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HEARING VOICES: PAUL CELAN WITH BERNHARD WALDENFELS

ABSTRACT

The paper discusses voice as a medium of human communication through the indirect approach of listening. After designating the multifaceted nature of the voice, the author dedicates attention to Bernhard Waldenfels' theory of the voice as developed on the basis of the phenomenology of the alien. According to Waldenfels, the polyphony of the vocal, in which the own and the alien re-sound in mutual permeation, calls for the possibility of responsive listening. In the concluding portion of the article, the author takes into consideration one of the poems from the cycle "Stimmen" ("Voices") that Paul Celan published in the collection *Sprachgitter*. With regard also to Celan's auto-poetological writings, the ensuing interpretation attempts to briefly sketch the contours of the anti-politics of voice.

KEYWORDS

voice, listening, the other, Paul Celan, poetry, Bernhard Waldenfels, responsive rationality

*Gedichte, das sind auch Geschenke –
Geschenke an die Aufmerksamen.
Schicksal mitführende Geschenke.*

Paul Celan: "Brief an Hans Bender"

Human communication, the mediation — and the (post-modern, all-encompassing) mediatization — of the singularly and collectively experienced, the mutually communal world, (almost) cannot be conceived of without the medium of voice. From before birth, from the parental conversations echoing distantly within the sheltering interiority of the initiative womb, to after death, to the words whispering in the air without breath in the final proximity of exposed exteriority, accompanying not only ordinary existence, but also determining exceptional moments in the (solitary as well as social, private as well as public) lives of individuals and communities, the enigmatic, multifaceted, complex — (in the abysmal elusiveness of its fundamental essentiality) "aphenomenal" — phenomenon of voice — even, *per negationem*, in the extreme of (speech/hearing) impairment — co-constitutes, (often) over-heard, (but) entreating hearkening, (n/ever) listened-to, the effectuation, the self-realization of human(e) being-in-the-world.

The vocal dimension of dwelling, its vocality, can be and is encountered in numerous, in innumerable situations and circumstances, not only in the "literal" sense, but also in a "metaphorical" transfiguration: the varied, intensively and

extensively diversified engagement, “usage”, of the (inter-mediating) function(s) of voice embraces, on the one hand, the mundane, un-obvious spontaneity of quite quotidian dialogical “exchange of opinions” or of increasingly inane broadcasting of “information”, as well as, on the other hand, the challenging “elaboration of justice” in the legal proceedings of a courtroom trial or the demanding “dissemination of knowledge” in the education process in a schoolroom setting. Whereas it is, it seems, impossible to imagine the historicity of nascence and the wide-ranging ramifying, the wide-spread ramifications and reception of (certain, if not all, forms of) art, predominantly, however, of course (contemporary: “popular” as well as “elite”) music and literature, beyond (at least a) collaboration of the vocal, its political trans-form(ul)ation offers opportunity to lift or lend — co-incidentally: “for a cause” — one’s voice during periodically un-stable re-enactments of the declaratively guaranteed, but continually endangered right to vote in democratic elections.¹ Yet, the self-assertive, self-assuming boundaries of wholly worldly immanence receive the outline of a pro-visional, pro-visionary sketch through the (transcendently?) etching re-sounding of the innermost hollowing voice of consciousness exhorting, from within, towards ethical action and the outermost hallowing voice of god summoning, from without, towards religious devotion.

