BIBLE NOISE

Hearing Hidden and Silenced Voices through Sound Art Practice in the Reading Aloud of the Bible

by
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Abstract

My research brings together sound art with the ritual of reading aloud the bible. When the bible is read aloud in worship, it is done by a single voice. I consider this single voice as a mono-voice of hegemony that hides and silences that plurality of voices that are present in scripture, with certain voices becoming excluded and marginalised. Therefore, based on sound art practices, I explore, with the group Bible Noise, different ways of reading aloud scripture that could give greater attention to those voices that are ordinarily marginalised or unheard. The voices I pay attention to are those of women and the 'alien' or foreigner, as two marginalised groups. To do this I draw upon postcolonial, Black and feminist theology to examine, reimagine and contextualise these voices. Along with theology, philosophical ideas of plurality through Hannah Arendt and Jean-Luc Nancy are drawn upon to conceptualise ways plurality can be enacted. Listening to plurality in this project is a listening to multiple voices which leads to an exploration of polyphony, the simultaneous sounding of multiple voices. Polyphony, in its varied dimensions, is engaged with as a way to hear beyond the hegemonic and to pay attention to the many voices present in scripture. The group, Bible Noise, practices polyphony in different ways to attend to the voices of women and the 'alien' or the foreigner. I also explore our perception of hearing many simultaneous sounds and how we filter or merge the voices according to our prior understanding and propose more careful attention to those voices we have previously discounted. Polyphony in itself is not a guarantor of hearing the marginalised, as I discuss the notion of harmony where different voices are placed in a hierarchy or a 'correct' order. Polyphony, therefore, needs to be conceptualised in particular ways to hear the voices of the marginalised. Bible Noise employs sound art practices of the voice, text and plurality to engage and enact this polyphony which reveals the possibilities and challenges of the aim of hearing those who've been hidden and silenced. Through this distinctive bringing together of sound art with religious practice and text, new possibilities are created for hearing texts and engaging with sound art and religious ritual.

Dedication

To my mother, Elizabeth Jaya Chandy (1943 – 2023), your voice sings through my being.

To my father, Sugu John Mathai Chandy (1940 – 2016), you set these sounds up and would have enjoyed this polyphony.

Acknowledgements

A project like this is impossible without the help of so many people. There's a polyphony of help, sounding around this project whose voices I acknowledge.

Luiza Chandy, my wife, who was a midwife to this project on so many different levels, from holding my hand and stroking my head to talking through ideas, refashioning my South Indian syntax and believing and encouraging me through the years of doubt, tantrums and insight.

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Contents

Introduction

The voice is one of the ways in which Christians engage with the bible. The reading aloud of scripture is a ritual that most Christian groupings undertake as part of their gathered worship. This ritual is normally done with a single voice. I propose that this approach reflects and reinforces a hegemony, where dominant voices diminish and marginalise other voices. In response I engage with the multiplicity and plurality of the bible by using sound art practice, experimenting with the act of reading aloud in different ways. This leads to a polyphony of voices – the intermingling of voices of multiple readers and multiple characters in the texts. This polyphony is one that contextualises voices, where voices can have an effect on each other, since sound is so often contextualised by other sounds.

Contextualisation is often how we make sense of sound and in that resonance of contextualisation I narrate some personal context to introduce and make sense of this project. There are two realities that currently affect me as I attempt to finish this writing. This PhD is being completed while my mother is unwell. Part of her condition is a loss of the conventional ability to speak. She can still use her voice and speak but our shared conventions of language are lost to her. The voice is often connected to language and this project will explore how voice and language carry each other. My mother cannot communicate conventionally but those that *listen* to her over a period of time can more fully understand what she is communicating. To speak of voice and language is to speak of speakers and listeners. Speaking and listening is a key exploration of this project.

My mother, for the most part, can utter one word: "Ponnam." "Ponnam" is a word in the Malayalam language that indicates a need to go – it encapsulates the phrase 'I want to go.' When my mother utters it, however, it can have several meanings: 'I want to walk,' 'I am too hot,' 'I am restless' and so on. It takes a careful listening and asking of questions to understand what she is communicating with 'Ponnam.' The sound of 'Ponnam,' which means one thing to most listeners, is now filled with multiple meanings and possibilities. What is happening here is polyvalence, a multiplicity that polyphony alludes to; what seems to be a single thing, 'Ponnam,' refers to many things and sometimes many things together: 'I am uncomfortable, and I would like to sit up.' Similarly, polyphony often seems like a unity, a single thing, but it is many things occurring together. Distinguishing

the differences within, and how they work together, will give a fuller and better understanding of the situation/s we find ourselves in.

I use the word 'Ponnam,' a word in Malayalam. The presence of a foreign language points to a difference: a difference of culture, of personhood, of being. Growing up with two different languages, in two different cultures, I have had to negotiate how these differences work with each other with no easy resolution. Living with this multiplicity is personal to me but most human beings must live and engage with some form of multiplicity in their daily living.

An important point of connection with my mother is the reading aloud of the bible. I read aloud to her and we both listen to versions of audio bibles across two languages. The bible is a site of complex interweaving relationships and connections for us. It connects us to the past by evoking memories, remembered stories and phrases; it connects Christians because it is a shared sacred text across the community; it forms identity while also giving the potential to reconstrue identity. The bible, with its multiple books, meanings and voices, is the site of inquiry.

This PhD is also being completed while the world grapples with its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 fundamentally constricts breath, causing death. Breath is an essential part of the bodily human voice, and this voice is an audible signal of our ability to live. It is a signal that proceeds from our bodies with the possibility of being received by others. It is the voice that animates this project. The voice is a complex and multitextured idea and it is also fragile: a fragility shown by COVID 19's constriction of breath. Without breath, the voice cannot be. The COVID-19 virus constricts breath and therefore the voice, analogous to how power attempts to constrict different voices. By constricting different voices, a singular voice of hegemony takes hold: a monophony. In contrast, polyphony is the hearing and sounding of different voices and making sense of their place and relationship to each. Polyphony will be an essential exploration for this project.

Polyphony is the term for multiple sounds and in this project, I dwell on the multiplicity of voice and language in relation to the Christian Bible, referred to as the bible from here. I start by engaging with two stories: Babel and Pentecost. In both these stories, multiple

languages are spoken simultaneously with differing consequences. These polyphonies of language offer different possibilities for how we understand and listen to different voices. The presence of the bible in this project is due to reasons personal, social and academic. I am a practising Anglican Christian from a community of Christians in Kerala, India, known as 'Syrian Christians.' This community has been present in Kerala since at least the 4th century A.D.[1] and represents a multiplicity of identities. The 'Syrian' moniker comes from the liturgies they used prior to the European colonisation of India, rather than geographical connections.[2] During European colonisation, this community, for differing reasons, dispersed to become part of the different Christian denominations of Europe (e.g., Catholicism through the Portuguese and Anglicanism though the British). My background speaks of the multiple histories of Christianity, a multiplicity which is reflected in the sacred texts of Christianity, the bible.

At the same time, a project about multiple voices might defeat its own purpose if it cannot engage with multiple voices from multiple disciplines. The drawing from different disciplines, mixed with my own personal subjectivities, reflects the possible dissonance that bringing together voices can create. Equally, this project is also a practice of different physical voices sounding together as a group in a shared space and time bringing in further subjectivities.

The multiplicity of voices present in this project is on several levels: the varying texts of the bible and the different members in the practice, the different disciplines and authors I draw upon, my own multiple contexts and the wider contexts, all reflecting and enacting a polyphony which has every possibility of being chaotic and inaccessible. My challenge is to frame this polyphony, to make sense of it. In that vein, I will now describe the structure of this writing through a chapter plan.

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[1] Ian Gillman and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500* (London: Routledge, 1999), 166.

[2] K. George Varghese, 'Writing Family Histories: Identity Construction among Syrian Christians', *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no. 9 (2004): 897.

Structure

Chapter 1 Methodology

Methodology, broadly speaking, is 'the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them.'[3] For my project these various steps are not necessarily linear, but rather different methods brought together to address the concerns of this project.

The project is based around the practice of Bible Noise a group that I put together for the research of this project. The basic premise of Bible Noise is to read aloud the bible in different creative ways. The practice of Bible Noise is the basis of the research methodology which makes this project a Practice-Based Research project. Therefore, in this chapter, I show how my practice through this group employs practice-based research. As part of practice-based research, I draw upon different methods of Action Research, Artistic Research and Self-reflexivity, while also engaging with theory through philosophy and theology. I use these methods because they can be 'participatory in nature,'[4] and I, as a researcher, am participating and leading in the sessions of Bible Noise. Artistic Research amongst other things, examines 'the experimental practice of creating and performing'[5] which is what Bible Noise does through its creative reading aloud of biblical texts.

I examine four sets of practices within sound art. First, practices based around the physical voice since I'm practising different ways of reading aloud the bible. Second, practices that use texts as score which I do to give an analogous understanding of the biblical text as containing within it the sounds that need to be sounded out. Third, I talk about practices of listening because my project aims to give ways for listeners to hear hidden and silenced voices because hearing these voices might require a change of perception on the part of the listener.

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[3] C. R Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods & Techniques* (New Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd., 2005), 8.

[4] Valsa Koshy, *Action Research for Improving Educational Practice a Step-by-Step Guide* (London: SAGE, 2010), 4.

[5] Henk Borgdoff, 'The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research', in *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, ed. Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson (London: Routledge, 2012), 48.

I then dwell upon the practice of the group, Bible Noise. Descriptions are given of the format of Bible Noise sessions and how different 'pieces' or texts are performed. I explain how I prepare these pieces by comparing them to musical compositions and how I choose the texts and why I interact with them in that way. The members of the group are quite important to how the practice unfolds, and I describe some of their actions and responses to what's happening during each session. (The record of the practice is laid out in Appendix-A. There are thirteen pieces with scores and links to the recordings of the performance of the pieces and the discussions thereafter.) I then conclude the chapter by drawing a thread through the different research methods to show the methodology of this project which employs different methods, voices and practices.

Chapter 2 Contexts

In chapter 2 I describe the contexts within which the project is situated, in order to find ways of listening to multiple voices that can address the hegemony that we find ourselves under. I divide this chapter into three inter-related parts: the textual (biblical), the theological, and the philosophical. By speaking of these contexts, I hope to clarify the reasoning behind the project while also showing its implications. The three parts are, in a sense, three different 'voices': a polyphony engaging with hegemony.

Part 1 Babel and Pentecost: Approaching Plurality through the bible

The first voice is by approaching hegemony through the texts. I dwell on the stories of Babel and Pentecost primarily for the presence of simultaneous speech in them. The two texts are from different time periods, in different languages and, when brought together, have resonances that reveal more about each other. When understood in the context of empire, these stories become texts that speak of the sounding of different voices. Despite the hegemony and the single voice of authority that is often associated with religion, there are sources and possibilities of plurality that exist within sacred histories and texts. Plurality therefore, is not something imposed upon the bible from the outside but internal to it.

Part 2 Responding to Hegemony: Postcolonial, Black and Feminist Theology

Part 2 provides a more explicit engagement of hegemony through the tools of Postcolonial, Feminist and Black theology. These theologies arise from distinctions drawn by the hegemonic principle that what is understood to be white and to be male is the norm.

I draw on Black theologians who show that 'Whiteness' becomes a hegemonic concept aided by European theology. Building on this Black critique of race and its theological underpinning, I then engage with two Black theologies of sound, through the theologians Robert Beckford and Ashon Crawley. They both speak of '*glossolalia,*' the speaking of tongues, which is described in the story of Pentecost where people spoke simultaneously and were heard to be speaking different languages. *Glossolalia* creates, for Beckford and Crawley, spaces of liberation with multiple interpretations, spaces of plurality. *Glossolalia* becomes a connecting point between theology and Sound Art because it is a term used by some artists for their practice of using the voice through utterances that may not be linguistic.

I then turn to Feminist theology to speak of women's voices in the bible and how they've been ignored or misheard. I explore feminist theology by analysing one of the pieces of Bible Noise, *Hagar*. Hagar is a foreign woman and enslaved in the biblical narrative and is a key character for Womanist theology, a form theologising that can be described as 'intersectional.' Intersectionality is the concept put forward by Kimberlé Crenshaw which examined how black women were caught at the 'intersection' of gender and racial prejudice.[6] Hagar is at the intersections of different oppressions by being enslaved, foreign and female. I therefore draw on Womanist understandings of Hagar to expand and hear Hagar's voice.

Part 3: Philosophical Resonances.
The philosophical resonances of the project are now discussed around two pivots. The first is around the idea of the body and how differences of body are used to silence voices. The bodily difference of women to men is first engaged through philosopher Adriana Cavarero's discussion of Greek philosophy. From that discussion comes the notion that the body itself by linkage to femininity, is a point of denigration. This denigration is applied to the embodied voice which signifies the body.

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[6] Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1 (1989): 139.

The second pivot is an examination around two philosophers, Hannah Arendt and Jean-Luc Nancy whose notions of plurality are distinct but resonant with each other. This philosophical discussion is then drawn together with theology through Hildegard of Bingen's reflections on the Trinity which I posit as a conception of plurality already existing within Christian thought.

Chapter 3 Polyphony

The listening to multiple, different voices, the plurality of sound and our reception of this plurality is encapsulated in the title of the third chapter, 'Polyphony.' I explore its varied theorisation in music, language, and the psychology of perception. This will allow me to propose a framing of polyphony that draws together how I'm engaging with multiple voices in the text and those that sound the text.

I first offer a delineation within polyphony by discussing the notion of harmony based on Greek thought. Polyphony has multiple resonances across disciplines, and I draw upon two writers who use the term metaphorically for their disciplines. The first is Mikhail Bakhtin who sits within the field of linguistics and the other is Edward Said within the discipline of postcolonialism. These two writers provide connections to the contexts I've described so far and give me the platform to frame polyphony. A discussion of the cognitive-biological process of polyphony follows as a way of bringing the body into the discussion which then reveals further understanding of polyphony. This understanding in turn gives a way of making sense of how polyphony will allow us to hear hidden and silenced voices in the bible.

Information on the Practice

As mentioned above, additional materials of the practice are in Appendices A and B.

Appendix-A contains the materials and reflections for each piece. The general order for each piece is as follows:

  i.   A score, which is the relevant biblical texts laid out for the performer.
  ii.   A description of the how piece is performed, with some analysis and reflections on the performance.
  iii.   Links to clips of the performance and the discussions after the performances.

Some of the scores of the pieces with the appropriate sound file links appear in the main body of the thesis with further analysis.

Appendix-B contains the transcripts of the discussions that followed the performance of the pieces. These are unedited and unattributed and they are not directly referred to in the main body of the thesis. The reasoning behind this is given in the introduction to Appendix-B.[7]

A folder with other relevant material of Bible Noise can be accessed at <u>this link.</u>

Asides

Before each chapter there will be a short bit of writing which is not part of the main thesis but is obliquely connected to the project reflecting the contexts from which I speak.

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[7] See Appendix-B, Introduction, 305.

An Aside

…My father tried teaching me the keyboard but, as I've since discovered, sometimes parent-child relations don't translate into teacher-student ones! I, however, used to play the keyboard with him. I would play the left while he played the right. Not because it was simpler, but because I was left-handed. I particularly liked Bach, not for his many musical properties but rather that he seemed to give equal importance to the left and to the right.

Through that experience, I became very aware of harmony and chord progression. To such a point, that, melodies were fundamentally boring to me. It was fascinating to hear how notes worked together at the same time, rather than one after another. My musical activity and listening since has, mostly, been in some sense at the back. I sang bass in the choirs, played instruments that were mostly at the back, like bass and rhythm guitar and keyboards. I avoided solos as much as possible, whether singing or instrumentally. It always seemed much more interesting, skulking around the back of the music, subtly changing everything with no one really noticing.

June 2018

Chapter 1: Bible Noise – Practice and Methodology

Introduction

In the introduction to this thesis, I started with a personal subjective reflection on the health and voice of my mother. The reflection was not merely illustrative or analogical. It was also a prefiguring of the method of this project. The rationale for this follows from the aims of the project centred around the sounding of multiple voices, sounds that come from bodies within audible proximity of each other. This sounding happens through the practice of the group, Bible Noise. This chapter lays out, examines and contextualises the practice of Bible Noise and the methods that are interwoven to create the methodology of this project. The group sounds out texts employing different practices of sound art. The sounding of multiple voices is an audible position against the sounding of the single voice that normally reads aloud the bible. This sounding also reflects the presence of multiple voices in the text. Gathering together as multiple voices to sound out multiple voices signifies a communal, participatory and experiential possibility of engaging with the texts. This possibility provides the rationale for my choice to be part of the process: I am part of this process because the research is not only *about* the communal participatory and experiential but importantly it is *through* them.

I will discuss various methods that I use to conduct this research. The practice is key to the research process and therefore I speak about how this project is practice based research. Within this idea of practice-based research I outline more specific methods employed in the project. Bible Noise as a practice draws upon sound art and this artistic nature means that **art research** methods are drawn upon. As mentioned above, I participate in this practice and so I speak of how I draw upon **participant action research**, a method where the researcher is an active participant in what is being researched. Since my subjectivity is part of this process, I use **self-reflexive** methods as well, a process by which I analyse and interrogate my actions, process and thinking. Sound is fundamental to the project in its emanation and reception and so the method of **sound research** is also used for this project.

The practice engages with bible texts aiming to disrupt hegemony and so I draw upon theological and philosophical resources to contextualise and frame the thinking around

the project. The theology that I engage with reflects the aim to hear hidden and silenced voices and so draws from postcolonial, Black[8] and feminist theologies. Philosophically, the experiential nature of the research process leads me to engage with critical thought from philosophical disciplines of phenomenology.

To summarise, this chapter provides the description, context and rationale for the processes of the research project. This starts with the artistic practice of the group, Bible Noise, to my participation and subjectivity in the practice to the theological and philosophical thinking that I draw within the project. I outline the different methods that bring these processes together, which will show the methodology of this research.

Evaluative Criteria

The practice can have different outcomes and therefore, to evaluate the project, certain criteria need to be established. These criteria are formed based on the different emphases and processes of the project.

The first objective of this practice-based research is to produce different pieces that can centre the voices of women and foreigners; voices that have often been marginalised in the reading of the bible. This project is about hearing different voices in the reading aloud of scripture with a special attention to those of women and foreigners. This aim is pursued through the production of pieces that can allow listeners (and performers) to hear and attend to these voices. By employing liberative theological readings (feminist, Black, postcolonial) of the bible, the performance of these pieces could bring out the hidden voices so that listeners might better hear them. The ability of these pieces to give these voices more prominence will decide their success.

Aligned to the above objective, the practice aims to reconstitute the ritual of reading aloud the Bible in an artistic form that incorporates multiple voices. This is in contrast to the tradition of reading scripture by a single voice from the front of the congregation. Such a reading connotes a singular voice binding together the text and voices within the bible,

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[8] I will be capitalising Black when spoken of as an identity. Both APA and Chicago style guides are now moving towards this styling. Chicago Manual, 'Black and White: A Matter of Capitalization', *CMOS Shop Talk* (blog), 22 June 2020, https://cmosshoptalk.com/2020/06/22/black-and-white-a-matter-of-capitalization/.

erasing differences and multiple voices. My practice aims to disrupt this singular voice by reimagining the ritual through the sounding of multiple different voices, drawing on different sound art practices. The different speaking voices of the practice-based element of the research reflect the plurality of both the texts and the voices within the bible. The possibility of disrupting the single hegemonic voice through the pluralisation of the sounding aloud of the bible by a collective performance practice will decide the success of this intervention.

Another objective is to engage with the idea of simultaneity by exploring the polyphony of voices both in the bible and also through the performance of the pieces. There are multiple voices in the bible and when we hear sounds simultaneously we tend to isolate distinct sounds and ignore other sounds. There is a possibility, however, as shown in music, that we can hear multiple sounds coming together and interacting without necessarily isolating each constituting sound without regard to others. Some of the pieces will explore this interaction of voices within the bible by performing them in ways where voices will simultaneously speak. The success of this objective will be decided by how the pieces allow the listeners to experience this multiple speech as an integrated, interconnected whole with distinct parts.

A further objective is to establish the presence of the body in the reading aloud of scripture. Quite often when scripture is read, it is with a 'neutral' voice. Therefore, it is worth exploring the presence of the body from which the voice comes and what it means when several voices and their bodies interact. The practice of Bible Noise will happen within a space where bodies are present to each other and the body will be used primarily through voice with an occasional employment of body movement. The ability of the pieces to draw out the bodily possibilities of the reading aloud of the bible will decide the success of this objective.

Bible Noise

Bible

The practice of Bible Noise seeks to elicit plurality in the reading aloud of the bible. The name 'Bible Noise' elicits different aspects of the research. Bible refers to the set of texts that Christians consider sacred. I use the term 'bible' rather than 'scripture' or 'sacred texts' for its brevity but more importantly for its root, 'biblios,' from the Greek meaning

'books' which evokes a plurality. The books of the bible are written by several authors, compiled by several editors and interpreted in several different ways which demonstrates a plurality in and around the texts. This is significant because plurality is a central concept that this project engages with.

The bible is chosen for reasons at different levels. As a sound artist and Christian theologian there is a personal resonance to explore and inquire into the bible through sound. However, there are wider reasons to research the bible. As theorists Terry Eagleton[9] and Jurgen Habermas[10] have accepted, traditional religion is not going away and is possibly growing and morphing into new forms which cannot be ignored. Part of engaging religion's continued presence in public life is by examining the texts that animate it. The bible is still influential in various societies and in an inter-connected world it is important to understand how it is used and applied. Even in 'secular' Britain, references, phrases and narratives from the bible are present in popular culture.[11] Its use in American politics might be the most potent example where particular readings of the bible result in political statements and policy.[12] The bible is the site of inquiry because it has a meaning to its communities which impacts different areas of their living. Therefore, inquiring into the practice of reading it aloud opens a scope of possibilities because of the bible's influence at different levels for its readers.

There are several pluralities within the bible which are relevant to this research. It is written in several genres (e.g. law, poetry, saying, history) and languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) and it was written across a period of around 1000 years (900BCE –

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[9] Terry Eagleton engages with religion, specifically Christianity through the following works:

Reason, Faith, and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate (London: Yale University Press, 2010).

Culture and the Death of God (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

Radical Sacrifice (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

[10] Jurgen Habermas' engagement with religion can be found in: Craig Calhoun, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, eds., *Habermas and Religion* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2013).

[11] John Riches, 'The Bible in High and Popular Culture', in *The Bible: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2021), 115.

[12] Daniel A. Morris, 'The Bible in American Politics', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in America*, ed. Paul C. Gutjhar (Oxford University Press, 2018).

100CE).[13] There is also a plurality that is complex, problematic and unresolved: What Christians call the Old Testament for Jewish people, is their bible, while the New Testament consists of writings uniquely added for and by Christians, both of which together form the bible for Christians. The naming of the Jewish bible as the 'Old' Testament and the Christian additions as the 'New' Testament is a plurality which is filled with tension. A false separation between the old and new led to supersessionism, '(t)he faulty idea that Christianity replaces Judaism… [that] …led to anti-Judaism within the church and has been the source of tragic and fatal consequences in the history of the West.'[14] The troubling history that accompanies these texts is important because replacement of the old with the new can have horrific consequences. Plurality is accepting the old with the new rather than replacing the old. The terminology of 'Old' and 'New' is troublesome and problematic but I stay with those terms for its widespread use and also as a reminder of the difficulties that accompany plurality.

The bible has further plurality in its reception. Its original languages do not have precedence in providing access to it, in contrast to Islam where Arabic is considered to be the correct way of accessing the Quran. This means that the bible is experienced around the world through diverse languages. (The translation of the bible also resulted in the formation of scripts for previously unscripted languages.[15]) When these pluralities are ignored it can have consequences in the real world in the treatment of women, sexual difference and foreigners. Despite women having a prominent role in the early church, the later church institutions placed women under control and subservience. In the Anglican church women priests were only allowed in 1987. Women bishops are even more recent, 2011. In some denominations women still are not allowed to preach.[16] These circumstances arise from a singular reading of the bible where certain parts are amplified over others.

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[13] John Barton, *A History of the Bible: The Book and Its Faiths* (London: Penguin Books, 2020), 33, 261.

[14] Peter Heltzel, *Resurrection City: A Theology of Improvisation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 2012), 11.

[15] The Cryllic alphabet which is widely used in Eastern Europe came out of a need to translate the bible into Slavonic and other Eastern European languages. David Diringer and David R. Olson, 'Alphabet - Cyrillic and Glagolitic Alphabets', Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed 22 October 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/alphabet-writing.

[16] Bob Smietana, 'Accusing SBC of "caving," John MacArthur Says of Beth Moore: "Go Home"', *Religion News Service* (blog), 19 October 2019, https://religionnews.com/2019/10/19/accusing-sbc-of-caving-john-macarthur-says-beth-moore-should-go-home/.

This is further relevant today, as populist movements try to promote the idea of a 'Christian Europe' or a 'Christian Britain' against a Muslim world, with texts being appropriated for such causes.[17]

Exposing plurality in different ways will form an opening to continually attend to difference without homogenised synthesis or rejection. The plurality of the bible allows for an attention to the differences within it. The plurality of scripture is further underlined by seemingly contradictory texts. In the New Testament there are four gospels, four accounts of Jesus' public life, with differences between them which have not been fully resolved by successive generations of commentators and academics. Early in church history these differences disturbed theologians and one of them, Tatian (120-180CE), wrote the *Diatessaron* where he attempted to collect all the text of the four gospels into one single narrative line.[18] Yet the church has stuck to the four different accounts with all its contradictions rather than accept a harmonisation. A similar synthesis was attempted with the Old Testament[19] which also has duplicate and contradictory accounts. Israel Knohl, a Jewish biblical professor says that '[t]he anonymous assemblers and editors of the Torah'[20] could have produced a book 'free of all contradictions and tensions.'[21] Instead, Knohl compares the texts to a chorus and points out:

> *'they left us a book in which we find a variety of voices. Though the overarching narrative tends to blend, or perhaps even obscure, for most readers the diverse sounds of this chorus, if one listens carefully, one can hear them.'[22]*

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[17] Sociologist Rogers Brubaker explores this as populist rhetoric in Rogers Brubaker, 'Between Nationalism and Civilizationism: The European Populist Moment in Comparative Perspective', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 8 (21 June 2017): 1191–1226, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1294700.

[18] David Parker, 'The New Testament', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Bible*, ed. John Rogerson, 2001, https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780198601180.001.0001/acref-9780198601180-chapter-6.

[19] This attempt was found amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls, the writings of the Qumran Sect of Judaism which existed around the beginning of the common era. Israel Knohl, *The Divine Symphony: The Bible's Many Voices* (Jewish Publication Society, 2010), 4.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

The phrase: 'If one listens carefully, one can hear them' is particularly pertinent for this project. Listening carefully to hear 'the diverse sounds of this chorus' resonates closely with how the practice of Bible Noise engages with the plurality of the bible.

A further reason for using the bible is that in its content and usage it has certain resonances with sound, speech and music which makes it an area for sound research. In the bible texts, God speaks creation into being. It is through speech and listening that God interacts with creation. In a religious matrix where images of God are banned, the language of speech and listening become the primary ways in which God is interacted with. Music, another significant expression of human sound, occupies a significant place within the bible: the books of Psalms, Song of songs, and Lamentations were all written down with the expectation that they would be sung. Music, both instrumental and vocal, was a strong part of the religious institution of the ancient Israelites which is outlined with some detail in the Old Testament.[23] The New Testament, written later (primarily by Jews in the 1st Century), assumes the Old Testament as its base. It is written around the person of Jesus who is referred to as the Word who was '...in the beginning' (John 1). 'Word' from the Greek *logos* is both utterance and concept in this context.[24] The New Testament does not have as many instances of song and music and can seem to be lacking in the rich sounds of the Old Testament but the assumption is that these sounds are implicit. Songs from the Old Testament are sung in the New Testament (e.g., The song of Mary, the Magnificat in Luke 2 which is an adaptation of different Psalms) and newer ones (e.g. Philippians 2:5-11) are alluded to in these later writings.

Another important facet of the bible to this project is that it was written to be read aloud. For much of history the bible has been accessed by most people through the sound of the spoken voice. Therefore, it is worth interrogating this voice in what it does or does not do. My research attempts to propose a way of accessing plurality through sound; especially accessing multiple voices in texts that previously have been considered authoritative and singular in their meaning.

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[23] 1 Chronicles 26 is one of the more detailed descriptions of the priest musicians who played at the temple.

[24] William A. Beardslee, 'Logos', in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. Michael D. Coogan and Bruce M. Metzger (Oxford University Press, 1993), 463.

For Bible Noise, the primary version used is the New Revised Standard Version from here on referred to as the NRSV. The NRSV is used for several reasons: It stays close to the original texts in rhythm and meaning without extensive paraphrasing; it is considered to be an 'ecumenical' bible for the fact that it is acceptable to both Catholics and Protestants; it also uses inclusive language. Other versions of the bible are used only if there are particular sonic reasons. Other language versions are also used to explore the rhythms and resonances they produce.

Noise

The second part of the nomenclature of this practice is 'noise.' The practice explores a polyphony of spoken word, of speech; multiple voices speaking simultaneously, and the often-asked query is: 'won't that just be babble?' Most people can understand that singing voices work together but spoken voices seem to be 'babble.' 'Babble' has a particular resonance in this research for the lack of meaning it seems to imply, but also the sound of the word 'babble' is close to 'Babel,' a story from the bible, which I will explore further in chapter 2.

Noise requires further context especially within sound discourse where it has a wide variety of meanings. Greg Hainge, searching for an ontology of noise, tentatively concludes that: 'Noise is relational.'[25] Paul Hegarty gives a description of this relationality: 'it exists only in relation to what it is not.' This relational aspect of noise occurs because it is hearers who describe an aural experience that is disturbing as 'noise.' Noise is also a form of 'pollution'[26] as Mike Goldsmith says. The notion of 'pollution' has certain resonances with religion as anthropologist Mary Anne Douglas has done in her seminal work, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.*[27] As I'm exploring a religious ritual there is the question as to whether I'm 'polluting' the reading aloud of the bible by multi-voicing it. Multi-voicing, which is the simultaneous sounding of text, could be perceived as noise by those expecting a clear singular voice. Noise can be a way of identifying sound that is unknown or unfamiliar and the sound of Bible Noise will be

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[25] Greg Hainge, *Noise Matters* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 273.

[26] Mike Goldsmith, *Discord: The Story of Noise* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2.

[27] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York; Washington: Praeger, 1966).

unknown and unfamiliar seemingly without form or sense to those unused to hearing the bible read aloud in this way.

Music has a mixed relationship with noise where it could be in 'contrast with harmony'[28] yet without which 'music would be intolerably bland.'[29] The contrast between dissonance and harmony is relevant as these terms describe various kinds of polyphony. I later argue against using harmony as a way of understanding the polyphony that Bible Noise practices for the way it can predefine relationships of sound. The mixed relationship between music and noise is explored as a socio-economic analysis by Jacques Attali, in his book *Noise*.[30] For him, 'noise is violence'[31] as it 'interrupts transmission'[32] and music is a 'channelization of noise.' Drawing on René Girard's *Scapegoat*[33] he formulates noise as 'a weapon' and music as the 'ritualization of that weapon as a simulacrum of ritual murder.'[34] Noise is violence but at the same time Attali also presents noise as 'a herald, for change is inscribed in noise faster than it transforms society.'[35] Paul Hegarty, discussing Attali, muses: 'What is of interest is the continual process opened up by this perspective, where music becomes an avant-garde, and in so doing is always, initially, at least, identified as noise. Only later does the old noise come to be seen as legitimate music.'[36] Brandon Labelle seems to agree, quoting Eric Wilson who explores the noise of 16th century London: '"Noise, then, can be heard not merely as a symptom of symbolic vulnerability or theoretical disorder, but as the evidence and the occasional catalyst of dynamic cultural change operative across the urban topos."'[37] Hendy further characterizes noise as unexpected as being 'full of

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[28] Goldsmith, *Discord*, 2.

[29] Ibid., 3.

[30] Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

[31] Ibid., 26.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Attali says: 'The reader will perhaps have recognized it as an application in the domain of music of Rene Girard' s broader discovery of the role of ritual sacrifice as a political channeler of and substitute for the general violence.' Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 24.

[35] Ibid., 5.

[36] Paul Hegarty, *Noise/Music: A History* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 10.

[37] Eric Wilson, 'Plagues, Fairs, and Street Cries: Sounding out Society and Space in Early Modern London', *Modern Language Studies Modern Language Studies* 25, no. 3 (1995): 1.,xxiii

surprises.'[38] Bible Noise is approaching noise as a possibility for surprise and towards a fresh way of engaging the bible through sound.

Noise is also a set of movements within sound art, like noise music, glitch and so on particularly starting with Luigi Russolo's, '*The Art of Noises.*'[39] Caleb Kelly's Cracked Media[40] describes several of these movements but Bible Noise does not engage with his survey of noise. This is because Kelly describes noise movements like Glitch or Noise music which express themselves through non-human media. The sound of Bible Noise is fundamentally through the human voice. This practice is more aligned with voice-based sound art practices that engage with the voice for its sonic properties rather than linguistic sense. In this context LaBelle talks of 'the noise underneath speech.'[41] He asks: 'Is not the "noise" surrounding verbal articulations a sort of raw matter supporting rather than undermining our faculty of speech?'[42] He continues: 'Rather than hear noise then as outside any system of communication, we can understand it more as a central mechanism that must nonetheless remain invisible, or at least, unspoken.'[43] When multiple spoken voices are brought together less attention is paid to the meaning spoken – rather it is the sound that will have to be listened to first. The 'noise underneath speech' becomes stronger as multiple voices disrupt meanings of individual voices. Bible Noise makes sounds that thoroughly remain within the field of language but become noise through multiplicity and excess with the possibility of transformation that noise can offer.

Works of sound engaging with scripture

Historically, the bible has been sonically engaged with through music. Western classical composers engaged with scriptural texts setting them to music for use in worship or at special occasions like Christmas and Easter. Famous examples include 'Messiah' by George

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[38] David Hendy, *Noise: A Human History of Sound and Listening.* (London: Profile Books, 2013), 8.

[39] Luigi Russolo and Direzione del movimento futurista, *L'Art des bruits manifeste futuriste* (Milan: Direction du mouvement futuriste, 1913).

[40] Caleb Kelly, *Cracked Media: The Sound of Malfunction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2009).

[41] Brandon LaBelle, *Lexicon of the Mouth: Poetics and Politics of Voice and the Oral Imaginary* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 67.

[42] Ibid., 62.

[43] Ibid., 68.

Fredric Handel and the 'Passion of St. Matthew' by Johann Sebastian Bach. An interesting contemporary resource that offers a collection of biblically based works is 'The Bible in Music: A Dictionary of Songs, Works, and More.'[44] The 'dictionary' brings together works from contemporary popular music to classical music. An example of a 20th century piece is Philip Glass' Psalm 126, where words of the psalm 'are spoken by a narrator to wordless syllables by the chorus accompanied by the orchestra.'[45]

The engagement of the bible through sound outside of music comes through its reading aloud and often in the preaching traditions of different Christian denominations. Artists like Steve Reich have engaged with this kind of tradition for example through Reich's piece 'It's Gonna Rain' (1968). This piece uses a recording of a street preacher to create a piece that opens questions of the ending of the world. Reich has spoken about how the Cold War and the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 animated the making of this piece.[46] My work in Bible Noise contrasts with Reich's approach in different ways. Reich takes the audible voice away from its original context to respond to his contemporary situation. My work keeps the audible voice within its context of Bible Noise practices engaging with the text of the bible. It is unclear whether the voice from Reich's piece has given his assent to the artistic fashioning that has since happened. In Bible Noise the participants have a clear understanding that they are part of a research project. This assent has a significance within current discourses of appropriation and exploitation in this case, that of voices.

The preaching traditions are an important mode of biblical engagement through sound. Ashon Crawley engages with different preachers outlining how they use voice and sound which has different performative possibilities for the communities that are being preached to. He talks about the act of "whooping" which he describes as the 'speaking of phrases melodically, with excitement, usually breaking into loud exclamations and declarations repetitiously.'[47] Whooping, according to Crawley, is used as an invitation for the

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[44] Siobhan Long and John F. A. Sawyer, *The Bible in Music: A Dictionary of Songs, Works, and More* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

[45] Ibid., 190.

[46] Tom Huizenga, 'Fifty Years of Steve Reich's "It's Gonna Rain"', *NPR*, 27 January 2015, sec. Deceptive Cadence, https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2015/01/27/381575433/fifty-years-of-steve-reichs-its-gonna-rain.

[47] Ashon T. Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 38.

congregation 'to intense performances of deep antiphony in celebration.'[48] Crawley's emphasis is that through sound the performative sonic aspects of the sermon which is more than just the message, there is an invitation to participate in the sermon which is traditionally understood as a single voice speaking to a listening congregation. In analysing the importance of the participative, invitational aspects of sound in preaching Crawley quotes from the homiletician Evans E. Crawford: 'The sound of the sermon is not simply something added to the substance but rather is inseparable from the experience of participant proclamation, which is a communal event in the life of the congregation.'[49]

Crawley, discussing a sermon by Dorinda Clark-Cole (of Clark Sisters fame), speaks of how whooping is connected to pauses and silences which produce a 'sonic space as discontinuous and open, open to the other voices,'[50] the other voices of the congregants who gather around her. The sermons are also punctuated with musical instruments, like the Hammond organ and drums.[51] Crawley discusses another preacher, Juandolyn Stokes, analysing different non-semantic sounds that she utters through her preaching. She ends different phrases and statements with "hah" and "tuh" which Crawley calls 'appendages to words that are no less important for, no less generative of, meaning.'[52] Non-semantic sounds here are important for the overall meaning of the experience of being part of this participative sermon. Bible Noise might not reach the performative heights of such sermons but coincides on the participative aspect and takes on board the importance of sound as a conveyor of meaning beyond the semantic.

Further important works engaging with the bible come from John Harvey, Emeritus Professor of Art at Aberystwyth University. He has engaged with the bible through the Aural Bible series,[53] a set of different works made examining different ways of engaging and performing scripture. Of particular interest to me are two works: 'The Bible in

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[48] Ibid., 42.

[49] Evans E Crawford and Thomas H Troeger, *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 71. In Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 42.

[50] Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 45.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., 46.

[53] John Harvey, 'Aural Bible', *John Harvey* (blog), accessed 22 September 2023, https://johnharvey.org.uk/index.php/sound/the-aural-bible-series/.

Translation / Y Beibl Mewn Cyfieithiad' (2016) and 'The Biblical Record / Y Record Beiblaidd' (2019).

'The Bible in Translation' is a set of pieces that engage with the bible in 'interpretative and responsive' ways.[54] The pieces are sound compositions that draw out different aspects of biblical stories and themes. Harvey goes on to say that these pieces aim 'to develop a body of creative engagements with the bible and its sonic cultures'[55] which provide possibilities for biblical and religious studies. This coincides with some of the facets of Bible Noise. Bible Noise also engages with the bible in interpretative and responsive ways but with a specific attempt to hear the voices of women and foreigners. This engagement opens possibilities for religious studies in finding different ways of encountering the text.

'The Biblical Record' is a set of pieces that respond to a recording of the entire bible by Alexander Scourby. The recording was produced by the American Foundation of the Blind to give sight impaired people access to the bible. The pieces use Scourby's recordings within the compositions which are based around the texts which talk about blindness, whether they are aphorisms or narratives with sight impaired characters. The work also takes on board the social and political contexts of when the recording was done. Bible Noise, in a similar vein, examines the concept of the foreigner through 'Foreigner, Stranger, Alien' where biblical verses mentioning one of these three terms are read out aloud.

Sound Practice

Bible Noise draws upon different sets of sound practices. This plurality is both intentional as well as necessary. Since the research aims to listen out for multiple sounds, having a plurality of practices resonates with the aims of this project. This plurality is necessary as Bible Noise employs the spoken voice, texts, composition and polyphony. Therefore, sound art practices in voice and text are described, followed by practices of text scores also known as verbal notation[56] and listening practices.

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] John Lely and James Saunders, eds., *Word Events: Perspectives on Verbal Notation* (New York: Continuum, 2012).

Sound Poetry

Steve McCaffery, speaking of a genealogy of sound poetry, points to 'the vast, intractable area of archaic and primitive poetries, the many instances of chant structures and incantation, of nonsense syllabic mouthings and deliberate lexical distortions.'[57] He then points to the Russian futurists around 1910 when 'we find the first concerted attempts to isolate the concrete, phonic aspect of language as an autonomous focus of interest.'[58] Sound Poetry provides artistic ways to pay attention to the sonic in speech. Speech is often bound up in meaning, to the detriment of sound. Sound Poetry is interested in sound, particularly of the human voice, but is also connected to music. Dick Higgins points out that, though sound poetry has an aspect of music, it is not music.[59] Higgins talks of sound poetry as 'being inherently concerned with communication and its means, linguistic and/or phatic.'[60] This focus on the phonic is a key to how the practice of Bible Noise is approached. The practice of Bible Noise undertakes a focus on the sound, as sound poetry does, but rather than isolating the phonic, it goes with Higgins' idea of having the phatic *and* the linguistic.

Simultaneous Speech Practices

Another set of practices that Bible Noise engages with is one where there are simultaneous speaking voices. In the attempt to hear hidden voices, I am imagining these voices as being simultaneously present with louder, more heard voices. Simultaneous speaking voices are notionally different from simultaneous singing voices, which is probably because of the differences in perceiving speech and music which will be discussed in chapter 3. Simultaneous speech practices do use musical language, though, particularly in terms of counterpoint which is a form of polyphony. I will discuss two artists who have engaged in this practice: Hugo Ball and Glenn Gould.

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[57] Steve McCaffery, 'Sound Poetry - A Survey', UBUWEB, accessed 7 May 2019, http://www.ubu.com/papers/mccaffery.html. From the International Sound Poetry Festival, Steve McCaffery, and B. P Nichol, eds., *Sound Poetry: A Catalogue for the Eleventh International Sound Poetry Festival, Toronto, Canada, October 14 to 21, 1978* (Toronto: Underwhich Editions, 1978).

[58] McCaffery, 'Sound Poetry - A Survey'.

[59] Dick Higgins, 'A Taxonomy of Sound Poetry', UBUWEB, accessed 7 May 2019, http://www.ubu.com/papers/higgins_sound.html.

[60] Ibid.

Hugo Ball

Simultaneity of speech within artistic practice has its origins in Dadaist movements of the early 20th century. Hugo Ball's 'L'amiral cherche une maison a louer' (The Admiral is looking for a house to rent) is one of the early examples of this. Douglas Kahn describes: 'It was simultaneously recited in German, English, and French (as well as in nonsense words, vocables, singing, and whistling), moving in and out of relations of translation.'[61] Ball considered it 'a contrapuntal recitative in which three or more voices speak, sing, whistle, etc., at the same time in such a way that the elegiac, humorous, or bizarre content of the piece is brought out by these combinations.'[62] Kahn says that Christianity was 'Ball's touchstone'[63] through Ball's Dada days. Kahn goes on to propose that Ball's sound poems referred back to a passage in the biblical book, the letter to the Corinthians: 'For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; how be it in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.'[64] This verse, within its context, is dealing with glossolalia, a type of religious utterance which will explored in depth further on. The story of Pentecost, where glossolalia originally occurs, is an experience of multiple simultaneous languages. 'L'Amiral...' is recited simultaneously in multiple languages. So there seems to be a connection, however tenuous, between artistic simultaneous utterance and Christian practice. I use that connection to contextualise Bible Noise within sound art and religious practice. Bible Noise does not practice glossolalia in its religious or sound art forms and explores multiple languages very briefly. Bible Noise explores the multiple simultaneity of vocal utterance which can sound similar to glossolalia within both religion and sound art and can be illustrated through the following piece.

In the piece 'The Most High 3-voice of God,'[65] (screenshot below) passages based on songs uttered by women in the bible are sounded simultaneously. There are three passages with similar themes but differing texts. Each passage is given to an individual reader. At the end of each passage, the same piece of text has been inserted. The three readers read through

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[61] Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001), 48.

[62] Hugo Ball, *Flight out of Time: A Dada Diary* (New York: Viking Press, 1974), 49.

[63] Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat*, 51.

[64] 1 Corinthians 14:2 quoted in ibid.

[65] See Appendix-A, The Most High 3-Voice of God, 272.

their passage simultaneously. As they are of different lengths they will finish at different times. The one who finishes first listens out for any other reader who is reading the last portion of their text. When she hears that she joins in with that reader and reads the passage to the end again. These two readers then listen out to where the third reader has reached and join in with her. This simultaneous multiplicity demonstrates the different voices 'moving in and out of relations'[66] as Kahn describes Ball's 'L'amiral.'

The Most High 3-Voice of God

Deborah	Hannah	Elizabeth and Mary
Villagers in Israel would not fight; they held back until I arose, until I arose, a mother in Israel.	My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in my God.	"Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."
Consider the voice of the singers at the watering places. They recite the victories of the Lord, the victories of his villagers in Israel.	Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength. The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honour.	"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.
Wake up, wake up, Wake up, wake up, break out in song!		
Most blessed of women most blessed of tent-dwelling women.		
At her feet he sank, he fell; there he lay. At her feet he sank, he fell; where he sank, there he fell—dead		
He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people. He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the Lord!	He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people. He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the Lord!	He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people. He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the Lord!
Most blessed of women Blessed are you Blessed is she	Most blessed of women Blessed are you Blessed is she	Most blessed of women Blessed are you Blessed is she

Glenn Gould

Moving on from Ball's L'Amiral, Musician Glenn Gould's 'The Idea of North' is an important work for this practice. This piece has been classified as 'documentary, radio drama/theatre, music, or a combination of all three.'[67] Gould explores the 'North' of his native Canada, using the spoken voices of different people living there. At various points

[66] Ibid., 48.

[67] Anthony Cushing, 'Glenn Gould and "Opus 2": An Outline for a Musical Understanding of Contrapuntal Radio with Respect to The Idea of North', *Circuit: Musiques Contemporaines* 22, no. 2 (2012): 21.

in this piece 'overlapping speech' occurs.[68] Gould presents 'The Idea of North' as 'contrapuntal radio'. He explains this by saying: '[E]very voice leads its own[...] life and adheres to certain parameters of harmonic discipline... how the voices came together and in what manner they splashed off each other, both in the actual sound and in the meaning of what was being said.'[69] Counterpoint is a specific musical simultaneous occurrence where independent melodies interweave with each other. Johann Sebastian Bach is considered to be amongst the most skilful in the use of counterpoint. Gould, as a known exponent of Bach, is therefore using counterpoint as a musical concept in how he brings together simultaneous speech. Andrew Cushing attempts to analyse 'The Idea of North' musically: 'If horizontal melody and vertical chord successions constitute traditional notions of harmony, then speech and miscellaneous sounds are the harmonic elements idiomatic to contrapuntal radio.'[70] Cushing uses both semantic content and sounds to show how 'Idea of North' could be considered a piece of 'music'.

The phrase 'both in the actual sound and meaning' by Gould regarding counterpoint is a key point for Bible noise practice. The first emphasis is on sound but the interplay of meanings is also key to how the practice develops. An example from Bible Noise is the piece 'Hagar'[71] which draws on the narrative of a foreigner enslaved woman who is forced into the desert by her so-called master and mistress.[72] In the narrative there is an interplay between sight and sound. Hagar names God as 'El Roi', the God who sees, while God asks her to name her son, 'Ishmael', God listens. There is also the contrast between her mistress Sarah's laughter on her son Isaac's birth while Hagar is 'afflicted'. The contrast of these words is brought together simultaneously in the piece.

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Tim Page, *Glenn Gould: A Life in Pictures* (Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books, 2007), 22.

[70] Cushing, 'Glenn Gould and "Opus 2"', 28.

[71] See Appendix-A, Hagar, 295.

[72] Genesis 16 and 21

Movement 3

Now you have conceived and shall bear a son; you shall call him Ishmael, for the Lord has given heed to your affliction. Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.	Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me. Sarah bore Abraham a son Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him.
Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.	As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.
Hagar the slave-girl Egyptian Ishmael El-roi God heard the voice of the boy God listens God sees	Hagar the Egyptian slave-girl God listens God sees Ishmael God opened her eyes Ishmael El-roi

Here, contrasting emotions and meanings are brought together simultaneously. Bringing these contrasts together opens different experiences to the story. The story is of Abraham and Sarah and Hagar. The overarching assumption when engaging the story on the surface is that Abraham and Sarah are virtuous heroes. In engaging with this story through this research, resonances and dissonances arise in the experiences of the main characters, changing perceptions of who the story is about and understandings of pre-conceived virtue. This happened in the making of the piece for me but also in the post-performance reflections of the piece. It allowed us as a group to hear the voice of Hagar through the simultaneous sounding of Sarah's contrasting story. The simultaneity here is of the human voice to which practices we turn.

Voice-Based Practices

Cathy Lane's *Playing with Words*[73] is a compendium of various voice-based sound art practices which bring out the 'compositional possibilities offered by ... semantic meaning on one hand and abstract sonic qualities on the other, and all the gradations in between.'[74] For my practice it is important that the semantic and the sonic coexist together and so I will draw on both kinds of practices. I will draw out two works from *Playing with Words* to identify where Bible Noise draws some of its practice from.

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[73] Cathy Lane, ed., *Playing with Words: The Spoken Word in Artistic Practice* (London: Uniformbooks, 2015).

[74] Ibid., 8.

Michael Vincent's 'Sat There and Clapped'[75] uses the voice of electronic music pioneer Kevin Austin which is then looped. This is relevant for its exploration of voice repetition. For Vincent, 'the process of text looping seemed to be the key to provoking a perceptual shift in a listener that leads towards the musical understanding of the words themselves.'[76] This 'perceptual shift' is a hoped-for result of my practice which, however, might not always occur. What is important is that repetition provides the space for the perceptual shift. In the piece 'Whispering Grove,'[77] participants read aloud a text they've picked unseen from a set of folded papers. The length of each passage is different so, when each person performs, they have their own length and rhythm but when everyone speaks together these rhythms interweave. The speakers of the text stand in a circle while one participant listens in the centre. The repetition allows the listeners to attend to distinct individual phrases while also listening to the whole. In another piece, 'Thus Whispereth the Lord,' broken up repetitions of words associated with prophetesses in the bible are sounded while a narrative text is read at the same time. This gives a rhythmic sense, sonically, but with the semantic content present as well.

Thomas Gardner's 'LipSync'[78] uses spoken text, cello and lips which then goes through electroacoustic processes triggered by the speech. Gardner speaks of 'the dissolution of text into singing, … [implying] that music is a carrier of meanings unavailable to text.'[79] The 'dissolution of the text' is what Bible Noise does, not in rejecting text but performing text which expands it beyond the semantic. The piece 'Prologue Remix' enacts a contrasting dissolution of text comparable to 'LipSync'. In 'Prologue Remix,' different participants are given a portion of a passage to read aloud into a microphone. Each person reads their portion until the passage is completed. Their readings have been recorded and each of their recordings are now looped (with the software MAX/MSP) and played back together with the possibility of adjusting their volumes. Here the text is dissolved in the sense that it is no longer being heard in its previous linearity. Voices are heard over each other, with resonances and clashes occurring semantically and sonically. As the loops are

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[75] Michael Vincent, 'The Music in Words', in *Playing with Words*, 59.

[76] Ibid.

[77] See Appendix–A, Whispering Grove, 265.

[78] Thomas Gardner, 'Burying the Singing Bird - Text and Sound in "Lipsync"', in *Playing with Words*, 63.

[79] Ibid., 64.

of different timescales these resonances and clashes alter as the piece plays out. 'LipSync' and 'Prologue Remix' base themselves on a performance of text. Text based practices which are part of artistic performance bring up the notion of the score.

Text as Score

John Lely and James Saunders' *Word Events*[80] present different artists who 'score' words in distinction to musical notes for performance. Words used within these scores can be instructions for performance or they can be the sonic material itself. Since Bible Noise is engaging with reading aloud of the bible, the texts for the pieces are formed into scores for the performance. The scores consist of the instructions and/or the words that form the sonic material for the performance.

John White's 'Newspaper-Reading Machine'[81] is a piece where a group reads out random found texts. It aims to keep 'a certain element of randomness,'[82] within the defined structure of the piece. The instructions for the piece are for each participant to repeat the found text 8 times, each time with a different voice according to instructions. I used this idea of randomness and repetition in the piece 'Whispering Grove' where participants chose a text from a set of folded texts and had to repeat their text. In this case, the score is dispersed in that the instructions are the same for everyone but each participant receives a different text. This is the notion of parts within ensemble Western music where each section receives a relevant section of the score. The difference in this random assignation is that it is unknown which 'part' each participant receives. In Western ensemble music the conductor will normally have the entire score present before her. There is no conductor for 'Whispering Grove' as there are only participants; no one knows the whole or the other parts until each participant takes their turn to listen to the group. Even as the conceiver of the piece, I can know only the whole set of texts but cannot know which ones have been chosen and who is doing each part.

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[80] Lely and Saunders, *Word Events*.

[81] John Lely, 'Commentary: Newspaper Reading Machine', in *Word Events*, 391–94.

[82] Ibid., 392.

A different type of score is found in Craig Shepherd's 'Lines 2'[83] which is a choir piece where singers use a single pitch and vowel for the performance. He gives instructions for when to rest and when to sing by a certain number of counts where each singer counts in their own time. Here, the score is much more about the instruction than the sonic material. I used this idea in 'Whispering Grove' where speakers had to repeat their text a certain number of times while listening to other participants until certain conditions were met to indicate the time to stop. Below is an instruction sheet.

Bible Noise

What secret is at stake, … when one tries to capture or surprise the sonority, rather than the message?

Jean Luc Nancy

Whispering Grove

Pick a piece of paper with a text on it.

Now form a circle with the rest of the group.

Speak the text you chose, pronouncing it as clearly as possible and keeping the pace slow, keep repeating it. The volume must be low. But it must not be a whisper where it is only breath. Use your voice. If you can't hear anyone else, you're probably too loud! Remember to breath!

After the 5th time of saying the text:
    IF there is no one the middle, step into the middle.
    IF there is someone in the middle say your text another 5 times until the middle is free.

Once in the middle listen to the sounds around you. Step closer to hear more clearly if you need to, respecting the other's space. If it's difficult to be in the middle do step out. If it's enjoyable, be mindful of others needing a go ☺. After you've heard enough, take your place back in the circle and start sounding your text again.

After the last person has had their turn in the middle repeat your text and slowly fade out.

What is important in 'Whispering Grove' is that for the piece to work the participants have to listen to each other. John Lely, commenting on Cornelius Cardew's piece *Paragraph* 6,

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[83] Craig Shepard, 'Lines (2)', in *Word Events*, 336.

says: 'The notation compels performers to interact with one another in significant ways. All performers are mutually reliant on each other for progress through the piece.'[84] This reliance is fundamentally based on listening and leads us to explore some listening practices.

Listening

Listening is an important part of Bible Noise practice. The notion of listening is derived from the ritual where the congregation listens while a single voice reads the text aloud. On one level, the performance of each piece is meant to be heard as a whole, either by the group or by external listeners. Additionally, the pieces require the participants to listen to each other. The interaction and listening to each other is essential to the performance of each piece. Angus Carlyle and Cathy Lane in *On Listening*[85] present a collection on different listening practices. Within this collection is the account of Seth Ayaaz Bhunnoo who reflects on a performance of the Automatic Writing Circle in a church.[86] It is a multi-layered experience because of his own Sufi Muslim background and he talks of how listening in that context is a combining of 'multiple listening-histories, traditions and associations.'[87] Bible Noise, similarly, is drawing on multiple traditions, multiple practices and different voices to enact its practice. Bible Noise is reconceptualising the ritual of reading aloud the bible and this arises out of a different way of sounding the text and a different way of listening to it. Lisbeth Lipari says that listening can be a process of 'de-centring that calls us to question or shed our old views and certainties about our world.'[88] This idea becomes important as a mode of listening. Shedding old views and certainties is important as new understandings and experiences require a reconfiguring of the old. This is what I'm attempting to do with Bible Noise. One of the problems with polyphony in sound and in concept is that it prejudges a correct way of belonging together. This is known as harmony. Harmony from the classical Greeks, through the church to the current day, becomes a way of organising difference. However, this arrangement does not take into account new sounds, new experiences or new situations. How can a move occur from

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[84] John Lely, 'Cornelius Cardew', in *Word Events*, 158.

[85] Angus Carlyle and Cathy Lane, eds., *On Listening* (Axminster, Devon: Uniformbooks, 2013).

[86] Seth Ayyaz Bhunnoo, 'In the Midst of It All, Something Is Stirring: The Biopsychosocial Conditioning of Listening', in *On Listening*, 183.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Lispeth Lipari, 'Listening Others', in *On Listening*, 158.

a prescribed harmony to a polyphony that allows difference to co-exist differently? I will explore this question further in chapter 3: Polyphony.

Games

Elements of game in music are found in Charles Mingus' Jazz workshop, Iannis Xenakis' compositions and John Zorn's performances. Tony Conrad also speaks of a piece by David Behrman which is structured as a game. Conrad says: 'If a composition is a game among the performers, the music produced is dependent on interactions among them, and far less upon the previous choices of the composer.'[89] I use this idea for different pieces like 'Picking the Pieces'[90] and 'Mrrey Goorund.'[91] If the piece is far less dependent on the composer's prior choices, then games have an improvisatory aspect to them. Though improvisation is not a key approach in my practice there are certain improvisatory aspects to some of the pieces in my practice and a brief engagement with improvisation follows.

Improvisation, according to the Oxford Dictionary of Music, is: 'A performance according to the inventive whim of the moment, i.e. without a written or printed score, and not from memory.'[92] Musician David Bailey counters this definition by saying 'there is no musical activity which requires greater skill and devotion, preparation, training and commitment.'[93] Bailey, as a practitioner of improvisation, has conversed with musicians from diverse contexts, from organists to Flamenco musicians to Indian classical musicians in his book *Improvisation*.[94] Bailey avoids giving a definition for improvisation, intending that the conversations will reveal what improvisation is. Bailey refers to improvisation as self-expression,[95] while composer Steven Lacy thinks of it as composition in the moment,[96]

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[89] Tony Conrad, 'Word Scoring', in *Word Events,* 163–64.

[90] See Appendix-A, Picking up the Pieces, 282.

[91] See Appendix-A, Mrrey Goorund, 285.

[92] Joyce Bourne and Michael Kennedy, eds., 'Improvisation', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford University Press, 2013), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199578108.001.0001/acref-9780199578108-e-4586.

[93] Derek Bailey, *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), xii.

[94] Bailey, *Improvisation*.

[95] Ibid., 108.

[96] Ibid., 141.

Baroque improviser Lionel Salter considers it as spontaneity.[97] Bailey draws a difference between 'idiomatic,' the 'expression of an idiom' like Flamenco, and 'non-idiomatic' improvisation, which is more akin to 'free' improvisation.[98] According to Bailey, improvisation cannot be transcribed. He thinks that the development of notation 'restricted and removed'[99] improvisation from Western classical music. For him, 'one of the enduring attractions of improvisation is its momentary existence: the absence of a residual document.'[100] This is pertinent to my research as there are certain analogous connections between music notation and written text. Bailey seems to point towards a wilful forgetting in improvisation. From this brief engagement with Bailey, it can be gleaned that improvisation is a diverse set of practices and has different meanings to different practitioners. What is relevant for Bible Noise is that pieces which employ the notion of game have an improvisatory aspect that can have unexpected results based on the different interactions of the participants.

Bible Noise: The Process

What follows now is a description of how Bible Noise works. Bible Noise is based on the ritual of reading aloud the bible. I locate this ritual within the Anglican church. Distinguishing a particular church shows that it is one amongst many churches. There is great variance within Anglican churches where some are closely aligned with Roman Catholic practice, emphasising older rituals and word forms, while some resemble Pentecostal church practice which emphasises the engagement with the Holy Spirit in 'free' forms of gathering that are less word based. The ritual of reading aloud the bible is mostly drawn from Anglican practice, which takes an older, established word form. In my description 'older' refers to practices from Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and others that were initially constituted or were being practiced at the time of the reformation in the 16th century. By 'newer,' I refer to practices formed by Christian groups established during various 'revivals' in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Numerous Pentecostal churches were established at this time with markedly different practices which

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[97] Ibid., 27.

[98] Ibid., ix.

[99] Ibid., 59.

[100] Ibid., 35.

have influenced 'older' practices. There will be a further engagement with Pentecostal practices in chapter 2.

The Ritual of Reading the Bible in Worship

Choice of text

The older practices follow a lectionary which recommends the texts to be read through the whole year. Normally a portion is read from the Old Testament (the Hebrew Bible), the Gospels (the narratives about Jesus) and the Epistles (letters of the early Christian leaders to different churches or individuals). In doing this, lectionaries attempt to get through the whole bible in 3 years.[101] Newer practices choose their text according to what the leadership has decided based on a theme or what the preaching is focussed on.

The Reader

In the Roman Catholic church, the readers of scripture are known as 'lectors' which used to be a semi-official position within church hierarchy. Today, for most of the Church, anyone can read aloud the bible in gathered worship. Often this will be one of the few times when a voice of the 'lay' person (those without official designation) can be heard in an official capacity.

The Act of Reading

Some churches place the bible on a lectern which is normally at the front of the church, from which it is read aloud. In other churches, the reader brings their own book or reads from an app on their phone or tablet. The place of the reader in the space depends on the tradition. Where a lectern is present, the reader reads from there. Otherwise, the reading is generally from the front though there are times when it is read from within the congregation. In older practices there is an utterance which says where the reading is in the bible; the book, chapter and verses. The single voice utters the text and at the end says: 'This is the word of the Lord.' The congregation respond with: 'Thanks be to God.' The reading aloud is often followed by a sermon or homily. This can be a synthesis of the various readings or focus on a particular reading. Depending on the tradition, the preaching can be exegetical or ethical or both.

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[101] USCCB, 'Liturgy | USCCB', United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, accessed 23 December 2022, https://www.usccb.org/offices/new-american-bible/liturgy.

Similarities and Contrasts of the Ritual of Reading to Bible Noise

Bible Noise uses the above processes in reading aloud but in significantly different ways. The text is not chosen from the lectionary nor connected to any preaching. The choice of the text is guided by possible sound qualities and/or narrative possibilities which offers possibilities to listen to marginalised voices. For example, in the Bible Noise piece *Prologue Remix,*[102] the piece is drawn from John 1 which starts with 'In the beginning was the Word...'. The passage has several repetitions of 'Word', 'beginning', 'God', 'light' and so on. These repetitions provide certain rhythms that open possibilities for creating sound work. A recording of an outworking of this can be heard in the link below.[103] Another way of choosing texts is from a narrative perspective (distinctive to a sonic engagement) paying attention to marginalised voices. For example, texts that portray women's experience are focussed on, like the book of Ruth which is the story of two widows (additionally marginalised by the lack of a husband). This is then read through feminist theological readings to understand how it could be sounded. The readers are members of the group and there are no restrictions in who can read aloud the texts. There are no 'chosen' readers in terms of one reader sounding the bible for the rest. Every participant's voice will be sounded through the session. The multiplicity of voice is particularly important in sounding the plurality of the bible. The multiplicity of voice here is not just the multiple voices in the text. It takes the form of multiple, simultaneous speech when at points every participant will sound at the same time.

The reading aloud is considered a performance of the text, a 'piece' and it is reconstituted in different ways to draw out the research aims of listening to marginalised voices. The reading takes place according to the nature of each piece. After the reading there is no sermon by a single voice but a conversation between the participants focussing on the sonic experience of what happened and what it meant for them.

Bible Noise: The Group

The group nature of this research is essential for a few reasons. Firstly, it reflects and tests the notion of plurality which is reflected in the fact that multiple people are involved.

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[102] See Appendix-A, Prologue Remix, 262.

[103] https://on.soundcloud.com/WK9zr

Secondly, hearing different voices in the oral, aural sense (rather than the metaphorical) requires several participants. Thirdly, the human voice, spoken and heard within proximity is fundamental to this research. Hearing the human voice in proximity requires the presence of a group sounding and listening to each other. The human voice in simultaneous sounding brings up questions of plurality which are key to the practice of Bible Noise.

The practice draws upon different group practices of sounding, choir rehearsal and reading groups. Charles Mingus' Jazz Workshop is an early example of a practice of group sounding. Scott Saul commenting on the Jazz Workshop says that it 'occupied a middle ground between the unpredictability of direct action and the rule-bound character of games.'[104] Drawing on the rule-bound character of games, Bible Noise also draws on improvisor Eddie Prévost's London Workshop which met weekly. For Prévost, 'the working premise of the improvisation workshop had to be based upon an emergent set of criteria constantly tested within the cauldron of experience.'[105] Bible Noise, while exploring simultaneous speech, brings up new and unexpected things whether in terms of sound or meaning. Bible Noise has some convergences while also diverging from Prevost's workshop. Prévost has four descriptions of his workshop. 'There is no score…, no prescribed instrumentation…, no formal preparatory practise routines…, no anticipated outcomes.'[106] Converging with Prévost, Bible Noise has no practise routines or anticipated outcomes in the sense of sound because each session's outcomes are based on participants' perceptions. In other words, it is the participant's responses which are the outcomes of the session. Bible Noise diverges from Prévost's conceptualisation in having scores and a fixed 'instrument': the voice. The need for scores exists since we are working with text and the text is the material which fashions the voice in its sounding. The voice is the instrument as the speaking voice is where the inquiry takes place. We are also listening out for hidden and silenced voices which requires preparation to provide the context to hear these voices. Using scores and voices resembles a choir rehearsal. The choir has a tradition of sound from ancient Greek theatre onwards which crosses religious and artistic contexts. Like a

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[104] Scott Saul, 'Outrageous Freedom: Charles Mingus and the Invention of the Jazz Workshop', *American Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (1 September 2001): 388, https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2001.0029.

[105] Eddie Prévost, *The First Concert: An Adaptive Appraisal of a Meta Music* (Harlow: Copula, 2011), 115.

[106] Ibid., 117.

choir, Bible Noise is a coming together of voices but unlike most choirs, Bible Noise does not seek harmony and it gives attention to listening and sounding, attempting to hear something through the sounds that it makes. Bible Noise also dialogues and discusses the sounds it performs and hears. This resembles a reading group where what is being 'read' is the performance of the pieces of that session.

The participants of the group can be from any background. The only pre-condition to join the group is the desire to engage with the bible differently through sound and to be prepared to be challenged by this engagement. There are different levels of appreciation for the arts and different understandings of the bible; these differences allow for a plurality of response to the readings. Across the sessions, the largest number of participants was eight and the smallest, four. Bible Noise in its process and participation provides the outworking of this project to hear hidden and silenced voices. The nature of the practice and its processes fashions the research. The relation of Bible Noise to research methodology will now be explored.

Practice-Based Research

This research uses a practice-based methodology which takes place through the sound art practice of the group Bible Noise. This practice is 'not only the result of the research, but also its methodological vehicle, when the research unfolds in and through the acts of creating and performing.'[107] Bible Noise is the time where the research makes itself known through sound. The ideas and theorising that have been undertaken happen through the practice and, through the practice, further ideas and theorising arise. To understand and make sense of this process, different established research methods have been employed which I will now discuss.

Action Research

Action Research is considered to have been first formulated by Kurt Lewin in 'Action Research and Minority Problems.'[108] It 'creates knowledge based on enquiries conducted

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[107] Borgdoff, 'The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research', 46.

[108] Kurt Lewin, 'Action Research and Minority Problems', *Journal of Social Issues* 2, no. 4 (1946): 34–46. in Koshy, *Action Research for Improving Educational Practice a Step-by-Step Guide*, 4.

within specific and often practical contexts.'[109] Action research is also 'participatory in nature'[110] and creates knowledge through this participation. This method has been primarily used in the pedagogical field. However, it 'also has affinities with artistic research,'[111] especially where the practice is participative: 'The researcher acts within the practice she researches, not alone but with others, together searching for solutions.'[112] The affinity between artistic research and action research exists because it allows for the messy reality of the practice to be part of the research. This contrasts with a lab setting where there is a strict control of variables. For Bible Noise, Action Research is useful in the way it can analyse a group in which the researcher is a participant. Moreover, there is now a discipline of theological action research where theological research occurs in the practice of religion rather than the inquiry of belief.[113] The Theology and Action Research network states: 'Learning from action research methods, theological action research uses a range of data gathering in order to hear voices 'on the ground'. These may be questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, or observation exercises. This data is the 'raw material' of the voices of practice which need to be heard in our theologies.'[114] 'The voices of practice which need to be heard' is a particularly resonant phrase but it also frames the kind of theology I will be engaging with which will be explored below. Action Research is most widely used in pedagogy, which is not the prime purpose of Bible Noise. Pedagogy might be one of the effects of the research but primarily Action Research is used as a way of researching group practice with the researcher as participant.

