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Résonances d'Écho

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This article takes up a number of points that I formerly examined in my book, *Graham Swift : la scène de la voix*, but hopefully, it allows me both to provide for English readers a clear synthesis of my central argument and to take that argument a step further. The conference on Echo, for which I warmly thank the organizers, gave me the opportunity to emphasize, in the light of the Greek myth, the paradoxical association of the spectral and bodily nature of a certain voice, a voice which happens to resonate throughout Swift's novels. Véronique Gély's thorough investigation of the fate of Echo in myth and literature (*La Nostalgie du moi : Écho dans la littérature européenne*) proved enlightening in many respects. I also wanted to make more room for Jacques Derrida in this article and come back to the opposition between a voice that consolidates the illusion of self-presence and self-centredness (the voice to be found in *La Voix et le phénomène*) and a spectral voice which can be approached through the notion of "résonance" that Jean-Luc Nancy explores in his wonderful book *À l'écoute*. With more space and time, I might have brought into play Derrida's own *Spectres of Marx* of course. Isabelle Alfandary's book, *Derrida - Lacan*, published in 2016, and in particular the sub-parts entitled "L'écouter-parler" and "Le partage de l'oreille" proved immensely interesting to me as it re-works Derrida's initial take on voice, drawing from Jean-Luc Nancy, among others. As Alfandary points out "resonance" could be no less than a point from which "the whole worksite of *différance* could be reopened" (Alfandary 283).

"In the end." "In the end"? What did she mean – in
the end he would see?

Dear Father,

*I have the £ 15,000. The bank notified me last week.
Thank you for sending it at last. I'm sure this is for the
best and how Mother would have wanted it. You will see
in the end.*

*I think we can call everything settled now. Don't bother
about the rest of my things. You said I should come – do
you really think that it is a good idea? After all you say I
put you through, I should have thought you'd be glad to
be finished with me at last.*

Dorothy

He sat up, in the double bed, holding the letter
before him, looking at it fixedly as if it were really
a code in need of breaking. It had come four days
ago. He'd read it perhaps fifty times, so that he
could remember the words without needing to see
them.

“– finished with me at last.”

(Swift 1980, 9, my emphasis)

- 1 “In the end”, “finished with me at last”: these are the words that open Graham Swift's very first novel, *The Sweet Shop Owner*. In the beginning is the end, and yet “the end” is not exactly the beginning: it is an echo that has been resonating in Willy Chapman's mind for some time now, as we are told that he has read the same letter “perhaps fifty times”—an echo that will continue to resonate and reappears close to the end, when the curtain is finally drawn, in that very same room, on Willy Chapman's death.¹ Beyond this carefully orchestrated first novel, *Echo* is a key figure in the Swiftian narrative: built on fragmentation and repetition, his text is also driven by the momentum and self-generating power of words. More than a principle of composition, *Echo* can be seen as a name for the virtual space (the chamber) that the narrative voice conjures into existence, or, equally, the space that calls forth the narrative and makes it possible. It bears an interesting relation to *khôra*, which Jacques Derrida invites us to see not as a womblike place of origins nor as a maternal figure as such, yet as a mother of sorts, for *khôra* is connected with creation and nomination without having “the properties of a genitrix nor the property of her children”.² If similarly, *Echo* can never call her own that which comes out of her, she welcomes all—whether it be words which are imported from elsewhere or words which seem to spring and grow from within, insofar as such a distinction is possible.
- 2 *Echo*'s plight acquires a new relevance from the moment her voice gets written. As Jacques Rancière suggests, the “muteness” of the written text which separates the word from its source of emission produces “a specific mode of enunciation and circulation of words and knowledge”, a mode of “orphaned enunciation”: “[La parole écrite] n'est pas simplement un moyen de reproduction de la parole et de conservation du savoir, elle est un régime spécifique d'énonciation et de circulation de la parole et du savoir, le régime d'une énonciation orpheline, d'une parole qui parle toute seule, oublieuse de son origine, insouciant à l'égard de son destinataire” (Rancière 82).
- 3 To the severed condition of all written word, the figure of *Echo* adds the motifs of amputation and alteration. Conversely, by removing the live element in *Echo*'s voice, by inflicting a second death on her, the written text enhances her fate and brings out what is

lost—and yet will not die. The text becomes the ideal resting place for a voice struck by absence, a voice felt not to belong anymore, the ghost of a voice. Because it presents us with what is missing as much as what remains, writing Echo, like writing voice itself, means building a space for that which, in the utterance, is not just orphaned but spectral. The letter lends a body to a voice other and unreal—more unreal each time one repeats the words one has already read fifty times.

