] Erikson explains,

> The dadaists' attraction for the speech of primitive peoples … is indicative of the desire for a language that is older, that is in a harmonious relationship with its environment, that is more concrete, more directly in touch with reality.[170]

This perspective resonates with Jakobson's understanding of how the child acquires language by way of echolalia – through an empathic, embodied relation. Following Erikson's perspective, the primitivist impulse of Ball's poetry is motivated by a desire to awaken a primal language that is concrete and vital – grounded in an embodied relation to the world.

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[168] Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 31-34.

[169] Kahn argues that Dadaist Huelsenbeck's 'negro poems' trivialize the language of others. These poems at first did not include any African language but Huelsenbeck's idea of what a 'negro' would sound like (for Huelsenbeck 'umba umba' was the sound of Africanicity). Kahn states that this appropriation or pseudo-mimicking of the language of the other was founded upon a position of assumed cultural dominance where the non-western other's language is not engaged with any genuine curiousity, but rather used to signal noise and by extension, anarchistic disturbance, within the Western culture. See Kahn, *Noise Water Meat*, 42-48.

[170] Erikson, "A Language of Presence," 283.

Ball describes how his last performance of *Gadji Beri Bimba* would take on, without his conscious decision, 'the ancient cadence of priestly lamentation'. [171] This suggests that Ball was working with a deeply embodied rhythm. Ball had a strict Catholic upbringing governed by his overbearing mother.[172] No doubt Ball's unconscious vocalization of priest-like lamentation is linked to the vocalic rhythms and sounds of his religious education, which had been infused with his mother tongue. This point resonates with Kristeva's perspective that avant-garde poets through their emphasis on the semiotic – the unconscious rhythmic, pulsional aspect of language – return to the language of the mother, but with a difference that generates the creative act. The importance of rhythm in Ball's voice aesthetics places emphasis on the word that *is* and *does,* rather than *refers*. Further, rhythm draws attention to voice as a liminality between language and body. The rhythm of the drumbeat, the heartbeat, the opening and contraction of muscles, and the breath all shape the voice, which in turn shapes language. Rhythm speaks the body and is spoken by the body.

In this respect, Ball's practice is connected to Acconci's. Both artists are concerned with vocalization as a form of ritual that is marked by the rhythm of the body. From one perspective, Ball who engages the nonsense form of glossolalia departs much further from intentionalized language than does Acconci, who employs semantically meaningful language. But from another perspective, Ball's words, though nonsense, are more formalized and fixed than those of Acconci. What Ball says is preordained by the confines of his poem. [173] Acconci on the other hand works with improvised speech and so the rhythms of his body have the potential to disturb and generate the semantic value of his utterance. Ball moves from sense to sound and back to sense in his formalized language. But in the performance of his poem, as he explains, something takes over him. The movement of his poem is motivated by an embodied impulse, thus he oscillates between sound and sense.

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[171] Ball, *Flight out of Time*, 71.
[172] Ibid.,xv.
[173] The poem Gadji Beri Bimba is inscribed in written form. I assume that Ball wrote the poem before his performance. I was not able to find any evidence to counter this perspective.

From concrete to abstract

The emphasis on rhythm and sound and also the primitivist impulse in Ball's voice aesthetics can also be explained in terms of the modernist movement towards abstraction. Indeed, primitivism and abstraction are often intertwined in modernist aesthetics. Ball's *verse ohne worte*, beside absorbing the voice experiments of the Futurists (*bruitisme*, *simultaneità*, *parole in libertà*), have a precursor in the work of Ball's mentor, the Russian Expressionist Wassily Kandinsky and his idea of *pure sound*. In 1909 Kandinsky created a theatre piece entitled *The Yellow Sound.*[174] Annabelle Melzer describes it as an anti-naturalistic performance that departs from the conventions of theatre with 'almost a complete elimination of dialogue, plot and sequential action.'[175] She continues, ' [it] is an opera of grunts and shrieks. The only comprehensible words spoken in the play are an eight-line choral prelude.'[176]

Kandinsky conceives of the sound of the pure human voice 'without being obscured by words, or by the meaning of words.' [177] This notion of the pure voice is indicative of Kandinsky's move towards abstraction, where, according to his perspective, all things are reduced to their essentials to produce a universal meaning. Similar to Kandinsky, in linking his project to the development of abstract art, Ball seeks a voice that is free from conventional linguistic identity in order to respond to what he sees as the spiritual crisis of his age. He explains,

> The image of the human form is gradually disappearing from the painting of these times and all objects appear only in fragments. This is one more proof of how ugly and worn the human countenance has become, and of how all the objects of our environment have become repulsive to us. The next step is for poetry to decide to do away with language for similar reasons.[178]

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[174] Interestingly, it was not performed until 1972.
[175] Annabelle Melzer, *Latest Rage the Big Drum: Dada and Surrealist Performance* (Michigan: Uni Research Press, 1980), 19.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Kandinsky in Ibid., 20.
[178] Ball, *Flight out of Time*, 71.

He continues, '[w]e must give up writing second hand: that is, accepting words (to say nothing of sentences) that are not newly invented for our own use.'[179] 'I don't want words that other people have invented ... I want my own nonsense, my own rhythm'.[180] Ball's perspective of the *second-hand* nature of the language we articulate anticipates the post-structuralist thesis that we are spoken by language. His urge to create a new language is a line with Kristeva's perspective that poetic language is revolutionary. In order to create this new language, he creates nonsense words that are grounded in the rhythm of his vocalic body.

I conceive the abstraction of Ball's poetry in terms of Jakobson's idea of the poetic function. Jakobson writes,

> Poeticity is present when the word is felt as a word and not a mere representation of the object being named or an outburst of emotion, when words and their composition, their meaning, their external and internal form acquire a weight and value of their own instead of referring indifferently to reality.[181]

The word in this context is not a transparent signifier. The self-referentiality of the poetic word creates a gap between it and the idea of a reality it might refer to. Jakobson states,

> Why is it necessary to make a special point of the fact that sign does not fall together with object? Because besides the direct awareness of the identity between sign and object (A is A1), there is a necessity for the direct awareness of the inadequacy of that identity (A is not A1). The reason this antinomy is essential is that without contradiction there is no mobility of concepts, no mobility of signs, and the relationship between concept and sign becomes automatized. Activity comes to a halt, and the awareness of reality dies out.[182]

This notion of the autonomy of the sign – the material weight of the word that creates a more curious relationship to reality rather than a habitual consumption of reality through automatic conceptualization – resonates with Ball's aesthetics where he works to develop a more vital relation to reality. Ball calls his poems *poems without words*. However, they still contain words where they include phonemic units, but they

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[179] Ball, *Flight out of Time*, 71.
[180] Ibid., 221.
[181] Jakobson, "What is Poetry?," 174.
[182] Ibid., 175.

are words that are freed from semantic reference. He states, 'the magically inspired vocables … gave birth to a new sentence that was not … confined by any conventional meaning. Touching lightly on a hundred ideas at the same time without naming them …'[183] A is and is not A1, A2, A3 *ad infinitum.*

Jakobson's understanding of *the material weight of a word* that does not refer transparently to a concept or referent, or express an emotional interior, can be extended to how the voice functions as a self-referential materiality[184] in relation to both practices that concern this chapter. Marinetti and Ball disturb conventional language through the materiality of the voice and an approach to *logos* as plastic. From one perspective, there is an abstraction at work where language is released from its referential function. From another perspective, the sound becomes less abstracted where it does not function like Saussure's sound-image (the incorporeal servant to signification) but is made vital through its link to the body and thus able to express something of the reality of existence.[185]So in the case of Ball and Kandinsky their approach to language is both concrete and abstract. The word becomes pure sound and thus is concretized. This sound takes on an abstract function in its ability to speak to a universal consciousness, or in Ball's words: *touch on a hundred ideas without naming them*.

The relation between the abstract and the concrete is important in voice aesthetics more generally. The more abstracted from language the voice is the more its vocalic register – its concrete aspect – is registered. This perspective is generated by the voice in art throughout the last century. It is relevant to Acconci's practice where his repetitions of voice materialize speech such that its semantic content begins to erode. The perspective of concrete sound abstracted from referential systems is critical to Shaeffer's sound object that engages what he terms reduced listening. These ideas will be explored in detail in chapter four in relation to the acousmatic voice, which

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[183] Ball, *Flight out of Time*, 68.
[184] I explore this idea of self-referential materiality in more detail in the following chapter in relation to the thought of Fischer-Lichte.
[185] Michael and Victoria Kirby note this paradox in the relation between the terms *abstract* and *concrete* where in abstract art the work can be simultaneous abstract and concrete despite the fact that these terms denote opposite meaning. Kirby**,** *Futurist Performance*, 21.

can also be conceived as an abstracted, concretized voice. Important to Schaeffer's concept of the sound object, which is both concrete and abstract, is the mediation of technology. Anderson's technologized voice emphasizes the linguistic voice. But she also abstracts it and concretizes it when she approaches it as a sound bite – a material to manipulate.

Repetition and the archaic stage of language

For Kandinsky repetition has an important role in the production of the pure human voice abstracted from the referential function of language. He states,

> Frequent repetition of a word (a favorite game of children forgotten later in life) deprives the word of its external reference. Similarly, the symbolic reference of a designated object tends to be forgotten and only the sound is retained … The soul obtains to an objectless *vibration*, even more complicated … more transcendent, than the reverberations released by the sound of a bell, a stringed instrument or a fallen board.[186]

Thus Kandinsky associates the repetitions of a child that have the effect of eroding semantic value with *objectless vibrations of the soul* that for him have a spiritual value. Kandinsky's understanding of the child's play with repetition resonates with the Dadaist desire to return to childlike nature and irrational play that for them is a source of both creative and spiritual potential.

A child's use of voice is different from that of an adult. Language is not as embedded in a child and there is more scope to play with the sounds of the voice. Jakobson states,

> According to the findings of phonetically trained observers … the child at the height of his babbling period "is capable of producing all conceivable sounds" … the child then loses nearly all of his ability to produce sounds in passing from the pre-language state to the first acquisition of words, *i.e.*, to the first genuine stage of language.[187]

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[186] Wassily Kandisky in Melzer, *Latest Rage*, 40-1. Emphasis added.
[187] Jakobson, *Child Language Aphasia and Phonological Universals*, 21.

Kristeva considers that it is in this babbling period, what she terms the 'archaic', 'pre-oedipal' phase of language, where poetic language originates. She proposes that avant-garde poets activate this archaic stage of language in order to produce rhythmic, sonic, non-conventional uses of language.[188] In this respect, I propose that Ball's sound poetry engages the archaic stage of language.

Melzer states that 'the phonetic gibberish and cacophony of natural sound which the dada performer revels in is as suggestive of a move toward childhood as the name "dada" itself.'[189] The term 'dada' has several linguistic meanings but the repetition of the phoneme emphasizes its sound and returns it to, what Kristeva calls, its phonetic state. In her analysis of Mallarmé's poetry Kristeva states,

> the increased frequency of a given phoneme … produce[s] an effect which is foreign to the common usage of the natural language … [the movement] toward a pre-phonematic, shall we say *phonetic state*, which can be observed in children who have not yet acquired the sounds of one language but are capable of producing all possible (non-linguistic) sounds … divests the phoneme of its phonematic character ... and reconnects it to the articulating body: initially the articulatory apparatus and then, through the drives (*pulsions*) to the body as a whole.[190]

Ball states his poems

> serve to show how articulated language comes into being … I let the vowels fool around. I let the vowels quite simply occur, as a cat miaows. Words emerge, shoulder of words, legs, arm, hands of words. Au, oi, uh.[191]

This statement conveys the idea that language is not just given to us ready-made, but is materialized by the vocalic apparatus. The child's body must learn to make language and before she learns to set her sounds in particular molds, she first plays with sound's plasticity. Kristeva considers this play as encompassed by the semiotic and fundamental to the subject's ability to produce language.

Erdmute Wnezel White describes this aspect of material production in Ball's poetry,

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[188] See for example Kristeva, Interview.
[189] Melzer, *Latest Rage Big Drum*, 64.
[190] Kristeva, "Phonetics, Phonology and Impulsional Bases," 33.
[191] Ball, *Flight out of Time*, 221.

> Ball's *Lautgedichte* [sound poems] convey the physical substance of sound, sound as guttural rumblings, *sound as voice*, generated by lungs, larynx, vocal chords, tongue, and lips, producing sudden trills and sibilations. When we execute such sounds, the poet seems to be saying, we join the chorus of animals …[192]

This emphasis on the vocalic body, from White's perspective, merges the human voice with the *chorus of animals*, or to echo Ball, with the *cat's miaow*. Ball's voice departs from its function in *logos* to convey a rational comprehension of the world, in order to sound a more primal tuning with the world located in the rhythms and organic expression of the body. Here, voice does not fill arbitrary molds, but generates forms that bring with them the image of the body and the embodied world. Ball's sound poetry that resonates with the vocalic production of infancy also points to the idea that if *man* had a *voice as the chirp is the voice of the cricket*[193] what it might sound like, a voice that would enable him to *join the chorus of the animals*.

From Marinetti and Ball to Acconci

In this chapter I have considered the sound poetry of Marinetti and Ball as productive of and produced by the vocalic body. Both artists materialize speech through emphasizing the body as a sounding cavity. They approach the voice as a concrete material in order to revolutionize language and to perform and address an expanded subjectivity. These ideas continue to resonate in the voice in art throughout the next century.

Marinetti's vibrations sound not only the human, but the human's embodiment of and resonance with the world. Ball's incantation is anthropocentric, but calls for a transformation of the subject. Both artists, who emphasize the materiality of the voice over semantic meaning, evoke a more vital relation to the world. Marinetti, who echoes the world, expresses not only the vocalic body, but also functions like a machine. Like a phonograph, his vocalic body both records and transmits the acoustic

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[192] Erdmunte Wnezel White, *The Magic Bishop: Hugo Ball* (Columbia: Camden House, 1998), 106-7. Emphasis added.
[193] Agamben, *Infancy and History*, 3-4.

environment. Ball distances himself from mechanized reality and emphasizes speech as a deeply embodied, rhythmic and ritualistic act.

This mechanized aspect of vocalic production and the ritualistic act is significant to Acconci's work with voice. Interestingly, repetition is a critical mode of both the machine and the ritual. In the mechanized repetition of the voice there is an unconscious motivation at play – where thought is made in the mouth. In distinction, in ritual the repetition of the voice is formalized and conscious. However, in performing the ritual, as Ball experiences, one can lose oneself within it. In Acconci's practice the repetitions of the voice are activated both consciously and unconsciously. This aspect of his vocalic repetition produces the form and content of his work. Building from Kahn's premise of the enunciative drive, I consider this aspect of repetition in Acconci's work as activated by the invocatory drive.

In this chapter I have considered both Marinetti and Ball as performing a vocalization of the subject, where saying is emphasized over the said. I extended this premise to the idea that these artists, through approaching the subject from the perspective of voice, reverse the thesis that we are spoken by language. Acconci does not aspire to overcome the conventions and the self-contained system of language. However, he also performs, through his emphasis on the materiality and movement of the voice, a vocalization of the subject – or what I refer to as a *musicalization of the subject*. This is not a revolutionary act as it is in modernist performance, but rather an amplification of the embodiment of everyday speech.

In their interest in sounding an embodied resonance with the world, Marinetti and Ball depart from the auto-affective voice of the autonomous subject. From this perspective, I argued that they address an expanded subjectivity. In the next chapter, subjectivity is not so much expanded as put on trial, to employ Kristeva's phrase. Acconci, through performing the hetero-affective voice, amplifies the construction and deconstruction of subjectivity in the negotiation of language in relation to the other.

Chapter 2. Acconci's Voice: Between Self and Other

Feelings are nothing, nor are ideas, everything lies in motility from which like the rest, humanity has taken nothing but the ghost.

Antonin Artaud in Kristeva, *Revolution*, 170.

'They always talk about your voice', remarks Richard Prince in an interview with Acconci in 1991. Acconci replies,

> My voice probably has, for some people, a storage of sexual associations … Also it seems to come out of some depths, so it probably promises intimacy, sincerity, integrity, maybe some deep, dark secret (*it ties into biases of Western culture, it seems to go beyond surfaces*).[194]

Acconci's response reveals his self-conscious relation to his voice as an erotic medium that might be employed to make contact with and potentially manipulate his listeners. His remark that his voice seems *to go beyond surfaces* conveys the idea of voice as that which can penetrate the interiority of both self and other. He also draws attention to the problematic positioning of the voice as the index to the *authentic self*. Acconci's response tells us much about how his voice functions in his works. Whoever 'they' are, Prince is not referring to art historians, for the voice in Acconci's work has largely been ignored.

Kate Linker is one exception. In her 1994 monograph on Acconci she underlines the importance of his voice:

> The performances of 1970-72 witness the entry into Acconci's art of his voice, the fabled voice that provides the key signature for all his work of this decade. It is a remarkably supple instrument, deep, gravelly … and bearing all the marks of what Roland Barthes described as "the grain" – the *body* of the performance in his voice.[195]

If ever a voice spoke the body it would be Acconci's smokey, melodious voice that is punctuated with slight stutters. Another exception to the neglect of the value of the voice in Acconci's art is LaBelle's 2006 essay, 'Performing Desire/ Performing Fear:

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[194] "Vito Acconci interviewed by Richard Prince," *BOMB* 36 (Summer 1991), date accessed November 3, 2012. http://bombsite.com/issues/36/articles/1443. Emphasis added.
[195] Kate Linker, *Vito Acconci* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994), 52.

Vito Acconci and the Powerplays of the voice'. This seminal essay attends to the central position Acconci's voice takes in his performance works *Claim* (1971) and *Seedbed* (1972). LaBelle considers how through the libidinal economy of the voice Acconci produces space, performs the self and makes contact with the other. I develop these ideas through a focus on the voice as a materiality, which in Acconci's practice I conceive as a musicality and more generally as movement.

Throughout his career as poet, artist, and architect Acconci has been concerned with movement. As a poet, he registers this movement in the way the reader follows the words across the space of the page. As a performer, Acconci is concerned with the way his body moves in space. Currently, as a director of an architect's studio and a teacher in design he is interested in an urban environment that is constantly moving.[196] Acconci shares Antonin Artaud's conception (see introductory quote) of movement as the basis of being. Acconci states, 'movement … [is] a base for everything else – it seems so apparent to me that moving is before being, if you can look at it experientially'. [197] In this chapter I conceive Acconci's use of voice in its generation of a vocalic body as a movement between self and other. I understand the materiality of this movement in terms of the rhythm of the voice constituted through repetition and difference.

The work that concerns this chapter intersects both conceptual and performance art. Acconci's negotiations with language can be understood in relation to conceptual art. In both his poetry, performance and later installation he presents language in a mode that displaces its function as an automatic, transparent referential system. Acconci's performance work continues the legacy of Fluxus and Happenings in terms of his interest in doing rather than referring. His performance work also draws from his female contemporaries in its concern for embodiment. All these aspects have their seeds in the early performance art addressed in the previous chapter.

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[196] Vito Acconci, Interview with Simone Schmidt, Brooklyn, New York, June 3, 2014.
[197] Vito Acconci, "Excerpts from Tapes with Liza Bear," *Avalanche* 6 (Fall 1972): 75.

Although Acconci never lets go of semantically meaningful language, he continues the legacy of the early performance poets in his concern for the voice as a concrete materiality that affects his listener. Like the poet-performers, his voice functions as *disturbance*. Acconci performs both a disturbance of language and a psycho-somatic disturbance in relation to himself and the other. He disturbs language through the repetitions of his voice, eroding its semantic value. These repetitions are a result of the invocatory drive and a conscious desire to control both himself and the other. They create the structure and form of his work and musicalize his speech. In this way, to employ Kristeva's terminology, they emphasize the voice as a semiotic medium that is both productive and transgressive of the symbolic.

Acconci's vocalizations have been referred to as 'first person incantations'.[198] They call both an idea of self and a relation to the other into being. Because Acconci performs the subject in process, the idea of self is never fixed, but in a constant state of 'renewal'.[199] Like Ball, Acconci emphasizes the power of the voice to ritualistically enact something. Where Ball is concerned with cosmic forces enacted in the spiritual ritual, Acconci is concerned with libidinal forces enacted in a private ritual made public.

Acconci's voice reveals the interiority of the self to the other, and how this interiority in its emission in space can become synonymous with the interior of a room. His listener enters his vocalic space – his 'verbal cocoon'.[200] Acconci draws attention to the voice's oppressive potential in relation to the listener. For Acconci, it is a question of '[c]an I with voice take over [the listener]?'.[201] Rosolato suggests aggression is inherent in the voice. The voice, he claims, is 'the body's most powerful emanation.'[202]

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[198] Vito Acconci, "Introduction: Notes of Performing a Space," *Avalanche* 6 (Fall 1972): 12.
[199] Rosalind Krauss, "Video: the Aesthetics of Narcissism," *October* 1 (Spring 1976): 54.
[200] Lisa Bear and Willoughby Sharp, *The Early History of Avalanche*, 12, accessed February 21, 2016, http://primaryinformation.org/files/earlyhistoryofavalanche.pdf.
[201] Acconci, Interview with Schmidt.
[202] Rosalato, "The Voice: Between Body and Language," 108.

Acconci's voice is activated as a libidinal economy that works to both attract and repel his listener. The push-pull dynamic of Acconci's voice is not just in relation to the other. It also occurs in relation to himself as he constructs then deconstructs an idea of self. In invoking his listener, Acconci emphasizes the self's dependency on the other. Thus he performs the fundamental hetereo-affectivity of the voice. In mapping the movement of Acconci's voice, I adopt Lacan's premise that we always sound for the other even if that other is ourself.

A poetic and performative continuum

Acconci's practice begins with his career as a poet in the 1960s. This origin is not only significant in relation to his development as an artist, but also in terms of a more general pattern where a study of voice aesthetics in the visual arts reveals its intersection with the literary arts. This intersection occurs in the voice aesthetics of the modernist artists discussed in the previous chapter. It also occurs in Burroughs' and Anderson's work with voice, explored in the following chapter. Craig Dworkin states that during the 1960s the collision between the visual and literary arts was unprecedented.[203]

Like Marinetti and Ball, Acconci rejects the idea of language as something transparent. His poetry is an attempt to halt the habitual movement from word to idea or to the thing in the world, and instead emphasizes the word's material presence on the page. In a letter in 1969 Acconci states, '*words have charge*, they develop an orientation in the reader. Therefore, it is the work of the art situation to jolt the reader out of that orientation.'[204] He works to have the word refer to nothing outside of the performative context of the page. The word is the 'thing' rather than the object or idea it refers to. It is its movement across the page, the way it influences the reader to

[203] Dworkin states that Acconci's and Bernadette Mayer's eclectic journal *0-9* exemplifies this collision between the literary and visual arts. See Dworkin in Vito Acconci, *Language to Cover A Page*, ed. Craig Dworkin (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2006), xii.
[204] Acconci, *Language to Cover a Page*, xiv. Emphasis added.

move with it – to traverse the page from left to right, top to bottom – that concerns Acconci.

For example, an excerpt of a poem reads,

> there there then here it is to the right
>
> in the corner down there to the west a little bit over
>
> at the side between these left over here on the bottom
>
> near the edge on the spot there—not quite –there[205]

Here, the attention stays on the page and in this way language becomes an opaque material – a printed matter – rather than a transparent screen to something other. In this respect, Acconci shares Robert Smithson's interest in 'language as matter and not ideas'.[206] Further, his interest in the materiality of language can be considered as part of the Cagean ethos of sounds themselves that influenced so much of the American avant-garde of the 1960s.

His poetic motivations can also be aligned to the intentions of the modernist artists who engage the medium not in terms of the message it can carry, but through its self-referentiality – its concrete reality. Yet for Acconci, the emphasis is not on the materiality of sound, but on an understanding of words as vectors that influence movement across a page that is performatively engaged by the reader. In reference to his poetry, Acconci states that he wants 'to use language to cover space rather than discover a meaning'.[207] He could be referring as much to his later performances as to his poetry for, as I discuss below, the voice in his performances controls and colonizes space.

Words will become much more *charged* in Acconci's performances. They shift from the anaesthetized, matter-of-fact language of his poetry to aggressive demands or intrusive projections. They impact not only physical space and thus draw attention to their physicality as sounds, but also create certain movements that not only implicate

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[205] Acconci, *Language to Cover A Page*, 44.
[206] Craig Dworkin, "Fugitive Signs," *October* 95 (Winter 2001): 92.
[207] Vito Acconci, "Early Work: Movement Over a Page," *Avalanche* 6 (Fall 1972): 4.

Acconci's listener into his performative system (as do the poems) but also aim to invade her psychological space. When Acconci moves from, the ground of the page to the ground of his own body[208] in his transition from poetry to performance, his words become charged with his libidinal body. As LaBelle is acutely aware, this is a body that is motivated by fear and desire.

A key connection between Acconci's poetry and his performance work is the emphasis on concrete materiality. Acconci moves from emphasizing the concrete materiality of the word as a thing on the page to emphasizing the vocalized word as a physical presence. Another aspect that carries from his work as a poet to his work in performance involves the relation that Acconci activates with the reader/ listener. I consider this relation as often confrontational in its direct address between writer/speaker and reader/ listener. The following poem performs the self-referential quality of language discussed above, but also sets into play an aggressive, direct address between writer and reader:

> I have made my point
>
> I make it again
>
> It
>
> Now you get to the point.[209]

The language Acconci employs here does not refer beyond itself except to the positions of 'I' and 'you' – the positions of writer and reader – which in fact also bring us back to the space of the page through the performative actions of writer and reader. The reader and listener of many of Acconci's poems and performances are directly implicated in his work: 'Now *you* get to the point' to, in his performance *Seedbed* (1972): 'I'm doing this to *you* now … I'm touching *your* hair'.[210]

An excerpt from Acconci's poem *Re* (1967) reads: ' here ... there ... here and there ... I say here ... I do not say it now ... then and there … I say there ... I do not say then ...

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[208] Acconci in "Excerpts from Tapes with Lisa Bear," 71.
[209] Acconci, *Language to Cover A Page*, 55.
[210] Excerpt from *Seedbed* (1972), cited in *Vito Acconci: A Retrospective: 1969 - 1980*, curated by Judith Russi Kirshner (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1980), 17.

then I say'.[211] Here, Acconci emphasizes language as a constant shifting between contradictory points and unable to arrive at a propositional truth. This movement between repetition, difference and contradictory points that has its seeds in his poetry becomes prevalent in his video practice. As I will later discuss, I understand this movement in relation to the invocatory drive. I propose that Acconci emphasizes speech motivated by the drive and thus foregrounds the voice as a materiality – what I understand as a musicality.

The importance of understanding Acconci's work with voice in relation to his poetry is that both forms approach the word as a materiality and a movement and set up a relation between the artist and his audience.[212] Both forms present a departure from abstract linguistic value and ground meaning in an embodied reality. In this sense these forms speak more generally to the voice in art that grounds communication in embodiment and registers the voice as concrete.

The trace of the linguistic voice and the presence of the extra-linguistic voice

In *Claim* (1971) Acconci occupies the basement of Willoughby Sharp's apartment and sets up a video on the floor above him to transmit his performance to his audience.[213] The performance runs for a duration of three hours and consists of Acconci seated, blindfolded and holding a lead pipe. He rocks back and forth, swinging the pipe and chants the following:

> I've got to keep talking. I've got to really believe this. I'll keep anyone off the stairs. I'll keep anyone off the stairs. When I hear someone come down the stairs I'll start swinging. I don't care who I swing at. I won't see who I swing at. I've got to keep talking myself into this. I've got to really believe this. I've got to really believe this ... I want to stay alone down here. I don't want

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[211] Excerpt from Vito Acconci, *Re* (1967) in Acconci, "Early Work: Movement Over a Page," *Avalanche* 6 (Fall 1972): 4.

[212] I employ the term 'audience' in place of 'listener' in order to account for both audio and visual perception, and in this case, reading. Although Acconci mentioned that he does not like this term due to its association with conventional performance, I employ it because of its etymological link to *audire* – 'to hear'. This term seems apt, for even when I account for visual perception, my focus in this thesis is always auditory perception.

[213] Please listen to Vito Acconci *Claim* (1971), accessed March 2, 2016, http://ubu.com/film/acconci_claim.html.

> anyone to come down here with me … I'll hit anyone who comes down the stairs. I'll hit anyone who comes down the stairs.

Acconci understands the piece as a form of self-hypnosis to convince himself that he would hit anyone that enters his space. He states that by the third hour he was convinced that he would do so.[214] Sharp describes the atmosphere of the performance as charged.[215]This monologue, where Acconci works to convince himself of what he will do, can be understood by way of Derrida's movement of the trace of language that defers identity. It can also be conceived in terms of Walter Ong's idea of the embodied speaker and the impact of the speaker's words upon the other.

Acconci states,

> it was not by Jacques Derrida but by Ong that I was taught the difference between writing and orality: orality meant a community of talkers and listeners – *orality took the 'thing' out of itself and into the body of the listener*.[216]

Derrida and Ong develop what can be considered antithetical perspectives on the relation between oral and literate culture. [217] Ong celebrates the voice as the medium *par excellence* of communication, where Derrida deconstructs this position. From a Derridean perspective, Ong's premise is part of the tradition of metaphysics that conflates the presence of meaning with the presence of the voice (logocentricism as phonocentrism). It is not entirely correct to see these theories as the antitheses of each other for they have different conceptions of the term presence.[218] For Ong, presence is

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[214] Acconci, Interview with Schmidt.
[215] Willoughby Sharp in *Willoughby Sharp Videoviews Vito Acconci*, 1973, accessed February 21, 2016, http://ubu.com/film/acconci_sharp.html.
[216] Vito Acconci in Mark C. Taylor, Frazer Ward, Jennifer Bloomer, *Vito Acconci* (New York: Phaidon, 2002), 11. Emphasis added.
[217] Christopher Norris makes the point that Derrida 'wrote *On Grammatology* at a time when there was quite a burgeoning industry of speculative writing on the relations between oral and literate culture – the 'Gutenberg galaxy' debate – and Derrida took a line which, on the face of it, was pretty squarely opposed to the ideas being put forward by Marshall McCluhan and Walter Ong.' See Christopher Norris, "Derrida and Oralcy: Grammatology revisited," accessed May 18, 2015, http://www2.lingue.unibo.it/acume/acumedvd/zone/research/essays/norris.htm.

[218] John D. Schaeffer and David Gorman, "Ong and Derrida on Presence: A Case study in the conflict of traditions," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 40, no. 7 (2008): 858. Schaeffer and Gorman write,

> [f]or Ong 'presence' denotes the quintessentially human, that is, the presence of a human subject behind and in every communication. For Derrida 'presence' denotes the signified as an

the presence of the embodied sounded word as a dynamic, relational event. For Derrida, presence is the presence of meaning to the consciousness that intends it through hearing one's own voice.

In the citation above, Acconci conveys his interest in how the word moves from the 'thing' on the page to a sound that affects the listener. Thus, in his performances Acconci is interested in the extra-linguistic register of the voice. In *Claim* he generates a foreboding presence in relation to his listeners. Ong's thesis resonates with this energetic aspect of Acconci's practice. In distinction to this, Derrida's thesis on différance can account for Acconci's negotiation of the linguistic voice. Acconci moves from proposition to proposition – 'I want to stay alone down here … I'll hit anyone who comes down the stairs' – in an effort to make present an idea of the self to the self. His voice's constant movement that travels the chain of signifiers is unable to fix identity.

Acconci's use of the linguistic voice departs from the voice aesthetics explored in the previous chapter. Where the modernist artists strove to seal indication and expression,[219]Acconci resigns himself to the indicative nature of language. Indeed, as I will discuss in reference to *Theme Song* (1972) and *Undertone* (1973), he emphasizes the slippage of the signifier as he moves from one proposition to another and blatantly contradicts himself. This emphasis on the indicative aspect of the linguistic voice where it fails to arrive at truth or certainty has the effect of drawing attention to the extra-linguistic voice. In *Claim*, Acconci works to arrive at identity through the repetition of propositions. In this process the materiality of the voice as a repetition with difference is brought to the foreground.

What this materialization of the extra-linguistic voice conveys is that communication is not purely concerned with the said – the signified. Rather, communication understood from the perspective of the voice concerns a saying in relation to the other. From this perspective, it is not the transmission of the signified that is central,

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essence, that is, the philosophically unworkable assumption that a signifier denotes a signified that is 'present,' full and entire, in the signifier.

[219] Erikson, "The Language of Presence," 279.

but a material, relational act motivated by unconscious impulses. Ball and Marinetti through their emphasis on the vocalic body perform this aspect of communication. Marinetti echoes the vibrations of acoustic space, and Ball emphasizes embodied rhythm and the articulatory apparatus. Both artists expand subjectivity through its vocalization. Likewise, Acconci through an emphasis on the vocalic body vocalizes the subject not in order to revolutionize subjectivity, as is the concern of the modernists, but to emphasize everyday communication as an embodied act. In the case of *Claim* where Acconci sounds as much to himself as to the other, he draws attention to the operations of the voice as not bound by signification, but to a compulsive movement.

Derrida's deconstruction of the auto-affective voice provides a critical entry point into how Acconci performs the hetero-affectivity of the voice. Derrida writes,

> [S]ense ... *has a temporal nature, is never simply present. It is always already engaged in the "movement" of the trace, that is, in the order of "signification"* … If we ... remember that the pure interiority of phonic auto-affection assumed the purely temporal nature of the "expressive" process, we see that theme of a pure interiority of speech or of "hearing oneself speak" is radically contradicted by "time" itself. … *"Time" cannot be absolute subjectivity" precisely because we are not able to think it on the basis of a present and on the basis of the presence to itself of a present being* [220]

What is relevant in Derrida's thesis in relation to Acconci's practice with voice is his assertion that there can be no presence of subjectivity, or only a subject that asserts its identity through its non-identity. The subject that thinks itself and speaks itself can never grasp itself as identity within the flow of time because it is subject to the movement of the trace. Derrida conceives the hetero-affectivity of the voice in the linguistic deferral of truth. But more important to understanding how the hetero-affective voice functions in Acconci's practice, is his relation to the other – the listener, which is also himself.

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[220] Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon*, 73-74.

