

**A DRAMATURGY OF SILENCE: COMPOSING THE RADIO
PLAY**

Linda Marshall Griffiths

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ABSTRACT

My practice-led thesis, 'A Dramaturgy of Silence: Composing the Radio Play', develops the argument that the multiple processes of creating silence can become a central dramaturgical tool in the writing of radio plays – the dramaturgy essentially becoming silence. The practice component of the PhD consists of my two radio plays, *Orpheus and Eurydice* (2015) and *The Sky is Wider* (2016). Both navigate narrative journeys into and out of silence whilst experimenting with language breakage, the removal of the semantic and considering both the substance of silence and embodied silences within the radio play form.

The chapter entitled 'A Typology of Silence', critically and creatively articulates the multiple silences that emerge as part of the practice. These include the notion of silence as punctuation, its realisation as both absence and presence, and its capacity to silence. I further investigate the silence of the body and how the internal voice of what I have called the 'unsilence' can be articulated. The typology does not exist purely as an academic text, but through its playful form explicates the actual process of making silences through playwriting. It recognises that to attempt to categorise and anatomise silence whose very substance is outside of language is impossible, the emergence of silence often exposing the holes in language and challenging its reliability.

In the chapters 'Composing the Underworld: Rhythmic Encounters and Excavating the Unutterable' and 'Silence and Sound interventions: The Presence and Absence of the Silent Body', the creative process of the practice is considered critically through the lens of a Dramaturgy of Silence. This thesis argues that the use of silence as the principal dramaturgical tool continually relocates the radio play back into the immediacy of its sound environment, with silence ironically turning up the volume of the radio play and intensifying the acoustic experience. A Dramaturgy of Silence returns to the experimentations of Samuel

Beckett's theatre and radio-work, whilst advocating new thinking and experimentation within the radio play form. I draw on the creative work of Caryl Churchill and Virginia Woolf and reflect upon Maurice Blanchot's and Gilles Deleuze's philosophical writing around silence juxtaposed against Julia Kristeva's embodied semiotics, to articulate the dramaturgical possibilities of silence in the radio play and my own creative work.

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INTRODUCTION

To consider how a writer might approach writing a radio play is to think about how we experience sound. Listening is an embodied, immersive, aural experience. Mladen Ovadija writes, 'Fluid, erotic, immediate, and signifying through its own materiality, sound is not an arbitrary signifier denoting a thing or an act; it *is* a thing and/or an act in itself' (2013, p.3, emphasis in original). Sound is – it happens now.

Second by second, variation, addition, removal; multiple noises layered by distance and volume. We are immersed in sound – it continues with or without our awareness or attention. The French metaphysician Henri Bergson considered time not as something apportioned into equal divisions and spatial, but durational and heterogeneous. He created what Ovadija calls 'an aural paradigm of the world' (2013, p.38), insisting that we are always in a process of motion. This onward flow holds vibration and rhythm, change and juxtaposition. Bergson likened our experience of time to that of a 'musical phrase which is constantly on the point of ending and constantly altered in its totality by the addition of some new note' (2002, p.62).

Both these suggestive notions of motion and immersion are embroiled in the process of writing a radio play. The radio play's continual movement in time becomes its essential form as a dynamic process of sound, various and multiple. It can break time from linearity; moving backwards, forwards, whichever way it wants to go. It can sidestep through minds, through walls, arresting time, repeating moments whilst within its very construct always moving forward in its own time frame, in its own telling within its own time duration. Stanley Gontarski notes how Bergson's rethinking of the continual movement of time is always active, is itself 'a creative force, a creative duration' (2015, p.2). This creative duration provokes ideas about the substance of the radio play and its

potential to be an ever-evolving time-moment, its poetics immersed and its rhythms realised in the immediacy of its sound-materiality.

Throughout this practice-led thesis, I argue that the notion of the radio play as an 'aural paradigm' is essential to a writer's understanding of the form. In contrast, Martin Esslin describes the experience of listening to the radio play as 'akin to the experience one undergoes when dreaming [...] the mind is turned inwards to a field of internal vision' (1971, p.7). However, I resist spatializing the radio play, creating here instead a discourse that considers first the radio play's essential form as a dynamic process of sound. Andrew Crisell makes this distinction using Hawkes' semiotics (1977), separating the aural from the visual, writing, 'In radio all the signs are auditory: they consist simply of noises and silence, and therefore use *time*, not space, as their major structuring agent' (1994, p.42, emphasis in original). The unique challenge then for the writer of the radio play becomes not only how to create this immediacy of sound but how to sustain its continual creative duration.

Indeed, the immersive and immediate experience of listening challenges the notion that the central impetus of the radio play is narrative. If the materials of the radio play are sound and time, then navigating the radio play through its 'aural paradigm' becomes a process of curating its language through a continual motion of sound. This aural paradigm moreover does not banish the idea of story from the radio play. Storytelling is one of the oldest oral traditions, whereby the storyteller shapes their tale through rhythm, breath, and promise. Equally, within the classic verse drama of the Greeks, the folk-ballad, the oral transmission of poetry, and the poetics of Shakespeare, the use of texture, poetic language, narrative juxtaposition, rhythm, and intensity makes the event of the 'telling' as important as the telling itself. Likewise, in a radio play the movement of sound becomes integral or even embodies the story itself, mutually negotiated through its substance of sound.

Furthermore, I argue that the demand for ‘story’ in the British radio play has impoverished the form. In this thesis, Aristotle’s traditional dramaturgy of structuring an action, which is foregrounded in the radio play through its ‘concerns’ with story will be shaken from its prime position to make way for another candidate that also exists as a principal premise of the radio play.

This new (and ancient) dramaturgy is silence.

In simple terms, silence brings attention to itself. The radio play continually competes with the world around it – the cocoon of the car, the business of the kitchen, late at night against the inevitability of sleep. Silence heightens the intensity of the acoustic experience through the reverberation between itself and words. It is through the process of writing radio plays that my awareness of silence amplified. A confounding dynamic developed in my radio plays that forms the central creative question for this thesis – metaphorically, silence began eating my radio plays. My plays began to develop a stutter, characters failed to end sentences, they doubted the full stop, they didn’t like, they wouldn’t, they they they...

Silence.

Writing about how writers use the stutter,¹ Gilles Deleuze notes that the stutter ‘constitutes a zone of continuous variation [...] a zone of vibration’ (1997, pp.108-109). Correspondingly, my writing was responding to the radio play’s demand for continual motion through rhythmic juxtaposition. My work ‘stuttered’ because I tacitly understood that I was collaborating with silence to create a varying zone of vibration within the radio play itself.

In writing this thesis, I attempt to make what Robin Nelson has called in *Practice as Research in the Arts*, ‘the tacit explicit’ (2013, p.44), both for the reader and myself.

¹ Deleuze’s stutter is not realised through a character who stutters, but ‘it is the writer who becomes a *stutterer in language*. He makes the language as such stutter’ (2013, p.107, emphasis in original).

Nelson writes how the liquid knowing of practice often precedes an articulation through critical reflection, ‘developing its own criteria for credibility and rigour’ (ibid, p.52). This investigation begins with a creative question: Why silence in radio plays? Immediately, by asking such a question the enquiry becomes vast and multi-disciplinary. To question silence is to consider its theoretical, conceptual, and creative possibilities. To frame this enquiry through the radio play (a sound-form that would seem ironically to repute silence), curtails the territory significantly, whilst simultaneously intensifying silence’s intervention and radicalising thinking about the radio play, new media and silence’s relationship with both language and the body.

A Dramaturgy of Silence as a creative process articulates and extends my liquid knowing of silence through my practice, whilst engaging critically with the field of established theoretical, philosophical, and artistic thinking on silence. Nicholas Davey (2006) rearticulates the ancient Greek definition of theory or *theoria* as both ‘contemplation’ and ‘participation.’ He renegotiates the position of theory not as the impersonal observer watching from outside, but as one inside the practice immersed in a lively conversation, which then contributes towards the subsequent creative making. Davey writes:

It is the nature of art practice to be always more than it knows itself to be. [...] It is only by attempting to think differently about art practice that many of its hidden assumptions can be recovered. However, such recovery aims not at placing practice at the command of theory but at releasing the potential within the latter. [...] One role of theory is to uncover the possibilities that remain inherent within practices and thereby liberate them towards futures already latent within them (2006, p.21).

Davey illustrates here the possible dialogical nature of theory and practice; that through *theoria*, the conversation allows for an emergence of unexpected insights. Certainly, realising this dialogue through practice-led research, demands what Robyn Stewart calls a

‘diverse and hybrid approach’ (2007, p.125). Discussing her practice as an artist and researcher, she places the discourse of practice-led research ‘between artist and product, producer and audience, theory and practice so that it becomes the space for reflection, contemplation, revelation’ (ibid, p.128). She positions it, ‘within the borderlands, crossing between time and place, personal practice and the practice of others, exploring the history of the discipline and its changing cultural contexts’ (ibid, p.128). This statement helps elucidate my process through its acknowledgment of the multiple sites of necessary engagement in practice-led research. I recognise that my initial discoveries were in the writing of the radio-play, privileging silence through experimentation and creative processes. Subsequently, these texts were realised in sound through the recording process, which tested, exposed and realised the writing. Then through listening to the play, through reflexivity, the process invited speculation, dialogue, interpretation, and ultimately a return to the practice - to begin again to experiment with what I had discovered.

Navigating these ‘borderlands’ in practice-led research challenges notions of how knowledge might be understood and articulated. William W. Lewis and Niki Tulk note how ‘research and practice exist in a radical positioning: where knowledge formed through the material process of performance can be valued as equivalent to knowledge produced through speculative and analytical modes’ (2016, p.1). Certainly, the challenge throughout the process has been to recognise where any ‘new’ thinking might reside – in the liquid knowing of the creative work and/or the concrete facts of theory or methodology. Haseman and Mafe (2009) suggest that it is through the conjoining of both these elements that practice-led research is realised, ‘So while there are emergent outcomes within creative practice, it is when this potent and somewhat unruly discipline is conjoined with research that creative practice-led research becomes truly emergent in its outcomes’ (2009, p.220). However, the language of practice-led research evoked above: ‘conjoining’ ‘borderlands’ ‘hybrid,’ challenges the constraints of academic

writing, problematizing the use of a detached science rhetorical model of critical writing. It raises questions of how the practice might transform the critical writing. Lewis and Tulk writing about performance research ask:

In this process, what does the source material now become? In what ways can the language we use to document or describe what happens in a specific space and temporality radically open up the work and its associated discourse/s, rather than act as a restraining force through analysis. There are many languages to explore and utilize in this investigation. We incited experiments in writing about/for/in performance (2016, p.4).

Certainly, the process of practice-led research, forming and discursive, resists the hermetical seal of academic language. Sean Sturm writing about academic writing, recognises the potential of '*epistemic* (knowledge-displaying) and thus *expository* writing' broadening into a '*heuristic* (knowledge-discovery) and thus *exploratory* writing' (2012, no pagination). Comparatively, Ross Watkins and Nigel Kraut writing about practice-led research in Creative Writing note that it is 'difficult, distorting and dispiriting to have to express new creative writing knowledge according to the rules of the current array of acceptable genres' (2016, no pagination). Watkins and Kraut call for a more critical-creative process, where diverse modes of writing are able to intervene and dialogue with the practice they emerge from, using language and forms that best illuminate the practice. Re-creating theory into what Sturm describes as 'forms that will activate, or mobilise, the content' (2012, no pagination).

How then, in a Dramaturgy of Silence, could the creative/critical convene? It seems incongruous to interpret a practice that uses silence to carve, challenge, and expunge language, through a critical discourse that privileges formal language. Instead, through writing the Typology of Silence, exploring different silences, there was an opportunity to create a critical-creative piece of writing. By laying the critical and creative writings side

by side, I create a dialogical process for the reader, who must traverse and roam between the two modes of writing, creating an exploratory and more heuristic experience, subsequently provoking consideration of their own understanding and relationship with silence. The Typology (discussed below) remains playful and exploratory, always questioning how understanding is articulated and how silence is understood, or indeed experienced.

This dialogical process of practice-led research expands the initial creative question of the thesis, ‘Why silence?’ four-fold and becomes central to the forming of *A Dramaturgy of Silence*. It takes place through four strands of thinking. The original question: ‘Why silence?’ examines silence’s relationship with the radio play. The second question: ‘How silence?’ examines practically how the writer might invite silence into a radio play. The third question: ‘What silence?’ considers the substance of silence beyond its absence of sound, whilst the final question: ‘Where silence?’ questions how we experience silence, both outside and inside the body. These four questions then thread their way throughout a *Dramaturgy of Silence*.

Seán Street’s book, *The Poetry of Radio, The Colour of Sound* (2014) establishes the importance of poetic form in radio documentaries, plays and poetry (charting historically the development of the audio poem), whilst expanding the discourse to make a case for the poetics of sound itself. He further considers the poetics of sound through silence, the vernacular, and natural soundscapes. He writes:

I hope to move towards a point where the poetic possibilities of sound and radio come together with the oldest oral traditions, while at the same time taking us towards a place where pure sound, composed as music is composed, retains a kinship with poetry within its process of making and in its audience reception (2014, p.6).

A *Dramaturgy of Silence* explores similar territory to Street's poetics of sound and language, but differentially locates itself in playwriting (as is my practice). However, it is not a history of the radio play, or an examination of significant radio play events.² Here, the focus is the relationship between the radio play and silence, looking to compositional approaches developed in contemporary theatre practice, particularly through the critical writing on musicality by David Roesner and the creative work of Caryl Churchill. It uses these compositional elements to not only examine silence's intervention through punctuation, substance, and movement, but also (like music) to continually place the listener inside the creative duration of the radio play. Also examined are contemporary radio plays that engage with silence, whilst the work of Samuel Beckett and Virginia Woolf becomes a springboard into different considerations of silence.

Although not a playwright, Woolf is crucial to this study because of her engagement with multiple possibilities and processes of silence. For Annika Lindskog, Woolf's creation of soundscapes within her fiction become a 'movement between silence and sound – and between different interpretations of the same sound [...] paralleled by concomitant movements between inner and outer selves [...] inner and outer worlds, being and nothingness' (2017, p.249). Here then, the territory of the radio play is partially laid out, capturing ideas of motion and soundscape, the capacity to cross through the boundary of the body, to create internal and external life, all of which are bound to the relationship between silence and sound. Julia Kristeva's (1984) writing on the semiotic, particularly her understanding of rhythm in poetic writing, is also essential here. At the same time Maurice Blanchot's concepts on the '*other* night' (1981, p.99, emphasis in original) and Gilles Deleuze's (1997) consideration of the exhaustion of language, illuminate and articulate the creative process and critical thinking which emerges from the practice.

² This has already been explored extensively by Tim Crook (1999), Martin Esslin (1971), Geoffrey Heptonstall (2009), Séan Street (2002).

The meaning of dramaturgy itself is in a process of transformation in the field of theatre making. I recognise immediately the contradiction of the term, Dramaturgy of Silence; wherein the word ‘dramaturgy’ historically laden with implications of language and narrative, faces down the substance of silence that undermines its safety and threatens to devour it. How can these two terms coalesce? Mary Luckhurst examines multiple definitions of dramaturgy in her book *Dramaturgy, A Revolution in Theatre*. She cites the oldest meaning as a ‘structure of a play’ (2006, p.5). However, she notes, the Oxford English Dictionary defines the dramaturge as a ‘composer of drama’ (ibid, p.6). These two contrasting definitions are helpful in separating what we understand as ‘old’ dramaturgy, concerned with the ‘internal structures of a play text [...] arrangement of formal elements [...] plot, construction, narrative, character, time-frame and stage action’ (ibid, p.10), from ‘new’ dramaturgy, which dismantles notions of the writer imposing a dramatic structure onto a text, considering instead principles of the writer’s and maker’s compositional processes.

Katalin Trencsényi and Bernadette Cochrane imagine new dramaturgy more broadly than negotiating the dramatic, placing the dramaturgical process central to the entire theatre making, describing it as ‘the inner flow of a dynamic system’ (2014, p.xi). By doing so they acknowledge the diverse components of contemporary theatre³ that through new dramaturgy develop ‘in continuous dialogue and interaction with one another, and in constant motion’ (ibid, p.xii). Similarly for Cathy Turner, this inner flow expands into an architecture whereby the lines for a performance are drawn by the theatre maker(s) primarily through a ‘structuring of a work in relation to all its elements’ (2010, p.150). New dramaturgy does not necessarily discard narrative but reconsiders its primacy, reevaluates its possibilities and questions how structures of narrative might expand, disappear, or interact with other components. Renegotiating narrative’s primacy, Turner notes, means that a more open dramaturgy comes into play, no longer ‘fixed and

³ These components might include the physical, sound, the visual image, language and the site where the performance is realised.

resolved' but 'open, plural and fluid' creating "compositions" in time and space' (2016, p.34, emphasis in original).

These provocative ideas seem problematic when confronted with a British radio play constrained traditionally by story. The language of BBC guidelines for writing radio plays prioritises narrative, 'Radio Drama thrives on strong narratives [...] a great storyline will keep your audience listening' (BBC World Drama). However, I borrow definitions of new dramaturgy precisely to challenge both the language and assumptions that insist on the dominance of narrative in the radio play, focussing instead on concepts of compositionality that release the radio play into an exuberant and dynamic relationship with its basic elements of sound and silence. Instating silence as the central dramaturgical tool in the writing of the radio play is to recognise how silence can be inherently part of the inner flow of a text – its sounding of language's unreliability creating a text always in a lively process of re-evaluating itself. Furthermore, silence's gaps and pauses create incompleteness within the text that invites the listener into an interactive and immersive experience. Silence, as will be demonstrated, collaborates with the notion of the radio play as an aural paradigm, being itself immersive, heterogeneous, and durational.

I invite the reader to follow this practice-led research as follows: First, to navigate 'Chapter One, A Typology of Silence', which considers silence through its theoretical, conceptual, and creative possibilities. The writing of A Typology of Silence developed simultaneously to my practice, out of the necessity to clarify the silences that were emerging in my radio plays. Beginning as a sprawling mind-map trying to categorise 'types' of silence, it broadened significantly to questioning the dynamics of silence and language, silence and power, and silence and the body. It also notes the lexicons and punctuations of silence, the implication of rhythm, and silence as both absence and presence.

A Typology of Silence develops both as a creative and critical study. It utilises the processes of creative writing used to unpick the formal stance of language; using lists, questions, repetition, and rhythm whilst considering its relationship with the page. Consequently it does not purely consider silence theoretically, but through its form tries to explicate the compositional and critical process of evoking silences. This permits the reader to experience the unanswered question, the breakage and rhythms of silence, the white of the page elucidating what Glyn Maxwell has called (writing about poetry), ‘the other half of everything [...] it’s silence, the space, the whiteness’ (2016, p.5). Concurrently, the typology takes inspiration from John Cage’s book *Silence: Lectures and Writing* (1978) through its playful mediation between words and silence. However, it attempts to move beyond Cage’s oscillation between the impossibility of silence and its possible emergence; to invite, cajole, and reach towards silence, desiring its empty space, its embodiment, its oscillating surface.

A Typology of Silence, as has been already noted, also wrestles with different ways of writing practice-led research, demonstrating that the extrapolation of knowledge is through both academic and creative consideration. In her writing on practice-led research, Barbara Bolt describes the process between theory and practice as ‘material thinking’ by which the materials of the practice are used ‘to do more than explain, describe or even contextualise practice’ (2010, p.29). In the typology, the creative articulation of knowledge allows the text to both embody and communicate its findings, whilst conversing with the practice out of which it emerges. The typology unravels into silence, ultimately conceding that no definition of silence can ever be conclusive.

I invite the reader then to listen to the first piece of practice, my radio play *Orpheus and Eurydice* (2015). I would ask the listener to use headphones. As a contemporary re-telling of the ancient myth, reverberating with a disintegrating narrative told initially through new media, headphones seem part of Orfeo’s privatised and fracturing traverse of the Underworld, which he navigates partially (or wholly) in his head.

The text of the play then appears in full.

Both radio play texts experiment with how a Dramaturgy of Silence is notated on the page. I expand traditional punctuation of silence (the pause) and the layout of radio play, to notate specific lengths of silences. I also use the white of the page, textural layering and double columns to instate compositionally more complex rhythmic orchestration, indicating explicitly where silences should be evoked whilst curating a text-score that proceeds both vertically and horizontally, communicating on the page the process of motion which should be realised in the recording of the radio play.

I then invite the reader to read Chapter Two: 'Composing the Underworld: Rhythmic Encounters and Excavating the Unutterable', in which I document and reflect on the process of using a Dramaturgy of Silence to reevaluate the radio play through a process of rhythm and compositionality. The chapter engages critically with theories of silence and sound, and ideas of rhythm and compositional narratives.

Following Chapter Two, I ask the reader to listen to my second piece of practice, *The Sky is Wider* (2016). This radio play is in binaural sound, so headphones become vital to appreciate its three-dimensional sound aspects.

The text of the play then appears in full.

Chapter Three: 'Silence and Sound Interventions, the Presence and Absence of the Silent Body' extends the Dramaturgy of Silence to examine the relationship of both silence and the radio play with the body of the central character in the play and its relationship with the listener's body. It develops critical ideas around the 'unsilence' and the absence and presence of silence. It also specifically examines the binaural radio play.

My conclusion, 'A Dramaturgy of Silence, Silence can be a Plan' attempts to draw together the findings of an expanding Dramaturgy of Silence. It takes its creative findings from the four strands of creative questioning of 'Why, How, What, Where Silence?' and

rearticulates them through the lens of A Dramaturgy of Silence. It considers how working with A Dramaturgy of Silence's compositional processes impacts the radio play, and it reviews its methods of invoking silences and its conceptual understandings of silence, whilst noting new discoveries. It reflects how a Dramaturgy of Silence might convene with the future of the radio play. Finally, it considers its political impact as a tool to reveal silences, invite dialogue and release the voice of the 'unsilence'.

CHAPTER ONE

A TYPOLOGY OF SILENCE

W

WHY SILENCE?

Because it is impossible to say what needs to be said.

Because words are unreliable.

Because of unspeakable absences.

Because there must be something than just noise,

To create a space for nothing

something

other.

Language disintegrates and we stunned hide stammer stop mouth shape words...

Pause.

Why silence?

Words fail.

Noise fills.

Why silence is the question of this Typology.

How silence appears.

When silence is necessary.

If silence is possible.

Why silence?

What other tool do we have to un-noise the noise and un-word the word?

U

UNDERWORLD

We enter the Underworld.

The space between words and silence, between noise and stillness.

A plain of sounds, an unfettering of language,

A place of uncoupling.

To work with gaps of silence rather than words.

To edge closer to experience than understanding.

To articulate stories in new ways.

To be shaken,

To lose sight,

To stumble.

To edge towards silence...

Or,

away from it.

UNNOISED SILENCE

Silence: Absence of noise.

‘There is no such thing as silence,’ John Cage states (1978, p.191); his experience in the anechoic chamber having revealed to him not silence but the beating of his heart and the pulsing of his nervous system. He discovered when sound is reduced to nothingness other noises emerge; consequently to be alive is to exist in a continuance of sound. Cage’s famous conceptual sound work, 4’33”,⁴ is a durational blank score created to inspire listening.

⁴ John Cage’s composition of silence consisting of three movements performed by a pianist at a piano with the lid closed, reading a blank score, and aided by a stopwatch. First performed at the Maverick Concert Hall, Woodstock, New York; April 29, 1952.

In his essay *Surface Noise/Silent Sea* (1999), Peter Stafford tells a story of how aboriginal children slip into crocodile infested waters without being noticed. They slide in backwards, silently as the crocodiles do themselves, so the predators recognise only another crocodile entering their silent world. Subsequently the water remains unbroken. Stafford uses this story to examine both the restoration and practice of silence, however the split in his metaphoric silence promises both renewal and death. In the depths of his silence lurks annihilation. Similarly, this Typology slips carefully into this sea of silence; questioning whether it is something or nothing, heard or unheard, perceived or imagined, life or death, slipping backwards into silence is the route of this Typology.

Performing 4'33", the pianist sits at the piano and does not play for four and a half minutes. Cage hoped through the experience of no music, the audience would become aware of the natural sound around them – the rain on the roof of the concert hall, the shuffling and movement of bodies, the occasional turn of the page marking the three different movements of the piece.

Kyle Gann says of 4'33", 'To Cage it seemed [...] to have been an act of framing, of enclosing environmental and unintended sounds in a moment of attention in order to open the mind to the fact that all sounds are music' (2010, pp.17-18). In other words, the absence of intentional sound brings to the attention of the listener all the unintentional noise they may not usually consciously hear.

However, Roy Sorenson (2009) challenges Cage's absolutist definition of the impossibility of silence, arguing that we recognise silence because we overcome the effects of sound around it, or that silence apports space for itself in spite of the minimal sound that might remain. In this sense, a playwright's purpose in framing silences is not to capture unintentional sound, but to make a durational space to expose an emptiness that potentially brings silence to the attention of the audience, emerging despite the surrounding sound.

Sorenson playfully comments that silence is possible in the anechoic chamber, just not with John Cage in it. Equally, Sorenson notes that silence does exist in the great emptiness of space where there is nothing for sound to reverberate through, silence preceding noise and continuing when all noise ceases. It could be argued, silence exists beneath noise; sound becoming multiple islands of noise that break small waves on an ocean of silence.

UNWORDED SILENCE

Samuel Beckett, like Cage, found silence impossible – his writing mediates between a silence that is denied and yet somehow desired. Silence is central to Beckett's work, through which he articulates disintegrating human experience. As Beckett famously writes to Axel Kaun:

As we cannot eliminate language all at once, we should at least leave nothing undone that might contribute to its falling into disrepute. To bore one hole after another in it, until what lurks behind it – be it something or nothing – begins to seep through (1984, p.172).

However, in Beckett's plays, silence does not overwhelm language alone. Beckett exposes silence by not just 'boring' holes, but with infinite precision curating cuts, carving into the skin of language until it becomes transparent. Beckett reduces the word to nothing through a continual reforming of new shapes and patterns; what Deleuze calls 'atomic, disjunctive, cut and chopped language' (1997, p.156). Beckett uses his writing to annihilate and unword language in an attempt to reveal silence, whilst at the same time exposing language as a substance of nothingness. It is the detailed attention given to this deconstruction, which makes the emergence of what lurks beneath possible. Beckett's diminishment of language remains an extraordinary creative act.

Beckett's characters dread silence, both in its deathlike inevitability and its continual threat of emergence. The compulsion of their mouthed language becomes a desperate attempt to deny silence in all its nothingness, ultimately a hubbub of talking that can never cease.

Yet Beckett, through the materiality of language's fragmentation unearths in his characters a remarkable and terrible endurance. A capacity to continue, however self-deluding, in the face of nothingness. Daring to shout back at the void of silence that lurks beneath.

What becomes apparent when trying to define this relationship between words and silence is the endless re-negotiation of form and meaning. Are words just islands floating on a sea of silence or is silence consumed by the perpetual babble of language? For the playwright who positions silence before language the discovery may not only be how silence renegotiates meaning, but how within the multiple embraces of words and silence, the substance of language itself begins to transform.

UNSAID

Something someone feels but does not say out loud.

Subtext.

UNSAYABLE

That which is impossible to say out loud.

(Usually said by the end of the play)

UNSPOKEN

Something that exists, is known, is absent but never articulated.

UNUTTERABLE LOSS

No words.

USELESSNESS

Max Picard states that when words stop silence begins: 'The absence of language simply makes the presence of Silence more apparent' (1948, p.15). For Picard, silence is autonomous, it is not merely the negative space created when language ceases but it is itself a phenomenon. He dismisses a silence of nothingness, arguing that 'silence is always wholly present in itself and it completely fills out the space in which it appears' (ibid, p.7). Silence has the capacity to hold expanse and closeness, immediacy, detail and depth. He defines it as a 'holy uselessness' (ibid, p.3) in that it cannot be exploited, there is no material profit or dogmatic negotiating to be had from it, it simply 'is'.

In contrast, the dissolution of forms realised in modernism recognises a silence of nothingness, its void contending with Picard's 'presence'. Silence is only ever an absence of noise or words; it is wholly negative and representative of annihilation. Certainly, to examine silence is to acknowledge the futility of its nothingness or its transcendent fullness, but emphatically these are still only part of what silence can communicate.

Silence can be uncanny – a sudden realisation of the vibration of its presence, it can be a terror in the black of the night or torture in the extended duration of a prison cell.

It can bring a sense of stillness and a heightening awareness of the natural world. It can be pregnant with years of the unspeakable at a family dinner table.

Its ‘holy uselessness’ is its freedom; silence feels uncanny because we don’t construct its emergence and cannot control its effect. Silence in its emptiness provokes us; this ‘holy uselessness’ becomes an opportunity for our own speculative reading, silence becoming something. It affects the body, through a physical sense of its eeriness or a held breath whilst experiencing its stillness. It calls to the imagination and somehow the body recognises it beyond the strain of language.

For Picard, silence is creative. The purposelessness of silence challenges the purposeful; words can break into it, speak over it, deny or discard but cannot appropriate it. In its uselessness, perhaps modernism and Picard meet. Here, a convergence of what Ihab Hassan calls ‘the negative echo’ and ‘its positive stillness’ (1971, p.249); become a vanishing silence subsuming the imagination.

S

SILENCE AS⁵

Silence when only one person does the talking.

The silence when someone leaves the room.

Silence of a new baby sleeping.

Silence that holds the breath of a conversation.

Silence between two, an old man and woman, when she says she's cold and he offers his scarf, and she, her unhurried hand pale bone touches his chest, the scarf and they stand in stillness.

A gun-shot... silence.

Silence of murder in the dark.

The terror of silence.

⁵Inspired by Tim Etchell's ‘The kind of silence...’ (1999, p.108).

Silence of stars.

Silence at two am I am not sleeping.

The silence of desire.

The silence of standing alone in an empty house, alone.

Silence of deciding not to speak.

Silence of the stretch of a body.

Silence of night licking its way into dawn.

And still standing in that house alone, the silence that devours.

Silence of the high up when you can get no higher.

Silence of the abbey, gutted, boned and scattered.

Silence of right here.

This.

Now.

SILENCING – THE UNSILENCE

When a voice is silenced not by choice but by force, then silence loses its fluidity and negotiation. Quoting Karl Jaspers, Susan Sontag writes, ‘He who has the final answers can no longer speak to the other, breaking off genuine communication for the sake of what he believes’ (1969, p.19). Cheryl Glenn (2004) defines history as a continuing act of silencing. Not only of the voices of women but of national, ethnic, religious, linguistic minorities, the LGBTI community and children who all remain conspicuously absent from the history-books. Their voices lost to us, their stories unknown.

If power allows no voice but its own then silencing becomes a weapon. To disagree is to be reviled, mocked, bullied, dominated and your reputation vilified. It is to be robbed of opportunity to make answer and to have no one to speak up for you. The silencing of an individual or group becomes a deterrent to others of that same group or different minorities of speaking out. The status in society of gender, race, or religion can also silence those outside the group. Overwhelming majorities can force silence. In these cases, liberty can be withdrawn, people incarcerated, threatened and humiliated. Violence (both physical and sexual) can be exercised; murder and genocide becoming the ultimate silencing.