Artistic Research

Artistic research is a term that Søren Kjørup considers to have 'huge variability.'[115] In his discussion of the plurality of the term he considers Artistic Research as 'the production,

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[109] Koshy, *Action Research for Improving Educational Practice a Step-by-Step Guide*, 4.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* (London: Routledge, 2012), 51.

[112] Mika Hannula, Juha Suoranta, and Tere Vadén, *Artistic Research: Theories, Methods and Practices* (Helsinki; Göteborg: Academy of Fine Arts; University of Gothenburg, 2005), 90.

[113] Helen Cameron, *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2010).

[114] Clare Watkins, 'Theological Action Research', *Theology and Action Research Network* (blog), 10 November 2016, https://theologyandactionresearch.net/theological-action-research/.

[115] Søren Kjørup, 'Pleading for Plurality: Artistic and Other Kinds of Research', in *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, 41.

use and dissemination of knowledge and insights connected to creative work in art and design.'[116] Others have defined it as the process where: 'the artist produces an art work and researches the creative process, thus adding to the accumulation of knowledge.'[117] In both these definitions there is a subtle evocation of a 'finished' product or object. Bible Noise is re-performing a ritual. Borgdoff argues that one of the features of artistic research is 'the experimental practice of creating and performing.'[118] As Bible Noise reconfigures an existing ritual, the experimental practice is the performance of this ritual, sounding the bible in polyphony. The creative process and the performance are analysed to provide insights and knowledge, according to the other definitions of Artistic Research. The 'work' is the performance, the sounding of the texts.

Self-reflexivity

Reflexivity, in ethnographer Charlotte Davies' view, 'expresses researchers' awareness of their necessary connection to the research situation and hence their effects upon it.'[119] For Bible Noise, this reflexivity is required at several points. As I am the one leading the group and putting together the material for the group, reflexivity is critical as I need to gauge the effects of my presence and participation in Bible Noise. Furthermore, for some of the sessions, my wife and children are present. In what sense do they affect the research? The effects of my participation (and that of family and/or friends) are controlled by the essential aim of each session of Bible Noise. The aim is to perform the pieces that provide the research, ways of listening to plurality. These pieces are all 'scored' and recorded and analysed. The scores, recordings (or their transcriptions) and analysis are open to scrutiny which provides an 'audience' to which this research is answerable to. This knowledge guides the approach in how each session takes place. My participative role requires elucidation so that there is a clear awareness of how I am part of the research. I constitute the pieces like a choir director. I perform along with the group like an improvisor. I lead the discussion like a reading group. The controls for my participation are framed by the research processes of Action Research and Artistic Research. A further question for me at each point of the research process is 'why?' Why have I chosen this question? Why this

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[116] Ibid.

[117] Hannula, Suoranta, and Vadén, *Artistic Research*, 5.

[118] Borgdoff, 'The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research', 48.

[119] Charlotte Aull Davies, *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 7.

text? Why am I basing a piece on a particular artist? This question helps me to analyse and clarify my research process. Reflexivity then continues as each session of the practice takes place and after it finishes. Reflexivity also continually examines personal biases, cultural and religious frameworks and their effects on the research.

Sound as research

Sound as a field of inquiry overlaps many disciplines. Jonathan Sterne speaks of Sound Studies as something that 'thinks across disciplines and traditions, some that have long considered sound, and some that have not done so until more recently.'[120] There are now various anthologies which explore how sound is used for and as research.[121] Sound, for Bible Noise is the practice, the object of analysis and also a method for research. Walter Gershon discusses the usage of sound in qualitative research and says that sound 'informs our everyday ways of being and knowing'[122] and that it is 'a tool for reflexivity as well as for qualitative inquiry.'[123] It is also a way to 'conceptualize emergent ontogenic and epistemogenic understandings that help individuals and groups interpret the nested layers of ecologies, norms, values, and other iterations of the ordinarily sensible that inform our daily lives.'[124] This means that sound is not a 'mere' carrier of information but rather the processes by which sound is made, transferred and perceived provide information of different situations and ways of understanding them.

Bible Noise practices polyphony, which is simultaneous sound to explore the possibilities offered for how differences can exist together. Sound can provide understandings of plurality because it comes to us in simultaneous multiplicity. At all times there are multiple sounds coming to us. Polyphony is both performed and listened to, to explore

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[120] Jonathan Sterne, 'Sonic Imaginations', in *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), 2.

[121] Brian Kane lists anthologies that populate the field of sound studies: 'Michael Bull and Les Back's Auditory Culture Reader, Veit Erlmann's Hearing Cultures, Jonathan Sterne's Sound Studies Reader, Trevor Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld's Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies, and Routledge's four-volume Sound Studies.' Brian Kane, 'Sound Studies without Auditory Culture: A Critique of the Ontological Turn', *Sound Studies* 1, no. 1 (1 January 2015): 2, https://doi.org/10.1080/20551940.2015.1079063.

[122] Walter S. Gershon, 'Vibrational Affect: Sound Theory and Practice in Qualitative Research', *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 13, no. 4 (1 August 2013): 258, https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708613488067.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid., 260.

how difference co-exists. This leads to exploring the sociality of persons through sound since as Labelle says '...the acoustic event is also a social one: in multiplying and expanding space, sound necessarily generates listeners and a multiplicity of acoustical "viewpoints," adding to the acoustical event the operations of sociality.'[125] For Labelle sound 'is intrinsically and unignorably relational.'[126] The relational properties of sound are not just regarding human sociality but also about human relation to space that sounds are in. What is of interest to Bible Noise, which Labelle does not elaborate on, is inquiring how sounds in their relation to each other present themselves to us. Sounds' internal relations then open possibilities for understanding and enacting human relations.

For Bible Noise, the use of sound is important at various levels. The bible's sonic origins (its pre-written forms and the fact that it was written to be read aloud) give several resonant, consonant and dissonant possibilities that can be scrutinized by sound. The bible is often 'seen' as a text rather than 'heard.' The sounds that occur through the practice now offer a very different experience of the bible. Sound also allows a particular experience of plurality which is a central research concern. There are dangers of reifying sound but it allows certain experiences that are particular to the way our bodies receive and emit sounds. I draw upon music and sound art and their various overlaps[127] and the concepts and practices of polyphony to draw out plural voices in the text. The process of Sound Art is used because it 'interrogates the condition of sound and the processes by which it operates.'[128] Sound art practice also deals extensively with noise, with voice, and with words. It provides the context for the practice and its performance.

Practice through Theory

Philosophy

Philosophically the research bases itself in the phenomenology of Jean Luc Nancy and Hannah Arendt for their resonances and engagement with plurality. For Nancy, 'Existence is with: otherwise nothing exists'[129] and he considers Being to be 'singularly plural and

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[125] LaBelle, *Lexicon of the Mouth*, xii.

[126] Ibid., xi.

[127] See Thomas Gardner and Salomé Voegelin, *Colloquium: Sound Art-Music*, 2016.

[128] Brandon LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), xi.

[129] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 4.

plurally singular,'[130] a conceptualisation which I will elucidate in chapter 2. I bring Nancy's conceptualisation alongside Hannah Arendt's, as there is an alignment between the two regarding plurality, as philosopher Yasemin Sari says: 'what remains foundational for both is the relational element by which a public space is formed.'[131] Nancy's conception of plurality which is political is explored through sound, drawing on his own conceptions of sound, where 'sound is taken to exemplify complex forms of uncertainty, relationality and plurality alongside a certain multidimensional experience of time.'[132] While Arendt's concept of the 'table' as the opening and space of plurality will be considered. These conceptualisations will be discussed further in chapter 2.

Phenomenology is used for its engagement with the 'lived experience' and from it, a hermeneutic phenomenology is used to engage with biblical texts where 'meaning… arises from the interpretive interaction between historically produced texts and the reader.'[133] This engagement informs the theologies used for this project. Hermeneutic phenomenology is also used for the reflexive process and the analysis. This is done because:

> *The researcher is called, on an ongoing basis, to give considerable thought*
> *to their own experience and to explicitly claim the ways in which their*
> *position or experience relates to the issues being researched.*[134]

The presence of the self has been discussed before when describing the method of self-reflexivity. Additionally, Bible Noise is about the experience of hearing different voices in different ways with an emphasis on the experience. Phenomenology therefore is an appropriate form of philosophy for this project.

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[130] Ibid., 28.

[131] Yasemin Sari, 'Hannah Arendt', in *The Nancy Dictionary*, ed. Peter Gratton and Marie-Eve Morin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 25.

[132] Michael Gallope and Brian Kane, 'Music', in *The Nancy Dictionary*, 162–63.

[133] Susann M. Laverty, 'Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology: A Comparison of Historical and Methodological Considerations', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 2, no. 3 (1 September 2003): 28, https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690300200303.

[134] Ibid.

Theology Through and From Practice

This phenomenological approach informs which theologies are drawn upon. This project originated in reading feminist theology. Feminist theology comes out of critical engagements through feminist thought of the lived experience of women. I draw on other theologies which similarly arise out of contemporary lived experience.

- Liberation theology – actively forms itself from the experience of the silenced and the hidden, a theology that expresses God's 'preferential option for the poor.'[135]
- Post-colonial theology – arises by engaging a diversity of post-colonial critiques on existing theological norms and practices. It engages with the reality that the bible is/was 'a defining symbol of European expansion.'[136]
- Black theology which arose in the 1960s in the United States, based on the experiences of African Americans, notably with James Cone's *Black Theology and Black Power.*[137]

These theologies will be dealt with in detail in chapter 2. What brings these theologies together is how they're drawn from the lived experience of people, particularly people groups who have been marginalised. This is the connection to the project as Bible Noise is an attempt to hear and voice those voices that have been marginalised, silenced and hidden.

The Use of Postcolonial, Black and Feminist Theology

I acknowledge that some of what I'm saying in listening to hidden and silenced voices has strong resonances with the idea of the subaltern. I'm briefly going to explore this resonance and then additionally put forward why I won't be pursuing the notion of the subaltern further.

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[135] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation.*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, Revised Edition (London: SCM, 1988), xxv.

[136] R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed., 'Introduction', in *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1–10, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511612619.001.

[137] James H Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*, 1969.

The subaltern as a critical term was initially discussed by Gramsci in his prison notebooks where the subaltern class is contrasted to the dominant class in his discussion on hegemony. Later this term was employed to denote those who were facing other kinds of marginalisation as well. In the 1980s a group of scholars formed 'a sub-discipline' with in the field of postcolonial studies known as 'subaltern studies.'[138] Amongst this group, founded by Ranajit Guha, was the scholar Gayatri Spivak whose essay 'Can the subaltern speak?'[139] is a foundational text for speaking about the subaltern. The essay title itself immediately has resonances with the voice and the possibility of hearing it.

Spivak's essay repeatedly asks the title question, showing in different ways the difficulty of hearing the subaltern. This difficulty is highlighted with Spivak's emphatic 'The subaltern cannot speak.'[140] This is not an issue of the subaltern's agency but rather the complex structural forms that prevent her from being heard. Subaltern studies point to the difficulties of hearing subaltern voices but also attempt to amplify them. Therefore, it seems resonant with this project.

However, I'm making a methodological choice here to go through with other ways to hear and amplify hidden voices. There are different reasons for this.

1. Part of the methodology of this project I,s in the spirit of its polyphony, to use different methods and disciplines to hear the multiple voices in scripture. Progressing down the route of subaltern studies has the potential to encompass and subsume the entirety of the methodological processes of the project. This will change the careful balance that I envision between postcolonial, Black and feminist streams of thought for this project.

2. Postcolonial, Black and Womanist theology give me similar tools to do the work. Crucially these theologies engage with the embodied practices of biblical engagement which are fundamental to the project. Tracing a route through subaltern studies will add undue burden to the nature and scope of the project.

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[138] Ian Buchanan, 'Subaltern', in *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford University Press, 15 February 2018), 423.

[139] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

[140] Ibid., 104.

3. This project, though not limited to or by theology, has many theological and religious facets. Therefore, I'm drawing on the streams of postcolonial, Black and Womanist theologies to contextualise and animate the project. The delineation of these theologies from the more 'secular' streams of thought occurs through context and interdisciplinarity. The theologies that I draw upon are based on the experiences and reflections of different people groups practising their religion, in this case Christianity. The interdisciplinarity happens as these theologies have to interact with different forms of theology that have gone before them which have been more speculative and philosophical.

Outworking of Bible Noise Research Process

I will now examine five pieces to show how the above research tools work together. The term 'piece' is used in a musical and performance sense, from the start of the sounding to its end. Pieces are often repeated in different sessions and reconfigured according to how they worked out in previous sessions. The piece is done by reading from a selection of text which is considered to be a score. The score contains the biblical text and directions for performance. The pieces discussed here are chosen for the different emphases they have within the research process. '**Prologue remix**'[141] has a sonic emphasis as it is configured to the rhythms and sonic possibilities within the text with diverse voices sounding them. '**Contrapunt of Naomi and Job**'[142] has a more critical hermeneutical emphasis as it is put together through feminist re-readings so that a hidden voice can be heard with a dominant voice. '**Thus whispereth the Lord**'[143] emphasises listening to hidden voices without dominant voices by re-appraising the role of the female prophet through sonic features highlighted in the text and sounds derived from their names. This is a bringing together of several hidden voices previously 'whispering' but sounding their deeds with and through their 'noise.' '**Picking the pieces**'[144] emphasises collaboration through listening and sounding. It takes place in the form of a compositional game where participants working collaboratively to make sense of the individual words given to them

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[141] See Appendix-A, Prologue Remix, 262.

[142] Ibid, Contrapunt of Naomi and Job, 269.

[143] Ibid, Thus Whispereth the Lord, 274.

[144] Ibid, Picking up the Pieces, 282.

by sounding them together as a sentence. '**Babble Kabaddi**'[145] emphasises listening while sounding through reconfiguring the traditional Indian game of 'Kabaddi.'

Prologue Remix

Prologue Remix[146] was the first piece that was attempted in the bible Noise sessions. This passage was from the gospel of John[147] which starts with the phrase, 'In the beginning was the Word.' Repetitions of words or phrases that occur in the text were considered as a possibility for sonic performance and formed the basis for making the piece. The word repetitions were important for choosing the text but reflexively the resonance of 'beginning' and 'word' played a part because this was the start of the process and the engagement with Word/word. The repetitions of 'In the beginning,' 'light,' 'Word' and 'God' showed a potential for sound work.

The idea was to layer participants' voices by recording and looping each of their phrases and playing them back to be listened to. Amongst others there were two phrases, 'the Word was *with* God' and 'the Word *was* God,' that were engaged with. The duality of 'with' and 'was,' was something sound could enact through layering of differently timed loops. At certain points 'Word' and 'God' would sound simultaneously while at others they would be next to each other in linear time. Similarly, 'light' and 'in the beginning' would interplay with the other terms.

After the voices were recorded, participants were given the option to do their own mixing to explore the different voices and to hear the sounds clashing and relating to each other. This was enacting how our hermeneutic can 'decrease' or 'increase' the 'volume' of certain voices. Certain softer voices might need an increase or loud voices might need a decrease so that each voice could be heard.

Early in the recording process one of the participants started coughing.[148] On reflection, the coughing demonstrated what the research was meant to do. The cough was a 'noise'; a

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[145] Ibid, Babble Kabaddi, 289.

[146] Ibid, Prologue Remix, 262.

[147] John 1:1-5

[148] https://on.soundcloud.com/vNumF

disruption to my preconceived sound of the piece. This fulfilled the intention of bringing together the sounds: that it would disrupt received meanings and ways of knowing.

In the discussion that followed, participants all said that they were initially listening out for their own voice, so it made it difficult to hear the voices together. This showed how listeners generally listen out for a single voice, especially when speech is involved. The performance aspect of the piece probably predisposed the listeners to listen to their own voice. Repeated listening changed the perception as there was more of a listening to the whole rather than to the individual spoken voice. The performance aspect also initially inhibited the participants from doing their own mix. The consciousness of other participants watching them do a mix made them hurry through their 'turn.' Participants took time getting used to the notion of participation rather than assuming a performer/audience bifurcation.

'Prologue Remix' starts with sound in the choice of text, is enacted through sound and listened to and reflected upon through conversation. Sound becomes both process and what is being analysed. Action research and artistic research overlap here as I, the researcher, participate in the making of the sound. The conversation afterwards starts a group-reflexive process and afterwards I go through a self-reflexive process of remembering what happened and listening back to the recording. The piece fits within action research as a participative activity that is aiming to gain knowledge. It fits with artistic research as it makes a performative piece through the layering of the different voices and giving participants the agency to make the layers sound as they might want or to fulfil their curiosity.

Contrapunt of Naomi and Job

In Contrapunt of Naomi and Job[149] there is an engagement with hermeneutics first. Feminist theologian Jacqueline Lapsley's reading of the book of Ruth animates this piece which focuses on the character of Naomi, Ruth's widowed mother-in-law.[150] Lapsley presents Naomi as an equivalent of the more well-known character of Job whose story is known as a discourse on suffering. By focussing on Naomi, Lapsley brings out a hidden

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[149] See Appendix-A, Contrapunt of Naomi and Job, 274.

[150] Jacqueline E. Lapsley, *Whispering the Word: Hearing Women's Stories in the Old Testament* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 90.

voice on various levels. The book within the bible is known as 'Ruth,' possibly because Ruth is the ancestor of king David,[151] a key character in the bible or because her foreign origins make the book a defence for inter-racial marriage.[152] The naming of this book as 'Ruth' hides Naomi because the reader is predisposed towards Ruth. Naomi's hiddenness is even greater as she is a widow who has lost both her sons and the loss of these immediate male relatives makes her position precarious, materially and socially. It is this voice that Lapsley brings out.

For this piece, the artistic research started with the question, 'what would happen if Lapsley's reading could be enacted in sound?' I constituted a piece focussing on similar words and phrases that Job and Naomi utter in the narratives based on Lapsley's research. Words such as 'bitter,' phrases such as 'the hand of the Lord,' and 'seven sons,' were used as common sonic utterances. Job and Naomi also lament that God provides and takes away. There is loud weeping involved with Naomi and her daughters-in-law and with Job and his friends. These common words, phrases and narratives formed the basis of a piece, a reading which would bring these two voices together. A score was set where these phrases could be performed. The score was formatted as text in two columns. I chose this format in contrast to musical stave styles as it mirrors the format of many bibles. The participants were divided into two groups: one would read the 'Naomi' texts and the other the 'Job' texts. Towards the end these would mix and mingle. We performed the piece and then conversed about what had occurred. The performing and conversing were part of the artistic research process and the action research process. Reflecting on the first time this piece was performed,[153] I wondered whether the piece was enacting the coming together of the voices of Job and Naomi. Reflexively, the question about the plural, polyphonous nature of the piece was a doubt in my mind. This was because in the initial score[154] the Naomi voice and Job voice were not speaking simultaneously. I questioned whether the piece was closer to illustrating a sonic hermeneutic by placing voices in linear time rather than an enactment of plurality in simultaneity. There were good reasons as to why the

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[151] Ruth 4:18-22

[152] Frederic William Bush, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ruth, Esther / V9,* Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1996), 19.

[153] https://on.soundcloud.com/SSMgJ

[154] See Appendix-A, Contrapunt of Naomi and Job, 269.

piece happened as it did; I had wanted Naomi's voice to be clear. Sometimes polyphony can be appreciated when we hear individual voices on their own.

The second iteration of this piece[155] was done as a reading where the two voices of Job and Naomi came together simultaneously, which provided a better enactment of hearing the voices through each other. Now, the common words and phrases instead of coming one after another, wove in and out. This weaving in and out allowed listeners to hear Job and Naomi together in the similarities that were brought out in Lapsley's reading: the hidden Naomi is heard through the 'lofty' Job. Through repeated hearings of this bringing together, Job, the wealthy, powerful man is brought together with Naomi, the widow who has nothing. Job is given back his wealth and seven sons but Naomi has Ruth whom the text considers to be better than seven sons.

In this piece there are various listening challenges. The reader has to be listening to the other reader(s) in their group to ensure they are reading together. The reader has to simultaneously listen out for the other group to ensure they're in the same place in the score. This is a very similar listening process to being in a choir where the singer listens to their part in their group while also listening to other parts to be in time and in pitch. What makes it different is that it is a spoken voice. Our general attunement towards listening to a single voice with specific messages makes it harder to listen to a group of spoken voices. In choral singing, singers do not need to be hearing the words as they can follow others purely in pitch. This piece requires listening to words and the score here provides both help and hindrance: it helps in ensuring that readers know where they are in the piece but it adds a level of complexity as readers need to be looking at both columns to read their own and the other group's text to ensure they stay within the score.

The complexity that is manifest in this piece with the layers of listening and looking at text reveals the complexity that exists in engaging texts in this piece. Readers come to texts with preconceptions, formed through the various 'voices' that have formed and influenced them. These 'voices' are at play for a reader when she reads a text even though she might not be conscious of them. This is what the practice of Bible Noise purports to do – physically enacting with the voice using sound art practices some of the complexity that

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[155] https://on.soundcloud.com/pnVE1

occurs in engaging with text. Hearing spoken voices in multiplicity alerts us to the other voices present and the choice at every point exists as to whether to pay attention to other voices or not.

Thus Whispereth the Lord[156]

The ritual of reading aloud scripture often ends with the phrase 'This is the word of the Lord' to which the congregation responds: 'Thanks be to God.' 'This is the word of the Lord' appears in certain translations of the bible[157] and a similar phrase in the King James version is 'Thus saith the Lord.' This phrase appears throughout the Old Testament but most frequently appears in the books of the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.[158] Prophets are those who speak for God and they speak outside or alongside the traditional institutions of society. Prophets in the bible are not necessarily foretelling or future telling, though it is part of the remit, they are also critiquing the present and the past. The category of prophet is introduced here because it has a resonance with the reading aloud of the bible. The phrase after the reading has a prophetic echo and this ritual connection to the prophetic is the initial prompt for this piece.

Most of the prophets recounted in the bible are men. I thought it would be good to hear from women who are prophets since they are not often heard. 'Thus saith the Lord' became 'Thus whispereth the Lord' because these prophets are not given much space in the text and so become a whisper. Bible Noise, therefore, attempts to hear and voice this 'whisper'; the quietened voices of female prophets.[159] From drawing on the ritual phrase 'this is the word of the Lord,' now the process becomes textual research, through the process of finding and analysing women in the bible who were prophets. The piece engages with seven instances of women prophets in the bible. The number seven has a significance of completeness in the bible. The purpose of the piece was to hear these seven through a sonic enactment of their texts and their circumstances.

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[156] See Appendix-A, Thus Whispereth the Lord, 274.

[157] Example: NRSV 2 Kings 9:36

[158] Isaiah has 35, Jeremiah 147 and Ezekiel 126. 'BibleGateway - Keyword Search: "Thus Saith the Lord"', accessed 4 June 2019, https://www.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=%22thus+saith+the+lord%22&qs_version=KJV.

[159] The piece can be heard at https://on.soundcloud.com/UPQKC

The score was for three groups.[160] Two groups would sound a sonic aspect of the prophet while the third read the text about her. The polyphony here is not the multiple voices of the text but the sonic features of the prophets simultaneously sounding with their narratives within the text. The sonic features were chosen from the text itself like 'tambo' and 'bereen' from Miriam's tambourine or a sonic enactment of a name like 'bzzzzz' for Deborah whose name means bee. These sonic features when sounded produce a dual effect. On one hand they crowd out the narratives and speech of the woman prophet but on the other hand they provide the noise of the woman prophet which is open to derision but also opens the possibility of drawing attention to her voice and celebrating transformation.

The piece follows the chronology of the bible, starting with Miriam in the Old Testament book of Exodus up to the 'daughters of Philip' who were prophets in the New Testament book of Acts. The piece ends with a text from Ezekiel that speaks of God's breath giving life to those slain which raises questions of whether the readers' breaths have sufficiently given voice to the women's voices that have been silenced.

Miriam, known as Moses' sister, was the first. Moses is the foremost prophet of the Old Testament and his brother, Aaron, is the first priest. Miriam's status as Moses' sister is interesting because most women were known as a man's mother, wife or daughter. Miriam is titled as 'prophet'[161] and leads the women with tambourines, singing to them and dancing with them. The word 'tambourine' is broken into two as 'tambo' and 'bereen' and split between the two groups. 'Sister' is taken up by one group while 'singing' and 'dancing' by the other. The 'm' and 'b' give an impression of lower frequency sounds. The 's' sounds in 'sister', 'singing' and 'dancing' give impressions higher frequencies. These low and high frequencies resemble the sound of the modern tambourine where the skin provides lower frequency while the chimes give a higher frequency.

Prophet Deborah is next. She was one of the judges of Israel: judge meaning leader of Israel before the monarchy making her unique as there are no other known women leaders

[160] See Appendix-A, Thus Whispereth the Lord, 274.

[161] Exodus 15:20

of Israel. She helped defeat Israel's enemies and sang a song of victory. Deborah's name means bee hence her text is surrounded by a buzzing noise. Both Deborah and another prophet named Huldah (the weasel or rat) are named after biblically unclean creatures.[162] Blaženka Scheuer proposes that while these names could 'enhance the characterisation' of these women, the names are used to 'undermine... [their] achievements and capacity' and to denigrate female leadership.[163]

The three unnamed daughters of Heman[164] are then sounded. Heman was one of the directors of music for the temple. Temple musicians were to 'prophesy with lyres, harps and cymbals,'[165] and were part of prophetic activity. Temple duties were a family affair and there are long lists of priests arranged according to family. In the midst of a long list of male musicians in the temple suddenly 'three daughters' are mentioned: 'God had given Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. They were all under the direction of their father for the music in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of the house of God.'[166] The mention of these daughters is odd which has caused some translations to reword this text to exclude the women from the ministry of music.[167] The presence of these women in this male-dominated space is a trace of their presence and of their contribution to the musical life of the Israelites. In this piece, this is brought out by the repetition of the instrument names in the text which are then merged with modern equivalents: harp – piano, lyre – guitar and cymbal – drum.

Huldah is the next prophet that's sounded. She was approached by the king's officials on rediscovering the holy texts.[168] taught the men how to re-engage with the scriptures. In her prophetic reply she invokes the phrase, 'Thus saith the Lord' (in the King James Version)

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[162] As described in Leviticus 11

[163] Blaženka Scheuer, 'Animal Names for Hebrew Bible Female Prophets', *Literature and Theology* 31, no. 4 (1 December 2017): 455, https://doi.org/10.1093/litthe/frx032.

[164] 1 Chronicles 25:5

[165] 1 Chronicles 25:1

[166] 1 Chronicles 25:5 Other translations like NIV say: 'All these men were under the supervision of their father'.

[167] Mariottini gives background to this 'silencing'. Claude Mariottini, 'Women Prophets: A Postscript', *Dr. Claude Mariottini - Professor of Old Testament* (blog), 2 December 2013, https://claudemariottini.com/2013/12/02/women-prophets-a-postscript/.

[168] 2 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 34

which this piece, 'Thus whispereth the Lord,' invokes and recalibrates. Huldah means 'weasel' or 'rat.' Like Deborah, she has a name of an unclean animal hence the sound of squeaking surrounds the narrative of Huldah. Huldah's 'squeak' resounds the voice of God in high-pitched ways rather than the low-pitched male readings heard in many audio bibles.[169] Huldah's squeak with her prophecy around engaging the bible is the centre-point of the seven.

Next is the unnamed wife of Isaiah referred to as the prophetess[170] and some theologians like Susan Ackerman think that this is because she is merely the wife of a prophet.[171] However Mariottini argues that no other prophet's wife is referred to as prophetess and therefore the title prophetess is not honorific but that she 'exercised the prophetic ministry.'[172] Her particular prophecy in the text is to have a son named Maher-Shalal-hash-baz which means: '*The spoil speeds, the prey hastens.*' In the piece, the name of her son in the original and in English are repeated, with each repetition going faster. The speeding up reflects what the phrase communicates.

Anna, the next prophet, is from the New Testament. She is present when the eight-day old Jesus is presented at the Temple in Jerusalem. This part of the text is well known but mostly for the words of Simeon who is present here.[173] His words form the prayer *Nunc Dimitis* 'Now dismiss.' For Simeon, seeing the baby is the culmination of all things; for

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[169] BibleGateway.com offers many audio bibles of which none are in a woman's voice. 'BibleGateway.Com- Audio Bibles', accessed 10 June 2019, https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/. When I first started researching audio bibles in 2016 there were none except a few with only the New Testament. Now there seem to be three audio bibles in the voices of women.

'Courage for Life' which claims to be first audio bible app. 'Courage For Life Bible Project', *Courage For Life* (blog), accessed 7 January 2019, https://courageforlife.org/projects/audio-bible/.

'her.Bible' narrated by ethnically diverse women. 'Her.Bible', her.BIBLE, accessed 24 December 2022, https://her.bible.

'The Bible in Women's Voices is an ongoing project of a crowd sourced audio bible. 'The Bible in Women's Voices', Shirley Banks, accessed 24 December 2022, http://www.shirleybanks.com/bible.

[170] Isaiah 8:3

[171] Susan Ackerman, 'Why Is Miriam Also among the Prophets? (And Is Zipporah among the Priests?)', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121, no. 1 (2002): 49, https://doi.org/10.2307/3268330.

[172] Claude Mariottini, 'Isaiah's Wife', *Dr. Claude Mariottini - Professor of Old Testament* (blog), 23 August 2013, https://claudemariottini.com/2013/08/23/isaiahs-wife/.

[173] Luke 2:22-38

Anna, however, it is the spur for her prophetic action: 'to speak about the child to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.' Anna becomes a proto-apostle (the original meaning being emissary). Her name means grace and being a widow for most of her life meant that she was on the fringes of society. The sounds accompanying her bring out aspects of her life by drawing upon words in the text of 'fasting' 'temple' and 'grace.'

Yet more unnamed daughters complete the seven. The four daughters of Philip are mentioned by the author Luke in passing. 'He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy.'[174] Nothing is known of them other than that they are unmarried, their father is Philip and that they prophesy. This is another fragment of women prophets, another whisper. So, whispers accompany this reading. It ends with an emphasis on 'four daughters'. The hope here is that the whispers of the many accounts of prophetic women are fleshed out in sound.

The whispering continues with the ending of the piece which is taken from the book of Ezekiel. The passage talks of God's breath being given to those who've been slain so that they might live. This passage is used because in the context of the piece it asks questions about whether it is possible to give voice to those who have been silenced. In this section there are concerted breaths taken by the group and the piece ends in whispers that fade away. This fading away asks whether the practice is able to bring out these voices. The research is being reflected upon through the dynamics of the piece itself.

The research process here starts from a feature of the ritual of reading aloud scripture with the phrase 'this is the word of the Lord.' Throughout the bible this phrase seems to come from a prophetic voice which is predominantly male. Therefore, women prophets are explored to hear hidden voices. This is a linguistic, literary and hermeneutical process where original meanings, historical contexts and feminist readings are employed. The polyphony here is not a polyphony of voice in the aural sense but a multiplicity of sounds. Each female prophet's voice is amplified and distorted through the sonics that accompany their person. The readers must negotiate a complexity of hearing the words that present a rhythm through repetition but also the narrative of each woman prophet. The sounds of this piece end with an ambiguity where sounds suggest the possibility of failing to hear the

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[174] Acts 21:9

hidden. In the discussion after the piece, one of the participants felt that they were part of something powerful but could not articulate what it was. In that sense the piece works on an emotive level but it also reveals the challenges of this research process. The piece was first done without any of the hermeneutical background. It opens up questions which if pursued could lead to hearing hidden voices but gives the very possibility of muffling the voices that the piece aims to hear.

Mrrey Goorund

This piece uses a game to form its sound. The composer Iannis Xenakis used games as a way of composing pieces like *Duel* and *Stratégie*[175] but my usage of games is simpler. Xenakis used game theory for its mathematical nature to compose. My use of 'game' here is about following certain simple rules rather than drawing on game theory. Game is used here for two reasons. First it can be a compositional strategy. Mrrey Goorund is formed around composer David Behrman's structuring of composition as a game between the performers. The sound produced in such a composition 'is dependent on interactions among [the performers]..., and far less upon the previous choices of the composer.'[176] The second reason is the concept of game has been used to engage with language; especially Ludwig Wittgenstein with his language games[177] and philosopher Hans Georg Gadamer with his notion of hermeneutics being a form of 'play.'[178]

A well-known bible verse is broken up into its individual words written onto separate pieces of paper, mixed up and handed out to the participants. Since the verse is well-known[179] participants might start recognising it and start working together to perform the verse in the 'right' order. The game ends when the group has a whole feel they've got to where they should. The participants are allowed only to sound the word that they have. They are informed that they have to make sense of what they're hearing by putting the

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[175] Iannis Xenakis and Sharon Kanach, *Formalized Music: Thought and Mathematics in Composition* (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon, 1992), vii.

[176] Conrad, 'Word Events', 163.

[177] Douglas Giles, 'Wittgenstein's Language Games', *Inserting Philosophy* (blog), 6 December 2021, https://medium.com/inserting-philosophy/wittgensteins-language-games-bad4cafcad1f.

[178] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G Marshall (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), 102.

[179] John 3:16 was used 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'

words into the order that they feel is the right one. Several processes occur here. The participants need to listen to the broken-up verse from each other. They draw on their memory to help reconstruct the verse. They then need to perform it by saying their word at the right moment. The cues to speaking come from hearing others and working out from memory whether it works. This is a type of communal hermeneutic where sense is being made only as everyone participates. If one player gives up, the game no longer works unless she gives her words to another player.

In the first time of performing this piece, some participants quickly realised the verse. They then tried to direct others through gesture. There were no rules against gesture. The eagerness for the 'enlightened' participant to get the verse correct meant that some other participants stopped listening and just waited for direction from those who knew it. This enacts how often certain processes get taken over by those with particular skills which does not allow the 'slower' participants to actually get to grips with the process. This is particularly true with how the bible is engaged with where institutional representatives control the bible in a way that makes its listeners or readers passive. Participants also need to make sense of the bits that they are hearing with the bits they are reading in their hand. There is an interaction between the visual and the sonic that can be complex.

This is a participative process which relies on co-operation and attention to each other for the game to work. In other iterations the verse is not so well known which makes the dynamic of remembering weaker. The verse gets shaped according to the participants' conception of what is in the bible.

Babble Kabaddi

'Kabaddi' is a sport that is indigenous to South Asia.[180] Two teams stand in two zones. One member from team 'A' 'raids' the other team 'B' by going into team 'B's zone and touching an opposing team member who is then removed from the game. The team remaining or with most members at the end of a stipulated time wins. Though this sounds like 'tag' the key distinction of the game is that the 'raider' must audibly repeat the word 'kabaddi' throughout his 'raid' without taking a breath in between. The sonic here is an essential

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[180] Alan Tomlinson, 'Kabaddi', in *A Dictionary of Sports Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2010), https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199213818.001.0001/acref-9780199213818-e-654.

part of the game through all its variants. The word might differ but the concept of the voice being in continuous use through the 'raid' is standard.

'Babble Kabaddi' uses this concept of sounding. However, there are no teams and no 'tagging. All the participants except one stand in a semi-circle. The participant outside the semi-circle designated the Babel-er stands at some distance facing the open semi-circle. At this time the participants of the semi-circle are given parts of a passage from the bible but no one knows what the others have. The passage is without verbal sense to each individual member. Now the Babel-er starts saying the word 'Babel' repeatedly without taking a breath in between and walks into the semi-circle. While she does this the group are simultaneously all uttering their text repeatedly. The Babel-er while saying 'Babel' attempts to make sense of the passage that has been broken up and repeatedly uttered. When the Babel-er starts running out of breath she goes back to her starting point and the group stop their utterance. The Babel-er then tells the group what she thinks she heard. Members of the semi-circle can then offer corrections of the part they were given. The group can then decide to either agree on a single version or keep multiple versions of what they think the passage is. Then the next passage is 'played' with a different Babel-er.

Babel, the story of multiple language confusion was referenced earlier in the context of noise. As previously said, Babel has two possible meanings: 'confusion' or 'God's door'. The Babel-er enacts both these meanings as she goes into the semi-circle. Her repeated uttering of 'Babel' is potentially confusing to her and to the group. She also sounds and listens at the same time and becomes the one who opens the bringing together of the broken-up passage. She cannot do this on her own. It is only by working with the group that any sense can be made. Members of the group can also be sounding and listening simultaneously though they have not been specifically asked to listen.

Polyphony here is more pointed towards the simultaneity of sounding and listening. The multiplicity of voices is obviously there but it depends on the Babel-er sounding 'nonsense' while listening to 'sense' and also the group's ability to help out. Skills of memory and recall come into play and it is the combination of listening, sounding and short-term memory that makes the game work. The improvisational aspect of this piece is much more in the contingent nature of the game. In one instance the Babel-er could not recall any of the utterances. The hidden voice here is the possible voice that Babel-er cannot recall,

cannot hear or is unable to get close to before their breath runs out. It is at the end when the group comes together that this voice can be heard.

The research process of this piece started with exploring an existing sport which uses vocal sound. Kabaddi is reconfigured for Bible Noise. Two teams are melded into one to emphasise the collaborative process. Instead of members of a team crossing sides it is a single person, the Babel-er that comes into the group. The Babel-er is part of the group yet for that moment fulfils a specific role: of noise maker and interpreter. Making noise without taking breaths in-between causes a tension, a tightening. The lack of breathing-in while sounding puts the body in a different place. The Babel-er becomes different in order to listen and to make sense of the differences in the group. The Babel-er becomes partially analogous to the researcher. The researcher is someone who approaches the group in difference and is the person coming into the group, bringing noise to the group and then reflects back to the group what she's heard. What the Babel-er says is tentative and open to correction which is part of the process of research. This piece turns out to be reflexive of the research process.

Conclusion to Chapter 1

This chapter has presented the different methods used to form the methodology of the project. It provided rationale as to why different methods were employed. The project crosses different disciplines and is also practice based. Therefore, the research process required a variety of research tools. This project is about hearing multiple voices by sounding multiple voices in the reading aloud of the bible. It is done by different voices being audibly present to each other in a space where the bodies sounding these voices gather together. This forms the practice of Bible Noise. The polyphonous nature of the sounding and listening is reflected in the methodology of this project which employs different methods to achieve its goal.

The practice of Bible Noise was based around the participatory reading aloud of the bible. The aim of the practice was to explore the sounding of multiple voices by paying closer attention to ignored and silenced voices thereby accentuating the presence of a multiplicity of voices within the bible. This sounding occurred within the presence of each other to inquire into the role of the body in making these sounds. Drawing upon Sound Art practice I put these pieces together by drawing on texts that could draw attention to the ignored voices around the categories of female voices and 'alien' or foreigner voices.

We then performed these pieces. The practice and the aims of the project led the way in the choosing of the methods to establish the methodology.

The following is a summary of the methods used based on the nature and aims of the project. Action Research was employed because the project is practice based and the practice is participative. Action Research contextualises the role of the researcher as a Participant Observer which rationalises my presence within the practice of Bible Noise. Action Research arose from an education context, but it has been used in other disciplines including theology which is directly relevant to this project. Bible Noise drew upon Sound Art practice for the pieces it performed and so I employed two methods related to Sound Art. One was Artistic Research which establishes the kind of research that happens through artistic practice. Artistic Research showed the insights and knowledge that could be gleaned from the practice of Bible Noise. The choosing of the text, its presentation to the group, the performance of the piece, the reception of the piece; all these are analysed and interrogated through the method of Artistic Research. The other method related to Sound Art is Sound Research. The experience of sound in the way it starts and ends, the way we categorise sounds and the ability for several sounds to co-exist in the same space and time is used as a method to present the ideas of this project.

Alongside these methods, I employ different modes of theological and philosophical thought. These modes are drawn upon based on the aim of my project to engage in sound art practice, in order to hear hidden and silenced voices in the reading aloud of the bible. The hidden and silenced voices that we aim to hear are attenuated towards those of women and 'foreigners'. The practice-based nature of the project aligns with the more phenomenological streams of philosophy which is why I engage with Arendt and Nancy. The theologies engaged with also have a phenomenological flavour. Liberation theologies which arose from the 1960s onwards form the general cluster from which I draw my theological thought. The attempt to listen to women's voices is contextualised by drawing on feminist philosophers particularly Cavarero and feminist theology. Listening to the voice of the foreigner is done through engagement with postcolonial thought and theology and black theology. Womanist theology which expresses intersectional theology brings together the attempts to listen to both woman and foreigner.

Then I described different pieces that Bible Noise performed that brought together these methods. In describing these pieces, I showed how the different methods were working together. Importantly, I gave a sense of the practice worked from the conception of the pieces to their performance.

Hopefully, the laying out of all these methods gives the reader the tools with which to hear the presentation of the research that follows. The next chapter elucidates the contexts that the project finds itself in. The presentation of these contexts gives rationale for the project while also showing how the practice meets with that rationale. It will start with an engagement of two texts; texts that show the multiplicity of voices in the bible which also reflects that multiplicity of methods presented in the chapter gone by.

'I want white rice. I don't like this brown rice.'

My family had moved from England to Kerala. I had moved from a white land to a brown one. And as a child I expressed my adjustment problems through the medium of rice. The rice we had in Kerala is now identified as 'rosematta.' It's a rice that leaves parts of the husk on. This gives the grain a reddish hue and after cooking a red trace remains on each grain of rice. As a child, I somehow took a dislike to it. Of course, I love it now. Back then it was a child's expression of cultural dislocation. And looking back on it forty years hence I think it speaks of a dislocation that affects the world as a whole. Desiring white rice over brown. Desiring whiteness over brownness. That desire permeated many Indians as I was growing up. And now I'm trying to understand and reckon with that desire. Decolonisation for me is not blithely adding authors to my reading list. It goes to the depth of my being asking questions of my fears, desires and memories.

The depth of my being is also entangled with Christianity. The movement by the followers of a condemned brown man later became the white man's religion. And the white man ruled the waves and the world. Now he rules the word and the image. The whiteness of Christianity was something I wasn't aware of. But that's how whiteness works – it performs the 'neutral' ground we distinguish ourselves on, the ground (to distort an ancient saying): in which we live and move and have our being.[1] Now as I become aware of this 'ground' I'm struggling to work out what it means for my daily living. How do I read the Bible? How do I go to church? How can I sing those songs written by Trump supporters?

July 2021

Chapter 2: Contexts

Two Stories

Babel

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. And the Lord said, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Pentecost

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

Introduction

The texts above seem to have been placed without any context or introduction. This has to do with an important point that I want to draw from these texts: hearing many voices without context is puzzling at a minimum and quite possibly disorientating. Both texts have some form of disorientation described within them which originates from the sounding of many 'tongues.' Giving context is important for it situates subjects of research within environments which then make better sense of the subject being researched. Since my project is crossing different disciplines, it is important that I give the contexts within which I'm drawing these disciplines together. By providing contexts I will show the way in which I'm theorizing and critically reflecting on the practice of Bible Noise.

This chapter is made up of three parts. The presence of three parts echoes the three-point sermon; a sermon or homily possibly based on the classical method of deductive reasoning.[181] However, my presentation is not deductive in that manner nor is it meant to be a homily. Rather, what I aim to present will obliquely critique this system. The three parts are interconnected and are not logical sequential parts to build an argument. Rather they provide the pluriform 'spaces,' the contexts to hear this project. We quite often make sense of sounds contextually and my presentation of contexts is a way of making sense of the research. The three parts evokes the sense of a musical piece with three voices interweaving each other and contextualising each other.

Part 1 will engage with the bible. By doing so I will contextualise my research as a way of engaging and disrupting hegemony. The bible has often been used for the justification for hegemonic authority but my engagement with the above stories of multiple voices will show the plurality that is present within the bible and the plurality of interpretation possible with these texts. Hegemony is elucidated through the presence of empire within the texts and so I draw upon postcolonial theology whose theorisation is based the rereading of texts in the framework of colonisation and empire.

Part 2 unpacks the notions of hegemony and empire through postcolonial theology. The postcolonial exploration of the texts reveals a form of hegemony that arose through the

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[181] Haddon W. Robinson and Torrey W. Robinson, *It's All in How You Tell It: Preaching First-Person Expository Messages* (Baker Books, 2003), 11.

European colonial era: the hegemony of race. A discussion of race leads to an engagement with Black theology. Race is a form of othering which is often connected to an idea of delineating people linked to ideas of foreignness. In my practice one set of voices that I attempt to listen to, is that of the 'foreigner' or the 'alien'. I connect the idea of foreignness and race because race is a hegemony that is created by a form of empire through European colonisation. I will show that it is a foreignness which is not necessarily connected to geography or ethnicity but is an overlapping, abstract power play of skin colour, historical connotation and empire myths. The engagement with Black theology is also pertinent because European theology (and theology from the 'White Dominions') is a hegemonic force in the practice of Christianity even though the majority of practicing Christian are outside of Europe and the 'White Dominions.' I engage with two black theologies through Robert Beckford and Ashon Crawley to show possibilities of sound and plurality in theological contexts. These Black theologies show that Christian theology need not be abstract, privatised and spiritual, but rather can be embodied, communal and of the 'flesh.' The engagement with Black critical thought and theology shows how a difference of body creates a category of human that is used to maintain hegemonies. The idea that the difference of body is used to create and maintain a hegemony leads me to engage with feminist theology. As mentioned before, the project started with the possibility of listening to women's voices through Lapsley. Feminist theology provides further critiques of the hegemony within theology by showing the different ways of listening to women's voices and engaging with women's experiences. To align the notions of listening to the voices of women *and* foreigners I draw upon womanist theology which takes up the position of critical engagement through the experiences of Black women. I do this through a piece around the narrative of Hagar, a key figure for Womanist theology. [182] Reflecting on Hagar will show the ways Black and feminist theology provide the tools for hearing these voices while also showing through the practice how we sound these voices.

Black and feminist theology arise from race and gender differences that are used to create and maintain hegemonies of whiteness and maleness. These are differences of the body. The notion of the body and its denigration becomes a connecting point for part 3.

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[182] Wilda Gafney, *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017), 38.

Part 3 revolves around the philosophical streams that my project engages with. Presenting the term wisdom as analogous to philosophy, I engage with the idea of 'Wisdom' in the bible and her portrayal as female. This provides the context to discuss the understanding of the body and how it gets denigrated. The denigration of the body is connected to the way women are denigrated and of the voice itself, relegated to a mere carrier of an abstracted message. I present how this denigration is then taken up by Christian theology. The interconnected denigration of the voice, the body and women leads to a silencing of the three. This leads to a discussion on silence which is presented as both oppressive and a possibility of freedom against oppression. The possibility of silence is that it can provide the space and opportunity to hear the hidden. Silence becomes a type of 'between.' I elucidate the meaning of betweenness by discussing the philosophy of Arendt and her concept of the table being the space that allows differences to flourish and at the same time for mutuality to develop. I then bring Arendt together with Nancy for his reflections on sound and his ideas of community. This bringing together provides the situation to discuss the idea of plurality which is important for the project in hearing and sounding out multiple voices.

Talking of plurality takes us back to theology, since I need to engage with the idea that theology is often presented as against plurality. The Trinity is a concept that can embrace the presence of difference and mutuality. Since theology in some sense interacts with its conceptualisation of the nature of God, the concept of the Trinity in its presentation of God as Three and One shows the possibilities for a plurality that is not isolationist or hegemonic but one that is affirming and mutually flourishing. Sound and Music provide different ways to understand and experience the Trinity in ways that concepts and visual media cannot. This connection between sound and the Trinity shows how seemingly abstract concepts can be brought to human experience in fresh ways. The Trinity through sound affirms the plurality that can be drawn from Christianity.

Contexts Part 1: Babel and Pentecost: Approaching Plurality through the Bible

Introduction

I am exploring Babel and Pentecost as a way to contextualise my research of listening to and sounding out multiple voices in the reading aloud of the bible. These two stories have multiple voices sounding out different languages. The plurality of voices is at the heart of this project and sound, semantics and the social are the three areas whose interplay shape my research context. The response and reaction to these plural voices within the narrative and the consequent interpretation of these narratives forms my approach to polyphony: many voices sounding simultaneously. My analysis of the two texts is intertextual which enacts a metaphorical polyphony: two texts can recontextualise each other, just as two sounds can. For my analysis I draw upon theological and literary resources which give indications of the literature that I base my research on. Through my analysis I put forward that *Glossolalia* ('many tongues') from the Pentecost story becomes a key concept that opens my engagement with the plurality of voices.

In one sense the two stories are very different from each other. Babel was probably written down in Babylon around 800 B.C. in Hebrew by Jewish priests. Pentecost was probably written in the Roman empire around 50 A.D. in Greek by a medical doctor who was a proselyte (a convert to Judaism). However, the two texts have resonances: the plurality of voices, their polyphony, the noisiness of these voices, the semantic blockages and interplay, the questions of difference; all will be drawn upon to contextualise this project. The bringing together of the two stories and their intertextuality provides a pattern for my sound practice which I further elucidate in this chapter.

I first outline the narrative of Babel and its presence in wider cultural discourses. Sometimes within these discourses the diversification of language at Babel seems to be a problem to be overcome rather than celebrated. I then look at how diversification as a problem is reflected in theology as well. Common theological interpretations of Babel and Pentecost do not necessarily celebrate plurality. In these interpretations, the diversification of language is seen as punishment which is then reversed at Pentecost where unity is achieved once more. I, however, present readings from post-colonial theology that consider the tower of Babel as the symbol of hegemony that is broken by a

liberator God who affirms difference. Similarly, the story of Pentecost is re-read carefully as one where differences are not erased but are affirmed without conflict. The affirmation of difference is related to polyphony and these stories each enact an aural polyphony that affirms the difference of languages which reflects deeper differences within humanity like race and ethnicity. Both these stories from the bible, in their inter-relations and their readings, provide avenues for my practice and situate some of the critical contexts of this project.

Babel

The story of Babel has been laid out above.[183] To briefly recap: all people have the same language. They wish to build a tower that will reach into the 'heavens.' God sees what they are up to, goes down and confuses their language and so they are scattered all over the earth. Cultural historian Hillel Schwartz calls the story '[a]n allegory of idolatry and arrogance,'[184] where a human project ends in noise. Schwarz says: 'When all of the tongues jabbered at the same time, "It was a Noise of a thousand sounds."'[185] Babel is possibly a pun meaning 'confusion' and/or 'God's door.'[186] In the story the tower is meant to reach the heavens by implication the tower was a gateway, which is possibly the reference to door. Referring back to the other meaning, the story ends in confusion when the people's language is diversified. If the door can be considered an opening, then Babel offers a double possibility of confusion and opening. Steiner evokes the double possibility of Babel: 'the affair at Babel was both a disaster and—this being the etymology of the word 'disaster'—a rain of stars upon man.'[187] Languages are a key part of the story of the Babel, possibly reflected in the structural and linguistic features of the story. which is written as a chiasm[188] where different parts have parallel themes or wordplays and shows a careful

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[183] See above, Two Stories, 74.

[184] Hillel Schwartz, *Making Noise: From Babel to the Big Bang & Beyond* (Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 2011), 47.

[185] Ibid., 48.

[186] Craig G. Bartholomew, 'Babel and Derrida: Postmodernism, Language and Biblical Interpretation.', *Tyndale Bulletin* 49, no. 2 (1998): 314.

[187] George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), xviii.

[188] Joel S. Baden, 'The Tower of Babel: A Case Study in the Competing Methods of Historical and Modern Literary Criticism', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128, no. 2 (2009): 211, https://doi.org/10.2307/25610179.

construction in its writing. There is also a sparseness of language which seems to reflect the inability of communication narrated at the end of the story.

Babel in Wider Culture

The idea and concept of Babel appear across different areas in Western culture. The film 'Babel' is a story across four different countries.[189] Douglas Adam's 'Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy' features the 'babel fish' a creature that sits in the hearer's ear and translates languages instantly.[190] Babel has been used for various translation services like https://www.babelfish.com/, and apps like Babbel https://uk.babbel.com/. Theologian Craig Bartholomew says: 'Babel has become a symbol of fragmentation and pluralism in our day,'[191] and he offers a brief survey of Babel's presence in literature: 'Jeffrey Stout in his masterful *Ethics After Babel*[192] alerts us to just how common Babel is as an image today. Kafka returns to the theme of Babel continually,[193] Maurice Blanchot relates his view of textuality to Babel,[194] Walter Benjamin invokes Babel in his reflections on language, Gillian Rose takes the Tower of Babel narrative as her reference point in her assessment of postmodernism and its conflation of architecture and theory,[195] Julia Kristeva discusses Babel,[196] and George Steiner discusses the history of the interpretation of the Tower of Babel narrative at length in After Babel.'[197] Bartholomew gives this survey in the context of discussing Derrida's fascination with Babel; a story that Derrida 'gives sustained attention

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[189] *Babel*, Drama (Paramount Pictures, Paramount Vantage, Anonymous Content, 2006).

[190] Douglas Adams, *The Ultimate Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Random House Worlds, 2002), 41.

[191] Bartholomew, 'Babel and Derrida', 315.

[192] Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics after Babel: The Languages of Morals and Their Discontents* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1988).

[193] Steiner, *After Babel*, 68.

[194] Leslie Hill, *Blanchot: Extreme Contemporary* (London: Routledge, 1997), 54.

[195] Gillian Rose, 'Architecture to Philosophy — The Postmodern Complicity', *Theory, Culture & Society* 5, no. 2–3 (1 June 1988): 357–71, https://doi.org/10.1177/026327648800500208.

[196] Julia Kristeva, *Language, the Unknown: An Initiation into Linguistics* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989).

[197] Bartholomew, 'Babel and Derrida', 316–17.

to and returns to repeatedly.'[198] Derrida writes: 'We think we know that story, but it is always in our interest, I believe, to reread it closely.'[199]

Literary critic George Steiner reads the story from the perspective of translation studies. He is discussing languages, the confusion of which is the most arresting moment of Babel. The presence of multiple languages is important for this project to explore plurality. However, it does need to be emphasised that my interest here is sound and its difference and how it relates to the difference of identity. Language opens the possibility of exploring identity difference through sound since language is 'one of the primary markers of a specific culture, cultural tradition, or ethnic group.'[200] Steiner considers language as dialectical, 'the formative energies of language moving both inward and outward in a civilization.'[201] This is because language comes from 'a specific historical-cultural landscape.'[202] The community that speaks this language is in turn 'shaped and determined'[203] by this language. The 'inward and the outward' are present in Babel where the tower evokes an 'inward' movement while scattering of the story evokes an 'outward.'

Steiner outlines the search for the 'one language' before the events at Babel, 'the lost language of Paradise.'[204] This search, according to Steiner, 'express(es) a fundamental reaction against the privacies of individual usage and the disorder of Babel.'[205] Finding traces of this language would lead 'back to the universal grammar of Adam.'[206] He shows how philosophers Descartes, Leibniz and theologian John Wilkins individually tried to form 'a universal ideogrammatic language system,'[207] which as Steiner says, are 'attempts

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[198] Ibid., 307.

[199] Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, ed. Claude Lévesque and Christie McDonald (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), 100. in Bartholomew, 'Babel and Derrida', 307.

[200] Theodore Hiebert, 'The Tower of Babel and the Origin of the World's Cultures', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126, no. 1 (2007): 47, https://doi.org/10.2307/27638419.

[201] Steiner, *After Babel*, 80.

[202] Ibid.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid., 62.

[205] Ibid., 214–15.

[206] Ibid., 62.

[207] Ibid., 73.

to reverse the disaster at Babel.'[208] Walter Benjamin also reflected on the search for this 'lost language': 'it will mean not just that this primordial language is the one originally spoken, but that the harmony originally created by those spoken languages was of incomparably greater power than any of the individual languages would possibly possess.'[209] The post-Babel situation seems to be unsatisfactory, as Steiner observes: 'There is a special miseria of translation, a melancholy after Babel.'[210] He goes on: 'The tongue of Eden was like a flawless glass; a light of total understanding streamed through it. Thus Babel was a second Fall, in some regards as desolate as the first.'[211] This melancholy assumes that the unity of language and of people was the ideal situation and if Babel can somehow be reversed or overcome, things would be better. The reversal of Babel as an ideal implies that the plurality which arose in Babel is negative. Reading the story in this way leads readers towards understanding plurality as the punishment for human intransigence. I now discuss whether this is indeed the case.

Babel: Plurality as Punishment?

Reading the profusion of tongues as punishment is widespread and has had a long history. German reformer Martin Luther called this division 'the seedbed of all evils.'[212] Dutch theologian Hinne Wagenaar says that 'this text has been explained as an etiology for the diversity of peoples and languages. This diversity is the result of divine punishment as a response to human pride.'[213] The reading of the plurality as punishment is present in Jewish readings as well, where the single language is understood as divine gift but 'the division of languages led to misunderstanding, violence and warfare.'[214]

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[208] Ibid.

[209] Walter Benjamin, 'Language and Logic', in *Walter Benjamin: selected writings. Vol.1*, ed. Marcus Paul Bullock and Michael William Jennings, 2004, 273.

[210] Steiner, *After Babel*, 283.

[211] Ibid., 61.

[212] Hiebert, 'The Tower of Babel and the Origin of the World's Cultures', 48.

[213] Hinne Wagenaar, 'Babel, Jerusalem and Kumba: Missiological Reflections on Genesis 11:1–9 and Acts 2:1–13', *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 366 (2003): 407, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6631.2003.tb00414.x.

[214] Hiebert, 'The Tower of Babel and the Origin of the World's Cultures', 48.

Understanding plurality as negative in Babel has implications since 'the diversity of languages and nations is then the result of God's punishment of humanity.'[215] On one hand it legitimises a need for the erasure of difference by the longing for the 'one language' and implicitly, 'one people' ideal. Conversely, it can legitimise the unequal treatment of people like apartheid in South Africa. Wagenaar traces how it was possible for churches to develop certain theories of race citing the case of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. Theologians 'were amply able to legitimate the existence of apartheid (segregation) in South Africa'[216] by considering plurality in Babel as punishment. They did this by considering the separation of people as God-willed and therefore the mixing of races as against God's will.

Derrida seems to present Babel as punishment as well: 'Out of God's jealousy and resentment against that single and unique lip of men, he imposes his name'[217] and with this violent imposition, God initiates the deconstruction of the tower.[218] It is worth considering what this punishment might be for. Derrida says of the builders of the tower: 'Had their enterprise succeeded, the universal tongue would have been imposed by violence, by force, by violent hegemony over the rest of the world.'[219] This could be the reason for the 'punishment.' God's response is to disseminate the people 'and dissemination is here deconstruction.'[220] Derrida's texts on Babel are full of twists and turns but it is of interest that he connects the abandonment of the tower with deconstruction. This connection might be a way to turn Babel around: to consider it in a different way.

In a contrast to punishment there are several theologians who read Babel and its plurality of languages and the dissemination of people as a positive outcome. According to Alvin Dueck, 'there is a line of interpreters, beginning with Josephus through John Calvin to

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[215] Wagenaar, 'Babel, Jerusalem and Kumba', 408.

[216] Ibid.

[217] Bartholomew, 'Babel and Derrida', 309.

[218] Derrida, *The Ear of the Other*, 102.

[219] Ibid., 101.

[220] Bartholomew, 'Babel and Derrida', 310.

various contemporary theologians who advocate a different and more hopeful view.'[221] Daniel Ritchie says 'God's scattering of the people appears to the builders as a punishment, but within the Pentateuch, the Old Testament, and the bible as a whole it is consistent with God's blessing.'[222] There are numerous examples where the scattering or dissemination of people is part of a blessing. In Genesis 1, when everything is supposedly good, God tells humans to 'fill the earth.'[223] Similarly, after the flood in the renewal of the earth, God similarly tells humans to 'abound on the earth.'[224] In contrast, the people who build the tower are fearful of being scattered. Not to be scattered is to not fill the earth. The scattering is not a punishment because filling the earth is part of God's blessing.

Earlier, Steiner spoke of how language arises from particular contexts of time and place. If the people had filled the earth like they were meant to, many languages would have formed naturally in response to the different contexts people encountered. The plurality of languages is therefore not necessarily a punishment. As Dueck says: 'The profusion of languages is… not the vengeance of a jealous God. The Babel story points to the fear of losing a sense of identity by being scattered, a fear of becoming restless, rootless wanderers.'[225] The notion of identity requires further investigation. In Babel the people have been presented as having 'one language' with the 'same words' until the point of the confusion of languages. There is no distinction or difference between them until their languages are diversified. Hiebert reads Babel as 'not about the suppression of difference between cultures but about the origins of difference itself.'[226] His reading comes from a more contextual reading of the text where other interpreters have 'devalued difference' while Babel in his reading goes 'in the opposite direction, valuing difference by explaining it as God's aspiration for the new world after the flood.'[227] We turn to a contextual reading of the story to make sense of this interpretation.

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[221] Alvin C Dueck, 'Babel, Esperanto, Shibboleths, and Pentecost: Can We Talk?', *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 21, no. 1 (2002): 76.

[222] Daniel E. Ritchie, 'From Babel to Pentecost: Burke's India, Ideological Multiculturalism, and a Christian Poetics', *Christianity & Literature* 43, no. 3–4 (1 June 1994): 409, https://doi.org/10.1177/014833319404300312.

[223] Genesis 1:28

[224] Genesis 8:17

[225] Dueck, 'Babel, Esperanto, Shibboleths', 76.

[226] Hiebert, 'The Tower of Babel and the Origin of the World's Cultures', 35.

[227] Ibid., 58.

Babel in context

The story of Babel is a text set in the middle of two lists of nations. The plurality of people comes before and after the narrative of Babel. What is of relevance here is 'the context of its production'[228] which is the Babylonian exile. The Jewish people were invaded by the Babylonian empire (circa 800 BCE) with large portions of people exiled to Babylon. Most commentators agree that the Jewish bible was compiled, edited and formalised at this time. Being in exile led to certain stories being understood or presented differently. If Babel can be understood as being written down at this time then it can be read 'as a Jewish response to the experiences of political and cultural oppression.'[229] This allows the text to be read as 'a poetic, satirical, and polemical protest'[230] against empire. What needs to be explored is what this protest is against and why it takes this form.

The imagery of Babel is dominated by the tower a monolithic structure which can be seen in works by artists Brueghel,[231] Escher[232] and others. Postcolonial theologian Eleazar Fernandez writes of the tower as 'a symbol of imperial praxis.'[233] Wagenaar calls it 'the ideological centre of the city.'[234] It is most likely that the tower referred to is a *ziggurat* a feature of several Babylonian cities where a step tower was built at the city centre,[235] tower which had both religious and political dimensions. As Fernandez says, the tower 'symbolized the surveillance mechanism of the Babylonian imperial power. It stood above the city to monitor the movements of the city dwellers. The tower is the eye of the monarchy to enforce order within the city.'[236] Through its height through its height symbolically connects 'heaven and earth.'[237] It 'was the most powerful representation of

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[228] Wagenaar, 'Babel, Jerusalem and Kumba', 408.

[229] Ibid., 409.

[230] Joseph W. Poulshock, 'Missing the Message of Babel: Dismantling Misconceptions', *Christ and the World*, no. 10 (March 2000): 112.

[231] Pieter Bruegel I., *The Tower of Babel.*, 1563, painting, 1563, https://library-artstor-org.arts.idm.oclc.org/asset/LESSING_ART_1039788943.

[232] Maurits C. Escher, *Tower of Babel*, 1928, Woodcut, 1928.

[233] Eleazar S. Fernandez, 'From Babel to Pentecost: Finding a Home in the Belly of the Empire.', ed. Tat-Siong Benny Liew, *Semeia: The Bible in Asian America. SBL*, no. 90/91 (2002): 30.

[234] Wagenaar, 'Babel, Jerusalem and Kumba', 409.

[235] Ibid.

[236] Fernandez, 'From Babel to Pentecost: Finding a Home', 32.

[237] Wagenaar, 'Babel, Jerusalem and Kumba', 409.

the Babylonian religious system.'[238] Therefore the tower has multiple resonances for a foreign, exiled people who have to live within a hostile environment: it symbolises their oppressed and alien state which can be negotiated only if they become part of the 'all people, one language' hegemony. This has contemporary resonance where Fernandez, referring to immigrant groups in the United States, points out how they shed 'their pasts, their ethnicity-the language, customs, dress, culture of the old country.'[239] The building of the tower itself has other resonances in the book of Exodus, where the Jewish people were slaves in Egypt using bricks to build for their masters. The use of bricks in Babel could be an echo of this time. Fernandez says these projects 'rest on the backs of others,'[240] others who are at the bottom of society. The disruption of the project is a relief for these people: as Wagenaar says, 'God comes down to deliver those who are victims of the system. This God comes down and scatters those on high (Is. 2: 15).'[241]

The story of Babel can therefore be read as a disruption of hegemony. The tower was built by the empire to 'combat their fear of losing hegemony.'[242] Therefore, from the perspective of being oppressed by the empire, God's action is a liberating one. The 'confusion' of tongues, the diversification of language, becomes a disruption of hegemony and affirmation of difference. It is a disruption of 'one language' in the narrative as theologian Calvin Seerveld says: 'a single, approved communication lingo... that cemented the solidarity needed to vaunt their consolidated power.'[243] This is not exclusive to the Babylonians since other empires acted similarly: 'For the ancient Greeks, "barbaros" was one who did not speak Greek but simply emitted sounds, a discriminatory view which the Romans were only too quick to adopt.'[244] Even within Jewish history there is a small

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[238] Alexander D. Soal and Desmond Henry, 'The Reversal of Babel: Questioning the Early Church's Understanding of the Gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts as a Reversal of the Curse of Babel', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 39, no. 1 (23 August 2018): 5, https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v39i1.1842.

[239] Fernandez, 'From Babel to Pentecost: Finding a Home', 32.

[240] Ibid., 33.

[241] Wagenaar, 'Babel, Jerusalem and Kumba', 410.

[242] Ibid., 409.

[243] Calvin Seerveld, 'Babel, Pentecost Glossalia and Philoxenia: No Language Is Foreign to God', *Journal of Christianity and Foreign Languages.* II (2001): 7.

[244] John Kinder, 'Language as Expression of Unity and Diversity: From Babel to Pentecost and Beyond', *Australian Ejournal of Theology*, no. 12 (July 2008): 2–3, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241454511_Language_as_expression_of_unity_and_diversity_from_Babel_to_Pentecost_and_beyond.

fragment of a story where Israelite soldiers executed foreigners who could not pronounce the word 'Shibboleth' correctly.[245] 'One tongue' therefore is not a happy image of a group of people getting along together but one of oppressive hegemony. Babel then, could be read as theologian Joseph Poulshock says: 'one of the first documented critiques about language planning, socio-lingual engineering, and linguistic imperialism.'[246] The confusion of tongues need not be seen as punishment for the human race but rather as 'a protection against domination.'[247]

The response of the people to the confusion is important here. The people do not try and work things out. As Seerveld notes: 'they couldn't understand one another, and therefore moved off in their little hard-bitten, monolingual enclaves.'[248] Babel therefore raises the question of whether living together in difference is impossible. Bringing the story of Pentecost alongside Babel might give some openings to explore the possibility of the coexistence of difference.

Pentecost

The story of Pentecost is set in the book of *Acts*, short for *Acts of the Apostles*. The book is attributed to Luke, an early Christian who was a Jewish proselyte, a convert to Judaism. Acts recounts the stories of some of the early followers of Jesus. One of the reasons Luke wrote the book of Acts is to show how early Christianity spread in the Roman empire from its obscure origins. The theme of being scattered from Babel is echoed in the notion of spreading.

Pentecost, meaning 50 days, was originally the Jewish 'Festival of Weeks' or Shav'uot.[249] The first followers of Jesus, who like him were Jewish, had gathered to pray on this festival day, after the events of Easter. They then heard 'the sound of a violent wind' which 'filled

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[245] Judges 12:4

[246] Poulshock, 'Missing the Message of Babel', 114.

[247] Wagenaar, 'Babel, Jerusalem and Kumba', 411.

[248] Seerveld, 'Babel, Pentecost Glossalia and Philoxenia: No Language Is Foreign to God', 7.

[249] 'Shavuʿot - Oxford Reference', accessed 11 February 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100459955.

the whole house.'[250] They saw 'tongues' of fire over each other's heads[251] and then begin to speak 'in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.'[252] The sound of the wind is an evocation of God's Spirit, *ruach* in the Hebrew which translates literally as 'breath.' The fire also reflects several images from the Jewish scriptures where God's action is connected with fire.

