

SCRIPTINGS#10

Speech Practice: Disassembling Voice

But in the film I don't die of course. Cartoons are unlimited. And when you're unlimited, it's the ultimate.

as she turns her feet 90 degrees

he is walking back and forth (unbrokenly)

I wonder, what does it mean for Michael Jackson to have a name. To have his own Michael Jackson-name.

**he is walking back and forth
(unbrokenly)**

I am dissatisfied with these words: freakishness as much as utopia. At the moment of his death I was astonished what an irregular, spleenish figure the world had come to admire irrevocably. I think people did not know that actually they are ready to love someone who changes his skin, his nose, his sex, his voice as someone very close to them — to let someone in that much — but very subconsciously there was a lot of gratitude, forgiveness and courtesy involved in loving Michael Jackson. Loving Michael Jackson at the center of everybody.

**as she turns
her fingers**

**as she
is lifting up
her arms in
the round,**

Maybe in Michael Jackson's relation to objects, to cars, to pets and animals he readily accepts the power of the glove, the hat, the cars, transformers, the insignia, who just like him belong to the realm of magic. Who just like him are instruments. Instruments of music, but also always ready for being played, being played out.

**he is balancing on his foot until
— coinciding with her rolling on
the ground — he collapses**

In the beginning you might think, you'd express yourself, and you don't make clear to yourself that at the base of the expression there is an impression, that is not deriving from yourself, not deriving from oneself. To let your subjectivity take its course, but from a moment where you can have something objective right under control — body, voice, movement.

**as he is
measuring
his space,
calmly**

**she is
measuring her space, calmly**

**they are close for seconds
their pictures nearly touch one another**

rising up with both feet on the ground

Michael Jackson makes the appearance of appearances, because his is the impossibility of appearance. He cannot speak, because people scream, he cannot reach out because people would tear him apart. He is the place of a we that is bigger than ever.

His resonance in us could appear as marionettes that realise an impossible appearance, as a shadow play, in the script.

rising up with both feet on the ground

I feel a knot in my throat hearing the absence of voice in your space

The softest voice: the voice of his later years appears as pure technique, a command that would yet tear apart, that shoots out and overshoots the mark. That shrieks and collapses.

Can Jackson's disassembling voice be written? What does it mean to enter the space introduced by this vocal gesture? What kind of images are constituted along with their articulation either in writing or dancing? How do they come about?

she feels a knot in her throat

The image of a voice, or rather any voice, brought into language. Its articulation is what falls into time. What kind of belonging, companionship or complicity is played out?

hearing the absence of the voice in his space

I think of Michael Jackson, a younger one, of this different and yet similar voice, it is Jackson aged 14 singing *Aint No Sunshine When She's Gone* – a voice in between gender that crawls up your spine, and a softness that later will appear as pure technique and yet would tear you apart, touch you inescapably. The later voice, as special as it is specialised, exemplary as far as it was a voice that would be the sign of the other by being excluded from any specific group, recognizable, inimitable and maybe already an imitation, a mimesis of a self (the younger version). A strangeness that was given and a strangeness that was an aspect of forming the self as an aesthetic singularity, a voice that also in speech would be an event, a line of flight.

do think twice don't think twice

Speaking with a written voice. Breathing is a string that you are incessantly tied into and it is through breathing that your lungs and everybody else's lungs access the same space. As voice is a modulation of breath, what does it really mean then to become common in entering Jackson's voice? Would that also mean asking to whom this voice belongs? To expose the mechanics of the instable organ that is dance.