Leonard Lawler conveys this aspect of the function of the hetero-affective voice. He writes,

> if we think of interior monologue, we see that a difference between hearer and speaker is necessary, we see that dialogue comes first. But through that dialogue (the iteration of back and forth) the same, a self is produced. And yet the process of dialogue, differentiation-repetition, never completes itself in identity; the movement continues to go beyond to infinity so that identity is always *deferred*, always a step beyond. "Différance" names this inseparable movement (what we called repeatability above) of differentiation and deferral.'[221]

This excerpt speaks to a critical aspect of Acconci's practice that I understand as the movement of his voice between self and other that is also a movement between repetition and difference. Différance is concerned with difference produced in signification. However, as I have stated, Acconci through his negotiation of the trace aspect of language, emphasizes the extra-linguistic voice. Thus difference and repetition as a *material* register is amplified.

Derrida's premise that the auto-affective voice cannot grasp the subject or the signified (they are interchangeable) because of the flow of time, which results in the movement of the trace, resonates with Acconci's use of voice. In *Claim* Acconci emphasizes speech as a durational act. In *Seedbed* where Acconci performs for eight hours a day over a period of days speech understood as duration is even more apparent. In all the works analysed in this chapter Acconci performs subjectivity that unfolds, shifts and is in a constant state of destabilization. Over a period of time he works to constitute a particular relation to himself and the other. The sealed circuit of the auto-affective voice fails to arrive at identity. Through performing the auto-affective voice Acconci constitutes its fundamental hetero-affectivity.

In levelling speech to writing, Derrida does not account for the material process of speaking that is marked by the disturbances of the body. This is where Kristeva's theory of the subject in process is critical. She understands the slippages in language as not solely a matter of sliding signifiers, but as also due to the semiotic: the organization of the drives that mark, motivate and transgress language. Kristeva's

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[221] Lawlor in Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon*, xxiii.

perspective of the speaking subject negotiating language in the material process of an embodied relation resonates with how Ong conceives the spoken word as a durational, embodied, and affective event. The limit of his theory, however, in distinction to that of Kristeva, is his conception of the subject's interiority as *a priori* to speech and as something that then is revealed in speech. Kristeva's theory affords an understanding of the subject's interiority as something produced in the event – in the material process of a relation. This latter idea is central to how subjectivity is performed in Acconci's work.

In the case of *Claim*, Acconci generates a sense of self – he works to convince himself that he will attack his intruders. As he produces his interiority, he simultaneously produces an interiority for his listeners.[222] This aspect resonates with Ong's understanding of the voiced word as productive of an interiority or surrounding for the listener.[223] Ong's understanding of the voice as constituting an *I-thou* relation is also significant in relation to how the voice functions in Acconci's performances. Drawing from Martin Buber, Ong perceives the *I-thou* relation as an intimate communion between speaker and listener. Ong understands the other as necessary for *logos* – for thinking and speaking to occur.[224] This perspective echoes that of Lawler cited above and is critical to Acconci's practice that is centred on the *I – you* dynamic. In all works analysed in this chapter Acconci performs his dependency on the other in his constitution of self and thus amplifies the fundamental hetero-affectivity of the voice.

To understand Acconci's practice in relation to both the linguistic and extra-linguistic voice is important for it registers how the voice activates heterogeneous relations. It is neither body nor language, but that *liquefying and dissolving agent* that oscillates between things. The voice generates an energetic presence, whilst manifesting the movement of the linguistic trace. In the last chapter I discussed how the modernist

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[222] Acconci has stated that 'sound and architecture are inherently connected because both of them make a surrounding'. See Vito Acconi in Daniele Balit, "Vito Acconci – Interview," *Arte e Critica*, March 2005, accessed February 21, 2016, http://www.dbarchives.net/index.php?/text/vito-acconci-interview/.
[223] Walter Ong, *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 129-30.
[224] Schaeffer and David Gorman, "Ong and Derrida on Presence," 859.

performance poets foreground the vocalic body and the concrete value of the voice. In the next chapter, I consider how Anderson amplifies the linguistic value of the voice and thus mutes the vocalic body. In the last chapter, I explore the affect of the voice in song that again emphasizes the vocalic body and the concrete register of the voice, which causes the linguistic register to fade. In distinction to these other practices, Acconci affords language and body equal presence. The movement of his voice holds their heterogeneity in tension with each other. In this way, he more than any other artist included in this thesis, registers their antagonism.

The self-referential materiality of the voice

The voice in *Claim*, despite its carriage of words, functions as a self-referential materiality. Acconci, in reference to his performance work states that he wants to make his presence felt.[225] In performances such as *Claim* he makes his presence felt through the voice. I draw upon the artist's perspective to understand this presence as a self-referential materiality. Acconci explains,

> If the artist is a performer, in action, his presence alone produces signs and marks. The information he provides necessarily concerns the source of information, himself and cannot be solely about some absent object.[226]

This statement departs from the semiotic condition of absence,[227] and conveys the idea that the body in performance refers to itself. This perspective resonates with Fischer-Lichte's understanding of self-referential materiality as fundamental to performance. By self-referentiality, Fischer-Lichte means that before a performance refers to anything else, it first refers to itself in that it is composed of 'real bodies' in 'real spaces'[228] performing real actions. In *Claim* Acconci rocks back and forth and bangs a metal pipe. For Fischer-Lichte, it is not a case of regarding these actions in

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[225] Acconci in *Willoughby Sharp Videoviews Vito Acconci*.
[226] Acconci in Dworkin, "Fugitive Signs," 109.
[227] Here *semiotic* refers to the production of meaning-making through signs that depends on a condition of absence where the sign stands in for an absent concept and referent.
[228] Ficher-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 31-34.
Fischer-Lichte develops this idea of performance's involvement of the 'real body' in 'real space' from Max Herman's understanding of performance as *event* in 'theatre studies' (a field of study he introduced in the early twentieth century).

terms of their semiotic meanings and a leftover 'bodily excess'. 'Rather the materiality of [these] ... actions' precede any attempt 'to interpret them beyond their self-referentiality'. [229]Understanding Acconci's performances by way of Fischer-Lichte's thesis of the self-referentiality of materiality becomes more complicated when we consider that in many of these performances and in those that concern this chapter, Acconci speaks.

Fischer-Lichte notes that speech in performance art since the 1960s harnesses a split between language and voice.[230] This does not necessarily mean that performance artists, through emphasizing voice, disturb speech to a point of unrecognizability. Rather, these artists draw attention to the fact that language and voice are not the same thing. Where the dominance of language normally eclipses the voice, performance art emphasizes the materiality of the voice and its potential for generating corporeality and spatiality.[231]

I understand Acconci's performance work within this context. Like the modernist artists Acconci emphasizes the vocalic body as distinct from, but also productive of speech. Acconci's vocalic body can be related to Fischer-Lichte's concept of the *bodily-being-in-the-world*. She proposes that the performer as a bodily being-in-the-world is perceived as an 'embodied mind in a constant state of becoming' and 'a transformative and vital energy'.[232] Acconci's voice sounds his embodied mind, his constant state of becoming through a transformative and vital energy. His bodily being-in-the-world is extended in space to produce a particular spatiality and surrounding for his audience, which he considers oppressive.

In reference to both Acconci's poetry and body art Dworkin states,

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[229] Ficher-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 18.
[230] Ibid., 127-8. Included in her examples of artists working in this way are Spalding Grey, Laurie Anderson, Rachel Rosenthal, Karen Finley, Diamanda Galas and David Moss.
[231] Ibid., 128 -129.
[232] Ibid., 99.

> Acconci's investigative project was undertaken in a climate of radical semiotic interrogation. Without explicit connection or commentary, artists and poets were creating works that proposed the theoretical conclusion being simultaneously advanced by post-structural theorists.[233]

Perhaps because her focus is performance, Fischer-Lichte has a different perception of this period and states in reference to performance art and Fluxus actions of the early 60s that 'corporeality dominated semioticity'.[234] I do not consider that in the works I analyse Acconci's body dominates his language. Rather, I consider that he draws equal attention to the presence of his body as he does his negotiation of language. In line with my approach to the voice as a dialectical medium, I propose that it is by way of the voice that he performs body and language as inextricably connected, mutually formational, but in tension with each other.

Dworkin is aware of the powerful presence of the body in relation to language. He writes,

> Acconci's … poetry and performance … inverts Robert Smithson's assertion that "without linguistic awareness there is no physical awareness" and declares instead that without physical awareness there is no linguistic awareness.[235]

This point resonates with a key conceptual thread of this thesis that I have developed in the last chapter: communication is grounded in embodiment. Marinetti and Ball *show how language comes into being* through the forms of onomatopoeia and glossolalia. Both forms gesture to how the infant acquires language through an empathic embodied resonance with the world. Acconci also grounds communication in embodiment. In his practice with voice he demonstrates how one's negotiation of language is subject to the invocatory drive which is always already in relation to the other.

Dworkin understands Acconci's approach to communication as productive of noise. Again, this perspective links to a central idea of this thesis that I introduced in the last chapter: the voice in art generates disturbance in relation to language. Dworkin thinks about this noise in terms of the question of materiality. He writes,

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[233] Dworkin, "Fugitive Signs," 103.
[234] Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 18.
[235] Dworkin, "Fugitive Signs," 110.

> Given the materiality of language, indeed of all channels of communication and dissemination, it follows that every generation of signs is accompanied by some noise: signifying effects that exceed semantics and cannot be accommodated by any single hermeneutic account. From the axiom of materiality, a deconstructive analysis might show that all meaning is thus predicated on nonsense, but one might argue that any particular meaning must result from a set of exclusions and filters, from the blind spots of a specific critical perspective and the medial noise they ignore.[236]

Dworkin distinguishes meaning from noise, where noise is the excess of semantic information or the ground from which this information emerges. By contrast, Fischer-Lichte, to follow her thesis on self-referential materiality, would consider noise meaningful, not as an excess, but as a material presence that the receiver can be conscious of and affected by.

For Fischer-Lichte, meaning can be generated from the perception of materiality. She states,

> To perceive something as something means to perceive it as meaningful. Materiality, signifier, and signified coincide in the case of self-referentiality. Materiality does not act as a signifier to which this or that signified can be attributed. Rather, materiality itself has to be seen as the signified already given in the materiality perceived by the subject.[237]

Where for Dworkin noise is the ground and meaning is the figure, for Fischer-Lichte noise no longer is determined by this dualism. Both perspectives speak to Acconci's work with voice. Dworkin's perspective accounts for how the listener registers the disturbance in language that is produced by the repetitive currency of the voice. Fischer-Lichte's perspective accounts for how the listener can discern in the voice, what Acconci has described as an essential movement as basis of being. There is the potential for the listener to arrive at this perspective after listening to the voice for a long duration, when linguistic value recedes due to the amplification of vocalic resonance. This idea returns to the point I made earlier in reference to Kandinsky's understanding of repetition as a portal to pure sound. However, in line with the critical thread of this thesis, the voice is neither solely sound or sense, but moves back and forth between these registers.

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[236] Dworkin, "Fugitive Signs," 108-109.
[237] Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 141.

In *Claim* what we hear (understand) in Acconci's message is a threat: he will hit anyone that comes into the basement. To listen to this performance is to perceive repetition with a difference, which produces a rhythm that generates and is generated from the vocalic body. On rhythm in relation to her concept of bodily-being-in-the-world Fischer-Lichte writes,

> The heartbeat, the blood circulation, and respiration each follow their own rhythm, as do the movements we carry out when walking, dancing, swimming, writing, and so forth. The same goes for the sounds we make when speaking, singing, laughing, and crying. The inner movements of our bodies that we are incapable of perceiving are also organized rhythmically … The human body is indeed rhythmically tuned.[238]

The rhythmic bodily dimension of Acconci's mantra is reinforced by the fact that he rocks back and forth throughout the performance. This rocking motion supports and propels his mantra. The bodily-being-in-the-world that Acconci performs is not contrived. If we examine video interviews of Acconci, the same rhythmic dimension of his voice – the repetition with deviation – is set into play, and is reinforced and supported by the rocking of his body.[239] This synchrony between Acconci's vocalic and bodily movement clearly conveys how his speech is grounded in embodiment.

I understand repetition in Acconci's practice in relation to the vocalic body and, as I discuss below, due to the need to control this body. But its prevalence in his practice can also be explained by the fact that repetition is a critical currency in sound art more generally. As discussed in the previous chapter, for Kandinsky it is mode with which to access pure sound – to move closer to sound itself. This employment of repetition to focus on sound continues in later sound art. Due to sound's ephemeral, durational nature it often escapes the listener's attention and the detail of its qualities cannot be grasped. Repetition is employed by sound artists to allow the listener to *hold* the experience of sound – to experience it in detail.[240] But in all cases repetition is a mode through which to emphasize the sound's materiality.

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[238] Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 136.

[239] See for example, "Vito Acconci – in Your Face," *Show* Studio, accessed July 2, 2013, http://showstudio.com/project/in_your_face_interviews/vito_acconci.

[240] Alan Licht considers the aspect of the repetition and looping of sound in art as enabling the listener 'to hold' the experience of sound, which is ephemeral. He explains that Rainer introduced repetition to her dance for this reason, that is, to 'hold' the experience of time and in particular the movement of the

Repetition is central to Acconci's work with voice. In such works as *Claim* where Acconci employs repetition to hypnotize himself, it is a controlled element. However, Acconci states that even in works where his repetition is controlled, this repetition has its base in an involuntary mechanism. He explains that from a young age he suffered from a stutter and that this stutter still to a degree affects his speaking voice.[241] Repetition is both the result and remedy of the stutter that creates ruptures in the linguistic voice. Acconci explains that to repeat a phrase helps the next phrase emerge.[242] When there is a gap in speech due to the halting effect of the stutter, repetition enables the speaker to cover over this gap. Repetition – as an involuntary mechanism and a strategic device to control both himself and the other – becomes the structuring principle in Acconci's work with voice. [243]

Dworkin proposes the stutter can produce the form of language and registers the body speaking. His perspective below recalls my discussion of the self-referential materiality of the voice. Dworkin states,

> All language is referential, but it need not reflect concepts, *when language instead refers back to the material circumstances of its own production, we can hear the murmur of its materials*. When speech continues without communicating anything, when speech intransitively reaches the limit at which its communication becomes silent, *we can hear the body speak*.[244]

To echo Dworkin, the repetitions and hesitations in Acconci's speech in *Claim* mark the *limit of communication* and the *murmur of materials* where *we hear the body speak*. In *Claim* we hear the body speak where the flow of Acconci's speech is interrupted. For example: 'I really – [abrupt pause] I really have to believe this … I want – [abrupt pause] I don't care who comes down the stairs.' But more dominant than these moments when the flow of his speech is dammed by points of 'organic

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body. Licht states that installations that use loops or drones are an attempt to sustain a sonic moment long enough to examine it in detail. He cites Bill Fontana who states something similar: 'Sounds that repeat, that are continuous and that have long duration defy the natural acoustic mortality of becoming silent.' See Alan Licht, *Sound Art: Beyond Music, Between Categories* (New York: Rizzoli, 2010), 120.

[241] Acconci, Interview with Schmidt.

[242] Ibid.

[243] This idea of the structuring principle of the stutter is drawn from Craig Dworkin, "The Stutter of Form," in *The Sound of Poetry/The Poetry of Sound*, ed. Marjorie Perloff and Craig Dworkin (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 166-183.

[244] Dworkin, "The Stutter of Form", 167-8. Emphasis added.

hesitancy', are the moments when the flow of his speech is ruptured with deep inhalations.

Dworkin considers the potential for the stutter to be 'the integral part of the formal structure of the text'.[245] This premise can be extended to consider the breath as integral to the formal structure of speech. In everyday speech, unless we are nervous or stressed, we do not notice our breathing that supports it. Acconci amplifies the embodied act of speaking. His deep inhalations in *Claim* bring forth the body and the particular energy of, or the exertion involved in, the performance. But to return to the notion of the stutter, the stutter is not just about hesitancy. It is also concerns the compulsion to repeat; it is 'what the body says, over and over again.'[246] Acconci's speech in *Claim*, and in all the works considered in this chapter, is compulsive and obsessive.

The effect of the stutter can be extended more generally to that of the vocalic body. Dworkin's idea that the stutter can structure a linguistic work resonates with how I conceive the vocalic body as generative of both the form and content of the work that concerns this thesis. In the last chapter I considered how the vocalic body as an articulating apparatus, and as productive of rhythm, generates and is generated by Ball's glossolalia. In Anderson's practice the vocalic body is a more subtle register, but I argue that its rhythm activates the poetic aspect of her work. In the last chapter I consider how the vocalic body creates not only the form and content of the work, but also a space to inhabit. In Acconci's practice, although his negotiation of language is constant, it is the vocalic body composed of repetition and difference that produces the form and structure of the work.

The self-referential materiality of the voice gestures the language of the body. This body is always present in speech. In the early performance poets' work this body, through onomatopoeia and glossolalia, produces the symbolic form of poetic language. The linguistic voice and the extra-linguistic voice are pulled in close with

[245] Dworkin, "The Stutter of Form," 167.
[246] Ibid., 168.

the aim to seal the gap between indication and expression. In Acconci's work the self-referential materiality of the voice sits in tension with the linguistic voice. Acconci points to processes of everyday speech grounded in embodiment. Through repetition he emphasizes the extra-linguistic voice. This aspect of his work has been drawn from his experience as a speaker whose language is ruptured by the stutter. Despite the involuntary nature of this repetition, it also forms a controlled element in his practice. Like other artists of his generation whether in performance, minimalist or sound art, repetition is a mode with which to emphasize materiality as well as produce the structure and form of the work. In Anderson's practice, we will see this mode of repetition that emphasizes the materiality of the voice, extended to emphasize the technological mediation of the voice, which in turn also creates the structure and form of her work.

The push-pull of the vocalic-body-space

Acconci explains that his performances are 'an occasion of interchange … an occasion of meeting' between him and his audience.[247] He does not want the gallery space to function as a space of exhibition, but as a point of exchange. Acconci states, 'I want space to work not so much as viewer on one side, me on the other, [but] as a kind of mingling.'[248] The idea of mingling conjures an alchemy whereby both performer and audience mutually affect and transform each other. Fischer-Lichte calls this the *autopoetic feedback loop* between the performer and audience. In this loop there is a continually shifting state of mutual affection of the two positions.[249] Although Acconci is separated spatially from his audience in *Claim* (he is seated in

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[247] Vito Acconci, "Vito Acconci Work Pieces from 1970 to 1982," *SCI-Arc Media Archive*, accessed November 27, 2013, http://sma.sciarc.edu/subclip/vito-acconci-clip_550/.
[248] Vito Acconci in Paul Taylor, "Self and Theatricality: Samuel Beckett and Vito Acconci," *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 148.
[249] Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*, 172. Fischer-Lichte states,

> In the autopoetic feedback loop, all participants always act both as subject and object. They co-determine the entire process, stimulating new performative turns while also being determined by turns effected by others … the perceiving subject cannot help but breathe in the odor; the voices of the actors and singers resonate in their chests. A constant exchange takes place between the perceiving subject and the object perceived, which dissolves the fundamental subject object opposition that philosophy and the history of ideas so ardently insist on.

the basement below them) he is not separated temporally and acoustically. Acconci's audience experiences his voice and his action of banging the pipe fed live to them through the video monitor. In *Claim* it is vital that his audience is there, for his performance is produced in relation to their presence. That Acconci's audience knows that he knows they are there in turn affects the way they perceive the performance. If for Fischer-Lichte 'presence concerns the energetic processes between people'[250] then Acconci's work achieves this. As Sharp remarks in interview with Acconci, the audience was drawn into the energy of his performances, an energy that Sharp describes as confrontational and antagonistic.[251]

Acconci's monologue is an effort to convince himself of his desire to be alone in the basement, that the basement is his and that he could attack anyone that comes into his territory. The video serves as a form of threat, it warns his audience to keep their distance from him whilst asserting his presence and his location in the space. Acconci states that the video functions as an 'announcement'.[252] I understand 'announcement' in terms of the fundamental position the voice takes in announcing his location and his intent to protect his territory. His voice produces both a centrifugal and centripetal force. It both repels his audience, but also makes sure their attention is kept on him. Despite the fact that Acconci is removed from his audience, his vocalic body is a potential that can both compel his audience closer, but also force them to keep their distance. This relation is characterized by power, rather than an equal exchange. Acconci's voice is the only one that sounds, and it demands a silent response and a willing intent to listen.

Acconci states, 'from 1969, … the interest has really been in an interactive element, what I would call throwing my voice, setting up a power field.'[253] The term *power field* is drawn from the vocabulary that Kurt Lewin develops in his *Studies in Topological Psychology* (1936 rpr. 1966). Before the influence of Lewin, Acconci states he was primarily interested in the physical dimension of space that could be

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[250] Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformation Power of Performance*, 116.
[251] *Willoughby Sharp Videoviews Vito Acconci*.
[252] Acconci, "Vito Acconci Work Pieces from 1970 to 1982,".
[253] Acconci in "Excerpts from Tapes with Lisa Bear," 71.

mapped according to his movements within it.[254] Under Lewin's influence however, Acconci's interest broadens to include psychological concerns and how these concerns can be articulated as a physicality and movement within space. Lewin's topological psychology affords Acconci a system for performing his relation to his audience.

Lewin proposes that in life we each occupy separate regions and that we can influence each other's regions by producing power fields. Lewin defines this term as '[t]he sphere of influence of a person. It can be represented as a field of inducing forces.'[255]Through the production of a power field one can transgress the boundaries of one's region and impact another's region. Lewin considers the ability to influence each other's regions in terms of the idea of 'real connection which one can call "dynamic communication."'[256] Within this relation there are degrees of connectedness and separateness, influence and resistance. This relational dynamic that can be mapped topologically is important to *Claim* where Acconci's relation to space functions not only as a physical reality, but also articulates a psychological situation, what Lewin terms a *life space*.[257]

In *Claim* Acconci and his audience are separated by the constraints of architecture and physical space. Acconci is able to transgress the boundaries that separate his region from that of his audience through the video. The technologically extended voice generates a power field, not only through the threatening import of the message it carries, but also through its energetic currency. Acconci's voice generates a magnetic force that both attracts and repels his listeners.

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[254] Ibid.
[255] Kurt Lewin, *Principles of Topological Psychology* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1966), 218.
[256] Ibid., 54.
[257] Lewin defines 'life space' as

> Totality of facts which determine the behaviour (*B*) of an individual at a certain moment. The lifespace (*L*) represents the totality of possible events. The life space includes the person (*P*) and the environment (*E*) … It can be represented by a finitely structured space.

Ibid., 216.

The voice affords an opening to the speaker's consciousness. From the listener's perspective there is a collapse between the listener's and speaker's interiorities. [258] In relation to *Claim*, I extend this perspective to conceive this work as producing an architecture of the embodied mind. Acconci considers architecture and sound as connected in that both produce a surrounding. [259] In this work, he separates himself from his audience on the floor above – space is approached as an extension of himself.[260] In *Claim* this extension is generated through the voice. This is not to say that Acconci is expressing an essential self, but as an embodied mind, this self is produced as it is performed in relation to the other.

To think the voice as generative of spatiality is also to think of it as generative of a particular kind of atmosphere. Atmosphere is both a physical and psychological phenomenon. The particular quality of atmosphere that Acconci produces through his voice is one of oppression in relation to both his listener and himself. Bruce Nauman also, employs the voice to perform this collapse between the interiority of the mind and the interiority of architecture. Like Acconci he is interested in sound's oppressive potential. In one installation, his voice hisses, 'get out of my mind, get out of this room' over and over again.[261]Here Nauman spells out the collapse between space and mind that is the effect of the voice. The repetition of this phrase and the quality of sound amplifies the voice as an aggressive currency.

The fact that there is no sound recording of Acconci's performance *Seedbed* means we must imagine the voice and its impact.[262] But this is not hard to do for there are many extant recordings of Acconci's voice that have cemented its quality as deep,

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[258]Ong states,

> One does not produce words in order to get rid of them but rather to have them penetrate, impregnate, the mind of another. This penetrating quality of words is due not merely to an intentionality deliberately given to the (I want my words to penetrate your consciousness) but to the very nature of sound itself, which … proceeds from one interior to another interior.

Ong, *The Presence of the Word*, 34

[259] Acconci in Balit,'Vito Acconci – Interview'.

[260] Paul Taylor notes this connection in Taylor, "Self and Theatricality," 142.

[261] Bruce Nauman, *Get out of my mind, get out of this room*, (1968). The fact that Nauman works with repetitive sound draws attention to the fact that repetition is a currency employed by sound artists. I discuss the repetitive currency of sound art in the last chapter.

[262] LaBelle, "Performing Desire / Performing Fear," 110.

smokey, slow, steady, seductive, yet sometimes flat and monotone and punctuated with slight stutters. In *Seedbed*, because Acconci's listener cannot see him, the idea of stepping into his mind when stepping into a space filled with his voice is even more strongly evoked than in *Claim*.[263]

Acconci lies underneath a ramp inserted into the floor of the Sonnabend Gallery. Hidden from his audience, he masturbates and vocalizes sexual fantasies into a microphone, which are emitted in the gallery space above through speakers. Acconci relies on the auditory presence of his listener to stimulate his masturbation and he implicates her directly into his erotic fantasies. He explains, 'I'm looking for a sound of a person, of a viewer, so that I can react against it. There were days when I was probably listening for the secretary because there was no one else there.'[264]This returns to the discussion of the auto-feedback between audience and performer. In this case the sound of the listener motivates Acconci's vocalizations.

In *Seedbed* Acconci generates similar processes and themes that occur in *Claim*. It is a work that depends on contact with a listener, and this contact is performed by the voice extended through technology. Like *Claim*, Acconci works to have his presence and, by extension, a certain atmosphere felt by way of the voice. The voice functions in relation to the architecture of the space and transgresses the boundary (the ramp) between Acconci and his listener. Like *Claim* it generates a power field that impacts his listener's region. Lewin states that boundaries are usually of a social nature,[265] and Acconci in *Seedbed* through voice not only transgresses the physical boundary of the ramp, but also the boundary between private and public space. Indeed, the physical boundary of the ramp functions as a boundary between the private and the public. Acconci states that in this piece he is private in the sense that he is sealed off in a private fantasy realm and public in that his voice is heard by, addresses and implicates his listener into his fantasy.[266]

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[263] Ironically, the video documentation of this work communicates the contrary where we 'see' Acconci, but cannot 'hear' him.
[264] Vito Acconci in Frazer Ward, "In Private and Public," in Mark C. Taylor, Frazer Ward, Jennifer Bloomer, *Vito Acconci* (New York: Phaidon, 2002), 40.
[265] Lewin, *Principles of Topological Psychology*, 45.
[266] Vito Acconci in *Willoughby Sharp Videoviews Vito Acconci*.

Acconci's work is often discussed in terms of the dialectic of the private and the public, but rarely does this discussion consider how vital the voice is in activating this dialectic. Indeed, the voice that sits at the threshold of the interior mind and the exterior world controls a critical boundary between the private and the public. Like *Claim*, Acconci's listener is absorbed by his state of mind; she enters his state of mind through her entry into the gallery and her reception of his voice. However, where in *Claim* Acconci never addresses his audience directly, in *Seedbed* he implicates his listener into his fantasy through addressing her in the second person. The aggression that Acconci produces in relation to his audience in *Claim* is continued in *Seedbed*, but it is of a different kind. He confronts hilistener with language that is sexually graphic: 'You're pushing your cunt down on my mouth … you're pressing your tits down on my cock … you're ramming your cock down into my ass …'[267]

Like Marinetti, Acconci uses words like weapons and aims to shock his listener. But where Marinetti's aggressive use of voice is aimed to awaken his listener to a dynamic environment and encourage his listener's embodiment of this environment, Acconci's works to libidinally arouse his listener. In both cases the voice as an energetic currency is emphasized and intended to affect its listener. In distinction, Anderson will ventriloquize a disaffected, neutralized voice. But she will also draw attention to the oppressive quality of the voice – in her case the mass-mediated voice – that can invade consciousness.

As the discourse on Acconci and as he himself mentions many times, his interest during this period, which originates in his poetry, is in movement. Lewin's term *locomotion* affords an understanding of the movement of the voice in *Seedbed*. Lewin defines locomotion as a '[c]hange of position [where] ... the moving region becomes part of another region ...'[268] He states, '[t]o come close to another person through a conversation is [a] ... case of social locomotion which, although it involves no physical movement, is psychological real.'[269] Through voice Acconci 'comes closer'

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[267] Vito Acconci in LaBelle, "Performing Desire / Performing Fear," 110.
[268] Lewin, *Principles of Topological Psychology*, 216.
[269] Ibid., 49.

to the other; he moves into their region. Acconci's voice functions as a *path* [270] that connects his region with that of his listener and produces *dynamic communication.* However, Acconci's perception of the function of the voice in this piece complicates the assertion of it as a path that connects two points. Acconci conceives of his voice in this piece as a 'marginal' presence. By marginal he does not mean minimal, but rather that his voice is emitted at the margins of space, as something that surrounds his listener. Acconci states,

> I mean physically marginal – being around a room rather than at a point – not marginal in the sense that my presence can be forgotten about ... I would be a part of the walls, part of the floor, but I would be making them come alive in such a way that they would strike ... It's more powerful to exist around four walls or under a floor than in one place. I have more points to act from …[271]

As much as Acconci's voice works to affect his listener, it also functions to articulate space. In Acconci's work the vocalic body as an articulating and sounding cavity, which conjures the image of the body, is extended into space. From this perspective I conceive of his work as productive of a *vocalic-body-space*.

Alvin Lucier in his work *Sitting in a Room* (1969) [272] also performs the voice as an articulation of physical space. In this work Lucier states,

> I am sitting in a room different from the one you are in now. I am recording the sound of my speaking voice and I am going to play it back into the room again and again until the resonant frequencies of the room reinforce themselves so that any semblance of my speech with perhaps the exception of *rhythm* is destroyed. What you will hear then are the natural resonant frequencies of the room articulated by speech. I regard this activity not so much a demonstration of a physical fact but more as a way to *smooth* out any irregularities my speech might have.

Lucier's explication of his process and the process he performs produce the content and form of the work. With each recording and playback of the explication the quality of his voice shifts so that it moves further from the body to become, as he explains, 'the natural resonant frequencies of the room articulated by speech'. The technological mediation is crucial to this performance's production of the vocalic-

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[270] Ibid., 54.
[271] Vito Acconci in "Excerpts from Tapes with Lisa Bear," 72.
[272] Please listen to Alvin Lucier, *Sitting in a Room* (1969), accessed February 21, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAxHlLK3Oyk.

body-space. It is of interest that, as Lucier tells us, his process is motivated not in order demonstrate a physical fact, but rather in order to erase his stutter. We can hear his stutter as he states the words 'rhythm' and 'smooth'. Here, as with Acconci's work, the automatic mechanism of the body heard through speech motivates the ordering principle of the work. Repetition is a method for both artists to control this automatic movement.

Where Lucier works to erase the libidinal trace of the body in the voice, Acconci in *Seedbed* works to amplify it. The erotic quality of his voice in *Seedbed* is heightened by the fact that he works with an acousmatic voice, a voice separated from its source of the body. The voice has the effect of evoking the body that cannot be seen such that it becomes a powerful and enigmatic force.[273] The acoustmatic voice's erotic aspect is intertwined with its quality of oppression. As Acconci states,

> It's much easier to know where you are, when you are faced with something visual, because you're looking at it … sometimes it is difficult to know where sound is coming from ... you can close your eyes but you can't close your ears, so that *sound is almost pressure, sound is a possibility of oppression*.[274]

Michel Chion considers the originary acousmatic voice the mother's voice. The infant cannot see or fix where its mother's voice comes from and her voice surrounds it in a powerful, all-encompassing embrace. Chion proposes this voice, in its relation to the infant, has the potential to generate the effect of both nest and cage.[275] This ambivalent quality of the acousmatic voice is registered in *Seedbed*. On the one hand his voice produces a condition of intimacy, but it is a forced intimacy. Indeed, Acconci in reference to this work and his work more generally, proposes it functions in the form of a trap. [276]

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[273] Chion develops the idea that the acousmatic voice is more powerful or influential than the voice whose source can be seen. See Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, ed. and trans. Claudia Gorbman, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
[274] Vito Acconci in Balit, "Vito Acconci – Interview".
[275] Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, 61.
[276] Acconci states,

> The thing about *Seedbed* is that … anytime a viewer came into that space, like it or not, the viewer became material for my mind. The viewer became material for … my sexual fantasy and that notion of the viewer … being immediately *trapped* into something is something that work of mine has always played with.

Sound is the medium *par excellence* to fill space with the self. It is, as Rosolato states, the self's most powerful projection, which is as much spatial/ physical as it is psychological. [277]For Acconci because the voice cannot be shut out, it is an oppressive presence. The only way to control one's relation to the sound of the voice is to move away.[278] This idea that the ears, unlike the eyes, always remain open is often repeated in critical theory concerned with sound or listening. Lacanian theory is interested in this premise. Dolar states, '[t]he ears have no lids, as Lacan never tires of repeating; they cannot be closed, one is constantly exposed, no distance from sound can be maintained.'[279] Acconci is interested in this power over the listener. For him, it is a question of, 'can I with voice, take over the listener?'[280]

Acconci's production of a vocalic-body-space that constitutes an oppressive relation with his listener gestures to an ethics and ecology of the voice. Anderson also points to this oppressive, invasive aspect of the voice in her approach to the mass-mediated voice. But where Anderson works to critique this aspect the voice, Acconci works to find himself in it. His objective is to generate the voice's oppressive potential in order to *do* something – affect his listener and himself.

The hetero-affective voice

The relation of power enacted between Acconci and his listener is not as simple as Acconci in the position of aggressor and his listener in the position of the aggressed. In *Claim* Acconci, who speaks to himself as much to his potential intruders, must submit himself to his voice. Here, his voice functions as the other of himself that drums into his consciousness what he must believe he will do. Acconci describes the

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"Vito Acconci Work Pieces from 1970 to 1982". Emphasis added.
[277] Rosolato, "Voice: Between Body and Language," 108.
[278] Acconci is aware not only of the oppressive potential of sound and the voice, but also the oppressive potential of the technologies of radio, TV and film, that extend and also amputate this voice. In his later installations his voice will echo those of these media – the voice of the DJ or filmstar.
[279] Dolar, *A Voice And Nothing More*, 78. Dolar echoes other cultural theorists stating that totalitarian regimes depend on the voice and he considers 'the voice as the source and immediate lever of violence.' See Dolar, *A Voice And Nothing More*, 114.
[280] Acconci, Interview with Schmidt.

function of his voice in *Claim* as a form of self-hypnosis.[281] He explains that his repetition of phrases numbs him into believing that he will attack his intruder. [282]In submitting himself to the hypnotic voice, Acconci further destabilizes the concept of the auto-affective voice. Acconci who changes the state of his mind through vocal repetition, positions the voice as other to himself, and thus draws attention to the disunified nature of subjectivity.

