

## Tones of Face: On Psychophonotypographics

Steven Connor

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Few if any humans learn to write or read before they learn to hear or speak, and the sonic character of text always hums and hovers close to it. This is more than a matter of encoded sounds. Mikhail Bakhtin remarks that words do not merely point to what they mean – they also have a ‘taste’ of their use in human mouths (Bakhtin 1981, 293). That taste is often something like an accent (which means literally, *ad canto*, an inclination to song), or phonic tang, hanging around them. The look of letters speaks, has ‘character’, as we might say. If we evoke the idea of linguistic *register*, as used to refer to the level of formality, or the particular kind of evocation of authority that language can possess, we are combining two modalities: first of all that of pitch – as in a soprano or bass register, this deriving from the word used to regulate the flow of air in a furnace and then to vary the tone produced by organ pipes – and secondly that of visible form and arrangement. A register is of course also a written record of information or events, but has more specialised meanings in printing, to indicate the alignment of type on the printed page and later on, the exact overlaying of different colours or images in colour printing.

The history of typography rejoices in an extensive, impassioned, but highly technical literature. As long as the awareness and effects of typography were not widely or intensely experienced this could scarcely be a matter of concern and the connoisseurs and obsessives of typography could be left to their own undeniably absorbing devices. But in a time like our own, in which the specifically typographic insistence of the letter has become ever more prominent and formative in the experiences both of reading and writing, the topic is owed closer attention, and attention of a broader kind, that can make typography speak to more forms of social and psychological experience, including the question of what speaking itself means and our growing opportunity and aptitude for seeing voices, and hearing turns of phrase in tones of face. It is this broader field of attention that I will designate, ostentatiously enough, if with little expectation of it ever attaining wide currency, as psychophonotypography.

The most dramatic developments in the experience of reading during the twentieth century have been, firstly, the vast growth in forms of public writing and inducements to reading, through signs, notices,

announcements and advertisements, propagating prodigiously, like a kind of algal bloom, on every available surface, and, secondly, a corresponding explosion of typographic plurality. Even in the nineteenth century, the range of typefaces which an average reader would encounter and recognise was limited to three or four basic types. The very word 'type' seems to give an indication of the generalised nature of what we expect from a typeface. I am reminded of a story I once heard of a researcher in a small, disregarded back room of the Bibliothèque Nationale who saw a box on a top shelf labelled 'Stereotypes', and discovered that it contained a collection of rubber moulds used for the repeated setting up of blocks of text.

There is also a certain idea of violent force involved in the notion of the type, which derives from the Greek τυπος, from the τύπτειν to beat or strike, the idea being that the variable needs to be subject to a kind of restricting force in order to remain the same. This would imply that type belongs on the side of stasis and permanence in the famous formula *verba volant, scripta manent* – speech flies, script stands. Oddly enough, the reverse is also true, and partly because of the very thing that the invention of what became tellingly known as 'movable type' made available, namely the capacity for economical reproduction. One of the earliest complaints about writing is that of Socrates, in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Socrates complains that, in contrast to spoken words, which, though they are momentary, and, in fact, because of this, must always arise in and be restricted to a punctual yet ephemeral here and now of utterance, writing is promiscuously mobile, because it can be detached from the here and now truthfulness of speech, 'the living, animate discourse of a man who really knows' (Plato 1956, 70). Speech is mobile because it is always passing away: writing is mobile because it is always being passed around:

Once a thing is put in writing, it rolls about all over the place [κυλινδεῖται – rolls, like a 'cylinder'], falling into the hands of those who have no concern with it just as easily as under the notice of those who comprehend; it has no notion of whom to address or whom to avoid. (Plato 1956, 69-70)

Socrates goes on to compare a serious writer to a farmer who takes care to plant his seeds in stable, well-tilled ground:

he will not, when he's in earnest, resort to a written form and inscribe his seeds in water, and in inky water at that; he will not sow them with a pen, using words which are unable either to argue in their own defense when attacked or to fulfil the role of a teacher in presenting the truth. (Plato 1956, 71)

Seen in these terms, it is in fact writing that is volatile. The proverb *verba volent scripta manent* is autological in this respect, since you will be hard put to it to track this much quoted utterance to an authoritatively original written form. It is said to have been uttered in a speech by one Caius Titus to the Roman Senate, but neither this dubious personage (unaccountably equipped with two *praenomina*) nor the occasion on which he volleyed this phrase has been definitively identified.