On hearing the noise, a crowd gathered 'in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.'[253] It can be assumed that the followers of Jesus were speaking simultaneously because of the noise that caused people to gather. The crowd was formed of Jews 'from every nation under heaven.'[254] They were here for the Jewish festival but likely to be visitors. They heard through the noise the language of where they had come from. They were perplexed because they knew that the group who were speaking was local Galileans. Some of the crowd started mocking them, accusing them of being drunk. Pentecost as an event is considered to be birth of the church. The event is full of sound and emotions of amazement, bewilderment and puzzlement but at the same time because people hear in their own language, there is some understanding and then conversation between the followers of Jesus and the crowd.

There is a resonance between Babel and Pentecost due to a rabbinic tradition which Luke might have drawn on that 'God gave the law in the languages of the seventy nations of the world.'[255] However, the resonance for my project is simpler, the presence of the multiple languages spoken in simultaneity. The term that describes this spoken simultaneity is *Glossolalia*.

Glossolalia is the Greek word for 'speaking in tongues.' It has been referenced as a medical condition of 'nonsense speech'[256] or in psychology as having an 'impoverished' syllabic

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[250] Acts 2:2

[251] Acts 2:3

[252] Acts 2:4

[253] Acts 2:6

[254] Acts 2:5

[255] Ritchie, 'From Babel to Pentecost', 410.

[256] Elizabeth Martin, 'Glossolalia', in *Concise Medical Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2015), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199687817.001.0001/acref-9780199687817-e-4068.

range with 'no systematic grammatical structure.'[257] At Pentecost, *glossolalia* seems to indicate the ability to speak previously unknown languages. Following Pentecost in other New Testament texts, *glossolalia* indicates a set of spoken sounds that are part of both personal and public devotion and St. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians calls it 'speaking mysteries in the Spirit.'[258] *Glossolalia* therefore has a plurality in how it is understood.

The Pentecostal church, the fastest growing[259] and relatively recent (early 1900s) form of established Christian worshipping practice,[260] as the name suggests, is most associated with *glossolalia* within Christian practice. The Pentecostal church is more widely spread in the nations of Africa and South America which evokes a difference of Christianity from that fashioned in the nations of Europe. This becomes one of the reasons that I draw upon Black theology to form the research context as much Black theology comes from Pentecostal traditions. The relationship between *glossolalia*, the Pentecostal church and Black theology will be explored further down. *Glossolalia* as a term is also used to describe a set of sound art practices with the voice and therefore becomes a connecting point between my sound practice and religious theological contextualisation. For my practice, *glossolalia* is relevant as the primary attention is to the sound of many voices sounding before an interpretation is arrived at. It is the sounding of many tongues, whether they be multiple languages or mystical speech. The sounding of many tongues in Pentecost has a resonance with Babel which I will now explore.

Intertexting Babel and Pentecost

The clearest similarity between Babel and Pentecost is the presence of multiple languages. Additionally, the confusion of Babel is echoed by the bewilderment and puzzlement at Pentecost. These similarities have been observed before but there has been a strand of

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[257] Andrew M. Colman, 'Glossolalia', in *A Dictionary of Psychology* (Oxford University Press, 2015), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199657681.001.0001/acref-9780199657681-e-3528.

[258] 1 Corinthians 14:2

[259] Joel D. Daniels, 'The Fluid Movement of the Spirit: (RE)Conceptualizing Gender in Pentecostalism', *Journal of Religious Ethics* n/a, no. n/a, accessed 24 December 2022, https://doi.org/10.1111/jore.12409.

[260] The 'Azusa Street Revival' in 1906 is considered a key event in the establishment of Pentecostalism. Cecil M. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Thomas Nelson, 2017). This will be explored further below on page 88

reading these two stories that presents Babel and Pentecost in opposition. From the time of 'the early church fathers' Pentecost has been presented as the reversal of Babel.[261] Barreto surveys several prominent theologians who make this claim.[262] The effect of Babel 'is now reversed' says C.K. Barrett. Etienne Trocmé calls Pentecost a 'supernatural Esperanto' which undoes the confusion of Babel. Cyril of Jerusalem contrasts the division of Babel to 'restoration and unity of minds' at Pentecost.[263] Barreto comments that construing Pentecost as a reversal of Babel by interpreters might 'have been well meaning in their seeking to combat the plagues of ethnocentrisms and racisms.'[264] However, for Barreto the implication of this reversal is that 'difference is a problem in search of a solution.'[265] For Wagenaar, understanding Pentecost as a reversal 'implies a unification of nations and languages; many tongues and diversities were made one!'[266] The search for unity that we saw in the search for the original language seems to again present itself. Barreto however considers that Pentecost is 'a divine choice to live into Babel's world-shaping aftermath.'[267] He says that Pentecost 'resists a homogenization of difference. Instead a world of diverse peoples'[268] is affirmed 'not as a counter to or corrective of Babel's afflictions upon human history but as a recognition of a world teeming with difference to which God has called God's people.'[269]

Therefore, I read Babel and Pentecost as an affirmation of difference. The confusion of Babel and the amazement at Pentecost are both responses to the presence of simultaneous difference. I described above how certain interpretations of both stories leaned towards a unity which erased difference. I have outlined how certain interpretations read the stories as an affirmation of difference. This possibly reflects the 'inward and outward' energies of

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[261] Soal and Henry, 'The Reversal of Babel', 1.

[262] Eric D. Barreto, 'Whence Migration? Babel, Pentecost, and Biblical Imagination', in *Latinxs, the Bible, and Migration*, ed. Efraín Agosto and Jacqueline M Hidalgo (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing: Imprint: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-96695-3.

[263] Ibid., 135.

[264] Ibid., 136.

[265] Ibid.

[266] Wagenaar, 'Babel, Jerusalem and Kumba', 411.

[267] Barreto, 'Whence Migration? Babel, Pentecost, and Biblical Imagination', 136.

[268] Ibid.

[269] Ibid., 139.

language that Steiner spoke of as well as Bakhtin's notion of language: 'Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work, alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward.'[270] Hiebert speaks of Babel in similar terms: 'The story's drama springs from the tension... between the centripetal force of homogeneity and the centrifugal force of heterogeneity.'[271] My approach for this project is to search for the heterogeneity, the difference that co-exists with each other. My readings and approach to Babel and Pentecost is indicative of how I'm approaching different texts and bringing them together.

Conclusion to Part 1

I explored the stories of Babel and Pentecost for the common presence of the simultaneous sounding of difference in language through human speech. I brought together different texts as a practice of intertextuality which is a bringing together of different voices. Additionally, simultaneous speech is important for this project, and I draw upon practices that perform speech simultaneously. Texts that have resonances with each other are brought together in sound to hear their commonalities and, importantly, their differences. The presence of multiple languages is not going to be enacted in my sound practice. The multiple languages emphasise the differences present, cultural or otherwise, that are under threat or the pressure of assimilation or erasure. Through both the stories of Babel and Pentecost, interpretations that prefer unity over difference have been discussed. The presence of multiple languages assumes the presence of differences in terms of culture and ethnicity and the urge to unify these differences into unity opens up a discussion on hegemony in the next part. Race will form one part of the discussion on hegemony based on the linguistic difference that these two stories bring up. The other part in my discussion of hegemony is gender. Though the genders of the characters in both narratives are never mentioned, imagery by artists of both events indicate the characters as male. The erasure of women's voices from the imagination of these stories forms the other part of the discussion of hegemony. Hegemony in Babel is made evident

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[270] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, New Ed edition (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1982), 272.

[271] Hiebert, 'The Tower of Babel and the Origin of the World's Cultures', 55.

by the presence of empire. Hegemony in Pentecost is more in the background but is still present since the entire story of early Christianity takes place in the context of the hostile Roman empire. *Glossolalia*, the strange multi-voiced speech that then becomes part of Christian practice, opens up different avenues for my sound practice. This practice brings together texts and sounds multiple voices together, aiming to listen out for and affirm difference, to disrupt the hegemony that is symbolised in the single voice that reads aloud the text.

Contexts Part 2: Responding to Hegemony: Postcolonial, Black and Feminist Theology

Introduction to Part 2

In this part I draw on three issues that arise in my presentation of the stories of Babel and Pentecost. Firstly, the two stories are written in the context of empire which leads me to draw upon postcolonial thought and theology for its critique of empire. Secondly, the narratives present the simultaneous sounding of different languages which represents a possible difference of ethnicity and culture. The issue of ethnicity leads me to black studies and theology, which derives itself from the experience of African origin people who were demarked as other on the basis of their 'race' or ethnicity by those who considered themselves 'white'. Thirdly, in both the stories there is a tacit assumption of the maleness of the characters. This assumption occurs through the consistent silencing of the female voice. Therefore, I draw on feminist theory and theology to listen to voices silenced and hidden. Hegemony runs through all these issues, where empire, maleness and whiteness, assume a 'single voice', which hides or silences other voices: of the colonised, of femaleness and non-whiteness. My practice aims to disrupt this single voice by sounding many voices and paying attention to ignored and silenced voices.

Empire, Hegemony and postcolonial theology

The story of Babel is written in the context of the Jewish exile within the Babylonian empire. In a similar vein, the story of Pentecost is written within the context of the Roman empire. Postcolonial theologian Fernando Segovia says the texts of the New Testament where the story of Pentecost is found, need to be given 'attention to their context within the Roman Empire and their engagement with its imperial ideologies.'[272] Reading these texts within their political contexts opens meanings and voices that are different when compared to reading biblical texts as 'moral' texts that emphasise private behaviour. Imperial ideologies can be explicitly coercive and dominant but there are forms of coercion and dominance that might be implicit. This implicit coercion is encapsulated in

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[272] Fernando F Segovia, 'Introduction: Configurations, Approaches, Findings, Stances', in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings*, ed. Fernando F Segovia and R. S Sugirtharajah (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 8.

the term hegemony which can be defined as: 'the relatively dominant position of a particular set of ideas and their associated tendency to become commonsensical and intuitive.'[273] This idea of hegemony holds within Christian practice and theology as well, where theologies formed in Europe, mostly by men, have historically defined and shaped Christian thought. Theologian Sarah Coakley, critiquing her own field of systematic theology, says: 'The social theorists who have decried 'hegemony' are rightly calling attention to ways in which powerful discourses, especially ones that aspire to a total picture, can occlude or marginalize the voices of those who are already oppressed, or are being pushed into a state of subjection.'[274]

The reading of the texts of Babel and Pentecost in the context of empire and hegemony is drawn from postcolonial theory and theology. 'Postcolonialism' is a 'body of academic analysis and theory'[275] that engages with 'the continuing relevance of colonialism in today's world.'[276] This engagement occurs through 'analysing the perpetuation of colonial forms of power and knowledge'[277] and 'challenging historical and contemporary accounts which privilege western knowledge and interests.'[278] Colonialism is intimately bound up with empire and the discourse of both aim 'to fix all reality according to the world view of the dominant group. The language of the empire is considered normative, and all other voices are derivative.'[279] Edward Said, one of the early and influential voices of postcolonial theory, attempts to hear beyond the normative voice of empire through his reading strategy: '...to draw out, extend, give emphasis and voice to what is silent or marginally present or ideologically represented.'[280] My practice aims to be a sonic embodiment of this

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[273] Ben Rosamund, 'Hegemony | Political Science', Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed 11 December 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/hegemony.

[274] Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self: An Essay 'on the Trinity'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 47.

[275] William Brown, 'Post-Colonialism', in *A Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations* (Oxford University Press, 2018), https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199670840.001.0001/acref-9780199670840-e-1714.

[276] Ibid.

[277] Ibid.

[278] Ibid.

[279] Sarah Anne Noreen Travis, 'Preaching in the Perichoretic Space: A Social Trinitarian Postcolonial Homiletic for the Canadian Context.' (PHD Thesis, Ottawa, Library and Archives Canada = Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, 2013), 130.

[280] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 66.

kind of reading where the single voice of reading scripture is disrupted by the many voices that sound it. Said also uses music analogy with reference to counterpoint, the music that enacts several voices simultaneously: 'My point in... contrapuntal reading is to emphasize and highlight the disjunctions, not to overlook or play them down.'[281] The contrapuntal in Said's work will be explored further in chapter three[282] on polyphony but what is pertinent here is the possibility that postcolonial theory opens in bringing out voices that have been previously silenced. Bringing out different voices can be disjunctive and my practice will listen to these disjunctions to hear what they might have to say. The bringing together of different voices makes postcolonialism broad in remit and method. Theologian Tat-Siong Benny Liew says that it is 'multidimensional and multidirectional ... [that] cannot ... be reduced to any form of (over)simplicity or singularity.'[283] Speaking of postcolonial theology, theologian David Bradnick says that it 'recognizes differences and allows for a multiplicity of responses, hoping to achieve a reciprocal exchange of perspectives from all voices.'[284] This reciprocity of voices is what I'm attempting to embody through my practice. The overall intention of using postcolonial theology is 'to critique hegemonic ideological constructions that make absolutist or totalitarian claims and to provide legitimacy for alternative theological views.'[285]

Critique of Postcolonial Thought

However, postcolonialism has its limitations and has been accused of being part of the same hegemonic apparatus that it claims to critique. Coakley, though sympathetic to the aims of postcolonialism says: 'there is much talk of the problem of attending to the otherness of the 'other' in contemporary post-Kantian ethics and post-colonial theory; but there is very little about the intentional and embodied practices that might enable such attention. And this is particularly ironic, given the claims of (largely secular) post-colonial

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[281] Ibid., 146.

[282] See below, Polyphony as Metaphor: Edward Said, 178.

[283] Tat-Siong Benny Liew, 'Margins and (Cutting)Edges. on the (Il)Legitimacy and Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, and (Post)Colonialism', in *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*, ed. Stephen D Moore and Fernando F Segovia (London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 125.

[284] David Bradnick, 'Postcolonial Theology', in *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization*, ed. George Thomas Kurian (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

[285] Ibid.

theorists to speak for deeply religious populations.'[286] Postcolonial theologian Stephen Moore (drawing on Marxist philosopher Aijaz Ahmad) echoes this disconnect, saying that postcolonialism seems to draw upon 'raw materials generated in the Third World… exported to the First World,… turned into refined or luxury products by a privileged intelligentsia metropolitan elite of fellow-scholars and graduate students.'[287] Moore also points out that several postcolonial theorists are in well paid positions in prestigious Western universities and 'insulated from the harsh material realities'[288] outside academia. Feminist theologian Laura Donaldson points out that postcolonialism (at least initially) 'discouraged the deployment of gender as a theoretical rubric by linking it to a narrowly defined Euro-American, middle-class feminism'[289] with an 'obstinate refusal to acknowledge women except by subsuming them under the more general category of 'the colonized'.'[290] It is important to acknowledge limitations and weaknesses of different theoretical fields for it gives openings to bring in other disciplines, other voices. This is why I use different kinds of theology to contextualise the theorisation of my project. Despite its weaknesses, I use postcolonial theory for its critique of empire and hegemony and its ability to connect issues of empire, race and colonialism. I then bring in voices of black and feminist theology to make up for the weaknesses of postcolonial theory. Though empire and colonialism seem like events of the past they are a present reality which postcolonial theory engages with. As church minister Sarah Travis says: 'In seeking to transform the present, postcolonial theory disputes Western hegemony and disrupts the discourse of the dominant by privileging the concerns of others who have been marginalised, oppressed or silenced by the colonial process.'[291]

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[286] Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self*, 47–48.

[287] Stephen D Moore, 'Questions of Biblical Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi; or, the Postcolonial and the Postmodern', in *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*, 82.

[288] Ibid.

[289] Laura E. Donaldson, 'Gospel Hauntings: The Postcolonial Demons of New Testament Criticism', in *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*, 97.

[290] Ibid.

[291] Travis, 'Preaching in the Perichoretic Space', 20.

Foreigner, Stranger and Alien

A way in which I engaged with postcolonialism in my practice was through the piece 'FSA (Foreigner, Stranger and Alien).'[292] Previously I discussed the stories of Babel and Pentecost through postcolonial engagement. This piece explored a more generalised notion of foreignness in the bible by sounding out all the verses where these words appear. Foreignness is a difference which identifies an outsiderness, a lack of belonging. The piece 'FSA' explored how the bible overall approached the notion of foreignness. Each verse, with either of the words 'foreigner,' 'stranger' or 'alien,' was identified. To accent the foreignness, the words in the original languages of Hebrew and Greek were placed alongside the English words. The verses were placed into bowls grouped according to the original words. On cue we each picked one and read them simultaneously, then repeated the process until the bowl was empty.[293] What arose from this reading was that certain words seemed to understand the foreigner as one to be welcomed and included, while other words considered the foreigner as one to be avoided and shunned. Along with this ambivalence to foreigners, the texts also showed some writers and communities self-identifying *as* foreigners. The piece FSA shows the multivalence of foreignness in the bible, being outsiders, welcomed or shunned, along with reflections on being foreign. This multivalence needs to be engaged with and I do this below by exploring the hegemony of race. A further notion of foreignness was accentuated in the presence of the 'foreign woman.'[294] The foreign woman is considered the pitfall for morality in some verses (though, in the case of Ruth, this is subverted).[295] The notion of the foreign woman will be further explored through the piece 'Hagar' below.

The ambivalence of foreignness in the bible is open to misuse as texts shunning foreigners could be used in justification of exclusion. My practice is investigating a Christian ritual with Christian texts. Therefore, it is key to understand and acknowledge that Christianity is entangled with hegemony and my discussions will focus on hegemony arising from race and gender. Coakley, critiquing her own discipline of systematic theology, refers to how it is seen 'as inappropriately totalizing, and thereby necessarily suppressive of the voices and

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[292] See Appendix-A, FSA (Foreigner, Stranger and Alien), 299.

[293] A recording of this can be heard at https://on.soundcloud.com/woXWs

[294] Nehemiah 13:26-27 is an example of warnings against foreign women.

[295] Ruth despite being foreign is presented as paragon of virtue.

perspectives of marginalized people.'[296] It is therefore important to engage with hegemony by providing strategies to listen to the voices that have been silenced and ignored. Race and gender, which are differences of the body, guide the way in which I interpretatively approach the texts for the practice. First, I will reflect on the issue of race.

Language, Ethnicity and Black theology

The stories of Babel and Pentecost sound simultaneous languages. The diversity of languages evokes the ideas and notions of difference in culture and ethnicity. The two stories in two different languages are products of two differing cultures: Babel, written in Hebrew by an exilic community in Babylon, and Pentecost, written in Greek by a convert to Judaism documenting the movement of Christianity from Jerusalem to different parts of the Roman empire. The plurality within and between the stories of Babel and Pentecost has different tensions; tensions of how to negotiate, understand and live with difference. More importantly, the two stories bring up tensions of identity between Judaism and Christianity. Babel is found in the 'Old' testament while Pentecost is in the 'New' Testament. 'Old' and 'New' are nominal distinctions between the texts of the Jewish bible and those of later Christian writings. The use of 'Old' and 'New' is problematic as it has sometimes led to supersessionism, which theologian Peter Heltzel describes as '(t)he faulty idea that Christianity replaces Judaism.'[297] Spurred on by the event of Pentecost, Christianity started as a Jewish movement which was open to all races and not just Israelites. In this opening up to all races, a key question arose: 'How Jewish should this movement be?' This question is writ large across the writings of the New Testament. One of the unfortunate resolutions of this question was supersessionism.

Supersessionism

Supersessionism broadly considers Christianity to be a replacement of Judaism. An early proponent of supersessionism, Marcion of Sinope (85-160), disregarded Jesus' Jewishness and rejected the Jewish scriptures, the Old Testament. Theologian Daniel Gard writing on this subject says that 'Marcionism shares with supersessionism the unfortunate

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[296] Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self*, 42.

[297] Heltzel, *Resurrection City*, 11.

marginalization of the Old Testament.'[298] Marcion was unable to encounter the difference that he saw in the account of Jesus' life and the Old Testament God. He was unable to allow the two distinct registers of scripture to sound together. Hetzel considers that supersessionism 'led to anti-Judaism within the church and has been the source of tragic and fatal consequences in the history of the West.'[299] What I am interested in here is the link between the suppression of voices in scripture and modern conceptualisations of race. J. Kameron Carter explores how supersessionism moved from being a disagreement between two communities to definitions of race that affect our conceptualisations of race today.

Supersessionism and race

Carter, giving a theological account of race, proposes that 'modernity's racial imagination has its genesis in the theological problem of Christianity's quest to sever itself from its Jewish roots.'[300] Tracing this development, Carter says that 'Jews were cast as a race group in contrast to Western Christians.'[301] This made Judaism a religion of the East. (The growth of Islam also adds to the dynamic here though Carter does not mention it for the sake of his argument.) This 'East' was contrasted to a Christian Europe. According to sociologist Alastair Bonnet, the 'older category of 'Christendom' fused with the 'concept of Europe.'[302] Christian Europe became a superior race in contrast to the Jews who were inferior. From this development Carter asserts: 'Within the gulf enacted between Christianity and the Jews, the racial, which proves to be a *racist*, imagination was forged.'[303]

There are two points here which are relevant for my project. Firstly, the development of racial imagination is made possible by 'the process by which Christ was abstracted from Jesus, and thus from his Jewish body.'[304] The removal of the particularity of Jesus' body

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[298] Daniel L. Gard, 'The Church's Scripture and Functional Marcionism', *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (2010): 209.

[299] Heltzel, *Resurrection City*, 11.

[300] J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

[301] Ibid.

[302] Alastair Bonnett, 'Who Was White? The Disappearance of Non-European White Identities and the Formation of European Racial Whiteness', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 6 (1 November 1998): 1038, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419879808565651.

[303] Carter, *Race*, 4.

[304] Ibid., 6.

allows for an abstraction that then allows for the white body to be considered the norm by belonging to the 'superior' religion of Christianity. The early church struggled with this Jewish body as we saw in the case of Marcion earlier. For my project, the presence of the body is important to emphasise the particularity of the voices. The voice represents the individual body in its particularity; therefore my practice occurs as a group where bodies are present to each other and participating with each other through the voice and the ear. Secondly, the suppression of the Jewishness of Jesus, (and therefore of Christianity) is a form of silencing – a suppression of the Jewish voice. The plurality of the bible, therefore, is now in danger as the 'New' testament takes precedent over the 'Old.' The polyvocality of the bible is in danger of becoming univocal. The existing polyphony of the text is now heard as monophony.

Whiteness

Whiteness is a creation that occurs through the interlinking of religion, geography and fluid boundaries of ethnicity as will be shown below. Bonnet, who explores the idea of whiteness across history, points out that one of the earliest citations (1680)[305] of whiteness has to do with a distinction made 'between 'The White Line (the Posterity of Seth)' and 'the black line the Cursed brood of Cain.'[306] This refers to biblical characters, Seth and Cain, who are sons of the first humans, Adam and Eve. Bonnet also quotes a 16th Century chronicler, George Best, who speaks of the biblical character Noah's sons as all being white but the third son Ham as 'marked with a black badge to symbolize loathsomeness and banished to … Africa where they lived as idolators.'[307] This narrative is pertinent as it precedes the story of Babel in the bible. This text was also used to justify slavery as has been explored by Stephen R. Haynes in *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery*[308] where biblical texts are abused for the preservation of power, in this case, whiteness.

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[305] 'White, Adj. (and Adv.) and n.', in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 18 June 2020, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/228566.

[306] Bonnett, 'Who Was White?', 1038.

[307] Ibid.

[308] Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Bonnett outlines conceptualisation of whiteness: 'skin colour, religion and geography are drawn together during 17th and 18th centuries, 'a triple conflation of White = Europe = Christian arose that imparted moral, cultural and territorial content to whiteness.'[309] Theologian James Perkinson says of how the conflation of skin colour and divinity influenced the colonial project: 'The theological meanings invested in epidermal appearances served the function of theodicy, legitimizing... European colonial and later imperial enterprises.'[310] Professor in film studies Richard Dyer remarks on the thought process that leads here: 'Christianity has been thought and felt in distinctly white ways' with a 'Manichean dualism of black:white that could be mapped on to skin colour difference.'[311] The effects of this can be seen today where several nationalist politicians across Europe are using 'white' Christianity in opposition to Islam as a way gaining or consolidating power.[312]

Whiteness goes 'beyond phenotype,'[313] beyond seeming appearances. Dyer notes how the Irish and Jewish people became categorised as white only in 'particular historical circumstances.'[314] Whiteness is more than just a 'race' marker. Black author Renni Eddo-Lodge says whiteness is 'a political ideology that is concerned with maintaining power through domination and exclusion. Anyone can buy into it, just like anyone can choose to challenge it.'[315] According to Womanist theologian Kelly Brown Douglas, whiteness became the standard, 'the narrative of civility'[316] which non-white people aspired to.

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[309] Bonnett, 'Who Was White?', 1038.

[310] James W Perkinson, *White Theology: Outing Supremacy in Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 157.

[311] Richard Dyer, *White: Essays on Race and Culture.* (London: Routledge, 1997), 17.

[312] Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins and Anton Jäger, 'The Populist Right Is Forging an Unholy Alliance with Religion', *The Guardian*, 11 June 2019, sec. Opinion, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/11/populists-right-unholy-alliance-religion.

[313] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, 'Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (8 September 2012): 5, https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630.

[314] Dyer, *White*, 96.

[315] Reni Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race* (London: Bloomsbury Circus, 2017), 170.

[316] Kelly Brown Douglas, *Black Bodies and the Black Church: A Blues Slant* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 73.

Whiteness as hegemonic

Whiteness works as a standard and as a political ideology which becomes hegemonic. Hegemony, as mentioned before is when the majority of people assume that a certain mode of being is the natural way. Whiteness involves 'a wide range of social actors, to the extent that reproductions of white cultural and political power become part of the fabric of everyday life.'[317] The hegemonic is assumed even by those who are disadvantaged by it. Whiteness perpetuates itself through 'a willing (although often coerced or unconscious) acceptance by both whites and people of colour.'[318] The hegemony of whiteness extends through its identification with 'Europe' and 'Christian' into Christian theology. This is not to say that Christian theology was some pure discipline 'infected' by whiteness but that theology in its modern form is bound in some sense to issues of race.

White Theology

Perkinson investigates white hegemony by looking at theology because according to him 'Christian supremacy has given birth to white supremacy.'[319] What he means is that certain theological imaginations assumed a particular notion of supremacy of the Christian religion. The point of my practice is to draw attention to the hidden voice but in order to do that I need to alert us to the presence of the dominant voice. Perkinson evokes the notion of an unhearing self when it comes to white theology:

> '... the problem with white theological talk is that it is almost always about
> race without ever mentioning race. This is its burden. It is an untaught
> pedagogy. A problem of the ear, of the whole body "as" an ear, failing to
> hear its own cadence, its walk. Whiteness is a walk without a talk, a talk
> unconscious of its walk, a modern meaning of "talking head" verbosity,
> oblivious of its body.'[320]

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[317] Lucy Michael and Samantha Schulz, 'Unsettling Whiteness: Disruptions and (Re)Locations', in *Unsettling Whiteness*, ed. Lucy Michael and Samantha Schulz (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014), xii.

[318] Carole Gerster, 'After Whiteness: Exposing the Old and Envisioning the New Multicultural Normal', in *Unsettling Whiteness*, 91.

[319] Perkinson, *White Theology*, 2.

[320] Ibid., 190.

Two points are important here. Firstly, the 'failing to hear.' This is one of the central issues that Bible Noise attempts to engage. There are many voices present within scripture but we cannot hear them because there is a dominant voice overpowering them. This dominant voice, however, is itself not attended to. It is assumed as 'natural' which is how hegemony functions. Hearing other voices requires us to be aware of the dominant voice. Secondly, Perkinson considers white theology to be 'oblivious to its body.' Partly this is due to immense abstractions that theology is capable of. The presence of the body, however, asks for an engagement with the lived experience, within time, within space. Dyer speaks of a contradiction here with regards to Christianity and the body. He speaks of Christianity as 'a religion whose sensibility is focused on the body'[321] which, considering the iconography of Jesus and the emphasis on the body of Christ, is true. However, as Dyer says, 'we think of Christianity as an anti-body religion.'[322] There is much abstraction that takes place and Perkinson draws this abstraction on to the 'white male body that is "theological" in its deepest recess of articulation [that] remains the *habitus* and "unconscious" of the global system of white power and privilege.'[323] This is why the voice becomes so important to the engagement of the text. The voice with my practice becomes a way in which to move from metaphorical 'black' and 'white' of the text to something that's far fleshlier and more embodied.

The problems that arise out of white theology are an important reason for me to explore Black theology. For Black theology is more expressive of the notions of listening to the self, of listening out for the hidden, but also is more cognizant of its fleshly nature.

Black Theology

Black theology in its theorised form arose in the 1960s in the US, notably with James Cone's *Black Theology and Black Power*.[324] Cone draws on the African American experience to articulate a theology that he called 'unashamedly black and unapologetically Christian.'[325] He explained Black theology as 'a theology of survival because it seeks to

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[321] Dyer, *White*, 15.

[322] Ibid., 16.

[323] Perkinson, *White Theology*, 193.

[324] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*.

[325] James H Cone, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody: The Making of a Black Theologian*, 2018.

interpret the theological significance of the being of a community whose existence is threatened by the power of nonbeing.'[326] Black theology arises from the context of engaging with black experience in white dominated systems. There is an added significance, as J. Kameron Carter commenting on Cone says: "The identification between persons of African descent in America and the people Israel avoids the modernist problem of supersessionism because that identity is mediated through the worship of the Jew, Jesus of Nazareth.'[327] Carter then employs an acoustic metaphor: 'To be attuned to the divine harmonics is to play Israel's covenantal song.'[328] That is to say that in order for Christians to understand their religion they need to engage with the Jewish origins of their faith. Therefore, this becomes a method to overcome hegemony: 'African Americans retold history so as to begin dissolving the hegemonic history of whiteness through a new religious orientation toward the fragments of the events of the past.'[329] The recovery of the distinctly Jewish origins of Christianity allows a recalibration that brings forward distinct voices.

Two Black theologies

Black theology is a large field, but, from these liberative and distinction affirming origins, I focus on two works by two black theologians: *Jesus Dub: Theology, Music and Social Change*[330] by Robert Beckford and *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*[331] by Ashon Crawley. I shall be drawing on them to give prompts and openings to the practice of Bible Noise. Both these authors critically engage with their religious communities, by dealing with their material religious practices. Sound forms an important component of their engagement and therefore makes it relevant to my project.

Beckford, who is British with Caribbean ancestry, and Crawley who is American provide two voices from two differing contexts that engage with the sonic from a place of Black theology. Beckford engaging with Dub music describes the cross-over from and between the church and the dancehall. He then borrows Dub's socio-political sound features,

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[326] James H Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation.* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970), 43.

[327] Carter, *Race*, 148–49.

[328] Ibid., 167.

[329] Ibid., 149.

[330] Robert Beckford, *Jesus Dub: Theology, Music and Social Change.* (Taylor & Francis, 2006).

[331] Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*.

applying them to theology and the bible. He considers Dub to be a 'hermeneutical act involving deconstructive/reconstructive activity,'[332] which reconstitutes meaning and language employing 'wordsounds, a transformation of words so as to alter and adjust meaning.'[333] The formation of these word-sounds for Beckford are 'assertive statements that engage with social realities and power relationships.'[334] He then relates features of Dub back into the religious community as he considered the religious services to offer the 'deconstructive/reconstructive' mentioned above. As he says: 'Central to my argument is the view of Black worship as counter ideology. Counter-ideology describes how adherents were provided with alternative views of the world and their place within it based on the theology and practice of the dominant worshipping community.'[335]

Beckford's dealing with word-sounds is relevant as my practice is working on the basis that there is meaning in the sound as well as the text and this is why my practice is embodied and using the human voice. His presentation of the 'alternative' and the 'counter' are important to my practice in order to hear the voices that have been hidden and silenced in the reading aloud of scripture.

Crawley, in a different mode, is theorising through sound an aesthetics of Black Pentecostalism, what he terms an 'otherwise possibility.'[336] He invokes sound as a way of understanding 'otherwise possibilities' which 'announces the fact of infinite alternatives to what *is*.'[337] Otherwise possibility asks for a different engagement to the one we've been involved in. As he says: 'otherwise possibilities exist and the register of imagination, the epistemology through which sensual detection occurs—that is, the way we think the world—has to be altered in order to get at what's there.'[338] The relevance of Crawley here is that my practice is aiming, through the pieces performed, to alter the way scripture is heard by presenting different voices as the 'otherwise' possibilities existing in how the bible is engaged with.

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[332] Beckford, *Jesus Dub*, 2.

[333] Ibid.

[334] Ibid.

[335] Ibid., 58.

[336] Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 2.

[337] Ibid.

[338] Ibid.

Crawley and Beckford both come from Pentecostal churches, now considered to be the fastest growing[339] church in Christianity. It derives its name from Pentecost which I outlined in the previous part,[340] where the Spirit is main instigator of the narrative. The origin words for the Spirit in both Hebrew and Greek give the notion of breath. Crawley draws significantly upon the notion of breath as is evident in his book title. He starts the book with the notorious line 'I can't breathe,'[341] where he is quoting Eric Garner who was killed by police in 2014. At the time of this writing, George Floyd's death, which was a forced withholding of breath at the hands of the police is still resounding around the West. For Pentecostalism, the Spirit or God's breath is core to belief and practice. Breath is fundamental for the voice to sound. The need for a breathed voice in my practice comes from this connection with the Spirit, who animates the event of Pentecost, when voices in distinction speak out aloud simultaneously. Pentecostalism has been viewed with suspicion within more established churches for its seeming lack of 'order,' but for my project it provides bases for understanding the ritual of reading scripture as embodied, sounded through the breath that animates the voice.

Pentecostalism considers the event known as 'The Azusa Street Revival,'[342] a gathering of people praying in Los Angeles in 1906, a key event of its origins. Its relevance here is for the various pluralities that animate the event. Both Crawley and Beckford refer to the Azusa Street Revival as the major event that defines, forms and challenges their respective traditions. Beckford writes: 'Many of the denominations that took root in the Caribbean were born out of the Azusa experience.'[343] Crawley extensively refers to the event, highlighting its social, inclusive nature:

> *White men and women prayed for and with black women and men, Latin*
> *persons were there are the very beginning, Korean and Jewish too. It was*
> *noted, even in the first news story about this new group, how the*

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[339] Richard Vijgen, 'Pentecostalism: Massive Global Growth Under the Radar', Pulitzer Center, 9 March 2015, https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/pentecostalism-massive-global-growth-under-radar.

[340] See above, Pentecost, 87.

[341] Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 1.

[342] Robeck, *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival*.

[343] Beckford, *Jesus Dub*, 34.

interraciality was a flout to the normative ideals of racial categorization

and distinction.[344]

The coming together of these different races in the highly racialised environment of America was significant in itself. It does echo the multi-lingual utterances of the story of Pentecost. What was even stranger for the media of the day was the presence of *glossolalia,* the speaking of 'tongues.' A newspaper report called it a 'weird Babel of tongues,'[345] which brings together the resonance that Pentecost and Babel have. The chaotic, misunderstood sounds of *glossolalia* divided its first hearers and still does so today. For my project, *glossolalia* becomes important as it is an utterance with no immediate obvious meaning and yet it is a form of communication using the sound of the human voice. I'll draw this out further by exploring Beckford and Crawley's engagement with *glossolalia.*

Glossolalia for Beckford and Crawley

For Beckford, *glossolalia* seems deconstructive: 'the speaking of tongues, the sounding of the breath that's without(,) causes human categorisation to crumble.'[346] Crawley similarly highlights *glossolalia*'s disruptiveness:

> *'…glossolalia not only enacts a disruption of grammar and lingual form*
> *but also enacts spatiotemporal incoherence, produces a "floating*
> *nowhere" for celebratory speaking for ecstatic praise against the very*
> *violence and violation that… animates… our political economy. Glossolalia*
> *is the surplus of language and a line of flight.'[347]*

Beckford and Crawley present *glossolalia* as religious and political, a sonic space for emancipation and interpretation. For Beckford, 'one could not have tongues and continue with forms of social discrimination.'[348] Working through racial implications of *glossolalia,* Crawley distinguishes between translation and interpretation, where translation is a search for purity while interpretation is 'necessarily plural, … necessarily irreducible, [and]

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[344] Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 11.

[345] Note 15 ibid., 297.

[346] Beckford, *Jesus Dub*, 118.

[347] Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 224.

[348] Beckford, *Jesus Dub*, 118.

anoriginal.'[349] Beckford agrees: 'Hearing is always an act of interpretation. In church, I was indirectly taught to interpret sound ... to contest and challenge the way things were.'[350]

Sonically this presents an embodying that's without the pre-eminence of the words outlined before in Augustine. This religious practice of sounding opens up different possibilities. For Bible Noise this becomes an opening where different voices can come together and though strange and chaotic at first, Bible Noise aims to provide openings for engagement and imagination. Further, *glossolalia* has a presence within Sound Art practice as well.

Sound Art and Glossolalia

Glossolalia comes up in sound art discourse through discussions on Antonin Artaud[351] and Kurt Schwitters. Brandon Labelle describes Kurt Schwitters' *Ursonate* as drawing 'upon *glossolalia* as an imaginary centre – a linguistic unconscious – to refigure speech according to primary utterance.'[352] *Glossolalia* is employed in sound art discourse to 'escape the tyranny of meaning.'[353] Christof Migone, quoting Roland Barthes, contends that this is because for Barthes, 'discourse is not communication, as is oft repeated, it is subjection.'[354] The move to the sonic becomes almost a move against meaning as echoed by Trevor Wishart: 'I find meaning gets in the way.'[355] Richard Kostelanetz, in defining a text-sound art, excludes pitch, meaning and even ritual utterance.[356] These quotes point towards a moving away from linguistic speech into a speech as 'sound.' In Bible Noise, what is of interest is to keep a balance of the aural and the linguistic. As previously said, too often in the engagement of the bible the linguistic takes primacy over sound, to the point that every text loses its genre and voice. *Glossolalia* provides a way of engaging with Christian

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[349] Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 219.

[350] Beckford, *Jesus Dub*, 66.

[351] Jay Murphy amongst others consider glossolalia as a feature of most of Artaud's work: 'Artaud's ... glossolalia... after a certain point punctuates each and every one of his texts.' Jay Murphy, 'Artaud's Scream', *Deleuze Studies* 10, no. 2 (29 April 2016): 142, https://doi.org/10.3366/dls.2016.0219.

[352] LaBelle, *Lexicon of the Mouth*, 65.

[353] Roland Barthes in Christof Migone, 'Untitled', in *Writing Aloud: The Sonics of Language*, ed. Brandon LaBelle and Christof Migone (Los Angeles, Calif.: Errant Bodies, 2001), 165.

[354] Ibid., 166.

[355] Trevor Wishart in Vincent, 'The Music in Words', 71.

[356] Richard Kostelanetz, 'Text-Sound Art: A Survey', *Performing Arts Journal* 2, no. 2 (1977): 61–70.

ritual in a sonic non/supra-linguistic sense that is vocal. It is a vocal practice that takes place as a participation in the ritual. Participation in this form points towards the presence of community. Beckford and Crawley highlight several features of their communal worship that denote a religious sensibility that is not merely private but participatory.

Black Theology and Community

Beckford describes the worship of Caribbean congregations: 'The worship cultures of Black Methodists and Baptists from Jamaica were physically expressive, oral, participatory and communal.'[357] Sonically, this is often expressed in the call and response of gospel music and also in the preaching when the congregation will respond with shouts and 'Amen!'. This provides a very different sonic register to the homily or preaching in traditional churches where a single voice speaks to a congregation. The key difference is the participation and it is a sonic participation. As Beckford evocatively says: 'In church, I had learned to recognise the dynamics of *Black noise* through the antiphonality of call and response, the narrativity of orality in song and preaching and the expressive physicality played out in the artistry of the sermon.'[358]

Continuing the theme of participation, for Crawley, 'sociality' is a fundamental term in his work. He considers belief itself to be a 'practice of sociality.'[359] He proposes that Blackpentecostalism is an 'aesthetic sociality of blackness'[360] which is 'an egalitarian mode of Spirit indwelling, wherein that which those filled with the Spirit have is immediately given away to others through aesthetic proclamation, through linguistic rupture that announces and enunciates expanded sociality.'[361] He is referring to the sounds of his black church where congregants can express different mystical and ecstatic events. When the congregation is caught up in the Spirit there is an equality that breaks down different hierarchies, where anyone can utter prophecy or speak in tongues. The 'linguistic rupture' for Crawly is the speaking of tongues which is an expression that is open to be uttered

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[357] Beckford, *Jesus Dub*, 42.

[358] Ibid., 17.

[359] Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 25.

[360] Ibid., 37. From Laura Harris, 'What Happened to the Motley Crew? C. L. R. James, Hélio Oiticica, and the Aesthetic Sociality of Blackness', *Social Text* 30, no. 3 (112) (1 September 2012): 53, https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-1597332.

[361] Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 38.

simultaneously with others, without pre-scripting and formal pre-arrangement. The ability to utter simultaneously is important for Crawley because for him sociality 'is simultaneity;'[362] it is the presence of the person to each other as persons and community. For my research, this is resonant. Community is important to me because I consider polyphony an enactment of community in how sounds remain distinct while blending in a whole. The simultaneity of sound is the experience of polyphony. Polyphony and sociality seem to present reciprocal interpretations of each other as ways of construing community.

So far Black theology has provided different ways of performing and engaging with the ritual of reading scripture out loud. The reason for choosing Black theology, was as mentioned before, a way of overcoming the hegemony of whiteness which is suffused through theological discourse. However, an important strand of voices has not yet been heard. These are the voices of women. Beckford[363] and Crawley,[364] refer extensively to, and form their arguments with and through Womanist theorists and theologians and I have not brought out their voices overtly in the Black theology presented here. However, the voices of women are critical for this project and so I now turn to feminist and Womanist theology in order to listen and take on board insights and processes that will make sense of my project. The presence of the term Womanist acknowledges the problems that feminism has had with the hegemony of whiteness. Womanism is a term coined by Alice Walker[365] as a 'response to racism and classism in feminism... and sexism in black liberationist thought.'[366] Womanism, which arises from the Black articulation of feminism, arises because of the hegemony of whiteness and alerts us to the different levels of hegemony that exist. Therefore, my engagement with feminist theology will take into account Womanist engagement with the texts.

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[362] Ibid., 119.

[363] Beckford outlines how he is informed by bell hooks, Jacquelyn Grant, Patricia Hill Collins, Carolyn Cooper and Kelly Brown Douglas. Beckford, *Jesus Dub,* 9-10. (bell hooks doesn't capitalise her name. See below, Womanism, 223.)

[364] Crawley refers, critiques and draws upon Kelly Brown Douglas, Cheryl Gilkes, Marcella Althaus-Reid and Saidya Hartman amongst others.

[365] Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), xi.

[366] Gafney, *Womanist Midrash*, 6.

Feminist theology

This project had its origins in my reading of the book *Whispering the Word: Hearing Women's Stories in the Old Testament,* by feminist theologian Jacqueline Lapsley. Lapsley attempts to hear the voices of different women in the text. I will be drawing upon this work at various points but I will explore my approach and reference to feminist theology through the biblical story of Hagar. I choose the story of Hagar because of her status as a foreigner (Egyptian), a slave and a woman. Wilda Gafney, Womanist theologian says: 'Hagar has served as the launching point for contemporary womanist discourse and premodern protowomanist analyses, and continues to fire the exegetical imaginations of readers/hearers of African descent in multiple religious traditions.'[367] This is due to Hagar's African origins, her slave experience and her presence in Islamic traditions, alongside Jewish and Christian traditions. Hagar is an outsider on different levels and therefore corresponds to a potential hidden voice which my practice attempts to hear. She is enslaved, used by Abraham and Sarah to give Abraham an heir. Her story comes to us from two short pieces of text in the book of Genesis.[368] Feminist theologian, Phyllis Trible, starts her classic work, *Texts of Terror*[369] with the story of Hagar. She says: 'As one of the first females in scripture to experience use, abuse, and rejection, Hagar the Egyptian slave claims our attention. Knowledge of her has survived in bits and pieces only, from the oppressor's perspective at that, and so our task is precarious: to tell Hagar's story from the fragments that remain.'[370] Trible's reference to 'bits' and 'pieces' and 'fragments' point towards the whispers of the different voices in the bible that have been ignored or passed by. My exploration of the story of Hagar will be guided primarily by Trible and Gafney for their attention to the texts of Hagar. Through this exploration of Hagar, I show how feminist theology interacts with the text and afterwards how this interaction is employed through the practice of Bible Noise.

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[367] Ibid., 38.

[368] Genesis chapters 16 and 21

[369] Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

[370] Ibid., 9.

Hagar in Patriarchal Texts

The narratives of Hagar appear in Genesis chapters 16 and 21. The start and the end of the narrative Hagar shows not only the patriarchal reality which Hagar is in but the patriarchal reality of the text. The start of her narrative states: 'Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children.' (16:1) The story revolves around how Abram can have a child. The women in the story, Sarai and Hagar, are there primarily for their child-bearing capabilities. At the end of the narrative, we hear of Ishmael growing up in the wilderness and that 'his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.' (21:20) Hagar's name is not mentioned and the narration centres on Ishmael her son. Hagar is instructed by the 'angel' (who is a representation of God) that she will name the child, 'you shall call him Ishmael, for the Lord has given heed to your affliction.' (16:11) However, the text records, 'Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.' (16:15) It is Abram who names the son while Hagar is the one who bears the child. As Trible says of this text: 'Patriarchy is well in control.'[371] An important point that feminist theology has to engage with here is that the biblical text is patriarchal; as Trible says elsewhere regarding the bible, 'the patriarchal stamp is permanent.'[372]

The question that arises for feminist theology is how to engage with these patriarchal texts. Lapsley puts forward three types of responses. She categories them as loyalists, rejectionists and revisionists.[373] Loyalists acknowledge the problem of the patriarchy of the text and aim 'to locate the problem in the *interpretation* of the bible, not in the text itself.'[374] Rejectionists 'reject the bible as authoritative'[375] by which she means that the bible becomes one text amongst others with no specific status for the Christian community. Revisionists, according to Lapsley, 'acknowledge the patriarchal aspects of the text' without making it 'definitive.'[376] Revisionists also look for 'muted traditions and voices that offer alternative to the dominant biblical strains, but that must be teased out in order to be heard.'[377] Lapsley identifies her work with the revisionists. My project will draw

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[371] Ibid., 19.

[372] Phyllis Trible, *God and Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 202.

[373] Lapsley, *Whispering the Word*, 3.

[374] Ibid.

[375] Ibid.

[376] Ibid.

[377] Ibid.

on this 'revisionist' method for its evocation of 'voices' that seem 'muted' which can be attended to as an alternative to the 'dominant' or the hegemonic. Trible's work can also be considered 'revisionist' in the sense that Lapsley puts it. Trible describes her methodology as a mix of approaches. One is to document 'misogyny historically and sociologically'[378] within the text. Another is to 'uphold forgotten texts' while reinterpreting 'familiar ones to shape a remnant theology that challenges the sexism of scripture.'[379] Her third approach is to incorporate the above two by offering 'sympathetic readings of abused women'[380] which are poetical and theological. My practice is attempting to acknowledge the biases of the text while listening out for the 'forgotten texts' which in my terminology corresponds to voices that have been hidden or silenced. Reconfiguring these texts in my practice gives the possibility of performing these texts in ways that are poetical and/or theological.

Womanist Engagement with Texts

Wilda Gafney offers a further engagement from a Womanist perspective. She draws upon the Jewish tradition of the *midrash.* The *midrash* is a Jewish rabbinical reading of the text, where 'dominant narratival readings' are reimagined 'while crafting new ones to stand alongside... former readings.'[381] She calls her reading 'Womanist midrash' because 'it attends to marginalized characters in biblical narratives,'[382] focusing on women and girls and those are foreign and/or enslaved. Gafney also draws on a practice drawn from the Black church known as 'sanctified imagination' where preachers go beyond the text, but in a way that's still considered authoritative. For Gafney: 'The sanctified imagination is the fertile creative space where the preacher-interpreter enters the text, particularly the spaces in the text, and fills them out with missing details: names, back stories, detailed descriptions of the scene and characters, and so on.'[383] Gafney's Womanist Midrash listens out for outsiders (defined by femaleness, foreignness and slavery) within the text and creatively engages with them. Drawing upon Lapsley, Trible and Gafney's approaches I try and listen to Hagar.

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[378] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 3.

[379] Ibid.

[380] Ibid.

[381] Gafney, *Womanist Midrash*, 3.

[382] Ibid.

[383] Ibid.

Listening to Hagar

If we are to hear the counter-traditions in the text we must not just accept the dominant thread of these texts, which is the story of Abram/Abraham. We need to hear Hagar's own agency and her own character within the text. As Trible says above, we only have 'fragments.' However, attention to these fragments might allow us to hear beyond the dominant strain of Abram/Abraham, the patriarch of the text, a patriarch not just in this narrative but according to tradition and religious imagination as well. Laspley draws upon literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of polyphony, where texts are polyphonous; an 'interplay among a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses with each voice maintaining its fully validity.'[384] Accordingly, we can now hear Hagar's voice as a distinctive voice amongst others in the broader text. This evokes the notion of polyphony and how it can be experienced acoustically. There are many distinct voices which can be heard in their distinctness if attention is paid to them. This forms an important part of my practice where polyphony is employed as a way of listening that can allow us to hear beyond the dominant voice. Listening to Hagar is done, not by silencing the surrounding voices, but by hearing her voice amongst others.

Hearing Hagar through Divine Entanglement

When Hagar flees to the desert, God meets with her and asks where she has come from and where she is going. Trible comments: 'For the first time a character speaks to Hagar and uses her name.'[385] She replies, 'I am running away from my mistress Sarai' (16:8) and this is significant according to Trible: 'In answering, Hagar speaks for the first time. Exodus from oppression liberates her voice.'[386] This is Hagar's first speech and her first self-identification is as one who is running away. Running away, or fleeing, is another possible meaning of the name Hagar.[387] Hagar is identifying herself as someone fleeing the power structure that is Abram and Sarai. The act of fleeing is a further sign of her agency for she acts in Trible's words, 'to claim her own exodus.'[388] God now tells her that *she* will bear a son. Previously, her role is merely to bear a son to Abraham. Now, the allusion is

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[384] Lapsley, *Whispering the Word*, 30.

[385] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 15.

[386] Ibid.

[387] 'The Amazing Name Hagar: Meaning and Etymology', Abarim Publications, accessed 2 July 2020, https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Hagar.html.

[388] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 13.

that this son is hers. Hagar is also given a name for her son. There are other men who are given names for their children but no other woman in the Jewish bible is given this responsibility. The echo of an 'angel' coming to a woman and speaking directly to her about having a child and to name the child can be found in the New Testament in Luke 1, when the angel speaks to Mary. It is an echo, a whisper across texts, but the parallel is striking if attended to. This kind of attention is what Lapsley aims for in her work. She says when it comes to women's voices and texts: 'Attending carefully to women's speech means straining to hear those whispers, with an ear to the possibility that the whispers of women also bear a commingled whispering of the Divine Word.'[389] Attending carefully is an important part of my practice, to hear the many voices, especially the ones who've been overlooked. My practice attempts to lay out the possibility of paying attention to these voice that have been ignored. An added resonance is the name that Hagar is to give her son, Ishmael meaning 'God has heard.'[390] This evokes the notion that Hagar now has a voice, for she is in conversation with someone who hears her.

Hagar's Voice Heard

Hagar then performs a unique action within the bible: Hagar uses her voice and names God. She calls him El-Roi or the 'the God who sees.' Gafney and Trible consider this uniqueness saying Hagar 'is the only person in the canon to give God a name'[391] and 'a power attributed to no one else in all the bible.'[392] Naming someone in ancient times was an act of power. Hagar names God and then names the place where she met God, *Beer-Lahai-Roi*. She names the immaterial (God) and the material (place); her agency here is profound. Hagar is a theologian. Her naming unites the divine and human encounter: 'the God who sees and the God who is seen.'[393] This is the highpoint of Hagar's story; she has voice, has agency, performs acts of power in naming God and place. She achieves this in the wilderness outside the structures and strictures of society. However, in the text, she has been asked to go back to Sarai. What will happen when Hagar goes back to the structures of oppression which she fled?

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[389] Lapsley, *Whispering the Word*, 21.

[390] Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: The Five Books of Moses* (New York; London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2019), 52.

[391] Gafney, *Womanist Midrash*, 42.

[392] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 18.

[393] Ibid.

Hagar back in Society

Hagar heads back to Sarai and the text says that God asks her to go back to her mistress and 'submit' to her (16:9). Another translation reads it as: 'Return to your mistress and suffer abuse.'[394] Gafney on this point comments: 'The biblical text reifies her enslavement.'[395] Hagar is sent back into the reality of the continuing power structures. However, as Gafney says, 'there is hope. Hagar will become the Mother of Many Peoples.'[396] Gafney is referring to the text that follows which promises Hagar to be a mother to a nation. However, as the text continues, after Hagar's return the text elevates Abram as having a son, who is borne by Hagar (16:15-16) and it is Abram who is recorded as naming Ishmael, though it was spoken to Hagar. As Trible comments, 'patriarchy is well in control.'[397]

What Trible documents is the reality of the power structures that abuse women. Trible's approach to these 'texts of terror' is to interpret 'stories of outrage on behalf of their female victims in order to recover a neglected history, to remember a past that the present embodies, and to pray that these terrors shall not come to pass again. In telling sad stories, a feminist hermeneutic seeks to redeem the time.'[398] Feminist theology here takes into account the realities of power structures while listening to hidden voices and tries to engage with them in a way that could make a change in the present structures. What Hagar represents is a profound possibility of divine encounter and personhood that is stifled by the power structures which surround her. Trible's recounting attempts to allow readers to hear Hagar in a fresh way to hope that Hagar's story can have an impact in the present. My work is partly aligned with this same process and I will unpack how as I discuss the piece 'Hagar' further below. Hagar's story additionally brings out a dynamic that feminist theology encounters: the dynamic of Sarai/Sarah's collusion and agency in the power structures that demean Hagar.

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[394] Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, 52.

[395] Gafney, *Womanist Midrash*, 42.

[396] Ibid.

[397] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 19.

[398] Ibid., 3.

Hagar at the intersection

Trible considers that Hagar's story 'depicts oppression in three familiar forms: nationality, class and sex.'[399] Sarai is the one who seems to most directly contribute to Hagar's suffering. Gafney speaks of Sarai's role as the cause of suffering while being trapped in the patriarchal system: 'Sarai is free; she has some societal privilege as Abram's woman and Hagar's mistress. But she is still an infertile woman in a male-dominated world, both of which imperil her status; she seeks to attain/restore her status on and in Hagar's body.'[400] Sarai is exerting what power she can, despite that exertion causing suffering to another woman. Gafney reads Sarai/Sarah's complex portrayal here as an example of 'the complicated relationships between women and men across lines of privilege and hierarchy.'[401] Gafney is eliciting a key feature of Womanist thought, that takes on board the different layers of oppression that society can have. Gafney reads Hagar 'through the prism of the wholesale enslavement of black peoples in the Americas and elsewhere; Hagar is the mother of Harriet Tubman and the women and men who freed themselves from slavery.'[402] Hagar has a deep resonance with women who face oppressions on different fronts. This brings up the notion of 'intersectionality,' a term coined by Black law professor, Kimberlé Crenshaw.[403] Crenshaw says that the concept can be seen in action from the 19th Century: 'In every generation and in every intellectual sphere and in every political moment, there have been African American women who have articulated the need to think and talk about race through a lens that looks at gender, or think and talk about feminism through a lens that looks at race.'[404] Intersectionality came out of a legal case that Crenshaw was involved with where the law could protect against race OR gender discrimination but could not protect against both. Crenshaw elucidates: 'The consequence of that is when African American women or any other women of colour experience either compound or overlapping discrimination, the law initially just was not there to come to

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[399] Ibid., 27.

[400] Gafney, *Womanist Midrash*, 41.

[401] Ibid., 44.

[402] Ibid.

[403] Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex'.

[404] Bim Adewunmi, 'Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality: "I Wanted to Come up with an Everyday Metaphor That Anyone Could Use"', accessed 13 March 2017, http://www.newstatesman.com/lifestyle/2014/04/kimberl-crenshaw-intersectionality-i-wanted-come-everyday-metaphor-anyone-could.

their defence.'[405] As Crenshaw developed the concept she showed 'how discourses of resistance (e.g., feminism and antiracism) could themselves function as sites that produced and legitimized marginalization.'[406] This is why I have engage with two systems of discrimination in the hope that the discourse against one does not become a tool of oppression for the other. Hagar's story therefore needs to be understood within the different systems of discrimination she 'intersects'. The drawing upon Womanist theology is important for how it takes into account the different discriminations that happen within Christian practice and theology.

Having gone through an engagement of Hagar through the texts and having engaged with some of issues in hearing Hagar, I now describe the piece that came out of this engagement.

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[405] Ibid.

[406] Devon W. Carbado et al., 'Intersectionality: Mapping the Movements of a Theory', *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 10, no. 2 (ed 2013): 304, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X13000349.

Movement 1

Hagar

Group 1	Group 2
Sarai said to Abram,	Sarai said to Abram,
"You see that the Lord	You see
You see	has prevented me
from bearing children;	You see
You see	go in to my slave-girl;
it may be that	You see
You see	I shall obtain
children by her."	You see
And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.	whatever Sarah says to you,
And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.	do as she tells you,
And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.	for it is through Isaac

And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.	that offspring shall be named for you
You see	Listened
Listened	You see
Hagar the Egyptian	But Sarah saw the son of
when she saw that she had conceived,	Hagar the Egyptian,
she looked with contempt on her mistress.	whom she had borne to Abraham,
she saw	playing with her son Isaac.
she looked	she looked with contempt.

Then Sarai said to Abram,	So she said to Abraham,
"May the wrong done to me be on you!	Cast out this slave woman with her son;
Your slave-girl is in your power;	The matter was very distressing to Abraham
do to her as you please.	on account of his son.

Then Sarai dealt harshly with her,	So Abraham rose early in the morning,
Then Sarai dealt harshly with her,	and took bread and a skin of water,
Then Sarai dealt harshly with her,	and gave it to Hagar,
Then Sarai dealt harshly with her,	putting it on her shoulder,
Then Sarai dealt harshly with her,	along with the child,
and she ran away from her.	and sent her away.
Hagar the Egyptian.	Hagar the Egyptian,
Hagar the one who flees	Hagar the dragged.
Hagar Egyptian slave-girl	Hagar slave-girl Egyptian
ran away	sent away

Movement 2

The angel of the Lord	in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.
found her by	the water in the skin was gone,
a spring of water	she lifted up her voice and wept.
in the wilderness	And God heard the voice of the boy;
Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai,	What troubles you, Hagar?
where have you come from	Do not be afraid;
and where are you going?"	for God has heard
	the voice of the boy where he is.
So she named the Lord who spoke to her,	Then God opened her eyes and
"You are El-Roi";	she saw a well of water.
for she said,	El-Roi – the God who sees
"Have I really seen God and	God opened her eyes
remained alive after seeing him?"	and she saw a well of water.

Movement 3

Now you have conceived and shall bear a son; you shall call him Ishmael, for the Lord has given heed to your affliction.	Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me. Sarah bore Abraham a son Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him.
Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.	
Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.	As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.

Hagar	Hagar

the slave-girl	the Egyptian
Egyptian	slave-girl
Ishmael	God listens
El-Roi	God sees
God heard the voice of the boy	God opened her eyes
God listens	Ishmael
God sees	El-Roi

'Hagar': An Engagement through the Practice of Bible Noise[407]

I have taken the two texts of the narrative Hagar, found resonances between the two texts and placed the portions of the respective texts next to each other. This placement allows the listener and performer to appreciate the text in a deconstructed way, where repetitions and resonances between the two texts are brought to attention.

The first movement gives voice to Hagar's interactions with Sarah and Abraham. Sarah asks Abraham to 'look' at her plight and Abraham 'listens to her voice.' Sarah is the one who has voice while Abraham looks and listens with the power to control the narrative. Sight and sound are introduced as important to the piece through the repetitions of 'look', 'saw', 'voice' and 'listen.' Sarah's power is only in her access to Abraham. Sarah appeals to patriarchy to solve her problem which is a patriarchal problem: that she has no children. When she does have a child, she wants the possible threat of Ishmael to her own son Isaac to be removed. Hagar and Sarah both *look* with contempt, Hagar at Sarah and Sarah at Ishmael. Hagar is without voice yet can see Sarah while at the same time, Sarah is still caught in the patriarchal structure and so still cannot see Hagar. She can only see a threat to her own son and she is also threatened by Hagar's transformed vision. As Sarah has no power on her own, all she can do is mistreat Hagar or ask Abraham to send her away. In chapter 16 Sarah mistreats Hagar while in chapter 21 she gets Abraham to send away Hagar and Ishmael. Abraham sends them away with food and water but as said before he has not said anything supportive of Hagar. Rather, the food and water may solely be on account of the Ishmael. The movement ends with a repetition of Hagar's name with its different associated meanings. Her foreignness is accented with the repetition of 'Egyptian.' This is to centre the piece around Hagar, to sound out the 'counter-tradition' that feminist theology aims to amplify.

The second movement is set in the wilderness, which is where Hagar finds herself in both chapters 16 and 21. The wilderness is equivalent to the desert: there is a lack of water. The first resonance is about that water, its precariousness and its lack. For the first time in the movement Hagar's voice is heard not in words but in weeping: 'She lifted up her voice and wept.' Hagar is now addressed by God with questions. At the same time God has heard the

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[407] See Appendix-A, Hagar, 295. The piece can be heard at https://on.soundcloud.com/ZiQtj

voice of the boy, the boy whose name is Ishmael which means God listens. Hagar's agency has been vision and now she names God as someone who sees and, through sight, God leads her to the water which was precarious and absent. 'Eyes', 'saw', 'sees': words associated with sight are mixed in the ending of this section, where God is seen and so is water. The name that she confers on God is also repeated as a way of emphasising the agency of sight for Hagar whose deprivation mutes her.

The third movement takes us back to the role of women as child bearers. The power structures are back in place. While God has attended to Hagar's 'affliction', God brings Sarah 'laughter.' Both women are bearing sons for the man of the narrative, Abram/Abraham, who is the one who names each child. Hagar's hope remains in the promise that is made separately to each Abraham and Hagar: the boy will become a 'nation.' In the piece Hagar moves from her initial identity as 'slave-girl' and an 'Egyptian' to someone who gives birth to 'God listens' (Ishmael) and whom God sees. With this ending, Hagar is given a central place as someone who God interacts with. It is an ending which is more theologically reflective than narrative text which alludes to Hagar's identity: A person who is in God's sight and hearing.

In this piece, I drew upon the ideas of Lapsley, Trible and Gafney. Lapsley looks for 'counter-traditions' that needs to be 'teased out.'[408] Trible mixes approaches that analyse the women in the texts in their patriarchal context, uplifting 'forgotten texts' and reading them with a sympathy that could foster change for women in the present day.[409] Gafney, through her Womanist 'midrash,' highlights Hagar's intersectionality. The piece repeats terms of Hagar's identity which oppress her, Egyptian, Slave and Girl/Woman, but aims to end in hope by considering Hagar as important to divinity in unique ways; in her being able to see God and name him. This ending evokes Gafney's 'sanctified imagination' mentioned above.[410] The aim for my practice is that the piece could give space, possibilities, openings; to construct from the fragments of a tale a fully formed person of agency, bravery and fortitude; Hagar.

[408] Lapsley, *Whispering the Word*, 3.

[409] Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 3.

[410] See above, Womanist Engagement with Texts, 113.

Conclusion to Part 2

I have engaged and drawn upon three forms of theology for this project. Postcolonial, Black and feminist theology have provided voices from the margins to engage with the hegemony of empire, race and gender. It was important to explore Christianity's own entanglements with these hegemonies by showing its own participation in empire, the establishment of racial divides and the assumptions of patriarchy. As shown with postcolonial theology, there are limits to what a particular theology can engage with and it is prone to its own contradictions. I drew upon three theologies as a way to show the different forms of marginalisation that occurs as each theology arises from a particular experience of marginalisation.

This project is aiming to hear hidden voices of foreigners and women. Accordingly, two pieces were discussed: 'FSA (Foreigner, Stranger and Alien) and 'Hagar.' FSA showed the ambivalence towards foreigners within the numerous texts uttered but also gave descriptions of being a foreigner. Hagar drew out the experience of not just foreignness but also of being a woman and being enslaved. Hagar was an example of intersectionality where persons are caught in the 'intersection' of different oppressive structures. Therefore, Womanist theology through Gafney was drawn upon to engage with Hagar's experience. The piece 'Hagar,' drawn from the two texts where she's situated, showed the oppressive structures she was under while also showing her agency and divine interaction.

Through the early part of the project the character of Hagar was not a key voice for me to listen to. Yet through the engagement with the above forms of theology, she has become a key voice to hear, a voice from multiple margins who can see and name God. To be able hear such a voice is core to this project.

Contexts Part 3: Philosophical Resonances

Introduction to Part 3

In the previous section I have shown my reasoning and use of postcolonial, Black and feminist theology in engaging with the texts. Engaging the bible through these theologies is a way to hear different voices, not just acoustically but also through different academic approaches. Using these theologies becomes a way to listen differently and attend to what we have not experienced before. Now I shall outline my philosophical engagement with this project. For my project, philosophy has a dual role. First, philosophy outlines the thinking that articulates and supports the project and second, philosophy is used as a way to connect theological and sound art discourses. The connection comes due to the relationship that theology and sound art have with philosophy. Philosophy is a broad set of discourses and I need to first give some rationale to my choices of philosophical discourse. In order to do so I first explore the bible texts for notions of philosophy by drawing upon 'Wisdom literature.' The portrayal of 'Wisdom' as feminine leads to a discussion of the female voice within philosophy drawing on Adriana Cavarero's reflection of the woman philosopher Diotima in Plato's writing. The body is denigrated while the soul is elevated with the woman associated with the body and the man with the soul. The discussion of the body is related to my practice in why I use the voice and why a group needs to gather for the practice. Building on further reflections from Cavarero, I draw on philosopher and theologian Karmen MacKendrick who explores the continuation of these philosophical concepts in Christian theology. Cavarero and MacKendrick, through their discussion on the voice, give launch points to discuss the notion of plurality. I engage Jean-Luc Nancy's text *Being Singular Plural* to expand upon what notion of plurality I'm engaging with in my practice of polyphony. I'm interested in what implications plurality has for community and identity therefore draw together Nancy's own interest in community together with Hannah Arendt's conceptualisation of human plurality. Within my practice I then reflect on how listening to voices in the context of race and gender is a bringing together of the plurality of human bodies.

Philosophy - The Female Voice

Philosophy comes from the Greek, ('philo' – Love; 'sophy' – Wisdom) literally the love of wisdom. 'Wisdom,' as a term, features heavily in certain parts of the bible especially in the books of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes.[411] Anthony Thiselton comments on contents of these books: 'Life is complex; wisdom is varied, and expressed by more than one voice.'[412] The plurality of voice regarding Wisdom and analogously to philosophy is an important resonance with my project which aims to listen to different voices. Proverbs acknowledges different authors, starting with Solomon, however all the named authors are male. Towards the end of Proverbs there is an oracle from the mother of King Lemuel, but it is presented as: 'The words of King Lemuel.' (Proverbs 31:1)

This does not mean that the female voice is entirely absent in the books. When wisdom is personified, the voice of Wisdom is female. The presentation of Wisdom as female has given feminist theologians openings to explore theology from feminist and Womanist perspectives. Funolo Olojede, a research in the Gender Unit in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, explores in her thesis how the character of Wisdom 'enables us to perceive certain uncelebrated women in the Old Testament in a new light.'[413] Feminist theologian Elizabeth Johnson, in her now classic text *She Who Is: the Mystery of God in a Feminist Theological Discourse,*[414] draws upon 'Wisdom – *Sophia,* and Mother imagery to develop a Trinitarian theology, to point us towards the triune God, mystery of relation who may be spoken of as 'SHE WHO IS."[415] Johnson is doing this through the traditions of Jewish religious text to personify God in accessible forms like angels, as can be seen in the texts of Hagar discussed above.[416]

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[411] Anthony C. Thiselton, 'Wisdom in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures: The Hebrew Bible and Judaism':, *Theology*, 24 March 2011, 163, https://doi.org/10.1177/0040571X10395465.

[412] Ibid., 170.

[413] Funlola Oluseyi Olojede, 'Unsung Heroines of the Hebrew Bible: A Contextual Theological Reading from the Perspective of Woman Wisdom' (Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2011), 3, https://scholar.sun.ac.za:443/handle/10019.1/6493.

[414] Elizabeth A Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York, 2017).

[415] Nicola Slee, 'The Holy Spirit and Spirituality', in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology.*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Nicola Slee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 183.

[416] See above, Movement 2, 122.

