

The mollusc leaves a trace of

process.

A play –

Characters –

Jean-Luc Nancy (JLN)

Hélène Cixous (HC)

Clarice Lispector (CL)

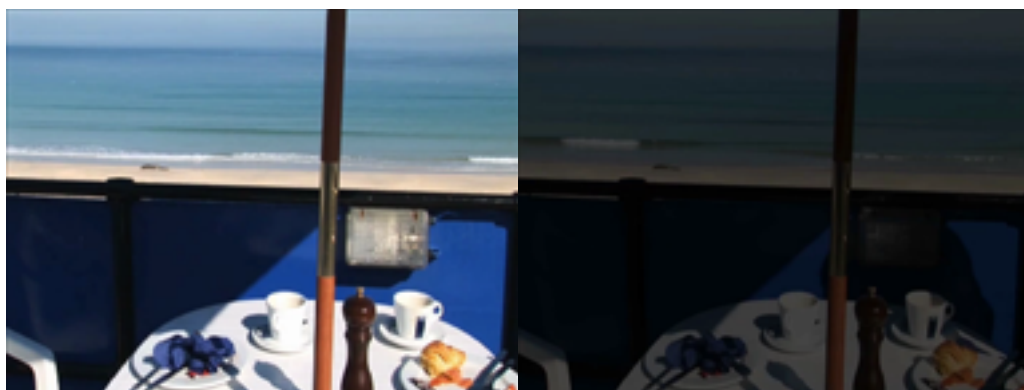
Me (KS)

JLN – ‘So a great voice would always be more than a single voice? Is that why Plato, Aristotle, Galileo, Descartes, Heidegger so often wrote dialogues?’ (Nancy 2006: 43).

The scene is set. A circular space in which there are many possible projections, painting and singing.

Some tea may be drunk and we may move around the space.

We may fade.



JLN – I thought I heard a voice, so I came on over. Was it you? (Nancy 2006: 38).

KS – It may have been me, but I was thinking, so it may have been someone else. Or you might have heard what I was going to say before I said it – but that was different because I was thinking it and not saying it. Perhaps it was you?

JLN – He comes, introduces himself, and says: (Nancy 2006: 35).

JLN – I'm hardly likely to have confused the two (Nancy 2006: 38).

KS – Why not? I often confuse the two, sometimes I confuse the three or the four or the five. I don't always know when three should be thinking to four and when four should be speaking to two. All I know is that I am always two or more thinking but not always more than one speaking.

JLN – But the voice that hears itself can do so only by keeping silent. Derrida's shown this, as you know (Nancy 2006: 47).

KS – Yes, but now hear what Lispector says:

CL – I dedicate this narrative ... to the transparent voice of Debussy to Marlos Nobre, to Prokofiev, to Carl Orff and Schoenberg, to the twelve-tone composers, to the strident notes of an electronic generation – to all those musicians who have touched within me the most alarming and unsuspected regions; to all those prophets of our age who have revealed me to myself and made me explode into: me. This me that is you, for I cannot bear to be simply me, I need others in order to stand up, giddy and awkward as I am, for what can one do except meditate in order to plunge

into that total void which can only be attained through meditation. Meditation may not bear fruit: meditation can be an end in itself. I meditate without words or themes. What troubles my existence is writing (Lispector 1992: 7–8).

KS – What makes Lispector are the voices that she speaks, what makes and troubles her is the ways that she communicates her voices. What troubles Lispector is writing; yet Lispector is writing, she is writing. She *is* writing. To me Lispector *is* writing, she reveals the various voices that made her; leaving a transparent trace – a trace that we can see through to Clarice. But Clarice does stand up on her own, as a woman she stands up, she stands up in the void, the NowHere space, the nowhere space that meditates on the possibilities of fruition, the moment of exposure, the revealing of the lived-in moment. She doesn't stand alone in this moment, this unfixable space and time, we cannot identify the alone in this; we can only see her and read her as a trace in this moment: the unfixable moment in time that is the **hour of the star**.

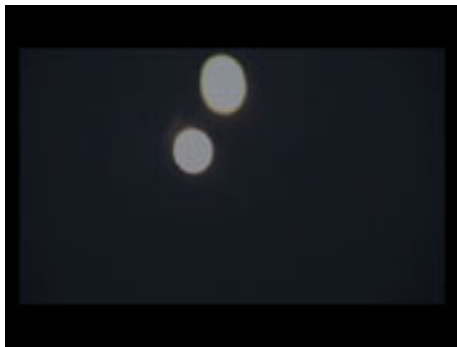
(*Me* considers this, pours a cup of tea and sits in discussion and thought)



KS – *The Hour of the Star* has inspired a process that returns me to the narrative of my story, this negotiation between practice and research. Should I articulate my thoughts in speech, in writing, in images, in dialogue, in process, in academia, in-side.

Where am I in my work?

Why am I speaking this voice?



JLN – I have nothing to say. You wanted to hear me speak. You needed it. It is only when we are spoken to that we know that we exist (Nancy 2006: 36).

KS – Exi(s)ting contains a voice, a voice that silences other voices, only to be heard, to reflect upon, and then sometimes we speak, sometimes we choose language to communicate. Sometimes we choose language of images, sometimes speech and song. What remains in the fading moment are voices silenced ... so listen carefully.

JLN – Why did you teach me your language? I already knew about its rhythm, and I didn't need ... (Nancy 2006: 36).



