
MUSIC AS PEACE:
AN INTERSPACE OF
INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

M a j a B j e l i c a

As was stated in our conference's call for papers, "throughout history, sages, philosophers and theologians have searched for the proper measure to secure what in a most intimate sense could be described as 'peace'". It is probably uncontroversial to state that everyone can have her own understanding of the notion in question; therefore, this paper is not about to attempt to define it. Rather, in this paper I will attempt to demonstrate that it is through music that a kind of peace can be achieved – or, better, at least some understanding of what it might consist of. In order to be able to say something about the ontology of music, we could start from the same point as we just did with peace: "Throughout history ...". It is difficult to finalise a definition of music – already the line between music, sound, noise and silence is hard to draw. However, a crucial distinction we might make is this: differing from peace, music, in at least one of its ways of being, can be found everywhere and in every time. Maybe it is an overreaching statement; however, I am firmly convinced that it is not far from being the truth.

Music as a form of art – but not just that – is also a medium for nourishing peacefulness or/and an environment in which peace can prevail. Over the last decade some new literature has emerged on this topic: researchers, realising that music has an important social role in preserving and establishing peace, have been gathering their thoughts and data from the field in various special issue journals and readers. With the examination of some concrete examples from the field of intercultural conflict transformation, it will be shown how music can play a crucial role in achieving peace, truce, or, at least, closure. The presentation will include also some ethnomusicological thoughts: special consideration will be devoted to the Sufi music of two religious minorities in Turkey, the Mevlevi and the Alevi. Music has had an important role in their struggle for their own acknowledgement; even today, music plays a cru-

cial role in their rituals and everyday life. Moreover, a philosophical approach towards music will be presented, and some examples of ethical possibilities immanent to music will be pointed out, especially the approach that understands music as a kind of “neutral zone”, a place for a dialogue among and between cultures.

To sum up, this contribution will present an interdisciplinary account and a reflection on the interconnections and relations between music and peace. Unfortunately, there will not be much space for a detailed development of the instances presented, since these will be very broad. The main aim of the present contribution is rather to show the vast variety of possibilities that engaging with music might bring us in different times and places, in terms of enabling intersubjective relationships and intercultural dialogue.

Musicking: Intercultural Communication for Peace

Over the last decade, some scholars have argued that communicating through music might be beneficial to the achievement of intercultural tolerance, understanding and knowledge. In the period before that, connections between music and peace were also being widely addressed, but more generally and without the same focus. Here three of the most obviously related issues will be presented: interestingly, none of them directly reference peace in their titles, but rather address conflict or conflict transformation, the latter being an activity of peace. While the three volumes described are not the only ones in the field, we can say that they are very much referenced and cited today.

In 2004 the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research established a project connecting music and peace, of which the four years subsequent result was the publication of a collection of papers entitled *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*,¹ to which a number of prominent scholars contributed. Even if they all had their own definition of peace, they were able to

¹ O. Urbain (ed.), *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, I. B. Taurus & Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, London / New York 2008.

agree on a mutual framework, provided by one of the pioneers of peace studies, Johan Galtung, which defines peace as “the capacity to transform conflicts with empathy, creativity and nonviolence”²; therefore, each author provides an account of at least one of these elements. The articles present a framework for the connections between music and peace; thus combined together, these constitute a great force for good. Some instances of the political usages of music are also discussed alongside a consideration of the role of music in healing and education as well as some relevant anecdotes in the form of accounts of the personal experiences of the authors. In his search for interconnections between music and peace, Galtung explains in his article³ that music can be uplifting – meaning that it can elevate an individual beyond the ordinary, detaching us from reality – and that this uplifting has the capability to unite us, because music as art is power. This unity is conducive to peace.

