

## Communiqué\_

"Hey- hello!! Wait for me!!"

"Oh, hi. How are you doing? How's life treating you?"

My old Maths teacher used to encourage us to solve equations by saying that we should put butter with the fish<sup>1</sup>.

*Hmm...*

*so, by adding butter to the fish I create a combination of flavours, which will in fusion with other flavours create a well-thought, well-considered meal - WHAT IF I DON'T LIKE FISH ???*

He would also tell you when you thought there was nothing left to do and needed cheering up that "you could always drill a hole in our knee and fill it with lead!"

*Imaginative man my old Maths teacher, Herr Garmeister.*

*Seriously ? So what would happen if all these miserable people I see on a Monday morning boarding a train to work would drill a hole in their knee? Which knee would you go for? Do you have a favourite one - Left or Right?! Would this army of Lead-filled-knees make a difference? Would anyone who didn't have Lead in their knee feel jealous and Left out? Would there be a new trend developing and people would be divided into two groups - "Lead? Yes!" - "Lead? No Thanks!""??*

*But now, seriously: would my Lead-filled knee make my life easier? - Would it help me on a daily basis? OR would it just be a "PRETTY PICTURE" something attractive to look at?? - Where would I have to draw the line? - I guess there is no line to draw: my Lead-filled knee would be pretty to look at as well as serving the function of reminding me to be happy! - But surely there will be more practical uses ... !!*

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<sup>1</sup> "Na dann geben Sie mal Butter bei die Fisch' " - Herr Garmeister 2001

Lisa Dotzauer

'(Shouts) "Ce n'est pas possible!"'

Contemporary Studies and Critical Theory

Well, Let's see:

*by exhibiting my lead-filled knee - let's say in a museum ( and I'm still unsure of which knee to drill and UPGRADE at this moment), people would come and look at it - many would write about my knee, about how I displayed it, how it interacts with the world - many would have an opinion about my lead-filled knee, some will shout it out loud, some will discuss it with others and some will never tell what they really feel looking at it. There will be groups of people trying to engage with it, there will be university students trying to get into my head to uncover the "mystery of the lead-filled-knee", there will be bored school kids wanting to go home ,... (Seriously I could go on and on) ...*

*So I started comparing Dunne&Raby and Michael Anastassiades's Statistical Clock (2007) [see Appendix I, image I] my notes [see Appendix I, image II {The Statistical Clock} image III {High Wire - Catherin Yass}] and one of my drawings [see Appendix I, image IV] with my exhibited knee....*

**I look outside** - out of the window. It's raining. Why is it always raining when I am walking somewhere?

...

In 1982 Boy George sings "Do you really want to hurt me - Do you really want to make me cry"<sup>2</sup>, in 2006 Amy Winehouse lets us know that she's trouble and no good<sup>3</sup>, a year later Catherine Yass films Didier Pasquette walking on a high wire almost 100m above Glasgow and last month we went to the "Wouldn't it be nice... ..Wishful thinking in art and design" exhibition in London.

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<sup>2</sup> Do you really want to hurt me, Culture Club, 1982

<sup>3</sup> You know that I'm no good, Amy Winehouse, 2006



Lisa Dotzauer

‘(Shouts) “Ce n’est pas possible!”’

Contemporary Studies and Critical Theory

> Oh, hi! Sorry for the **SOUND(S)** <

“... nine ... ten ...”

> I am ‘The Statistical Clock’ created by Dunne&Raby and Michael Anastassiades in 2007 <

“... eleven ...”

> I count the number of deaths reported from shootings, stabbings, bombings, fire, drowning, car, plane and train crashes by scanning a live BBC newsfeed <

“... twelve ...”

> I am not a broadcast, but I have the authority and legitimacy of a public announcement (at least this is what clever people have written about me in the ‘Wouldn’t it be nice...’ – Exhibition Booklet) <

...