- 4 It is easy to understand why Echo, as a figure both of what is lost and of what won't stay quiet has found such congenial abode in Swift's fiction. Swift's characters and narrators all inhabit a zone between melancholy and mourning. *Wish You Were Here*, published in 2011, stresses that there is no simple trajectory from one to the other in his work,³ that ghosts will not so easily be done away with. But the spectres are not just the lost ones and the past to which they belong; those who conjure them up and become a receptacle for their voices also run the risk of losing both their contours and their substance. And yet this dispossession does not appear simply as a danger to be resisted, it is the condition for the narrative to be something other than a process of self-mystification. Turning oneself into a shadow becomes a means to welcome a resonance which is no mere repetition. Paradoxically, the more ghostly the voice becomes, the more it imposes itself in its bodily dimension. Every time Willy Chapman repeats "In the end", with a different inflexion, the words carry the affect contained in these words which speak, or rather in this instance, fail to speak to the man who utters them. Whether repetition has the power of making words increasingly meaningful or more hollow every time they resonate, what matters is the space which is left to exist between the word and its echo: in French "un entre" which is also "une antre" (35), as Jean-Luc Nancy suggests in *À l'écoute*—an in-between which shapes itself like a cave or a cavern. It is in that "entre/antre", in my view, that the Swiftian text finds its power and momentum.

Speculation, specularity, spectrality

- 5 In Swift's novels, the story consistently stems from some form of crisis or shock which both impels and impedes it. It involves almost invariably a resurgence from the past, a return of the repressed or some form of spectral manifestation which shatters the narrative that registers it. In the echo which resonates at the beginning of *The Sweet Shop Owner* we may hear first the threat that the voice might simply get stuck, that the narrative might come to an end ("the end") even before it has started. Stunned by the words which detach themselves from the letter, Willy Chapman also gets to hear in their stubborn repetition the powerlessness of his own voice. As they try to come to terms with what has hit them, Swift's narrators embark into a convoluted process of examination and self-examination which follows broken lines and regularly takes them back to the same points. What insists and resists is not simply the object of their inquiry, but the voice that rises in front of themselves, a voice that is not just a transparent vehicle of meaning but that can become opaque and alien at any point. In his study of *Waterland*, Marc Porée suggests that, as he "evokes the dead", Tom Crick, the narrator, "raises ghosts, including the ghost of his own voice" ("fai[t] se dresser les fantômes, y compris le fantôme de sa propre voix", 311). Hence the question of whether the narrator might not be already "mourning his own voice" ("Le narrateur serait-il déjà en train de porter le deuil de sa propre voix ?", Porée 311).⁴ In his sixth novel, *Ever After*, Swift goes as far as to entrust the narrative to a man who has returned from the dead—or actually is not sure he

has returned as the *incipit* suggests: “These are, I should warn you, the words of a dead man”. The elaborate and contrived soliloquy that follows seems to give the lie to the impression that Bill Unwin is not securely back in his body after his failed suicide attempt, and yet Echo somehow manages to work her way into the monologue and makes herself heard behind the voice that has regained control:

I am not me. Therefore was I ever me? That is the gist of it. A proof of all this lies before your very eyes. Or at least before mine, since you have no means of comparison and only my word to go on. But this is the point: these words or rather the tone, the pitch, the style of them and consequently of the thoughts that underlie them, are not mine. I have penned in my time—long ago—a thesis and an academic paper or two, but I have never begun to write anything as personal as this. Yet this way in which I write is surely not me. What would you call it? A little crabbed and sardonic? A little wry? A tendency to the flippant and cynical? Underneath it all, something careless, heartless? Is this how I am? (Swift 1992, 4, my emphasis)

Here we could say that the text splits itself between a reasoning subject and a resonating subject—to borrow the opposition suggested by Jean-Luc Nancy—an opposition which is visible but not audible in French between “raisonnant” and “résonant”. Beyond the doubts that the speaker voices with much method and in the most eloquent manner, the “[ai]” sound which punctuates the monologue conjures up a shadowy “I”, a rival to the one who displays his verbal skills, a ghost who challenges the man who puts up the performance. It turns out that *Hamlet* is one of the main hypotexts of *Ever After*.

