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DOKIDOKI ÉDITIONS





« Je n'étais pas en train de l'embrasser, je murmurais dans sa bouche »

Le 30 avril 1877, le poète et inventeur français Charles Cros dépose une lettre à l'Académie des sciences dans laquelle il formule le principe d'un appareil qu'il nomme *paléophone*, littéralement « voix du passé ». Cros décrit son invention comme un moyen d'enregistrer et de reproduire « des phénomènes perçus par l'ouïe » :

> « Mon procédé consiste à obtenir le tracé du va-et-vient d'une membrane vibrante et à se servir de ce tracé pour reproduire le même va-et-vient avec ses relations de durée et d'intensité sur la même membrane ou sur une autre appropriée. »

Le temps que l'Académie dévoile publiquement la lettre de Cros, Thomas Alva Edison, qui n'avait alors pas connaissance des intentions du poète français, produisait son propre prototype, suivant exactement les mêmes principes exposés par Cros. Néanmoins, là où l'inventeur américain voyait dans le phonographe le moyen pragmatique de conserver et de reproduire la parole, tel le dictaphone, c'est dans des termes plus mélodieux que le poète français avait envisagé sa propre invention, comme en témoigne un poème ultérieur :

> *Comme les traits dans les camées / J'ai voulu que les voix aimées / Soient un bien qu'on garde à jamais / Et puissent répéter le rêve / Musical de l'heure trop brève / Le temps veut fuir, je le soumets.*

Avec l'apparition de la musique pop et ses récits lyriques empruntés du « rêve musical de l'heure trop brève » qui ont fini par inonder l'industrie du disque, le désir inassouvi de Cros (il n'est jamais parvenu à construire son propre appareil) revient hanter l'invention d'Edison. Et si c'est Edison qui a finalement tiré parti de l'entreprise phonographique, c'est paradoxalement l'ambition poétique de Cros qui le mieux présage le potentiel de marchandisation du phonographe. Cros en effet voyait dans son invention une machine à créer un surplus de plaisir – les voix aimées qu'on peut garder à jamais, – et c'est là précisément ce que le capitalisme a su mettre à profit, en associant le surplus de plaisir à la plus-value : en transformant le bien de Cros en biens.
Cela dit, si Cros hante l'invention d'Edison, Edison à son tour hante l'ambition poétique de Cros. Les rêveries musicales auxquelles aspirait le poète français en effet reprennent pour la plupart la forme de la comptine que l'inventeur américain, avec « Mary Had a Little Lamb », a choisi de réciter, ou plutôt de crier (étant donné son handicap auditif et le rudiment de son invention) à travers le tuyau de l'appareil de sorte à graver sa voix sur le cylindre

d'étain. L'enregistrement d'Edison, aujourd'hui reconnu comme le premier enregistrement sonore intentionné bien qu'il n'en reste trace, préfigure, par son recours au registre féminin, l'histoire et l'idéologie de la musique pop.

Lorsque Jacques Lacan, dans son séminaire *Encore* de 1972, formule pour la première fois son énoncé notoire, resté largement incompris, « il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel », il le compare aussitôt à l'industrie de la musique. Le phonographe d'Edison, littéralement « écriture du son », en vient ainsi à incarner le rôle de l'autre dans la « cure par la parole » de Freud. En jouant sur les mots « disque » et « discours », Lacan invente le néologisme *disque-courcourant*, un discours qui ne cesse de tourner en rond, au point de ne devenir rien de plus qu'un disque vierge et, comme le dit Lacan, « ça tourne, ça tourne, très exactement pour rien ».

« S'il n'y avait pas de discours analytique, poursuit Lacan en s'adressant directement à son auditoire, vous continueriez à parler comme des étourneaux, à chanter le *disque-courcourant*, à faire tourner le disque, ce disque qui tourne parce qu'*il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel* – c'est là une formule qui ne peut s'articuler que grâce à toute la construction du discours analytique, et que depuis longtemps je vous serine. »

Lacan ici joue sur le sens du verbe « seriner » : dans son sens littéral, « apprendre un air à un oiseau », et dans son sens figuré, « loger dans la mémoire certaines choses à force de les répéter ». Ceci dit, le jeu de mot *discursif* de Lacan tourne en rond de manière vertigineuse, dans une sorte de syncope où s'alternent le littéral et le figuré au point où l'on ne parvient plus à distinguer entre ce que la musique pop est censée faire et ce que Lacan lui-même tente de dire ou de chanter. En effet, que signifie le fait que son *disque-cour* alternatif doive être chanté et répété jusqu'à rentrer dans l'esprit de son auditeur comme un *Ohrwurm* (terme allemand récemment employé pour décrire l'effet de certaines chansons pop revenant hanter l'auditeur sous la forme d'une répétition involontaire et irrépressible) ?

