



PHD AND POSTDOCTORAL COURSE & CONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 22-23, 2022

DIALOGUE AND THE ART OF LISTENING

© Peter Brandes. 2016-18. Hölderlin, Celan, Heidegger

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Aslaug Kristiansen, Agder University Kristiansand

Paul Mendes-Flohr, Hebrew University Jerusalem/University of Chicago

Peter Szendy, Brown University

Salomé Voegelin, University of the Arts London, LCC

VENUE

Aarhus University, Fredrik Nielsens Vej 4, Studenternes Hus,
meeting room 2, 8000 Aarhus C.

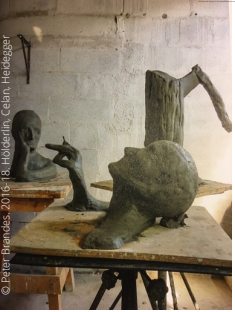
REGISTRATION

Read more and register: <https://phdcourses.dk/Course/89088>

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!



AARHUS
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DIALOGUE AND THE ART OF LISTENING

DESCRIPTION

While long neglected in Western epistemology, listening as a way of knowing and relating to the world has recently received scholarly attention in various fields. Listening is also an essential yet under-investigated aspect of dialogue and a prerequisite for peaceful coexistence of different ways of life in multicultural societies. Holding a promise for unearthing new terrains of dialogue, learning and knowing, the following questions related to listening deserve to be investigated more closely:

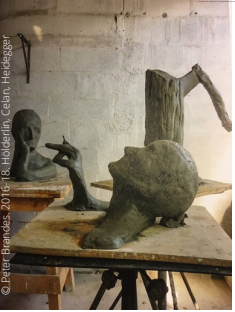
- In what sense is listening a valid 'way of knowing'?
- What is the epistemological, methodological and ethical significance of listening?
- What is the role of the second-person perspective in the art of knowing through listening?

In this course, we seek to offer an interdisciplinary approach to these questions, inviting a discussion with scholars from philosophy, theology, psychology, musicology, sound art, and educational studies. The modality of the course reflects the themes of 'listening' and 'dialogue': We seek to engage all speakers and participants in a mutual process of listening and to cultivate both intellectual reflection and arts-based practices of intense listening as known from musicology, sound art, and improvised 'dialogues' with and without words.

The aim of this course and conference is to provide

1. an introduction into influential texts on listening
2. an exploration of the art of listening in the context of dialogical processes
3. a discussion of the possibilities and limits of the art of listening.





DIALOGUE AND THE ART OF LISTENING

PROGRAM

THURSDAY 22.9.

Aarhus University, Fredrik Nielsens Vej 4, Studenternes Hus, meeting room 2, 8000 Aarhus C

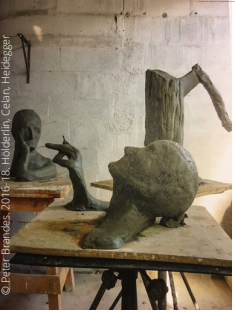
- 9.00-9.15 Welcome
- 9.15-10.30 Reading session including a listening exercise
10.30-10.50 Coffee break
- 10.50-11.30 **Keynote lecture by Paul Mendes-Flohr** (University of Chicago & Hebrew University, Jerusalem):
"The Songs of Silence"
- 11.30-12.10 **Keynote lecture by Aslaug Kristiansen** (Agder University, Kristiansand):
"Education, Trust, and Listening"
- 12.10-12.30 Dialogue between the keynote speakers
- 12.30-13.00 Questions from the audience and discussion
13.00-14.00 Lunch (for all participants)
- 14.00-15.30 **PhD session:**
- 14.00-14.45 **Hugo Boothby** (Malmö University): "Appearance and Dissensus: Listening and Its Politics of Relation"
- 14.45-15.30 **Marianne Træbing Secher** (Roskilde University): "From the Primacy of Vision and Understanding in Western Philosophy to the Art and Act of Listening."
15.30-16.00 Coffee break
- 16.00-16.40 **Postdoctoral paper by Essi Ikonen** (University of Helsinki & Aarhus University):
"Listening as Methodology: Autoethnographical Sonic Analysis"
- 16.40-17.00 Questions from the audience and discussion
18.00 Dinner (for invited speakers)

FRIDAY 23.9.

Aarhus University, Fredrik Nielsens Vej 4, Studenternes Hus, meeting room 2, 8000 Aarhus C

- 9.00-10.15 Reading session including a listening exercise
10.15-10.35 Coffee break
- 10.35-11.15 **Keynote lecture by Salomé Voegelin** (University of the Arts London, LCC):
"Sonic Epistemologies: Confrontations with the Invisible"
- 11.15-11.55 **Keynote lecture by Peter Szendy** (Brown University): "The Triologue of Listening, or: The Place of the Listenee."
- 11.55-12.15 Dialogue between the keynote speakers
- 12.15-12.45 Questions from the audience and discussion
- 12.45-13.15 Course evaluation and rounding off
13.15-14.00 Lunch (for all participants)





DIALOGUE AND THE ART OF LISTENING

READINGS

THURSDAY 22.9.