TUESDAY

Dear Diary

*You won’t believe what I saw today – so much fun! So many people here ☺ So Great! Well, apart from the terrible, terrible bad news all the time, but you kind of get “desensitised to everyday technologically fatalities” (contemporain, Centre d’art, 2007), don’t you think? I mean how many people do actually get killed every day from “shootings, stabbings, bombings, fire, drowning, car crashes, plane crashes and train crashes” (contemporain, Centre d’art, 2007)? ...*

...

It is still raining and I keep wondering if it actually means anything... anything at all.

Lisa Dotzauer

'(Shouts) "Ce n'est pas possible!"'

Contemporary Studies and Critical Theory

Ferdinand de Saussure once said that linguistic study should concern itself just with sounds.

"But suppose that sound were a simple thing: would it constitute speech (langage - natural language)? No, it is only an instrument of thought; by itself it has no existence. At this point a new and redoubtable relationship arises: a sound, a complex acoustical-vocal unit, combines in turn with an idea to form a complex physiological-psychological unit."<sup>5</sup>  
(Holdcroft, 2006)

*A few little words ... oh, sorry, I mean SOUND(S).*

Ok, let's take the **SOUND** of "five" then: *I can hear the announcements of the 'The Statistical Clock'. They make sense, well as much sense as the word: 'five' can actually make.*

*I would also be able to understand 'The Statistical Clock' if it would announce the numbers of deaths in German.*

eins - zwei - drei - vier - fünf - sechs - sieben - ...

Saussure further argues that it depends on HOW we consider the sound:

In order to understand the SOUND of 'five', we need to regard the sound as an expression of an idea - not just simply a sound, but as an element of a language.

*I am able to understand the English and German because I am part of both communities of speakers and have knowledge of the key features that make out each language.*

*What would happen if 'The Statistical Clock' spoke Spanish or would use the French language to announce the death of a person in any accident?*

uno - dos - tres - cuatro - cinco - seis - siete - ... ???

un- deux - trois - quatre - cinq - six - sept - ... ???

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<sup>5</sup> Saussure quoted by David HOLDCROFT in "Saussure -Signs, Systems, and Arbitrariness" (2006)

Lisa Dotzauer

'(Shouts) "Ce n'est pas possible!"'

Contemporary Studies and Critical Theory

*With my little knowledge of the Spanish and French tongue*

*[I should have listened to my old teachers and studied for myself and not just the exams] I would only be aware of the first seven deaths of the day. The eight and any other following fatalities would go unnoticed to me.*

*The moment the eight death is announced in Spanish (or French) through the acoustic foam of "The Statistical Clock", I only hear a sound: [OOCHO] (or [HUHIUT]).*

*My 'sound' experience is the same as it would be for a non-English speaker who hears [ayt] instead an English speaker who would actually hear "eight" and connecting it to the number that occupies the place in between seven and nine.*

*"... thirteen ... fourteen ..."*

*So only because I have knowledge of the English and German language I can fully follow what's going on.*

Following Saussure-ian thought, a given language is a mixture off "langue" [a particularly language] and "parole" [speech], both occupying the same amount of the concept of language.

*In other words, "langue" and "parole" are like both sides of a coin or a piece of paper - you cannot really split the metaphorical sheet of paper or the coin without destroying its existence as such an object.*

"Langue" and "Parole" can be understood in terms of their relations with each other by means of a set of contrasts.

*Oh, so I guess it is like looking at the group of degree students that are standing in front of my lead-filled knee trying to understand the ideas in order to write a short essay about the exhibit:*

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'(Shouts) "Ce n'est pas possible!"'

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But first Let's define some basic concepts first:

> the language is a language of art/design - ok, technically there are two languages present: a) the language of art and b) the language of design

> the group of students form the community of speakers as we can assume they all know the key features of each language pool and "speak" art and design

Now, let's assume student A. raises his voice and states his thought:

"I think this is rubbish"

The rest of the students are listening to what A. says and student B. lets everyone know that she thinks it is actually a very interesting piece of work.

The moment student A. informs the rest of his peers he uses the "parole" aspect of language: student A. played an active role as an individual. The group of students who were listening to A. could understand him because they possess knowledge of the spoken language, which has social aspects and no active individual role, i.e. the whole group of students interacting with each other by means of speaking.