Ceci étant, je dirais que si l'on prenait la leçon de chant de Lacan et qu'on la transposait dans la forme d'une chanson pop, dont Lacan souhaite à l'évidence con-courir ou corriger le disque-cour, celle-ci ressemblerait à la chanson magnifiquement succincte de Falseparklocation : « Boys Kiss Girls ». Cette chanson, en effet, non seulement joue avec ironie sur le vide de la plupart des euphémismes manifestes de la musique pop, que Lacan reconnaît comme son propre ou son sens de la décence, mais elle interrompt ce vide dans une image fondamentale par laquelle Lacan lui-même décrit la nature essentielle de l'amour. Lorsqu'on est amoureux, on sollicite le regard de l'autre : « Quand, dans l'amour, je demande un regard, ce qu'il y a de foncièrement insatisfaisant et de toujours manqué, c'est que – *Jamais tu ne me regardes là où je te vois.* Inversement, *ce que je regarde n'est jamais ce que je veux voir.* » En d'autres termes, le désir inconscient de l'autre ne coïncide jamais avec le fantasme du sujet, lequel n'est lui-même jamais projeté que pour se protéger de la cause inconsciente de son désir. C'est pourquoi Lacan transforme le mot « amour » en « armur ». Curieusement, la schize du regard amoureux est également la conclusion d'une autre chanson de Falseparklocation, « Headless » :

> *From where I'm looking / I'm headless /*
> *I see your face / Your appearance / And*
> *not my own / It's your head I see / It's*
> *your face I see / And not my own.*[1]

Les deux phrases qui, chaque fois, mettent un terme au couplet de la chanson « Boys Kiss Girls » – des garçons et des filles qui s'embrassent ou se regardent – pouvant sinon durer indéfiniment, ne coïncident étrangement jamais l'une l'autre, quand bien même on y prête une écoute attentive. Le désir tel qu'il est décrit succinctement dans la première phrase, « Tous cherchent quelqu'un quelque part », ne coïncide jamais avec le fantasme décrit dans la seconde phrase, « Qui sera celui ou celle qui rêvera de moi cette nuit ». L'admirateur ou l'admiratrice endormi(e) est également *headless* [sans tête], à toujours étranger(ère) dans son désir inconscient au fantasme de la chanteuse. Ainsi, ce n'est finalement que lorsque que l'on reconnaît que l'autre aussi est *headless*, qu'il ou elle n'incarne rien pour nous, pas même dans l'écho spectral de la voix aimée de Cros, qu'au lieu de tourner en rond indéfiniment, on affronte [*head on*] ce signifiant sinon vide qu'on appelle « amour ». Mais là encore, comme nous le rappelle finalement la musique pop, « *What's love got to do with it ?* ».

Dean Inkster
Traduit de l'anglais par Lore Gablier

1. De l'endroit depuis lequel je regarde / Je suis sans tête / Je vois ton visage / Ton apparence / Mais pas la mienne / C'est ta tête que je vois / C'est ton visage que je vois / Mais pas le mien.

DANCING WITH R.

dancing with R. / what a strange dance / dancing with a robot / dancing bizarre

BOYS KISS GIRLS

boys kiss girls / girls kiss boys / they all search for someone somewhere / boys kiss girls / girls kiss boys / who will be the one that dreams of me tonight ? / boys look at girls / girls look at boys / boys look at boys / girls look at girls / boys / girls / girls / boys / boys / girls / girls / boys / boys kiss boys / girls kiss girls / they all search for someone somewhere / who will be the one that dreams of me tonight ?

LANGUE ÉTRANGÈRE

sans savoir où je vais / dans la nuit / qui tombe en douce / je me perds / je m'enfuis / dans ton cœur / je m'enfuis / loin de moi / loin de tout / sous la pluie / qui tombe en douce / je me parle une langue étrangère / je me perds / dans ton cœur / sans savoir / où je vais

BIG CITY

I still don't sleep / I'm scared to dream / I count sheep / on and on and on / no one is awake / I can't escape / from this room / carefully arranged / I hear my heart / beating in the dark / the moon stares / I'm staring back

HONEY

everything is so bright my honey / the moon is shining bright my honey / though there is no tomorrow / we just dance all night / and we spend your money / and we spend your money / everything is so bright / the moon is shining bright / we are dancing all night / we are dancing all night / until the streets are getting loud / until the sun is coming out / until the stars are fading out / until we feel like ghosts / and then leave me alone / leave me / leave me