I argue this force of silencing is never silent. It becomes what I have called the ‘un-silence’. That which is constrained still exists; those forcibly rejected words remain embodied and those denied, untold stories are daily lived and suffered like wounds. Muteness or a self-censoring can burst into moments of violence or rage; creating raw and ragged stories of the un-silence breaking into unarticulated screams, dreams and howling. Even when genocide occurs, when there is no one to speak the absences, silence remains; standing witness to the horror.

The un-silence can become the core of a play. That which has been oppressed progresses towards articulation. This may mean a tearing open, an exposing of a wound that moves towards communication. The force of its silencing can propel the un-silence towards a physical actualisation of dance, of song, of violence, of self-annihilation, of terror. Alternatively, it may reach towards the poetic, an action of gathering, of many voices, of re-instating and re-owning that which has been lost.

R

RHYTHM

Patricia Ondek Laurence (1991) in her book *The Reading of Silence*, writes that the meeting place of silence and sound in Virginia Woolf's work is rhythm. Woolf writing to the composer Ethel Smythe says, 'All writing is nothing but putting words on the backs of rhythm. If they fall off the rhythm one's done' (1978, p.303). Ondek Laurence defines these rhythmic encounters as a 'metalanguage' (1991, p.7) that creates 'rippling sentences, oscillating themes, alternating structures and flickering visions of reality' (ibid, p.170). Through rhythm, Woolf creates moments rich in sensation, motion, and thought; imbued with both silence and language.

Ondek Laurence notes how in Woolf's work, these rhythms are a movement that can cross the boundary of the body. 'Silence is part of the rhythm [...] from the surface events of life to the silent depths of the mind' (ibid, p.14). Through rhythm these silences are punctuated or delineated; rhythm drawing to the surface of language the silent movement of thought.

⁶The cacophony of a house filled with children, with chatter, with stories, with the slurp of soup...

Stirred up with silences of familiarity, of... misunderstanding.

Scored still by the sound of the garden, of children, of the sea breaking.

A stolen moment of stillness.

The harsh noise of youth.

Silence of the lighthouse beam as it traces each sleeper.

The house empties of people.

A bark of a dog.

A sudden death.

The cleaning woman's lament of dirt and dying.

A floor-board splits.

⁶ A short consideration of the silent and sound rhythmic encounters in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1964).

Silence and words are not mutually exclusive but continually pass through each other. The articulating of our imagination, our words in the air half made, half realised on the breath as we juggle our thoughts into language – some take flight, some fail. The patterning of words moment to moment permeated with silences, jolts, reappraisals, repetition, interruptions and gaps becomes a heightened ‘metalanguage’ embracing a rhythmic musicality; silence and words counterparts in a movement of conversation between the body and the world.

In the anechoic chamber, John Cage hears the beating of his heart; its rhythm throwing into relief the surrounding silence. The faltering or heightened heart-beat a creative metaphor of how by slowing or accelerating this rhythmic interaction, words can cover over and deny silence, or be used to annotate its presence. Can move closer to silence, move closer to the moment, move closer to stoppage, to death, to life...

Can contrapunt.

War impacts like a glass imploding.

Decay.

Stillness.

Then noise...

People return, their banging feet on the stairs.

Their voices vying...

Reaching...

Filling...

The silent absence of death.

The stillness in the garden when for a moment that which is lost stands...

A ghost.

...silence filled.

Then swallowed once more into the noise of life.

Q

QUESTIONS

I have questions:

Is silence more than just a non-occupied space?

A second of not speaking?

There is nothing there really, is there?

A pause,

Who fills it?

An experiment using the music of William Boyce to measure brain activity, revealed that peak brain activity occurred during the pauses between the musical movements when nothing was happening, 'While music may soothe the savage beast, the brain thrills to the sound of silence' (2007, para.5). Dr Vinod Menon publishing these findings said of silence, 'It can arrest the listener's attention, and create conditions that facilitate anticipatory processes related to previously heard sequences of sound'. He recognised that instating silences in music 'elicit[s] intense physiological and brain responses' (ibid, 2007).

In this break,

In this stop of silence...

I predict.

Because this silence promises.

Elusive, ambiguous, unreliable space...

Allows me to speculate.

I have questions.

Because all these words these words whilst these words they sound,
I am alerted to something different, something underneath...
Something through, something I imagine behind,
Something lurking.

Professor Andy Clark envisages the human brain as a 'prediction machine' (2015, From Rag-bags to (Unified) Riches section, para.3). Suggesting that the brain is 'constantly active, trying to predict the streams of sensory stimulation before they arrive' (ibid, The Strange Architecture of Predictive Processing section, para.3). This predictive processing point towards our perceiving silence through the speculative mind; that the brain attempting to make sense of something that is empty or absent intensifies its responses.

The things omitted,
Stand most present.
This fluid space becomes a question,
A fluctuating possibility.

Silence un-owned,
An invitation.

I have questions.

P

PAUSE

Susan Sontag considering the experience of silence compares the difference between looking and staring: ‘A look is voluntary; it is also mobile, rising and falling in intensity as its foci of interest are taken up and then exhausted. A stare has, essentially, the character of a compulsion; it is steady, unmodulated, “fixed”’ (1969, pp.15-16, emphasis in original). In a play, the pause grabs our attention and sharpens our awareness. However, silence is never “fixed.” As it extends it becomes a quantity of questioning; unnerving and evolving. It continually modulates as we speculate what it holds. As the silence endures, its intensity grows or dissipates; it becomes a vehicle for emotion or our boredom discards it. Silence is compulsive for the same reason the eye moves from looking to staring. In that moment the mind is questioning; steadiness and lack of movement are never part of that experience.

PAUSE.

Harold Pinter says, “the pause is a pause because of what just happened in the minds and the guts of the characters. They spring out of the text” (Gussow, 1994, p.36). Pinter’s pauses illuminate the unspoken; they can intimidate or become refusals to speak. Pinter uses pauses as punctuation and it is in these gaps of non-speaking that we feel the unease of that which is not uttered; they become compulsive and unsettling. Conversely, Graeme Miller contradicts this definition, for him pauses are blots, phenomenally tactical: “All these things they communicate at a very deep level but they are fantastically shallow, they're tricks – the use of tipex in a very creative way” (Performance Matters, 2010).

PAUSE.

Examine the betrayal of the pause on Saturday night television.

“And the winner is....”

PAUSE.

In defence of Pinter, his pauses may be tactical but they are never a pause for pause sake or ‘fantastically shallow’. For Pinter there is always a cause for silence, words stop because something happens. The breaking space of the pause vibrates, it exposes, it challenges language, and it attempts to articulate the experience of the body. It can

reach beyond language (some kind of knowing without words), creating a wordless return, a recognition of that which cannot be said.

O

ONTOLOGICAL STAMMER

In comparison, Sontag also writes how artists articulate silence through noise. She coins the phrase the ‘ontological stammer’, meaning an artwork that babbles, refuses the linear and might ‘out-talk language, or [...] talk oneself into silence’ (1969, p.27). Similarly, Pinter says, ‘One way of looking at speech is to say that it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness’ (2005, pp.24-25).

The ontological silence is a verbosity expressed through avoidance, incoherence, shutting out or denying the silence that lurks beneath. Like Mouth in Beckett’s Not I (1998), it becomes a repetition, a torrent of words that covers the nothingness (the words themselves incomprehensible) and a barrage over the void. However, in the case of Beckett, these words continue, they must always continue. The silence somehow embedded within them, continually fled from.

Or sometimes when I when
 I you don’t I don’t you can’t
 we can’t work work work
 with this these words these
 nonstop ever pushing when
 the words fly out faster than
 if they hurt me ever could
 ever would ever touch first
 your mind ca co phon ee
 would work with the idea
 that as many words as are
 possible that they they that
 they can never they could
 never they could they hide
 they stand before they they
 let us let us see all the things
 all the things all the things
 that that that sometimes
 could be can’t be why
 would you what what what,
 all them all of them you
 mean all of them are
 possibly impossible to say.

N

NOTHINGNESS

NARRATIVES OF SILENCE: UNDERWORLD NARRATIVES

The narrative movement of a play can become a journey into or out of silence – a navigation across the Underworld to where silence ultimately waits, or a journey escaping silence to escape back into a world of words and noise.

A journey into silence moves towards an experience of silence that the whole narrative prepares and frames. It reaches towards a moment when words are no longer possible, when silence is all that remains. To build towards a complete silence is to traverse across the Underworld, unpicking piece by piece the noise and words that cover over that silence. It is to inflict on a character a journey of recognition, to unword them, strip them of all artifice, or bring them to face death.

Blanchot (1995) would argue that silence is impossible – we can only Orpheus like, glance and look away from that which we can never create. Yet, those who are mute or silenced might contend it is already present within their silent body. The body denied speech becomes a landscape of compression and protest.

The journey of the silent body is a journey of interiority – an underworld of refused words and embodied silences. Here, the body in exile reaches towards articulation. Its Underworld is an interior language ravaged by the act of silencing. To cross it is to attempt a journey from despair to defiance, from nothingness to howling. It becomes a realisation of the unsilence, which although compressed and denied must find a voice.

In the end the journey either way may be impossible, but it is the attempt to expose the silence, to unmask the unsilence or to navigate a journey as close to where silence is, becomes the tool that constructs the Underworld Narrative.

To discover what silence holds.

L

LEXICOGRAPHY

How do we make silences?

Through punctuation.

Through blank spaces on the page.

Through poetic language.

Rhythm.

Metaphor.

Through the semiotic.

Sub-text.

Stripping words back to essence.

Allowing silence to menace.

Absence and death.

Through the polyphonic.

Word slippage.

Repetition.

Verbosity.

Stuttering.

Through ems and aahs.

Through sighs.

Affect.

Effect.

Speculation.

By narrative journeys into and out of silence.

By stopping.

I

IS THERE ANY SUCH THING AS SILENCE?

Not at the abbey, where silence falls at its most graceful, through sun. A kind of silence cut through with birds, trees, people (not silent then).

Under water in the bath – a deep note.

Not whilst I sleep, a rhythmic snore – mine or his?

Not in the hummed path home when it's late and dark and the path is only three steps away then swallowed. The hum is the lamppost, signalling my way.

Not locked in the toilet where the kids can't get me. The tap drips and someone still knocks.

Not in the pine forest, knee deep in pines, still my breath and the lift of air.

At the tip of the hill?

High up, a certain quiet unrolls stabbed over by a plane, or a dog.

In an empty, vandalised hospital, one smashed window allowing a cone of light. Not there, in its degraded nothingness, my heart bangs.

Is there no place where sound is not?

Maybe high ups once in Topanga. A silent earthquake shook. In that same place a humming-bird examined my great face its wings batting a hundred times a moment, the minutiae of its side-swipe.

Swish.

In an apartment in the middle of the night alone?

But the streets around were car'd and peopled by everyone I didn't know,

Their shared noise made my silence.

Silence when three days late my baby is taken out of me.

Sound was impossible...

Just his first cry reminded me I was still living.

Silence of my dead grandmother. The last tear still wet on her face.

No words.

What words?

Silence of the child left in the garden.

Silence at the possibility of making a prayer.

Silence between lovers when words are dead.

Silence of my grandfather,

His hooping choking cough made worse by his laughter.

Silence of them taking him away with a wave

And his never coming back,

Dead in the ambulance before he got there.

Heart opens, contracts.

The no breath swallowed sob.

The moon is silent, but even in space the vacuum of nothingness is invaded by the noise of space-junk and deep breath of astronauts.

One day a dead thing

I will be nothing

something.

But is it even silent when I am thrown on the wind?

(my ashes out of some sort of flask I hope, nothing too fancy)

The blow of the wind and my scattering

Is still noise...

I just don't hear it.

H

HOUSE-BREAKING

Julia Kristeva writes about rhythm in terms of the 'semiotic,' imagining an embodied space that lies beneath language, which through its dynamic bodily-drives bursts into words. She claims this territory for the poetic to challenge language itself; disrupting meaning through rhythm and re-examining the failure of words to express completely the articulation of the mind and body. She borrows the word 'effraction' (1984, p.55), envisaging the semiotic as metaphoric housebreaking, breaking into language to steal from it its certainty of meaning.

Silence conspires in this 'effraction' stealing from language its full sentences, fragmenting and punctuating their certainty. What can the beat, the pause, the ellipses do in terms of challenging the words that surround it? The developing rhythms allow for a kinetic experience of language, whilst rhythm creates new formations of words that may resist conventional meaning or are experienced in different ways. Textural and patterned; jolts, reappraisals, repetition and interruption become a heightened 'metalanguage'. Embracing a rhythmic musicality, silence and words become counterparts in a movement of sound.

Effraction: a smashed window, a footstep sends shivers. The sounds startle, we do not recognise the words but hear new unexpected utterances. Its vibrations affect our heartbeat, our breathing, the noise drumming and then silence. We listen, experience each whisper and lull, our senses heightened. Our ears strain, our own breath vital. The silence, the blood rush, the thump of the heart. We become alive to every sound, time slows or quickens. Rhythm punctuates.

G

GLITCH

Malfunction. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines the glitch as ‘sudden, usually temporary malfunction [...] a brief irregularity’ (2008, p.605). The word-glitch is made through the change of a letter or a slight re-sounding of a word, which causes the word to lose its meaning, whilst amplifying its sound. A word-glitch can become a fidge between silence and slan kish; by hump tea in the worm of meaning whilst re-cremating a new sown.

F

FUGUE (WORD)

To work contrapuntally with a text

Through

The counterpoint of words and silence

Through

Repetition to create

Through

The counterpoint of rhythm between words and silence

Through

The rhythmic pattern

Through

The counterpoint of worms⁷ polyphonically a rhythmic pattern that illustrates silence

Through

Connection, relationship, and difference.

⁷ Glitch.

E

EXPLETIVES OF THOUGHT⁸

Erm. Sigh. Sniff.

EMERGENT SILENCE

An emergent silence in a play becomes apparent through an absence – primarily of a character that is dead, awaited, or silenced. In musical composition, Andrew Edgar calls these absences ‘silences in motion’ (1997, p.312). A particular instrument within the score at moments ceases to play as part of the melody, its absence becoming apparent through that which is missed or lost, scoring a silence into the composition. Similarly, in a play, an emergent silence can haunt or stalk the other characters with the capacity to broaden and deepen through the play’s progression, ultimately to instate itself centrally, overwhelming their words and actions.

EMPTY OR FULL

Ihab Hassan describes how the ‘language of silence conjoins the need both of auto-destruction and self-transcendence’ (1971, p.12). Silence both fills and empties. It can be apocalyptic or resonant.

Hassan writes, ‘Such silence [...] speaks not only of vanishing things: it must also sing, on pain of universal stillness, of a new kind of love’ (ibid, p.246). As the space hollows, it becomes transparent.

The emptiness of silence therefore throws up multiple possibilities – to not only deny or acknowledge death in its nothingness, but in that recognition of death sharpen the sense of living into a conscious moment of being. The emptiness of silence may transform into a physical act, a searing image, an expression of love or a wail of endurance. It can become a creative act, and often in that moment of emptiness transfigure into a new form.

The horror of vacancy, the present stillness – clasp hands.

⁸ Borrowed from Barthes (1992).

D

DEATH

Jason Bahbak Mohaghegh writes that silence is an act of revenge, that it always ‘demands supremacy and conquest for itself’ (2015, p.9). Silence is infinite; words and lives in the face of silence become just scratches on its surface, already fading as they are momentarily realised. For Bahbak Mohaghegh, silence waits ‘to steal the world’ (ibid, p.9), haunting and stalking us, allowing itself to be known and then scattering us into absence.

However, we can only speak of a silence of death from a position of expectation. Karmen MacKendrick writes, ‘Silence calls us to an unknown. [...] Yet our sense of this unknown is not pure future—that which we shall find—nor is it presence, as if we could see it before us. Silence calls to memory, to our sense of having forgotten’ (2001, p.27). This forgotten silence may be of our inevitable death, which we cannot allow ourselves to remember, but for MacKendrick, drawing on Blanchot’s writings, silence is also immemorial. An ancient silence precedes us; we are born out of it as a creative act. We have no memory of it, we have forgotten what we could never remember, but we sense it, scrabbling for words that cannot articulate it. Blanchot writes of it, ‘I do not know but I have a feeling that I am going to have known’ (1992, p.112).

For MacKendrick, tied up in this forgetting is desire. It is a desire to traverse towards silence that stands outside of language and outside of time. ‘It is the desire belonging to the outside. [...] Only in forgetting, do we open space for such desire. [...] This is a desire to exceed our own limits, a desire that will take us beyond ourselves’ (2001, p.30).

Silence invites us to approach its edge, allowing our writing and ourselves to fragment through that encounter. MacKendrick notes for Blanchot, this becomes an invitation to become acquainted with death. Simultaneously however, we are also encountering a silence that precedes us, reacquainting ourselves with what we have lost and yet somehow know and recognise.

C

CARVING SILENCE

Caryl Churchill plays often examine the silencing of voices by power. This can become the starting point of her plays; they break silences and they exist as questions. By posing them through exercises of repetition and form, we understand that the answers she offers us exist in complex, unspeakable words that underscore her work as silence. In *A Number* (2002), she gives us variations on the same clone, through a number of interviews with his father. Churchill's complex systems of questioning become dualistically unanswerable, but weaved throughout her breaking, her cut-away sentences and interruptions, her dissolving punctuation, her fracturing parallel dialogues is a silence to allow these questions to resonate. In *A Number*, the underscore of unspeakable silence is the prism through which she allows her audience to examine her experiment, whilst continually shifting through its many differential positions. The question becomes less about the ethics of cloning but more about our own humanity, our responsibility as parents, discarding any notion that science offers solutions to our own mortality. The play is always in a process of becoming; folding in what has come before so both the answer and the dramatic forward movement of the play continually unravel. She works for the matters of the heart but she works almost mathematically in form to slice through and expose the silence it holds.

B

BETWEEN

Perhaps that's what I
 am, the thing that
 divides the world in
 two, on the one side
 the outside, on the
 other the inside....
 I'm neither one side
 nor the other, I'm in
 the middle, I'm the
 partition.... perhaps
 that's what I feel,
 myself vibrating, I'm
 the tympanum, on the
 one hand the mind, on
 the other the world, I
 don't belong to either'
 (1959, p.383).

Beckett's definition of the tympanum defines where *A Dramaturgy of Silence* lives. It emerges in that thin skin between the inside mind and the outside talk, between the silence and the noise, in the stammering, unspoken, unmade utterances. The place where words vibrate, form and dismantle themselves, sound and un-sound themselves, in the embrace of words and silence. Here, a radio play can become an embodied, three-dimensional sound happening. Simultaneously vibrating and forming, the radio play becomes the tympanum; an immersive experience of listening inescapably caught trembling in the trap of your ear.

A

ABSENCE

Absence: Being away from a place or person; time of being away; non-existence or want of; abstraction of thought (1964, p.5).

Absence in playwriting functions as a silence that becomes apparent through an absence primarily of a character through death, physical absence or a character that is silenced or refuses to speak. This absence may become manifest in a play when the character has been present and then disappears physically. Equally in a play when the character is absent from the beginning, who may never appear they can only be constructed and their identity motivated by the other characters in the play, the what they tell about their absence allows a 'silence motif' to underscore the play, become a static element of death.

Absence can also be used as a withholding of information by the

Chekhov's plays manifest the absent life, that which is not the events or happenings; they instead are waiting, filled with silences of desire.

These physical absences and help in to measure internal absences that allow characters to emerge through the absence of the character from other characters in the play or even from the audience, or evoking an absence – a silent presence. Ghostly haunts of death; words of love.

The results of the

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

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Orpheus and Eurydice

By Linda Marshall Griffiths

1 x 45 Afternoon Play

CHARACTERS

ORFEO.....Nico Mirallegro
EURYDICE.....Emily Taafe
APOLLO.....Jonathan Keeble
HADES.....Alexandra Mathie
POLICEMAN/BOY..... Stephen Fletcher

Producer:	Nadia Molinari
Sound Design:	Steve Brooke
With Music composed by	PJ Harvey
TX:	Tuesday 22 nd September 2015. 1415 – 500 BBC Radio 4



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Int. Apartment

EVENING

BIG APARTMENT TURNED INTO A CAVE. THERE
COULD BE LOW STATIC. A YOUNG MAN SITS,
ALONE.

ORFEO

(OUTLOUD) If I still still...

If I...

If I if I.

If I...

Don't move.

If I refuse to draw this breath.

If I...

This breath...

If I...

Could hold this second...

If I...

Like a held tick of the hand of
a...

Like a...

If I.

Like a

Like a

If I...

Could I hold you here...

Eurydice?

(V/O) You looked like you were turned to
stone.

When I found you you were stone.

No gorgon's blast...

No...

Curse.

Just...

(QUICK MEMORY, LIKE A BLUR)

Int. Corridor of hotel

NIGHT

ORFEO RUNS TO HOTEL ROOM DOOR. A
POLICEMAN IS THERE.

ORFEO. Who is /it!

POLICEMAN. /Please sir, step back from this, you
can't...

ORFEO. This is my hotel room, this is my
//room.

POLICEMAN. //I know who you are sir...

ORFEO. We were just staying over///night, I had
a gig I...

POLICEMAN. ///...I'm really I...

ORFEO. Who is it?

POLICEMAN. A young woman.

ORFEO (SHOVES) Let me in, let me, I've..., get the...

POLICEMAN (STRUGGLE) I need help /here, I need...

ORFEO. /Is it my wife?!

Int. Apartment

EVENING

ORFEO. You were stone.

A FLY BUZZES BY HIM AND THEN BOUNCES OFF
A WINDOW. THE VOID OF THE SPACE RETURNS.
ORFEO SEES THE STRUGGLES OF THE FLY.

Run your head against the glass but it
won't open. This world is sealed.

A JUMP, A BANGING ON THE DOOR.

VOICE (OUTSIDE, DISTANT, A BLUR).

APOLLO. Orfeo!

You in there?

BANGING.

Hey!

Hey.

Are you, can you...?

BANGING.

I've got a key!

The door-guy, he...

ORFEO. Go away!

APOLLO. Knew you were still /in here.

ORFEO GOES TO DOOR.

ORFEO (LOW) /Go away.

Please.

APOLLO (CLOSE) Open the door.

ORFEO. No.

APOLLO. You can't just...

ORFEO. I can.

APOLLO. ...lock yourself in.

People...

ORFEO. I don't care.

APOLLO PUTS KEY IN THE DOOR.

Don't.

THERE IS A WRESTLE WITH THE DOOR, ORFEO IS FLUNG BACK. APOLLO ENTERS.

APOLLO. It stinks in here by the way.

No lights?

SWITCHING ON A LIGHT.

ORFEO. Don't.

APOLLO. Why you sitting in the dark?

BEAT.

ORFEO. Go away. /Please.

APOLLO. /When d'you last put anything in your body...

KICKING A BOTTLE.

ORFEO (MOVING AWAY) I don't care.

APOLLO. ...just this poison.

PAUSE.

APOLLO. Have you eaten anything?

Have you got any...

GOES TOWARDS KITCHEN (ALL OPEN PLAN)

(You look terrible by the way)

ORFEO OPENS DOOR GOES OUT ON BALCONY.
THE OUTSIDE WORLD TURNS UP. APOLLO'S
VOICE CONTINUES IN BACK.

Ext. Balcony (High-up) NIGHT

ORFEO. Why do I keep feeling you just stepped out of /the room, it's just, I...

(V/O, WHISPER UNDERSCORES) Eurydice.

Like it's just some joke, like any minute they're going to...

You're going to...

I feel your breath.

The shape of where you were.

How can you not be...

Here?

THE WORLD AROUND HIM, THE CARS BELOW.

APOLLO (BACKGROUND, UNDERSCORING ORFEO) /Not wanting to sound like your mother oooooor any, I mean I don't want to sound like your mother you do have to

you do have to - what is this!? It's got hair.

Dead or alive?

(Sorry)

Is there any, is there...

God-sakes...

This stinks.

Mouldy sandwich, good..., is that what...

Uck.

Urrrrrrr.

It's liquid.

BEAT.

I got people to bring you food, I got all this unopened, this... O no, what are these...?

This takeaways crawling.

Haven't you, do you not...?

THE OUTSIDE CLOSE NOW.

ORFEO

(V/O, WHISPER) Eurydice.

PULLS OUT PHONE.

(OUTLOUD) Here I have you.

On my phone.

EURYDICE'S LAUGH (REPEAT).

I have you...

HER LAUGH.

Your laugh.

Blood lips.

HER LAUGH.

The honey of your breath.

APOLLO COMES OUT ONTO BALCONY.

APOLLO. I'm getting you dinner sent up, what
you...?

Hey don't stand so near the edge -
it's...

High.

It's...

Don't look don't...

ORFEO STANDS.

ORFEO. We all cling..

The cars crawl.

What for?

THE CARS REVERBERATE BELOW.

PAUSE. ORFEO LOOKS DOWN.

APOLLO. Do you want me to get you something?

ORFEO. No.

APOLLO. To help you sleep, to help you.. stop
thinking. Why don't you come away /from..

ORFEO. /No.

APOLLO. That...

ORFEO. Can you get me to where she is?

APOLLO. I could get you some sleeping p/ills.

ORFEO. /And take me where?

My wife is dead.

I'm sealed in this..

If I just fell if I...

APOLLO. Don't...

ORFEO. Jumped.

This flesh would..

I would..

MOMENT. TIMELESS.

APOLLO. Orfeo.

ORFEO. Break.

APOLLO. Look at me.

BEAT.

ORFEO. How can this all carry on and she...
Where is she, what part of this world...
APOLLO IS RIGHT BY HIM.

APOLLO. Come inside mate.

ORFEO. ...would I find her?

APOLLO GUIDES HIM AWAY BACK INTO THE
APARTMENT.

Int. Apartment Den NIGHT

ORFEO I have this film..

APOLLO. Don't look at it.

ORFEO. ...here, on my phone.

APOLLO. Don't do that to //yourself.

//A RECORDING OF THE BEACH, THE REPEATED
LAUGH.AND THEN THERE...

Ext. Beach DAY

ORFEO (V/O) You ran, biting, blinking, the
water spitting up..

The salt on your tongue. Your hair a
hiding place.

You were a kid from somewhere else.

Your broken verse.

Your blank rhyme.

And there was a wolf,

In the frenzy of your body.

A wolf,

In the intricate patterns of your arms.

A wolf,

Stalking you.

Int. Den

NIGHT

ORFEO

(OUT-LOUD) It was me.

HE SUDDENLY LUNGES THROUGH TO THE
KITCHEN. APOLLO FOLLOWS.

Int. Kitchen

MORNING

APOLLO.

ORFEO PULLS OPEN A DRAWER, IT CLATTERS.

Don't do this to yourself.

You don't...

You don't...

It wasn't just ecstasy; it was it was
the vipers bite. It shouldn't, //it
should never have been out there.

It was poison, it was adulterated - a
bad batch.

Don't do this to yourself.

ORFEO.

//If I rip out these veins.

KICKS THROUGH THEM.

Blunt, blunt..

PICKS ONE UP.

This prong might...!

APOLLO TRIES TO STOP ORFEO, RIPS IT OUT
OF HIS HAND.

APOLLO. Stop!

ORFEO. Glass then.

ORFEO SMASHES ONE ON THE SIDE.

APOLLO. Stop this!!

ORFEO. I will carve her name into /my heart.

APOLLO. /This this isn't what you want.

ORFEO. Isn't it?

APOLLO. To be finished with //all this?

ORFEO. //Yes!

APOLLO. All you have?

ORFEO. I don't care.

APOLLO. Wait...!

Don't. Look. Don't. Look. Don't.

///Look...

ORFEO. ///You can leave you don't have ///to...

APOLLO. ///I don't want to leave!

Wait, just...

ORFEO. For what?

Tomorrow,

The day after...

The space she lives in fades.

PAUSE.

ORFEO. You can't buy death Apollo. You can buy anything else. You bought me you bought us. You, the god of music.

APOLLO. I make dreams come true.

ORFEO. Do you?

BEAT.

So can you buy me death so I can bring my sweet love back?

LONG PAUSE.

I didn't think so.

STILLNESS, A CALL FROM THE UNDERWORLD.

APOLLO. There might be a way.

ORFEO. What did you /say?

APOLLO. /A thing like death.

ORFEO. How?

APOLLO. Something that might soothe...

ORFEO. I don't want to be soothed I want my
skin to//burn!

APOLLO. //Wait!

BEAT.

There is...

I have...

A vial.

That will slow your breathing, borrow
death's likeness.

Where you might just slip
into the...

ORFEO. ...

APOLLO. Underworld, the...

ORFEO. ...

APOLLO. ...unravelling place of...

ORFEO. Death.

PAUSE.

APOLLO. There is a price.

ORFEO. What price?

APOLLO. My price.

ORFEO. Always your price.

APOLLO. Break your silence.

ORFEO. ...

APOLLO. Do you know what you're worth to us...?

ORFEO. No.

APOLLO Orfeo you have become the most famous singer on the pla/net.

ORFEO. /Because my wife's dead?

APOLLO. Your album's gone double platinum.

BEAT.

You know in time some time in time
you will want to write some music.

ORFEO. What?

APOLLO. Or we can get you //songs.

ORFEO. //I don't want your songs.

BEAT.

APOLLO. It might help.

ORFEO. What!?

BEAT.

What my wife's dead, I squeeze it out I
don't know I I I I, what - for everyone
to see...

APOLLO. Your fans want...

ORFEO. What, a part of this I don't think they
want /a part of this?

APOLLO. /They suffer.

ORFEO. They suffer?

APOLLO. Because you su//ffer.

ORFEO. //They don't know her they don't know
me.

APOLLO. It doesn't matter they feel they...

ORFEO. No.

BEAT.

APOLLO. One song.

ORFEO. No.

PAUSE.

APOLLO. Look, everybody's devastated..

ORFEO. Devastated, are /they?

APOLLO. /Of what happened.

ORFEO. What happened?

BEAT.

APOLLO. It was a terrible accident.

ORFEO. Say her name Apollo, say //it outloud..

APOLLO. //What?

ORFEO. Say my wife's name..

Break the air.

Go on.

BEAT.

APOLLO. Eurydice.

ORFEO. Again.

APOLLO. No.

ORFEO. Do you know what happens when you overdose on MDMA...

APOLLO. I do know.

ORFEO. ...how she might have /suffered?

APOLLO. /Don't do this.

ORFEO. It's not a benign drug.

APOLLO. Don't do this.

ORFEO. I go over and over it.

Anxiety.

Irritability.

Restlessness.

Sadness. I think about that.

It's a list they gave me on the pamphlet
of information in the hospital while I
was waiting for her to...

(V/O) The honey of your breath...

Stolen somewhere else.

APOLLO. Record one song, one heart-breaking
song.

ORFEO. No.

APOLLO. A vial.

BEAT.

APOLLO. A way to peel back this skin of life and
step through, catch the edge...

Where the world falls off.

BEAT.

ORFEO. You've been there?

APOLLO. That is my price.

ORFEO. You always know your price.

APOLLO. And yours.

ORFEO. Show me the vial.

APOLLO. It's here.

ORFEO. You always carry it with you?

APOLLO. Your song Orfeo.

ORFEO. ...

APOLLO. Say yes, and this is yours.

BEAT.

ORFEO. Yes.

Int. Bathroom DAY

ORFEO. A needle, that's all...?

APOLLO. Listen, it's all background. Hear that...

