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Listening

to Charlotte Mendell

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ssuming that there is still sense in asking questions about the limits, or about some limits, of philosophy (assuming, then, that a fundamental rhythm of illumination and limitation does not comprise the permanent pace of philosophy itself, with a variable cadence, which might today be accelerated), we will ponder this: Is listening something of which philosophy is capable? Or—we'll insist a little, despite everything, at the risk of exaggerating the point—hasn't philosophy superimposed upon listening, beforehand and of necessity, or else substituted for listening, something else that might be more on the order of *understanding*?<sup>1</sup>

Isn't the philosopher someone who always hears<sup>2</sup> (and who hears everything), but who cannot listen, or who, more precisely, neutralizes listening within himself, so that he can philosophize?

Not, however, without finding himself immediately given over to the slight, keen indecision that grates, rings

out, or shouts between “listening” and “understanding”: between two kinds of hearing, between two paces [*allures*] of the *same* (the *same sense*, but what sense precisely? that’s another question), between a tension and a balance, or else, if you prefer, between a sense (that one listens to) and a truth (that one understands), although the one cannot, in the long run, do without the other?

It would be quite a different matter between the view or the vision and the gaze, the goal or contemplation of the philosopher: figure and idea, theater and theory, spectacle and speculation suit each other better, superimpose themselves on each other, even can be substituted for each other with more affinity than the audible and the intelligible, or the sonorous and the logical. There is, at least potentially, more isomorphism between the visual and the conceptual, even if only by virtue of the fact that the *morphē*, the “form” implied in the idea of “isomorphism,” is immediately thought or grasped on the visual plane. The sonorous, on the other hand, outweighs form. It does not dissolve it, but rather enlarges it; it gives it an amplitude, a density, and a vibration or an undulation whose outline never does anything but approach. The visual persists until its disappearance; the sonorous appears and fades away into its permanence.

What is the reason for this difference, and how is it possible? Why and how can there be one or several difference(s) of “senses” in general, and also difference(s) between the perceiving senses and the perceived meaning, “sensed sense” [*les sens sensibles et le sens sensé*]? Why and how is it that something of perceived meaning has privileged a model, a support, or a referent in visual presence

rather than in acoustic penetration? Why, for example, does *acoustics*, or the teaching model by which the teacher remains hidden from the disciple who listens to him, belong to a prephilosophical Pythagorean esotericism, just as, much later, *auricular* confession corresponds to a secret intimacy of sin and forgiveness? Why, in the case of the ear, is there withdrawal and turning inward, a making *resonant*, but, in the case of the eye, there is manifestation and display, a making *evident*? Why, however, does each of these facets also touch the other, and by *touching*, put into play the whole system of the senses? And how, in turn, does it touch perceived meaning? How does it come to engender it or modulate it, determine it or disperse it? All these questions inevitably come to the forefront when it’s a question of listening.

Here we want to *prick up the philosophical ear*: to tug the philosopher’s ear in order to draw it toward what has always solicited or represented philosophical knowledge less than what presents itself to view—form, idea, painting, representation, aspect, phenomenon, composition—but arises instead in accent, tone, timbre, resonance, and sound. We’ll add another question as a temporary marker, to indicate the trembling discrepancy and dissymmetry of the two sides while still beginning to draw, to lure the ear (but also the eye along with it): Although it seems simple enough to evoke a *form*—even a *vision*—that is *sonorous*, under what conditions, by contrast, can one talk about a *visual sound*?

Or else: If, from Kant to Heidegger, the major concern of philosophy has been found in the appearance or manifestation of being, in a “phenomenology,” the ultimate truth of the phenomenon (as something that appears as



precisely distinct as possible from everything that has already appeared and, consequently, too, as something that disappears), shouldn't truth "itself," as transitivity and incessant transition of a continual coming and going, be listened to rather than seen? But isn't it also in the way that it stops being "itself" and identifiable, and becomes no longer the naked figure emerging from the cistern but the resonance of that cistern—or, if it were possible to express it thus, the echo of the naked figure in the open depths?

"To be all ears" [*être à l'écoute*, to be listening] today forms an expression that belongs to a register of philanthropic oversensitivity, where condescension resounds alongside good intentions; thus it often has a pious ring to it. Hence, for example, the set phrases "to be in tune with the young, with the neighborhood, with the world," and so on. But here I want to understand it in other registers, in completely different tonalities, and first of all in an ontological tonality: What does it mean for a being to be immersed entirely in listening, formed by listening or in listening, listening with all his being?