TUESDAY

Dear Diary,

This is my second entry for today. I just can't get these numbers out of my head.... so many dead...

"... fifteen ... sixteen ... seventeen ..."

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'(Shouts) "Ce n'est pas possible!"'

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Saussure further declared that "a given language state is a system of arbitrary signs..." (Holdcroft, 2006) and "A linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern." (Harris, 2005) Harris further explains that the sound pattern is not actually a sound, but the hearers psychological impression of a sound, as given to him by the evidence of his senses.

*Just like the example of comparing of "The Statistical Clock" speaking English and French: I can either interpret the sound into a word with given meaning or just hear a sound.*

*I pick up my notebook again and read through it.*

Note: WHERE DOES TITLE FOR ASSIGNMENT COME FROM?

Didier Pasquette '(Shouts) "Ce n'est pas possible!", but I can't hear it. I see his lips move, but there is no audio telling me that he is actually saying it...

Remember: Saussure - l'image acoustique : Harris - Sound Pattern

*Now, this starts to make sense:*

*According to Harris' translation of Saussure we can talk to ourselves or recite silently a piece of verse, without moving our lips or tongue - ok, I guess we could call it thinking -*

*No one can see what I am saying to myself - I am using the "parole" aspect of language - but am I still interacting with others - using or applying the "langue" concept fully ??? I guess not.*

*But what is with the 'High Wire' example? Didier Pasquette is shouting four words across the City Glasgow. I can see him moving his lips, but I*



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'(Shouts) "Ce n'est pas possible!"'

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cannot hear any sound – Pasquette is applying "parole", but as I'm not in the same community of speakers as he is, I 'miss out' on "langue".

Furthermore, if I would have been able to hear what he is shouting, I would have only heard [cenepasossible] (A Sound) and not "Ce n'est pas possible!" (A Sound with Meaning) as I don't know the key features that create the French language...

TUESDAY

Hello Diary,

Third entry: I wish I would not understand all this sounds I am looking for on the BBC newsfeed. My Life would be easier – I would only make a sound – I would not be able to communicate with the Exhibition Visitors in front of me, but at least I wouldn't be aware of all those dead people. I would be using something that Saussure called 'Sound Pattern' (ok, Harris translated it as such, as obviously Saussure was a French Speaking Swiss Linguist) and it would all be in my own head it would not come out and inform everyone who is able to make a connection between the Sound AYT and the number 8. I think that would be better

LOVE

Yours, "The Statistical Clock"

Does Language need to be something physical?

Well, I'm not sure what Saussure would say to that question as I just

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'(Shouts) "Ce n'est pas possible!"'

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*don't know enough about his theories yet, but I don't believe that it need to be. I can recall studied material during an exam without shouting it and I know it is there, I then bring it to paper and made it 'visible', but it existed before in order for me to make it visible. So therefore, the same applies to Pasquette's shouting "C'est ne pas possible!".... His voice might not be hear'able, but I can see him moving his lips [even if I could hear him my French is in such a poor state that I wouldn't understand him anyway...] : it is therefore **THERE**.*

*I guess this principle applies to Sign Language as well: I can order something to drink, say "Thank you" and possible a few more things ... and all this without moving my lips [well, in most cases]. So I communicate by "signing" my way around the world - just like speaking French, German or English. And still 'langue' [the community of people signing] and 'parole' [me signing] apply*

*So: in order for someone to understand me [either by hearing the sound I make whilst speaking, in the case of a hear'able language such as German or Spanish, or by seeing me signing, in case of BSL (British Sign Language) or any other sign language] the person must be in the same community of speakers as myself, as well as knowing and being able to connect the "signs" (here used for sounds (Spoken Language) and signs (any Sign Language) with their meanings.*

*... now that is clever ... !!*

## Appendix I



Image I

*Dunne & Raby and Michael Anastassiades*  
Statistical Clock (2007)

