

Sound constructs

A constructionist discourse of sound processes and listening.

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Overture

This article outlines a very particular view of social constructionism. It is a view that treats all discourses, including its self, Science, what it is to be human... as relational constructions. Detailed attention is given to the processes in which “relational realities” may be constructed and to their (often neglected) oral/aural aspects – here referred to as sound qualities. It is suggested that when oral/aural ways of relating are well developed, these tend to be associated with relatively “soft” self/other differentiation. It is further suggested that relational constructionist work could benefit from increased attention to sound, silence and listening in relation to “soft” differentiation. Such work could re-construct listening (a) as “power to” be open to and appreciative of other (b) as multi-sensual/embodied, and (c) as vitally important for “the patient labours of co-existence”. Such re-constructions could help management and organisation studies develop micro theories (e.g., of leadership, of listening) and more “wholistic” approaches (systems theories, chaos theory, complexity theory) that are non-dualistic, that are sensual/embodied and that are capable of acknowledging the spiritual aspects of organisational life.

Having refrained the themes of our composition we can continue to the subject of the first movement. This develops our construction of *relational processes* as (a) inter-actions that are (b) multiple and often simultaneous and (c) local/cultural/historical. This subject gives way to the second movement in which we reflect on visual qualities of relating and how these might participate in the construction of hard self/other differentiations. This development brings us

to our final movement – an exploration of listening as a quality of sound processes and “soft” self-other differentiation.

Critical relational constructionism.

Introducing the discourse.

I am using the term “critical relational constructionism” (CRC) to identify a particular bundle of interrelated “lines of distinction” that together comprise a “discourse” (Deetz, 1996). The “lines” have long histories and come from many different local-cultural contexts (see e.g., Danziger, 1997; Gergen, 1994; Hosking and Morley, 2004). The latter include feminism, feminist and other radical critiques of science, the parts of western philosophy that managed to avoid ‘following in the footsteps of Plato’, literary criticism, cognitive and social psychology, interactionist, cognitive, and phenomenological sociologies, radical family therapy, critical social anthropology and some expressions of postmodernism and post structuralism (e.g., Latour, 1987; Foucault, 1980).

Instead of centring mind and ‘real’ reality the discourse of CRC centres communications as processes in which relational realities are constructed - including constructions of persons and contexts - and including constructions of science and scientific inquiry. So unlike (social) constructivism CRC is not a local theory concerning mind operations that construct versions of external reality. And in contrast to (post) positivist constructions of social science perspectives, this is not a perspective that assumes relativism (‘anything goes’) necessarily replaces (some version of) realism. Rather this is another ‘map’ about another territory (to borrow Korzybski’s metaphor¹). Given this map, the objective-subjective, real-relativist dualisms are viewed as socio-historical “lines of distinction”(sic) that are local to discourse(s) other than ours (see Deetz, 1996; Hosking, 2005).

The following seem to represent some of the key themes that make-up the discourse or “intelligibility nucleus” (Gergen, 1994) of CRC:

- Assumptions about a singular self, individual mind operations and individual knowledge give way to a centring of relational processes.
- Relational processes are viewed as person/world making – as inter-actions that (re)construct local ontologies or “forms of life”.
- The unitary conception of self gives way to a dialogical-processual conception of multiple self/other relations in ongoing construction.

- Otherⁱⁱ is no longer discoursed as ‘outside’, existing independently of self; the discourse of inside - outside is re-storied as a variable (local/cultural/historical) construction.
- Self/other relations are seen as constructions. Relational processes *may* construct closed or “hard differentiation” (subject-object) between self and other but do not have to. In other words, subject-object relations are no longer assumed to be ‘how things really are’ (ontology) or assumed as a normative standard on which objective knowledge (epistemology) depends.
- Relational processes close down or open up possible selves and worlds; not ‘anything goes’.
- Relational processes (re)construct both stability *and* change.
- Reflexivity is more or less characteristic of all relational processes and not just those that some call Science. Reflexivity echoes past inter-actions and poses the possibility of re-production as well as the possibility of change.