SHRUNKEN SEAS

it's another day / passing in sleep / drifting among things / with no particular energy / we dive in shrunken seas / swallowed alive / by the now / of buried memories / there's only here and now / and there's the seashore / it's another day / passing in sleep

DRAGONFLY

I know you listen to this song / dreaming about something / I know you listen to this song / looking at strangers / I know you listen to this song / in the middle of a room / I know you listen to this song / just by accident / I know you / listen to / this song / by the end of the day / cars are passing by / by the end of the day / it's windy & dark outside / by the end of the day / people keep on passing / by the end of the day / you're lying on your back

TROPICAL THOUGHTS

million of thoughts / million of thoughts around my head / looking for things / looking for things to creep in / thinking about / thinking about tropical gods / I hear the noise / I hear the noise crawl in my ear / I hear the sound / I hear the sound crawl in my ear / I hear the sound / I hear the noise / I hear the noise bright and white

SOMETHING ABOUT

something about the way you talk / makes me clear my thoughts and throat / the message of your mouvements is / very different from what you say / and you say a lot / I had about all / I just take it no more / you are rotten to the core / useless information here / luxurious temptations here / is this supposed to fill my mind? / is this supposed to kill my mind?

25.0000 POSSIBILITIES

what's growing on the sides / it's all gone / the streets look all the same / and the city centers look all the same / people shop at the same places and wear the same clothes / have all the same faces / and strive for all the same things / you have 25 million possibilities to be this or that or something else / where is the sun ? / everytime we drive through a city / there are always many things happening there / but the things we see are all the same / the streets are the same / people say the same things / all the time they have the same things to say / and on the radio / they play the same songs / all over again / people only love what they know / that's what they say / people only love what they know / even though there is nothing so different than your mind and mine / we wear the same clothes / and the shops we go to / they are all the same / and there is nothing growing on the sides / it's all gone

HEADLESS

from where I'm looking / I'm headless / I see your face / your appearance / and not my own / it's your head I see / it's your face I see / and not my own

4AM

I just said hello / you understood kiss me / I just said I'm sad / you understood touch me / I just said I'm sorry / you understood stupid / I just said that's perfect / you understood ugly / I just said hello / you understood kiss me / I just said I'm scared / you understood fuck me / I just said okay / you understood I'm angry / I just said good-bye / you understood nothing / you understood nothing / once in a while / I don't know why / we are mingled up in mind games / once in a while / I don't know why / we can't get from there to here / there are times / where we can't / get from there to here

B15G

it's an iceberg / seeking to relocate / it's dark outside / we head into nowhere / an enormous iceberg centred / reflecting the low autumn sun / we could lose ourselves /and even if / we are searching for / we hold on / searching for the pale sun / searching for another place / not yet here / we head into nowhere / we drift along / we could lose ourselves / but we still hold on / we hold our hands / even if there is nothing to hold on / and we head on / looking for another place / not yet there / and people say hello / to a massive ice formation / that broke from the shore / travelling through the sea / 1000 miles eastwards / then 1000 miles westwards / seeking to relocate

EVERY TIME WE DANCE HE HOLDS ME SO TIGHT AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO SO I TELL HIM I LOVE YOU

tonight we love / in the glow / that glows so softly / I know / that 's all there is / that's all we need to know / in summertime / every time we dance / he holds me so tight / and I don't know what to do / so I tell him / "I love you"



"I Wasn't Kissing Her, I Was Whispering in Her Mouth"

On April 30, 1877, the French poet and inventor Charles Cros submitted a letter to the Academy of Sciences describing an apparatus that he named a *paleophone* (literally, "a voice of the past"). Cros referred to his invention as "a process of recording and reproducing audible phenomena" which:

> ... consists in obtaining the tracing of the to-and-from movements of a vibrating membrane, and the utilization of this tracing for reproducing the same to-and-from movement, with their inherent durations and intensities on the same membrane, or another adapted for this purpose.

By the time the Academy made public Cros's proposed invention, Thomas Alva Edison, unaware of the French poet's intentions, had produced a working model following the very principles Cros had expounded in his letter. Yet where the American inventor had initially seen his phonograph as a pragmatic means for storing and reproducing sound, such as dictation, Cros, as he claimed in a later poem, had seen his own invention in more amorous and melodic terms:

> *Like the faces in cameos / I wanted beloved voices / To be a fortune which one keeps forever, / And which can repeat the musical / Dream of the too short hour; / Time would flee, I subdue it.*

If it was Edison who would ultimately profit from the phonographic enterprise, it was, paradoxically, Cros's poetic ambitions that would presage the phonograph's potential as a commodity. If Cros understood his invention as a machine for the creation of surplus enjoyment – "beloved voices" that one can possess – it was left to capitalism itself to equate surplus enjoyment with surplus value – to transform Cros's "fortune" [*bien*] into "goods" [*biens*]. It was with the advent of pop music and its lyrical narratives of so many musical dreams "of the too short hour," which would dominate the phonographic industry in the twentieth century, that Cros's unfulfilled desire (he was not able to build his own device) would return to haunt Edison's invention.