There is no better way to do this than to look beyond present usages. After it had designated a person who listens (who spies), the word *écoute* came to designate a place where one could listen in secret. *Être aux écoutes*, "to listen in, to eavesdrop," consisted first in being in a concealed place where you could surprise a conversation or a confession. *Être à l'écoute*, "to be tuned in, to be listening," was in the vocabulary of military espionage before it returned, through broadcasting, to the public space, while still remaining, in the context of the telephone, an affair of confidences or stolen secrets. So one aspect of my question will

be: What secret is at stake when one truly *listens*, that is, when one tries to capture or surprise the sonority rather than the message? What secret is yielded—hence also made public—when we listen to a voice, an instrument, or a sound just for itself? And the other, indissociable aspect will be: What does *to be listening*, *to be* all ears, as one would say "to be in the world," mean? What does it mean to exist according to listening, for it and through it, what part of experience and truth is put into play? What is at play in listening, what resonates in it, what is the tone of listening or its timbre? Is even listening itself sonorous?

The conditions of this double interrogation refer first of all simply to the meaning of the verb *écouter*, "to listen." Consequently, to that kernel of meaning where the use of a sensory organ (hearing, the ear, *auris*, a word that gives the first part of the verb *auscultare*, "to lend an ear," "to listen attentively," from which *écouter*, "to listen," comes) and a tension, an intention, and an attention, which the second part of the term marks, are combined.<sup>3</sup> To listen is *tendre l'oreille*—literally, to stretch the ear—an expression that evokes a singular mobility, among the sensory apparatuses, of the pinna of the ear<sup>4</sup>—it is an intensification and a concern, a curiosity or an anxiety.

Every sensory register thus bears with it both its simple nature and its tense, attentive, or anxious state: seeing and looking, smelling and sniffing or scenting, tasting and savoring, touching and feeling or palpating, hearing and listening.

This last pair, however, the auditive pair, has a special relationship with *sense* in the intellectual or intelligible acceptance of the word (with "perceived meaning" [*sens*

*sensé*], if you like, as opposed to “perceiving sense” [*sens sensible*]). *Entendre*, “to hear,” also means *comprendre*, “to understand,”<sup>5</sup> as if “hearing” were above all “hearing say” (rather than “hearing sound”), or rather, as if in all “hearing” there had to be a “hearing say,” regardless of whether the sound perceived was a word or not. But even that might be reversible: in all saying (and I mean in all discourse, in the whole chain of meaning) there is hearing, and in hearing itself, at the very bottom of it, a listening. Which means: perhaps it is necessary that sense not be content to make sense (or to be *logos*), but that it want also to resound. My whole proposal will revolve around such a fundamental resonance, even around a resonance as a foundation, as a first or last profundity of “sense” itself (or of truth).

If “to hear” is to understand the sense (either in the so-called figurative sense, or in the so-called proper sense: to hear a siren, a bird, or a drum is already each time to understand at least the rough outline of a situation, a context if not a text), to listen is to be straining toward a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately accessible.<sup>6</sup>

We listen to someone who is giving a speech we want to understand, or else we listen to what can arise from silence and provide a signal or a sign, or else we listen to what is called “music.”<sup>7</sup> In the case of these first two examples, one can say, at least to simplify (if you forget voices, timbres), that listening strains toward a present sense beyond sound. In the latter case, that of music, it is from sound itself that sense is offered to auscultation. In one

case, sound has a propensity to disappear; in the other case, sense has a propensity to become sound. But here there are only two tendencies, precisely, and listening aims at—or is aroused by—the one where sound and sense mix together and resonate in each other, or through each other. (Which signifies that—and here again, in a tendential way—if, on the one hand, sense is sought in sound, on the other hand, sound, resonance, is also looked for in sense.)