The aim of this talk is to suggest that in fact the realm of script has become hugely mobile, partly through a volatile collusion and collusion, or cross-play of text and sound. My concern will be with typography, or watery ink.

### **Soundshapes**

To begin with, I want to suggest the importance of a mediating modality in this collusion of the visible and the audible. Letters are never overlaid with phonic suggestion alone, for this kind of suggestion often cooperates with an intimation or demonstration of the kinetic. The word *tone* I have used in my catachrestic title may help us with this movement between domains. A tone is a musical sound, but its root idea is that of stretching or straining, from Greek *tenein*, to stretch – hence the idea of muscular tone. In fact, tone is part of a mobile and widely adaptive family of words itself stretching athletically across different kinds of kinetic tendency or potential – *tension, intention, extension, tent, tempt, tender, tetanus, hypotenuse, protasis, catatonic* - along with *tendency* and *potential* themselves. It is often via the mediation of the tonic tendency that typefaces, especially in their newly various and animated forms, can implicate the phonic.

There is in fact quite a long history of what might be called sonomorphs, or sound-shapes, in writing, which extends back at least as far as what is known as the *banderole* in medieval illustrations, which fulfilled the function of indicating sound or speech that would later be taken on by the convention of the speech bubble, or its bubbly companion, the ‘thinks’ bubble. These devices might be regarded as ways of ‘seeing out loud’. The transition from text to sound is imaged in the attainment by the flat script of three-dimensional volume, along with the suggestion that the script is being animated by some kind of breeze.

This kind of *banderole*, imaging speaking as unscrolling, is a feature in particular of paintings of the Annunciation, which, after all, centre

on an act of utterance: announcing and enunciation derive from Latin *nuntius*, itself perhaps a modification of *noventius*, news but have moved progressively over to the side of utterance (in fact, like the word *utter* itself, which was used to mean to offer for sale, or, more specifically in the late sixteenth century, to publish).

In Bernhard Strigel's *The Annunciation to Saint Anne and Saint Joachim* (1506), an angel identifies himself to the future mother of the Virgin with the words *Ego sum angelus domini at te missus*, I am the angel of the Lord, sent to you. The scroll hangs like smoke in air, simultaneously emanation and residue, auditory event and visual object. It suggests both a moment in time, and the span of time during which the words are emitted. The lines on which words are inscribed were often left visible in medieval manuscript, but here the lines may also give the suggestion of a musical stave, as though the annunciation were in fact being sung (singing being a very large part of the function of angels, when they were not delivering messages of this kind).

In other such banderoles, dealing with the more familiar annunciation to Mary herself, the script is often abbreviated, serving therefore as a kind of prompt or score for a chant that may already have been known to the viewers, and so could be recited even when the text was obscured, by the Möbius-like folding of the banderole. An example here is an illuminated page, sometimes attributed to Herman Scheerre, from the *Beaufort-Beauchamp Book of Hours* in the British Library, probably made around 1410. The banderole gives us only snatches of the conventional greeting of the angel to the Virgin: *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Iesus*: Hail Mary, full of grace, may you be blessed among women and blessed be the fruit of thy womb Jesus. The idea that the sight of the scrolling script might activate the memory of the sung salutation makes of the banderole a sort of tape-recording, both of them, of course variations on the form of the scroll. Gabriel seems to be supporting the form of the annunciation in his hands, as though it were a musical instrument, and Gabriel and Mary seem to be following with their gazes the smoke-signal unfurling of the banderole, the undulations of which are carried across into the forms of Mary's and Gabriel's robes, and the radiations across the surface of the background, along with the lines of emanating breath from the divine figure in the top left, all creating a generalised sonomorphism across the visual field of the image.