In order to provide concrete examples of the role of music in conflict transformation we might summarise two articles that each address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both presenting a specific musician with his own individual approach, both mainly taking on structural-constructivism approaches. The first of these musicians, presented by Karen Abi-Ezzi⁴, is Gilad Atzmon, who, with his Orient House Ensemble – of which the drummer is Israeli and the guest vocalist Palestinian – plays music from the Middle East, North Africa and East Europe, presenting Israeli soul music and Jewish folk music with a combination of Arab Palestinian flavours. With this activity, Atzmon is re-questioning the peace process, its status quo; at the same time as merging the separate musical traditions, he offers a fresh, innovative approach towards the need for unification of diversity, projecting the cultural fusion onto politics. The author argues that, in so doing, Atzmon is affirming art as a place of social activity, or, better, social activism, showing aesthetics to be the most effective way of increasing people’s awareness, conducting

² Cited in O. Urbain, “Introduction”, in: Urbain 2008, p. 4.

³ J. Galtung, “Peace, Music and the Arts: In Search of Interconnections”, in: Urbain 2008, pp. 53–62.

⁴ K. Abi-Ezzi, “Music as a Discourse of Resistance: The Case of Gilad Atzmon”, in: Urbain 2008, pp. 93–114.

to social engagement and action. Another artist, Yair Dalal, is presented by Oliver Urbain,⁵ who shows the different ways in which the musician spreads his philosophy of peace through music: performing Babylonian music in order to assert, though problematically, the common roots nurturing both Jews and Arabs; playing both the violin and the oud; mixing Jewish and Arab musical styles; performing with musicians from both backgrounds and sharing his message through interviews. According to the author, Dalal presents music as a tool for searching for a possible resolution. Moreover, as Urbain says, both musicians, Atzmon and Dalal alike, even with their different approaches and views, are challenging the status quo and playing a crucial role for peace within the discussions about the foundations of constructed cultural and national identities. Of course, Urbain, in common with other contributing authors, doesn't believe that music has only a positive effect on relationships among persons and cultures, as he states:

“[...] like any other human endeavour, music can be used to enhance human life or to destroy it. [...] We are aware that these different ways in which music plays various roles for peace sometimes emphasize the bright side, sometimes the dark side, and that both are intertwined, like the yin and the yang, hence the book's subtitle”.⁶

Here we will elaborate only the brighter sides, leaving the darker ones for a future occasion. However, the understanding of the notion of peace offered by the editor might raise at least some question.

“I view peace as the vibrant and dynamic state of a society in which everyone can enjoy life to the fullest, with full employment, adequate social protection, abundant food, water, pure air, and shelter, warm and joyful communication between people, participation in governance, justice, equality, freedom, mutual respect, and a fulfilling intellectual and cultural life.”⁷

The definition here is compatible with the statement that peace does not simply consist in the absence of war; it is also consistent with the notion of peace as conflict transformation with the usage of empathy,

⁵ O. Urbain, “Art for Harmony in the Middle East: The Music of Yair Dalal”, in: Urbain 2008, pp. 201–211.

⁶ O. Urbain, “Introduction”, in: Urbain 2008, p. 3.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

nonviolence and creativity. However, to keep the question that we might anticipate arising simple, why couldn't peace also be “a vibrant and dynamic state of mind” of an individual person to find herself in? We will make some connections with these questions later.

Another volume of *Music and Conflict*⁸, which addressed similar issues, was issued in the same year as the previous one, to coincide with a symposium of the International Council of Traditional Music, entitled *Discord: Identifying Conflict in Music, Resolving Conflict through Music*. This collection, released in 2010, brought together articles from ethnomusicologists worldwide who research the central role of music in the understanding and researching of conflict, more or less emphasising its polyvalence. Music is understood as a strong discursive tool, which should be always critically assessed in relation to its performative practices and social effects. Not having much space for a detailed account of this publication, let us mention the chapter *Music in Application*, in which the emerging field of the so-called “applied ethnomusicology” is introduced and which stresses the potential of music for overcoming conflicts, especially through educational programmes, cultural awareness and intercultural understanding with musical performance.

