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Geraldine Finn

Univerza Carleton, Kanada
Carleton University, Canada

The Truth – In Music The Sound Of *Différance*

Resnica – v glasbi
Zvok *différance*

Ključne Besede: resnica, glasba, zvok, *différance*, *destinérance*, *résonance*, paracitat, igra, cepič, pesem, medprostor, poslušanje, slišanje

Keywords: Truth, Music, Sound, *Différance*, *Destinérance*, *Résonance*, Para-cite, Play, Graft, Song, Space-Between, Listen, Hear

POVZETEK

Članek (poskus, prizadevanje, preizkus, prizadevanje) skozi (na: poti, za katero pravimo, da na njej poteka določen vir energije) resnico v glasbi je napisan, da bi se bral in poslušal. Da bi se pri-klicala izkušnja ireduktibilne zvočnosti resnice (iz) glasbe (prek) besed, ki govorijo o njej, in igra *différance* – niti tišine, ki se pletejo med zvoki, s katerimi je jezik/glasba/resnica prepletena –, ki prinaša smisel (čutnega). Komponiran kot niz »cepičev« (paracitativ) pisanj Jacquesa Derridaja, članek uporablja to, kar predlaga, ponazarja to, o čemer govori: dekonstrukcijo, ki je vselej prisotna v delu (v njegovem delu, v tem delu, v katerem koli delu): dvoumen *destinérance* resnice (iz) glasbe (prek) besed.

Ce qui reste à force de musique. Niti poezija niti proza. Niti filozofija niti pesem. Nekaj iz prostora vmes.

ABSTRACT

This essay (trial, effort, test, attempt) through (on: the way we say that something runs on such and such an energy source) the truth in music has been written to be read as heard. To re-call the experience of the irreducible sonority of truth (in) music (in) words of which it speaks, and the play of *différance* – the threads of silence that run between (the) sounds that language/music/truth is mixed together with – that makes *sens(e)*. Composed as a series of grafts (para-cites) on to the writing of Jacques Derrida, the paper engages what it proposes, enacts what it tells: the deconstruction always already at work in a work (his work, this work, any work): the equivocal *destinérance* of truth (in) music (in) words.

Ce qui reste à force de musique. Neither poetry nor prose. Neither philosophy nor song. But something in between.

I

I owe you the truth

In painting
And I will tell it to you

Cézanne wrote
In a letter
To Émile Bernard

Strange utterance

Derrida writes
I recite
(Para-cite)

The speaker is a painter

He is speaking
Or rather
Writing

For this is a letter

He is writing

In a language
Which *shows* nothing

Causes
Nothing
To be seen

Describes
Nothing

Represents
Even less ¹

What must truth be

To be owed
(*Due*)

Even rendered
(*Rendue*)

In
Painting
That is
What interests me

This interest
When I am interested

In the idiom
Of truth

In
Painting

Which promises
A truth

Which is (not)
Always already there

In
Painting

This revenue
Of
Surplus value

Irreducible

To the semantic
Content
Of its representation

Indeed
To the representable

Untranslatable
In its economic performance

Undecidable
In Its equivocal *destinerrance*

(Derrida writes)
I recite

This idiom
Of truth

In
Painting ²

But
That's what
An idiom is

It does not
Merely
Fix
The economic
Propriety of a focus

But
Regulates
The possibility

Of
Play

Of
Divergencies

Of
The equivocal

A whole economy
Precisely

Of
The trait

This economy
Parasitizes
Itself

Hear
Here on
Off the page

What must truth be
To be owed
Due

Even
Rendered

Rendue

In
Music

In
Painting ³

In
Words

On
Off the page

That is

What interests
Me

This revenue
Of surplus value

This
Interest

When
I am interested

In
The idiom of truth

In
Music

Which promises
A truth

In
Writing

In
Words

Which is (not)
Always already
There

In
Music

Ce qui reste
À force
*De musique*⁴

What Must

Truth
Be

In order
To be owed
Due

Even
Rendered
Rendue

In
Music

I cannot
Precisely
Have it

At my
Disposal

Or
In my
Control

I listen to it

It is
The experience
Itself

Of
Impossible appropriation

The most joyous
And
The most tragic⁵

(Derrida writes)
I recite

It may give rise
To
Calculation

Representation
Tabulation
Imitation
Regulation

Notation

Con-scription
Pre-scription
In-scription

De-scription

But
In the final analysis
It ceases to be
Calculable ⁶

Ce qui reste
À force
De musique

Beyond
The order of the calculus
Itself

Beyond
The incalculable
As a still possible calculus ⁷

Forever
Unable to saturate
A context

What reading writing
Speaking citing
Re-citing

Will ever make it heard ⁸

This idiom
Of truth

In music

In a word

The reader too

Must

Improvise ⁹

Take breath

And read with the ears ¹⁰

*bör dich ein
mit dem Mund*

Hear deep in

With the mouth ¹¹

Listen

With limbs and lips

And throat and tongue

Absorb

Its movement

With larynx and lungs ¹²

What underlying scansion

Of the world

Does it embody ¹³

This idiom

Of

Truth

Which is (not)