Wisdom in Proverbs is personified as a female voice that demands attention: 'Wisdom cries out in the street; in the squares she raises her voice.' (Proverbs 1:20); 'To you, O people, I call and my cry is to all that live.' (Proverbs 8:4) She defines herself as being with God in the beginning during the act of creation (Proverbs 8:23) and invites everyone to a feast (Proverbs 9:5). The presence of 'Woman Wisdom'[417] offers an evocation of philosophy from the above biblical quotes as being noisy, welcoming and hospitable. It feels bodily and embracing.

In contrast however as philosopher Adriana Cavarero shows philosophy can negate the body in favour of an abstract soul. The denigration then leads to women being considered more bodily and men being considered more spiritual, which leads to men being considered superior and women inferior. Cavarero reflects upon Greek imagery that portrays women with animals calling it: 'a recurrent cultural topos' that 'has long linked woman with the animal element, as though her humanity were intimately imbued with it.'[418] Cavarero says this link comes where the feminine is 'represented as almost-bestial' while 'the masculine as almost-divine.'[419] This representation comes an 'ontologically descending hierarchy' of 'god-man-animal' where the spiritual is how men unite with god while the body unites them with animals.[420] As I will show below, the denigration of the body and the association of the feminine with the body which is 'bestial' will resonate centuries later in Christian theology. The link between the body and feminine could be a reason why women's voices got hidden or silenced as the theology prioritised the spiritual over the body. This possibility has different resonances for my practice. The engagement of the bible today is often in silent reading while my practice is about reading aloud. Reading aloud in the presence of others brings the body into engagement with the bible as the group listens to each other reading aloud, acknowledging each other's presence and making space for each other as each body requires it. The abstract text of the bible becomes different when voiced within a group, where sound makes it more immediate and temporal rather than the eternal immortality that abstract maxims purport to have.

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[417] Olojede, 'Unsung Heroines of the Hebrew Bible', 11.

[418] Adriana Cavarero, *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy*, trans. Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio and Áine O'Healy (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 110.

[419] Ibid.

[420] Ibid.

In the bible, though Wisdom is considered to be a woman, no woman's utterance is directly attributed here. Wisdom seems to be without a temporality, without flesh; she becomes an ideal rather than any embodied reference to a named women within the bible. The ideal of Woman wisdom is in contrast to the image of the 'strange' or 'loose' woman in Proverbs 7:4-5:

4 Say to Wisdom, "You are my sister,"
    and call Discernment a friend,
5 To keep you from a stranger woman,
    from a smooth-talking alien woman.[421]

The 'stranger woman' was briefly mentioned in my description of the piece 'FSA (Foreigner, Strange and Alien) above.[422] Olojede in discussing texts from the book of Proverbs recounts several interpretations of this alien woman whom she calls 'Strange Woman,' summarising them: 'it is clear that the Strange Woman was perceived as a threat to the male community of Yehud, whether from a social, economic, or religious perspective. The Strange Woman and Wisdom Woman share resemblances not only from a literary but also from a socio-historical perspective. Two extreme configurations of the feminine are juxtaposed in poignant poetry.'[423] The threat might be social, economic or religious but the way the Strange Woman is portrayed is far more bodily, as a sexual object that needs to be avoided. She is 'smooth talking' (2:16, 5:3, 6:24, 7:5, 7:21), 'loud' (7:11, 9:13), 'an adulteress' (2:16, 6:24, 7:5) physically beautiful (6:25) and a prostitute (7:10, 23:27). The Wisdom Woman and the Strange Woman can both be understood as metaphors but the difference between these metaphors points towards a denigration of the body. While they both use their voice to gain attention, the Strange Woman's voice is described as loud and smooth talking. Just the loudness of the Strange Woman becomes a sign of waywardness. The Strange Woman descriptions and associations with physical beauty and sexual promiscuity further point towards a suspicion towards the woman's body. There is an additional layer of relevance to this woman. In many passages she is referred to as 'alien' or 'foreign.' Olojede says that the Strange Woman could also 'be a metaphor for foreign

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[421] Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible, volume 3: the writings: Ketuvim* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2019), 374.

[422] See above, Foreigner, Stranger and Alien, 97.

[423] Olojede, 'Unsung Heroines of the Hebrew Bible', 78.

wisdom.'[424] The metaphor works on the ideas of bodily transgression and foreignness. These ideas resonate with my concerns around gender and race. Both gender and race are differentiated through the body even if the way they are differentiated is distinct, (socially constructed dress codes for gender, skin colour for race.)

The consideration of the body is a fundamental reason for using the human voice in my practice. The use of the human voice here takes place by being bodily present to other voices. Therefore, the philosophy I engage with requires to be discourses that accept the body and the voice that comes from it. The presence of voice and body also reconfigure what the bible is. Rather than a set of abstract maxims, the presence of the voice and body can alert us to the presence of the different bodies that the text recounts. The voice, in its temporality, impermanence and fleshiness, requires further engagement, because in the bodily engagement with reading aloud of the bible it might open possibilities of listening and hearing that abstract thinking might be closed to.

Voice

My discussion of the voice revolves around how its corporeality has been diminished in philosophy and theology. The discussion is informed by the philosopher theologian, Karmen MacKendrick and Adriana Cavarero. MacKendrick considers the voice as 'the meeting point of sense and sense: of meaningfulness and sensuousness,'[425] Voice opens up both the flesh and the abstract. This dual possibility of the voice is reduced when the body is discounted as MacKendrick points out: 'The fleshiness of voice delights singers and intrigues poets, but for a long time now, it has repelled philosophers.'[426] The reduction of the voice away from its body is expressed from the time of Plato. Cavarero shows Plato to be disturbed by 'the triumph of the vocal over the semantic,'[427] which is echoed by Aristotle who says that 'the voice is *semantike*.'[428] In Plato the voice has been according to Cavarero, 'reduced to an exterior sign, to a secondary, instrumental factor that is, as

[424] Ibid.

[425] Karmen MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice: Sensual Soundings* (Fordham University Press, 2016), 8.

[426] Ibid., 6.

[427] Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, trans. Paul A. Kottman, 1st edition (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2005), 127.

[428] Ibid., 35.

happens in Plato's discourse, superfluous.'[429] The voice as exterior sign, is as MacKendrick says, an attempt to make 'meaning into something pure, distinct from voice'[430] the implication is that this makes voice become 'nonrational and sometimes dangerous sound.'[431] The search for pure meaning at the disregard of sound and the body was later adopted by Christian theologians.

Voice and Body

Discussions by Christian theologians on sound and its corporeality revolve around music and the singing voice but their concerns are very similar to the Greek philosophers in their suspicion of the body and their concern for the semantic. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) an early philosopher theologian, regarding the singing voice says: 'When it happens to me that the song moves me more than the thing which is sung, I confess that I have sinned blamefully and then prefer not to hear the singer.'[432] Augustine is concerned with the bodily aspect of the song. He separates the 'thing,' the meaning and does not want the sound itself to be what moves him. The text Lactantius Divine Institutions is more direct: 'For all those things unconnected with words, that is, pleasant sounds of the air and of strings, may be easily disregarded, because they do not adhere to us, and cannot be written.'[433] A millennium later, Augustine Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466 – 1536) is also concerned with the loss of meaning in sound when he protests against music that 'produces a tremendous tonal clamor, so that not a single word is understood.'[434] Erasmus would rather abstract our singing itself: 'Let us sing vocally, but let us sing as Christians; let us sing sparingly, but let us sing more in our hearts.'[435] Sound is therefore placed under the control of meaning or the semantic. Feminist theologian Heidi Epstein calls this control, particularly within music, a 'musical chastity belt.'[436] Epstein expresses the control of the semantic over sound as: 'Text bridles music's "body," sublimating its erotic pull to

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[429] Ibid.

[430] MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 117.

[431] Ibid.

[432] Confessions 10.3349-50 in Heidi Epstein, *Melting the Venusberg: A Feminist Theology of Music* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 16.

[433] Ibid., 16.

[434] Ibid.

[435] Ibid.

[436] Ibid., 15.

higher intellectual ends.'[437] The semantic priority in turn subordinates the body in different ways and especially bodies that are different. In semantic prioritisation, rationality is prized and it is the male that is rational and the ideal as Cavarero says, '…through the bodily difference that marks her, a woman is a deficient human person, a man who is less-than-man.'[438] The prizing of rationality is linked to the prizing of the male. Therefore, part of the strategy of hearing women's voices in the bible is to create more bodily, fleshly engagements with the bible. The voice is more than the semantic to argue against Aristotle. Sound artist Mikhail Karikis frames the problem of thinking of voice without the body: 'such thinking undervalues the particular embodied 'who' from where the voice emanates, and keeps only the semantic aspect of the voice, i.e. 'what' is voiced. It is a logocentric way of thinking: it confirms the hegemony of speech and by extension undermines all those vocal sounds we produce which are not destined to language.'[439] What Karikis aims at here is to pay attention to the voice for its sonics rather than pay attention merely to the semantic. The sonics pay attention to the 'who' and too often the tone employed in reading aloud the bible is to downplay the 'who'. MacKendrick describes this voice as implying: "Nothing to hear here, an undercurrent murmurs, only ideas to understand, all spoken in the same and therefore irrelevant voice.'[440] This irrelevant voice can often be heard around the world in services of many denominations. Allowing listeners to listen to the corporeal within their own corporeality would allow for a resonance that would transform this irrelevant voice.

Cavarero emphasises the 'who' when she says that 'the voice appears as the elementary principle of an ontology of uniqueness that radically contests the meta-physical tradition that silences the "I" in flesh and bone.'[441] Contesting the 'meta-physical' is what I'm aiming to do by emphasising the sonics of the voice. The voice and the body provide uniqueness and this will be important when ideas of plurality are engaged with further on. My practice in Bible Noise is reading the bible aloud, with others, in the presence of others. The use of voice while being with each other opens spaces for distinct, unique offerings to sound

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[437] Ibid.

[438] Cavarero, *In Spite of Plato*, 53.

[439] Mikhail Karikis, 'Nonsense: The Medium of Sound in Art Research', 2, accessed 10 May 2019, https://www.academia.edu/32875235/Title_Nonsense_The_Medium_of_Sound_in_Art_Research.

[440] MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 118.

[441] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 176.

which then constitute polyphony. Polyphony requires the coming together of distinct sounds simultaneously and since the body gives, as Cavarero says, a 'uniqueness,' the bodily voice present to other bodies provides space to explore polyphony and plurality. The bible is engaged in a fleshly way through the use of the voice, the ear and the other senses in being present to another person. In emphasising the fleshly nature of this engagement, I'm not discounting the semantic. My engagement is both aural and semantic, as MacKendrick says: 'The notion that we must reduce or turn away from language in order to take body seriously, or that we can disregard corporeality in understanding words, misreads both. The two of them must make each other.'[442] (The idea of each one making the other has resonance in my discussion on polyphony that will be explored in chapter 3 below). The importance of the voice for my practice comes from this dual corporeal and semantic nature. I emphasis the corporeal because it has often been downplayed and denigrated as I've shown.

The downplaying of the corporeal voice happens when text is given a certain status and the voice is then merely a vehicle for the semantic. Cavarero compares the three religious traditions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity: 'In the Hebrew tradition, the sacred Word is first of all a sonorous event, a fact that is confirmed in the very name of the bible: miqra, or "reading, proclamation." The reading of the sacred text, for the Jews is done aloud with a rhythmic undulation of the body that underscores the musical sonority of the Word, whereas for the Christians it is silent and immobile. Muslims, too, read the Koran aloud, undulating the body back and forth.'[443] Cavarero's assertion here is possibly too broad a brush and essentialist. There is however an issue with the contemporary engagement of the bible that seems to prioritise the silent meanings of the text. I will expand on this prioritisation before carrying on with the voice.

Abstraction – Semantic Priority

The voice is quite often lost or not paid attention to in engaging with the bible. Mark Earey, tutor and researcher in Anglican worship speaks of the contemporary engagement with the bible: 'the bible no longer belongs primarily to a corporate context in which it is

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[442] MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 21.

[443] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 22.

spoken out loud and heard by a number of people simultaneously,'[444] as congregants are more 'likely to be following it in print.'[445] Earey thinks this visual encounter 'privatizes the bible'[446] and it no longer belongs to its 'corporate context.'[447] Earey is comparing an older culture where the primary access to the bible was through the sonics of reading aloud with the easy access to bible texts through print and digital means today, making its engagement seems to be more silent and individualised. This distinction has been amplified by Walter Ong, particularly in *Orality and Literacy,* where he proposes that: '[m]ore than any other invention writing has transformed human consciousness.[448] Ong contrasts oral cultures fostering personality that are 'more communal and externalized'[449] with literate ones where '[w]riting and reading are solitary activities that throw the psyche back on itself.' His views have been validly critiqued in several quarters,[450] but he does open up the question of what difference arises in seeing the text in distinction to hearing it. Birgit Meyer, professor of religious studies, additionally draws attention to the early Protestant 'emphasis on [silent] reading and text'[451] which was a 'deliberate discrediting'[452] of other more material forms of the ritual of reading aloud scripture. Meyer is referring to thought coming out of the Protestant Reformation in the 15th Century with its emphasis on scripture reading. However, the foundations for this had been laid prior according to Raymond Studzinski, professor of spirituality. He points to the scholastic movement in the 12th Century as the time when the pure abstraction of text took root. He says that the era saw 'a movement away from preoccupation with the particular such as the concrete page to concern with the abstract, with universal ideas. Reading itself could be seen as an act of abstraction; the text represented a materialization of abstraction. The text, the book, were pointers to the mind where ideas were lodged. In this way the text assumed hegemony

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[444] Mark Earey, 'This Is the Word of the Lord: The Bible and Worship', *Anvil* 19, no. 2 (2002): 90.

[445] Ibid.

[446] Ibid.

[447] Ibid.

[448] Walter J Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word.* (Routledge, 2002), 77.

[449] Ibid., 67.

[450] Jonathan Sterne, 'The Theology of Sound: A Critique of Orality', *Canadian Journal of Communication* 36, no. 2 (28 June 2011), https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2011v36n2a2223.

[451] Birgit Meyer, 'Material Mediations and Religious Practices of World-Making', in *Religion Across Media: From Early Antiquity to Late Modernity*, ed. Knut Lundby, New edition edition (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc, 2013), 8.

[452] Ibid.

and, reading, writing, speaking, and thinking all became text-molded.'[453] Prior to this however, texts were engaged in more corporeal ways. One of the known ways of this engagement in Christendom is *Lectio Divina,* which is a way of reading texts aloud that was central to early monastic Christian communities in the West, as Studzinski says 'they lived a life centred on such reading.'[454] Since the reading was done aloud, it 'had a social and physical dimension.'[455] Socially, due to the communal nature of the reading, and physically, as the 'reader responded to how words felt to the mouth, to the ears, to the eyes.'[456] Studzinski further recounts the metaphors of 'chewing' and 'digesting' applied to the act of reading, which are strongly corporeal metaphors. Reading here is shown as an embodied and social practice which has today been abstracted away to become privatised and individualised. This abstraction is aided through the downplaying of the sonic features of text. Reading can be a corporeal event but can the composition of the text, the writing of it, have corporeal elements? I turn back to MacKendrick to briefly show how writing can be corporeal as well.

For her, text has can have a corporeal element and it does not have to be essentialised in terms of writing being purely abstract and voice being purely body. Voice in its corporeality is entwined with text. My practice accentuates the corporeal because of assumptions of the text being purely abstract. In Bible Noise we are not considering the textual as purely abstract while the voice is the only way to engage it. Through the voice we're aiming to show the corporeal nature of text. MacKendrick engages with the notion of the written voice. She understands the writing process in its embodiment and discusses the concept of the individual voice. She considers the written voice as 'distinctly auditory and bodily'[457] while accepting that it is different from the spoken voice.[458] The difference seems to be in how the written voice is imagined and this imagination is sonic. She speaks of the writer Ursula LeGuin who waited to 'hear' a character before starting to write. LeGuin according to MacKendrick inhabited the body of a character in order to tell their

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[453] Raymond Studzinski, *Reading to Live the Evolving Practice of Lectio Divina* (Kentucky: Cistercian Publications, 2009), 13.

[454] Ibid., 14.

[455] Ibid.

[456] Ibid.

[457] MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 9.

[458] Ibid., 21.

story and says: 'Body is story, voice tells it.'[459] MacKendrick reformulates this as: 'Voice tells body.'[460] In other words, the voice is the narrative of the body. MacKendrick then quotes Virginia Woolf, waiting for rhythm for the writing process: 'A sight, an emotion, creates this wave in the mind… then as it breaks and tumbles in the mind, it makes words to fit it.'[461] These writers are using a sonic imagination, imagining sound in its physical senses to put down words as text. From these examples and others, MacKendrick proposes the voice in the written sense is neither wholly language nor wholly corporeal, nor is it even wholly sound. This 'neither, nor' accompanies a 'both, and' where, as quoted above, the voice is both sensuality and meaning. The voice opens the space for a multiplicity of the corporeal and linguistic or the abstract. For Bible Noise, the text takes on certain physical characteristics in how it is performed. Biblical texts are printed on pieces of paper that Bible Noise participants are holding. In some pieces we are sitting, while in others we stand and in others we move every time holding on to pieces of paper with printed text.

What often happens, however, is that the voice is silenced in a bodily sense; what is given importance is the semantic content and the bodily is discarded. This is a silencing of the body and thereby a silencing of the voice that comes from body. Silence is a word I've used a few times and it is worth dwelling now on the nature of silence and silencing.

Silence

I started this chapter 2 drawing on the stories of Babel and Pentecost in part 1. The tower of Babel, representing hegemony shows the dominant voice, the single language overriding plurality. The 'confusion' of languages presents the possibility of plurality, a space in Arendt's terms for plurality. However, the people do not stay in the place but disperse leaving the tower standing in silence. In Pentecost, people speak in simultaneous plurality and seem to be understood in simultaneous languages. The blowing of the Spirit which precedes the speaking is a resonant originary allusion. The Spirit is one 'brooding' over the chaos before the creation of the world, before God speaks existence into being.

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[459] Ursula Kroeber Le Guin, *The Wave in the Mind: Talks and Essays on the Writer, the Reader and the Imagination* (Boston, Mass.: Shambhala, 2004). in MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 15.

[460] MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 15.

[461] Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf: Volume 3:1923-1928*, ed. N Nicolson and J Trautmann (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 247. in MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 16.

The story of creation can be read as one of diversification as things are made 'separate' or distinct from one another. The Spirit, the breath of God, brings in the plurality of creation, also brings in the plurality of Pentecost. This resonates with Nancy's notion of plurality being fundamental to existence. The simultaneous speech of Pentecost does eventually subside, not to suppress plurality but in order that this plural happening might be accessed for those in fear and puzzlement of the strange noise. The subsiding of noise in Pentecost and also in Babel results in what can be understood as silence. Silence, however, in both stories has different significances. In Babel, there is a silence that arises by the lack of plurality since all are speaking one language. There is an imaginative assumption that can be made that as the people scattered, the tower is left in silence. Here, silence has a negative sense, one which inhibits voices and one that emphasises the failure of plurality. In Pentecost, there is a silence of voices before everyone starts speaking simultaneously. Then there is a different kind of silence as this speech subsides and one voice speaks. Here, silence seems to be more a way of framing or attending to. The idea of silence needs to be briefly dealt with since I'm attempting through my practice to hear voices that are silenced or hidden.

My project, through polyphony, attempts to listen to voices that have been silenced or ignored within the reading of the bible. To speak of a voice that's silenced can refer to the act of silencing as an oppressive act. However, silence has a significance that is more complex in the variety of contexts my project touches and draws upon. Therefore, I'll discuss silence broadly in different ways and how notions of silence impact my project. Initially, I examine silence as an act or state, that is oppressive; in how it prevents voices from being heard. The oppressiveness of silence is examined mostly through race and gender. Then, I examine silence as the moment or the space for fresh possibility, where it can be a horizon from which voices emerge.

Silence as Oppressive

> *But Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore the long robe that she was*
> *wearing; she put her hand on her head, and went away, crying aloud as*
> *she went. Her brother Absalom said to her, "Has Amnon your brother*
> *been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother; do not take*
> *this to heart." So Tamar remained, a desolate woman, in her brother*
> *Absalom's house. When King David heard of all these things, he became*

very angry, but he would not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him,

for he was his firstborn. But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor

bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had raped his sister Tamar.

2 Samuel 13:19-20

Tamar is king David's daughter born from David's marriage to Macaah, the daughter of a foreign king. Tamar's half-brother Ammon rapes her and she escapes to Absalom who is her full brother. Absalom says 'be quiet for now' while David does nothing. Wilda Gafney calls this story, 'a scriptural mirror illuminating acts of complicity in our own communities.'[462] Absalom says, 'be quiet.' His is a complex response as he hates Ammon and eventually kills his half-brother. Absalom's silencing of Tamar is an indication of the wider structures of silencing women as Ammon is the oldest son and loved by David. This is further emphasised by Absalom's own silence in speaking 'neither good nor bad' to Ammon. Professor of Hebrew Robert Alter, says that when the narrator of the story refers to someone's silence, 'we may infer that the refusal or avoidance of speech is itself a significant link in the concatenation of the plot.'[463] Regarding this story he says, 'strikingly, the silence of both David and Absalom after Ammon's rape of Tame is singled out for narrative report.'[464] I draw attention to Alter because the English translation and idiom might not convey this. Tamar is a foreigner and a woman but despite her status of being David's daughter, her loud cries are silenced and those in power do not speak up for her. The complicity of power in the silencing of Tamar is echoed in an earlier story where the Jacob's daughter Dinah is raped. Jacob hears of the rape but 'held his peace' which is a phrase that indicates silence. Silence here becomes representative of the injustice that we read of, but the narration itself also takes part in the silencing of Tamar and Dinah as Tamar speaks only a few sentences and Dinah none at all. Cavarero, commenting on Greek philosophy reflects on the relationship between silence and women: '"Women should be seen and not heard," goes the famous adage of patriarchal wisdom. Another proverb tells us that "silence is golden"— which here would mean that "whoever remains silent gives his consent" or obeys, as wives and daughters rightly should. Taking this to its logical conclusion, the perfect woman would be mute—not just a woman who abstains from

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[462] Gafney, *Womanist Midrash*, 233.

[463] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 100.

[464] Ibid.

speaking, but a woman who has no voice.'[465] Cavarero quotes the character of Juliet in Shakespeare: '"Bondage is hoarse," says Juliet, "and may not speak aloud", expressing perfectly the essential bond between silence and oppression, between the voice and freedom, that hangs over their exchange.'[466] The silence is often a maintenance of order at the expense of those whom society can appreciate as long as they remain 'mute.' Silence is part of how hegemony works. Post-colonial theologian Tat-Song Liew speaks of hegemony as 'what we do in silence and live out as 'it-goes-without-saying'. It is taken for granted, it is understood as a given, it is simply assumed; there is no question raised or any inquisition made.'[467]

Silence in the bible is sometimes represented as the ultimate oppressor, death as historian Diarmaid MacCulloch speaks of the Old Testament texts linking silence and death: 'Repeatedly, the Tanakh links the silence and darkness of defeat in war to the ultimate human defeat in death and the darkness of the grave.'[468] MacCulloch presents God as someone, 'who in normal and desirable circumstances expresses himself in noise, usually emphatic noise.'[469] For God to be silent, therefore, suggests that he is absent and has removed himself. There are several Psalms and texts that ask God to not be silent and to be noisy again. MacCulloch speaks of how 'the silence of God provokes a chorus of protest, expostulation and anguished supplication, expressing not merely a sense that it is a just judgement, but on occasion that it is an inexplicable affliction of the innocent.'[470] Silence in this context is understood as the absence of personhood, justice, life and God. In a culture that banned divine images, where sound was the practical and deeply symbolic way for Israelite culture to understand itself, silence threatens the very core of Israelite existence. The bible presents silence in other ways as well, which I will discuss further down, but the image of silence as oppressive is strong.

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[465] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 117.

[466] Paul A. Kottman, 'Translator's Introduction', in *For More than One Voice*, xxv.

[467] Liew, 'Margins and (Cutting)Edges. on the (Il)Legitimacy and Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, and (Post)Colonialism', 146.

[468] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Silence: A Christian History* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 13.

[469] Ibid., 16.

[470] Ibid., 18.

Though silence in general terms is most often associated with an absence of sound, in philosophy it can be associated with purity of thought. Colloquial phrases of 'I can't hear myself think' and 'let me pause a moment to think' are common enough seeming, as though sound inhibits thinking. The linking of silence and thinking is for Cavarero a result of the voice being philosophically silenced: 'in being devocalized, logos is forced to coincide as much as possible with the silence of thought.'[471] According to Cavarero, the Greek philosophers who initially constructed philosophy through speech, 'devocalise' the process to make thought in its purest form silent. Similarly, Black theologian Ashon Crawley comments on the idealisation of silence in Enlightenment philosophy: 'Enlightenment's subject is one that can withdraw into an absolute silence, unbothered and unconcerned by the ongoing verve and noise of worlds.'[472] Crawley further elucidates: 'silence can be said to have epistemic characteristic: conceptually, it the desire to get to the heart of the matter, the truth of the situation, the irreducible agreeableness, the fundamental antimix.'[473] For Crawley, this silence is controlling and hegemonic, 'with certain modes of socially acceptable behavior and comportment.'[474] The controlling, oppressive nature of silence for Crawley is understood as 'forestalling of the sound's ever-expansiveness, of the ceaseless chatter and noise of nothingness, a nothingness that needs be discarded in order to produce the scholar, the learner.'[475] Crawley's argument here is in the context of his previous statement of silence having an epistemic characteristic for Enlightenment philosophy. According to this philosophy, noise is external to any knowledge and therefore can be disregarded as a 'nothing' and this process of eliminating noise will produce the scholar. This chimes with the previous statements made by church leaders several of them prefer to have the words in the 'heart' rather than in the ear. Crawley sees this notion play out racially where 'noise, in general, became racialized as the other of Europe, as the other of rationality, as the other of the proper.'[476] This is connected to the denigration of voice and body. This 'desire for quietude' translated for the enslaved as a 'terror of spatially, sonically organized terror'[477] where the voices and bodies of African

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[471] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 43.

[472] Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 44.

[473] Ibid., 245.

[474] Ibid., 244.

[475] Ibid.

[476] Ibid., 140.

[477] Ibid., 244.

Americans could be disregarded just in the same manner noise could be. Crawley does not think absolute silence is possible, rather 'silence indexes a certain quality of seeming noiselessness.'[478] For him, silence 'is a certain mode of inattention to some objects while, no doubt, privileging others.'[479] Crawley's notion here is that silence is about perception. Absolute silence is impossible because it requires a complete stasis of everything. If silence is a 'mode of inattention' as Crawley suggests, then silence is something that can be changed according to different kinds of attention. Those in power can 'silence' voices they do not wish to hear by drawing attention to the dominant voice. Hearing these silent voices then becomes a way of attending beyond the dominant voice, as these silent voices are not silent in that they are absent but, rather, they have not been attended to and dominant structures have masked their presence by drawing attention to themselves. Silence is an oppressive tool, but by reconfiguring our attention, silence could also be where possibilities outside the hegemony can be explored, where voices outside the dominant hegemonic voice can be heard.

Silence as Possibility

> *Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk. So Eli said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine." But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time."*

1 Samuel 1:13-16

Hannah is the mother of the prophet Samuel. She is unable to have children and prays silently to God moving only her lips. Eli the priest admonishes her. MacCulloch comments on this admonishment: It 'seems to be that silent prayer to the Lord was a controversial and debatable custom.'[480] Previous discussion of silence in Israelite culture highlighted the

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[478] Ibid., 44.

[479] Ibid., 244.

[480] MacCulloch, *Silence*, 21.

oppressive and deathly nature of silence. However there are many events of silence within the bible that present silence as a place or time that God can work in. In this story, Hannah is silent but she has been speaking. She is deeply troubled and cannot voice herself. It is her lack of voice that Eli notices. When Hannah explains what she's going through, Eli then blesses her. Silence in the story drew attention and, though misunderstood at first, results in blessing. Jacqueline Lapsley considers Hannah as paradigmatic for women unheard: 'she represents all other biblical women who, under constraints of various types, must whisper what they have to say.'[481] Whispering is not quite the same as silence in strict acoustic terms but, if silence is understood as 'inattention,' then the whisper is like silence because it is so easily missed. These whispers are voices that 'are muted and the reader must strain to hear them, but they are nonetheless an intricate part of the richness of the text.'[482] A piece of music where multiple sounds are employed often has instruments or sounds that occur, not as obvious elements of the piece, but as important textural or rhythmic developments. These are not obvious to the hearer but straining to hear them does allow listeners to hear these sounds. This is the process my practice of polyphony attempts. Silence occurs because of inattention to sounds but listening beyond the dominant voice, can take the listener to sounds she has not heard before; what was silent to her attention can now be heard. Silence and sound need not be understood as binary opposites. I turn to philosopher Don Ihde to articulate a more nuanced relationship between sound and silence.

Ihde considers silence to be the horizon of sound. The horizon has a multiplicity of meanings and significances in philosophy, which philosopher Saulias Geniusas expresses: 'the horizon is a versatile and unsurpassable limit, which is always relative to subjectivity and which delimits each and every phenomenon.'[483] Horizon is at the edge of our experience. Ihde, drawing initially on Heidegger, first describes the horizon in visual terms, where the horizon is at the edge of vision and cannot be the focal point. He then contrasts the visual with the auditory, since sound does not have the same 'spatial

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[481] Lapsley, *Whispering the Word*, 21.

[482] Ibid., 8.

[483] Saulius Geniusas, *The Origins of the Horizon in Husserl's Phenomenology*, Contributions to Phenomenology (Springer Netherlands, 2012), 6, https://www.springer.com/gb/book/9789400746435.

signification.'[484] To experience the edge of the horizon, Ihde pays attention to the 'thresholds of hearing.'[485] For him, sounds come into presence or 'trail off'; presence comes from the absence beyond the horizons. It is the moment of hearing the sound and its consequent trailing off that constitutes the horizon. So Ihde experiences the horizon through the 'enigma of silence' since 'silence adheres to things hidden relatively within present experience.'[486] This allows Ihde to consider that the auditory horizon can be understood as temporality. For him silence becomes the horizon of sound; '"...the sound of time passing."'[487]

Ihde, like Crawley does not think absolute silence is possible. He says, 'experientially, I cannot escape sound.'[488] However, despite our experience of sound being constant, we can choose to ignore it. If this is possible, I contend that it is the listener's attentiveness that brings up the horizon. For, only as it is being attended to, does the sound make itself present. (Though of course there are sounds that *demand* our attention, like a siren or the peal of thunder.) The reason for speaking of attention here is to understand how to negotiate the presence of silent voices. Polyphony is defined as simultaneous sounds but not all sounds are sounding all the time. Within certain pieces, voices will stop singing while others start. If the listener hears them as a whole, for example, a song, a question that arises is where the horizon of the song is. Is it at the beginning and the end of the song? When we listen to recorded music, there is a defined auditory horizon to a piece in the silence before the start, but as sounds layer and new sounds 'come in,' do we consider each new sound as a new horizon? Defining what a new sound is, is also open to different definitions according to pitch, repetition, timbre etc. If we do consider each sound has its own horizon, then each piece of music has several 'silences' within it. In reading aloud the bible there are several experienced silences. Each gap between words provides a horizon. Yet the perception of the horizon of the sound of the reading will be at the start and end of the reading. The horizon of the sound is connected to the intention of hearer. Depending on the attentiveness of the listener the horizon of the sound could be different. A listener

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[484] Don Ihde, 'Auditory Horizons', in *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*, 2nd edition (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 2007), 107.

[485] Ibid.

[486] Ibid., 110.

[487] Ihde is quoting from Thomas Stoppard's 'The Bridge' in ibid., 111.

[488] Ibid., 109.

with wandering attention will place the horizon of sound at a different time the one the attentive listener puts it. For both listeners there are resonances of meaning and sound that this reading aloud evokes and as such the horizon is always holding the possibility for expansion. Silence understood as the horizon of sound becomes the space or the time which is full of the potential of sound.

There are voices with their own horizons, possibly hidden in our culture-bound listening to the bible. To hear these voices, their silences become important, for when they sound, we are aware of their horizon and it is only in our attending, in hearing through the sounds, can we hear them. If silence is the 'sound of time passing' as Ihde says, then polyphony with its many silences reconstitutes how time is experienced. Time is no longer linear but multi-layered. The singular voice in its sounding and hearing needs strict time. The polyphonous sounding presents the listener with the different interwoven strands of time. Hegel, Marx, Adorno and De Man and so on have questioned our notion of time as constricting our subjectivity.[489] Or rather our notion of time 'frames' our experience and this can be useful in listening to speech. But this 'frame' can muffle what we're listening to. In this case it is the bible and there are sets of texts which require linear listening. However, there are several texts which ask of a different notion of time. This is especially true of the 'prophetic' voice. Prophets are often associated with future doom. In the bible, however, prophets are speaking of past, present and future and often simultaneously. They are voicing the sounds of God, who is self-named as 'I am who I am,' and at different points as 'the beginning and the end' and simultaneously as eternal. Several horizons in the auditory sense present themselves and linear time conceptions, and our reception of the single voice is not sufficient. The prophetic voice needs to be heard in its multiplicity of time and bringing together polyphony with auditory horizons offers this possibility.

One of my experiments in Bible Noise presents an outworking of this through the piece 'The Most High 3 Voice of God.'[490] In the piece three songs of women are sounded simultaneously by three readers. A common resonant passage ('blessed...') is placed at the end of all three readers. As the first reader finishes, she is to listen to the others as they finish, and she joins with the one who finishes next and they together listen out and finish

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[489] Robert Adlington, 'Moving beyond Motion: Metaphors for Changing Sound', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 128, no. 2 (2003): 297.

[490] See Appendix-A, The Most High 3-Voice of God, 272.

with the third reader. The next group then start the multiple readings again. This synchronicity can be construed as a neat summing up, a kind of totalisation. However, it is more of a call to listen to the horizons of those phrases which will come in the individual texts. Those who have read will possibly now hear the contours of 'blessed...' within the three texts as it is read. In each repetition the synchronous moment is variable. Auditory horizons clash and intersect and allow the possibilities of experiencing time differently. The silence that is being listened for is not an absence of sound but rather a waiting for a sound to start.

To draw these ideas back to Arendt, silence can work both ways in Arendt's concerns to prevent totalitarianism and to promote plurality. Silence can be in a first sense, the silencing of the different voices which will lead to totalitarian existence. Conversely, in a second sense, the silence can provide a way of listening to different voices. Silence in the second sense is not so much the negation of sound but rather attending towards those voices that are not the dominant. Arendt envisions a table which provides the between space that fosters plurality. Transferring Arendt's metaphor into sound, I propose that silence can be imagined as the between of sounds, where silence is not just the temporal gap between one sound after another but silence is also the way we listen to the distinct voices amongst the many voices sounding, especially the voices that have been ignored.

In conversation listening involves our attending to the other and sometimes in order to do that, speakers need to be silent. Silence within sound has analogous resonances to the space that Arendt envisions through the table to be the space where plurality can become a reality. MacKendrick understands silence as 'the structuring principle that makes speaking possible.'[491] She quotes Jean Louis Chretien: '...To suspend one's voice is not to suspend one's breath,'[492] she calls this silence 'a divine contraction that allows space for the world, resonating as we leave spaces in our speech.'[493] This is similar to the idea of silence being a horizon. MacKendrick considers silence important for it is an unsayable that needs to be listened to. As such, she presents the voice as 'open' with its silences and aurality which constitutes a resistance: 'Its resistance is in its very openness. The voice that

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[491] MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 28.

[492] Jean-Louis Chrétien, *The Ark of speech,* trans. Andrew Brown (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 28.

[493] MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 28.

tells and resists telling is created both in the silences that structure the rhythms of its speaking and in the voices that have made their unexpected way from hearing into sound. Every voice tells more than it can say, and it sounds even what it cannot tell, and in the end, it resists perfect knowing.'[494] The corporeal voice adds an unsayable to the text. The breath of the reader, pushing the words out, expands the capacity of the text with this unsayable. What silence does here is provides times and spaces for breath which are required for the voice to sound. Silence gives the possibility of plurality when silence is a way of hearing others.

Plurality and Voice

The voice is not plural solely due to its duality as corporeal and linguistic. Its plurality also arises from the notion that each voice carries with it the echoes and resonances of other voices. As MacKendrick says: 'no word even called in my voice, is ever entirely my own; likewise, no voice, however distinctive, is without its resonant echo, in which it not only returns to itself, but recalls innumerable other voices.'[495] For MacKendrick, this comes about as we are so often echoing others and in doing so the self becomes strange, 'a strangeness that comes with the otherness of myself, an 'essential plurality of voice.'[496] This plurality extends further in her discussion of hearing the self which becomes a dual process of the voice, where the voice is both spoken and heard. In doing so the self is 'given' both to others and back to the self: 'Speaking I give myself to others; heard I am given myself.'[497] She again quotes Chrétien considering how, 'in order to hear myself, someone must already have heard me and spoken to me, in a way that forestalls me.'[498] From this, she presents each voice as a response to a call which is not solely ours but a *'particular* confluence of voices.'[499] Plurality is present within each voice because every voice draws on others and also must be heard. This resonant voice brings with it 'the possibility of multiplying and complicating our truths' and to 'add new sounds to the

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[494] Ibid., 36.

[495] Ibid., 21.

[496] Walter Bernhart and Lawrence Kramer, eds., *On Voice* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014), vii. in MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 23.

[497] MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 23.

[498] Chrétien, *The Ark of speech*, 9.

[499] MacKendrick, *The Matter of Voice*, 26.

chorus of becoming ourselves.'[500] This 'multiplying and complicating' is a reflection of the polyphony that I enact in the practice of Bible Noise where the excess of voices and meaning acts as a call to listeners to hear for themselves in fresh ways the plurality present in the text and its hearing. The plurality of the bible is undeniable in the large number of authors and editors who have compiled the text and those who have interpreted it and translated it over time. So, when the reader voices herself, she is uttering a chorus.

Cavarero frames the plurality of the voice as inherently relational. For her since 'speech is sonorous, to speak to one another is to communicate oneself to others in the plurality of voices.'[501] The plurality here assumes that the voice is communicating amongst other voices and so the relationality occurs in the to and fro nature of communication. The sonorous materiality of the voice is important according to Cavarero because 'beyond the specific content that the words communicate, is the acoustic, empirical, material relationality of singular voices.'[502] Cavarero thinks that 'to ignore the materiality' of the voice in conversation and dialogue is a 'methodological decision' which then becomes a 'strategic deafness to the plural, reciprocal communication of voices' in philosophy.[503] Ignoring the materiality is quite often what happens in the reading aloud of the bible, where the sonority is considered to be only the medium of communication, rather than part of the communicative act. Since my practice is aiming to hear plurality within the bible, the sonorous voice becomes a crucial way to access plurality. Most sounds are pluralities as most of them occur as multiple simultaneous frequencies. Several sounds sounded and heard together is the rough definition of polyphony. (A more considered definition will be done in chapter 3.) Polyphony within music is considered to be the simultaneous sounding of different unique sounds. The idea of uniqueness and their coming together is important for my project as I'm putting forward the possibility that understanding polyphony will provide ways of understanding how human beings can co-exist in their differences, in their uniqueness. Uniqueness is key to Cavarero's idea of plurality which she draws from the philosophy of Hannah Arendt. Cavarero finds Arendt's ideas of plurality resonating with those of philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy. There are subtle

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[500] Ibid., 130.

[501] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 13.

[502] Ibid.

[503] Ibid., 14.

differences between their ideas, differences which make them unique, but I draw upon both these philosophers to articulate the plurality I wish to achieve in my practice of polyphony.

Hannah Arendt and Plurality

Cavarero is interested in the material voice for the way it is reciprocal, relational and plural. Her thinking on plurality is informed primarily by philosopher Hannah Arendt. Arendt is interested in creating a political space where plurality is affirmed. For her, plurality comes through the affirmation of uniqueness and this comes through speech: 'the political essence of speech consists in revealing to others the uniqueness of each speaker.'[504] Cavarero presents Arendt as not giving primacy to what is being said but rather the act of speaking which is important. As Cavarero says: 'Arendt is interested in the relationality of the act of speaking, not in speech as a system of signification characterized by objective rules that bring the speakers to an understanding.'[505] Rather than the content of speech, the act of being together and speaking together is the way that Arendt thinks plurality can be facilitated. Plurality for Arendt is not something that needs to be imposed or made but 'a character of the human condition.'[506] The character arises from the uniqueness of each human: 'From birth, which announces the human being as a new beginning, everyone shows him- or herself to be unique. This is what men have in common: uniqueness in plurality, or the uniqueness that makes them plural and the plurality that makes them unique.'[507] The notion of plurality and uniqueness forming each other is one that Cavarero finds in Jean-Luc Nancy. She says he has a 'similar position'[508] to Arendt but for him, instead of 'uniqueness,' Nancy uses the term 'singularity.'[509] I will return to Nancy's position further down but first will briefly put forward Arendt's understanding of plurality.

Arendt is writing in the context of the different totalitarian regimes that had been or were in power across the globe. Her reflections revolve a lot around the rise of Nazism and her

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[504] Ibid., 189.

[505] Ibid., 190.

[506] Ibid., 191.

[507] Ibid., 191–92.

[508] Ibid., 193.

[509] Ibid.

concern is to present plurality as a way to prevent totalitarianism from rising again. For plurality to happen, Arendt thinks that society requires a public space. This space 'presupposes and guarantees plurality and it provides the opportunity for a politics based on mutual recognition and respect for difference, although it does not necessarily lead towards a conception of politics as argumentative and consensual.'[510] This space for Arendt is 'where we can excel and display ourselves; where we can experience the world from different standpoints.'[511] For Arendt, the public space is where political action happens and it is distinct from the private. She defines the public through two 'interrelated phenomena': 'first, that everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity. Second, the term "public" signifies the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it.'[512] The public space is where human interaction happens and this is the political space. Cavarero describes this political space as 'the relational space between human beings who are unique and therefore plural.'[513] It is the relations between people that constitute their uniqueness and plurality. Arendt describes this space as an in-between, drawing upon the image of a table: 'To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time.'[514] Cavarero draws out this concept of the in-between 'as something that both separates people from one another and relates them to one another. Like a table or a seating plan, a constitution separates and relates us by putting us in different seats in one another's presence.'[515] The table based on Arendt's conceptualisation has resonances for my practice. The table is a significant image in Christianity as it refers to one of the most common and widely practiced acts of worship: communion. This is where Christians are served bread and wine in memory and re-enactment of the last

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[510] Ignaas Devisch and Kathleen Vandeputte, 'Responsibility and Spatiality, or: Can Jean-Luc Nancy Sit on a Bench in Hannah Arendt' Public Space?', *Lumina*, 2011, http://lumina.hnu.edu.ph/index.php?page=articles&id=80&vol=22&no=2.

[511] Ibid.

[512] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 50–52.

[513] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 192.

[514] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 52.

[515] Dana R Villa, *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 204.

supper of Jesus and his disciples before his death. In my practice we often start with food around a table. Afterwards, depending on the piece, we often perform sitting around a table. The table provides the space for our voices to be made distinct while also providing a material comfort for leaning or placing the printed text of the piece. Arendt envisions the table as a political space that gives each other room to be unique. In a material sense, the table does provide the space, the support and the structure for our practice of polyphony.

The space in itself is not plurality but provides conditions for plurality. Cavarero posits that it is the voice that allows plurality through relationality to occur between people. She argues that one of the essential criteria of politics for Arendt is 'the relationality of the unique beings that manifest themselves actively through speech, leaving aside the imperialism of the Said.'[516] It is important to note here that Cavarero does not think that Arendt is overly concerned with what is said, rather that Arendt is emphasising the act that takes place as people talk and listen to each other. The emphasis is on relation rather than content. In some ways this is reflective of the kind of polyphony that I pursue in Bible Noise. Rather than following a music theory model that considers only specific notes fitting with others, I ask what happens when two or more unique voices come together. The relations between these voices provides more than the sum of the voices as I will discuss in chapter 3 through polyphony. For Cavarero, the importance of the voice is that it 'announces' a relationality but further, this relationality is announced 'as corporeal, material, and rooted in the always embodied singularity of an existent that convokes the other with the rhythmic and sonorous breath of his or her mouth.'[517] The corporeal, for Cavarero, is what provides the uniqueness for the voice and when the corporeal unique voice sounds Cavarero presents it as relational, which allows the voice to be plural. The corporeal voice provides, according to her, an 'embodied uniqueness that the metaphysical ear does not want to hear.'[518] Since my practice aims to hear voices that have been hidden, it becomes important to hear what the metaphysical ear ignores, which is bodily voice. That is the reason the practice takes place at a particular space and time where we are with

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[516] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 200.

[517] Ibid.

[518] Ibid., 206.

each other, so our voices are sounded and heard allowing relationality and plurality to occur. A hugely important facet of relationality is listening to each other.

Arendt and Nancy

Cavarero thinks that there is a similar underlying resonance between Arendt and Nancy. Both are interested in the political sphere and the bringing together of difference in plurality. Cavarero says that Nancy 'grounds politics in the *with*, the *among*, the *in*—which corresponds in Arendt's lexicon to the in-between—that is, in any particle that alludes to the original, ontological relation inscribed in the plurality of singular beings.'[519] Nancy, like Arendt, emphasises the act of saying rather than the content of speech. As Cavarero says, he 'privileges the relationality of Saying instead of the universal horizon of the Said.'[520] Rather than use the term 'unique' as Arendt does, Nancy uses the word 'singular.' For Nancy, plurality is inscribed into all existence: 'Existence is *with:* otherwise nothing exists.'[521] This is because each thing achieves its singularity (or as Arendt would say 'uniqueness') through its presence with all other things. Using the more Heideggerian term 'Being' he says: 'Being cannot be anything but being-with-one-another, circulating in the *with* and as the *with* of this singularly plural coexistence.'[522] As with Arendt, where the plural and the unique are contingent on each other, for Nancy, the singular and plural are also dependent on each other. Like Cavarero's understanding through Arendt of the voice as plural, the voice is plural for Nancy: 'The voice is always shared and is itself a sharing. There is a polyphony at the heart of each voice. Every voice is in itself opened, plural, exposing itself to the outside world.'[523]

The resonances between Arendt and Nancy that I draw upon here are in their conceptualisations of plurality, which is contingent on uniqueness or singularity and their understanding of the voice as plural. There are differences in their thought which will prove helpful in understanding the practice of Bible Noise. Cavarero thinks that Nancy

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[519] Ibid., 193–94.

[520] Ibid., 194.

[521] Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 4.

[522] Ibid., 3.

[523] Ignaas Devisch, 'A Trembling Voice in the Desert: Jean-Luc Nancy's Rethinking of the Space of the Political', *Cultural Values* 4, no. 2 (1 April 2000): 248, https://doi.org/10.1080/14797580009367198.

does not engage with the material and the acoustic in his thought: 'Although he emphasizes that these voices are singular and valuable precisely because of this singularity, Nancy still does not problematize the uniqueness of their sound or the material relationality of the acoustic sphere.'[524] The problem with this for Cavarero is that 'without acoustic pleasure, without the relation between the enjoyment of mouths and ears, the uniqueness of the voice risks becoming an abstract, disembodied category.'[525] This is an interesting comment because Nancy has written on the body (e.g. *Corpus*)[526] and on the acoustic sphere (eg. *Listening*)[527] and the question that arises for me is why his thoughts on the material and the acoustic are fleetingly addressed in his work on plurality. Arendt herself does not dwell that much on the material and acoustic but she does place the body as the starting point of uniqueness, which Nancy does not seem to do.

Part of the reason is possibly the contexts that they are writing in. Professor Ignass Devisch and Kathleen Vandeputte, who have written much on Nancy, write in their analysis of Arendt and Nancy: 'Arendt responds to the modern loss of traditions due to the totalitarian devastation, while Nancy, not less concerned about totalitarianism, is dealing with the contemporary call for a substantial community and the political dangers of this.'[528] The difference between them results in Arendt and Nancy aiming for a similar notion of plurality through different ways. As Devisch and Vandeputte say: 'For Arendt, a public space is more a political construction functioning as the safeguard for plurality and for any degeneration into totalitarianism, and therefore a public space must be created in contrast with the private realm. For Nancy, on the other hand, public space or togetherness is already there simultaneously with every welling up of being.'[529] Arendt wants to construct a political space for plurality, while Nancy thinks that plurality is already there in the bedrock of existence which we need to be made aware of. For my practice, I draw upon both these notions of plurality. With Nancy I can imagine that the

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[524] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 195.

[525] Ibid., 91.

[526] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

[527] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007).

[528] Devisch and Vandeputte, 'Responsibility and Spatiality, or: Can Jean-Luc Nancy Sit on a Bench in Hannah Arendt' Public Space?'

[529] Ibid.

plurality already exists and with Arendt I can 'construct' a way of accessing this plurality. Going to the bible with Nancy considers the plurality of the bible as an already existing reality. Going with Arendt means a space needs to be 'constructed' in order to access this plurality. This is what Bible Noise attempts to do by sounding out different voices, acknowledging existing plurality and the practice becomes a process of 'constructing' a space that allows us to access the plurality of the bible. It could be asked whether the notions of plurality that I am employing are wholly external to the practice and thinking of Christianity. Though Christendom has often emphasised unity against plurality, it can be shown that the doctrine of the Trinity is one that attempts to hold the possibility of plurality and unity in a way that does not negate each other.

The Trinity – Christian Understandings of Plurality

The conceptualisation of the Trinity in an articulated form arose out of arguments around the plural identity of Jesus as both human and divine. The council of Nicaea in 325 AD formulated the Trinity as 'mia ousia [one substance] treis hypostaseis [three persons].'[530] God is described in a plural way in terms of being one and three at the same time. This is a plurality that is in communion which as theologian Colin Gunton describes: 'in God the three persons are such that they receive from and give to each other their unique particularity.'[531] This giving and receiving is a way of relating to each other and has been called *perichoresis* which Gunton describes as 'the mutual indwelling and coinherence of the persons of the Trinity.'[532] Different theologians have drawn on the notion of Trinity to articulate plurality. Liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, articulates his theology in response to severe inequalities in South America and draws on the Trinity to work towards 'a community of equality in respect for differences: a full living communion of the most diverse relationships.'[533] Spanish-Indian theologian Raimundo Panikkar who worked towards interfaith dialogue proposed that the Trinity 'not only allows for but invites

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[530] Peter C Phan, 'Developments of the Doctrine of the Trinity', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity*, ed. Peter C Phan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 6.

[531] Colin E Gunton, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Essays toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 16.

[532] Ibid., 44.

[533] Leonardo Boff, 'Trinity', in *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology: Readings from Mysterium Liberationis*, ed. Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuría (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2003), 83.

differentiation and diversity.'[534] A postcolonial perspective comes from Sarah Travis who thinks that the Trinity 'opens up new possibilities, and disputes the hegemony of empire.'[535] The Trinity has also been described through musical analogy by musician theologian Jeremy Begbie where he suggests that we speak of 'God's life as three-part polyphony.'[536] This analogy evokes a resonance for how the notion of polyphony can be drawn upon to articulate theology.

Problems with the Trinity

The Trinity is traditionally spoken of in terms of 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' There are two problems with this articulation of the Trinity in the context of this project. The first is the gendered language of 'Father' and 'Son' and second is an implicit hierarchy that the Father and Son over the Spirit. There have been feminine expressions for the Trinity like the medieval mystic Julian of Norwich who according to theologian Kathryn Reinhard used the term 'mother,' 'to describe all three persons of the Trinity.'[537]

The other issue of the Spirit's 'subordination'[538] is resonant for the project as the Spirit has been expressed in feminine terms and also the Spirit is central to Pentecostalism which I've discussed above. This subordination of the Spirit according to Coakley arises out of 'covert issues of spiritual power and gender.'[539] She thinks that 'repressing or marginalizing of the doctrine of the Spirit' resulted in a situation where 'complicated entanglements with questions of human gender, power, and desire' were 'mutely disregarded.'[540] There have been traditions representing the Spirit as feminine in theology and Christian art but for Coakley while this 'may represent important implicit relocations of female power and presence,' they also 'arguably serve more to shore up cultural stereotypes of 'femininity''[541]

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[534] Raimon Panikkar, *The Rhythm of Being: The Unbroken Trinity* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2013), xxi.

[535] Travis, 'Preaching in the Perichoretic Space', 130.

[536] Jeremy Begbie, *Beholding the Glory: Incarnation through the Arts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 150.

[537] Kathryn L. Reinhard, 'Joy to the Father, Bliss to the Son: Unity and the Motherhood Theology of Julian of Norwich', *Anglican Theological Review; Evanston* 89, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 631.

[538] Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self*, 101.

[539] Ibid., 551.

[540] Ibid., 4.

[541] Ibid., 197.

The Spirit is in some sense a hidden voice and the Spirit's role has different resonances for this project.

The Importance of the Spirit

I hesitate to refer to the Spirit as 'it,' for it possibly leads to the objectification of someone who is sheer dynamism, nor can I comfortably refer to the Spirit as 'he,' for how the term relates to issues of gender. Accordingly I will be using the phrase, 'the Spirit' which will not be smooth or easy to read but hopefully reflect the discomfort that the Spirit has engendered upon Christian practice and experience. The story of Pentecost, which is quite important for my presentation of plurality and sound, is fundamentally a work of the Spirit. The Spirit gives utterance to the people and the event is preceded by the sound of wind – wind which is analogous with God's breath. Pentecostalism arises in a similar movement of the Spirit which, as discussed above,[542] is a movement within Christianity which had plural-multiracial origins. The Spirit, therefore, is important to access the hidden and silenced voices. The Spirit is breath and breath is how the voice and body are animated. Without the Spirit, voice and body ceases. The downplaying of the Spirit links to the different issues I've highlighted, issues of hegemony, body, voice and plurality. Coakley wishes to re-emphasise the Spirit in the understanding of the Trinity: 'It is the very threeness of God, I shall argue, transformatively met in the Spirit, which gives the key to a view of gender that is appropriately founded in bodily practices of prayer.'[543] Coakley's attempt here is earthed in a contemplative bodily practice that presents different possibilities of engaging with God's plurality. For her, the Spirit is the important way to understanding this plurality: 'The Spirit is the constant overflow of the life of God into creation: alluring, delighting, inflaming, in its propulsion of divine desire. But the Spirit is no less also a means of distinguishing hiatus: both within God, and in God's relations to creation. It is what makes God irreducibly three, simultaneously distinguishing and binding Father and Son, and so refusing also by analogous outreach the mutual narcissism of even the most delighted of human lovers. Its love presses not only outwards to include others, but also inwards (and protectively) to sustain the difference between the persons, thus preserving a perfect and harmonious balance between union and distinction.'[544] The

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[542] See above, Two Black theologies, 104.

[543] Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self*, 34.

[544] Ibid., 24.

Spirit in Coakley's passage is dynamic and open, inclusive while protective of difference. By emphasising the Spirit in this way, Coakley inclusively expresses the Trinity in a way that is less prone to authoritarian and patriarchal formulations. It is instructive how both feminist theology and Black theology emphasise the Spirit in their formulations. The possibilities offered by the Spirit allow Black and feminist theology to move beyond the strictures of hegemonic thought and practices that exclude them. From Coakley's description, the Spirit can be imagined to be the dynamism of relations as the Spirit is not only what animates relations within God but also to all of reality outside of the Trinity. In this vein of dynamic relation, theologian John V. Taylor refers to the Spirit as the 'Go-Between God'[545]: 'always the go-between who creates awareness.'[546]

The Spirit referred to as the 'go-between' adds a dynamic quality to Arendt's idea of the 'between' and this is important for me in how I'm approaching polyphony. Polyphony is experienced as not only the presence of simultaneous sounds but is also the experience of the relations between the sounds. For me, an emphasis on the Spirit not only opens possibilities of freedom and plurality but also emphasises the relations that occur between the distinct entities and experiences in my practice of polyphony.

Re-emphasising the Spirit allows a re-emphasis of the Trinity as an expression of plurality that I hope to practice in Bible Noise, where we utter different voices not with the aim of finding a unified meaning but to experience what happens as different voices relate to each other. Since the Trinity, is described as a plurality of three interrelating persons the plurality that I'm practicing is not alien to Christian practice but at the same time it is a voice within Christian practice that has been silent due to the different hegemonies of which Christianity has been part. The possibilities the Trinity opens up, according to theologian Panikkar has relevance for 'the political, economic, and ecological predicament of the earth.'[547] Therefore, I'll reflect on how the Trinity expressed in sound could offer plurality in terms of voice, body and sound. I will do this through the medieval female theologian, musician and mystic, Hildegard of Bingen.

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545 John Vernon Taylor, *The Go-between God* (London: SCM Press, 2004).

546 Ibid., 43.

547 Panikkar, *The Rhythm of Being*, 7.

The Trinity through Sound and Voice

Hildegard of Bingen (1098 – 1179) was a German abbess and mystic, whose musical compositions are amongst the earliest on record by a woman. As will be shown sound is an important way for Hildegard to engage with the Trinity particularly through sound of the voice English professor Geraldine Henderson affirms the importance of the sound of the voice by stating that: 'Sound, the sound of the voice especially, separate from musical sounds, was most important to the visionary Hildegard.'[548] Henderson observes this through the various writings of Hildegard. The following passage from her writing expresses the Trinity through the evocation of speech.

In a word there is sound, force and breath. It has sound that it may be heard, meaning that it may be understood, and breath that it may be pronounced. In the sound, then, observe the Father, Who manifests all things with ineffable power; in the meaning, the Son, Who was miraculously begotten of the Father; and in the breath, the Holy Spirit, Who sweetly burns in Them. But where no sound is heard, no meaning is used and no breath is lifted, there no word will be understood; so also the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not divided from one another, but do Their works together.

So as there are these three causes for one word, the celestial Trinity is likewise in the celestial Unity. …in a word there exists and there operates no sound without meaning and breath, or meaning without sound and breath, or breath without sound and meaning, but all keep indivisibly together to operate; so also these Three Persons of the true Trinity live inseparably in the majesty of the Divinity and are not divided from each other.
Thus, O human, understand the One God in Three Persons. In the foolishness of your mind you think that God is so powerless that He cannot truly live in three Persons, but only exist weakly in one. What does this mean? God is, in three Persons, the true God, the First and the Last.[549]

Hildegard is using imagery from the bible to express the Trinity. The Word, or *Logos* is how Jesus Christ is described in the New Testament. Breath is how the Holy Spirit is

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[548] Geraldine E Henderson, 'A Sound Theology: The Vital Position of Sound and Music to Hildegard of Bingen's Theology and Public Identity' (Ann Arbor, Mich., UMI Dissertation Services, 2005), 24.

[549] Saint Hildegard, *Hildegard of Bingen: Scivias*, trans. Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (Paulist Press, 1990), 164–65.

described in the Old Testament through the word *ruach* which is aligned to the Greek *pnuema* in the New Testament. It is interesting to note how, for Hildegard, the Father is experienced as sound, which contrasts expressions by other theologians where the Father is remote and abstract. She experiences the Son as meaning. Meaning cannot be an abstract form of thinking since Christ is the Word made flesh. Therefore, meaning itself could be speculatively inferred from Hildegard to be a bodily experience. By expressing the Spirit as breath, Hildegard continues with the bodily way of experiencing the Trinity. This is in contrast to using the term 'soul' or 'spirit' which is a more abstract term in comparison to breath. Hildegard's use of bodily sound through human speech to express the Trinity is relevant for my practice which uses the spoken voice. Using human speech to express the Trinity, she then defends the plurality of God towards the end of the passage above. She castigates those who cannot accept God's threeness, God's plurality: 'In the foolishness of your mind.' God's power is in his plurality as opposed to God existing 'weakly as one.' The monism of understanding God as only one is described by Hildegard as 'weak'. Hildegard understands and expresses the Trinity through bodily language while emphasising plurality.

Understanding the Trinity through sound allows a conceptualisation that is different from the visual and the spatial. Theologian and musician Jeremy Begbie is a proponent of this method. Begbie draws on polyphony to understand the Trinity and, if the Trinity opens ways to make sense of plurality, then polyphony will be a way to make some sense of plurality. Begbie considers sound as a way to address difficulties of understanding the Trinity and considers that polyphony opens a more wholesome conceptualisation: 'It may be that a large part of our chronic tendency to treat the Trinity as essentially problematic, an intellectual and fundamentally mathematical conundrum, has been fueled by an excessive reliance on visual conceptions of space, according to which "three in one" will always be deeply problematic. The disarming simplicity of a three-note chord facilitates conceptions of Father, Son, and Spirit "in" and "through" each other (perichoresis) far more naturally.'[550] *Perichoresis* is a Greek term which describes the mutual indwelling of the Trinity.[551] Begbie overtly draws on musicologist Victor Zuckerkandl's description of a

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[550] Jeremy S Begbie, 'Theology and Music', in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology since 1918*, ed. David F Ford and Rachel Muers (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 729.

[551] Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self*, 349.

chord and considers it as a viable representation of the *perichoresis* of the Trinity. Zuckerkandl's portray of a chord is as follows: '…the elements whose coming together make it up do not vanish in the new unity without leaving a trace, but preserve, audibly preserve, their identity. The tones connected in the triad sound *through one another.* Or let us say that they interpenetrate one another.'[552] Polyphony therefore offers to open different possibilities in how we conceive of plurality, a conceptualisation that comes through the way simultaneous sounds work together and through our perceptions of simultaneous sound. Chapter 3 on polyphony will dwell on the audible outworkings of polyphony in relation to my project.

Conclusion to Part 3

This section brought together different philosophical strands and streams that this project revolves around and draws from. It critically reflected on ideas of philosophy by drawing on Cavarero's feminist critique of Plato. This critique showed how the voice in its embodied form was lesser than the ideas it communicated. The denigration of fleshly voice was connected to the denigration of the body from which it came. MacKendrick showed that there was a prioritisation of the abstract idea and the semantic, with little attention given to the bodies and voices that uttered these ideas. My practice is a process by which the embodied voice is given attention which therefore follows Cavarero and MacKendrick as a critique of a type of philosophy that has then affected much Christian thinking.

The voice is also plural in its utterance. On a physical level the sonority of the voice occurs in multiple simultaneous frequencies while also communicating in shared meanings. The way we use our voice in language is by learning already existing modes of sounding. Our voice in some sense carries voices that have previously sounded. The physical bodily voice expresses a plurality within itself through multiple frequencies but also exhibits plurality by the fact that the voice asks to be heard and responded to. The written voice, in that sense, is more passive, requiring a reader to engage; while the spoken voice in our perception has more urgency, demands more of our attention, especially when the body where it comes from is in our audible presence.

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[552] Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956), 298–99.

The presence of plurality and the body does not ensure the listening or the engagement with the voice. Voices remain unheard, ignored - in other words they are silenced, if not physically then in perception. This led me to talk about silence and its ambivalence. Silence can be oppressive in how voices are ignored or even erased. This is a silence that's done to voices. On the other hand, silence can be the moment of possibility, where fresh voices or previously unheard voices can be heard. Silence, after Ihde, is a horizon of sound over which we can hear those ignored. This is a silence that is called upon those willing to listen. It also requires a silencing of the hegemonic single voice so that, in its absence, ears can be attuned towards hearing the plural voices that have been stifled.

The voices of Arendt and Nancy speak of how plurality can be practiced in a way that is not oppressive or isolating. Arendt uses the analogy of the table which creates a space for distinctness but also sharing. The table was an unintentional but important feature of the practice of Bible Noise as we often had food around a table before directly engaging with the sounding of the texts and some of the pieces were done around the table. Plurality for Arendt requires a space to be created. This is distinct from Nancy who seems more intent in drawing awareness to the already existing plurality of all things. Nancy and Arendt are both drawn upon in how plurality is practiced in Bible Noise. Through Arendt, the practice of Bible Noise creates the space of plurality, in the presence of the table, by the commitment of the participants of their time and energy. The plurality of voice is not something that is forced upon the bible; rather, as I've showed at various points above, it is intrinsic to it. Nancy's evocation and elucidation of the 'Singular Plural' is a reflection of that reality of biblical plurality.

These ideas are not external to Christianity as can be found in the key religious doctrine of the Trinity which expresses a plurality that is at the core of Christian understanding. The Trinity is the notion of divinity expressed through the equality and mutuality of the Father, Son and Spirit, a co-presence that is three persons and one God. By speaking of three persons and one God, Christians are expressing a concept which is plural in itself: God is one idea (three persons) but also another (one God). The balance of history and Christian practice has however emphasised the oneness of God rather than the threeness: plurality itself has become a hidden voice. The various theologians who emphasise the plurality of God are in some sense paying attention to this hidden voice. Within the Trinity there has also been an ignored 'voice,' that of the Spirit. Though the

conceptualisation of the Trinity is clear in the equality and mutuality of the three persons, much of Christian history has given less attention to the person of the Spirit. The lack of attention to the Spirit is connected to hegemonies present within Christianity. The Spirit, according to the words of Jesus, 'blows where it will' and therefore all possibilities are open to the Spirit. This is destabilising to the hegemonic. This is borne out by the early denigrating responses to the Pentecostal movement, churches that emphasised the role of the Spirit. The role of the Spirit is central to the story of Pentecost which is a divine expression of plurality. Earlier in this chapter[553] I reflected on that story, where many languages (tongues) arise to be understood and misunderstood. This plurality is the work of the Spirit. My practice is an attempt at paying attention to hidden and silenced voices in the bible and this is done by paying attention to plurality itself.

The Trinity provides a space, much like Arendt's 'table,' for experiences of plurality. The Trinity has also some conceptual echoes with sound, particularly polyphony where multiple sounds coexist as 'one' without overpowering or isolating each other. As a theological concept, the Trinity, in its 'perichoresis,' the mutual indwelling, reflects the presence of the many voices within the reading aloud of the bible. It is a concept (and, for the believer, a reality) that inspires, breathes and 'spirits' this project.

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[553] See above, Pentecost, 87.

Conclusion to Chapter 2

I am going to conclude this chapter by showing how the three sections have worked together. The reason for the three sections was to form a multi-voiced approach to engaging with the plurality of voices in the bible, with particular attention to those that might be silenced or ignored. There are different threads that are shared through these three sections which bring them into relationship with each other.

Hegemony is one such thread. In section 1 the tower of Babel was the representation of hegemony through the presence of empire. The hegemony of empire was critiqued through postcolonial analysis. Postcolonial thought arose from the critique of more recent colonial empires that were instrumental to the creation of the modern ideas of race. Section 2 drew out the hegemony of whiteness and maleness by engaging with Black and feminist theology. Section 3 spoke of the hegemony of the mind by elevation of the abstract and the denigration of the body. This hegemony occurred by the instrumentalization of the voice as a mere carrier of abstract thought. I then turned to the notion of the single voice as representative of hegemony which led to the discussion of plurality and the conditions that could enable plurality as a possibility against the hegemonic. The three sections presented the reality of existing hegemonies while suggesting ways of acting against them.

The thread of plurality is the way I propose to act against hegemony. Plurality occurs at the very beginning of the chapter by presenting two texts in a parallel form. The texts themselves are narrating plurality but as shown it is a plurality that is open to misunderstanding and requires attention. Section 1 dealt with the plurality of the biblical texts, showing the presence of multiple voices in the texts themselves and also in the writing, compilation, editing and interpreting of these texts. Section 2 drew in different voices to set up a plurality of engaging with these texts by drawing on different theologies from liberation theology, black theology, feminist theology and Womanist theology. Then in section 3 I drew upon some of these voices while including more voices in proposing how plurality can take place. Arendt and Nancy provided ways of understanding plurality and enacting it. The discussion of the Trinity then became a way of understanding plurality within the core of Christian thought.

The two stories of Babel and Pentecost was a plural sounding of voice and language. Language is considered to be a response and engaging with the physical environments that humans live or pass through. Language is therefore a way of being in a material environment. The voice while often spoken of in abstracted form is in my project a presence of the physical body. In section 2 I speak of two differences of race and gender which I identify as differences of the body. Talking of race and gender is in some ways talking of the materiality of body. The hegemonic places these differences of body in lesser terms by assuming a white, male norm for the body and these differences were engaged using Black and feminist theology. Section 3 showed how the body became denigrated through feminist readings of Greek philosophy. The denigration of the body became closely related to the denigration of voice in its fleshly terms. The elevation of the abstract and the understanding of voice without the body became a hegemonic voice, a single voice. The idea of a single voice reading the bible in the normal ritual during Christian worship was the idea I hoped to disrupt and expand with my practice of sounding embodied multiple voices in Bible Noise. Bible Noise shows that the bodies of the participants create sound through the voice and each body receives the sounds of others and of themselves. Sound becomes a mutual connection between bodies. The problem with the hegemonic voice is that the voice is going one way. Plurality allows for mutual connections that are shown by the sounding and hearing of multiple voices allowing a connecting of bodies that is not oppressive or isolating.