- Buber, M. (1965). The word that is spoken in *The knowledge of man: selected essays*. Harper & Row
- Mendes-Flohr, P. (2015). Introduction in Mendes-Flohr, P. (ed.) *Dialogue as a trans-disciplinary concept: Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue and its contemporary reception*. De Gruyter.
- Mendes-Flohr, P. (2014) "Martin Buber and Martin Heidegger in Dialogue," *Journal of Religion* 94(1), 2-25

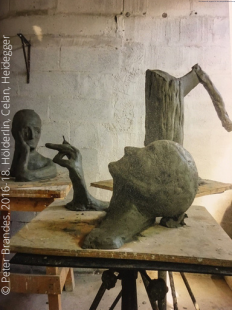
FRIDAY 23.9.

- Nietzsche, F. (2006). Conversation about music in Clark, M. and Leiter, B. (ed.) *Daybreak: Thoughts on the prejudices of morality*. Cambridge University Press.
- Feld, S. (2015) Acoustemology in Novak, D. & Sakakeeny, M. (eds.) *Keywords in sound*. Duke University Press.

ADDITIONAL LITERATURE

- Alerby, E. & J. Brown, J. (2021). Silent and invisible students: The importance of listening to the silence and seeing the invisible. *Journal of Silence Studies in Education* 1(1), 19-31
- Biesta, G. (2003). Learning from Levinas: A Response. *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 22(1):61-68
- Hägg, H.S.F & Kristiansen, A. (eds.) *Attending to silence. Educators and philosophers on the art of listening*. Portal Books
- Mendes-Flohr, P. (ed.) *Dialogue as a trans-disciplinary concept: Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue and its contemporary reception*. De Gruyter.
- Stengel, B. (2003). "As if we were called". Responding to (pedagogical) responsibility. *Philosophy of Education Archive*, p. 195-203.
- Szendy, P. (2008). *Listen: A History of Our Ears*. Fordham University Press.
- Szendy, P. (2016). *All Ears: The Aesthetics of Espionage*. Fordham University Press.
- Voegelin, S. (2010). *Listening to noise and silence: Towards a philosophy of sound art*. Bloomsbury Academic & Professional.
- Voegelin, S. (2014). *Sonic possible worlds. Hearing the continuum of sound*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Welz, C. (2017). "A Voice Crying out from the Wound - with or without Words: On Trauma, Speech, and Silence" *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 56(4), 412-427
- Welz, C. (2019). "A Theological Phenomenology of Listening: God's 'Voice' and 'Silence' after Auschwitz" *Religions* 139(10)
- For acoustemology and anthropology of sound: Collection of articles and recordings from Feld, Steven on his website <http://www.stevenfeld.net/>





DIALOGUE AND THE ART OF LISTENING

ABSTRACTS

Hugo Boothby (Malmö University):

“Appearance and Dissensus: Listening and its politics of relation”

Listening is relational, generated in the in-between of hearing subject, sound and sound technology (Voegelin, 2020). Acknowledging the relational nature of listening demands that one considers the political significance of sound technologies and the politics of sound itself as attentively as one considers the politics of the hearing subject. In this paper, the politics of listening and its relationality is defined in terms of both appearance (Arendt, 1998 [1958]) and dissensus (Rancière, Panagia, & Bowlby, 2001). Arendt’s emphasis on perception, of others and oneself, in public appearance is important for capturing the plural and intersubjective nature of political listening. In contrast, Rancière’s politics of dissensus places its emphasis on partition and the aesthetic redistributions necessary for audibility in listening. Applying artistic and ethnographic research methods (Boothby, 2022; Cory & Boothby, 2021), the sound-work generated and performed during this research builds knowledge and captures the aesthetic experiences enacted in sound making. Drawing on science and technology studies, the sonic objects created in this artistic research are defined as boundary objects (Star & Griesemer, 1989). Boundary objects do not demand consensus, as long as collaborators or an audience recognize the value of a boundary object. They do not necessarily have to agree what that value is, making the sonic boundary objects generated in this research ontologically consistent with a politics of listening that is contingent and relational.

This paper draws its empirical data from an experimental music composition and performance created by the author together with the Elefantöra (Elephant Ear) ensemble (2020-2021). Elefantöra is a norm-critical music ensemble that includes both disabled and non-disabled musicians. Taking listening as a critical perspective from which to consider Elefantöra’s musical praxis, this paper focuses on the ensemble’s creative reappropriations of music technology and their inclusion of diverse musical abilities and knowledges. My engagement with Elefantöra demonstrates that when musicians are defined as disabled, normative assumptions regarding the “correct” use of musical instruments (Voegelin, 2019) and expert definitions of “good sound” (Sterne, 2012) generate discriminatory “rehabilitative” (Churchill & Bernard, 2020) approaches to musical composition, performance and listening. By rejecting the correct use of musical instruments and contesting expert definitions of good sound, Elefantöra productively avoids rehabilitative approaches to music composition, performance and listening. I conclude that although the members of Elefantöra do not address exclusions of ableism directly in their work and refuse to be defined as artists in terms of disability, their norm-critical musical praxis enacts a plurality of appearances and disclosures of dissensus in listening, which actively challenge ableism and exclusions from musical virtuosity.