- 6 In the self-searching voices that Swift invents for each of his novels, the author constantly plays with the illusion of presence that voice has the power to sustain but also the ability to unsettle it as soon as some distance is introduced. The voice which is put at the service of speculation and specularity emerges, in one way or another, in its spectral nature. Swift’s narrators are more or less garrulous, more or less articulate, but even when they are particularly clever with words, the reasoning voice never completely fills the void which the resonating voice restores. In an article called “Répétition, remémoration, perlaboration dans *Waterland*”, Jean-Jacques Lecercle suggests that the narrator Tom Crick is too much in control, talking too much and not listening enough for any kind of working through to take place. *Waterland* could thus be seen, according to Lecercle, as a novel where “perlaboration” proves impossible, (“un roman de l’impossible perlaboration”, 45), and as a result, a novel ruled by repetition (“un roman de la répétition”, 45). Jean-Jacques Lecercle nevertheless notes that the text also works *in spite* of its narrator and makes us hear “double” sometimes. The example he quotes is drawn from the passage in *Waterland* where the young Tom empties in the river a pail full of blood, blood which contains the foetus that Martha the witch has removed from his sweetheart’s womb:

I turned my head away. But then I looked. I howled. A farewell glance. A red spittle, floating, frothing, slowly sinking. Borne on the slow Ouse currents. Borne downstream. Borne all the way (but for the Ouse eels...) to the Wash. Where it all comes out. (Swift 1983, 317, my emphasis)

- 7 As Lecercle points out, it is difficult not to hear in the “borne”, repeated three times, a “born”, a trace or a remainder of what precisely will never get to be born. The figure of speech which one spontaneously associates with Echo is epiphora rather than anaphora. But through the momentum of the anaphora, the repeated fragment detaches itself and forms a remainder that resonates in the reader’s mind—not unlike the truncated words that the nymph is doomed to repeat. We might hear in this repetition a faint echo of

Dick's stutter and touch upon a limit, which, as Juan Menenes argues, is not just a deficiency but can be seen as a power that "neutralizes" (145) "the narrator's inundation of the past with his-story" (142). Yet we can claim that the essential place left to silence in the novel does not just lie outside the narrator's narrative, but finds its way inside it, in spite of all attempts by the history teacher to "saturate" (Menenes 148) his narrative.

- 8 Echo can mark the emergence of something unsettling, *Unheimlich* or monstrous. As Véronique Gély remarks, Echo bears the marks of the non-human and signals "the irruption of alterity at the heart of identity" ("l'écho, cette voix qui n'est pas humaine, signale l'irruption de l'altérité au sein même de l'identité", 9). But what threatens identity can also rescue the narrators from a deadly absorption in themselves. In fact, Echo is involved in an ambiguous game with Narcissus in these novels. We cannot fail to notice the virtual absence of mirrors in Swift's fiction, but they are in fact replaced by what one might call acoustic mirrors. It is voice which is the vehicle of reflection, voice which offers the possibility of familiarity and recognition but also of narcissistic satisfaction. Some of Swift's narrators clearly like the sound of their own voice. The fact that our voice, unlike our image, reaches us without requiring an external surface is what explains the sense of immediacy, presence and self-possession that we may derive as we speak, as Derrida famously argued:

Le sujet n'a pas à passer hors de soi pour être immédiatement affecté par son activité d'expression. Mes paroles sont vives parce qu'elles semblent ne pas me quitter : ne pas tomber hors de moi, hors de mon souffle, dans un éloignement visible. (Derrida 1967, 85) [The subject does not have to pass outside of himself in order to be immediately affected by its activity of expression. My words are "alive" because they seem not to leave me, seem not to fall outside of my breath, into a visible distance. (Transl. in Cisney 150)].