By his appearance alone Jackson made bodily change acceptable to an almost unacceptable degree. At the center of the impossible appearance is a dissolution, a destabilisation of the constituent, also bodily, parts. To expose the mechanics of this change is dance, it is pure dance.

rising up with both feet on the ground

rotating arms breathing out

rotating arms breathing out turning round

What kind of vocabulary constitutes itself with Jackson's disassembling voice and its disappropriation at all costs? How does that vocabulary relate the question of an exemplary space to that of contemporaneity?

a-how

**lying on the back,
looking at her feet
with closed eyes**

Also here shines up a shift or threshold that renders the belongings of a thing or being to one realm or the other. I just can't think of anyone else who crossed that threshold as incessantly as Jackson, held himself in such an unattainable space and did so in the figure of an ageless child who had left all attributes of belonging behind.

**that dream of
being the one**

who will dance

on the floor

in the round

The dark light shining blindingly is dysphoria, it means to appear without a body that would belong to oneself, it is appearing in the figure that is entirely *entäußert*, given over to the realm of everybody.

**... that his own responses to his voice are
incorporated into the performance — imagining
a lung around the thigh bone**

turning turning tiptoeing swirling and driving

**I don't think, I ever heard Michael's
breathing — but I do hear the dancers' breathing
here — and heard Ingrid's early on yesterday**

The history of human beings is perhaps nothing other than the hand-to-hand confrontation with the apparatuses they have produced; above all with language.

The point of a successful aesthetic singularity is that it crosses over directly into the form of the universal, without all those mediations that usually come in between. Something is so absolutely unique (even when we can trace all the sources from which it arose) and so absolutely, aching, joyously or heart-wrenchingly right, or just itself, that it becomes a kind of universal value. Something which in this case tends towards or within time unfolds as an unbearable singularity. How is this aesthetic singularity written into his voice. Is it the affectuous, the ephemeral, the bodily demarcations — yelps, hiccups — as well as technique, control that uncontrols that mark the aesthetic singularity as voice? Is it an impossible voice?

**but then she
changes
perspective**

**too high
to get on top of,
too low to get under
feeling like a movie
king or queen**

There is a common place, being bound into voice, movement and dance, the apparatuses (like language) in which we appear. But to be honest, I guess, you could say that it hurts to be me. Being in a deeply sad place. We tried to think of a dark light, where it is about being played out in your gestures, where your life is at risk. With Jackson there is not just the energetic, euphoric commonality, but a commonality which the dysphoric — when the energy is over and a nearly invisible man walks to his trailer — is maybe as much part of.

I guess it was she who wrote:

**“Actually, these hiccups feel like they were caused by
a kind of asphyxia, when muscles have too much
tension (and you want to push the limit in a way or
another), the respiration can be blocked and a yawn
can be activated by physical mechanisms.”**

— now —

and then she wrote:

**“Back to respiration! If I want to speak (especially English) really fast
in order to squeeze a certain amount of information into a limited
period of time, yelps or hiccups will appear.”**

and also:

**“the routine to allow the hiccups as a space for freedom OUTSIDE
of the rhythm and inside the rhythm.”**

her hand is touching his hand on the inside

A life is ethical not when it simply submits to moral laws, but when it accepts putting itself into play in its gestures, irrevocably and without reserve — even at the risk that its happiness or its disgrace will be decided once and for all.

Desire, utopia, movie-making sequences, the empty place's shift to Pepsi-generation, it is here that Jackson is paradigmatic.

lying on the back looking at his feet with closed eyes

he is walking beside her

Another word I have difficulties with is utopia. Translated from Greek *utopia* designates a non-place, and that I think may be an essential part of Jackson: occupying a non-place, maybe in an utopian way. But the difference lies exactly in this concept of future and potential inherent to utopia. I would like to try to locate Jackson's prophetic quality less in the difference between now and a possible future and thus the will that can shape a different world, but rather in his unoccupiable place, in his incessant transformation that reveals nothing really, but that performs the disintegration of the body, the empty place.