Developing the refrain of processes.

Inter-actions. In the discourse of CRC, talk of the individual as having A Self and as possessing their own mind and individual knowledge gives way to a discourse of relational processes viewed broadly as inter-actions or communications. This of course raises the question of how the inter-actions are understood. Constructionist writings have usually given *language* a central role – not as a way of representing some independently existing reality – but as a key medium in which re-presenting (as constructing) ‘goes on’. Put slightly differently, in this discourse, language derives its significance from *the ways it is used* in human relationships and the forms of life it supports (Gergen, 1994. emphasis added). This emphasis on language gets away from the dualistic distinctions and characterisations that discourse an external world with properties, humans with senses (that can collect data about that world), and ‘internal mind operations’ that process the data for knowledge construction.

Relational processes are discoursed using a variety of linguistic tools. Some seem to emphasise *written and spoken language* by using terms such as story telling, conversation, narrative, and discourse. In addition, the term “*performance*” sometimes is used – perhaps to gesture more towards the possibility of non-linguistic actions – perhaps more strongly to suggest an ontological (rather than epistemological) discourse of construction (see e.g.,

Newman and Holtzman, 1997). Some writers employ the term “*actant*” and write of networks of relations between actants. This seems neatly to avoid suggesting that construction is an individual act and clearly signals the relevance of inter-actions between non-human objects. For example, Latour speaks of an actant as “whoever and whatever is represented” (Latour, 1987 p84) including people, objects, statements, facts, events... and the processes of enrolling and controlling that construct and stabilise realityⁱⁱⁱ. Broadly speaking, I use the term “inter-action” (a) to signal a performance (b) that involves a coming together (c) of “whoever and whatever” and in so doing (re)constructs person/world relations as (d) relational realities.

This discourse of inter-action can be distinguished from what, in psychology, is called (social) *constructivism*. First, it makes it clear that we are talking about human and non-human actants as both contributors to and products of reality construction processes. Second, reality construction is clearly storied as a process of inter-relating actants and not individual action and interpersonal relations. Third, the discourse of CRC assumes the “textuality” (Stenner & Eccleston, 1994) of *all* relational realities rather than discoursing just written and spoken texts as the textual objects of the knowing scientists’ regard. Part of what this means is that CRC reflexively and critically regards its self as a relational construction. This contrasts with (social) *constructivist* writings that tacitly claim a superior vantage point (that of science) from which the constructions of others can be better observed.

Multiple, simultaneous inter-actions. (Post)positivist empiricist research often assumes that it can be helpful to reduce the complexity of interaction to simple behavioural acts performed in sequence and objectively definable. Sharp distinctions are made between what are discoursed as science/the scientist, human actors, natural and man-made objects, and language; scientific interest is discoursed as being in objective knowledge about Other. For example, if we consider Magritte’s painting *Ceci n’est pas une pipe*, a common discourse would construct the painter, the painting, the viewer and other possibly relevant inter-acts as independent entities. In this way, complex, ongoing, relational processes are constructed as a seemingly singular and stable ‘it’ (e.g., the painting) in relation to an other ‘it’ (e.g., the viewer) and in relation to the Aristotelian logic of either-or (IT is either a pipe or it is not). In contrast, CRC opens up the “black box” (Latour, 1987) of relating: by centring multiple, simultaneous inter-actions (rather than a singular object); by centring the production – the performance or ‘the how’ - of ongoing processes (rather than ‘the what’ of inputs and/or

outputs), and; by staying open to the possibility of multiple and changing constructions as ‘content’^{iv}.

