

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE - EXPLORING THE DIGITAL CITY
3 NOVEMBER 2006 - TAPE 5

LEON: ... primitive sense. Hearing is the primitive sense, the voice of primitive apparatus but maybe the biggest lesson about sound and the voice is it provides a different way of looking at things and so again looking at urbanism, looking at our environments through the filter of voice is, well, we start to look at things differently. This image in the back is of an experiment we did where we took, we thought of banal rhythms, in conjunction with the conference we've had, about twenty people came in to participate in this activity and what it was was we had loudspeakers, you can see there, connected to a computer and what we're doing is playing banal sound, vocalisations, we didn't want to have aesthetically rich interesting vocalisations, there's no end to those, we can easily get access to them, so instead we had a voice reading the Stock Market report, one of our students reading it out. We had somebody having a conversation on a mobile phone to do with trying to book a train and another one was an auction house. I can play you one of those, or a bit of it, to show you how banal they are: *[plays tape]* Anyway, that sort of thing. And then we got people to specialise that experience so we had these three sound sorters in this room, one there, one there and one up there, that's three, and they had to do diagrams and answer a series of questions which is very difficult for people, I have to say, and in fact maybe a lesson from this is people are not very good at visualising and talking about and articulating issues about space and voice. So then what we tried to do, and we're still analysing the results of this but we set up an environment using the three speakers again, this time much more mobile with batteries and so on, and we set up a scenario where people could actually arrange these voices in a space. So our thesis here was that people may not be articulate talking or describing, talking about or describing things, but anyone can pick up an object and move it and it's quite an instinctive thing to do and then reflect on it and then talk about it so it's a nice designing way of perhaps putting a handle on this phenomenon of voice and space so, as I say, we're still looking at how they did and recorded their movements and so on. In fact, in these examples it is quite interesting, one person in the final condition he arranged things incredibly symmetrically so there's one at the right, one at the left and one under the chair but then this other person did more or less the obverse which is to place them in different positions around the room. Now it may be, it turns out, that what they actually did with the sounds, the voices, isn't that interesting, what they say about it might be and we're still looking at that.

The other handle on this sort of research is to consider, for example, our own tones and you will recognise them but I think the key is the notion of territory, the voice is one of the primary ways of defining territory within the animal kingdom and mainly within humankind and there's lots of references in it of that. In fact, there's a really interesting species of monkey in Borneo that is so skilled at using its voice in defining territory that what it can do is ventroloquise, it projects its voice as though it were a long way off. It buys time in terms of its

conflict with the tribe or the group whose territory it's invading, if you like. So they're in the alien territory, the territory they shouldn't be, they're eating their food but they throw their voices to sound as if they were a long way off. I found that in a paper on the internet, I mean an academic paper, and I found it through the normal academic web station, so that's a nice little find. But anyway we've identified territorialisation and the reason for thinking about the barrows market environment and the idea of barrow callers who are mobile moving these barrows around and calling out, now they're static and stationary with their stalls but as well as calling attention to their wears and starting off a transaction prior to that because this whole thing of actually defining territory and you can see the way people use the voice in that context they're kind of negotiating between themselves as they adjust the tone and volume in their voice and so on to create their own territory from their overlapping territories and it's complex when two or more people are interacting as callers. So we thought that was kind of interesting and maybe I'm defining territory now as I discover these words and this environment. So we did that and sign units, this thing where you say Yo is interesting because in watching football players just playing recreationally you get people going yip yip yip as a sort of sequence or whatever and it matters how many times a thing is said. It's a bit like, I can only think of ridiculous examples but hello is one thing, hello hello has a certain connotation in British culture, Hello! Hello!; hello hello hello. I don't know what happens if you say it four times or five but the signing of it can be determined as much as anything by the number of repetitions of something and, oh yes, when it's the case with bird calls, the inflection, repetition, reproduction boosts the idea of kidding or fibbing with sound in some cases. And then the cut in de-territorialisation and resistance is in there as well. I put that in before you mentioned it.