A SOUNDSCAPE OF STATIC, AIR-CONDITIONING, TRAFFIC, ALL THE OUTSIDE SLOWLY EMERGES.

Listen for her voice in the noise.
Follow it. Cross over.

APOLLO INJECTS HIM. ORFEO GASPS.

APOLLO. A little bit of blood, you're just starting.

A RUSH OF BLOOD TO THE HEAD.

THE SOUND OPEN, HER LAUGH LOOPS. THE THREE SEGMENTS ARE ADDED MOVING TO THE POLYPHONIC. AS UNDERSCORE:

ORFEO (WHISPER). Anxiety irritability
restlessness. Sadness.
Impulsiveness. Aggression.
Lack of sleep. Thirst.
Lack of sleep. Thirst.
Reduction of reduction of reduction of
Nausea.
Chills.

(ADD SECOND SEGMENT)

/Blurred vision.
Marked rise in body
Dehydration.
High blood..
Kidney failure.
Heart failure.
Irregular

heartbeat.

Panic.

Seizure.

Death.

SECOND SEGMENT:

ORFEO.

/If I still still...

If I...

If I if I.

If I...

Don't move.

If I refuse to draw this breath.

If I...

(ADD THIRD SEGMENT)

//Like a held tick of the hand of a...

Like a...

If I.

Like a

Like a

If I...

THIRD SEGMENT FOREFRONT:

ORFEO

(V/O) //I am in love with night if
you are the night. I will pass into
darkness. My tomorrows are ravage I will
not meet them, I will break with this I
will...

AN AVALANCHE OF NOISE, THE WORLD
OUTSIDE BUILDS TO A SHARP POINT.

THEN SILENCE...

Ext. BeachDAY

THE WAVES CRASH, THE BEACH UNWINDS.

ORFEO.

Where am I?

SOMEONE BREATHES, MOVES CLOSE BY...

ORFEO.

Riddy?

MOVES AWAY.

(V/O) I smell your skin.

HER LAUGH. HE SWOOPS, SHE MOVES.

ORFEO.

Riddy...

RIDDY

(PLAYFULLY) Tell me your name.

ORFEO.

Give me my phone.

RIDDY.

Tell me.

ORFEO.

Orfeo.

/Turn it off, I want to...

RIDDY.

/Orfeo...

Nice.

ORFEO.

You're here.

RIDDY.

Of course I'm here.

Now what is it you do?

ORFEO.

O, give me the phone

RIDDY

(TEASING) No, I want to know...

ORFEO.

I...

Music.

RIDDY.

Right.

ORFEO.

Riddy...

RIDDY.

Singer?

ORFEO.

Yeah.

RIDDY.

Wow.

ORFEO.

I don't...

RIDDY. Wow.

ORFEO. Listen to me...

RIDDY. Twenty million hits.

ORFEO. Who cares.

RIDDY. Anything you do, they watch.

ORFEO. A second of a moment in a room I sang.

RIDDY. You sang. They watched.

 Ten million, twenty million.

 The sirens.

ORFEO. What?

RIDDY. That's what they call themselves, your
girl /fans.

ORFEO. /They'd tear you to pieces they saw
this.

RIDDY. Kiss me.

ORFEO. Please turn that off.

 SHE TURNS IT OFF.

RIDDY. Just us.

 THE BEACH DIES OUT.

ORFEO (V/O) You unravel in my arms.

 Wait!

 SHE IS FURTHER AWAY. ORFEO RUNS AFTER.

 (V/O) You run in the waves, blinking,
splicing...

 (OUT-LOUD) Eurydice!

 THE SEA BREAKS UP. HE GASPS.

 (V/O) Can time break?

 Can time splinter?

 (OUT-LOUD) I could find you in these
places, if I could break through...

THE LAUGH. THE SEA MOVES UP AND OVER HIM
AND THEN...

Ext. Pool at a party

NIGHT

ORFEO.

Where am I?

MUSIC BACKGROUND, LAUGHTER.

(V/O) The shiver of that pool that no-one ever touched.

No-one looked at me.

That first party, where we met.

HE BREATHES.

I skirt round the edge of and I hear
your laugh like gravel and mess still
live in the world.

EURYDICE LAUGHS.

(TRYING TO PUSH THROUGH) Riddy!

Eurydice!

(V/O) You're here I can feel...

Your heat.

ANOTHER LAUGH.

(OUT-LOUD) Riddy!

(V/O) The hem of a dream. I glimpse your
slight hand brushing away that insistent
curl...

(PUSHING THROUGH) Excuse me, excuse me.

SHE LAUGHS, HE PUSHES THROUGH.

RIDDY.

Ow!

ORFEO.

Sorry...

RIDDY.

You're standing on my foot.

ORFEO.

Sorry sorry.

RIDDY.

Don't... Ow!

ORFEO. Sorry!

RIDDY. Now you're holding my hand.

ORFEO. Am I holding your hand?

RIDDY. You're holding my hand.

ORFEO. It's such a friendly /hand.

RIDDY. /Have we met?

ORFEO. No...

RIDDY. I feel like we...

ORFEO. Maybe in another life.

RIDDY. I don't believe in other lives.

ORFEO. Nor me.

(V/O, WHISPER) Did my heart love till now?

RIDDY. Could I have my hand back?

ORFEO. Yes, no. Sor/ry.

A SLOW MOTION TAKING OF A PHOTOGRAPH.

(V/O) /There was a photograph taken holding us frozen in that first moment.

It was on the front page of every newspaper.

RIDDY. Do we know each other?

ORFEO. Not yet.

HALF-BEAT.

RIDDY. I like your face.

ORFEO. Do you?

RIDDY. I feel like we...

Like we...

Like...

ORFEO. Come and have a drink with me?

RIDDY. Like we should always be going to have a drink.

SHE LAUGHS.

I'm Riddy.

THE CIRCLE CLOSES, PEOPLE AROUND HIM.

ORFEO. Wait, don't...

SHE'S GONE. HE TURNS.

You were...

Here.

Just...

I met you, here.

THE PLACE UNRAVELS, DISINTEGRATES.

ORFEO (V/O) The world folds in two.

THE WORLD FOLDS UP AS DESCRIBED..

The swimming pool swallowing tiles, they slide.

You slipping away.

(OUT-LOUD) Let me through!

Let me through!!

ORFEO RUNS.

Int. Door after Door

NIGHT

ORFEO (V/O) Door after door...

Our rooms.

Our streets.

The studios.

The bars.

HE PASSES THROUGH

Our beds

our escapes
 our touch
 our ripping each other
 our bruises
 our
 our
 our piers
 our journeys
 our kisses in cars.
 our
 our many many hotel rooms...

Int. Hotel Room

DAY

RIDDY SITS AT WINDOW, ORFEO SLEEPILY IN BED. VERY QUIET AND STILL.

ORFEO. Riddy.
 RIDDY. Ssssh.
 ORFEO. What you doing?
 RIDDY. Watching.
 ORFEO (YAWNS) What city is this?
 RIDDY. Chicago.
 ORFEO. What you watching?
 RIDDY. People.
 ORFEO. Who?
 ORFEO COMES OVER.
 RIDDY. There, guy in the felt hat half past ten.
 ORFEO. Artist, great hands - sells tiny little boxes of advertising.

ORFEO SIGHS.

ORFEO. You want room-service?

RIDDY. Nope.

I hate room-/service.

ORFEO. /You're not supposed to open these windows you know.

RIDDY. Blue car.

All dressed in white...

Going to a wedding?

ORFEO. Doctors!

RIDDY. Angels!

ORFEO. Out for a day trip.

HE STANDS AT WINDOW.

RIDDY. Look old men quarter to two.

ORFEO. Waiting for a bus.

RIDDY. Where they going?

ORFEO. Glory.

THEY BOTH LAUGH.

They decided to walk give 'em a bit more time.

RIDDY. The angels are out looking for them.

HIS PHONE BEEPS.

Aw, look at that little dog - throw it a ball and it brings it back, aww, that's happiness.

ORFEO. Apollo says he'll pick us up in ten.

HALF-BEAT.

RIDDY. Do we have to go?

ORFEO. Course we have to go.

RIDDY. Couldn't we just get on a bus to somewhere. I hate these glass rooms. We look out they look in.

ORFEO. It's just promotion.

RIDDY. Anything you do, they watch.

ORFEO. Who?

RIDDY. Your sirens.

I can't see them but I know they're down there, they've been there all night pressed so close to the door waiting for you waiting for you to come down.

ORFEO. I just sing.

RIDDY. And they watch.

The twenty million, the/forty million.

ORFEO. /My unkempt self.

RIDDY. Not so unkempt now.

BEAT.

ORFEO. Okay, red camper.

RIDDY. A woman.

ORFEO. She has all her children in the back.

RIDDY. She's getting out, she put the kids in the car she's out of here. She's been married ten years and ten years no-one spoke.

ORFEO. There's a little kid in the back.

BOTH. Boy.

ORFEO. He didn't want to go but he didn't want to stay either.

His father is silence.

Silence shutting the door.

Silence at the dinner table.

He put his foot through the boy's guitar.

RIDDY. Sounds like home.

ORFEO. Most nights they eat dinner without speaking. His mother stepping like a tightrope and the kid, he sees the way she pushes her food down her throat like it was small tight constricted place...

RIDDY. And then?

ORFEO. There's a little girl in the back, too small you can't see her head. When she grows up she's gonna be she's gonna be supreme like president of the United States.

RIDDY. It'll never happen.

ORFEO. That's why the woman drives.
Because she never wants that little girl to know what it is to be al/one.

RIDDY. /It'll make her so fierce.
To be so //alone.

ORFEO. //Packed up her bag she's gonna drive the longest line to the sea.

RIDDY. Where the sky is never broken.

ORFEO. She'll make it.

RIDDY. Sunset.

ORFEO. Music.

RIDDY. End.

ORFEO. And similarities to persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

BEAT.

RIDDY. Aw let's get out of here.

ORFEO. What?

RIDDY. Let's go somewhere. Nothing's real. You can't touch anything.

You can't open the window they're scared you'll throw yerself. And living here I would I would throw myself.

Let me feel your skin let me feel your face.

ORFEO. You're mad.

SHE KISSES.

(WHISPER) We can't, not now - Apollo...

RIDDY (PULLING AWAY) I hate Apollo.

ORFEO. Thanks to him we can do anything we want.

RIDDY. But we're not are we?

I want to be down there on the dirty streets.

No-one looking.

I want to go somewhere where no-one's heard of us.

I don't want to get my teeth fixed.

ORFEO (LAUGHS) What?!

Don't get your teeth fixed.

RIDDY. Or whitened.

ORFEO. Don't.

RIDDY. I want my arse to hang out my trousers I want to be beautifully overweight I want to drink disgustingly.

ORFEO. You do.

RIDDY. I don't want to wash my hair.

ORFEO. Don't then you slob.

SHE LAUGHS. THE PHONE BUZZES AGAIN.

RIDDY. O I hate him.

ORFEO. Everyone's waiting.

How do I look?

RIDDY. Perfect.

Too perfect.

BEAT.

ORFEO (V/O) And I know if I go outside the hotel room and come back in she won't be here. I hold on.

RIDDY. My hands are cold, that's the funny thing. I can't seem to get 'em warm.

ORFEO. Riddy.

SHE'S GONE, HE GASPS.

ORFEO (V/O) We wanted to have children, imagining them a girl and a boy, and another boy maybe...

We'd call him Elvis.

our

our late late night screaming

our

our

our coffee pots and unused plates and all the stuff we never got to get

our broken words

knives in the hearts

our bad dancing

our

our jokes with no punch lines

we loved

we loved

SUDDENLY THE THROWING UP OF SHEETS OF A BED.

Int. Bed

EARLY MORNING

UNDER THE COVERS. HE JUMPS AWAKE.

ORFEO. Riddy?

RIDDY. You had a bad dream.

ORFEO. I thought I lost /you.

RIDDY. /Sleep now.

ORFEO. It was so real.

RIDDY. (WHISPER) Don't open your eyes.

ORFEO. Are you here?

RIDDY. I'm here.

SHE TOUCHES HIM, ORFEO GASPS.

ORFEO. You're just slipped away so quickly. All the little details...

RIDDY. What little details?

BEAT.

ORFEO. Did none of this happen?

RIDDY. None of what happen?

PAUSE.

ORFEO. I had this terrible dream.

RIDDY. It's just a dream.

ORFEO. It was real.

RIDDY. Tell me?

ORFEO. No.

RIDDY. Tell me, it's o/kay.

ORFEO. /That you went away.

RIDDY. I would never go //away.

ORFEO. //That you... (it's stupid) died.

That...

RIDDY. No...

How?

ORFEO. O it doesn't matter.

RIDDY. Tell me?

ORFEO. It was just a dream it was just a stupid terrible terrible dream.

PAUSE.

RIDDY. At the Labyrinth?

ORFEO. What?

RIDDY. At the Labyrinth club - wasn't it. It, I was waiting for you - you you were late.

ORFEO (WHISPERS) Riddy.

RIDDY. Is this your dream or mine?

ORFEO. I don't know.

RIDDY. Did we love, did we love each other?

ORFEO. We did love each other.

RIDDY. Did we?

I can't remember.

Why are we saying did, like all this...

ORFEO. Riddy...

RIDDY. Where am I?

I'm so cold.

My feet are cold.

I can't see you I can't...

Hold me.

I can't feel your touch are you holding me now?

ORFEO TRIES TO HOLD ONTO HER SHE SLIPS THROUGH.

ORFEO. I am.

Don't go.

THE BED IS EMPTY. HE SOBS.

Your shape still weighs the air.

IT SPINS AND IS GONE. HE CAN'T HOLD ON...

Int. Apartment NIGHT

ORFEO GASPS SUDDENLY SITS UP. ORFEO WAKES.

APOLLO. Did you find her?

ORFEO. Yes.

No.

It was just memories.

They were just it was just...

She wasn't...

It.

BEAT.

I've got to get back.

Give me another hit.

APOLLO. You'll fade it's...

ORFEO. She's in the labyrinth, I know I can find her.

APOLLO. It's dangerous.

ORFEO. I know I can bring her back.

APOLLO. You'll disappear.

ORFEO. One last hit.

Apollo...

Please.

I've got to see her.

She thinks...

She...

That night something...

Something happened.

I...

APOLLO. What?

ORFEO. I was late I was...

APOLLO. What?

ORFEO. I've got to find her, I've got to tell her. I know then she'll come back she'll...

I can't do all this without her.

BEAT.

APOLLO. One last hit then.

HE KNOCKS THE VEIN.

Your blood's slowing.

A vein.

HE INJECTS, ORFEO GASPS.

APOLLO. Give it a minute.

THE ROOM TURNS A MINUTE.

ORFEO. Whoa.

APOLLO. Steady.

ORFEO. Why did the wall just ripple?

APOLLO. They do that sometimes.

MUSIC, LOW AND INSISTENT.

APOLLO. Hear that music?

ORFEO. I hear that music.

APOLLO. That's where you want to go.

ORFEO. What?

APOLLO. You want the echo the...

Find her voice.

BEAT.

ORFEO. Am I sleeping?

Am I...

APOLLO. You're starting to fade

ORFEO (V/O) My heart skips,
Then skips.

Skip...

BEAT.

A breath,

Pumps...

And.

And.

And.

A

LURCHES DOWNWARDS.

ORFEO (V/O) The floor...

THE CRACK OF THE FLOOR.

It lurches and drops.

HE FALLS THROUGH AND THE GROUND RAISES
UP TO MEET HIM.

Ext. Outside the Labyrinth Club NIGHT

MUSIC INSIDE, MUFFLED. HE JUMPS AWAKE.

BOY. Orfeo?

ORFEO JUMPS AWAKE.

ORFEO. Where am I?

PEOPLE ALL AROUND. THERE IS HEAVY MUSIC FROM INSIDE.

BOY. Outside the Labyrinth. You the worse for..?

ORFEO. Yes.

PEOPLE ALL ROUND REVERBERATES, HOLDS.

ORFEO. What is this place?

BOY. Not many living make it this far.

You still got flesh, they feel that.

ALL AROUND HIM WHISPERS, VOICES, A MOVEMENT.

ORFEO. Is my wife here?

BOY. I don't know.

ORFEO. Is it dawn,

Or night?

BOY. Undecided.

HALF-BEAT.

Do you remember me?

ORFEO. Sorry?

BOY. It's me.

ORFEO. I...

BOY. We...

ORFEO. Sure.

BOY. We met.

ORFEO. Sure.

BOY. You wrote your name on my arm.

ORFEO. I wrote my name...?

BOY. Green pen.

Do you remember?

BEAT.

ORFEO. Look I'm really really sorry but I need to find my wife I think she's in the Labyrinth.

BOY. And tell her what?

ORFEO. I gotta go.

BOY. That those sweet sweet hours when you should have been with her...

ORFEO. I love her.

BOY. ..you were with me.

ORFEO. There was an accident, /she...

BOY. /She fell.

I know.

It's so easy...

ORFEO. How are you //here?

BOY. //I know that now.

No way back, right.

ORFEO. Right

BOY. I love you

ORFEO. I gotta go...

ORFEO PUSHES THE DOOR AND ENTERS THE LABYRINTH.

Int. Corridor of Club

NIGHT

THE MUSIC BANGS. THROUGH IT COMES...

RIDDY. Orfeo...

HER VOICE DISTORTS, BECOMES HARDER TO HEAR - STARTS TO BREAK UP.

Orfeo?

(ECHOING, COMING NEAR & FARTHER)

ORFEO. Riddy?

HE TURNS A CORNER, IT BECOMES MORE LIKE A LABYRINTH. THE MUSIC GROWS.

RIDDY. I'm lost.

ORFEO. Where are you?

RIDDY. I don't know I don't know.

ORFEO. I'll find you, I'm here...

RIDDY. I can't find my way out.

ORFEO. Where are you?

RIDDY. Please come and get me.

ORFEO. I will I am.

RIDDY. Please don't leave me here...

ORFEO. I won't I promise.

RIDDY. I can't, I can't find my way /out.

ORFEO. /I'll find you, where are you?

RIDDY. No.

HE GOES THROUGH TO WHERE THE DANCE-FLOOR OPENS OUT.

ORFEO. Riddy?

RIDDY. The people.

ORFEO. I'm through them.

RIDDY. They're...

ORFEO. What?

RIDDY. O no...

ORFEO. What?

RIDDY. I

ORFEO (V/O) They ripple...
They know I shouldn't...
(OUT-LOUD) Be here.
(V/O) They are an ocean...
And I
(OUT-LOUD) Cut through.

RIDDY. They're dead.

ORFEO. Riddy?

BEAT.

Riddy?

THE MUSIC RISES, ORFEO FIGHTS HIS WAY THROUGH AND THROUGH TO...

Int. VIP ROOM NIGHT

THE MUSIC RUMBLES BEHIND HIM. A WOMAN, HADES.

HADES. Hello Orfeo.

ORFEO. How do you know my name?

HADES. I know everyone's name.

ORFEO. Where's my wife?

HADES. The bigger question is can I let you live? Hades does not endure the living.

ORFEO. This is Hades?

HADES. I am Hades.

ORFEO. What are you going to do /with me?

HADES. /I could throw you out to some dark dark place no-one would ever remember.

ORFEO. But...

HADES. But to fling you out would be to remind my guests of breath, of beat, of the tearing open.

Here they still walk in their dreams. They don't believe yet what's happened to them.

And...

After-all...

BEAT.

I want to hear you sing.

ORFEO. No.

HADES. No?

ORFEO. I'm not going to /sing.

HADES. /You're a singer.

ORFEO. Am I?

HADES. The most famous I hear.

Troubadour, they make dolls of you.

ORFEO. To sell records.

HADES. Of course to sell records. Isn't that how you all live - transaction after transaction?

ORFEO (SIGHS) I don't want it to /be.

HADES. /An object of desire?

ORFEO. I don't want to be.

HADES. Pretty.

A doll...

BEAT.

ORFEO. I come for Eurydice.

HADES. How will she know you?

ORFEO. Why wouldn't she /know...?

HADES. /You don't seem to know yourself.
How will she recognize you Orfeo?
PAUSE.

ORFEO. We're the same we...
She'd lived outside,
She had..
Scars.
HALF-BEAT.
She was the gap
The
vacancy,
the
other

in me.

I had this song..
That no-one could..
Touch.
That..
BEAT.
I could have sung the world into being.
HALF-BEAT.

HADES. And the rest, as they say...

ORFEO. We
were the same.
We
knew

what it meant

to...

live alone

PAUSE.

HADES. To die alone you mean.

Int. Corridor of hotel NIGHT

ORFEO. ..who is /it!

POLICEMAN. /Please sir, step back from this, you can't...

ORFEO. This is my hotel room, this is my
//room

ORFEO PASSES THROUGH, HEARING THE VOICES
NOW FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR.

Int. Hotel Room NIGHT

THEY LISTEN.

POLICEMAN. //I know who you are.

ORFEO. Who is it?

POLICEMAN. A young woman, I ///can't say..

ORFEO (SHOVES) ///Let me in, let me, I've..., get the..

POLICEMAN (STRUGGLE) I need help ///here, I need..

ORFEO. ///Is it my wife?!

HE SOBS.

Int. VIP Room. NIGHT

ORFEO. Sprawled across a bed, why always
sprawled across a bed? No clothes.
That's what they said, in the papers.
Like they were there, like they knew.

But she wasn't, she she was rolled up
small on the sofa her coat still on.

Like she had tried to protect herself
from death like she tried to hold on...

No gorgon's blast...

No...

Curse...

Just

BEAT.

Look I just need to tell her...

She's the love of my life.

She's the love of my life the...

HADES. Keep saying it.

ORFEO. ...that's why I've got to bring her back.

Without her

I'm a shell

I'm...

A wound

Like a...

thing a thing a thing

with the middle cut out of it.

PAUSE.

HADES (SIGHS) If you see her again is there
any part of you she would recognise?

ORFEO. I don't know I don't know I...

BEAT.

My song.

HADES. You promised that to Apollo...

ORFEO. What?

HADES. ...you said you would give him your song.

BEAT.

ORFEO. I lied.

HADES. Did you?

ORFEO It's the only thing she'll know.

BEAT.

HADES. Your voice a whisper, a breath of the
silence. She might hear.

ORFEO. She'll hear.

HADES. Death might let you...

ORFEO. What?

HADES. Uncouple her.

Shoot holes through her,

Bring her back to the ramshackle.

ORFEO STANDS.

Go to that door.

When you step through...

Cajole death.

Call back your Eurydice...

Maybe she'll hear.

BEAT.

If she does, draw her back up the paths
towards life, but do not listen to me do
not look at her for death will not allow
the dead to be seen as they are, no-one
must know what...

ORFEO. Okay.

HADES. If you...

Look at her she will...

Eurydice will...

Become an impossible fact.

Not till you hit the streets of day will
she be whole.

PAUSE.

Through that door.

ORFEO. What's through there?

HADES. The place she left from.

ORFEO. The hotel room?

HADES. Are you afraid?

ORFEO. Yes.

HADES. Go through.

HE GOES THROUGH.

Int. Hotel Room NIGHT

THE ROOM IS SILENCE.

ORFEO. No.

(V/O) I can't.

I choke.

(OUT-LOUD) You're here.

(V/O) This hotel room, this place of
death.

I do not look at you.

Nothing.

THE SILENCE HOLDS.

ORFEO (OUT-LOUD) I can't sing

HE FACES AWAY FROM HER.

HE SOBS.

ORFEO

(V/O) My voice parched..

Shapes empty

I can't

My

throat

reach

undo

skin

a ghost of pain somewhere

cries through my

bowels

my eyes

my bones

my song

I call you.

THE CRY, A STRANGE DISTORTED THING
REACHES HER.

RIDDY

(V/O) If.

If.

This...

If...

If I...

This.

Like...

Like a...

If I.

Like a

Like a

If I...

SHE MOVES.

ORFEO

Riddy...?

(Don't look, don't look don't look)

SHE JUMPS AGAIN LIKE A HEART RE-
STARTING.

RIDDY.

(V/O) I

I

ORFEO

(URGENTLY, LIKE THEIR STORY CALLS HER
BACK) You loved dawn, it's nearly dawn
now.

When we're crashing but we keep going,
we keep...

We run.

We...

You

Ahead of me always ahead of me.

HE SOBS ONCE.

WITH EACH GASP OF PAIN AS SHE IS RE-
FRESHED, SHE JUMPS LIKE A HEART RE-
STARTING.

RIDDY

(V/O) Don't.

Don't.

Clasped.

Don't.

If I

This

Like a

Like a

ORFEO. Riddy...

RIDDY. (V/O) If I...
Don't.

ORFEO. Do you remember catching the dawn
drinking cider out of a cheap plastic
bottle?

Eating crisps and smoking other people's
cigarettes?

Stealing vodka.

And spliffs and...

Just us.

Our nothings our nobodies.

Us and the breaking sky.

Riddy.

The morning is here.

RIDDY (V/O) Don't...

SHE GASPS A BREATH.

ORFEO. Riddy!

RIDDY (V/O) If I if I if I if I if I if I if I

GASPS.

ORFEO I don't look at you I don't look at you.

RIDDY. (V/O) Don't make me...

If I refuse to draw this breath.

If I...

This breath...

If I...

Could hold this

If I...

Like a held tick of the hand of
a...

Like a...

If I.

Like a

Like a

If I...

Could I hold myself /here?

ORFEO (V/O) /And you...

And you...

I feel you,

You

You wake.

SHE TAKES A BREATH.

ORFEO. You're breathing.
(V/O) I can't look at you.

RIDDY. What's my name?

ORFEO. Eurydice.

RIDDY. I don't remember that name.

ORFEO. We must...

RIDDY. Where am I?

ORFEO. You're...

RIDDY. Where am I?

ORFEO. We're just..

INTERLUDE.

RIDDY. Why won't you look at me?

ORFEO. I'm just, we need to get out of here.

RIDDY. What's your name?

ORFEO. Orfeo.

RIDDY. Orfeo?

ORFEO. Yes.

RIDDY. Orfeo...

I know that...

MOMENT.

My Orfeo?

ORFEO. Yes

BEAT.

RIDDY. No you're not..

He didn't...

Look...

HALF-BEAT.

He's young.

ORFEO. I'm young.

RIDDY. You're stooped.

You're...

STOPS.

Where is he?

BEAT.

ORFEO. I'm taking you to him.

We just, if you...

INTERLUDE.

RIDDY. Why does it grow dimmer?

ORFEO. It's dawn.

RIDDY. What did you say my name was?

BEAT.

ORFEO. Eurydice.

RIDDY. No.

I can't...

What's my.

If I if I if I...

Who?

ORFEO. I called you Riddy.

RIDDY. Why does it go dimmer I...

STOPS.

Where am I?

ORFEO. You had a bad dream.

RIDDY. It was so real.

ORFEO. You slipped away.

RIDDY. Am I dead?

ORFEO. What?

RIDDY. Am I alive?

ORFEO. Alive.

RIDDY. Then how come I keep appearing and disappearing? Did you not see that?

ORFEO. No.

RIDDY. There is emptiness then I'm here.
Emptiness...

Do I live?

ORFEO. You do.

Don't be scared.

RIDDY. I'm not scared.

This emptiness is mine.

INTERLUDE.

ORFEO. Do you remember?

RIDDY. Remember /what?

ORFEO. /What happened.

To you?

INTERLUDE.

RIDDY. I

I

I was,
The night was
so loud.
I...
The noise,
All over
Seized and squeezed
My heart.
THE NOISE GROWS.
I lost my shoes.
I was, choking.
I was,
Cold.
My hands were shaking shaking..
I.

Orfeo, he..

ORFEO. What?

RIDDY. He didn't come.

I took a pill, just to..
I wanted, just for a couple of hours.

INTERLUDE.

RIDDY. He thought we were like the same skin.

ORFEO. We are the same skin.

RIDDY. No.

SHE STOPS.

Why don't you look at me?

Look at me.

ORFEO. I can't.

RIDDY. Do I know you, have we met?

ORFEO (V/O) The world is outside this door,
its great strain.

(OUT-LOUD) Look, we have to go - we have
to get out of here.

SHORT INTERLUDE.

RIDDY. Do I know you?

ORFEO. I called you back.

RIDDY. Orfeo?

ORFEO (V/O) She by the edge of the world.
So close.
Just outside this door.
Its dirt, buses pass beneath.
The early workers never dreaming of the
closeness of death.
Like a sweep of my flesh, I know she
sees me.

RIDDY. Look at me.

ORFEO. No.

RIDDY. Orfeo look at me.

ORFEO. I can't.

BEAT.

RIDDY. Why didn't you come?

ORFEO. I was...

RIDDY. What?

ORFEO. I did come I came here to find you.

RIDDY. You're late.

 PAUSE.

 You were with someone.

 Right?

 BEAT.

 Right?

ORFEO. No.

 BEAT.

RIDDY. Same as always.

ORFEO. What do you mean, same as...

RIDDY. Same as always

ORFEO. ...

RIDDY. Everyone knows the stories Orfeo.

ORFEO. What stories?

RIDDY. The boys.

 BEAT.

 Right?

 HALF-BEAT.

ORFEO. No.

RIDDY. I bet they love you,

 Right?

 PAUSE.

ORFEO Why couldn't you look away Riddy.

 Like everyone else.

 You with your relentless gaze...

 Seeing everything.

I wanted oblivion I wanted...

To switch it off.

RIDDY. Then why did you love me?

ORFEO. I wanted to taste life.

I'm a wolf I...

And how you lived.

On the edge of a knife

So sharp.

I love you.

You are the love of my /life.

RIDDY. /I hate words.

BEAT.

ORFEO. I'm not lying.

RIDDY. Except to yourself.

PAUSE.

The bitter taste that you...

Make of us...

I know,

What we are.

Know what you scored in between and
before.

The scratches and scars

I know.

But you,

All my fire

You look away.

BEAT.

RIDDY. Look at me.

ORFEO. I can't.

RIDDY. Look at me.

ORFEO. If I look at you I will lose you.

RIDDY. No.

You'll know me

Orfeo.

Look at me.

ORFEO. Come outside to the morning.

RIDDY. No,

Here.

Now.

N o w...

HE TURNS TO HER, GASPS.

ORFEO (WHISPERS) You burn my eyes.

A LIFTING.

RIDDY. You see me

Unmade and unravelled

As I am.

ORFEO (SOBS) Riddy, don't...

RIDDY. I

unword

myself

I

I

scatter.

A LIFTING, LIKE A BLOWING AWAY OF LEAVES
OR SAND. SILENCE SETTLES AND HOLDS AS HE
STANDS, JUST HIS.

SILENCE.

EVENTUALLY HE HEARS HIMSELF BREATHING.

ORFEO

(OUT-LOUD) She had..

She...

There was...

SILENCE.

I'm...

Her name...

Her name her...

Her...

She...

Her name.

Her marvellous name was...

Eurydice.

It's all I have left of her.

THE SOUND OF THE BUSY CITY GROWS, THEN
ROARS.

Int. BathroomNIGHT

ORFEO LURCHES INTO SITTING WITH A GREAT BREATH. APOLLO IS STILL THERE.

ORFEO. Where am I?

APOLLO. Still on the bathroom floor.

ORFEO. Not moved?

APOLLO. Where is she?

BEAT.

Did you find her?

ORFEO. Yes.

APOLLO. And she didn't you didn't?

ORFEO. No.

