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An Exhibition of Hidden Stories: The
Young Voices Soundscape: Examining
Sound and Silence as a Collective
Experience in Sound Art Installation

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AN EXHIBITION OF HIDDEN STORIES: THE YOUNG VOICES SOUNDSCAPE EXAMINING SOUND AND SILENCE AS A COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE IN SOUND ART INSTALLATION

Panayiota A. Demetriou

Abstract

In this paper I explore the concepts of sound and silence focusing upon creative modalities for the dissemination of oral history materials. In doing so I focus upon two sound installations: *Witness* (2000) by Susan Hiller, in which second-hand accounts of extra-terrestrial sightings were exhibited; and *The Young Voices Soundscape* (2012), in which I exhibited a collection of sound recordings of young people's first-hand accounts of concerns about their social inclusion. In particular, I examine Hiller's methods of preserving, managing, curating and distributing the various materials generated through the collection of oral histories, which have been catalytic to my own work. The concepts of sound and silence are approached within the context of uncovering silent histories as a practice of oral history that gives 'voice' to stories that might otherwise remain unheard. Drawing upon a number of theoretical frameworks including the philosophies of sound art as well as poststructuralist and deconstructionist perspectives, I examine the relationship between sound, silence and oral history. In addition, I discuss what it is that constitutes a silent history with regard to its association with oral histories, debating how each of the two sound installations challenges the extent to which oral histories may be considered reliable or otherwise. Through this discussion, I identify disparities of information within chains of oral history accounts that arise as a consequence of the process of being passed from one person to the next. Such disparities produce a sense of 'removedness' within each exhibition, which brings into question whether the act of recording and relating oral histories might correlate with depreciation in the value of silent histories. In this article I consider that such disparities do not affect the reliability of silent histories, whilst acknowledging the 'irrational' aspect to the stories exhibited in *Witness*.

Key Words: performance, sound installation, soundscape, sound, silence, oral history, silent histories.

Inside The Young Voices Soundscape

Left in the dark, one needs to explore what is heard: a hubbub of voices filling a space. There is an inability to distinguish individual voices, to make out their identity and what each voice is saying. It is not at all what is expected. When listening, one usually expects to have something visual to accompany and make sense of the sounds we hear, as the visual fleshes out the sound. But here, the hearing is full of doubt about the heard, as a swelling of disembodied voices fills up the room. Going further into the space, with the guidance of dim lighting that creates an uncanny effect, not only is one in doubt of the heard but also of what is to be seen. The voices are like ghosts travelling around the space, slinking around human-like figures, making one doubt if the bodies are real or unreal. The disembodied voices move in on the figures from all directions, creating their silhouettes with an amorphous breeze. However, what perplexes one's mind is that the figures are still, mute and numb to any auditory engagement, yet at the same time the voices are 'alive' and buzzing all around the space. The voices do not belong to the figures, which is not what a person would expect. In this case, one cannot but wonder if there are other people in this room too. As vision becomes

stable and one's eyes become familiar with the lighting in the space, it is clearer that the silhouettes are only mannequins, with 'voice boxes' at their feet. There are more people in the soundscape, travelling around the space, listening as a mode of exploration, an approach to walking through the soundscape. Although these voices differ from one another in volume and tone as well as in the frequency and length of pauses, they combine to form a harmonised pandemonium of voices. A sense of instability in the listener is caused by the simultaneous occurrence of voices that vary in pitch, creating an unsettling tone, colour or timbre. Distance and proximity transform one's perception of the soundscape as the closer one moves towards the mannequins, the more easily distinguishable individual voices become. When focusing merely on one voice, the rest of the pandemonium is muted, almost silent. One's auditory engagement becomes numb towards the rest of the voices until the process of listening is repeated with another voice. It is not only as though the remaining voices are muted, but also as if they have become part of 'the sound of silence', a component of the background sounds, as if they are echoes of the room's vibrations.

In this article I discuss creative modalities for the dissemination of oral history materials by exploring different approaches to silent histories via an examination of the audio-sculpture *Witness* (2000) by international artist Susan Hiller and my own sound art installation *The Young Voices Soundscape* (2012).¹ *The Young Voices Soundscape* exhibited a collection of sound recordings of young people's first-hand accounts about issues concerning their social inclusion,² while Hiller's *Witness* exhibited second-hand accounts of extra-terrestrial sightings². Through the discussion of these two sound installations, I approach the role of sound and silence to highlight the potential 'disparities' of oral histories occurring as a result of lacunae³ in testimony due to the migration of information within chains of accounts, leading to a quality of 'removedness'. This phenomenon questions whether such a quality of 'removedness' might correlate with depreciation in the value of silent histories. In consideration of these concepts, I ask how these two installations help to reveal the 'disparities' and subsequent sense of 'removedness' occurring within accounts of oral history. Does the practical dissemination of oral history materials mean that they become less 'silent'? Do accounts of oral histories therefore lose their value as silent histories due to the shared sense of subjectivity that occurs within the act of telling?

In *The Young Voices Soundscape*, I exhibited an existing collection of oral history materials created from the 'remains' of my previous artistic research within the project *Young Voices - An Applied Theatre Project, Aiming to Bridge the Gap Between Youth and Adults* (2010-2011).⁴ The 'remains' from this project included a collection of sound recordings of young people's personal oral accounts, in which they discussed concerns about their own social inclusion. Through an exploration of the 'anxieties' and 'moral panics'⁵ often associated with young people, as well as an interrogation of how such associations might lead to social exclusion,⁶ my research within this project examined how different performance forms might facilitate youth inclusion. Within *The Young Voices Soundscape*, I extended the idea of exploring performance forms as a means of disseminating oral history materials within the setting of a sound installation, in which a series of mannequins with 'voice boxes' (mini speakers and mp3 players) were placed within the gallery space. These mannequins were used to represent each of the young people, with each corresponding mp3 player being attributed a different oral history account from the sound collection. These accounts were then played simultaneously throughout the exhibition. The project was presented at the University of Bristol's Department of Drama on the 20 November 2012 and ran from 15:00 – 21:30.