Just as further evidence of the importance of territorialisation with the voice, this is from Robert Audrey who's apparently a winning poet and author, that got into this area the territorial imperative of personal enquiry into the animal origins of property and nations and it's not ostensibly about the voice but it was very interesting read this, not necessarily PC but anyway an interesting fragment talking about this thing he called [inaudible due to background noise] which we perhaps normally think of as community but he says community sounds too smooth, basically. Really the way we interact is more egonistic so it's about negotiation and perhaps quarrelling. He says it's not about danger. So anyway as a bird must sing from his accustomed twig to announce his property existence so the Italian, I'm sorry to say, must turn up his radio and television set to maximise the volume or quarrel with his wife in such tones as to leave no neighbour in doubt that the master is at home and in charge of the situation. So there's something there in what you're saying that within every domestic situation I like to think that there's something about asserting one's presence just simply by use of the voice independently of what's being said. He makes a similar commentary of New York with Little Italy, from my experience.

And then also if we talk about territory then we have to talk about de-territorialisation and Deleuze and Guattari wrote this article which I don't

actually list, do I? Oh yes, it's after the refrain; and Deleuze & Guattari talk about three phases so you'd have this notion of a child whistling in a potentially threatening circumstance. I don't know if this actually happens with children these days. Maybe they resort to other means but it's very magic, your child perhaps your child feels insecure and comforts itself in the familiar tune sung under the breath, so at night children walking home in the dark and [*whistles*]. This establishes a home for sublime deeds like the foundation of a city home so he talks about the sacred gnome on the circle and so on which we've seen many times today and that's all about comfort and bringing things into your orbit and it has to be harmonic so it's about smoothness or I should say stridation. This term destroys the forces of chaos etc. And then finally what we call interesting is, I guess, if you regard this in hermeneutic terms it completes the hermeneutic circle, it allows a crack in the circle and launches forth hazards and improvisation. One ventures from home on the thread of a tune along [solemn gestural ?? lines]. Nice metaphors in all that but I guess he's saying as much as anything that it's one thing to think about territory but we have to think about breaking out and what circumstances enable us to break out and that we are break-out individuals.

Second last slide now: Back to tangible computing and situated technologies, this is a quote from Paul Dourish's marvellous book *Where the Action Is: The Foundations of Embodied Interaction* so this is to my mind all about smoothness and about technologies enabling a seamless existence, and that thing hugely desirable and in fact the relationship between the machine and us being blurred so it's hard to know what's machine and what's human and as if that's something we want. And you can see there he says "Tangible computing tends to exploit our physical and spacious skills and to extend interaction into a ring where these skills can be brought to their smoother more natural forms of interaction and expression'. I think his text betrays this. I don't think it's all really about smoothness but it's just interesting that this seems to be the ideal, it sort of just flows, it seems to be natural to say that that's what we want and I guess it's a platonic but do we want this? It sets out the unifying computational experience and physical experience and tends to unify the physical and electronic worlds to create a blend you can see I've highlighted all the blendy smoothy words, a match to our daily experience and abilities. Contrary to this view, this was pointed out to me by Pedro Ballou, one of my former colleagues who works in Ireland now as a musician, this image of someone playing a cello is, no, it's not a cello, is it? That's a violoncello, a viola. Anyway, he always says that this idea of smoothness with computer interfaces, why on earth are we aiming for that? Musicians never have with instruments, it's some notion of virtuosity. There's no evidence that people have tried to make musical instruments that are somehow easier to play. Why is that? It doesn't need to be the case that things are somehow smoother invisibly and then also this is an image of someone trying to step into a virtual reality environment which is of course commonly to Dourish's theses that say that's terrible but I guess from my point of view in this argument we'll know that is the nature of our technology sometimes. They're conspicuous, they're kind of obvious and maybe ought to be so and that's an example of

quintessentially supposedly smooth Acu-Pranic piece of architecture which of course is likewise betraying and there's nothing at all smooth, it clutches and clutches are necessary to achieve the finishes.