It may be that the responsiveness to typeface may be a development of a tendency to mapping of sound on to shape that has been the subject of psychological investigation. In 2001 V.S. Ramachandran and

E.M. Hubbard repeated the experiments conducted by Wolfgang Köhler in 1929 with the naming of two shapes, one spiky and the other smooth, which respondents were told were called 'bouba' and kiki'. Invited to guess which was which, almost all the respondents agreed that the spiky shape was a *kiki*, while the smoother shape was a *bouba*. Ramachandran and Hubbard decided that the reason for this preference, which was widely, if not quite universally shared among speakers of different languages, was that 'the sharp changes in visual direction of the lines in the right-hand figure mimic the sharp phonemic inflections of the sound kiki, as well as the sharp inflection of the tongue on the palate' (Ramachandran and Hubbard 2001, 19). One might postulate that English speakers might also have been influenced by the idea that the smoother shape is somewhat blobby or boob-like, compared with the jagged shape, which looks more 'kicky' or 'kinky'. Ramachandran and Hubbard are mostly interested in what this might suggest about innate patterns of mapping between sound and shape, mediated perhaps by a form of kinetic mapping of the motor systems for physical movement in space and the movements of the vocal apparatus. The term they suggest for this is 'synkinesia' (Ramachandran and Hubbard 2001, 20). Ramachandran and Hubbard focus on what this might suggest about the origins of language, but speculation is surely also possible regarding the ways in which subsequent developments might modify and develop these inherited or sedimented patterns.

In my book *Beyond Words*, I argued that the kinetic feelings and capacities bound up with particular sounds may have to do, not only with what kinds of things they may seem to us to sound like – railway trains, hissing sabres, whispering breezes, cuckoos, and so forth – but also what sort of physical processes they seem to enact in the process of their production through the vocal apparatus. The first class may be called phonomemic, as incorporating Greek φωνή, voice, and the second phenomemic, invoking φαίνειν, to show, bring to light, or cause to appear (Connor 2014, 12). Phenomemic correspondence summons up, and may seem to cause to appear, what I have called a 'dream theatre of the mouth' (Connor 2014, 15), considered as a dynamic factory of stresses, strains, braces and relaxes, which we see feelingly, and which our languages coordinate into quite intricate patterns of opposition and cooperation.

On occasion, this nocturnal fantasy of what has been called the 'primal cavity' of the mouth (Spitz 1955) has been promoted into the visible form of letters. In his *Alphabet of Nature* (Van Helmont 1667) Francis Mercury van Helmont demonstrated at length his crazy, though rather charming theory that the characters of written Hebrew, in reality

derived from cuneiform transformations of clay tablet inscriptions, were phonetic diagrams of the postures and motions of the human mouth involved in their production. Thus, in making the sounds of Hebrew, the mouth seemed also to Van Helmont to be miming out their written form. Van Helmont's views are strongly inflected by the language-mysticism of Kabbalism, in which the shapes and sounds of words are accorded a magical, even a divine power, over the world. This kind of magical thinking carries in much of the work performed by letter forms, and contemporary responses to them.