When he was six years old, Stravinsky listened to a mute peasant who produced unusual sounds with his arms, which the future musician tried to reproduce: he was looking for a different voice, one more or less vocal than the one that comes from the mouth; another sound for another sense than the one that is spoken. A meaning with frontiers or one on the fringes of meaning, to paraphrase Charles Rosen.<sup>8</sup> To be listening is always to be on the edge of meaning, or in an edgy meaning of extremity, and as if the sound were precisely nothing else than this edge, this fringe, this margin—at least the sound that is musically listened to, that is gathered and scrutinized for itself, not, however, as an acoustic phenomenon (or not merely as one) but as a resonant meaning, a meaning whose *sense* is supposed to be found in resonance, and only in resonance.<sup>9</sup>

But what can be the shared space of meaning and sound? Meaning consists in a reference [*renvoi*]. In fact, it is made of a totality of referrals: from a sign to a thing, from a state of things to a quality, from a subject to another subject or to itself, all simultaneously. Sound is also made of referrals: it spreads in space,<sup>10</sup> where it resounds while still resounding “in me,” as we say (we will return to this “inside” of the subject; we will return to nothing but that).



In the external or internal space, it resounds, that is, it re-emits itself while still actually "sounding," which is already "re-sounding" since that's nothing else but referring back to itself. To sound is to vibrate in itself or by itself: it is not only, for the sonorous body,<sup>11</sup> to emit a sound, but it is also to stretch out, to carry itself and be resolved into vibrations that both return it to itself and place it outside itself.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, as we have known since Aristotle, sensing [*sensitiv*] (*aisthesis*) is always a perception [*ressentir*], that is, a feeling-onself-feel [*se-sentir-sentir*]: or, if you prefer, sensing is a subject, or it does not sense. But it is perhaps in the sonorous register that this reflected structure is most obviously manifest,<sup>13</sup> and in any case offers itself as open structure, spaced and spacing (resonance chamber, acoustic space,<sup>14</sup> the distancing of a repeat [*renvoi*]), at the same time as an intersection, mixture, covering up in the referral [*renvoi*] of the perceptible with the perceived as well as with the other senses.

One can say, then, at least, that meaning and sound share the space of a referral, in which at the same time they refer to each other, and that, in a very general way, this space can be defined as the space of a *self*, a subject. A *self* is nothing other than a form or function of referral: a *self* is made of a relationship to self, or of a presence to self, which is nothing other than the mutual referral between a perceptible individuation and an intelligible identity (not just the individual in the current sense of the word, but in him the singular occurrences of a state, a tension, or, precisely, a "sense")—this referral itself would have to be infinite, and the point or occurrence of a *subject* in the substantial sense would have never taken place except in

the referral, thus in spacing and resonance, at the very most as the dimensionless point of the *re-* of this resonance: the repetition where the sound is amplified and spreads, as well as the turning back [*rebroussement*] where the echo is made by making itself heard. A subject *feels*:<sup>15</sup> that is his characteristic and his definition. This means that he hears (himself), sees (himself), touches (himself), tastes (himself), and so on, and that he thinks himself or represents himself, approaches himself and strays from himself, and thus always feels himself feeling a "self" that escapes [*s'échappe*] or hides [*se retranche*] as long as it resounds elsewhere as it does in itself, in a world and in the other.

To be listening will always, then, be to be straining toward or in an approach to the self (one should say, in a pathological manner, *a fin of self*: isn't [sonorous] sense first of all, every time, a *crisis of self*?).<sup>16</sup>

Approach to the self: neither to a proper self (I), nor to the self of an other, but to the form or structure of *self* as such, that is to say, to the form, structure, and movement of an infinite referral [*renvoi*], since it refers to something (itself) that is nothing outside of the referral. When one is listening, one is on the lookout for a subject, something (itself) that identifies *itself* by resonating from self to self, in itself and for itself, hence outside of itself, at once the same as and other than itself, one in the echo of the other, and this echo is like the very sound of its sense.<sup>17</sup> But the sound of sense is how it refers to *itself* or how it *sends back to itself* [*s'envoie*] or *addresses itself*, and thus how it makes sense.