So my conclusion: Smoothness is not so great as an urban objective and I haven't mentioned Donald Sherne yet but he, in his piece, *The Space Within Concepts*, which is about metaphor and master metaphors, huge metaphors that pervade a whole discipline like paradigms. He talked about this apparent transition in planning where, prior to the Second World War, the planning objective was restoration in unity, bringing things together, a sort of medical metaphor and uniting, repairing and bringing things together then show them later, says that later on that was replaced by a metaphor somehow recognises disruption and rupture in the fabric of decision making and planning and not necessarily create a harmonious whole but to somehow give representation to the various groups which is a more agonistic view. Anyway, smoothness is not so great, maybe agone is the word for it, the word which should be... Pertaining to sound, particularly to the voice, draws attention to the seams and the thresholds of urban existence, proved conclusively but nonetheless [inaudible due to background noise]. The ubiquitous devices situated in technology just shift the scenes round. I don't think there's anything bad about that, I think that's how things are and we configure it, we configure it in our environments and so on, we configure it and I am pretty confident of that aspect, I am pretty confident which metaphors are shifting the scenes. Ubiquitous devices already exhibit an investment in voice so this obsession with voice that I'm parading is thoroughly tied up with some of the devices we use. Thank you.

JANE: Thank you very much. [Applause] In my introduction I spoke a lot about the intellectual contours of Richard's academic career and I've got to say that he does really good slides as well! [laughter] Visuals are always, I think, very useful in terms of..

RICHARD: What about the sound..?

JANE: And the sound as well.

RICHARD: It wasn't rubbish, was it?

JANE: No, the sound was fine. I must admit the complete Powerpoint package was what I meant, sound and visions. So if we can open for questions, comments and discussion.

WOMAN: I have an interest in what you were talking about very much about the urban environment. I'm involved with a lot of community groups, an environmental group here in Dundee and the group has just got some funding through the big Lottery Fund to do a project on accousticology, actually going out working with people in, it's actually Dudhope Park which is not far from where we are at the moment and both looking at understanding the sounds of

the environment and then perhaps shaping and changing those sounds over the period of the project. I just wondered to what extent the work you're doing, focused on the built environment and whether it encapsulated that natural environment as well. You focus on voice but then we have voice, people and plants as well.

RICHARD: Absolutely, yes. Well, our three test sites were the Stock Exchange, and ironically and interestingly we're actually out of and can't seem to get right to the core of it; and then a railway station, in fact it was to be Wembley Station it got transformed to Waterloo Station, interestingly because Waterloo had a very interesting documentary. I forget what it was called now but it was about the station and we thought well that introduces film and so on and so there was that and the other is the classic scene, the market place. We could have picked an outdoor space, I guess. It's very interesting. Do you think, there seems to be a renaissance, doesn't there, a real interest in sound now. I don't know if it's because we feel we've dealt with everything else so now let's move on to the other senses but I know there seems to be a revival of interest and there's a special funding round for HRC soon which is about sound in the environment.

WOMAN: Well, I think it came from an interest of local people actually in the sounds of the environment..

RICHARD: It isn't just about noise abatement, is it, which is obviously an issue but not *the* most interesting.

WOMAN: No, not at all. No, it's very much about natural sounds in the environment so, no, it wasn't noise abatement.

MAN: Richard, terrifically interesting. Maybe you do include it but I'm not sure but I'm not sure that I picked it up when you were talking about it but there is another way in which people interact which is by positive engagement like playing games with their space or by being affected by the space that they go into. Classic examples would be going into a cathedral and being quiet or children shouting in an echo-y hall to experience of the joy of the resonance of the space but the only, I suppose there have been positive examples of architects in engineering situations like that that might affect the sound behaviour of people. One of my favourites would be the one that Zumthor did in the Baths of Vals..

RICHARD: Say that name again. Who did?

MAN: The Zumthor Baths in Vals which is where you go into a tiny little swimming pool which is within the structure of the building and you realise there's this strange humming and when you settle yourself because there's a seat under the water and everybody else is sitting on that seat, you settle yourself in a place if you can, you realise that the sound is being made by the

people humming because of the sheer aesthetic pleasure of the resonance of the space.