APOLLO. She didn't want to..

ORFEO. No.

APOLLO. ...come back.

Right.

ORFEO SOBS FOR A MOMENT PULLS IT BACK.

She knew then.

ORFEO. Knew what?

APOLLO. What we all know.

ORFEO. What do you all know?

BEAT.

APOLLO. Your friends.

ORFEO Get out.

Get out!

APOLLO GETS UP.

APOLLO. Next week then.

ORFEO. Next week what?

APOLLO. Your song.

ORFEO. No.

APOLLO. You think you can hide this?

ORFEO. I don't care.

APOLLO. You don't think it will all, you know...

ORFEO. I don't care.

APOLLO. ...get messy, get...

ORFEO. I don't give a...

APOLLO. ...into the...

ORFEO. Into the /what?

APOLLO. /It will people will...

ORFEO. I don't care.

APOLLO. I'm just trying to work out where you are on this trajectory

ORFEO. What?

APOLLO. This career trajectory. Whether you're worth more to me dead or alive?

ORFEO. Get out.

HE GRABS APOLLO PUSHES HIM TO THE DOOR.

ORFEO. Tell them, tell everything.

All I am I don't care.

Whisper it, tweet it, spread out the pictures.

APOLLO. There are pictures.

(By the way)

Next week.

HE SLIPS OUT THE DOOR, THE DOOR CLICKS SHUT.

ORFEO STANDS, GETTING HIS BREATH.

ORFEO

(V/O) And then I know what to do.

That there is nobody, nobody in the
world I want to look at.

That there is nobody, nothing..

My heart spooned out...

My eyes burnt...

My tongue...

BEAT.

Nothing.

I will go out,

Go out to the sirens.

They will know what to do with me.

HE OPENS THE DOOR AND GOES DOWN THE
STAIRS AND OUTSIDE TO THE STREET.

THE CRIES AND SCREAMS OF THE SIRENS RISE
AS THE STREET OPENS OUT TO HIM.

CHAPTER TWO

COMPOSING THE UNDERWORLD: RHYTHMIC ENCOUNTERS AND EXCAVATING THE UNUTTERABLE

This chapter develops a Dramaturgy of Silence through interrogating the relationship between words and silence. It questions how silence can be used not only to impact the radio play form but furthermore as a vehicle to dismantle both narrative and language. To illuminate my practice-led insights through a Dramaturgy of Silence, I develop a compositional approach and bring together ideas from Kristeva and Blanchot to examine notions of how silence might both break into and out of language.

The practice, my radio play *Orpheus and Eurydice* (2015), is a contemporary reimagining of the myth realised as a forty-five minute radio play commissioned by BBC Radio Four. The Orpheus myth is a potent rendering of a journey into silence, a crossing of the Underworld towards death and failure. Orpheus glances back at his dead wife, she dissolves back into death and he returning to the world, meets his death through the Ciconian⁹ women – his dismembered head still singing as it floats down the river. Is it possible then for silence ever to overwhelm noise? This chapter uses the compositional processes of A Dramaturgy of Silence to elucidate how a text through a process of reduction and fragmentation might become an invitation for silence to emerge.

This statement may seem contradictory when considering not the text but the recording of *Orpheus and Eurydice*. The impact of the soundscape created in the post-production edit and addition of music would seem to make silence more impossible; the play itself saturated in sound. Therefore, is it the case that a

⁹In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, I use the Sirens (instead of the Ciconian women) to represent Orpheus' fans, who ultimately tear him to pieces. Orpheus encounters the sirens in Apollonius of Rhodes' epic poem, *Argonautica* (3rd century BC). Here, Orpheus rescues the Argonauts from the enticing songs of the Sirens through the playing of his lyre, consequently overwhelming their voices (2008).

movement towards silence in a radio play can only ever be an idea, a metaphor, or a reduction of sound? Notwithstanding, this discourse argues that realisations of silence extend profoundly beyond ‘an absence of noise’. Absolute silence may well be impossible, but silence becomes palpable for the listener through silences of absences, through the experience of grief and unutterable loss that words cannot articulate, and ultimately through a silence of death which pervades the end of the play.

Alongside its examination of silence, this chapter will also take into account silence’s dynamic relationship with the radio play, most significantly the radio play’s substance of sound. Sound is immersive, as Frances Dyson comparing it to new media writes:

Sound is the immersive medium par excellence. Three-dimensional, interactive, and synesthetic, perceived in the here and now of an embodied space, sound returns to the listener the very same qualities that media mediates: that feeling of being here now, of experiencing oneself as engulfed, enveloped, absorbed, enmeshed, in short, immersed in an environment. Sound surrounds (2009, p.5).

A radio play conceived as a sound movement challenges the writer to re-consider it not only as a play-text whose function is to tell a story, but also as a text-score that in its immediacy evolves like music through compositional elements. A radio play in these terms is immediate, temporal, rhythmic, vibrational and always in a process of variation, echoing Bergson’s ideas of motion and flow as ‘repeated and successive vibrations, bound together by an inner continuity’ (1998, p.203). This chapter examines these ideas of movement in the radio play through notions of rhythm and musicality, whilst expanding on the use of musical techniques such as the fugue and the polyphonic to find new ways to invoke silence.

BEGINNINGS – RE-IMAGINING THE MYTH

BBC Radio Four commissioned my radio play *Orpheus and Eurydice* as part of a season of work created by the Royal Opera House exploring the myth of Orpheus. The season included a production of *Orphée et Eurydice*, Gluck's opera at the Royal Opera House (2015), *Orpheus*, Rossi's baroque opera at the Globe Theatre (2015) and Little Bulb's *Orpheus* at the Battersea Arts Centre (2015). In addition, the poet Simon Armitage envisaged two contemporary radio plays that retold the story from the two separate views of Orpheus and Eurydice – a female telling of the Orpheus story and a male telling of Eurydice. I was privileged to write the Orpheus version, re-imagined as *Orpheus & Eurydice* (2015), whilst Armitage retold the story of Eurydice in *Eurydice & Orpheus* (2015). The brief was for two separate plays with a linked moment at the beginning, in this case a translation from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (2004) translated by Armitage. Original music by PJ Harvey also appeared in both productions.

The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice haunts western consciousness, emerging repeatedly as inspiration for both artists and philosophers. Orpheus' journey into the underworld and his glance backwards that ends the possibility of bringing his wife back to life has resonated and repeated, the mythical musician passing through the ages for the price of a song. In Neil Gaiman's radio-documentary *Orpheus Underground*, Margaret Atwood comments, 'It's the story which is infinitely translatable into your meanings, your time and in fact if it doesn't get translated into your meanings and your time it will die' (2015, 5.42-5.55). In Gaiman's poem 'Orphee' (2015), he develops the theme of not looking back, echoing the damage done by Orpheus' backward glance and the terror of memory. My own interpretation questioned what a journey into silence might be for an Orpheus of the digitalised generation and how the form of the radio play might dynamically communicate that.

My primary source material was Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a narrative poem written in Latin in the eighth century AD. Book X describes vividly the 'double death of Eurydice' (2004, p.226). Additionally, the earlier telling of Orpheus and Eurydice in Virgil's *Georgics* (published early in the first century), is a deeply poetic rendering told in less than eighty lines (2001). This version positions Orpheus and Eurydice more equally – only Eurydice audibly speaks as she reprimands Orpheus for his glance back at her. Eurydice's voice and ownership of her death and silence, was also vital to my interpretation of the myth. In my telling, although told through Orpheus' journey, Eurydice would be central.

The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is briefly as follows: Orpheus, a famous musician, marries Eurydice but on their wedding night, a venomous snake kills Eurydice. Orpheus cannot accept his wife is dead so he finds a doorway into the Underworld through which he passes. He crosses the Underworld, pleads with Hades (Persephone / Proserpine) to give him back his wife, and then overwhelms the dead with the playing of his (hollow) lyre. Orpheus regains Eurydice but as he draws her back towards the surface of the living, he looks back at her. She then relapses into death and Orpheus proceeds to dismemberment. The Ciconian women cut off his head but it continues to sing as it floats down the river.

With these as source material and an expanse of adaptations in poetry, theatre, opera, fiction and film, my initial approach was to research the myth through material that resonated conceptually, structurally or thematically with my new imagining as a radio play. Primarily, my main concerns were silence, immediacy, grief, the use of the digital to illuminate memory, and an anti-linear, fragmenting narrative.

Structurally, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (2001), which certainly holds echoes of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, was helpful in charting Orpheus' journey. Baz Luhrman's 1996 film version became an early inspiration; a fast, kinetic, vividly

visual film that uses images and music to strip back the story to its essence. I imagined the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice re-told as a twisted version of Shakespeare's tragic play but in reverse, starting at the death of Juliet in the way the Orpheus myth begins with the death of Eurydice. It would then work backwards through the plot points as follows:

1. The first moment of the play would be a development of the charged grief of Romeo when he discovered his dead Juliet.
2. The vial of poison that the Friar gives Juliet would become the vehicle into the place of near-death for Orpheus, a way into the Underworld.
3. Romeo and Juliet's short love affair and marriage envisaged through a collection of Orpheus' memories (mostly) held in time digitally – a tiny film on a phone, a photograph of their first meeting and then an extended scene in a hotel room, finally a moment in bed.
4. The Underworld would appear as a party (the Capulet ball) – ultimately Hades reimagined as a nightclub in the Underworld.
5. To wind the play back towards the ambiguity of Romeo's relationship with Mercutio would resonate Ovid's imagining of Orpheus' sexual encounters with boys.
6. Rolling back to the meeting of Romeo and Juliet, Eurydice's awakening becomes the first moment of hearing her real voice.
7. The end becomes the beginning. Romeo heart-broken by a girl he never knew becomes the devastating reality of Orpheus, leading to his death.

This plan helped me to navigate the movements the myth would pass through, considering dramaturgically how each section compositionally created an opportunity to provoke different silences as part of a narrative movement towards the culminating silence at the end of the play.

My reading broadened to David Grossman's hymn of grief *Falling Out of Time* (2015), in which a man responding to the loss of his child through war embarks on a journey to reclaim him from the dead. The movement towards death within the writing and the shaping of the grief, even how the words looked on the page, was indispensable to my thinking of Orfeo's¹⁰ journey. Additionally Ann Wroe's book *Orpheus, the Song of Life* (2014), charting the Orpheus myth through the ages, became a valuable resource to explore possibilities of what that underworld journey might be. As Wroe distinguishes between possible readings of Orpheus' journey, from Freudian dreams, mystic suffering through to the psychological, she suggests 'his journey was the need to recover memories and retrieve what was lost' (2014, p.134). Here, I began to speculate whether it should be a journey of the mind or an actual journey, or somehow both.

In Orfeo's first dive into the Underworld I used memory windows to re-visit past events that Orfeo now experiences knowing Eurydice is dead. Christopher Nolan uses memory windows in his film *Inception* (2010), a re-telling of the Orpheus myth set predominantly in the dreaming mind. Cobb, the main character breaks into people's dreams (to steal or create memories), but in the dreamscape is stalked and haunted by his dead wife Mal. Here memory windows are used to examine their past relationship – Mal initially appears as an uninvited character disrupting the first scam (inside a dream) of the film. Later, she is glimpsed literally locked in the nightmare basement of Cobb's memory. These memory windows are never flashbacks because they happen in the present, whilst colliding or colluding with the memory they inhabit within the dream. Consequently, each memory window renegotiates the present action (and sometimes the past memory).

¹⁰ When indicating Orpheus in the radio play, I will from now on use the name as used in the text, 'Orfeo'.

A similar inspiration, Charlie Kaufman's film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) uses 'memory windows' in its time-reversing narrative as a way to stop the main character Joel losing his love Clementine. The narrative of the film literally wipes her from his memory, whilst Joel fights through multiple memory-windows to arrest each erasure by subverting or fleeing the memory-window whilst still installed within it. In terms of the development of a compositional narrative in *A Dramaturgy of Silence* in a radio play (discussed later), this non-linear narrative works as a continual evolving present moment whilst juxtaposing both its past and present, maintaining the immediacy of the aural paradigm.

At my elbow throughout was Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* (2012), poems both strange and elusive that continually float different possibilities of how the myth is understood, significantly addressing Eurydice three times but also alluding to her within the imagery. In Sonnet II:15, Rilke suggestively evokes a fountain-mouth, through which water from the hill, passing graves, carries speech or sound to the fountain-mouth:

And so it is, she calls

only to herself alone. Push in to fill a pitcher

and she feels as if you have interrupted her. (2012, p.97)

I was interested in this idea of Eurydice not wanting to be disturbed or interrupted in her death. The idea of death being a state of post-language, a silence that might not want to return to the finiteness of words suggested to me that Eurydice did not dissolve at Orfeo's backward glance at all, but chose to remain in her deathness. It offered an opportunity to create a compositional technique to elucidate how Eurydice took ownership of her own silence.

However, before examining the compositional processes of working with a Dramaturgy of Silence, I now construct a conceptual framework that considers both how silence is drawn into language and how it ultimately confronts the narrative structure of the play itself.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK – COMPOSITIONAL STRATEGIES

EFFRACTION

In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Julia Kristeva rejects language bound by order and meaning. She identifies a poetic and embodied space which she reclaims as ‘the semiotic’ that lies between and beneath language; ‘rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation it is musical, anterior to judgement, but restrained by a single guarantee: syntax’ (1984, p.29). Kristeva rejects a disembodied and inert semiotics, resituating language as a movement from the body (continually negotiating and fluctuating between impulses and interactions) towards language, the dynamic bodily drives (the chora) partaking in its forming. Indeed, for Kristeva, this motion from body to word, ‘charges, bursts, pierces, deforms, reforms and transforms’ language (ibid, p.103).

In trying to categorise this territory, two additional definitions express the dynamic possibilities of using Kristeva’s semiotic to elucidate silence’s relationship with the radio play. Firstly, Kristeva’s use of the word ‘effraction¹¹’ (meaning a robbery or break-in) suggests the semiotic breaks into language to question and dismantle it (ibid, p.55). Additionally, Anna Smith describes this unmetered rhythm as ‘a radical dislocation of space’ (1996, p.109). The power of both definitions (dislocation and

¹¹ Translated as ‘breaching’. Translator notes however in French, ‘effraction’, is ‘the judicial term for ‘breaking and entering’’ (1984, p.247).

effraction) provocatively suggests that rhythm is more than a gesture of musicality but has the potential to pierce the surface layer of language and reshape it profoundly. Kristeva, in *Desire in Language*, proposes words can move beyond meaning and can function kinetically:

The poet [...] wants to turn rhythm into a dominant element [...] make language perceive what it doesn't want to say, provide it with its matter independently of the sign, and free it from denotation (1980, p.31).

Whilst Kristeva does not acknowledge silence as a central dynamic of this rhythm, one of her earliest texts *Séméiotike* (1969), compellingly echoes Beckett's notion of boring holes into language¹² (1984, p.172). Smith translates and conjoins this idea through Kristeva's writing, 'Not content with the surface layers of meaning in language, the text of poetic language "excavates a vertical in the surface of the word" (*Sém*: 9), and discovers there a "corridor" (*Sém*: 287) opening on to a "vast expanse of emptiness" (*Sém*: 275)' (1996, p.88). Here, both Beckett and Kristeva propose perforating language to reveal the silence beneath, although Beckett's notion of nothingness differs from Kristeva's notion of emptiness (both of which will be further discussed in Chapter Three). However, Kristeva's definition of effraction (referring back to its original designation as house-breaking) also illuminates how silence can break into words through fragmentation and punctuation; unpicking language, underscoring and challenging its meaning and ultimately breaking language open to allow the unexpressed or unsayable to emerge.¹³

Transferring these understandings of Kristeva's 'semiotic' to the radio play, repositions the radio play as a metalanguage of silence and words, continually

¹² In *Typology of Silence: Unworded Silence* (p.15).

¹³ In *Typology of Silence: Housebreaking* (p.32).

renegotiating meaning through its radical rhythmic textures. It again echoes Bergson's aural paradigm of a creative duration moving kinetically, 'successive notes of a tune [...] a succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another' (1910, p.104). It illustrates how a Dramaturgy of Silence evolves compositionally in a radio play as something akin to a music-score, the word-silence encounter working mutually as an immediate, immersive sound experience whilst simultaneously developing the narrative's movement within the durational aural experience – words, silence, and narrative working as convergent stratum. In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, these three elements would ultimately coincide as the narrative progressed to a point where words were no longer possible. Here silence would instate its primacy through death, the play literally crossing the Underworld from words to silence, from life to death. This brings me to the second part of my conceptual framework.

WHAT NIGHT HOLDS

In his essay 'The Gaze of Orpheus,' Maurice Blanchot considers Orpheus' backwards glance to Eurydice, as a glance towards what he calls 'the *other* night' (1981, p.99, emphasis in original). This glance for Blanchot interrogates the limitation of the artist/writer. He uses Eurydice as a metaphor for that beyond the limits of an artwork, 'the profoundly dark point towards which art, desire, death, and the night all seem to lead. She is the instant in which the essence of the night approaches as the *other* night' (ibid, p.99). Blanchot then discusses what the effect of glancing at the *other* night might be on the artist/writer and their work. Compellingly, what the artist glances towards in the *other* night is death; beyond words or seeing, its silence beyond reach.

I would however like to use Blanchot's metaphor to tease out two ideas to attempt to illuminate my practice. The first considers Eurydice as silence itself (already imbricated in Blanchot's writing), whilst the second idea reconsiders Eurydice through the *other* night, as a position of how women might distinctly understand and experience silence. Before I expand on these ideas, I first include Blanchot's description of the dead Eurydice in full:

In her nocturnal darkness, in her distance, her body closed, her face sealed, which wants to see her not when she is visible, but when she is invisible, and not as the intimacy of a familiar life, but as the strangeness of that which excludes all intimacy; it does not want to make her live, but to have the fullness of her death living in her (ibid, p.100).

Tom McCarthy (2001) describes Blanchot as wanting 'death itself, in full absence and deathness'. Blanchot's famous quote: 'Silence is impossible. That's why we desire it' (1995, p.11) manifests this same longing. Silence invites us but we must look away from what it represents. Silence holds this nocturnal darkness; we desire its depths but cannot traverse it. Beyond language, words are inadequate. Karmen MacKendrick writes, 'We can only approach silence, indicating where it would be, if we could say it' (2001, p.5).

Here, then, is an edge, words curtailed. However, Michel Foucault (writing on Blanchot) allows language to traverse this edge, 'Into that void it must go, consenting to come undone in the rumbling, in the immediate negation of what it says, in a silence that is not the intimacy of a secret but a pure outside where words endlessly unravel' (1987, p.22). Language fragments or in fact the writer fragments language, drawing silence into it. Through fragmentation, silence exposes the limitation of language and yet Blanchot recognises in this exposure a return. The

failure of language in its finiteness when exposed to silence is undone and in that moment, its limits extinguished. Blanchot sees in the instance of Orpheus' gaze something 'which sets free the essence of the night, [...] interrupts the incessant by revealing it' (ibid, p.104).

In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, the use of fragmented language to unleash silence was central to the writing. Furthermore, within the narrative I attempted to instil silence gradually, as the play continually traverses towards its edge, moving across the Underworld. By the end, Orfeo has no words, nothing left to say – his only option is death. Blanchot looks into the night as an artist, destroying the possibility of the making but Orfeo looks into the night as a man, destroying the possibility of continuing as he is. Like Blanchot, the understanding of what the *other* night means changes him forever. Orfeo fragments. For Foucault, fragmented writing becomes 'Infused [...] with an inner transparency' (1987, p.23), fragmentation invites silence, as language atomises silence expands. Ultimately, for Orfeo (like Eurydice), his fragmentation becomes a 'scattering,' wherein the silence of death takes centre stage.

My second idea drawn from Blanchot's '*other* night,' examines an embodied silence realised through a female body. Blanchot's descriptions of the dead Eurydice, the 'profoundly dark point', 'nocturnal darkness', 'distance', 'body closed', 'face sealed', 'invisible', 'strangeness', 'the fullness of her death living in her' (1981, p.100), might illustrate historically women's experience of being silent and silenced; positioning the woman as the other, the unknowable, that which does not speak. Yet for Adrienne Rich this 'dark core' (a term she borrows from Woolf¹⁴) is part of a woman:

¹⁴ From *To the Lighthouse*: 'To be silent; to be alone. All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others' (1964, p.72).

We begin out of the void, out of darkness and emptiness. [...] Out of death, rebirth: out of nothing, something. The void is the creative, the matrix. It is not mere hollowness and anarchy. [...] We are not supposed to go down into the darkness of the core. Yet, if we can risk it, the something born of that nothing is the beginning of our truth (1980, p.191).

Instilled in Rich's definition is the sense of an embodied silence (similar to Kristeva's chora) which finds articulation through movement from the depth of the body towards a possible language. Historically, this movement has been stunted or denied to women. The silent female body is contested space. Gilbert and Gubar recognise the compression of women's voices into silence enforces a buried life, 'enclosed in the architecture of an overwhelmingly, male-dominated society' (2000, p.xi). However, Malhotra and Rowe additionally acknowledge silence's potential to be 'a sacred internal space that provides a refuge – especially for non-dominant peoples' (2013, p.2). Here it is interesting to note how Kristeva bridges both these definitions in her articulation of silence. In *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991), Kristeva recognises the act of silencing, but also a proud, autonomous withdrawal into silence:

Come, now! Silence has not only been forced upon you, it is within you: a refusal to speak, a fitful sleep riven to an anguish that wants to remain mute, the private property of your proud and mortified discretion, that silence is a harsh light. Nothing to say, nothingness, no one on the horizon. An impervious fullness: cold diamond, secret treasury, carefully protected, out of reach. Saying nothing, nothing needs to be said, nothing can be said (1991, p.16).

It is intriguing that in spite of Kristeva's extensive writing around poetic language, she positions silence in the body. This feminist understanding of an embodied silence undermines the primacy of the concept of silence as nothingness, which has taken precedence following modernist thinking and experimentation. In the play, I attempted to rescue Eurydice from metaphor, from nothingness, by returning her silent body back to her. Absent or imagined by Orfeo throughout, in the instant she awakes Eurydice can at last speak with her own voice. Working with a text-fugue as her voice (a contrapuntal fusion of words and silence, discussed later), I explore how a silenced body might navigate its way back into language (out of the unspeakable terrain of death). Simultaneously allowing Eurydice to negotiate what her own state of death meant to her and in the process taking ownership of her silence by relapsing back into death. Her embodied silence although enforced by death, becomes enclosed and ineffable by her own choice.

DEVELOPING A DRAMATURGY OF SILENCE – COMPOSITION

Central to a Dramaturgy of Silence is its compositional processes, whereby silence instilled in the text becomes the central dramaturgical tool. In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, three distinct compositional processes of the Dramaturgy of Silence develop:

1. **Rhythmic encounters** and the process of musicality; exploring ideas of a text-score.
2. **Compositional techniques**; the polyphonic and the fugue.
3. **A narrative movement** into silence; examined through an Underworld Narrative.

RHYTHMIC ENCOUNTERS

In her writing on Beckett's dramatic writing, Maria Ristani proposes a re-definition of rhythm as both 'structure-producing interruption and inventive motility - rhythm as interplay of both constraint and release' (2014, p.120). Contained in these definitions are both notions of flow and break, words and a punctuating stop. Ristani develops this idea further: 'Beckett found in rhythm an alternative to conventional syntax – an edifice [...] on which to negotiate the drying up or dissolution of language' (ibid, p.120). Kristeva similarly imagines this rhythmic-process as texture 'in perpetual state of flux' (1984, p.5), but situates the rhythmic language as an articulation of the internal drive, an embodied utterance creating 'more throbbing than meaning' (1980, p.163).

In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, I attempted to bring both these notions together by developing a text that rhythmically threw itself off balance because of the grief experience of its central character, whilst structurally unpicking itself to expose silence. The text was also non-linear; breaking from its own progression to instate different rhythms as Orfeo's fractured memories of Eurydice appeared. The text should seem as if made in the moment and embraced by all the messiness of human speech; incoherent, playful, broken. Pauses, stops, silences would break into the words like breath. The inarticulateness of Orfeo played through ellipses; the things he cannot bear to utter lead to discontinued sentences and disruptions of silence allowing possible meanings to reverberate. For Orfeo, his language can in no way articulate his experience of grief following the death of Eurydice. Words are never enough to express the sensation he feels physically of her loss. With this in mind, I tried to strip back and fragment his words, to steal everything from them but the essence in order to see how bare and raw they could become. This then I hoped would heighten the experience of the language; activating through the 'effracting' rhythm a vibration of sound.

Indeed, the rhythmic text instates its immediacy through the pulse and reverberation of language, locating it in sound. Petra Maria Meyer notes the ear's capabilities of perceiving the subtlest variations:

Always trapped in time, in a state of tension between remembered past and expected future, the ear records events at the moment they are executed, in their very creation. [...] A listener is always in the thick of things. The external sound space presses into the interior, the listener is surrounded by the sounds, is penetrated by them (2013, p.61).

At this point, I broaden this discussion to the importance of these rhythmic encounters to the form of the radio play and its sound substance. In writing *Orpheus and Eurydice* in such a rhythmically disjunctive way, I was not only attempting to articulate Orfeo's experience but also simultaneously trying to capture the radio play form. Meyer describes the immediacy of sound as something the listener is experientially immersed in, furthermore that sound penetrates the listener suggesting that sound occurs both outside and inside the body. Extending this definition of sound in terms of the radio play I propose that without the components of immediacy, vibration and penetration (all of which are aspects or outcomes of rhythm), the radio play form refuses to come into being or flattens and disappears within the first minutes of broadcast, falling out of form and exposing its artificiality. Don's Ihde's sound phenomenology states:

Sound permeates and penetrates my bodily being. It is implicated from the highest reaches of my intelligence that embodies itself in language to the most primitive needs of standing upright through the sense of balance that I indirectly know lies in the inner ear. Its bodily involvement comprises the range from soothing pleasure to the point

of insanity in the continuum of possible sound in music and noise.

Listening begins by being bodily global in its effects (2007, p.45).

Compellingly, the listener's body partially becomes the receptacle of the radio play, through which its rhythmic encounters become an embodied vibration heard by the ear and experienced through the body. To heighten this experience compositionally, is to draw on the radio play's multiple layers and textures. Not only its soundscape of voice, sound, music, and silence but also its capacity to reveal the inner-life and language of the mind, contrasted against the multi-voiced language of the 'real' world. Moreover, the radio play can move back and forwards in time or repeat time-moments, move into a single-voiced poetic rendering of itself or celebrate the brawl and bite of a particular vernacular. Extending beyond this, the writer can layer text over text, use interruption, simultaneous talking, or inner and outer voices underscoring each other. Therefore, this compositional framework of the radio play allows its 'text-score' to be experienced partially through its orchestration; its rhythms, timbres, intensifications and releases, juxtapositions, layers and temporalities. It negotiates through musical elements its relationship with the body; its vibrational qualities allowing it to become experiential like music.

Roesner in *Musicality in Theatre* defines principles of 'compositional' playwriting as the use of musical techniques, the creation of score, and the use of musical terminology. Roesner writes, 'Musicality as a condition for dramatic writing is more than a philosophical question, though. It also manifests itself in the descriptions of a heightened sensitivity towards sound and silence that authors put forward and reflect on' (2014, p.129). He describes the compositional element as a device, which although not new in playwriting becomes in compositional playwriting the central concern.

A strong example of this is debbie tucker green's radio play *Lament* (2016). The central dynamic of the play has a jazz-like sensibility to text, using riffing and repetition contrapuntally between two voices. tucker green (Gardner, 2005) has talked about her resistance to defining the form she writes, that a play-text can easily become a poem can become a song. Certainly, *Lament* uses what Roesner has analogically called a jazz-musicality, which has particular emphasis on phrasing and rhythm and like jazz has 'a strong presence of a manifest pulse and equally strong deviations from its vital elements [...] expressed in particular by the layering of rhythms and syncopation' (2014, p.177). *Lament* considers a relationship between an unnamed man and woman – their past relationship, their current lives and their possible future. The dual voices in the play run next to each other, speak over each other, function almost as two instruments vying jazz-like for space, dominance, and sometimes balance. They over-lap, segue and separate, Beckett-like playing around with doublets and triplets which Ruby Cohn defines as 'echo doublets' (1980, p.101). These echo-doublets unpick phrases to rearrange repetitions; they mirror, disassemble, warp, and reframe themselves dissolving and resolving in sound.

Whilst one could say tucker green riffs on words, like Beckett, her words are utterly precise and spare. Extended silences are absent, but silence exists in the elimination of all the unnecessary; carving words into shapes and patterns whilst allowing the encounter itself to reveal character and relationship. Pauses become startling interludes when the character's utterances make them draw breath. Meeting and encounter build through sequences and it is often the stoppages, the breaths in between where the impossibility of a future sits. The unspoken, the unsaid, and the unsayable become the unutterable loss and lament of the play.

Continuing to build on compositional techniques inspired by fields of music such as jazz, it is also possible to focus on particular musical techniques. To proceed to the second part of my methodology on musicality I examine the use of two

compositional techniques, the **polyphonic**, and a **text-fugue** in the writing of the play, and their relationship with silence.

COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES

Polyphonic

Susan Sontag envisages the ontological stammer in works that reach for silence through incessant sound. It becomes a work that babbles, a work that dismisses language by turning it into noise. Through the work of Stein, Burroughs and Beckett, Sontag demonstrates how the ontological stammer might ‘out-talk language, or to talk oneself into silence’¹⁵ (1969, p.27). The ontological stammer resists silence; for Orfeo in the first movement of the play his words circle, deny, and despair at Eurydice’s death. Here, I attempt to create not so much babbling but multiple noises polyphonically. Indeed, the form of the radio play makes this possible by the juxtaposition and differing textures of the inner-voice, exterior dialogue, memory-windows, soundscape of the external world and the solo voice speaking out-loud; plus the use of sound, drone, and music.

The first movement of the play (pp.42–59, 0.40-6.20) was about grief. Compositionally, I knew I wanted to write a world that was anti-linear and chaotic, trying to create Orfeo’s experience of grief rather than tell it. Using Orfeo’s voice, I attempted to reduce the ontological stammer to a vibration; tiny silences continually disrupting his lines, any dialogue continually crossing over and interrupting. Additionally, I envisaged layering of the inner and outer world, the use of memory and media to capture an absent Eurydice and make everything slightly out of kilter moving between slow and fast. The heightened moments of Orfeo’s desperation

¹⁵ Typology of Silence: Ontological Stammer (p.26).

immediate in its intensity, the whole fluctuating soundscape penetrating the ear and body of the listener, whilst revealing the utter emptiness of loss and silence that lies beneath.

Thus far, I have predominantly considered how a Dramaturgy of Silence emerges through the writing of the text. However, I would like to pause for a moment to acknowledge that although a Dramaturgy of Silence examines the writing of the text; that is only partially representative of what the radio play, in its making, becomes. Evidently, once in production multiple other sound-registers come into play. Through performance, the complexity of the actors' work; voice, accent, texture, utterance and the multi-vocal effect of layering of these voices are realised. Additionally, the complex processes that account for the rhythmic sound-juxtapositions and extended soundscape and music are also integral to the radio form as the producer and sound designer interpret and edit the text.