When entering *The Young Voices Soundscape*, participants were issued with instructions to explore the different voices, selecting one that they felt most drawn to by holding the tangible form of the particular voice (mini speaker and mp3 player) in their hands. Following this, they were told to find somewhere in the space to stand still (acting as one of the mannequins) and

focus upon their chosen voice intently. This process could be repeated as many times as the participant felt inclined. By holding the tangible form of the voices, the participant thus stepped in for the young people as if they were themselves embodying these young voices. By listening intently to the young voices, whilst holding the object from which the voice emanated, the participant became an active agent within the soundscape. In this way, the participants acted as ‘belated witnesses’ to what the young voices were telling them.⁷

Through issuing the participants with instructions on how to interact with the soundscape, it was my intention to evoke the sense of belated witnessing I experienced when I originally interviewed the young people. This meant that by selecting a voice that they felt drawn to, the participant simultaneously took on the role of both interviewer and interviewee, constantly shifting by performing these two contrasting roles. The concept of the participant embodying the journey of both interviewer and interviewee was established before entering *The Young Voices Soundscape*, since each participant was initially made a custom mask from plaster of Paris. Since plaster of Paris has the ability to adopt facial characteristics, the inside of each mask became specific to the person it was created for. By contrast, the outside of the masks remained expressionless in order to provoke a sense of temporary detachment and physical anonymity for the participant from their facial identity. The participants’ experience of outward physical anonymity thus became reflective of the mannequins’ expressionless faces within the soundscape. This device was used to provoke a sense of empathy between participant and young voice. Upon exiting the soundscape, the participants were then instructed to remove their masks and attach them to a rail using string. By doing this, the participants were invited to symbolically detach themselves from the layers of identities and voices that they had possessed within the soundscape and, in turn, to have their own personae reinstated. In this way, the participants’ facial identification was captured as their physical characteristics became imprinted inside the mask. It is upon this condition that they were granted access to the archive.

The Young Voices Sound Collection

At the conclusion of my initial research project, *Young Voices: An Applied Theatre Project*, I was left with a collection of materials that resembled an oral history archive. This consisted of different types of documentation including a vast number of sound files as well as video documentation of young people’s oral accounts, transcripts of interviews, photographs, handwritten notes, autobiographical monologues, ethical reports, CRB certificates and other documents that are traces of a performance past. I therefore felt an on-going responsibility to how these voices would be represented, asking myself: who has the right to encounter, listen to and experience these voices? What happens to these recordings now that the project has concluded? Will these voices ‘rest in peace’ in the archive as simple evidence of past encounters? Or does the initial purpose in the act of collecting these stories mean that it might be unethical to leave these recorded voices ‘sitting’ in the archive, as if ‘silenced’? It occurred to me that I had ‘signed’ a verbal agreement with these young people in order to record their voices. It was agreed that the identity of the young people would remain anonymous, while ensuring that their stories were heard via my artistic research. Consequently, even after the project had come to an end, I remained responsible for the young people in the sense that I continued to be the applied theatre facilitator, the interviewer and the storyteller. In this way, I considered myself an authoritative, Derridean ‘archon’. In *Archive Fever*, Derrida writes:

The archons are first of all the documents’ guardians. They do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited and of the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. Entrusted to such archons, these documents speak the law [...].⁸

In this sense, by following the journey of gathering the material, the participants experiencing *The Young Voices Soundscape* also become archons and curators of the sound collection. Within the installation, the participants have control over the voices, by adjusting the dial volume of the speakers or by changing their physical position within the space. The participants were implicitly representing some of the work of the archon – curator, since the individual journeys taken by the active participants within the soundscape mean that the mannequins become figures who provoke an interpretive response within the listener, mirroring the creator's role when originally recording the voices. In addition, masking the participants prior to their entry into the soundscape mirrored the access procedures employed when visiting an archive, such as registration of personal data. This was further echoed with the measures I went through in order to gain access to the young people and record their voices, for example being CRB checked and receiving ethical clearance. In this sense, establishing similar security procedures towards monitoring who has access to the sound collection reinforced my role as the protector of these voices and made the participants experience a similar journey in order to gain access to the young peoples' voices.

Even though the sound recordings used within *The Young Voices Soundscape* were removed from their original context, the age group of the individuals that the voices belonged to was made evident through their modes of expression and the ways in which they articulated their concerns. As the philosophies of sound art pursue the construction of 'a critical engagement that witnesses, documents and narrates', so *The Young Voices Soundscape* invites us to encounter, listen and experience these voices as an active participant embarking on the same journey that the creator initially took when the voices were recorded.⁹ The clash of voice pitches within *The Young Voices Soundscape* is akin to Roger Kamien's (2008) idea that dissonant chords are active because of the tension they create; this approach has been used to articulate pain and conflict through music.¹⁰ In this sense, because the recordings give the impression of a tonal environment, the clash of pitches from the sound recordings are used within the installation to portray the tension found in the actual content of the recordings, in which the young people discuss anxieties and concerns about their social inclusion.

Silent Histories

The practice of oral history, as opposed to the idea of silence, has been used throughout the decades to 'voice' silent histories. Stephen Humphries (1984) supports the notion that oral history is conceived of as 'living memory', concentrating on the memories of individuals whose experiences have been mostly disregarded and excluded from past historical texts. He argues that even the voice of the middle class has been neglected, let alone the working class and the sub-communities embedded within it.¹¹ Building upon this view, Alistair Thompson and Robert Perks (1998) suggest that political elites have always influenced historical texts but oral history has transformed the contemporary practice of history by including the experiences and perspectives of individuals that have been 'hidden from history', such as working class history, women's history, black and ethnic minority history and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender histories. Additionally, by documenting features of historical experience, which are often excluded from written historical sources, like domestic work or family life, oral history embraces subjective interpretations of lived experience.¹² In the case of *The Young Voices Soundscape*, the medium of sound art was used as an approach to 'voice' the young people's lived experiences and concerns.