RICHARD: That's cool.

MAN: I was just wondering whether you, you seem to be thinking of it as a sort of experiment which you are studying the way that sound patterns in the environment but I wondered whether you were also studying that positive engagement of the individuals with their setting and the sound response that you get? I suppose another example would be the busker who knows how to choose a place where they get a good acoustic for their instrument.

RICHARD: Well, it is a vast topic and we've just sort of, in a way this talk is focusing on the stimulus or provocation to design generally that a consideration of sound might give you so I might still end up as a visually oriented, spatial, form-giving designer but nonetheless I argue if I were that. My practice would be informed by sounds which is the purpose of this talk perhaps but yes to think actually in designing such environments in a very positive sort of way I would love to get into that more, I think what you are saying is fascinating. I love this idea of people being compelled somehow when they're in certain space to vocalise in a certain way and humming is really cool. And of course, yes, people feel inclined to shout in a certain space because it echoes in a certain way.

MAN: The other example is not, it doesn't seem to quite fit into your thesis but I can't give you the exact reference, maybe someone else here can, but the instances where composers have used buildings as their instrument, where they've written a symphony or whatever for the building and where you get people playing the railings or the handrails..

RICHARD: Oh, I see, in a contemporary way, not Gromelski's Dome or whatever it is..

MAN: Well, there's that as well, of course, yes. And the sort of..

MAN: Dynamics ...

MAN: ..the four choirs in different parts of..

RICHARD: What I have trouble with, I suppose, in talking about music colleagues is their end always is, it might be composition or a production or a performance or an installation, whereas I guess thinking of these things from an architectural point of view I like to think of the ending somehow architectural meaning a definition of shape and form and space and environment and so on which is a slightly different objective so I must try and pull myself back from those interesting..

MAN: But it could still be architectural to you to design a building that could be played.

RICHARD: Yes, a building that could be played would be another way of conceiving of the design of a space, wouldn't it, to think about playability of the walls would rethink this room in terms of its sonorous qualities. It would be really cool.

WOMAN: We will hear Lorens again.

MAN: Thank you very much for the observation about the shapes that the students were producing, having shapes that voice produce I'll treasure. I think this is fascinating stuff and in the back of my mind there's [inaudible] experiencing architecture and the wonderful description of how the very resonant galleries turned into a place where you can do strings or quartets by piling cushions and carpets into a [inaudible]. And there's that marvellous scene in *The Third Man*, Harry Lime, going down the sewers but I would say it's better to take a sound of space and Jonathan Mills who is now the Director of the Edinburgh Festival was at that stage an artist student and we were looking at some of these things and he was talking a lot about the palaces of Japan in such a way that they make the sound of a lark could have walked through the [inaudible] ...

WOMAN: It's a nightingale.

MAN: The nightingale. The nightingale.

MAN: [Inaudible] ... which brings me to my point really which is I came up with another example. It's a house in the Cotswolds the name of which I can't remember, and it's the political sound because this is a house built using money got from the slave trade but they're fundamentally cleansing their history by having this amazing staircase of sheaths of corn. When you walk up the staircase this rustles and the whole thing's about saying actually our money comes from the land it doesn't come from the [inaudible] It's a bit like what I felt about, Grahame was talking this morning because there's one area of politics of what is involved in this but perhaps not [inaudible].

MAN: I don't know if this relates entirely or if it's a banal point but sound is often used for protest, isn't it? It's the last thing that we can block off, somewhere you can restrain in all sorts of ways. It's a big deal when you're gagging someone's mouth. That is the last straw, I assume, but the voice is the last means of protest. Obstreperous drunks and so on in the Edinburgh streets so it's the voice that bothers us the most and that is they know it and it's the most powerful device. Maybe it's like children crying, it's a way of protesting isn't it, it's very conspicuous. And that gets taken over, certainly as a metaphor in politics, the voice of protest, the voice of this, the voice of the other.