Critical Relational Constructionism assumes that many simultaneous inter-acts continuously participate in the always ongoing processes of constructing relational realities. So, for example, in the case of Magritte’s painting, relational processes *simultaneously* implicate *multiple inter-related* actants (we could say [con]texts) which could include relating the visual symbol (which many would say was a picture of a pipe) with the written text below it (which says ‘Ceci n’est pas une pipe’), the written text with the French language (so translating it as ‘this is not a pipe’), the written text with the Dutch language (and perhaps coming up with non-sense), narratives of earlier viewings, of what others have said about the painting, of what counts as a painting, of what is appropriately called a ‘pipe’ and so on. This means that the question ‘what is it?’ could invite many equally plausible answers depending on the *particular* inter-relating of texts: it’s a pipe, ‘it’s a painting of a pipe’, ‘it’s a paradox’, ‘it is a work of art’ and so on.^v

Local/cultural/historical constructions. CRC discourses relating as a process of (re)constructing stabilized effects or patterns. These can include social conventions, musical forms, organisational, and societal structures, western psychology, what some might call nature, facts or artefacts... multiple self/other constructions. But not all inter-acts are stabilised. Some go unheard, unseen, unnoticed... Furthermore, the fate of any actant depends on its relations with other actants and whether or not it gets warranted as ‘real and good’ (Gergen, 1994). Or, as Latour would have it: the fate of a statement depends on others who have to read it, take it up and use it - others have to be “enrolled” and they have to be “controlled” (Latour, 1987).

Some cultures or “forms of life” are able to “enrol” and “control” on a larger scale than others and so may appear, for example, to have more powerful Gods or to have better methods for producing objective knowledge. Once a particular performance becomes stabilized e.g., a greeting convention, a particular sonata form, what counts as middle C... other possibilities may find it harder to achieve warrant. As Beethoven discovered at one of his premiers, it may be harder to “enrol” and “control” an audience when its participants are sure they already know what is ‘real and good’! Such difficulties are especially likely to be encountered when

subject-object relations that implicate discourses of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ are already stabilised (see e.g., Deetz, 2000).

Our reference to local/cultural/historical processes should be understood in contrasting relation to narratives of general (trans-contextual, trans-historical) knowledge about reality. Critical Relational Constructionism emphasises that what is warranted or discredited is *local to the ongoing practices that (re)construct a particular culture or ‘form of life’* e.g., the sonata form in western (and not Japanese) music. But as we have seen, inter-actions vary in the scale of their inter-connections. This means that ‘local’ could be as broad as Western or post-enlightenment. The locals (including scientists) may take it for granted that their particular constructions are universal facts. However our critical discourse suggests the essential artfulness of stabilised effects and draws attention to the relational processes that make and re-make them.

CRC also speaks of the historical quality of relational processes/realities. But of course this has a particular meaning given our particular con-texts. So we are not referring to knowledge of some temporary truth in the con-text of some possible permanent truth. Further, we do not intend to discourse a view of historical processes in which the present is a moment between (the now finished) past and the (yet to come) future. Such a view goes together with the separation of means and ends, process and content, “tool and result” (Newman & Holtzman, 1997) and reproduces a very particular (western? post-enlightenment?) construction of time. Rather we say that relational processes have a “historical quality” in the sense that actants always supplement pre-existing actants and have implications for how processes will go on. In other words, the ongoing present re-produces some previous structurings e.g., the convention of shaking hands and acts in relation to possible and probable futures e.g., that a greeting will be successfully performed. We could say that all actants (texts) supplement other actants (con-texts) *and* are available for possible supplementation and possible (dis)crediting. In the discourse of CRC, inter-actions, and particularly regularly repeated ones, ‘make history’ so to speak and history is constantly being re-made (see also Vico, 1744; Hora, 1966).

Relational realities. We have said that multiple, simultaneous processes of relating inter-actions (re)construct persons/world relations. In this discourse the individual is not the agent of reality construction but rather is constructed and re-constructed in ongoing processes. In

this view, identity (and other assumed entity characteristics such as personality, organizational goals and structures...) is not singular and fixed and does not function as the necessary defining characteristic of someone or something. Rather identity and the assumed characteristics of entities are theorised (a) as relational and so (b) multiple and variable (e.g., different identities in different self-other relations), and (c) as performed rather than possessed in local/cultural/historical networks of ongoing relations. In sum, relational processes are “reality-constituting practice(s)” (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p.27) that construct markets, nature, science, facts, machines, self/other... as relational realities.