Another publication, a special volume of an electronic journal called *Music and Arts in Action*,⁹ issued in the same year as the previous one, describes various roles that music and arts might play in social action and conflict transformation. An editorial review of the field points out some of its main problems and misunderstandings – even misuses. The authors issue an appeal to take some of their suggestions into account during the process of conflict transformations, such as: considering much more the points of view of the participants of these processes; not exaggerating the role of music or taking it out of context; being aware of the longitude of the process of building relationships through musicking; and the “not always effective” nature of the interventions of “outsiders”. Moreover, when working with traditions and multicultural issues, an emphasis on differences among participants is not an ideal

⁸ J. M. O'Connell and S. El-S. Castelo-Branco (eds.), *Music and Conflict*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana / Chicago / Springfield 2010.

⁹ A. Bergh and J. Sloboda (eds.), *Music and Arts in Action. Music and Arts in Conflict Transformation*, 2, 2, University of Exeter, Exeter 2010.

first step to take, since it immediately points out the boundary between “me and you”. Furthermore, it is only through active engagement with musical activities that long-term personal and social change is likely to be achieved.

All of this, we might say, leads to an instrumentalised role of music; therefore it is not surprising that we have to take suitable precautions when using music as a tool for conflict transformation, i.e. peace. But what if we assume that music is NOT just a tool? Of course it can be; however, if we take it that way, our goal (of conflict resolution) is surely unlikely to be achieved. When making music, when musicking,¹⁰ we have to want only musicking, to let ourselves go into the activity that should be experienced with the mind and body unified in breath. Let the other near us express herself through the universal metalanguage of music. Said differently: starting with “music for music’s sake,” we come to peace. Starting with “music for...” another reason or goal (propaganda), we don't know where it might lead us. Surely, it is a powerful vehicle in reaching ANY goal; however, understanding it as an inter-subjective space, in which all subjects can co-exist one with another in mutual respect and affection, might provide us with another opportunity to learn how to create an ethical world.

Believing in and Reaching towards Peace through Music

Believers all across the world, followers of different religions, take different approaches to seeking a connection with their God or gods through music. But, as stated in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, even if there is a strong connection between music and religion, religious attitudes towards music are often quite ambivalent:

“Religious believers have heard music as the voices of gods and the cacophony of devils, praised it as the purest form of spirituality, and condemned it as the ultimate in sensual depravity; with equal enthusiasm they have pro-

¹⁰ The term “musicking” is the present participle of the verb “to music”, that encloses various kinds of musical activities. It was introduced by Christopher Small in English language; interestingly, a parallel “muziciranje”, meaning “making music”, has already existed for a long time in the Slovenian language. See C. Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performance and Listening*. Wesleyan University Press, Middletown 1998.

moted its use in worship and sought to eradicate it from both religious and secular life. Seldom a neutral phenomenon, music has a high positive or negative value that reflects its near-universal importance in the religious sphere.”¹¹

An example of these contradictory views is provided by the various roles of religious music in Islam – something that cannot be described as a unified notion. In orthodox Shi'a and Sunni communities there are no practices recognised as “music”, even if they seem musical to an outsider. Each religious practice is categorised in its own terms and none of them corresponds to music. Generally speaking, it could be said that it is actually only “sensuous music” that is forbidden, while calls for prayers, Qur'anic chants, celebration songs, military marches and similar examples are legitimate; however, at the same time they are not (called) music.¹² A different approach towards music can be observed in the so-called Sufi music, where instrumental music is performed, vocalisations of the names of God are very important and ecstatic movements and dance form a large part of ritual practices. A similar state of affairs obtains within popular Islam and heterodox Shi'a communities. Two examples of such musical practices in Turkish religious communities will be presented.