In *Beyond Words*, I argued that the imaginary mis-en-scène of the mouth's musculature programmed a contrast between the growls and gurgles produced from the brutish back of the month and the daylight dentiality of sounds produced at the gleaming front of the mouth which codifies much of the contrast between Germanic and Romanic languages in English, which is characteristically balanced between the two. Derek Attridge suggests something similar in his far-reaching remarks about the difference between words spelled with hard *c*, and words spelled with *k*, prompted by his analysis of the way in which onomatopoeia is employed at the end of the Aeolus chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. There Leopold Bloom, feeling a little bloated following his lunch, is looking in a shop window, and waiting for the noise of a passing tram to cover the sound of his fart. The sound is rendered 'Kran, kran, kran. ... Krاندلkrankran' (Joyce 2008, 279). Attridge wonders productively what might be the mechanism by which the sight, or visual idea, of the letter *k* seems to modify the sound it is supposed to signify. There is in English absolutely no phonetic basis for the idea that *k* might sound different from hard *c*, and yet Joyce's onomatopoeic use undoubtedly benefits from the suggestion that there might be. Attridge suggests, for example that *k* seems harsher than *c* because *c* has an alternative 'soft' sound (the two alternatives between adjoined in *success*), and also because adding a *k* to a *c* has the effect of making it, as we say, 'harder', and shortening any preceding vowel, as in the transformation of *pricing* to *pricking*. Attridge moves with breathtaking and brilliant swiftness from these reflections on why the sound signified by *k* might seem harsher and more mechanical than the sound of hard *k*, to something like a complete civilisational typology generated and, in its turn, consolidating the contrast of sounds:

One could speculate on the association of *k* with Northern European and *c* with Southern European languages, and the familiar opposition between stereotypes of North and South, cold and warm, Gothic and Mediterranean, barbarism and culture-an association traceable, for instance, in the differing

connotations for English readers of *Kaiser* and *Caesar*, or in the spelling of *Amerika* with a *k* used in satiric magazines during the Vietnam war. (Attridge 1984, 1124)

My own reflections on the noises and noisiness of spoken language was prompted by the memory of my mother repeating the common prejudice of her wartime generation, that German was a 'guttural' language. Sylvia Plath does something different in her memory of her father's German in her poem of violent father-exorcism, 'Daddy':

I never could talk to you.  
The tongue stuck in my jaw.  
  
It stuck in a barb wire snare.  
Ich, ich, ich, ich,  
I could hardly speak.  
I thought every German was you.  
And the language obscene. (Plath 1981, 223)

This is virulently nasty and also brilliant, creating a kind of rebus-effect from the coalescence of the sound of the guttural, suggesting both congestion and the expectorant effort to expel some impurity, as in a cough or vomit, and the locked look of barbed wire. This is associated in Plath's poem both with the barbed wire of concentration camps which are evoked a moment later, in the suggestion that the German language is 'An engine, an engine/Chuffing me off like a Jew./A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen' (Plath 1981, 223) and with the Gothic blackletter script, and perhaps especially the Fraktur family of typefaces, which became identified with Germany because it survived there well into the 1940s, much longer than in other European countries, when it became strongly identified with Nazi slogans, posters and placards, along with the characteristic barked sound of Hitlerian speeches. One typographic historian describes reading the heaviest Gothic or blackletter type as 'akin to sticking needles in one's eyes' (Garfield 2010, 188).

Some of the displays of German blackletter, and Fraktur in particular, invite a visual rhyme between the script and the angular shape of the swastika. Others seem to invite a feeling of the look of radio sound, probably through association with the jaggedness of conventional representations of radio waves. Plath succeeds in giving a sound, the sound of sound being choked off, to the briary, hook-and-claw look of Gothic script. These typefaces were first called Gothic by Italian typesetters in the Renaissance, as a way of indicating their grossness, crudity and barbarity. Their abandonment after the Second World War may have had much to do with the effort to disavow the violence

of the Nazi past. But ironically, the Nazis themselves denounced the use of blackletter typefaces from 1941, declaring that they were characteristic of Jewish printers: it may be that they were influenced by the difficulty of reading this script experienced by occupied people (Garfield 2010, 191).