Sound art invokes the notions of sound and silence aesthetically and conceptually, notions that are fundamentally associated with the practice of oral history¹³, and which are analysed thoroughly in the following section. Oral history as a practice records history that has not been documented in writing; it is mostly concerned with unearthing the history of 'ordinary'

people and giving voice to those silent histories. I consider these kinds of ‘community’ histories as silent because they are not usually made accessible, as they are not perceived as representing the history of the masses. Silence can be encountered whilst an oral history interview is being executed. This is something that I encountered whilst conducting the interviews with the young people during the initial collation of my oral history data, where silence during the interview became indicative of hidden, underlying meanings. Read via Freud, Derrida and Lacan, the ‘uncanny’ nature of silence becomes indicative of something ‘Other’ in the infrastructure of sound and expression. Due to Freud’s, Derrida’s and Lacan’s logocentrism,¹⁴ they described the unconscious as being structured like language. By using the talking cure as a method of psychoanalysis, Freud interprets silence – that is, resistances and pauses during speech – as an insight towards the exploration of further meanings that extend beyond symbolic transference and parapraxis¹⁵. As Nicholas Royle (2003) writes: ‘If silence is golden, there will have been something deadly about its glitter’.¹⁶

In light of this, the lacunae that are created in the absence of a purposefully constructed sound, in the case that sound can be described as an utterance, is symptomatic of additional underlying, subliminal and concealed meanings. In this sense, the individual sound files in *The Young Voices* collection do not only articulate the young peoples’ concerns in relation to their social exclusion but also reveal subconscious reflections via pauses within their speech. This phenomenon is what I have already referred to as the lacunae of testimony. Consequently, within the context of an oral history interview, the interviewer takes on the role of a psychoanalyst attempting to evaluate and record these pauses in consideration of non-verbal cues being as important as spoken ones. This relates to Derrida’s view of the archon, in the sense that the archive keeper creates an interpretation of the narrative within an archive. Taking into account Giorgio Agamben’s (1999) idea that testimony is created only via absence – ‘testimony only guarantees via its unarchivability, its exteriority with respect to the archive [in order that] it escapes both memory and forgetting’¹⁷ – the role of sound in the context of testimony and witnessing therefore becomes unstable. This is due to the fact that testimony defies integration into present experience, therefore becoming a site of memory, a concept that is interpreted by Agamben ‘as that which cannot be witnessed, is given literary form’.¹⁸

In order to explore two different approaches to comprehending the notion of silent histories, as well as their dissemination within the context of artistic research, I would like to consider Susan Hiller’s audio-sculpture *Witness*. Hiller’s project, an audio-based installation, contained a hubbub of voices. The sound recordings exhibited in *Witness* featured people’s experiences of extra-terrestrial phenomena. Using the Internet as her main tool, Hiller assembled a collection of written testimonies and statements from individuals who recalled mysterious experiences such as lights in the sky and UFO sightings.¹⁹ The artist took each of these witnessed accounts and implemented them into the audio-sculpture by suspending 400 small speakers from the ceiling and illuminating them. Each speaker in *Witness* conveyed a voice narrating a story: ten audio tracks were created with each track containing numerous recordings. These tracks were distributed between speakers in order to fill the space with a density of voices. Some of these voices had a named source while others were anonymous. In addition, many of the narrations began with a disclaimer, suggesting that the storyteller anticipated that visitors to the installation might not believe the stories they were hearing. The narrations came from all over the world and were spoken in their original language as well as spanning a diversity of age groups.²⁰

Hiller’s installation did not exhibit what might be described as a ‘conventional’ oral history collection, as it countered several concepts that constitute such an assemblage. This is because her approach for obtaining data was in contrast to more conventional forms of collecting oral history, such as the traditional use of interview.²¹ Hiller’s sound collection thus did not

emerge from a direct encounter between interviewer and interviewee or through the spoken word. Instead, her sources were written accounts that she found on websites that she left undisclosed. This alternative and interesting method of work is a critique of 'traditional' and 'objective' approaches, as it stands in contrast to 'conventional' approaches of collecting data for qualitative research, such as the interview within the context of the practice of oral history. Since Hiller obtained these written accounts and acquired different individuals to narrate and record them, her installation does not exhibit first-hand but rather second-hand recordings, creating a disparity in the people's original accounts, thereby producing a quality of 'removedness' for visitors to the installation. The data that was used in *Witness* may therefore be considered as a translation of subjective ideas as well as the ideas themselves taking on an 'irrational' nature, since not everyone believes in extra-terrestrial sightings. This provokes the question as to whether 'disparities' produced via the various lacunae within testimonies, as well as the role of memory and interpretation within chains of oral accounts, might lead to a sense of the accounts being considered unreliable. Such 'disparities' led to a resultant quality of 'removedness' for the person listening to these accounts, which might be seen as correlative with depreciation in their value as silent histories.

At this point, it is useful to define silent histories and explore the relationship between silent histories and oral history. Michel de Certeau refers to silent histories within his discussion of the mechanics of power by focusing on the role of the consumer, with particular regard to reading and constructing history. He perceives historiography as a management of absence and evaluates it as an action that is inherently estranged from the subject's presence. For Certeau, the writing of history establishes 'the study of writing as historical practice'.²² This may be understood as the practice and theory of writing existing as an active component in the composition of history. Writing, thus, does not simply record history by translating events into words, but instead words themselves come to contribute to the production of history. Certeau's examination of historiography therefore concentrates on the theoretical substructures of texts. His attention is on the 'commoners' who are not authorised to construct policies or histories but who 'just manage' in life and who are nevertheless still expected to contribute to the establishment of history and policy. In Certeau's view, history is not an approach used to deliver truth, for it is writing that represents the device of an imposed rationality. Considering written history as merely text, for Certeau the notion and act of reading a text is a type of 'silent production' through which the conditional social and historical foundations that have shaped the reader/consumer ensure a reconstruction of a text in vastly explicit and countless ways. He argues that certain ways of understanding the text will continually regenerate silent histories, histories that may be deciphered by the various disparities uncovered within delivery and interpretation. In this manner, Certeau's silent histories can be positioned as a means 'of undermining any sense of naturalness or inevitability about the present by showing that other readings were always possible'.²³

For the purpose of this paper, Certeau's 'other readings' are interpreted as the different ways of seeing the world, which are dependant upon the diversity of individuals that inhabit it. These 'other readings' mirror the individuals' stories that have not been documented in written history and which create the gaps that Certeau refers to within written history. What Certeau points out is that there is more to the 'set history' than each society has been provided with, starting with each person's own history.²⁴ As humans we are storied beings and we employ stories as the principle component through which we think, reflect and communicate. Therefore, narrative making is a process of identity making or forming an understanding of our identity and our selves, as well as interpreting our actions and desires. By telling a story we are simultaneously narrating our identity. In consideration of these views, if one's personal history is a vital component of one's identity and community as a collective whole,

Certeau's absences in writing can in practice represent the histories of the common people that have rarely been written.