The Mevlevi, followers of the teaching of the 13th century mystic Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi (Rumi in English; Mevlana in Turkish), put music and dance at the centre of their ritual, which they call *sema*. The *sema*, explained by some as a spiritual concert, is an event during which believers join in a mutual dance that is accompanied mostly by the live performance of an ensemble of musicians, also Mevlevi, in order to connect with God as directly as possible. The dance to the spiritual music consists in moving in a circle while also turning around their own axes. It was while so doing, according to their legend, that Mevlana was meeting God. In one of his major works of Persian mystical poetry, the *Masnawi*, he writes that “[s]ema is where the souls of lovers come to rest”, emphasising the inner peace that emanates

¹¹ T. Ellingson, “Music and Religion”, in: Jones, L. (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 9., Macmillan Reference USA, Farmington Hills, MI 2005, p. 6248.

¹² See E. Neubauer and V. Doubleday, “Islamic Religious Music”, in: *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. Accessed on 28 Apr. 2014 <<http://www.oxford-musiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52787>>.

from the whirling.¹³ These mystical dancers are more widely known as “The Whirling Dervishes”. Their dance, however, might take also other forms, such as moving in a closed circle, embracing each other and vocalizing or calling different names of God with emphasized breathing, while one of the dancers might also perform a *gazel* (we could say sing an ode). The breathing would provide also a rhythm for their movements, dancing and whirling.

Another Turkish religious group, the Alevi, a heterodox Shi'a community, which survived hundreds of years of persecution by the Sunni majority by living and practicing its rituals in seclusion, places music in a central position of their ceremonies, called *cem* (pron. 'jam'). It is a collective meeting of the whole community at which women and men come together in a joint prayer, recitation of mystic formulas, worshipping their saints and executing “breath exercises” with calling to God. All of that takes place in combination with their ritual dance, the *se-mah*, and the playing of the *saz* (folk lute). There are various types of *cems*; however, the attainment of ecstatic states is characteristic to all of them, mostly produced by dance, music and the repetition of their sacred words (names of God). Many scholars state that music is crucial to the *cem* because it provides the believers with a connection to the divine unity.¹⁴ Due to the different forms of *cem* and the variety of occasions at which it is performed, it could be said that

“[...] the role of music can be identified as social, educational, in expressions of religious beliefs and cultural concepts, a means of preserving the core of culture, and even as providing aspects of governing and judicial roles.”¹⁵

Both of the rituals are quite complex to explain in a few paragraphs; nevertheless, let us examine some of their obvious differences. The *sema* is performed only by men, the instruments used as well as the musical forms and other elements are from the classical Ottoman tradition. The texts of the songs, which mainly derive from the written poetry collec-

¹³ See S. T. Halman, “Love is All: Mevlana's Poetry and Philosophy”, in: Halman, S. T. and M. And: *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes: Sufi Philosophy – Whirling Rituals – Poems of Ecstasy – Miniature Paintings*, 3rd ed, Dost Yayınları, Istanbul 2005, p. 38.

¹⁴ See G. L. Clarke, *The World of the Alevis: Issues of Culture and Identity*. AVC Publications, Istanbul 1991, pp. 88–93, 131–152.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

tions of Mevlana, are ecstatic avowals of unity with God, mutual acceptance and love. Turning towards the Alevi's *cem*, we can see that its participants are as often female as male, the instrument used is the folk lute and the musical forms as well as the modes in which they are performed are of folk origin. The words they sing might derive from the poems, mainly preserved orally, and composed by either known or anonymous *aşıks*, the wandering bards of the folk heritage of Anatolia. These songs don't only refer to mysticism, faith and philosophy, but also to friendship, peace, affection, tolerance, hospitality, love and destiny – some of them might offer a form of advice or even indulge in satire.¹⁶ Clearly, one could say that they are not only worshiping life of God, life “on the other side”, but also emphasising the importance of our worldly lives, that should be lived well, justly and in the experience of solidarity with one's fellow humans. Spreading this message with music would have a strong influence on every community formation and each relationship, not only those characterised as religious. Interestingly, these most common Alevi songs are almost synonymously referred to as either *deyiş* (tr. sayings) or *nefes* (tr. breath), with the latter having a slightly more moral and didactic message.

