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Geraldine Finn

Univerza Carleton, Kanada  
Carleton University, Canada

## The Truth – In Music The Sound Of *Différance*

Resnica – v glasbi  
*Zvok différence*

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

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

### POVZETEK

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

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

### ABSTRACT

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

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

I

**I owe you the truth**

*In painting*

*And I will tell it to you*

Cézanne wrote  
In a letter  
To Émile Bernard

Strange utterance

Derrida writes  
I recite  
(Para-cite)

The speaker is a painter

He is speaking  
Or rather  
Writing

For this is a letter

He is writing

In a language  
Which *shows* nothing

Causes  
Nothing  
To be seen

Describes  
Nothing

Represents  
Even less <sup>1</sup>

**What must truth be**

To be owed  
(*Due*)

Even rendered  
(*Rendue*)

In  
Painting  
That is  
What interests me

This interest  
When I am interested

In the idiom  
Of truth

In  
Painting

Which promises  
A truth

Which is (not)  
Always already there

In  
Painting

This revenue  
Of  
Surplus value

Irreducible

To the semantic  
Content  
Of its representation

Indeed  
To the representable

Untranslatable  
In its economic performance

Undecidable  
In Its equivocal *destinerrance*

(Derrida writes)  
I recite

This idiom  
Of truth

In  
Painting <sup>2</sup>

**But**

That's what  
An idiom is

It does not  
Merely  
Fix  
The economic  
Propriety of a focus

But  
Regulates  
The possibility

Of  
Play

Of  
Divergencies

Of  
The equivocal

A whole economy  
Precisely

Of  
The trait

This economy  
Parasitizes  
Itself

Hear  
Here on  
Off the page

What must truth be  
To be owed  
*Due*

Even  
Rendered

*Rendue*

In  
Music

In  
Painting <sup>3</sup>

In  
Words

On  
Off the page

**That is**

What interests  
Me

This revenue  
Of surplus value

This  
Interest

When  
I am interested

In  
The idiom of truth

In  
Music

Which promises  
A truth

In  
Writing

In  
Words

Which is (not)  
Always already  
There

In  
Music

*Ce qui reste*  
*À force*  
*De musique*<sup>4</sup>

**What Must**

Truth  
Be

In order  
To be owed  
*Due*

Even  
Rendered  
*Rendue*

In  
Music

I cannot  
Precisely  
Have it

At my  
Disposal

Or  
In my  
Control

I listen to it

It is  
The experience  
Itself

Of  
Impossible appropriation

The most joyous  
And  
The most tragic<sup>5</sup>

(Derrida writes)  
I recite

It may give rise  
To  
Calculation

Representation  
Tabulation  
Imitation  
Regulation

Notation

Con-scription  
Pre-scription  
In-scription

De-scription

But  
In the final analysis  
It ceases to be  
Calculable <sup>6</sup>

*Ce qui reste*  
*À force*  
*De musique*

Beyond  
The order of the calculus  
Itself

Beyond  
The incalculable  
As a still possible calculus <sup>7</sup>

Forever  
Unable to saturate  
A context

What reading writing  
Speaking citing  
Re-citing

Will ever make it heard <sup>8</sup>

This idiom  
Of truth

In music

In a word

**The reader too**

Must  
Improvise <sup>9</sup>

Take breath  
And read with the ears <sup>10</sup>

*bör dich ein  
mit dem Mund*

Hear deep in  
With the mouth <sup>11</sup>

Listen  
With limbs and lips  
And throat and tongue

Absorb  
Its movement  
With larynx and lungs <sup>12</sup>

What underlying scansion  
Of the world  
Does it embody <sup>13</sup>

This idiom  
Of  
Truth

Which is (not)  
Always already there

In music

In words

Irreducible  
To the semantic content  
Of its representation

Indeed  
To the representable



Untranslatable  
In its economic performance <sup>14</sup>

Undecidable  
In its equivocal  
*Destinerrance*

The stereographic activity  
Of an entirely other ear <sup>15</sup>

An entirely other echo  
Echo echo echo  
Sphere

*Ce qui reste à force de musique*

Hear  
Here on  
Off the page

**Only the song remains**

It is reborn  
Each time

Nothing  
Can be done against it

Never  
Will any letter  
Ever

Make it heard  
In a word <sup>16</sup>

Here  
Hear on  
Off the page

Nevertheless

At this very moment  
In this work  
Here I am <sup>17</sup>

*Me*  
*Voici*

I follow  
*Je suis*

Under assignation

To make  
It heard

To tell the truth

In music

In words

*I owe you the truth in music*

And I will tell it to you

As it is tol(le)d  
In music