Certeau writes that the act of historical analysis means that associations to the techniques on which it was founded, such as oral traditions and folklore, are often habitually forgotten. In addition, because the discourse of history is possessed and recorded by those in power, it is as though history originated only with the 'noble speech' of interpretation, which through its discourse carefully omitted traces of labour history.²⁵ This idea relates to how Kenneth J. Gergen interprets Foucault's 'discourse-user' and Certeau's concept of the consumer, in association to social constructionism. Gergen reads these concepts as the 'warranting voice', stating that all individuals share a desire to have their own stories overcome opposing accounts. Gergen argues that 'we are all competing for a "voice" or the right to be heard, and we therefore present constructions of ourselves that are most likely to "warrant voice", to use representations that offer us some validity and legitimacy'.²⁶ He elaborates that several accounts 'warrant voice' more than others, in the sense that they are heard regularly and thus are prone to obtaining a 'truth' tag or 'common sense'. This is due to those in ruling positions having both the funds and the influence to maintain their voices.²⁷

In this sense, the voices used in *The Young Voices Soundscape* might be considered as a type of silent history since they are a part of an element absent within written history. Likewise, acknowledging the 'irrational' aspect to the stories exhibited in Hiller's *Witness*, the accounts within the audio-sculpture might also be considered as a kind of silent history because they too disclose a certain type of 'lived experience' that has not been broadly disseminated. In both projects, the validity of the accounts can be debated regardless of the context of each projects' sound recordings. This is because both projects exhibit accounts that are based on fragmented narratives and subjective truths. This is due to the issues related when recalling experiences and reminiscing, such as the 'problematics' of memory and the validity of oral testimony. In social constructionism, discourses allow for specific ways of interpreting the world as they construct our psychosocial realities.²⁸ Each experience is simply another way of looking at the world, which is deployed as and when necessary.²⁹ This idea links to how memory is non-linear, with each experience based on discourses being recalled as and when required. Moreover, this can relate to the view that memories do not mirror the actual happenings of the past, but instead are selective reconstructions of the past.³⁰ Individuals recall or forget past happenings in accordance with the requirements of the present: 'Memory's mutability makes it possible for multiple and conflicting versions of events to co-exist, sometimes in the interests of competing parties'.³¹

The 'problematics' concerning memory are very much connected to the validity of a testimony as well as witnessing, and also form the basis of particular issues in relation to the validity of oral history. However, Alessandro Portelli (2005) and other scholars such as oral historian Michael Frisch (1990) have challenged the scepticism that surrounds oral history. Portelli explains that the elements that constitute an oral history may be variable. Elements such as orality, narrative form and subjectivity, as well as the diverse credibility of memory and the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee are all, he argues, rather beneficial qualities. Portelli states: 'They should be considered as strengths rather than weaknesses'.³² He continues: 'Errors, inventions, and myths lead us through and beyond facts to their meanings'.³³ In this sense, these so called weaknesses found in oral testimony can be explored through Freud's talking cure technique. In this sense the lapses and lacunae within testimony actually project the concealed meanings of the unconscious: the desires, anxieties and reveries of the individuals doing the testifying (the id, ego and superego).

In the context of Hiller's audio-sculpture, what the audience members are actually listening to, apart from the voices recounting what they considered to be extra-terrestrial phenomena, are the desires, anxieties and reveries of the people doing the relating. In addition, the artist's

preference for the use of this very specific kind of data, which in mainstream society may be considered ‘irrational’, makes evident how these voices could belong to a branch of silent histories. *Witness* is based on carefully selected cultural artefacts from our society, which are then used as raw materials for the artist’s work. As Hiller has stated, her work poses a ‘paraconceptual’³⁴ idea of culture that aspires to disclose the degree to which existing conceptual frameworks are insufficient because they mask some part of reality.³⁵ This ideology hints at Hiller’s preference to use commonly discarded and distrusted materials such as the narrations in her audio-sculpture. The fact that she operates with such a method has moved her data from the ‘Otherness’ and strangeness of where it lives and how it is perceived in our inhibited culture, ‘to the otherness within our own and within ourselves’.³⁶

With her work, Hiller thus aims at excavating and simultaneously evoking an unstable and intangible characterisation of self and social norms, an idea that continuously contests ‘orthodox’ mind-sets and dispositions. Pierre Bourdieu defines the term ‘orthodox’ as *doxa*³⁷, the combination of orthodox and heterodox norms and beliefs. For Bourdieu, *doxa* or in simpler terms ‘the way things are’ occurs when restrictions are overlooked that have assisted to the escalation of unequal divisions in society. He explains it as ‘an adherence to relations of order which, because they structure inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident’.³⁸ Therefore, in respect of *doxa* or global popular belief, the testimonies used in *Witness* might be considered irrelevant and unimportant to social norms, since they do not comply with the commonly accepted. Hiller chooses to voice a certain lacunae of representation that is commonly overlooked as it is considered ‘irrational’ or ‘invalid’ by social ‘norms’. Hence, what Hiller exhibited is a type of silent history, not in the sense of the physically oppressed, underprivileged or excluded individuals that oral histories usually focus upon, but rather as a mental and perceptive repression, a marginalisation of certain ideas or social groups that believe in such phenomena.