In accordance with the briefly drafted and asserted affluence (of the manifold occurrence) of voice and (also) of “voice” an equally heterogenous array of natural, human, and social sciences, as well as proficiencies of other professions, could be consulted to discuss specific separate aspects if not the entirety of the phenomenon of vocality: beside the above fleetingly indicated communication theories and media studies, beside jurisprudence, pedagogy, and aesthetics or musicology, beside sociology or politology, ethics, and religiology, wherein voice may play a prominent, perhaps pivotal, but sometimes somewhat underestimated part, to name (but) a few: anatomy and physics provide indispensable, detailed insights into physiological “production” and acoustical “diffusion”, whilst anthropological and ethnographical research, supplemented and complemented by, for example, linguistics and psychology, con-textually illuminates the value of vocality amongst peoples and nations of the world through the inter-cultural expansion of interpretive horizons. The confluence and influence of the immense, the immeasurable knowledge thus (once) attained would, irrefutably, proffer a profound, well-(g)rounded platform (also) for (an attempt at) a (potential/ly) “philosophical” — hermeneutical or phenomenological, or both, or of another appurtenant appellation — consideration of voice, which would, in turn, in its own re-turning towards itself, require a reflection upon and of the historically highly stratified, polymorphous tradition of (anti-)metaphysical thought.

The subsequent deliberation, therefore (—and: however—), would like to, without pretention to exhaustive comprehensiveness, concentrate attention upon the question(s) regarding the communication medium of voice as it has been thematized, on the one hand, in the poetic work of Paul Celan (1920–1970) and, on the other hand, in the philosophical thought of Bernhard Waldenfels (1934). Although

¹ The designated correspondences are unambiguously manifest in several languages; for instance, in the Slovenian language, the noun “music”—“glasba”—and the verb “to vote”—“glasovati”—are etymologically related with the word “glas”: “voice”.

such a juxta-posing, a contra-positioning of perhaps (in their pre-suppositions indelibly and irreconcilably) opposing stances seems to possess a certain degree of arbitrariness—or, at least, contingency—, it is necessary to emphasize that both authors—at first glance in part divided not only by cultural, experiential, or generational precipices, but also by the abyss between divergent realms of their respective creativity—at fundamental inter-sections of development in a decisive and even defining manner dedicate intent efforts to the discussion of vocality, and do so (also) with reference to the other one’s—neighboring, albeit often contrary—“field of agency”:² whilst Celan, as his vast library bears witness (cf. Celan 2004), nurtured a lifelong, at once extensive and intensive interest in philosophy, and within it, especially phenomenology,³ in the elaboration of responsive rationality, founded upon the phenomenology of the alien, Waldenfels, correspondingly, frequently draws into debate examples from literary arts and recurrently expressively quotes Celan’s poetry.⁴

Yet: the purpose of the present paper is neither to expound upon the eventual influence phenomenological philosophy exerted on Celan’s poetic oeuvre nor to explore the latter’s possible importance for Waldenfels’ progressive unfolding of various aspects of responsive phenomenology, nor it is its intention to interpretively im-pose the perspective of either one onto its counterpart, but to (endeavor to) approach (the experience of the phenomenon of) vocality by taking into account mutually co-(in)dependent viewpoints of (Celan’s) poetry and (Waldenfels’)

2 The question of voice, specifically insofar as it is internally inter-connected with problems of the language of poetry and the artistry of writing, on the one hand, re-presents one of the essential, if not fundamental, at least extremely important, often thematized, albeit “in research” to a certain degree overlooked, overheard motifs and dimensions in Celan’s lyric work: conceivable, in effect a *desideratum*, is not only a re-tracing of explicit “mentions” of voice throughout the development of the author’s entire poetic creativity from the earliest beginnings to the late poems, but also a “re-”elaboration and a “de-”contextualization of implicit scientific, linguistic, cultural, artistic, religious, and political references to the (polymorphous) poly-vocality of human(e) existence in the world. Waldenfels, on the other hand, preponderantly, as in the lectures on the bodily corporeality of the self *Das leibliche Selbst* (cf. Waldenfels 2000: 379 ff.) or as in the book dedicated to attention *Phänomenologie der Aufmerksamkeit* (cf. Waldenfels: 186–204), recurs to the dimension of voice in order to illustrate and explicate, in a sense exemplify, the fundamental features of the thought re-orientation, which he has been in ever sterner detail and in ever greater nuance pursuing since the publication of *Ordnung im Zwielflicht* (cf. Waldenfels 1987) onwards, and which he—in a pre-cursory jotting of his (recently in book form published) diary—already in the year 1980 succinctly designated thus: “Direction of thought: *floating rationality*, confronted by such differences as subject and object, world and man, no fixation and no hypostatization into a higher reality.” (Waldenfels 2008: 25)

3 For a brief discussion of Celan’s highly paradoxical relation towards Martin Heidegger (1899–1976) and the (in-famous) meeting between the poet and the thinker in Todtnauberg cf. Božič 2012.