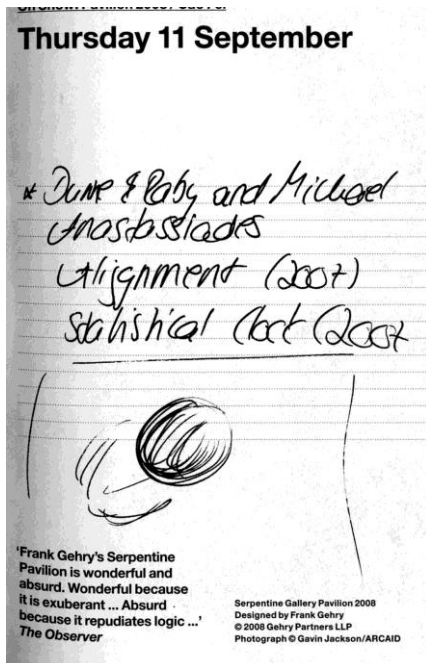


Image II

Page from my notebook, 21.10.08

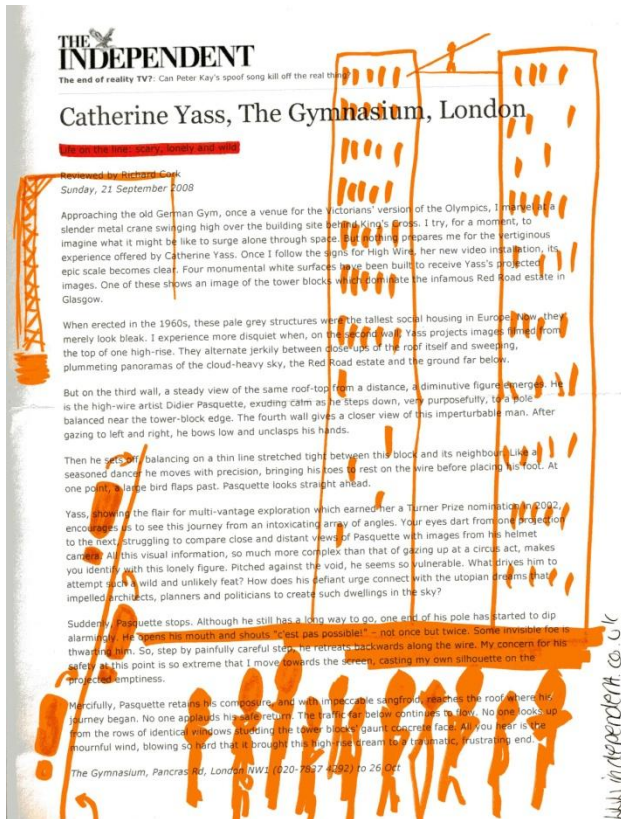


Image III

Drawing on print out, 21.10.08

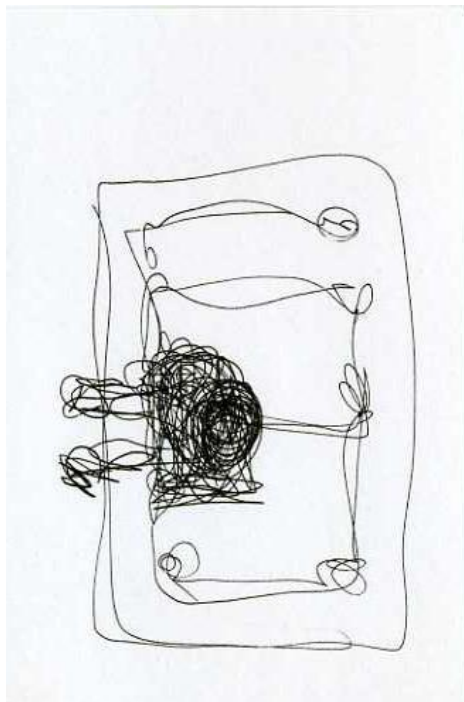


Image IV

Drawing about the experience of sitting on a polystyrene bench at the exhibition, 21.10.08

## Bibliography

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