Constructing self/other relations: the emergence of visualism and hard differentiation

As we have seen (heard?) CRC centres relational processes and speaks of these as the ongoing production site of self/other. In this view, self/other *may* be sharply differentiated in subject-object relation - but this is viewed as a social construction and not as a ‘fact of nature’. This argument resonates with Foucault’s suggestion that “...we should ask: under what conditions and through what forms can an entity like the subject appear in the order of discourse; what positions does it occupy; what functions does it exhibit; and what rules does it follow in each type of discourse?” (Foucault 1977, pp.137-138).

Many have explored such “conditions”, “positions” or “forms”. They have done so, for example, by reflecting on the relative dominance of vision and audition and how this relates to constructions of self/other – including constructions of nature, of Science, of what it is to be a person, of secular and sacred and so on (e.g., Berman 1983; 1990; Berquist, 1996; Berendt, 1992; Fiumara, 1990; Koivunen, 2003, 2006; Levine, 1989; Toulmin, 1990; Ong, 1967). Central to many of these accounts is a discussion of language as heard and spoken relative to language as written and seen. For example, Ong (1967) in *The Presence of the Word* writes about cultural-historical variations in the relative dominance of audition and vision, how this relates to the other senses, and how it is reflected in the relationship between word and sound. In common with others such as Berman, Latour, and Toulmin, he writes of a shifting dominance from the spoken word to the written word, of “the greater visualism initiated by script and the alphabet” (p8) and the further stimulation of visualism by the mechanical reproduction of print, the increased use of maps, and physical exploration of the world. “The modern age was thus much more the child of typography than it has commonly been made out to be” (Ong, 1967, p9).

According to Ong, “one of the most striking and informative” differences between oral/aural cultures and cultures dominated by the alphabet and print concerns their relationship with time. In oral/aural cultures and in the absence of ‘look up’ facilities, the past is present in what people say and do, in the performances of epic singers, storytellers and poets, in the arts of oratory and rhetoric... performances that join play, celebration, and community with learning. In such cultures the word is clearly a vocalisation, a happening, an event... experienced as “contact with actuality and with truth” (Ong, 1967.p33). However, by the time of Plato, some three centuries after the development of the Greek alphabet, it became possible to write about “ideas” (which, in Greek, means *the look* of a thing) – conceived not as events but as “motionless ‘objective’ existence, impersonal, and out of time” (Ong, 1967p.34).

Cultures dominated by the alphabet and print are said to give a more permanent sense of existence to the word. So, for example, words that are visualised in written form are frozen in space – made seemingly timeless by being stripped from the progression of sound in time. And words, by being made representations in space “suggest inevitably a quiescence and fixity which is unrealisable in actual sound” (Ong, 1967 p44)... Ong goes on to make an important connection between this seeming “quiescence and fixity” and relations of power between self and other, between word and world: “the sense of order and control which the alphabet thus imposes is overwhelming” (Ong, 1967.p45).

Other developments were also interconnected with the increasingly strong links between *vision* and language. One such was the idea and the valorisation of “literal” meaning. This is understood as meaning that is ‘according to the letter’ i.e., that is clear-cut and distinct - unlike complex and polysemous utterances. A related development was individualism as reflected in the increasing association of knowledge with books, in constructions of individual property (books, records, knowledge, copyright...), in constructions of the solitary thinker and so on. By the 18th Century Descartes could sever thinking from its links with sound-based communications - with spoken language and with listening. Thinking could instead be constructed as something that went on silently ‘in the mind’ - and perhaps even without words. Similarly, Locke could visualise the mind as a *camera obscura* receiving “external visual resemblances or ideas of things” (Ong, 1967.p67) and Kant could visualise knowledge as phenomena – from the Greek *phainomenon* meaning “appearance”, “to show”, to expose to sight” (Ong, 1967.p74). Observation, an activity for the eyes, increasingly dominated mans relationship to him self and to the (by then ‘outside’) world. And constructions of the world

had been transformed - from a world of oral/aural events in time - into a world of visual events in space.