This perspective of subjectivity is central to Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. The voice within the Lacanian schema contributes to this disunity. Here, 'the voice is not a form of self-affection or self-presence, but precisely an obstacle to the subject's identity: it is the objective correlate of what Lacan calls the split subject.'[283] Dolar, who develops the Lacanian perspective, proposes that something other from outside the self sets the voice into play. This something other is the remainder of the subject's entry into language: *objet a*.

Objet a activates and is activated by the drives. In the case of the voice, it is the invocatory drive that is set into play. The absence of the mother's voice that was first apprehended as a constant in, and continuous to, the infant's reality, renders her an object of desire in relation to the voice as *objet a*. The child is propelled by the invocatory drive toward the object voice. '[W]hat is it that the invocatory drive aims at? On one level, to make oneself heard, but on a more fundamental level to make oneself addressed.'[284]The invocatory drive harnesses both positions of sender and receiver within the dialogue, for the child incorporates its mother's voice, which addresses it, as its own. Lacanian theory proposes that the split subject clings to *objet a* in order to mask her division and 'sustain the illusion of wholeness'.[285] The infant/subject propelled in vocalization/speech through the invocatory drive and its circulation of *objet a* masks its splitting through its relational soundings.

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[281] Acconci, "Vito Acconci Work Pieces from 1970 to 1982".
[282] Acconci, Interview with Schmidt.
[283] Aaron Schuster, "Everyone is a Ventriloquist an Interview with Mladen Dolar," *Metropolism* 2 (April 2009) accessed May 7, 2013, http://metropolism.com/magazine/2009-no2/everyone-is-a-ventriloquist/.
[284] Darian Leader, "The Voice as Psychoanalytic Object," *Analysis* 12 (2003): 81.
[285] Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 59.

Leon Hilton states that *objet a* is 'Lacan's term for the unattainable object of desire – [it] has something to do with what Lacan proposed was an essential cleaving within the subject, a space within the *'I' that is always pierced by the 'You'*… For Lacan, *the relation of the subject to the other is situated as an echo of an initial division* or cleaving within the self.'[286] The infant's voice, constituted through the invocatory drive and sounded in the form of babbles and cries, is according to the Lacanian schema always *for the other*. Even though the infant has not yet acquired the word 'you', its soliloquy is intended for an addressee. Lacan states, '[t]his egocentric discourse is a case of hail to the good listener'.[287] The scene of infancy will lay the foundations for the voice as activated by the invocatory drive and for the condition of the voice as *appeal*.

Lacan states, '[a]ll speech calls for a reply. I shall show that there is no speech without a reply, even if it's met only with silence provided that it has an auditor …'[288] In Acconci's works discussed in this chapter, the voice sounds for the other – an appeal for the silent response of the listener. But his voice can also be conceived as a response to the silent address of the voice as *objet a*. Acconci's voice understood in relation to the invocatory drive is both sender and receiver, self and other.
It is the reply of silent audition that Acconci calls for. It is the willing intent of his listener to hear him (as well as his intent to hear himself) that propels the performances and sustains their duration.

Acconci's vocalizations in *Seedbed* and *Claim* depend upon the auto-feedback circuit generated through contact with his audience. In *Claim*, Acconci does not directly address his audience, but it is vital that they hear him. In *Seedbed* Acconci's contact with his listener is more pronounced where he addresses her in the second person. She is the 'you' to his 'I'. In both performances we hear the egoic soliloquy that Lacan notes as foundational to communication in the infant stage. Like the infant's other (its mother) Acconci's listener becomes an acoustic mirror to his soliloquy.

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[286] Leon Hilton, "Flip of the Mirror as Protest: Xiu Xiu and The Cause of Desire," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 23, no. 3 (September 2011): 311. Emphasis added.
[287] Dolar, *A Voice And Nothing More*, 27.
[288] Jacques Lacan, "Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," *Écrits: A Selection*, (London: Tavistock Publications Limited, 1977), 40.

Acconci performs his own sonorous envelope – his verbal cocoon – in his performance and video works where despite the fact that the voice often addresses his listener, it produces a solipsistic circuit. Acconci's solipsism is fuelled and supported by his listener who is the sounding board upon which to project his will and fantasies. Even when Acconci addresses his listener directly, it is always in terms of a fantasized relation and so she is but the screen upon which to project his subjectivity. His is not a total solipsism however, because it is always dependent upon the presence of his listener. There is always a 'you' incorporated into his 'I'.

In his non-live video work this premise becomes more complicated. Although Acconci's speech is heard, he is not present to this hearing. The intent, however, remains the same – Acconci continues to address his listener, to implicate her in his appeal. His 'I' remains dependent upon the 'you'. His speech, in these videos, as with the earlier performances, is both soliloquy and dialogue for all speech (as both Lawlor and Ong draw attention to) is in fact dialogue in that it is produced through a relation to the other. The other as the acoustic mirror is there to secure Acconci's position, to support his fantasy, or as the artist conceives it, to corroborate with what he says. [289]

In *Undertone*, Acconci is seated at a table.[290] The camera sits at the opposite end of the table, which, by extension, is the position the audience takes. Acconci's *mise-en-scene* and the way he addresses his audience takes the form of a confession.[291] Anne Wagner states,

> [t]he stage is set for what legal scholars have called, speaking of the criminal confession, the "story of the closed room," the disclosure that happens once the accused and interrogator finally sit face-to-face.[292]

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[289] Acconci, Interview with Schmidt.
[290] See Vito Acconci, *Undertone*, 1972, accessed February 21, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZaD9CHZecE.
[291] Confession was an important ritual in Acconci's life up until his college years. Because he attended a Jesuit college, confession was still a part of his life, but it was not compulsory as it was in his education before this time. Acconci's relays a humourous anecdote when in college he does confession and the priest exclaims in frustration, 'Why are you telling me this?!' Acconci explains that after this experience he stopped going to confession.
Acconci, Interview with Schmidt.
[292] Anne Wagner, "Performance, Video, and the Rhetoric of Presence," *October* 91 (Winter 2000): 76.

David Antin suggests that the visual style of the address that Acconci stages in this piece echoes that of the presidential address.[293] Yet the tone of Acconci's language is far too intimate to be that produced in a legal or political institution. It is the tone one takes with their lover or their self. In the case of the former, it is a demand for their attention, an appeal to be heard, trusted, and affirmed. In the case of the latter, Acconci slips between the hedonistic voice of fantasy or the more serious voice of conscience that wants to set the record straight. Blurring the distinction between institutionalized and intimate confession, Acconci disturbs the boundaries between the public and the private. The content and form of Acconci's speech in this piece is an amalgam of what occurs in *Claim* and *Seedbed*. Like *Claim* Acconci's voice produces a mantra to convince himself to believe something, and like *Seedbed* this something takes the form of a sexual fantasy. In *Undertone* Acconci shifts from the solipsistic, hypnotic circuit of the voice to a voice that addresses his listener as 'you'. *Undertone* departs from the earlier performances where Acconci denies his fantasy and asserts the reality of his situation.

In the following excerpt from *Undertone* I have typographically distinguished the three different voices:

> I want to believe there is a girl here under the table, she's resting her forearms on my thighs, now she's moving her forearms. I want to believe there is a girl here under the table … *I need you to be sitting there facing me. I need you to be sitting there facing me, because, because I have to have someone to talk to. I have to know that you are there facing me, so that I can have someone, so that I can have someone to address this to.* I want to believe I want to believe there is no one here under the table. I want to believe that there is no girl under the table …

The listener is the sounding board to Acconci's shifting articulation of self. The 'you' Acconci addresses takes the place of the lover or the priest and recalls the relation to the mother in the scene of infancy. Acconci speaks to be heard, but also to build his sexual fantasy; to enter the plenitude of the sonorous envelope first produced by the mother's voice. His voice, according to the Lacanian schema is the material

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[293] David Antin, "Television: Video's Frightful Parent," *Art forum*, (December, 1975): 44. This perspective resonates with certain moments in another performance video *Themesong*, discussed below. In these moments Acconci asserts that he is speaking the truth and he needs his audience to believe him, even though his audience knows his claims are ridiculous. This performance echoes the kind of dynamic, albeit in a cruder more obvious way, of Clinton's address to the public proclaiming his innocence in relation to the Monica Lewinski affair.

manifestation of the drive aiming at that lost voice – the object of desire that once constituted an original bond with mother's voice. However, at the points at which Acconci denies his fantasy of the girl rubbing his thighs – 'It's me who is resting my forearms on my thighs,' – a psychoanalytic interpretation might propose that he is no longer responding to the lost voice, but echoing the voice of the superego. This voice that contradicts Acconci's original fantasy introduces the idea of the voice as productive of a site of antagonism within the self. Kristeva's concept of the subject in process resonates with this piece where we hear Acconci vocalize shifting locations of his self, which mutually destabilize each other and together communicate the impossibility of an essential self.

At the beginning of this chapter in my discussion of the poem *RE* I discerned the seeds of Acconci's push-pull, contra-puntal dynamic where he states a proposition and then contradicts it. In *Undertone* this dynamic is amplified through a sexual fantasy that Acconci constructs and then deconstructs in relation to his listener, who is, as Acconci states, *needed* in this process of (de)construction. Aside from this push-pull, contra-puntal dynamic, the voice, as in all of Acconci's voice works, is marked by repetition.

The constant repetition that we hear in Acconci's mantra in *Claim* and *Undertone*, aside from convincing himself to believe something, manifests the compulsion of the drive – its urge to repeat. Dolar proposes that the drives have a parasitic relation to the body and are caused by the body being inculcated into language and imprinted by the signifier.[294] Following this logic, the voice makes manifest the effect of language upon the body. Dolar states,

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[294] Dolar, *A Voice And Nothing More*, 156. Dolar explains,

> The drives present a nature denatured, they are not a regression to some originary unsurpassed animal past which would come to haunt us, but the consequence of the assumption of the symbolic order. They get hold of the organic functions and corrupt them … they behave like parasites which derail the organic from its natural course, but their parasitism takes support from an excess produced by the invasion of the symbolic into the body, the intrusion of the signifier into the corporeal. What do the net of signifiers, this abstract and negative differential matrix, and the body have in common? The simplest clue is offered by the topology that we have detected in different realms: their intersection is the drive, which does not simply pertain to either the signifier or the organic; it is placed at the point of their "impossible" juncture.

> The object voice … is the by-product of the operation [of signification], its side result that the drive gets hold of, circling around it, coming back to the same place in a movement of repetition.[295]

In *Claim* and *Undertone*, the invocatory drive sounds in the constant movement towards and away from something that cannot be grasped.

In the previous chapter I introduced Kahn's concept of the enunciative drive and how this is connected to understanding language as a living object. Despite the modernist poets' desire to sound with a vital voice that is not constrained by the bounds of *logos*, because they are working from a post-linguistic position, their ability to sound this voice is in fact impossible. As Agamben proposes, the *phone* is always destined for *logos*, and must sound in the gap between body and language. The earlier artists strive for a vocalic utopia – a place that does not exist.

Acconci's voice holds the relation of language and body in tension with each other. To consider Acconci's voice aesthetics in relation to the invocatory drive as post-linguistic does not mean that the body is eclipsed by language. Rather, Acconci's work amplifies the extra-linguistic register. Earlier I discussed the idea of the body that speaks the text and produces the form of a work. In such works as *Claim* and *Undertone* it is the vocalic body figured through repetition with a difference that produces the form of the work. In these works where Acconci's mantras rest on a theme and its variation speech is musicalized. (More on this in a moment.)

The concept of the hetero-affective voice is a vital and critical thread in the voice in art and thus is central to this thesis. The hetero-affective voice draws attention to the inherent relationality and the embodied aspect of the voice. The voice of self is simultaneously the voice of the other. In fact, following the logic of this thesis, the voice is neither of these things but the relation between them. In Acconci's practice, the voice of self in relation to the other is marked and motivated by the invocatory drive, which generates the conflict between body and language. The hetero-affectivity of the voice that is so crucial to Acconci's practice continues in Anderson's practice,

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[295] Dolar, *A Voice And Nothing More*, 72.

but to a lesser effect. Where her voice is neutralized of the body, the invocatory drive is silenced. Anderson ventriloquizes the voices of the media and performs the disembodied voice of the other as an invasion of the body. The repetition of this voice does not speak to the operations of the drive, but to those of the machine. The hetero-affective voice is also evoked by the contemporary works I analyse. These works materialize the idea of a single voice that repeats the voices of others, but through its specific emission constitutes difference. The hetero-affectivity of the voice is also evoked by the modernist poets who vocalize their embodied resonances of the world.

The musicalization of the subject

Dolar states,

> Resonance is the locus of the voice … If the voice implies reflexivity, in so far as its resonance returns from the Other then it is a reflexivity without a self – not a bad name for a subject. For it is not the same subject which sends his or her message and gets the voice bounced back – rather *the subject is what emerges in this loop*, the result of the course.[296]

The listener is exposed to the performed loop of Acconci's subjectivity which, to follow Dolar's argument, is not the same subject that bounces back from the resonant void after every utterance. As mentioned, the acoustic mirror of the mother's voice enables the infant to incorporate the voice from the position of both sender and receiver. This also happens naturally when we speak – as we emit sound we simultaneously hear it.[297] Thus the voice as both self and other is developed not only through the primary scene of mis-identification with the mother's voice, but also through the empirical condition of speaking. The voice of the self resounds in the locus of the voice of the other and produces the subject through a continually looping (de)formation. Acconci states in reference to *Claim* that he begins to believe his position within the situation, and thus his subjectivity transforms. In *Undertone* the listener hears his state of mind shift from fantasy, to appeal, to denial and then recommence the circuit again.

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[296] Dolar, *A Voice And Nothing More*, 161. Emphasis added.
[297] Rosolato, "The Voice: Between Body and Language," 109.

The auditory misrecognition through hearing oneself speak in relation to the object voice returns to the impossibility of auto-affective voice. Dolar states,

> This object embodies the very impossibility of attaining auto-affection; it introduces a scission, a rupture in the middle of the full presence, and refers it to a void ... in which the voice comes to resonate.[298]

To cloak this impossibility the voice keeps sounding. Jaques-Alain Miller describes the disavowing function of the empirical voice. He states,

> the voice inhabits language, it haunts it. It is enough to speak for the menace to emerge that what cannot be said could come to light. If we speak that much, if we organize symposiums, if we chat, if we sing and listen to singers, if we play music and listen to it, Lacan's thesis implies that it is in order to silence what warrants to be called the voice as object little *a*.[299]

Dolar states that the more aestheticized the voice is the more it covers over the silence of *objet a*. In this respect he understands music as fetishized sound. But as Dolar notes, 'this gesture is always ambivalent: music evokes the object voice and conceals it, it fetishizes it, but also opens the gap that cannot be filled.'[300] Music more than any other form of vocal communication registers the appeal, the call, the urge to be heard, and to also respond to a silent address, whilst aestheticizing this appeal/response and producing it as a form of entertainment, comfort and catharsis.

In *Theme Song*, where he oscillates from song to speech, Acconci draws attention to the fetishistic aspect of the voice.[301] But in drawing so obvious attention to it, he undermines its function as a mask. Earlier in this chapter I stated that Acconci through exaggerating the indicative nature of the linguistic voice as a result emphasizes the extra-linguistic voice. In *Theme Song*, through disclosing the fetishistic aspect of the voice, he again draws attention to its materiality. In order to elucidate this aspect I draw on Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe's conception of subjectivity as a form of musicalization.

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[298] Dolar, *A Voice And Nothing More*, 42.
[299] Jacques-Alain Miller, "Jacques Lacan and the Voice," in *The Later Lacan: An Introduction*, ed. Véronique Voruz and Bogdan Wolf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 145.
[300] Mladen Dolar, "The Object Voice," in *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, ed. Renata Saleci and Slavoj Zizek (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), 10.
[301] Please listen to Vito Acconci *Themesong* (1973), accessed March 3, 2016, http://ubu.com/film/acconci_theme.html.

Lacoue-Labarthe considers the subject in the negotiation of language in a state of constant (de)formation. He introduces the idea of the subject as one of *desistance* – withdrawal. As much as the self tries to grasp itself in language, its subjectivity evades it – it withdraws. This grasping movement, what Lacoue-Labarthe understands as the 'autobiographical compulsion … (the need to tell, to confess, to write oneself)', is paramount to Acconci's 1970s practice. Lacoue-Labarthe aligns the movement of autobiographical compulsion to the 'musical obsession'. Like a song we cannot get out of our head, we construct and reconstruct our subjectivities in an effort to grasp something that remains beyond our reach. [302]Lacoue-Labarthe proposes that we must depart from the specular location of the subject that has been theorized from Plato to Lacan and instead consider the subject in its pre-specular formation. He asks, 'what happens when one goes back from Narcissus to Echo. … What is a reverberation or a resonance? '[303] Lacoue-Labarthe proposes we listen with what Nietzsche terms the 'Third Ear' to hear the fundamental musicality of the voice that is 'essentially a rhythmics'.[304] He develops Émile Benveniste's conception of rhythm – 'the form at the moment it is taken by what is in movement, mobile, fluid … improvised, momentaneous, modifiable' – with the idea that rhythm is the form or figure 'broached' by time, time as 'repetition in its difference'.[305]

Acconci performs the subject in desistance through his rhythmic monologue that speaks the imaginary. In the words of Lacoue-Labarthe, this monologue 'oscillates between figures' and 'destroys … as much as it helps to construct'.[306] Acconci renders this ambivalent movement of the imaginary, which is barely discernable in the subject of the everyday, explicit by his staging of a contrived subject. He constructs and deconstructs this subject through contradictory propositions and projects it through the screen of artifice – the fantasy in *Undertone* or the song in *Theme Song*.

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[302] Phillipe Lacaoue-Labarthe, "The Echo of the Subject," in *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, ed. Christopher Fynsk (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), 140. Interestingly, Acconci has mentioned this importance of 'the song you cannot get out of your mind' in relation to his work. See Vito Acconci in Balit, "Vito Acconci – Interview."
[303] Ibid., 146.
[304] Ibid., 161.
[305] Ibid., 201.
[306] Ibid., 175.

The idea of the musical obsession, or the song that gets stuck in one's head is particularly pertinent in the age of mass-mediated music that surrounds the listener with a ubiquitous force. To extend Lacoue-Labarthe's thesis, as much as the musical obsession is connected to telling oneself, it also involves listening to the other. Acconci comments on the influence of singer-song writers such as Jim Morrison and Leonard Cohen on his work during the early 1970s. These artists' employment of a single voice addressing an anonymous 'you' in an intimate tone whilst searching for a sense of self provide a model for Acconci's work with voice during this period.[307]

In *Theme Song* Acconci plays songs from a tape player to sing along with them and then improvise beyond them to constitute an idea of himself in speech. This model of moving from song to speech and back again is engaged in many of his works with voice.[308] This movement demonstrates how Acconci is approaching speech beyond its linguistic value to engage it as a materiality, or more specifically as a musicality. To echo Lacoue-Labarthe and Benveniste, Acconci locates speech as essentially a 'rythmics': 'mobile, fluid … improvised, momentaneous, modifiable'.[309]

Acconci moves from song to speech and back again in a seductive address. His speech becomes an extension of his singing and the songs he sings are modified to become extensions of his speech.

> Why don't you come here with me… come on … Look how lonely I am … I need you to take care of me … I'll really try to be straight with you. I'll be really honest … Come on put your body next to mine.

As in *Undertone*, what is emphasized in *Theme Song* is the hetero-affective voice – a voice dependent upon the other that sounds the 'I' pierced by the 'you'. Acconci sounds the appeal to the listener and the need to be heard as his voice shifts from seduction to quasi-confession and works to constitute an idea of the self in these different registers.

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[307] Acconci agreed with this perspective in Interview with Schmidt.

[308] Some of Acconci's video work that includes the movement between song and speech include, *Walk Over* (1973), *Stages*, (1973), *Turn On*, (1974), and *Command Performance*, (1974). I do not have the space to explore these works in the thesis, however I consider this a future area of research in the study of voice in Acconci's practice.

[309] Lacaoue-Labarthe, "The Echo of the Subject," 161, 201.

This hetero-affective voice is also registered where the voice echoes the mass-mediated singer's voice. Despite the notion of the inauthentic self that ventriloquizes the clichéd phrases 'I need you', 'don't cry', and so on, Acconci's voice is marked by his own grain. The individual quality of the voice is further emphasized when Acconci improvises beyond the songs and his voice unfurls his individual rhythm – what Mallarmé terms the self's 'rhythmic knot'.

In reference to *vers libre* Mallarmé wrote that 'every soul is a rhythmic knot.' [310] This perspective speaks to how the voice functions in Acconci's practice and connects this practice to that of the early performance poets. As I stated in chapter one, *vers libre* is a critical influence on *parole in libertà*, and by extension *verse ohne worte*. These practices through their emphasis on rhythm motivated by what Kahn termed *l'accent d'impulsion* are critical antecedents to Acconci's practice that activates the invocatory drive. Although Acconci amplifies the false intimacy generated by popular song, he also draws attention to the distinct individuality of the voice in its echolalia. Through voice, Acconci embodies the cliché and brings it to life. Meaning here is not to be found in words, but in the movement of the voice. That is to say, the self-referential materiality of the voice as disturbance is made meaningful.

In *Undertone* and *Theme Song* Acconci oscillates back and forth between contradictory propositions and thus erodes the intentional message through subverting it to movement. The rhythm of the voice speaks the body and the ambivalence of subjectivity (de)formed through the push-pull of the drives. Rather than signifying identity, the voice signals a movement towards another, and back to oneself. Acconci's hetero-affective voice renders the frustrations of the subject, as it performs to a silent listener, explicit and points to the limit of communication. In understanding Acconci's voice as performing a musicalization of the subject, I argue that he not only emphasizes the materiality of the voice, and grounds communication in embodiment, but also points to the problematic nature of communication. Marinetti and Ball in their vocalization of the subject also foreground the materiality of the voice, as well as point to the problem of communication when it is reduced to linguistic value. Their

[310] Stéphane Mallarmé in Ibid., 140.

poetic language recalls the scene of infancy when one responds to the world through the empathic resonances of the vocalic body. I have distinguished Acconci's practice from theirs through replacing the term *vocalization* with *musicalization*. The former develops from de Certeau's conception of the effect of glossolalia and his understanding of it as a vocalic utopia. In distinction, the latter is drawn from Lacoue-Labarthe's understanding of the desire of the subject to find itself in everyday language. Through poetic language, the modernists aim to revolutionize the subject. Acconci employs everyday language, but formalizes it through his repetitive-differential-contrapuntal mode, to amplify to the frustrations and compulsions of the subject. Acconci does not aim to overcome the problem of language. Rather, his project with voice reveals that the self must ceaselessly negotiate the tensions between body and language, self and other.

Lacaoue-Labarthe is correct to say we must listen to the subject with the third ear for when we do so we can discern the music of the voice. In Acconci's work the music of the voice, which I have described as a repetitive-differential-contrapuntal mode, produces the form and content of his work. In Anderson's work this third register of the voice will continue, albeit as an extremely subtle register.

From Acconci to Anderson

At the beginning of this chapter I referred Acconci's argument that movement is the basis for being. It is no surprise then that he found his way to the voice, for the voice as the dialectical medium *par excellence*, is always in movement. As Acconci performs the libidinal operations of the voice, he demonstrates that this voice ceaselessly moves between self and other, body and language. He amplifies the voice as a liquefying and dissolving agent that deconstructs as much as it constructs. He performs the voice's inherent aggression, its potential to affect its listener and to create an atmosphere.

In the next chapter I discuss the work of Anderson. Her work with voice, in distinction to all the other artists of this thesis, dislocates the voice from its embodiment. As I shall explore in depth, the reason she produces this rupture between

voice and embodiment is to perform the effects of the technological structures of communication upon the listener. Her work however, in line with the key thread of this thesis, approaches the voice as a materiality. The materiality of the voice is registered in its mediation through technology. Like Acconci, Anderson evokes the hetero-affectivity of the voice. Acconci aims to project the self upon the other, or use the other to find the self. In distinction, Anderson, through her audio masks, lets the other sound through her self.

Chapter 3. Anderson's Voice: Between the Body and Technology

I strive for a sort of stereo-effect, a pairing up of things against each other and see myself as a sort of moderator between things.

Laurie Anderson in Craig Owens, "Sex and Language: In Between," in Janet Kardon, *Laurie Anderson: Works from 1969 to 1983* (Pennsylvania: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1983), 50.

Anderson is self-consciously concerned with what she terms a 'stereo effect' and the positioning herself *between things*. It therefore follows that her work is critical to my thesis that is focused on the dialectical economy of the voice in art. In this chapter I analyze the voice in relation to the dialectic of the body and technology. I consider how the voice in Anderson's work of the 1980s is manipulated by technology and performs the effects of communications technology. Anderson's embodied presence on stage conveys her agency in relation to the technology through which she mediates her voice. From this perspective her work resonates with McLuhan's humanist understanding that media are the extensions of humans. However, the effect Anderson's mediated voice performs is more in line with Kittler's radical posthuman perspective that *so-called Man* is but the effect of technology.

I refer to Anderson's voice as the *technologized voice*. This term accounts for Anderson's technologically mediated voice and also for the voices of the media that she ventriloquizes. Anderson introduces a schism between her embodied presence on stage and the effect of disembodiment that the technologized voice engenders. Her embodied presence as performer renders the voice a technologized prosthesis. When Anderson is understood as a performer, the technologized voice is received as an extension of the body. But in listening to Anderson's technologized voice, the voice becomes a signal of technology.

In drawing attention to the issue of embodiment in Anderson's voice aesthetics, I write from a feminist perspective. Anderson is a feminist performance artist who shares the concerns of other feminist performance artists of her generation. But unlike many of these artists, she approaches the body, and more importantly due to the

central focus of this thesis – the voice – in a mode that is strikingly different from her contemporaries. Marina Abramovic, for example, approaches the voice as an extension of the body and sounds in a raw and cathartic mode.[311] In distinction, Anderson's voice is neutralized and almost completely emptied of the body. Despite her presence on stage, Anderson renders herself disembodied as *woman*, or at least gender neutral through her garb of a black and sometimes white suit.

The feminine in Anderson's performance is rendered inaudible when she performs her signature *voice of authority*. I consider how the absence of the feminine is amplified by what Anderson describes as her 'voice in drag'[312] and what Craig Owens refers to as 'vocal transvestism'.[313] Anderson employs a vocoder to masculinize her voice and produce her audio mask of the voice of authority. This voice sounds the voice of the white American male expert. Anderson exposes this voice's artificiality and by extension undermines its authority. In this way she deploys this voice as a mode of disturbance. She also deploys it as a mode of *defense* to defend against her silencing as woman. I consider how Anderson's masculine voice as a mode of both defense and disturbance performs the effect of gendered sound, which articulates power relations within the social sphere.

The trope of ventriloquy is key in critical discourse on the voice.[314] This trope is central to understanding the effect of the many voices Anderson sounds and how this

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[311] For example, Abramovic in *Freeing the Voice* (1975) sounds the vocalic body. Her body and mouth are activated as sounding cavities that produce extended vocalizations. These vocalizations that could be considered somewhere between yelling and singing, are repeated over a long duration. Throughout the performance the intensity of the vocalizations increases. The performance draws attention to the voice as an extension of the body, and the power of the body. Abramovic allows us to listen to how the quality of the voice changes as it becomes subject to the increase/decrease of the power of the body/ breath.

[312] Laurie Anderson, "From Americans on the Move," in *October* 8 (Spring 1979), 45.

[313] Owens, "The Discourse of Others," 169.

[314] Stephen Connor's text, *Drumstruck* is focused on the question of ventriloquy and Dolar's *A Voice and Nothing More* also considers the object voice, as coming from outside the subject and therefore a mode of ventriloquy. Connor also notes the connection between Lacanian theory and the idea of the voice as a mode of ventrilquy. He writes,

> Psychoanlytic theory, especially of a Lacanian variety, has assisted mightily with this formulation of problems of owenership and identity with respect to language, asking, when I speak, do I, really? With whose words? Whose voice? Ventriloquism has become the master trope for articulating the contemporary concern with the ethics of the voice.

sounding constitutes a condition of (dis)embodiment. On the one hand, Anderson's many voices suggest the condition of embodied consciousness where one has the possibility to sound many voices as to wear many masks. This perspective comes to the fore when the voice is thought of as an extension of the body. However, because Anderson dislocates the voice from the body, the many voices that she sounds are better thought as sound bites circulating the info-sphere. They are the effects of technology. The vocalic body that is so critical in the work of Acconci, Ball and Marinetti – the body as an articulating apparatus that musicalizes, materializes, produces and disturbs language – is neutralized in Anderson's work. In the preceding chapters I conceived the voice as constituting a vocalization and musicalization of the subject. In this chapter, however, if we are to think the subject it is in terms of its *ventriloquization.*

In the earlier chapters I discussed the importance of the extra-linguistic voice – the voice that expands, transgresses and to a degree ruptures the bounds of language. In this chapter however, I consider the technologized voice in close proximity to the linguistic voice. The linguistic voice refers to a voice that is heard (understood) as a function of a sign system and is subject to the rules of this system. This voice is untouched of the marks of embodiment; thought within a Kristevan framework it is *desemiotized*. Likewise, the technologized voice of Anderson's work is almost completely emptied of the body and sounds as an effect of the system that regulates its tone, code and reception.

I say almost, because despite the fact that Anderson employs what has been described as a neutral or deadpan voice, her voice takes a 'conversational'[315] tone that is distinctly her own. This conversational tone marked by her embodied rhythms is

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Connor, "Violence, Ventriloquism and the Vocalic Body," 80.

[315]Jonathon Neil, "Laurie Anderson," *Art Review* 49 (April 2011): 72. Neil writes,

> It becomes clear that Anderson's conversational style, the way she speaks, is structurally similar to her art. So perhaps Craig Owens, one of Anderson's early champions (and her best theoretical ventriloquist) missed something by wanting Anderson's art to be all about the general thematics of reading.

Through his focus on Anderson's voice, Neil is aware that he presents a perspective that departs from the dominant analysis of Anderson's work that focuses her work in terms of its linguistic – textual – value.

generated by and generates the vocalic body. It sounds the vestiges of Anderson's grain that are filtered through the vocoder's process of recoding of the voice. I argue this subtle register of the vocalic body contributes to its critical effect.

Anderson's approach to voice shares an affinity with that of Burroughs. In her film *Home of the Brave* (1986) she quotes his signature line: *language is a virus from outer space*. By this phrase both artists mean that language is not something that is generated from an authentic core within us, but rather comes from an alien place and invades us like a virus. If language is a virus from outer space, both Anderson and Burroughs perform the voice as its carrier. They ventriloquize the constant stream of vocal messages of the info-sphere. Before exploring the critical aspects of Anderson's work with voice, I preface this exploration with a brief discussion of Burroughs' voice aesthetics. These aesthetics provide a foundation for understanding several of the key themes generated by Anderson's work. They also take a critical place in the history of the voice in art in relation to the central theme of this chapter: the dialectic of technology and the body.

The legacy of Burroughs: the ventriloquization of the subject

There are two key influences on Anderson's use of voice. Acconci inspires her to focus on the sound of her voice. Anderson comments on her interest in "the way he repeats himself – he's a kind of one-man loop".[316] The second is Burroughs. On Burroughs, Anderson states,

> On the one hand there is spoken language, and on the other there's the printed word, and in the middle there is music … language is a terrible trick. Sometimes people think that just because they know the name, they know the thing. Burroughs understands that trick. But he also understands how to use language so precisely and beautifully that *it reaches a third level, the*

[316] Goldberg, *Laurie Anderson*, 18.

> *musical*. *He can say nonsense but the meaning is really in his voice*. He's not really a writer… He's some kind of weird *narrator*.[317]

By stating that Burroughs 'can say nonsense but the meaning is really in his voice', Anderson is continuing the perspective of the sound poets who work to collapse meaning into sound. This statement is of interest, for both she and Burroughs clearly depart from the utopian perspective of the modernist artists. What this statement underlines is the significance of the voice in their practice as narrators. Both artists sound ventriloquized voices, but because these voices are brought together and sounded by their voices they reach that *third level* of the *musical*. This is not the musicalization of the subject that we have listened to in Acconci's practice. Their voices do not sound to constitute the self, but rather signal the voice's power to sound the competing voices of the info-sphere. Through a single voice they capture the polyphonic resonances of the mass-mediated voices of acoustic space.[318]

Anderson is aware of the voice as distinct from language. She states, 'Why flatten words out [as text]? … Just say them. You get so much more information from the voice.'[319] Burroughs states that 'the most individual thing about anyone is their voice'.[320] Thus, although both artists emphasize the alien and invasive presence of language in the voice, they also understand the voice in distinction to this. Because of the voice's distinction to language, it is able to signal its invasion by language. However, this perspective is complicated by the idea that the voice of the other invades consciousness. As Burroughs states, 'If you are listening to someone, that person's voice is inside your head. It has to some extent invaded and occupied your

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[317] Laurie Anderson in Dean Rolston, "Language and Communication: An Interview with Abbot Reb Anderson and Poet-Artist Laurie Anderson," *Wind Bell* 33, no. 1 (Spring 1989). (No pages numbers notated, page one of document.) Emphasis added.

[318] *Acoustic space* is a concept introduced by McLuhan as an outcome of the electronic era and differentiated from visual space. He considers the latter in relation to print media as producing the effect of linearity and the former in relation to electronic media that produce the effect of simultaneity. Although Anderson cannot perform simultaneous voices in the manner of the simultaneous poem of the Dadaists, her work that involves many competing voices is suggestive of this simultaneous aspect of acoustic space. See for example, Marshall McLuhan, "Visual and Acoustic Space" in *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, ed. Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner (New York, London: Continuum, 2006), 67-72.