But here it is a question of being on the watch [*être aux aguets*] for a way that is precisely not that of a *watch* [guet] in the sense of a visual surveillance.<sup>18</sup> The sonorous here makes clear its singularity in relation to the optical register, where the relationship to the intelligible as a *theoretical* relationship (*theoretical* is linked, in Greek, to seeing) is more manifestly, if we can use this word, in play.<sup>19</sup> In terms of the gaze, the subject is referred back to itself as object. In terms of listening, it is, in a way, to itself that the subject refers or refers back. Thus, in a certain way there is no relationship between the two. A writer notes: "I can hear what I see: a piano, or some leaves stirred by the wind. But I can never see what I hear. Between sight and hearing there is no reciprocity."<sup>20</sup> In the same way, I would say that music floats around painting much more than painting is outlined around music. Or, in semi-Lacanian terms, the visual is on the side of an imaginary capture (which does not imply that it is reduced to that), while the sonorous is on the side of a symbolic referral/*renvoi* (which does not imply that it exhausts its amplitude). In still other words, the visual is tendentially mimetic, and the sonorous tendentially methexic (that is, having to do with participation, sharing, or contagion), which does not mean that these tendencies do not intersect. A musician writes: "How is it that sound has such a particular impact, a capacity to affect us, which is like nothing else, and is very different from what has to do with the visual and with touch? It is a realm we still do not know."<sup>21</sup>

In these statements, which I adopt for my own, there is no doubt more empiricism than theoretical construction. But the challenge in a study of the senses and of perceptible

qualities is necessarily the challenge of an empiricism by which one attempts a conversion of experience into an a priori condition of possibility . . . of the experience itself, while still running the risk of a cultural and individual relativism, if all the "senses" and all the "arts" do not always have the same distributions everywhere or the same qualities.

Still, what we are thus calling "relativism" in turn constitutes an empirical material that makes a condition of possibility for any "sensation" or for any "perception" as well as for any "culture"; it is the referral of one to the other that makes both possible. The difference between cultures, the difference between the arts, and the difference between the senses are the conditions, and not the limitations, of experience in general, just as the mutual intricacy of these differences is, as well. Even more generally, one could say that *the difference in sense* (in the "perceived" [sense] sense of the word) *is its condition, that is, the condition of its resonance*. But nothing is more remarkable, in this order of consideration and experience, than the history of music, more than any other artistic technique, in the course of the twentieth century: the internal transformations following Wagner, the increasing importations of references outside of music labeled "classical," the arrival of jazz and its transformations, then that of rock and all its variations up to their present hybridizations with "scholarly" music, and throughout all these phenomena the major transformation of instrumentation, down to the electronic and computer production of sounds and the remodeling of schemes of sonority (timbres, rhythms, notations) which



itself is contemporaneous with the creation of a global sonorous space or scene whose extraordinarily mixed nature—popular and refined, religious and profane, old and recent, coming from all continents at once—all that has no real equivalent in other domains. A musical-becoming of sensibility and a global-becoming of musicality have occurred, whose historicity remains to be thought about, all the more so since it is contemporaneous with an expansion of the image whose extent does not correspond to equivalent transformations in the perceptible realm.

To be listening is thus to enter into tension and to be on the lookout for a relation to self: *not*, it should be emphasized, a relationship to “me” (the supposedly given subject), or to the “self” of the other (the speaker, the musician, also supposedly given, with his subjectivity), but to the *relationship in self*, so to speak, as it forms a “self” or a “to itself” in general, and if something like that ever does reach the end of its formation. Consequently, listening is passing over to the register of presence to self, it being understood that the “self” is precisely nothing available (substantial or subsistent) to which one can be “present,” but precisely the resonance of a return [*renvoi*].<sup>22</sup> For this reason, listening—the opening stretched toward the register of the sonorous, then to its musical amplification and composition—can and must appear to us not as a metaphor for access to self, but as the reality of this access, a reality consequently indissociably “mine” and “other,” “singular” and “plural,” as much as it is “material” and “spiritual” and “signifying” and “a-signifying.”<sup>23</sup>

This presence is thus not the position of a being-present: it is precisely not that. It is presence in the sense of an “in the presence of” that, itself, is not an “in view of” or a “vis-à-vis.” It is an “in the presence of” that does not let itself be objectified or projected outward. That is why it is first of all presence in the sense of a *present* that is not a being (at least not in the intransitive, stable, consistent sense of the word),<sup>24</sup> but rather a *coming* and a *passing*, an *extending* and a *penetrating*. Sound essentially comes and expands, or is deferred and transferred. Its present is thus not the instant of philosophico-scientific time either, the point of no dimension, the strict negativity in which that mathematical time has always consisted. But sonorous time takes place immediately according to a completely different dimension, which is not that of simple succession (collary of the negative instant). It is a present in waves on a swell, not in a point on a line; it is a time that opens up, that is hollowed out, that is enlarged or ramified, that envelops or separates, that becomes or is turned into a loop, that stretches out or contracts, and so on.