4 Although Waldenfels scarcely ventures an (in-depth) interpretation of Celan’s work, the poet’s name, words and verses many times re-appear within his writings; e.g.—to cite (among numerous) but one instance—, the entire third, concluding section of Waldenfels’ seminal book *Antwortregister* stands under the epigraph taken from Celan’s (“programmatic”) poem “Sprich auch du” from the collection *Von Schwelle zu Schwelle* (1955); cf. Waldenfels 2007: 319 and Celan 2000, I: 135.

philosophy, insofar as they—in a kind of an interference of the different and the differing, from which “a common ground” (or groundlessness?) can be inferred—circumscribe “the (self-)same” as other(ed) through the prismatic fracture of poetic or philosophical language, by taking an indirect, a lateral, sidewise and crosswise, path through (the problematics of) listening, wherefore the following contemplation as the de-parting and as the de-terminating (p)reference point would like to ex-pose a reading of a “string” of 8 poems, usually, according to the anaphorically repeated, italicized (watch-/pass-)word, quoted as “Stimmen” (“Voices”) (cf. Celan 2000, I: 147–149 and Celan 2001: 88–93), that the poet, in intervals, intermittently, wrote in the years between July 1956 and November 1958,⁵ and later included, as the initial and the initiative, the introductory cycle, in his third(/fourth) book of poems entitled *Sprachgitter* (1959).

Although a profound discussion of Celan’s cycle would unavoidably, on the one hand, require a thorough reading not only of the autonomous singularity of each individual poem, characterized by the use of 7 separating asterisks in between, but also of the intricate, among them commonly shared, interlacing (nonetheless) integrating them into a self-supporting whole, and, on the other hand, demand a consideration of the exposed placement of the cycle within the collection as well as its particular, extraordinary relevance within the complete poetic opus, although it would, furthermore, for a complex dis-entanglement of the con-notated, un-concealed meanings necessitate a reflection with regard to biographical and historical con-texts as well as inter-textual influences and allusions, I subsequently intend to dedicate the focus of attention to the finale, the *coda*, of the cycle. The poem, in the original of Celan’s German language and in the English translation of John Felstiner, be-speaks (of) voice thus:

Keine
Stimme – ein
 Spätgeräusch, stundenfremd, deinen
 Gedanken geschenkt, hier, endlich
 herbeigewacht: ein
 Fruchtblatt, augengroß, tief
 geritzt; es
 harzt, will nicht
 vernarben. (Celan 2000, I: 149)

No
voice — a
 late-noise, alien to hours, a
 gift for your thoughts, here at last
 wakend: a
 carpel, eyesize, deeply

5 Cf. the commentary of Barbara Wiedemann in: Celan 2005a: 644–645.

nicked; it
 resins, will not
 scar over. (Celan 2001: 91–93)

What does, what can it mean to listen to a—not only my own, the appropriated (inner?), but also the alienated, strange (outer?) other’s—voice, to hearken to it, to hear it?