The body is a point of connection to the next chapter, polyphony when I examine our hearing processes particularly in how we listen to simultaneous sounds.

This chapter 'Contexts' was a description of where my project was situated. The chapter described different facets of the project and how it was contextualised and also showed how the practice of Bible Noise was engaging with these facets. The contexts described were pluriform and the ways of engaging with the contexts were plural in the different pieces and texts that we interacted with. What follows will be a further exploration of plurality in sound itself: polyphony.

Belonging to different communities simultaneously allows for great individual growth. No community can be too oppressive and the different communities engage the self in different ways. The banter and the humour of my Indian friends enrichens and fulfils me in a way that a church service can't. But yet again, I am veering towards talking about the individual or rather framing this as the individual. Possibly the true way to talk of this is through conversation as the frame of engagement will be fundamentally different. Possibly this is why podcasts are so popular. Perhaps yet another one is in order.

So does this simultaneous belonging weaken and atrophy the communities we belong to? Or is there a sense where the different networks in some sense feed each other and keep things in a balance? How does the 'us' balance with the 'I'? Or rather are the many 'us-es' somehow constituting the 'I'? I blather on, but my fundamental question is how a community is meant to function in a way that is beneficial to those within, to itself *and* to those outside?

September 2017

Chapter 3: Polyphony

Introduction

The previous chapter was presented in three parts: the first part examining hegemony; the second, three theologies from the margins to engage with this hegemony; and the third philosophical explorations to promote plurality. These three parts evoke a 'polyphony' where all three interleave and interact with each other. In this chapter I'm exploring the concept, practice, and experience of 'polyphony.' As shown in chapter 2 there are many voices present and it requires a particular kind of engagement to hear these many voices. Polyphony is the presence of many sounds or 'voices' simultaneously. Therefore, an examination of polyphony could provide ways of hearing the many voices that are present but often ignored. I will propose a conceptualisation of polyphony that could aid in hearing these hidden and silenced voices and show how the practice of Bible Noise works towards this.

Polyphony is a term that is used in multifaceted ways which can refer to a particular type of music, or the experience of hearing simultaneous sounds or even the metaphorical understanding of the presence of different voices in texts. I will first talk about the concept of harmony which is sometimes used synonymously with polyphony, but I propose that harmony implies a prejudging of how different voices belong together. This prejudgment is an ordering of how differences should coexist and therefore I present harmony as distinct to my framing of polyphony. Since polyphony has a strong association with music and my practice is in the spoken word, I compare music and speech with relevance to my project by exploring their similarities and differences. Doing so will clarify how polyphony functions within my practice by contextualising polyphony within music and speech. I will then explore how polyphony has been used as a metaphor to engage with texts. For this I primarily engage with the use of the term 'polyphony' in the works of Edward Said and Mikhail Bakhtin. I will present Bakhtin's emphasis on the distinction and individuality of the voices in polyphony. Said, in a different vein, is searching for hearing voices previously unheard. Bakhtin does not dwell much on the acoustic experience of polyphony while Said reflects more on the nature of polyphony by dwelling on the practice and experience of counterpoint in music. Music is an important avenue to explore polyphony and so I dwell on polyphony in music particularly the relations between voices as they simultaneously

sound. The relations between voices becomes the focus of my description of the Bible Noise piece 'Contrapunt of Naomi and Job' where I show an example of how I'm practicing polyphony in my project.

This discussion of polyphony through harmony, music, speech and metaphor leads me to clarify and frame the concept of polyphony that I'm working with in this project. I frame polyphony as a perceptual choice that the listener makes in perceiving simultaneous sounds as belonging together. Framing polyphony as perceptual choice leads me to explore the cognition of simultaneous sounds by examining how we process and perceive simultaneous sound through our hearing mechanisms from the physiological to the neurological. I do this to propose that an examination of the perception of polyphony gives us further avenues to hear and perceive hidden voices. The discussion of the hearing mechanism is also a way to pay attention to the bodily reception of sound. Understanding and examining the way we perceive simultaneous sounds, and, often prioritise certain sounds over others, opens possibilities of re-examining the way we listen out to different voices. I finish the chapter by dwelling on three pieces from Bible Noise to show how my framing of polyphony is works out in practice.

Harmony

Harmony is sometimes understood synonymously with polyphony. It is strongly linked with music for the way different pitches resonate with one another. Composer Arnold Schoenberg defines it as: 'the study of simultaneous sounds (chords) and of how they may be joined with respect to their architectonic, melodic, and rhythmic values and their significance, their weight relative to one another.'[554] This is one meaning of harmony which examines the coexistence of different simultaneous pitches. Harmony in this sense is an understanding of how different sounds relate to each other. There is a broader sense of harmony defined with terms like: 'accord', 'agreement' and 'orderly whole.'[555] Its etymology comes from the description of a carpenter joining two pieces of wood.[556]

[554] Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, trans. Roy E Carter (Berkeley, Calif.; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 13.

[555] 'Harmony, n.', in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 24 February 2022, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/84303.

[556] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 60.

Harmony in this sense is not a description of sound but an evaluation of how things are ordered. It has been used to describe order and beauty at least since the times of Pythagoras for whom harmony was 'the loveliest.'[557] Harmony for the Pythagoreans was 'divine,' as Iamblichus, a 3rd century biographer, says: 'Before it gave itself to the body, the soul heard the divine harmony.'[558] From this notion of divinity is seems that harmony is something that is pre-existing, and Iamblichus goes on to say that the appreciation of tunes we hear through our physical senses is the soul remembering this divine harmony.[559] Harmony here seems to be removed from the body and pre-existent which is possibly being set up as a pre-set order of things.

Pythagoras started analysing different mathematical aspects of music when according to legend he heard a group of black smiths beating their hammers.[560] While these discoveries might have led to greater understanding and appreciation of sound, the mathematics of music in Greek thought could be seen as an ordering of sound which draws upon the 'divine harmony' as will be seen in Plato's thought below. Harmony became a link between sciences as Socrates affirmed the Pythagoreans: 'as are eyes are framed for astronomy, so the ears are framed for the movements of harmony, and these are in some sort kindred sciences.'[561] This kind of linking reinforces harmony as a concept of order. Harmony as an order over sound is clearly expressed in some of Plato's writing as I will show through Cavarero.

Discussing the Greek philosophers' approach to sound Cavarero comments: 'Sonorous emissions are articulated according to an order that admits some combinations and excludes others. Logos respects and emphasizes this combinatorial task of harmonious, right joinings.'[562] Even when Plato talks of letters that form words, he uses the word

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[557] Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 62.

[558] Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis,* trans. Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell, Writings from the Greco-Roman World (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

[559] Kane, *Sound Unseen,* 70.

[560] Christoph Riedweg, *Pythagoras: His Life, Teaching, and Influence* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), 28.

[561] Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato,* ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Bollingen Series (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961). in Kane, *Sound Unseen,* 239.

[562] Cavarero, *For More than One Voice,* 60.

'harmony' as the 'right way' of joining letters.[563] The implication of harmony here is that there is a 'right' way for difference to be joined. This is not necessarily problematic however it does become so when it becomes a totalising principle. Plato wants to reduce music to a *numeric* harmony, to 'subordinate it to logos.'[564] This is by taking Pythagorean observations of music's mathematical properties as a defining principle which is reflected later in Augustine's thought where the 'pleasures of sound' need to be avoided by 'the disciplining of sounds into a music that he intends to be a science by numbers.'[565] Science by numbers is expressive of the Pythagorean universe which believes that 'the numerical law of the harmony regulates all things, including the passion of acoustic pleasure.'[566] Harmony, here, is not a coming together of difference and experiencing that difference, but rather an imposed understanding of what constitutes the 'right' joining. In doing so, it has to exclude that which cannot conform, as Cavarero says regarding music in Plato: '...its regulation is essentially decided by that which it must exclude. ...anything in the entire sonorous universe that oversteps the canons becomes a dangerous excess.'[567] This 'dangerous excess' is what Bible Noise attempts to listen closely to; to the voices that are not considered harmonious in the Plato's sense, paying attention to texts that have been ignored because they are perceived not to belong in 'harmony' with the louder voices.

Harmony in this sense through Plato becomes abstracted as a pre-existing right order removed from the body, (as previously described by Iamblichus) a metaphysical reality which echoes in our 'inner' self. Harmony understood in this sense becomes an ethical imperative. Plato states: 'arrhythmia and disharmony are akin to evil'[568] which is illustrative of how harmony becomes not a description of different sounds together but a prescribed morality. Heidi Epstein says that Aristotle, despite his shift from Plato, continues with the idea of 'virtue-as-harmony.'[569] Epstein further proposes that these Greek ideas of harmony 'indelibly shaped Christian theologies of music.'[570] Cavarero's

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[563] Ibid.

[564] Ibid., 127–28.

[565] Ibid., 128.

[566] Ibid., 155.

[567] Ibid., 160.

[568] Epstein, *Melting the Venusberg*, 13.

[569] Ibid.

[570] Ibid., 15.

quoting of Augustine above is an instance of this. The theologising of harmony was applied broadly where it was described 'in terms of purity and impurity, virtue and sin, carnality and spirituality.'[571] This moralising way of applying harmony to existence and by extension to music, forms a hegemony which attempts to organise difference in a prescribed way. Voices in the bible have been silenced due to different hegemonies that prescribe ways of listening to prioritised voices. This link between harmony and hegemony is the reason I do not use the term harmony to describe the plurality of sound and voice in this project. Rather I consider this conceptualisation of harmony with its links to hegemony as a caution that polyphony in itself does not allow for a hearing of marginalised voices.

It is important to acknowledge that in music the notion of harmony has evolved in different ways. Renaissance polyphony moved from consonance to dissonance but upheld consonance as a its primary principle.[572] Zuckerkandl posits that the principle behind this music was 'to seek consonance as good and to avoid dissonance as evil.'[573] However different musical composers expanded notions of harmony by moving away from the elevation of consonance. The 20th century saw different composers articulating this evolution by paying attention to dissonance. Charles Seeger expressed the concept of 'dissonant counterpoint'[574] and Schoenberg spoke of the 'emancipation of the dissonance.'[575] Boulez also expressed a notion of 'multiplied harmony' which was about different degrees of sound density.[576] These latter notions of harmony are closer to my project where voices are not judged on their 'consonance' but rather an attention to their presence and their relation to other voices. However, I consider the prevailing notions of harmony within wider discourse as being too close to the hegemonic ordering of

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[571] Ibid.

[572] Rokus de Groot, 'Perspectives of Polyphony in Edward Said's Writings', *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 25 (2005): 222.

[573] Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol*, 106.

[574] John D. Spilker, 'The Origins of "Dissonant Counterpoint": Henry Cowell's Unpublished Notebook', *Journal of the Society for American Music* 5, no. 4 (November 2011): 481–533, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752196311000290.

[575] Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 216.

[576] Pierre Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today*, trans. Susan Bradshaw and Richard Rodney Bennett (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), 117–18.

difference which evokes my earlier point that for my project harmony represents a danger
that polyphony itself can be a tool for hegemony.

The link that I've presented of harmony with hegemony is important to hold on to because
it shows that the presence of plurality alone is not enough. The presence of plurality in
itself can become hegemonic. Diversity is a term that is often used to suggest plurality.
Scholar Sara Ahmed in her work has shown how diversity is used to keep existing power
structures in place.[577] She says that 'diversity is often predicated on the numbers game, on
getting more of us, more people of colour, to add colour to the white faces of
organisations.'[578] Diversity is in this case is primarily about image building rather than
plurality that difference brings as Ahmed says: 'The term 'diversity' is appealing as it does
not necessarily challenge organisational culture, even if it allows a change in
appearance.'[579] Regarding difference Ahmed says 'diversity reifies differences as something
that already exists in the bodies of others.'[580] As an example of the kind of control that
institutions hold over this notion of difference Ahmed goes on to recount an instance
where the diversity organisation was not even allowed to use the word 'racism,' a term that
accounts for discrimination based on difference.[581] Plurality in this context is something
that ordered according to hegemonic aims. Since harmony in its general sense is an order
based on a pre-existing idea for this project I'm considering harmony as a hegemonic form
of polyphony. Althusser uses the phrase 'teeth-gritting harmony' to describe the
hegemony of state apparatuses.[582] The polyphony that I'm proposing is based more on
ideas of mutual giving way, co-inhering or perichoresis: a way of describing the Trinity's
mutual indwelling which was described in chapter 2.[583]

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[577] Sara Ahmed, *On being included: racism and diversity in institutional life*, 2012.

[578] Sara Ahmed, 'Embodying Diversity: Problems and Paradoxes for Black Feminists', *Race Ethnicity and Education* 12, no. 1 (1 March 2009): 41, https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320802650931.

[579] Ibid., 45.

[580] Ibid., 43.

[581] Ibid., 46.

[582] Louis Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)*, 1971.

[583] See above, The Trinity – Christian Understandings of Plurality, 159.

Music and Speech

The idea of harmony discussed above talked about how harmony and polyphony are spoken of in musical terms. The use of music to present my arguments around harmony and polyphony needs clarification because my practice uses sound through the spoken word. Therefore, I'm going to discuss certain relationships between music and speech to show the validity of drawing upon musical concepts in the context of my project. I am not going to give a definition of music because of its layered complexity which will be outside the purview of this project. Instead, I will describe the overlaps between music and speech since I am using music to understand ways of perceiving polyphony in the context of my practice which uses speech. Music and speech can both be understood as sound organised by human practice and engagement across periods of time. Their perception is primarily through our auditory mechanisms, and they are both enacted based on similar previous enactments. Pitch and rhythm are both important features of music and speech, though the way in which they work together might be different.

Glenn Gould, discussing the use of spoken word in music, says: 'I think that much of the new music has a lot to do with the spoken word, with the rhythms and patterns, the rise and fall and inclination, the ordering of phrase and regulations of cadence in human speech.... it's unrealistic to think of that as anything but composition... I think our whole notion of what music is has forever merged with all the sounds that are around us, everything that the environment makes available.'[584] Gould's comment is related to his piece 'The Idea of North' discussed in chapter 1.[585]

Klaus Scherer exploring the connections between language and music considers that the 'link between language and music is essentially the pragmatic aspect of expressing... through the means of... timbre, timing, rhythm, and melody.'[586] Different communities will have different understandings as to what constitutes music and what constitutes

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[584] Geoffrey Payzant, *Glenn Gould: Music and Mind* (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1978), 130.

[585] See above, Glenn Gould, 38.

[586] Klaus R. Scherer, 'Emotion, in Action, Interaction, Music, and Speech', in *Language, Music, and the Brain: A Mysterious Relationship*, ed. Michael A. Arbib, Strüngmann Forum Reports (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013), 139.

speech and Michael Arbib proposes that in some cultures they might be 'viewed as one.'[587] (Further discussion on culture continues below).[588] The primary distinction between music and speech relevant to this discussion can be drawn around how speech following language is 'clearly representational.'[589] By 'representational,' Arbib is pointing to how speech as a 'communicative purpose is often clear and explicit.'[590] Though this might be an exaggeration, it can be suggested that speech has more referential specificities than music. Speech contains much semantic content that refers to a range of specified things. Music can contain semantic content too through sung words but music has a far more variable amount of semantic content from having very little to being filled with it in terms of scores, words chants and so on. When music does have semantic content, the way the attention is drawn to that semantic content is variable as well. Speech on the other hand has less variance and seeks more attention to the semantic or representational content. This distinction is affirmed by Annirudh Patel and Steven Demorest, neuroscientists whose research crosses neurology, speech and music who suggest: 'the communicative characteristics of music are far more ambiguous and polysemic than language.'[591] Patel and Demorest's notion of polysemy refers to music greater variability in what it refers compared to speech. My practice is aiming to draw attention to *both* sound and semantic content, and I have presented in chapter 2 the tendency within Christian practice to emphasise the semantic over the sound. The variability in music of the amount of semantic content and how music does or does not draw attention to its semantic content is useful in formulating my practice which wants to draw attention to both the sound and the semantic.

It is important therefore to say that speech and music have more overlap than is generally recognized. Previously neurological research considered music to be essentially different to speech. As part of this distinction, the standard view held that speech was processed by

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[587] Michael A. Arbib, 'Five Terms in Search of a Synthesis', in *Language, Music, and the Brain: A Mysterious Relationship*, ed. Michael A. Arbib, Strüngmann Forum Reports (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013), 21.

[588] See below, section Sound – Culturally Defined, 175.

[589] Arbib, 'Five Terms in Search of a Synthesis', 22.

[590] Ibid., 24.

[591] Aniruddh D Patel and Seven M. Demorest, 'Comparative Music Cognition: Cross-Species and Cross-Cultural Studies', in *The Psychology of Music*, ed. Diana Deutsch (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2013), 658.

a portion of the brain in the left hemisphere while music was processed in the right hemisphere.[592] However, recent research has however shown the reality to be more complex, as neuroscientist Stefan Koelsch has proposed based on his research: 'The combined findings do not support the notion of a strict lateralization of language processing to the left and music processing to the right hemisphere. Instead, they rather suggest a strong interaction of both hemispheres during the processing of both language and music.'[593] Cognitive Annirudh Patel affirms this: 'The idea that speech and music perception show left versus right hemispheric asymmetry in processing is an old and firmly entrenched idea in neuropsychology. A closer examination of the evidence suggests that both language and music represent their sound categories bilaterally in auditory cortex.'[594] There might be more activity in one hemisphere over another regarding speech and music, but both hemispheres are in fact working together in the perception of both music and speech in musicians and non-musicians. Additionally, there is a 'fundamental similarity of brain areas involved' in the perception of both speech and music. Patel says: 'On the surface, the two domains are dramatically different. Music uses pitch in ways that speech does not, and speech organizes timbre to a degree seldom seen in music. Yet beneath these differences lie deep connections in terms of cognitive and neural processing.'[595] Koelsch similarly says that 'the present data does not support a strict dichotomy between auditory language and music processing, but rather suggest considerable overlap.'[596] I'm highlighting the overlap of music and speech to show that understandings gained from the perception of music can be used in my practice of reading aloud the bible through the spoken voice which will give indications as to how to listen out for the plurality of voices in the bible.

Sound – Culturally Defined

In this context it is worth noting how culture frames our reception of sound. Regarding music, it has been proposed that it is a 'universal language.'[597] What is implicit within such

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[592] Brian C. J. Moore, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Hearing* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 329.

[593] Stefan Koelsch et al., 'Bach Speaks: A Cortical "Language-Network" Serves the Processing of Music', *NeuroImage* 17, no. 2 (2002): 962, https://doi.org/10.1006/nimg.2002.1154.

[594] Aniruddh D Patel, *Music, Language and the Brain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 73.

[595] Ibid., 86.

[596] Koelsch et al., 'Bach Speaks', 964.

[597] Patel and Demorest, 'Comparative Music Cognition', 647.

an understanding is that languages are particular while music can somehow transcend particularities. This understanding comes from the above-mentioned particularities of representation or semantics that language affords in comparison to the apparently less specific nature of music, which is therefore somehow considered transcendent. However, by considering music as universal, the understanding of music can become hegemonic where the frames of reference for music are defined by dominant structures. Philip Ewell has in this vein written about the 'white racial frame' in music where the theorisation of music is racially charged.[598] Susan McClary similarly as theorised on how gender frames musical discourse.[599]

Therefore, it is important to demarcate music as a particular cultural phenomenon contextualised by different societal constructs. Ethnomusicologist Philip Bohlman discussing the idea of 'world music' speaks of how music 'has different meanings elsewhere in the world.'[600] According to him, 'knowing what music is and what it does may have little to do with categories that seem entirely natural to us.'[601] This means that throughout my research I have to contextualise how I present notions of polyphony and music. An illustrative comment comes from Karl Popper, who said that polyphony was 'the most unprecedented, original, indeed miraculous achievement of our Western civilization.'[602] The implication is that polyphony was somehow a unique 'Western' development. The facts, however, are that there are several polyphonic musical practices, 'with their own logics, rules, and techniques for the simultaneous combination of voices, within varying degrees of composed and improvisatory frameworks.'[603] Though I'm often referring to western polyphonic practices, it is important to acknowledge that there are different polyphonic practices present across the world. This acknowledgement is a way to point to

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[598] Philip Ewell, 'Music Theory's White Racial Frame', *Music Theory Spectrum* 43, no. 2 (1 October 2021): 324–29, https://doi.org/10.1093/mts/mtaa031.

[599] Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*, [Repr.] (Minneapolis, MN: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2010).

[600] Philip Vilas Bohlman, *World Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.

[601] Ibid.

[602] Karl Popper, *Unended Quest: An Intellectual Autobiography* (Routledge, 2005), 60.

[603] Liam Joseph Flenady, 'Composing Contrapuntal Worlds: Developing an Aesthetics and Practice of Counterpoint in the 21st Century' (Griffith thesis, Griffith University, 2017), 28, https://doi.org/10.25904/1912/1374.

the fact the polyphony needs contextualising and framing which I will do further down below.

Similar issues of the different cultural frames of reference for sound has been acknowledged in the cognitive sciences. Patel and Demorest have reviewed research into comparative approaches to music psychology which shows that 'enculturation has a powerful influence on our schema for music structure.'[604] According to them, the field of Music Psychology has 'ignored' the diversity of musical cultures present in our world and 'focused almost entirely on Western music.'[605] Patel et al. propose that 'cross-cultural music psychology offers a unique opportunity to test the validity of our thinking regarding fundamental processes of music cognition and their development through formal and informal means.'[606] This bringing together of distinct cultures to understand music cognition is in line with the aims of my project. Research on music cognition reviewed by Patel et al. shows that children undergo 'implicit learning of cultural norms' and from an early age start 'demonstrating cultural bias.'[607] Cultural background therefore has significant influence in how we listen and process the many sounds of music from different cultures. It is difficult to 'suppress style inappropriate expectancies'[608] in how we listen to music that is not from our culture. Equally, they find that listeners are 'not sensitive to tonality violations for unfamiliar cultures unless such a violation conformed to their culture-specific expectancies.'[609] Additionally, the context for performing and listening to music is also important since 'in some cultures it would be unusual to listen to music without an accompanying dance or movement of some kind.'[610] However, findings also show how 'bimusical' individuals, those who belong to two distinct musical cultures, are able to perceive the music from those music cultures in ways that are appropriate to those respective cultures.[611] This is resonant for this thesis since it shows the possibility of two differing schema of perception occurring within one person. Different ways of

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[604] Patel and Demorest, 'Comparative Music Cognition', 647.

[605] Ibid., 648.

[606] Ibid., 659.

[607] Ibid., 662.

[608] Ibid., 667.

[609] Ibid., 670.

[610] Ibid., 672.

[611] Ibid., 669.

attending are required to hear different voices and it is possible for these differences to exist within and among us. Polyphony is not just variable in its practice within music. Polyphony as a term is used beyond the fields of sound and music. It is used as a metaphor by different theorists and so I turn to the notion of polyphony as metaphor.

Polyphony as Metaphor

I discuss polyphony as metaphor because I want to show how polyphony can be understood as a way of perceiving the world and being in it. What I am doing is examining the aural phenomena of polyphony and asking what implications it has for human coexistence more broadly. The etymology of metaphor denotes a carrying across. It is the carrying across of a sense or experience from one field to another. Metaphor is integral to human language as we use it to make sense of the world. Polyphony has been used as a metaphor to describe or understand how different voices and people can co-exist fruitfully in different fields. Peter Pesic, a musician physicist, writes about how 'writers and theorists explicitly enlisted the concept of polyphony as illuminating their practice.'[612] He lists different writers and theorists who use polyphony, giving examples of poet Amy Lowell and Mikhail Bakhtin who 'enlisted polyphony to express their new visions of poetry and narrative.'[613] Similarly, in sociology according to Pesic, 'Max Weber presented polyphony as a central factor in the "rationalization" of Western music and society.'[614] In this vein of using polyphony as a metaphor I will now look at two theorists: the before mentioned Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, and Edward Said, Egyptian early pioneer of the discipline of postcolonial studies. I discuss them because their work involves the reading of texts, listening for different voices and using ideas of polyphony in their work.

Polyphony as Metaphor: Mikhail Bakhtin

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895 – 1975) was a Russian theorist whose work became more widely known from the 1970s.[615] Bakhtin's work was primarily in literature and linguistics. His

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[612] Peter Pesic, *Polyphonic Minds: Music of the Hemispheres* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), 241.

[613] Ibid., 229.

[614] Ibid.

[615] Michael Holquist, 'Introduction', in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, New Ed edition (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1982).

initial analyses were on Dostoevsky's novels where he uses the term polyphony to describe the many voices present in the novel. For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky's writing 'managed to liberate the voice of its characters from under the domination of the authorial or narratorial voice.'[616] According to him, characters have their own individual voices and Dostoevsky's novels are filled with the interplay of these voices: 'A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels.'[617] Bakhtin proposes that the novel is not 'illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event.'[618] Bakhtin uses the term polyphony because for him: 'The essence of polyphony lies precisely in the fact that the voices remain independent and, as such, are combined in a unity of a higher order than in homophony.'[619] He emphases the independence of voices describing the polyphony in Dostoevsky as: 'not a polyphony of reconciled voices but a polyphony of battling and internally divided voices.'[620] These descriptions of polyphony are resonant for my project since Bakhtin emphasises the individuality of voices present while rejecting a neat 'reconciliation' of these voices. Often the reconciliation of voices leads to a merger of voices without distinction. This merger leads to voices being hidden amongst other louder voices.

Bakhtin considers these individual voices as dialogic. This is because for him every word uttered 'is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates.'[621] The different voices are not mixed 'but set against each other dialogically.'[622] The dialogic for Bakhtin has 'a certain elemental, organic energy and openendedness.'[623] This suggests that voices can contextualise and affirm each other

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[616] Ian Buchanan, 'Polyphony', in *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2010), https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199532919.001.0001/acref-9780199532919-e-535.

[617] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 6.

[618] Ibid.

[619] Ibid., 21.

[620] Ibid., 249–50.

[621] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 280.

[622] Ibid., 360.

[623] Ibid., 361.

in polyphony. Bakhtin's ideas around the differentiation of these voices become a way for him to engage with plurality in the texts. He expands on this plurality through the terms 'heteroglossia' 'polyglossia' and 'hybridization.' Two of these terms are linked with language through 'glossia' (tongue) where Bakhtin not only considers the individual voices but also the different 'languages' they speak; languages in terms of ethnic speech but also the linguistic styles of different people groups within the same language. The presence of multiple languages is an echo and resonance of the stories of Babel and Pentecost that I spoke about in Chapter 2.[624]

Bakhtin, however, never explicitly explores polyphony as an audio experience. Conversely, he is quite explicit about polyphony being a metaphor: 'It must be noted that the comparison we draw between Dostoevsky's novel and polyphony is meant as a graphic analogy, nothing more.'[625] This is because for him 'the material of music and of the novel are too dissimilar for there to be anything more between them than a graphic analogy, a simple metaphor.'[626] Bakhtin's work however, is filled with sound through terms of voice, utterance, speech, tongues, languages and so on. These terms all have strong aural expressions and it can only be speculated as to what Bakhtin might have written if he had pursued the audible content of his work. Bakhtin's use of the metaphor of polyphony is however important because his own work has been used in diverse fields including nursing, law and organisational theory, proposing ways in which human beings can relate to each other. This diversity of use shows the possibilities of how the metaphor of polyphony can be useful and helpful in different areas of human living.

Polyphony as Metaphor: Edward Said

Edward Said (1935 – 2003) was a Jerusalem-born professor of literature and is considered to be one of the pioneers and founders of the discipline of postcolonial studies. Said's personal background provides a resonant context to his use of polyphony as a metaphor in his work. He was born into a Jerusalem based Arab-Christian family and spent a portion of his childhood in Egypt. He was also a U.S citizen from birth because his father had served with the U.S. military. I give these facets of Said's background because of the multiple

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[624] See above, Two Stories, 74.

[625] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, 22.

[626] Ibid.

cultural identities Said grew up and lived with. There is a sense that polyphony is a helpful metaphor to negotiate these multiplicities. He expresses this sense of polyphony by talking about his self as 'a cluster of flowing currents.'[627] These currents 'are always in motion, in time, in place, in the form of strange combinations moving about, not necessarily forward, against each other, contrapuntally yet without one central theme.'[628] 'Contrapuntally' which is the adjective form of 'counterpoint' is the term Said uses to express his polyphonic self here. Counterpoint is the primary mode of polyphony that Said uses in his work. A further facet of Said's identity is that he considered himself a keen 'amateur' musician[629] and wrote and lectured about music.[630] His practice of music and his writing about music give his use of metaphor a more embodied sense in comparison to Bakhtin's employment of polyphony.

Said's use of polyphony as a metaphor is primarily articulated in relation to the polyphonic style of counterpoint. His use of counterpoint initially in his work was as a strategy of reading texts. To repeat a previously quoted passage: 'In the counterpoint of Western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one. In the same way, I believe, we can read and interpret English novels, for example, whose engagement (usually suppressed for the most part) with the West Indies or India, say, is shaped and perhaps even determined by the specific history of colonization, resistance, and finally native nationalism.'[631] The metaphor of countrapuntal polyphony Said wants to read 'great canonical texts' (European and American) 'with an effort to draw out, extend, give emphasis and voice to what is silent or marginally present or ideologically represented in such works.'[632] He is doing this in order to show how European colonization and the ideas of empire born from it, manifests themselves in the literature of the time. For Said, 'the literature itself makes constant references to itself as somehow participating in Europe's overseas expansion' in ways 'that

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[627] Edward W. Said, 'On Writing a Memoir', *London Review of Books*, 29 April 1999, https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v21/n09/edward-said/on-writing-a-memoir.

[628] Ibid.

[629] Edward W. Said and Andrew Nicholson, *Musical Elaborations* (London: Vintage, 1992), xvii.

[630] Edward W. Said, *Musical Elaborations*, The Wellek Library Lectures at the University of California, Irvine (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

[631] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 51.

[632] Ibid., 66.

support, elaborate, and consolidate the practice of empire.'[633] Said is attempting 'to look carefully and integrally at the culture that nurtured the sentiment, rationale, and above all the imagination of empire.'[634] Said is not doing this as a historical exercise but because 'the imagination of empire' still pervades the current times, as Said quotes political philosopher Frantz Fanon: 'Colonialism and imperialism have not paid their score when they withdraw their flags and their police forces from our territories.'[635]

Said's response therefore is to read contrapuntally: 'To read these major works of the imperial period retrospectively and heterophonically with other histories and traditions counterpointed against them, to read them in the light of decolonization, is neither to slight their great aesthetic force, nor to treat them reductively as imperialist propaganda. Still, it is a much graver mistake to read them stripped of their affiliations with the facts of power which informed and enabled them.'[636] Said uses counterpoint as a way to read and in this statement, he additionally uses the term heterophony which emphasizes his use of the concept of polyphony. Compared to Bakhtin, Said seems to have a stronger experiential understanding of polyphony at least in terms of counterpoint which he brings to his work.

Said's use of counterpoint in his work has been described as 'not just an aesthetic, metaphysical model but rather a practical, descriptive way of exploring the world through our aesthetic experiences.'[637] 'Exploring the world' through polyphony is one of the important ideas that my project is based on. Bakhtin and Said are two voices which this project has drawn upon. The initial prompt for this project was the work of Jacqueline Lapsley which I described before in chapter 2.[638] She employed Bakhtin's notions of heteroglossia and polyphony to hear the voices of women in the bible. Said's work, on the other hand led to the formation of postcolonial studies which has been key to how I have

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[633] Ibid., 14.

[634] Ibid., 12.

[635] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth.*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York, Grove Press, 1963), 101. in Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 12.

[636] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 161.

[637] Kiyoko Magome, 'Edward Said's Counterpoint', in *Paradoxical Citizenship: Edward Said*, ed. Sivia Nagy-Zekmi (Lexington Books, 2006).

[638] See above, Feminist theology, 111.

approached certain texts, particularly my reading of the texts of Babel and Pentecost. Bakhtin and Said's expansions of the term polyphony are ways in which I use polyphony to hear voices of difference in the bible in the practice of Bible Noise.

Experience of Polyphony in Music

Both Said and Bakhtin draw on musical polyphony for their work. Similarly, I will dwell on the experience of polyphony in music. It is important to note that there are different forms of polyphony in music like Counterpoint, Heterophony, Homophony and so on which are listed in Appendix C.[639] There are plural ways in which the making of simultaneous sounds has been understood and classified within Western Music. These different approaches offer different ways to practice sounding multiple different voices.

Hearing multiple simultaneous sounds in music is commonplace. The ability to hear sounds that are complex 'harmonically' is not culturally specific but 'a basic aspect of auditory perception' and probably 'very ancient' as part of our evolutionary mechanisms of negotiating our environments.[640] Listening to polyphonic music however requires a particular kind of attention, as composer Aaron Copland says: 'Music that is polyphonically written makes greater demands on the attention of the listener, because it moves by reason of separate and independent melodic strands.'[641] Copland thinks that a proper engagement with polyphony 'implies a listener who can hear separate strands of melody sung by separate voices instead of hearing only the sound of all voices as they happen from moment to moment.'[642] What Copland means by this is that listeners should be able to discern parts of the polyphony distinctly. This might be too prescriptive but what is of interest here is that Copland thinks the listener needs to pay 'greater' attention. This is relevant to the process of hearing different voices in my project: there is a need for more attention to voices that have been ignored or silenced. Musicologist Rokus de Groot says polyphony 'eludes cognitive grip' while also 'defying a single authoritative listening.'[643] By this de Groot is referring to the complex interactions of simultaneous

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[639] See Appendix-C, 361.

[640] Patel and Demorest, 'Comparative Music Cognition', 648.

[641] Aaron Copland, *What to Listen for in Music* (New York: New American Library, 2009), 88–89.

[642] Ibid., 89.

[643] de Groot, 'Perspectives of Polyphony', 230.

sounds with each other which allows the listener to discover more of what's happening by listening carefully. It is not just each individual voice or note that the listener can discern but also the relations between these voices.

Musicologist Victor Zuckerkandl has further reflected on the experience of hearing polyphony in music. He reflects on the chord, a simultaneous sounding of musical tones: 'Three tones sound. In each of them space encounters us and we encounter space. None of them is in a place; or better, they are all in the same place, namely, everywhere.'[644] This is a reflection on how sound fills the (enclosed) spaces that it is present in. What is of significance is that, for Zuckerkandl, all three tones fill the space equally. Continuing his reflections, Zuckerkandl says: 'Simultaneously sounding tones do not run together into a mixed tone. No difference of places keeps them apart; yet they remain audible as different tones.'[645] It could be said from this statement that no tone has a pre-eminence of position because all three tones are filling the same space while remaining distinct. The reality, though, is that our perception might give precedence to one or another depending on a range of factors. However, it can be acknowledged from Zuckerkandl's observations that simultaneous sound can be a situation for a set of relationships that is not oppressive. The coming together of the tones does not erase them, as he says: 'the elements whose coming together make it up do not vanish in the new unity without leaving a trace, but preserve, audibly preserve, their identity.'[646] This notion is important when considering the hegemonic voice that overpowers and silences others or arranges voices into hierarchical systems. The preservation of identity does not mean that the tones do not affect each other. Zuckerkandl describes the tones as sounding 'through one another... they interpenetrate one another,'[647] and later: '...there is... a multiplicity of dynamic qualities, superimposed and interpenetrating.'[648]

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[644] Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol*, 297.

[645] Ibid., 298.

[646] Ibid., 298–99.

[647] Ibid., 299.

[648] Ibid., 307.

Relations in Polyphony

When listening to the simultaneous voices, we are hearing them in dynamic relationship with each other. The relationship between the voices is important because, when we're listening to polyphony, what we're hearing is not just the sum total of sound properties but additionally the *relationships between* the voices. Polyphony understood in terms of relations evokes my discussion above of the philosophers Hannah Arendt and Jean Luc Nancy. I referred in chapter 2 to Arendt's idea of 'betweenness' required for relationship[649] and dialogue while Nancy spoke of singular plurality where all existence is 'with'[650] or in other words existence happen as things are in relation with others. De Groot identifies two types of relations: 'the relation between one individual voice to each of the others, and the relation between the individual voice and the collective of voices.'[651] We can hear these relationships through 'harmonic interference,' where voices 'elicit sonorous aspects in each other that cannot be observed if the voices were sung or played separately.'[652] This occurs due to the overtones as the different frequencies within each voice meet with each other.

The idea of tones sounding *through* one another seems to point towards the ability of sounds to contextualise each other thereby underlining each sound's identity. Professor of religious studies John Sheveland, reflecting on this possibility, says that in polyphony, voices combine to create an 'emergent structure' that then 'bends back, reflexively as a movement that now sheds further light on the individual voices comprising it.'[653] This means that rather than a loss of identity, bringing together voices offers the possibility of establishing and clarifying identity. Again, it must be cautioned that there are limits to how much can be distinguished, especially when there are a large number of voices at play. Importantly, research shows that 'the ability to name the notes comprising a chord generally requires considerable practice.'[654] This shows that polyphony has the latent

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[649] See above, Hannah Arendt and Plurality, 154.

[650] See above, Arendt and Nancy, 157.

[651] de Groot, 'Perspectives of Polyphony', 222–23.

[652] Ibid., 223.

[653] John Sheveland, 'What Has Renaissance Polyphony to Offer Theological Method?', in *Understanding Religious Pluralism: Perspectives from Religious Studies and Theology*, ed. Peter C Phan and Jonathan Ray (Eugene: PICKWICK PUBLICATIONS, 2014), 267.

[654] Josh H. McDermott and Andrew J. Oxenham, 'Music Perception, Pitch, and the Auditory System', *Current Opinion in Neurobiology* 18, no. 4 (August 2008): 6, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conb.2008.09.005.

possibility to enact an equitable presentation of mutually affirming voices, but the listener must learn how to do so. The auditory perception of polyphony and predilections of this perception will be further explored below. Before that I will engage with the relations of voices by describing the piece 'Contrapunt of Naomi and Job.'

Contrapunt of Naomi and Job

The relations between mutually affirming voices can be explore through the piece *Contrapunt of Naomi and Job* performed in Bible Noise. This piece has been described in chapter 1[655] and also in Appendix-A.[656] Based on these descriptions Job is a well-known voice while Naomi is an ignored voice. However, by bringing together the resonant phrases uttered by Naomi and Job, both these voices start contextualising each other. The fantastical nature of Job's deprivation when brought together with the real-world loss of Naomi allows both characters to sound through each other. Naomi's problem can be understood in greater depth through Job, while Job can be made more relatable through Naomi's tragedies. In the initial iteration of the piece, the voices spoke one after another. This did not make it polyphonic in an audible sense but it showed how voices affect each other, which is how polyphonic sound works. Though this is not a polyphony in a material sense, it is one that is metaphorical: two voices presented as having resonance with each other. The purpose here is to amplify the voice of Naomi by showing its similarity to Job's. There are differences as well but maybe not enough to consider them as 'counterpoint' as Said would consider it. For Said, 'counterpoint' is a 'countertradition' and though the piece considered as a whole is sounding a countertradition by amplifying Naomi, Naomi is not in the same sense countering Job. Aurally speaking, this piece could be considered as a form of 'Heterophony' where there are resonances as well as divergences that signify individuality. Rather than Naomi's voice becoming one with Job's, Naomi's differences allow her voice to be distinguished from Job's and considered an equal voice to Job's.

After reflexively analysing this piece after its first performance, I decided to reconstitute the piece where there would be more polyphony of sound. The second iteration of this piece was done as a simultaneous reading where the two voices of Job and Naomi came

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[655] See above, Contrapunt of Naomi and Job, 60.

[656] See Appendix-A, Contrapunt of Naomi and Job, 269.

together simultaneously. The simultaneity provides a better enactment of hearing voices through each other. Now, the common words and phrases instead of coming one after another, weave in and out. This weaving in and out allows listeners to hear Job and Naomi together in the similarities that were brought out through Lapsley's reading. The hidden Naomi is heard through the lofty Job. Through repeated hearings of this bringing together, Job the wealthy, powerful man is brought together with Naomi the widow who has nothing. Job is given back his wealth and seven sons, but Naomi has Ruth who is better than seven sons. The two iterations of this piece show the different ways in which polyphony can be performed and listened to. Now I will turn to framing polyphony from the above presentations of the sonic experiences and the metaphorical use of polyphony.

Polyphony for this Project

I've presented polyphony in a musical context while also showing its metaphorical application in wider contexts. Now I'm going to contextualise polyphony in the way my project engages with and understands it. As has been shown, polyphony has a broad set of meanings from a specific type of music to a method of reading texts. The word 'polyphony' in its simplest form means 'many sounds' (poly – many; phony – sounds). However, the phrase 'many sounds' does not adequately describe polyphony. We could hear many sounds as a sequence of events, and in music this would not be considered polyphony. In music, polyphony is hearing sounds *simultaneously*. This is a feature of polyphony that I have been discussing. These sounds are simultaneously heard; they come to us in the same moment. Defining this musically seems straightforward in relation to traditional notions of music: polyphony is the simultaneous sounding of musical tones. However, when listening to music through loudspeakers, if some other music from another source is heard, we're not usually going to call the experience of hearing both musics as polyphony. Further to this, when the music includes 'non-musical' sounds like spoken word or field recordings the idea of polyphony either not applicable or it needs expansion.

If I follow this expansion of polyphony to include non-musical tones, then does it follow that the experience of hearing any simultaneous sounds constitute polyphony? There is a sense that the vast majority of what we hear is an experience of simultaneous sound sources and each sound can have multiple frequencies. For my project, however, I propose a delineation and distinction to polyphony away from the general presence of simultaneous multiple sounds. I do this to show that understanding polyphony in an

expanded but specific way will help in the process of listening to hidden and silenced voices in the reading aloud of scripture. Additional to the presence of simultaneous sounds, I consider the *reception* of simultaneous sounds. The reception of sound is emphasised here because my project engages with the fact that so many voices are ignored even when they are present. The ignoring of voices has certain parallels in our hearing process where we are able to 'ignore' sounds that we consider are irrelevant as shown by the 'cocktail party problem.'[657] This classic case inquires as to how we are able to hear and converse with particular speakers in a crowded room full of simultaneous speakers. This is possible because our hearing processes 'ignore' the irrelevant sounds to pay attention a particular speaker. This ability to ignore sounds will be discussed in more detail further below. This ability to ignore means that the hearer is able to organise what is heard. This organising of hearing is how I then frame polyphony for this project.

I propose that polyphony indicate a perceptive understanding that certain simultaneous sounds belong together. A simple example would be at an outdoor musical performance. Imagine a string quartet busking in Covent Garden. There will be the sounds of people, talking, the clink of cutlery and the sounds of other buskers. Those who listen to the string quartet have decided to attend to the multiple sounds coming from the quartet while paying less attention to the other sounds. For the most part, listeners will not consider the sounds of people talking and so on as part of the experience of the quartet. Polyphony here seems to be a choice we make, however tacit, to consider certain sounds as belonging together. This idea of belonging together is significant because my project proposes there are different sounds (or voices) that are not considered to belong, and therefore are ignored. My practice, therefore, attempts to draw attention to different voices so that they might be heard as belonging to the polyphony that's perceived.

Polyphony as I've presented it here, seems to be influenced strongly by perception. Therefore, I shall explore our perception of simultaneous sound by drawing upon the work of cognitive scientists. This is done through an examination of our hearing processes, from the physiological to the neural perception of simultaneous sound. While drawing on neuroscience it is interesting to note how the language of sound and music are used to communicate the science of the brain. Pesic draws up different examples of scientists

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[657] Josh H. McDermott, 'The Cocktail Party Problem', *Current Biology* 19, no. 22 (1 December 2009): R1024–27, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2009.09.005.

describing the 'reverberation' and 'orchestration' of neurons as well as their 'frequencies.'[658] Pesic goes on to describe the brain as polyphonic describing the simultaneous multiple frequencies of the neural networks that interact with each other as 'an unimaginably complex polyphonic composition.'[659] With this resonance of brain function and sound, I turn to explore our cognition of polyphony.

Cognition of Polyphony

Sound can be sensed through our whole body but the ear and its associated parts are the primary areas through which we receive and make sense of sound. Sound enters our ear canals and reaches our eardrum causing it to vibrate. These vibrations are passed on to ossicles, three small bones, and then to the cochlea, a spiral shaped organ which has membranes, fluid and thousands of tiny hairs.[660] From the cochlea, the movements are 'transduced' into neural activity.[661] Neurons then 'fire' and the sound, or the 'information' about the sound, goes within our brain to be processed. Each part deals with the sound in subtle ways. The shape of our outer ear causes the sound to reflect and be delayed which allows us to localise sound.[662] The ossicles work to maximise the efficient transfer of sound within a frequency range of 50 hz to 5000 hz from the air to fluids in the cochlea.[663] Then in the cochlea, the sound is split into component frequencies.[664]

What is evident from this brief, reduced description of the ear and its associated mechanisms is that our reception of sound goes through several processes before it is received to be made 'sense' of, making meaning of the sound. This echoes with a key component of my practice, the Bible. The Bible is a collection of texts that come together from the telling of stories, their modification, their editing, their compiling, their translation and so on. Acknowledging these mechanisms of transmission, whether of text or sound will help us be aware of what could be missed or ignored. In terms of physical

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[658] Pesic, *Polyphonic Minds*, 246–47.

[659] Ibid., 248.

[660] Moore, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Hearing*, 23–35.

[661] Ibid., 35.

[662] Ibid., 264.

[663] Ibid., 24.

[664] Ibid., 54.

hearing, a simple example is where our threshold of hearing (approx. 20hz – 20,000hz) limits us from hearing the large number of sounds that occur beyond those frequencies. Texts might be more complex than simple frequencies, but an analogy can be drawn that our modes of engaging the text vocally and through different discursive references could create thresholds beyond which there are voices to be heard and engaged with. The modes by which we currently engage with the text, silently or through a single voice might not be enough to tease out and come to hear the different voices. My drawing upon different theologies and working with Bible Noise to engage with the Bible is a way to hear beyond the thresholds of the norm and to hear hidden and silenced voices.

Hearing and Processing Simultaneous Sound

I have briefly talked about how sound is received by our hearing mechanisms before we make sense of it. I explore how we receive and process several sounds at once because my project attempts to hear the polyphony of voices in the bible especially the ones we tend to ignore. As I will show, our perceptive attention is important in how we make sense of simultaneous sounds and I propose that hearing hidden voices analogously require a particular kind of perceptive attention in order to hear them. An avenue of research into how we process several sounds was framed in the 1950s as the 'cocktail party problem' by E. Colin Cherry, a cognitive scientist.[665] His question was: 'how do we recognize what one person is saying when others are speaking at the same time (the "cocktail party problem")?'[666] Cherry's interest is in learning how we perceive a single voice amongst others, which as cognitive scientist Josh McDermott says is 'directing attention to the sound source of interest while ignoring the others.'[667] My intention is not to discount voices but to show how different voices can be heard to together, in how they to relate to each other, and how each voice belongs in relationship to the other. Hearing these relations between and through voices is part of the experience of polyphony as Zuckerkandl described above. This idea is similar to *perichoresis,* the mutual indwelling of the Trinity that I spoke of in chapter 2.[668]

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[665] E. Colin Cherry, 'Some Experiments on the Recognition of Speech, with One and with Two Ears', *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 25, no. 5 (1 September 1953): 975–79, https://doi.org/10.1121/1.1907229.

[666] Ibid., 975–76.

[667] McDermott, 'The Cocktail Party Problem', 1.

[668] See above, The Trinity – Christian Understandings of Plurality, 159.

There are two features of polyphony that need to be considered to understand the perception of it. One is the combination of sounds that we hear in each moment in time which can be called 'vertical,' where sounds of different frequencies and amplitudes are layered upon each other. The second is how, in our hearing, those sounds continue while changing their frequencies and amplitudes; or in other words, the experience of those simultaneous sounds across a time period, the temporal. These two aspects are described within cognitive psychology, according to Professor of Auditory Perception Brian Moore, as 'simultaneous grouping' and 'sequential grouping.'[669]

Our brain distinguishes the voices by this process of 'grouping.' Our perception processes place sounds of similar pitch, or timbre, or rhythm, based on our prior experiences and current expectations, together for us to hear a distinct voice amongst others. As professor of music, James Beauchamp says: 'sequential groupings of complex sounds are based on the spectral or temporal similarity of the sounds.'[670] I talk about this grouping because when I framed polyphony, I spoke of simultaneous sounds that we perceive as *belonging* together. The perception of belonging is organised by our brain and for my project it asks the question of how we can allow voices we've previously ignored to belong with the other voices.

Another avenue of research of simultaneous sound which is related to 'grouping' is 'Auditory Scene Analysis,' a model of auditory perception pioneered by Albert Bregman.[671] McDermott says that 'most contemporary work on the cocktail party problem is rooted in this latter research program.'[672] Bregman considered that 'a central problem faced by audition was in dealing with mixtures of sounds.'[673] The issue is that simultaneous sounds 'all sum together to generate the signal that enters the ear'[674] when it comes to the physical characteristics of the sound. Our perceptive system then 'has to continuously

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[669] Moore, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Hearing*, 289.

[670] James W Beauchamp, *Analysis, Synthesis, and Perception of Musical Sounds: The Sound of Music* (New York: Springer, 2007), 293.

[671] Albert S Bregman, *Auditory Scene Analysis* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).

[672] McDermott, 'The Cocktail Party Problem', 1.

[673] Bregman, *Auditory Scene Analysis*, 44.

[674] McDermott, 'The Cocktail Party Problem', 1.

decompose competing sounds into distinct meaningful auditory objects or "auditory streams" associated with the possible sound sources.'[675] Bregman called this parsing of sound, 'Auditory Stream Segregation.'[676] A stream, for Bregman, is a grouping of sounds that is 'a single happening'[677] which might involve multiple sounds like 'a series of footsteps' and which 'can form a single experienced event.'[678] The word 'stream' connotes movement and the joining together of different elements and as such is a good analogy of polyphony since polyphony is a bringing together of different dynamic voices. The word 'segregation' is for this project a far more complex term, particularly in the context of Black theology which I will reflect on further below.

Stream segregation happens through different responses within the auditory system to certain physical characteristics of sound like frequency (pitch), amplitude (volume) and differences in the timing of the sound.[679] Frequencies start getting separated within the cochlea and auditory nerve. Since every sound is a mix of frequencies, relevant frequencies are grouped together to distinguish individual sounds.[680] This grouping occurs within the brain.[681] The integration is both temporal, across time (like footsteps) and spectral, across the different frequencies (like music). Both processes of segregation and integration are dependent on context and on prior experience. The process of receiving and parsing simultaneous sound in our hearing system is often called 'bottom-up processing' or 'audition.' The integration process and making sense out of sound is often called 'top-down processing' or 'cognition' (of sound). Bottom-up and top-down connote a hierarchy of sorts where the bodily function of hearing is categorised as 'bottom,' while the understanding and meaning-making is considered to be 'top.' This fits into the pattern of body denigration and mind elevation which I discussed in chapter 2.[682] This idea of our listening process possibly reflects the way in which we engage with speech. The

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[675] Susann Deike, Susan L. Denham, and Elyse Sussman, 'Probing Auditory Scene Analysis', *Frontiers in Neuroscience* 8 (12 September 2014): 1, https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2014.00293.

[676] Bregman, *Auditory Scene Analysis*, xi.

[677] Ibid., 10.

[678] Ibid.

[679] Robert P. Carlyon, 'How the Brain Separates Sounds', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 8, no. 10 (1 October 2004): 466, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2004.08.008.

[680] Moore, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Hearing*, 289.

[681] Ibid., 288.

[682] See above, Voice and Body, 133.

importance given to the meaning in speech is greater than what is given to the sound of speech. My research project aims for us to engage with the sound that we hear, not just the meaning. The hierarchy described within the process of hearing brings us back to the term 'segregation.'

Segregation, at its root, means to 'set apart.' Bregman uses this term in its basic sense and is not commenting on anything political or social but the term, and its usage for understanding the cognition of multiple sounds, deserves engagement. The wider social and political meaning of 'segregation' comes most clearly in the first half of the 20th century in the U.S. when black people were discriminated against through laws and rules. Black people were categorised separately, and societal barriers of different kinds were placed upon them. Segregation, understood from this experience, has since evolved to current times to describe how different groups of people become segregated through the structures and hegemony in society. Bregman's notion of stream segregation is to examine how the auditory system makes sense of sounds by breaking the 'sum' of sounds into its constituent parts, then finding the 'relevant' constituent parts to make sense of. This necessarily means that some sounds are 'ignored' which is the case with the 'cocktail party problem,' articulated as the attempt to find a single voice while ignoring others. My project in contrast, is attempting to hear the voices that have been ignored, attempting to hear the plurality. Isolating sounds and making sense of those individual sounds are helpful only in that it might help us to hear a voice previously ignored. However, what I'm working towards is finding ways of hearing the many voices together, interacting with each other. Hearing of distinct parts amongst others is about contextualising the sounds amongst each other. This is reflected in our hearing process as well. Reiner Plomp, professor of Experimental Audiology comments that often research in the auditory, works on an isolated 'subsystem' and then holds all other variables constant for the investigation to proceed.[683] While there is much to learn from this method, Plomp says there is a problem because often 'this reasoning presupposes tacitly that once the behaviour of all subsystems is described, no further data will be needed to account for the behaviour of the system as a whole.'[684] When it comes to voices it is important not just identify the distinct voices but see how the voices are working together as a whole. Zuckerkandl's description

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[683] Reinier Plomp, *The Intelligent Ear: On the Nature of Sound Perception* (New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2013), 4.

[684] Ibid.

above[685] of tones sounding through each other and De Groot's analysis of the relation between notes is evoked here. The individual voices in themselves need to be distinguished but understanding the whole by exploring their relations to each other is necessary as well as it might reveal more of the whole and the distinct parts.

Segregation in broad terms, would be against the aims of this project. Integration, on the other hand seems at first to be what I'm after in hearing the many voices. After all, the integration process within our neural system is what makes sense of the large amount of sound data that enters our hearing systems. However, if I'm elevating integration, I could be aligning myself with a hierarchy that I'm arguing against. Plomp comments on these 'top' and 'bottom' processes: 'audition and cognition should not be understood as different stages of hearing—that is, that bottom-up processing leads to a sensation and, subsequently, top-down processing is employed to interpret this sensation.'[686] Rather, he says, both processes are 'working in parallel.'[687] This is in a sense of polyphony of the hearing process. Moore, talking of the hearing system as a whole says; 'even the earliest stages in the analysis of auditory signals are partly under the control of higher centers.'[688]

The presence of parallel processes of audition and cognition means that hearing is, as Plomp puts it, a 'biased' sense.[689] We are not always just hearing what is there 'with an open mind, (but) we are always interpreting, unconsciously as well as consciously, what we see and hear.'[690] This interpretation occurs 'on the basis of earlier experiences as well as the expectations of the listener.'[691] For hearing polyphony in the context of hearing different voices, it means that, depending on who we want to hear, we will probably be unable to hear voices we are not expecting to hear. This can be applied to our attending to or ignoring of different voices. My practice is a way of drawing attention to the different sounds and voices present amongst others with particular attention to ignored voices and I turn to describing and analysing my practice in relation to this sounding and listening.

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[685] See above, Experience of Polyphony in Music, 187.

[686] Plomp, *The Intelligent Ear*, 7.

[687] Ibid.

[688] Moore, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Hearing*, 35.

[689] Plomp, *The Intelligent Ear*, 35.

[690] Ibid., 139.

[691] Ibid.

Polyphony in Bible Noise

Following the above discussion, I will now explore through three pieces from the practice of Bible Noise, how polyphony is used in my practice. Different kinds of polyphony are enacted in my practice, and I dwell on the challenges and possibilities opened by them. These discussions of the pieces are primarily around their polyphony, both aural and metaphorical. The hermeneutical and broader research aspects of some of these pieces are discussed elsewhere.[692]

Prologue Remix

'Prologue Remix'[693] is a piece that overlays single phrases from a passage from the gospel of John.[694] In the passage there are different phrases and words that are repeated 'In the beginning,' 'light,' 'Word' and 'God.' I considered these repetitions could form the basis of the piece. From the passage I chose the following eight phrases.

1. In the beginning was the Word,

2. and the Word was with God,

3. and the Word was God.

4. He was in the beginning with God.

5. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

6. What has come into being in him was life,

7. and the life was the light of all people.

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[692] See above, Prologue Remix 58, Contrapunt of Naomi and Job 60, Thus Whispereth the Lord 62.

[693] See Appendix-A, Prologue Remix, 262.

[694] John 1:1-14

8. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Each of these lines were given to one participant. Each participant then came and spoke their line individually. These lines were spoken into a mic and recorded. After the eight lines had been spoken and recorded, all the voices were played back simultaneously and looped. All the participants listened to it.

In the discussion that followed, participants all said that they were initially listening out for their own voice. The performance aspect of the piece probably predisposed the listeners to first listen to their own voice. Searching for a single voice was possibly a way of making sense and relates to the 'cocktail party problem' where our perception is geared towards a single voice rather than the many voices. Repeated listening changed the perception as there was more of a listening to all the voices as a whole rather than to the individual spoken voice. Through this certain patterns and words became clearer and the repetition of phrases provided a rhythm where listeners could anticipate sounds and words coming together.

In terms of polyphony, there is the sound of the different layered voices coming to us simultaneously. The voices can be distinguished in generalised terms of 'male' 'female' and 'child.' However, the distinguishing of voice is also possible because each phrase is of different lengths. This means there are stops and gaps in phrase which allows the listener to distinguish different voices. The sounds of the voices interact with each other as the layering occurs along with pauses and silences. Listening to the voices for a while means that, we get used to the repetition of the phrases, a rhythm is established. Diana Deutsch has explored the phenomena where listeners start to perceive repeated, spoken phrases as having been 'sung.'[695] She was looping a phrase and through repetition 'the phrase had morphed from speech into song.'[696] In 'Prologue Remix' this morphing did not happen for listeners. However, it can be said that repetition tends to give sounds a 'musical' frame as

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[695] Diana Deutsch, 'The Speech-to-Song Illusion: Crossing the Borderline Between Speech and Song', in *Musical Illusions and Phantom Words: How Music and Speech Unlock Mysteries of the Brain* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[696] Diana Deutsch, *Musical Illusions and Phantom Words*, 151.

Deutsch affirms : 'repetition is a very powerful feature of music, and it appears in all known musical cultures.'[697] Even if the listeners do not necessarily hear 'Prologue Remix' in a way that is musical to them, the fact that repetition is such a strong feature of music means that listening to the repeated looped phrases can change the way they listen to the piece.

Listening to these repeated phrases allows the listener to experience polyphony in a qualified sense, according to how I've framed polyphony as a set of simultaneous sounds that belong. Different phrases and words from the different voices come together to form a polyphony of spoken sounds, where listeners can unexpected pairings of words and also hear phrases in ways they have not before because these phrases are now contextualised by other phrases around them. Through streaming and grouping processes phrases can be paid attention to while also hearing the whole, as a musician might listen to a piece of music. Polyphony here juxtaposes sound and semantic in ways that allow listeners to re-engage differently with the texts in a way that accepts the many voices that normally surround and contextualise texts. 'Prologue Remix' as a piece enacts a polyphony that both compresses the passage while expanding it. The 'compression' occurs as the different phrases are being heard at the same time rather than happen sequentially. The expansion happens because each phrase is now contextualised aurally and semantically by the other phrases. Polyphony here is a way for these voices to belong together in a simultaneous way that allows listeners to engage with the multi-voiced nature of the passage of the prologue of John.

The Most High 3-Voice of God[698]

This second piece from Bible Noise is based on three songs sung by women in the bible. Passages are taken from each song. There is a common theme amongst the three songs which is the notion of 'blessed.' A short additional passage based on this notion of 'blessed' is tagged on to the end of each song passage and this set of phrases becomes the end for all the passages. Each passage is given to a reader and the three readers read the passage simultaneously. The passages are of different lengths and the one who finishes first listens to the others. When she hears the portion 'blessed' read by one of the other readers she

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[697] Ibid., 164.

[698] See Appendix-A, The Most High 3-Voice of God, 272.

joins in with that voice and the two of them read till the end. The two of them then listen to the third reader and when she reaches 'blessed' then they both join in with the third reader. The rest of the group listens. This process is repeated twice.

This is the bringing together of the three different voices of Deborah, Hannah and Mary in the bible. There are similar resonances across the three songs. At first, we hear three seemingly disconnected voices but by the end they are together when they say the 'blessed' portion together. This unified ending emphasizes how these voices belong together, both aurally and semantically. The unison here seems to go against the notion of polyphony. However, this unison is more a way of calling on the attention of the listener. Being women these three voices are marginalised. Bringing the three voices together is a moment of solidarity, where the marginalised voices come together to enact their commonality and support for each other. This commonality becomes an amplification as the three voices sound together.

When the text is repeated, more attention can be given to the individual voices and what they are saying as distinct from the unison that happened before. The unison also offers a calling to attention of the resonances between the three voices, guiding the listener towards hearing how the resonances are played out in each voice. The unison is therefore not detrimental to polyphony instead, accentuates and affirms it. The three voices that make up this polyphony are very distinct. They appear in three separate books of the bible and are located in different places and situations, having different social roles. The texts present Deborah as a war leader and prophet, Hannah is the once barren wife, become vindicated mother and Mary is the teenager bearing a heavy promise. What brings these three together is their sounding of song, their hope for justice and their own marginalised status as women. This is a belonging together which is integral to the form of polyphony I have proposed. Once the hearers understand their belonging together and hear them together, the three voices together form a polyphony that sounds their resonances and distinctness creating a sound that can mutually affirm and amplify each other. This is the possibility present in this piece as it is performed when polyphony can bring attention to marginalised voices by amplifying and affirming each other.

Babble Kabaddi[699]

A third piece brings out a further iteration of polyphony through 'Babble Kabaddi.' As has been described in chapter 1[700] this is based on an Indian game. It is a form of tag through holding breath and uttering syllables. For Bible Noise, it is reconstituted as a listening exercise for one person to hear what others are saying while uttering repeated syllables. I showed above[701] how musicians like Mingus, Xenakis and Zorn have used games as a way of composing. For this project, the game is not used as a composition tool but rather as a way of hearing multiple voices. The person who must repeat the syllables has to listen to others who have been given words to say repeatedly by going close to them while not losing their breath or stopping their utterance. At the end this person needs to make sense of all she's heard. I'll refer to this person as the 'listener' in the following description and analysis.

The structure of the game allows for a different set of rules from standard musical ones of repetition, volume, pitch and so on. The different setting of sound-making gives possibilities of different engagements with polyphony. The listener goes towards the rest of the group while uttering their own sound. This is analogical in how readers and listeners approach sound with their own contextual biases. The listener must then listen over herself to hear the different voices, which is the challenge that readers and listeners face to fully hear others. Within the game, the listener must constantly make their sound which makes her lose breath which evokes the notion of a cost to listening. If the listener does not regulate their breath, then the game will be over. The listener needs to regulate their breathing and listening in order to hear everybody and then make sense of it. Listening to polyphony in other words requires time and effort.

Polyphony, as I have framed it, theoretically in this chapter and through the practice of Bible Noise reveals a perceptual choice (conscious and subconscious) that asks the listener for a certain kind of attention. The lack of attention to the many voices in the context of this game will allow the listener to only hear herself or maybe one other. The game of 'Babble Kabaddi' seems to indicate that listening to many voices over one's own requires

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[699] See Appendix-A, Babble Kabaddi, 289.

[700] See above, Babble Kabaddi, 69.

[701] See above, Games, 44.

certain types of attention to sounds and to breathing. In order to engage with polyphony therefore there needs to be an awareness of the workings of polyphony. In this context, it is the possibilities of the game that the listener needs to be aware of. By repeated playing of the game, the listener could become aware of how to regulate her own voice and breathing and thereby how to hear other voices while sounding her own. This is simply known as practice. This is true of polyphony as it is through repeated listening with growing awareness of the structures and possibilities within polyphony that a better appreciation of the voices and sounds within can be developed. Listening to marginalised voices requires these kinds of approaches of attention and understanding of context.

Conclusion to Chapter 3

I started this chapter by examining a notion of polyphony referred to as harmony. I presented harmony as an idea that could become part of the process of hegemony. This is when harmony is understood as a prescribed ordering of how different sounds fit together. Though harmony as a term has a multivalence, I based my presentation on harmony in how it was used in Greek philosophy which was then later taken up by the church. I discussed harmony to show that not all forms of polyphony are necessarily helpful to hearing the many and marginalised voices in scripture. Polyphony, in its simplest form of many simultaneous sounds, will not necessarily aid in hearing marginalised voices as it can be compromised to fit hegemony, as might be possible in harmony. Therefore, I needed to present a conceptualisation of polyphony that could allow different voices to flourish. In presenting this conceptualisation I needed to first clarify my use of music in this project. Polyphony is closely associated with music, and I use music as a way to explore polyphony but my practice is using the spoken voice. Therefore, I drew out distinctions and commonalities between music and speech. There were considerable overlaps of the sound features of music and speech in terms of pitch, rhythm and so on which showed a validity in using music to understand polyphony. As an example, I mentioned Glenn Gould's *Idea of North* also is a piece which is composed of spoken voices using musical ideas of counterpoint. Discussing notions of music and speech led into the reality of how culturally defined these terms can be. What is considered musical in one culture might be undefined or unpleasant in another. Speech is culturally different when it comes to language but the tonality of speech is also culturally framed. Comments on other people's speech or accent as 'sing-song' are testament to this cultural framing.

Having shown how I can draw from music for a spoken practice and also how there are cultural variations in music and speech, I turned towards the metaphorical use of the term polyphony in the works of Bakhtin and Said. Bakhtin and Said show their concern for listening to the multiple voices with Said wishing to listen to voices previously ignored while Bakhtin portrayed how different voices allow for a richer engagement with texts. The two writers gave a glimpse of how different engagements of polyphony can be relevant and instructive for different fields of human inquiry. Both these writers use polyphony as a metaphor based on the experience of music. Accordingly, I dwelt on the experience of polyphony in music drawing out the kinds of attention and effort required of greater engagement with polyphony. I also explored the interrelations of the different sounds with each other, how different sounds can mutually affirm and distinguish each other.

Based on these presentations of polyphony as metaphor and in music I drew up a way of framing polyphony for this project. I said that polyphony is the perceptual choice towards the presence of simultaneous sounds that belong together. This relates to my project because it is possible for many voices to be present but several can be ignored because they're understood to be irrelevant or not belonging. It is by understanding that the many voices belong that we can start appreciating how these voices interrelate and through this interrelation each voice could be enhanced and affirmed. To further my point about polyphony being about a perceptual choice, I turned to the neuro-cognitive understandings of processing simultaneous sound. What the engagement with this cognitive science showed was how our hearing process disregards certain sounds while engaging and processing others. Our biases shape our hearing. For polyphony to be heard, therefore, there needs to be awareness of which sounds are coming together as well as the willingness to listen out for the different voices.

Finally, I presented three pieces of Bible Noise and the different ways in which they enact and engage with polyphony. 'Prologue Remix' showed that when simultaneous voices occur there can be a tendency to search out a single voice. 'The Most High...' showed that a unison of voices need not be antithetical to my conceptualisation of polyphony but, rather, could set up and enhance polyphony when voices went from unison into their own 'part.' 'Babble Kabaddi' showed that a better engagement with polyphony requires, effort, attention, and practice.

These are the conclusions that I draw from the above discussions and explorations.

1. Simultaneous sounds in themselves need not be liberative or appreciative of difference. The discussion about harmony and the practice of homophony, organum and strict counterpoint show that simultaneous sounds can be used to control difference according to prejudged rules. Polyphony, therefore, if it is to be used in a more liberative sense needs to be particularly framed away from the coercive frameworks described in my discussion of harmony. This framing is fundamentally connected to my discussion of hegemony in chapter 2 where a way of organising difference is accepted as 'normal.' Hegemony can also be understood as a way of organising different voices in a similar way to how harmony also is an organisation based on some prejudicial understanding.

2. The metaphor of polyphony for understanding areas of human existence outside of sound and music needs further development. The metaphor in Bakhtin and Said gives much in terms of hearing different voices but Bakhtin specifically does not explore the aural experience of polyphony. Said explores a bit further but his exploration of polyphony in terms of counterpoint is done purely within the Western classical music frame. A broader appreciation of polyphony might be necessary considering the fact Said's postcolonial readings are primarily concerned with reading against the hegemony of Western colonialism.