The sonorous present is the result of space-time: it spreads through space, or rather it opens a space that is its own, the very spreading out of its resonance, its expansion and its reverberation. This space is immediately omnidimensional and transversate through all spaces: the expansion of sound through obstacles, its property of penetration and ubiquity, has always been noted.<sup>25</sup>

Sound has no hidden face;<sup>26</sup> it is all in front, in back, and outside inside, *inside-out* in relation to the most general logic of presence as appearing, as phenomenality or as manifestation, and thus as the visible face of a presence

subsisting in self. Something of the theoretical and intentional scheme tuned to optics vacillates around it. To listen is to enter that spatiality by which, *at the same time*, I am penetrated, for it opens up in me as well as around me, and from me as well as toward me: it opens me inside me as well as outside, and it is through such a double, quadruple, or sextuple opening that a "self" can take place.<sup>27</sup> To be listening is to be *at the same time* outside and inside, to be open *from* without and *from* within, hence from one to the other and from one in the other. Listening thus forms the perceptible singularity that bears in the most ostensive way the perceptible or sensitive (*aïsthetic*) condition as such: the sharing of an inside/outside, division and participation, de-connection and contagion. "Here, time becomes space," is sung in Wagner's *Parsifal*.<sup>28</sup>

In this open and above all opening presence, in acoustic spreading and expansion, listening takes place *at the same time* as the sonorous event,<sup>29</sup> an arrangement that is clearly distinct from that of vision (for which, incidentally, there is no visual or luminous "event" either, in an entirely identical meaning of the word: visual presence is already there, available, before I see it, whereas sonorous presence *arrives*—it entails an *attack*, as musicians and acousticians say). And animal bodies, in general—the human body, in particular—are not constructed to interrupt at their leisure the sonorous arrival, as has often been noted. "The ears don't have eyelids" is an old theme that is often repeated.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the sound that penetrates through the ear propagates throughout the entire body something of its effects, which could not be said to occur in the same way with the visual signal. And if we note also that "one who emits a

sound hears the sound he emits," one emphasizes that animal sonorous emission is necessarily also (here again, most often) its own reception.

A *sound* makes into a semi-presence the whole system of *sounds*—and that is what primitively distinguishes *sound* from *noise*. *Noise* gives ideas of the causes that produce it, dispositions of action, reflexes—but not a state of imminence of an intrinsic family of sensations.<sup>31</sup>

In any case, as soon as it is present, the sonorous is omnipresent, and its presence is never a simple being-there or how things stand, but is always at once an advance, penetration, insistence, obsession, or possession, as well as presence "on the rebound,"<sup>32</sup> in a return [*renvoi*] from one element to the other, whether it be between the emitter and the receptor or in one or the other, or, finally and especially, between the sound and itself: in that between or antrum [*entre ou antre*] of sound where it is what it is by resounding according to the play of what acoustics distinguishes as its components (volume, length, intensity, attack, harmonics, partials, long-distance noises, etc.) and whose major characteristic is not to form merely the results of an abstract decomposition of the concrete phenomenon, but just as actually to *play* some against others in this phenomenon, in such a way that sound sounds or resounds always beyond a simple opposition between consonance and dissonance, being made of an intimate harmony and disharmony among its parts: being made, one should perhaps end by saying, of the *discordant harmony that regulates the intimate as such* . . . (And without forgetting, although



without being able to speak of it knowingly, the very singular role played in listening by what we call "acoustic oto-emissions" produced by the inner ear of the one who is listening: the oto- or self[*auto*]-produced sounds that come to mingle with received sounds, in order to receive them . . .)

All sonorous presence is thus made of a complex of returns [*renvois*] whose binding is the resonance or "sonance" of sound, an expression that one should hear—hear and listen to—as much from the side of sound itself, or of its emission, as from the side of its reception or its listening: it is precisely from one to the other that it "sounds." Whereas visible or tactile presence occurs in a motionless "at the same time," sonorous presence is an essentially mobile "at the same time," vibrating from the come-and-go between the source and the ear, through open space,<sup>33</sup> the presence of presence rather than pure presence. One might say: there is the *simultaneity* of the visible and the *contemporaneity* of the audible.