The notion of repression and withholding voices also relates to Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, which is described as the dominance of the ruling class through the construction of popular discourses.³⁹ T.J. Jackson Lears (1985) clarifies that the hegemonic process does not endeavour to brainwash the public, but instead is dependant on predispositions within public belief to make particular information and cultural experiences accessible while suppressing or disregarding others.⁴⁰ Lears argues that it is important for historians to listen to human voices with a view to reforming the history of human experience. Moreover, as evident throughout western history, ‘speech has been considered a gift from the gods, the distinguishing characteristic of humans and therefore, the authorised medium of culture and power’.⁴¹ As Burr (2003) suggests, language gives individuals a framework for constituting their experience of the world and sense of self. In this sense, the worlds created by human beings are created out of a multiplicity of experiences, our day-to-day reality being overcrowded with hopes, anxieties, desires and fears so much so that we are in constant analysis of our drives and unconscious needs.⁴² Thus, oral history provides a particularly useful methodological tool to explore our lived experiences, regardless of the ‘disparities’ that arise within such accounts as a result of the process of relating. In consideration of the theories I have discussed, such ‘disparities’ of the accounts used within each exhibit do not therefore affect their integrity as silent histories. As established by Portelli and Frisch, the debates caused by the various ‘disparities’ within chains of accounts mean that the lacunae and gaps found within speech – the fragmented narratives and subjective truths – are the ‘essence’ of a story. Furthermore, these components also contribute to a story as being a silent history, since the additional underlying ‘tellings’ unravelled through the listener’s interpretation means that each instance of recalling a story will be perceived differently.

Sound and Silence as a Collective Experience

Just as human remains are analysed in order to ‘speak’ for their past experiences, the recorded voices within *The Young Voices Soundscape* functioned as the intangible ‘remains’ left to testify for bodies that were no longer present. By ‘disembodying’ the young voices and preserving their anonymity, the sound recordings in *The Young Voices Soundscape* became the meditations of the young people. These meditations may only exist or be recognised as a collection of voices evoking the young peoples’ concerns about their social inclusion because these are voices that do not age, like photographs in which ‘the momentariness remains in place but the historicity of the moment loses its certainty or applicability’.⁴³ The momentariness of the young voices will thus always remain ‘frozen’ as they continue to articulate the lived experiences and concerns that were relevant at a significant point in time. The historicity of the moment loses its applicability because the concerns expressed within the sound recordings may no longer be relevant to the young people whom once articulated them, as they may have matured and developed new opinions, concerns and certainly more lived experiences. The idea of momentariness becoming still is therefore produced via the act of recording and documenting itself, in the sense that to do so preserves particular moments in time.

By holding the tangible form of the voices within *The Young Voices Soundscape*, the participants stepped in for the young people as if they were themselves embodying the young people’s stories. Raymond Murray Schafer refers to this nervous split as ‘schizophonia’. This phenomenon is produced when sound is detached from its originating source, thereby delineating the process of recording. It is this ‘partage’ or splitting between an original sound and its electroacoustic duplicate that reinforces our engagement to that which is now absent, increasing the idea of a sense of a silence, an absence and a loss.⁴⁴ Jessica Dubow explains this as negative phenomenology: ‘places that do not confirm loss but which absorb and dissolve all presences into itself’.⁴⁵ In this sense each voice within the sound collection can be metaphorically seen as an individual ethereal presence of a phase of a person that once existed, which is trapped in a specific period of time. This idea is akin to Derrida’s theory of Hauntology, where the expectation for the spectre is to return, or the repetition of the presence.⁴⁶ This notion is furthered by the fact that the installation source material was generated from the remains of a previous project and ghosts of a performance past. David Toop evokes the ghostlike nature of sound in *Sinister Resonance*. He maintains:

Sound is a haunting, a ghost, a presence whose location in space is ambiguous and whose existence in time is transitory. [...] A phenomenal presence both in the head, at its point of source and all around, so never entirely distinct from auditory hallucinations. The close listener is like a medium who draws out substance from that which is not entirely there.⁴⁷

As characterised by Toop, sound may have an uncanny nature. However, as written in Plato’s dialogue *Timaeus* (360 BC), sound is defined as: ‘Impact transmitted through air’.⁴⁸ In Platonic idealism sound is attributed to the element of air as ‘the functions of means of transmission of the impact that is emitted from the sonorous body’.⁴⁹ This description leans towards contemporary definitions of sound as being the vibrations of travelling air.⁵⁰ Plato establishes sound as the ‘impact transmitted by the air, through the ears, to the brain and blood, until it reaches the soul’.⁵¹

Marie Thompson and Ian Biddle (2013) suggest that sound is distinguished as that which creates an affect. In Deleuzian ontology⁵² this is described as that which holds an additional position in relation to the phenomenology of feeling and perception.⁵³ This qualitative definition of sound precedes its ontological significance beyond the ear, associating it with the notion of sound and the act of listening as an active engagement and involvement with the

world.⁵⁴ In addition, Thompson and Biddle affirm how the element of sound creates instability through the power of sensory experience. As Salome Voegelin (2010) argues: ‘Listening’s focus on the dynamic nature of things renders the perceptual object unstable, fluid and ephemeral: unsettling what is through a world of sonic phenomena and audible spirits’.⁵⁵ This relates to the phenomenological experience and to the fact that sound is omnipresent; for example, when we wake, the sounds of daily life are heard just as when we take a walk we hear footsteps or when we speak we communicate through sound phonetics with other individuals.

Plato articulated the notions of phonetics and speech sounds in his dialogue *Timaeus*, with the term *phōnē*. Francis Conford interprets this term as sound that is inclusive of both sounds generated from an instrument and phonetic sound that is produced by the human voice.⁵⁶ For Steven Connor, a person’s voice, ‘is not a condition, nor yet an attribute, but an event. It is less something that exists than something which occurs’.⁵⁷ According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the action of speaking is a mode of ‘bodily singing of the world’.⁵⁸ The phonetic gesture is not a method of portrayal or imitation of preconceived ideas, but is instead a mode of bringing the speaker’s world into existence.⁵⁹ Merleau-Ponty asks:

What then does language express, if it does not express thoughts? It presents or rather it *is* the subject’s taking up of a position in the world of his [sic] meanings. [...] The phonetic ‘gesture’ brings about, both for the speaking subject and for his hearers, a certain structural co-ordination of experience, a certain modulation of existence, exactly as a pattern of my bodily behaviour endows the objects around me with a certain significance both for me and for others.⁶⁰

In relation to Merleau-Ponty’s theory, Connor (2000) explains the voice as a channel of articulating sound from the subject to the social world. He establishes that by the act of speaking, the voice makes evident that the subject is a being with perspective. In addition, the sight of an individual speaking reinforces the visual evidence of their existing in the world.⁶¹ Thus, as colloquially articulated, by ‘making sound’ through the use of our voice, we are able to externalise our inner thoughts, to verbalise our concerns and give ‘voice’ to our stories.