It is easy to get totally absorbed in one's own voice. But for the same reason, voice gains a particularly uncanny power when it reaches us from the outside. As Mladen Dolar puts it:

Re-flection demands bouncing back from an external surface, and it seems that the voice does not need this. The moment there is a surface which returns the voice, the voice acquires an autonomy of its own and enters the dimension of the other; it becomes a deferred voice and narcissism crumbles. (39)

The moment Echo makes herself heard and alters the image one has of oneself can be a moment of petrification or a catastrophic moment when things "crumble" or "collapse". In *The Light of Day*, George's destitution and eviction from the police force sums itself up in one word which has sealed his disgrace and erupts suddenly in the middle of the book:

The word that got used was "corrupt".

A strangely physical word. A black taste welling in your throat, a thickness on your tongue, as if you have a disease. As if they've rooted out some foul stuff inside you and it's you, it's yours now, you're stuck with it for good.

I was found to be corrupt, to be party to police corruption. At another time, maybe there would have been internal disciplining, reprimands, suspension. Shaming enough. But because the air was busy in those days with the word "corrupt" [...] I got the axe while Dyson walked. (Swift 2003, 134)

The word "that was in the air", "corrupt", has become the "stuff" that cannot be swallowed and causes the voice to get "stuck" in the narrator's throat (one may note the assonance). The word sounds George's downfall. But as it turns out, George survives the blow and becomes a "nocturnal animal" (Swift 2009, 295) in Swift's own words, a shadowy creature, a "private eye" and a "private ear" (Swift 2003, 29), the receptacle of his fellowmen's shattered lives. Instead of sounding "the end", Echo can mark a beginning as the "deferred voice" opens out a space where the experience of alienation or

dispossession does not have to be synonymous with a cancellation of oneself. Jean-Luc Nancy finds in resonance nothing less but the space in which a subject can sustain itself:

Il s'agit de remonter du sujet phénoménologique, point de visée intentionnelle, à un sujet résonant, espacement intensif d'un rebond qui ne s'achève en aucun retour en soi sans aussitôt relancer en écho un appel à ce même soi. Tandis que le sujet de la visée est toujours-déjà donné, posé en soi à son *point de vue*, le sujet de l'écoute est toujours encore à venir, espacé, traversé et appelé par lui-même, *sonné* par lui-même [...]. (44) [One needs to shift from the phenomenological subject as the point of intentional projection to a resonating subject as an intensive spacing, a bouncing back that never ends in a return to oneself but constantly renews and echoes the appeal to that same self. Whereas the subject of intention is always already given, posited as pre-existing by a *point of view*, the subject produced by listening is always yet to come, spaced, crossed and called by itself, *sounded/stunned* by itself [...]. (My translation. Nancy plays here on the polysemy of "sonné".)]

- 9 As Isabelle Alfandary points out, with this "fundamental resonance" ("résonance fondamentale") (19), Nancy makes it possible to revisit Derrida's approach to voice and its association with self-presence. Interestingly, resonance becomes a privileged means of encountering Derridean "différance": "Nancy suggests that it is possible to "reopen the whole worksite of voice" by questioning the notion of *différance* from the point of view of resonance" ("Nancy laisse entendre qu'il serait possible de rouvrir ici tout le chantier de la 'voix' en interrogeant la différence depuis la résonance", Alfandary 283).
- 10 The spectral subject that appears in the "space in-between" ("dans l'espacement intensif d'un rebond") may appear as singularly evanescent and yet it is in that space that it becomes possible to be something other than either "me" or "not me" to quote Bill Unwin—possible to loosen the trap in which the speaking subject finds itself according to Dominique Rabaté, that plight of being both "never oneself and too much oneself", "jamais soi et trop soi": "Nous nous trouvons devant deux abîmes : impossibilité de l'unité condamnée, présence toujours trop semblable de soi-même dans la diffraction des images" (49).