Always already there

In music

In words

Irreducible

To the semantic content

Of its representation

Indeed

To the representable

Untranslatable
In its economic performance ¹⁴

Undecidable
In its equivocal
Destinerrance

The stereographic activity
Of an entirely other ear ¹⁵

An entirely other echo
Echo echo echo
Sphere

Ce qui reste à force de musique

Hear
Here on
Off the page

Only the song remains

It is reborn
Each time

Nothing
Can be done against it

Never
Will any letter
Ever

Make it heard
In a word ¹⁶

Here
Hear on
Off the page

Nevertheless

At this very moment
In this work
Here I am ¹⁷

Me
Voici

I follow
Je suis

Under assignation

To make
It heard

To tell the truth

In music

In words

I owe you the truth in music

And I will tell it to you

As it is tol(le)d
In music

*Le son
Résonant*

*Quelle
Chanson*

Like the sound of the sea
Deep within a shell ¹⁸

The essential thing

Is to set the song in motion
As a graft

[Shoot or scion
Inserted in a slit of another stock
From which it receives sap
[Piece of transplanted living tissue]
Process of grafting
Place where the graft is inserted
Hard work] ¹⁹

And not
As a meaning
A work
Or a spectacle ²⁰

This economy parasitizes itself

Each grafted text
[Piece of transplanted living tissue]
Continues to radiate back
Toward the site of its removal