3. Polyphony is intricately connected to our perception. We have ways of grouping certain sounds together and also disregarding other sounds. Our process of hearing is not a dispassionate experience of available sounds but is linked to our cultural and social experiences and biases. If we then think of polyphony in order to hear multiple voices in the reading aloud of texts, then there needs to be certain perceptive shifts that can accommodate these voices. In other words, we have to search beyond our biases to listen out to and for hidden and silenced voices.

In broad terms I conclude this chapter on polyphony saying that polyphony has a lot to offer in terms of hearing and experiencing different voices together, especially those that have been ignored, silenced or hidden. It also gives an understanding of the way differences can coexist together in a mutually affirming, non-coercive environment. However, polyphony is not a catchall solution and needs to be conceptualised in particular ways so that it does not become a tool for hegemony. Part of this conceptualising was presented through chapter 2 by engaging with postcolonial, Black and feminist theology.

These three theologies are attempts to voice the experience of the marginalised and the ignored. Therefore, hearing polyphony needs to be approached with a slant and bias towards the voices that have been ignored or silenced. Polyphony, in the way I've conceptualised, needs attention and repeated listening so that we can hear the voices that have been so often ignored and hidden away that at first we cannot hear them at all. Yet, a closer and careful paying of attention could yield these voices, voices that might be mere whispers when we first hear them, but, through the amplification and affirmation of polyphony, could be heard in their full, distinct and rich integrity.

Conclusion

Summary

In this project I have attempted to find ways to hear hidden and silenced voices in the reading aloud of scripture. I did this by experimenting with different ways of reading aloud the texts with the group, Bible Noise. My presence and participation in the group required me to clarify my methodology. I did this by identifying Action Research, Artistic Research, Self-Reflexive and Auto-Ethnographic methods as suitable ways of doing research with the group. The group met for eight sessions, and we performed twelve pieces. These pieces were formed in conjunction with and in response to the literature I was engaging with. This literature was both around practices and critical thought. I outlined the different sound practices that I was basing Bible Noise on. Practices around voice, texts and words were identified to contextualise my own practice. The practice, methodology and sound art context formed chapter 1. Based on this formation I moved to a broader contextualisation of the project

In chapter 2 I identified wider contexts in which the project was situated. The contexts were based around the aim of the project to hear hidden and silenced voices. I started by exploring the stories of Babel and Pentecost for the multi-voiced events in them. Babel showed the presence of empire and hegemony which I engaged with employing postcolonial theology. The multiple languages within both the stories brought up issues of ethnicity which led to a discussion around race. Whiteness was identified as a hegemony and I drew on Black theology as a way of framing and understanding Christian theology as interlinked with hegemony. Whiteness is based around a feature of the human body and there is an older and more pervasive hegemony that is to do with the body which is around maleness. So, I turned to feminist theology and analysed the story of Hagar who was a foreigner, woman and enslaved. She becomes a key example of intersectional discrimination and, drawing on Womanist theology, I attempted to hear her voice.

I then turned to different philosophers to explore these hegemonies but also to describe the plurality I was attempting to sound. The hegemonies of race and patriarchy as shown occur around differences of body and I dwell on the body through Cavarero's engagement with Plato where the body itself was denigrated. The denigration of the body translates

into a denigration of the fleshly voice, where voice becomes important only for what it carries; voice becomes 'mere' carrier of the semantic. Through MacKendrick and Epstein, I showed that this denigration was taken up by Christian theology and I argued that the presence of an audible voice is more than semantic when we consider the presence of the body. By these presentations I proposed that the voice perceived as both somatic and semantic opened the possibility of moving beyond the hegemonies of race and patriarchy, both of which are produced by bodily difference.

Talking about the sounding voice led to a discussion on silence. Silence was found to be both oppressive and the opening of possibility, according to context. Silence can be oppressive when voices are cut off. For silence to be an opening there needs to be an active attention in order to hear the voices that have not been heard before. I discussed silence in terms of Arendt's concerns with totalitarianism. This led to me exploring plurality through the philosophies of Arendt and Nancy. Arendt proposes the metaphor of table, which is a place and space for sharing, while Nancy considers the voice as a way a sharing. Both these features had strong presences in my practice as we shared food at a table before performing the pieces and afterwards shared our reflections with each other.

Discussing plurality in these ways brought up the question as to whether plurality is somehow external to Christianity since Christianity has often emphasised oneness and unity in oppressive ways. I therefore started a discussion on the Trinity, the idea of God being one and three at the same time. The three-ness of God, which is a plurality, is something that many Christians hesitate to address but I proposed that it is a key resource for a Christian engagement with plurality. Additionally, through Begbie and Hildegard of Bingen, I showed how sound can be a way of accessing this plurality. The plurality of sound then led to chapter 3: Polyphony.

In chapter 3 I engaged with polyphony as a way to hear the many voices hidden or silenced amongst others. I first discussed the term harmony and highlighted the oppressive nature of harmony as understood from Greek philosophy which was later co-opted into Christian theology. Harmony is a prescribed, prejudged set of relations which allows for difference but, crucially, only in a particular way. Speaking of harmony as oppressive hopefully gives a better understanding as to how I'm talking about polyphony.

I then clarified what I meant by polyphony as the simultaneous hearing of many sounds that the listener perceives as belonging together. We have the ability to hear multiple sounds at the same moment, but we have the ability to ignore sounds that we feel are irrelevant. This is what is happening within hegemonies when we are led to ignore the voices that do not fit with the hegemonic. Since perception is key to how we hear, I discuss the cognitive aspects of hearing polyphony. An important reason for discussing our hearing mechanism was the importance of the body in my discussion. Our hearing is not just the frequencies hitting our ear drums but is significantly fashioned by our neural systems and dependent on our biases, culture and so on. The possibility of learning to listen differently is present but not assured.

Having spoken of polyphony and its perception in the acoustic, I discuss ways in which it is used metaphorically. I draw on Bakhtin and Said for their contributions to linguistics and postcolonial thought, both of which have been relevant to this project. Bakhtin showed how the presence of different voices within texts forms a polyphony which is not necessarily resolved. Said showed the need for a perceptive shift to hear the voices of those in the text but also the implied voices outside the text. Said and Bakhtin's metaphorical use of polyphony gives me a way of drawing out some implications from my research.

Original Contribution

The original contribution of this project comes through the coming together of three strands that arise across the three chapters (1. Practice and Methodology, 2. Contexts, 3. Polyphony) of the thesis. Each strand on its own might not fulfil the notion of an original contribution but (in resonance with a central theme of the project i.e., polyphony), it is in the co-presence and interaction between the three strands that an original contribution can be asserted.

1. The project contributes a novel artistic engagement with scripture through sound, working within certain boundaries of traditional scriptural engagement as opposed to more conventional artistic engagement with scripture.

Artists, especially in the west, have drawn upon biblical texts as inspiration, object or allusion for their work. My work, in a different way, pays attention to the ritual of reading aloud scripture, taking on board the materiality of the texts and those that voice them. Rather than pay exclusive attention to the semantic of the text, the wider features of the

ritual of reading aloud have been engaged with and though extensively modified have been incorporated into my work. Further to this, different hermeneutical approaches from theology have been brought to bear on the composition, the performance and the reception of these pieces.

2. The project introduces innovative ways of performing and listening to the hidden and silenced from postcolonial, black and feminist perspectives.

While different artists have drawn from postcolonial, black and feminist perspectives, my work draws upon these perspectives through a distinctly Christian theological approach. While there are theologians who engage with scripture through these perspectives, the particularity of my engagement is that it is an artistic engagement. The conjunction of the artistic and theological in my work through these perspectives distinguishes the project from other engagements of scripture, whether artistic or theological.

3. The project initiates ways of critiquing notions of polyphony and considering the listener's choice in hearing voices as polyphony.

There have been different engagements of polyphony and its employment in theology, critical thought and textual analysis. These engagements mostly take the notion of polyphony as an object of analysis with a lack of emphasis on the role of the listener in the perception of polyphony. I give more emphasis to how listener perspectives can change which voices are attended to or not, showing that a polyphonous engagement, whether aural or metaphorical, requires greater attention to hear all that is happening within. Additionally, quite often polyphony is not critiqued but rather taken as an ideal example of coexistence. Through my arguments around harmony, I show that polyphony can be regimented and possibly oppressive and counter to the aim of listening to hidden and silenced voices.

These three distinguishing strands, when brought together, interact to make this project an original contribution to both sound art and theology. This interaction, from a sound art perspective, contributes to the development of sound art practice by demonstrating its use in a religious context which is not merely illustrative but rather a revealing intervention. From a theological perspective, the interaction demonstrates an innovative engagement of the bible through sound by reconfiguring the ritual to include multiple voices, perspectives and texts, sometimes simultaneously. The three strands further interact by

bringing together critical thought, liberative theologies and contemporary art practice to show the possibilities available in engaging with traditional texts while listening to and hearing for voices that have traditionally been passed over or ignored. The project therefore offers possibilities of bringing together different critical aspects of art, critical thought and religious practice that can be applicable in spheres of congregational life and beyond.

However, the contribution here is not merely to the conjunction of sound art and theology. There are wider possibilities available for my research in contexts where texts are read aloud. This could be in formal pedagogical environments, like schools, or other situations such as performance poetry, children's read aloud sessions or even the act of a guardian reading to a child.

Evaluation of practice

It is worth evaluating in what ways the criteria of the practice were met or not as may be the case. The criteria were set as follows:

- produce different pieces that can centre the voices of women and foreigners.
- reconstitute the ritual of reading aloud the Bible in an artistic form that incorporates multiple voices.
- engage with the idea of simultaneity by exploring the polyphony of voices both in the bible and also through the performance of the pieces.
- establish the presence of the body in the reading aloud of scripture.

I will discuss how these criteria were engaged with in the practice of Bible Noise. The headings indicate the criteria and within each section I will either discuss individual pieces or discuss the body of pieces as a whole.

Produce different pieces that can centre voices of women and foreigners.

There were different pieces composed that centred these voices. These were:

- Contrapunt of Naomi and Job – Centring Naomi's voice. [702]

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[702] Discussed previously in chapter 1, Contrapunt of Naomi and Job, 60. Description in Appendix A, Contrapunt of Naomi and Job, 269.

- Most High 3-Voice of God – Centring voices of women who sing: Deborah, Hannah and Mary. [703]
- Thus Whispereth the Lord – Centring the voices of women prophets: Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, the wife of Isaiah, the daughters of Heman, Anna and the daughters of Philip.[704]
- Hagar – Centring the voice of Hagar, who is marginalised as an enslaved foreign woman.[705]
- Aliens – Centring the notion of the foreigner.[706]

The first four pieces in the list above centre women and 'Hagar' and 'Alien' centre the foreigner. The piece, Hagar crosses both these categories and therefore was reflected on in depth.[707] These five pieces showed the possibilities of centring voices that could be otherwise ignored. Each of the pieces foregrounded marginalised voices and participants got the opportunity to engage with these voices in a way that they hadn't done so before.

Reconstituting the ritual of reading aloud the Bible in an artistic form that incorporates multiple voices.

Bible Noise followed some conventions of bible reading in public worship while reconstituting the ritual in different ways. The texts read were directly taken from NRSV without paraphrase. The participants had the texts in front of them in order while reading aloud. In several other ways there were modifications and changes made to the ritual of reading aloud scripture. Below I discuss briefly how some of the pieces engaged with the idea of reconstituting the ritual of reading aloud scripture with multiple voices within texts through artistic practice.

- Whispering Grove[708]

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[703] Discussed previously in sections titled: Simultaneous Speech Practices (chapter 1), 35, Silence as Possibility (chapter 3), 143, Polyphony in Bible Noise (chapter 3), 195. Description in Appendix – A, 272.

[704] Discussed previously in chapter 1, 62. Description in Appendix – A, 274.

[705] Discussed previously in chapter 1, 38, and in chapter 2, Listening to Hagar, 114. Description in Appendix – A, 295.

[706] Description in Appendix – A, 299.

[707] Listening to Hagar, 114.

[708] Discussed in chapter 1, Text as Score, 41. Description in Appendix–A, 265.

This piece brought together texts from across the bible, where different genres, authors and timeframes were simultaneously whispered as the participants stood in a circle with a single participant in the middle. This was a reconstitution of ritual by having the silent listener in the middle with a 'congregation' of whisperers of scripture around them. This is in contrast with the norm of reading scripture from the front for a listening congregation.

The participants attempted to engage with the sounds surrounding them. The aural experience unfolded through the different words and verses creating an inter-voiced, intertextual impact. The low audio levels of the whispers meant that the listeners had to pay more attention so as to experience the words and sounds. As the words repeated the listeners started discerning the distinct words and phrases and the different interactions they underwent with other words and phrases. Rather than the ritual of reading aloud the bible being a single voiced, single passage experience the participants all simultaneously voiced and individually listened to scripture from disparate texts in the bible.

- Contrapunt of Naomi and Job

Rather than reading from a single passage or consecutive passages, these two voices from different parts of the Bible were brought together in an interleaving fashion while emphasising the different resonances of these two different voices. The more well-known Job was compared and contrasted with the less heard Naomi from the book of Ruth. This was a foregrounding of the marginalised voice of Naomi while sounding the established voice of Job. Rather than reading one text from the bible, two resonant texts were read both simultaneously and sequentially. This was a way of bringing together multiple voices within the bible using multiple voices to perform it.

- The Most High 3-Voice of God

In this piece three different passages were read simultaneously and, at the end, there was a synchronisation of the texts and the words. This coming together of synchronised voices is similar to congregational responses in spoken prayers during worship. The three passages were taken from different parts of the bible, sounding out the voices of different women which then synchronise as a way of creating the resonance and solidarity for these voices. This was a reconstituting of the reading of scripture by the use of multiple texts and the synchronisation at the end of the piece echoed the ritual as, often, there is a congregational response to the reading of the bible.

- Thus Whispereth the Lord

This piece reconstituted the ritual by sounding out aural effects of the narratives and texts spoken aloud. The bible is normally read aloud with just the words sounded out. This piece took imaginative steps to allow the sound of the narratives to spill out beyond the words. The simultaneous voices in the piece draw out the multifaceted nature of each text that is sounded.

Engage with the idea of simultaneity by exploring the polyphony of voices both in the bible and also through the performance of the pieces

All the pieces explored the experience of speaking simultaneously and hearing simultaneous multiple voices. The different pieces approached this polyphony in different ways. In the simultaneous reading of the 'Contrapunt of Naomi and Job' all the participants were speaking simultaneously. The participants were speaking and listening at the same time. 'Contrapunt of Naomi and Job' was also performed sequentially where one group spoke followed by another. This iteration accented the multiple resonances of the polyphony of voices in the bible by bringing together the voices of Naomi and Job. The two iterations of the piece showed different aspects of polyphony where the first iteration showed the polyphony of the sounding voices while the second allowed a different engagement with the polyphony in the texts of the piece.

With a different dynamic, 'Thus Whispereth the Lord,' which focuses on women prophets, had two sections of participants who emphasised certain audio effects from the text while the other section read the narrative of the text. This was a polyphony akin to a musical arrangement where different parts accent and draw each other out. The voices of the participants are performing in a polyphonous way the particular voice of the woman prophet. The multiple women prophets are brought out in a sequential way. It is through the drawing out of commonalities and resonances between the women prophets that the polyphony of voices in the bible is drawn out.

Several pieces, like 'Prologue Remix', 'Whispering Grove,' and 'Babble Kabaddi,' involved the repetition of phrases or words in an asynchronous form. This meant that the polyphony itself wasn't repetitive but different parts of the phrases would simultaneously

sound according to the length of the phrase and the speed in which the speaker spoke it. The polyphony for such pieces had a dynamic, generative quality.

Different participants responded differently to hearing multiple voices simultaneously. In 'Whispering Grove,' for example, some participants found it powerful while others found it disorientating. The simultaneity was not exclusive to the participants' sounding. The simultaneity was also from the different texts of the bible and the voices that they revealed. The pieces showed the possibilities of bringing in multiple voices to the sounding out of the text. Bringing in different voices and texts allowed for an appreciation of the multi-voiced nature of the bible and showed practical ways in which multiple voices could be employed simultaneously to engage with the bible.

Establish the presence of the body in the reading aloud of scripture

It is important to note that COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdown truncated the practice. The body's presence or rather the lack of its presence to each other was heightened through the lockdown. In the sessions where Bible Noise were able to meet in person the presence of the bodies was an important part of sounding out the bible. Though not directly linked the fact that we often ate together before the session was a particular acknowledgement of the body which then became a space of sharing. In some of the recordings this comes through in the clink of plates and cutlery.

The presence of the bodies to each other gave extra dimensions to the voice as participants turned to one another, moved their faces or moved across the room according to the piece. These dynamics offered varying acoustic phenomena, varying the ways in which the voice could be sounded, and allowing us to hear the voices in a diversity which wouldn't have been present with a voice being recorded in front of a microphone. The body's presence allowed a response through the voice as participants negotiated starts and stops of phrases and adjusted their speed of speech and volume. This responsiveness was a way of making space for and listening to each other, which was a fulfilment of the aim of the project of enacting a plurality where different voices could co-exist in polyphony.

COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdown meant that the participants of Bible Noise couldn't express and respond to voices in that way. The lockdown and the restrictions that followed also led to fact that Bible Noise couldn't have a performance (planned for June 2020) that

brought together all the pieces for a wider audience. This performance was the event where a more professional recording of all the pieces would have taken place.

Final Evaluation

Though COVID-19 truncated the practice, especially its seemingly natural conclusion of a final performance, I consider that the pieces and their performance achieved the overall aim of challenging the singular voice by bringing out the multiple voices within the bible through the multiple voices of the participants of Bible Noise. The pieces show that the single voice of hegemony can be disrupted through sound art practices and this disruption offers ways to hear the voices of women and foreigners which remain hidden and silent in conventional readings of the bible. Further, the performance of the pieces show that this process can be done in a participative manner through the sounding of multiple voices.

Implications

This research project aimed to be an opening of ways in performing and listening to Bible texts. I consider that the project has some relevance beyond itself, into and beyond the fields of sound art and theology. The findings and implications I draw out are based on my initial project proposals and all that has been revealed through my research practice. An important notion that I've discussed is the co-existence of differences which I've repeated and emphasised.[709] I showed that differences could be controlled by hegemony to fit a particular order in my discussion of harmony. My concern for the project was to inquire whether there is a way to accommodate and celebrate difference beyond the hegemonic arrangement. This concern will provide the direction to the implications that I draw out.

Plurality

Diversity and differences are present in varying degrees across different spheres of human existence. The question that this PhD research addresses is around how these differences are managed: how people co-exist together in difference. Through Ahmed's engagement with 'diversity,' I described how hegemony is a way of managing difference where an unspoken way of doing things is established.[710] Everything is done in terms of a norm

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[709] See above, Sound as research 52, Contexts Part 1: Babel and Pentecost: Approaching Plurality through the Bible 78, Plurality and Voice 148, Conclusion to Chapter 3: Polyphony 200.

[710] See above, Harmony, 168.

which is not made explicit but implied. An overt totalitarian system manages difference by establishing uniformity which erases difference while other systems allow for a diversity that is nevertheless under hegemonic control. Often the term harmony is used as the way to manage this difference, where the correct ordering of relations is defined as harmony.

My project proposes that plurality requires listening and a participation in dialogue which I discussed through Arendt's and Nancy's explorations of plurality.[711] I showed through my practice and theorisation that in the exchange of voice in listening and understanding, there is an opening of possibility which could allow us to belong together in difference. Bringing different voices together simultaneously might at first be chaotic but, with improved modes of attention, sense can be made of how voices relate to each other. Polyphony shows how sounds relate to each other and it is in and amongst the relations that experience of the whole lies. Listening to individual voices, especially those that have been ignored, is sometimes helpful in order to appreciate their presence, but, as I have shown, it is in their context, their co-presence with other voices, that we can appreciate difference and distinctness. What has become apparent is that hearing voices that we have not heard before sometimes requires at least a temporary silencing of the voices that have dominated. The silencing of the dominant voice is not meant to be a new form of oppression, but it is meant to be a temporary way of hearing the oppressed voice. Once the oppressed voice is heard and established it can be brought into relation to the previously dominant voice and it can be hoped that the two distinct voices can start losing their adjectives of 'oppressed' and 'dominant.' This process was demonstrated through the piece 'Contrapunt of Naomi and Job' where a previously ignored voice was brought together with an established voice.

This has implications for Christian practice, for it would mean emphasising the voices that have been ignored, like those of women and foreigners. This could be by paying attention to those texts where these voices are but also by hearing from the experiences of women and 'foreigners' and those who've extensively studied the texts from their 'hidden' and 'silenced' experience; something which I've attempted to do in my engagement with postcolonial, Black and feminist theology. The experience of Babel and Pentecost that I've

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[711] See above, Arendt and Nancy, 153.

laid out above,[712] shows that plurality is present in the bible as core to God's purposes and to the identity of the Christian church. Postcolonial engagement with these two stories shows that the bible has stories and passages that can be formed into tools against hegemony. The notion of Trinity further establishes a notion of plurality that is distinctly Christian and not external to Christian theology and practice. A continuing challenge for Christianity is to quieten the loud 'voices' of its mythical Europeanness, its maleness and its poor articulation of the place of the body in human existence. In doing so, it might be able to open itself up to the strange, liminal, diverse solidarity that showed itself at Pentecost. Pentecost, through its chaotic sound, performed a plurality that was aural and at the same time a formation and enactment of community. This project offers ways to access this plurality and community by engaging in different theologies from the margins and by taking up sound art practice in reconfiguring and re-engaging in the ritual of reading aloud the bible. Plurality is not just for the sake of distinction, for the sake of the individual, but in this project it is geared towards the notion of community.

Community

A key implication and contribution to knowledge of this project is what my project could mean for notions of community. Part of my account of the notion of community is drawn from Jean-Luc Nancy whose writings[713] are often concerned with the meanings and understandings of the notions of 'community,' 'being-in-common' and 'being-with.'[714] Nancy is concerned with how community becomes 'a matter of exclusion,'[715] and how it needs to resist 'both immanence and fusion.'[716] The problem of community for Nancy is that it defines itself through exclusion and also appropriates for itself 'immanence' or a divine identity while also fusing diverse identities within the community. Bryan Lueck, discussing Nancy's notion of community, says: 'Nancy argues that community is not, and could never have been, the kind of organic whole, fully present to itself, that is posited by the ideal of immanentism. Rather, community is constituted by the interruption of that presence.'[717] In other words, true community is formed by moving away from divine

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[712] See above, Contexts Part 1: Babel and Pentecost: Approaching Plurality through the Bible, 78.

[713] Starting with Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* (U of Minnesota Press, 1991).

[714] James E. Smith, 'Community', in *The Nancy Dictionary*, 49.

[715] Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 4.

[716] Marie-Eve Morin, 'Areality', in *The Nancy Dictionary*, 22.

[717] Bryan Lueck, 'Agamben, Giorgio', in *The Nancy Dictionary*, 20.

prerogatives of identity and by implication towards inclusion of different persons. For my project this interruption of presence occurs through including voices that have been ignored and the recalibration of notions of belonging.

The 'diverse solidarity' enacted at Pentecost occurred through the sounding of different languages which enacted a belonging in diverseness, not under a common hegemonic purpose but just by being together. Pentecost also starts the process of including those who've previously been excluded. The implication of my project is that polyphony can provide an experience of community where people can co-exist without subjugation and oppression by a process relating to and contextualising each other. Additionally, as I've presented above,[718] the listening of polyphony is dependent on how we consider whether certain sounds belong with others. Listening to polyphony in this inclusive way where previously unheard sounds are considered to belong together opens the idea of understanding community as an open and inclusive one. This is a highly idealised notion but, just as polyphony is better experienced by listening closely to the distinct sounds with in it and hearing their interrelations, a closer engagement with polyphony can contribute to deeper senses of community around listening, dialogue, appreciating distinctness and being welcoming to outsiders while cautioning against hegemony. A further aim is to continue open dialogue and listening so that we do not fix on an idealised notion of a 'harmonious' community since harmony, as I showed above,[719] can be oppressive by insisting on a particular set of relationships to be prioritised. The question then arises of what can be done to not fall into the habit of keeping things in 'harmony' which might ossify the ways of doing things which might well turn out to be hegemonic and oppressive of other voices. I will turn to a speculation to address this question by briefly discussing the notion of improvisation.

Speculating on Improvisation

My speculative strategy to continue hearing beyond the hegemonic 'harmony' to hear the hidden voice is through avenues of improvisation which could provide ways for ensuring that polyphony does not become or remain hegemonic. Discussing my practice above,[720] I

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[718] See above, Polyphony for this Project, 187.

[719] See above, Harmony, 168.

[720] See above, Games, 44.

briefly outlined some connections that Bible Noise has with improvisation. There is not the space to provide a considered notion of improvisation here but I will provide a basic outline of possibilities from some of the experiences of Bible Noise that improvisation offers.

I draw upon philosopher Gary Peters' understanding of improvisation as 're-novation' which is a 'production of the new out of the old,'[721] a newness that is not a fundamental break with the old but rather 'allows the becoming of knowledge to be known again as the sudden revelation of the new in the old.'[722] Peters presents improvisation as newness derived primarily from what's gone before. My project has been exploring traditional texts from which, based on different readings, I'm attempting to hear voices that are present but need different ways of being heard. The practice of Bible Noise is also based on established rituals of reading aloud scripture but then reconfiguring and playing with the ritual through sound art practice. Drawing on the notion of improvisation of being 'new' from the 'old,' the texts of the bible can be understood as being improvisations upon previous texts or traditions. Bible Noise has also had improvisational features, particularly in the pieces with games where ancient texts are performed in new and different configurations.[723] Improvisation can also provide a way of engaging with hermeneutics, the interpretation of texts. Bruce Ellis Benson has argued that jazz improvisation can enact 'a hermeneutical practice in which there is a balancing of

authors' intentions, the tradition from which texts and performances arise, the continuing tradition (or "interpretive community") that preserves and nourishes those texts, and the role of particular interpreters.'[724] Benson proposes that composers and writers of texts are in some sense improvising[725] as they are drawing out what might be considered as 'new' from the old; the pre-existing traditions of writing (and music). However, composers and writers appear to have more time to draw out the new while performers seem to have to

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[721] Gary Peters, *The Philosophy of Improvisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 135.

[722] Ibid., 140.

[723] See Appendix-A, Picking up the Pieces 282, Babble Kabaddi 289, Pass the Word (Bible Noise Kho) 292.

[724] Bruce Ellis Benson, 'The Improvisation of Hermeneutics: Jazz Lesson for Interpreters', in *Hermeneutics at the Crossroads*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, James K. A. Smith, and Bruce Ellis Benson, Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 194, http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip066/2005031637.html.

[725] Ibid., 196.

do it in the moment of performance itself. Benson then considers how interpreters of texts are within traditions, just as musical performers are interpreters of existing traditions of music,[726] and speculates as to whether interpretation can be seen as interpreters improvising with composers.[727] My brief discussion of hermeneutics and improvisation here is to point towards the different ways in which Bible Noise encounters or engages in improvisation. The setting of different texts next to each other in pieces like 'Thus Whispereth the Lord' and 'Most High 3-Voice of God' opens the possibilities of new interpretations based on existing ones. Games like 'Babel' and 'Picking the Pieces' are created more in the moment when the sound of the performance is purely based on how the participants are responding and performing within the structure of the piece.

Improvisation, as I have discussed both here and above,[728] is a varied set of practices and conceptualisations. What is important here is that improvisation opens possibilities for the 'new' to come through even though it might not always be successful. It is, however, in consistent engagement with this possibility that polyphony can withstand hegemonic ways of being. Black theorist Fred Moten, speaking of the black experience under oppression, says of improvisation: 'it is what we do in the face of history... it becomes both the method of survival but also the object of study for us as we try to understand our survival.'[729] Based on these brief thoughts on improvisation I would propose that improvisation will be an important tool to keep polyphony from succumbing to a hegemonic 'harmonic' arrangement. Improvisation presents a key element for future research towards interactions between plurality, sound art and theology.

These findings and consequent implications of my project for plurality, community and the improvisational possibilities therein, lead me to the final reflections for this project.

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[726] Ibid., 198.

[727] Ibid., 205.

[728] See above, Games, 45.

[729] *Interview with Fred Moten*, accessed 23 January 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=13&v=XFcWrHheqfg.

At the Edge-in-Between

This thesis is near its temporal end, at the edge of its metaphorical sound passing over into the realm of silence. However, in other respects it stands in between many things, both temporally and otherwise. The place of this thesis in amongst other productions of knowledge is complicated by its 'betweenness': its attempt to interphase between the disciplines of sound art and theology, its bringing together of different research methods and the different stages of times and events it has passed through. The project has been a bringing together of sound art practice with the Christian practice of reading aloud the bible, a distinct offering of a multi-disciplinary approach to art and theology. As such, the 'new' knowledges it offers are, for Christian practice, the use of sound art – particularly in the reconfiguring of the ritual of reading aloud scripture. At the same time, for sound art, this project offers engagements in religious practice with a set of ancient texts that can still open new avenues of engagement and discovery. An edge connotes both a sharpness and a boundary and this project has been both for me in experiencing difficult, 'sharp' things through the research process while crossing boundaries in terms of knowledge, understanding, practice and experience.

The practice of Bible Noise is situated on the edge of religious practice, between a ritual practice and sound art practice, which afforded me new experiences and new avenues for research. Interacting with the texts and with the other participants of Bible Noise was both a source of experience and thinking but also a place and time where my thinking could be enacted. The possibility of continuing and applying the practices of Bible Noise within Christian worship practice remains core to my research aims. Therefore, I'm invested in the expansion and application of this research through the production of resources for churches and those interested in sound and religion. This means that this thesis, rather than an end, has the possibility of being a point between the first experiments of Bible Noise and its future iterations. In the following I will explore one such possibility which was enacted.

Applying Bible Noise in a corporate worship context

An ideal outworking of the practice of Bible Noise is its use by the community of faith. The working towards of this ideal resulted in different works that are related to but not always directly pertinent to the project. They arose out of the different processes of the research and further explorations of my interest in using sound and the bible together.

Babel/Pentecost

This piece germinated from an idea connected to the linguistic group that my family originate from; those that speak Malayalam. I then recorded the texts of Babel and Pentecost in different languages. The Babel texts was recorded in four languages (Malayalam, English, Greek and Portuguese) while Pentecost was recorded in five (Malayalam, English, Greek, Portuguese and Aramaic). The recording was then played simultaneously, with varying volumes for each track. In the initial iteration this piece was played through headphones for people to listen to. Once, this was at an art festival and at another time it was an installation in a prayer room.

Later I got the opportunity to do the work within a context of corporate worship. This was during Pentecost Sunday: instead of the traditional slot of reading the passage of Pentecost, the Pentecost part of this piece was to be experienced by the congregation. Instead of having it through one sound source (the PA system), I decided it would be more within the heart of the piece to have the sounds dissipated. Therefore, a set of nine different, independent, mobile speakers were set up in the worship space and the voices spoke and 'moved' through them. This was a new way for the congregation to experience a familiar text. The familiarity of the text helped overcome the hearing of unfamiliar languages. It captured the confusion of hearing the many languages and, for some, it also provoked a sense of wonder.

Other readings

I also produced a set of pieces based on weekly lectionary readings. These weren't simultaneous voices or different languages, rather it portioned different parts of the text for different voices, both individual and group. It meant that some parts of the reading were with single voices, sometimes with multiple voices within the larger group and sometimes all the voices.

Some of these pieces can be found at https://engageworship.org/search/author/sunil-chandy . I was fortunate to do a placement with this organisation which produce different worship resources for churches. Through them I will also be producing a book that will enable local churches and bible study groups to practice different ways of reading aloud the bible.

Openings

This project is also in-between in another sense, for while I attempted to hear voices of women and foreigners, there are several other voices that deserve to be heard. Voices of differing sexuality, gender or (dis)ability were not attended to. Partly it was the limitations of the project, but it was also my own prior lack of understanding of the existence of these voices. This process of doing the project has alerted me to those and if I have a hope for this project, it would be precisely that: the opening of the possibility to hear those ignored voices that have been whispering in the bible and beyond. This project can therefore only be considered as a series of openings: towards hidden and silenced voices in the bible, towards reconfigurations of the ritual of reading aloud the bible, towards sound art engagement with biblical texts, towards a Christian engagement with sound art. The project about plurality accordingly ends in polyphonous possibility.

Glossary

General

Corporeality

Corporeality refers to the notion of materiality and physicality. In the context of this project, it refers to the presence of the body and the voice that sounds from it. This corporeal sounding leads to a critical reflection on how this presence affects the situations being reflected upon. Corporeality brings together sensory experience with perception, highlighting the importance of embodiment in different environments.

Difference

Difference points to the ways in which distinctions are made between people. In this project it broadly refers to differences in terms of gender and race.

Hegemony

Hegemony broadly refers to the dominance of a particular group over an other. Initially, this referred to political or military dominance. Antonio Gramsci, Marxist theorist, expanded this idea to include the dominance of cultural values and ideology.[730] This dominance is not explicitly coercive but works implicitly by establishing social values and worldviews.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality engages with how different systems of oppression 'intersect' for certain people, and initially this term arose from the experiences of Black women. The term was proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a legal theorist and scholar, in her paper, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex.*[731] Intersectionality has various overlaps with Womanism as they both centre the Black woman's experience. Intersectionality focuses on the systems of oppression, while Womanism takes a more holistic approach by articulating both positive and negative experiences of Black women.

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[730] Joseph V. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1981), 3.

[731] Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex'.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality references the way different texts relate to each other acknowledging the fact that no text exists in isolation and that they are read and engaged with across each other.

Language

A form of communication within groups, traditionally language has been associated with verbal communication, both oral and written. The notion of language has been expanded to include non-verbal forms of communication. Non-verbal communications can be officially designated as language. For example, the United Kingdom recently recognised British Sign Language (BSL) as an official language.[732] In this project, language is primarily used in its traditional sense of being a written and oral form of communication or expression.

Marginalisation

Marginalisation refers to how some groups are pushed to the 'margins' of society. As such these groups can be ignored or be considered of inferior status. Marginalisation can be across different areas of human existence based on ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, economic status, educational achievement, access to technology etc. In this project the area of marginalisation that is engaged with is around the ideas of gender and race by listening to the voices of women and foreigners.

Multiplicity

This is a term that has usages in mathematics, philosophy and psychology. Philosophically this term refers to the notion that large numbers of multiple distinct entities and features can coexist together. In this project this idea employed through notions of polyphony in analogical and adaptive ways.

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[732] 'Government Backs Vital British Sign Language Bill', GOV.UK, accessed 18 November 2023, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-backs-vital-british-sign-language-bill.

Phenomenology

A philosophical approach, 'the primary objective of which is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced.'[733] It engages with our experiences whether through human senses or internal perceptions. Edmund Husserl is acknowledged as a pioneer in this form of philosophy and his student Martin Heidegger developed it further. In this project I engage primarily with two phenomenological philosophers, Hannah Arendt and Jean-Luc Nancy, who formed their philosophies based on or in response to Heidegger's phenomenology.

Plurality

In this project plurality refers to the sociological co-existence of different persons, people groups, worldviews and so on. Plurality is often spoken of in contrast to a dominant entity.

Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is a framework that seeks to understand and respond to the colonial history of European powers, particularly from the experiences of the colonised. One response is to enable the 'elaboration of theoretical structures that contest the previous dominant western ways of seeing things.'[734] Pioneering theorists include Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Gayathri Spivak. Said is engaged with in this project for his connections to music and polyphony.

Race

Race is a term that often refers to ethnicities of people. However, it is also socially constructed when one considers how 'whiteness' and 'blackness' are not observable skin colours but complex historical and social constructions of how persons and people groups are arranged. In this project, the idea of race is used to examine and interrogate theological traditions and is employed to engage with the idea of the foreigner.

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[733] Walter Biemel and Herbert Speigelberg, 'Phenomenology', in *Encylopaedea Britiannica*, 13 October 2023, https://www.britannica.com/topic/phenomenology.

[734] Robert C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*, Very Short Introductions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4.

Sociality

Though initially used primarily in biology to explore (non-human) group behaviour (e.g., Edward O. Wilson[735]), the term sociality is used across the humanities to examine human group behaviour as well. For example, in this project, the term is used by Ashon Crawley from a Black theological perspective and also by Labelle from a sound studies perspective.

Womanism

A term coined by Alice Walker[736] to distinguish the particularities of Black women's experiences arising from the limitations of mainstream feminism. From Walker's initial coinage it has developed to take into account a wider range of women's experiences including race, class and ethnicity. Audre Lorde, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Patricia Hill Collins and bell hooks[737] are some of the writers practising and articulating Womanism. Womanism has overlaps with intersectionality. While intersectionality focuses on those caught at the intersection of different forms of oppression, Womanism is a broader holistic approach to all parts of existence.

Theology

Black theology

Black theology, as a distinct form of theologising, emerged in the 1960s in the US particularly with James Cone's *Black Theology, Black Power.*[738] Black theology explored the experience of African Americans and sought to understand and examine Black religious practice from the perspective of being a people that were formerly enslaved and currently discriminated against.

Feminist theology

A form of theologising which employs feminist frameworks to critique religious traditions and interpretations which are patriarchal while centring the experience of women within

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[735] Edward O. Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap P., 1975).

[736] Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose.*

[737] Clyde McGrady, 'Why Bell Hooks Didn't Capitalize Her Name', *Washington Post*, 16 December 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2021/12/15/bell-hooks-real-name/.

[738] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power.*

these traditions. It was influenced by feminist movement of the 1960s and 70s and interacted with liberation theologies and theologies of experience. Mary Daly,[739] Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza,[740] Rosemary Radford Ruether,[741] Letty M. Russell[742] were, amongst others writing key texts of this theology.

Glossolalia

Glossolalia, etymologically from the Greek, means speaking in tongues.[743] [744] Glossolalia is generally referred to as an expression of 'ecstatic spiritual emotion'[745] where the speaker utters sounds that are either a different language or a wholly other form of speech that is devotional. This form of speaking from a devotional context has also been taken on by artistic practices where the uttering of non-semantic sounds is practised as a way of attending to sound and the body from which it arises. In this project it is used to move beyond the semantic intelligibility of speech; instead, the listener is encouraged to hear the sound of the multiple speaking voices.

Gospel

Literally meaning 'good news,' the gospel refers to the message that Christians purport to spread. In biblical texts the gospels refer to the four accounts of Jesus traditionally referred to as 'Matthew', 'Mark', 'Luke' and 'John'.

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[739] Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

[740] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983).

[741] Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology*, SCM Classics (London: SCM, 1983).

[742] Letty M. Russell, *Inheriting Our Mothers' Gardens: Feminist Theology in Third World Perspective*, 1st ed (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy1206/88010051-b.html.

[743] Oxford English Dictionary, 'Glossolalia, n., Etymology' (Oxford University Press, July 2023), Oxford English Dictionary, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/6327613511.

[744] Oxford English Dictionary, 'Glosso-, Comb. Form' (Oxford University Press, July 2023), Oxford English Dictionary, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1046518235.

[745] Oxford English Dictionary, 'Glossolalia, n.' (Oxford University Press, July 2023), Oxford English Dictionary, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1126745762.

Holy Spirit

The third person of the Trinity. The Spirit shows the energy and the power by which God acts and speaks. The prophets who speak God's words are said to have the Spirit upon them. Similarly, the event of Pentecost is a work of the Spirit, animating the followers of Jesus into devotion through glossolalia.

Liberation theology

Liberation theology, has its origins in the period of the 1960s-70s particularly in South America. A seminal text is Gustavo Guttiérez's *A Theology of Liberation*.[746] This approach centres the experience and situations of the poor, dispossessed and oppressed. Scripture is read and interpreted from this perspective and theology is done in a 'ground-up' manner.

Pentecost

Pentecost is derived from the Greek 'Pentekoste' meaning 'fiftieth.' Within Jewish tradition it was the festival of Shavuot, 50 days after the Passover. Along with the celebration of the first fruits of the harvest, Shavuot is a commemoration of the giving of the Torah, God's Law given to Moses. In the biblical narrative it is during this festival that the Holy Spirit comes upon early followers of Jesus and creates the sonorous event of the speaking of tongues. The event is considered to be the birth of the Christian church.

Pentecostalism

One of the newer traditions of Christianity, Pentecostalism has been the fastest growing branch of Christianity from the mid-20th century. It has no central authority and can be found across the globe. Pentecostalism draws on the foundational event of Pentecost and the presence of the Holy Spirit is heavily emphasised during corporate worship. This presence is manifest through different practices especially that of 'speaking in tongues.'

Postcolonial theology

Drawing on postcolonial frameworks, postcolonial theology attempts to engage Christian theology by rereading it through the framework of empire. This is done with the

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[746] Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson ((London): SCM Press, 1979).

understanding that a large amount of Christian propagation and global spread happened at the time of European colonial expansion. Postcolonial theology attempts to frame theology from the perspectives of those marginalised by colonialisation and empire. R.S. Sugirtharajah[747] and Kwok Pui-lan[748] are examples of biblical scholars and theologians, respectively, amongst others.

Prophet

A speaker or interpreter of divine communication. Though contemporary usage tends to emphasise the future-telling aspects of prophecy, classically the prophet could be speaking into the past, present or future. For example, Nathan the prophet in 2 Sam 12 confronts King David about his past misdemeanours showing that prophecy isn't limited to future events.

Ritual

Rituals are often repetitive acts sometimes known as rites. The ritual often has meanings beyond the immediate act. These meanings could be religious but could also be social or familial. In this project, the reading aloud of scripture is the ritual which is examined and reconstituted.

Supersessionism

The idea that Christianity 'supersedes' Judaism. It has been used theologically to denigrate and persecute adherents of Judaism.[749]

Trinity

A conceptualisation of God as three differentiated persons, Father, Son and Spirit, while being one God. While the bible doesn't explicitly outline the concept, the Trinity is based on biblical ideas and later church discussions and arguments about the nature of Jesus and his relation to God. The Trinity has been used to portray the mystery of God for its

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[747] Fernando F Segovia and R. S Sugirtharajah, eds., *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (London: T & T Clark, 2009).

[748] Pui-lan Kwok, *Postcolonial Politics and Theology: Unraveling Empire for a Global World*, First edition (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2021).

[749] Heltzel, *Resurrection City*, 11.

simultaneous 'threeness' and 'oneness'. Additionally, it has also been used as ways of understanding Christian community with its simultaneous conceptualisation of differentiation and unity.

Womanist theology

Drawing on the Womanist movement, Womanist theologians attempt to 'unearth the hidden voices in history, scripture, and the experiences of contemporary marginalized African American women to discover fragments that can create a narrative for the present and future.'[750] Womanist theologians bring together concerns from Black and feminist theology for the particular situations experienced by Black women and reinterpret and engage with religious tradition accordingly.

Sound

Counterpoint

Counterpoint is a form of simultaneous sounding in music that was developed in Europe during the 12th to 16th centuries. It is described as: 'the coherent combination of distinct melodic lines in music.'[751] In counterpoint, each part is of 'significance of itself' but, when combined with others, results in a 'coherent texture.'[752] Within these two basic definitions it is important to note that the different voices require some sort of 'coherence.' The different 'voices' (or melodic lines) are meant to be controlled so that they do not 'undermine the perceived coherence of the musical result.'[753] Counterpoint has different distinct voices simultaneously sounding but does so according to certain rules. Such a

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[750] Monica A. Coleman, *Making a Way out of No Way: A Womanist Theology*, Innovations (Minneapolis, Minn.) (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2008), http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0814/2008011151.html.

[751] Arnold Whittall, 'Counterpoint', in *The Oxford Companion to Music*, ed. Alison Latham (Oxford University Press, 2011), https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199579037.001.0001/acref-9780199579037-e-1670.

[752] Joyce Kennedy, Michael Kennedy, and Tim Rutherford-Johnson, 'Counterpoint', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, ed. Joyce Kennedy, Michael Kennedy, and Tim Rutherford-Johnson (Oxford University Press, 2013), https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199578108.001.0001/acref-9780199578108-e-2218.

[753] Whittall, 'Counterpoint'.

form of codified coexistence of sound leads back to the notion of harmony that I spoke of above where voices are always in service to 'coherence.' There are different kinds of counterpoint and the most rigid of those is 'strict counterpoint' developed by Johann Joseph Fux.[754] There are other forms of counterpoint, especially from the 20th century, where there is more freedom given to the individual voices. Linear counterpoint is one such form which emphasises the individual voices' development without adhering to the surrounding melodies.[755]

Harmony

In general usage the term harmony is sometimes used interchangeably with polyphony as meaning to be presence of multiple simultaneous sounds. However, in this project it is used in distinction to polyphony. Harmony is considered to be the 'right' way of sounds coexisting together while polyphony is presented as the general presence of simultaneous sound. This argument is found on pages 163 – 167.[756]

Heterophony

Heterophony is 'the simultaneous sounding of a melody with an elaborated variant of it.'[757] This means a melody is performed by different voices or instruments together and each voice might vary its melody distinctly from others in the group. In heterophony the difference arises from the embellishments made by the individual voices, rather than from different melodic ideas.

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[754] John Rothgeb, review of *Review of Counterpoint in Composition*, by Felix Salzer and Carl Schachter, *Journal of Music Theory* 13, no. 2 (1969): 308, https://doi.org/10.2307/842992.

[755] Joyce Kennedy, Michael Kennedy, and Tim Rutherford-JohnsonTim Rutherford-Johnson, 'Linear Counterpoint', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, ed. Joyce Kennedy, Michael Kennedy, and Tim Rutherford-Johnson (Oxford University Press, 2013), https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199578108.001.0001/acref-9780199578108-e-5476.

[756] See above, Harmony, 172.

[757] Arnold Whittall, 'Heterophony', in *The Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford University Press, 2011), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199579037.001.0001/acref-9780199579037-e-3240.

Homophony

Homophony is the sounding of simultaneous music sounds where one voice or part is the main melody. Other voices and parts are accompanying or chordal. The accompanying voices are present only for the main voice and need not have independence of their own melodically or rhythmically. This form of simultaneous sounding is found in Victorian hymnody which is sung in churches across the world.[758]

Organum

Organum is a form of simultaneous vocal singing that developed in Europe during the 8th Century AD onwards. There was a clear demarcation of the 'main voice' – the melodic line and other voices sung in harmony to this main voice. One voice is given precedence over others, and the other voices must sing in a predefined relationship to the main voice.[759] It can be understood as a 'simpler' form of homophony.

Polyphony

For this project 'polyphony' is used in its root sense, 'many voices.' Polyphony is also a term that refers to certain European sacred musics of the 16th century. Polyphony in this sense used counterpoint and other harmonic devices, each voice having a degree of independence while also expressing the main melodic ideas.[760] However, as stated before in this research, polyphony is used as a base term for the hearing of many simultaneous sounds. This aural experience of many sounds is then used through analogy and metaphor to explore the impact of this term beyond its audio and aural contexts. Polyphony is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

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[758] Joyce Bourne and Michael Kennedy, eds., 'Homophony', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford University Press, 2013), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199578108.001.0001/acref-9780199578108-e-4454.

[759] Joyce Bourne and Michael Kennedy, eds., 'Organum', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford University Press, 2013), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199578108.001.0001/acref-9780199578108-e-6708.

[760] Jonathan Dunsby, 'Polyphony', in *The Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford University Press, 2011), https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199579037.001.0001/acref-9780199579037-e-5271.

Score

The score is a visual representation of sound through symbols, graphics, images and text by which the sounds can then be reproduced by performers. In this project the score is derived from the texts of the bible and arranged visually for the members of Bible Noise to perform.

Silence

Silence is generally considered to be an absence of sound. There are two ways in which this project engages with silence which can be found in chapter 3.[761] Firstly, it is discussed as an oppressive act that is often forced upon marginalised voices; in other words it is the process by which voices can no longer be heard. The second way is understanding silence as a possibility of hearing voices previously unheard. This creates the environment for an attitude of attention towards the unheard voice. A way of bringing together these two notions of silence is through Don Ihde's idea of silence as an auditory horizon, signalling the beginning and end of sound.

Voice

Voice is used in its multiple senses in this project. On one hand there is the audible, fleshly, bodily voice of the speaker or performer of Bible Noise. On the other hand, there are the voices of characters within biblical texts. The interplay between these two senses of voice happens when the voice of those in the texts are performed through the audible, bodily voices of the members of Bible Noise. These notions of voice are discussed in the section on voice-based practices[762] and also in the philosophical section of the thesis.[763]

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[761] See above, Silence, 138.

[762] See above, Voice-Based Practices, 39.

[763] See above, Voice, 132.

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Appendix – A: Bible Noise

Scores, descriptions and sound files for the pieces of Bible Noise

Introduction

This appendix lays out relevant aspects of the practice of Bible Noise, the participative/collective art practice which informed this thesis as a practice-based research project. The practice manifested in pieces which the group Bible Noise performed the aim of which was to hear hidden and silenced voices in the reading aloud of the Bible.

This appendix documents this work. It gives details of the participants, the sessions we had and the pieces that were performed. The pieces bring together the participants, the bible and the methods and aims of this research project. The scores of the pieces are presented under each piece title after which the pieces are described with some analysis. Further analysis of certain pieces is taken up in the main body of the thesis. Relevant links to the recorded clips are provided as well.

There were more sessions planned for Bible Noise including a public performance of some of our pieces. However, the COVID-19 pandemic truncated these plans and additionally different members had personal tragedies and illnesses. Bible Noise in terms of this project remains a practice without closure which might be appropriate considering the open-ended nature of the practice and the opening of possibilities that it generates. Only the pieces that were performed are listed in the table of pieces (page 3). There were other pieces formulated but due to above mentioned circumstances but they didn't come to fruition.

The scores for the pieces are placed here to show how the pieces worked and in some cases what the participants of Bible Noise were given.

Scores

Several pieces have scores provided which are the biblical texts laid out in different ways to direct the performance of the piece. The scores in some cases image screenshots to preserve the formatting of the original and to give a better sense for the reader. For the pieces where the performers are given a single verse or individual words (e.g. Prologue Remix) from the verse the collection of verses or words are given. The piece 'Polyphony' doesn't have a score as it is based on the performer's choice of text.

Recordings

There are a set of recordings which are clips taken from the different sessions of Bible Noise. These are fairly 'raw' recordings from the different sessions of Bible Noise. By 'raw' it means that the recordings were mostly done with a single PCM recorder recording the sound of the room and the voices. The recordings are clips from the sessions and other than some EQ and cropping the sound is from the original files with two exceptions described below. The original plan was to record the pieces towards the end of the research process with a better set of mics but this was not to be because of the personal circumstances of the participants and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each piece has a set of recordings and a general link is provided to a set list of the recordings of each piece. Links to the individual recordings are also given afterwards.

This is a OneDrive link to the folder with all the clips. https://1drv.ms/u/s!AisG0-qi2NOamM4jMZv2ffZSgtjrWQ?e=zZDDuY There are folders within each one containing the clips of each piece.

The piece 'Pass the Word (Bible Noise Kho)' doesn't have a recording due to a technical issue. This was one of later pieces and due to the pandemic, we weren't able to redo it. The piece 'Prologue Remix' is recorded through a different system and is the only one where there is a further technological manipulation of sound is used. The recording that is linked here is put together using other audio software (MAX/MSP) using the original recording of the individual voices.

The Bible Noise Group – at a Glance

Participants

1. Anne Yeardley
2. Fiona Barnes
3. Howie Barnes
4. Keerthana Chandy
5. Kiarna Chandy
6. Luiza Chandy
7. Michelle Williams
8. Richard Thomson
9. Sheela Thomas
10. Sue Thomson
11. Sunil Chandy
12. Terry Wright
13. Winston Vethroy

Meetings

	Meeting Dates	Pieces done	Participants	Other activity
1	15/07/2018	Prologue Remix Whispering Grove Contrapunt of Naomi and Job	8	
2	21/10/2018	The Most High 3-Voice of God Whispering Grove Thus Whispereth the Lord	8	
3	02/12/2018	Broken Rhythms Picking the Pieces Mreey Goorund	9	
4	24/03/2019	Prologue Remix Babel Kabbadi Pass the Word	8	
5	12/05/2019	Contrapunt of Naomi and Job Hagar	6	
6	22/09/2019	Aliens	7	

| 7 | 01/12/2019 | | | 7 | Listening and discussion |
| 8 | 08/03/2020 | Polyphony | | 5 | Listening and discussion |

Table of Pieces

	Name	Description	Per-formed	Explores
1	Prologue Remix	Individual voices read texts which are looped and mixed	2	Word clashes, layering of voice and the opportunity of each participant to determine different mixes
2	Whispering Grove	Individuals in a circle whisper texts with single listener inside	2	Listening to multiple voices, attending to whispers, hearing different texts together
3	Contrapunt of Naomi and Job	Simultaneous reading of resonant passages from the book of Ruth and the book of Job	2	Hearing an unheard voice along with a well-known voice
4	The Most High 3-Voice of God	Songs of women in the bible brought together	1	Bringing together ignored voices, establishing solidarity thereby giving stronger voices to all of them. Repetition, asynchronicity, and synchronicity.
5	Thus Whispereth the Lord	Women prophets sounded	1	Tracing a thread of mouthpieces of God reimagined through the voices of women.
6	Broken Rhythms	Different languages transliterated breaking the rhythm of the dominant language	1	Breaking rhythms causing speakers to stumble – the different kinds of attention it causes
7	Picking up the Pieces	Text broken into words – Groups tries to make sense of it	1	Group dynamics and how community can construct meaning
8	Mrrey Goorund	Consonants and vowels separated out	1	Group dynamics and how different parts of the community have differences which need to interact with each other

9	Babel Kabaddi	Kabaddi game with the aim of listening while sounding	1	Simultaneous listening and sounding, the holding of breath
10	Pass the word	Kho game of whispering texts to each other	1	Listening and passing on of sounds – loss of original, reimagination and assumption
11	Hagar	Layering of Hagar's story with Sarah's	1	Different levels of oppression of Hagar in comparison to Sarah, in terms of foreignness, womanness and slaveness.
12	Aliens	Foreigner, Stranger and Alien	1	Reading through the different words for outsiders and the different senses they give in hearing the context.

1. Prologue Remix

Score

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

'Prologue Remix' was the first piece that was attempted in the Bible Noise sessions. This passage was from the gospel of John (John 1:14) which starts with the phrase 'In the beginning was the Word.' Repetitions of words or phrases that occur in the text were considered as a possibility for sonic performance and formed the basis of formulating the piece. The word repetitions were important for choosing the text but reflexively the resonance of 'beginning' and 'word' played a part for this was the start of the process and the engagement with Word/word. Repetitions of words or phrases like 'In the beginning,' 'light,' 'Word' and 'God' were considered as sonic possibilities and formed the basis of formulating the piece.

Each participant uttered a phrase into a microphone, their voices recorded and then played back simultaneously all the voices layered upon each other. We listened to this layered voice playback and then discussed it. This discussion can be heard on '03 Prologue Remix Discussion 1' at <u>this link</u>. As the individual voices were being recorded one of the participants coughed (0:10 on '01 Prologue Remix Individual' at <u>this link</u>). The cough was a 'noise'; a disruption to my preconceived sound of the piece. This fulfilled an intention of Bible Noise; that it would disrupt received meanings and ways of knowing. In the discussion that followed participants commented on their own voice, that were initially listening out for their own voice. (E.g. 0:30 on '03 Prologue Remix Discussion 1' at <u>this link</u>). There, initially it was harder for the participants to hear all the voices together. This indicated how listeners generally listen out for a single voice especially when speech is involved. The performance aspect of recording and hearing back one's voice in the presence of other people probably predisposed the listeners to listen to their own voice. Repeated listening seemed to change the perception as there was more of a listening to the whole rather than to the individual spoken voice.

In the second iteration of the piece after all the voices were recorded, participants were given the option to do their own mixing of the levels to explore the way different voices interacted and to hear the sounds clashing and relating to each other. This was enacting the fact of how our hermeneutic can 'decrease' or 'increase' the 'volume' of certain voices. Certain softer voices might need an increase or loud voices might need a decrease so that each voice could be heard. The performance aspect again initially inhibited the participants from doing their own mix as some participants felt self-conscious (0:32 on '07 Discussion on Mixing Prologue Remix 2' at <u>this link</u>). The consciousness of other participants watching them do a mix made them hurry through their 'turn.' Participants

took getting used to the notion of participation rather than assuming a performer/audience bifurcation.

'Prologue Remix' starts with sound in the choice of text, is enacted sound and listened to and reflected upon through conversation. Sound becomes the process and what is being analysed. Action research and artistic research overlap here as I, the researcher participate in the making of the sound. The conversation afterwards starts a group-reflexive process and afterwards I go through a self-reflexive process of remembering what happened and by listening back to the recording. The piece fits within action research as a participative activity that is aiming to gain knowledge. It fits with artistic research as it makes a performative piece through the layering of the different voices and giving participants the agency to make the layers sound as they might want or as to fulfil their curiosity.

Recordings

Set list - https://on.soundcloud.com/z4TMF

1. Prologue Remix Individual

   https://on.soundcloud.com/MK3nw

2. Prologue Remix

   https://on.soundcloud.com/WK9zr

3. Prologue Remix Discussion 1

   https://on.soundcloud.com/jbgU3

4. Prologue Remix Discussion 2

   https://on.soundcloud.com/pXYJR

5. Discussion On Mixing Prologue Remix

   https://on.soundcloud.com/B4vMv

6. Prologue Mix Listening Back Discussion and Lunch

   https://on.soundcloud.com/h4NdE

7. Discussion Mixing Prologue Remix 2

   https://on.soundcloud.com/YAnHV

2. Whispering Grove

Score

Whispering Grove Texts

Exodus 39:10 Then they mounted four rows of precious stones on it. The first row was carnelian, chrysolite and beryl
Deuteronomy 2:14 Thirty-eight years passed from the time we left Kadesh Barnea until we crossed the Zered Valley. By then, that entire generation of fighting men had perished from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them.
Deuteronomy 11:31 You are about to cross the Jordan to enter and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you have taken it over and are living there,
Job 24:20 The womb forgets them, the worm feasts on them; the wicked are no longer remembered but are broken like a tree.
Isaiah 37:26 "Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities into piles of stone."
Ezekiel 10:11 As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the cherubim faced; the wheels did not turn about as the cherubim went. The cherubim went in whatever direction the head faced, without turning as they went.
Isaiah 50:5 The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears; I have not been rebellious, I have not turned away.
Isaiah 58:8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.
Matthew 16:1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

Mark 7:21 For from within, out of your hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder,

Luke 6:27 "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,"

John 1:9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

John 11:33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

John 20:31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Whispering Grove is a piece where participants stand in a circle and at a low volume repeat a verse given to them. The verses were chosen from different books and genres within the bible. The reasoning behind this was to enact the breadth of the kind of material that is present in the bible. The set of verses that are above were what we used for our performance, but the piece will work with other verses if the principle of using verses from different biblical genres is followed. The genres aren't exhaustive but include: law, poetry, prophetic utterance and narrative.

The participants repeat the verses, and a rhythm is established as the speakers become comfortable with the words. The low volume is established with the instruction that they should be at the threshold of being able to hear themselves and also be able to hear others. After a few repetitions participants take it in turns one at a time to stand in the middle of the circle, trying to hear what is being said and to hear through the clashing words and texts.

The piece performs the multivocal nature of the bible. As each participant stands in the middle, they try to make sense of what they're hearing. They hear through the different words and the different verses which can have an intertextual effect. The low volume means that the centre listener must attend closely to what is being said. As the listener slowly establishes different words and sentences, they can then pay attention to how these words and verses are interacting with each other.

From the perspective of Christian practice this piece has some resonances of the act of praying for people, where a person will be in the centre while others pray for them. There are different layers of listening here. Each participant must utter their verse at a low volume while also being able to hear the presence of others. This requires hearing ones on voice and also the voice of others. The participant who goes to the centre then has additional layers of listening to engage with in order to hear what's going on. Whispering Grove enacts the reality of the presence of different multiple voices in the Bible and provides a line of inquiry as to how these multiple voices can be engaged with.

Recordings

Set List - https://on.soundcloud.com/25Pne

1. Whispering Grove 1 intro
   https://on.soundcloud.com/MDh6D

2. Whispering Grove 1

   https://on.soundcloud.com/6GQz6

3. Whispering Grove 1 Discussion

   https://on.soundcloud.com/2hWcN

4. Intro to Whispering Grove 2

   https://on.soundcloud.com/RvbEP

5. Whispering Grove 2

   https://on.soundcloud.com/Bx4SQ

6. Whispering Grove 2 Discussion

   https://on.soundcloud.com/wQRyL

3. Contrapunt of Naomi and Job

Score

Contrapunt of Naomi and Job

Movement 1

Group 1	Group 2
for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me.	And the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter
Almighty Bitter	Bitter Almighty
I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty Full Taken away	the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away Empty Gave

No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me.
 	
The hand of God
 	
has turned against me.
	I am a laughing-stock to my friends;
	I am a laughing stock
	Who … does not know
	   that the hand of the Lord has done this?
	Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends,
	   for the hand of God has touched me!
	
	Have pity.
	The hand of God

Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. Then they wept aloud again. They wept aloud. They wept aloud	When they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him, and they raised their voices and wept aloud; they tore their robes and threw dust in the air upon their heads. They wept aloud. They wept aloud

Movement 2

spread your cloak over your servant, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family. My Redeemer Redeemer	I know that my Redeemer lives and that at the last he will stand upon the earth Guardian Redeemer Redeemer
Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.	But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.

Movement 3

Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. Better than seven sons Naomi has a son! He also had seven sons and three daughters. Better than seven sons	For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given… birth. Guardian-Redeemer And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends. Seven sons
a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. Better than seven sons.	There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. Seven sons.

In the 'Contrapunt of Naomi and Job' is a sonic engagement with feminist theologian Jacqueline Lapsley's reading of the book of Ruth. Lapsley sets up Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law as the primary character of the book of Ruth and compares Naomi to the character of Job and brings out different resonances between these two characters.

I posed the question; 'What would happen if Lapsley's reading could be enacted in sound?' From that question, I constituted a piece focussing on similar words and phrases that Job and Naomi utter in the narratives based on Lapsley's research. Words such as 'bitter,' phrases such as 'the hand of the Lord,' and 'seven sons' were used as common sonic utterances. Using these common words, phrases and events a reading was formed that would bring these two voices together. The score is formatted as text in two columns. I chose this format in contrast to the style of a musical stave since columns mirror the format of many bibles. One column has the Naomi texts while the other has the Job texts. The participants are divided into two groups. One reads the 'Naomi' texts and the other the 'Job' texts. Towards the end these texts mix and mingle.

This mixing and mingling allows listeners to hear Job and Naomi together in the similarities that were brought out through Lapsley's reading. The hidden Naomi is heard through the 'lofty' Job. Through repeated hearings of this bringing together, Job the wealthy, powerful man is brought together with Naomi the widow who has nothing.

Recordings

Setlist - https://on.soundcloud.com/UDwbt

1. Contrapunt Intro
   https://on.soundcloud.com/rYBTT
2. Contrapunt of Naomi and Job 1
   https://on.soundcloud.com/SSMgJ
3. Contrapunt 1 Post Discussion
   https://on.soundcloud.com/sHwcu
4. Contrapunt of Naomi and Job 2
   https://on.soundcloud.com/pnVE1
5. Contrapunt of Naomi and Job 2 Second Trial
   https://on.soundcloud.com/x5GwE

4. The Most High 3-Voice of God

Score

<div style="border:1px solid">

The Most High 3-Voice of God

Deborah

Villagers in Israel would not fight;
   they held back until I arose,
   until I arose, a mother in Israel.

Consider the voice of the singers at the watering
places.
   They recite the victories of the Lord,
   the victories of his villagers in Israel.

Wake up, wake up,
  Wake up, wake up, break out in song!

Most blessed of women
  most blessed of tent-dwelling women.

 At her feet he sank,
   he fell; there he lay.
At her feet he sank, he fell;
   where he sank, there he fell—dead

He raises the poor from the dust,
   and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes,
   with the princes of his people.
He gives the barren woman a home,
   making her the joyous mother of children.
Praise the Lord!

Most blessed of women
Blessed are you
Blessed is she

Hannah

My heart exults in the Lord;
   my strength is exalted in my God.

Talk no more so very proudly,
   let not arrogance come from your mouth;

The bows of the mighty are broken,
   but the feeble gird on strength.
The Lord kills and brings to life;
   he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
 The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
   he brings low, he also exalts.
He raises up the poor from the dust;
   he lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes
   and inherit a seat of honour.

He raises the poor from the dust,
   and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes,
   with the princes of his people.
He gives the barren woman a home,
   making her the joyous mother of children.
Praise the Lord!

Most blessed of women
Blessed are you
Blessed is she

Elizabeth and Mary

"Blessed are you among women and blessed is
the fruit of your womb.
For as soon as I heard the sound of your
greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy.
And blessed is she who believed that there
would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her
by the Lord."

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of
his servant.
   Surely, from now on all generations will call
me blessed;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of
their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their
thrones,
   and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
   and sent the rich away empty.

He raises the poor from the dust,
   and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes,
   with the princes of his people.
He gives the barren woman a home,
   making her the joyous mother of children.
Praise the Lord!

Most blessed of women
Blessed are you
Blessed is she

</div>

'The Most High 3-voice of God' is based on passages which are songs sung by women in the bible. There are three such passages with similar themes but differing texts. Each passage is given to an individual reader. At the end of each passage there is piece of text which is the same across all three (*He raises the poor from the dust…*). The three readers read through their passage simultaneously. The others in the group are listening. As they are of different lengths they will finish at different times. The one who finishes first listens out for any other reader who is reading the common portion of their text. When she hears it, she joins in and reads along with that reader to the end again. Once these two readers finished the common portion they listen out to where the third reader has reached and when they hear the third reader reading the last portion, they both join her.

This is a piece where individual voices continue on their own path until near the end where they eventually synchronise in unison. Aurally the polyphony starts as asynchronous which then ends in synchronicity. It can be described as starting as a form of linear counterpoint which then ends in unison. The unison section is an encapsulation of the different resonances of sound and meaning within all three passages. It is a bringing together of the marginalised voice. The unison here doesn't represent a hegemonic unity but rather the co-amplification of different marginalised voices. The piece enacts a solidarity of marginalised voices across time drawing on common themes and concerns.

Recordings

Setlist - https://on.soundcloud.com/iLiCx

1. The Most High 3 Introduction
   https://on.soundcloud.com/YJf8i
2. The Most High 3-Voice of God Trial
   https://on.soundcloud.com/M5Q9H
3. The Most High 3-Voice of God
   https://on.soundcloud.com/2Tiar
4. The Most High 3-Voice of God Discussion
   https://on.soundcloud.com/t3e7j

5. Thus Whispereth the Lord

Score

Thus Whispereth the Lord

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Tambo-Tambo-(Pause) *Tambo-Tambo-(Pause)* *Sister- Sister- (Pause)* *Sister- Sister- (Pause) (Repeat)* *(After Group 3 have done their line FADE)*	*Singing, Dancing-(Pause)* *Singing, Dancing-(Pause)* *Beh-Reen- Beh-Reen-(Pause)* *Beh-Reen- Beh-Reen-(Pause)(Repeat)* *(After Group 3 have done their line FADE)*	 (After two rounds of the others) Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them
  At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment.	*Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz! (long with the pitch going up and down) (Repeat)* *(FADE)*	*Zzzzzzzzzzzz! Zzzzzzzzz! (Fairly short bursts)* *(Repeat)* *(FADE)*

Lyre-piano-cymbal-guitar-harp-drum(repeat) *(STOP)* *Drum-harp-guitar-cymbal-piano-Lyre (Repeat)* *(FADE)*	David and the officers of the army also set apart for the service the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals. God had given Heman fourteen sons and **THREE DAUGHTERS.** They were all under the direction of their father for the music in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of the house of God.	*Drum-harp-guitar-cymbal-piano-Lyre (Repeat)* *(STOP)* *Lyre-piano-cymbal-guitar-harp-drum(repeat)* *(FADE)*

   When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. Then the king commanded the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary, and the king's servant Asaiah, saying, "Go, inquire of the Lord concerning the words of this book that has been found; So the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the prophetess Huldah where they consulted her. She declared to them, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel:	*(High pitched and quick)* *Squeak!Squeak!* *Squeak!Squeak!Squeak! (Repeat)* *(STOP)* *Squeak!Squeak!* *Squeak!Squeak!Squeak!*	 *(Low pitched and slow)* *SQUEEEAK (Repeat)* *(STOP)* *SQUEEEAK*

Maher-shalal-hash-baz (repeat with increasing speed)		*The spoil speeds, the prey hastens (repeat with increasing speed)*
	And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz; for before the child knows how to call "My father" or "My mother," the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away by the king of Assyria.	
(STOP)		(STOP)

	(Slowly, Gently with pauses) Ah… Na… Grace… Widow… Praying… Eighty four… Temple… Fasting… *(repeat)*	
(Slowly, Gently with pauses) Fasting… Temple… Eighty Four… Praying.. Widow… Grace… Na… Ah… *(repeat)*		There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.
(STOP)	(STOP)	

		(Without Voice) *Sssss Sspsss Pssss Spurssss (Repeat)*
(Without Voice) *Sssss Sspsss Pssss Spurssss (Repeat)*		
	we went into the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the seven, and stayed with him. He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy.	
(Single Voice) *Four Daughters*		
		(Single Voice) *Four Daughters*
		(Single Voice) *Four Daughters*
(Single Voice) *Four Daughters*		
(All four voices) *Four Daughters*		*(All four voices)* *Four Daughters*

Thus says the Lord God:	Come from the four winds	
		O breath, and breathe upon these slain,
that they may live."	that they may live."	that they may live."
I prophesied as he commanded me, *(breathe in)*	I prophesied as he commanded me, *(breathe in)*	I prophesied as he commanded me, *(breathe in)*
and the breath came into them, *(breath out)*	and the breath came into them, *(breath out)*	and the breath came into them, *(breath out)*
and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.	and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.	and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.
(Without Voice) *Sssss Sspsss Pssss Spurssss (Repeat and Fade)*	*(Without Voice)* *Sssss Sspsss Pssss Spurssss (Repeat and Fade)*	*(Without Voice)* *Sssss Sspsss Pssss Spurssss (Repeat and Fade)*

The ritual of reading aloud scripture often ends with the phrase 'This is the word of the Lord' to which the congregation responds: 'Thanks be to God.' 'This is the word of the Lord' appears in translations of the bible like NRSV (2 Kings9:36) and the equivalent version in the King James version is 'Thus saith the Lord.' This phrase appears throughout the Old Testament but most frequently appears in the books of the prophets. The phrase 'this is the word of the Lord' after the reading therefore has a prophetic echo. The ritual's connection to the prophetic is the initial prompt for this piece.