### *Oblique*

Perhaps the hardest tone of face to read, or at least read out, even though it always seems to hint at or call for a certain kind of intonation, is italic, so named because it was characteristic of the typefaces employed in Renaissance Italy, which gradually displaced blackletter forms. The slope of italic, almost always forward, or in the direction of readerly travel, i.e. from left to right in most European writing systems, implies the onward press of hurried handwriting, slightly ahead of itself and bent on getting somewhere it is not yet. Italic script is closer to speech and the fluid continuity of cursive writing; where blackletter typefaces are blocky and anticipate the repeated impressions or impacts of the seal or stamp, italic script has the quality of duration, or time on the move and in the making. The fact that italic script seems to be gliding across a ductile material, like slate or paper, rather than being applied percussively and perpendicularly to a surface also associates it with the act of speech. It is not surprising that italic is often employed for the representation of interior monologue, or orality without obvious origin.

However, the characteristic uses of the italic are not in fact to impart this sense of fluidity, but rather to break up the unremarked continuity of roman typography, in order to isolate words or phrases for emphasis or particular attention. Not many are nowadays aware of the printing convention that was still observed when I was writing my first texts for publication, that underlining a word in manuscript or typescript was an instruction to a printer to set it in italic. To read the italic out loud is to mark an internal dehiscence, to speak the suspension or interior differentiation of speaking, often by marking the move from the functional use of a word to the demonstrative mention of it. So one may typically mark the italic, which may often be used to spotlight for attention a single word, by marking it off, pausing before it, sometimes with a little preparatory gasp, as though to articulate the sound of something not so much being said but as being read out.

This use of the italic to isolate items for attention in something of the way that quotation marks do may also account for the unintentional

irony that can be introduced by the use of quotation marks to stimulate excited attention in labels on market stalls. Thus we may be informed on a vegetable stall that ‘carrots’, or, straining for even greater *éclat*, “carrots”, are obtainable for 40p a pound, as though the greengrocer were imparting a winking hint that though the orange items arrayed for sale might well be the kind of thing that the unwary are inclined to call carrots anyone who knows their onions will know that they cannot honestly be regarded as *carrots*, not like they used to be in the days when a carrot really *was* a carrot. The italic will often stimulate this ontological flicker or stammer, the intensification that, in asserting that something is *really* what it is said to be, lets in the recognition that it is only being *said* to be, so it may only be the saying that makes it so: ‘You call those *carrots*?’

Unlike bold face, which, as its name suggests, is straightforwardly assertive, and implies increase both in stress and in volume, the italic is simultaneously conspicuous and sinuously confidential. Where bold face looks you brazenly in the eye, italic takes you aside. The tilt of italic implies the lilt, or lifted eyebrow, following Emily Dickinson’s hint to ‘Tell all the Truth but tell it slant’ (Dickinson 1960, 506). The italic has the audiovisual import of wryness, the inflection of inflectedness, or the sense that there is more here than meets the eye, or indeed ear. To enunciate the italic is to attempt to impart the sense of unspoken import or inclination given by what is a scriptive gesture: even though, when we read the italic on the page we are enjoined to imagine it as a sort of visual intonation, a hearsay or hear-see.

## CAPITAL

Typefaces deploy an economy of effort which dramatise primary ideas of the soft and the hard, ideas that are powerfully at work in the metaphors we use to formalise our hearing of speech sounds. Inscriptions are durable because they take a long time to make, and therefore convey the supererogatory message of their own resistance to chronic erosions. Stone inscriptions are authoritative, because they bite, literally assaulting the surface that bears them. Samuel Beckett’s *How It Is* describes two creatures encountering each other in a featureless landscape of mud, in which communication takes place by means of one of them carving messages with a thumbnail in the flesh of the other, inscriptions rendered in the text by capital letters. Capitals enact power and pain, their angularity resulting directly from the difficulty of carving cursive shapes, and repeating the penetrative shapes of the stylus or chisel. The transcoding whereby large and uniform letter shapes are understood to represent increased volume,