Ong spoke of these changes as a transformation of “the sensorium”. By this he meant to refer to relations between the senses and the mind and sound and language – which he viewed as local/cultural/historical constructions. The world had been re-constructed as a world of dead objects existing in spatial relations and more or less well represented by dead and relatively permanent texts. Self and other had been re-constructed as separate existences in subject-object relation. These and many other many interrelated shifts had (re)constructed a “neutralized, devocalized physical world” where man was “a kind of stranger, a spectator and manipulator... rather than a participator” (Ong, 1967,p73). Self/other relations had become “dis-encharmed”; the sense of “participating consciousness” characteristic of oral/aural communications had been largely lost.

“The view of nature which predominated in the West down to the eve of the Scientific Revolution was that of an enchanted world. Rock, trees, rivers and clouds were all seen as wondrous, alive, and human beings felt at home in this environment. The cosmos, in short, was a place of belonging” (Ong 1983, p.16).

Another way of describing this transformation of self/other and their relationship is to say that “soft” self/other differentiation had given way to a “hard differentiation” (Berman, 1990) in which self and other were sharply separated and opposed in subject-object relation. Mechanical philosophy and materialist science had together produced dead texts of representation and a dead (secularised and de-natured) universe. Through non-participating knowledge constructed as an individual possession Descartes, and those that came after him could aim to make men the “masters and possessors of nature” (Descartes, 1637).

Returning to CRC, we are now invited to consider the possibility that many constructionist treatments of language may implicitly or explicitly reproduce the dominance of vision and visual actants. So, for example, the frequently commented on ‘shift to text’ seems to be primarily a shift to *written* text^{vi}. Although constructionist writings *theorise* language as action research practices often reduce action to the frozen and visualised word. So live talk is regularly turned into dead texts – into interview transcripts that can be analysed. The arguments of Ong, Berman and others suggest that focussing on the written word may promote visual qualities, stasis, and space to the relative neglect of sound, ongoing processes and time. This emphasis may restrict our practical ability to depart from subject-object

relations – even though this is theoretically possible - and even though good reasons have been produced for so doing (e.g., Anderson, 1990; Gergen, 1995; Dachler and Hosking, 1995). *If we wish to explore the possibilities of non subject-object ways of relating it may be precisely these sound qualities of processes that need to be amplified.*

Sound constructs.

Some qualities of oral/aural processes

So, could more explicit and focussed attention on the possible sound qualities of relating help with the (re)construction of self/other relations in ways that are more “soft” rather than “hard” subject-object? This movement attempts to answer this by reviewing some key themes concerning the sound qualities of processes.

Constructions in time and in the middle of action. Whilst experience necessarily involves some sense of duration sound seems to be experienced as most obviously *active and ongoing*. Sound is more likely to be experienced as ‘in progress’ when compared, for example, with a visual experience. Part of what this means is that sound, be it the spoken word, music, a passing car, the call of a bird... seems “*irrevocably committed to time*” (Ong, 1967, p40). In addition, the experience of sound as passing or going out of existence *gives a sense of presence*. This includes a sense of “presence to the word” (Ong, 1967), a sense of presence to silence and a sense of presence in the ‘here and now’. Further, when we hear sounds we know that something is ‘going on’ – we feel ourselves to be in the middle of action in a way that is not true when we look at dead texts (Ong, 1967; Berendt, 1992). Looking means seeing surfaces and what is in front of our eyes; hearing is all around, we are surrounded by sound. Sound, silence, intervals between sounds... situates us *in* the world, “in the middle of actualite” (Ong, 1967 p128). So a stronger sense of participating in a world of sound may strengthen our sense of being part of the world (soft self/other differentiation) rather than apart from it.