In an art of an approximative, “experimental” and “heuristic” meditation (presumptively recapitulating essential emphases of Waldenfels’ theoretical stance regarding responsive listening, before delving into Celan’s words, I, with the (nagging) ringing of a s(t)inging riddle in the ears, place, trans-pose, myself—my self (for I cannot do otherwise?)—with concentration endeavoring to expound upon (the dimension of) voice, into one of the most common, most commonly, generally and universally, but nonetheless solely singularly experienced dialogical, inter-personal (of) situations: into the circumstances of a conversation: whether I may be debating issues of intimate, ardently alluring concern, perhaps in the closed, (half) confined space of a (downtown) quiet quaint café talking about our views on the artistry of poetry with my friend, perhaps with my wife chitchatting about the course of our everyday life in the airy, (half) open space of a (suburban) balmily breezy balcony, or, whilst at a railway station im-patiently awaiting the train to arrive, plainly, with (perchance) un-palpably un-perceivable, (annoyed) im-politeness, replying to a passing stranger’s simple request to check my watch for time, I encounter the (un-surprising) event, the (un-predictable) advent of (a/the) voice of the other, to which (the/a) voice of mine is provoked to respond, as a needle—threaded with language—piercing—tearing (asunder) and sewing (up)—through the retrogradely re-established (often awkwardly stifling, outer or inner) stillness, whereto the ceaselessly rambling and rumbling noise of the surrounding world progressively altogether subsides during the inter-weaving movement of words, that seizes the scene, but has already always been begun before it starts once more in an already always renewed in-(de)finite, in-(de)terminable continuation: yet, the confoundingly tactile text(ile), a sort of veil, of voices enveloping the (development of a) conversation, in their inter-play maintaining relational proximity amongst internally included participants as well as the relative remoteness of partly excluded externality, with-stands, with its fragility and with its fragmentariness, (despite and in the face of) the (omni-present) possibility of dis-integrative destruct(urat)ion: confronted with “the matter at hand” voices, brought about through it, impressing upon it their expression, although the slightest of interferences, a foreigner’s comically intricate accent in the struggle with pronunciation or the abrupt outburst of an earnestly unsettling dispute with a vendor in the street, can cause, attracting attention, the wandering/wondering meander of a sudden detour, a (short) pause or a (long) break, the retracing/retracting emendation of a strenuous recommencement, in agitation rise or in appeasement fall, lead to a concluding agreement or to a final altercation, encourage towards boundless proliferation or crumble towards desolate muteness.

But: a voice I listen to is not the voice I hear, and a voice I hear is not the voice I listen to (cf. Waldenfels 2010b: 184 ff.).

A voice—being (not) just (but also) language, being (not) just, (but also) sound—however (—and: therefore—), the voice, the inter-(ap)pellation, the address of which calls for(th) an intent, an intentional hearkening, is never a straightforward, never an ideal enunciation of self-evident and self-sufficient sense: a voice is neither (just) the (in-significant) sounding, nor (just) the (in-audible) meaning of words, but, taking part in the “materiality” of bodily “concreteness” as well as in the “immateriality” of spiritual “abstractness”, both, at once, in their mutual permeation and in their simultaneous infiltration: the im-material, un-abolishable and un-avoidable, re-sonances re-present, as “signs”, as “signals” splinters, of the senseful in the illegibility of its (con-notated) meaning. Each and every voice is, with the modulations and the modifications, the dynamics of its vibrant transformations, situated in the “in-between” of the inter-mediate, on the border-line between, on the one hand, what, as persevering in the unknown, inexplicable and unrecognizable, the distant, the alien, no reason and no reasoning can grasp—the occasionality of voice itself as it instigates, institutes (the response of) listening—and, on the other hand, what—through (the answer of) hearing as a constitutive, construing in-activation of voice—becomes understandable, as rendered into the close, recognizable and explicable, the known, the own, speaks to us, you and I, bespeaks us, me and you: every and each voice takes place on the border-line of sense and nonsense. Voice is a/the medium of their mutual mediation: voice is (the/a) non-sense.