Transforming that too
As it affects the new territory ²¹

We must begin
Wherever
We are

Wherever
We are in a text

Wherever
We already believe ourselves
To be ²²

Fidelity
Requires that one quote

In the desire
To let the other speak

And

Fidelity
Requires that
One not just quote ²³

To grasp a meaning
That does not come through understanding ²⁴

But through
Rhythm resonance
Repetition rhyme
Timing timbre
Tone

Ce qui reste
À force
De musique

Undecidable

In its equivocal destinerrance

What reading
Writing speaking
Reciting citing
In-citing
Will ever
Make it
Heard

In a word

The silent play of
Différance

The s-p-l-a-c-e of
Résonance

Undecidable

Between

The sedimented *sens*
Of
Sound

The sedimented sound
Of
Sens

Singing
Ringing
Off on the page

The most difficult thing

Is the invention
Of the tone

And with the tone
Of the scene
That can be staged ²⁵

The pose that adopts you
As much as you adopt it ²⁶

Hear
Here on
Off the page

The tone being precisely
That which establishes
The relation

It isn't the content
It's the tone ²⁷

Everything is summoned
From an intonation

And even earlier still
In what gives its tone
To the tone

A rhythm

I think
That all in all

(Derrida writes)
I paracite

It is upon
Rhythm

That I stake
Everything

It therefore begins
Before beginning

That is
The incalculable origin

Of
A rhythm ²⁸

II

I owe you the truth
In music

And I will tell it to you

As it is tol(le)d
In music

En passant
Résonant

In the space between

One thing and another

Speech
(And)
Writing

Poetry
(And)
Song

Sens
(et)
Sons

Undecidable

Between

Le nom/non du père
The discourse of the father

And the lalalanguage
Of the mother tongue

The truth
in music

Comes
To
Pass

As music
Comes

To
Pass

Always already
Past

Passed
Through

The desire of the (m)Other

Trace effect(s)
Of
The in(ter)vention

Of
The Other

Which must be re-enacted

Repetitioned
Repeated
And
Rehearsed

To be
Enjoyed enjoined

Or
Real-ized

At all

As
Music

As
Truth

In
Music

Event

Of the space
Between ²⁹

One and Other

Of the space
Between
Things

That
Sound
Re-sound

Only when they move
A-part
Together

When they are moved
Together
A-part

Event
Of the space
Between

Sounds

The threads
Of silence

That run
Between
The sounds

That music is
Mixed
Together with ³⁰

The silent
Play
Of *différance*

That sustains

Maintains
Retains
Sound

As
Music

The truth
Of
Différance

In
Music

All round

From outside

All round
From a centre

Somewhere
Near
Here
And there

Music tells
The truth
About
Truth

Which comes
And goes

Which comes
To pass

Which comes
Always
Already pas(t)sed

Through

The play
Of
Différance

Undecidable
In its equivocal *destinerrance*

Between

A passion
That moves

And

The mobilizing action
Of one body on another

Between

Choice chance
And
Necessity

What reading

Writing speaking

Singing citing

Reciting

Inciting

Will ever

Make it

Heard

The truth

That music tells

The truth

About

In a word

Repeated

And

Rehearsed

Repetitioned

And

Recalled

To be

Enjoined

Enjoyed

Or

Real-ized

At all

Only the song

Remains

It is reborn

Each time

Nothing

Can be done

Against it

Ce qui reste

À force

De musique

Between

Speech
And
Writing

And
Beyond
The tranquil familiarity

Which links us
To one and the other

Occasionally reassuring us
In our illusion
That they are two ³¹

Music
Takes its toll

Engages
The play of *différance*

The truth of truth
In
The space between

And
Turns it

Into
Sound

Phenomena
Experience
Event

Something
We hear

Something
We apprehend

Something
To which
We can attend ³²

Le son
Du sens

Les sens
Du son
Résonant

With in as our bodies
Our selves

Ce
Qui reste
À force de musique

Making space

Giving place
To (a) truth

To which
We cannot *not*
Respond

One way or another

Like the sound of the sea deep within a shell

That is not
Any sort of present being

That has neither
Essence nor existence

That does not exist ³³

The truth
Of
Music

The truth
Of
Truth

The truth
Of
Différance

What

Reading writing
Singing speaking citing
Inciting
Reciting

Will ever
Make it
Heard

Ce qui reste
À force
De musique

In a word

This is not a game

In which
Mastery is acquired ³⁴

Though some do strive
To make it so

And this we can hear

In (the) music

Even where it strives to deny it

The truth
Of *différance*

The *différance*
Of truth

And where true the effort to deny it

In (the) music

As
A work

Which comes
And goes

Which comes
To pass

Which comes
To be

Always already
Pas(t)sed

Which has to be
Repeated
And
Rehearsed

Repetitioned
And
Recalled

In order to be
(Music)
At all ³⁵

The truth

In
Music

The truth
Of *différance*

Cannot be
Fixed

In a permanent present
Or

Confined
To a single moment

Meaning
Origin
Articulation
Event
Agent
End

Though some contrive
To make it so

And this too can be heard
In (the) music

The *différance*
Of
Truth

The truth
Of
Différance

And
Where true
The effort to conceal it

To reveal it

As
The essence
Or
Existence

Of
Some fixed and present being

Soul
Spirit
Satan
Nature
God

Truth
Of
The Human Condition

Toujours déjà

Il y a là

Déconstruction
À l'oeuvre

And this can be heard in (the) music

In the space
Between
One and Other

That sounds
Re-sounds

With in as our bodies our selves

Bending our bodies
Lending our bodies

To the truth
Of its becoming

As
Music

Rhythm resonance
Repetition rhyme
Timing timbre
Tone

The tone being precisely that
Which establishes
The relation

I am complicit

Implicated

Imbricated

In the ethics
Of this musical engagement

Strategic and adventurous ³⁶

Of the play
Of *différance*

In one direction
(*Sens*)
Or another

An ethical appeal
To which
I cannot *not* respond

One way or another

By resistance
Denial
Or consent

I am *solicited* by (the) music ³⁷

Whether I acknowledge it
Or not

I am
Embrangled
In response-ability
In (as) my body
(Myself)

In the politics
Of its very possibility
As music

To which I cannot *not* respond

The institutions
Which name frame
Contain restrain maintain
And tame

What is
To be

The sound(s)

(Of truth)

In music

When I consent
To the music

I consent
To the politics
Of the institutions
That let it be
Music

One way or another

Whether I acknowledge it or not

All this
Can be heard

In (the) music

Even where it strives to deny it

To celebrate a universal singular

Necessary objective

And final

Truth

(For example)

One

That does not

Come

To pass

But is

(Posited as)

Here

To stay

Named and contained

Within the silence

Of its musical frame

For

The work

Of producing truth

In music

Remains

Ce qui reste

As the work

Itself

Which cannot *not* be heard

The (hypostasized) One

Universal

Final

Truth

In

Music

Cannot be

Without
This work

Of producing
Truth

In
Music

This work
Of music

The work of truth

Cannot *not* be heard
In music

Which is always already
Experienced

Irreducibly

As
Work

By those
Who make it happen

Everything

Is at stake
In music

Epistemology
Ontology
Politics
Ethics
Aesthetics
Kinaesthetics

The truth of truth
The truth of *différance*
The *différance* of truth

We should not be surprised
Therefore

At the passion
With which

It is

Contested
Resisted
Defended
Denounced
Practiced
Pursued
Performed

For music
Is always more
Than what it signifies

Giving place to a truth which it does not because it cannot master
(Name tame frame or contain)