To give an example of this, the polyphonic I have just described and which I endeavoured to create in the first six minutes broadened significantly as the soundscape was created. There is a variation of drones in the soundscape, a scraping, vibrating string from the score and a continuing crackling of static [5.18]. There is also what I call an 'air-drone' [6.15]; an imitation of silence which subtly fills the soundscape underscoring Apollo's offer to Orfeo. This air drone stands in for silence; a crackle of static accompanying it signposting a transition into a new possibility, 'I have a vial' [6.38] becoming the first opening into the Underworld. The function of the drone in a radio play (similarly to a film) is to create unease, and it works through its capacity to vibrate, affecting the listener physically. The air-drone however not only does this, but allows a tinnitus-like note to emerge as the idea of the vial and Underworld is developed. The soundscape profoundly brings additional complexity and patterning to the recording, flowing in multiple registers around the text, juxtaposing and varying in rhythm and volume. However,

substituting silence through music or drone (as will be examined later), can constrain silence's capacity to communicate.

Essentially, it would seem a Dramaturgy of Silence instilled in a radio play diminishes through recording. Nonetheless, I would like to offer two observations that re-evaluate this notion. Firstly, that a Dramaturgy of Silence should be precisely articulated and notated on the page. This process is essential to the creating of a text-score and is realised by the use of its rhythmic layout and its articulation of silence through punctuation (pause, beat, ellipses, interval). It can be expanded by additional notation; use of the white page to instate blanks of silence, simultaneous textural layering (slashes and recurring ellipses), using double columns to demonstrate concurrent or juxtaposed scenes or external/internal voices. The writer can also work with different tones and colours in the text and the text can process both vertically and horizontally to articulate rhythm, silence, and gaps of breath and thought. The writer can also curate music, describe soundscape, juxtapose different places, interior/exterior voices, and create detailed sound moments. Therefore, on the page, the writer has much opportunity to lay out a rigorous notation of their Dramaturgy of Silence, for the actor, director, and sound designer to capture.

In recording however, A Dramaturgy of Silence in the spirit of embracing 'new' dramaturgy should celebrates collaboration, creating a process, which like silence is fluid, dynamic, and open to new ideas. Churchill, like Beckett, works instinctively with many elements of a Dramaturgy of Silence, paring her plays down to essence. However, as Mark Lawson (2015) points out, Churchill is different to Beckett in that she is much less interested in controlling the staging of her plays. More and more she treats her plays as scores, allowing director, designers, and actors to construct and discover its possibilities. In her play *Love and Information* (2012), there are no named characters, no stage directions, and little specification in what order the play might be realised. Churchill allows for playfulness and chance of discovery, a

completely democratic and collaborative way of working which in some ways would suggest a multi-layered, orchestral process where the detailed, compositional text frames a theatre event that is a movement of multiple people, jazz-like exploring the material. A Dramaturgy of Silence then, should be deeply conducive to this approach.¹⁶ Silence becomes an invitation to the actor, the director, and the sound designer, thus allowing a continuing process of discovery in recording the plays, whereby silences might still surprise and new meanings might still be realised – the text continually expanding and interacting with those who create it.

Fugue

My second musical technique involved creating a text-fugue, which I approached playfully having listened to Bach's fugue in G minor (2016). I was aware of Caryl Churchill's (1988) experiment with the form for a television piece *Fugue*, using fragmented repetition of the same lines to demonstrate the effect of a death on a family, examining the moment visually and contrapuntally to create its structure (Worth, 2009, p.77). James Joyce (2008) also created a quasi-fugue in Episode Eleven of *Ulysses* working with several voices, each voice developing singularly and in variation to the others.

A fugue is a musical composition which works with a short repeating phrase usually between two or more voices juxtaposed as a call and answer, 'Its *purpose* is to reveal connections between seemingly unlike things. Its *method* is to develop an idea in never precisely the same way. Its *character* is to demonstrate relationships' (Smith, 1996, emphasis in original). Roesner, whilst recognising that the compositional

¹⁶ The process of collaboration develops through mutual trust between all players. I note that Churchill works with few directors, predominantly James MacDonald, and the evidence of their production is that a rich collaborative process is at work. MacDonald speaking of his own directing process illuminates the ethos of an artist who has nothing to prove, who embraces collaboration, 'My job is to discover how to embody the gesture that the play seems to be making. [...] I don't have anything I need to express myself. My job is to enable other people to express themselves' (Independent, 2016). The collaborative process then is developed through relationship and trust, sometimes rare, but in making a radio play, crucial.

technique of Churchill's fugue may not hold up to the rules of a musical fugue, observes how its principles are utilised to create 'an experimental fusion of words, dance and the medium of television' (2014, p.134). In contrast, my text-fugue develops as a negotiation between words and silence and emerges first at the beginning of the play, spoken by Orfeo (p.42. 0.40–1.12) and reclaimed later by Eurydice (pp.83-87. 33.00–34.38).

Orfeo's fugue at the beginning of the play is more impulse than language – the 'If I' breaking, stuttering, not able to complete itself in a full sentence but always returning. Contrapuntally the second line (or answer) develops sequentially before falling into a repeat of, 'Like a,' the fugue becoming stuck for a moment before jumping forward again. The progressive pattern of the fugue manifests not only Orfeo's desire to try and catch hold of his dead wife's memory but also expresses his experience of grief – his anguish challenging the shape of the language, his mind rushing, his words trying to also catch his breath. The fugue cannot make sense of the words it needs because no words exist to express the calamity of his wife's death.

Eurydice's fugue, although using the same pattern of words as Orfeo's, challenges any notion that she exists as an object or metaphor. Eurydice's fugue instates her immediately in the present, whilst negotiating her own embodiment.

RIDDY (V/O) If.

If.

This...

If...

If I...

This.

Like...

Like a...

If I...

Like a

Like a

If I... (Orpheus & Eurydice. 2016, pp.83-84. 33.05)

I attempted to reverberate the first moment of Eurydice's fugue more as a heartbeat than a word with meaning. John Cage (1978) discovers in the anechoic chamber that silence is impossible; that he still hears the blood moving round his body, the throb of his nervous system. Silence denied us by our own heartbeat and yet between beats it resonates. We exist moment to moment with an opening and contraction of rhythm (a sound, a silence), and it is that relationship I endeavoured to create in Eurydice's re-awakening. I attempted to make the text oscillate between life and death. Beckett's definition of the 'tympanum' became the territory I attempted to traverse:

I'm in the middle, I'm the partition, I've two surfaces and no thickness, perhaps that's what I feel myself vibrating, I'm the tympanum, on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either (1959, p.383).

Eurydice is between death and life. Her words vibrate but do not yet sound as meaning. She is in-between (like Beckett), not belonging to either. Here Beckett re-situates Kristeva's semiotic. His tympanum describes a thin skin of language set between the mind and the world. In comparison Kristeva's semiotic space although

also recognisably a tympanum, derives always from the material body and the embodied drives which destabilises the language it is trying to express. My writing although exploring the delicate skin that Beckett describes always propels itself from Kristeva's internal material state.

In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, the fugue extends out of the dead being who is Eurydice, (who rejects language or has already forgotten it) and moves towards the surface of the living. Like Kristeva's chora, Eurydice's (im)material body is still her starting place. As the fugue builds, she attempts to pull back towards her silence and struggles to remain in death. The 'don't(s)' are placed as a gasp of pain as Hades had earlier imagined – that the process of coming back to life would 'shoot holes through her' (p.81), as if the words themselves hurt her, pin her. As Eurydice returns to the living, she recognises Orfeo and demands that he looks at her, 'sees' her – his glance is instigated by her. It is her choice to pull away from Orfeo's gaze, her decision to scatter. The fugue would articulate the ownership of her own death and the only actual moment she definitely exists in the play. Here we discover another silence, the silence of the individual who chooses not to speak – Kristeva's 'impervious fullness' (1991, p.16). Eurydice fights for her own silence, it is momentarily wrestled from her but ultimately she chooses to enter back into it.

In the actual production with additional soundscape (33.00-34.20), the fugue is overlaid with recorded piano. A slightly distorted recording of Eurydice's voice attempts to underscore her movement back to life. Here, music overpowers silence, swallowing the fugue's gaps. Silence in this case cannot contend with the music, its additional vibrations overwhelm. Music in radio plays (like drones) can impersonate silence, underscore words and express that which words often cannot articulate, but it is impossible for music to substitute silence completely. Walter Murch, re-editing Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil* (1958), commented on the opening score the studio added to the film after Welles was fired, saying, 'The music just used up all the

available audio “oxygen” (2003, p.87, emphasis in original). Music in radio plays can over-state emotion and manipulate the listener whilst simultaneously constraining and dictating the experience. I am not challenging music’s importance in the radio play, but recognising it is another register that has multiple complexities and subtleties and must be part of the curation of the sound-score as a whole. In the case of Eurydice’s fugue, the piano-music although delicately placed still suggests a certain emotional arc within the sequence. Its tenderness supports what Orfeo recalls as he talks about his and Eurydice’s relationship, but cannot simultaneously respond to Eurydice’s fugue, which is a protest. The music is limited to play one way or the other and so metaphorically sucks the silence out of the fugue, no space remains for it.

Eurydice returns to her emptiness, her death, her completeness. Kristeva proposes we are all exiles to ourselves; that we lose our original sense of being when we cross over from a state of pre-speech into learning how to use language. Extending this notion, there is a sense that Eurydice has passed forward into a post-language state. For Eurydice this means a completeness of being in her silence, where words are no longer necessary or even possible.

COMPOSITIONAL NARRATIVE

I have emphatically avoided speaking thus far about narrative to make a case first for the compositional nature of the radio play. Such primacy in the commissioning process is given to the importance of story, that I wanted first to lay out the territory for the materiality of sound, troubling the notion of privileging narrative in the writing of the radio play. Now addressing these concerns, I give first an example of the language used to describe the process of writing a radio play:

Radio has the fastest turn-off rate of all drama so make the audience want to stay. Try to hit the ground running – you have to do the thinking but it doesn't necessarily have to reach the page. Everything must earn its keep – it may be a fantastic bit of prose or a wonderful image but if it's not relevant to the story and the characters, lose it. Cut the preamble and emotionally tie the audience down. Simple often works best (BBC Writers Room).

These scriptwriting tips, very much in the language of commissioning, might describe television or film writing, thus exposing historically the problematic corner the radio play has been confined to. By instating it purely as a vehicle of narrative, the writer denies its substance of sound. By ignoring its sound materiality, the enforced design of the narrative overwhelms the compositional sound movement at which point the radio play form implodes; its artificiality is exposed and the clunkiness of the radio-mic and the actors gathered round it becomes wholly apparent. However, by acknowledging the substance of sound within the narrative through vibration, rhythm, change, juxtaposition, and variation the radio play form can fully emerge. The merging of narrative and sound becomes an immersive, bound to rhythm time movement functioning in sound and silence as the substance of the story. As the radio play form emerges, its textual materiality becomes what the narrative cannot – an actual playing of itself realised in all its sensuality.

However, I am not dismantling narrative in the radio play, but re-evaluating it in compositional terms. Indeed, Bergson's 'aural paradigm' that I have used to invoke the radio play, is always in motion, always moving forward within its own telling. I will briefly now consider some of the processes necessary in creating a compositional narrative. Danijela Kulezic-Wilson in *Musicality of Narrative Film*, describes a technique of narrative patterning in a film, which 'may result in the conscious construction of a "rhythmical" macro-form' (2015, p.67, emphasis in

original), realised through constraint and flow in ‘alternating sections of tension and release, conflict and resolution, anticipation and its fulfilment (ibid, p.67). Kulezic-Wilson charts these macro-movements compositionally through design and repetition, recognising within that encounter an increasing complexity of form.

However, (like film) a further consideration is the radio play’s temporality and by extension the temporal ordering of time, which allows the narrative arrangement to become non-linear juxtaposing time both backwards and forwards (as demonstrated in memory-windows). Admittedly, working with a non-linear time-movement in sound is complex and can become disorientating to the listener. Here, repetition can be invaluable, positioning a moment in time that can continually reinstate equilibrium in the play. Kulezic-Wilson notes, ‘repetition can be involved in the creation of balance, symmetry and the proportional distribution of structural accents and at the same time it can introduce a sense of movement, progress and intensification’ (ibid, p.72). Repetition in a radio play instates itself in sound, and through its re-appearance creates expectation, juxtaposition, and change. It evolves in its own sound-movement as a punctuating act, reinstating its difference in its continual return. Missed when it dissolves, it marks its absence in the sound patterns it no longer vibrates.

Kulezic-Wilson’s ‘micro-networks of patterns’ (ibid, p.67) in the radio play would be further recognised as juxtapositions between interior and exterior worlds, single voice, dialogue and multiple voice, shifts between sound and voice, density and emptiness. Additionally, the slowing of time – expansion, interludes make for textural experiences of the restraint and release of silence, whilst moving towards an experience of arrested time, freezing the frame.

An example of both repetition and dislocation of time is found in Michael Symmons Roberts radio play series, *The Blast of War* (2015), which revolves around what

Symmons Roberts calls 'bullet time'. In the first episode, *Helmand*, he examines perpetually the killing of a young soldier in war, arresting its moment repeatedly, slowing its speed down to stoppage. Working in verse, Symmons Roberts stretches images of war against the bare soundscape that surrounds it – its sparse nature embedding the listener in the streets of Helmand. Chorus-like, he uses rhythmic repetition that instates in sound growing tension and intensity, continually writing around this central time-moment:

In films they call it bullet time,

The frame that freezes

A whole scene split second

After shots are fired.

And only you, the camera's eye

Can move among still passers-by.

Can feel the heat within the gun,

The bullet with its job half done

Floats between two wax-work men

Hanging still in no-man's land.

Here I am,

Held in bullet time.

(5.49)

Although Symmons Roberts describes this frozen moment as we might see it spatially in film, the actual experience of listening becomes not only an experiential slowing of time but also a postponement from the horror to come. Situated within

the watching soldier's mind – the slowing and refusal of the inevitable, helped by a musical underscoring drone of dreamlike quality and the simplicity and unemotional utterance of the actor as he slows the horror, enables the listener to wait, suspended in that terrible deferred moment. Underscoring this moment is the uncanny experience of an approaching silence that is the inevitability of death; it arrives unannounced, torn apart with the reality of the bomb exploding. In an interview with Street, Symmons wonders, 'I've often pondered what is the length of a pause – the measure of silence' (2014, p.39). In his bullet-time, he finds a way to stretch time to allow a silence of dread that precedes the inevitable event of the soldier's death until...

The world stands still (6.50).

Accordingly, I consider now how through the compositional narrative of a Dramaturgy of Silence, silence might ultimately arrest the radio play. Here, what I have called an 'Underworld Narrative' comes into play, a narrative that takes a trajectory from words to silence, unpicks that which it covers to expose that which cannot be said. It could be argued that many narratives use this construct particularly in crime genres, but an Underworld Narrative would place emphasis not on the 'secret' of a story being revealed, but moving beyond that to a place where the silence itself is exposed.

Acknowledging silence as the aporia in literature, Martin McQuillan writes, 'Silence is a necessary condition in the act of narrative production, it is – to paraphrase Maurice Blanchot – "an opening onto a complexity yet to come"' (2000, p.27). Silence, as Blanchot gestures through the myth of Orpheus is impossible and yet still beckons. A narrative that reduces to silence would consider that which is absent or silent within the text as that which is most crucial. In the case of *Orpheus and*

Eurydice, silence as death though unwelcome or uncertain, underscores and make its way ultimately to the surface of the play.

Kent Puckett considering these ellipses in texts notes, ‘the fact of confronting the lost object, leads to a work that involves rebuilding a system around that lost object, of building or rebuilding a coherent world around or in spite of the absence in question’ (2016, p.285). In other words, silence becomes that which a narrative constructs itself around even as an action of denial of its existence. The silence that is covered can be insistent or even inevitable in its determination to appear, what Junot Díaz has described through the experience of buried trauma as ‘the ghost that’s always coming for you’ (2018, para.30).

The Underworld Narrative in *Orpheus and Eurydice* attempts to dissolve systematically sound and text as it traverses its territory towards silence. The text increasingly prioritises silences, allowing them initially to emerge as gaps and fragments, hints beginning to underscore the text, juxtapositions between what Orfeo says about his relationship with Eurydice and that which silence implies. Concurrently, in each progressing scene I also reduced the materiality of the sound, from the sounds of the beach and first noisy meeting of the party, to the empty interior of the hotel-room and finally to the silence of the bed.

Each memory-window draws Orfeo closer to the actual memory of the past, whilst also subtly shifting Eurydice’s understanding of her place in those memories until she realises she is dead. The hotel-room (pp.62-67. 14.19-18.36) for example, is much quieter than the two memory-windows prior to it, becoming a deliberate withdrawal of sound to increase intimacy as Orfeo’s memories unravel. In the hotel-room most of the sound comes faintly from the outside and this extended scene plays with just Orfeo and Eurydice talking. I hoped the emptiness of the soundscape echoed those unspoken things back – their great love already jilted by circumstance.

The following scene in the bed (pp.68-70, 19.38-21.40) entombed in silence. No background sound at all, where silence confronts and breaks up the memory completely.

Andrew Edgar in his writing on silence and music describes ‘silences in motion’ which ‘refer to those silences that are not perceived and interpreted in terms of the cessation of the music’s progress but are rather part of a melodic line that continues through the ostensible pause’ (1997, p.312). In this sense, an instrument instated in a piece of music becomes silent and its absence felt by the loss of its presence, scores its silence through the melody of the other instruments. Similarly, the radio play can reverberate that which is absent as an emergent silence that manifests an absent life or person, imagined through their silence, carving their vacancy through the shape of the play.

Alternatively, an absence may articulate something that is irrevocably lost and can haunt a play as a continual emerging silence throughout the piece. Furthermore, because the radio play can articulate the inner-life, complex internal absences can be created as embodied silences, realised through the inner voice of the radio play in which the character absents themselves from themselves or from the silence that stalks them. This progression can move compositionally through different states of realisation: suspicion, disbelief, questioning, denial, pretending, comprehension, recognition, horror, violence, all of which orchestrated through intensification and release of the rhythmic metalanguage of the word and silence encounter. For Orfeo, a silence exists within him which he refuses to acknowledge, but which the play will ultimately expose – the fact that his relationship with Eurydice was already irrevocably lost prior to her death, through his betrayal.

Consequently, the play’s progression becomes one of Orfeo falling into the silence of the Underworld by degrees, a peeling away of the noise he has put around the

event of Eurydice's death and the denial of what really happened. In many ways, it is a movement from an absent presence (the repetition of his conjured Eurydice) to an acknowledgement of her unbearable absence. Ultimately, Orfeo has no words, what is left is unutterable and opens up into the terrible silence of the deathness of the *other* night. Underscored by howling and music, I hoped this final silence to be experienced as Orfeo's muting; his embodiment of silence. There are no words possible beyond this moment for him and it is his own death now that beckons him. His final words are interior and his final sound his breath – the waiting murderous Sirens (his fans) are his only possible outcome.

For Blanchot, we can glance at that *other* night and touch the edge of silence through our failure and finiteness. This silence in its absence, its emptiness, its fullness, its foreboding of death replies to the language that cannot frame it. Silence's unquantifiable, unspeakable essence both terrible and beautiful can be unleashed and understood through its reaching towards our bodies and reclaiming its infinite spaces. Silence, finally, by becoming the central register of a play becomes the most communicative thing of all.

COMPOSITION AND EMERGENT SILENCES.

This chapter examining *Orpheus and Eurydice* establishes the compositional processes of a Dramaturgy of Silence. I argue that the rhythmic framework becomes the essence of the actual radio play text; that its text-score is principally experienced through its sound materiality. By extension, therefore its rhythms, timbres, intensifications and releases, dynamics, and temporalities move its substance closer to the experience of listening to music. The radio play therefore becomes a pulsion;¹⁷

¹⁷ Borrowed from Ovadija's *Dramaturgy of Sound*, who defines pulsion in theatre through 'its euphonic value, which connotes a pulsating rhythm of performance' (2013, p.209). Pulsion in the radio play becomes by extension the pulsating rhythm which is both its essence and drive.

instating its presence through its amalgamation of word and silence; making its vibrant rhythmic relationship present in the recording through multiple orchestrations of text, sound, silence, narrative, body and editing.

A Dramaturgy of Silence, through its typology and practice, negotiates readings of silence, attempting to identify new perceptions of silence. In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, the idea of a silence in motion or emergent silence,¹⁸ describes a silence that moves towards central register of the radio play acknowledging that silence can make known its presence even whilst surrounded by words and sound. To quantify silence only as an absence of noise¹⁹ neglects the possibility that silence can overcome noise, can substantially overcome the play. In this case, an emergent silence becomes a silence that haunts the play, framed by its absence and developed through a narrative-movement. The emergent silence in *Orpheus and Eurydice* is initially realised through the absence of Eurydice and completes itself embodied in Orfeo as he moves towards his own death and nothingness.

However, my statements about what these silences might mean are after all subjective; there is always a question of different interpretation by the listener. The writer might frame a silence, in hope to provoke a certain meaning, but how and if the listener responds to it is personal, dependent on not only their experience of listening to the play but also on what they themselves bring to a silence.

This emphasises the unquantifiable nature of silence, perhaps best articulated as a ‘speculative’²⁰ silence. Regine Elzenheimer writes, ‘By establishing a non-occupied space, the responsibility for their own perception is given back to the audience. As it polarizes perception [...] silence points out difference’ (1999, p.33). Within the frame of a play, the silence exists as an invitation. As Elzenheimer suggests, silence

¹⁸ Typology of Silence: Emergent Silence (p.34).

¹⁹ Typology of Silence: Unnoised Silence (pp.13-14).

²⁰ Typology of Silence: Questions (pp.23-24).

brings ambiguity to explicitness challenging language's certainty, but that silence also allows a freedom of discovery and interpretation.

Finally, a silence emergent in the text becomes central to my ideas around the Underworld Narrative. In a Dramaturgy of Silence (where the trajectory is from noise to silence), the narrative is driven by the silence buried within it, a silence around which the narrative is actually constructed. The importance of rhythm through this narrative creates a rich process of compositional interrogations of the temporal possibilities of the radio play. Multiple silences are released through the telling; silence's intervention with sound becoming vital to the materiality and progression of the narrative. By enacting silence in the text, there is also an opportunity to instate complexity and non-resolution, allowing not a dogma of certainty but a possibility of questioning. Through developing a Dramaturgy of Silence both through writing the text and through realising the text in performance, silence continually elucidates new meanings through negotiation with the text, sometimes unexpectedly. It is as if, when making room for silences in radio plays, their appearance makes possible more discoveries and the text beyond its limitation of language, like Blanchot recognises, continually offers a return.

THE SKY IS WIDER

Please listen with headphones:

On the enclosed pen-drive.

On the enclosed CD.

Or download here:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/xiu1u7tx2i1y2jv/Sky_Is_Wider_060716_PMR620_15DN8953.wav?dl=0

Or here on Box of Broadcasts. <https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand>

THE SKY IS WIDER

By Linda Marshall Griffiths

1 x 45 Afternoon Play

CHARACTERS

ELLA.....Christine Bottomley
CHARLIE.....Sydney Wade
NEUROLOGIST.....Wil Johnson
NURSE.....Yusra Warsama

Producer: Nadia Molinari
Sound Design: Steve Brooke
TX: Wednesday, 6th July 2016 1415 – 1500.

Recorded in Binaural Sound



Radio Drama North, BBC Production

Winner BBC Best Single Drama 2017

ELLA.

(V/O) Shiver

Shimmer

I can't...

What lies

She lies

I...

There's a hole in me I fall down,

In me

I can't wake.

I don't sleep.

I can't.

Shimshan shimshan.

Sa

I can't,

I...

Eyes on stalks

I...

Shiver

Shimmer

Tremor

I can't

Tremble

Stretch me

Someone

I ache

I hurt

I

ELLA

I hat

I hole

What?

She has

There's a hole in me

I fall down

In me.

I can't wake

I can't sleep

I can't...

Shimshan shimshan

If my head

If my head

If my head

I can't

I can't

I'm trying

To speak.

I hear

I Ella,

I Ella.

A DRONE RISES, THERE IS
SCREECHING, HAMMERING, WAWAH
PEDALS AND GUITARS - IT RISES INTO
A TERROR OF NOISE. A VOICE

CRACKLING, MUFFLED CALLS OUT. (THE NOISE OF THE MRI SCAN, BUT THIS IS UNKNOWN TO ELLA) IT MOVES TO UNDER-SCORE THROUGHOUT.

NEUROLOGIST.

Ella.

Shimshann a so est.

Ella.

Shimsham a solace.

Shimshallow

Im fallow.

Shimshan a furrow

Ella.

Shimshammoan a barkin' tu a furrow.

Imashame a foress.

Imagine a foress.

Imagine...

Ella.

Imagine walking through a forest.

THE SOUND REDUCES TO...

Ext. Forest

DAY

A FOREST GRADUALLY GROWS ALL
AROUND HER AS SHE WALKS.

ELLA.

(V/O) Imagine you are walking
through a forest

He said

Leaves in front of my eyes.

A

Breath of wild stars.

A

Leaves

Falling

About

Me.

And I lay in this still still
place

I..

Swallow

I

Taste earth in my mouth

I

Tears down the side

Sound of birds

(Do I believe in birds?)

I

ELLA.

The tree shadows me

The path thick to nothing.

(A forest

Imagine a forest)

And you go into the forest and you
go into the forest and so into the
forest what does a forest look
like?

PAUSE.

Where am I?

How did I...

I don't, how did I

How did I how did I...

Dark then light,

Dark then light.

THE TREES LEAN AND BREAK, AN
EERINESS GROWS.

How did I how did I how did I

Wake up.

What?

Wake up.

I am awake

Am I awake?

ELLA.

flash of light

flash of light in my eyes

flash of light

(HER SHARP BREATH)

The light a pin-drop.

No I'm sleeping...

I'm still sleeping.

SHE FALLS AWAY AS THE NOISE OF THE
SCANNER DIES TO NOTHING.

NOTHINGNESS HOLDS.

Int. A Room

NIGHT

THE SILENCE OF THE OUTSIDE
EMERGES, A REAL SPACE - THE
HOSPITAL ROOM. THE SILENCE OF
NIGHT, A FEELING OF AN EMPTY SPACE
ALL AROUND MOVES INTO AWARENESS.
AND THERE IN THE BACKGROUND ALL
THE UNENDING SOUNDS OF THE
HOSPITAL PURRS, BEEPS AND HUMS.

ELLA

(V/O) And though I am sleeping I
know I am sleeping somehow I open
my eyes

I am...

There's...

A man,

A man stood by my bed

And though I am sleeping I know I
am sleeping there is a man stood
by my bed

And I can't...

I can't move I can't

ELLA.

I can't

Even swallow

I

Nothing of me

I am held

I am

Enclosed in...

I am

I don't know if I breathe

(Do I breathe?)

I can't even move my eyes, I see
him but I cannot look, I just...

(Help me)

He is

At angles.

This isn't my room

This isn't

(I don't know where I am)

He walks to the end of the bed

And

I don't look at him I...

He's looking at me, all the time I
feel...

He walks to the end of the bed

I can't, I can't

NEUROLOGIST. Ella.

ELLA (V/O) Where am I?

NEUROLOGIST. You're at St Nicholas'.

BEAT.

Ella...

ELLA. (V/O) I don't remember coming in.

NEUROLOGIST. You've had a head injury, /you were hit by a..

ELLA. (V/O) /Have I? No I haven't.

HALF-BEAT.

NEUROLOGIST. Can you can you open your eyes Ella?

ELLA. (V/O) Pardon?

NEUROLOGIST. If you hear my voice.

ELLA. (V/O) I hear your voice.

NEUROLOGIST. Ella.

ELLA. (V/O) Yes.

NEUROLOGIST. Can you open your eyes.

ELLA. (V/O) My eyes are open, I'm looking at you...

NEUROLOGIST. Right.

BEAT.

I'm going to take your hand Ella.

ELLA. (V/O) Okay.

NEUROLOGIST. Just give a little scratch - can you feel this Ella?

HE PRODS HER.

ELLA. (V/O) Ow! Yes.

NEUROLOGIST. Can you feel anything Ella?

ELLA. (V/O) I feel that.

NEUROLOGIST. Can you feel that Ella?

ELLA. (V/O) Yes, I told you.

NEUROLOGIST. Nothing.

ELLA. (V/O) Nothing?

NEUROLOGIST. There's nothing.

ELLA. (V/O) Tell me what happened?

NEUROLOGIST. It's okay.
It's just...
Trauma.
We...

ELLA. (V/O) What is happening to me?

NEUROLOGIST. Nothing.

ELLA. (V/O) If you awake from a dream,
how do you know if you're awake?
How do you know?

You sleep half your life, how do
you know you're not sleeping
twenty years of your lies.

How do you know as you lay awash
with waking and the ceiling lines
you.

Pin.

Drop.

Eye.

Still.

I drop

THE DRONE BEGINS AGAIN, AND
GROWING FROM HER FEET SWALLOWS AND
SUBMERGES HER.

NEUROLOGIST.

Ella.

Ella.

Shimshan shimsham shimshammen

You are walking in a supermarket.

ELLA.

What!?

NEUROLOGIST.

Imagine.

A SUPERMARKET STARTS TO GROW ALL
AROUND HER.

Int. Supermarket DAY

ELLA PUSHES A TROLLEY IN THE
SUPERMARKET.

ELLA.

What?

Wait, wait wait...

I...

PEOPLE GO BY.

Wait,

How did I...

SHE STANDS.

What?!

SHE STOPS.

NEUROLOGIST.

Can you see the supermarket Ella?

ELLA.

Yeah I can see the supermar/ket.

NEUROLOGIST.

/Walk along the first aisle Ella.

ELLA.

Why?

NEUROLOGIST.

Walk around...

ELLA. Every aisle.
I'm in the bread aisle.
SHE LOOKS.
Granary, white...
It's junk white but...
SHE STOPS.
I have a trolley, how do I have a trolley?
SHE TAKES THE BREAD AND PUTS IT IN.

NEUROLOGIST. That's good Ella...

ELLA. I hate muesli what's it for?
Chocolate bits...

NEUROLOGIST. That's very good.
Now rest.

ELLA. Always...
No-one tells me about breakfast, like jam and butter. I do butter - not just a slice of sliver. I'm not thinking of my heart I'm thinking of happiness.
SHE PUTS JAM IN THE TROLLEY.
Crisps?
Do I buy crisps?
THINKS.
I buy crisps I always buy crisps cheese and onion. Pack of six. I hate cheese and onion...
SHE PUTS THEM IN THE TROLLEY.
Why do I buy crisps?

NEUROLOGIST. Ella, that's enough for today.

ELLA. What do you mean I'm only half...

THE DRONE OF THE fMRI SCAN STARTS TO SHUT DOWN.

ELLA.

I'm not done yet!

THE LIGHTS START TO GO OFF ONE BY ONE.

Hey I'm shopping here, don't turn it...

Don't, I'm still...!

A STRANGE EERIE.

Hey!

Is anyone there, I'm stuck here in the middle of this supermarket - did everyone go home?

Where's the lights, where's the bloody lights!!

THE SOUND OF THE FRIDGES, THE SHELVES JUST DISAPPEARING, THE FRIDGES GOING, THE NOISE OF PEOPLE AND EVERYTHING DIMINISHING.

Don't take all the...

Where is everyone?

Where did the bananas go I can't go home without...

