

I think, however, that I would want to hold onto the ear a little bit longer, not least because this is the particular organ which has evolved in the direction of sound: the ear is a folding of sound, in the same sense that Deleuze describes the eye as a folding of light (you might call it the actualisation of sound - the ear that is, not simply the sounds heard with it - I mean the ear even looks a little like a wave). Would this other deterritorialised ear evolve if the most actualised ear were not, for want of a better word, dis-abled? And if it does, why this incessant move towards sound? In either case, I think we can see that the more interesting ontology lies on the side of sound - an ontology of sound - rather than beings with or without ears. The phrase 'world of sound' is quite nice because it allows a way into this stronger ontology of sound and shall we say, the more humanist ontology of the being that exists in the 'world' of sound, with its concomitant emphasis on sense/meaning etc. If in general we say that bodies fold sound, then those with and without ears lie on the side of sound. By ontological separation, I don't mean an other ontology for the deaf - I suppose I mean the more or less artificial (you might say socially constructed) separation from the world built on sound, the world which to the extent it is to do with sound, belongs also to the deaf. If this weren't the case then it wouldn't be possible to speak of an ethical responsibility to improve on this world - invent other ears or refine what we mean by a sense of hearing.

Matt:

If I were to develop one thought in response to your comments on deafness it would be around the idea you picked up on of 'touching' so I'll try and develop that thought a little more. To begin, I would suggest that sound goes all the way down into the depth and surface of all matter; it is, in this sense, a mode of matter. That would be a rough outline of the ontology of sound I would work from.

Hearing is another thing and deafness, whilst rooted in the ontology of sound, requires in addition an ontology of hearing, except this is most likely to fall back into an epistemology of hearing. Do we interpret the sounds we hear? Yes, I think we do and we can see this clearly in ventriloquism where we interpret the sound as the specific speaker. Is what we hear always interpreted? Fundamentally no, with every act of hearing or with every sound there is a material basis, a concrete vibration that exists and that, whilst not exactly the cause of the sound, is a necessary aspect of all sound. How would we hear silence then? Silence has its own tune; there is never the absence of sound.

Deafness understood as an absence of sound is rejected by an ontology of sound that posits sound as a mode of matter. Deafness as a way of being able to know, as a block or absence of a route for knowledge is plainly a fact of life, but then so is my being unable to dance or speak Swahili. There are many modes of knowledge, many epistemological worlds, all connected to a unified ontological world. There are many ways to know the same thing, perhaps whilst never knowing that it is the same thing, but each way of knowing is a difference that makes the difference in the thing known.

This is an attempt to make the same thing of the difference between the deaf and the hearing, to make deafness a form of hearing if you like, but one which is closer to a form of touching. This touching is something I would posit as more fundamental than 'hearing'. Touching operates at the level of intuition which precedes interpretation. Now, there may be no reason to have a strict hierarchy between intuition and interpretation, with one being more 'ontological' than the other, but there is a strong intuitive pull to give intuition a greater role in 'ontologising'. Less reading the world and more feeling it is what I would advocate.

Ben:

In the beginning, sound: the continual hum against which we live, the white noise into which we die.

Matter makes the sounds we hear but is itself a differentiation of that never heard sound - the big bang - from which matter emanates. There is a surface and there is a depth to sound. The material, familiar, surface of things makes the sounds which emanate across space, while the stranger more temporal depth reaches back *into* sound as the very fabric of matter.

Ears evolve along this surface as so many foldings or pockets forming the hollows within which sound can resonate and so be heard. And can we imagine an organ capable of touching upon sound in depth?

For too long the brain has been tuned, via the senses, to the outside of things. We need to touch upon the inside of this outside, that which the outside folds and which the brain was *only ever a fold* - what the brain promises is a quantum sense of touch.