The place of the body

- 11 One could fear that there might be too little to feed on in the space in-between. Echo's fate, as Jonathan Rée points out, is at the opposite pole of that of Narcissus: "Narcissus, the perfection of self-centredness and self-ignorance and Echo the last extreme of receptivity, to the point indeed of servility and self-starvation" (70). Nancy insists that as a recipient of all voices including his own, the "listening subject", "le sujet à l'écoute" does not inhabit a pure void, but finds sustenance in the silence that allows words to resonate instead of being bluntly themselves:

Le « silence » en effet doit ici *s'entendre* non pas comme une privation mais comme une disposition de résonance : un peu – voire exactement... – comme dans une condition de silence parfait on entend résonner son propre corps, son souffle, son cœur et toute sa caverne retentissante (44) ["Silence" must not be *heard* as lack but as a condition for resonance: somewhat—or exactly...—as when in a situation of perfect silence one hears the resonance of one's own body, of one's breathing, of one's heart and of the one's entire echoing cave. (My translation)]

- 12 Echo's story, as Véronique Gély points out, is the story of a body, a body either torn to pieces or petrified; it is also the story of the voice that survives that body—a voice whose bodily dimension is paradoxically intensified when it becomes detached, invisible,

disembodied. Rather than sheer dispossession, the Swiftian text and its resonating voices present us with a metamorphosis which restores the corporeal dimension of voice that gets occulted when it disappears behind the meaning it carries. The transformation is sometimes welcomed and celebrated by the narrators themselves. One needs only to listen to Bill Unwin's rapture when he describes the moment one turns into a shadow in the theatre:

That moment when the performance begins! That magic moment when the lights go down and the curtain trembles; when the pretend thing, the made up thing, becomes the real thing and the audience, in their dark rows turn to ghosts. How can it be? Why should it be? What's Hecuba to him? That moment when things come alive. (Swift 1992, 252)

- 13 The moment when one turns into a ghost is not a moment when the body is purely absent for it then starts to pulse and throb to the sound of the words uttered on stage. Echo is to be found in the words which are detached and seem orphaned (here snatches from *Hamlet*) but also in the body in which they resonate. Mladen Dolar argues that: "The voice by being so ephemeral, transient, incorporeal, ethereal, presents us for that very reason the body at its quintessential, the hidden bodily treasure beyond the visible envelope [...]" (71). We are not talking about the fair image that forms itself in the mirror, but about a dark hollow—not about the double in which one can contemplate oneself but an invisible remainder which nevertheless has the power of holding things together. One could think of Lacan's multiple rewriting of the mirror stage and his redefinition of the imaginary as depending crucially on a hole or a blind spot in the image, which has its equivalent in the voice: Mladen Dolar talks about a "blind spot in the call" (4). George in *The Light of Day* offers us an image close to that of the body as a cave containing a "hidden treasure" when he says: "I'm the black shell of a house at night, lit up inside" (234). George can be considered to stand slightly apart among Swift's narrators as he is an "ear" as much as a voice, a recipient of the confession of others, who also opens himself to the resonance of his own voice. But from the beginning, Swift manages to turn his narrative into "a resonating cave", "une caverne retentissante" (Nancy 44). Willy Chapman's story is suspended to every breath he takes as he suffers from a heart condition: a parallel can be drawn between the cage which contains his heart, the narrative which welcomes various voices, past and present, and the closed place in which the character spends most of his days—that shop in which he likes to listen to every "creaking of the floorboards" and every "rustle, like crumpled paper outspreading" (17-18), that shop, which, "sometimes, in the mornings, seemed to speak" (18).
- 14 The opposition or the tension between a reasoning voice and a resonating voice may be seen as involving two different parts of the body. Dolar remarks that: "Every emission of the voice is by its very essence ventriloquism [...]. The source of the voice can never be seen, it stems from an undisclosed and structurally concealed interior [...] from inside the body, the belly, the stomach—from something incompatible and irreducible to the activity of the mouth" (70). With or without its narrators, through them or in spite of them, Swift's entire fiction builds itself as a place for that other voice which seems to come both from inside and from nowhere—a voice which Dolar, after Lacan, calls "extimate" ("extime"). Each novel has its own way of making us hear that other voice, whether it be an intra- or inter-textual voice—an opposition which the Swiftian text tends to blur. Echo invites us to look at the so-called "intertextual relation" from a particular angle, as a tensional effect which involves a corporeal dimension. According to Antoine Compagnon, "a quotation repeats, causes the act of reading to echo within the