the raised voice which seems to want literally (in an unusually literal sense of that word) to impress its intent on the air, has become a standard feature of newspaper headlines. Capital letters derive much of their force from the sense, deriving obscurely perhaps from the memory of the resistant material into which they may have been incised, that they are words that are themselves pressing into something like material form. Despite their corporeal references to the head, the *caput*, from which human articulation issues, headlines and capital letters seem to enact a kind of autonomisation of sound, a message whose urgency precipitates a second, visible body, as though the letters themselves were all variations of that inflammatory shape we know as the 'exclamation mark', a sign which not only signifies exclamation but seems to image its cicatrising trace, like the scar left by a bolt of lightning. The placard written in capitals during a political demonstration is often the visible silhouette or accompaniment of chanted slogans, and can also become a second body made over into the signification of a message, as in the famous placards declaring I AM A MAN carried by striking Memphis sanitation workers in 1968. Gathered together, the mass of placards offers in its visual rhyme a mirroring of the solidary chanting of the workers in unison, a sound which is made more emphatic through being displaced from the mouths of the workers to the text which they hold up, as though to image a sound bursting from out of a muted condition into the exclamation of letters.

The design of typefaces is a subtle, intricate and time-consuming matter, and their whole purpose and advantage therefore lie in their capacity for reuse. Type asserts its authority in its seeming permanence. Times New Roman, the typeface with which we have become most familiar in the modern world, was designed for the Times Newspaper by Stanley Morison in 1932. Its authority like that of any carved epigraph, comes from a curious compounding of life and death. It borrows from speech the punctuality of the here and now utterance, while evicting its ephemerality. Where ordinary writing can roll promiscuously about the world, the epigraph relies upon the principle of gravity – that which has been laboriously engraved, on a stone which is too heavy to be portable – to insist upon its immutability, and therefore its ever-after authority. Unlike spoken utterance, what the epigraph utters remains in place and is returned by every new reading to itself. Epigraphs and inscriptions of all kinds – *Nosce te ipsum*, *Lasciate ogne speranza*, *Look on my works ye mighty*, *Arbeit macht frei* – have this strange quality of embodying speech frozen into materiality, but retaining, in a death-in-life way, the capacity of being invocable in speech.

Though epigraphs of this kind insist on their absolute self-sufficiency, they often seem to function as something like a score, or script intended for performance. Written Latin often made use of abbreviations, which the reader was intended to fill out in inward or outward speech. The inscription at the base of Trajan's triumphal column in Rome furnishes a characteristic example:

SENATVS·POPVLVS·QVE·ROMANVS  
IMP·CAESARI·DIVI·NERVAE·F·NERVAE  
TRAIANO·AVG·GERM·DACICO·PONTIF  
MAXIMO·TRIB·POT·XVII·IMP·VI·COS·VI·P·P  
AD·DECLARANDVM·QVANTAE·ALTITVDINIS  
MONS·ET·LOCVS·TANT<IS·OPER>IBVS·SIT·EGESTVS

The Senate and people of Rome [dedicate this] to the emperor Caesar, son of the divine Nerva, Nerva Traianus Augustus Germanicus Dacicus, pontifex maximus, in his 17th year in the office of tribune, having been acclaimed 6 times as imperator, 6 times consul, pater patriae, to demonstrate of what great height the hill [was] and place [that] was removed for such great works.

In common, not only with many such inscriptions, but also with the way in which Latin texts were often written in manuscript, there are none of the accommodations to the spoken inflections of reading. In particular, there are no gaps between the words. And yet, for that very reason, this kind of *scripta continua* as it was known seems to enjoin spoken performance. There is therefore an implied exhortation to ventriloquism, or the throwing of voice into the text. In fact, there are in the Trajan's column inscription two voices that are subject to this conjectural projection. There is first of all 'the Senate and People of Rome', on whose behalf this stone seems to speak, and who seem to speak through it. But behind that, there is the voice of the stone itself, for the declaration declares ('Ad Declarandum') that its purpose is to make clear how high the hill was which was removed for the purposes of making this declaration. So, speaking in counterpoint with the declaration of the Senate and People it bears, the stone on which that voice is inscribed, inscribes its own speech reflexively on itself.