Where did all the..?

HER VOICE ECHOES.

SHE STANDS IN THE MIDDLE OF A HUGE EMPTY SPACE, SILENT.

CHARLIE

(WHISPER) Mum!

ELLA.

Who's that?

CHARLIE.

(WHISPER) Mum, it's me did you forget about me?

SILENCE.

ELLA

(EVENTUALLY) Charlie?

CHARLIE.

Did you forget I was here?

BEAT.

ELLA.

No I...

No I...

I...

They said I had a knock on the head.

They...

I didn't I would /never..

CHARLIE.

/Please please please...

It's not funny anymore.

They said...

Three days...

That it was, that you would...

Mum!

ELLA.

I can't see you Charlie.

I can hear you, //you sound so near but I can't...

It's just so dark.

CHARLIE.

//I need you I don't...

I don't like it here.

Please, I...

ELLA.

If I hold out my hand

Can you take it.

CHARLIE.

Mum.

ELLA.

Take my hand Charlie.

CHARLIE.

I can't get to you mummy.

ELLA.

I can feel you next /to me.

CHARLIE.

/I'm on my own here, I //don't...

SHE STARTS TO MOVE.

ELLA. //I'm here.
Stay where ///you are, stretch out
your hand.

CHARLIE. ///They don't, no-one..
They don't tell me anything.
They're whispering..

ELLA. Who?!

FURTHER AWAY.

CHARLIE. I'm scared mum I'm really really
scared..

ELLA. Wait, don't move..
Don't..
Look..
Stay where you are.
I'll get to you!

CHARLIE (FURTHER) ...that you're not coming
back.

ELLA. I'm coming back, just..
CHARLIE STARTS TO CRY AND STARTS
TO MOVE AWAY.

CHARLIE (FADES, CRYING) I got to go now
mum.

ELLA. Charlie!
Wait, what you doing..
Wait!
I'm coming..
Look, hold out your hand

CHARLIE. I can't..., they say I've got to..
SHE PULLS AWAY, SHE IS GONE.

ELLA. Who says?
Wait!

Charlie!

CHARLIE IS GONE. THE WORLD SHUTS
AND OPENS AGAIN SOMEWHERE ELSE.

Int. Hospital DAY

NEUROLOGIST. Ella...

ELLA. (V/O) What's happening to me?

NEUROLOGIST. How are you?

ELLA. (V/O) Where's my daughter?

NEUROLOGIST. Ella?

ELLA. (V/O) Where's Charlie?

NEUROLOGIST. Can you look at /me Ella?

ELLA. (V/O) /No I want to know where my
daughter is bring her here now I
want to see //her now.

NEUROLOGIST. //Can you open your eyes Ella?

ELLA. (V/O) No more questions.

Just...

NEUROLOGIST. Look at me.

SHE STOPS.

ELLA. (V/O) What is this place?

Why am I...

How long have I /been here?

NEUROLOGIST. /You've been here three months.

ELLA. (V/O) Three months!

NEUROLOGIST. I don't know if you remember you
had an accident.

ELLA. (V/O) What accident?

NEUROLOGIST. You had a bang to the head, you
fell off your bike /and were hit
by a car.

ELLA. (V/O) /No, I didn't...
When?

NEUROLOGIST. You've been here three months.

ELLA. (V/O) I haven't been here three months.

NEUROLOGIST. Ella...

ELLA. (V/O) Look forget that /where's Charlie?

NEUROLOGIST. /Can you open your eyes?

ELLA. (V/O) What do you mean can I, //my eyes are open.

NEUROLOGIST. //Can you open your eyes?

ELLA. (V/O) My eyes are...,
I'm looking at you.

NEUROLOGIST. Ella...

ELLA. (V/O) I am.
My eyes green eyes, see?

NEUROLOGIST. Nothing.

ELLA. (V/O) What do you mean, /noth...
I want to go home, I want to go home!

NEUROLOGIST. Can you clench your hand...?

ELLA. (V/O) Yes, look - I'm clenching everything.

NEUROLOGIST. Clench your hand Ella, if you feel //pain.

ELLA. (V/O) //I feel pain now where's my...

NEUROLOGIST. Clench your hand.

ELLA. (V/O) I'm clenching, look my knuckles are white.

NEUROLOGIST. Nothing.

ELLA.

BEAT.

(V/O) I'm here,

Then gone.

Here,

Then gone.

Swallowed.

Shiver.

There's a hole in me,

Then gone.

My bed is full of water, why..

Shiver

Shimmer

I'm gone

I'm gone

SHE STARTS TO SINK DOWN IN THE
WATER, IT IS ALL AROUND HER. SHE
STARTS TO GO UNDER, SLIPPING
DEEPER INTO AN OCEAN THAT IS
BELOW.

My eyes slide under with me away
to a slip a sink a slide a dip a
fall dive I chill as the water
deeper I can't I I

So black

Even as you dream my name

And forget

I still

I sink

I

SHE IS FAR FAR DOWN.

Int. Hospital Room DAY

REAL TIME, REAL PLACE. CHARLIE
SITTING NEXT TO ELLA WHO LIES IN
THE BED.

CHARLIE

There's this story about a selkie..

Do you remember you said they live
in Scotland selkies I always
thought they were..

Real.

You said..

One day..

This selkie this woman this..

She she she she came out of the sea
and.

(It was you you used to put on that
old coat and dive over the bed we
were roll over laughing and
laughing)

She slipped off the skin and

The blubber

(You kissed me wet kisses like
seals)

BEAT.

And she fell in love this wild..,

this woman

This

Selkie

She

Met a man at the local disco,

The local

Chippy

CHARLIE.

Ha

They ate chips and...

The local pub,

Playing four hands on the piano,
songs they both...

Do you remember yet mum do you...?

On the pier rolling the

She

The two pennies...

To win a skeleton key-ring they..

PAUSE.

Do you remember mum?

(open your eyes)

I used to draw pictures of girls
with seaweed in their hair down to
their toes.

I know it's stupid I know it's

But I've got to find a way to you..

Erm.

(Else I'll go mad in the head)

Open your eye just for one second,
like you hear me like you hear...

STOPS. WAITS.

SIGHS.

It didn't work out with that man.

CHARLIE.

They used to ride the Ferris wheel
on the pier and kiss at the top.

But that's not always enough to..

You know,

Roll you through.

Keep you going.

All the shouting and that..

It's just..

You couldn't live with that.

You said..

PAUSE.

And the woman she she had a baby
and

She

She had this big wild hair

(The baby)

And green eyes

Like

Erm

Her mum.

Like green on green

Like

Born that way

Born

CHARLIE.

Not blue.

I know everyone says that but

They were just they were

Green

Green

End of story.

And...

Weren't they mum, our eyes...?

Open your eyes.

BEAT. NOTHING.

But.

The sea

It's it's

Unexpected.

It doesn't it's

Strong.

It's stronger.

People always think you can take a
boat out you can do what you want
you can't.

SIGHS.

CHARLIE. The sea took her.
The mother.
Just one day no...

BEAT.

No goodbyes no...

PAUSE.

She was gone
Just just just
She was

She was

She...

Back into her blubber
into her...

PAUSE.

And the daughter stood there with
her green eyes.

She waited

On the edge of the water

She

Just for a sight of her

(That would have been enough)

ELLA (WHISPER) No skies
I sink.
Still
Away.

I can't swallow

I can't...

My skin

Rolls

With itches

I can't

Spoil

Or squeeze

I

I

Where am I?

Shiver

Shimmer

I lie.

I lie here

Bottom of the sea.

CHARLIE. She...

ELLA

Just for

(How could she leave her?)

She

Called her.

(Wake up mum, please wake up.

Quick kick

I'm here,

I rise

Please please please please)

I kick

Please open your eyes.

I scream

EL

ELLA. I can

I can

I an

Hell o

Hell

CHARLIE. Mum.

Wake

Eyes

Wake

I

Can't

CHARLIE. Mum.

ELLA. Is my hand clasped or open

Is my foot curled or straight.

Why is my back a question mark o

Why

ELLA I feel

The sheet wrapped

CHARLIE. You're never going

I to open your eyes are you?

Help

I

CHARLIE. Dad's
waiting out-side in the...

Wake

Open

Scream

Touch and I will feel your touch

I am here

I am

I

I scam

You don't blink. CHARLIE. Bye mum.

I dram.

You start to go.

O scream

Don't go!

CHARLIE GOES OUT.

My eyes fall open...

Empty room.

ELLA

You gone.

Alone.

EVERYWHERE STANDS SILENT. SOMEWHERE
OFF AWAY, A RADIO SINGS A NIGHT
SONG. SHE LISTENS. THE STERILE
SOUND OF THE HOSPITAL ROOM RINGS.

ELLA

(V/O) I'm in a hospital.

I follow the line of the blue of
the door a thousand time my eye
follow the line as you lay ever on
my back my cruel hurts I ache stem
life nay my mind hates the line of
the blue that I must follow to stop
myself from loy the line of the
blue I must kee I can't I don't kan
the lum of the blue to the clar I
never leave by..

I'm in hospital.

The line of the blue that leads to
the door, outside from here take me
to the stars and the sky and the
air is there a garden where you can
lay me down let my skin feel the
timbre and turl of of of of of of
of of soil.

I'm soiled.

I'm soil.

The line of the blue I stay with
the line

The lin

The lime

I can't move

In hospital, a bed..

I gawk

I don't
 My hands curled in shells of,
 I look they clamp
 I am wound rouny meself
 I drool
 I
 Don't
 Is this me?

Int. Hospital DAY

NEUROLOGIST. Ella?

ELLA. (V/O) Where am I, what is this /place?

NEUROLOGIST. /Can you open your eyes Ella.

ELLA. (V/O) My eyes are open, what are you...

NEUROLOGIST. Can you open them?

ELLA. They're open!

NEUROLOGIST. You've been here six months Ella.

ELLA. (V/O) No I haven't.

NEUROLOGIST. You have a brain injury..

ELLA. (V/O) No I don't...

NEUROLOGIST. But we believe I believe..

ELLA. (V/O) Where's my daughter...?

NEUROLOGIST. ..we've been scanning your brain
 And...

ELLA. (V/O) Answer me.

NEUROLOGIST. ...we believe that...

ELLA. (V/O) You've been scanning my brain?
When?

NEUROLOGIST. ...you're hearing us.
You may be aware we've been...

ELLA. (V/O) When?

NEUROLOGIST. ...asking you to imagine...

ELLA. (V/O) Places.

NEUROLOGIST. And there is indication...
Of brain activity.

ELLA. (V/O) What do you mean brain scanning?

NEUROLOGIST. That's why we keep...

ELLA. (V/O) I'm here!

NEUROLOGIST. We keep...

ELLA. (V/O) I'm here in front of /you.

NEUROLOGIST. ...trying.

(CLOSE) /Can you open your eyes Ella.

ELLA. (V/O) My eyes are open.

NEUROLOGIST. Nothing.

BEAT.

Can you clench...

ELLA. (V/O) Yes, everything.

NEUROLOGIST. Nothing.

ELLA. (V/O) Nothing?

I am stretching
I am ripping my skull
I'm here.

NEUROLOGIST. Nothing.

ELLA.

HE STARTS TO GO.

(V/O) Wait!

Wait please.

HE GOES.

I'm not hollow.

I'm awake.

I'm here I'm here.

Int. Hospital Room DAY

CHARLIE IN THE SILENCE OF THE ROOM,
THERE MAY BE MACHINES BUT THERE IS
AN ABSENCE. HER MOTHER MAY BREATHE
BUT SHE IS ALSO NOT THERE TO
CHARLIE.

CHARLIE.

They said write down questions
you'd (you know), ask your mum if
she was here.

You are here.

(By the way)

Ten questions if she, if you...

Okay one - can you hear me?

Two - why don't you open your eyes?

Three...

BEAT.

When you coming home?

Four - what's my name?

Erm.

Five.

Do you remember your favourite
place?

CHARLIE

(WHISPER) Mum, open your eyes -
please open your eyes.

SHE WAITS.

SIGHS.

My mum's favourite..

Place.

(They said write it down)

SOUND OF FOREST, A MEMORY.

I didn't.

I just...

Em.

It was this...

In this woods it...

You'd go up this path

We'd go all the time

Every

You drive

Then you walk

Right over the farmer's fields

On the path

And then this sort of

Sort of waylaid, magic

(OUT-LOUD) Path

CHARLIE.

Little stream

(Bit brown)

Ext. Forest DAY

FOR A MOMENT SHE WALKS IN THE
FOREST WITH HER MOTHER.

(V/O) Sun shines on my face

Your feet in front of me that's
what I see

And

Int. Hospital Room DAY

(OUT-LOUD) I remember your shoes
better than...

You had

These boots

Smart

Red

And your hair really short

Like you meant business

Like

And this great leather jacket

With tassels

All beat up.

I wear it sometimes.

I lie on your bed

And

CHARLIE.

It nearly fits me now.

You don't need it.

Where you've gone.

I...

THE FOREST SEEPS THROUGH.

And this tree it's

It's it's

An oak

It's...

Like its branches are bigger than
like

Em

Other trees

THEY ARE THERE.

Last summer you marched ten of us
up there to see it

To

Like

Ha

You made everyone hold hands

Ha

Round the

CHARLIE.

You know

It was, we had to climb over barbed
wire

All your

BEAT.

About ten of us all of us

Round it

Which you said

It was

That made it

It was

A thousand years old.

Each person, each one of us

Was worth a hundred years

Stretched out round its..

Hands held.

Each...

BEAT.

(I don't think it's that old)

BEAT.

And I think when we're gone

When we're all gone

It still

Is there

CHARLIE.

You'd made this brilliant picnic
with fairy cakes with icing gone
over the edges

(I did the icing)

Red.

This brilliant picnic with dips and
carrots and...

Pomegranate seeds.

THE FOREST IS GONE.

Question six: why did you leave me?

Seven: When you coming back.

(These wouldn't be the questions
really)

Seven - don't forget your bike
helmet next time right, like you
always told me like you always...

No that's eight.

Nine: What do you dream of wherever
you are?

PAUSE.

Ten. Do you dream of me?

SILENCE.

Wake up, mummy

Please I...

SHE CROUCHES BY HER MUM.

Mum.

Mum.

CHARLIE.

It doesn't even look like you, it's not you.

Every-time I'm here I think...

RIGHT IN HER MOTHER'S EAR.

You'll wake.

You don't.

You'll wake.

You don't.

You're waking...

I always think you'll wake up in a minute because I'm here, if you...

If you,

If you could...

Hear me.

Why wouldn't you...

Or

I get home from school and dad says...

(I'm living with dad it's rubbish)

You...

Rang, you...

You're on your way.

It was just a matter of...

It was a joke.

You're coming to get me.

CHARLIE.

It was just a...

Not that you're gonna be like this
forever.

Bum wiping, nose, slobber.

SIGHS.

Wake up.

Not...

Catastrophic.

Not

Unaware.

(I hate those hate words)

Not

BEAT.

Vegetative...

No what do they call it...

The politer, the...

Em

Awake but not...

NO RESPONSE.

Lying there like a...

CLOSER.

CHARLIE.

She looks like you

But you're not my

Mum,

You wouldn't lie there you...

You'd get up

You'd

You're not my mum.

You're not.

She

She

Wiggles like a

Like a

Thing.

I wish I didn't come

I wish I didn't have to.

I don't want to come anymore.

I hate your tubes

I hate the way they...

It's red and sloppy...

I hate it.

I hate the gomp

I hate to look at you.

Why don't you open your eyes?

CHARLIE.

Look at me,

You're shrinking

Like a thing

Folding...

Itself

Over and over.

My mum wasn't...

(I'm holding your hand mummy, can
you feel it)

ELLA

(V/O) I'm here Charlie, I can...

CHARLIE.

Wake up, please...

ELLA.

...I'm here.

CHARLIE.

Open your eyes, just for a...

SOME OF THE FOREST GLITCH.

ELLA.

(V/O) I will, I am.

I can speak.

I'm here.

I'll speak now.

CHARLIE.

Mummy.

ELLA.

(V/O) I swallow.

I'm here.

In and out

In and...

Int. House DAY

ELLA RUNS UP STAIRS, THROUGH DOORS,
OFF BUILDINGS.

ELLA.

I'm here Charlie, I'm coming. Just
wait,

I'm coming. I'm going to get there,
I'm nearly with you.

Just just...

Please darling.

I'm coming I'm coming.

I'll find a way, I'll find a way
through.

Wait, wait.

I will.

I will curl a foot, turn a corner.

My eye,

It will

Drop open.

I will...

I look through.

I look through.

CHARLIE.

I wish you'd die.

CHARLIE GOES OUT.

ELLA BURSTS THROUGH A FINAL DOOR
INTO THE FOREST. IT GROWS AROUND
HER.

Ext. Forest DAY

ELLA CRIES AND CRIES. THE TREE IS
HUGE ABOVE HER SLOWLY IT'S RHYTHM
IN THE WIND SOAKS THROUGH TO HER.

ELLA

(V/O) You wait...

You huge impossible tree you...

Stand you...

I remember your branches were like
a forest

You stand...

Somewhere

Away from here...

IT LIFTS AGAIN WITH A BREEZE.

With me

All this time

Standing.

And we asked you give us a leaf you

gave us a leaf

give us a leaf and this,

a yellow leaf

swooned down to us

a yellow leaf

We caught it.

Somewhere I know

You

Stand

(V/O) Encased.

I wish

I

I

I...

SHE STARTS TO CRY LIKE HER HEART
WOULD BURST.

...could send my child a leaf
like you sent us

A leaf

A lid of an eye.

PAUSE.

I can't even send her that.

Int. Hospital Room

DAY

A NURSE WASHES ELLA, A SECOND HELPS.

NURSE (VERY DISTANT).

Ella, we just going to
turn you now.

One, two, three.

(Her eyes are open)

That's just to finish
you off, you'd...

(These sores are not...)

You'll feel lovely
after.

Okay, we'll just...

This will, it might...

SHE BREATHES BETWEEN
HER TEETH.

Sting.

WIPES WITH CARE.

Lovely.

We're gonna...

Jill, can you pass me
some more...

Thanks.

Thanks thanks thanks.

Let's turn her again.

SHE HUMS GENTLY.

Ella, we're going to...

One

Two

ELLA. There is a
stuck,

a stum

a jump

a glitch

of jumps

juz

juz

This place...

I sleep

I wake

I move

I don't

My wruz

My litches

My seas and slips

Shoves

Suns and saunts...

No way up I can only

But I do the same eazz

Same relolving

NURSE Go.

THEY TURN HER.

There we go...

There we go...

SHE HUMS, STOPS.

One by one.

There we,

Now.

Still, it's easy...

SHE HUMS...

There.

SIGHS.

I wish we could take
her some place other
than this. In this
room, always in this
room.

What if she can hear,
what if...

Always here.

Always in this one
place...

What if she can...

Hear.

ELLA. Dream sam.

Like a wave, I'm
inside and you..

Twixt me.

Sing my brain its
brooding note.

The water cold.

The milk light.

The sky wide.

You sing.

You beat.

You spike.

You whisper.

You beat.

You turn

You trim

You taw.

You take.

You starve

You...

NURSE. All Done.

If she's still in there.

Never /leaving,

Never.

Who comes,

ELLA. Don't.

Turn her...

Don't...

Yep.

Who comes?

ELLA.

This is my heart, this is my..

Can you hear it banging,

Listen!

SHE BANGS, THE DRUMMING GROWS.

I'm here.

GASPING AND CRYING.

I'm here!!

SHE BANGS AND BUILDS, THE HEART
DRUMMING DRUMMING DRUMMING.

Open my eyes!!!!

ALL AROUND AN INCREDIBLE THROBBING.

Someone...!!!

LIKE A RUSH OF BLOOD TO THE HEAD,
LIKE A WHITE FLASH OF LIGHT IN THE
EYES.

HAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

A SHAKING STARTS.

A SHAKING SO HARD.

A SHAKING OF EVERYTHING.

OUTSIDE A VOICE VERY FAR AWAY.

Int. Hospital Room DAY

NURSE COMING IN DOOR, THE
NEUROLOGIST FOLLOWS.

NEUROLOGIST. What's happening?

NURSE. I don't know she..

NEUROLOGIST. What is it?

NURSE. She she she..

NEUROLOGIST. Ella.

NURSE. She's crying.

NEUROLOGIST. What?

NURSE. There are tears on tears rolling
down her...

NEUROLOGIST. How is that...?

NURSE. I can't stop her, I can't..

NEUROLOGIST. Ella.
Ella.
Can you open your eyes?
ELLA SOBS.
Ella??
Can you...

NURSE. Her pulse is racing.

NEUROLOGIST. Ella?
Nothing.

NURSE. Why would she?

NEUROLOGIST. Why wouldn't she - you ever cried
in a dream?

NURSE. Yes...

NEUROLOGIST. It's not uncommon.

NURSE. ...like her heart is breaking.

NEUROLOGIST. We don't know that.

NURSE. Tears, look at them they're real!

NEUROLOGIST. Nothing.

Ext. Hilltop NIGHT

ELLA (SCREAMS) Nothing??
Nothing!!!

Int. Hospital Room DAY

NEUROLOGIST. How long has she been...?

NURSE. Ten minutes.

NEUROLOGIST SIGHS.

NEUROLOGIST (CLOSE) Ella,
Ella.
We're here.
I'm here we're here.
Please don't be,
Distressed.
BEAT.
We know you know you're..., you can
understand, we're going to try and
reach you, we're going to try...
We're...

NEUROLOGIST.

Ella.

Keep imagining.

We're going to try and reach you.

Ella.

Int. MRI Scanner DAY

THE NOISE OF THE SCAN BEGINS, AS SHE GOES IN THE WORLD AROUND HER ENCLOSSES.

NEUROLOGIST

(FROM OUTSIDE). We're scanning your brain now..

I'm going to ask you a question and if the answer is yes I want you to imagine you are hitting a tennis ball back and forth to an imaginary coach.

If the answer is no, I want you to think of yourself walking through a supermarket.

Okay.

Ella.

Is the year 2013?

Int. Supermarket DAY

ALL AROUND THE SPACE OF THE SUPERMARKET START TO GROW.

ELLA.

No - I wish it was, none of this would have happened, I don't even remember 2013. No I am walking through a supermarket - here you are - shelves the same always the same it had no glamour, just cheap and full of things I never needed.

Int. MRI Scanner DAY

NEUROLOGIST.

No, that's a no.

That's correct Ella it is not 2013.

Rest, brilliant Ella.

Brilliant.

BEAT. TYPING, PAPER.

Now I am going to ask you a second question.

Em.

Ella, are you in the hospital?

ELLA.

What?

NEUROLOGIST.

Ella, if the answer is yes I want you to imagine you are playing tennis.

If your answer is no, I want you to imagine you are walking through a house you once lived in.

ELLA. Is that really your best question?

Int. Tennis Court DAY

THE TENNIS COURT EMERGES.

ELLA.

And I hate tennis I hate the hundred lost balls and the net too high and the way the lines are never in the right place...

Int. MRI Scanner DAY

NEUROLOGIST.

Brilliant Ella.

See the supplementary motor area.

Brilliant brilliant.

NEUROLOGIST. You're talking to us Ella.
 You're really..
 And rest.

Int. Tennis Court DAY

ELLA. Will I ever stand outside with the sun on my face?

SHE WHACKS THE BALL.

Int. MRI Scanner DAY

NEUROLOGIST. Now Ella, one more question.

BEAT.

Okay.

Em.

Is your daughter's name Samantha?

If the answer is yes imagine you are playing tennis.

If the answer is no imagine you are walking through a forest.

ELLA. My daughter, my beautiful daughter is my beautiful daughter's name Samantha?

No...

Ext. Forest DAY

THE FOREST GROWS AROUND - SHE WALKS THROUGH THE FOREST.

ELLA. Her name is Charlie and every day I am missing, every moment, every second of her.

THE FOREST IS ALL AROUND HER, A
BIRD CALLS.

ELLA.

She loved this place.

And if I looked for her every day
of my life I will never find her.

THE DRONE OF THE MRI SCANNER FADES.

Int. Hospital Room DAY

CHARLIE SITS BY BED.

CHARLIE.

Mummy.

Mum.

Mum, I need you...

I...

I...

Something happened,

At school.

And I've got no-one...

BEAT.

Dad sits out in the car waiting
eating a bloody sandwich wrapped in
plastic listening to the football
and he never, he never...

SHE REALLY CRIES. DOOR OPENS AND
NEUROLOGIST COMES IN.

NEUROLOGIST.

Hello.

CHARLIE.

Hello.

PAUSE, SHE WIPES HER FACE.

NEUROLOGIST.

You okay?

CHARLIE. Yep.

NEUROLOGIST. Okay.

PAUSE. CHARLIE GATHERS HERSELF.

CHARLIE. You my mum's doctor?

NEUROLOGIST. I'm her neurologist.

CHARLIE. Right.

BEAT.

How's she doing?

NEUROLOGIST. Good.

CHARLIE. Good!? In what way good!?

NEUROLOGIST. We've been doing fMRI scans.

CHARLIE. What are they?

NEUROLOGIST. Your mother's brain is...

CHARLIE. Dead.

NEUROLOGIST. No.

CHARLIE. ...

NEUROLOGIST. The scans show she is...

CHARLIE. What?

NEUROLOGIST. ...aware. It's rare but...

CHARLIE. Of what?

NEUROLOGIST. She has the ability to understand spoken commands /and to respond...

CHARLIE. /Us?

She's aware of us?

That we're here, she can...

NEUROLOGIST. Is your father here?

CHARLIE. No.

CHARLIE. Yes.
No, well yes...
No.
He's in the car.
I mean he's here, he's in the building I mean I'm not on my...

NEUROLOGIST. Okay.
BEAT.

CHARLIE. She's still in there?

NEUROLOGIST. Yes.

CHARLIE. She can hear /me?

NEUROLOGIST. /There is neural response, yes.

CHARLIE. What does //that mean?

NEUROLOGIST. //Look, the surrogate decision maker...

CHARLIE. The what?

NEUROLOGIST. Your dad...

CHARLIE. He shouldn't really be, they were /separated...

NEUROLOGIST. /Gave...
Permission for us...
To...

CHARLIE. Do experiments on her?

NEUROLOGIST. Well not experiments.

CHARLIE. Like a cat or a monkey in a...

NEUROLOGIST. Well not a...

CHARLIE. So she can understand...?

NEUROLOGIST. We believe so.

BEAT.

CHARLIE. How?

NEUROLOGIST. We ask her questions.

CHARLIE. Like?

NEUROLOGIST. Easy, you know is her name Ella, is it Friday?

CHARLIE. And she knows the answer.

NEUROLOGIST. She can answer yes or no. Through commands we give her.

BEAT.

It's new research, we're just...
Through brain-imaging we can...
See.
Ask your father...

CHARLIE. He doesn't tell me anything - he thinks she's a gaping hole.

NEUROLOGIST. She's not a gaping hole.

BEAT.

CHARLIE. Will it make her better?

NEUROLOGIST. What?

CHARLIE. Your experiments?

NEUROLOGIST. No, though it might...

CHARLIE. Is she in pain?

NEUROLOGIST. We didn't...

CHARLIE. Does she want to live?

NEUROLOGIST. We can't ask...

CHARLIE. Why not?

NEUROLOGIST. It's an ethics issu/e.

CHARLIE. /What?

Wouldn't you want someone to ask you that?

HALF-BEAT.

NEUROLOGIST. I don't know.

PAUSE.

CHARLIE. Can I ask her questions?

NEUROLOGIST. No.

CHARLIE. Why not?

You could ask my surrogate dinner maker if he /minds.

NEUROLOGIST. /I'm really really //sorry...

CHARLIE. //Yeah everyone's really really sorry.

But what's all this for if she can't talk to who she wants to talk /to.

NEUROLOGIST. /It's for research, //it improves...

CHARLIE. //I've got questions.

NEUROLOGIST. It could be too distressing for your ///mum.

CHARLIE. ///What more than all this?!

Shut in like a...

BEAT.

I can't carry on without her.

She knows,

All the stuff I need to...

And if...

She knows.

BEAT.

CHARLIE. I need to ask her if I should I go on a date with my best friend Peter Fisher?

NEUROLOGIST. Okay.

CHARLIE. You think that's stupid?

NEUROLOGIST SIGHS.

Right, what would you do?

BEAT.

NEUROLOGIST. I...

My advice would be don't ever go on a date with your best friend until you're at least thirty - by that time you'll have explored all other options.

CHARLIE. What does that mean?

NEUROLOGIST. It means be best friends.

CHARLIE. You sure?

HALF-BEAT.

NEUROLOGIST. No.

CHARLIE. My mum would be.

Int. A Room NIGHT

ELLA LIES, NEUROLOGIST STANDS.

ELLA (V/O) And still that night you stand. At the end of my bed you stand. You don't ask the questions anymore, you know my eyes will not open, you know I will not speak.

But still...

NEUROLOGIST.

Ella...

Tomorrow is your last scan I...

I

have to go back to my...

I

I have to, we have to write this up.

You've been brilliant.

(By the way)

We won't, I'm not...

Back

Now

For...

SIGHS.

Your daughter...

ELLA

(V/O) Let her come.

NEUROLOGIST.

...she wants to ask you.

And I...

ELLA

(V/O) Let her please.

NEUROLOGIST.

But this is research it's not...

And this is only the beginning - we will be able to read people's minds in ten years.

PAUSE.

NEUROLOGIST.

There may not be any more fMRI scans Ella. You've answered our questions, this technique of visual-scanning has been...

Really successful. (thank-you)

I mean your care plan will be rewritten, your therapeutic...

They'll do bed-side scans, less

Loud.

Less...

Intrusive.

And I promise you the new research going on is incredible, we will there will be...

BIG SPACE OF NOTHING.

Ella, I just wanted to tell you.

My dad had a catastrophic stroke.

I was just a kid,

But I remember...

...the loneliness.

Int. Scanner

DAY

THE HUGE DRONE OF GUITARS STARTS TO GO.

CHARLIE

(DOWN A FUNNEL) Can she hear me?

NEUROLOGIST.

Yes.

CHARLIE.

Wow!

NEUROLOGIST. Let's just do some...
Questions, simple ones...
First.

CHARLIE. Okay.

HALF-BEAT.

Can I ask them?

NEUROLOGIST. Let me set up the frame.

CHARLIE. Okay.

NEUROLOGIST. Okay.

Let me...

Ella, we're going to ask you a question and if the answer is yes could you imagine playing tennis.

And if the answer is no Ella could you imagine you are walking through a supermarket.

CHARLIE. A supermarket?

CHARLIE LAUGHS.

Sorry.

NEUROLOGIST. Right.

CHARLIE. What's the question?

NEUROLOGIST. Is a banana yellow?

CHARLIE (LAUGHS, PULLS HERSELF UP) Sorry.

Shall I call her Ella?

NEUROLOGIST. Can do.

CHARLIE. Ella - is a banana yellow?

NEUROLOGIST. Ella, if a banana is yellow imagine you are playing tennis. If it is not yellow imagine imagine you are playing a tennis.

CHARLIE. Sometimes they're green.

NEUROLOGIST. Ssssssh.

CHARLIE. What's it doing?

NEUROLOGIST. It's, erm - showing she's...

CHARLIE. What?

NEUROLOGIST. Playing tennis.

CHARLIE. Where?

NEUROLOGIST. Here.

