

## THE SOUND OF MEANING

### Aesthetical Approaches to the Manipulation of Speech Sounds

#### QUOTED TEXTS:

##### **Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," in *Image, Music, Text*:**

"The *geno-song* is the singing and the speaking voice, the space where significations germinate 'from within language and in its very materiality'; it forms a signifying play having nothing to do with communication, representation (of feelings), expression; it is that apex (or that depth) of production where the melody really works at the language—not at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sounds-signifiers..."

##### **Hugo Ball, *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*:**

"In these phonetic poems we totally renounce the language that journalism has abused and corrupted. We must return to the innermost alchemy of the word, we must even give up the word too, to keep for poetry its last and holiest refuge. We must give up writing second-hand: that is, accepting words (...) that are not newly invented for our own use."

##### **Raoul Hausmann, *The phonetic poem*:**

"This is where I differ from Ball. His poems created new words, sounds and above all musically arranged onomatopoeia; mine are based on letters, therefore excluding all possibility for creating language with a meaning or with coordinated movement."

"Phonetic poetry divides the time-space continuum into pre-logical number values which guide visual perception through the power of the written notation of letters. Each value in such a poem expresses itself individually and, by higher or lower declamation, of letters, sounds, vowel-consonant agglomerations, each sound unit is given its value."

"In order to communicate this typographically, I chose letters of different sizes and of different densities, treating them as a form of musical score."

##### **Kurt Schwitters, *Manifesto*:**

"Consistent poetry is built up from letters. Letters have no conceptual relationship. Neither have they in fact a sound: they only possess sound potential which can be evaluated when taken up by the reader. Consistent poetry rates letters and letter groups against each other."

**Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*:**

“We are not analysing a phenomenon (e.g. thought) but a concept (e.g. that of thinking), and therefore the use of a word.”

“I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the ‘language-game’.”

“(…) in philosophy we often compare the use of words with games and calculi which have fixed rules, but cannot say that someone who is using language must be playing such a game. (...) logic does not treat of language -- or of thought -- in the sense in which a natural science treats of a natural phenomenon.”

“We see that what we call ‘sentence’ and ‘language’ has not the formal unity that I imagined, but is the family of structures more or less related to one another....The *preconceived idea* of crystalline purity can only be removed by turning our whole examination round. (One might say: the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need.”

“What is the criterion for the sameness of two images?—What is the criterion for the redness of an image? For me when it is someone else’s image: what he says and does. For myself when it is my image: nothing. And what goes for ‘red’ also goes for ‘same’.”

“The assumption would thus be possible—though unverifiable—that one section of mankind had one sensation of red and another section another.”

“How do I know that this is colour is red?—it would be an answer to say: ‘I have learnt English.’”