*Le son*  
*Résonant*

*Quelle*  
*Chanson*

Like the sound of the sea  
Deep within a shell <sup>18</sup>

### **The essential thing**

Is to set the song in motion  
As a graft

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

And not  
As a meaning  
A work  
Or a spectacle <sup>20</sup>

This economy parasitizes itself

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

Transforming that too  
As it affects the new territory <sup>21</sup>

We must begin  
Wherever  
We are

Wherever  
We are in a text

Wherever  
We already believe ourselves  
To be <sup>22</sup>

Fidelity  
Requires that one quote

In the desire  
To let the other speak

And

Fidelity  
Requires that  
One not just quote <sup>23</sup>

To grasp a meaning  
That does not come through understanding <sup>24</sup>

But through  
Rhythm resonance  
Repetition rhyme  
Timing timbre  
Tone

*Ce qui reste*  
*À force*  
*De musique*

Undecidable

In its equivocal destinerrance

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

In a word

The silent play of  
*Différance*

The s-p-l-a-c-e of  
*Résonance*

Undecidable

Between

The sedimented *sens*  
Of  
Sound

The sedimented sound  
Of  
*Sens*

Singing  
Ringing  
Off on the page

**The most difficult thing**

Is the invention  
Of the tone

And with the tone  
Of the scene  
That can be staged <sup>25</sup>

The pose that adopts you  
As much as you adopt it <sup>26</sup>

Hear  
Here on  
Off the page

The tone being precisely  
That which establishes  
The relation

It isn't the content  
It's the tone <sup>27</sup>

Everything is summoned  
From an intonation

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

A rhythm

I think  
That all in all

(Derrida writes)  
I paracite

It is upon  
Rhythm

That I stake  
Everything

It therefore begins  
Before beginning

That is  
The incalculable origin

Of  
A rhythm <sup>28</sup>

## II

**I owe you the truth**  
In music

And I will tell it to you

As it is tol(le)d  
In music

*En passant*  
*Résonant*

In the space between

One thing and another

Speech  
(And)  
Writing

Poetry  
(And)  
Song

*Sens*  
*(et)*  
*Sons*

Undecidable

Between

*Le nom/non du père*  
The discourse of the father

And the lalalangué  
Of the mother tongue

**The truth**

in music

Comes  
To  
Pass

As music  
Comes

To  
Pass

Always already  
Past

Passed  
Through

The desire of the (m)Other

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

Of  
The Other

Which must be re-enacted

Repetitioned  
Repeated  
And  
Rehearsed

To be  
Enjoyed enjoined

Or  
Real-ized

At all

As  
Music

As  
Truth

In  
Music

**Event**

Of the space  
Between <sup>29</sup>

One and Other

Of the space  
Between  
Things

That  
Sound  
Re-sound

Only when they move  
A-part  
Together

When they are moved  
Together  
A-part

Event  
Of the space  
Between

Sounds

The threads  
Of silence

That run  
Between  
The sounds

That music is  
Mixed  
Together with <sup>30</sup>

The silent  
Play  
Of *différance*

That sustains

Maintains  
Retains  
Sound

As  
Music

The truth  
Of  
*Différance*

In  
Music



**All round**

From outside

All round  
From a centre

Somewhere  
Near  
Here  
And there

Music tells  
The truth  
About  
Truth

Which comes  
And goes

Which comes  
To pass

Which comes  
Always  
Already pas(t)sed

Through

The play  
Of  
*Différance*

Undecidable  
In its equivocal *destinerrance*

Between

A passion  
That moves

And

The mobilizing action  
Of one body on another

Between

Choice chance  
And  
Necessity

**What reading**

Writing speaking

Singing citing

Reciting

Inciting

Will ever

Make it

Heard

The truth

That music tells

The truth

About

In a word

Repeated

And

Rehearsed

Repetitioned

And

Recalled

To be

Enjoined

Enjoyed

Or

Real-ized

At all

Only the song

Remains

It is reborn

Each time

Nothing

Can be done

Against it

*Ce qui reste*

*À force*

*De musique*

**Between**

Speech  
And  
Writing

And  
Beyond  
The tranquil familiarity

Which links us  
To one and the other

Occasionally reassuring us  
In our illusion  
That they are two <sup>31</sup>

Music  
Takes its toll

Engages  
The play of *différance*

The truth of truth  
In  
The space between

And  
Turns it

Into  
Sound

Phenomena  
Experience  
Event

Something  
We hear

Something  
We apprehend

Something  
To which  
We can attend <sup>32</sup>

*Le son  
Du sens*

*Les sens  
Du son  
Résonant*

With in as our bodies  
Our selves

*Ce  
Qui reste  
À force de musique*