CL – Everything in the world began with a yes. One molecule said yes to another molecule and life was born. But before prehistory there was the prehistory of prehistory and there was the never and there was the yes. It was ever so. I do not know why, but I do know that the universe never began (Lispector 1992: 11).

KS – like this process, when was the beginning, or is the beginning simply impossibility? Before I began thinking about the beginning of it, it had already started and yet I captured a moment at which point I said NOW, this is where I am.



JLN – It was not learned, and it cannot be learned. For that, we would need to indicate its beginning, an order in which to begin the rhythm. But there is no order; it does not begin; it begins anywhere, in any language (Nancy 2006: 36).

CL – I should explain that this story will emerge from a gradual vision – for the past two and a half years I have slowly started discovering the whys and the wherefores. It is the vision of the imminence of...of what? Perhaps I shall find out later (Lispector 1992: 12).

(The moon appears and then like a balloon.)

KS – I have thought about your story *The Hour of the Star* and I have thought about the moon and how my story joins you and me, and you again.

(ME prepares to tell the story ... checking they are listening ...)

Balloon blowing around

Street corner

sound of violin

basin

hairs

mirror – cracked

typewriter

Sewing – darning, sewing – darning, sewing – darning

ants!

Sugar, sugar, sugar.

Questioning BULGING eyes

dog eating, dog again, tail of dog, healthy dog.

Cold coffee

blotches, skin, powder

lively piano tune

cockerel

birds chirping

cargo ship signal

Horse

A Rose

Rhyme and holding hands

+doll+

ball

Sloooow motion of Haaaare Leeaping

PING PING PING PING PING PING PING PING PING PING PING

Like a raindrop.

Brides and butterflies

A house with a well

Una furtive Lacrima

KS – Who is Macabea, the typist and the virgin who likes Coca-Cola?

BANG! (*The balloon is popped*)

CL – A story that is patently open and explicit yet holds certain secrets – starting with one of the book’s titles ‘As For The Future’ preceded and followed by a full stop (Lispector 1992: 13).

KS – You found the work too, you find *The Hour of the Star*, you say it connects to your self, who you are, the politics of you, the politics of you as a woman.

(*ME holds up the fruit ‘vivre l’orange’*)

HC – A writing came with an angel’s footsteps – when I was so far from myself, alone at the extremity of my finite being, my writing-being was grieving for being so lonely, sending sadder and sadder unaddressed letters: ‘I’ve wandered ten years in the desert of books – without encountering an answer’, its letters shorter and shorter ‘but where are the amies?’ more and more forbidden, ‘where the poetry?’ ‘the truth?’ (Cixous in Sellers 1994: 85).

KS – At a time when I felt I was losing myself I have found in this popping balloon and in writing’s touch a sense of caress, a healing wrap around of female inspiration. Writing is watching over me like I’m a mother watching over my newborn. Staring and looking into the cot, sensing the breathing, getting closer to feel the air escape from the mouth, and as it touches my face, it takes some of me back in with it. Life as a balloon animal is very difficult, you can never get it right ... life as a balloon animal, full of life, the life breathed into by an-other. The final balloon animal that I can make, my last breath makes my last form. The fragility of the balloon carries my last breath.

En-closing life, closing life.

Some life seeps out slowly through a loose knot, the breath is free and with the air, but the balloon is less firm, uselessly and unstable rolling around in a breeze. A draught catches the balloon and sweeps it aside; a foot pushes the balloon in another direction. Life slips unnoticed through the weak knot. Sometimes life makes a sound of escape – a strained scream.

Picked up and squeezed – the life is pushed faster. It is encouraged to leave.

Are we leaving or living?

Is leaving living?

Bend the balloon, try and shape a form. The breath being pushed from one leg to a head, forming a tail and a nose. Twisted breath, trapped breath in separate units ... aha four legs, but alas, no form for a head. The form will need to have three legs and a head. This is not usual, but still, a form. Making balloon animals, how do you get it right?

Macabea swallow the smiling mouse, if you can find it in this sharp world.

CL – If, instead of a full stop, the title were followed by dotted lines, it would remain open to every kind of speculation on your part, however morbid or pitiless (Lispector 1992: 13).

KS – I'll watch over the cot and I'll catch the breath of the words on my cheek but the form is not determined by my full stop. It continues with the dotted lines of which Clarice speaks.



HC – There are those women whose voice notes the signs of life in its minute beginnings. If they write, it is to surround the birth of life with the most delicate care. They have taught me that tenderness is a science. And their writings are voices changed into hands to come very gently to meet our souls, when we are searching, we have needed to leave a search for what in our being is most secret. Because a woman's voice has awakened our heart (Cixous in Sellers 1994: 85).

KS – the voice is like a trace within us, through Lispector's voice Cixous can hear her own. Through hearing Lispector, Cixous has listened and reheard her own voice, it is not only the inspiration from Lispector that awakens Cixous's heart, but it is the recognition of herself again, to find within herself her voice, and the knowledge that someone else is there too.

HC – Their writings are voices changed into hands to come very gently to meet our souls (Cixous in Sellers 1994: 85).

KS – listening to the writing. I try to listen, I sometimes hear the whisper underneath the booming voice of the shout, the shout of the normal, the usually represented large voice booming all around us, but if we train ourselves we can hear underneath a

determined protective voice; it encourages us, it holds us in its embrace; all we need to do is hear it.