By contrast, silence may be considered as the absence of a purposefully constructed sound. American composer and music theorist John Cage proposed that silence is the absence of intended sounds or the ‘turning off’ of our awareness.⁶² From a Structuralist point of view, what is unspoken and unheard is therefore ‘non-existent’, as the non-discursive cannot be analysed.⁶³ Michel Foucault (1978) sees silence as ‘the thing one declines to say, or is forbidden to name’. He elaborates: ‘There is not one but many silences and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses’.⁶⁴ Silence might represent an absence; however it still involves the actions of listening and hearing. In light of this, silence is a common form of perceived absence and symptomatic of suppressed presences, thus a formula for withholding voices. According to Maria Luisa and Achino Loeb (2006), ‘Silence is not meaningless as a metaphor for power, for it serves as an avenue for giving voice to unencumbered experience’.⁶⁵ Likewise, the anthropologist Eric Wolf (1999) argued that silence is used as a medium to practice power through all of its modalities.⁶⁶ As the sound of the spoken word is the primary currency through which we communicate socially, silence, in this context, is the absence of that communication. If silence is an instrument of the exercise of power, and ‘free speech has been the contested crux of controversy’⁶⁷ then it is used by those in power to control and oppress.

Although this paper draws on social constructionist and deconstructionist theoretical understandings in order to account for the agency of silence such as Derrida and Foucault, it is important to acknowledge other perspectives and ideas, including alternative frameworks.

In this context, the understanding of silence cannot be limited to the presence or absence of language/the act of speaking and discourse, as established by social constructionist and deconstructionist theoretical understandings. These theorisations positioned text and language at the forefront of constructing social phenomena and individuals⁶⁸. As Vivian Burr (1995) put it, individuals become the instruments of language and of the social practice, lacking agency; or as Teri Walker (1988) stated, 'what we can know is what can be said'.⁶⁹ Whilst this thinking is useful for my discussion, it is important to be aware of critiques of social constructionism. Burr (1995; 2003) is an advocate of social constructionism, but rightfully acknowledges the theory's limitations, suggesting that reality may not only be limited to text. There are multitudes of ways of seeing the world; hence social constructionism may not be the only position from which to understand silence. An understanding of silence can travel beyond text and language, for example, not being physically able to speak or being voluntarily silent for a variety of reasons is different from voices silenced for reasons of social exclusion.⁷⁰

Social constructionist and deconstructionist ideas have limitations when it comes to understanding the non-discursive. Therefore, I would like to refer to the Actor-Network Theory (ANT), not to contrast or compare the distinct theoretical frameworks, but rather to elaborate on the idea of silence in the context of how it is represented within *The Young Voices Soundscape* (2012). In addition to this, using ANT will assist the contextualisation of the role and agency of technologies, the materials of the exhibition space and other, non-discursive elements, as opposed to their aesthetic value, which form the comprehension of an artwork. As I have already described, the piece employs several non-human actors whose function is to represent the agency of silence, which are non-discursive but focused on the phenomenon, such as masks, mannequins, mp3 players and speakers. As a theoretical premise, ANT acknowledges the position of non-human actors within reality and suggests an understanding of the world where actors, instead of belonging to different hierarchical classes, are more or less connected through a generalised symmetry.⁷¹ This theory focuses on the interrelation between materials and semiotics and explains how material semiotic networks are combined to act as a whole. All that is placed in the exhibition space becomes caught up in a web of relations and thus becomes components of entelechy or actuality. The technologies of the performance, such as the materials employed within the exhibition space, thus become mediators within a network. These technologies are as significant as the human participants since through interaction, they help to shape the installation. In this way the networks created within the performance space are ephemeral and exist in constant perpetuity; this signifies that relations are continuously performed through complex engagements with complex mediators, as each individual's engagement with the exhibition is different.

Conclusion

In this article I have explored the concepts of sound and silence in order to address creative approaches for the dissemination of oral history materials. To accomplish this, my survey has concentrated on two sound installations that used materials from oral history collections within their exhibits. My analysis has taken into consideration multiple theoretical perspectives to explore the concepts of sound and silence, including Freudian concepts and poststructuralist perspectives. I have examined the relationship between oral history and silent history, addressing how, regardless of the debates surrounding the validity of oral testimony, 'disparities' within chains of accounts do not deprecate the value of silent histories.

Although the sound installations *Witness* and *The Young Voices Soundscape* differed in the mode of collation and content of data, as well as the exhibition styles used in the final performance products, both projects aimed at bringing certain 'silent histories' to centre stage in order to challenge 'orthodox' dispositions and perceptions. Using Paul Thompson's

language, both Hiller and myself intended to ‘take oral history “out of the house” and “past the front door”’.⁷² In this sense this type of artistic research refers to ‘the semi-privatised, marginal nature of the practice’ and the endless seas of tapes lying unused in archives.⁷³ Hiller’s audio-sculpture and my own work in *The Young Voices Soundscape* thus attempted to make the sound recordings used within each project accessible to a wider audience with the view to creating a collective participatory experience of sound and silence.

Oral history’s engagement with different disciplines, including artistic collaborations with museum curators, artists and media professionals, aims ‘to create public histories that combine sound, image and text’ as well as gathering a better understanding of the narratives of memory.⁷⁴ The pivotal point of the sound installations discussed here is not only to give a certain sound to silence, as is the aim of oral history, but also to ‘animate’ oral history and bring it to life, creating spaces for oral history outside of the usual ‘archival impulse’.⁷⁵ It is therefore possible to conclude that the recordings used within both exhibits might be considered as collections of silent histories that challenge mainstream notions of sound, and silence as well as challenging how oral histories might be disseminated. I therefore propose soundscape installation as one modality of artistic research that may help to deepen insight into the nature of sound and silence with regard to the practice-led dissemination of oral history materials.

Notes

¹ *The Young Voices Soundscape* (2012) formed the first practical enquiry for my doctoral research. To further assist the analysis of the research project’s first practical enquiry, the written research uses Susan Hiller’s audio-sculpture *Witness* (2000) as a main case study.