[319] Anderson in Goldberg, *Laurie Anderson*, 18.

[320] Burroughs in Victor Bockris, *With William Burroughs: A Report from the Bunker* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1996), 187.

brain.'[321]Acconci is interested in this capacity of the voice to invade the listener that is both himself and the other. Where Acconci performs the embodiment of the hetero-affective voice, Anderson and Burroughs sound the alterity of the disembodied voice. As narrators they sound the individuality of their voices, their music, whilst ventriloquizing a *tissue of quotations*.[322] As stated above, Anderson does not completely erase her vocalic body – through her conversational tone it continues to resonate. Burroughs, more so than Anderson, sounds the grain of his voice: the body sublimated in language that musicalizes speech.

As with most artists who work with voice, Burroughs' voice is a particularly distinct voice. In painting the artist's hand produces her signature mark. Likewise, in Acconci's, Burroughs' and Anderson's practice their voices function like signatures. Anderson describes Burroughs' voice as 'gravel crunching under a ten-ton truck [and as] plastic ripping in slow motion.'[323] However, his is also a monotone voice with no emotive inflection. The idea of the neutral voice is common among art of this period. Artists such as Yvonne Rainer and Simone Forti worked with the voice in this way in order to distance it from individual psychology and allow it to function as one concrete gesture among others. [324] The voice detached from individual psychology and approached as a concrete gesture has an earlier precedent in the work of Marinetti and the broader context of avant-garde performance at the turn of the nineteenth century. This aspect of the neutralized voice in both Burroughs' and Anderson's practice is critical to their ventriloquization of the acoustic environment. In both practices the voice is sounded as a concrete gesture where it functions like a sound bite or found object, dislodged from the info-sphere. I consider both their voices as posthuman where they are received as of the machine, rather than an embodied consciousness. Even in his novels Burroughs' voice is registered as sounding in this way. Joan Didion in her 1966 review of *The Soft Machine* states,

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[321] Burroughs in Bockris, *With William Burroughs*, 187.
[322] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 146.
[323] Goldberg, *Laurie Anderson*, 18.
[324] See Meredith Morse, "Voice, Dance, Process, and the "Pre-digital": Simone Forti and Yvonne Rainer in the Early 1960s," in *Voice: Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media*, Norie Neumark, Ross Gibson, and Theo van Leeuwen, eds. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2010), 119 -145. This idea of the voice as distanced from individual psychology has its seeds in Marinetti's ideas on how the voice should function within performance and also in the broader context of avant-garde performance at the turn of the century.

> [His] is a voice in which one hears transistor radios and old movies, all the peculiar clichés and all the cons … all the peculiar optimism, all the failure"… Burroughs is less a writer than a 'sound'.[325]

Thus Burroughs' voice, like Marinetti's, is a gramophonic voice. He sounds, not the unmediated environment that Marinetti does, but the mass-mediated acoustic environment. His ventriloquization of this environment in both his novels and later tape experiments and films is a mode with which to register the control this environment has over the subject and also an effort to disturb this control. In this respect, Anderson shares his approach to the voice. Her *scrambling of the system*[326] has its antecedents in Burroughs' 1960s and 1970s tape experiments, what he calls, after Brion Gysin, *cut-ups*.

On the *cut-ups* Burroughs explains,

> In the summer of 1959 Brion Gysin painter and writer cut newspaper articles into sections and rearranged the sections at random … The cut-up method brings to the writer the collage which has been used by painters for fifty years.[327]

It is not just in painting that the early twentieth century innovation in collage occurs. As Burroughs notes, Tzara introduced a similar idea to Surrealist circles in the 1920s when he 'proposed to create a poem on the spot by pulling words out of a hat.'[328]Tzara's approach to language as ready-made and concrete is continued in Burroughs' aesthetic. Echoing Ball's concerns and anticipating the post-structural thesis, Burroughs considers that language it is not something intended by us, but comes to us ready-made – *second hand*.[329] This ready-made aspect of language is for Burroughs evidence of its control over the subject. The cut-up is Burroughs' method to make this control explicit – to render it conscious. Tzara's statement that *thought is*

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[325] Robin Lyndenberg, "Sound Identity Fading out: William Burroughs' Tape Experiments," in *Wireless Imagination*, ed. Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead (Cambridge, Massachussetts and London: MIT Press, 1992), 409.
[326] Anderson refers to the 'scramble system' in her spoken word piece, 'Odd Objects' in her performance *United States* (1981). The idea of her scrambling the system is related to Burroughs' cut-ups whereby through her ventriloquization of the voices and messages of acoustic space she disturbs their coherency and transparent value.
[327] William Burroughs, *The Cut-Up Method of Brion Gysin*, UbuWeb Papers, 2, accessed March 7, 2016. http://www.ubu.com/papers/burroughs_gysin.html.
[328] Ibid.
[329] Ball, *Flight out of Time*, 71.

made in the mouth resonates with Burroughs' understanding of language as an automated, unconscious act that is generated by language's conditioning of the body/mind that causes us to mouth ready-made ideas. To unpack Tzara's statement further, with Burroughs' aesthetic in mind, thought that is severed from the conscious mind and *made in the mouth* can be understood as an act of ventriloquism.

In chapter one I discussed Tzara's idea that thought is made in the mouth in relation to the vocalic body and the idea that language is materialized by the vocalic apparatus and is in this sense semiotized à la Kristeva. I considered the performance-poets' aesthetics as effecting a vocalization of the subject, which I understood as transforming both language and subject. In the context of Burroughs' aesthetic, Tzara's statement resonates with Burroughs' idea that language is an alien presence, not willed by the mind, but automatically voiced without our control. Burroughs' voice aesthetics amplify (for Burroughs considers he echoes what is occurring in reality) the ventriloquization of the subject.

Language speaks us, to return to the post-structural thesis. Burroughs is concerned with the voice of automatic verbalization. He claims, '[i]t is precisely these automatic reactions to words themselves that enable those who manipulate words to control thought on a mass scale.'[330] For Burroughs, language's ability to ventriloquize the subject is heightened through the technologies of mass mediation. The cut-up method of his tape-recorder experiments (and also in his writing) is a way of *exposing* and *exorcising* this control.[331] Burroughs targets the mass media's weapons of control – the word and the voice – with the very same weapons. [332] In his cut-up tape

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[330] William Burroughs in Daniel Oldier, *The Job: Interviews with William Burroughs* (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1974), 59.

[331] Lyndenberg, "Sound Identity Fading out: William Burroughs," 414. Lydenberg states 'Burroughs has thus displaced the uncanniness of the psyche, of language and voice, onto the machine where it can be exposed, explored, and exorcised.' Thus she employs the terms 'exposure' and 'exorcism' in a context that differs slightly from the context in which I employ these terms. But the idea of the exposure and exorcism of language and voice remains fundamental to Burroughs' practice. This notion of 'exorcism' will be picked up again below in reference to Burroughs' interest in 'primitive', ritualistic uses of the voice.

[332] William S. Burroughs, "The Electronic Revolution," (1970) *Ubu Classics*, 2005 , www.ubu.com, 33. Burroughs also uses the image as weapon to fight against the same weapon of the image employed by the mass media in his cut-ups films, which he made with Antony Balch throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

experiments he samples, cuts, splices and distorts both word and voice. The linguistic voice is approached by Burroughs as a concrete form to be manipulated.

Burroughs' states,

> cut/ups on the tape recorder can be used as a weapon … to scramble and nullify associational lines put down by mass media. The control of the mass media depends on laying down lines of association. When the lines are cut the associational connections are broken.[333]

In his tape cut-ups Burroughs samples and reads from a range of sources from the radio, television, newspaper, and literary texts and splices them together in order to disrupt their intended meaning. In *Working With Popular Forces* (mid 1960s)[334], Burroughs cites news reports, and repeats these citations, whilst interspersing them with the sound of short wave radio. This repetition and the sound of the radio emphasize the technologized voice as a materiality that is the product not of embodied consciousness but of the machine.

Robin Lyndenberg suggests that Burroughs blurs the lines between segments of news reports and 'fictional elaborations' and thus 'expos[es] the authority of news reporting as merely a form of manipulative creative writing'.[335]This exposure of the voices of authority as a form of manipulation continues in Anderson's work. Her work with the technologized voice also *cuts-up* the mass mediated message, and approaches it as a concrete form to be sampled, shuffled and scrambled. In this way, like Burroughs, she emphasizes the technologized voice as a materiality. As in Burroughs' practice, technology is the tool with which she is able to disturb the message beyond its transparent linguistic value and its automatic consumption.

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[333] Burroughs, "The Electronic Revolution," 13.
[334] Please listen to William Burroughs, *Working with Popular Forces*, (mid 1960s), accessed March 3, 2016, https://ubusound.memoryoftheworld.org/burroughs_william/Break-Through/Burroughs-William-S_10-Working-with-the-Popular-Forces.mp3.
[335] Lyndenberg, "Sound Identity," 416.

The audio-mask: voice as defense

> In order to speak, to represent herself, a woman assumes a masculine position, perhaps this is why femininity is associated with masquerade, with false representation, with simulation and seduction.
>
> Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism," in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1992), 168.

When performing in 1978 with Burroughs and John Giorno – 'such decidedly male sound-makers'[336] – Anderson decided to process her voice through a vocoder so that it sounded masculine. She explains her decision as follows, '[t]he machismo surrounding Burroughs was thick and this filter *was my weapon, my defense – an audio mask*.'[337]Thus Burroughs' influences her practice with voice not just in terms of all the points I have raised above, but he also provides the catalyst for the critical aspect of her practice: the masculine audio mask. Like Marinetti, Acconci and Burroughs, Anderson approaches the voice as a weapon. But in distinction to these artists, hers is not a weapon of aggression, but of defense. Anderson employs the masculine voice to defend against what it means to be *heard* as a woman performer. She explains,

> I wear audio masks in my work – meaning electronically, I can be this shoe salesman or this demented cop, or some other character. And I do that to avoid the expectations of what it means to be a woman on stage.[338]

In another anecdote she describes her experience as a female performer for a German audience, **'**[w]hen I spoke as a woman, they listened indulgently, but when I spoke as a man, and especially as a bossy man, they listened with interest and respect.'[339]

A concern that Burroughs did not have that is a critical aspect of Anderson's practice is this relation between voice and gender. For all the distinct particularity of

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[336] Goldberg, *Laurie Anderson*, 18. This performance was called 'The Nova Convention'. It was a festival organized to celebrate the work of Burroughs.
[337] Ibid.
[338] Susan McClary, "This is Not a Story my People Tell: Musical Time and Space According to Laurie Anderson," in *Discourse* 12, no.1 (Fall-Winter 1989-90): 111.
[339] Goldberg, *Laurie Anderson*, 58.

Burroughs' voice – its *gravel crunching* sound – it remains *unmarked* in that it is a sound produced by a man, or more specifically, it sounds masculinity. In linguistics an unmarked term is understood as neutral, transparent, normal, universal or privileged in relation the *markedness* of its binary opposition, which is considered as other, different, abnormal, and particular. For example, the term 'man' is unmarked where 'woman' is marked. 'Man' takes the universal and gender-neutral position in relation to the gender-specific position of 'woman'.[340] This distinction between the unmarked and the marked in language can be broadened in terms of a distinction between gender and its social and political ramifications. Interestingly, until the late 1960s the term gender was used as technical term specific to the study of grammar. [341] In 1968 psychoanalyst Robert Stoller introduced a new meaning for the term 'gender' by differentiating it from 'sex'. Stoller argued that the former is culturally determined, whereas the latter is a fact of biology. In his thesis, Stoller separates the idea of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' from 'anatomy or physiology'.[342]Judith Butler complicates this distinction between sex and gender:

> Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pregiven sex ... gender must also designate the very apparatus of production where the sexes themselves are established. As a result gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or a "natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive", prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts.[343]

This is a difficult proposition, which I will return to, by way of an example, in a moment. Gender can be more simply understood in the words of Donna Harraway as

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[340] See Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, eds., *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 250-251.
[341] Anna Trip, *Gender* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 3. Trip states: '[t]he 1966 edition of *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* defines it as:'(Gram.) any of three "kinds", masculine, feminine and neuter, of nouns adjectives , and pronouns.'
[342] Ibid., 4.
[343] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 11. Interestingly, Buttler does not include the voice in her study of gender performativity. As Annette Schlicter notes, Butler's theory is contained within the logic of the visual. See Annette Schlichter, "Do Voices Matter? Vocality, Materiality, Gender Performativity," in *Body and Society* 17, no.1 (2011): 33.

'a system of social, symbolic, and psychic relations, in which men and women are differently positioned.'[344]

To return to the question of gender and markedness, Simone de Beauvoir conceives the female body as marked within a masculinist discourse in distinction to the masculine body that is conflated with the universal position.[345] I extend this logic to the voice. In many contexts, particularly in public contexts, the masculine voice functions as an unmarked sign in relation to the markedness of the feminine voice. I employ the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' to denote gender rather than biological distinction, and to emphasize the voice as culturally inscribed as opposed to a 'natural' or biological phenomenon. Indeed, to follow Butler's point above, what is considered natural when it comes to the sexes is often culturally determined through gender differentiation. For example, where it is natural to consider the male voice as low and the female voice as high, one is conditioned to perform and exaggerate these differences.[346] One learns from an early age what a man and woman should sound like and one conforms to these stereotypes.

To reiterate Haraway's definition: gender is 'a system of social, symbolic and psychic relations in which men and women are differently positioned'. The voice is critical in activating these relations as it is an index of the gendered body, carries language and produces many of our acts of communication. Nelly Furman states, the voice is 'the locus of articulation of an individual's body to language and society.'[347] This *articulation* constituted through the prism of gender is often not self-consciously intended by the speaker. For a woman to speak, she speaks her body because of the cultural constraints imposed upon her. For a man to speak, he can bypass his body, or more specifically, his subjectivity is not constrained to his body. Despite the fact that he operates at the margins of society as a homosexual, junkie, avant-garde artist, Burroughs leverages a position of power in that his voice signals masculinity. We

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[344] Donna J. Harraway "Gender for a Marxist Dictionary," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (London: Free Association Books Ltd., 1991), 142.
[345] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 13.
[346] This point is made in David Graddol, *Gender Voices* (Oxford; New York: Blackwell, 1989) and also in Schlichter, "Do Voices Matter,"43.
[347] Nelly Furman, "Opera, or the Staging of the Voice," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3, no. 3 (1991): 303.

hear the grain of his voice – the sonic image of his body. Despite the grit and grime of this sound, his voice as masculine sounds the unmarked position within the socio-political arena of gender. If he sounded feminine, the reception of his voice (both its sound and the ideas it conveyed – for the former impacts upon the latter) would immediately be constrained in terms of the marked position the feminine occupies in society.[348] This would particularly be the case during the 1960s, when he makes his cut-ups, when there would have been less tolerance to hear the feminine voice within the avant-garde context.

But what does the constraint of the markedness of the voice that sounds femininity actually mean? For Leslie Dunn and Nancy Jones the 'female voice' is anchored in the female body which

> confers upon it all the conventional associations of femininity with nature and matter, with emotion and irrationality ... [which leads to the] devaluation of feminine utterance as formless and free-flowing babble, a sign of uncontrolled female generativity ... [and] the identification of woman's vocality with her sexuality: like the body from which it emanates, the female voice is construed as both a signifier of sexual otherness and a source of sexual power, an object at once of desire and fear.[349]

Even when Anderson does not speak through the masculine audio mask, her voice as woman is neutralized. Her voice, almost completely emptied of the body, is to a degree de-eroticized.[350] There is no sense of the *feminine utterance as formless and free-flowing* in her work. This aspect of the feminine voice becomes important to contemporary work with voice where, as I shall discuss in the following chapter, women artists reclaim the *feminine voice*. By contrast, early in her career and throughout the 1980s, Anderson is self consciously aware of what it means to sound as a woman in the male dominated art scene. Although other performance artists of this time engage the feminine in their work, Anderson takes a different route. [351] She understands the gendered voice's function in the operations of power. She opts for the

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[348] Judging from Burroughs' misogynist perspective to sound like a woman would have been anathema to him. See Oldier, *The Job*, 116, 118, 122, 125.
[349] Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones, eds., *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3.
[350] As I will explain below there is an element of eroticization that her technologized voice engenders.
[351] For example, Ana Mendieta, who although does not work with voice, engages the female body through its association with the earth.

power to be heard and takes the masculine position. But she does so, not to align herself to this position, but to undermine it.

Anderson's masculine audio mask is an artificial sound. It sounds masculine due to the lowering of pitch, but it is still registered as artificial. Clifford Nass and Scott Brave in their study of the computer generated voice find that although clearly artificial, the voice's gendering as masculine or feminine through the effect of higher or lower pitches will have the same effect as a human voice that is received as either masculine or feminine. Of a study in 2000 they state

> people conformed much more with the male voice than the female voice, even though the male and female voices made identical statements … Specifically people seemed to follow that (regrettable) stereotype that females are less worthy of serious attention than males are. Regardless of their own gender, participants found the male voice to be more trustworthy than the female voice.[352]

In a specific example, Nass and Brave note that in Germany BMW had to recall the GPS navigation system that employed a female voice because 'German male drivers … do not take directions from females.'[353] Nass and Brave distinguish the authority associated with the masculine voice from the more caring 'sensitive', 'people-orientated', 'co-operative' feminine voice. They state that it is because of these characteristics that the feminine voice is employed in call centres that deal with consumer complaints. If, however, the call centre had a 'rigid policy of "no refunds no returns," ' Nass and Brave suggest 'the interface would benefit from a male voice, as females are harshly evaluated when they adopt a position of dominance.'[354] It is no surprise then that Anderson calls her signature masculine voice the voice of authority. The artificiality of this voice is registered not just through its technologically modified sound, but also due to the fact, that Anderson, despite her androgynous garb of a suit and her short spikey hair, is clearly female. This disjuncture between what we see and what we hear is evidence the power of sound – of the masculine sound – even if this sound is understood as artificial.

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[352] Clifford Nass and Scott Brave, *Wired for Speech: How Voice Activates and Advances the Human-Computer Relationship* (Cambridge Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 2005), 15, 20.
[353] Ibid., 31.
[354] Ibid., 30.

Jonathon Neil understands Anderson's voice of authority 'as one that embodies a distinct kind of American authority, our big Other as philosophical talking head, a ventriloquist for the invisible hand of the market, a voice of power plugged into the A.C circuit.'[355] This is the voice of the expert and Anderson employs it to lecture on such things as technology, an area stereotypically associated with men, especially during the 1980s.[356] For example, in the opening of her film *Home of the Brave* Anderson's voice of authority addresses the audience on the subject of '0s and 1s' – the binary language of information technology.[357] The voice of authority, aside from being a distinctly masculine voice is the technologized voice. This is not only because it is a voice produced through technology, but because it is an effect of our technological systems of communication. It is, as Amelia Jones puts it, 'a technologized vocal code' that is also a patriarchal code. [358] It is a voice that does not convey personability or intimacy, but is received as a disembodied emission carrying the weight of information. As Neil suggests, the voice of authority is 'not ego' but 'first and foremost a voice'[359] in the sense that it is a voice that we hear transmitted through the media and detached from any one body or identity.[360]

In another performance, Anderson's voice of authority lectures on sperm with a gravity of the kind that one might hear in the voice-over of a documentary.[361] However, in this example and the one mentioned above, one hears the voice of authority inflected with the humour of Anderson's conversational tone. By conflating the gravity of the expert's voice with her conversational tone Anderson subverts the authority of this voice. She further undermines its authority through playing with the 'factual message' and merging it with the voice of the salesman to produce a comedic effect.

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[355] Jonathon J.D. Neil, "Laurie Anderson," *Art Review* 49 (April 2011): 70.
[356] Nass and Brave, *Wired for Speech*, 22.
[357] Please view, Laurie Anderson, *Home of the Brave* (1986), accessed March 3, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osHBA6YAHAo. View from 2'41'' – 5'04''.
[358] Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Body, Performing the Subject* (Mineapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 211.
[359] Neil, "Laurie Anderson", 70.
[360] This point will be developed below.
[361] Please visit, accessed March 3, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SirOxIeuNDE. This performance, which was taken from Laurie Anderson's performance *United States* (1981), occurred on a television show *The New Show*.

The unmarkedness of the voice of authority is not just associated with its masculine sound, but is also due to the fact that it is a sound unmarked by a particular accent that would displace it from its position of universality. For example, within an American context, the sound of an African American, or the sound of an uneducated migrant, or even the sound of a male from the southern states of America or the Midwest would create a marked voice. [362] It is not just within an American context that this voice sounds its universality, but also within the entirety of the western world that is dominated by the American media.

In taking on the unmarked identity associated with the masculine voice Anderson draws attention to the markedness of her embodiment and the voice she has silenced that is an extension of this embodiment. This point becomes clear when comparing Anderson's use of the masculine audio mask to Acconci's masculine voice. Through voice, Acconci undermines the authenticity of the subject and performs its ambivalence – the subject in a constant state of renewal. Further, he self-consciously performs the voice of the male seducer or aggressor and its power to affect the listener. But he does not question or undermine this power, but rather embodies it as his own. He does not critically distance himself from these masculine voices, but, as he explains, works to find himself within them.[363] Further, when Acconci sounds the grain of his voice – the sonic image of his body and its eroticism – this voice is not marked as other within the social-political arena. Anderson, in distinction, recodes her feminine voice as masculine, to deconstruct the latter, and assert the former as silence/ absence.

In performing the voice of authority, Anderson reverses Joan Riviere's thesis of femininity as masquerade. In her 1929 essay 'Womanliness as Masquerade', Riviere proposes that woman who, in order to hide her desire or ability to have agency and authority within discursive space (what Riviere refers to as her 'masculinity'), has to accentuate her femininity, perform it as a kind of masquerade. She writes,

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[362] Kaja Silverman makes a similar point in her discussion of the disembodiment of the masculine voice and its link to authority and universality in 1950s Hollywood film. I refer to this discussion below.
[363] Acconci, Interview with Schmidt.

'[w]omanliness … could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert reprisals expected if she was found to possess it …'[364] Riviere's thesis on femininity or what she refers to as 'womanliness' is of interest for the fact that she argues that there is no 'true' femininity beneath the mask, but that femininity is always a masquerade, or, as Butler later rephrases it, a performance.[365] Anderson is aware of performance and its relation to the gender divide. She states, 'We're used to performing. I mean like we used to tap dance for the boys – "Do you like it this way boys? No? Is this better?" '[366] However, as a performance artist, Anderson assumes the active position within discursive space. Where Riviere claims that womanliness is a masquerade, Anderson asserts the artifice of masculinity, in particular that associated with the all-knowing, transcendental position that she sounds. Through her performance of the voice of authority this sound becomes no longer unmarked. Like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* who discovers the wizard's booming voice is produced by a small man with electrical equipment hiding behind a curtain, Anderson unmasks its construction.

Sean Cubitt registers the problem of being heard as a woman and the question of audibility as power in relation to Anderson's work. He writes,

> Making a noise is the prerogative of the powerful … [b]ut a woman's voice should be ever soft and gentle. It marks both the weakness of women's relationship to language … and their subordination, subjected to the fuller subjectivity of men … making a noise with her [Anderson's] voice … challenges both subordination and weak subjectivity. But it cannot do so without profound ambivalence about what is to be achieved.[367]

The ambivalence of what is achieved by Anderson's voice of authority is such that her noise as woman depends on her sounding masculine. But because her voice is not completely severed from her body on the stage, her voice as a sign of masculine authority is problematized. The incongruence between her visual and audio presence

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[364] Joan Riviere "Womanliness as a Masquerade," (1929) in *Formations of Fantasy*, Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 1986), 38.
[365] Riviere states, 'The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the 'masquerade'. My suggestion is not, however that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing.' Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as a Masquerade," 38.
[366] McClary, "This is Not a Story My People Tell," 111.
[367] Sean Cubitt, "Laurie Anderson: Myth, Management and Platitude," *Art Has No History* (London, N.Y: Verso, 1994), 281.

exposes the cultural construction of the voice and undermines its authority. But Anderson can only undermine this authority through echoing it and thus displacing her voice. What she undermines is simultaneously her way of being heard. Anderson's initial mode of defense against being silenced nonetheless renders *her voice* silent. She can only signal the masculine transcendental voice as construction through her own construction via the audio mask.

This notion of *her voice* is problematic. It links to the idea of the voice as expressive of the authentic subject – the voice of the *soul*, as Aristotle refers to it. In the last chapter I demonstrated that this voice that sounds a seamless relation between self and language does not in fact exist. Acconci amplifies the voice's condition as pierced by the other and subjected to the movement of the trace in its negotiation of language. The modernist artists attempt to locate this authentic voice through the vocalic body, but even this register cannot escape the symbolic frame. Anderson in silencing her voice points to the question of what this voice might sound like. The masculine voice she sounds is a fetishized sound as is the feminine voice that Cubitt describes above. Thus Anderson's project points to how the voice is far from expressing an essential self, and rather is, particularly in terms of its mediation, a mask through which one sounds.

The ambivalence Anderson's work generates is critical to her practice. Gender is one area where she *moderates between positions*. Owens asks, 'what does it mean to mediate between two poles, when they are the poles of sexual difference? To speak from a position that is neither masculine nor feminine, but neuter–in-between?'[368] As Jones states,

> Anderson … is no longer woman as object but man as speaker (or perhaps more interestingly, she is both: the voice is split off from the anatomical gender and the body/self in question).[369]

This split between audibility and visibility relates to a second dialectic that is critical to Anderson's practice with voice, not just in terms of the problem of gender, but more generally, and that is between embodiment and disembodiment.

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[368] Owens "Sex and Language: In Between," 50.
[369] Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject*, 211.

The (dis)embodied voice

The voice as a bodily emission is always to a degree disembodied. This disembodiment is increased in the voice's electronic production and amplification in performance. This aspect of performance is often rendered inaudible so that the voice sounds 'natural'. However, Anderson makes the electronic mediation of her voice explicit. Susan McClary writes,

> in Laurie Anderson's performances, one actually gets to watch her produce the sounds we hear … her presence is always already multiply mediated: we hear her voice only as it is filtered through vocoders. As it passes through reiterative loops, as it is layered upon itself by a means of sequences.[370]

The disembodiment of Anderson's voice in the voice of authority is heightened by the fact that we see her body on stage and there is not 'natural' linkage between her body and her voice. The reception of her voice as simultaneously masculine, technologically modified and disembodied generates a dialectic with her embodiment as woman performer on stage. Below, I consider this dialectic in terms of the discourse on the gendered voice and the condition of embodiment and disembodiment. For simplicity, I refer to this condition as (dis)embodiment.

The condition of (dis)embodiment and its relation to voice and gender has a cultural history that is reflective of the socio-political positioning of the masculine and the feminine. Theodor Adorno argues that where it is appropriate for the male voice to be recorded and transmitted disembodied through the phonograph and gramophone, this is not the case for the female voice. He claims,

> Male voices can be reproduced better than female voices. The female voice easily sounds shrill – not because the gramophone is incapable of conveying high tones … Rather, in order to become unfettered, the female voice requires the physical appearance of the body that carries it. But it is just this body that the gramophone eliminates, thereby giving every female voice a sound that is needy and incomplete.[371]

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[370] McClary "This is Not a Story My People Tell,"109.
[371] Theodor W. Adorno and Thomas Y. Levin trans., "The Curves of the Needle," (1928) *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 54.

The disembodied masculine voice by distinction has a long cultural history where it is received as transcendental, universal and authoritarian. This is why it is so critical that Anderson has amplified the effect of, and by extension, exposed this voice in performance.

Mary Anne Doane in her analysis of the voice-over in documentary and film considers this voice of authority and its relation to the condition of disembodiment. She states,

> Disembodied, lacking any specification in space or time, the voice-over is … beyond criticism – it censors the questions "Who is speaking?" "Where?" "In what time?" and: "For whom?" … this voice has been for the most part that of the male, and its power resides in the possession of knowledge and in the privileged unquestioned activity of interpretation … *sound carries the burden of "information" while the impoverished image simply fills the screen* … The guarantee of knowledge, in such a system, lies in its irreducibility to the spatio-temporal limitations of the body.[372]

Kaja Silverman also discusses the distinction between the disembodied masculine voice and the embodied feminine voice in her analysis of 1950s Hollywood film.[373]She proposes that the voice's power is directly related to its (dis)embodiment. Of the voice-over, Silverman writes,

> [it] is privileged to the degree that *it transcends the body*. Conversely, it loses power and authority with every corporeal encroachment, from a regional accent or idiosyncratic "grain" to definitive localization in the image.[374]

Here she proposes that even a masculine voice that sounds its embodied aspect in the form of a regional accent will lose its authority, which returns to my point above. Silverman's thesis however, informed by Lacanian psychoanalysis, proposes that in 1950s Hollywood film a woman's voice is always more embodied than that of a man. Because of her voice's association with embodiment, Silverman argues woman wields less power in relation to the symbolic than does man.

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[372] Doane, "The Voice in Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space," 42-43.
[373] Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 39.
[374] Ibid, 49.

Anderson is aware of the voice of authority's link to disembodiment and she emphasizes this aspect. But the fact that Anderson's body is seen on stage speaking recalls the voice's embodied production. Further, as McClary notes, Anderson amplifies the voice's technnologized production, thus emphasizes it as a construction. Anderson who performs the disembodied voice of authority points to the embodied subject that is ventriloquized by this voice. It is worth recalling Agamben's distinction between Voice (*logos*) and voice (*phone*) here. The modernist artists' aim was to erase the Voice through materializing the voice – grounding it in embodiment. In distinction, Anderson holds the Voice's disembodiment and the embodied subject in tension with each other. The neuter Voice of *logos* that the performance poets resist, in her practice is masculinized, technologized, and amplified. Anderson's is not a utopic project like her modernist antecedents. Rather, her aim is to draw attention to the effect of the media upon the listening and speaking subject. As Acconci is resigned to the indicative nature of language, Anderson is resigned to the control of the media. Both performance artists draw attention to these aspects, but do not propose an alternative.

However, Anderson has told us that she is a moderator between things, so her project is never one sided. Further, her voice understood from the position of the narrator acts as an intermediary. Anderson's embodiment on stage calls attention to the erasure of the feminine voice and the embodied voice more generally. However, the vestiges of her grain can be heard in her conversational tone that is produced by the particular rhythm and buoyancy of her voice. This tone adds an element of humor to her voice that has the effect of undermining the voice of authority. Anderson's vocalic body is subtle, almost inaudible, which contributes to the effect of ambiguity that her voice engenders. To return to Anderson's citation above, despite its subtlety, it is in this third register of the voice – it musical aspect – where one can discern *her voice*.

As I have argued in the previous chapters, the voice as materiality – its vocalic body and concrete aspect – disturbs the conventions of language and emphasizes embodiment as fundamental to communication. Anderson's voice is a tissue of quotations and is recoded through the vocoder. But to develop Kittler's perspective, technological media are able to capture the Real even if the Real of the voice is so heavily mediated that one can barely discern it as an embodied emission. The rhythm

of Anderson's voice continues to sound through her audio masks. In this sense the effect of her voice recalls that of Lucier's. Though Lucier through electronic mediation works to dissolve his voice into the resonant frequencies of the room, the rhythm of his voice persists.

A cyborg voice: voice as disturbance

Teresa De Lauretis proposes that the inhabitation of the contradictions of gender is the condition of feminism.[375] From this perspective she positions Anderson's work as feminist. De Lauretis states that

> Feminism [involves] ... a movement back and forth between the representation of gender (in its male-centered frame of reference) and what that representation ... makes unrepresentable. . . . to inhabit both ... spaces at once is to live the contradiction which … is the condition of feminism … [Anderson's] work has enacted such a … [condition] by continually shifting back and forth across boundaries…[376]

Anderson's work is feminist not only in its obvious questioning of gender politics in the voice of authority, but also more generally in her relation to technology. As stated, technology is stereotypically a male domain. For Anderson to perform her *mastery* of technology in such an explicit and creative way is to subvert gender stereotypes. McClary, sounding the tone of gender politics of the late 1980s writes,

> Women in this culture are discouraged from even learning about technology, in part so they can continue to represent authentic, unmediated Nature. To the extent that women and machines both occupy positions opposite that of Man in standard dichotomies, women and machines are incompatible terms. [377]

Following McClary's logic, Anderson in rendering her voice 'unnatural' displaces the patriarchal conception of femininity. In disembodying her voice through the machine, Anderson is challenging the cultural legacy that ties a woman's voice to her body, and her role as representative of *unmediated Nature*.

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[375] I would suggest that it is the condition of woman in general to inhabit contradictions within patriarchy – whether or not this inhabitation occurs consciously or not from a feminist position.
[376] Teresa De Lauretis in Susan McClary "This is Not a Story My People Tell," 113.
[377] McClary, "This is Not a Story My People Tell", 110-111.

This is one area where the ambivalence of Anderson's project lies. As a performer, Anderson takes a radical position in defying the expectations of what a woman should sound like. She asserts her agency in relation to technology, and thus further displaces the stereotype of femininity. But in ventriloquising the technologized, disembodied voice Anderson negates the space for the subject to sound her voice. I have stated that this notion of *her voice* is problematic. Nonetheless, the agency Anderson conveys as performer is countered by the lack of agency she affords the speaking subject. (Indeed, one could argue there is no speaking subject, as I will discuss below.) Where Acconci resigns himself to the indicative and mass-mediated nature of language, he finds his agency through the musicality of the voice. Anderson's voice also reaches this third register, through her position not as the speaking subject, but as the narrator that carries the tissue of quotations.

Anderson's transformation of her voice through the vocoder confuses the distinction between technology and the body. In this respect the trope of the cyborg is critical in understanding her voice aesthetics. This trope has been employed by feminist discourse to disturb rigid boundaries and fixed identities and challenge conservative gender politics. Haraway approaches the cyborg as a mode through which to envision for people more fluid and pluralistic realities. She writes,

> a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints. The political struggle is to see from both perspectives at once because each reveals both dominations and possibilities unimaginable from the other vantage point. Single vision produces worse illusions than double vision or many-headed monsters.[378]

Anderson's cultivation of what she terms a 'stereo-vision' and her self-conscious position as a moderator between contradictions resonates with this vision for a cyborg world. The ambivalence of Anderson's message and her approach to communication as miscommunication strikes an accord with Haraway's understanding of

[378] Donna J Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, technology, Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20th Century" in Donna J Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (London: Free Association Books Ltd, 1991), 154.