CHARLIE. What that, it...

NEUROLOGIST. Yes, that's the area...

CHARLIE. Wow.

NEUROLOGIST. Okay...

Rest Ella.

Thank-you, excellent.

CHARLIE. A banana is yellow.

NEUROLOGIST. Yes.

BEAT.

NEUROLOGIST. Now you.

ELLA. Okay, I'm ready.

NEUROLOGIST. Okay same thing Ella - if the answer to the question is yes imagine you are playing tennis.

If the answer is no, imagine you are walking through a supermarket..

CHARLIE. Could she imagine something different?

NEUROLOGIST. Pardon.

CHARLIE. She hates supermarkets, supermarkets suck.

NEUROLOGIST. It doesn't /really...

CHARLIE. /What other one's you got?

NEUROLOGIST SIGHS.

NEUROLOGIST. A house.

CHARLIE. Nah.

NEUROLOGIST. A city.

CHARLIE. Nah.

NEUROLOGIST. A forest?

CHARLIE. A forest?

NEUROLOGIST. Yes.

CHARLIE. Okay.

NEUROLOGIST. Okay.

BEAT.

NEUROLOGIST. Okay.

Ella, if the answer is no could you
imagine you are walking through a
forest.

CHARLIE. ...

NEUROLOGIST. You can ask your question now
Charlie.

CHARLIE. Right.

Okay.

PAUSE.

Mum,

BEAT.

Can you hear me?

Look I know what you're going to
say about the dating and all that,
I'm too young - I know I know. I

like boys but I don't like them in that what and they're pretty stupid most of the time.

SHE LEANS IN.

Mum, I have to ask you one thing. It's a big thing and I don't know how I'm gonna get it get you to answer it but I know when you hear me ask it you'll know and I know they'll stop me because I'm not s'pose to ask that sort of but if you can think really quickly and just just just...

Right. Okay...

My question...

Was it my fault?

NEUROLOGIST.

Was what your fault?

CHARLIE.

That you're here like this, all laid out and stuck and gone...

NEUROLOGIST.

Charlie.

CHARLIE

(FAST) Because of you and dad I mean he was there but he never.., and you said you said things should be so much so much better no shouting...

So you wouldn't have been riding your bike between us and him all the time coming to get me cos I didn't like staying over and I wanted to be home with you.

And I told you to wear your helmet and to have your lights in the dark and all that cos you'd always go off on one if I didn't...

And that night that night I didn't want to go to dad's and I was kicking off, and and the rain and

the, you were you were next to me
to keep me sheltered from the cars
I know and..

I I didn't even see you slip under,
just one minute you were there and
then...

I didn't you didn't even cry out...

I looked round and you weren't
there and the car had already gone
over you.

And I didn't know I didn't know
mummy where you had gone.

CHARLIE STARTS TO CRY.

NEUROLOGIST.

Wait.

Wait, Charlie wait.

Wait wait wait...

CHARLIE.

What?

NEUROLOGIST.

Charlie look at this.

CHARLIE.

What?

NEUROLOGIST.

Look - there.

CHARLIE.

What is that?

NEUROLOGIST.

The parahippocampal gyrus.

CHARLIE.

What?

NEUROLOGIST.

She's in the forest.

That means no, that means it wasn't
your fault!

She's walking in the forest

THE FOREST OPENS UP AROUND THEM.

CHARLIE.

Mummy?

Ext. Forest DAY

ECHOES INTO, A YOUNGER CHARLIE AND
ELLA WALK.

ELLA. Best colour.

BOTH. Purple!

CHARLIE. Best animal.

ELLA. Err,

Seal.

CHARLIE. Heron.

ELLA. Best tree.

CHARLIE. This one.

THE HUGE TREE ABOVE THEM.

ELLA. This one.

CHARLIE. Hello tree of trees!!

Do you think it remembers us coming
be/fore?

ELLA. /Yes.

CHARLIE. Do you think it feels //us?

ELLA. //I think it feels everything.

It feels our footsteps,

Our vibrations.

CHARLIE. And the wind.

ELLA. I got honey sandwiches.

CHARLIE. I wonder if it grows acorns
any/more.

ELLA. /Too old for acorns.

CHARLIE. This is the best tree isn't it?

ELLA. One of them.

CHARLIE. Best place.

ELLA. Yep.

CHARLIE. Me and you.

ELLA. Me and you.

MOMENT.

CHARLIE. Are you sad about dad?

ELLA. Yep.

CHARLIE. Me to/o.

ELLA. /Just remember, grown-ups are stupider than kids...

CHARLIE. Like you two.

ELLA. ..and it's not your fault.

CHARLIE. I know.

ELLA. Whatever's happened between me and dad it was was never you just us idiots right...

CHARLIE. Right.

ELLA. Remember that.

CHARLIE. You said it a hundred //times.

ELLA. //I know but...

CHARLIE. I know mum.

ELLA. Promise.

CHARLIE. Yep!

ELLA. Promise.

CHARLIE. Yes!

ELLA. Anything that happens.

CHARLIE. Yes!!

I got it!

BEAT.

ELLA.

Satsauma.

CHARLIE.

Cheers.

CHARLIE

(V/O) That great oak tree it stands
it's a secret and no-one knows it's
even there it's huge, it stands
like it scratches the sky.

All this time

All this time

it never spoke,

it never...

opened an eye

it just...

BEAT.

But I think if it could,

What it would say of all the things
it felt and heard.

BEAT.

I miss you mum,

So bad...

Ext. Tree

DAY

THE TREE GROWS ALL AROUND.

ELLA.

...I could rip out my heart my...

Mind my...

And...

But every minute,

Every minute...

ELLA.

Charlie.

I stand.

I wait.

I listen.

Touch my skin,

I feel you.

I'm here.

THE TREE LIFTS ALL AROUND AND
REACHES TO THE SKY.

CHAPTER THREE

SILENCE AND SOUND INTERVENTIONS: THE PRESENCE AND ABSENCE OF THE SILENT BODY

This chapter examines how a Dramaturgy of Silence, which places silence as the central dramaturgical tool, can be expanded through the exploration of the silent body. It questions how an imposed silence is experienced through the interiority of its victim and furthermore how the form of the radio play can position the listener not only inside the character's head, but also constrained within the experience of the silent body. The practice, my radio play *The Sky is Wider* (2016) is a forty-five minute original play commissioned by BBC Radio Four through the Wellcome Trust's Experimental Stories Scheme 2014. The play takes place in the mind of Ella, who through the passage of the play realizes that she has suffered a brain-injury and is actually in a hospital bed in a state of unresponsive wakefulness. Locked inside her head, Ella is unable to move or speak – simultaneously liberated through memory and imagination, whilst desperately trying to communicate with the world outside of her body.

In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, silence is imbued and journeyed towards, understood through that which is absent and that which is unutterable – words ultimately giving way to howling and death. The starting point of *The Sky is Wider* is silence. Ella, the central character, is interred in silence; her mind and body becoming a place of exile where all communication, verbal and physical, is initially impossible. The radio play form has the unique capacity to cross the boundary of the body, to hear the internal sound of the mind whilst simultaneously hearing the external sound world and the

people in it, communicating the experience of that silent body to the listener. It is this embodied place that the play not only emerges from, but also is held captive within.

Correspondingly, positioning the play completely within Ella's mind allowed me to investigate three different strands of The Dramaturgy of Silence. The first was how words themselves emerge from the kinetic vibrations of the body, evolving from a silence of unconsciousness. The second was silence's substance as both absence and presence, and how these might be realised. The third was the power of silencing creating what I have called the 'unsilence'; a language constrained within the silenced body.

Locating the play in what seems to be an absent silent body returned me to Kristeva's theories around the chora (1984), the silent physical impulse that attempts to propel itself into language. Gilles Deleuze's (1997) metalanguages, which chart language's disintegration into silence (through Beckett's writing), were helpful in my conceptual framework to articulate how the different interventions were created, particularly through a language of deterioration and the inevitability of silence. Finally, the realisation of silence as nothingness or presence was made much more substantial by the recording of the play in binaural sound, where the use of a binaural microphone created an immersive, three-dimensional experience when listened to on headphones.

BEGINNINGS – LOCATING THE SILENT BODY

The Wellcome Trust's Experimental Stories Initiative (2014) creates opportunities for writers and producers to work with scientists over a two-day workshop, exploring current scientific research to provoke new ideas and stories for radio plays for BBC Radio Four. Through the scheme, Wellcome Trust endeavours to create collaboration

between writer and scientist, which becomes a springboard out of the scientific research into a creative idea. Wellcome's aim is to ask big questions to reach an audience who may not necessarily embrace the scientific. This particular initiative was created to work in conjunction with the Wellcome Trust's exhibition 'States of Mind: Tracing the edges of consciousness' (2015-2016), the brief being to examine the nature of consciousness and 'in particular what can happen when our typical conscious experience is interrupted, damaged or undermined' (Wellcome Collection, 2016).

The exploration of the science of *The Sky is Wider* began with our pairing (BBC producer Nadia Molinari and myself) at the Wellcome Trust's *Experimental Stories* with Anil Seth, Professor of Cognitive and Computational Neuroscience and Co-Director of the Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science at the University of Sussex. Throughout the conference my primary question became what form a radio play might take which would enable it to put into action the theories examined by the neuroscientists, whilst simultaneously flowing as an evolving sound movement that would invite silence? In consultation with Seth, and studying the neuro-scientific research of Adrian Owen (2013), who investigated communication with patients with brain injuries through brain-imaging studies, I decided to create a play that would exist in the brain of a woman in a so-called 'vegetative state':

In a classic study from about 10 years ago, Adrian Owen and his team asked behaviourally unresponsive patients to imagine either walking around their house or playing tennis, while their brains were scanned using functional MRI (which measures regional metabolic activity in the brain). These questions were chosen because imagining these different behaviours activates different parts of the brain, and so if we

see these selective activations in a patient, we know that they have understood and are voluntarily following the instructions. If they can do this, they must be conscious. It turns out that between 10-20% of patients behaviourally diagnosed as being in the vegetative state can pass this test. Equally important, this same method can be used to establish simple communication by (for example) asking a patient to imagine playing tennis to answer 'yes' and walking around a house to answer 'no' (2016, para.3).

As Seth described this research, I was struck by the potency of asking someone locked inside their own body to imagine themselves playing tennis or walking through a supermarket as a brain stimulating exercise that would allow them to answer a question or confirm their own consciousness. The nature of the questions, functionally scientific struck me as both banal and strange. How would a confined mind respond to such a question? This provoked an in-depth conversation about the nature of questions that a patient might (or might not) be asked within this process. Furthermore, we considered the experience of the patient who could only respond to basic binary questions without having the ability to answer fully, ask questions themselves, or dictate what questions they needed to answer. As Seth notes, 'Alongside these scientific developments we encounter pressing ethical questions. How should we treat patients in these liminal states of awareness? And given a means of communication, what kinds of questions should we ask?' (2016, para.5).

A key text that illuminated this experience was Jean-Dominique Bauby's book *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2008), Bauby's devastating account of his catastrophic stroke, which he dictated through the blinking of his left eyelid. This attack left him totally paralysed in a state of 'locked-in syndrome', and his account communicates

the terrifying reality of an imprisonment in one's own body. Reading about Bauby's experience two statements collide; 'My cocoon becomes less oppressive and my mind takes flight like a butterfly' (2008, p.13), conflicting with, 'but I was too devastated by this brutal downgrading of my future hopes to take much notice' (ibid, p.16). The tension between these two factors; the leap of the imagination by the confined mind, terrorised simultaneously by its enclosure, became for me the essential element to understand and articulate in *The Sky is Wider*. It would examine what the brutal act of silencing does to the embodied life and language it stanches.

I recognised that the inner-voice would be central to the writing of the play. Steven Connor notes that 'radio space is mind space: that radio is always enacted in the mind of the listener [...] the booming round O of the skull' (2014, p.65). The listener's head therefore becomes a receptacle for the radio play. Martin Esslin describes how the listener's ears 'can be directed either to the outside world or inward to pick an internal monologue; indeed they can enable the listener to experience the external world *subjectively* with the ears of the character in the play' (2012, p.277, emphasis in original). Compellingly I realised that the play, particularly when listened to with headphones created a dynamic relationship between Ella and the listener convening in an imagined shared experience. That it was not just a matter of the play happening in the listener's head, but also of it endeavouring to place the listener both into Ella's head and into her silent body.

However, before examining the processes of creating this relationship, I now construct a conceptual framework that further considers how language extends towards silence and how the substance of silence might be realised and transform within the radio play.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK – METALANGUAGES

In Deleuze's late essay *The Exhausted* (1997), he describes three 'metalanguages' used to destabilize language, reading across Beckett's novels, plays, radio and television work. For Beckett language is devalued; its disintegration in the face of silence is the propelling force of his work. Deleuze charts this evolving disintegration through these metalanguages, defining them as three distinct 'exhaustions' (ibid, p.156). Here, I use Deleuze's metalanguages to frame and articulate some of the processes involved in writing *The Sky is Wider*. In this process, I also re-evaluate Deleuze's definitions of silence's substance and language's deterioration.

Deleuze's Language I becomes a metalanguage that fractures words into 'atomic, disjunctive, cut and chopped language' (ibid, p.156). This metalanguage of diminishment exposes language's failure, causing stuttering and fragmentation. In his short essay, *He stuttered* (1997), Deleuze notes that when language is subjected to this process, sound and meaning begin to separate. He writes:

If a system appears in perpetual disequilibrium or bifurcation, if each of its terms in turn passes through a zone of continuous variation, then the language itself will begin to vibrate and stutter (1997, p.108).

Deleuze's definitions resonate with Kristeva's semiotic, which (as has been previously stated) 'bursts, pierces, deforms, reforms' (1984, p.103). Both articulate what Deleuze calls a 'zone of vibration. Language trembles from head to toe' (1997, p.109). This process of teasing apart the sound and meaning of language became crucial to the writing of *The Sky is Wider*, which as it extends into Deleuze's Language II, becomes a language which 'no longer operates with combinable atoms but with bendable flows' (ibid, p.156), starting to discard meaning through what I

have called a 'glitch'. Here the materiality of the sound of the word counterpoints or confounds its understanding.

The idea of the glitch collaborates with the composition of Ella's inner voice; the kinaesthetic vibration of her body affecting her internal language. Correspondingly, it allowed me to experiment with how Ella formed and constructed her words as she regained consciousness, the process simultaneously re-making and unpicking language in a trajectory that travelled both towards and away from silence.

In his writing on speech composition, Martin Hirsch notes, 'If one subtracts any semantic information from language, its musical potential comes to the forefront [...] the act of listening sways back and forth between musical hearing to linguistic hearing, playing with comprehension and non-comprehension as well as with the boundaries between language and music' (2013, pp.93-94). Indeed, the glitch draws attention to itself through its malfunction; no longer a vehicle that transports meaning into a sentence but itself an act of sound.

Similarly, in Beckett's second radio play *Embers* (1959), which is located in the mind of the central character Henry, the interiority of his language is often reduced to incomplete utterances and repetitions which (although not complete glitches) play in short, rhythmic staccato instating the primacy of sound:

white world, great trouble, not a sound, only the embers, sound of
dying, dying glow, Holloway, Bolton, Bolton, Holloway, old men,
great trouble, white world, not a sound (1998, p.255).

Beckett prioritises sound in its drumming immediacy, whilst reducing language in short phrases to almost the time-space of a heartbeat. Working within the interiority of the radio play, this flow (and constraint) continually reverberates. It draws the

listener into an auditory experience swinging between semi-meaning and intelligible language, between the body and the word. Deleuze extends the definition of Language II, suggesting that it becomes about the exhaustion of the voice and of speaking itself. In Beckett's writing, language is exhausted but characters continue to speak. Words are still conjured, stories still spoken and repeated over and over.

Likewise, in *Embers*, Henry flees a goading silence by continually evoking the lost people of his life. He calls them into half-embodiment and then lets them dissolve before him. He conjures his mute father and becomes initially the ventriloquist of his own child. The external soundscape of the play is mostly the sea and sometimes a wrenching up of the volume like a storm. There is sudden screaming, crying, crashing pianos, a child sobbing, and then a return to quietness. Henry's wife is almost absent in her remote responses to him. She becomes his final resistance to silence, but he cannot sustain his evocation of her. Falling into silence for Henry is impossible because then it would become necessary to acknowledge himself as Deleuze envisages, as the 'exhausted one, the unnameable, me, sitting alone in the dark' (1997, p.157). Language II then is the words we use to deny or cover our mortality, the words through which we escape the nothingness of silence.

In this context, I found the question of how I understood and situated silence becoming increasingly complex. In Beckett, our bodies become noise-machines that flee but ultimately succumb to the deathness of silence. Contrastingly in *The Sky is Wider*, silence never terrorises Ella but becomes her embodied starting place. Language here assembles as a scrabbling towards consciousness. The silent body reinstates itself in sound repeatedly and then slips away out of consciousness, slipping through and out of the listener's mind. Similarly, in Arthur Kopit's radio play *Wings*

(1979), a woman suffering from aphasia reconstructs her language as her brain recovers from a stroke:

Hapst aporkshop fleetish yes of course it's yes the good ol' times when
we would mollis I mean collis all aroun still what my son's name is
cannot for the life of me yet face gleams smiles (1979, p.25).

The reversal of this trajectory, with the starting point as silence, throws up different possibilities from Deleuze's diminishment of language. In Kopit's play for example, there is partially a process of restoration. Compellingly, this breaking out of silence can also become a shout of protest, a momentary proof of existence or a dreadful cry of love and endurance. Indeed, words not exhausted but reignited, attempting to shout out-loud and reclaim meaning.

Deleuze's final metalanguage, Language III, moves beyond words, considering not the effect of silence on language but the substance of silence itself as it 'rises up or stretches out in its holes, its gaps, or its silences' (1997, p.162). For Deleuze, Language III becomes a space for no words, no voices, of blanks and the unsaid; a silence of nothingness. Beckett's plays likewise gesture towards a void.

However, Ondek Laurence (1991) contrasts Woolf's differing understandings of nothingness and emptiness. Ondek Laurence notes that in Woolf, the emptiness of silence can become an experience of consciousness. In this sense, recognition of death can sharpen an experience of living; the moment-to-moment conscious realisation of the emptiness of silence can contain a palpable moment of being. Ondek Laurence notes, 'Even though these states may [...] signal a retreat into oneself, they are linked in Woolf, as in other female artists, to creative power' (ibid, pp.52-53).

Adrienne Rich acknowledges this in her poem, *Cartographies of Silence*:

It has a presence,

It has a history a form.

Do not confuse it

with any kind of absence. (1978, p.16)

This is a crucial observation in the development of a Dramaturgy of Silence, which attempts to understand how silences of absence and presence emerge. In *The Sky is Wider*, silence's emptiness has propensity to continually reshape, refill, withdraw. A silence of emptiness may contain nothingness, be without content but still holds a potentiality of movement, of change; its emptiness subsumed. The difference for Woolf and indeed for the listener is that these silences do not only transform in the surrounding environment but are also experienced through and inside the body.

I now expand on these three 'metalanguages' to illustrate the expansion of a Dramaturgy of Silence through the writing of *The Sky is Wider*.

DEVELOPING A DRAMATURGY OF SILENCE – ABSENCE AND PRESENCE

To expand a Dramaturgy of Silence, I examine the absence and presence of silence, crossing through the boundary of language and the body. In *The Sky is Wider* three distinct processes emerged:

1. Experimentation with a **glitch** and **expletives of thought** (Barthes 1992, p.4).
2. Juxtapositions of silences of **absence and presence** and the sound intervention of **binaural technology**.
3. A **narrative movement** out of silence – the unsilence.

GLITCH

At the beginning of the play, Ella's brain-cycles of wakefulness and nothingness became an opportunity for me to create 'glitches' in words and sequences. Steven Hammer writes about the 'linguistic glitch' in Zaum (the transrational poetry of Russian Futurism) saying, 'a combination of *za* [across; beyond; to the other side of] and *um* [mind; intellect; head], denoted a new mode of linguistic expression in which words' meanings became indefinite or indeterminate' (Hammer, 2013, emphasis in original, Zaum section, para.3). I was interested in Zaum territory but did not want to create a new 'sound' language, but rather renegotiate meaning through the glitch's momentary malfunction. Furthermore, in those glitching moments I was aiming to reinstate the primacy of sound over meaning.

Caryl Churchill's stage-play *Blue Kettle* (1997), similarly uses two words 'blue' and 'kettle' to glitch the language of the play. Churchill gradually starts to replace the normal words of the play with these two words until they start to devour the text with their full and partial utterances:

DEREK. What blue me the kettle in the first place was that I met your son. I did really.

MRS PLANT My bl? You ket him bl?

(1997, p.67)

Although meaning is disappearing, the approximations and suggestions of the words allow different translations. The developing repetition also exposes the textural qualities of the words. As the play continues, the rule of replacement that Churchill

imposes on the text spreads like a virus. Powerfully, the frame of meaning dissolves into the drumming of the un-language and the physicality of its presence.

Elizabeth Angel-Perez (2013) recognises in Churchill's text an act of destruction in which language is systematically put to death and replaced by a playful renegotiation of terms of meaning. Angel-Perez acknowledging language's failure writes, 'the text no longer contains its own truth, it becomes somehow contingent and therefore prone to being manipulated' (2013, p.93). For Angel-Perez, the comic 'knowingness' and playfulness of the process displaces the disaster of language, whilst instating new ways of realising tragedy. Extending this thinking, these glitching transactions function similarly to encounters with silence. When using the pause, silence challenges language by illuminating its lack. Similarly, with the glitch, as the word loses conventional meaning, it skims closer to silence's surface. It is as if silence yields the glitched word some of its power to challenge. Thus the glitch functions like a pause by bringing attention to itself (in this case through malfunction) and thus exposing language's limitations and narrowness of meaning.

Conversely, *The Sky is Wider* is not a study of the failure of language, but of language failing because the brain is impaired. Therefore, the glitch needed to integrate with Ella's bodily desire to communicate so that she might understand what was happening to her. It felt important that words vibrated and moved into and out of focus, embracing some of the musicality and strangeness of repetition in Churchill's *The Skriker*:

SKRIKER: Heard her boast beast a roast beef eater, daughter could spin span spick and spun the lowest form of wheat straw into gold, raw into roar, golden lion and lyoness under the sea, dungeonesse under the castle for bad mad sad adders and takers away (1994, p.1).

The Skriker's language is a mix of fairy-tale, alliteration, rhyming, and sounding of words. It playfully infiltrates language in the same way as the Skriker and her fellow creatures try to infiltrate the human world. Reworking of words merge meaning into a mesmerising movement of sound, quickly hardening from familiar fairy tales into:

Bitch botch itch. Slat itch slit botch. Itch slut bitch slit (ibid, p.2).

The Skriker's words claw at the edge of language by deepening their vibrations; the words possessed by their materiality as she attacks language out-loud. In contrast, Eimear McBride's (2014) first novel *A Girl is a Half-formed Thing*, does not so much attack language as unhinge it. In its startling immediacy, through tightening and loosening of moments, the language unfurls a childhood. It is brutally realised through its bodily experience and recalls as a fragmented return:

I know. The thing wrong. It's a. It is called. Nosebleeds, headaches.
 Where you can't hold. Fall mugs and dinner plates she says clear up.
 Ah young he says give the child a break. Fall of swings. Can't or. Grip
 well. Slipping in the muck. Bang your. Poor head wrapped up white
 and the blood come through. She feel the sick of that. Little boy head.
 Shush. (2014, p.1)

The glitch in this case is the gaps and silences that swing the words into and out of focus. The language whilst visceral and vibrating floats us through the mind of the girl of the title, who whilst present continually absents herself from the core of what she has experienced. McBride's approach strips everything unnecessary from the writing. She describes what remains as, 'what the girl sees, thinks, how her body reacts to what it experiences and can, from the sum of these, hopefully extrapolate how she feels' (2016, para.5). This second approach becomes less a formidable

testing of language but an embodied reaching that through its gaps exposes the shreds of the unspeakable.

In *The Sky is Wider*, Ella's glitched thinking is created through different provocations realised in dreams, the intrusive scan and her imprisoned wakefulness. A word without meaning, for example, a 'new' word would be the approximation of the sound of another word that Ella was trying to grasp. The word 'shimshan,' that appears very early in the writing of the play is the glitched word of 'imagine'.

ELLA. I don't sleep.

I can't.

Shimshan shimshan.

Sa

I can't,

I...

Eyes on stalks

I... (0.12 – 0.20)

In the MRI scanner when the neurologist asks Ella to "Imagine," her brain glitches, she hears "shimshan." 'Imagine a forest' becomes 'shimshann a so est' or 'shimsham a solace'. Ella's mind reshapes possible variations as she (and the listener) grasp for meaning. Hearing the words in the recording, I found the unravelling approximations (p.138. 0.58–1.27) hold the strangeness of an unknown language, but also physicality – a texture both musical and percussive. Steve McCaffery writes how avant-garde sound-poets 'freed the word from semantic mandates, redirecting a sense of energy

from themes and message into matter and force' (1997, p.155). The words themselves absent of meaning become a present act of sound; fluid and immediate like Deleuze's 'bendable flow' where the atomic combinations of words overwhelm understanding (ibid, p.156).

EXPLETIVES OF THOUGHT – ERMS AND AAHS

Whilst creating glitches, I also prioritised what Roland Barthes calls '*expletives of thought*' (1992, p.4, emphasis in original). These are noises we use (not always consciously) as tiny bridges between words or out of silence. I used these transitions primarily through the voice of Charlie, Ella's daughter. Charlie trapped in the unbearable experience of sitting in the hospital with her inert mother, is both confronted by a wall of silence and the physical 'thing' her mother has become. Here, I released the text from formal punctuation, the line-breaks becoming a stopping and starting regulated by Charlie's breath and anguish. This unpredictable rhythm negotiates a plethora of these expletives of thoughts that make talking so minutely complex in its juxtapositions.

Correspondingly, Barthes describes how writers erase the body when they transcribe spoken word into text. He argues that speech is always tactical, so when trying to communicate out-loud the spoken words are full of the creation of thought moving into speech. This would be the often absent 'erms' and 'ahs,' the 'buts' and sighs. Without them, he notes that the sentence becomes a representation of an idea rather than a movement of speech. He argues formal punctuation may make meaning clear but is artificial to the way that actual word-sounds arrive.

Using these expletives as gatherings of thoughts allowed me to bridge journeys out of silence into language, both unformed and as uttered. Seán Street notes that when ordinary people ‘seek to express an idea or emotion and passion enters them, their language seems to be suddenly contained in a stanza, and a new rhythm enters the voice. Even the pause between words contributes to meaning’ (2014, p.76). Street gives two examples of a radio interview with a traveller; the original interview and the edited version. The second interview has removed what Barthes called the ‘scoria’ (1992, p.5); the ums, the gaps, the you-knows. After it has been played to a group of teachers Street notes, ‘Many found the unedited version preferable, claiming that the raw actuality has more “innate” drama in it, as the speaker strives and struggles for the right word, whereas the edited version simply uses the right word’ (2014, p.71).

The ‘erms,’ sighs, natural stops, repetitions of words, gathering of sentences create a language that continually negotiates the lived moment that makes that moment present. Barthes (echoing Kristeva) comments how this writing of language can become a ‘voyage of the body, [...] a difficult voyage, twisted, varied, to which the development of broadcasting – that is, of a speech at the same time original and transcribable, ephemeral and memorable – now brings a striking interest’ (1992, p.7).

Compositionally, expletives of thought allow a physicality of sound. They also surf silence, marking its surface with sound whilst signposting the unspoken. I am also interested in the stops between thought and words (sometimes in the middle of the sentence) that make language’s rhythms more unpredictable. These stops seem more complex and numerous than we as writers allow them space for. They become silent marks that the body scores through words.

For Charlie, her expletives are mostly realised through ‘erms,’ sighs, natural stops, repetitions of words, gathering of sentences and the pleading repetition ‘open your

eyes mum'. It is not so much 'exhausting' language through its denial of silence as Deleuze describes in Language II, but a continual haranguing of silence by Charlie who exhausts her options of trying to get her mother to respond. (10.55-11.50)

CHARLIE Playing four hands on the piano, songs they both...

Do you remember yet mum.

Do you...?

On the pier rolling the

She

The two pennies...

To win a skeleton key-ring they...

PAUSE.

Do you remember mum?

(open your eyes)

I used to draw pictures of girls with seaweed in their hair
down to their toes.

I know it's stupid I know it's

But I've got to find a way to get to you...

Erm.

(Else I'll go mad in the head)

Open your eye just for one second, like you hear me like you
hear...

STOPS. WAITS.

SIGHS.

It didn't work out with that man.

They used to ride the ferris-wheel on the pier and kiss at the
top.

But that's not always enough to...

Equally, the theatre work of Alecky Blyth and film-work of Clio Barnard, pioneers of verbatim techniques, demonstrate the compelling sound of everyday speech that can be both vital and dynamic. In their work, the exact rendering by actors of recorded interviews with real people exemplifies the everyday banter, the vernacular, the imperfect non-sentence that also carves its way into silence. The roughness of saying it as it is, the avoiding of saying it as it is, the banter of menace, the brawl and bog-talk of every day speech, Barthes mourns 'the loss of all these scraps of language'. Adding, 'these words and expressions are yet in some way discreetly dramatic; they are appeals, modulations – should I say, thinking of birds: songs? – through which a body seeks another body' (1992, p.5).

Roesner writes about introducing analogically a jazz-musicality into playwriting, using characteristics of jazz music that pay close attention to sound, particularly in the detail of its ‘microtonal inflections’ and ‘licks, motifs and riffs’ (2014, p.176). Roesner recognises the differences between the pure sound of a composer’s vision and the ‘uniqueness and expressive in jazz [...] where rough, uneducated, even damaged voices (Billie Holiday), failing intonation and unpolished onset (Miles Davis), jarring, angular phrasings (Dexter Gordon) are celebrated’ (ibid, p.176). In writing voices for radio, the examination of the length of sigh, the open breath of a thought and the detail of a repeated gathering that says that says that says that that that says that..., can allow the beating rhythmic vibration of the voice to be explicated into crystallised sound-drops. It advocates an embodied poetic that does not dislodge the importance of the distilled poetic voice in radio play writing, but advances the same rigorous adherence to the spoken words of dialogue, where the complex sounding of the body becomes essentially part of that articulation.

SILENCE AS ABSENCE AND PRESENCE

In creating *The Sky is Wider*, there was an opportunity to differentiate between the contrasting silences of a silence of absence and a silence of presence. For instance, Ella is shut into her silence yet her physical presence remains. Additionally, the play happens in her mind, in a voice that is unheard by any other character in the play. Her mind moves between consciousness, unconsciousness, and the fluctuating space between the two. She dialogues with her exterior world without answer and yet is experienced as only a physical silent ‘thing’ by her daughter and a non-responsive patient by her doctor. Her absence is tangible in the scenes when Charlie talks to her, yet her presence is a force beneath the silence, she ripples with life.