Nevertheless, both ceremonies have in common the emphasis on direct contact with God, which might be reached through music, mainly with ecstatic dance, music and song performances, but also listening.¹⁷ Another important element in common is the *dhikr*, the repetition of the different names of God, which might be explained also as rhythmical breathing exercises. All of this somehow shows that the mystical rituals described here very much engage the bodies of the believers in this spiritual process, allowing for a unification of body and spirit.

¹⁶ See M. Duygulu, *Alevi-Bektaşî Muziğinde Deyişler*. [Selfpublished], Istanbul 1997.

¹⁷ Cf. M. And, “Sema: The Spiritual Concert of the Mevlevis”, in: Halman, S. T. and M. And: *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes: Sufi Philosophy – Whirling Rituals – Poems of Ecstasy – Miniature Paintings*. 3rd ed., Dost Yayınları, Istanbul 2005, pp. 77–105.

Philosophy, Morality, Ethos

The belief that with music a connection can be established between the body and one's moral life is one of the points investigated by some contemporary philosophers of mind and music. Coming across the article "Music, Mind, and Morality: Arousing the Body Politic", written by two philosophers, Philip Alperson and Noel Carroll, revealed that it can be a quite diffused and relevant topic of research. The authors discuss how engagement with music can affect life in a community and its politics or social actions and that this can contribute to the moral life within the culture.

"We see that music is frequently regarded as reflecting and affecting moral conditions, as regulating behaviour in the service of supporting social norms, and of integrating the social fabric by reinforcing the sense of community and identifying key cultural values and activities of a culture, by enhancing interpersonal relations, by providing a healing or restorative function in times of sorrow or anxiety, by identifying social problems, and by encouraging action to address those problems."¹⁸

Among the features that enhance moral life within cultures we might consider music's pulse, which gives to listeners a feeling of movement and helps to coordinate their movement together – this can be linked to a response in the cerebellum (the part of the brain connected with movement). With its pulse and melody music also stimulates those parts of the brain that are connected with affect and in this way establishes a common mood among listeners and promotes a common feeling amongst the group. It can evoke a level of charged emotive bonding. It also affects the neural sites linked to the arousal of pleasure and displeasure. With all this influences we can easily agree that music has the power of fostering the feeling of cohesion among a group of people, without which there is no ethical life.

Songs, with their music, voice and propositional content,

"[...] can be joined with movement, including processions, marches, rituals, and social dances of an indefinitely large number of kinds and variati-

¹⁸ P. Alperson and N. Carroll, "Music, Mind, and Morality: Arousing the Body Politic", *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 42, 1, 2008, p. 10.

ons. When bodily movement, word, and music are mobilized together for a concerted effect in this way, so many dimensions of the person are engaged that the resulting states of bonding and affective affiliation can be nearly irresistible. That is why song together with dance and other sorts of movement may be regarded as a kind of primal social cement. Song not only functions to coordinate people in body and spirit, it is also an effective lever for educating people in the ethos of their culture.”¹⁹

The influence of music on the ethos of a culture is not, of course, a new topic. Probably all of us have heard about the Greeks' fondness for music due to its power to educate, cultivate and control citizens; other cultures also stress the importance of music, for example the ancient Chinese. Yuhwen Wang in his article²⁰ about the attitude towards music in Plato's writings and in the old Chinese scripts of Yue Ji and Yue Shu, shows that both cultures were evaluating music for its effect on the shaping of a cultivated individual and community. They both stress the affiliation of music with the universe and with spirit. Interestingly, however, the author shows that these two cultures differentiate greatly in stating the reasons and sources of the power of music.