> [c]yborg politics … [as] the struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication, against the one code that translates all meaning perfectly, the central dogma of phallogocentrism. That is why cyborg politics insist on *noise* … [379]

This emphasis on noise returns to the voice aesthetics of the previous chapters and the idea of voice as disturbance. Marinetti and Ball create noise to disturb conventional language. Acconci creates noise to disturb the idea of an intentional, autonomous subject. Anderson creates noise to disturb identities. This noise is produced through a renegotiation of boundaries. Haraway states that 'in cyborgs … there is an intimate experience of boundaries, their construction and deconstruction,' and that '[c]yborgs have to do with regeneration rather than rebirth.'[380]

Through the voice of authority Anderson simultaneously constructs the patriarchal voice of the media and deconstructs it through drawing attention to it as artifice. She regenerates this voice through the vocoder and through her conversational tone that filters through the technological processing. In her audio drag she crosses the boundary of gender distinction. Her recoded voice distorts the distinction between voice as a 'natural' emission of the body and voice as an artificial product of technology. Anderson's voice engages the threshold. There is no sense that she aims to overcome the contradictions, as in the Hegelian dialectic. Rather, in a Kristevan logic, Anderson allows these contradictions to sit in tension with each other. This holding of contradictions in tension with each other is for Haraway the image of the cyborg[381] and for De Lauretis the condition of feminism.

Anderson's *O Superman* (1981) activates the Kristevan logic of the threshold, which marks both differentiation and non-differentiation. This work takes the form of song, performance and video. In this piece Anderson's voice is a linguistic voice where it carries language and an extra-linguistic voice where it brings together the sounds of the body and technology. The extra-linguistic voice is what Kittler would call the Real of the voice and I refer to as a materiality – sound. The music is pared back and there is a focus on repetition. Anderson's use of the synthesizer and reduced musical

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[379] Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," 176.
[380] Ibid., 181.
[381] Ibid., 149.

composition draw from both pop and avant-garde minimalist music. The piece leans closer to minimalist music and also sound art where it works with a repetition that is extended with little variance and builds a slow generative sound.[382] However, the fact that *O Superman* reached number 2 on the UK pop charts tells us that this work is just as comfortably placed within the context of pop music. Anderson allows the contradictions of pop and avant-garde music to sit in tension with each other whilst confusing their distinction.[383] The distinction between musical categories is further complicated by the fact Anderson has appropriated parts of the song from an opera of the early twentieth century.[384] This piece further disturbs boundaries due to the fact that it can be analysed within an art historical as well as musicological context.[385] That this work is included in the MoMA collection reinforces the idea that it cannot be contained within any one category whether that be music, visual art or performance. [386] This returns to my discussion in introduction to this thesis regarding the question of sound in art. To reiterate: it is more useful to think of what sound in art does, than be concerned with the question of categories. I take up this discussion in more detail in the following chapter.

O Superman has developed out of Anderson's spoken word practice and many of the vocal elements are spoken rather than sung. In these spoken elements, the linguistic, rather than the vocalic register dominates. (Normally in song, the reverse is the case, as I will discuss in the following chapter.) Acconci employs the individual singer-song writer model to activate a single voice and the intimate I-you dynamic in his

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[382] By avant-garde minimalist musicians I am thinking of artists such as Phillip Glass, Brian Eno, and Steve Reich. These musicians are Anderson's contemporaries. The proximity in their practice is evidenced by the fact that Anderson has performed with both Glass and Eno, and has noted Reich as an influence. Their music develops in the context where there is a meeting between the visual arts and experimental music. The sound art of the 1960s emerges in the overlap between these two forms. Max Neuhaus is a key sound artist that develops out of this context and works with sound as a repetitive, generative currency. His work will be discussed in the following chapter.

[383] This connection can be extended to the meeting between pop/ rock music and avant-garde art practice. Indeed, this is the context in which Anderson's performance art develops where there is a dialogue and exchange between music production and art production, such as that which occurs between Andy Warhol and *The Velvet Underground*.

[384] This opera she is adapts is by Jules Massenet entitled *Le Jongleur De Notredame* (1902). For this reason Anderson dedicates this piece to Massenet. This adaptation of a previous composition is relevant to my final chapter that concerns the feminist mode of echo.

[385] Susan McLary who informs my discussion of this piece is a musicologist.

[386] See "The Collection," *MoMA*, accessed December 29, 2015, http://www.moma.org/collection/works/107283?locale=en.

performance. In contrast, Anderson sounds multiple voices. These multiple voices can be conceived through Harraway's vision of a cyborg politics of *many-headed monsters* and more generally in terms of the postmodern collapse of the grand narrative. The polyphonic aspect of this piece is not an attempt to subvert a dominant power as it is in Dada voice aesthetics. Rather, it performs the effect of mediation where the notion of the individual, so-called authentic embodied consciousness is displaced the multiple voices that are competing signals in the info-sphere.[387]

At the beginning of the piece and carried throughout its entirety there is a repeated note of middle C that sounds a single syllable: 'Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha'. This sound's rhythmic constancy recalls the rhythmic constancy of the heartbeat. The sound is also tinged with the sonic quality of the breath, which reinforces its association with the body. But the repetition of this sound is too fast to be a heartbeat and too perfectly measured to be produced solely by the body. Indeed, this sound in its steady repetition evokes the sound of the machine that monitors the heart, if the heart were in a stable condition. Interestingly, according to Smith Reed this is the only element of the piece where Anderson's voice is not processed through the vocoder. It is what Reed refers to as a 'pure recording' of Anderson's voice.[388] With this sound Anderson's voice activates subtle oscillations between the body and technology.

Of this sound, McClary states,

> It gives the impression of being expressively authentic, as though it exists outside of or prior to language, and it evokes powerful though contradictory affective responses – alternatively it may be heard as sardonic laughter or as anxious, childish whimpering.[389]

McClary's understanding of this voice as suggestive of a pre-linguistic register returns to the discussion of chapter one. Through reference to the thought of Jakobson and Kristeva, I considered how the repetitions of the voice evoke the pre-phonematic state of the infant, in which she has the potential to sound beyond the set moulds of

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[387] In the next chapter this polyvocal element will be taken up again in terms of the ethical potential of the voice.
[388] Smith Alexander Reed, *The Musical Semiotics of Timbre in the Human* Voice, PhD Thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 2005, 32, accessed March 29, 2014, http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/7313/1/s.a.reed2005etd.pdf.
[389] McClary, "This is Not a Story My People Tell," 115.

language. In relating the pre-linguistic voice to the notion of the authentic voice, McClary echoes Ball's *valuing* of the voice. Her perspective evokes Agamben's question as to what the human would sound like if she had a voice as the cricket has a chirp and the donkey a bray. That is to say, what would the human voice sound like if it were not always already destined to language?

Just as Agamben proposes that one cannot think the voice outside its condition as negativity in language, Anderson seems to suggest that once cannot think the voice outside its condition of technological mediation. If Anderson does evoke the notion of the authentic, bodily and affective sound, it is only as an echo of what it once was.[390] It is a sound that has been modified and mediated by the machine.[391] This perspective can be extended to Kittler's radical posthumanism that tells us that technology separates physiology and information and that what remains of humans is what machines can store and manipulate.[392] If we return to Ball's imaginary, the value of the human voice in Anderson's work has, to a degree, been swallowed by din of the machine.

The ambiguity of this piece is also registered musically in the oscillation between the major and minor key that sounds a happy and sad register respectively. [393] The ambivalence of the sound (both vocal and instrumental), which articulates the movement between body and technology, anxiety and humor, and happy and sad states, is reflective of Anderson's approach to communication as miscommunication. For Anderson the problem of communication is not solely as a problem of language, but also due to the impact of communications technology.

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[390] This 'once' that is associated with the pre-linguistic scene of infancy is something that can ony be imagined, not known.
[391] It is of interest that the sound poet Henri Chopin works with technology throughout the 1950s – 1970s to express the *authentic voice*. In this sense he develops Ball's voice aesthetics where he amplifies and expands the vocalic body through technology. (See LaBelle in "Raw Orality" on how sound poets work with technology to sound the vocalic body.) In contrast, Anderson employs technology to emphasize its distinction from the vocalic body.
[392] Kittler, *Gramophone*, 16.
[393] McClary makes this point also. See McClary, "This is Not a Story My People Tell," 116.

Voice communication in the latter half of the twentieth century becomes increasingly complicated. Face-to-face communication is replaced by the disembodied voice via telephonic communication, and live communication is substituted by the voice dislocated from the consciousness that intended it in the *voice message*. *O Superman* engages the structure of telephonic communication and extends it to that of advertising and public announcements. In merging these modes of communication *O Superman* conveys the idea that the voice recorded and transmitted by technology does not achieve communication as connection and understanding. Rather, the disembodied voices emphasize communication as separation and misunderstanding.

A voice states, 'Hi. I'm not home right now. But if you want to leave a message, just start talking at the sound of the tone'. This voice conveys the idea of an individual in its sing-song up beat aspect that seems to say 'hey its *me*' to express the idea of a unique identity. This is the 'happy to hear from you' type voice that echoes that which we might hear on an answering machine, particularly if it is a feminine voice. This voice also echoes a generic disposition employed to communicate via the voice message one's personability attached to the idea of one's home. This is the type of voice that we hear on sitcoms or in commercials. It is the voice of *second orality* that is programmed to give the effect of spontaneity.[394]

The identity of this voice is further complicated by the fact that it is filtered through the vocoder. The vocoder creates an echoing effect where there is a movement between a more embodied human sound, closer to the grain of Anderson's voice, and a sound more removed, closer to the neutral voice of the machine. Despite its upbeat nature, this voice slips into a melancholic, edgy register, signalled by the minor key Anderson employs when she says the word 'tone'. This shift in tone could either be received as literally echoing the sound of the answering machine tone or as sounding a more sinister aspect associated with the voices of machines. Barthes proposes that the neutral voice, the voice emptied of the body, is a terrifying voice.[395] Despite the

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[394] I explicate Ong's concept of *second orality* below.

[395] Barthes states, 'If occasionally the neuter, the whiteness of the voice appears, it is a great terror for us, as if we were to fearfully discover a frozen world, where desire is dead.'

fact that this voice is just as clear, linguistically speaking, as the human voice, the absence of the vocalic body produces an unnerving effect.[396] This is the effect of the *uncanny valley* where there is a striking resemblance to the human voice, but it is emptied of feeling.[397]

The next voice states, 'Hello? This is your mother. Are you there? Are you coming home?'. Again this voice that is filtered through the vocoder slips between the grain of the voice and the neutral voice of the machine. It is marked by the sound of anxiety that is common in the voice of a mother trying to make contact with her child. It signals that authentic, affective *humanness* that McClary points to. The question 'Are you there?' is a product of electronic communication that enables one to communicate with another instantaneously across a distance whilst not knowing if someone is physically *there* or not. This question is indicative of the effect of the new communication technologies where it is no longer a point of communicating a specific message but rather 'checking in' and making contact with someone.[398] The question points to the dialectic that is fundamental to the effect of technology, which I have introduced above – that of separation and connection.

The voice then shifts from the familiar motherly tone 'Hello? Is anyone home?' to the sound of an omniscient voice that, to echo Doane's analysis of the voice-over, does not answer to ' "Who is speaking?" "Where?" "In what time?" and: "For whom?" '.[399] This voice states, 'Well you don't know me. But I know you. And I have a message to give to you. Here come the planes.' The voice of the mother becomes the voice of the machine. In performing this next voice Anderson's mouth is lit up by an

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Barthes in Allen Weiss, "Radio, Death, and the Devil: Artaud's *Pour Finir avec le jugement de dieu*," Douglas Kahn and Whitehead eds., *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio and the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 287.

[396] For example, the computer Hal's voice in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space* Odyssey (1968) produces such an effect.

[397] *The uncanny valley* was conceptualized by robotics professor, Masahiro Mori in an essay of the same name in 1970. It is linked to Sigmund Freud's concept of *the uncanny* developed in his essay 'The Uncanny' in 1919. *The uncanny valley* denotes an area of robotic aesthetics where one feels revulsion in response to something that looks, sounds and moves like a human, but is not quite human. See Masahiro Mori, "The Uncanny Valley," accessed December 30, 2015, http://spectrum.ieee.org/automaton/robotics/humanoids/the-uncanny-valley.

[398] Herman Rapaport makes this point. See Herman Rapaport " "Can you say Hello?" Laurie Anderson: "United States"," *Theatre Journal* 38, no.3 (Oct 1986): 346.

[399] Doane, "The Voice in Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space," 42-43.

electronic device that conveys the idea 'of a "speech" programmed by technology'.[400] Contradistinctively, this device also emphasizes vocalic production at the site of the mouth where it causes the viewer to focus on the movement of the mouth. Thus Anderson swings between the registers of the embodied and disembodied voice. This voice suggests the idea of something beyond the human that is omniscient and omnipotent – a kind of technological god, not unlike the voice of authority. But in distinction to the voice of authority, this voice is feminine.

The movement from the voice of the mother to the voice of the machine is an unsettling one. The familiar and comforting is made strange and alienating. Further, the message 'Here come the planes' communicates this voice as a harbinger of destruction. The feminine computerized voice is conceived as continuing the legacy of the siren and *femme fatale*; it is a seductive but fundamentally destructive voice.[401] Interestingly, Dolar considers the sirens' voices as voices of authority.[402] In playing with this effect of the feminine voice, Anderson generates a subtle eroticism. But through its technological mediation, this voice is separated from the body. It is an acousmatic voice – a product of the gap registered between source (body), cause (technology) and effect (voice).[403] The ambivalent quality of Anderson's voice and its effect of acousmaticization recalls my discussion in the previous chapter of the mother's acousmatic voice in relation to the infant. As Chion tells us, this voice produces the effect of both nest and cage. This idea of the ambivalent quality of the feminine acousmatic voice will be developed further in the last chapter.

The voice will later move back to the similar upbeat sound first heard on the answering machine. This time, rather than signalling the individual and the domestic 'home', it is the generic voice of advertising and of public announcements: 'They're

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[400] Ainhoa Kaiero Claver, "Technological Fiction, recorded time, and 'replicants' in the concerts of Laurie Anderson," *TRANS – Revista Trancultural de Música* 14 (2010), 7, accessed February 18, 2013, http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=82220947006.

[401] See Stacy Allen, *The role of the feminine computerized voice in society and cinema*, accessed February 21, 2014, http://voices.yahoo.com/the-destructor-role-feminine-computerized-1755189.html?cat=38.

[402] Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 198.

[403] This perspective on the acousmatic voice is drawn from Brian Kane's conception of it. See Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2014). I discuss this perspective in detail in the last chapter.

American planes. Made in America. Smoking or non-smoking?'. This generic voice is then displaced by the omniscient voice that carries the *message*: 'And the voice said … Because when love is gone there's always justice. And when justice is gone there is always force. And when force is gone there's always mom.' This voice is immediately followed by the familiar individual voice: 'Hi mom'. Anderson swings from the melancholic minor register to the happy major register and then back again: 'So hold me now in your long arms. In your automatic arms, your electronic arms … your military arms'. Thus Anderson brings together mother, machine and military – the familiar and domestic with the alienating and destructive.

It is not just the linguistic content of her message that blurs the boundaries between these things. This meeting is also due to that fact that it is her voice – a single voice – that carries these multiple voices and their tones that shift between the major and minor, the upbeat and ominous, the personal and impersonal, the embodied grain of the voice and the neuter voice of the machine. The 'ha ha ha' register of the piece, in which McClary discerns simultaneous humor and anxiety, is an echo that abstracts and conflates the movement between the multiple voices that shift from the upbeat positive sounds of 'hi mom', to the more sombre, ominous tones – 'your military arms'.

Despite the emphasis on the technologically modified voice in *O Superman*, the human element in the voice persists. When a voice is purely technological – devoid of human rhythms – it is difficult to understand. Anderson has, to echo Ball, her own rhythm. This rhythm that is distinctly her own, as in all her voices, is maintained. What we are presented with in this piece is as Reed writes,

> the binary of nature and technology [where] meaning is not found … in Barthes "grain of the voice" nor in Adorno's "curves of the needle", but in the differential space between them.[404]

Nature is signalled as persisting, not only by way of the grain of the human voice, but through the recordings of birds chirping that intermittently intersperse the piece. The complex rhythm of the birds sounding in unison is in stark contrast with the minimalist, standardized sound of the machine that controls the repetition of the 'ha

[404] Reed, *The Musical Semiotics of Timbre in the Human Voice*, 38.

ha' and other repetitive elements in the piece. These bird sounds recall Agamben's conception of the voices of animals in distinction to the human's voice silenced by *logos*. The sounds of the birds, however, are barely perceivable – the machine dominates.

In Anderson's work one is never certain of her message. Like Acconci, Anderson understands the voice as an echo of other voices. Within one voice there are multiple. This point will become particularly pertinent to the following chapter. Acconci grounds these multiple voices in his bodily-being-in-the-world through generating his own musicality. Anderson does not ground these voices in relation to her body, but through the particular buoyancy of her voice that is her music, she infuses these multiple voices with humour and irony. It is this third register of her voice that enables it to hold contradictions in tension with each other, where *A is and is not A1*. Haraway proposes,

> Irony is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the tension of holding incompatible things together ... Irony is about humour and sensuous play. It is also a rhetorical strategy and a political method, one I would like to see more honoured within socialist feminism. At the centre on my ironic faith, my blasphemy, is the image of the cyborg.[405]

Following this perspective, Anderson's voice is a cyborg voice, not only in the way it brings together body and machine, but due to fact that is holds contradictions in tension with each other and generates irony – humour and play.

The ambivalent register of 'ha ha ha' that runs throughout the entirety of the piece is its critical thread. Perhaps it is this sound where one most clearly hears *her voice*. It is the sound that encompasses all of what Anderson can say. To return to de Certau is a *must say* and a *saying nothing*.[406] Despite the controlled tempo of this sound, the sound itself has not been given *second hand*[407] through language, but is a sound that comes from an embodied resonance with the world. It is a self-referential materiality. Despite the alignment of the technologized voice with the linguistic voice, Anderson

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[405] Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," 149.
[406] de Certeau, "Vocal Utopias: Glossolalias," *Representation*, 38, 40.
[407] Ball, *Flight out of Time*, 71.

as narrator sounds its extralinguistic, musical aspect and thus disturbs the messages she sounds.

A voice without a subject

In activating multiple voices in *O Superman*, Anderson, as in all her works, positions herself as a medium through which voices speak. As stated, the voices Anderson sounds are not expressive of an embodied consciousness. In *O Superman,* where her robotic movements situate her closer to a machine than a human, this aspect is reinforced. Ainhoa Kaiero Claver conceives the voices in Anderson's work through what she terms 'the dislocation of the unitary voice'. [408] She discusses how this dislocation is evident in voices transmitted by machines. By *unitary voice*, Claver means that which combines speech and consciousness and produces the presence of the 'I' or subject. Media technologies, including the earlier phonograph, telephone, radio and film, and the later television, answering machine and computer, produce disembodied, decontextualized voices whose modification, transmission, repetition, and interpretation is severed from any single intentionalizing consciousness. Anderson's work with voice echoes the voices that are inscribed by machines, where it severs speech as materiality at the 'level of the signifier' from speech 'at the level of thought.'[409]

It is not just the machine that has produced this disassociation, but language more generally creates this effect. The linguistic voice is always to a degree subjected to interpretation that departs from the intentionality that motivates speech – this is its indicative nature. This effect is heightened by the voice's disembodiment and transmission through communications technology. As I have discussed with reference to Tzara's idea that thought is made in the mouth and Burroughs' idea of automatic verbalization, language produces a condition of ventriloquy. The subject is not in conscious control of language but *is spoken* by it.

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[408] Claver, "Technological Fiction, Recorded Time," 4.
[409] Ibid.

As Claver proposes,

> The alienation of being absent from the words that one pronounces gave rise to the statement by William Burroughs, later taken up again by Anderson, that language (as a manifestation of thought) is a virus coming from outer space.[410]

In Anderson's work we are not given the embodied 'I' in speech but her voices are received by the listener as if they are not her own. Anderson is both the inanimate body and the ventriloquist. In her words, she is a 'closed circuit', both 'the snake charmer and the snake'.[411] The unitary voice in Anderson's work is decomposed into a polyphony of voices and it is not certain who is speaking. In echoing the voices of machines, Anderson delivers to us the voice of the record – voices that are decontextualized, disembodied, and without presence. Again, to echo Doane's thesis on the voice-over, in relation to Anderson's voices, one cannot answer the questions: ' "Who is speaking?" "Where?" "In what time?" and: "For whom?" '.[412]

Claver understands the voice of the record in relation what she terms *written oral practice*. Her position is developed from Benveniste's distinction between discursive enunciation tied to speech and historical or narrative enunciation related to writing. Where in the former there is an 'I' and an embodied presence, the latter enunciates in terms of an absence. Claver writes,

> Technologies have given birth to a new type of oral practice based on the register of writing, which is reflected both in the simulacrums of present time, conversations projected by the media, as well as the numerous machines that "speak" to us. Today's technology has been able to project a "speech" originated from *a register without a subject*, that is to say, to set in motion and perform discursively as pure writing … Anderson's performance[s] … analyse the advent of this new culture of written oral practice that fuse the mode of presence (speech) with the mode of absence (register)'.[413]

Claver's idea of written oral practice resonates with Ong's concept of second orality. This second concept accounts for the condition produced by media such as radio and television that transmits speech to give the effect of spontaneity. Because these media depend on writing in their programming, Ong proposes that they constitute a second

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[410] Claver, "Technological Fiction, Recorded Time," 4.
[411] From Laurie Anderson's song "Closed Circuits," in her performance *United States* (1981).
[412] Doane, "The Voice in Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space," 42-43.
[413] Claver, "Technological Fiction, Recorded Time," 6. Emphasis added.

orality.[414] The voices of second orality sound clichéd and generic messages. These are the voices Anderson ventriloquizes.

The idea of speech without a subject is critical to Anderson's practice. Voice is normally considered an important marker of both the body and identity, but as Nass and Brave remark, 'the equivalence between voice, body and identity breaks down in the world of technology.'[415] These scholars note the shift from a single voice coming from a single body to the idea of many voices coming from a single machine. Anderson sounds voices as if they are transmitted through the machine. Instead of understanding these voices in terms of identity, ego, subjectivity, or psychology, I conceive them as producing certain personae that function like sound bites of secondary orality.[416] Persona comes from the Latin *personare* – to sound (*sonare*) through (*per*). The term was originally employed in the context of theatre, in which actors would vocalize through masks.[417] Adorno in his understanding of the characters of Samuel Beckett's plays writes that they are "empty *personae* ... masks through which sound passes."[418] Beckett influenced the American avant-garde of the twentieth century, thus he would have, even if indirectly, influenced Anderson's use of voice.[419] The idea of the voice sounding through a mask resonates with Anderson's understanding of her voices as audio masks. In place of an embodied consciousness, her voice signal a surface effect generated and transmitted by technology. This is

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[414] For a useful introduction to Ong's concept of secondary orality see, Abigail Lamke, "Refining Secondary Orality: Articulating what is Felt, Explaining what is Implied," in *Explorations in Media Ecology* 11, no. 3 and 4 (2012): 201-217. This text traces the disparate references to secondary orality throughout Ong's writing and notes that this concept was not fully developed, but more so an introduction to an idea. Lamke then relates her understanding of this concept to a contemporary context through reference to Apple's voice Siri.

[415] Nass and Brave, *Wired for Speech*, 98.

[416] Norie Neumark also describes the effect of Anderson's voice as generative of a 'vocal persona'. See Norie Neumark, "Doing things with Voices," in *Voice: Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media*, Norie Neumark, Ross Gibson, and Theo van Leeuwen, eds., (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2010) 101.

[417] Nass and Brave note this etymology in reference to the term 'personality'. See Nass and Brave, *Wired for Speech*, 33-34. Adorno also refers to the voices of Beckett's plays as *personae*. See Theodor Adorno, "Trying to Understand Endgame," in *Notes to Literature*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), vol.1, 249. Beckett would have been a key influence of Anderson (and also Acconci as the writing on his work evidences).

[418] Adorno, "Trying to Understand Endgame," 249.

[419] Acconci notes Burroughs and Beckett as key influences on his use of voice. Acconci, in Interview with Schmidt. Thus Anderson and Acconci share influences but perform very different effects of the voice.

what Neil is suggesting when he understands the voice of authority not as ego but as first and foremost a voice transmitted through the AC circuit. [420]

In Acconci's work with voice one could argue that he too engages not the subject or identity but personae, such as the rockstar or filmstar. But in distinction to Anderson, he embodies the cliché and improvises beyond these models in an effort to locate himself – he performs the subject in process. Anderson does not embody her personae to find a sense of self, but to register how the voices of communications media are received not as subjects, but as automated signals or information carriers. She lets the clichés float free as sound bites of public address that invade our consciousness. Despite the fact that one sees her articulate these voices, Anderson's embodied presence as performer is neutralized through her effacing garb and mechanized movements. She performs a machine that sounds multiple voices without a subject.

The (post)human voice

Where Harraway considers the disturbance in communication, the constant reconstruction of identity and the loss of boundary between human and machine as wielded by the feminist in her favour, Cubitt casts this situation in a negative light. His language is particularly telling when he discusses the loss of the individual voice in Anderson's practice:

> Anderson's constantly remodulated vocals not only enact the *decay* of individuality ... they also continue the estrangement of the voice from the body in which we can recognize the *theft* of knowledge under the *guise* of information. Our speech is not our own. The triumph of the signifier over the signified arrive not as the strength of formal technique, but as the distances between speaker and spoken, spoken and hearer, the *tyranny* of mediation.[421]

Again the poststructuralist thesis is propounded, but to echo Cubitt we are spoken not so much by language, but by our machines. Anderson's position in relation to this premise remains unclear. Despite the fact that in *O Superman* we can hear the melancholic tone in her voice and this is the dominant mood of the piece – this mood

[420] Neil, "Laurie Anderson," 70.
[421] Cubitt, "Laurie Anderson: Myth, Management and Platitude," 286.

is never permanent nor certain. If we are to take Anderson's self-conscious position as a moderator between contradictory standpoints seriously, we cannot determine her message in any one way. To echo Owens, 'the criticism of her work… that attempt[s] to recuperate it within a single, overarching … metalanguage [does so] only at the risk of falsifying it.'[422]

It is better to consider Anderson's project as performing the effects of the mediatized voice rather than determining whether or not she approaches these effects as 'good' or 'bad'. I consider Anderson's interest in the impact of communications technology in relation to Kittler's phrase, that builds on McLuhan's theory: '[m]edia determine our situation.' [423] Kittler moves beyond McLuhan's humanist interest in 'understanding' media as an 'extension' of the human[424], and claims that media cannot be interpreted in terms of the hermeneutic tradition where the human is in control of her media, but rather must be mapped materially as system with functions and effects. What Kittler will term 'so called Man', thus undermine the idea of the human agent, will become one of many of these effects.

Anderson straddles both these perspectives. She maps the functions and effects of the technologized voice. In her performances where she sounds like a machine that transmits multiple personae, she conveys the idea that we receive these voices as alien presences that in turn ventriloquize us. Thus she registers the discord between our embodied presence and the disembodied technologized voices. To echo Kittler, she registers that 'so-called Man is split into physiology and information technology.'[425] The invasion of consciousness by the technologized voice that Anderson performs is in line with Kittler's premise that we are the effect of technology and that technology determines our situation. But on the other hand, in performing the machine

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[422] Owens, "Sex and Language: In Between," 51.
[423] Kittler, *Gramophone*, 1. Sybille Krämer defines media in the context of Kittler's work as, 'techniques that emerge with the invention of writing and that end with the conglomeration of media that are wired by the computer.' See Sybille Krämer, "The Cultural Techniques of Time Axis Manipulation: On Friedrich's Kittler's Conception of Media," in *Theory, Culture and Society* 23, no. 7-8 (2006): 15.
[424] This phrase forms the title of Marshall McLuhan's text, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964).
[425] Kittler, *Gramophone*, 16.

transmitting multiple personae, Anderson takes the position of the narrator. That is to say, she is an agent in relation to the technology she employs to produce the technologized voices. From this perspective that I see her project in line with McLuhan's more humanist understanding that media are the extensions of humans.

Anderson's project resonates with both theorists' materialist concern for media. For all three, *the medium is* indeed *the message*.[426] In introduction to this thesis and also chapter one I discussed Kittler's understanding of technological media (e.g. the phonograph) as able to record the Real (e.g. sound). From this perspective he differentiates *technological media* from *textual media*. Kittler writes, '[t]extual media transform the linguistic-symbolic into an operable code; technological media, by contrast, transform the contingency-based, material, real, itself into a code that can be manipulated'.[427]Indeed, in relation to this latter perspective, Anderson's use of the vocoder is an example in his thesis.[428]Kittler's differentiation between technological media and textual media can account for the distinction (despite their proximity) between the technologized voice and the linguistic voice. From this perspective I understand Anderson's technologized voice, as engaging the voice not as a metaphoric or conceptual register, but as a materiality.

Kittler draws attention to how the recorded voice amplifies the rupture of unified subjectivity, which is an effect of language:

> "So-called Man" is not in command of language. Language is a data stream that can be recorded; … it is precisely the fact it can be recorded, transcribed, and scrutinized that reveals it to be a datastream operating according to its own rules … The introduction of impassive mechanical sound recording technologies … constitutes the main enabling factor for a fundamental reassessment of language, at the core of which is a reversal of the traditional relationship between speaker and language. We do not speak. We are spoken.[429]

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[426] This phrase was introduced in McLuhan's *Understanding Media*. The concept of the medium is the message conveys the idea that is not the content of the message that creates meaning, but the medium it is carried through. For example, in the case of a telephone it is not so much the content of the spoken message that creates meaning in telephonic communication, but the fact that this communication occurs across a distance between two speakers and by way of the disembodied voice.
[427] Kittler in Krämer, "The Cultural Techniques of Time Axis Manipulation," 100.
[428] Kittler, *Gramophone*, 12, 49, 111.
[429] Kittler in Geoffrey Withrop-Young, *Kittler and the Media* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 68-9.

Again the poststructuralist dictum is proclaimed. Kittler proposes that it is no mistake that Lacan developed his psychoanalysis in the second half of the twentieth century when the era of technological media was well established.[430] From Kittler's premise one can infer that Lacan's location of the subject in relation to language should really be a location of the subject in relation to language disseminated through technological media.[431] Anderson, who sounds the clichés and repetitive, generic messages of the voices of authority and public address is performing how we are spoken by these voices that circulate our media saturated environments. In echoing these voices, she becomes both medium and ventriloquist – a human public address system. Thus she performs how we have become echoes of our communications technology.

Aside from performing the ventriloquization of the subject, Anderson signals the posthuman register through her technologically modified voice. I have earlier introduced the term posthuman as a meeting between the human and the machine. Anderson's voice is recoded through the vocoder, but the subtle music of her vocalic body continues to sound. Her technologized voice, understood through the discourse of Harraway, is the voice of the cyborg. The radicality of her project lies not in her mouthing of the clichéd messages, but in the Real of her voice that is neither body nor technology, but intersects both. It is at the threshold of the meeting between the human and the machine where Anderson's voice functions as disturbance. This voice,

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[430] Kittler writes,

> Ever since Freud, psychoanalysis has been keeping a list of partial objects that, first, can be separated from the body, and, second, excite desires prior to sexual differentiation: breast, mouth and feces. Lacan added two further partial objects: voice and gaze. This is psychoanalysis in the media age, for only cinema can restore the disembodied gaze, and only the telephone was able to transmit a disembodied voice. Plays like Cocteau's *La voix humaine* follow in their wake.

Kittler, *Gramophone*, 57.

[431] Indeed, Lacan is informed by information theory. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz write,

> By emphasizing Lacan's frequent references to circuits and feedback (not to mention Lacan's refusal to discuss the subject of language with anybody not versed in cybernetics), Kittler moved Lacan out of the hermeneutically soiled realms of old-style psychoanalysis, philosophy, and literary scholarship and into the far more appropriate posthermeneutic domain of information theory.

Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz, "Translator's Introduction," in Kittler, xviii-xix.

when listened to at the third level, subverts both the control of language and the machine, to generate its own music.

From Anderson to contemporary Echoes

Anderson's project clearly displaces the voice from its location as an index to authentic, embodied consciousness. She demonstrates that it is not just language that speaks us, but also our machines. Through ventriloquising voices without a subject, she performs the power of these voices to invade consciousness. But through her ventriloquization she regenerates the technologized voice such that she disturbs its control. Anderson's gesture of disturbance is achieved through the third register of her voice that holds contradictions in tension with each other. It is this musical aspect of her narrator's voice that brings together the polyphonic signals of the info-sphere and playfully animates them. Hers is a cyborg's voice and her language is irony.

Anderson's voice is never completely on the side of technology, nor the body. It oscillates between these positions. And through this oscillation Anderson performs the effect of communications technology. The voice in her project, listened to from the side of technology invades consciousness as an alien persona. The voice, listened to from the perspective of the body, is regenerated through its technological prosthesis.

Anderson's regeneration of the masculine voice of authority undermines it but at the cost of silencing the feminine voice. As I have argued, even when Anderson's voice is not remodulated as masculine, it is almost completely neutralized of the feminine body. Anderson has described her violin as an alter ego, a feminine voice and as a kind of siren.[432] So perhaps it is through her violin that she really lets herself sing.

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[432] Anderson states, 'For me the violin is the perfect alter ego. It's the instrument the closest to the human voice, the human female voice. It's a siren.'
Anderson in Goldberg, *Laurie Anderson*, 77.

At this juncture I move from Anderson's distinctly 1980s feminist aesthetic to contemporary voices that I understand as productive of a feminine aesthetics. Where Anderson sounds through the masculine mask to simultaneously unmask its artifice, these contemporary artists unapologetically claim that aspect of the feminine that has been targeted by the misogynistic bent of metaphysics. Where Anderson's technologized voice mutes the vocalic body, these next artists recall those of chapter one and two in their emphasis on the musicalized, semiotized production of the voice.