The uncanniness of this always intimates, and is implicated in death, in the way in which Leopold Bloom imagines a phonograph becoming part of the apparatus of funerary sculpture:

Have a gramophone in every grave or keep it in the house.  
After dinner on a Sunday. Put on poor old greatgrandfather  
Kraahraark! Hellohellohello amawfullyglad kraark  
awfullygladaseeragain hellohello amarawf kophthst. Remind

you of the voice like the photograph reminds you of the face.  
(Joyce 2008, 109)

In Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, Ebenezer Scrooge attributes the first apparition by whom he is visited to the effects of indigestion, and puns groaningly that 'there is more of gravy than grave' about it (Dickens 1988, 19); but we can allow ourselves the thought that, even in the long historical dreamtime preceding the development of phonographic apparatus, there is already something groovy too about the grave, and the engraved.

The power of epigraphs to embody the idea of a geophonic conjuring of speech from silent stone is suggested by the anonymous epitaph on the North wall of St Mary the Virgin Church in East Bergholt, Suffolk (where John Constable was the miller's son):

WHAT ERE THOV ART HERE READER SEE  
IN THIS PALE GLASS WHAT THOV SHALT BE  
DESPISED WORMES AND PUTRID SLIME  
THEN DVST FORGOT & LOST IN TIME  
BIRTH BEVTY WELTH MAY GILD THY EAST  
BVT YE BLACK GRAVE SHADOWES THY WEST  
THER EARTHLY GLORYS SHORTELIVD LIGHT  
SETS IN A LONG & VNKNOWN NIGHT  
HERE TILL THE SVN OF GLORY RISE  
MY DEAREST DARKE AND DVSTY LYES  
BVT CLOTHED WITH HIS MORNING RAYE  
HER POLISHD DVST SHALL SHINE FOR AYE  
READER FIRST PAY TO THIS BEDEWED STON  
THE TRIBVTE OF THY TEAR & THEN BEGON

The address of the epitaph is characteristically transferential. It is only the attentive presence of the reader in front of the tablet that activates the address to them, like an automatic recording triggered by their approach, and that serves to wind the addressee into its gears, as they read themselves reading. The inscription-address is literally a programme, a pre-scription or writing through in advance of their act of reading, out loud, to themselves. The address is personal, even as it is dismissively generic ('what ere thou art') and presents the reader with the deliciously grisly prospect of their own personal dissolution into postpersonal dust. The verse draws together the punctual moment of the reading 'here' with the 'what ere' constituted by the indefinite repetitions, past and present, that serve to capture and conscript in advance every future occasion of reading, and yet also to advance every future reader into the ghostly condition that lies in, because it actually is, their future. The epitaph contrasts the reflective

hardness of the stone, the 'pale glass' which holds the address upright and intact (if also inevitably eroded over four centuries or so) and the anonymous slime and dust it covers over, bringing them together in the witty-grotesque oxymoron of the 'polished dust' of the radiant resurrection in which it trusts, or its words do. I have just said that the stone covers over the remains of the woman it commemorates, as stones often do: but in fact this stone, like many gravestones, is in fact vertical, in its new position in the North wall of the church (it is not clear when it was moved or from where) so literally *addresses* the reader, in the etymological sense of standing them up, and bringing them into the posture we call standing to attention. It is as though the stone itself has already risen in parody of the resurrection to which it looks forward.

The final 'begon' is a familiar *nunc dimittis* for all readers of such epitaphs, as well as a designation of the entire process of 'being gone' the inscription is designed to anticipate and, for the suspended space of the reading, enact. To be the reader of this epitaph is to become aware of one's condition of being gone from it and the scene of reading it programmes, to be exhorted to articulate the words that will enact one's own dying fall. The admonition is both a bracing invocation to the reader and a decomposition of them and their act of reading. Epigraphs of this kind often imply this migration and multiplication of sources of utterance into inanimate entities, in the process I have called panophonia (Connor 2012).