The giving, the gift, of voice is an incision into silence: in silence it converts (it) into sound, and, on the precarious path-way of the con-sonant voyage slowly passing away, ultimately reverts (itself) to silence: the departure point of voice lies in the other, it comes to us from elsewhere, and, in listening to it, enters, sometimes violently shrill, other times mildly scarce, our ears, our hearing: (it) gives (itself) to (us to) understand (cf. Waldenfels 1995: 97 ff.). The (echoing) sounding and the resounding (echo) of voice, itself, re-covers, discloses and encloses, its origin: whilst it abandons, leaves it behind, it nonetheless (also) de-poses, in-habits its own—disowned—, its strange—estranged—spatial and temporal mark. The origin of voice, even in the case of my un-alienable, my un-alienated voice (the pre-supposed “purity” of autoaffection is “infected” with germs of alterity), never fully and totally coincides with the instant and the location, where and when it is (being) listened-to, (being) heard. Insofar as it travels through space and transverses it, passes through time and traverses it, in itself always dis-placed, dis-similar in itself, voice un-veils its origin in-to silence: it secretes it and keeps it secret. The itinerant, the errant voice, (as) an echo(ing) of itself, is a temporalization and a spatialization of the space and the time of the world, as opened, as opening through its an-archically de-centered mirror: “Voice does not precede experience, it is voiced *in the experience*. Therefore, it proves to be a *broken, ripped, ruptured voice*; it is surrounded by previous sounds and resonances, accords and discords, it is an *echo of itself*. This originary resounding of voice resists being domesticated in a simple monotony or homophony, which amalgamates everything in a single or a common voice; at the same time, it also withdraws the well-known oppositions, such as time and space, the enlivened and the inanimate, the own and the alien, action and passion, person and thing, autonomy and representation, the heard and the unheard.” (Waldenfels 2010b: 183)

The (e)motion of vocality is a continually fluctuating—trans-mut(at)ed—oscillation between the semantic layers and the sonorous qualities of language, their un-dis-solvable inter-weaving on the margins of non-sense, which it, itself born of breath, bears, the chiasmus and the hiatus—the ch(i)asm—between them: as de-noting a hetero-chrony and a hetero-topy (of the world) voice is and can be only received and perceived at the crossroads of its own being-(an)other, its own speaking-differently, its own speaking-in-differences, in its own “otherness”.

The alterity, the “alter-nativity”, the un-(a)biting of sense and nonsense with-in, with-out (human) voice, allows us to give audience and to be granted an audience, a be-longing beyond obedience, to the unheard through the heard (cf. Waldenfels 1999a: 197–199), which imbues voice with the character of an event: “Voice is the unheard event of being-heard, of finding-a-hearing [des Gehörtwerdens, des Gehörfindens], it is not merely an acoustic resonance within a world of heard given dates. Therefore, it follows that listening means responding, that it listens *to* something, even before it hears and understands something as *something*.” (Waldenfels 2000: 384)

Responsive listening, listening as a response to the address, the appeal and the claim, of—the un-heard(-of)—voice(s), according to Waldenfels de-marked by the two-fold,—temporally/spatially—diastatic movement of precedence (of the address) “beyond” reach and subsequence (of the response) “beyond” recompense (cf. Waldenfels 2010b: 192–194), attentively gives and takes heed to/of the polyphony of the own and the alien in the mutuality of their inter-permeation: “The polyphony begins by the duplication and the multiplication of voice itself, by the circumstance that speech deviates from itself, supersedes and overtakes itself, that it is never completely by itself, but always already outside.” (Waldenfels 1999b: 12; cf. also Waldenfels 2007: 435 ff.)