Verwijderd: t

Past and future are in the ‘here and now’. Time is constructed in sound in ways that are very different from the visual, spatialized communications that came to dominate science and modernity. In aural/oral-cultural communications the past is present in live action in talk, in music, and in regularly re-constructed conventional practices. Bergson (1934) called this lived experience of time “*duree*”. In his view, lived time interweaves past, present and future to produce an indivisible process or *elan vital* that encompasses everything that lives

(Schroder, 2005). Similarly, in music “past and present merge” for example in that “all previous notes play a part in the current one” making the experience of harmony and melody possible (Berendt 1992; also Barenboim, 2006). “The future is also involved to the extent that within the harmonious progression of music, the note sounding ‘now’ anticipates the future note in which it will be resolved” (Berendt, 1992, p.44). Greater sensitivity to sound constructions may help to open the way to a sense of time as lived experience, to a sense of time passing, and to a sense of presence/presents in the world.

Participating in multiplicity and simultaneity. Sound “situates man in the middle” not just in the sense of “actualite” (sic) but also in the middle of simultaneity and multiplicity. For example, we relate to sounds in front, behind, above, below... “all these things simultaneously... I not only can but must hear all the sounds around me at once.” (Ong 1967, p129). A chord consists of multiple notes played simultaneously; polyphonic music – be it called jazz, fugue, or opera buffo – involves multiple, simultaneous voices. And a note produced by the human voice, a hammer striking a string, or air moving across a reed, produces multiple overtones. Tempered tuning and modern Western instruments have greatly limited the multiplicity of these overtones, so “isolating, alienating, and sundering things from their natural context” (Berendt, 1992 p.163). So clearly it is possible to be more or less open to simultaneity and multiplicity and sensitivity to the sound qualities of processes could facilitate such openness.

Knowing and becoming are one. In oral/aural cultures, knowledge is clearly active and ongoing, a live process rather than a dead thing. In oral/aural cultures knowledge: is kept alive by being voiced, by being performed; is experienced as communal and not individual, and; is from within sound connections rather than the product of an outside observer’s distant gaze^{vii}. “Being in is what we experience in a world of sound” (Ong, 1967 p130; emphasis added), “To hear = To be” and “Being is only oneness” (Berendt, 1992 p.48). Being in the ‘here (hear?) and now’ seems to go together with a sense of participation where self and other are experienced as a relational unity or only softly differentiated^{viii}.

Reciprocating/responsive processes. Ong suggests “the word, and particularly the spoken word, is curiously reciprocating” (Ong, 1967 p125). This “reciprocating quality” has many potential aspects. For example, and as we have already noted, the past and the present ‘come together’ in that every action echoes and to some extent develops what has gone before.

McNamee and Gergen made a similar point: “The collation of voices used by an individual at any point (a) always gains its bearing from preceding conversation and (b) is always fashioned according to the relationship into which one is speaking” (McNamee and Gergen, 1999 p.12). Actions contain fragments of others actions – where each fragment “represent(s) the whole” which can never be specified.

Of course another aspect of reciprocity/responsiveness is that sounds echo and resonate and rhythms synchronise. Inside and outside relate, not in the sense of inside and outside some singular and bounded Self (as in Subject-Object relations), but in the sense of interiors “manifesting themselves” – like a cave when a wolf howls - or the body of a violin when a string is bowed or plucked (see Ong, 1967 p117). The discourse of inside - outside no longer applies to some fixed boundary between Self and Other but to variable *reciprocations* that *allow* sounds, overtones, multiple voices... to be heard. The more reciprocations the more emergent and improvised-in-the-moment is the process. “Doing-what-the-situation-calls-for” can be a way of ‘going on’ in relation that, for example, characterises a certain sort of collaborative inquiry that some call ‘therapy’ (Harlene Anderson, 1997) and indeed the relationally responsive ‘coming together’ that characterises improvised jazz (Gergen, McNamee and Barrett, 2001). Relational responsiveness is impossible when one voice dominates. A sound metaphor opens up possibilities for ‘going on’ in ways that are *open* to many voices and multiple, simultaneous self-other realities.

In sum, participating in sound processes seems to involve:

- a sense of duree or time passing;
- ongoing action and actualite, simultaneity and multiplicity;
- (re)sounding the past and the future in the present;
- reciprocating/responsive, multi-voiced inter-action, and
- the continuing (re)construction of multiple self/other relations.