For Plato, music works with harmony, according to the principle of “likeness”. That is to say, a beautiful melody will shape a beautiful character, a good rhythm will assimilate just words, and so forth. This is due to *harmonia*, the affiliation between the soul and the universe. The Chinese scripts also locate the power of music in its sonic features; however, they affirm that its influence on the ethos is derived through its influence on the body. A certain kind of music might provide a certain circulation in the body and therefore enhance the senses, providing for a better disposition to directing human customs and manners. The different explanations of the same fact of the two old traditions show, that music's

“[...] ethical power and utility for education, statecraft and its connection with the universe, therefore, may enjoy cross-cultural value and importance,

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

²⁰ Y. Wang, “The Ethical Power of Music: Ancient Greek and Chinese Thoughts”, *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 38, 1, 2004.

which need not be confined merely to the two ancient traditions. Rather, it deserves consideration for human beings today as well.”²¹

This short excursus in the combined fields of philosophy and music was made in order to see if there are some possibilities for understanding music as a rich environment for an ethics of intersubjectivity and intercultural dialogue. It is obvious that there are some grounds upon which we might proceed.

Music as Ethical (Inter)space

Interestingly, music also plays a crucial role in the ethical world of the emerging age of breath, according to Luce Irigaray. In her writings it is possible to find some moments especially dedicated to music, that connect it with breath, voice, sound, silence, listening, openness, dialogue, hospitality, otherness, body and space. Further on, a brief disclosure of her views and understanding about the bonds among these notions will be attempted. Since her words have a poetics of her own, this will be mostly done by presenting the passages themselves, to which some comments will be added.

Wishing to link her thought with the view presented earlier, about music affecting moral life through directly influencing the body, we should surely present her thoughts from the chapter “Before and Beyond Any Word”²² from her *Key Writings*, in which, stressing the importance of beginning with our present energy in order to become divine, she states that a

“[...] tradition which uses music rather than sermons to reach such an end is not mistaken. The choice of rhythm like the choice of tones can lead breath, and even blood, from centres of elemental vitality to the more spiritual centres: of the heart, of hearing, speaking and thinking.”²³

One could say that the analogies among her statement and the thoughts of the previous sections of the text are not very hard to find.

²¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 102.

²² L. Irigaray, “Before and Beyond Any Word”, in: Irigaray, L.: *Key Writings*. Continuum, London / New York 2004, pp. 134–141.

²³ *Op. cit.*, p. 134.

Further on, she says that the qualities of music let the breath stay fluid and that engaging with music allows

“[c]osmic and personal waves [to] vibrate together and, likewise, a field of interpersonal vibrations can be created.”²⁴

Thus, it is clear that, for Irigaray, music does not only have an important role for the individual when attaining to a spiritual path, but also for the establishment of a relation with the other as a subject, a relation that remains open for whoever might be willing to listen. Listening itself is a fundamental step and an essential disposition in creating a space for intersubjectivity, which is shown in passages of another of her texts:

“If I am to be quiet and listen, listen to you, without presupposition, without making hidden demands – on you or myself – the world must not be sealed already, it must still be open, the future not determined by the past. If I am to really listen to you, all these conditions are essential. [...] Listening to you thus requires that I make myself available, that I be once more and always capable of silence. To a certain extent this gesture frees me, too. But above all, it gives you a silent space in which to manifest yourself.”²⁵

In this way, listening is an elemental condition for silence to be offered to the other. It seems that Irigaray more often refers to silence than music, since her notion of the former is much more discussed than her understandings of the latter. In one of her more recent articles she reveals the main aspects of the importance of silence for an intersubjective place to emerge among two.