written text" ("la citation répète, elle fait retentir la lecture dans l'écriture", 27). While on the one hand Echo can convey the sense of purely mechanical repetition, it allows us, on the other hand, to emphasize rewriting as a response of the body, a body responding to what speaks to it.⁵ *Ever After's* spectral "I" can be described in the words of Jean-Michel Maulpoix as "a mouthpiece of absence and plurality", "un porte-voix d'une absence et d'une pluralité" (152). It is from the moment that it no longer coincides with itself that it can become simultaneously "the voice that speaks to me, the voice of others who speak through me, the voice in which I address others" ("la voix de l'autre qui me parle, la voix des autres qui parlent en moi, la voix même que j'adresse aux autres", Maulpoix 160). The Shakespearian intertext, which finds its way at various points in Bill Unwin's monologue, is still carried in his mind by the voice of his departed wife, a stage actress. But the shadow texts which crop up everywhere in Swift's fiction are most of the time written texts, countless memoirs, manuscripts, letters which sometimes take over the text which is supposed to contain them. Rather than swallowing the voice that it mutes, the written text allows it to resonate—rather than a process of petrification, the letter can be considered to perform that metamorphosis which brings out another voice—or voice as other, the voice that haunts us rather than the voice we use.⁶

- 15 Echo's voice, that voice that "does not belong", does not only find an ideal expression in the intertextual voice—a voice including another voice, but in a transpersonal voice—a voice which finds its ultimate expression in the polyphonic novel. The seventy-five sections that make up *Last Orders* contain a piece spoken by Jack, the man who is now reduced to ashes in an urn which his friends are about to empty in the sea. But in fact all the monologues that compose *Last Orders* can be seen, in their own manner, as examples of prosopopoeia. More than ever, the characters that carry the narrative and speak each in their turn, can be said to "occupy the very place of voice", "la place même de la voix" to quote Jean-Michel Maulpoix (160). Through the global composition of the novel, they emerge as disembodied voices that echo and form another body around the absent Jack. The "joy of an active dispossession of oneself" (Rabaté 10) felt by Bill Unwin in *Ever After* gains an impersonal dimension in *Last Orders*. In this "orphaned narrative"⁷ deprived of all unifying voice, resonance is clearly made possible by the space in-between, un "entre" which is also une "antre" as the book is built as an echoing chamber in the first place. Because of the plural space it creates, *Last Orders*, more than any of Swift's other books, allows us to see Echo not as a forlorn nymph but as a happy ventriloquist.
- 16 The major part that Echo gets to play in Swift's fiction can be connected with the role of the void or the absent origin around which his novels are built—one may remember in *Ever After* the cave where Bill Unwin's ancestor has the sudden dizzying revelation that the universe may be much older than what he learnt from the Bible. But equally Echo holds the Swiftian text together—not just in spite of, but thanks to, the gap, the space in-between (the "espacement" or the "entre"/"antre") which resonance introduces in the fabric of the text. At the end of her study on Echo, Veronique Gély wonders whether the "diffracted", "dispersed" subject of modernity (Gély 295)—the subject which, in Barthes's words, "dissolves" in the fabric of his own text as "a spider would dissolve in the secretions of her own web"⁸ does not mark the victory of Arachne over Echo. Swift's novels suggest that the two mythological figures can cohabit and work side by side. Fragmentation and dissolution produce a remainder, a spectral presence: in the scattered fragments of the subject made text, the body and in particular the body of desire is not cancelled but liberated. Finally, Echo extends the limits of the text in a manner that

might be deemed terrifying but also, ultimately, salutary: without beginning or end, words can continue freely to resonate in the echoing chambers of his novels.