This presence is thus always within return and encounter. It *returns* (refers) to *itself*, it *encounters* itself or, better, occurs against itself, both in opposition to and next to itself. It is co-presence or, again, "presence in presence," if one can say that. But insofar as it does not consist in a being-present-there, in a stable, fixed being, yet is not elsewhere or absent, it is rather in the rebound of "there" or in its setting in motion, which makes it, the sonorous place ("sonorized," one is tempted to say, plugged into sound), a place-of-its-own-self, a place *as* relation to self, as the taking-place of a self, a vibrant place as the diapason of a subject or, better, as a diapason-subject. (The subject, a

diapason? Each subject, a differently tuned diapason? Tuned to self—but without a known frequency?)

We should linger here for a long while on rhythm: it is nothing other than the time of time, the vibration of time itself in the stroke of a present that presents it by separating it from itself, freeing it from its simple *stanza* to make it into *scansion* (rise, raising of the foot that beats) and *cadence* (fall, passage into the pause). Thus, rhythm separates the succession of the linearity of the sequence or length of time: it bends time to give it to time itself, and it is in this way that it folds and unfolds a "self." If temporality is the dimension of the subject (ever since Saint Augustine, Kant, Husserl, and Heidegger), this is because it defines the subject as what separates *itself*, not only from the other or from the pure "there," but also from self: insofar as it waits for *itself* and retains *itself*, insofar as it desires (itself) and forgets (itself),<sup>34</sup> insofar as it retains, by repeating it, its own empty unity and its projected or . . . ejected [*projetée, ou . . . jetée*] unicity.<sup>35</sup>

So the sonorous place, space and place—and taking-place—as sonority, is not a place where the subject comes to make himself heard (like the concert hall or the studio into which the singer or instrumentalist enters); on the contrary, it is a place that becomes a subject insofar as sound resounds there (rather, *mutatis mutandis*, as the architectural configuration of a concert hall or a studio is engendered by the necessities and expectations of an acoustic aim). Perhaps we should thus understand the child who is born with his first cry as himself being—his being or his subjectivity—the sudden expansion of an echo chamber, a vault where what tears him away and what summons him

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resound at once, setting in vibration a column of air, of flesh, which sounds at its apertures: body and soul of some *one* new and unique. Someone who comes to himself by hearing himself cry (answering the other? calling him?), or sing; always each time, beneath each word, crying or singing, *exclaiming* as he did by coming into the world.

The setting in motion of place is identically that of the present instant. What subtracts the sonorous present from the negative and chronometric punctuality of the pure and simple present (time not folded, not beaten out, not modulated), is that this time of the successive addition of presents is *at the same time* the reprise of a present that is (already) past and reopening [*relance*] of a present (still) to come. It is in this sense that one can say, for example, "There is no physical time in music."<sup>36</sup>

One should recall here Husserl's whole analysis of time, but only in order to lead it to Gérard Granel's masterly treatment of it.<sup>37</sup> If I may be forgiven for grossly oversimplifying, I will recall only this: in order to describe awareness of time, Husserl uses the paradigm of listening to a melody.<sup>38</sup> He analyzes how the present of this perception is a present formed by the overlapping, in it or on it, of the present impression and the retention of the past impression, opening forward onto the impression to come. It is a present, consequently, that is not instantaneous, but differential in itself. Melody thus becomes the matrix of a thought of unity *of and in* diversity—even in divergence or in "divorcism" (separation in opposite directions [*sens*])—as much as of a diversity or divergence *of and in* unity. There is certainly no chance in the fact that music, and more

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precisely its listening, comes to support and expose a capture in principle [*une saisie principielle*] of unity in difference, and of the latter in the former. The unity of unity and the unity of difference, the unity of monitoring the melody and its modulation, its tune and its notes, if we can put it that way, is effectuated in what Husserl calls the "living present." This present is the *now* of a subject that gives, on first or final hearing [*instance*], its presence to the present, or its present to presence. In the terms I use here, I will say that the "living present" resounds, or that it is itself resonance and is only that: resonance of instances or stances of the instant, in each other.