Making space

Giving place  
To (a) truth

To which  
We cannot *not*  
Respond

One way or another

*Like the sound of the sea deep within a shell*

That is not  
Any sort of present being

That has neither  
Essence nor existence

That does not exist <sup>33</sup>

The truth  
Of  
Music

The truth  
Of  
Truth

The truth  
Of  
*Différance*

What

Reading writing  
Singing speaking citing  
Inciting  
Reciting

Will ever  
Make it  
Heard

*Ce qui reste*  
*À force*  
*De musique*

In a word

**This is not a game**

In which  
Mastery is acquired <sup>34</sup>

Though some do strive  
To make it so

And this we can hear

In (the) music

Even where it strives to deny it

The truth  
Of *différance*

The *différance*  
Of truth

And where true the effort to deny it

In (the) music

As  
A work

Which comes  
And goes

Which comes  
To pass

Which comes  
To be

Always already  
Pas(t)sed

Which has to be  
Repeated  
And  
Rehearsed

Repetitioned  
And  
Recalled

In order to be  
(Music)  
At all <sup>35</sup>

**The truth**

In  
Music

The truth  
Of *différance*

Cannot be  
Fixed

In a permanent present  
Or

Confined  
To a single moment

Meaning  
Origin  
Articulation  
Event  
Agent  
End

Though some contrive  
To make it so

And this too can be heard  
In (the) music

The *différance*  
Of  
Truth

The truth  
Of  
*Différance*

And  
Where true  
The effort to conceal it

To reveal it

As  
The essence  
Or  
Existence

Of  
Some fixed and present being

Soul  
Spirit  
Satan  
Nature  
God

Truth  
Of  
The Human Condition

**Toujours déjà**

Il y a là

*Déconstruction*  
*À l'oeuvre*

And this can be heard in (the) music

In the space  
Between  
One and Other

That sounds  
Re-sounds

With in as our bodies our selves

Bending our bodies  
Lending our bodies

To the truth  
Of its becoming

As  
Music

Rhythm resonance  
Repetition rhyme  
Timing timbre  
Tone

The tone being precisely that  
Which establishes  
The relation

### **I am complicit**

Implicated

Imbricated

In the ethics  
Of this musical engagement

Strategic and adventurous <sup>36</sup>

Of the play  
Of *differance*

In one direction  
(*Sens*)  
Or another

An ethical appeal  
To which  
I cannot *not* respond

One way or another

By resistance  
Denial  
Or consent



I am *solicited* by (the) music <sup>37</sup>

Whether I acknowledge it  
Or not

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

In the politics  
Of its very possibility  
As music

To which I cannot *not* respond

The institutions  
Which name frame  
Contain restrain maintain  
And tame

What is  
To be

The sound(s)

(Of truth)

In music

When I consent  
To the music

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

One way or another

Whether I acknowledge it or not

**All this**  
Can be heard

In (the) music

Even where it strives to deny it

To celebrate a universal singular

Necessary objective

And final

Truth

(For example)

One

That does not

Come

To pass

But is

(Posited as)

Here

To stay

Named and contained

Within the silence

Of its musical frame

For

The work

Of producing truth

In music

*Remains*

*Ce qui reste*

As the work

Itself

Which cannot *not* be heard

The (hypostasized) One

Universal

Final

Truth

In

Music

Cannot be

Without  
This work

Of producing  
Truth

In  
Music

This work  
Of music

The work of truth

Cannot *not* be heard  
In music

Which is always already  
Experienced

Irreducibly

As  
*Work*

By those  
Who make it happen

**Everything**

Is at stake  
In music

Epistemology  
Ontology  
Politics  
Ethics  
Aesthetics  
Kinaesthetics

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

We should not be surprised  
Therefore

At the passion  
With which

It is

Contested  
Resisted  
Defended  
Denounced  
Practiced  
Pursued  
Performed

For music  
Is always more  
Than what it signifies

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

The truth  
Of truth

The truth  
Of *différance*

*Ce qui reste*  
*À force*  
*De musique*

Never will any letter ever make it heard

### **Only the song remains**

It is reborn each time

Like the sound of the sea deep within a shell

I listen to it

I cannot precisely have it at my disposal

Or in my control

It is the experience itself of impossible appropriation

The most joyous

And the most tragic

So let's listen

Yes

Let's listen <sup>38</sup>

## Notes

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

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