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NOTES

1. "You will see in the end" (186). The novel also closes with words that we have heard several times before, "All right. All right—now", in particular at the end of the race Willy remembers in section 34: "All right. Now." (198). In-between the text gets regularly punctuated with several "Not now".
2. « [...] ladite "comparaison" de *khôra* avec la mère [...] ne lui assure aucune propriété au sens du génitif subjectif ou au sens du génitif objectif : ni les propriétés d'une génitrice (elle n'engendre rien et n'a d'ailleurs aucune propriété du tout), ni la propriété des enfants » (Derrida 1993, 50-51).
3. In this instance, Wendy Wheeler's description of a linear trajectory testifying to the successful work of mourning in Graham Swift's *œuvre* was to prove hasty. The same applies to the disputable set of oppositions she uses: "The task which Swift sets himself is that of discovering how the self-destructive melancholias of modernity can be turned into the healthy mournings of something that we might call postmodernity" (65).
4. In his analysis of "the first-person turn" and the "turn to listening" in Swift's *Tomorrow* as well as in novels by Banville and Ishiguro ("Contemporary Fiction and Narratorial Acoustics: Graham Swift's *Tomorrow*"), Stephen Benson dwells on the sophisticated construction of an acoustic environment which involves a paradoxical relation between presence and absence, and the pervasive motif of loss. However, if Benson pays careful attention to the silence that surrounds the narratorial voice, he does not address the manner in which that silence affects the speaking subject from within, making his or her own voice ghostly.
5. Bernard Baas insists on the difference between a flat echo and resonance as a form of response to the call to be found in the voice: « Répondre, ce n'est pas simplement faire écho » (204).
6. In the words of Jacques-Alain Miller, « La voix, on ne s'en sert pas, elle habite le langage, elle nous hante » (51).
7. I am referring to Rancière describing the condition of the "mute word" but also to an article by Michel Morel devoted to *Last Orders* and entitled « *Last Orders* : le récit orphelin ».
8. « [...] perdu dans ce tissu - cette texture - le sujet s'y défait, telle une araignée qui se dissoudrait elle-même dans les sécrétions constructives de sa toile » (Barthes 101).

ABSTRACTS

Repetition is often considered to be one of the distinctive features of Swift's work, but not enough attention is paid to the resonant quality of his text and to the role played by a voice which sounds as though it did not entirely belong to its speaker but came from elsewhere. Swift's novels allow what Jean-Luc Nancy calls "le sujet résonnant" to emerge beside "le sujet raisonnant" – as its spectre. Echo "recomposes space", produces what Nancy calls "l'antre et l'entre du son". It involves the body in an ambivalent manner, effacing or "abolishing" it (Gély) whilst asserting the bodily dimension of "the voice that survives the body" (Gély) and its effects on other bodies: words gain life and substance as they "find an echo" in the subject in / through whom they resonate. While it may be connected with the void or missing origin that haunts Swift's fiction, Echo also marks the felicitous metamorphosis of the illusory self-present voice into a transpersonal voice.

L'œuvre de Graham Swift a pu être abordée sous l'angle de la répétition, mais il convient de se demander ce qu'il advient lorsque cette répétition se fait résonance et nous laisse entendre une voix qui ne semble pas entièrement appartenir à celui ou celle dont elle émane. Le roman swiftien laisse place, à côté du "sujet raisonnant", à ce que Nancy appelle un "sujet résonnant" que l'on peut voir comme un spectre du premier. Écho "recompose l'espace", produit ce que Nancy appelle "l'entre et l'antre du son". Elle implique le corps de manière ambivalente, l'effaçant ou "l'abolissant" (Gély) tout en donnant une dimension corporelle à cette "voix qui survit au corps" (Gély) et à ses effets sur d'autres corps : les mots prennent vie et substance dès lors qu'ils trouvent un écho/une réponse à travers le sujet en qui ils résonnent. En étroite relation avec le vide et l'origine absente qui hantent la fiction swiftienne, Écho est néanmoins ici porteuse d'une heureuse transformation : tout en défaisant l'illusion d'une présence à soi, cette voix autre, orpheline, s'impose aussi comme une voix transpersonnelle.

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oeuvre citée Sweet Shop Owner (The), Light of Day (The), Ever After, Wish You Were Here, Last Orders, Waterland

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Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2011) which focuses on the staging of voice in Swift's fiction. She is co-editor of the online journal *L'Atelier* and is on the editorial board of the online journal *Polysèmes*. Her interests include post-colonial literatures (she has published articles on Janet Frame, Alice Munro, and J.M. Coetzee).