Beatrice Warde expressed in 1932 a then common ambition for typography to be transparent as a windowpane or crystal goblet:

[A] good speaking voice is one which is inaudible as a voice. It is the transparent goblet again! I need not warn you that if you begin listening to the inflections and speaking rhythms of a voice from a platform, you are falling asleep. When you listen to a song in a language you do not understand, part of your mind actually does fall asleep, leaving your quite separate aesthetic sensibilities to enjoy themselves unimpeded by your reasoning faculties. The fine arts do that; but that is not the purpose of printing. Type well used is invisible as type, just as the perfect talking voice is the unnoticed vehicle for the transmission of words, ideas. (Warde 1955, 33)

But one of the shared features of phonics and typographics is their absence of zero-degree or uninflected forms. What Warde dismisses as distracting noise may also be related to the alertly attentive trance that Yeats thought characteristic of the condition summoned by the humming sonorities of poetry, all ears for the saying of what is said.

And the fortunes of a typeface like Gill Sans are proof that in a polytypographic dispensation there can be no purely executive typeface any more than there can be a completely toneless voice. Gill Sans and its derivatives like Futura have become the aspect of a particular kind of mid-century popular modernism, in its use for railway and road signs, as well as the signage in institutions such as schools and hospitals, the covers of Penguin paperbacks and, most influentially, the BBC. It is the visible accent of a temporary and now somewhat antiquated and even exotic dream of an egalitarian, welfare-state democracy. It is a sort of received pronunciation of the eye, its very neutrality a companionable kind of visual idiom.

### **Animation**

The importance of the kinetic as a mediator or transformer between the visual and the auditory is strongly confirmed in the origins of film animation, which lay in the ambition of Warner Brothers, who owned the rights in a great deal of musical works, to find a way of deploying them in sound cinema. The first animations were therefore not so much animated by the accompaniment of sound as the animation of sound itself. The opening sequences of films retain this sense of the interpenetrations of sound and visual form. Since these sequences include in their function the transmission of certain forms of announcement and information, like titles and cast lists, their typography is often drawn into the choreography of masses in motion. Not surprisingly, these movements often enact concussions, collisions, shiverings, lacerations and painful deformations, especially in the title sequences of thrillers and horror films, Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) and David Fincher's *Se7en* (1995) being notable examples.

It is the logo that represents the authority of the brand in the modern world, along with the psychotypographic coercions and solicitations of modern public reading experience. The logo is often twinned in advertisements with an identifying jingle, as though to add the well-attested attention-grabbing mnemonic capacities of sound to the recognition lasso of a distinctive shape. The prominence of particular typographical forms in musical merchandise, especially album covers during the 1970s, with the distinctive styling of the Beatles and Doors band names, establishes strong, if often arbitrary, identifications between visual and musical style.

The forms of type come to life, either actually, or in implied movement, suggest the development of a kind of sonified vision, in

which visual forms are agitated and animated by the sound that accompanies them, or that they may seem to conjure or encode. All of this is phonophenomenology, of course, and the analysis of it no more than the elucidation of hallucination, but the hallucination itself is real enough and consensual enough to have substantial psychosocial effects.

Perhaps the most important part of the hallucination is the idea that the visual signs by which we are surrounded and perhaps even assailed are not merely agitated but also agentive, in the sense that they are not merely available for us to see, but constitute a kind of self-saying act of address, of the kind imagined by Gerard Manley Hopkins:

each hung bell's  
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;  
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:  
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;  
Selves - goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,  
Crying What I do is me: for that I came. (Hopkins 1970, 90)

The speech act obliquely shaped by these psychophonotypographic phenomena is not that of apparition but of annunciation.

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