² The term first-hand accounts is understood in this paper as the account which derives directly from the original source or personal experience. The term second-hand is used to describe the accounts that originate from a person witnessing a testimony, where the accounts obtained are used as a means of achieving something.

³ Etymology: an unfilled space; a gap. Originates from mid-seventeen century: from Latin, ‘pool’, from lacus ‘lake’ (Oxford Dictionaries, 2012).

⁴ *The Young Voices* method was developed in collaboration with several youth groups from Scarborough (North Yorkshire) and surrounding district. It looked at increasing and facilitating communication between isolated adolescent groups through applied theatre, using several of Augusto Boal’s workshop techniques from his *Theatre of the Oppressed* method. These methods were used to identify the participants’ ‘oppressions’. By capturing these oppressions and presenting them to an audience of peers as well as adults, the project facilitated communication between young people and youth workers. The project developed a method designed for the use of youth workers with their role as ‘intercessors’ between young people and the adults that are responsible for them.

⁵ A term used by Stanley Cohen in *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* to describe the intensity of a feeling, such as anxiety, expressed in a society about an issue that threatens social values (Cohen, 1972). Cited in Panayiota A. Demetriou, *Young Voices an Applied Theatre Project Aiming to Bridge the Gap Between Youth and Adults* (Kingston: University of Hull, 2011), p. 10.

⁶ These negative factors have been extensively examined by scholars such as: Stanley Cohen (1972), J.J. Arnett (1999), Sharon Nichols and Thomas Good (2004) and Monica Barry (2005).

⁷ The ‘belated witness’ is a term used by Michael Levine (2006) to describe the status of second-hand witnessing. Michael Levine, *The Belated Witness: Literature, Testimony, and the Question of Holocaust Survival* (California: Stanford University Press, 2006).

⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 2-3.

⁹ Salome Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2010), p. xii.

¹⁰ Roger Kamien, *Music: An Appreciation*, 6th Brief Edition (Illinois: McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages, 2008), p.41.

¹¹ Stephen Humphries, *The Handbook of Oral History: Recording Life Stories* (London: Inter-Action Imprint, 1984), p. ix.

¹² Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. ix.

¹³ Acknowledging the lineage of oral history practices, Perks and Thomson (1998) maintain: ‘Gradual acceptance of the usefulness and validity of oral evidence, and the increasing availability of portable tape recorders, underpinned a revival of oral history after the Second World War’. Oral history prevailed as an extensive practice in the 1960s because of the social history movement that occurred between the sixties and seventies and the democratisation of history, which was also driven by the decolonisation and the feminist and civil rights movements. Sharpless (2006), discusses that by this period social historians contested the status quo and started to survey the interests of a multiracial, multi-ethnic populace underlining class relationships. At the same time, the International Activities and National Endowments for the Humanities (NEH) funding scheme encouraged more historians to switch to the practice of oral history, ‘to uncover the forgotten or unacknowledged history of women, minorities and “ordinary life”’.

¹⁴ Logocentrism is a concept that positions the logos (λόγος), ‘the word’ or ‘speech’, as epistemologically superior in analysis. It is a philosophy that favours speech over writing as a form of communication, seeing as the ‘logos’ is supposedly closer to an originating spiritual source. This method of literary analysis situates the word and language as the fundamental mediums of expressing and interpreting our external realities.

¹⁵ Freud explains this as ‘a suppression of a previous intention to say something is the indispensable condition for the occurrence of a slip of the tongue’ (Freud, 1922, p. 52). A slip is the result of a conflict between two mental forces: an unconscious necessity or desire and the pursuit of maintaining its disclosure. Freud interpreted applied memory lapses in a similar manner.

¹⁶ Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 86.

¹⁷ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books), p. 158.

¹⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books), p. 158.

¹⁹ Jonathan Jones, ‘Susan Hiller’s Witness’ (London: Guardian News and Media, 2000) in *The Guardian Online* <<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2000/may/25/art.artsfeatures>> [accessed 20 January 2012].

²⁰ Ann Jones, *Unexplained Lights in the Sky: Susan Hiller’s Witness* (London: Mostly Film, 2011) in *Mostly Film* <<http://mostlyfilm.com/2011/05/04/unexplained-lights-in-the-sky-susan-hillers-witness/>> [accessed 20 January 2012].

²¹ Research shows that the interview has become one of the most common techniques used by both qualitative and quantitative researchers. This technique of collecting data has therefore become ‘a universal mode of systematic inquiry’ (Fontana, A. and Prokos, A. H. 2007, p. 11). Its excessive use has led academics to argue: ‘We live in an interview society’ (Atkinson, P. and Silverman, D. 1997, cited in Fontana, A.; and Prokos, A. H., 2007, p. 10). Fontana and Prokos (2007) indicate: ‘It is as though interviewing is now part of the mass culture, so that it has become the most feasible mechanism for obtaining information’ (p. 12). Platt (2002) suggests that the interview covers a diversity of disciplines, which makes it difficult to ‘derive meaningful generalisation about it’. In addition, she argues that ‘the changes that have taken place over time are driven partly by methodological concerns and partly by socio-political motives’ (Plat, J. 2002, cited in Fontana, A. and Prokos, A. H., 2007, p. 18).

²² Michel de Certeau, (trans. by Tom Conley), *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. xxv-xxvii.

²³ Claire Colebrook, *New Literary Histories: New Historians and Contemporary Criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 120.

²⁴ Alasdair MacIntyre (1984) delineates this as human lives being a narrative in themselves and Barbara Myerhoff (1992) used the term ‘Homo Narrans’ to describe humanity, which is defined as ‘a need to narrate as keen as the need to eat or sleep’. In her words, narrative constructs meaning as ‘narrative-making is self-making’ p. 8).

²⁵ Vivian Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 62.

²⁶ Vivian Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 62.

²⁷ Vivian Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 62.

²⁸ Carla Willig, *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2008), p. 117.

²⁹ Carla Willig, *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2008), p. 117.

³⁰ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 210.

³¹ Anna Maria Alonso, ‘The Effects of Truth: Re-Presentations of the Past and the Imagining of Community’ in *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1:1 (1988).

³² Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 4.

³³ Paul Hamilton and Linda Shorpes, *Oral History and Public Memories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008).

- ³⁴ According to art historian Dr. Alexandra Kokoli, 'paraconceptualism' contains both notions of conceptualism and the paranormal, but in this neologism/hybrid term, neither conceptualism nor the paranormal are used as whole concepts. She suggests that the prefix *para-* (Greek origins: *παρά* [beside/beyond]) is used to indicate the large extent to which her work questions the 'comfort zone' of all boundaries (Susan Hiller, <<http://www.susanhiller.org/about.html>> [accessed 20 January 2012]).
- ³⁵ Susan Hiller, *Susan Hiller: Recall - Selected Works 1969-2004* (Newcastle: Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, 2004).
- ³⁶ Susan Hiller, *Recall* (Newcastle: Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, 2004).
- ³⁷ Greek origin: *δόξα* [belief/popular opinion/glory].
- ³⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1984), p. 471.
- ³⁹ Bonnie Brennen, *For the Record: An Oral History of Rochester, New York, Newswomen* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), p. 154.
- ⁴⁰ Cited in Bonnie Brennen, *For the Record: An Oral History of Rochester, New York, Newswomen* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), pp. 154-155.
- ⁴¹ Cheryl Glenn and Krista Ratcliffe, *Silence and Listening as Rhetorical Acts* (Springfield, IL: Southern Illinois University, 2011), p. 1.
- ⁴² Vivienne Burr, *Social Constructionism* (Hove: Routledge East Sussex, 2003), p. 47.
- ⁴³ Clive Scott, *Street Photography: From Atget to Cartier-Bresson* (New York: I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd., 2007), p. 200.
- ⁴⁴ Murray R. Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 1994).
- ⁴⁵ Jessica Dubow, *Still-Life, After-Life: W.G. Sebald and the Demands of Landscape in Envisioning Landscapes, Making Worlds: Geography and the Humanities* ed. by S. Daniels, D. de Lyser, J. N. Entrikin, and D. Richardson (London: Routledge, 2011).
- ⁴⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006).
- ⁴⁷ David Toop, *Sinister Resonance: The Mediumship of the Listener* (New York: Continuum, 2010), p. 6.
- ⁴⁸ Francesco Pelosi, *Plato on Music, Soul and Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 159.
- ⁴⁹ Francesco Pelosi, *Plato on Music, Soul and Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 157.
- ⁵⁰ Gerald Cheshire, *Sound and Vibrations* (London: Evans Brothers, 2010), p. 6.
- ⁵¹ Francesco Pelosi, *Plato on Music, Soul and Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 155-156.
- ⁵² See Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt, *Sounding the Virtual: Gilles Deleuze and the Theory and Philosophy of Music* (London: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010).
- ⁵³ Marie Thompson and Ian Biddle, *Sound, Music, Affect: Theorizing Sonic Experience* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013), p. 36.
- ⁵⁴ Salome Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2010), p. xiii.
- ⁵⁵ Salome Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2010), p. 12.
- ⁵⁶ Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato*, reprinted (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 1997), p. 158.
- ⁵⁷ Seven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 4.
- ⁵⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, (trans. by Colin Smith), *Phenomenology of Perception* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 193.
- ⁵⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, (trans. by Colin Smith), *Phenomenology of Perception* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 84.
- ⁶⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, (trans. By Colin Smith), *Phenomenology of Perception* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 193.
- ⁶¹ Seven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 5.
- ⁶² John Cage's conversation with Michael John White (1982), in Richard Kostelanetz, *Conversing with Cage* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), p. 66.
- ⁶³ Maria Luisa and Achino Loeb, *Silence: the Currency of Power* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp. 2, 15.
- ⁶⁴ Michel Foucault, (trans. by Robert Hurley), *The History of Sexuality, Vol.1: An Introduction*, 3 Vol. (New York: Pantheon Books), p. 29.

- ⁶⁵ Maria Luisa and Achino Loeb, *Silence: The Currency of Power* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p. 1.
- ⁶⁶ Eric Wolf (1999) cited in *Silence: The Currency of Power*, ed. by Maria Luisa and Achino Loeb (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p. 3.
- ⁶⁷ Maria Luisa and Achino Loeb, *Silence: The Currency of Power* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p. 10.
- ⁶⁸ Language is seen as not merely representing the world or functioning as a mirror reflecting the meanings people might have in their minds (Davies and Harre, 1990). Rather, social conditions, including the circumstances under which it becomes possible to have shared meanings communicated in language, can evoke the very forms of speech or writing that are possible. These forms of language in turn give rise to the meanings and understandings accessible for people to use.
- ⁶⁹ Teri Walker, *Whose discourse?*, in *Knowledge and Reflexivity: New Frontiers in the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. by Steve Woolgar (London and Beverly Hills: Sage, 1988), pp. 55-80.
- ⁷⁰ Silent due to disability, which in discursive elements cannot be interpreted, as the social constructionist approach is limited to understanding discursive practices only.
- ⁷¹ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Harvard: Harvard College, 1993).
- ⁷² Paul Hamilton and Linda Shorpes, *Oral History and Public Memories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008).
- ⁷³ Paul Hamilton and Linda Shorpes, *Oral History and Public Memories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008).
- ⁷⁴ Paul Hamilton and Linda Shorpes, *Oral History and Public Memories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008).
- ⁷⁵ This echoes Hal Foster's use of the term 'impulse', in his essay *An Archival Impulse* (2004). Foster uses Craig Owens's *The Allegorical Impulse: Notes Toward a Theory of Postmodernism* (1980), alongside Benjamin H. D. Buchloch's *Gerhard Richter's Atlas: The Anomic Archive* (1999), to examine three contemporary artists (Thomas Hirschhorn, Sam Durant, and Tacita Dean) whose work uses the concept of archives. To define his meaning of archival impulse he relates the qualities used in archival art to each of the artists' works.

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Biography

Panayiota A. Demetriou is undertaking a PhD at the University of Bristol, in the area of Theatre and Performance Studies. Her thesis investigates performative approaches to the exhibition of oral history archives. Demetriou is also a freelance Live Art artist and the initiator and curator of the annual Cypriot non-profit event *Performance & Live Art Platform*.