Our temporary conclusion seems to be that *relational processes may be more or less open* to simultaneity and multiplicity, to other voices and to new self-other constructions. Further, should we wish to enjoy soft self/other differentiation and be more open to Other, including other selves, we should do well to follow Berendt’s advise and “cultivate the potentialities of the ear and of hearing” (Berendt, 1992 p.31). This development brings us to our final

movement – an exploration of listening as a quality of sound processes and “soft” self-other differentiation.

A sound discourse of listening.

The dominance of Science and visual actants together construct a hard differentiation of self and other – what I earlier referred to as Subject-Object relations. Such relations construct an active Subject (S) who is *largely closed to other* – where other includes other possible selves, one’s own body (as a possession, as separate from one’s knowing mind), and other people and things viewed as independently existing objects. S is open only to constructing knowledge about Other as an Object (‘knowledge that’) and using that knowledge to form, mould, or structure Other (‘power over’). S is understood to possess a private interiority that is closed to Other/not-self^{ix}. The closed Subject already knows e.g., what s/he wants to know and what s/he wants to do with that knowledge. S relates to Other in ways that are self-interested, that speak for and about Other and that are relatively closed to other possible self-world relations.

This context seriously limits the ways listening can be understood. So listening is something that some-one does in order to know Other as a separately existing entity (ontology). Its role is tied to interests in the production of propositional knowledge and to issues of accuracy and truth (epistemology). Visual observation dominates sound listening. Silence implies nothingness - a void to be a-voided (Berman, 1990).

To re-construct listening in non subject-object relations requires letting go of over - sharp distinctions between the senses, between the senses and the mind, between the mind and the body, between inside and outside my Self and between self and other. In the absence of these hard differentiations, and in the presence of CRC’s discourse of relational processes and sound participation, listening is shifted out of the “self contained individual”(Sampson, 1993) and into embodied participation in local/cultural/historical processes. Our discussion of sound spoke of *processes of coming together* – processes in which it is possible “to allow sounds, overtones, multiple voices... to be heard”. This seems to bring us to what Corradi Fiumara called “the other side of language” i.e., the listening side - rather than the more commonly emphasised side of talking and world structuring in subject-object relations.

Corradi Fiumara called her book “*The other side of language; a philosophy of listening*”. In it she reflected on western philosophy and its one-sided attention to “the moulding ordering

sense of ‘saying’; this she called *logos* (Corradi Fiumara, 1990 p2). Drawing extensively on Heidegger, she argued that attention to *logos* constitutes attention to “saying without listening” and so to “a generalized form of domination and control”(Heidegger, 1975 in Corradi Fiumara, 1990 p2). She continued by making use of Heidegger’s exploration of the relatively neglected verb form of *logos*, that is *lesein*.

Heidegger’s *Early Greek Thinking* provided a key text. There he began his chapter on *Logos* with the famous fragment from Heraclitus: “When you have listened, not to me but to the ...*Logos*, it is wise to agree that all things are one”. With this as his context, Heidegger went on to explore *lesein*. Here we find an emphasis that helps us to understand how sound constructions of relating may (to put it in the negative) avoid the dominance, “enrolling” and “controlling”^x of Subject-Object relations. Our earlier discussion of *reciprocity/responsiveness* seems especially helpful, as does our talk of “coming together” to “allow” other voices, multiplicity, emergent constructions... to be heard. For Heidegger, listening as *lesein* includes “gathering”, “heeding” or “hearkening” amongst its meanings (Corradi Fiumara, 1990). “But gathering is more than mere amassing. To gathering belongs a collecting which brings under shelter” – an action performed with a view to “safekeeping” (Heidegger 1975, in Corradi Fiumara, p4). Heidegger used the harvesting of grapes for making wine as his example. He continued by connecting *lesein* and “gathering” with laying: “Laying brings to lie, in that it lets things lie together before us” and “whatever lies before us involves us and therefore concerns us.” “Laying is the letting-lie-before – which is gathered into itself – of that which comes together into presence”(Heidegger 1975, in Corradi Fiumara, p5).