MAN: Yes, I wanted to say something about the voice in technology. I wanted to focus on the mobile phone and it's possible that nothing I'm saying is new. I don't read a lot of the stuff about mobile phones but one of the few things that Catherine Finlay and I argue about is how come I don't have a mobile phone? No, it's true. I think the reason is because I haven't quite got my head around this interception of technology and voice that is marked by the mobile phone and I think it has something to do with the way the mobile phone de-territorialises voice and in a way that a stationary phone, I'm thinking in particular of the phone that one always had in those apartments in New York which was invariably in the kitchen, how, in the way that the stationary phone asserts a certain kind of spatial reference for the voice and I call territorialise my voice that the mobile phone doesn't and it comes out in all kinds of creepy ways like whenever you call someone on a mobile phone you can never hear what they're saying because invariably they're in a very noisy environment and so everyone's always shouting or conversely if you're on the receiving end of a mobile phone inevitably someone calls you when you're somewhere where you can't hear anything. That's irksome, not particularly a creepy irksome but it comes out in certain creepy things too like it used to be that if you call somebody you would say "Hi" or "How are you?" or something. You would never ask "Where are you?" That would be patently absurd. You would say "Well, you just called me. I'm in my kitchen, for Christ's sake. Why would you, I couldn't be anywhere else if we're speaking" but now it's entirely possible to call somebody and have no idea whatsoever where they are. It's possible to call somebody and they might be creeping up right behind you. I'm serious..

MAN: You'd hear the phone ring!

[Laughter]

MAN: ..No, but they could [inaudible] and I think that's creepy or funny.

RICHARD: Use the theory term, creepy or funny. What's the..

MAN: Depending. Well, usually creepy things are discharged as jokes to discharge energy and I think it's precisely because we insist that the voice is not disembodied, that it is actually nailed down by a mouth and although it remains nailed down by a mouth even if it's a travelling mouth of the mobile phone, there's something about the direction that points in. If you can speak to somebody and they could be anywhere or they could be here and then there because it's a mobile phone, the next step with that is something where you could speak to somebody and their mouth might be here and a kind of ventriloquism might occur and the voice would come from there. It's related to what you were saying, I think, when you opened with some of..

RICHARD: Well, the voice is incomplete without vision. Perhaps..

MAN: Yes, but the mobile phone is pointing in that direction.

MAN: The recent fuss about the veil has been looking at that.

MAN: Oh yes.

MAN: Which one of you was speaking?

MAN: Just waiting to see the eyes, but Jack Straw argued that case that he felt anxious because it was ...

MAN: Did he actually implicate voice in that argument? Did he say, I can't remember.

MAN: I can't remember

MAN: I know he said I don't want to speak to people where you can't see their full face but he didn't say I can hear voice but I can't see where it's coming from.

WOMAN: The voice was implicated over the fact that the lady in question, she was a language teacher, so the sounds which she was actually producing..

MAN: That was the lady who was involved in the school..

WOMAN: Yes, that was the one. Not particularly but there was another case where the sounds was the teacher because she was a lady, an English teacher.

[All talking at the same time]

RICHARD: This is an interesting vocalisation! [Laughter] It's like The Last Supper here, by the way! Somebody's being passed along here.

WOMAN: It's Christ! [Laughter]

RICHARD: That's a good observation. Whoever said the veil thing, tricky to weave that into a paper! [Laughter] Still...

MAN: I would be interested in, at one point a few minutes ago somebody was talking about designing architecture for sound and all that and I actually got quite interested because there's quite a few people that I know working as artists who are actually recuperating existing architectures through the use of sound and there's a particular artist called Louise K. Wilson, who's not one of the twins. She's been working at Orford Ness which is a former atomic weapon research place and there's these enormous centrifuge pits which are absolutely perfect acoustically so she's been working in them. You stand right