Most of the prophets recounted in the bible are men. I thought it would be good to hear from women who are prophets since they are not often heard. 'Thus saith the Lord' became 'Thus whispereth the Lord' because these prophets aren't given much space in the text and so become a whisper. Bible Noise, therefore, attempts to hear and voice this 'whisper'; the quietened voices of female prophets.

The score was for three groups. Two groups would sound a sonic aspect of the prophet while the third read the text about her. The polyphony here isn't the multiple voices of the text but the sonic features of the prophets simultaneously sounding with their narratives within the text. The sonic features were chosen from the text itself like 'tambo' and 'bereen' from Miriam's tambourine or a sonic enactment of a name like 'bzzzzz' for Deborah whose name means bee. These sonic features when sounded produce a dual effect. On one hand they crowd out the narratives and speech of the woman prophet. On the other hand they provide the noise of the woman prophet which is open to derision but also opens the possibility of drawing attention to her voice and celebrates transformation.

The whispering continues with the ending of the piece which focuses on breath which is taken from the book of Ezekiel. The passage talks of God's breath being given to those who've been slain so that they might live. This passage is used because in the context of the piece because it asks questions whether it is possible to give voice to those who have been silenced. There is also a connection between breath and the use of voice. In this section there are concerted breaths taken by the group and the piece ends in whispers that fade away. This fading away asks whether the practice is able to bring out these voices. The research is being reflected upon through the dynamics of the piece itself.

Recordings

Setlist - https://on.soundcloud.com/ki508

1. Thus Whispereth Intro

   https://on.soundcloud.com/K3xKd

2. Thus Whispereth Setting Up

   https://on.soundcloud.com/oHEb5

3. Thus Whispereth the Lord

   https://on.soundcloud.com/UPQKC

4. Thus Whispereth Feedback

   https://on.soundcloud.com/4e49V

6. Broken Rhythms

Score

Broken Rhythms

	NRSV	KJV	Malayalam	Portuguese	Hebrew
Genesis 3:10	He said "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."	And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.	Yours there sound I garden in heard. Naked because got afraid hid	He answered "Heard the your voice in the garden and, full of fear, hid myself because am naked.	Was naked because and I was afraid in the garden I heard your voice so he said and I hid myself.
Genesis 21:17	And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.	And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he *is*.	The little one's cry God heard. God's an angel sky from Hagar to called asked : "Hagar, You what for troubled? Fear not, little one's cry God hearing is.	God heard the voice of the boy, and the messenger of God called from the sky Agar and said her: "What have you Agar, nothing fear, because God heard the voice of the body, of the place in that is.	Hagar to of God the angel and called of the boy the voice God and heard: "for fear not Hagar ails you what to her and said heaven out of there he's where of the boy the voice to God has listened
Isaiah 48:6	You have heard; now see all this; and will you not declare it? From this time forward I make you hear new things, hidden things that you have not known.	Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare *it*? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.	You heard already; now this all see; you it proclaim not? Now onwards I to you new things hear will; you to know not hidden things.	Of what I before said see the realisation. Not the would want to declare? The to leave of now reveal to you all things new, that were hidden and that unknown.	From this time new things I have made you hear declare it will not and you all this see; You have heard, you did know them not and even hidden things

Broken Rhythms explores listening to the familiar through different rhythms. Language has sonic features of pitch and rhythm which have subtle effects in how the language is then received. This piece 'breaks' the rhythm by using different translations and transliterations from different languages. Three verses which focus on the notion of listening were chosen and they were read aloud in five different versions.

1. NRSV (New Revised Standard Version)

   This is the contemporary version of the bible I have referred to through this research. This version however doesn't have an emphasis for 'dynamic equivalence' and sometimes keeps words orders of the original languages.

2. KJV (King James Version)

   This is perhaps the most well-known version of the bible in English. It has been considered a classical text of English with several of its phrases still used today. As it is read aloud the questions of this version's resonance and archaic-ness is brought up.

3. Malayalam (transliteration)

   Malayalam is a South Indian language closely related to the older language of Tamil.

4. Portuguese (transliteration)

   Portuguese is considered to be a Romance language descended from Latin.

5. Hebrew (transliteration)

   Biblical Hebrew is the language of the Old Testament. It is a Semitic language and Modern Hebrew is based on Biblical Hebrew.

Reading aloud different versions bring different rhythms to what the participants are used to. In many cases the word orders are different to what the readers are used to. The reconfiguring of rhythm is an interruption to the flow and causes the participants to re-engage with the words. As different participants read their versions they stumbled and had to pay attention again to the word order in front of them.

Recordings

Setlist - https://on.soundcloud.com/mgLK9

1. Broken Rhythms Genesis 3

   https://on.soundcloud.com/rvZmL

2. Broken Rhythms Hagar

   https://on.soundcloud.com/EYUek

3. Broken Rhythms Isaiah

   https://on.soundcloud.com/C95vk

4. Conversation after Broken Rhythms

   https://on.soundcloud.com/V7XEp

7. Picking up the Pieces

Score

Picking the Pieces

Genesis 3:8

They	heard	the	sound	of	the	Lord
God	walking	in	the	garden	at	the
time	of	the	evening	breeze		

Romans 8:26

Likewise	the	Spirit	helps	us	in	our	weakness
for	we	do	not	know	how	to	pray
as	we	ought	but	that	very	Spirit	intercedes
with	sighs	too	deep	for	words		

Psalm 88:8

You	have	caused	my	companions	to
shun	me	you	have	made	me
a	thing	of	horror	to	them

John 3:16

For	God	so	loved	the	world	that	he	gave
his	only	Son	so	that	everyone	who	believes	in
him	may	not	perish	but	may	have	eternal	life

This piece uses a game to form its sound. Each participant is given words on pieces of paper with one word on each piece. A well-known bible verse is broken up into its individual words, mixed and handed out to the participants. Participants can only say the word that is given to them and no other. If the verse is well-known participants might start recognising it and start working together to perform the verse in the 'right' order. This proved to be the case as the first verse used was John 3:16. The game ends when the group has a whole feel they've got to where they should. Several processes occur here. The participants need to listen to the broken-up verse from each other. They reconstruct the verse either by memory or trying to make grammatical sense. They then need to perform it by saying their word in the right order at the right moment. The cues to speaking come from hearing others and working out whether the sentence works. This enacts a type of communal hermeneutic where sense is being made only as everyone participates. If one player gives up, the game no longer works unless she gives her words to another player. The game enacts ways in which sense can be made co-operatively through listening to each other. The final form of the verse is shaped according to the participants' conception of what is in the bible.

When performing the piece participants started gesturing wildly at each other and tonally modulating their voice to communicate as they sounded out their word. Certain participants took a lead in ensuring that others uttered their word at the right time. This showed a presence of 'experts' that could guide the process but equally showed how participative processes are in danger of being controlled by a few rather than all the participants.

Recordings

Setlist

https://on.soundcloud.com/wNtJ3

1. Picking Up the Pieces Intro
   https://on.soundcloud.com/yGLZ3
2. Picking Up the Pieces Initial
   https://on.soundcloud.com/vSCth
3. Picking Up the Pieces First Trial
   https://on.soundcloud.com/7Q9MF
4. Picking Up the Pieces Second Trial

https://on.soundcloud.com/KJ2cs

5. Picking Up the Pieces Third Trial

   https://on.soundcloud.com/8T9Dj

6. Picking Up the Pieces 1

   https://on.soundcloud.com/UqU7J

7. Picking Up the Pieces 2

   https://on.soundcloud.com/WDHHF

8. Picking Up the Pieces Discussion

   https://on.soundcloud.com/2Va9e

8. Mrrey Goorund

Score

Vowels (with numbered word separation)

oo	o	ee	ah ay	eye	i	ay oo
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(pause)

eye	a	o	oo	eye	ay	oo	a	eye
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

(Isaiah 43:1-2)

eye	A (apple)	er	o (row)	er	o	o	O (ball)	ee er
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

(pause)

er	i	i	oo	i i u	o	ee
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(Jeremiah 32:27)

Consonants (with numbered word separation)

D	N	T	B	FR D		W L	S V	Y
1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8

(pause)

	H V	C L D	Y	B	N M	Y	R	M	N
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

(Isaiah 43:1-2)

	M	TH	L D	TH	G D	F	L	P P L
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

(pause)

N TH NG	S	T	D F C L T	F R	M
1	2	3	4	5	6

(Jeremiah 32:27)

Vowels (with word separation)

oo | o | ee | ah ay | eye | i | ay oo | (pause)

eye | a | o | oo | eye | ay | oo | a | eye |

(Isaiah 43:1-2)

eye | A (apple) | er | o (row) | er | o | o | O (ball)| ee er| (pause)

er | i | i | oo | i i u | o | ee. *(Jeremiah 32:27)*

Consonants (with word separation)

D | N T | B| FR D | | W L | S V | Y (pause)

| | H V | C L D | Y | B | N M | Y | R | M N |

(Isaiah 43:1-2)

| | M | TH | L D | TH | G D | F | L | P P L | (pause)

N TH NG | S | T | D F C L T | F R | M |

(Jeremiah 32:27)

Vowels

oo o ee ah ay eye i ay oo (pause)

ay a o oo eye ay oo a eye.

eye A (apple) er o (row) er o o O (ball) ee er.

er i i oo i i u o ee.

Consonants

D N T B FR D W L S V Y.

H V C L D Y B N M Y R M N

M TH L TH G D F L P P L (Pause)

N TH NG S T D F C L T F R M.

Mrrey Goorund is similar to 'Picking the Pieces' in that verses are broken up and the group has to recreate the verse. However, in this case the words themselves are broken up into consonants and vowels. The title is a play on the 'Merry Go Round with vowels and consonants swapped. The consonants and vowels are in the same order that they appear in the original verse. There are three different scores for the piece. The first one distinguishes and numbers each word the sound appears in. The second gives distinction between the words. The third score has just all the sounds in the correct order but without any distinction.

Participants are given either vowels of the verse or the consonants. First the participants have to find the others who have their category of either vowels or consonants. Now in two groups they have to now utter the verse together using only the sounds given to them. It requires co-ordination and repetition to start getting a sense of rhythm and meaning of the verse.

When performing the piece, the consonant group soon got a sense of what they were saying. It seems to be that consonants gives distinction to the words. The consonant group also found it simpler to utter their sounds because they were short sounds. The vowels group found it harder to co-ordinate as they took a while to agree as to the length of their sounds. Vowels being open sounds can have indeterminate length while consonants are much shorter. The vowel group only started making sense of what they were trying to say after listening to the consonant group. As they started making sense the vowel group were able to better co-ordinate the length of their sounds. We only did the first score as it took time for the participants to get into the game. These efforts can be heard in the recordings.

The vowel consonant interaction showed the importance of distinction and the need for appropriate lengths of sound. Both consonant and vowel though sonically doing very different things need to each to make sense of each other. They both give context to each other and therefore identify each other. The ability of sounds to contextualise each other is important here and resonates with how musical notes contextualise each other temporally and polyphonically.

Recordings

Setlist - https://on.soundcloud.com/7KNaS
1. Mrrey Goorund Intro

https://on.soundcloud.com/bePqD

2. Mrrey Goorund Finding Each Other

   https://on.soundcloud.com/QkJJR

3. Mrrey Goorund Do Not Be Afraid 1

   https://on.soundcloud.com/8CifL

4. Mrrey Goorund Do Not Be Afraid 2

   https://on.soundcloud.com/yavn3

5. Mrrey Goorund Do Not Be Afraid 3

   https://on.soundcloud.com/UpVaW

6. Mrrey Goorund Discussion

   https://on.soundcloud.com/odjhx

9. Babble Kabaddi

Score

Babel	Babel	Babel

For	God	so	loved	the	world
that	he	gave	his	only	Son

'Kabaddi' is a sport that is indigenous to South Asia.[764] Two teams stand in two zones. One member from team 'A' 'raids' the other team 'B' by going into team 'B's zone and touching an opposing team member who is then removed from the game. The team still remaining or with most members at the end of a stipulated time wins. Though this sounds like 'tag' the key distinction of the game is that the 'raider' has to audibly repeat the word 'kabaddi' throughout his 'raid' without taking a breath in between. The sonic here is an essential part of the game through all its variants. The word might differ but the concept of the voice being in continuous use through the 'raid' is standard.

'Babble Kabaddi' uses this concept of sounding. However, there are no teams and no 'tagging. All the participants except one stand in a semi-circle. The participant outside the semi-circle designated the Babel-er stands at some distance facing the open semi-circle. At this time the participants of the semi-circle are given parts of a passage from the bible but no one knows what the others have. The passage is without verbal sense to each individual member. Now the Babel-er starts saying the word 'Babel' repeatedly without taking a breath in between and walks into the semi-circle. While she does this the group are simultaneously all uttering their text repeatedly. The Babel-er while saying 'Babel' attempts to make sense of the passage that has been broken up and repeatedly uttered. When the Babel-er starts running out of breath she goes back to her starting point and the group stop their utterance. The Babel-er then tells the group what she thinks she heard. Members of the semi-circle can then offer corrections of the part they were given. The group can then decide to either agree on a single version or keep multiple versions of what they think the passage is. Then the next passage is 'played' with a different Babel-er.

The research process of this piece started with exploring an existing sport which uses vocal sound. Kabaddi is reconfigured for Bible Noise. Two teams are melded into one to emphasise the collaborative process. Instead of members of a team crossing sides it is a single person, the Babel-er that comes into the group. The Babel-er is part of the group yet for that moment fulfils a specific role: of noise maker and interpreter. Making noise without taking breaths in-between causes a tension, a tightening. The lack of breathing-in while sounding puts the body in a different place. The Babel-er becomes different in order to listen and to make sense of the differences in the group. The Babel-er becomes partially

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[764] Tomlinson, 'Kabaddi'.

analogous to the researcher. The researcher is someone who approaches the group in difference and is the person coming into the group, bringing noise to the group and then reflects back to the group what she's heard. What the Babel-er says is tentative and open to correction which is part of the process of research. This piece turns out to be reflexive of the research process.

Recordings

Setlist - https://on.soundcloud.com/QoFaS

1. Babble Kabaddi Intro

   https://on.soundcloud.com/qNDm3

2. Babble Kabaddi Trial

   https://on.soundcloud.com/b8dWE

3. Babble Kabaddi 1

   https://on.soundcloud.com/CKgoG

4. Babble Kabaddi 2

   https://on.soundcloud.com/a2Hv4

10.   Pass the Word (Bible Noise Kho)

Score

after	the	fire	a	sound	of
sheer	silence				

there	was	silence	in	heaven	for
about	half	an	hour		

O	God	do	not	keep	silence
do	not	hold	your	peace	or
be	still,	O	God!		

This is another piece based on a game from India called Kho or Kho-Kho.[765] It is another game where an utterance by voice is key to the playing of the game. It is a game of tag between two teams. One team the 'chasers' sits in a line in crouching positions. The team that are seated have to 'tag' members of the opposing team in a set time period. The members of the team face one side with every alternate member facing the opposite side, similar to how musical chairs is organised in a line. One member of the 'chasers' attempts to tag members of the other team, but they are constrained: They cannot cut through the line and can only run in one direction. Therefore, the chaser mantle needs to be passed on and this is done by tapping a teammate from behind while saying 'Kho!' The person who has been tapped now continues the chase while the former chaser takes her previous place.

'Pass the Word' was reconfigured Kho in a similar way to how Kabaddi was reconfigured. Instead of two teams there is only one group. Words from a verse are mixed up and distributed among the group. Depending on the length of the verse a member might have more than one word. The group stands in a line facing alternately. The person on the end starts and walking in one direction 'tags' another participant by lightly tapping their shoulder from behind and whispers the word she was given. The participant who was tagged then walks around the group and chooses the next participant to be tagged. The first person has taken this participant's place. The second participant tags the third person by whispering their own word but also the word that was whispered to them. Carrying on like this the participants start gathering the words from other participants. A participant can be tagged more than once since they might have more than one word. The game stops when one participant can accurately recite the verse.

This is a game of listening, memory and reconstitution of word orders. Participants need to hear the word and then add their word and pass it on. The words might not make sense but each time they get passed on there is more possibility of making sense. This is an enactment of participants sharing words with each other to make sense. The true sense can be gained only if all participate. It could be possible for two participants to keep tagging each other which would result in no sense being made. Sometimes words are

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[765] 'Kho Kho, a Kabaddi-like Sport Linked with Indian Epic Mahabharata - Know All about It', Olympics.com, accessed 7 November 2022, https://olympics.com/en/news/kho-kho-history-rules-how-to-play.

misheard but if the words are passed on each time there is a chance that might be reheard properly.

There are no recordings for this piece as mentioned in the introduction. There was a technical issue with the recorder and therefore I was unable to capture the piece. The plan was to redo all the pieces including this one with a better recording setup. COVID-19 coupled with different personal circumstances of the participants meant that this was not possible. This is also a piece that requires everyone in a single space which meant that an online iteration wasn't possible either.

11.   Hagar

Score

Movement 1

Group 1	Group 2
Sarai said to Abram,	Sarai said to Abram,
"You see that the Lord	You see
You see	has prevented me
from bearing children;	You see
You see	go in to my slave-girl;
it may be that	You see
You see	I shall obtain
children by her."	You see
And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.	whatever Sarah says to you,
And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.	do as she tells you,
And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.	for it is through Isaac
And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.	that offspring shall be named for you
You see	Listened
Listened	You see
Hagar the Egyptian	But Sarah saw the son of
when she saw that she had conceived,	Hagar the Egyptian,
she looked with contempt on her mistress.	whom she had borne to Abraham,
she saw	playing with her son Isaac.

she looked	she looked with contempt.
Then Sarai said to Abram,	So she said to Abraham,
"May the wrong done to me be on you!	Cast out this slave woman with her son;
Your slave-girl is in your power;	The matter was very distressing to Abraham on
do to her as you please.	account of his son.
Then Sarai dealt harshly with her,	So Abraham rose early in the morning,
Then Sarai dealt harshly with her,	and took bread and a skin of water,
Then Sarai dealt harshly with her,	and gave it to Hagar,
Then Sarai dealt harshly with her,	putting it on her shoulder,
Then Sarai dealt harshly with her,	along with the child,
and she ran away from her.	and sent her away.
Hagar the Egyptian.	Hagar the Egyptian,
	Hagar the dragged.
Hagar the one who flees	
Hagar Egyptian slave-girl	Hagar slave-girl Egyptian
ran away	sent away

Movement 2

The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness	in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. the water in the skin was gone, she lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the boy;
Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?"	What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.
So she named the Lord who spoke to her, "You are El-roi"; for she said, "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?"	Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. El-Roi - the God who sees God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water.

Movement 3

Now you have conceived and shall bear a son; you shall call him Ishmael, for the Lord has given heed to your affliction. Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.	Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me. Sarah bore Abraham a son Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him.
Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.	As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.
Hagar the slave-girl Egyptian Ishmael El-roi God heard the voice of the boy God listens God sees	Hagar the Egyptian slave-girl God listens God sees God opened her eyes Ishmael El-roi

Hagar is a piece which dwells on the character of Hagar, the Egyptian enslaved woman who appears within the narratives of Abraham in the book of Genesis (chapters 16 and 21). The two short narratives are reconfigured to draw out the resonances from each other. The resonances I have drawn out are based around the acts of listening and looking and also the multiple journeys into the wilderness.

Group 1 reads the reconfigured narrative of chapter 16 and group 2 starts with chapter 16 but moves after the first section to chapter 21. The groups read each line simultaneously. As each group reads, they're able to hear snatches of words from the other group. On occasion they give space for the other to sound while keeping silence. There are two times when the groups say the same line or phrase together ('Hagar the Egyptian' and 'Hagar'). This is a sonic punctuation that attempts to centre Hagar. The piece draws out the different experiences of Hagar from oppression to wilderness to divine encounter.

The first movement is based on Hagar's interactions with Sarah and Abraham.[766] There are repetitions in for the phrases 'And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai' and 'Then Sarai dealt harshly with her.' This was a way of centring the experience of Hagar under the then Abram and Sarai. Movement one also highlights Hagar's marginalised state by being a foreign (Egyptian) enslaved woman. Possibly etymologies of Hagar are also voiced in the piece through the phrases 'Hagar the dragged' and 'Hagar the one who flees'. The movement starts with Abraham and Sarah setting the narrative which Hagar is coerced into. It ends with Hagar's relocation from the oppressive system constructed by Abraham and Sarah ('ran away' and 'sent away').

The second movement is set in the wilderness which is where Hagar finds herself in both texts. The first part of the movement is around the water or the lack of it. The second part is a divine encounter where God speaks to Hagar. Hagar's voice is uttered away from Abraham and Sarah in the wilderness. It is through divine encounter that she first speaks, and she takes agency over this encounter by naming God. The phrase 'she named the Lord who spoke to her' is also the first description of someone talking to her. Her naming of God as 'the One who sees' is emphasised by her ability to see God and see the water.

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[766] In chapter 16 Abraham and Sarah are Abram and Sarai. The account of their name changes is given in chapter 17.

The third movement starts with the promises and events of Hagar and Sarah giving birth. The middle of the movement deals with promises given by God regarding Ishmael Hagar's son. The final part of the movement sums up Hagar away from the systems of Abraham and Sarah where she can be with her son and God.

Recordings

Setlist - https://on.soundcloud.com/t4tBL

1. Hagar Discussion 1

    https://on.soundcloud.com/n6ZDK

2. Hagar

    https://on.soundcloud.com/ZiQtj

3. Hagar and Discussion on Polyphony

    https://on.soundcloud.com/Ci1kL

12.   FSA (Foreigner, Stranger and Alien)

Representative Score

1	**Genesis 17:12** Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money from any foreigner (nekar) who is not of your offspring.
2	**Genesis 17:27** and all the men of his house, slaves born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner (nekar), were circumcised with him.
3	**Genesis 31:15** Are we not regarded by him as foreigner (nekar)s? For he has sold us, and he has been using up the money given for us.
4	**Exodus 12:43** [Directions for the Passover] The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: This is the ordinance for the passover: no foreigner (nekar) shall eat of it,
5	**Leviticus 22:25** nor shall you accept any such animals from a foreigner (nekar) to offer as food to your God; since they are mutilated, with a blemish in them, they shall not be accepted in your behalf.
6	**Deuteronomy 14:21** You shall not eat anything that dies of itself; you may give it to aliens (ger) residing in your towns for them to eat, or you may sell it to a foreigner (nekar). For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.
7	**Deuteronomy 15:3** Of a foreigner (nekar) you may exact it, but you must remit your claim on whatever any member of your community owes you.
8	**Deuteronomy 17:15** you may indeed set over you a king whom the Lord your God will choose. One of your own community you may set as king over you; you are not permitted to put a foreigner (nekar) over you, who is not of your own community.

65	**Obadiah 1:12** But you should not have gloated over your brother on the day of his misfortune (nekar); you should not have rejoiced over the people of Judah on the day of their ruin; you should not have boasted on the day of distress.
66	**Zephaniah 1:8** And on the day of the Lord's sacrifice I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who dress themselves in foreign (nekar) attire.
	Zar
1	**Genesis 42:7** When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke harshly to them. "Where do you come from?" he said. They said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food."
2	**Deuteronomy 25:5** [Levirate Marriage] When brothers reside together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a stranger (zar). Her husband's brother shall go in to her, taking her in marriage, and performing the duty of a husband's brother to her,
3	**Deuteronomy 32:16** They made him jealous with strange (zar) gods, with abhorrent things they provoked him.
4	**1 Kings 3:18** Then on the third day after I gave birth, this woman also gave birth. We were together; there was no one (zar) else with us in the house, only the two of us were in the house.
5	**2 Kings 19:24** I dug wells and drank foreign (zar) waters, I dried up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt.'

	Ger
1	**Genesis 15:13** Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens (ger) in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years;
2	**Genesis 23:4** "I am a stranger (ger) and an alien residing among you; give me property among you for a burying place, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight."
3	**Exodus 2:22** She bore a son, and he named him Gershom; for he said, "I have been an alien (ger) residing in a foreign (nekar) land."
4	**Exodus 12:19** For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether an alien (ger) or a native of the land.
5	**Exodus 12:48** If an alien (ger) who resides with you wants to celebrate the passover to the Lord, all his males shall be circumcised; then he may draw near to celebrate it; he shall be regarded as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it;
6	**Exodus 12:49** there shall be one law for the native and for the alien (ger) who resides among you.

Fsa (or Foreigner, Stranger and Alien) is a piece that explores the idea of the foreigner in the bible. In the Old Testament, there are three Hebrew words that are related to this idea *Nekar*, *Zar* and *Ger*. These words are translated into terms like foreigner, stranger and/or alien depending on the translation. There are 95 verses where these words appear and I gathered all these verses, printed them out and then cut each verse out, grouping them with their respective word. Similarly in the New Testament there are different words referring to the concept of foreigner. Greek words like *xenos, parokeil*, *apellotriomenoi* and *barbaros* in their different forms are used to denote foreignness. In the piece as the participants read the relevant verse they have to say the corresponding 'foreign' word ie the original words in Hebrew or Greek with the English word. Sometimes more than one of these words appear in the verse and those were highlighted (the red text in the score above). For the Old Testament the verses were grouped according to each word and each group of verses are folded and put into separate bowls. The New Testament was all put into one bowl.

Bible Noise examines each word sonically by reading a set of verses from one group (eg. the *nekar* group). We do this by picking one of the folded pieces of paper from the same bowl together and reading out aloud together. We leave the open pieces of paper in front of us and then pick another one from the same bowl and again read our verses aloud together. We keep doing this until all the pieces of paper in the bowl are finished. Then we discuss what sense we gain of that word.

Then we start on the next group (eg. the *ger* group) and repeat the process. After that we repeat the process with the third group. Then we discuss what was the sense that came across from reading all these verses. The participants felt that *ger* was used in a positive sense; an outsider who should be cared for. While *zar* seemed to give a sense of the unknown. *Nekar* seemed to be a more antagonistic word.
We repeated the process for the New Testament (NT) groups of verses as well and then discussed it.

The reading aloud of these words in their context gives sense to the word. This piece is a way of contextualising meanings. By uttering the particular words in the original language rather than the English, more attention is drawn because it is unfamiliar. It is a word whose meaning is formed by uttering the whole verse which it is in. What arises from this

reading and discussion is that foreignness is multi-valent concept where on one level they are those who don't belong who need to be welcomed and cared for. On another level they are to be shunned and avoided.

Recordings

Setlist – https://on.soundcloud.com/zQ1Wj

1. Foreigner Stranger Alien Intro
   https://on.soundcloud.com/bFUyv
2. FSA Part 1 Ger
   https://on.soundcloud.com/woXWs
3. FSA Part 1 Ger discussion
   https://on.soundcloud.com/FVyK7
4. FSA Part 2 Nekar
   https://on.soundcloud.com/42nSj
5. FSA Part 2 Nekar discussion
   https://on.soundcloud.com/CjQGm
6. FSA Part 3 Zar
   https://on.soundcloud.com/ay8fA
7. FSA Part 3 Zar discussion
   https://on.soundcloud.com/WkxxK
8. FSA Part 4 Choose Any
   https://on.soundcloud.com/1WNwr
9. FSA Part 4 Discussion
   https://on.soundcloud.com/NphbU
10. FSA Part 5 Intro to NT
    https://on.soundcloud.com/dM4m5
11. FSA Part 5 NT
    https://on.soundcloud.com/idsC0
12. FSA Part 5 NT Discussion
    https://on.soundcloud.com/uTSuA
13. FSA Part 6 NT
    https://on.soundcloud.com/1z3jQ
14. FSA Part 6 General Discussion
    https://on.soundcloud.com/Nmz5u

13.   Polyphony

Polyphony is a more exploratory piece in Bible Noise. This piece is primarily reflecting on polyphony inquiring into what we hear when there are multiple spoken voices. The participants picked a random verse from the bible and we all spoke what we had chosen simultaneously. Then we repeated the same chosen verse again. After a few repetitions then we chose another verse and repeated the process. After a few iterations the participants were directed to choose verses from stories of women and foreigners (12 Polyphony Look for Story). The discussions were around what we could hear while we read. What came out through the discussion was that repeating did allow for the ability to hear other voices. A sense of familiarity to the text also aided in being able to hear others. The participants could also hear snatches of individual words as they read. For the third set of texts we read out each person's text individually before reading it simultaneously ('9 Polyphony 3 Reading Out Individual Texts). One participant wondered whether they had the capacity to talk and listen at the same time ('11 Polyphony 3 Second Discussion). Another point that arose was if the rhythms of speaking were the same that it was hard to distinguish between one's on voice and another. All these points show the complexity of polyphony and the complexity in attending to multiple other voices. It takes a particular kind of attention to hear others especially if we are speaking as well.

Recordings

Setlist - https://on.soundcloud.com/FQZEu
1. Intro to Polyphony
   https://on.soundcloud.com/wg7Mo
2. Polyphony 1
   https://on.soundcloud.com/gzCH1
3. Polyphony 1 Discussion
   https://on.soundcloud.com/LcwZR
4. Polyphony 1 2nd Trial
   https://on.soundcloud.com/JFyPm
5. Polyphony 1 2nd Discussion
   https://on.soundcloud.com/oQHNY
6. Polyphony 2

https://on.soundcloud.com/UqH3V

7. Polyphony 2 Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/65cmT

8. Polyphony 3

https://on.soundcloud.com/HThTt

9. Polyphony 3 Reading Out Individual Texts

https://on.soundcloud.com/GA6U3

10. Polyphony 3 2nd Trial

https://on.soundcloud.com/MWv59

11. Polyphony 3 2nd Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/gbptz

12. Polyphony Look for Story

https://on.soundcloud.com/GV77g

13. Polyphony Foreigner

https://on.soundcloud.com/buX9r

14. Polyphony General Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/mrZL9

Appendix – B: Transcripts

Unedited transcripts of discussions from the sessions

of Bible Noise

Introduction

Appendix-B shows the transcripts of the discussions and conversations we had during the sessions of the Bible Noise. These are time-stamped transcripts from the recording files in Appendix-A. It is important to note that these transcripts are unedited and unattributed. There are a set of reasons for this. The conversations are broadly referred to but do not appear as quotes in the main body of the thesis. Not using verbatim quotes from these conversations was a methodological choice as it would have taken the research in a different direction. Instead, I have taken a self-reflexive route from the experience of being in the group. Using direct material from the transcripts would have opened a whole set of research requirements which was beyond the scope of this project. Additionally, some of the participants have had changes in health and personal circumstances which makes the presentation of this material in the main body impractical. The discussions are also variable in length, as often participants had to leave early and so on.

The question can then be asked, why is this significant amount of material presented here? The transcripts are presented here to give the reader of the thesis an additional experience of the practice of Bible Noise. They also provide a sense of each discussion in the recorded clips.

Broken Rhythms Discussion

[00:00:00] So any first feelings, um, or comments? Uh, so to just clarify, so that was the N R S V our church Bible? Yes. Uh, this was the kj. The Cambridge 16th, 17th century one. This is Portuguese, um, translate from Catholic. This was Mak, which is my, um, dad's mother's tongue. My mother's tongue , and that was, uh, Hebrew trans trade, and they, all these three were trans trade.

[00:00:50] So, yeah.

[00:00:53] It's difficult to, um, not try and kind of inflict it in a way that makes sense. And just read, read through and just, yeah, and leave. Leave the sense to the words really. I suppose. It's quite, yeah. I'm sorry. The sentence that really stood out for me was the one that did make sense, like the little ones Cryer got heard.

[00:01:18] And all the others. I found it really hard to get the meaning from mm-hmm. . Yeah. I can't really, um, I could hit, I could sort of pitch into what to your phrase is, and most of everyone else's, but my own, I was really trying to make it, make sense of it. I couldn't, I couldn't say. It was really helpful when you said, just try and put the phrasing equally on each word, because it was really difficult to.

[00:01:46] Yeah, not try and make it make sense. I was slightly surprised that the Hebrew was like more messed up than the Milian was. Cause I thought that the would be more, um, weird compared to the Hebrew.

[00:02:05] Well, it could be also the, because obviously I don't read Hebrew. I, I'm take top of source, so I don't know what, whether they. Made it nicer. All but they've got each, each English word under the Hebrew word. So, um,

[00:02:26] what did you think? Did you think? I thought that um, it kind of doesn't make sense, but it does in the same time. Ah, okay. Then I think also that it is like

[00:02:57] you actually understand what it says in other languages instead of people saying like,

[00:03:08] You, you un actually understand what it says in the sentences. You don't just say, oh, if you have sentence in like another language and

then trite it back, it's gonna be different. It's gonna be mixed up and with other words. And I think that was quite nice, but out also. It's also how. how other people listen.

[00:03:35] Also, this shows a feel that in, in a kind of artificial way at least tells you there's a difference in how the things being, um, heard or experienced. Mm-hmm. , um, um, a couple of weeks ago, um, I was just, uh, looking at. , uh, from the origin of the word word in English. Mm-hmm. . And the word word comes from through French, from Latin.

[00:04:17] It's ver, b e r b e. Mm-hmm. . Yeah. Makes sense. So I, I thought, oh, so if the word meant verb mm-hmm. maybe. , maybe in the old days, that was what words were meant. They were doing things, yeah. Mm-hmm. and, and I came home and told, like Louisa and Louisa was reading a book, which actually the author said precisely the same thing.

[00:04:44] Mm-hmm. . So up to the 16th century, English was full of verbs. And then when, when science, um, came. Since came, when this whole scientific mindset started to go, it became more important to have nouns. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Um, I mention an important part of the story. I, that whole idea started with another book called Rehearsing Scripture, where she was saying, when you read scripture, focus on the verbs because everyone can understand the verbs.

[00:05:22] So when you have. You know, you don't, then you don't have to explain who the Samaritan was. You know, you folk with the verbs. Everyone has some access and it's just a way of thinking. And this also shows, I mean, the way the verbs come here are all different. And the way this whole structure is very different,

[00:05:43] right? So

[00:05:48] some of.

[00:05:54] Slightly. Um, there would, I would lose some of it, but then there would be little phrases that came out. I think there was one in the one about the boy, and there was something there that was particularly hit that came out. I found it difficult to, it felt, in a sense, it felt like the death experiences. , you, you lose some of this stuff and then only bits come out and actually the sense of the hole is lost.

[00:06:20] You just get that, those bits for winters, those little phrases that might come out, but then you can't because you are losing some of the thread in between. You can't string the whole sentence together. It's, it is interesting how you, you listen differently. When Keanu was reading, that sounds to me like Lan dialect.

[00:06:42] Oh, it really does sound. Lan Lanisha wrote it.

[00:06:52] Yeah. I was very confused about that. I didn't realize I was old English. I thought that was just an accent thing. Yeah, there's that. Um, there's a video on YouTube with, uh, Ben and David Crystal who read Shakespeare in the original. And it sounds best country. Best country. Yeah. Changes the whole thing. I won't be surprised.

[00:07:16] That was probably closer. That kind of language got another game. Now we're probably closer than, than this is to sort of, yeah. Okay. The thing is, if you, if you are listening to something, which is in a kind of phrase pattern that you are used to, yeah. Sorry. When you're not, you don't, you're listening and you don't know when the phrases.

[00:07:44] Are finishing. Do you? And that's, that's a confusing thing in, in something like, cuz I, I've got some things in here and I didn't quite know just, you know, whether, uh, a group of words actually all brought, joined together, belong together or so, but we have an instinctive so I'm just saying it was difficult for me to, um, continuously understand.

[00:08:08] Yeah. And what other people read on.

Contrapunt 1 Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/sHwcu

[00:00:00] So, um, so now obviously, you know which texts are being compared. Um, yeah. First thoughts and then I'd like,

[00:00:20] I was quite confusing. I found it. Uh, I could see what we were doing.

[00:00:32] It didn't seem to make sense. Somehow

[00:00:42] it felt quite rhythmical. Oh, yes.

[00:00:52] Um, I would like to, But I was really confused. Mm-hmm. , what, what is exactly happening? Mm-hmm. . So are they just like verses or, absolutely. Yeah. I, I'll, I'll explain. I will explain, but uh, I just wanna know what you're feeling. Feelings are. Well, it's kind of echoing, wasn't it? Cause some of the words are repeated across the, the two stories, almighty and Bitter and Seven Sons and the.

[00:01:21] Yeah, each, each group was saying, you know, sound a bit, yeah. I wasn't sure whether it would actually make sense if you'd read it like that

[00:01:39] just didn't happen. . Well, I, yeah, I think there would, um, mean, um, uh, some connection between the two groups. Mm-hmm. would, although. Yes, at, at moments it seemed like, uh, responding that one group was responding to the other, and there was like a kind of conversation starting, but then at other times it wasn't.

[00:02:05] But I think that with, with repetition, um, and with greater familiarity, I might make more connections between the two. You know, find more, you find more responses as it were.

[00:02:22] Made me think of the great place where you have one person reading the So. And I also confused, I remember to play one hand the other we were, that's.

[00:02:50] Yeah, I suppose, I don't know whether you read this quote at the top of this page. Um, this one. Um, so this person is kind of my key, uh, philosopher Chan. You know what secret is at stake when one tries to capture a surprise, the ity rather than the message? And that's kind of what I was saying, focusing on the kind of sounds and what comes out of the sounds.

[00:03:17] So I think that is saying if, if, if you are looking for the message, we are kind of almost predefining what we hearing some, not all the time, but there's a sense where we are predefining what we're hearing, but, so there's more sense of hearing first and then trying to make sense. Yeah. Um, so this, again, it is one of the chapters in this book where, um, she's basically.

[00:03:47] um, the Book of Ruth through Job. That's what she says. So, and, and it's quite interesting. What she's saying is that the Book of Ruth is not really about Ruth, but it's about Naomi because it's about, so that is what the texts, most of the texts here are, are. In fact, all the texts are about Naomi. .

So it's about now me losing everything because she loses her husband and sons and therefore she has nothing on the country.

[00:04:22] Yeah. So, so being a widow, she, she's, um, she's, uh, she has become a nothing, so she has lost, um, so that's why she says I went to be full, but the Lord has broken me back into, I can give you all the references. Um, and so, so she was reading and then, then obviously Joe is restored and Naomi is restored.

[00:04:49] Mm-hmm. , because now he's restored in the sense, because at the end they're, the women are saying, Naomi has a son, though, in the beginning she says, do you think I could give birth to give my daughter-in-law new husbands here? Yeah. And, and. So, uh, I then went on a search finding more kind of resonances and, and we, the, the verse in, um, okay.

[00:05:19] So, so in the beginning there's this kind of, the use of the word bitter is quite strong, both

[00:05:27] and, um, the hand of God. Uh, the hand of God in this context is a negative thing. It's. It's like a punishment on the second page, then obviously then, then weeping allowed. Okay. That possibly a cultural thing. But still it is a, the weeping allowed is at the loss.

[00:05:50] And then we have the garden edema or the edema. So I've chosen almost all the texts from the N rsv, but um, NSV doesn't need guardian edema, uses next of kids. I choose a bit of me going on, but, um, job obviously is talking of my redeem, which becomes a very famous song, isn't it? And now, and Handles Messiah.

[00:06:18] Um, and then I kind of there in Movement two and we open to the New Testament. So blessed be the Lord God of Israel is from Mary's song in Luke. . Mm-hmm. , um, bringing up the ideas of re redeeming and so on, and kind of took it, uh, to the point of after the crucifixion where they don't know where he is and the hope of want to redeem, so just, uh, divert it into the New Testament there, almost like a bridge in a song.

[00:06:59] And then Movement three kind of tried to bring it back together because NMI gets a son who is actually Ruth's son, but then NMI has got Ruth, who is said to be better than seven sons. That's what the women say. So the women say that Ruth is better than seven sons. So Joe gets seven sons and two doctors.

[00:07:21] But Ruth is better than seven sons. So you know that kind of, again, the resonance. I'm just going with the sound that really the seven sounds, seven is a completes complete illustration, but nows got better than complete restoration. And then I kind of finished with almost kind of, it is idea of revealing more than so finished with the beginning in the sense of, you know, more who impact or like kind of opening.

[00:07:49] Opening. Yeah. So I don't know whether. Changes the way you would hear it or not. This was, for some people, I suppose a surprise is a good thing, but for some people the explanation is the bad thing and we all respond differently to, to how things happen.

[00:08:15] And half an hour, eight

[00:08:20] good. Nice. And.

[00:08:25] Okay. Are there any other, any, any other thoughts? I know it's Sunday afternoon, we all bit sleep, so if there's anything, can this, that we're doing just now, could this, where would you use this? Would you use this sort of, um, process? Within a, a group or a congregation.

[00:09:00] Yeah. I suppose this one is a particular, there's a particular sl, there's a, there's an agenda to it in that it's, it is trying to read Naomi through job, so, yeah. Um, but um, so I would. I would use this process, I suppose, as a way of, of, uh, reading like, um, an obvious place might be, uh, for example, Christmas cuz we have some prophecies with, with, uh, with the gospel.

[00:09:33] Yes. Um, so for example, Mary's song is nearly a carbon coffee of, uh, Hannah. So it's, the language is very similar, so you could kind of just intersperse that, but then also you have the prophecies and the prophecies fulfilled. Matthew saying this was fulfilled non. So all those kind of possibilities there.

[00:09:58] So moving kind of forward and backward, um, between the two. Uh,

[00:10:11] When I saw the is yesterday and when I saw I, I just hadn't realized how many parallels it.

[00:10:29] Oh, okay. Just to see how these kind ties that thing. Yeah.

[00:10:43] It's incredible throughout the Bible how that ties. Yeah. Cause um, I think when you become a Christian, at first I can remember being really just focusing on the New Testament and the, and the, the Old Testament, I think, comes alive to you. The, the deeper you go into. Into faith. Yeah. They come really compliment each other.

[00:11:14] And as you read the New Testament, then you see links. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think And analogies, when you listen to music, you start hearing more and you start hearing links to other paces. Mm-hmm. , I mean, yes. Cause there's lots, lots of. they Same writers. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. So Hannah's Messiah and he basically completely ripped the whole thing off his old stuff.

[00:11:50] Mm-hmm. . And he, but not with that. They all, they all borrowed me to.

[00:11:59] Thank you very much, uh, for Thank you. Doing your Sunday afternoon. Thank. Uh, if you want to keep any of the stuff you are welcome to, but if you're not just leaving him to take him, how are you going to use this as part of your PhD? Um, so, uh, in the PhD I have actually based on this, on some sound artists to use words in text like this, um, in multiple layering ways.

[00:12:32] Sometimes as a whole, when they use voice, they seem to be quite interested in the voice itself. Uh, that many words. But since we are dealing with the raw material of this work is words itself. So we have words. Um, so it's about saying, so your response is kind of the com part of it saying, does this work?

[00:12:59] if it has worked, how does it work? If it hasn't worked, how does it work? So, mm-hmm. . Yeah.

FSA part 1 Ger Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/FVyK7

[00:00:00] First, um, did you hear something that the other group read that

[00:00:09] stuck out? I think the word girl stands out a lot. He kind of spoke you, you hear that quite, um, strongly.

[00:00:23] Yeah. And the connection of the three words. Um, that one and orphan a. I heard often the Gary's orphans and widows together. That's what I, um, noticed. I heard Richard saying a couple of times, resident Delia. Yes.

[00:00:44] I think I, I was kind of quite caught up in the mechanics of what I was supposed to be doing, and I wasn't really halfway through. I thought, oh, I should listen to what the others are saying. But I was found, I was just sort of concentrating on what. Doing and also rereading what I just read cuz a lot of them, they didn't, sentences didn't finish.

[00:01:04] So I was still trying to process what, what was that about? Because it was sort of half bit of information and then, but then when I managed to sort of realize that I wasn't listening to the other group and like the word that came out was girl, because it was hard. It's hard to listen to three people speaking at the same time, but you do notice the word that you don't know.

[00:01:26] So, That did stand out. Mm-hmm. I know you were needy once. Um, so just quickly, what, what does Ger come across as, or do you understand? An alien? Yeah, but yeah, I mean, when you read it, it's salium, but then.

[00:01:56] What, I guess what is the, what is the girl meant to be? I mean, or how are you supposed to be behave? Or, or how is, how the, because we are all in the Old Testament. It's all Old Testaments to make sure I've mentioned before. And so how is it, how is God looking at the girl and how is Israel meant to be with the girl or from, is there anything like that that comes.

[00:02:24] I just, it felt diff, they felt different. They were a different, a different deal. And they didn't, I mean, I dunno if I'm wrong, but it just felt like they weren't as important. Mm-hmm.

[00:02:43] um, uh, yes. Well, I, the, the.

[00:02:51] in, in need of protection. Mm-hmm. , um, yeah, been in the same way as orphans and Woodhouse. Mm-hmm. . Um, and yeah, so kind of overlooked maybe, or at risk, but, so this. I'm just kept saying, you must not overlook and you must provide for this April. Um,

[00:03:27] they're apart from the whole, they're not part of whole, they are apart from them, and they're somehow easily identifiable. They can't mix. They can't be confused for everybody else. They're definitely. They stand

out and so you can refer to them when people know who you're talking about. And from something that I read, um, there were references to them having come from Ifferent places, from Israel, from Judah.

[00:04:00] Is that right? I think one of the pieces or from Judah? Yeah. So once you resident Alien From from from Judah. Yeah.

[00:04:14] Yeah, so two different places of origin are referred to.

[00:04:23] Okay

FSA part 2 Nekar Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/CjQGm

[00:00:00] Okay, so same as last now, what does Necar convey to you? I mean, how,

[00:00:13] how do we,

[00:00:19] the word that kept coming up was separate. I don't know if it's, if that's makes anything. Hello?

[00:00:31] I, I believe that I heard it used in connection with Vine. I think it was used a, a neck hard of vine, or it might have been, but it, I, so, which would, so if it's used as a, as a description of a, you know, it's a person, but a. Well that, that seems to me that it's not cultivated or it's not entirely, um, indigenous to Israel or they, you know, if I'm right about that was I am right about, yes, I find the choice and the stop.

[00:01:17] Then did you turn degenerate and become a wild Yes, yes. So, yes. So not from Jewish stock? Yes. Yes. Huh. Okay.

[00:01:38] Is that a difference between girl and is it, is it more of a kind of derogatory term in that color? Like not, yeah. I felt like it was more insulting someone and nigger than a girl. There seem to be more like you need to pity on the poor, the poor girl, the poor and the poor girl. But Nier, I mean Nier and Necca.

[00:02:11] Is there some sort of, there's some, I don't know if that's, , you know, it feels like there's something not nice, isn't it? Like that they must separate from them that they're not, they're not good in some way. It's

horrible that, um, that same one that you are talking about also struck me because that thing of pure stock sounds very Nazi.

[00:02:38] Like when you were trying to keep pure bloodline, not.

[00:02:46] But then the, the another verse that struck, stuck out to me was one from Maiah where God's actions were referred to. Um, his work is referred to as Necca, and his deeds are strange, which is another word in brackets. Yes. Well, foreigners seem to be something that is. A contaminant and needs to be cleansed, but also being applied to what God is doing, which was, seems very strange.

[00:03:24] Something is one I can find. It was something, yeah. Yeah. This sporting, and then in brackets , as if it could be, it wasn't, you know, it could be an adjective for, so, It's terrible to you, I dunno. Yeah. And I had one that was in Adultress. Mm-hmm. as well.

FSA part 3 Zar Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/WkxxK

[00:00:00] So,

[00:00:07] and also again, in comparison also , and

[00:00:17] they sound to me like, like a bogey man. Like something happened that is being used as a kind of threat. They will come and um, Is it the, if it were, there's this thing in Jose here about Standing Grain has no heads that she'll yield no meal. If it were to yield foreigners with Devar as if they were compromise and take what grows and they're not present with us, they are a threat from outside.

[00:00:55] What did you hear? Also, you hear you can sit that loud. How is it ominous? Can ominous, yeah. It is good. They seem very powerful, but as you say, they don't seem to be actually here. They, it's the thought of them, this other power. thing, presence that you had to guard against perhaps. But also I've got one that's, uh, describes loose women as our Yeah, the scare, the scary, powerful woman.

[00:01:36] The other, does that make sense? If the speakers are, and the writers are men and they are the subject and object of the text, The other who is out there could be the woman because she's not part of us. No. Mm-

hmm. , I think different and that it's just, um, that people think that's all the bad things that people think are, just use those like a fear and then the.

[00:02:19] Thing that people don't like.

[00:02:28] Also, I think they've got some kind of power on people. Um, cuz I've got one that says, um, that, um, it's hopeless where I've loved strange strangers Czar, and after them I will go. So they, they want to follow the, the, they've got some. And they want to go after them. Yeah. Women Presum, you've got that kind of new as well.

[00:02:56] Yeah.

FSA part 4 Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/NphbU

[00:00:00] Can I just read you on from Isaiah? But um, this is the Lord. For the Lord rise up as on Mount Perine. He will rage us in the value of to do his deed. Strange sar is his deed, and to work his work alien. Ow is his work. But I think that's, it's kind of scary. It's supposed to be scary, isn't it? You better, it's, you know, if you don't want.

[00:00:28] this is, you know, describing the work or the rage, the l the rage of the Lord. And I dunno what this is, which, this Isiah 28. Mm-hmm. . So this is in response to, yeah. Or maybe, you know, if you don't, if it's the first part of Isaiah, then it has to do with possibly the foreign invasion That Strange is the Lord.

[00:00:48] The Lord. Oh, I see. Yes. He's almost the foreigners are coming cause the Lord commanded them to come. Yes. But uh, you read one that's, I read the. , was it the same one? Yeah, but I hadn't taken it negatively. I don't know why. I just, I, I saw that God's work was analogous to that, which I hadn't understood. See, you don't have a context in the context.

[00:01:08] It depends. Yeah. If it's a, if it's like a doom context, then yeah. But if it's a positive one, like if it is a latter , you'd say that it's strange cause God is doing this new thing. Mm-hmm. Yes. That's Joy's thinking. Yeah. Maybe I You've never seen anything like this. Yeah. , my guess is being the first bit of eyes, it's gonna be more of a dual scenario than a positive thing.

[00:01:34] Mm-hmm. , um, I'm, I'd meant to say these ones where the, it's, it's being foreign as an experience that you can have, even if you're not

foreign. Um, it made me think of a book I read recently on, um, schizophrenia and, um, statistics. Schizophrenic, um, illness is higher in immigrant communities and that is regardless of where you are.

[00:02:02] So the immigrant communities themselves would be different because of the different country they're in. So here it would probably be, um, um, black communities, Asian communities, and perhaps in European. But in Australia, one of these immigrant communities is the British. And, uh, and like a European community, they have higher incidences of schizophrenia than native, than, you know, local populations.

[00:02:27] So there is a thing of, you know, being, being alien does make you hopeless. And, um, what was the other one, Phil Cutoff. Anyway, that was my addendum.

FSA part 5 NT Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/uTSuA

[00:00:00] Feels like it's someone that doesn't know, who isn't in, who doesn't know what's going on or who hasn't. Is there any part all of them or just any particular one or all the words? You haven't gone through that anything. Just a feeling really. Um, maybe it's just 1 0 2.

[00:00:25] Maybe it was a Hello Trio mink.

[00:00:33] Am I allowed to do this? Hi, I just wondered cause I've got both here with Xenos. Yeah. Xenophobia and I just, and it's translated to Stranger. Yeah. Whereas xenophobia you think of as fear of foreigners basically. Yeah. And so I just wondered what word he used in here for that transla. Yeah. Well, it's also what I suppose what it was then as well.

[00:01:04] I, I was listening out for, um, Jesus words of Jesus, and I think I heard, um, yes, I heard that you reading something for Jesus or some teaching of Jesus, which features Xenos and, but that was about inclusion. That, that was kind of re reinforcement. Inclusion I think. But I can't remember exactly what this one, and I think I read the bit that came before the bit one of you had written.

[00:01:35] I've got, then they were also, or actually then also they also will answer, Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a strangers than or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you the other side? And when was it that we saw you as strangers in us and welcome.

[00:01:57] Yeah. They did not welcome me. So this is And Jesus as the Xenos, isn't it? Jesus is the foreigner.

[00:02:06] This is when he's saying about, yeah. Each time you welcomed. Yeah. Then he welcomed. And Jesus is in Is, is is in. You know, it's something we've seen Jesus in the person in front of you and the person in front of you is a foreigner. Jesus is in that person. Yes.

[00:02:27] I heard, um, Richard, you're saying Barbs, which is that word where we get poor barbarians was a tribe, weren't they? Actually, but now we use that word to mean some kind of hoodlum, people who are ignorant and um, like in the similar way of steins that they are or banded. Yeah. Or they were all tribes. We take a word that just is a, is a, actually just a name for a of people, but then it just becomes a derogatory term.

[00:02:59] Yeah. Yeah. The um, the Zen Xenos feels like the New Testament equivalent to the gu be respected,

[00:03:16] you know, looked after all. Mm. Yeah, because I, my Ephesians one, you're no longer strangers, is then also aliens paray, but your citizens in Saint and also members of the household of God sounds like the, those Old Testament base is where the girl is, is a part of the tribe and also can have been the same inheritance in the tribe and that they're all together.

[00:03:41] It feels like a.

[00:03:46] I didn't quite get what the appellant men was really?

[00:03:57] Which person that, so Ephesians, it says they're darkened in their understanding Alienated app. Hello from for the life of God because of that ignorance and heartness of heart.

[00:04:15] What does that word?

[00:04:20] Some alienation? It is. So it's some form of separation. Okay. But it doesn't refer to a, it doesn't necessarily refer to a foreign as such, but, but the idea is of foreignness and of strangeness. Strangeness. Yeah. Alienation even That's what it alienation. . Yeah. Um, not, not so, so this is kind of like a metaphorical idea that Yeah.

[00:04:53] Yeah. So it's quite different in New Testament. There's a less, seem less of a idea. Foreigner, I'm assuming being part of the empire. It's a

bit different how you talk about it. It's already mixed up, isn't they? Yeah. Yeah. So you talk about it in different kinds of ways. And then they had a. Um, people would come from outside Hellistic, Jews and that who are perhaps Greek speaking and already kind of foreign, but Jews also coming to celebrate festivals and things at the temple, so they'd have that influx from time to time of people who are speaking different s literacy in the, uh, in the acts.

[00:05:36] At that point there, the Jerusalem is full of foreigners each hearing the disciples. People speaking in their own language, but what, what word would've been used? For example, in, I think it's, it's in one of the Paul letters talking about entertaining strangers. And you may be entertaining angels. Isn't that, isn't that in Hebrew?

[00:06:00] Yes. Hebrews. Yeah. And I wonder what your word is used for when hospitality is being shown to somebody who's visiting? I think have that of a guest, as it were. Somebody who's, oh, sorry. Oh, there's, there's this one. Did you, this is not the angels one, but extend hospitality to strangers, ISOs, mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm.

[00:06:25] but Hebrew.

FSA part 6 General Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/Nmz5u

[00:00:00] How many of you got the kind you think just

[00:00:11] Yes. I've got Ephesians. Yeah. Ephesians. Yeah. Um, no, that's not, that's not, is that the same though? It's not the same. I've got para something para.

[00:00:28] they're similar. There seems to be, again, aur, wander, rock. It seems to be,

[00:00:43] well these are all Greek words, aren't they? They're not. They're local words. Yes. Not, they don't convey, you know, they're not the language that's been derived by that nation, the Jewish nation's words. , well, the majority of the Jews who have spoken Greek, because not all of them are living in, in Israel.

[00:01:06] Yeah. So, so the Greek, the Old Testament has already been translated for 300, 4, 300 years or so by then, . Yeah. So by the time Jesus,

the, the Old Testament, their Bible was primarily writing. , but I mean not, yeah, for Jesus one. Yeah. It's been translated from, well, it's written by Greek speakers. Greek speakers.

[00:01:30] But the Greek is actually quite poor. Yes. It's not very good. Not Greek. So you're saying in the communities they would've spoken Greek Well, depends on where you were. Yeah. If you're in Israel, obviously not. You would still speaking, you were speaking Arabic, you would've been speaking. You probably would've spoken both cause Greek would've been the business language.

[00:01:50] Yes, that's true. Yep. So a lot of people would've known it in some form.

[00:01:59] We don't have that many words, direct quote from Jesus. I think the very few are that

[00:02:10] in the the top of the . Those are the only kind when he's the one here? Yes. Yes. The girls the big size. His size. His size and And deaf man or the man. And is that, that is,

[00:02:35] those are the only, only direct words that we have. And the rest of it is written from all tradition, and it would've been probably passed down. To the writers. Cause we don't know who the writers actually are. The gospels and the gap between them and Jesus is, well, they're written within living memory.

[00:02:53] They're written within. So we're talking decades. We're not talking hundreds of years. Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm.

[00:03:04] There's something one step removed, isn't there? Yeah. And especially for us, the language, if you're think thinking about, you know, Yeah, it's interesting that we have these few words in Jesus folk and that they, they weren't translated. They weren't translated and they were considered important enough to, to remain in their original, yeah.

[00:03:27] Language.

[00:03:33] There must have been something about the way he said them that made them particularly, I mean, you can imagine the one on the cross, those would. . Very impactful. Yeah. Mm-hmm. . And I wonder why the other

ones, there must have been some resonance about them that made them stick in the head. Mm-hmm.

[00:03:54] I think doing this, they're a very strong, um, cue. A visual cue. I mean, um, so reading these things, so listening is, I have to absorb so much from what I've heard as from what I've read, basically. Hmm. And I suppose, but I suppose that I pick up the, I'm hearing words that I've also been reading, so maybe that reinforces, you know, um, yeah.

[00:04:22] And also, yeah, the listening. I, I knew that I wasn't settling down to listen for a while because I was about to read again. And then what went on, you know,

[00:04:36] It's helpful. I mean, because I never know how the pieces are going to work as such. Mm-hmm. It's some things kind of show up, I suppose. Mm-hmm. There were occasional echoes at some point. You, these are strangers together. Yeah. And like we said it together and then another one where you said it and then like a millisecond later.

[00:04:56] Then Fiona said the same thing, so it sort of almost traveled between. and it, I, I was trying to listen to three simultaneously or try and, or in order or something, but then they're not, you know? Yeah. I suppose it's, yes, it's probably easy to listen to one person. Yeah. Everything they're saying, but then you, I mean, that itself would be a helpful thing.

[00:05:18] Can you hear one voice within the others? Mm-hmm. That also is good, but that's why I mainly listen to Richard. Yeah. But then there's a question as to why did. Um, partly because he's sitting next door, you do tend to hone into, um, somebody, and at first it was the person who was speaking the loudest. Mm-hmm.

[00:05:41] then I, then I was trying very, very hard to listen to somebody who, who was speaking less loud. Yeah. Awareness. Yeah. Which is kind of my point. I think I. Say to try and listen to those you haven't listened to before. Yes, yes.

[00:06:03] Yeah. So just something that, that thing of the girl, the or the widow that keeps, that comes up a lot. Especially in the In the, in Levi or you trust, yeah. Yes. And counseling. Those are the. That's kind of the center of the Torah. The Torah for, it's the real Torah for, mm-hmm. So there's something important.

[00:06:29] And then you have this other kind of thing of the foreigner, the marrying the foreigner and so on. A lot of that coming in Ham and Ezra. Cause that's the way they are interpreting why things central wrong. And when we, in Bible college, we, one of our teachers told us that Roots, the Book of Roots is written.

[00:06:50] kind of against Amaya Esra. Mm-hmm. to say, actually, you know, your whole king line comes from mixed. Mm-hmm. And so roots within a particular way to kind of, uh, allow, um, or to not go too far on that. Mm-hmm. , it's not, it's a picture. Just like I was talking about with Frederick Douglass's, it's um, I'm reading a book about failure.

[00:07:24] It is very good. But, um, she's talking about Frederick Douglass, who was a, who was born as a slave in the US and, and grew up and become an abolitionist. And he gave a lecture where he talked about the power of art, whether poetry or paintings, to give people kind of picture. Whether it's a picture they're actually looking at, or a word picture that appears in their head and how powerful those are to change people's minds about things much more than laws or campaigning.

[00:07:58] Um, and, and the Book of Ruth is, is this is a picture of in terms another alternative Yeah. Yes. About god's justice, about love between people of different cultures and countries. and it, and it's, it's absorbable that way, isn't it? Because you, you read the book and you identify with these women, and in the way that you can do that, it makes, that's where literature has its power, isn't it?

[00:08:31] Because you, you, you enter into that experience and then you don't, you can't, it's not an argument. And when you feel almost, you're experiencing it. MRI scans have shown that when somebody's reading about an experience that that of a character in a book, the same areas in the brain, light up as if you were actually doing that thing yourself.

[00:08:54] In real life, there isn't a difference. So if you are reading a character who's different to you and you enter into that experience, it's very powerful because it, it unites you at a neuron level in your brain. . That's why diversity of experiences in the stories that we read or see is so important. Mm-hmm.

[00:09:16] Hmm.

[00:09:25] So some of this, what I, I mean, I actually went through, so I've taken out every single mention of foreigner's Strange and in to kind of go. Just to get a feel of what it is and if you just looking at play numbers, G is the largest number of, but meanings change as we saw in some books, can have a slightly different feeling and so, but G seems to be the largest one, but I don't know.

[00:09:56] Then support some of the things Necar and Za come together. Mm-hmm. . Yes. So there is that kind of double, there's a double. difference. Mm-hmm. exception. Um, and then in a New Testament, it, it already kind of feels already quite mixed up and so it's not really clear. Um, but again, it's about the stories we kind of take on.

[00:10:29] Cause AMI is a story that's taught a lot, um, in my experience. The building of the, yeah, the building and the good leadership and all that kind of thing. So if you've got a lot of then you'll be, you know, prone to see foreigners in a particular way. I think, I mean, I'm just saying, I think reflecting on my experience of learning NAMA has been mostly from a kind of American, you know, kind of almost Baptist kind of point of view, and.

[00:11:05] You can almost see that a particular focus on particular texts almost lead you in particular ways. Mm-hmm.

[00:11:29] Yeah. The, the, the idea of the foreigner and the. Israel having the same law is, is actually quite radical. I don't know whether you know better about the history of law. No, I don't. I'm sorry. Yeah. A condo I read that's fairly unique because otherwise most other places the foreign has to completely join in.

[00:11:55] Yes. Become the host. . Yeah. So leave everything behind, assimilate completely. A completely or then, or you get treated completely differently. That's what I've understood so far. Um, I don't know. And what's that? 3000 bc I don't know what, I don't the number, what provision is there, but this kind of provision for the, the girls is.

[00:12:29] Um, odd and I think I, it came to me, um, cause I followed this rabbi called Berg. She's quite, she's uh, one of these Twitter rabbis and she's a real rabbi, but she a lot of so, and the immigrant stuff and a lot of immigrant stuff happening in the us She, she's constantly bringing out, looking after the, the.

[00:12:54] Mm. And then she's the one who, who point, that's how I figured out this girl. But often video, she is talking about that kind of the intersections of, um, what's it, um, oppression. Is it, is that right? Or underprivileged? Mm-hmm. , the intersections of un

[00:13:17] This may be a different point. Bishop James Jones at St. Martins. Was interpreting the, um, cleansing of the temple by Jesus in a more interesting way than simply anti commercialization. Mm-hmm. Of that part of the temple. Wasn't that about inclu inclusiveness and not, and discrimination, inclusion and not discrimination, wasn't it the point he was making?

[00:13:41] Yeah. Jesus was, did you, did you hear this one? Yes. Yeah. Was that. He said, that's what he said, isn't it? He's efficient. . Now I wasn't there, I just listen to it later. Oh good. Quite interesting. But I, I, maybe a bit, I thinks saying point inclusive the other Yes. That they weren't allowed, they weren't being allowed to use them cause they taken over for commercial and so it was the house of

[00:14:13] It's not just the Jewish nation. That's what you said. That's what I picked earlier. Yes. I remember when, um, when we were in India, um, I'm forget now how we, we had asked for a, we were at a Methodist church, so was working there, and we had asked the pastor about my being a member as well, but then he wanted to have copies of my passport and visa and permits and whatnot.

[00:14:39] Mm-hmm. and, um, I refused, I wouldn't, I wouldn. I wanted to check up that I was all legal and whatnot. Actually, actually, the whole process is such a mess that it wouldn't have looked like I was legal, even though I was actually legal because of the way that the Foreigners registration office worked, right?

[00:15:00] So I was constantly, constantly having stamps in my passport and having applications that were in process, and by the time those were processed, I have to apply again. Extensions, which meant that by the time I actually got to a place where it looked on paperwork like I was legal, I was back again in application and process.

[00:15:20] Like UK ? No. Yeah, just, well, I just thought you said powerless, aren't you in these, you are powerless. But I mean, you, I, I, I felt I am a member of the body of Christ. And I don't need to show you a piece of paper

about my nationality for that to be true. Mm-hmm. . And so, so I never became a natural member of that church.

[00:15:50] We, the Brethren Church, she had to whisper a letter. If you wanted to go to visit really a brethren church and settle from town, you had to bring a letter of introduction that you really were Papa B. And they let you in? Yeah. Baptists here. Some do that. Really? Yeah. Really. And so we had, we moved from Birmingham and we took a letter from our Baptist minister when we went to painting.

[00:16:18] And then this is just on holiday. Oh, this is, this is literally just, if you were on holiday seventies.

Hagar and Discussion on Polyphony

https://on.soundcloud.com/CiɪkL

[00:00:00] This is the word of the scenario. . This is the word of the Lord. It's just, that's it. You, you've maned this taxi bible, some creatures. Then Bible re I think it's, uh, it's a fairly accepted harmony. Dick

[00:00:20] have you heard, got to transcribe everything. We're recording. Um, well, I'm trying to use certain softwares to help me along the way. . Okay. So always it is. . Big job. Yeah. Any thoughts on how it worked? Did, did explain the story make a different or did the second doing a second time make a different? I realize the way you've cut the sentences, the way you cut most of the sentences, you cut sentence after the end instead of before.

[00:00:52] Before that was a mistake. ? Well, yeah, because, well, we were saying it and I would say, and but then Terry would say it on the next line. Cuz that makes more sense. That makes more sense. Yeah. That, that is an add on my part. I was thinking more in the meaning sense, but actually from a sound sense, which I should have been thinking

[00:01:09] Mm-hmm. , um, the, the conversational sense as to, and, and having said that, if you deliberately wanted us to read this as. I, I would be making a mistake by not reading it. Yes. Yeah. As it is. Yeah. But I'm hearing it, I realize that actually to make the kind of the sonic, the sound sense of it, it's probably.

[00:01:38] Yeah. You have also entered this on a preposition.

[00:01:44] Don't, don't understand how it was to come , but I, I did seriously wonder, this is earlier that I was, the last bit, which was only one word on each side. I was going down with my finger and it, it actually kind of, I think, helped me in some way to achieve kind of, you know, some to kind of, you know, keep together the other group.

