

THE VAGINA HAS TEETH¹: MYTH, CONCATENATION + EVP

Victoria Gray

This text was commissioned by Mercy (Liverpool) on the occasion of the Electronic Voice Phenomena tour at The Glasshouse International Centre for Music (formerly, Sage) Newcastle-Gateshead, on Friday 10th May, 2013, featuring performances by Outfit, Hannah Silva, Ross Sutherland, SJ Fowler, Hetain Patel & Richard Milward, curated around themes of Hauntology, afterlife, spoken word, glitch art, and music.

In the gap between emission and reception lies a threat to communication. *Noise*. A disturbance. A bite. A drop. An a-fibrillated vibration that scuffs the polished surface of the speech-to-meaning event. For movement theorist Andre Lepecki, this disturbance-of-meaning is the making of the ‘parasite,’

... the supplementary entropic, the disturbance in the smooth channels of semiotics[...]/ Parasitic paradigms privilege the fuzzy diagrammatic concatenation of unfoldings in the plane of composition. [...] So, we are not receivers, receptors. Instead, we accumulate. And we start to produce, thanks to accumulation. And if we allow the noise to coalesce in the fibrillation of a thought which most of all dares to think, then something quite interesting happens...not by the means of “communication” but by the means of endless, and now, indeed exo-parasitic noisification (Lepecki, 2012).²

Lepecki, riffing on Michel Serres’s text, ‘The Parasite’ (1982) reformulates a theory of ‘parasitic noisification.’ Here, the body (in performance) is not a stable channel, but a stain on the transparent surface of representation. Beyond any communicational imperative, the actioning body affirms an asemiotic capacity. It is noise amongst the noise of the event of noise, ad infinitum. The body intervenes by making grooves and itinerant channels, dys-appearing from meaning-capture in order to materialise a disturbance. The body is a ‘pest’ (Serres, 1982) and therefore, pest-like, the body becomes parasitical, unperturbed by semiotic languaging.

If, as Lepecki provokes, something interesting happens when we abandon communication in favour of ‘fuzzy diagrammatic concatenation,’ then this text strives to do the same; which is to say, it flirts with being impenetrable.³ My “review” of Mercy’s EVP event (because I was commissioned to write a review, after all) cuts through (the crap of) turgid channels of one-to-one art-criticism-come-communication. And by artistic licence of unsortable accumulation, hoards other ‘stuff’ instead. Unfolding as a string of concatenation’s, as opposed a straight review that “deals” with each performer’s performance in turn, my re-view wilfully miscommunicates what was “actually” performed in the event of EVP.

Instead, the text is a review-experiment operative on the virtual plane of de-composition. As a record of my (angry) discord when experiencing the general tenor of the EVP event, this text is made up (as in, is fabricated and constituted) of assemblages. An assemblage of images unseen, headless voices, old gripes, general gists, and . . .

. . . for that reason, and for the record, I’ll never (want to / want you to) understand. Understood?

¹ Referencing the title of Hannah Silva’s performance

² www.newyorklivearts.org

³ As a performance-maker and writer, one who passes as all kinds of available female and woman and girl, my work (which is to say my body-mind), by virtue of its centrality in everything I do, has been routinely, almost ubiquitously, subjected to gaze-death. I write an essay, he tells me it’s “impenetrable.” Which is to say I am impenetrable. He gives feedback on my performance work, and says “you’re fucked,” “because you’re a woman, you can’t do what you do with your body, because when someone looks at it you’re always already fucked.” And so you see, it seems I can’t win. Fuckable and unfuckable, at the same time. And they love that.

In walks 'the gent' with his stick, to the buzzing, dying, dumb frequency of a violin. Naturally he is a wretch. He tells an inward joke of electronic empathy and like depression, his violin descends into noise. The joke resonates like the protraction of a down.

Dead Granddad listens to Pink Floyd in a waking dream where everything is turned into a metaphor for death. It moves us by accident.

Accident. Synchronicity. The Crystal Maze. The Crystal Dome. The Crystal Dome is a Geodesic Dome. A Geodesic Dome begins with a Decagon. Sage Hall 2 is a Decagon. It all adds up. To 10.⁴

To 1 + 0. Male + Female. That all? The fans in The Crystal Dome blow gold like the hurricane Dorothy rides on her bed.

Dorothy is stuck in Oz. Sandra is stuck in Industrial Cell 23. Disembodied women stuck with disembodied voices. Where are all the women? We are mis-represented on screens, in speakers, in dangerous abstractions. I am Dorothy. I am Sandra. I am absent and therefore a metaphor for death.

A partial disturbance occurs in the relationship between Dead Granddad and Dead Dad and becomes Dead Dada. The death of Granddad, the death of Dad, the death of Dada. All sleeping surreally like Dada Desnos, poster boy of surrealist sleeps.

Robert Desnos stole Duchamp's female alter ego, 'Rose Sélavy.' Rose is an abstraction, a ghost woman, stolen and worn like a mask. I hear a man with a Middlesbrough accent talk and it is specific. We mourn the loss of the provincial. I hear him speak about wet spray and ejaculation at women. I exercise my own mental hygiene and wonder why it became so violent.

I taste your stink. Your false impressions. Your voice over my voice under. Deep undercover with a series of words and gestures not your own but embodied nonetheless. Do I speak English? We speak through disease, through transmission, through bodies. We take elegant ideas for a walk with grace, like the choreographer.

The religious betrayal of an uncommunicable thought becomes the suicide of an idea. A woman's voice, again, trapped and speaking in reverse. Where are all the women? We are mis-represented on screens, in speakers. We promenade in dangerous backward abstractions.

A woman called Total Man Stan was a psychologist and paranormal researcher. She used bowls, and mirrors, and lamp,s and water to speak convincingly of the dead; of the Neanderthals who were ruled by women. A cautionary tale {like the vagina dentata} written in left-hand {like the latin 'sinestra,' like the political left}.

I am Dorothy on the bed in a hurricane. I am Sandra in the maze failing her task. I am absent and therefore a metaphor for death.

There is a big bear at the back of every stage.

⁴ 10 is also divisible by 5, hence the 'Law of Fives' which is also related to the 23 enigma. The EVP event happened on the 10th day of the 5th month of the year and on a Friday which is the 5th day of the week.