Granel, however, raises his Heideggerian objection to this point: for this analysis, the difference was implicitly assigned as unity from which "the phenomenological gaze already causes to *bring out* [*ressortir*]"<sup>39</sup> both unity and diversity grasped or pronounced *as such*. Phenomenological intentionality thus diverges from what it had nonetheless been aiming for: the original "retreat" of each trait, unity and diversity, which does not offer itself *as such* but, on the contrary, plunges into what Granel calls "the Tacit" or "the silent difference that bears fruit in anything perceived." This is not, for Granel, anything but the retreat, the fugitivity, and the modesty of being in its Heideggerian sense. And this sense—to add a word to Granel's text—is the transitive sense of the verb *to be*,<sup>40</sup> according to which being "is being [*est l'étant*]" in a transitive mode (which is, however, neither a "doing" nor any operation . . .): a sense, thus, that is impossible to hear/understand, an unsignifiable sense but one that, perhaps, lets itself . . . be listened to. Forgetful of this retreat from



being, Husserl, according to Granel, perpetuates the “forgetting of being” in the Heideggerian sense, and this occurs to the very extent that he does not concentrate his ear on musical resonance but rather converts it ahead of time into the object of an intention that configures it. Sound (and/or sense) is what is not at first intended. It is not first “intentioned”: on the contrary, sound is what places its subject, which has not preceded it with an aim, in tension, or under tension.

On this account, we should say—even if this goes beyond Granel’s statement—that music (or even sound in general) is not exactly a phenomenon; that is to say, it does not stem from a logic of manifestation. It stems from a different logic, which would have to be called evocation, but in this precise sense: while manifestation brings presence to light, evocation summons (convokes, invokes) presence to itself. It does not establish it any more than it supposes it already established. It anticipates its arrival and remembers its departure, itself remaining suspended and straining between the two: time and sonority, sonority as time and as meaning.<sup>41</sup> Evocation: a call and, in the call, breath, exhalation, inspiration and expiration. In *appellare*, what comes first is not the idea of “naming,” but that of a pressure, an impulsion.

According to Granel: from melody to the silence that declares it by silencing the unity of its unity and of its difference, such is the beyond-phenomenological ascent—that is to say ontological, still in the sense that in this case being continuously differs from all being-here-and-now. Which does not just mean that it is always different, but that it does not stop differing this difference itself: it

does not let the difference be identified between two identities, since it is as the *différent*, indifferent to identity and to difference.

I propose to paraphrase by saying that it is a question of going back to, or opening oneself up to, the resonance of being, or to being as resonance. “Silence” in fact must here be understood [*s’entendre*, heard] not as a privation but as an arrangement of resonance: a little—or even exactly . . .—as when in a perfect condition of silence you hear your own body resonate, your own breath, your heart and all its resounding cave.<sup>42</sup> It is a question, then, of going back from the phenomenological subject, an intentional line of sight, to a resonant subject, an intensive spacing of a rebound that does not end in any return to self without immediately relaunching, as an echo, a call to that same self. While the subject of the target is always already given, posed in itself to its *point of view*, the subject of listening is always still yet to come, spaced, traversed, and called by itself, *sounded* by itself, if I can allow myself all these plays on words, trivial though they are, that the French language suggests here.<sup>43</sup> Although Granel did not formally declare it, the step he wants to take, by so thoroughly working through the Husserlian description, from phenomenological order to ontological retreat and recoil, is not accidentally a step that goes from the gaze to listening: in a sense, it comes back to suggesting that Husserl persists in “seeing” the melody instead of listening to it . . .

The subject of the listening or the subject who is listening (but also the one who is “subject to listening” in the sense that one can be “subject to” unease, an ailment, or a crisis) is not a phenomenological subject. This means that

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he is not a philosophical subject, and, finally, he is perhaps no subject at all, except as the place of resonance, of its infinite tension and rebound, the amplitude of sonorous deployment and the slightheadness of its simultaneous redeployment—by which a voice is modulated in which the singular of a cry, a call, or a song vibrates by retreating from it (a “voice”: we have to understand what sounds from a human throat without being language, which emerges from an animal gullet or from any kind of instrument, even from the wind in the branches: the rustling toward which we strain or lend an ear).<sup>44</sup>