The polyphonic re-sounding of voice is one of the figures, one of the pre-figurations of the extraordinary, which eludes all order(ing), defies its nets, precedes and supersedes, sur-passes (through) it, occurs as the singularly plural and as the plurally singular, which, therefore, causes the estrangement of experience (cf. Waldenfels 2001), and gives itself, whilst being listened-to, to be heard (only) indirectly, through and as the un-heard, on the border(s) of order: thus, for Waldenfels, (also) philosophy and poetry, or art(s) in general, fulfill the function of intervening inter-rupture [Störfunktion], bringing about innovative responses to the address(es) of the alien by the anomalizing inter-play of the extra-ordinary that prevents the processes of normalization to render dull the sting of the alien (cf. Waldenfels 1999b: 169 and also Waldenfels 1998).⁶

On the basis of the present(ed) abbreviation of Waldenfels’ comprehension of the medium of voice, I re-turn to the vocal phenomenon as it co-constitutes, co-determines Celan’s (thoughts on) poetry. The poems, along with the cycle “Stimmen”, beside it, published in *Sprachgitter*, as the title of the collection itself seems to suggest, bear witness to Celan’s enduring, in effect lifelong, strenuous struggle with the il-legitimacy, the self-effacing self-justification and self-authorization of poetry in the face, in the confrontation with the abysmal historic rupture of the holocaust,

6 Cf. the—somewhat more—thorough discussion of Waldenfels’ theory of responsive rationality—especially against the background of the confrontation with the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002)—in: Božič 2017.

customarily symbolized with the—in-famous ominous—(“name”) of Auschwitz: the existentially engaged, engaging response, a response of a German speaking poet of Jewish descent, to the contradictions and the conflicts of the 20th century, (in an “exemplary” manner) “dis-embodied” in the fate—and in the faith—of the countless thousands of members of the Jewish nation during the Second World War, sets in motion, despite the tendency to fall—frightfully—silent, despite the “hermetic”, “opaque” obscurity, the poet’s dialogical search for a way towards an essential change of poetic language, towards a trans-form(ul)ation of words, towards a “breath-turn”, and could, therefore, be comprehended as a harbinger, a precursor of Celan’s auto-poetological re-consideration(s) beginning to take first shape precisely in the time of the nascence of poems for *Sprachgitter*, and ultimately culminating in the preparation of the speech “The Meridian” (“Der Meridian”) delivered in the year 1960 on the occasion of the award of the Georg Büchner Prize (cf. Celan 2000, III: 187–202 and Celan 2001: 401–413). Thus, a look forward, ahead and beyond the cycle, perhaps (also), retrogradely, offers a retro-spec(ula)tive insight into the grounding—groundless?—elements of Celan’s understanding of voice as articulated, voiced, in the “voices” of “Stimmen”.

Celan’s speech “The Meridian”—as well as other (fragmentary, aphoristic) writings and (occasional) jottings on the problems of (contemporary) poetry, among them most notably the planned, but never realized series of lectures “On the Obscurity of the Poetic” (“Von der Dunkelheit des Dichterischen”) from the year 1959 (cf. Celan 2005b: 130–152)—conceives of a poem as with-standing (with-in) “*the mystery of an encounter*” (Celan 2001: 409), as being effectuated on the margins of itself, as addressing itself, underway, towards the other. As neither plainly and simply (just) “language”, nor (just) verbal “correspondence”, but the “actualized language, set free under the sign of a radical individuation” (Celan 2001: 409), a poem, mindful of its dates, of its limitations, becomes—receives its—form as language of a single person marked by the creatureliness of being: it is “an epiphany of language”: a—language turned (through breath into a:)—“voice”.

A poem—“the unique, heart- and sky-grey language in time, born by breath” (Celan 1999: 55)—is, at its core, the “labor”, the “elaboration” of someone who perceives, questions and addresses the (surrounding) phenomena, and, thus, a conversation, however oftentimes a despairing, a hopeless one. For a lonesome, errant poem, directed towards and bound for the other, each and every thing, every and each (human) being is a form of the other, but: as the other it is constituted only in the encounter, in the “in-between” of the conversation itself: as the other gathers around the naming I and becomes a Thou, it also brings its (alien/disowned) otherness—its time—into the (own/alienated) presence of a poem.