In the last chapter I focus on the acousmatic voice (the voice that is separated from its source) emitted in space and, building from the discussion in chapter two, consider how the vocalic body creates a vocalic space. The artists of this chapter engage the voice in song. Again, to return to the metaphysical location, the voice in song is a distinctly feminine mode. The particular songs that are sung are popular songs, thus like Anderson and Acconci, these artists echo mediated voices. They do so, not to generate irony as Anderson does, or to construct a sense of self in relation to the other as Acconci does. These artists activate an echoic mode to draw attention to the difference the voice generates through its materiality. From this perspective I argue this practice gestures towards an ethics and ecology of the voice.

Chapter 4. Contemporary Echoes: Between Repetition and Difference

An echo is sound that repeats and differentiates. It is a resonance – what we could call a *resounding*. This chapter concerns the voice's movement between repetition and difference. The works I analyse depart from those of the previous chapters that included the visual element of the performer's body. In distinction, this chapter addresses the disembodied voice emitted in space. I focus on works that involve the voice in song by the contemporary artists Janet Cardiff, Kristin Oppenheim, and Susan Philipsz. Despite the fact that the voices in these works are disembodied, they sound their grain, thus amplify their source – the body. This chapter attends to how the voice in song generates a particular space – a vocalic-body-space – and the importance of listening as an embodied practice.

The phrase *repetition and difference* recalls Lacoue-Labarthe's conception of rhythm, discussed in chapter two. Like an echo, rhythm is constituted through duration where the past that repeats is contracted in the present that differentiates. The phrase also conjures the title of Gilles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1968). His theory of morphogenesis – the creation of new forms – considers this contraction of the past in the present, and how history is only possible through repetition. This chapter attends to the voice in song as a form of repetition that evokes distinct historical and cultural moments. This evocation occurs through the listener's embodiment of the vocal emission within a particular spatio-temporality. The vocalic emission is the past contracted in the present. It produces difference in its repetition.

Throughout this thesis I have demonstrated that the quality of repetition is inherent to the voice. In relation to the dialectic of sound and sense, it is through our repetitions of sounds that we learn to make sense through language – through repetition we acquire language. Dada sound poetry opens us to the two sides of the coin. It recalls the pre-linguistic stage of infancy where the child repeats phonemes – *da da* – but has not yet mastered the art of speech – sound becoming sense. It also performs this repetitive mode to erode the semantic value of speech and emphasizes the materiality of the voice – sense becoming sound. In the dialectic of self and other, the voice in

repetition manifests the desire of the self to constitute itself in relation to the other. This voice is motivated by the invocatory drive first developed in relation to the mother. In Acconci's work vocalic repetitions disturb language, whilst compulsively returning to it. In the case of both the early performance poets and Acconci, the repetitions of the voice constitute the musicalized, rhythmic dimension of the voice. They sound the vocalic body. In the dialectic of the body and technology, the repetitions of the technologized voice are those inscribed and transmitted by the machine. The technologized voice is not an index to the autonomous, embodied, intentional subject, but is a posthuman signal circulating the info-sphere that can be endlessly repeated and mutated. Anderson ventriloquizes this signal to perform the subject as the effect of technology. Where relevant this chapter will draw upon these three themes – sound and sense, self and other, body and technology – to develop the theme of the voice in song as a movement between repetition and difference.

My case studies mostly involve the feminine voice in song. Building on the previous chapter, the question of repetition in relation to these case studies concerns both the gendered voice and a feminist *resounding*. I extend the focus on the feminine voice to the broader concern for difference. A feminine voice, as stated in the previous chapter, is marked by difference. In this chapter, difference is also approached as that which exceeds the bounds of gender. Difference is understood as a creative and ethical currency. It enables not only more conscious relations between self and other, but also with spatio-temporal, socio-historical and cultural contexts.

I employ the echo as a model through which to think how the selected case studies create difference through the repetitions of the voice. This approach is grounded in an understanding of the echo as a materiality that is both relational and creative. Further, I draw from the feminist deployment of the mythological character of Echo in my approach to the feminine voice in song. From the model of the echo I develop a discourse to attend to the aesthetics and ethics generated by the voice in my selected case studies.

The potential of Echo

In Ovid's tale Juno punishes Echo for hiding Jupiter's affairs.[433] The nymph, who once discoursed so beautifully, must forever repeat the last words of the other that she hears. Echo falls in love with Narcissus and is doomed to be his acoustic mirror. In taking Echo as a model through which to think the feminine voice, I am aligning my perspective to feminist scholarship that has done the same. This scholarship considers the feminine voice in the position of both powerlessness and potential.

For instance, Amy Lawrence, in her analysis of classical Hollywood cinema considers the voice of woman through the hierarchy of Echo and Narcissus.[434] Lawrence argues that the position of woman's voice or Echo is one that signifies powerlessness and passivity. Echo is simultaneously bound by and excluded from patriarchal discourse – that of Narcissus. She can only sound to reinforce the totality of this discourse and her own oppression and silencing within it.[435]

Also within the discipline of film theory, Polona Petek recasts Echo in a position of power and significance.[436] Petek takes Echo's condition of multiple deferrals (she is informed by Derrida) as a mode through which to understand the creative and critical potential of the postmodern film and its spectatorship. Although Petek grants Echo agency, she does this at the cost of silencing her. Echo becomes a metaphor for criticality and creativity and the criticality of echo as a materiality – sound – is omitted in Petek's analysis.

Cavarero understands Echo as a complex of both powerlessness and potential. She acknowledges the lack of agency of the Ovidian Echo. The nymph, in her repetition, loses her ability to sound *logos* as a rational, intentional subject. However, Cavarero

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[433] Ovid, "Book III" in *Metamorphoses*, trans. Mary M. Innes (Harmonsdworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971) 83-87.
[434] Amy Lawrence, *Echo and Narcissus: Women's Voices in Classical Hollywood Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
[435] Kaja Silverman takes a similar perspective in her *The Acoustic Mirror*. The concept of the *acoustic mirror* is related to the model of echo.
[436] See Polonna Petek, *Echo and Narcissus: Echolocating the Subject in the Age of Audience Research* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2008).

suggests that if Echo is transported from the mythological scene to Kristeva's scene of infancy, she becomes the protagonist of the generative space of the vocalic. In this space that both precedes and exceeds the symbolic, mother and child are bound in an echolalic mode of call and response. Here, language emerges from music and is musicalized. In this scene, Echo foregrounds the relationality and uniqueness that Cavarero deems as inherent to the materiality of the voice. Cavarero writes,

> If we transport Echo onto this scene – which is renewed wherever the semantic succumbs to the vocalic – then the Ovidian nymph ends up recuperating a different sense for her vocalic repetition, one that is no longer punitive of forced. For as Ovid no doubt knew, Echo is not so much a tragic figure of interdicted speech as *she is a figure of a certain pleasure … the echo that mobilizes the musical rhythm of language does not simply coincide with an infantile regression; it rediscovers, or remembers, the power of a voice that still resounds in logos.* [437]

But even within the myth there is space to register the potential of Echo. Ovid tells us Echo does not repeat Narcissus verbatim, but only the last of his words. Her echo sounds a repetition with a difference. Cavarero states that the Ovidian Echo has no control over the difference she constitutes.[438] By contrast, Derrida proposes that with this gesture of repeating only the last of Narcissus' words she is able to both respond to him and make his language her own.[439] From this last perspective I approach Echo. Through her repetition she makes the other's language her own.

Where there is linguistic repetition the difference of the materiality of the voice is amplified. In linguistic repetition the semantic value of words decreases and the grain of the voice is emphasized. Thus Echo brings the body to the foreground. Because Narcissus cannot love her, Ovid tells us, Echo's flesh and bones waste away to the point where she is *nothing but a voice*. She is the disembodied voice *par excellence*. This chapter, although concerned with the disembodied voice in song, draws attention to embodiment and thus brings the body back to Echo.

To return to Cavarero, Echo's *jouissance* in the musicalizing of speech is a vital and thus powerful currency. This jouissance can be extended to the feminine voice in

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[437] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 169.
[438] Ibid., 165-172.
[439] See Derrida, Interview, accessed October 16, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZBfTMOPQrw.

song. In the history of metaphysics, the feminine voice in song, which emphasizes the vocalic rather than the semantic, is considered a threat.[440] The case studies that concern this chapter sound this voice and, through their production of the vocalic-body-space, open the listener to an embodied resonance. However, the feminine voice in song cannot be reduced to vocalic pleasure. It is also a mode of mourning – a marking of loss. Most importantly, it is an ambiguous register. This ambiguity signals the potential of the feminine voice. I drew attention to this register in Anderson's work where her voice reaches the third level. Anderson ventriloquizes the voices of the media but simultaneously sounds her voice in the buoyancy of its rhythm, which inflects her speech with irony and humour. The potential of Echo lies not in the illusion of the auto-affective voice that conflates consciousness with the said. Her power is not ideal, but real and lies in her relational currency that brings together and animates *more than one Voice*.[441]

The musicality of the voice – the vocalic body – as this thesis has demonstrated, is a critical thread in the voice in art. This register tells us something about how the artist is approaching communication, subjectivity and embodiment. In the case of the early performance poets, it is a mode through which to revolutionize language and subject and to be able to communicate a more vital relation to reality. In the case of Acconci, it is amplified to demonstrate speech in relation to the other as an embodied act motivated by the invocatory drive. In Anderson's practice, this third register of the voice – its buoyant musicality – is subtle in relation to the noise of clichéd sound bites of second orality. The subtlety of this register produces the effect of irony. All three practices draw attention to the problem of language in communication. In the case of the contemporary Echoes that concern this chapter, the vocalic-body dominates the

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[440] See Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More*, 34 – 56. Dolar states that within the history of metaphysics there is 'a relationship between music and power.' He continues,

> The main concerns, which will recur throughout [this] history with astonishing obstinacy, are ... music, and in particular the voice, should not stray away from words which will endow it with sense; as soon as it departs from its textual anchorage, the voice becomes senseless and threatening – all the more because of its seductive and intoxicating powers. Futhermore, the voice beyond sense is equated with femininity ... Wagner will write in a ... letter to Liszt: ... music is a woman.

See also Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 103-116.

[441] This phrase is drawn from the title of Cavarero's text, *For More Than One Voice*.

linguistic register. This register is not eroded or undermined as it is in the other practices. Rather, language becomes part of the texture of the song that weaves a space of resonance.

The acousmatic voice: between source, cause and effect

In Philipsz's *Surround Me* (2010-11)[442] the disembodied voice moves through the streets of London singing different songs from the Elizabethan period. It is not uncommon for one to hear the disembodied voice in song in contemporary acoustic space. But it would be the kind of singing one would hear from a radio – a polished, manufactured product. Philipsz's voice, in distinction, is not the voice of a trained singer. It is a voice that has been described as sounding like one who sings to oneself. Like Anderson's voice, through its technologized emission it has been separated from the body. The sound of Philipsz's voice is not heavily electronically processed as is Anderson's, and signals a closer relation to the body that has produced it. In Philipsz's work, however, the body cannot be seen. The voice floats free. It resonates within the urban scape joining the chorus of the city sounds. Emitted in open spaces surrounded by stone and concrete, this voice generates a voluminous, textured, travelling, echoing sound. In some pockets of the city, her voice is multiplied by emissions from several positions in space. At times, her single voice creates a call and response effect. At others, it becomes a choir.

The disembodied voice is an acousmatic voice. This term refers to a sound that has been separated from its source and thus depends on the splitting of listening from vision. Acousmatic sound is ubiquitous today due to the developments in audio technology. Although it was not referred to as such at the time, acousmatic sound, and in particular the acousmatic voice, came into prominence with the introduction of the phonograph in the late nineteenth century. This technology enabled people for the first time to record the voice and listen to it disembodied. However, the separation of

[442] Please visit, *Surround Me*, accessed February 24, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vt5w5VuECY.

the voice from its visual source is not dependent on sound recording technologies. Any kind of obstruction (for example, architecture and distance) can separate sound from the vision of the source that emits it. In the Elizabethan period, for example, it would have been common to hear the singing voice emanating from churches, or taverns. Any listener who had not entered these spaces would receive these voices as acousmatic voices.

Whenever we hear a voice separate from the body that emits it, we perceive an acousmatic voice.[443] The acousmatic sound is the condition *par excellence* of music. Even when attending a concert, we do not so much observe the instruments, but attend to the sounds themselves.[444] As Brian Kane argues, what is of most importance to the term acousmatic is that it denotes a particular mode and history of listening.[445] Pierre Schaeffer brought the term acousmatic into common parlance within the discourse of sound studies. In his *Treatise on Musical Objects* (1966), he develops the idea of the sound object of reduced listening. He conceives the sound object as autonomous of the source that produced it. In this way, he understands it as an acousmatic sound. For example, the sound of a galloping horse does not refer to the galloping horse, but is intended by the listener as a particular sonic quality. [446]The sound object is intended as the material sound itself, rather than a sign that refers to something else (e.g. the horse). [447]

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[443] The etymology of the term *acousmatic* has been mythologized in theoretical writings, the most seminal of which is that of Schaeffer's magnum opus *Treatise on Musical Objects* (1966). Schaeffer writes:

> *Acousmatic*, the *Larousse* dictionary tells us, is the: "*Name given to the disciples of Pythagorus who, for five years, listened to his teachings while he was hidden behind a curtain, without seeing him, while observing a strict silence.*"

See Pierre Schaeffer, "Acousmatics," in *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, ed. Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner (New York, London: Continuum, 2006), 76 – 77. The myth is relayed by Schaeffer and by those who have developed and drawn from his theory on acousmatic sound (most notably Chion, in *The Voice in Cinema*) as a situation designed so that the students must focus on Pythagorus' teachings, rather than being distracted by his visual presence.

[444] Roger Scrutton in Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2014), 5.

[445] Kane, *Sound Unseen*, 9.

[446] Schaeffer's thesis is informed by Husserl's phenomenology hence I employ the term *intended* connected to *intentionality* – that which makes phenomena an object of consciousness.

[447] Michel Chion, *Guide to Sound Objects: Pierre Schaeffer and Musical Research*, 31, accessed January 23, 2015, http://monoskop.org/images/0/01/Chion_Michel_Guide_To_Sound_Objects_Pierre_Schaeffer_and_M

Schaeffer's separation of the sound from its source in order to focus on the sound itself provides a context to think of sound not as an index, but as an object. Due to sound's quality as duration, I do not consider sound an object. However, Schaeffer's perspective is useful to the analysis of my case studies where he understands sound as something concrete. Schaeffer approaches sound not as a sign of this or that – but as a self-referential materiality. Reduced listening can be considered a musicalization of sound. In this mode we listen to sounds, not for what they mean or refer to, but for their distinct qualities: rhythm, pitch, timbre and duration. The voice, as this thesis has demonstrated, is always linked to both body and language. But often it is eclipsed by its function as a servant to language or as an index to the body. Schaeffer's perspective affords a space to think the voice, particularly the acousmatic voice, as not one or the other, but as a particular acoustic quality. In relation to the case studies that concern this chapter, this concrete quality can be extended to the idea of an acoustic environment.

Kane's perspective on acousmatic sound and the mode of listening it engenders enables an approach to the acousmatic voice as a relational complex. He departs from Schaeffer's conception of acousmatic sound as purely autonomous, separated from its source and reified as an object. Kane also argues that this sound cannot be reduced to its source. He proposes that this sound is produced by a 'structural gap' or 'spacing'. He writes,

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usical_Research.pdf. I do not go into the complexity of Schaeffer's theory here due to the fact that it is not relevant to my chapter. However, it is important to note that the sound object is not as simple as a material or concrete sound that is heard empirically. Schaeffer who develops his thesis from a phenomenological perspective considers the sound object that is intended by the subject preceded by the idea that the subject has of it. This idea is a universal idea or 'essence' that is shared by all subjects. Kane in explanation of this 'idea' or the 'essence' of the sound object gives the example of the note 'C'. We have an idea of the note 'C' and when we hear the note 'C' we intend the sound object as note 'C'. Kane writes,

> A sound object ... is an ideal object; it inhabits an order of essences (in the phenomenological sense) that guarantees repetition without difference... as an ideality, this sound object does not exist in the world. It is heard in sounds, but it must be distinguished from the actual sonorousness of sound. The sound object is not itself sonorous. In the silence of imagined sound, where there is nothing actually vibrating, one can perform intentional acts that depend on the sound object's ideal stability, such as conceiving, composing and distinguishing sounds.

Kane, *Sound Unseen*, 33-34. This is similar to Saussure's idea of the sound image, whereby the sound image is not material but rather a psychic impression that differentiates all other sound images from each other, thus we understand a particular phoneme as the same despite the differences in accents that may articulate it – hence we have repetition without difference.

> This neither heteronomous-nor-autonomous sound ... only *is* when source, cause and effect are spaced. But even to use the word *is* is itself an infelicity, for the *being* of acousmatic sound *is* to *be* a gap. Acousmatic sound is neither entity nor sound object nor effect nor source nor cause. It flickers into being only with spacing, with the simultaneous difference and relation of auditory effect, cause and source. [448]

In recognizing the charge or tension between sound and source in the acousmatic situation, Kane makes a vital point. The acousmatic voice in the works I analyse produces an effect of simultaneous disembodiment and embodiment that is on neither side of the dialectic. Rather, to follow Kane, the acousmatic voice in my case studies is produced in the *spacing* between to these conditions.

For example, in Phillipsz's *Surround Me* although the body that emits the voice is not seen, it is evoked – the vocalic body conjures an imaginary body. This body is produced through the spacing between source (body), cause (technology) and effect (sound). The body evoked in Philipsz's song is embodied by the listener and in turn causes the listener to become aware of her embodiment. The particular grain that musicalizes Philipsz's voice sensitizes the listener to her own corporeality. However, that this voice is then multiplied and emitted from different points in space disrupts the idea of it as an index to an individual body. Rather, we move back and forth from the idea of the voice as an index to the individual body, to the voice as a spatialized event – a concrete atmosphere to inhabit. The grain of the voice that signals the individual body is expanded into the urban fabric and its sounds of footsteps, traffic and chatter, in a resonant, echoic mode. Because of this slippage between the idea of an individual body and a transpersonal space, I extend the concept of the vocalic body to the vocalic-body-space.

The acousmatic voice analyzed in this chapter is not only figured through what Kane has defined as a spacing between the source (body) cause (technology) and effect (sound), but added to this critical relation is the question of space. The acousmatic voice employed in installation art is different from the acousmatic voice in film or on the radio. In this art the acousmatic voice sculpts space. This brings me to the art historical context that is key to my case studies, that which concerns *sound in space.*

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[448] Kane, *Sound Unseen*, 149.

Sound in space

The relation of sound to space has been a critical aspect of sound in art since the emergence of so-called sound art in the 1960s. Max Neuhaus is the forefather of artists concerned with the relation of sound to space and his oeuvre during the 1960s and 1970s is seminal to sound art's development. For Neuhaus, it was never a question of producing 'sound art', but rather of producing a particular environment or what he refers to as 'place' through emitting sound in space.[449] This practice is tied to land art and the environmental art of the time[450] and can be considered in terms of Krauss' 'sculpture in the expanded field'.[451] Instead of the use of earth, or steel, artists such as Neuhaus, working in the expanded field of sculpture, employ sound.

Neuhaus differentiates between space and place. He proposes that space is neutral or abstract and place has character; that sound can define and transform space and thus constitute a place.[452] For example, in *Times Square* (1977)[453] the unremarkable grate that marks the boundary between the subway and the street above becomes charged with the subtle vibrations of drones. Neuhaus installs synthetized sounds in the tunnel beneath the grate. These sounds are amplified and resonated by the tunnel's architecture. Despite the subtlety of the sound, once registered, the drones transform the surrounds. They add a strange quality to the flow of the traffic and the flickering screens; the commercial district is enchanted by way of Neuhaus' sound intervention. Philipsz considers Neuhaus a critical influence on her work.[454]As I discuss below, she is interested in the potential of the disembodied voice in song to transform space and produce a recognition of place through the listener's embodiment of the acoustic environment.

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[449] For Neuhaus' resistance to the term sound art see Max Neuhaus "Sound Art?," accessed January 22, 2015, http://www.max-neuhaus.info/bibliography/. For Neuhaus' understanding of his works with sound as the production of place see Max Neuhaus, "Notes on Place and Monument," accessed January 22, 2015, http://www.max-neuhaus.info/soundworks/vectors/moment/notes/.
[450] See Alan Licht, "Sound and Space," *Modern Painters* (November 2007): 74- 77.
[451] See Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (Spring, 1979): 30-44.
[452] Neuhaus, "Notes on Place and Monument".
[453] Please visit, *Times Square*, accessed Febraury 24, 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnMHHr27_yU.
[454] Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev in discussion with Susan Philipsz, accessed December 15, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvQ-0v5SgJU.

Where Neuhaus' oeuvre is a seminal precursor in terms of the question of sound in space, Lucier's *I am sitting in a room* (1969) is a seminal precursor in relation to the question of the voice in space. Lucier's repetitious process of recording and re-recording the speaking voice dissolves it into, as he says, *the resonant frequencies of the room*. Through this process, the voice is moved further and further away from its source of the body and closer to the acoustic properties of the room mediated by technology.[455] This does not mean that the recorded voice becomes closer to Schaeffer's conception of the reified sound object. For the repetitive emission and recording of the voice emphasizes not only the *cause* of technology, but also the *source* of the room. Through repetitive electronic mediation, the room replaces Lucier's body as the articulating and sounding cavity. In this way, the resonant chamber of the room, becomes the vocalic-body, or to follow the thread of this chapter – the vocalic-body-space.

Space works in a similar way in my case studies. It either becomes an interior resonant chamber or, in the case of exterior installations, the voice is emitted to resonate in relation to particular architectural structures and urban environments. The electronically mediated voice is dispersed in space, loosened from its tie to a single body, and the vocalic body is a product of sound's interaction with space – it is a vocalic-body-space.

Music or art?

The fact that all the case studies I analyse involve the voice in song might spark the question: how is this so-called 'art' where an artist sings, or employs others to sing, different from 'music'? Neuhaus, a former musician, would respond that sound in art is constituted as art rather than music because it is spatialized, whereas music is a

[455] Lucier performs the separation of sound from source through the critical intervention of electronic technology mediation. It is interesting to note that this piece demonstrates that the acousmatic voice need not be dependent upon its listener not being able to see the visual source. Rather, as Kane argues, what is needed in the acousmatic situation is a separation, or 'spacing', of sound from source. Even though Lucier is still in the room of his sounding voice, the voice is separated from his body through its electronic recording and transmission.

time-based medium that has a beginning, middle and end – it has a narrative structure that is measured and finite.[456] Cox proposes that music and sound art are both concerned with time, but where music concerns what he terms, following Deleuze, *pulsed time*, sound-art involves a *non-pulsed time*. This latter term is connected to Bergsonian duration – the concept of time not as distinct units that can be measured, such as in clock time, but rather time as a continuum, a flow 'differentiated by various temporal "rhythms," "vibrations", "tensions," "dilations," and "contractions"'.[457]

Duration concerns embodied or felt time, rather than a quantified conception of time. Neuhaus intuitively registers this difference in time in the following comment:

> Traditionally composers have located the elements of a composition in time. One idea which I am interested in is locating them, instead, in space and letting the listener place them in his *own time*.[458]

Music is also embodied by the listener according to her own time. But in the case of sound art, the work's quality as Bergsonian duration is consciously conceived in relation to its form. In the works I analyse, despite the fact that all the artists work with song, because these songs are looped, the idea of a distinct beginning and end is erased. This formal device accounts for the fact the listener can enter and leave the space at any point in the song. The listener's embodied time is a section cut (a duration) from the continuum (the greater duration) of the installation both of which are an undetermined flow of, or unstructured, time.

In reference to his place works, Neuhaus writes,

> Communion with sound has always been bound by time. Meaning in speech and music appears only as their sound events unfold word by word, phrase by phrase, from moment to moment.

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[456] Contemporary theorists such as Licht follow this line of argument that sound art is concerned with space, whereas music is concerned with time. See Alan Licht, *Sound Art: Beyond Music, Between Categories* (New York: Rizzoli, 2010).
[457] Christoph Cox citing Bergson in, "From Music to Sound: Being as Time in the Sonic Arts,"accessed January 22, 2015, http://faculty.hampshire.edu/ccox/Cox.Sonambiente%20Essay%20(Book).pdf. This essay appeared in German as "Von Musik zum Klang: Sein als Zeit in der Klangkunst," in *Sonambiente Berlin 2006: Klang Kunst Sound Art*, ed. Helga de la Motte-Haber, and Matthias Osterwold, Georg Weckwerth (Heidelberg: Kehrer Verlag, 2006), 214-23.
[458] Max Neuhaus, "Program Notes," *Sound Works, Vol. 1: Inscription* (1994), 34. Emphasis added.

> The works in this volume share a different fundamental idea – that of removing sound from time and setting it instead in place.[459]

Neuhaus' statement provides an interesting point of tension with the works I analyse. These works that involve songs, as songs, *unfold word by word, phrase by phrase*. However, this unfolding does not always constitute a linear temporality, for the way they are emitted in space – sometimes fragmented, repeated, multiplied, overlapping and dispersed – disrupts the linear sequence of the song through opening it up as a volume in space. Further, how the listener moves through space also has the potential to disrupt of the song's linear unfolding.

Sound art emerges from music's expanded field. Cage, this field's key representative, shifts the conception of music from organized and intentionalised notation to an expanded field of everyday non-intentionalised (chance) sounds. Following Cox, works such as *4'33''* (1952) begin a trajectory of the spatialization of sounds in art that constitute a *non-pulsed time*.[460] It is of interest therefore that artists such as Philipsz, Cardiff, and Oppenheim bring music through the form of song into this context. It is almost as if they have gone full circle. But not quite – rather what has happened is a spiral effect. There is difference in their repetition of song. And much of this difference has been generated from the lessons learnt from Cage's and Neuhaus' expansion of the field of music.

The repetitions of the voice in song

In the case of song prior to the era of electronic reproduction, its continuing existence was ensured by repetition where it was passed from one embodied vocalization to the next. In the case of song in the era of electronic reproduction, repetition involves the repetitions produced by sound recording technologies, which are fuelled by the demands of capitalism.[461] The question of difference is critical to the era before

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[459] Neuhaus, "Notes and Place and Monument".
[460] Cox, "From Music to Sound: Being as Time in the Sonic Arts".
[461] Capitalism no longer completely drives this repetition due to the impact of the internet, which has afforded the increasing agency of listener.

electronic reproduction due to the fact that a song was passed from one mouth to another. Though the general idea and sound of the song might remain the same, differences were constituted through each new embodied emission of the song. In the era of electronic reproduction, this question of difference in relation to the repetition of popular song is complicated. More often than not, repetition will not bring with it difference, due to the fact that in this later context we are not dealing with the embodied voice that sounds in a specific time and place, but rather the technologized voice. However, this voice constitutes difference through sampling, and through its echoes by different singers who produce different versions of the song.

When one sings, unless one sings one's own composition, one echoes the combination of sounds, rhythms and words that have been composed by someone else. Even if the song is one's own composition it is still influenced by songs that have come before it. To sing (as to speak) is to resound. The case studies explored in this chapter that work with popular song, consciously attend to the condition of song as a resounding and encourage the listener to consider the value of this resounding through her embodiment of a particular spatio-temporality.

Philipsz has produced a body of works that consist of her singing songs *a capella* from both a contemporary and historical context. She electronically transmits the sound of her singing voice in public spaces such as a shopping centre, railway station or under a bridge. As mentioned, she is not a trained singer and her unpolished voice produces a gap, or tension – what can be called a *difference* – in relation to the cultural and historical identity of the song and the idea of song as a manufactured or professional product of the music industry.

The song Philipsz chooses to sing can be conceived as a *found object*. Like Marcel Duchamp's selection of the snow shovel, she selects a song and positions it in a new context. Yet there is more at play in her work than the selection and recontextualization of a found object. In singing the song, the song is mediated by the voice, and a new object is created. In line with the conceptual trajectory of this thesis I do not consider sound an object, but rather an event that produces an experience and in the case of this chapter, where the question of space is critical, an environment. What one can take from Duchamp's legacy of the ready-made in the analysis of

Philipsz's work, and that of Oppenheim and Cardiff also, is the conceptual activation and transformation of something, in this case – song – through its resounding. Because voice is never simply a question of idea, these artists' resounding of the song must also be understood as a material activation and transformation. Indeed, the idea is created through the materialization of the song. This materialization occurs in relation to a specific spatio-temporality that is embodied by the listener. Often, in the case of Philipsz's work and that of Cardiff and Oppenheim also, a particular historical moment is evoked in the song selected. This moment is made to resonate – to repeat with difference – in the new context. In the example of Philipsz's work that I have introduced above, it is the Elizabethan voice that is materialized within contemporary London.

Many of the songs Philipsz resounds are songs originally composed by men. Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev understands this as a political strategy. She couches her interpretation of Philipsz's work in relation to Adrienne Rich's premise that women must revisit, repeat and reinterpret the dominant masculine discourse of the past in order to both understand their position within it, and separate themselves from it. For Christov-Bakargiev, the fact that Philipsz employs her voice rather than her image is also an important act of resistance. She states,

> women have been the epitome of the represented and consumed body … to propose an alternative by denying the image and giving only the voice is … radical … A … concern of women … is how to recover a voice in a world where women did not … have an authorial voice … For Rich repetition and reinterpretation becomes a cultural strategy …"Revision, the act of … entering an old text from a new critical direction is for women … an act of survival … We need to know the writing of the past … differently ..."[462]

In Philipsz's work there is not an overt undermining of a patriarchal discourse, but a more subtle process occurs where a gap is produced between the known identity of the song and her resounding of it.

Beyond the question of the gender, this gap is produced by the quality of her voice that is fragile and wavering. This voice, which evokes the conditions of intimacy and

[462] Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev in discussion with Susan Philipsz.

the solitary act of singing to oneself, is emitted into public space. The contrast between the private quality of her voice and the public aspect of its emission contributes to its effect of disturbance. In chapter two I discussed the power of the voice to collapse the boundary between the private and the public. Philipsz' voice also erodes the boundary between these two conditions.

Christov-Bakargiev considers Philipsz's voice, which sounds as if she sings to herself whilst singing well-known songs, an act of resistance. She states, 'Her repetitions are acts of resistance against signature, celebrity, originality and authority.'[463]This perspective resonates with how I conceive my case studies as moving between repetition and difference. I do not consider repetition in relation to a point of origin, but rather as an echoing that is a continuum composed of variations. Within this continuum that is repetition with difference, the idea of originality, authority and celebrity, no longer holds. The materiality of the voice opens us to the possibility to think difference, not as an original, isolated, autonomous moment, but as resonance that is relational and creative.

In order to speak we must repeat the words that have been given to us. We must insert ourselves within a discourse. It is this understanding that led to the poststructuralist dictum that has been a key conceptual thread throughout this thesis: *we do not speak language but are spoken by it*. But this premise is constituted by an understanding of speech from the perspective of language. As this thesis has worked to demonstrate, speech can be understood from the perspective of voice. It is from this perspective that Cavarero's thesis on the *vocal phenomenology of uniqueness* is generated.[464] Cavarero states,

> speech, understood as speech that emits from someone's mouth, is not simply the verbal sphere of expression; it is also the point of tension between the uniqueness of the voice and the system of language.[465]

I propose that when one *listens* to the voice the poststructral thesis that one is spoken by language is reversed. Cavarero states,

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[463] Christov-Bakargiev in discussion with Philipsz.
[464] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 7.
[465] Ibid.,14.

> The voice is always unique but all the more so in the vocalic exercise of repetition. In fact, by challenging the economy of the same, uniqueness is here entrusted to nothing other than the singular voice.[466]

The voice that repeats language produces difference in its repetition and thus language is *voiced*.

Song is a key protagonist in this reversal of the post-structuralist account of the subject's relation to language. Theorists such as Kristeva argue that song is our first language developed by way of the mother-infant's echolalia. Through her musical call and response the infant acquires language, and in this acquisition that is a repetition, the infant constitutes her difference through her embodied resonance.[467] In song, more often than not, in distinction to speech, it is the vocalic rather than linguistic register that is dominant. When the vocalic register is dominant, language no longer speaks us. Rather, we *sing* language.

In Anderson's work with song that I analyzed in the preceding chapter spoken word is emphasized thus the linguistic register dominates. It is her aim to perform the ventriloquization of the subject. But, as she says, she is both snake charmer and the snake.[468] It is in that third register of her narrator's voice – her music – that she voices language.

Cavarero states that in song, '[t]he *phone* is, even when it negates the semantic in its sonorous ocean, nevertheless semantic.'[469] In Philipsz's work with song, words are not frustrated by a 'sonorous ocean', but remain clear. This fact is important in that even if the listener does not recognize the melody of the song, she can identify its lyrics. Despite the criticality of the voice in Philipsz's work, the words of her song remain significant. In asserting the identity of the song she sings, they provide a position from which the voice asserts its difference from this identity.

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[466] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 171.
[467] Kristeva, Interview.
[468] From Laurie Anderson's song "Closed Circuits," in her performance *United States* (1981).
[469] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 127.

Take for example *The Internationale* (1999).[470] Even someone not familiar with this song, through hearing such words as 'unites the human race' would infer that this is a song sung by a collective. Composed in 1871 by Eugène Pottier (a former member of the Paris Commune), the song was originally intended as a French socialist anthem. Over the next several decades since its conception the song became the anthem for many different left-leaning contexts around the globe including that of the Communist party in Europe and the workers' movement in the United States of America. In each different historical context the lyrics and the purpose of the song shifts. What remains a constant in all contexts is the identity of the song as a call to arms and action. It is a song intended to rally the collective in support of a left-leaning political cause. Philipsz's solitary voice that sings the song intended for the collective produces an immediate rupture with the song's historical intention, but simultaneously emphasizes this intention by way of this rupture.[471]

Philipsz's repetition of this song draws attention to the quality of repetition inherent to song and how this repetition is tied to its difference. In the case of *The Internationale* repetition and its difference occurs in the different contexts in which this song was sung – from the French revolution to the communist revolution to the workers' movement in America and so on. Philipsz also constitutes difference through installing this song in multiple contexts. Each installation of the work creates a particular spatio-temporality, which generates particular relation with the historical evocations of the song.