Yet if Cros's poetic ambitions would haunt Edison's invention, Edison himself would, in turn, haunt these ambitions; for the repeated musical reveries that the French poet had envisaged more often than not take the form of the nursery rhyme, in this case "Mary Had a Little Lamb," which the American inventor had chosen to recite – or rather shout (due to his hearing disability and the device's initial, rudimentary mechanism) – into the mouthpiece

of his invention so as to engrave his voice onto the primitive tinfoil cylinder. Although lost, Edison's recording is now remembered as the first, voluntary sound recording and, oddly enough, augurs the endless lexicon of girls' names that have pervaded pop music history.

In 1972, when Jacques Lacan first formulated his infamous and much misunderstood claim that "there is no sexual relation," he did so by immediately contrasting it with the record industry. Edison's phonograph (literally, the writing of sound) thus ends up playing "other" to Freud's invention of the "talking cure". Playing on the words "disc" and "discourse," Lacan invents the neologism *disque-courcourant* (a current, read popular, disc-course), a discourse that endlessly turns around on itself, to the point of becoming nothing more than an empty disc – a disc, as Lacan affirms, that "goes around and around for nothing, quite precisely." In the absence of analytic discourse, Lacan continues:

... you would continue to speak like birdbrains [*étourneaux*], singing the current disk [*disque-ourcourant*], making the disk go around, that disk that turns because '*there's no such thing as a sexual relation*' – a formulation that can only be articulated thanks to the entire edifice of analytic discourse, and that I have been drumming into you for quite sometime [*que depuis longtemps je vous serine*].

Lacan is here playing on the literal and figurative meaning of the word *seriner*: literally, to teach a bird a tune [*seriner un air à un oiseau*], and figuratively, the act of "lodging certain things in the memory through the force of repetition." Yet if one listens too closely, Lacan's *discursive* wordplay begins to turn around on itself – dizzingly, one might add – in a kind of endless syncopation, oscillating from the literal and the figurative to the point where we can no longer distinguish between what pop music is purported to do and what Lacan himself is attempting to say or sing. For what does it mean, as Lacan himself states, that his alternative *disc-course* must be sung and repeated until it enters the minds of its listeners like an *Orhwurm* (the German word that has recently been used to describe the effect of certain pop songs that return to haunt the listener in the form of an unintentional and irrepressible repetition).

That said, I would suggest that if Lacan's singing lesson were taken up and played back in the form of a pop song, whose *disc-course* he evidently wishes to *con-courir* or correct, it would end up sounding very much like Falseparklocation's beautifully succinct "Boys Kiss Girls." For not only does it ironically play on the emptiness of pop's most obvious euphemisms, which Lacan admittedly named pop music's propriety or sense of decency [*décence*], but it interrupts that emptiness in a fundamental image through which Lacan described the essential nature of love. For when in love I solicit the other's gaze, "what is profoundly unsatisfactory and always missing is that – *you never look at me from the place where I see you*. Conversely, *what I look at is never what I wish to see*." In other words, the unconscious desire of the other never coincides with the subject's fantasy, which is itself only ever projected in order to ward off – or protect the subject from – the unconscious cause of his or her own desire. This is one of the reasons why Lacan rewrites the word "love" (*l'amour*) as *l'armur* (both "a wall" and "armor"). Curiously, Lacan's split of the amorous gaze is the very conclusion of another Falseparklocation song "Headless":

> *From where I'm looking / I'm headless / I see your face, your appearance / And not my own / It's your head I see / It's your face I see / And not my own.*

Likewise, the two lines that, each time, bring to an end the stanza in the song "Boys Kiss Girls" – boys and girls otherwise endlessly kissing or looking at each other – curiously never coincide with one another, no matter how closely one listens. Desire, as it is encapsulated at the end of the first stanza: "They all search for someone somewhere," never coincides with the fantasy at the end of the second: "Who will be the one who dreams of me tonight." The dreaming admirer is also headless, forever estranged in his or her unconscious desire from the singer's fantasy.

Thus, is it not finally in the recognition that the other too is headless, that he or she embodies nothing for us – not even in the spectral echo of Cros's "beloved voices" – that we face, head on, rather than endlessly circling, that otherwise empty signifier we call love? But then, as pop music has taught us, "*What's love got to do with it?*"

Dean Inkster