[00:02:04] Yeah. So I dunno. Kind of doing, you know, using your body in some way in addition to your voice Yes. Might help this. Yeah. Yeah. I think that you, I give him half. You were, you were. Well, I was, I was just going to say, but I was dealing the same thing that throughout. Yeah. Um, because I figured it might help you keep track of where we are.

[00:02:27] When it comes to the Sarah, Sarah, they'll with. But it didn't , like I found myself getting more confused than before, which I found interesting. Right.

[00:02:45] Anything came out? Anything about Hagar? You didn't, you know anything about the story? Well, yes. Okay. I, yeah. Um,

[00:03:03] Yeah. I don't really what to say. What did you feel the second time? It's more comfortable. Yes. Yeah. It was easier, I think. Yeah.

[00:03:19] But engaging with the content of the story is, would be too much. Would be, would be get in the way of doing this. Because I started, you know, doing that. I thought I can't, you know, so I suppose one of my questions is, what would happen when you do it, like the sixth or the seventh time? Would you be engaging with the content?

[00:03:37] Yeah. It might be easier. Do that. Yes. I think it, you have that point because you'd have, you know, you'd have to concentrate on what you were doing nights and so you'd, you he would listen more. He'd listen more, yeah. Because patterns would emerge kind of rhythms and patterns and things would emerge and we might kind of, you know, get fall into.

[00:03:56] and understanding between the groups of S Yeah, because that's the other complication is that you have to coordinate with your own group member. Mm-hmm. as well as, yeah. Yeah. Then two, so it's kind of a double, so I think, I think it's astonishing cuz it's, there's a lot of processes going on there. Yeah.

Hagar Discussion

[00:00:00] Okay, we go home now. , I completely missed one. The top line. I didn't see that one, could you? So I was onto the next sentence. Yeah. It's also paying attention, I think. Yeah. Okay. First, first thoughts. Any thoughts of, not, of the sounds of performing or even the text, um, when you had, when group. Had their repeated lines, especially when Sarah dealt harshly with her.

[00:00:30] I found it very difficult to concentrate on which line I was on because I wasn't sure that's where they were. Yeah. So how many times do we sit with five times? Actually, five. It didn't seem to do that so much on the first page where Abraham listened to the voice of Sarah. That second time without Sarah giving harshly was very,

[00:00:52] Um, sorry. Well, very disorientated. Yeah,

[00:01:02] it was more CARTO as well throughout, I thought. Yeah. Um, and I know when we get right down to the final part of movement three, it's delivery, so, you know, , even other lines before then. , I thought we're quite, you know, stunted, you know, Stu staccato because we were deliberately waiting for the group to catch up with us or we with them.

[00:01:31] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Community's difficult business, isn't it?

[00:01:39] Wait, waiting for the people. Um, anything about Hagar Surf that comes out through this?

[00:01:51] Objection. No, that's what it says. The text.

[00:01:59] Um, yes. It seems like this is much more a dialogue than the previous one was, although there's quite a lot of question and answer, isn't there? It's quoted speech.

[00:02:16] right? Yeah. So the what is being addressed by Yeah. By Hagar? Mm-hmm. and I. That's the angel it seems. Yeah. So I was slightly, that was another thing to compute who was speaking. Actually, it's only Hagar, isn't it? Hagar address is God, yes. Sarah speaks to, oh, Sarah. Yeah. Sarah speaks to Abraham and then Abraham.

[00:02:40] Yeah. Does Abraham? No, I didn't. Abraham doesn't seem much in this past. I don't think that actually doesn't match. Yeah. Uh, typical bloke stays quite while women fight. One, one thing I noticed was, um, the, in Greg, um, Hagar ran away and. Salmon take our cent away. So salmon. Yeah. Is that, are those differences, do those differences come from the biblical text itself?

[00:03:18] Mm-hmm. , I've never noticed that. Well, because there are two stories, right? Yeah. So, but I've, I've never noticed it in one, you know, she was kind of selling the over She ran, yeah. It was in rsv. I'm assuming it's closer and something. And also the other one, Hagar, the Dragged and Hagar. That was, yeah. Yeah. I think I connected those, I connected those meanings.

[00:03:43] That's why they're saying, yeah. But an exercise like this makes it obvious where there are differences in the text because you, you kind of, because you, well, I mean you see in black and whites and green and . Um, yeah. You know, the difference is, and interestingly I'm not, not being over, but, but actually.

[00:04:04] Quoted speech blends with, with narrative. There are times when, um, so it starts with parenthesis or whatever that the right word is, you know, um, but then blends with narrative speech. Um, because actually the beginning, beginning of the last page that's quoted and in group one's column that is actually a quoted speech isn't.

[00:04:31] Yes. That's, and then it says the Lord is given to your affliction, and then Hagar bought Abraham's son. Yes. Yes. So it goes, gives way to, to narrative, doesn't it? Mm-hmm. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Yeah. I think, um, the reason why, I mean, Hagar's fascinating Ka because obviously she's a foreigner. Yeah. But then also much maligned and.

[00:04:56] in, uh, you know, in, what's the word since then? Because of the kind of whole Arab, kind of, the way, way Muslims and Arab are conceived of. Soma is the father. All, all these Arabs, you know, so there's that does that as well. Also, she's an Egyptian, so she's definitely, in a sense, a foreigner and a slave girl.

[00:05:21] So that fragility. , that's what interests me. But also she does something which I'm not showing anyone those does, but she names God. So that's in, um, movement too. She names God as El and most other places, either God is asked what his name is or God names him. . So in this case, uh,

he names and so that's why I was playing with the idea of being, of seeing and what that does.

[00:05:57] Cause at the end, God opens her eyes. Um, and at the same time, Ishmael means God listens. Yeah. Mm-hmm. , how about, but it can mean God gives attention to, or God gives heat to, but the idea is that someone kind of bending down to listen. Though it's not a specific sound word, but it's, that's the idea. So she calls God, you're the one who sees mm-hmm.

[00:06:25] And then he, he says, you'll have a son who means God listens. So it's kind of this, there's this play between seeing and sound. So, um, the other thing that came to me was, um, she lifted up her voice and wept. , and then it says, God heard the voice of the boy. Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. . That is another slight auditor there.

[00:06:53] I'm not sure what that means. You know, she's the one who weeps out aloud, but God hear the voice of the boy. And that's in, I've not put that in there, but he says, I have heard the voice of the boy. You know, what's the matter? Um, yes,

[00:07:13] All right. Um, shall I try it again? Mm-hmm. , let's solve those.

Mrrey Goorund Discussion

[00:00:00] Okay. Sorry, the last one, numbering was wrong. So let's, let's, let's stop there because it's nothing. Time, time is coming. There's exhausting . But again, uh, listen. Um, then, um, so we, we broke it down even more, didn't we? Yeah. Any, any feelings about. Easy for us. Really. Cause you could read what it was without the, without any s, you could still work.

[00:00:28] Really. D if you show, this is what they've got, letter we got, they've got,

[00:00:46] oh, that was. So it just makes me feel like endless game. And the other game, some people are more able to play than others. It seems really hard. Yeah. Yeah. What, what? Cause that's interesting. What is difficult? So what makes it hard for, for the people? I mean, is it. Well, we already knew what it was and they had no idea.

[00:01:13] Yeah. And the other one, some of us knew the verse, not everybody knew the verse, and some of us knew the verse better than others.

So the more you know, the easier it is to play. Yeah. But I suppose because, because the point is that the whole point of the game is for everyone then to. Um, say it out. Yeah.

[00:01:36] And not that one is winning and one is not. Yeah. It becomes more important than for those who know to, to share, I think in some way with that. Yeah. That's point If you can't talk to each other. Yeah. Yeah. Because, and that's the other thing that, I mean, we talked about this, how we don't really know in some sense what the other is going through and.

[00:02:03] um, how we can imagine it, but we might not really know, uh, which is kind of why we did the language. Um, what do you, why do you think the consonants are easier to, because they, well, why, why do you think it's easier for you? Um, why do you think that's easier? Because they're, oh. Cause just looking at it almost immediately, I could figure.

[00:02:27] Was, you know what it said. And uh, it's very easy to figure it out because it's very familiar. Yeah. But you can read whereas read without consonants. Uh, without vows, can't you? You can read. Oh yes, you can do, yes. So actually we more or less had without. Constant without constant and um, take cause there's only a small amount of vows and there's loads of constant more to think about.

[00:02:54] We have more you can try. The other thing is you gave us sounds for the vows and they got letters. . Even though the letters are the sound, it's just harder. If you've got u r e good instead a o o. This, this again, is, is like the deaf experie. Cause the consonants go before the vows when you're going down, when you're, where if you look, when you're looking at the speech banana.

[00:03:24] Yeah. You've got your consonants near, uh, the, the top. So you, they are, uh, uh, higher frequency than the vows and you, and are quite often unvoiced as well. So like you are, oh yeah. Those, those are the what, disappear from the words first. So when you're trying to hear when they're missing and you, but you've got ooh and e, it's much harder to work out what the word is.

[00:03:50] Yeah. . So the means says as you're using hearing, you're only hearing the you. Yeah. You hear, you hear more of the, the voice vows in the middle of the words and gradually on either side of the words, the consonants there, there's like a pattern to it cuz they are at different

frequencies. And you can, if you look up, if you Google speech banana, you can see it.

[00:04:12] So there's a, the, depending on how some of these frequencies have gone. Conscience will will disappear at different points and then it's the consonants that differentiate words and make the markers between them so that you work out what those words are. If you're just left with the string of vows because the consonants have disappeared, you, you can't.

[00:04:34] That's what makes sleep so difficult. Ah,

[00:04:41] it interesting also that without the bowel though, you have. Sound Not much. No. Only half of your consonants will be voiced. Yeah, approximately. So, I mean, yeah. So the, the consonants always some kind of, almost a hip, isn't it? Your tongue is hitting against something or your lips are coming together. So it's some kind of a physical friction there.

[00:05:13] All of ours are kind of more open and kind of, um, so there's some kind of difference there, which I'm not, I'm trying to understand, but sometimes very difficult, like the word people, it's very difficult to figure out whether pull, whether between the P and the L there's a consonant or you know, if it's, uh, which side of.

[00:05:39] Paul. Yeah. What's between the P and the L? Yes. I don't know Paul. Yeah. The sound comes between the P and the L. Yes. Yeah. Yeah. But I, I think, um, suppose how it comes back to the Bible think, is that how, um, again, it's the kind of different,

[00:06:03] or is it the different kind of It was the. God. Um, there's some kind of a thing about writing that writing and the consonants, but then you have no idea what it sounds like cause you don't have the vows and Hebrews written like that. So we have really, the consonants in the, we don't really know, so we can't really say what the sound that Hebrew was.

Picking up the Pieces Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/2Va9e

[00:00:00] Um, any thoughts on what happened, um, in that, what we just did

[00:00:13] just a bit of a sense of getting it wrong or letting the side down or, yeah. Quite difficult if, you know, it's quite difficult. Yeah, it was a bit

pressured. Pressured. Okay. Yeah. May have been wonderful. So did it feel like, was it the impatient of others that was pressuring or can you reduce the sound, the money jumping?

[00:00:41] Can you jump as a feather? , which is not at all, cause feathers can't join. What was it? The pressure of other people? That was I, not necessarily, I think for me it was like, oh, I can't quite remember what it's supposed to be. You know, more my own pressure. Yeah, pressure getting it right. Yeah. And also trying to keep in your head what diversity is, dity, and then try to remember where you're up to.

[00:01:15] They're not really. Become, mm-hmm. . Yeah. Yes. Who has what? I kept putting my maze in the wrong two maze, and I kept putting them all in the wrong place.

[00:01:32] Mm-hmm. . It's also worrying about making mistakes or not, not being put out. I haven't made a silly mistake sort of thing. I think the other exercises, it don't, there's no prior knowledge required in the other ones. Whereas this one, you should know the verse and if you didn't, you really play the game. We should know the verse.

[00:01:59] So, and I think this is what, um, about how, um, when we come to scripture is it because we are so concerned with getting it right. We, um, the people who don't know then. How do you get them in? You kind of, it's that pressure, isn't it? And they're kind of getting cross almost about it. But, um, I think it's the idea of trying to enjoy the game almost.

[00:02:26] And, um, people, um, there's a, um, you, you all know how many tick is, how many tick, yes. How many ticks is, uh, uh, interpret. Yes, and we are all interpreting the Bible. I mean, because we are all living in different times and spaces, so we are always interpreting and we're always interpreting everything we feel and sense and always interpreting.

[00:02:54] So famous hermeneutics person called Gama spoke of this hermeneutics, the way of interpretation. For it to be truly working for people, it needs to be. Game. But again, without that many rules, I mean obviously I had to give you some rules there because if you, by the time you figured out the rules in the evening, so it's that idea of almost the idea of needing to play because just to also help children learn with, with playing.

[00:03:25] And so we also need to do that.

Polyphony I Discussion

[00:00:00] Okay,

[00:00:06] so first question is, um,

[00:00:12] on the second and the third time, I'm assuming that on the first time you were focusing on yourself completely. Yes. Yes. As on the second and third time, did you hear anyone else? Yes. Mm-hmm. , I had Sue. What was, who was like, you just heard Sue. Yeah. Okay. Listening. Okay. . I did it at some point. I thought it, I got a glimpse of yours and then it's gone, so I can't remember.

[00:00:43] Yeah. Yes, me too. or what? It was Oh, a, a glimpse. I mean, there's something came into my mind. Mm-hmm. , and, uh, I'm from, I could hear soon it wafted in and I knew what the. Where it was coming from and then it left . So I can't actually, I can't remember now what she was reading. No, but I'm panning around here. I heard.

[00:01:05] Great. Is your faithfulness this call upon my name or your name and straight away charging Straight ahead? Straight charging Straight ahead. I dunno why that's coming, but I, yes, so I, I had, so I had, I had fond in. No. Oh, I knew which one you had. Not his formed. Formed you,

[00:01:30] so it's, and I heard you mine. Yeah, I heard Face. Face. The fourth one had a face I and appearance. Yeah, I just had, I remember the fourth one, face and an appearance. I remember that. Yeah. I had faithfulness and I couldn't somehow, I just couldn't hear you. That's quite interesting for me that I couldn't hear you, not because you weren't loud, but something that I couldn't dis somehow distinguish between mine and which is

[00:02:06] What about, um, but it was, if you mix them all together, it kind of sounds. like doesn't make sense. Yeah. But we are wondering how, when things don't make sense. I didn't get Richards either. It's funny I didn't get any of your spots. I've noticed looking at the page you're on, yes. You must be in the same story as me.

[00:02:30] Really? But actually you, isn't that interesting? Well, I maybe I was looking for the same thing as you, a couple of your fans here. Oh no, it's the same page. Which one was it? What you, gosh, I'm on page 23, uh, verse

23, and I'm on, um, that I'm on verse 25. . That is really amazing. So not quite, if you weren't married, I married none.

[00:02:58] Could you? Interesting. Yes. So, so in this case, in this case, Richard has been the unheard. Mm, mm-hmm. . Yeah. So I was definitely heard. You were. Yes. So you, so you, you did the one where they fell down into the fire. No, no, no. It's right. But the three men, the first, first one, yeah, that's it. But the three men, and then I did the Yes.

[00:03:25] Fell down. But I see four A blazing fire. Fun. Yeah. So let's, let's. Do the same one and see whether we can leverage it, whether it is us, whether it's our attention, or something in the sound. Okay. Ready?

Polyphony 1 Second Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/oQHNY

[00:00:00] Could you hear? I heard Richard, I heard Richard tones. I didn't hear any words. I heard me shack, um, I heard fell down and six or something like that. Yeah, I heard. First I couldn't hear anything and then I heard bed and then I think, I dunno whether I sort of filling in the rest, but the third time I.

[00:00:27] Quite clearly because even though you are dial seven, I out dial four, I didn't tweet was that passage mm-hmm. . And so I still didn't know which passage you were.

[00:00:41] I heard fiery furnace at one point. Yes. So did I. Mm-hmm. . Okay. That's, that's interesting. And you couldn't make out No. Yeah. I, I had like words Now were you, Were you trying? Were, what were you I was, I heard words now and then, and then like mumbles and then, yeah. Mumble. Okay. Great. So now I'd like you to choose, uh, a story, um, or a verse about a woman.

[00:01:22] I know, um, where it, what, what do you want? Coconut? Uh, I want, uh, what is it again?

[00:01:38] Um, what's the one,

[00:01:44] Sarah?

[00:01:51] What is any particular story or anything?

[00:01:59] They don't use the permission.

[00:02:06] Okay. This bit, oh, there's a long voice. This part? No, this much.

[00:02:16] Five to what? Just five. One verse again? The same? Yeah. One verse or a sentence, if that makes more sentence.

Polyphony 2 Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/65cmT

[00:00:00] Okay. Did we, how was it? I heard quite distinctively from Richard. Do not sin again. . . A word to you. A word to you. All of us.

[00:00:22] I heard. I think everybody except Ner actually. Okay. I. . So I knew which who, which stories everybody was, but I couldn't get hers. Say something about Kaan. I think they heard something about Journeys. Journeys, yeah. I don't know. Journey. Can't remember. Cause I only heard you in the first part. Right. Did you hear Richard at all?

[00:00:50] Did you guys sue? Voice arms really small. It was short, wasn't it? Cause I, I, I was conscious when you were no longer speaking. Mm-hmm. , um, I heard, I heard very clearly she, she treasured these things in her heart. Mm-hmm. very clearly. Did you hear Louisa? I, I didn't, I never heard news. I can't. They're quiet.

[00:01:14] You say The wilderness in the wilderness Wilder. Wilderness Behi. Yes. You didn't hear me. Can't heard you. No you didn't. But then again, was I speaking more quietly this time? Yes, maybe a little bit. But again, I'm wondering of how the knowledge of the story ah, helps the hearing. Whether that allows you to hear differently, that's quite important because in order to hear other voices we need to know what's there.

[00:01:43] Oh, maybe that is cuz I knew yours was Hagar. Yours was the woman caught in adultery. Yes, Mary was Mary. Who, which one called an adultery? This one. One. This one? Yeah. She's not named.

[00:02:00] Whereas I chose the, um, concubine at the end of judges.

[00:02:05] You know that story, the Levi in the concubine? In judges. It's pretty grim. Sorry, I don't, not suit, not say that. I have read judges for a long time. Afraid it takes a long time to get around. It's, it's one. And what was, what was Keith in This's one? Keith, can you read yourself, Keith? Mm-

hmm. . Okay. Abram took his wife, Sarah and his brother's son lot and all the positions they had gathered and the persons whom they had acquired Harran, and they set forth to learn of Keenan when they had come to the land of Keenan.

[00:02:49] Oh, okay. So maybe we just needed the sentence for the whole. . Yeah. Okay. That's, um, that's interesting. That's and toasty. Um, now,

Polyphony 3 2nd Discussion

[00:00:00] How was that? How was that? Yeah, it makes, it makes it easier to listen to, I think. Yes. I went much faster cuz I knew what I was seeing. Huh? Okay. I managed to hear everybody, all parts of everybody, everybody else actually in that time. Yeah. Um, I was concentrating. You weren't concentrating so you didn't hear.

[00:00:28] No. Yeah, it just blocked out the sounds. Cause my brain was like, okay, we know everyone else's, so I'm just gonna concentrate on this one. Oh, that's interesting. Mm. So you actually couldn't hear. Okay. And you were just focusing on yours. Mm-hmm. . That's very interesting. And I'm, I'm not, I'm not sure if my brain has a capacity to listen and speak at the same time.

[00:00:53] I mean, to read and speak, I mean, Because I was listening to Yes. You two or three seconds at a time what somebody else was speaking. Yeah. So kind of a and constant hearing it. But, but I, whether I was Yeah. Un speaking, when we start this, I'll actually forget that I'm supposed to be listening and then second, second time we come and I like, oh, I gotta listen to people.

[00:01:22] But if you, if you, if you listen to somebody else who. speaking and listening at the same time. I dunno whether you, they would be, they would be speaking in a different way because they were listening. Listening, yeah. Mm-hmm. absorbing as well as, yeah. Yeah. I did that. I noticed that earlier on, that I, when I was reading and listening and my re I started losing concentration on what I was reading.

[00:01:48] I was just looking at, so, . Mm-hmm. . It's a very good thing to do.

[00:01:59] Yeah. I found that I could, I could read mm-hmm. , but without paying attention I could read. Yeah. And so I could listen. So that's, it's scary one way. Cause you're doing something without almost that unconscious, subconscious, whatever. And, uh, You can, you can read. You can read without listening to yourself though, can't you?

[00:02:25] Cause sometimes I've, I've read and thought I've not, I've not heard any of that. What out loud you mean? No, no. When I'm reading, like if I was reading and then I was distracted by something else. Oh, oh yes. I know. Very familiar with that. I'm very familiar with that. Concentrating. Read it. Yeah. But also to, to be, but to be speaking it as well.

[00:02:47] That's, that's the kinda step beyond. Yeah. Mm. So I think what I'm trying to kind of work through is how we listen to those. We don't listen to, in that sense, amongst everything else. So, mm. And whether our act of listening and attention, how, what that shows us. Mm-hmm.

[00:03:12] So they might make a difference. If you're doing a performance, if the audience are familiar with the scripture you are reading or not, they will. Or if they have the texts in front of them, they will make a difference. Yes. Yeah. Yes. , yes.

[00:03:29] Because I, I heard more or less all of yours. Most of yours each time just now. Yeah. Um, but. Yeah, the same words, I mean, glory was occurred about four times or something, so I was heavy emphasis on that. But I think I did hear most of it, but I don't, so I dunno if I set myself to listen to yours and read my, at the same time, but primarily to listen to yours, I dunno whether I'd be able to, you know, read mine as well.

[00:04:01] That's the thing in terms of attenti concentrate. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Because you are reading it. Mm-hmm. , yes, but I just, it's not a. conscious kind of a reading. Is that right? Yes, yes, that's right. Yes. Yes. Well, I, yes, I don't, I didn't, I don't stop speaking, so I must have been reading what was there,

[00:04:25] Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So that, that also interesting that we can attend to something attend there as well. Mm-hmm. . Yeah. I'm just wondering how it all comes together. In what way? It comes together. Hmm.

[00:04:53] Time. We'll do one step back. We'll just do one more. Yes. Hmm. I'm wondering whether I would be able to, this is just personally to switch my attention from, you know, to more or less read my text and then switch

my attention from one of the other speakers to the next at a certain moment, but that I. . I don't think that is because, because randomly volume varies.

[00:05:25] Yeah. And then somebody finishes. Yeah. And so and so after st. After one or two people finish, then of course it's in theory. Yeah. Then you can come. It's easier to, yeah, it's easier just to hear the remaining two people, for example of Yeah, and there's gap. Yes. In between words, somebody's world. Yes. Yeah.

[00:05:45] And actually somebody may be speaking in the same rhythm. If somebody's speaking for, you know, just by coincidence in the same kind of rhythm as I am, then it's probably not so easy to hear. Mm-hmm. Because you hear things which are just slightly, you know what I mean? Yeah. Out of think easier are words, which are whole words, which are, or whole words, which fall into spaces.

[00:06:06] Mm. Mm. Which is maybe what happened to us in the first one where, yeah, we couldn't hear you so much. Mm-hmm.

[00:06:19] It just actually reminds me of reading bedtime stories to the children and I could sometimes have read them a whole story and now I couldn't remember what it was about. I'm just reading it my mind's on something. Yes. Actually, I actually, yes, it's so, Oh, we all did that actually, don't we? We all read things.

[00:06:40] Yeah. Um, although not so much allowed, I suppose. Mm-hmm. . Yeah. Yeah. Especially if it's about Thomas

[00:06:55] Yeah.

Polyphony General Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/mrZL9

[00:00:00] Okay. In the second time, I said my verse twice, . Oh. So it's quite short. Yeah. Yeah. And I still didn't read the end. Right. Yeah. Because I was like the short one that just wasn't right. Just one sentence. Yeah. Mine is short, but it meant that I had a fair amount of space at the end to listen to other people.

[00:00:24] Mm, yes. Yeah. Okay. I heard something about, um, that being pardoned for praying or let your servant be pardoned for something Okay. For praying or something. Mm-hmm. . Yeah. I found it difficult. I had the

longest Yes. And it had this strange word called women and, and so I was kind of think yeah. Struggling and that keeps repeating.

[00:00:54] It repeats.

[00:00:58] Yeah. So this is mine. May the Lord pardon sound on one count when my master goes into the house of women to wash, they're leaning on my arm and I bow down in the house of women. When I do bow down in the house of women, , may the Lord pardon sound on this one count. So there's certain rhythm there. Yes. But.

[00:01:20] I think somehow I got caught in that and couldn't really. Mm-hmm. , you chose excellently for women? Think so. A rhythm? Yes. Always choose verse that and repeat some words like, because last time you kept saying, but this one repeated as well. That's what I was saying. Glory. What is the house of women? So this is Naman.

[00:01:43] He is, he needs to help his. to worship, and the one you, and so he will inadvertently bow down to the idol Ofri, R I n m o N. Mm-hmm. And so he's asking Elijah whether God will pardon him for that. Oh. And so, I mean, Elijah says, good peace. My about the kind of the physical action versus what's not. Kind of thing.

[00:02:14] The one you chose for me, it only says Ruth once and it says Oprah. Oprah.

[00:02:24] I kept hearing Philip Philip came and um, yeah, I heard. Do you understand? Yeah. Um, I heard of how, how you guy who will guide me and then the getting into the chariot and it sounded quite cozy. It is Phil, is this someone one where, um, first with that person knew Philippines money, and then he talks about Isaiah.

[00:02:49] Yes. Yes. So I think he had a nice chariot, cuz it was, yeah, the cream, he was high up, high up Ethiopia, wasn't he? Yeah, yeah, yeah. But the problem is if I, I got to know that this was longer than, well certainly didn't, you know, serious. So then I start thinking I'd better get a shuffle on this. Yes. Yeah. So the kind I will, I might.

[00:03:13] Yeah. I might finish up speaking on my own. . Yeah. Okay. So, but then I grew the consciousness, I became aware that yours is quite long as well. Long as well, yeah. Yeah. Mm-hmm. . And that's an interesting

dynamic that the same reason I was slowing down cuz mine was short. Ah, make it, I was trying to make it last.

[00:03:33] Ah, I could hear, is it Goliath of ga? Yeah. Hearth. I didn't hear anything from Keith. Yeah, it's quite short, so. Mm-hmm. ? Yeah, you wanna hear my verse here? He took more by twice. The name of one was Oprah and the name of the other roof, or dunno how to pronounce his name. Or she

[00:04:07] I think this is where Oprah got her name and it was missing Australian. Was it really? Is it? Yeah, think so. Oh, a bit of a random name. I think so. I might be wrong. Might be wrong, but I thought I had seen that somewhere. Oh, okay. Yeah. Am I right in thinking that, oh, I mean, this is very basic. L the suffix. L.

[00:04:32] That's D is it? No. So no. Oh, is it not simply Cuz Israel, L and Emanu L. It was a name. A name for God, not, not L in itself. Just those two. Yes. L sha is God. God, okay. Yes. Called Almighty, right? Are you talking about, see Lord Almighty in the Testament, old Testament, that's from El Sha. I've got, and then if you have, I've got, got Most high, which is actually Oh, does it?

[00:05:04] L l Elon. Yeah. Got high. El Elon. L Elon. But did they choose, for example, the An Angels name tend to end with L, don't they? Yeah. Different. Yeah. But there like three different names, um, in the Old Testament, aren't there? El is one. Yeah, Yahweh is the other one. Yeah. Yeah. And. because actually, Lord, in capital Letters, yeah, in the Old Testament is where it's written Yahweh, no, yes, no, yes, yes.

[00:05:38] In capitals when you have four capitals. Yes. That's where in the, in the original text it's written the, the, the Tetragrammaton, the four letter r y h w h. Well, that makes no sense. Oh, yeah, yeah. And I forgot the other one. And they, they figured that these are the, there's like three different, That have been sort of patched together and they, they come, they, they, they can discern which stream they come from, depending on which name they use for God in the original text, because in our pre course, Pete Drager said, gave the meaning of the word Israel, and I thought he said it meant that something like the, the desolation or so.

[00:06:26] gosh, it just shows how I've, I've scrambled on it completely. Probably you have to listen to it again. What does is Isra, where does that come from?

[00:06:37] So again, it's L is, L is God. So Israel is whatever off guard. Yeah. See, manual is okay with us. God, yes. Oh, yes, yes. So that's how it looks. Gabriel must mean in the presence of God. Yes. Mm-hmm. do, do you remember this in one of the, one of the films we watched, Pete, Greg said, and I don't remember. Don't remember, remember?

[00:07:07] Correct? That sounds familiar. That, um, I think it was desolation. Yeah. Well,

Prologue Remix Discussion 1

https://on.soundcloud.com/jbgU3

[00:00:00] So I'd like your thoughts on, well, obviously doing it then hearing it obviously. Um, I still hate my voice. Sorry. I still My voice. Your voice. Oh, that's an interesting question though. Does, does your, do you feel different about your voice in hearing it with other voices? Oh, it sounds a lot better with other voices.

[00:00:30] I thought. Yeah, I, I'm light blend than, uh, I was aware of mine kept coming up, you know, I kept hearing it.

[00:00:42] I don't know what that tells you, . Well, it could have been at that point it was a louder, because obviously we all have slightly different volumes and I'm trying to adjust the volume. No, sit down. I'm quite happy. Okay.

[00:01:05] Yes. As we were saying before, hearing our own voices a bit disconcerted, isn't it? And so, and I think we all maybe attuned into our own voices and that's Yeah, slightly. So getting over a slight feeling, embarrassment. Things about Yeah. Part of, but um, But that's interesting. If you're attuned to the voice and we are listening out for our voice.

[00:01:29] I guess this question is, you know, in, in scripture, yes. We are probably listening out for something particular rather than listening for itself almost. I'm, I'm wondering whether that's a possibility. I'm just reflecting on what you just said. Yes. Mm-hmm. , the papers gone. It's okay . I, I thought I, cause I, I read it and then, um, I didn't look at it when I was, which is quite unusual for me.

[00:02:05] I didn't look at it and then I was certain that I've made a mistake and said the, the light is the light of all people. And I was listening to where I

thought I'd gone wrong. That's how I thought it said light in of life. So you don't know what you said, or, I think I said life. Life. I think I said it right?

[00:02:26] Yeah. I was just, I thought I'd sound wrong. Yeah. Um, any, any other reflection? My accent's not Australia. Cause I thought it was because there's three northerners here and I was listening, trying to such three Northern accents and the one that was missing with me, I didn't sound as. . So that's interesting because if you, um, it's interesting also we had what was, uh, an outside noise, which is Keith us cough.

[00:03:02] Mm-hmm. . And that was also interesting in how, what happens when this outside noise comes in. And it, I didn't mean for it, but it kind of, again, kind of, kind of sounds out what I think. , the disturbing of what so-called noise is and how, um, and when, when you hear something new sometimes that's what it is.

[00:03:30] The new thing is just a noise. Sorry, so stop it. Do you mean a noise without meaning? Yeah. So I need to distinguish between noise and sound a bit. So noise, I'm, I think I use it as a, as always slightly disruptive or perceived as, , um, to something that's established or something that's peaceful. Yes. So, but uh, and even me, I was even, I was controlling the sound and I was trying to get rid of the noise, you know, as part of my kind of aesthetic idea.

[00:04:03] But, but I suppose this is again, the question, when you have. There are different voices coming. Does it, when it becomes a noise, are you still willing? I mean, am I, will I, would I be willing to keep listening in into the noise to see what can I, what can I hear? Uh, what do I get? Um, there are other small kind of things.

[00:04:24] So does that happen? Is like when you say word and God, so when somebody's saying word, somebody else is saying God. So that, um, kind of, you know, saying the. Was God, but then you're hearing word and God at the same time. So there are other kinds of possibilities. Um, do you want to listen to that a little bit more or shall we just move on to the next one?

[00:04:50] Maybe one, one. Any. I'm, I'm happy that it'd be nice to hear it again though. We about it, if that's all right. Let's, let's try. Yes. Thank you.

Prologue Remix Discussion 2

[00:00:00] Yeah, I don't know what you felt the second list move off. I think also the repetition gives it a kind of meditative sometimes also cause it runs different lengths, it never has quite the same time. So, and also if, if I could, I'd find that volumes. Exactly. Cause it's almost exactly equal to sees. I managed to get the cough out.

[00:00:28] It was interesting for me that because I, the first time I, I kept hearing what I'd said, but that time I only heard it once. Hmm. Yeah. So that, that's possibly also the way I was trying to get the volumes evened out. Yeah. So it's, again, at that point I'm the kind of interpreter, isn't it, of helpful. All the sounds and I'm, I'm bringing it together.

[00:00:57] Though I'm trying to kind of hear everything equally. Obviously it's my room where I'm sitting and all that stuff.

Prologue Remix Discussion on Mixing

[00:00:00] It's difficult to know what you are doing when you're pushing the needles. Cause you don't, I don't know which track was coming through which, yes. Yeah. But, um, somebody was trying one at a time who I did that find you already. It was 1, 2, 3, 4. Yeah. So it was according to our order. Yeah.

[00:00:21] Yeah. But, um, Doesn't have any reflection on how we read scripture or how we understand scripture.

[00:00:38] I need to have another go. Really. Cause that was just also it was it. I mean it was, it all relates to what's just up to, I haven't done it before. I dunno how it works. And also, It was building up to being really, really noisy. Yeah. Yeah. And same, mine was just a reaction. At this moment, I'd like it to be nice and quiet, but you know, next time I like something different, try something else.

[00:01:11] I felt a of relief.

[00:01:16] Yeah. Do you think that reflects, do you think that reflects on how, how we do research. Or how scripture is, how certain scriptures become very loud and that kind of a effect. For me, I think it's, it's just the

reaction to the sound. Cause once it starts, I mean it's just general. Once there starts to be a lot of it, I've just find it very difficult.

[00:01:49] Which, I mean, you know that anyway, so I, I dunno. Anything about scripture per se, that the delivery makes a huge difference to me, which is why I'm in an gli except a Pentecostal one, because I can't cope with it. Yeah, I can't cope with that kind. Well, my question is, I know, I know that's the reaction to the song, but um, does our reaction to the song reflect certain aspects of how things are happening?

[00:02:16] You know, not just in some, but in, in how scriptures or how certain things are forced? Certain things are very loud in our lives. And is there a sense in which, the way we trying to mix it, does there any reflection of how you would like to access scripture or how we would like to read it or how we'd like it to be read to us?

[00:02:44] I really like. When you have these pairs kinda bouncing off each other. Yeah. And, um, making those particular words kind of come out like life or beginning or word. And, um, that feels to me. And so I enjoy that.

[00:03:09] I enjoy hearing those words, layering.

[00:03:15] I suppose if you had a normal meeting in the church, you don't get to hear those kinds of competitions and and layers of.

Prologue Remix 2 Discussion on Mixing

https://on.soundcloud.com/YAnHV

[00:00:00] I'm trying, I was trying to make more of a pattern, a sec. Mm-hmm. What, what's kinda pattern, was it just in terms of the meanings or sound or, yeah, bring, trying to bring the same words. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:00:28] Anyone.

[00:00:32] It definitely, um, easier on one level. Cause when you walk behind, buttons gonna happen less. Yeah. It, it's still feels a little bit self-conscious experimenting in group, in public group, other people, you know. Right. Something that, you know, maybe I could go away and come up, you know? Right. Probably for quite a bit longer.

[00:00:57] Yes. But, Yeah, fine. That's good. But I feel that if, if one of us had, uh, like 15 minutes to do this, it would get quite creative. Probably. I

mean, I'm sorry, I'm talking about myself. You know, I would be less inhibited about it, I guess. Yes. Yeah. Minute is small. If I didn't my entire turn, I, other people need their think, so the.

[00:01:25] Yeah, well kind of, yes. I can imagine discovering a lot about it if I had 15 minutes. So when you also like pick up ideas from other people as well? Yes. And how you could it, I thought, well that sounds really good. I like that bit. People do things, so yeah, it's nice doing a group that way. But it's also little bit in community space as well ways and presumably it.

[00:01:52] Quite different. He used a very different passage. I mean, John who said writes poetically. No. He has score of these repetitions. Repetitions, yeah. But maybe so say it was a passage from the Gospel of Luke, then the feel of it would be very different, wouldn't he? Yes. It doesn't possibly wouldn't work at all in one way.

[00:02:18] It's because of the lack of.

[00:02:22] Because these are quite short phases. Most, most of shorts. Yeah. So I've chopped a lot, quite, you know, kind of taking out bits from that. This is what John won, one 14.

[00:02:36] Cause there are more petitions. And then after this if, yeah, so if, if we. Uh, longer with this and got to know more and the possibilities then, and then we read it again. We would probably read it in a slightly different way. Such a way that they were hang together more, probably, maybe not differently anyway.

[00:03:00] Yeah. Yeah. I guess this reflects also the way I think we read scripture. Cause we, we are also remixing and be, when we are young, we hear a set of. So the volume of that is the highest. But then as we explore, more things are revealed to us more the other voices coming in.

[00:03:29] Yeah. And also maybe to a certain extent, the will passage, right? This, you can be saying, speaking some words, but actually thinking ahead to, you know, to where you know, they. to very, you know, to the next phrase or the next verse or something, or, yeah. That, that just happen.

[00:03:51] Yeah. When Harry was doing his first, I dunno if he did a second one. Yeah. When he was doing his first one, he was cutting off some of the phrases. Yeah. And, um, it's, I thought it sound, it, it sound very interesting,

but I found in my head I was filling. , um, or you're filling the cut off. Yeah. Yeah. He's, he's taking it off and it sounded cool in my head.

[00:04:13] I can't stop myself from filling in, missing bit because I, when, when Howi cut it off, it felt as a, someone started the sentence and someone else finished there was that,

[00:04:30] so I, yeah, I guess Cause I'm easily distracted. I was happy with the distraction off the other voice. . So I didn't feel the need of that competition of the first one. Okay. We're not, but we're not needing to get meaning outta this cause we know anyway. What the meaning is. I mean, obviously it's a different kind of meaning, I suppose.

[00:04:51] Yes. It's not the immediate Yeah. The word information, but there's more. I think that's what I hope. Yes. There's more coming winding. In some sense, I think both Richard and were saying about spending more time on your own with it, it would be very interesting to see what you would come up with and also what the passage was saying to you after you spent that amount of time listening to it.

[00:05:18] Yeah. Because you would've to just, you would be, you know, flooded in it. Yeah. Because I mean, another option that you can actually cut down almost to the word isn't. Was the word in the beginning was the word

[00:05:48] beginning.

[00:05:52] He.

[00:06:02] You know, those kind of are also better . Nick's gonna love it when you,

[00:06:11] uh, yeah. Obviously the sound has, has as, as you know, as he said, can be oppressive also, especially,

[00:06:27] All right, let's two 30. Um, do people want to do one more thing or do you think we should stop now? Yeah, I'll do one more thing. We, we have to leave at about quarter pass cause we're taking Oh yeah. Stop. Yeah, sure. Yeah, that's fine. Okay. Do some. Okay. So, okay. Fun. Great. Um, yeah, let's just do comedy. Has known.

[00:06:54] Has anyone heard Kadi? I haven't , no. Louis, have you, did we played at um, when you went to Matt's? Yeah. Yeah. So do you know, do

you know the basic rules? An Indian game. It's an Indian origin game. They're very proud with it. Basically we have two. On opposite sides of a kind of a field or a space. Um, and, um, I can't remember if we've got one capture or the whole of the opposite team, but you, you and your team, you have to run to the other side without being stopped and the whole time, without taking any breath, you have to say,

[00:07:44] yeah, they did it all over. This is what that, that is the game , if you get caught.

The Most High 3-Voice of God Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/t3e7j

[00:00:00] Uh, was any of that familiar to you or your own text or did you catch any other texts that were familiar? I, I caught the Magnificat Mm mm-hmm. when I was listening to the others, but whether there's any of it in what I'm reading, I'm not sure. Mm-hmm. , actually, yeah. I caught some of this by somebody else who said it.

[00:00:27] Mm-hmm. . . Yeah. The feeling of it is familiar, but I couldn't say where it was from or what it was. Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. or with a actual, I don't recall. Blessed of view among women. Praise the Lord. But I don't really recall where it would come from. Mm-hmm. Or how it would go together. Is it from, but

[00:00:50] yeah, Elizabeth? Yeah, I think mine, Richard. It says, um, from the judges. Yes. The majority of her. Yes. You know, after she smashed the plank's head in for eg. Here. That's how I remember. Yeah. The violence. Yeah. Um, and so we said, Mary, did we say Mary or Elizabeth? What said Elizabeth? Elizabeth saying Of Mary?

[00:01:14] Yeah. And then Mary. Mary. Mary. So Mary, and there's one more. One the. . One of the things, I think Fiona and Sue's one, I wonder why did you,

[00:01:34] okay, so these are three songs by three women. So, so we said Deborah and we said Mary, so, so there is a part where Elizabeth is kind of, kind of, uh, what do you say, being joyous about Mary. So which kind. , uh, precedes Mary's song. Mm-hmm. and so Mary's song as well. And, but the, the middle song is a Song of Hannah, that's Samuel's mother.

[00:02:03] So this is basically, uh, and the whole point was to bring together these three women's songs. I'm sorry, when you said Deborah, did you mean Delilah? No, Deborah. Deborah, okay. Yeah. In. Oh, right. So, um, so yeah, what, um, was there anything that came out, particularly in the listening of it, I suppose,

[00:02:36] what are you looking for in particular? I mean, about the way we, we heard what the other people were saying or, uh, so first, yeah, first is about how you heard the. Um, what it felt like on a very basic level, um, saying, oh, couldn't hear this voice, or This voice is too prominent, or could be very basic like that.

[00:02:59] But then maybe after that, just saying, um, was there kind of a, was there an emotion attached to it? Um,

[00:03:12] I think there was, for me, there was definitely more feeling of emotion of women crying out rather than particularly hearing necessarily what the words were. Mm-hmm. . And it was nice to feel like other, you weren't a lone voice. There were other people crying out together and sometimes you were literally together and sometimes.

[00:03:35] you were at a different pace, but still crying out together. Kind of an alongside, would you say? Yeah. Or with, not the same, but, but next to you. Yeah. Yeah. May it felt more, um, powerful and significant when we were together. The bits where we were together. Yes. Like at the end Yeah. Was a, we joined into young.

[00:04:02] It was a kind of a pleasing resonance when Fiona and I kind of synced the first time you read it. Mm-hmm. , although I noticed a second time let's posty where? Well, it's, it's, it is just the way it goes, isn't it? Cause of the pace where you were reading, but, but the second time you were sentenced ahead of me, um, which I, I found difficult to process cuz I was hearing Fiona, but I was reading the language.

[00:04:25] I should be so, yeah. Um, the reason I asked the question I did was because I find it interesting that you, whether this was random or not, I don't know, you'll have to tell us, but both Richard and I were given. As, as men, we were given the text by a woman who'd just done a typically non-violent thing. You know, I smashed someone's head in with a, we do that the time, of course, but mm-hmm.

[00:04:52] um, and I wondered if. Deliberate or conscious, or that wasn't deliberate? No. Okay. So if that was just a fluke, you know, oh, could, could have been an unconscious thing. I don't know. completely unconscious. Um, uh, so I've actually, I've taken, I've left out quite a bit, obviously. I've sort, I've taken out the endeavor's name, so almost cut the sentence at that point.

[00:05:17] So that almost, um, , just so that that story, this doesn't come flooding in, that you're kind of hearing this, these words almost for themselves. And, uh, so, so actually there are other women present within these songs. So when, when in Deborah Song and Sang Most Blessed, the most blessed is, um, jail. The one who, uh, story just said, you know, put the tent back through, um, Caesar's head.

[00:05:45] Um, but, you know, and so. The thing is that, that most blessed is what Mary's called. Mary says that she'll be called blessed. And then Elizabeth, you know, Elizabeth has called her blessed already. And so that, that sense of, um, how this, this thing of, especially when jail is supposed to so violent, I mean judges, but judges has always got that, that, uh, extra, uh, weirdness about it.

[00:06:18] It's about, then it's about, but it's about, somehow it's about connecting it. So, mm-hmm. , that very violent and really kind of difficult time is still connected to, um, what is, what is to come. But also we know that from Mary's side, Mary's story in Monza ends with the violence of death. So there is that.

[00:06:44] That's that resonance. I didn't bring that out because I was wondering whether that'll be dwelling in the violence too much, but that sense of the, the hammer on a peg, the hammer on a male kind of thing.

[00:07:03] I think the, um, I was influenced by, um, what I was told that the kind of, uh, pattern that you told us, . And therefore I thought, oh, it's my own journey to start with. Because apparently when we come together, it wouldn't possibly come. Only curse at the end. And I didn't really hear what other people were reading until the end when I did, because I was, this is the bit where we're all came together, you know?

[00:07:27] Mm-hmm. , but, um, but that, but that was good. I was very satisfying. And so, um, and then I started wondering whether, but, but then, Done it a few more times, whether I would be able to hear what other people were reading and read my own. But I don't think that that's quite challenging, isn't it? Yeah. So it's very reassuring and comforting.

[00:07:50] So Yeah. To be, to come together like that. Yeah. So that's why we kind of listened and then spoke. Listen. Yeah. But yes, I think as you kept on doing it, then you would've been able to hear and Yes. And speak at the same time. Yeah, probably. Yeah. It's a difficult thing because. But that's what happens in when you're playing music with people that you have to listen to yourself and to other people.

[00:08:14] But it doesn't happen, uh, automatically though. It, it takes, it takes time. You become more, more familiar with what the words or the, the music between yourself. Yeah. Yeah. Is it a similar, um, pattern that as a conductor of music, you, you so. Try to adjust your pace to the congregation and vice versa. Right?

[00:08:40] Yeah. Yeah. And it's the same. I, I think, um, I don't know if it was happening consciously or unconsciously, but when you are saying the last passage, probably you are looking out for other people joining in and then it almost like seeing perfectly on the last line. Yeah. But you are adjusting your face to the

[00:09:00] Yeah. Yeah.

Thus Whispereth the Lord Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/4e49V

[00:00:00] Okay.

[00:00:06] thought was that good?

[00:00:10] Okay. Any immediate, immediate feelings? Got it. Supposed to be exhausting and deflating at the end. Lies like

[00:00:28] a big experience that I wasn't expecting to be part of something like that. It felt quite like that for something

[00:00:42] you felt, uh, you some, you're part of something. Part of something. I'm not sure what it was, but I felt that was part of something quite big. There are parts of rhythm, like you got repeat in the, like the layer symbol guitar. And after you say that three times, then you don't even need to look at that thing.

[00:01:01] You can live your life . Yep.

[00:01:10] What the squeaking is for. Yeah, I will. I will explain. I just wanted to gather some just immediate kind of Oh, okay. Yeah. I wasn't able to follow the narrative cuz I was. Yeah, concentrated quite hard on what we had to do. So the other narratives I wasn't actually listening to, there's certain words that were hard to, I hope that you'd be doing a full rehearsal

[00:01:41] exchanging locked in the toilet. ash. Yeah. Nice. It felt quite dramatic. Yes. Well, any, uh, any thoughts on the title on page one?

[00:02:10] Yes. If there's anything you, not, you don't, not to think about too much, just anything. Yeah, that's fine. . Um, it's bit like a mass whisper. . Well, well one, well, one thing is referring to that book I first read, let me just call Whispering the World. Oh yes. The other thing is that it's that, um, the King James Washington is thus set the Lord.

[00:02:36] So it's that idea, this big full voice coming out. And so the idea of, listen, it's more about trying to listen to the whisper of. , other stories that are there as well. Mm-hmm. , which is the whole kind of, so, and also the, the, the what's behind the whisper is that it's breadth. And so the breadth of God is, uh, in Hebrew, it's, uh, rock In Greek, it's neuma intelligence, , uh, and.

[00:03:12] So, um, it's about the idea that the whisper of God is very important and, uh, when Elijah meets with God at the earthquake, earth, wind and Fire, um, some translation says it was a whisper. Some translation, it's a silence. But it's that idea of listening to what is almost behind what is coming at you, uh, first.

[00:03:36] Uh, and so this. , I was just, we were actually going through the whole, um, bible of, in terms of female prophets, those were kind of identified as prophets. Mm-hmm. , the whole women prophets. So we have Miriam first, and Miriam as, as it says in here on page, you know, she took a tambourine hand. All the women went to tambourines and with dancing, so there's a huge kind of celebration.

[00:04:06] And Miriam is the worship leader. and, and she actually leads the people in singing actually, if you look at the text. So that, that idea of, um, especially that because women aren't priests, but they are still, you know, at least in the Old Testament, they can be prophets. Um, so that, um, there's something now then we go to Deborah, who's the next pist named.

[00:04:32] Mm-hmm. . So why does business, because Deborah means B or swm of bees. Mm-hmm. . But again, the idea of , the idea of that the spirit moving and that kind of something is going on, that this, the name kind of his names always. more than just this, is that this is that person. There's sense of support. Um, page two is, um, yeah, it is in this whole temple.

[00:05:11] This is, this is the passage from, uh, one Chronicles. Um, this particular one, Chronicles 25, and all this is about how the template is being set up. And there's all these, you have all these names of men and it's all, you know about men, but suddenly in the. , these three daughters are mentioned and nowhere else in that, in those few chapters, do you hear of any women at all?

[00:05:34] So there's something, um, significant. Obviously there's arguments as to whether these three daughters are just mentioned because the three daughters. But, uh, some still didn't say that these three daughters were also involved in the music making at the temple. And the thing about music making in the temple, it's for prophecy.

[00:05:55] So music making and that's right. Music making the temple is for prophecy. And so they're prophesying and the connection with the whole, um, piano in guitar and drum actually, because they are the liar, um, uh, is a kind of, um, it is a kind of a guitar in the sense that it's a, it strings over a body while the har and the piano is similar and that their strings.

[00:06:23] Attached to the body itself rather than over body. So, so I was just, uh, using that. Um, ah, squeak, well holder means weasel or rat. So again, it is drawing out and also it becomes almost hilarious how, um, the king is so, um, worried about, but he, he decides that he'll send all these guys, all his, his priest and all his court officials to this, to this woman called Weel.

[00:06:59] And uh, then she's the one who pronounces, you know, thus says the Lord. Um, and I was, I just at that moment, Samuel, you know, saying squeak, Lord. So to do a squeaky, sorry, it's nothing to do with a prophet squeaky over squeaky . Yeah. And which parents would actually caught their daughter rat. Well, this is, this is, I was reading this up and this is the thing is why, why are some people named after animals and there's all this discussion, but there's no kind of ideas to, and even Deborah in that sense, it's not a.

[00:07:39] Uh, normal Israel name. It comes in Genesis, it is the Rachel's nurses called Deborah, but again, it's called B. And again, we don't really know the significance of that. I think we should all just follow in the of scripture. We should all have a name. Yeah. Well, I think what interests me is how this, this, in that sense, the Holy Spirit is supposed to almost come in that kind of almost through the side.

[00:08:04] Almost not direct, um, as Jesus is in front of you, you can see Jesus on this idea, but the spirit kind of comes from all four directions. The wind blows are will, so that these pictures seem to, you know, the bees are just swarming or, so I don't, I'm, I'm just, uh, shooting at the top of my head here. So, um, and then, uh, page four was actually, The eye and I went to the ERs, uh, is Isaiah.

[00:08:39] Oh yeah. And, uh, so the name and Isaiahs asked to name him Maha Shaba, which means, um, the spoiled speeds, the prey hastens, so mm-hmm. . So the whole act becomes almost a, the family becomes a, a prophecy itself. So, which is also. Possibly I kind of strange. Um, page five. Um, this is about Anna. Um, Anna means grace and deeper.

[00:09:14] This is what she was praying. Says she was praying and fasting. The temple date, night, and date says, um, she's the one who basically then, Announces to Jerusalem that Jesus is the one. So this 80 year old widow who is, you know, at the very outskirts of society, is the one who's called for claims. Uh, and the last one, last of the prophets, uh, are these unnamed daughters of Phillip.

[00:09:48] Phillip, the one who went to, went to the Ethiopian. And so that's why this, this whisper is coming back cause the whisper is, What I call this whole thing, but this idea of there are all these people whispering at the back and these four daughters, obviously there was something, Luke. Luke who is the one writing this, he knows of them, but he doesn't name them.

[00:10:13] Um, and he specifically says they're unmarried. So there's something odd or special, you know, it's very good. Um, so. . So it is a thread, um, drawn through all these kind of stories and illusions. There's a lot of illusions here. Um, yeah. Wonder children? Hmm? I wonder if the daughters are still children, which is why they,

[00:10:47] whether if they were children, there probably wouldn't be much need to mention. But, but if, if you're saying daughters, then you probably need to qualify that they're not married daughters. Yeah, possibly. Well, it

says a gift of prophecy. So would they be of some at one stage rather than children? Not necessarily.

[00:11:11] Because you have, you have Samuel who can, you must be called at a very young age. Yeah. Mm-hmm. . , unless he make an appointment, what's going you to become married? They can't prophesy anymore. Cause they won't get the authority of the husband . They don't have time. That's so the title should that say that's spread the Lord through these women?

[00:11:36] Well, I think it's about listening, uh, overall to other others because I mean, it's interesting you bring up both children because I think that's another voice I want to explore. Thank you all. Um, sorry it's gone over two 30. Um, thanks very much for your time, your voices. Listen to listen to the, um, I'd like to hear, hear that.

[00:12:02] Yeah. Yeah. Well, but maybe not now, but yeah, I'll try. Um, hopefully this is a better recording. Last time's recording was okay, but, um, But I think if you just listen to it, it is totally different than when you're in it. So, yeah, so there is a difference, but obviously you can remember.

Whispering Grove 1 Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/2hWcN

[00:00:00] Do have a seat. Cause that's, in some sense it's quite ing isn't it?

[00:00:09] focus on saying something, trying to listen. So yeah, thoughts, uh, your, uh, I think, um, your experience of listening first, and then you can say what experience of. The repetition itself. So first, when you first would like to hear what is, what you thought of, uh, when you were in the middle

[00:00:41] What of them do you, okay. A bit grumpy. That she felt that mommy stopped her from saying something. Hmm.

[00:00:54] But how is it dismissing? Oh, its kind weird Cause you could hear everyone speaking at the same time, but you could hear individual. You could, yeah,

[00:01:13] please. It felt like eavesdropping. Eavesdropping. Yeah. Because, um, As you move around cause people ask, speaking is constant and you are almost, it's like you are overhearing a conversation cuz you're not gonna go in necessarily at the beginning of the text and then hear it through to the end.

You go in and you hear some words and then you know, you might move out and catch something else.

[00:01:40] So it felt like, it felt almost like being in the middle of a lot of conversations in which you are sort of dropping in and then moving around. Which is how they describe, especially the letters, isn't it? Cause you're hearing one side of the conversation, isn't it? And so the other side is kind of implicit within what you are reading.

[00:02:03] So yeah, it struck me how I heard some words but not the other that Ephesians three or what it was. I think you were reading it. Mm-hmm. , Ephesians and I kept hearing. Perhaps because I, I know the quote, I don't know,

[00:02:25] but not a, not much was really distinct with what I heard. Mm. But you found it distinct? Yes. Mm-hmm. , I, I found, like I wanted to hone into, Each person. Mm-hmm. . So I was in them. I was in there for quite a long time ago, , cause I wanted to hear of everyone. I found it quite powerful. But then the next person will be kind of almost synchronizing into the, into the one you just to

[00:03:03] powerful.

[00:03:07] I had hearing problems as a. So when I used to hear a lot of people together, I couldn't hear them. I could just hear a wash of sound. Oh. So I found it quite intimidating, but then it kind of reminded me of being a child and just hearing this was of sound. Yeah. And having to concentrate to listen. I could hear, you know, hear you all, but I couldn't just hear a wash of sound.

[00:03:27] That's all I heard. So is the, so is this the, is the confusion of the confusion of the what? The not knowing of the worship song is that. Kind of makes us to, I think it's my, my emotional reaction to it, remembering being a child. That's my reaction to it. That's why it felt odd. It wasn't me as the adult, it was me.

[00:03:51] Right. What struck me was that we repeat words from the liturgy every week. Yeah. Repetitive and I. Which it doesn't mean anything. Yeah. Repetition, sort of Did, did anyone else find that there didn't mean anything anymore? Well, but take it beyond there. I thought that as a kind of challenge to myself, I thought I might be able to collect while I was, which turned out to be possible while I was standing in the middle.

[00:04:32] The gist of what each person was. and then, and then make something outta it when I step back. Right. And hold, retain in the sense of what everybody was saying. But then of course you realize, you realize I can't do that. But there are key words from each person, but then, and then Oh, without staying in the middle for a long, long time.

[00:04:50] Yeah. I kind of, you know, set myself a task to try and make some, something with the words that I had.

[00:05:01] Oh, that's so interesting. This sort of repetition thought, this is how I fear sometimes, you know, I've heard this before,

[00:05:17] so,

[00:05:21] but the other, the other thing is when I step back out, could I read. But also here, peoples text better at the same time. Yes. So is it possible, you know, to do speaking and hear it? Yeah. Which, and that's difficult. Yeah. Yeah. Oh, thank you. I know we're getting a bit late, so are we okay to do the one third, the third sounding?

[00:05:46] And um, uh, but that's really interesting and helpful because Yes. Um, Because for some, for some people, when they hear a piece of music, they is hearing the music or maybe the voice and then don't hear all the best around it. But because it's harmonized or because they're used to hearing it, it doesn't, it's okay.

[00:06:11] But something like lots of voices together, yes, it can be. Um, cuz even you find it difficult, aren't you? With, with, uh, lots of voices. But then was this d. Well, I think, uh, that's why I was, I, I, you know, if I lean into people and the microphone and the hearing aid is pointing that way, then I can pick out that person.

[00:06:32] Cause that they are made to do that. So then I'm, I'm getting something from everybody. Yeah. And then, yeah, the rest of it is, uh, wash. Yeah. Right. Yeah. Yeah. I suppose that's another reason why it's Bible noise, because, I mean, it's almost making. , what is noise? And everything comes together. It does sound noisy.

[00:06:55] Mm-hmm. And I mean, I'm sure you've seen it with especially new Christians and Alpha. I mean, there's so much than questions coming from all these bits of the Bible. Mm-hmm. You know, because you can't make sense of all these because they are different voices. They are from

different, um, um, spaces, places, and, but we, we have, we think they belong together because, They come from the same breath, just as we come from the same breath.

[00:07:24] They come from Gods breath.

Whispering Grove 2 Discussion

https://on.soundcloud.com/2hWcN

[00:00:00] A thoughts or reflection or observation or not OB hearings.

[00:00:09] Can we use these texts as a basis of the new sermon series, puzzle? I was, um, some of them more obscure ones didn't come out, see, like this one. Then they mounted fours of precious stones on it. The first row was Carnalian Crystalite, and. I have the chairs in the wheels. Yeah. It's hard. Yeah. But maybe just that's that time quite resonant of everything.

[00:00:37] I think that's probably, I found it interesting because it started off from a respective of reading. I started off, I think doing okay what's, but towards the end I was just beginning to find it funny and I noticed my, I, I thought my voice was getting, Um, I kept hearing, hearing the word Cher all the time.

[00:00:58] Yeah. Well, I, I can say I'm sorry. I nearly got the go when Sue moved from close to me. I should have been, I really, really had, yeah. Because you , just, just in view of what you said about last time, you see, and that came to mind I think last time. Last time I did, was I listened to everybody methodically.

[00:01:17] Yeah, you did. Listened to the whole, you probably did all of the verses. Yeah. But, and very close as well. Yeah. Last, last time we were, we were ated for what? 20 minutes. It's, uh, but this time I could hear different, different words like, um, love your enemies and, and Jesus. Something about weeping and Yeah.

[00:01:39] Yeah, I found it, um, practically I found it really difficult to, cant five just have my fingers, like, have to give up on the, I'll just keep going. I think next time I'm probably take that off, but it's, it is to find out a way that, you know, you don't have Yeah. It gives you a guy, doesn't it? Yeah. Yeah. But yeah, counting it while you're saying it is, yeah.

[00:02:02] There's no natural sense of, uh, Times, I think sometimes I can get a four because I'm so used to counting four as using it. Okay. But yeah, I, I didn't, um, when I went in the middle, I kind of wanted to go over to, I couldn't hear Winston or Sheila at all, but I, I kind of felt I can't go . I dunno why, but I just, so I didn't, and I didn't really hear any of the texts apart from my own, apart from wheels.

[00:02:34] Something. Dunno what the enemies, it's basically wheels. I could hear , that was it. Oh, okay. But I, but I really enjoyed reading mine over and over again. Cause I thought the more I read it, the more it kind sank into me. But I couldn't really get a sense of what was coming out, out, what else was around me. I, Suzanne, Texas is one that stood out most to me as well because of Chair bi, because of wills.

[00:03:01] I knew instantly was from Ezekiel because as far as I'm aware of every, that's the only book that mentions Chair bi wills so closely to each other. But I also wonder how far was distinctive because those two words are quite distinctive in, in and of themselves. Ah, yes. And I dunno if that's phonetically speaking or if it's just because you know, a most like love your enemies.

[00:03:22] Um, Santa Cherry being whales and a very distinct, you know. Yeah. Very particular. Yeah. Yeah. So they stand out, or it should just be silly, just loud, but I'm, I was quite aware of needing, needing to, um, watch for the time when everybody had been in middle, so that was quite, I, I suppose I'm quite prioritized following, you know, a pattern, a set pattern of things.

[00:03:50] Quite a lot of my attention and, you know, other than reading my own, was watching for everybody logging whether everybody had been in the middle, and therefore whether we, you know, moved on to doing what we did at that stage. Yeah, yeah.

[00:04:08] Sorry. Yeah, I couldn't listen to him properly to anyone, so I was more looking for a passing in other people so that they could come to the middle and make . So you're more worried about kind of almost worry the procedural stuff rather than actual material and the content, yeah, of that, but I couldn't hear anything distinct.

[00:04:29] As soon as I listened to someone, there was something else distracting from the other side, so I was curious of another one. But as soon as I wanted to pick up that one, I moved to other one. . Yeah. I mean, I

couldn't distinguish between reverses. Mm-hmm. , um, you know, so every time I tried to focus, I mean, I had to say I knew what Sue was.

[00:04:48] I mean, I dunno chapter and verse, but I knew it was Ezekiel. Mm-hmm. and I, I knew roughly what she was saying, but I couldn't make out a whole sentence or over verse. And, um, I think Fiona was the other person I could really hear. . Um, again, I couldn't really make out what the actual verse was. It was just too much dissonance, if you like.

[00:05:11] Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. . Um, not in a bad way, but just it was difficult to distinguish between the voices. Yeah. I think that made me focus more on what my own words were. Cuz it made it almost like you were in a cocoon. I don't know, but that you Yeah. Really focused on. Cause you. Well, I couldn't take in what else was going on, so it made me feel like could focus more on what I was saying.

[00:05:37] I, I suppose. So would you say that the other voices going on caused you to focus more or would the same thing would happen through alone, I guess was the question? No, I think it would, it, it created a space. Yeah, where I went inward for me. Oh, okay. What I realized immediately that Terry's was a lot shorter than mine, you see?

[00:05:56] Because I was, I'd only got through it and then Terry was in the middle before, you know, you was the first one.

[00:06:04] I've still got, you know, lots to, lots to read from. So yes, that was interesting. But if you will, if you will choose one something from Isaiah if you'll, I didn't choose it. . I think she shorter than you. Just looking at the really, the true light that gives light. Yeah. I think it's interesting for me because.

[00:06:23] I could hear each one absolutely. Individually. Mm-hmm. , you could, I could. Yeah. Yeah. You knew what they were? Not really. No. No. You hadn't really looked? No. No. Okay. Cause I just, you literally just got them. I did this this morning. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. I essentially did the randomization, just kind of copy and paste it and didn't look at them.

[00:06:46] Um, . So, um, I guess I'm wondering if, if it happens again, if, if, you know, whether, um, it would change things as whether you would listen out more or mm-hmm. , um, and obviously this time I made that extra stipulation of don't stay too long, so obviously there's even more to think about. Yeah. Rather than just to be mm-hmm.

[00:07:10] Mm-hmm. . Um, so I suppose I'm, I'm, I need, I don't know how, how, how, how could I, that situation in a way that allows people to be, but at the same time be mindful of others, I suppose. Are you allowed to look at other people's, um, lips and you know, or how, whether they're stopping and you know, or they're looking out for space in the middle, having finished five times, or you just allowed to only hear them?

[00:07:42] Cuz I ended up looking at some of the faces like. worry the other people. Sorry. And then, then you're worrying about the other people rather than just thinking about your Yeah. What you are doing. Yeah. Cause it's about your experience, so, oh, right. What experience I remember last time, so you closed your, you closed your eyes as well, didn't you?

[00:07:59] Ah, been helpful. I couldn listen more properly. Yeah. I eyes so I couldn't, I couldn't see everyone say Get out . And I just listen to every single. But then you come step in the middle or look out for someone else's replacement, like go into that space. I guess you don't need to look for the replacement.

[00:08:18] Right. Because it's all about the timing of when they finish. So it's all about, so it's all about them and their timing that allows you to come in. Yes. It's not, uh, that's the procedure. So it's a chance thing rather than a particular coming because each length is different. Yeah.

[00:08:39] And if he's our memory verse, is the week ? Yes, we have. Yes. Yes. I submit all this as documentation. No, I don't. Um, um, okay. Um, anything, anything else about this? Um,

Appendix – C: Forms of Polyphony

This appendix lists different forms of polyphony with Western music. It relates to the discussion on polyphony in chapter 3.

Forms of Polyphony

The lexical presentation below shows how simultaneous sounds have different nuances in being experienced. The list is no way exhaustive but rather indicative of varied practices and understandings of polyphony.

Counterpoint

Counterpoint is a form of simultaneous sounding in music that was developed in Europe during 12th to 16th centuries. It is described as: 'the coherent combination of distinct melodic lines in music.'[767] In counterpoint each part is of 'significance of itself' but when combined with others results in a 'coherent texture.'[768] Within these two basic definitions it is important to note that the different voices require some sort of 'coherence.' The different 'voices' (or melodic lines) are meant to be controlled so that they do not 'undermine the perceived coherence of the musical result.'[769] Counterpoint has different distinct voices simultaneously sounding but does so according to certain rules. Such a form of codified coexistence of sound leads back to the notion of harmony that I spoke of above where voices are always in service to 'coherence.'

There are different kinds of counterpoint and the most rigid of those is 'strict counterpoint' developed by Johann Joseph Fux.[770] There are other forms of counterpoint especially from the 20th century where there is more freedom given to the individual voices. Linear counterpoint is such a form which emphasises the individual voices to develop without adhering to the surrounding melodies.[771]

Heterophony

Heterophony is 'the simultaneous sounding of a melody with an elaborated variant of it.'[772] This means a melody is performed by different voices or instruments together and each voice might vary their melody distinct from others in the group. Heterophony is used to describe non-Western music practices like those from Indonesia but it can be heard all

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[767] Whittall, 'Counterpoint'.

[768] Kennedy, Kennedy, and Rutherford-Johnson, 'Counterpoint'.

[769] Whittall, 'Counterpoint'.

[770] Rothgeb, 'Review of Counterpoint in Composition', 308.

[771] Kennedy, Kennedy, and Rutherford-Johnson, 'Linear Counterpoint'.

[772] Whittall, 'Heterophony'.

over the world. In heterophony the difference arises from the embellishments made by the individual voices rather than from different melodic ideas.

Homophony

Homophony is the sounding of simultaneous music sounds where one voice or part is the main melody. Other voices and parts are accompanying or chordal. The accompanying voices are present only for the main voice and need not have independence of its own melodically or rhythmically. This form of simultaneous sounding is found in Victorian hymnody which is sung in churches across the world.[773]

Organum

Organum is a form of simultaneous vocal singing that developed in Europe during 8th Century AD onwards. There was a clear demarcation of the 'main voice' – the melodic line and other voices sung in harmony to this main voice. One voice is given precedence over others, where the other voices have to sing in a predefined relationship to the main voice.[774] It can be understood as a 'simpler' form of Homophony.

Polyphony

Polyphony is also a term that refers to certain European sacred musics of the 16th century. Polyphony in this sense used counterpoint and other harmonic devices where each voice would have a degree of independence while also expressing the main melodic ideas.[775] I must make it clear that my use of the term polyphony is *not* in this sense.

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[773] Bourne and Kennedy, 'Homophony'.

[774] Bourne and Kennedy, 'Organum'.

[775] Dunsby, 'Polyphony'.