at the heart of this and your voice sounds like it's coming from inside your own head. It's just a real interesting sort of doubling effect from the whole kind of feeling of what the Cold War men, was it mental construction and so on, and she's been in some amazing stuff and places like that so the actual, that side then you take it outside and play, that's what gives people a whole new sense of what these places actually are but it's almost like an accidental side effect of these places are, these wonderful acoustics. And I was thinking another thing I used to do when I lived in London I used to go down Silvertown a lot. You know those huge grey elevators by London Airport? Well, if you could get up the top floor and explore some interesting plane in, there were these poles that just dropped the entire length of the building, drop things down the different holes you would just have the most enormous kind of ear xylophone in the world, the sound of things dropping down the different shafts and the thing is you couldn't actually record it, it was something to do with being there and seeing this kind of vacancy as which at one time was being filmed from different parts of the empire and all that. It's absolutely astonishing. As well as building for architecture, I think there's a huge amount that architecture minded, sound musicians can actually do about replacing existing sounds which have a dubious legacy.

MAN: There's that guy in the Monte Young in New York, that's the Deer Foundation house which has been going for twenty years, and some of the pieces were about to decay and so the original sounds have been looped and looped and looped and slowly is decaying..

RICHARD: Oh right, this is the famous tape thing. *I am sitting in a room..*

MAN: Yes, [inaudible] something else now. But it's wonderful because each floor has a different acoustic environment almost so the guys from the Monte Young, the Deer Foundation, they did the earth room and they did sound as well. It was amazing. But I was thinking when I was having a hard time with metrotopias, that Walter Benjamin, when I did this paper I started off with Walter Benjamin, the telephone coming into his family's house in 1904 and it was put in a crash can area in the back for the servants' and he describes its progress through the house coming into the front room by the 1920's and cleaning out all the bric-a-brac and Victorian stuff as the younger generation takes over and it's a beautiful metaphor for, and then you can take it out into the streets and...

RICHARD: What piece was that in?

MAN: It's just been translated. It's *A Berlin Childhood*.

RICHARD: *Berlin Childhood*

MAN: It's just 2006 it's come out. [inaudible]

RICHARD: I'm recording this, by the way, hope you don't mind, folks. It won't be published, just for research.

MAN: So are we!

[Laughter]

JANE: There's two more, two more points here.

MAN: Dipping off Lorens' point, just the other week my son phoned me up and we had a [inaudible] conversation and I had to excuse myself because, I put the phone down for a moment because there was someone at the door. Of course, inevitably, I went to the door and he's standing there [laughter] Sorry, this is a fascinating afternoon and indeed morning so putting an entirely different dimensional thing so my point of view and concept outlook have a kind of common form and the like and the components of that, I was speaking to Lorens earlier and when I was an undergraduate here there was this very new town planning school and, dare I say it, slightly jealous architectural school so we lads peering at pictures of that and there was this dismissive remark, new plans is working two dimensions and we, quick thinkingly, said we will be working four dimensions and of course this is what's happening down at the workers' front too, the one dimension of the railway line, two dimensions of the master plan, three dimensions of the design frame and the four dimensions of thirty years to get there but then [inaudible] was a nifty point and your relationship of sound etc. and silence being inability to make sound or to speak there's, from a personal point of view silence being the inability to hear and just wondered what you thought about that.

RICHARD: And so by inability to hear, through a sensory issue with the individual as opposed to inability to hear because of the loud air conditioning unit or a wall blocking..

MAN: Inability to hear through disability level

RICHARD: Yes, so that's obviously an interesting and important issue. It's an interesting question. I don't know how I can weave that in.

MAN: No, well, I understand. That's why I prefaced my comment with ...

RICHARD: It isn't just that one might want to hear if one has difficulty hearing, as it were. It's hearing with clarity, isn't it? So it's.. And it could actually be to create silence in the background so you can hear the foreground sometimes perhaps so discrimination's called for perhaps and maybe consider that.

WOMAN: I was just thinking also the flip side of the..

RICHARD: Which side?