In her first installation of the artwork, Philipsz emits the song from a loudspeaker in an underpass in Ljubljana, the city of the former communist region of Slovenia. Philipsz disturbs the identity of the song through the quality of her voice and through her choice of site. Slovenians would be familiar with this song and its former political currency. It is not only the quality of Philipsz's wavering voice that produces a striking difference to the song's intention as a call to arms. Also important is the fact

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[470] Please listen to Susan Philipsz *The Internationale* (1999), accessed March 5, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5NJVPCIhNk.

[471] This emphasis on the collective by way of its replacement with the individual voice, is similar to the effect of Anderson's masculine audio mask that amplifies the absence of the feminine register.

that hers is an electronically mediated voice. This call to arms would have occurred as an embodied emission where people would have sung together *en masse* in the street.

The acousmatic voice of *The Internationale* signals loss: loss of the vitality of the song, loss of the vital presence of its singers, and loss of the contexts in which the song was made vital. Caimhin Mac Giolla Leith writes,

> We can only imagine the effect on the average Slovenian pedestrian of happening upon an inexplicable, disembodied voice softly crooning what was once a stirring rallying cry for socialists around the world. Here, in a region riven by the re-emergence of competing nationalism after decades of communist hegemony, the collective call to arms and action of another era was transformed into something quite other. But what exactly? A displaced lament for a lost utopianism? A bitter and ironic joke?

Unlike Anderson, there is no irony in Philipsz's voice. Rather she works with the voice as an empirical value that has the potential to affect its listener. How it affects its listener is not determined by Philipsz. But that it might affect the listener, motivates Philipsz's installation. Of this installation Philipsz states, 'One of my enduring memories was seeing a group of elderly women standing stock still silhouetted in the underpass, humming along to it. One of them was crying.'[472] Whatever the impact of Philipsz's vocalization, it produces a disturbance in the soundscape of Ljubljana. It evokes history as the contraction of the past in the present, and amplifies this contraction as difference.

The installation draws attention to the association between sound and space and how this association constitutes place. Song, as much as it can affirm a political and social identity, can also, due to the evolution of history, produce a profound sense of displacement – a rupture in the spatio-temporal present. In the case of this work, it is as if the music of communist times has kept playing, but people are now dancing to a different tune. The song *Internationale* is a jarring presence in the current reality of Slovenia. As Philipsz's anecdote informs us, this rupturing effect is embodied by the

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[472] Philipsz in Lena Corner, "The Art of Noise: "Sculptor in Sound": Susan Philipsz," accessed January 26, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/nov/14/susan-philipsz-turner-prize-2010-sculptor-in-sound.

listener as affect. Rather than enchanting this space – bringing a place to life – Philipsz's voice has the effect of conjuring a place that is no longer.

The singular-multiple

The Internationale activates the critical relation between the individual and the collective. Philipsz's individual voice both recalls the collective voice of *The Internationale* and signals its absence. This dialectic can be thought in terms of Cavarero's *singular-plural*, which I extend to that of the *singular-multiple* in order to provide more scope for the analysis of my case studies. We learn to speak through echoing the voices around us. In this way, our voice emerges as a difference through its many repetitions of other voices. The three artists discussed in this chapter repeat songs sung many times by many different voices and thus set into play this critical relation between the singular voice and multiple voices.

For Cavarero the voice's uniqueness is a 'corporeal uniqueness'.[473] She develops her perspective in relation to Hannah Arendt's and Nancy's political philosophy of plurality. Arendt conceives 'an ontology that insists on a plurality of unique existents in relation to one another'. Where Arendt employs the term 'unique', Nancy employs the term 'singular' and conceives of a 'being-in-common of singular existents'.[474] He states, 'the singular is primarily each one and therefore, also with and among others.'[475] Following from this, the voice produced by a body that is distinct from all others is unique. But this distinction only exists in its relation to all others. This relationality of the voice occurs in the to-and-fro dynamic of communication and is also due to the fact that our voice echoes the voices that we hear. Cavarero understands this relationality of the voice as 'uniqueness in resonance'.[476] She considers infant-mother echolalia as foundational to the voice's uniqueness in the

[473] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 208.
[474] Ibid., 193.
[475] Nancy in Ibid.
[476] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice,* 199.

resonance.[477] The voice's singularity is always tied to and emerges from its relation to plurality.

In the case of *The Internationale*, the singular voice signals its relation to a plurality of absent voices. In Cardiff's *The Forty-Part Motet* (2001), discussed below, the voice signals its uniqueness in relation to a plurality of present voices. In some works I analyse it is not always the question of the vocalic emission of a unique body in relation to vocalic emissions from other unique bodies. In Philipsz' work sometimes it is the same unique body that produces multiple vocalic emissions. In these instances, my conjunction of the singular-multiple is more appropriate, for the concept of the singular-plural implies the idea of unique bodies in relation to other unique bodies. In distinction, the singular-multiple can capture not only the idea of a unique voice sounding in relation to other unique voices, but also the idea of a unique voice sounding multiple emissions.

On a basic level, the works that concern this chapter are composed of resounded songs, and in this way the voice can be considered through the frame of the singular-multiple. The voice in these works that sings popular songs is singular among the multiple voicings of these songs. The singularity or the uniqueness of the voice in these works is dependent upon the multiple voices that it echoes and emerges in distinction to. Thus on a conceptual level these works engage a vocalic resonance – an echolalia – that I frame in terms of this idea of the singular-multiple. On a material level, in the works that engage more than one voice, this is also the case.

I understand Cardiff's *The Forty Part Motet*[478] in terms of the singular-multiple, not only due to the fact that it involves the resounding of a famous Renaissance choral piece, but also due to how the piece is materialized in space. This work is composed of forty speakers that emit the sound of forty different voices singing a specific part in

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[477] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice,* 200. Cavarero writes, 'resonance … alludes to the musicality of a reciprocal communication that from the very first cry tastes the pleasure that lies in the vocal sphere of relation.'

[478] Please visit Janet Cardiff's *The Forty-Part Motet* (2001), accessed March 5, 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icoutF9py1M. This video shows a 2013 installation of the work at the Cloisters in the Fuentidueña Chapel, New York. To listen to a professional recording of the piece please visit, accessed March 5, 2016, http://www.metmuseum.org/press/exhibitions/2013/janet-cardiff.

Thomas Tallis' 1575 composition *Spem in Alium*. This composition was first intended to be sung by multiple choirs in a Renaissance chapel. Renaissance chapels inspired the first instance of *a capella* singing due to the quality of resonance within these spaces. Indeed, this is how the term *a capella*, which in Italian means 'of the chapel', arose.

Cardiff explains, 'originally [Tallis]... wrote the piece for a chapel that had eight different alcoves, so had eight different choirs of five voices each. As the choirs sing the sound moves back and forth.'[479] Cardiff is aware of the critical relation between sound and space that concerns the performance of Tallis' motet within its Renaissance context. She extends this cultural heritage of the intimate relation between sound and space in musical performance to the contemporary context of sound in art. Her work conveys the idea that this relation of sound to space is not something born in the expanded field of music of the late 1940s, but has a much longer history.[480]

The fact that *a capella* singing emerged in this critical relation between sound and space is relevant to the case studies of this chapter, for they all involve the voice singing *a capella* and are all sensitive to the relation between sound and space. Indeed, rather than considering themselves as sound artists, these artists often refer to their work as sculpture. Thus they all employ the voice to sculpt space. Cardiff's work in particular, where the forty voices move back and forth in space like rivers, amplifies sound's potential to materialize space.

Cardiff's recording of the singers' voices and her positioning of the speakers in space produces the effect of opening up the composition. How the listener accesses this opening will determine how the work resonates. The speakers stand in a circle like proxies for the bodies – the *corporeal uniqueness* of the singers. The listener is able to enter this circle, move through it and select any of the speakers to move more closely to and thus concentrate on the sound of a single voice.

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[479] Janet Cardiff in Meeka Walsh and Robert Enright, "Pleasure Principals: the Art of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller," *Border Crossings* 20, no.2 (May 2001), no page number.
[480] In the period before sound recording and transmission technologies the relationship between sound and space would have been crucial due to the fact that architectures were relied upon to carry and amplify sound. Indeed, many buildings would have been designed with this intention in mind.

It is not just the separation of the forty speakers that enables the listener to perceive the distinct sound of each voice, but this effect is heightened by the binaural recording technique recording technique that Cardiff employs. This technique involves the recording of the sound of each singer's voice with a technology that produces an effect that simulates human hearing.[481] When the listener goes close to the speaker she can hear the voice in such a way that she might be standing before the body of the singer. But the effect of the microphone amplifies the grain – the visceral texture – of the voice such that this effect could not occur without the interface of technology.

The motet, whether sung in a chapel (despite the separation of the choirs in space) or emitted through a stereo system, would produce an overall effect of a blending of voices into the fabric of the music. In distinction, as Cardiff explains, she allows you, 'to climb inside the music and connect to the separate voices.'[482] The listener is able not only to pick up on the individual voices, but also, to a degree, depending on how she moves through the installation, to weave them together in a particular way. In this sense Cardiff enables her listeners activate and participate in an *open work*.

The idea of an open work is developed in Eco's essay 'The Poetics of the Open Work' (1959). Eco states that the condition of the open work, despite being self-consciously engaged in contemporary aesthetics, is a condition that is fundamental to all art. An artwork may be understood as 'complete' in that it is a unique, coherent, finite product, yet it is also open in the sense that it is open to multiple interpretations. Eco writes,

> (i) 'open' works … are characterized by the invitation to make the work together with the author … (ii) … there exist works which, though organically completed, are 'open' to continuous generation of internal relations which the addressee must uncover and select in his act of perceiving the totality of incoming stimuli. (iii) Every work of art … is effectively open to a virtually unlimited range of possible readings, each of which cause the work to acquire new vitality ...[483]

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[481] In this technique sound is received by two microphones spaced the distance of the diameter of a dummy head, rather than captured from one point as in the case of a directional microphone.
[482] Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, *Janet Cardiff: A Survey of Works Including Collaborations with George Bures Miller* (Long Island, NY: PS1 Contemporary Art Centre, 2002), 5.
[483] Eco, "The Poetics of the Open Work," 173.

The ‘open work’ generates an ‘ecology of participation’, where the audience in receiving the work also takes on the role of co-creating it.[484] This idea can be extended to listening in general. In an ecology of listening one participates and to a degree composes one’s acoustic environments as one attends to them. The particular sounds one attends to will determine the quality of the acoustic environment one creates.

Cavarero calls for us to listen to more than one voice and to attend to uniqueness in resonance as opposed to the fascist crowd where the many are subsumed into the totalitarian voice of the one. [485] Cardiff enables her listeners to engage the singular-multiple and to discern the *unique in* and *amongst* its *plurality* in *resonance*. She enables her listener to move back and forth between the two positions: to stand in the centre of the work to listen to the voice in its plurality, or to move close to a speaker and listen to the voice in its singularity. Whatever way the listener materializes the work she is impressed with a sense of the fundamental aspect of the voice as both singular and plural and its inherent relationality as resonance.

Cardiff’s work recalls the effect of the Dadaist simultaneous poem that provides an alternative vocalic space to that generated by the fascist voice. But in distinction to this earlier work, Cardiff enables the listener to attend to the clarity of the individual voice. The individual voice is not swallowed up by competing voices that together create noise. The hetereo-affectivity of the voice that Acconci performs as essential to the constitution of self is, in Cardiff’s work, extended into a transpersonal space. In this vocalic-body-space it is not the self that is central, but the criticality and creativity of relationality that produces a particular environment. The fundamental quality of this environment is resonance.

Although *The Internationale* is not composed of the emission of multiple voices, I understand it in relation to the singular-multiple and the space of resonance. This song

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[484] Guy Harries, “The Open Work’: Ecologies of Participation,” *Organized Sound* 18, no. 01 (April 2013): 3 – 13.
[485] This political term comes from the Italian *fascio* that means bundle as in a bundle of twigs, that is, where the many are bundled together as one.

that was destined for the collective, is similar to a national anthem that aims to unite each individual through the identity of a nation-state. Of the anthem, Cavarero writes,

> In this song, the individuals are not called to distinguish themselves; nor even less, are they called to distinguish themselves as voices. Rather they are called to lose themselves in it.[486]

Philipsz's singular voice would evoke the idea of multiple voices for those who are familiar with *The Internationale's* intention, or that identify this intention in the song's words. To return to Cavarero, Philipsz's lone sonic emission emphasizes that the sound of the collective is made up of a plurality of corporeal uniqueness. Thus Philipsz evokes the collective not as the unified one, but as the singular-multiple.

In discerning the unique voice among plurality, and understanding that the unique voice exists because of this plurality, the listener is opened to an ethical horizon. The voice that is received in resonance with the voices of others breaks with conception of the voice as the index to the autonomous, sovereign subject. The voice of resonance displaces the solipsism of the auto-affective voice that speaks only to oneself. As demonstrated in relation to Acconci's work, even when the voice sounds to oneself, it is always in relation to the other. For Cavarero relationality is inherent in the voice. Echoing the psychoanalytic theory I have drawn from in chapter two, She writes,

> In the etymology of the Latin *vox*, the first meaning of *vocare* is "to call," or "to invoke." Before making itself speech, the voice is an invocation that is addressed to the other and that entrusts itself to an ear that receives it. Its inaugural scene coincides with birth, where the infant, with her first breath, invokes a voice in response, appeals to an ear to receive her cry, convokes another voice… the sonorous bond of voice to voice. This bond establishes the first communication of all communicability, and thus constitutes its prerequisite. There is nothing yet to be communicated, if not communication itself in its pure vocality.[487]

Lyotard has a similar conception of the voice as communication 'in its pure communicability'. He states, '*Phone* is a semeion, a signal. It is not the arbitrary sign that takes the place of the thing … it is sense itself insofar as sense signals itself.'[488] Here, we return to Aristotle's distinction between *phone* and *phone semantike*, which marks the distinction between the human and the animal. In the space of resonance –

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[486] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 201.
[487] Ibid., 169.
[488] Jean-François Lyotard**,** in Adrienne Janus, "Listening: Jean-Luc Nancy and the "Anti-Ocular Turn in Continental Philosophy and Critical Theory," *Comparative Literature* 63, no. 2 (2011): 191-2.

of the relationality of the singular-multiple – we move closer to what we share with all animals. The voice in song is not separated from the semantic, but as theorists such as Kristeva and Nancy argue, our ability to make sense of the semantic is dependent upon the space of resonance. Sense emerges from the space of resonance.

Listening in the space of embodied resonance

Nancy proposes that the listening subject 'is perhaps not a subject at all, except as the place of resonance'.[489] The subject is the agent who thinks, speaks and means. For Nancy, meaning has the same structure as listening/sound where both engage a space of shifting referrals. He considers meaning not in terms of the known signified, but in terms of a constant movement and resonance. This recalls *différance* where meaning is understood as a deferral of the signified. But for Nancy, meaning is fundamentally grounded in the material, sensual world. In his text *Listening* (2007) the French term *sens* encompasses its tri-partite definition: sensual perception; movement, direction, impulse; and meaning. For Nancy meaning is possible because of the movement and sensation of resonance. For this reason, Nancy calls for philosophy to attend to the act of listening.

In the spirit of anti-ocularcentrism, he considers that philosophy that has been so closely associated with sight[490] has been deaf to the fundamental condition of meaning. He states that philosophers do not listen but only hear. Nancy writes,

> *Entendre*, "to hear", also means *comprendre*, "to understand," as if "hearing" were above all "hearing say" (rather than "hearing sound") … [this is] reversible: in all saying … there is hearing, and in hearing itself, at the very bottom of it, a listening which means: … it is necessary that sense not be content to make sense (or to be logos), but that it want also to

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[489] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 22.
[490] See Janus, "Listening: Jean-Luc Nancy and the "Anti-Ocular" Turn" 182. Janus states: 'For to use the term "theory" already positions one within the "ocularcentric" discourse that Jean-Luc Nancy and a certain strain of Continental philosophers or "theorists" would like to turn against. The etymology of the word "theory," from the Greek … "theõria," conflates seeing with thinking – as "looking at, viewing, contemplation, speculation, insight or beholding" – and indicates the dominance of the visual paradigm in Western thought.'

> resound. *My ... proposal will revolve around such a fundamental resonance ... around a resonance as a foundation, as a first or last profundity of "sense" itself (or of truth).*[491]

Nancy's aim is 'to treat "pure resonance" not only as the condition, but as the beginning and opening up of sense, as ... sense that goes beyond signification.'[492] Here, the emphasis is placed not on meaning as an abstract entity, but on the embodiment of the listener in the space of resonance.

Important to Nancy's conception of resonance as sense is the idea of the body in relation to a spatio-temporality. He states, '[t]o listen is to enter into that spatiality by which at the same time I am penetrated, for it [this spatiality] opens itself in me as well as around me …'.[493] Nancy conveys the idea that the listening subject embodies the environment as much as she inhabits it. In his thesis the subject that listens is more body than subject – she is a 'resonant body'. The resonant body is opened 'to its vibration' and 'its being is put into play for itself'.[494]

I have considered how, in approaching the human voice as one vibration that echoes other non-human vibrations, Marinetti amplifies the voice as a mode to expand conventional subjectivity. This expanded subjectivity is also registered in Nancy's conception of the resonant body that opens itself to the resonances of the world. He writes, the 'sonorized body undertakes a simultaneous listening to a "self" and to a "world" that are both in resonance.'[495] In listening, one becomes aware of one's own rhythms that are influenced by the sounds and rhythms of their environment.

Nancy differentiates the 'sonorized body' of the listener from the phenomenological subject who has 'an intentional line of sight'. The latter perceives the object as a 'target' and intentionalizes it as a representation.[496] In distinction, the former is activated by sound that comes at it from all directions, whilst the listener 'strains' towards understanding. In this way, 'to listen is always to be on the edge of meaning'.

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[491] Nancy, *Listening*, 6. Emphasis added.
[492] Ibid., 31.
[493] Ibid.,14.
[494] Ibid., 25.
[495] Ibid., 43.
[496] Ibid., 21.

Nancy understands hearing as the perception of the phenomenological subject who produces an intentionalized object. He writes,

> Perhaps we never listen to anything but the non-coded, what is not yet framed in a system of signifying references, and never hear [*entend*] anything but the already coded which we decode.[497]

Perhaps it is such that these two modes of listening to the non-coded and hearing for the coded cannot be separated. Rather, the subject moves between the two registers, where listening is an opening to the unknown and hearing is a closing down on the known.

Nancy's thesis amplifies how there are different perceptual and cognitive registers in our relation to the acoustic world, depending on whether we are listening in the space of resonance or hearing in the space of significance.[498] The two modes can be conceived, like Kristeva's understanding of the dialectic of the semiotic and the symbolic, as generating signifiance. The case studies presented in this chapter activate the potential to move back and forth between these different registers – from sound to sense – and to discern how each mode feeds into and informs the other. As stated, this thesis amplifies the sonic register of the voice rather than the semantic not only due to the fact the voice as sound has been neglected, but more importantly, because this is the *driving force* of my case studies.

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[497] Nancy, *Listening*, 36.
It is of significance to note the French verb *entendere* (to hear) is etymologically related to 'to have an intention' and thus to the phenomenological context. Indeed, this is how Schaeffer understands the verb as one of his 4 modes of listening. However, Nancy and Schaeffer employ this verb in very different ways. For an interesting discussion of the relation between Nancy's differentiations of the listening/hearing modes in relation to Schaeffer's see Brian Kane, "Jean-Luc Nancy and the Listening Subject," *Contemporary Music Review* 31, no.s 5-6 (October-December 2012): 439-447. On why Nancy distances himself from the 'hearing' (*entendre*) mode and employs the listening (*écouter*) mode in his philosophy, Kane writes: 'Nancy selects *écouter* as the implications of the verb, *entendre*. Listening, as *entendre* or as intention, preserves and prolongs the structure of a Cartesian epistemology: a subject, possessing the capacity for attention, who wills its direction; and an intentional object towards which this attention is directed, and from which it attains its meaning.' (443).
[498] Pierre Schaeffer's *Treatise on Musical Objects* (1966) is a seminal work in this respect. It outlines four modes of listening: *écouter*, *entendre*, *comprende*, and *oüir*. For a clear description of these modes see Brian Kane, "Jean-Luc Nancy and the Listening Subject," *Contemporary Music Review* 31, no.s 5-6 (October-December 2012): 439-447. Chion, who was greatly influenced by Schaeffer in his sonic theory refines and simplifies these distinctions in listening to three modes: *causal listening*, *semantic listening*, and *reduced listening*. See Michel Chion "The Three Listening Modes," in *Audio Vision* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

Cardiff states,

> one of the main things about my work is the physical aspect of sound. A lot of people think it's the narrative quality but it's much more about how bodies are affected by sound. That's really the driving force.[499]

This focus on narrative in the critical reception of her work is understandable in relation to her audio walks where the voice relays a particular narrative to her listeners. But even in Cardiff's audio walks, the voice as a materiality is emphasized – it sounds as a visceral, seductive medium. In the case of *The Forty Part Motet*, it is clear that Cardiff works with voice in a mode that is aligned to Nancy's concept of the resonant body. The work is generated from the relation between the vocalic emissions, the space they are emitted in, and the listener's resonant body. How the listener moves through and is moved by the work will produce the particular vocalic-body-space.

Like Philipsz, Cardiff installs her works in multiple locations. In the case of *The Forty Part Motet* this work has been installed in both gallery and church spaces.[500] Building from my earlier discussion on *a capella* singing as originally intended for a chapel, it is not only the mode of singing – its dispersal in space – that produces its critical relation to space. Also important, is the fact that chapels and churches were originally designed to amplify the resonances of the human voice – in particular the voice in song. Cardiff's installation of her work in churches increases the potential of affecting her listener.

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[499] Janet Cardiff in Walsh and Enright "Pleasure principals", no page number.

[500] For example this work was installed in 2013 in the twelth century Spanish chapel, the Fuentidueña Chapel at the Cloisters in New York. One listener commented on the difference in hearing the work in this space than at a museum. He states,

> I'd seen it at MoMa, and the gallery was very neutral ... But there's nothing like this kind of space, the resonance of brick with wood roof. The ... ghost qualities are a lot more apparent here. Everything bounces a lot more: you hear a voice over here, and you kind of feel it float around you."

See "Moved to Tears at the Cloisters by a Ghostly Tapestry of Music" in *The New York Times*, September 19, 2013, accessed Febraury 24, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/20/nyregion/moved-to-tears-at-the-cloisters-by-a-ghostly-tapestry-of-music.html?_r=0.

In reference to *The Forty Part Motet* Cardiff explains how at one point the choir had to stop singing due to someone needing to go to the bathroom. She states that she decided to keep recording the singers as they took a break and began to chat amongst themselves about banal things. Cardiff states, 'I realized afterward that this little bit of intermission was so important because it made the people into real people.' She explains that just before the singing resumed the choir took a collective breath 'and then their voices [became] ... almost angelic.' [501] The movement between the everydayness of the singers and their transcendent voices recalls the enigmatic effect of the acousmatic voice as one produced in a spacing or gap. The recorded intermission reminds the listener that the source of the voice is the human body. The recording of the voice through the binaural recording technique and its emission through the separate speakers affords the listener an appreciation of the subtle, intimate registers of the voice whether in everyday speech, or in the expansive sound of song. This movement between the different registers of the everyday and the sacred awakens the listener to her own potential to move between these registers.

Cardiff states that when the piece was installed at PS1, New York two weeks after September 11 people stood amongst the speakers and looked out at the city and wept.[502] Adorno likens singing to tears; it is a release that is beyond intention, subjectivity and meaning.[503] This anecdote underlines the critical relation between sound and a specific spatio-temporality and, in this case, its recent history. The effect of a song will shift depending on the context it is emitted in. Further, this anecdote reinforces the idea that the work is completed by the listener in the space of embodied resonance.

Philipsz comments on the idea of affecting her listener so that she is made more conscious of herself and her environment as an important aspect of her work. She states,

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[501] Janet Cardiff, "One Collective Breath," accessed Febraury 17, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZXBia5kuqY.
[502] Ibid.
[503] Barbara Engh, "Adorno and the Sirens," in *Embodied Voices: Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 134.

> Music can transport you to another place and time, to some far off distant land without you having to leave your room. However, hearing someone singing privately can have the opposite effect. It can heighten one's sense of self while making you more aware of the place you're in.[504]

In Philipsz's work, as demonstrated in my analysis of *The Internationale*, one is able to access the work from the position of hearing by identifying the song she sings and its historical context, whilst listening to the particular quality of her voice emitted in space. In engaging the work through both modes there is the possibility that one can embody the immediate spatio-temporal present and also be 'transport[ed] to another place and time.' In the case of Philipsz's Slovenian listeners, perhaps they hear history and listen to the voice make contact with their present, which in turn potentially heightens their awareness of place and the layers of time and culture that constitute it.

It is in hearing that the listener is able to identify a song and therefore is made aware of the repetition that the artist activates in their work, and in listening that the listener becomes sensitive to the differences the artist produces through this repetition. For example, in *The Lost Reflection* (2007)[505] Philipsz sings a duet composed by Jacques Offenbach for his opera 'The Tales of Hoffman' (1881) and installs this work under the Tormin Bridge that crosses Lake Aa in Münster. An excerpt describing the work reads:

> The score is based on The Story of the Lost Reflection by the German romantic writer E.T.A. Hoffmann. It is the story of the seductive yet unfortunately vicious charm of the courtesan Giulietta, whose spell men cannot resist, thereby losing their own reflection… we listen to Giulietta and Niklausse intone: "Time flies by, and carries away our tender caresses for ever! Time flies far from this happy oasis and does not return." ... Philipsz sings both voices recorded on two separate tracks, and it almost seems as if the voices were calling to each other across the lake and back, joining only to lose each other once more.[506]

If one were to take the position of hearer in relation to this work one could possibly identify the song as the duet in Offenbach's opera. From this position one could

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[504] Susan Philipz in David Shariatmadari, "Her Noise: Susan Philipsz," *Art Review*, no.10 (2007): 36.
[505] Please visit, *The Lost Reflection* (2007), accessed February 24, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5WnVFEajEc.
[506] *Skulptur Project Münster 2007*, Press Kit, accessed January 15, 2015, http://www.skulptur-projekte.de/skulptur-projekte-download/pdf/Pressemappe_E.pdf.

potentially move to the position of listener to attend to the same voice (same in the sense that the listener can identify it as Philipsz's voice) that is emitted from two different locations and that produces a dynamic of call and response. The hearer could perhaps identify that Philipsz has taken the positions of both Giulietta and Niklausse. But even if one cannot hear these voices and link them to the two characters' voices in the opera one can listen to how her singular voice is made multiple in the vocalic-body-space.

This aspect of Philipsz splitting her voice – taking multiple singing parts – occurs in much of her work and signals the inherent alterity of the mediated voice. On the one hand her unmanufactured, unpolished, fragile, and intimate voice signals its embodied individuality – its corporeal uniqueness. On the other, it contradicts this aspect through its multiplication in the structure of a song that is composed of several parts. When the same voice – same in the sense that its grain does not change – takes different positions, the voice is desubjectivized. This recalls the discussion of the technologized voice of the previous chapter where the voice is severed from an association with a self or an individual, autonomous body. In Philipsz's work this voice that engages the dynamic of the singular-multiple generates a transpersonal vocalic space of resonance. It becomes a sonic texture with which to sculpt space.

This is very different from the 'I-you' model of singer-song writers that influences the structure of Acconci's work with voice. Where Acconci's voice is anchored in subjective space, Phillipsz's voice extends beyond it to shape the environment. Again, this environment is of a different nature than the atmosphere that Acconci produces that is like stepping into his mind. Philipsz's voice, although personal in its fragile, wavering sound, is dispersed into the environment, not to colonize it, but to generate a subtle articulation of it.

The two vocalic emissions that sound from either side of the Tormin Bridge sound the breadth of the lake. The voices are distinguished from each other due to the fact that one voice is received as louder than the other voice. This difference in volume is produced by the listener's position in space, whereby one vocalic emission is closer to the listener's ear than the other. This seems a basic statement. But in the experience of the work, spatiality opens up in the listener, and causes her to inhabit the dimensions

of space that sound articulates. Instead of moving through space from A to B, which is one's utilitarian experience of moving through space, space moves through the listener. These observations do not say anything specific to the voice in song, but rather offer a more general perspective on sound's potential to create a spatial experience for the listener.

I understand this work in terms of both the material and conceptual aspects of echo. Echo functions in this work on several levels. To follow the conceptual thread of this chapter, an echo is constituted in the repetition of Offenbach's composition that produces difference. Echo also occurs in the call and response dynamic figured by the two emissions of Philipsz's voice back and forth across the lake. The echo is also the acoustic effect caused by the vocalic emission that resonates with structure of the bridge and the expanse of water that travels between it. So far I have traced three aspects of how echo functions in the work materially. Now I turn to the conceptual import of these functions. As per the key perspective of this thesis, the conceptual element is never separated from its material counterpart, but develops from it.

LaBelle states,

> The echo as a sound that expands according to the acoustical dynamic of a given space, can be heard as a proliferating multiplication – a splintering of the vector of sound into multiple events … It disorientates the origin, supplanting the sound source with an array of projection and propagations. It mirrors back while also fragmenting any possibility of return. This ontology of the echo partially makes unintelligible the origins of sound. In this way, it operates as an acousmatic event that has the particular effect of "decentring" focus.[507]

This material effect of the echo is a metaphor for the conceptual import of this chapter: the voice that activates the dialectic of repetition and difference. At the outset of this chapter I stated that the voice in these works that operates in terms of this dialectic is generative of both an aesthetics and an ethics. In a similar way, LaBelle links the ontology of the echo to the space of cultural and political renewal:

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[507] Brandon LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life* (New York, London: Continuum, 2010), 40.

> The echo … gives way to enlarging the possibility of imaginative transformation … the echo is a strategy for resistance and rebellion – a sonic mirroring to the point of defusing the reign of the established culture.[508]

LaBelle's words resonate with those of Rich and Christov-Bakargiev cited earlier. These perspectives and my own approach to echo depart from the premise of a fixed origin or authority and emphasize instead a process of relational creativity. The way echo figures in LaBelle's conception and how I conceive of it in terms of the conceptual thread of this chapter, is very different from the mode of citation and repetition that occurs in Anderson's work in the previous chapter. The latter works with irony as a strategy to destabilize a dominant discourse. In distinction, echo, as it concerns this chapter, functions in an animistic mode. The artists that echo songs breathe new life into them and embody them as their own. But this echoic mode does not link the song to the idea of the subject as one who intentionalizes the world around them. In line with Nancy's conception of subjectivity as generated in embodied resonance, these artists, in their echoing, draw attention to how the voice figures a relational and creative mode.

The ecology of the voice

The quality of Philipsz's unpolished and intimate voice causes public space to become somehow private. To paraphrase her citation above, this quality heightens one's sense of self and the place one inhabits. This effect is the reverse of what Acconci achieves in his activation of the dialectic of the public and the private. Through voice, Acconci exposes an idea of self and aggresses his listener with his intimacy. He demands his listener to move outside herself and into his alterity. In distinction, through Philipsz's soft singing often emitted in stark, public contexts, she encourages her listener to become aware of her intimate embodiment of a spatio-temporality. It is as if Philipsz extends the cocoon-like space of listening to music with one's headphones, which both enchants one's surroundings, whilst providing an intimate experience of one's embodiment, to the world at large. Where Acconci

[508] Ibid.

through voice makes the private public, Philipsz through voice makes the public private. Both artists aim to affect their listener. But where Acconci's speaking voice demands the attention to be on him, the function of the singing voice opens the listener to her embodied resonance of the vocalic-body-space.

Through her creation of the space of embodied resonance, I conceive Philipsz as generating an ecology of the voice. In this respect, she continues the legacy of the modernist sound poets. I considered how Marinetti's voice embodies the vibrations of his environment and transmits them. I also proposed that Ball in trying to locate the human *phone*, following White, joins the chorus of the animals. Marinetti wishes to echo the new acoustic environment and sound its dynamism. Ball aims to sound the authentic voice. It is Philipsz's aim to create more vital relations between the listener and her environment. Indeed, all three artists employ the voice to create a more vital connection between body and environment.

In *Lost Reflection* Philipsz's voice in its call and response mode complements the bridge's mirrored structure and traces its breadth across the lake. But its fragile, ephemeral sound produces a stark contrast with the bridge's brutalist concrete architecture. As Christov-Bakargiev observes, there is an ecology produced in this intervention. In our hyper-visual commercial world the quality of the invisible, delicate, ephemeral voice offers another place in which to dwell.[509]

Anyone who has visited Times Square would know it to be a context saturated with the visual imagery of flickering screens and also densely occupied by traffic and pedestrians. Neuhaus' sonic intervention, despite its invisibility and almost barely there quality, creates an opening in the consumerist fabric of Times Square. In order to receive these sounds a different attention is required that contrasts with the distracted mode of inhabitation that Times Square stimulates. Neuhaus' installation offers an alternative mode of inhabitation, which involves a curious, more careful awareness. The peaceful site of the Tormin Bridge is worlds away from the flickering screens of Times Square, but nonetheless, like Neuhaus, Philipsz's installation creates

[509] Christov-Bakargiev in discussion with Philipsz.

an opening for a different kind of dwelling within this environment. It is important to register this difference through the impact of the voice.

Today, the sound of a voice intended for an audience in public space that does not sound like manufactured music or a pre-recorded, automated or official public announcement, is an uncommon experience. Philipsz's voice is pre-recorded and electronically emitted in space. Yet the quality of her voice, which recalls an ordinary person singing to herself in privacy, disturbs one's expectation of the type of mediated voice one might hear in public space. The sound of the embodied voice[510] in song, in the calls of vendors and town criers was, as Schafer notes, common in the soundscape of pre-industrialized society.[511] Today these hi-fi sounds have all but disappeared and have been replaced by the lo-fi beeps and drones of machines and traffic of post-industrial society. Their eclipse is partly due to the changing nature of entertainment and information exchange, which is no longer dependent on the live voice as it was in pre-electronic times.