In the first three movements of the play, Ella's developing awareness moves from its initial dislocation through an experience of physicality in the forest, to a terrified stutter as she finds herself suddenly in an unknown bed, watched by an unknown man. I created Ella's confined internal space as if the compression of her mind provokes a sharpening of consciousness articulated in multiple forms, vibrations, and sensations. For Kristeva this presence is realised through the fibre of the body interwoven with language; 'the text shatters and rebinds experience in the process – the term *experience* implying *the subject* and *presence* as its key moments' (1984, p.187). Ella's silent body speaks; her internal thinking apportions and relinquishes sound. Externally, in the physical world of the hospital, however, Ella's consciousness seems absent. George Home-Cook, in his writing on silence in radio plays, notes, 'A character's muteness, or state of being temporarily silent, is experienced by the listener to be co-present with the thematic content presented in the "sound picture"' (2015, p.101, emphasis in original).

Home-Cook (2015) referring to Harold Pinter's radio play, *A Slight Ache* (1966), whose third character, a match-seller, is silent throughout the play, notes how the match-seller is revealed through the other characters who describe him. Experiencing the silence of a mute character however goes beyond its thematic content; the silence is realised not just by a matter of describing the silent one but in making present their absence. In *A Slight Ache*, Pinter uses silence to allow a menace to emerge and develop. Max Picard,²¹ who argues for a silence that is autonomous, writes, 'silence is not merely the negative condition that sets in when the positive is removed; it is rather an independent whole, subsisting in and through itself' (1948, p.15). In this case, the match-seller's presence through silence becomes palpable.

²¹ Typology of Silence: Uselessness (pp.16-17).

Conversely, in James Fritz's award-winning radio play *Comment is Free* (2016), a silence of absence is realised by the central character who never actually appears in the play. The character, Alistair Cooper is only ever heard on his answer machine, his actual voice and person absent throughout. Different voices, public, press, and politicians scorn Cooper, as a right wing commentator and journalist. His absence conjures a 'presence' through the multiple voices describing his duplicitous shape like a Greek chorus. Anger against Cooper's prejudices grows, until online threats become reality and he is murdered outside his own home. At this point in the play, his silent absence becomes complete and irrevocable. This begins a shifting of perspective as the public language that percussively, aggressively, multi-phonically called for his silencing begins to re-evaluate this absence in light of this devastating and violent act. This highlights both the banality of public emotion whilst intensifying the absence of his loss to his wife. The absent silence begins to reshape itself against the response of the voices; exposing both the cynicism and sentimentality of the language used after his death. Silence carves, mutates, critiques and intensifies as the play continues.

Correspondingly, Jason Bahbak Mohaghegh writes, 'The circumscription of an absent space, [...] does not bear itself as a pure void, but even more importantly as an act of destructive coruscation' (2015, p.6). In *Comment is Free*, language's violence exposes itself through its misrepresentation and distortion, whilst silence instils its presence through a '(dis)quieted space of incursion, enunciation and fleeing, where poetic language serves a deeper force than itself' (ibid, p.9). Mohaghegh argues that silence demands supremacy in a text and realises it through both its absence and presence; interrogating language, surfacing, pushing its way through the fragility of words exposing itself as a 'counter-revelation' (ibid, p.9). The experience of listening to Fritz's play becomes a continual negotiation between the unravelling language and the silence that confronts it.

In *The Sky is Wider*, Charlie waits for her absent mother to regain consciousness – she questions, tells stories, threatens, and pleads. The silence never yields but she still waits, she still hopes. This silence of absence unleashes multiple responses from the person who waits. Charlie is not a stoical waiter, as are Estragon and Vladimir in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1998), but a child who cannot make sense of the situation. Absence can become unbearable as it stretches into the interminable; waiting become a flatness of time passing, of monotony. Karmen MacKendrick calls this silence 'a shattered present' (2001, p.18). MacKendrick notes that silence not only fragments language but also time; Charlie has lost both the past and future through her mother's accident. MacKendrick writes:

The fear which silence evokes, the ancient fear, is the fear of time and the absence of time, time which is never more than the coming of an absence, time which is not gathered into memory but fragmented in the return. But this silence, this absence, is also an opening. The infinite spaces which terrify are still the joyous openings which invite (ibid, p.19).

This absent silence then swallows language and memory but somehow, beyond language, holds everything of its loss. It is a silence negotiated between the realised absence and the person who perceives it. In becoming aware of the silence, a process begins of speculation of what the silence holds, its absence potentially transforming into a fullness of that which is lost, allowing a return. Here, silence becomes an invitation.

BINAURAL TECHNOLOGY²²

The challenge in recording was to realise Ella's silent body as both present and absent, to place the listener into the head of Ella whilst creating a three-dimensional sound world around them. This became possible through recording in both stereophonic and binaural. Ella's internal voice, recorded on a customary voice-over microphone, places her voice inside the listener's head. The binaural microphone in contrast creates a spatial, three-dimensional experience that unlike stereophonic situates the sound of the play externally to the listener when listened to on headphones. Use of headphones compellingly places the listener into a listening space as close to the anechoic chamber as a writer can ever hope. With headphones, the 'real' outside sound is subdued whilst the vibrational experience of the 'created' soundscape is experienced. Here, the listener's body completely becomes the receptacle of the radio play. Indeed, in this quietened space, silences can explicitly emerge – even durations of non-sound can play (as they did with John Cage) against the breath, the heartbeat of the listener and the hushed sound of the outside world.

The use of headphones and binaural technology therefore has a provocative relationship with silence and the radio play. Here, engagement with the sound-movement of the radio play is harder to interrupt and the powers of silence can be unleashed. The experience is clearly of sound into the ear but additionally in the case of a binaural play, it becomes an experience communicated body (Ella's) to body (listener). In *The Sky is Wider*, the transcribing of Ella's body in sound and her surrounding environment is communicated to the body of the listener both through the

²² The first example of the binaural was in 1881, at the first International Exposition of Electricity. The 'theatrophone' became the first live streaming event. A live performance of the opera (recorded with eighty transmitters) was via cables in the sewers transported to people listening on headphones two kilometres away (Basu 2015).

affect and effect of her internal, disjointed language and the fluctuating soundscape that encircles. Furthermore, through the binaural technology, it also captures and uses the listener's body to frame and substitute Ella's.

To expand this idea it is helpful to look at how the binaural operates. The multiple microphones situated in the binaural microphone spatially position the recorded sound externally to the listener's body. For example, if the actor speaks into the left side of the microphone, the recording (and the brain) will translate that as someone speaking into their left ear.²³ Chris Pike (2017), the senior scientist in Audio at the BBC Research and Development sound team, calls the binaural 'an immersive spatial audio experience'. He continues, 'Binaural techniques simulate the hearing cues created by acoustic interaction between our bodies and the environment around us. Audio signals are filtered to introduce these cues and give the impression that a sound source is located outside the head at a given location in space' (2017, How it Works section, para.1). The binaural in *The Sky is Wider* places the external characters close-up, to the left and right, above and below Ella. The examining neurologist moving around her bed, Charlie whispers close-up or withdrawing, translate aurally all around Ella (and the listener). This double dynamic then of interior/exterior stakes the listener into Ella's silent body with the sound-environment rising up all around them; an invisible 'other' world insisting on its presence.

The new media of Virtual Reality and the binaural both propose that their audience steps into an immersive world, which they explore through the visual and audio. I would argue, however, that for binaural technology 'immersive' is a problematic word. Immersion suggests the listener dives into a sound world, that (VR like) is a disembodied experience that occurs through a computer-generated scenario. I argue

²³ To experience this phenomena please follow this link: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/projects/binaural-broadcasting>.

this is where the binaural and VR separate. The binaural is less a disembodied immersion but an experience of a sound intervention. Dyson writes, ‘Virtual audio acknowledges and technologizes the presence of the body and the environment in a manner that the visual aspect of VR is only just beginning to encompass’ (2009, p.138). The binaural does not exclude the material body and its actual physical surroundings, but uses the listener’s body as both a receptacle of sound and an object that it surrounds.

In her writing on the post-human, N Katherine Hailes notes that virtual reality is ‘the result of a multisensory interaction that creates the illusion that the users are *inside* the computer’ (1999, p.27, emphasis in original). In contrast, the binaural creates the illusion that a three-dimensional sound world is intervening in the listener’s physical space. The sound phenomenon, so sensual and experiential cannot abandon the body. In his study of sound, Don Ihde says, ‘I do not merely hear with my ears, I hear with my whole body’ (2007, p.45). The listener not only becomes the receptacle through and around which the binaural forms its sounds, but within that experience something new emerges; the listener themselves are made present through the sound intervention into the physical space of the radio play.

Here, as Dyson indicates, the perspective of listening is repositioned, experienced not just by the ear but also by the body. She writes, ‘For computer technology to admit the listening body into the interface is quite radical; to admit the sound source as an independent, autonomous identity is even more so’ (2009, p.139). In the case of *The Sky is Wider*, the presence indeed of the listener’s body acts as a frame holding Ella’s voice, whilst becoming a ‘body’ to the surrounding movement of the external sound world and characters. The binaural also collaborates with silence; it is able to sound the presence/absence of the floating surrounding voice/soundscape, the movements

between words/noise and silence. Silence allows the binaural to move physically; the binaural recordings of an actual forest, hospital and supermarket seem bare compared to usual ‘sound-edited’ soundscapes; a single broken twig underfoot throws open a space of forest communicating additional emptiness in the play’s surrounding environment. In the gaps of silence, the brain speculates and the creation of the emerging three-dimensional sound-space becomes collaborative between the binaural, silence and the mind. Dyson writes:

Every object, every form, affects the resulting sound; every surface becomes a topology that yields reflections and, by registering the sound absorbency of the materials, reveals a depth. [...] In doing so it marks materiality and immateriality at the same time, representing the world as matter, on the one hand, and as a continuum of differing pulses and transient formations, on the other (ibid, p.139).

Here then, the listener can be stalked by the sound intervention, the brain not only instils the environment, but physically places other bodies in the surrounding space, who can now step into the personal space of the listener breaking the once ‘safe’ experience of the radio play.

A JOURNEY OUT OF SILENCE

In further developing a Dramaturgy of Silence, I now consider the narrative journey out of silence. Here, an ‘Underworld Narrative’ comes into play, a narrative that takes a trajectory from silence to words. Jason Bahbak Mohaghegh, mapping the work of Iranian poet Forugh Farrokhzad, describes the silent body as negative space. In charting Farrokhzad’s poetic processes passing through negation and exile to desire,

he recognises the ‘relationship between silence and an exponentially-defiant body, one which forms a long trajectory from despair to affirmation’ (2015, p.128). In Farrokhzad’s work, the constrained body making multiple attempts to break out of its exile becomes a process of endurance, in which the experience transitions and transforms.

Mohaghegh recognises the silent body initially as a space of nothingness, ‘a space of pure negativity, a plateau across which conditions of enclosure and suppression play themselves out relentlessly’ (ibid, p.127). He imagines this as an experience of non-being, but I would argue by allowing access to the interior experience (in the case of Farrokhzad through poetry, in the case of the radio play through the internal voice), the silent body becomes acutely present. Its silenced voice contradicts its nothingness through its utterances. This non-being/being phenomenon which I have called the ‘unsilence’ in the typology, becomes the constrained body/voice whose words become landscapes of an interior language compressed and ravaged by the silencing effect. The transition out of the ‘unsilence’ for Mohaghegh emerges out of ‘a mounting presence [...] rallying against reality itself’ (ibid, p.131).

At this point for Mohaghegh, the silence that has been the enemy to the oppressed body becomes the source of protest as it is experienced through the body almost as a silent scream. The constant hollowing of the constrained internal space causes the silenced body to begin to exclaim through jerks and textures, expressing the pain interred in it. For Kristeva this would be the ‘fibre’ of the body moving into the poetic, but equally the unsilence can also break the silence more physically and incoherently. In *The Sky is Wider* this happens when Ella experiences what Mohaghegh calls ‘the invisible theft of belonging’ (2013, p.130), as she is washed by a nurse and almost reduced to an infant-like state (23.28-26.42). In a state of

nothingness or muteness, as the people around her refer to her indirectly, questioning her consciousness, Ella rallies against her negation at which point her desperate interior exertions bursts out into sobbing. This becomes the turning point for the play as her first (and only) actual foray back into the physical world, the unsilence at this point physicalized through suffering and thus breaking out of its constrained space.

In Forugh Farrokhzad's poetic narratives, her exploration of the silent body moves onwards into a place of exile which articulates resistance, separation and reinstatement. Certainly, an Underworld Narrative might follow this progression but what of the silent body that does not escape to exile? For Winnie, up to her neck in earth in *Happy Days* (1998) there is no relief. 'Mouth' in *Not I* (1998), will repeat the same words and resistance to silence repeatedly. Here then stands the devouring silence that Deleuze's Language III articulates.

For Ella there is no escaping her captivity and yet somehow, in the final moments of the impossible silence between mother and daughter, a memory ignites into an entwined moment that breaks the silence between them. This shared memory is of a picnic they once had, drawn into the present whilst simultaneously being experienced through our knowledge of what has been lost. In this case the memory, although heard with all its original content, has already ceased to exist. In addition, although the scene may seem ordinary, its singularity reverberates by its momentary existence in time, outside of time and not existing at all. The shiver of silence, in fact a silence-in-motion that underscores the scene, paradoxically holds both absence and presence simultaneously – somehow holding a moment of utter joy whilst resonating with its desolation. In that moment it is possible to experience all that is lost through what MacKendrick has called its 'palpable presence' shimmering through the absence it actually is (2001, p.101).

THE UNSILENCE AND SOUND INTERVENTIONS

This chapter exploring *The Sky is Wider* examines silence's substance of emptiness and presence and its relationship with not only the silenced character's body but also the body of the listener as a receptacle of the radio play and an object within it. Each step in this process has broadened the dramaturgy, not only through the writing of the play and its recording, but also by reflecting upon the power of silence revealed in the recording. I highlight three specific areas of discovery.

Firstly, my experimentation with the glitch raises new questions about how both radio and stage plays might work further with the non-semantic. The glitch, through its slippage of meaning becomes pure sound, whilst simultaneously exposing its malfunction. Like silence, the glitch causes the listener to speculate on the unreliability of what is uttered; challenging language and renegotiating meaning. Extending the idea of the glitch, a play moving continually into a glitched state transforming from a language we recognise to a partially created one that no longer yields conventional meaning, could initiate an opportunity to alienate and resuscitate language through transitions of meaning. The trans-rational nature of Zaum reconfigured not to become just a language of sound, textured and immediate, but with potential to re-evaluate language itself.

Furthermore, the potential of an extending glitching technique between two real languages, where the malfunction in the language transmutes through Zaum into a new language, could become a multi-lingual event, creating opportunities to understand how language can repel, resist or restore communication. We find ourselves in a time when language becomes more and more the wall through which we fail to communicate. However, could the glitch become a vehicle through which

language can reach? I believe the encounter of the glitch with language creates an opportunity to re-negotiate an understanding of the complexity of communication beyond the limitation of meaning. Language not so much exhausting, but transmogrifying.

Another contribution is my development of what I have called the ‘unsilence,’ which examines Ella’s conscious experience of silencing. The ‘unsilence’ exists as an embodied silence, the voice of the silenced one constrained within the body but manifested as an internal drive that moves towards some kind of articulation. This redefines for me the way Kristeva’s chora can be understood, being what Barrett calls ‘an articulation of bodily drives’ (2011, p.9). The chora, then become representative of the ‘unsilence;’ the core or wound of the character that propels itself into language. Its properties are unspeakable; no words exist to express it fully but the attempt by the character to articulate it moves it into the semiotic of broken, forming language and may ultimately propel the chora into full expression, not necessarily of a formal language but as a language of the body that encapsulates and articulates its denial.

Thirdly, the use of binaural technology not only heightens the absence/presence of Ella’s fluctuating existence, but also by trapping the listener into Ella’s body collaborates with the absence/presence of the silent body of the listener themselves. The binaural therefore radically resituates the listener’s position in the radio play. Ordinarily, a radio play is situated in the head; in the stereophonic listening experience the listener overhears the play, evoking the created world in the mind. The listener is present but invisible, overhearing the story but never being implicated in its parts. Binaural technology challenges that position because the surrounding soundscape places the listener physically into the play (or the play trespasses into the listener’s physical space); the brain insists on the physical world and by that sound

intervention makes the listener both present and visible, allowing the play to begin to stalk them. Now no longer safe from the sound intervention, the binaural radio play can cross into personal space, it can haunt and it can become representative of a physical thing.

Compellingly, Deleuze's models of three meta-languages, charting their way into exhaustion, are provocations for the writer impelled by silence. Yet I resist his definitions of exhaustion and nothingness. Although often through a process of deconstruction and fragmentation, I still find silence creative and electrifying, even if through devastation. Silence to me seems in a continual state of transformation.

Yet Deleuze does also recognise in Language III 'immanent limits [...] hiatuses, holes or tears [...] if they didn't widen in such a way as to receive something from the outside or from elsewhere' (1997, p.158). These could be MacKendrick's 'Immemorial Silences' (2001) that precede us and call to us from the outside of time, or Woolf's 'enlightened absences' (Ondek, 1991) fluctuating between emptiness and presence, or even an embodied silence whose creative act, like Kristeva's chora, punctures language.

Finally, it seems pertinent here to challenge Kristeva's criticism of Woolf's writing. 'Woolf describes suspended states, subtle sensations and, above all, colors – green, blue, but she does not dissect language as Joyce does' (1981, p.166). Apart from Kristeva misunderstanding Woolf's processes of dissecting language through silence and the body, it seems crucial to re-evaluate these gendered understandings of how writers use language. For writers provoked by silence, there is no constraint and no single way of understanding how silence might be exposed. From this practice, it is evident that Deleuze's dissecting metalanguages and Kristeva's semiotic can function concurrently in language; that writers can simultaneously distil language in a

movement towards silence whilst creating an embodied language, which continually breaks silence. That consistently we can expect in our silences of nothingness transfiguration, that we can find ourselves body-to-body with a silence that transcribes the experience of the body as an emergent act of creativity. Ultimately, that we can make way for silences that beyond words communicate more than we could ever imagine.

CONCLUSION: A DRAMATURGY OF SILENCE – ‘SILENCE CAN BE A PLAN’²⁴

In this thesis, I argue for an ‘aural paradigm’ of the radio play reconsidering it through its substance of sound and its duration in time. Resisting usual definitions of the radio play that imagine it spatially or through narrative, I argue for the radio play to be realised and created through an understanding of how the listener experiences sound. Sound, both immersive and continually in motion, aligns the writing of the radio play closer to that of composing music, wherein the writer utilises multiple compositional processes to realise the radio play form. Here the central dramaturgical tool becomes silence.

The first question of the thesis, ‘Why silence in a radio play?’ is answered and understood through this sound materiality and the musicality of the radio play. Silence sustains the compositional movement of the radio play, its permutations becoming inherently part of the inner flow of the text. Silence also instates a rigour to the language of the radio play, experienced through punctuation or the sharp cut of fragmented language and instilling the radio play continuously into the moment. Silence becomes an invitation to the listener of the radio play, whereby the listener fills its pauses and gaps, speculating what its absence or presence might mean, drawing them into the radio play’s immersive experience. Uniquely in the radio play, silence (like sound) crosses the boundary of the body, negotiating the relationship between the inner life of a character and their external voice through both embodied silences and the unsilence.

²⁴ Rich. (1980, p.191).

In the Introduction, I establish three more strands of questioning: ‘How silence?’ which considers how silence is evoked in radio plays, ‘What silence?’ considering the substance of silence and ‘Where silence?’ questioning how we experience silence both outside and within the body.

In *A Typology of Silence*, I address these first two questions. I unpick the first question, ‘How silence?’ through acknowledging the pause and lexicography of silence, whilst also considering how silence might be augmented through a process of fragmentation of language, compositionally through rhythm, or understood through that which is unspoken or absent. The second question, ‘What silence?’ I consider through different possibilities of silence – nothingness, emptiness, fullness, uselessness. I extend this to embodied silences and the power of silencing which constrains the voice within the body.

A Typology of Silence becomes, paradoxically, a sounding board, articulating the silences created through writing and recording my radio plays. The challenge throughout the process of writing a *Dramaturgy of Silence*, as stated in the Introduction, has been to recognise where any ‘new’ thinking might reside – in the liquid knowing of the creative work or the concrete facts of theory or methods, or as Haseman and Mafe (2009) suggest, through the conjoining of both these elements. What has been essential for this process was to find what Sturm has called ‘the *right* form, [...] a form that will activate [...] the content’ (2012, no pagination). Sturm highlights the difficulty of the practice-led thesis and the necessity of finding forms that become ‘not only vehicles for critique (critical in their *content*) but also implicit critiques of the essay as mere container for content (critical in their *form*)’ (ibid, no pagination). By attempting to invite silence into the *Typology*, through poetic and disappearing language, rhythm, experimentation, and expanse of the page, whilst

simultaneously writing critically about silence, I situate the reader between the creative and critical, in the position of the practice-led research itself, dialogical and heuristic. The Typology of Silence acknowledges the incompleteness of language, unable ever to wholly define silence. It, like this practice-led thesis, celebrates silence's refusal to let words define it, letting silence in its final entry take its central place.

A Dramaturgy of Silence continues developing through the writing of *Orpheus and Eurydice* and the critical analysis of Chapter Two, considering predominantly the first two questions, 'Why silence in a radio play?' and 'How silence?' examining the radio plays aural paradigm and demonstrating its compositional strategies. The dramaturgy addresses notions of rhythm and musicality, whilst creating compositional techniques and annotating a text-score. Rhythm is central to the compositional process becoming a 'metalanguage' (Ondek Laurence, 1991, p.7), imbued with both silence and language. This metalanguage negotiates not only the multiple possibilities of this encounter of silence and language, but also the unique relationship in the radio play of crossing the boundary of the body, between the inner life of a character and their external voice. Certainly, the radio play shares this territory with the novel but its capacity to slip seamlessly across these borders creates additionally an immediacy and materiality to the experience. The radio play sounds itself through the receptacle of the listener's body, whilst becoming a frame for a different consciousness that the listener embodies through silence and sound.

In *Orpheus and Eurydice*, I create two new compositional techniques to capture Orfeo's and Eurydice's experiences of silence. For Orfeo, the development of the musical technique of polyphony creates an 'ontological stammer' (Sontag, 1969, p.27), becomes a strategy for Orfeo to circle, deny and lament Eurydice's death. For

Eurydice, the creation of the text-fugue, releases her embodied silence into words and then returns it to silence. Both techniques mediate with silence, propelling them into or withdrawing them from, capturing dynamic interactions with sound.

Picard's (1948) idea of silence having an autonomy that resists words or lies beneath words becomes central to my creation of an Underworld Narrative in *Orpheus and Eurydice*. This narrative compositionally follows a trajectory from words to silence, where silence ultimately breaks through the surface of the radio play. The Underworld Narrative weaves its way through the radio play sustaining its 'creative duration' (Gontarski. 2015, p.2) by its continual progressive motion, fluctuating between the friction of words and the emptiness of silence. Silence always moving towards, away, besides, beneath, inviting and threatening emergence. The process of creating an Underworld Narrative which has silence buried in it begins to transform the question for me of 'Why silence in the radio play?' into more fully, 'How is a radio play shaped and formed out of silence?' Silence becomes not only the principal dramaturgical tool, but also the impulse, the origin out of which the radio play emerges.

Through writing *The Sky is Wider* and the critical analysis of Chapter Three, I then develop A Dramaturgy of Silence further through an examination of the absence and presence of silence. Here the third and fourth questions are expounded, 'What silence?' and 'Where silence?'

My creation of the glitch is an expansion of the Russian Futurists transrational poetry, Zaum. In a word-glitch, the absence of its meaning causes the word to become a present act of sound. It heightens the experience of the word's texture and its percussive qualities making it particularly conducive to the radio play. By examining the glitch, it becomes apparent that a word without meaning moves closer and shares

some of the power of silence, illuminating the unreliability of language and renegotiating meaning. The glitch has potential to position the listener outside of language, experiencing the alienation of a half-known language, straining to understand. It escapes the confines of its meaning and allows new speculative possibilities, loosened into a fluctuating, unravelling flow.

I also experiment with Barthes 'expletives of thought,' the sighs and aahs, and bodily sounds that in real life conversation often underscore spoken words and in the radio play become part of the compositional patterning and texture. Like the glitch, expletives of thought stand between silence and the word; their sound returning language to the body, broadening its primary function of communicating meaning. In the radio play, where sound is the only medium and its enhanced recorded quality the advantage, I argue the sounding of these embodied patterned actions of speech distil the radio play, reaching further towards the body of the listener and the embodied experience of the radio play itself.

An important part of *A Dramaturgy of Silence* has been my questioning of the primacy of a silence of nothingness, arguing for a silence of presence and a silence of embodiment. My experimentation in *The Sky is Wider* has attempted to demonstrate this through a silence of absence, fluctuating into a silence of presence. This is realised through the character of Charlie, who confronting a silence of nothing (her unconscious mother) with questions, pleas and memory, releases for the listener an experience both of absence (through Ella's non-presence) and a silence that is pregnant with all that has been lost between them. The shiver of silence paradoxically holds both absence and presence simultaneously, underlining Woolf's understanding that a creative act is possible even in the acute emptiness of silence.

Examining an embodied silence further through Ella's experience of being constrained in her own body, binaural technology intensifies the listener's experience. Here, the binaural has the capacity to both capture the listener into the character's body, whilst placing the character's sound world around them in three-dimensions. The binaural radio play becomes what I have called a sound intervention, stepping into the real physical space of the listener. Dyson writes on the concept of digital embodiment, suggesting it 'connotes a sense of envelopment' (2009, p.17). For Dyson, the expansion of digital technology becomes about the relationship between the created atmosphere and the individual body. However, the binaural (unlike virtual reality) does not attempt to disembody the listener, by moving them into an artificial, digital world, but heightens the embodied experience of listening, the radio play rising up all around the listener whilst using their body as a frame to situate the character inside. With headphones and working with the binaural, silence in radio plays can become more apparent, its edges sharper, its absences deeper, its duration extending.

An embodied silence is also the starting place for my second Underworld Narrative in *The Sky is Wider*. This narrative follows a trajectory that progressively attempts to break out of silence, from what I have called the unsilence. Uniquely, this interior, constrained voice can be realised and heard in the radio play, allowing an internal journey through different states of denial, negation, resistance, defiance, and desire, always reaching towards articulation. Its rhythmic progression a continual intensification and release within the narrative, creating waves or patterns of movement. The radio play, because of its internal life, can reveal or submerge a silence, orchestrating trajectories through relinquishment, stalling, and surrendering, or evolving, realising, and resisting. There are clearly new juxtapositions of Underworld Narratives to be developed. For example, both trajectories (into and out of silence) could be realised within one play, or a silent journey of the will could without

articulating itself verbally, capture the narrative and bend it to its purpose. There is evidently a place beyond the Underworld Narrative, where story itself evaporates. Here stands the ontological stammer of Beckett's work, when a character tries to talk over the silence that threatens to consume them. The radio playwright meets this edge, waiting to pass forward into the post-dramatic and new media, finding new forms through silence and sound for the radio play to capture.

Listening to a radio play can quicken the heart, re-phrase the breath and additionally now, with headphones, become what Bull calls 'audiotopia, [...] the intense pleasure described by iPod users as they listen to music [...] and their desire for continuous, uninterrupted use' (2013, p.528). That sound exists more and more in the private space between the ears, communing with the body becomes a tantalising challenge to the radio play writer who must imagine its future at least in terms of new media formats, podcasts, and the binaural. The rise of the podcast suggests there is a vast audience that is willing to check-in and listen at their leisure. Writing on the 'juggernaut' that the podcast has become in the US, Felix Salmon writes 'Podcasting has become industrialised, in quite an exciting way. It's shaping the future of audio-only storytelling, the future of radio' (Wired, 2018, para.1). The British radio play if disseminated as a podcast could create a new platform not necessarily constrained by time frame or expectation of what a radio play should be. The podcast offers the possibility of experimentation, of loosening of story, reaching towards new forms of narrative, where story becomes only part of the architecture that sustains the radio play form. Here, A Dramaturgy of Silence can be unleashed.

Moreover, a Dramaturgy of Silence, returning to Turner's definitions of new dramaturgy, is never 'fixed and resolved' (2016, p.34), but fluid, dynamic, and open-ended. Working with a Dramaturgy of Silence is to re-evaluate language, narrative,

and in the writing of the radio play, the form itself. In the Introduction, I suggested the range of the radio play was limited compared to the new dramaturgy of theatre. Completing this thesis, I now argue for the huge scope of the radio play's dramaturgy. Turner imagines the theatre play through the architecture of structuring its elements, but here (resisting the spatial analogy); the compositional nature of the radio play has been broadened and unpicked. Roesner (2014) in *Musicality in Theatre* defines principles of 'compositional' playwriting as the use of musical techniques, the creation of score, and the use of musical terminology. Compositional playwriting of the radio play through a Dramaturgy of Silence however expands to consideration of texture, rhythm, silences in motion, juxtaposition of multiple elements and the compositional narrative that propels the play through. Furthermore, a Dramaturgy of Silence embraces collaboration, recognising the unique compositional contribution of the performance, each actor bringing not only an individual realisation of the text, but also an original sounding through their voice, tone, accent, and physicality. Moreover, the dramaturgical and collaborative relationship between the writer and director, and the joint creation of the actual radio play by the director and the sound designer in the editing suite, demonstrates the extended possibilities of the compositional radio play realised through A Dramaturgy of Silence.

We are living through a crisis of language. Silence used politically to manipulate power through biased news and withholding of information, preventing the exposure of dissenting views. Mark Thompson talking about 'the broken language of politics' argues 'that wild exaggeration and outright lies had become routine [...] becoming harder and harder for us to find words to bridge the gap between different cultures and belief systems, and that mutual tolerance was becoming more difficult to sustain' (2017, para.35-36). Can we draw some hope from the 'uselessness' of silence that Picard imagined? When such an unexploited silence is invited into the space of a play,

an artwork, into a conversation, into a community or a religious institution and into political discourse, a new possibility arises. Elzenheimer writes on silence:

It confronts people with the elementary conditions of their being and thereby frees them, at least conceptually, from the inevitability of political and social manipulation. [...] By establishing a non-occupied space, the responsibility for their own perception is given back [...] Silence points out difference (1999, p.33).

Here then, silence perhaps remains one of the only truly democratic spaces through which the mind can speculate and imagine. Through its ambiguity, silence creates an encounter with the mind that is always separate from ideology. This place for questioning as Elzenheimer suggests is increasingly essential within the unravelling complexities of the 21st century. MacKendrick extends this idea saying, 'If there is hope [...], it is for the open space, the question, not the answer but the very possibility of response, a possibility sustained in silence' (2001, p.59).

Thompson (2017) suggests that one possible remedy for the crisis of language is the capacity to listen. This then becomes the final silence of a Dramaturgy of Silence – the capacity to listen not only to others speaking but to where silence resides. Thompson adds that the response to listening is 'the courage to make sure facts are heard' (2017, Through the seas they are merciful section, para.5). The most important discovery for me of A Dramaturgy of Silence is the unsilence. What history is now critically exposing is that the unsilence must find its way to the surface. It will like a ghost haunt us until it emerges, it is a silent cry of injustice and terror and it must find a way to make itself heard.

The capacity to listen to silence becomes about hearing that which is denied, looked away from, or which that we scroll the screen past. *A Dramaturgy of Silence* challenges me as a writer to reveal the unsilences that call to me. By naming the unsilence here, I hope it also becomes suggestive to other writers to comprehend which of the multiple unsilences they might themselves hear and expose.

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