References:

- Arendt, H. (1998 [1958]). *The Human Condition* (2 ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Boothby, H. (2022). Music for Universities: Composing with MP3 and iPod. Article for *Artifact & Apparatus: Journal of Media Archaeology*.(Special Issue, The Allure of Obsolescence).
- Churchill, W. N., & Bernard, C. F. (2020). Disability and the Ideology of Ability: How Might Music Educators Respond? *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 28(1), 24-46.
- Cory, E., & Boothby, H. (2021). Sounds Like ‘Home’: The Synchrony and Dissonance of Podcasting as Boundary Object. *radio journal: international studies in broadcast & audio media*.
- Rancière, J., Panagia, D., & Bowlby, R. (2001). Ten Theses on Politics. 5(3). doi:10.1353/tae.2001.0028
- Star, S. L., & Griesemer, J. R. (1989). Institutional Ecology, ‘Translations’ and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley’s Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39. *Social Studies of Science*, 19, 387-420.
- Sterne, J. (2012). *MP3: The Meaning of a Format*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Voegelin, S. (2019). Technologies of Sound Art: Techno-cultural occurrences. In M. Bull (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies* (pp. 201-209). Milton, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Voegelin, S. (2020). Sonic Methodologies of Sound. In M. Bull & M. Cobussen (Eds.), *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Sonic Methodologies*: Bloomsbury Publishing USA.





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ABSTRACTS

Marianne Træbing Secher (Roskilde University):

"From the Primacy of Vision and Understanding in Western Philosophy to the Art and Act of Listening."

In my PhD thesis, I want to focus on listening. My thesis is about coping with certain non-knowledge as window of opportunity for disempowered professionals in welfare work. I focus on social pedagogues in social psychiatry, but I want to develop a model of reflection for welfare professionals more generally. This should be the impact of my research. The problem I investigate is that the professionals sometimes do not understand the system user, which makes them disempowered. The suggestion of my research is to develop a model for reflection that calls upon an openness for various forms of knowledge in the welfare professions. I aim in the process of certifying it by the Department for Social Service in DK.

The notion of the "saturated phenomenon" (Marion, 1996) and a "certain non-knowledge" suggested by Jean-Luc Marion (Marion & Lewis, 2015) might work as an addition to the already known categories of knowledge. The focus is on how we can use "certain non-knowledge" in welfare professions when we experience phenomena that are so saturated with impressions that we lose our ability to define, articulate, or understand what is going on. The research question is: What ethical implications does this have for professional practice? I wish to move from the primacy of vision and understanding in western philosophy to the art and act of listening, as described by Emmanuel Lévinas (1996). His point is that what we should be listening to is the unknown. He calls this infinity. Analogously, we should be open to what surprises us, and to the otherness of the system user. Exactly that which exceeds our understanding.

My research method is based on the anecdotal theory by Jane Gallop (2002), using anecdotes as a background for developing models for reflection. This method is created to investigate the uncanny, queer, unreasonable, excessive - including the experiences that welfare professionals have when they don't understand the system users for whom they are responsible.

Bibliography

Gallop, J. (2002). *Anecdotal theory*. Duke University Press.

Lévinas, E. (1996). *Totalitet og uendelighed: Et essay om exterioriteten*. Hans Reitzel.

Marion, J.-L. (1996). "The saturated phenomenon," *Philosophy Today*, 40(1), 103.

Marion, J.-L. & Lewis, S. E. (2015). *Negative certainties*. University of Chicago Press.

William Mathorne (Aarhus University):

"Listening to the Tradition: What gets lost in secular translations?"

In the last two decades, Habermas has been a decisive force in re-acknowledging the presence of religion in modernity and has set out to rethink the interaction between secular and religious spheres in modern society. Central to his project of conceiving of a "post-secular" society is the idea of furthering dialogue across secular-religious communities in order to benefit from the still unexplored truth-content of the religious traditions. By listening to religious discourses, secular modernity might still find valuable resources if only it can succeed in translating them back to the secular tongue of the public sphere. The paper aims to problematize this notion of inter-cultural listening and is divided into two parts.

First, I will investigate how Habermas understands secular translations of religious content in order to draw out the type of learning-processes he imagines in a "post-secular society". In particular, I wish to highlight how the operative terms of "post-secular" dialogue are still in large part located within the secular domain, rather than transgressing this category. In the second part, I will challenge the notion of the secular underlying the theory of secular translations. I draw on Talal Asad's recent critique of Habermas' secularism and its foundation on a form of modernity peculiar to a specific Christian past. I suggest that the secular should not be understood as universal tongue, as a kind of substance, into which we can translate heterogeneous discourses, but rather should be taken as a plastic medium of listening, through which religious discourse is refracted and novel harmonies and layers of meaning can emerge.