he is falling beside her

she is falling beside him

balancing quickly on one foot, letting the song move up and down his spine

What we grasp from Christianity, which would now be the rest of the self-deconstructed Christianity: opening a space to see something that was present in it, but perhaps unseen and perhaps unseeable. How does that belong to Jackson, which voice is present in the voice but perhaps unseen and perhaps unseeable? Which voice was present in the song, but unsung or unheard? Among the things that perhaps remain from Christianity, belonging to it, but belonging to it as a kind of precondition that Christianity itself knows, but at the same time obscures by religion and by the repressive power of religion, if you want, amongst those things of course is love. The famous Christian love which is in one word: impossible love.

like an "S" wandering through the body, his toes are dancing on the ground. The fingers trying to grasp the air to get a hold of ... what? Mirroring his toes, maybe? His "S" transforms in all directions and not just up and down the spine, also bending to the left, bending to the right, twisting the hips

falling apart, gliding, sliding

yesterday;

she was falling beside him

Utopos meant the place that cannot be, whereas *eutopos* was the good or happy place, where the good or beautiful has already been realised. *Utopos* was the place of the virtual, that which in realisation would be destroyed, realising the unrealisable or that which shall not be realised. An impossible appearance – that doubling of being inimitable and at the same time resonating within everybody.

he was walking beside her

she, is dancing alone with Michael

The disassembling voice then is the introduction of an element that undoes the assembling within any category, resonating and incorporating its own resonance as undoing? I mean, as mariottes in language, or rather, in writing, this voice introduces itself as a space that would link to the question of authorship. Then again what about consumption?

— now —

she was walking beside him

he was falling beside her

The commodification of love or the love-isation of commodity?

"do you remember dancing on your own in your nursery"

falling apart, gliding, sliding

A transformation, not in order to achieve anything, but rather to avoid and escape the moment of aging, engaging with friends, people, being mortal. Instead setting into motion a machine of transformation as a way of trying to stay in one place, an impossible place? An activity, therefore, that revolves around itself and thus – though that seems to be just not true thinking of the devastating effect all the continuous transformations have had – some kind of movement which in its realisation wouldn't be destroyed, a potential that doesn't dissolve in the act. The voice that incorporates its own response to the potentiality of being saved in the act, thus a *eutopia*?

— she asks —

To be mobilized is to relate to work not as an activity, but as a possibility. Capitalism got as much as it could from undoing all the old social ties, and it is now in the process of remaking itself by rebuilding these same ties on its own conditions.

now she is walking alone in the round and speeding up, slowing down squeezing with her sneakers

"... the sun coming in around 4 o'clock?"

measuring space, calmly slowing down squeezing with sneakers

Because there was also conflict in this love: Jackson's diffuse expression of sexuality, which so many people have found disturbing, because it doesn't fit into any normative paradigm, is the line of flight along which he continued to singularize himself, to a point beyond which universalisation was no longer possible.

**moving the lower leg
fluttering like a broom above
the ground and then the same
with her bare hand as if
beckoning the floor**

Still I find with Jackson a twist of the unseen or unsung, that what is covered, where I find more and more that to his being an instrument there is another, maybe prophetic layer. Pepsi could not overwrite the lines of *Billie Jean*. I guess, at the end of the day we have no clue what it really designates.

**well,
I will continue
to feel alone
like "him"**

the fluidity he has

Then Every Head Turned With Eyes That Dreamed Of Being The One

Colophon

Speech Practice: Disassembling Voice derives from a two-day open rehearsal that took place on March 3/4, 2010, at Iaspis, Stockholm. The linguistic intensity of Michael Jackson's song *Billie Jean* formed its repetitious, though silent, focus.

Participating writers:
Ingrid Cogne,
Sönke Hallmann,
Anders Jacobson,
Achim Lengerer,
Patricia Reed,
Elske Rosenfeld,
Tanja Widmann,
Inga Zimprich.

Participating performers:
Ingrid Cogne,
Anders Jacobson.

And further guests joining during the public sessions.

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Giorgio Agamben,
Mark Fisher,
Michael Jackson,
Jean-Luc Nancy,
Steven Shaviro and
The Invisible Committee.

Proof-reading:
Elske Rosenfeld.

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