The truth
Of truth

The truth
Of *différance*

Ce qui reste
À force
De musique

Never will any letter ever make it heard

Only the song remains

It is reborn each time

Like the sound of the sea deep within a shell

I listen to it

I cannot precisely have it at my disposal

Or in my control

It is the experience itself of impossible appropriation

The most joyous

And the most tragic

So let's listen

Yes

Let's listen ³⁸

Notes

- ¹ Para-cited from (upon) Derrida 1987: 2 – 3.
- ² Para-cited from Derrida 1987: 4 – 5.
- ³ Para-cited from Derrida 1987: 6.
- ⁴ Derrida 1987a: 95 – 103.
- ⁵ "I cannot ... tragic." Para-cited from Derrida 1995: 372-395, 394-395.
- ⁶ Cf. Derrida 1994: 52.
- ⁷ "Beyond ... calculus." Derrida 1989: 52.
- ⁸ Cf. Derrida 1979: 76-77: "Forever unable to saturate a context, what reading will ever master this 'on' of 'living on'?"
- ⁹ Lee 1998: 206.
- ¹⁰ Hopkins 1966, cited from Pick 1966: 26.
- ¹¹ "Hear deep in with the mouth". Concluding lines of Paul Celan, 'The shofar place' (*Die Posaunenstelle*) in Celan 2000: 360-361.
- ¹² Para-cited from Lee 1998: 212.
- ¹³ Lee 1998: 206.
- ¹⁴ "Irreducible ... performance". Para-cited from Derrida 1987a: 5 – 9.
- ¹⁵ Cf. Derrida 1982: xxiii. "Where has the body of the text gone when the margin is no longer a secondary virginity but an inexhaustible reserve, the stereographic activity of an entirely other ear?"
- ¹⁶ "Only the song ... heard". Para-cited from Derrida 1987c: 43.
- ¹⁷ Derrida 1990: 11 – 48.
- ¹⁸ Derrida 1989a: 155 – 163.
- ¹⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary* 1971: 1186.
- ²⁰ "The essential thing ... spectacle". From Philippe Sollers, cited by Derrida 1981: 355.
- ²¹ "Each grafted ... territory". Para-cited from Derrida 1981: 355.
- ²² "We must begin ... to be". Derrida 1976: 162.
- ²³ "Fidelity ... not just quote". Derrida 1989a: 50.
- ²⁴ Derrida 1989a : 88.
- ²⁵ "The most ... the tone". Derrida 1995: 188.
- ²⁶ "The most ... the tone". Derrida 1995: 188.
- ²⁷ "The tone ... the tone". Derrida 1994: 21.
- ²⁸ "Everything ... rhythm". Para-cited from Derrida 1998: 48.
- ²⁹ For a more detailed elaboration of the spirituality, politics, and ethics of the space-between see my Finn 1996.
- ³⁰ Para-cited from Merleau-Ponty 1964: 46.
- ³¹ "Between ... two". Derrida 1982a: 5.
- ³² For a more detailed elaboration of music as the sound of *différance* see Finn 2002.
- ³³ "That is ... exist". Para-cited from 1982a: 6.
- ³⁴ Cf. Hobson 1998: 166: "Freud causes the child to create a track for himself – Freud's grandchild keeps the self going through the repetition of throwing the cotton reel out to an extreme and hauling it back. This is not a game in which mastery is acquired."
- ³⁵ For a more detailed elaboration of these ideas see Finn 2001.
- ³⁶ Cf. Derrida 1982: 7: "In the delineation of *différance* everything is strategic and adventurous. Strategic because no transcendent truth present outside the field of writing can govern theologically the totality of the field. Adventurous because this strategy is not a simple strategy in the sense that strategy orients tactics according to a final goal, a *telos*, or theme of domination, a mastery and ultimate reappropriation of the development of the field."
- ³⁷ "The French *solliciter*, as the English *solicit*, derives from an Old Latin expression meaning to shake the whole, to make something tremble in its entirety." Translator's note (# 18) in Derrida 1982a: 16.
- ³⁸ "Let's listen" are the final words of Jacques Derrida (Derrida 1995): 395.

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