Philipsz is aware of the absence of these street voices in the contemporary soundscape. In *Surround Me* she sings 'New Oysters' composed by the seventeenth century English musician Thomas Ravencroft.[512] Ravencroft was inspired by the cries of the street traders and developed a composition where one voice follows another in a round to echo their to-and-fro calls. Philipsz installs this song in 'Change Alley' in the financial district of London, where in the past the street traders called out to each other. The sound of her voice is emitted on the weekends when this area is silenced due to the fact that the 350,000 employees that normally occupy this space are not at work.

Iain Sinclair, a writer who is informed by the theories of psychogeography, describes the effect of *Surround Me*:

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[510] By this I mean non-electronically mediated. The embodied voice in this soundscape could in fact be an acousmatic voice whereby one would hear the sound of the voice but not actually be aware of where exactly and who it was coming from.
[511] Schafer, *The Soundscape*, 64-65.
[512] Please visit, *Surround Me*, accessed February 18, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JtBSyPijKA.

> You *can hear this voice without knowing what it connects to* and that gives you an older sense of London when you might have come across such a thing … you can understand that *time in the city is plural* and the Elizabethan voice can coincide with the contemporary voice.[513]

Here, Sinclair proposes that it might have been common to hear the acousmatic voice emanating from the architectures and streets of London. Again Philipsz's use of voice encourages the listener to inhabit a place in relation to its history, to embody the contraction of the past in the present. As in *The Internationale*, her lone voice signals the loss of a vital vocal texture, this time that of the London street traders.

Philipsz does not always evoke history through her repetition of song. When she sings and emits popular contemporary songs by Radiohead, for example, in a supermarket or a bus station, she encourages her listener to inhabit these spaces differently and to find a place within them. Marc Augé refers to spaces such as supermarkets and stations as *non-places*.[514] In emitting her voice in such spaces in her intimate, as-if-singing-to-herself mode, Philipsz calls upon her listener to attend to her environment. This call to attention departs from the distracted, disconnected mode of inhabitation that these spaces normally encourage through manufactured, automated or authoritarian voices. It encourages a more careful and curious relation to one's surroundings. In listening to the grain of Philipsz's voice, which invokes a corporeal uniqueness, the listener in turn perhaps becomes more aware of her own corporeal uniqueness as embodying a spatio-temporal present. In this way the non-place of the station or supermarket, to follow Neuhaus, is rendered a place.

The contrast of Philipsz's voice with manufactured, automated, authoritarian voices recalls the voice of the busker. The busker's voice is one of the few remaining street voices of pre-industrial times. LaBelle writes, '[t]he image of the street musician … [lends] the notion of an authentic sound that might hark back to folk traditions, of acoustical instrumentation and singing from the heart.'[515]These ideas LaBelle attaches to the street musician are all evoked by Philipsz's method. However, Philipz also

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[513] Ian Sinclair, *TateShots: Iain Sinclair on Susan Philipsz's 'Surround Me'*, accessed January 23, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISzXgoE7Dc0. Emphasis added.
[514] Mark Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London, New York: Verso, 1995).
[515] LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories*, 11.

signals the loss of these associations with the voice due to the fact that her voice is electronically mediated and looped. These repetitions are those of the technologized voice not a 'singing from the heart', if singing from the heart is understood as a live vocalic emission. One could understand Philipsz's sonic interventions as conveying electronically mediated culture as devoid of 'authenticity'. But this is if one ignores the material dimension of her work. Approached as a materiality, the electronically mediated voice is a vital resource. It enables sound to be dispersed in and to sculpt space – to create a space of resonance. And despite the fact that this space may signal a certain loss, loss of the live body with the heart that animates it, it also realizes, as I have argued above, the potential of the voice to activate space and the listener in a mode of mutual transformation.

Philipsz's work with voice amplifies how the voice creates a particular environment and mode of inhabitation for the listener. She draws attention to the fact that this mode can ground the listener in her body, and by extension in her environment. Philipsz's vocalic emissions encourage a more curious relationship to the site they are emitted in. They may call upon history, whilst place one more attentively in the present. They are distinct from the technologized voice of authority, advertising and public address. Philipsz's practice draws attention to the creative and ethical potential of the mediated acousmatic voice. This voice, as Philipsz's work demonstrates, can offer another place in which to dwell.

A siren's lullaby

> In the beginning, in the uterine darkness was the voice, the Mother's voice. For the child once born, the Mother is more an olfactory and vocal continuum than an image. Her voice originates in all points in space, while her form enters and leaves the visual field. We can imagine the voice of the mother weaving around the child a network of connections it's tempting to call the umbilical web. A rather horrifying expression to be sure, in its evocation of spiders – and in fact this original vocal connection will remain ambivalent.
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> Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, 61.

Kristin Oppenheim in *Hey Joe* (1996)[516] sings a fragment of the song by the same name popularized by Jimi Hendrix in 1966: 'Hey Joe, where you going with that gun in your hand?'. She repeats the phrase over and over and over again. Oppenheim's languid, soft, almost whispering voice breaks with Hendrix's voice that signals the power and virility of the rock icon and the violent context of the Vietnam war in which the song was popularized. As in Philipsz's and Cardiff's installations, Oppenheim's work produces a relation between the listener's spatio-temporal embodiment of the installation and a particular historical and cultural context that the song is identified with. Her fragmentation and repetition of the song breaks with its narrative structure, to create a sense of cyclical return. The gentle rocking rhythm of her voice and the softness of its sound evoke a lullaby. But as one listens to this sound and hears the lyrics, an unnerving effect is produced. The voice generates a sense of foreboding. Its ominous quality, as well as its back and forth movement, is reinforced by the movement of strobe lights across an otherwise empty and darkened room in the gallery.

Oppenheim's voice recalls both the mother's and the siren's voice. It generates both the comforting embrace of the sound envelope that the mother's voice produces for the child, and also the seductive, yet dangerous, magnetic pull of the voice of the *femme fatale*. The ambivalence that Chion registers in relation to the mother's acousmatic voice can be extended to the idea of the feminine voice in general. Oppenheim's voice evokes both mother and siren, not in order to critique a stereotype as in the work of Anderson, or in an effort to seduce her listeners as in the work of Acconci. Rather, Oppenheim is interested in the ambiguity of the sound of the voice as a material with which to create a particular sonic environment – a vocalic-body-space.

The idea of the vocalic body as conjuring an imaginary body is particularly relevant to the acousmatic voice. The enigmatic quality of the acousmatic voice motivates the listener's imagination to fill that space between source (body), cause (technology) and

[516] Please listen to Kristin Oppenheim, *Hey Joe* (1996), accessed March 5, 2016, http://www.ubu.com/sound/oppenheim.html.

effect (voice). Oppenheim's voice, which weaves a comforting, erotic, yet unnerving sonic texture, conjures the acoustic images of the bodies of the mother and the siren. Technology contributes to the generation of the voice's imaginary body. Connor writes,

> The microphone makes audible and expressive a whole range of organic vocal sounds which are edited out in ordinary listening … the hissings and tiny shudders of the breath … such a voice promises the odours, textures, and warmth of another body.[517]

The intimate quality of Oppenheim's technologized voice sounds as if it were a voice that was speaking in the listener's ear. It is almost as if, to follow Dyson, the body of the speaker lands in the listener's ear.[518] This effect is distinct from the effect of Anderson's technologized voice. Despite the remnant of her grain that is figured in the rhythm of her voice, Anderson mutes the organic, visceral textures of the voice.[519] In Oppenheim's work, however, the body is amplified through the resonances of the technologized voice.

I have underlined the importance of space in all the case studies that concern this chapter. Connor writes of 'the inalienable association between voice and space'. He proposes the voice not only takes place in space, but *is* space.[520] In Oppenheim's work, the echoing voice, which repeats a single phrase over and over again, is amplified. Again Connor writes, 'The echoing voice is not a voice in space, it is a voice of space.'[521] Earlier I described how the sound of Philipsz's voice echoing across the lake creates an effect that causes the listener to embody space. The listener is able to internalize the breadth of the lake through registering the differentiation of the volume of the voice as it is emitted at different points in space. In Oppenheim's work the frequency of the voice's repetition amplifies it as a material, wave-like motion. The listener both inhabits and embodies this movement of the voice.

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[517] Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 38.
[518] Dyson, *Sounding New Media*, 19.
[519] This point connects to my point above that Anderson employs the technologized voice to emphasize disembodiment due to the fact that within the particular art historical period she is working in it is important for her to draw attention to this aspect.
[520] Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 12.
[521] Ibid., 38.

In the case of Oppenheim's work and in all the case studies of this chapter, what is at issue is not subjectivity. The performance poets work to expand subjectivity through breaking with conventional language. Acconci explores it as a repetitive and impossible process. Anderson works to destabilize the mediated stereotypes that ventriloquize our subjectivities. In the case studies that concern this chapter, the vocalic-body-space opens the listener to an embodied resonance. Through song, certain subjectivities are evoked. In *Hey Joe* the mother, the siren, and the rock star are sounded. But it is the quality of their voices as resonance that is critical to the work, not their identity. Likewise, the listener is encouraged not to identify as a subject, but to open to the space of embodied resonance.

Barthes would understand this dissolution of subjectivity in the space of resonance as due to the amplification of the grain of the voice. He writes, 'It is in the throat, [the] place where the phonic metal hardens … bringing not the soul but jouissance … The 'grain' is the body in the voice as it sings.'[522] He continues, 'It is not the psychological subject in me who is listening; the climactic pleasure hoped for is not going to reinforce – to express that subject, but on the contrary to lose it.'[523]The soul Barthes speaks of can be aligned to the soul in the voice as Aristotle understands it. For Aristotle, the soul in the voice is *phone semantike* and makes the human a political animal. The *jouissance* of the voice that Barthes speaks of is distinguished from the logocentric voice. It is this voice's playful, explorative, erotic, animating quality that Plato resists due to its potential to erode *logos*. It is in listening to this voice, as Barthes tells us, that subjectivity dissolves.

Oppenheim's voice that sings as if singing a lullaby and thus evokes the back and forth rocking movement of mother with child creates a particular vocalic-body-space that resonates with Kristeva's concept of the *chora*. This is a generative space where the child orients itself in relation to the mother's body through the drives. Kristeva writes,

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[522] Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," 183, 188.
[523] Ibid., 188.

> The drives, which are "energy" charges as well as "psychical" marks articulate what we call a chora: a nonexpressive totality formed by the drives and their stasis in a motility that is full of movement as it is regulated … the chora … is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm.[524]

In my analysis of Acconci's work I considered how the pulsional to-and-fro quality of his vocalic production could be understood in terms of Kristeva's concept of the semiotic. Oppenheim's work can also be understood in this way. For Kristeva, the chora is a space of semiotic production. This is the space generated between mother and child where speech is musicalized and materialized. This is the space where we first learn to speak through singing. Oppenheim, who repeats the same words over and over in a gentle rocking motion, sounds like the acoustic mirror that enables the infant to feel both body and space. In the vocalic-body-space, voice, body and space are interchangeable.

Oppenheim's work is different to that of Philipsz in her departure from the narrative structure of the song. Where Philipsz places more emphasis on what Barthes terms a *phenosong*, Oppenheim amplifies the *genosong*. These terms are developed from Kristeva's concepts of the *phenotext* and *genotext* that she connects to the symbolic and semiotic respectively. [525] Barthes writes,

> [The] pheno-song … covers ... all the features which belong to the structure of the language being sung … everything in the performance which is in the service of communication, representation, expression … The geno-song is the volume of the singing and speaking voice, the space where significations germinate from within language and in its very materiality; it forms a signifying play having nothing to do with communication, representation … expression … where melody really works at language – not at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sound-signifiers.[526]

Important to both Kristeva's genotext and Barthes' geno-song is the idea of the germination of signification within materiality or what Barthes refers to as the

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[524] Kristeva, *Revolution*, 25, 26.

[525] Kristeva, *Revolution*, 86-7. Kristeva states,

> a genotext … include[s] semiotic processes but also the advent of the symbolic. The former includes drives, their disposition, and their division of the body, plus the ecological and social system surrounding the body … even though it can be seen in language, the genotext is not linguistic … it is rather a process … and non-signifying …*The genotext can … be seen as language's underlying foundation*. We shall use the term phenotext to denote language that serves to communicate …

[526] Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," 182.

voluptuousness of the sound-signifiers. Rather than understanding Oppenheim's geno-song as having nothing to do with communication (as Barthes proposes), in its evocation of the chora and its semiotic production, I understand it as gesturing to the foundational scene of communication. In this scene, as Cavarero tells us, the vocalic bond between mother and child 'establishes the first communication of all communicability'. [527] Following from this, Oppenheim's work performs what Lyotard refers to as communication 'in its pure communicability'. [528]

Through the repetition of a phrase, Oppenheim gently erodes semantic value into a semiotic texture. Her echoes sculpt space with *the voluptuousness of sound-signifiers*. Oppenheim awakens the potential of Echo in her evasion of semantic value and her *jouissance* in the material register of the voice. She sets into play a libidinal vocalic economy where her soft voice moves back and forth like a languid caress. Oppenheim describes the piece as a kind of 'searching'.[529] This searching is communicated in the phrase she repeats, 'Hey Joe, where you going with that gun in your hand?' and also by the searchlights that move back and forth across the floor. This sense of searching resonates with Levinas' conception of the caress. Levinas states that '[t]he seeking caress constitutes its essence by the fact that the caress does not know what it seeks.'[530] Like a Levinasian caress, Oppenheim's voice moves back and forth to generate a vocalic-body-space.

In the introduction of this thesis I discussed Kristeva's concept of negativity in the dialectical relation as that which 'is the liquefying and dissolving agent that does not destroy but rather reactivates new organizations.'[531] The voice in Oppenheim's, and in all the case studies of this thesis can be thought as operating as a negativity in relation to the dialectic. The voice dissolves boundaries between sound and sense, body and space, self and other, repetition and difference and it reconstitutes these relations. My

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[527] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 169.
[528] Lyotard in Janus, "Listening: Jean-Luc Nancy and the "Anti-Ocular" Turn," 191.
[529] Kristin Oppenheim, accessed December 4, 2015, http://rwm.macba.cat/en/specials/fonsaudio_kristin_oppenheim/capsula.
[530] Emmanuel Levinas, "Time and the Other," in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Sean Hand (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 51.
[531] Kristeva, *Revolution*, 109.

thesis has focused on art that employs voice in such a way that it reveals how the voice brings these relations into being – how the voice functions as a germinal force.

In the case of Oppenheim's *Hey Joe* her voice in repetition dissolves the narrative structure of the song and its association with signature and celebrity. In a similar way to Acconci, Oppenheim opens her listener to the motility of the voice as a semiotic economy. This back-and-forth movement is not the dependency of the subject invoking the other that sounds in Acconci's work. Rather, it involves a sonic exploration that generates a transpersonal vocalic-body-space. The sound evokes the idea an imagined oceanic space that is created in the mother-infant echolalia. This pulsing, echoing sound that moves back and forth recalls the foundation of communication as a generative space.

From one conclusion to the next

In this chapter I have discussed the critical and creative potential of Echo that generates differences in her repetitions. I considered how Philipsz, Cardiff and Oppenheim through emitting the voice in space, create particular vocalic-body-spaces. I drew attention to the importance of these emissions as song. Song, which can be identified through its lyrics and melody, is a mode through which one can clearly discern the voice create difference in its repetition. I discussed how song can evoke a particular history and association to place and how these aspects will shift depending on the particularity of its spatio-temporal emission. I considered Philipsz's, Cardiff's and Oppenheim's work as gesturing to an ethics and ecology of the voice. These artists emphasize the voice as sounding in relation to other voices, and also as offering a particular mode of inhabitation. I argued that these artists amplify listening as an embodied act and call upon the listener to participate in the creation of the vocalic-body-space.

In the following conclusion I will draw attention to the key conceptual threads of this thesis. At this stage the detail of my thesis can be distilled to generate some more general perspectives that convey the importance of attending to the voice in art.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of a range of case studies from throughout the last century I have argued for the importance of listening to the voice in art. An analysis of the voice in art expands the discourse of art history and attends to some of its critical concerns. These concerns include the problem of communication, subjectivity and embodiment. To think these concerns from the perspective of voice generates new knowledge.

Throughout this thesis I have analyzed the voice in art by way of key dialectics. The dialectics I included do not just speak to the voice in art, but to the ontology of the voice more generally. The voice is our most basic and most vital medium of communication. It therefore follows that artists would be interested in exploring this critical medium. This thesis has presented a study of the range of ways that artists approach the voice. It worked to connect these different approaches through key concepts that speak to the voice in art more generally. Thus, this thesis has demonstrated that the voice in art occurs as a continuum marked by repetition and difference.

All of the selected artists are aware of the critical relation of the voice to language. Through voice, they develop what can be considered a response to the idea that language has control over us and that when we speak we repeat what has come before us. After the linguistic turn, the perspective that *we are spoken by la*nguage was cemented. But as this thesis has argued, this dictum only holds true if we come from the perspective of language. If we come from the perspective of voice, the dictum is reversed: *we speak language*. In my case studies this active relation to language can be more appropriately thought as *we sing language*. For, it is in what Anderson has referred to as that third register of the voice – the musical – that the voice can sound without it being muted by linguistic value.

This voice that sounds, as the artists in this thesis have shown, is not Aristotle's *phone semantike*. It is not the voice that Derrida has taken to task. The artists of this thesis do not sound the voice as an auto-affective register. Indeed, they prove that this register is impossible. In sounding the voice in its musical register they distinguish it

from language, identity, and subjectivity. I employed the concept of the vocalic body to understand the nature of the voice that the selected artists sound. This concept encompasses the idea of the voice as grounded in embodiment and as a concrete register that materializes speech. But following the logic of the dialectic that has run throughout this thesis, the voice understood as a materiality and a musicality is never separate from language. The voice always sounds in relation to language. As this thesis has demonstrated, how this voice sounds depends on the artists' concerns and the distinct art historical moment they are situated within.

I began my story with the Futurists and the Dadaists due to the fact that, in relation to the story of art, it was a logical place to start. These artists are positioned as the antecedents to performance and new media art. In connection to this lineage, I understand their practice as laying a certain foundation for understanding the voice in art. Both Marinetti and Ball approach the voice as a vital and powerful medium. Both artists desire to create their own language through an emphasis on the voice.

Marinetti works with the voice not as an index to self or subject, but as a vibrational medium that can echo the vibrations of the universe. On one level this is a utopic enterprise. Yet if we understand the voice as a materiality, Marinetti's perspective of the voice as generating one vibration among many makes sense. Marinetti's concern for the voice's material vitalism is motivated by the aim to stir within his listeners the dynamic energy of the modern world. His political intention is to encourage them to join his fascist cause and go to war. Beyond the limits of his political motivation, his project with voice clears a ground to think an ecology and ethics of the voice. Understood as one vibration among many, the human's voice is no longer central in the acoustic sphere. The value of *phone semantike*, where the human wields *logos* and thus is separated from the animals, is undermined by Marinetti's perspective of material vitalism. In this respect, I conceived Marinetti as generating a posthuman aesthetic, not solely through his meeting with the machine, but through the levelling of all materialities (animal, vegetable, mineral) in the sea of universal vibration.

Through onomatopoeia Marinetti echoes the sounds of his environment. His employment of this form conveys a fundamental aspect of the vocalic body that precedes and aids language acquisition. I understood Marinetti's onomatopoeia in

relation to an infant's echolalia. The infant, who does not yet have language, receives and responds to the sounds she hears through echoing them. It is this echoing that enables her to acquire language. Saussure is correct to say that onomatopoeia continues the arbitrary relation of the sound signifier to the concept. Yet Marinetti's poetry must be understood as being motivated by an empathic, embodied resonance. His work moves from the intellectual mediacy of *logos* to the sensual immediacy of the voice. Marinetti's poetry brings sound to the foreground in its relation to sense. Sense emerges from sound. This sound is not the incorporeal, non-material support, as in Saussure's understanding of the sound image, but a vital materiality. This is why it is so important for the modernist artists to tie the sounds of the voice to the body. For when they are abstracted as they are in linguist's system, they become the servants of the dead letters of language. This is something that both Marinetti and Ball intuit. Their projects aim, to echo Ball, to breathe life back into language through an emphasis on voice.

Ball does not depart from the humanist understanding of voice as strikingly as does Marinetti, but in his voice aesthetics he develops a space to think subjectivity and communication differently. The most critical element of Ball's aesthetics is rhythm. He emphasizes the importance of his embodied rhythm as a mode of communication that can substitute *second hand* language. He understands this rhythm as his *own nonsense*. For both Marinetti and Ball the vitality of the vocalic body counters rational language.

Ball rejects language because of its association with corrupt governance and journalism. He replaces this language with glossolalia, which is developed at a time, as de Certeau tell us, when there is a need to speak with a new language. The understanding of glossolalia as a *must say* and a *saying nothing* and its tie to the infant's voice that sounds without sense, connects it to the foundational scene of communication. From Kristeva's perspective, in this scene the infant and mother are bound together in a call and response, echolalic mode. The infant, who is without speech, does not sound to make sense – that is to arrive at the said (signified). Rather the infant sounds to perform the act of saying in order to constitute her bond with her mother. I considered Ball's poetry that abandons the said and emphasizes saying in terms of this foundational scene.

I understood Ball's glossolalia in relation to the vocalic body as an articulating and sounding cavity that materializes speech. From this perspective, I proposed his poetry gestures to the early stages of language acquisition. Ball states that he shows how language *comes into being*, that he lets the vowels emerge like a *cat's miaow*. I connected this perspective to Jakobson's understanding that an infant can make sounds that exceed those sounds caught within the frame of language. Ball considers his poetry as working from within this alchemous space of the plasticity of sound. The voice in this space does not sound *logos*, but an embodied relation to the world. It is from this perspective that Ball thinks he can sound *his voice*.

This is a problematic proposition. Whenever there is a voice, there is also a question of who is speaking? Can the voice be expressive of the self or subject speaking? The artists included in this thesis have grappled with this problem in different ways. Marinetti's response to this problem is to eject the subject and sound from the position of universal vibration. Ball's response is to search for his voice. In this way his project could be conceived as a response to Agamben's question: what would the human voice sound like if the human had a voice as the cricket had a chirp and the donkey a bray? What would the human voice sound like if it were seamlessly united to experience in distinction to language that creates a rupture in relation to experience? As Agamben suggests there is no answer to these questions, for the voice is always destined to language. Ball's poetry, despite its emphasis on nonsense sound, creates a new symbolic form to capture these sounds. This perspective also applies to Marinetti's poetry. Sound becomes sense. To follow Kristeva, the semiotic produces the symbolic. And to repeat Agamben again, the voice is always destined to language.

In Acconci's project sound does not become sense, rather sense becomes sound. Acconci does not attempt to depart from the semantic value of language as the early sound poets did. He resigns himself to its indicative nature. His relation to language reflects his development as an artist at the time of the rise of conceptual art. Acconci is sceptical of its ability to convey truth and approaches it, not as a transparent screen to reality, but as an opaque material to be played with.
Acconci's voice aesthetics perform the impossibility of locating the self in relation to language. The importance of these aesthetics is that they emphasize the dependency of the self upon the other in the act of communication. As Ong claims, the *I* is

necessarily in relation to the *thou* in order for the I to speak and to think. Acconci activates Lacan's dictum: *all speech calls for a listener even if that listener is the other of ourself*. It is here that the critical aspect of Acconci's practice with voice lies. He performs the hetero-affectivity of the voice. This hetero-affectivity is present in the early performance poets' work where they sound an embodied resonance with the world, rather than the rationality of an autonomous, intentional subject. Acconci blatantly emphasizes the hetero-affectivity of the voice in his demand to be heard. Further, he performs the voice as the other of himself when he works to hypnotize or convince himself of something. In this way, he amplifies the voice's fundamental alterity.

Acconci echoes the early performance poets where he sounds the third register of the voice – its musicality – through emphasizing the vocalic body. His vocalic body is more complicated than that of the earlier poets that perform an embodied relational resonance with the world. Acconci performs the vocalic body as produced by the invocatory drive in relation to the other. His performances are marked by what I discerned as a push-pull dynamic – a movement towards and away from both himself and the other. Acconci demonstrates that the self is constituted through its relation to the other. The automatic movement of the drive results in the repetition of Acconci's voice and causes this voice to sound mechanized. But these vocalizations always produce difference in their repetition and thus open the listener to Acconci's organic rhythm. I argued that although Acconci performs the subject's inability to grasp itself in language, he also generates his own music. He unfurls, to echo Mallarmé, the self's rhythmic knot.

I drew from Lacoue-Labarthe in order to understand how Acconci's voice functions in relation to the question of the subject. Lacoue-Labarthe considers the subject as one of desistence (withdrawal) where in its effort to grasp itself in language, its subjectivity continues to evade it. He conceives this effort as producing a movement that is a rhythm. In this sense, Lacoue-Larbarthe's premise could also speak to Ball's aesthetics. But Ball, in distinction to Acconci, does not so obviously perform the self's desire to constitute itself as subject in relation to language and the other. Lacoue-Labarthe asks us to listen with what Nietzsche terms *the third ear* – to the music of the voice. This third ear tells us not just of our struggle with language and

subjectivity, but also of our deeply embodied natures. In this way, Lacoue-Labarthe's perspective speaks to a key conceptual thread carried throughout this thesis.

To understand this musical aspect of the voice I drew from Kristeva's concept of the semiotic. The semiotic, understood as the organization of the drives in relation to language, is an unconscious register. However, when the semiotic is activated by the performance poets it becomes a creative force that generates new forms. This is what Kristeva means when she says that the semiotic both transgresses and produces language. In Acconci's practice, the semiotic dimension of his language is both unconsciously and consciously motivated. It is responsible for the hesitations, repetitions, differences and ruptures in his language that he does not intend. But through allowing this aspect of his language to flow for a long duration, he is consciously producing the form of his work. Further, as he explains, although repetition accounts for an unconscious dimension in his speech, it also becomes a conscious device to control both himself and the other. Thus like the early performance poets, the semiotic generates the form of his work with voice.

In reference to *Themesong* Acconci's says that he works to find himself in other people's music. However, I argued that his voice aesthetics also involve the question of finding himself in his own music. The voice aesthetics generated by all the artists discussed in this thesis can be conceived in terms of this idea of the generation of music through the voice. As I have argued by way of the concept of the vocalic body, this music grounds communication in embodiment and gestures to its foundational scene in infancy. This music – the third register of the voice – can speak to the idea of *their voice*. But this voice is not, as I have argued throughout, expressive of an intentional, rational subject, but one that is singular in its materiality, and plural in its relationality.

It is Anderson who drew my attention to the third register of the voice – its musical aspect – in her description of Burroughs' voice. True to her aesthetic, it is ironic that it was Anderson who did this. For, out of all the case studies included in this thesis, in her work this third register is least emphasized. In Anderson's practice it is a particularly subtle register that I understood as generated by the rhythmic buoyancy of her voice that inflects this voice with humor, irony and play. I understood this musical

register of her voice in relation to her position as narrator. Anderson's voice as narrator carries the *tissue of quotations* and *scrambles the system*. This voice brings the many voices of the info-sphere together and amplifies them as competing signals.

Like Acconci, Anderson emphasizes the voice as an alterity. But unlike Acconci she is not concerned with locating the self in relation to the other. Rather her project is motivated by the desire to perform the effects of communications technology and its voices. Her single voice sounds the clichéd messages of *second orality* as concrete sound bites, detached from an embodied consciousness.

I referred to the voices Anderson sounds as technologized voices due to the fact that they are both mediated by technology and perform the effects of technology.
I understood Acconci and the early performance poets through their emphasis on the vocalic body as performing a musicalization and vocalization of the subject, respectively. In distinction, I understood Anderson's project as performing a ventriloquization of the subject. I argued that the voices she sounds are not embodied as her own, but are detached from ego, identity, and body. In place of these terms, I introduced the term persona in relation to her term audio mask. I located persona etymologically as sounding (*sonare*) through (*per*) a mask. Anderson's project with voice, more so than that of any of the other artists of this thesis, locates the voice as an artificial register.

Her most critical artificial voice is the voice of authority. This is the masculine voice of the expert and the salesman that carries the weight of information. It is, to echo Jones, the voice of a technologized, patriarchal code. It is the voice, to echo Doane, that does not answer the questions: "Who is speaking?" "Where?" "In what time?" and: "For whom?." It is a disembodied, universal voice that dominates the media. In performing this voice Anderson draws attention to a critical aspect of our cultural history that concerns gender difference. Within this history the logocentric voice is both a masculine and a disembodied voice. By distinction, the feminine voice in this history is associated with embodiment and a distance from the symbolic. Anderson takes the masculine position, not only through transforming her voice through the vocoder so that it sounds masculine, but also by emphasizing the voice's disembodiment and linguistic value. But as she takes this position she also

undermines it. Her work is critical in that it draws attention to the operations of power activated by the gendered voice.

I have described Anderson's project with voice as particularly ambivalent and ambiguous. She is, as she says, a moderator between things. This thesis has argued that the voice is the dialectical medium *par excellence*. Thus it is no surprise the voice is critical to Anderson's dialectical negotiations. Through voice Anderson negotiates what could be thought of as contradictions – feminine-masculine, body-technology. Her subtle vocalic body animates her speech such that when she speaks *A is and is not A1*. For Jakobson this contradictory proposition performs the effect of poetic language. It also performs the effect of irony, which, according to Harraway, holds contradictions in tension with each other. In this way Jakobson's proposition registers the effect of Anderson's cyborg voice.

The theory of Cavarero has been critical to this thesis where it draws attention to the materiality of the voice. Caverero's theory calls for a relation to language from the perspective of voice. She proposes that in semantic repetition the materiality of the voice is foregrounded. Anderson repeats the clichéd phrases of communications media and thus draws attention to the voice as a mediated materiality. Her voice is the product of its intersection with technology; the technologized voice is infused with the third register of the voice. It is through this third register that Anderson constitutes difference in her repetition of the voices of the info-sphere. The materiality of Acconci's and the early performance poets' voices is also amplified through repetition and difference. I understood this repetition and difference as generated by the vocalic body and the enunciative drive. I drew attention to how it constitutes the rhythm of the voice in the work of Acconci and Ball. In Ball's work rhythm replaces semantic value. In Acconci's performances rhythm competes with this value, and after time, takes it over.

My contemporary case studies draw attention to the difference the voice as materiality constitutes in its repetition of song. These works that sound the single voice in relation to multiple voices return to the ecology of the voice evoked by Marinetti's aesthetics. Indeed, these contemporary works are united to all of the case studies that

concern this thesis, not only through their emphasis on the voice as materiality, but also through their approach to the voice as relationality.

Following the thought of Cavarero, which develops the thought of Arendt and Nancy, the voice as a singular embodied emission always sounds in and amongst its plurality. In my analysis of contemporary works I extended this ethics of voice to an aesthetics of voice. I developed Cavarero's concept of the singular-plural to the idea of the singular-multiple to account for how in some works the same voice is emitted from multiple positions in space. I conceived the voice in these works as desubjectivized. By this I meant the voice does speak so much to the single body that has produced it, but to the configurations of its multiple emissions in space.

I conceived the contemporary case studies as creative of vocalic-body-spaces. These works amplify the voice's grain and evoke sonic images of the body. Following the thought of Connor, the bodies conjured are imaginary. Oppenheim's work in particular emphasizes the vocalic body, which I argued gestures to the foundational scene of communication. Her work sounds the back and forth movement of the voice – its pulsional quality. In this respect, Oppenheim's work recalls that of Acconci and Ball. However, unlike these artists her vocalic body is not bound to the artist's body, but generates a transpersonal space.

I considered the fact that these contemporary artists emit the voice in song as a critical aspect of their practice. Again, the voice in song evokes the foundational scene of communication where language emerges from music. Song is composed of a melodic narrative that may be repeated over and over again. It therefore enables one to perceive more clearly the difference the voice constitutes through its sounding of this narrative. I determined that it was not only the fact that these artists repeated songs that was critical to their practice, but also the fact that they repeated well known songs attached to distinct historical and cultural contexts. I argued that their emission of these songs in new contexts created both a displacement and evocation of these earlier contexts and a new sense of place.

The most critical aspect of the contemporary case studies lay in their emphasis on the importance of listening as an embodied practice. I considered these works as open

works in the sense that they ask the listener to make sense of the sound. Here, I understand sense in relation to Nancy's tri-partite definition of *sens*: direction, feeling and meaning. I considered how these works ask the listener to move between identifying the song and its cultural context, and embodying it as a particular spatio-temporality. The vocalic-body-space – the space of embodied resonance – affords the listener an access to self that exceeds the bounds of intentional subjectivity. It opens the listener to the world in a relation constituted through resonance.

Throughout this thesis I have placed emphasis on the extra-linguistic value of the voice through the concept of the vocalic body. By doing so, one could argue that I have merely replaced one essentialist perspective with another. That is to say, one could claim that I have substituted the culturally dominant register of the voice as linguistic value and disembodiment, with an embodied voice that disturbs linguistic value. As I have continually reiterated throughout this thesis, the voice is not body or language, but the relation between the two. I have, however explained my emphasis on the embodied aspect of the voice in relation to two key reasons. First, because it is this extra-linguistic aspect of the voice that artists are predominantly concerned with. And second, the aesthetics generated from an exploration of the extra-linguistic aspect of the voice produces a different kind of knowledge than that which, to echo Kittler, passes through the bottleneck of the signifier.

In introduction to this thesis, I explained art history's neglect of the voice as due to its ocularcentrism and linguistic bias. It is for this reason that is critical to attend to the extra-linguistic value of the voice. For this aspect not only speaks to how the voice functions in art, but also can offer new knowledge to art history, and the humanities in general. The kind of knowledge listening generates is not the same as that which is generated by sight. The phenomenological subject of sight, as Nancy tells us, targets her looking to an intentionalized object. In distinction, as Nancy proposes, one does not listen to a known entity, but opens oneself to relational resonances.

As I have demonstrated in this thesis, the voice sets dialectical relations into play. When one listens to the voice one cannot fix one's attention on an isolated object, but must attend to the material process of a relation that unfolds in time. As I have argued, the voice activates the relations between sound and sense, self and other, body

and technology, and difference and repetition. From the perspective of voice, these relations are constantly in process such that one can never isolate sound from sense, self from other, body from technology, and difference from repetition. To analyze these dialectical negotiations of the voice generates new knowledge in relation to the discourse that concerns communication, subjectivity and embodiment. It is from this perspective that I have argued the value of attending to the voice in art.

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