“Silence must be preserved before meeting the other as a place in which his, or her, otherness can be welcomed. Silence must intervene in a dialogue with the other, as the condition for an exchange between two discourses to take place, without domination or submission of one discourse with respect to the other. Silence must be kept in each one in order that a place of hospi-

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

²⁵ L. Irigaray, “In Almost Absolute Silence”, in: Irigaray, L.: *I Love to You: Sketch for a Felicity Within History*. Routledge, New York / London 1996, p. 118.

tality can be saved from appropriation or reduction of the real otherness of the other.”²⁶

Thus, the welcoming of the other involves an unconditional invitation to the other to introduce her own voice into this silence that was offered to her. Its uniqueness will be expressed to its music, its sound characteristics, that are shaped from her being. This is a

“[...] music made from breath and soul, of which the body is the tool. A music that is the most beautiful word that can be offered to the other, and which can, from a distance, come to resonate in them.”²⁷

One of her main arguments about music being the activity required to provide an environment for an intersubjective dialogue consists in its advantage over language in being much less coded or having the possibility of being un-coded. In her words, this is due to musical sound that “arouses an elevation of energy which does not end in a definite configuration”, which is also why “listening allows a becoming that is more flowing than looking.”²⁸ This might be an explanation, or at least one of them, concerning the reasons that

“[...] music allows communication in an instant between people more easily. Of course, differences exist between the musical choices of diverse cultures but sharing them seems easier than going from the logic of one culture to that of another. We can listen to different music but not to different languages. To share a rhythm or a melody is easier and quicker than to share a linguistic universe. Above all music remains faithful to bodily and cosmic waves and vibrations, which are universal, even if they are not equally discovered or awakened in all humans. Language is coded in a more artificial manner; moving further from natural reality, it is less open to becoming familiar to all, men and women.”²⁹

Remaining close to the universal vibrations of the living world, the sounds give density to a space – leaving it free, untaken. Not belonging

²⁶ L. Irigaray, “Ethical Gestures Toward the Other”, in: Škof, L. (ed.): *Ethical Gestures. Poligrafi*, 15, 57, Nova revija, Ljubljana 2010, p. 10.

²⁷ L. Irigaray 2004, p. 140.

²⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 135–136.

to anyone, this space offers itself for being inhabited from this same anyone. These sounds

“[...] open and re-open a space outside bodies, in bodies and between them. They lay out a place for a possible listening-to, for the respect and articulation of difference, differences, maintaining or restoring each one in their singularity – outside the subjection of the one to the other, but not without passages between the two. Through the tonalities proper to each one, thanks to their voices, the one and the other touch and intertwine.”³⁰

Contemplative Thoughts

Departing with a multiple wideness of fields, the ones of peace, music and ethics, it would be a real surprise to not have for a result a fragmented account of their interconnections. Allowing ourselves the often methodologically ungrateful, sporadic explorations of different grounds, we might discover some unpredicted connections between them. Probably nothing concrete has been established; nevertheless, it is still a well-founded starting point for further investigations.

“A new culture of ethical gestures and hospitality is needed, one closely related to the human body [...] The highest ethical demands of ourselves are [...] represented as a sign of an absolute hospitality, a place that can be secured first in ourselves for others – in ethical as well as also in political contexts. This indeed is a difficult task to achieve. Breath, silence and listening are three elements for an ethics of attentiveness and care, [and are the] necessary steps on a way towards achieving this goal.”³¹

Concluding with our conference chair's words, calling upon a new culture of ethical gestures and hospitality, we might say that the way or methodology to find the place for hospitality is not yet defined. This is why the establishing of wide interconnections among different aspects of cultures and lives might show itself as fruitful, but only with time and patience. Saying that we are in search for a new ethical path makes

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 139.

³¹ L. Škof, *Breath of Hospitality: Silence, Listening, Care*. Draft version of the conference paper for the conference *A Meaningful Life in a Just Society: Investigating Well-Being and Democratic Caring*, Utrecht 2014, p. 2.

us explorers of our minds, bodies, relations, communities and world. Attempting to find in music an interspace for learning the first step onto such a way might be somehow overreaching but... what is there to lose?

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