Poetry—“this speaking endlessly of mere mortality and uselessness” (Celan 2001: 411)—that travels—with art, towards the uncanny, towards its strangeness, towards its selfmost straits, in order to, with-in a turn of breath, set free a poem ... and send it on its way from the own to the other, is: a journey, and the poem (is) a path: “Then does one, in thinking of poems, does one walk such paths with poems? Are these paths only by-paths, bypaths from thou to thou? Yet at the same time, among how many other paths, they’re also paths on which language gets a voice, they are encounters, paths of a voice to a perceiving Thou, creaturely paths,

sketches of existence perhaps, a sending oneself ahead toward oneself, in search of oneself [...] A kind of homecoming.” (Celan 2001: 412) Because poems, as “voices”—are, Celan declares in a letter to Hans Bender (quoted as the epigraph to this paper), also presents, presents for the attentive—listener/s: the author as well as the reader—, presents that bring about destiny (cf. Celan 2000, III: 177–178).

The language of (his) poetry, as Celan attempts to circumscribe it (predominantly) in “The Meridian”—thereby citing one (the second) of the poems of “Stimmen”—is the—at once: “voiceful and voiceless [stimmhaft und stimmlos]” (Celan 1999: 55): anti-metaphorical—language of a poem, through the voice of which, through the naming of which in the encounter of the word and the world, the mortally personal, the radically individual, the singular, voicelessly partakes and departs (home) as “the mute consonant/consonance of the named” (Celan 1999: 145), as the—or: a—brittle, fragile being of the “world” of the word and the “word” of the world: of the wor(l)d.

The cycle of poems “Stimmen” sings of voices: whilst it, by no means in an impressionistic manner of a colorful iridescence of outer environment, projected onto the inside, by no means in an expressionistic manner of a tense agitation of internal torment, projected onto the outside, re-currently, always anew, refers to perception and reception (of the event—the eventuality—) of re-sounding plurality, multiplicity of vocality, to divergent situations and to contrary positions of listening to, of hearing voices in the mutually inter-twining un-folding, an art of a (contrasting, but complementing: chiasmic) parallelization, of the “natural” and the “social”, wherethrough the one re-calls, re-minds of the other, and, in a vexatiously enigmatic mirroring among them, the other way around, its language itself, confronted with the (seemingly?) groundless, ungrounded—freely floating—voices—without the “subject” of enunciation, without the “object” of address: only the sixth segment beginning with “Jakobsstimme” (“Jacob’s voice”; Celan 2000, I: 148 and Celan 2001: 91) conveys an individually, singularly “identifiable” voice, and, accordingly, also imbues the poem(s) with a biblical “backdrop”, further emphasized in the subsequent section—, offers a secure, safe refuge from ir-revocably ir-resolvable dissipation “into thin air”: a poem, the cycle, provoked by voices, by evoking them, through the echo of a poetic “translation”, instigates, institutes, despite the (imminent) threat of (dis-integrating, dis-embodiment) “dismemberment”, remembrance: the em/brace of memory.

The concluding (part of the) poem, paradoxically (as well as programmatical-ly for the development of Celan’s work), in a stark, “un-(equi)vocal” contra-diction (to the preceding seven parts/poems), a sort of a “musical” (motivic-thematic) “condensation”, on the one hand, summarizes and resumes the cycle’s movement by concisely recapitulating certain “traits” of the (“transcribed”) “experience”, but, on the other hand, also essentially and principally supplements it, the entirety of its “statement”, by giving testimony, by bearing witness to the mystery of the (en-counter with the) lack(ing) fail(ure), the shortfall, the shortage of voice: yet, as the enframing, hesitating line break and dash accentuate, the vocal (still) *is* present, however, no more as voice, but solely, singularly, singly, as a late-noise, a late noise: the voice of (a) noise, the noise of (a) voice, which has (been) with-drawn into the un-recognizable, the un-distinguishable, which comes, reaches us, belatedly, which has become (completely, utterly) alien, alienated to (our) hours, the hours of (our)