Given our earlier discussion of visual and auditory actants it is perhaps surprising that Heidegger’s language, or at least someone’s translation of it from German to English, is very much dominated by visual imagery. Perhaps gathering and letting lie that which involves us could be better expressed in sound metaphors. For example, the allowing and appreciation of overtones, of multiple voices, of other... in ongoing relations might come closer. This said Heidegger’s discussion of *lesein* very much resonates with our earlier discussion of the ontological (rather than epistemological) significance of sound processes. This discussion locates hearing, in the sense of “hearkening and heeding” in relation to soft self-other differentiation and openness – a discourse which often makes use of the language of “spiritual”, “oneness” and “enchantment”. In this context listening is strongly connected with

being as becoming which is in turn understood as a particular local manifestation of a singular, unifying whole^{xi}. This means that: *processes of relating can be said to be “open” when they are characterized by listening in the sense of gathering and allowing to lie, giving space to what is, rather than moulding or structuring other, allowing both multiplicity and wholeness.*

Sound processes and therefore listening as *legein* provide opportunities for what some call “genuine human relationship” (Gadamer, 1979). Listening of this sort can be linked with what Corradi Fiumara (p40) called “the patient labours of co-existence” – labours that seem to need a “modesty and mildness of language that can exorcise the risk that it (i.e., language) becomes an end in itself”. This means, for example, that management and organisation studies could expand their limited focus on the forming/ordering/moulding/structuring aspects of language (*logos*), on “power over” Other and on closure. Now they can explore communications and language as sound processes, listening as *legein*, and power as “power to” (Gergen, 1995; Hosking 1995) – *power to be open to Other* i.e., to soft self/other differentiation. Work of this kind would constitute a radically changed orientation to ecological issues and to notions such as “servant leadership”, “empowering”, green management, flat organisations and so on. Work of this kind would radically re-construct the present range of “wholistic” approaches such as cybernetics, chaos theory, and complexity theory. Acceptance of sound processes and listening means that now wholism becomes *embodied and enchanted*, live and sensuous, able to embrace somatic life, emptiness, reflexivity and openness (cf Berman 1990, p307).

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ⁱ “The map is not the territory” Korzybski 1933.

ⁱⁱ Including the body (in mind-body dualism).

ⁱⁱⁱ In Latour’s view, cultures (we could also say “forms of life”) differ in how they do this and differ in the extent to which they are able to enrol and control reality constructions. Science is different from other cultures by being able to act on a bigger scale.

^{iv} The question ‘what is it’ is no longer necessarily relevant or interesting: talk of (in)accuracies, distortions, errors... are seen as part of a different vocabulary and ‘game’.

^v Which some may take as good reason for not getting too hung up on games that focus on the question ‘what is it?’ In Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland the mouse was telling a story in which he declared that various named characters ‘ “found it advisable- “found *what*?” Said the Duck. “Found it”, the mouse replied rather crossly: “of course you know what it means.” ’

^{vi} Perhaps this echoes historical themes such as the (critical) realist centering of language (as a means of representing real things) and epistemology.

^{vii} Again we see that vision and Subject – object relations go together see Ong p219-231.

^{viii} Berendt refers to this sense of “oneness” as the “spiritual” quality of relating

^{ix} Interestingly, Julian Jaynes (1976) In *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* wrote about the mind of early Greek man as *open* to the Gods – open for them to speak to him and tell him what to do... so the gradual construction of the bounded, possessive individual involved shifting the locus of agency away from the Gods and placing it in the knowing individual. Perhaps this is also connected with the story of Adam and Eve who once they became knowing could no longer remain in the enchanted world, the Garden of Eden.

^x Which suggests that actor-network theory needs to be expanded from its early focus on visual actants to include sound processes and soft self/other differentiation. Dachler and Hosking (1995) and Koivunen (2003, 2006) have begun to explore possibilities of this sort using the language of constructionism in the context of leadership theory.

^{xi} Heidegger distinguishes being and Being to refer to this distinction.