worldly dwelling, a foreigner, a guest, but nonetheless gives itself, although absent, although through absence, (to us), as (in a “flash” of) an instantaneous reminder, a reminiscence, as a gift, a present (to the present, to the presence of) thoughts, gives (itself, us) to pause (at least for a moment) and think: thus, at last, as finite, subordinated, ordained (in)to the ir-reversibly relentless passage of time, it re-awakens, can be re-awakened, here, where we dwell, where the poem dwells: (as) a carpel: the welcoming, hospitable leaf of a perhaps minute, perhaps minuscule, yet, by seeing, be-holding, budding, but deeply nicked, profoundly injured (female reproductive organ of a) flower—the (possibility of the) “dimension” of a sheet of paper in the German original of “Fruchtblatt” should, however, not remain unnot(ic)ed—; attentive to, in attendance at the re-sounding noise(s), the (remote, distant) echo(s) of voices—of the dead? of the loved-ones who perished in the inexorable vortex of historical turmoil? of the ones who are destined to bear the (burden of) biblical tradition? of something/someone (absolutely?) other?—(a/the)—poetic—dwelling, (the/a)—dwelling—poem—(sk)etching the contours of existence with-in, without (of) the wor(l)d—, a-rises—as resin re-signing (before) the endured encounter: re-“producing” voice(s): re-singing (them) in the face of death, in the face of life—, from the for-ever open, never closing, for-ever opening, never closed wound, from the dis-closure of a wound that cannot, that will not scar over.

Celan’s poem, giving voice to the encountered—as noise: in-audible—voices, disowning itself, yet—at once—be-coming (to) its own, by dis-obediently responding to the address of the other, which dis-(e)nables (re-medial) healing of the originary—the original?—wound (between them), insofar as it, therefore—itself, thus, other(ed)—, pre-“serves” the un-ambiguously political institution of memory, against “use”, against “misuse”, against “abuse” from the interior (exteriority) and the exterior (interiority) of “the political”, through wor(l)d, maintains, with-stands (with) what, although “subjected”, although “objectified”, nonetheless, after all, before all, defies—de-faces—the (manipulative) “grasp” of politics:—the anti-politics—of voice.

Yet: are we (not), thus, as the multivalent, multifocal dimension—the measure?—of voice brings us, from (within) our distance, closer to the world, brings it, from (within) its distance, closer to us—without establishing a bridge over the un-surmountable gap—, confronted, through the communicative inter-mediality of the vocal, (also) with something—a thing? a nothing?—that cannot be consummately mediated, that obstinately and enduringly resists, rejects all mediation and, indeed, mediatization, that not only withdraws and entices as the immediate, but, furthermore, as the immediable, as the ar-rhythmic im-pulse of existence, reveals itself only through the extraordinary ruptures of its regular, regulated flow, then/there, where/when voice—derailing into giggling laughter or into trembling weeping, perforating atmosphere with shrieking cries, waning in vain with overwhelming deafness—, —once (and for all?)—lost, fails?

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Andrej Božič

Slušajući glasove: Paul Celan sa Bernhardom Waldenfelsom

Apstrakt

Članak razmatra glas kao medijum ljudske komunikacije posredstvom indirektnog pristupa slušanju. Nakon što je naznačio složenu prirodu glasa, autor posvećuje pažnju teoriji glasa Bernharda Waldenfelsa, razvijene na osnovama fenomenologije stranog. Prema Waldenfelsu, polifonija vokalnog, u kojoj vlastito i strano odzvanjaju u međusobnom prožimanju, ohrabruje mogućnost respozivnog slušanja. U zaključnom delu članka autor uzima u razmatranje jednu od pesama iz ciklusa nazvanog „Glasovi“ („Stimmen“), koju je Pol Celan objavio u zbirci *Sprachgitter*. Imajući u vidu i Celanove autopoetološke spise, interpretacija će nastojati da kratko skicira konture anti-politike glasa.

Ključne reči: glas, slušanje, drugi, Pol Celan, poezija, Bernhard Waldenfels, respozivna racionalnost