WOMAN: The flip side of the resistance argument which we obviously assume with noise, the sound of noise, there's also silence. Silence can be obviously seen and perceived as a resistance as the non-uttering of sounds is in itself a form of resistance although within media theory at the moment there is big discussion actually about noise and the new media as noise so as a form of resistance itself opposing the notion of media, digital media's moves, actually the word they use, move is exactly what they've used there as to one characteristic of digital media and of course so that the reason that there's this noise, they hear noise. To my mind there's also silence itself can mean, the non-uttering, the decision that not uttering a sound is in itself a form of resistance plus it can feel like [inaudible]

MAN: Yes, well, didn't Terry Waite remark upon the fact that he was enclosed in a space with no noise and he eventually discovered that he could make noise by, he discovered that he was manacled to a radiator. If he rattled the handcuff thing up and down the pipe on the radiator that created noise and that kept him sane.

RICHARD: Who is that?

MAN: Terry Waite.

RICHARD: Oh right. So the generation of noise is a curative or something or some familiarating situation. Yes, tricky. Interesting though.

MAN: This is a slightly selfish question and I've written down your second conclusion which reads "Attending to sound in a familiar voice draws attention to the seams and thresholds of the listeners." There's two key concepts in there and one is sound and the other is thresher. I'm struggling to write something about thresher and I wondered if you would expand on that?

RICHARD: Yes, the book *Cornucopia Limited* was about thresholds. It's about equal economics but understood as an issue to do with thresholds. There's this marvellous book by Lewis Hyde about the Trickster function and he aligns that entirely with the idea of residency at a threshold condition so the Trickster is someone who occupies the boundary between in and out, it's the shadowy character who's neither one nor the other, neither a thief or a guest, and it's a really nice theory.

MAN: But how does that relate directly to your, what you were talking about or what you were saying about it, "drawing attention to seams and thresholds" because..?

RICHARD: Maybe it's a throw-away line, "attending to sound draws attention to the thresholds." Well, I guess in so far as it deals with cut so the cut if we do attend to this reconfiguration perhaps of our thinking through attending to

sound, meaning as theorists, then we think not only about smoothness, bonding etc and we also think about cut and its various manifestations of cuttiness , cutters..

MAN: That differs from sort of ways of thinking about it. An example in Nicosia when it was the Green Line which kept off the Muslim north from the Greek south and there are wonderful sort of sound bays there because you get the time when the Muslims are being called to prayer which is like a projection of the possession of space across the Green Line so you get those sorts of assertion of boundary which are to do with the identification of place through sound and of course I suppose in this country the use of church bells to set boundaries that sound and produce its own boundaries, its own sort of extent, possession of space but you described it in a different way. If I look at *Cornucopia* we will find a better or a fuller description of the way you're thinking.

RICHARD: To be honest, in that book, I hadn't referred to sound. I wasn't thinking about sound. This thing about church bells, the church I used to attend in Sydney had to keep every Sunday ringing the bells because if they stopped then they would forfeit their right to resume so the bell ringer went off duty for a few months they wouldn't be able to start up again because of the complaints etc. it was part of the planning thing. So, yes, the idea of the, even the generation of sounds or noises or habitual calls as a way of maintaining in the maintenance of territory as well is certainly an issue. Probably find the same thing with a newspaper seller on a corner, *Big Issue* seller, if they went away then tried to come back they probably wouldn't, they might be stopped.

JANE: We'll allow one last question.

MAN: It's just more observation on what you were saying about surveillance and sound, the idea of recording conversations and so on. We're all familiar with bugs and phone tapping, I'm not personally familiar but we all know from James Bond and other things..

MAN: A mike? Have you checked under the table! [laughter]

MAN: ..that there is, yesterday the Information Commissioner published this paper about our surveillant society in Britain in terms of [inaudible], intensive form of surveillance and part of that report they talk about in scenarios and teacher and because we're now all used to this network of visual surveillance through CCTV cameras in the city in the UK and so on they're talking about now a network of microphones in public spaces that will pick up voices and conversations and so on and I wonder why is it that we feel, there was remarkably little resistance in the UK to this visual surveillance yet in other European countries there has been a lot [inaudible] but would people be much more concerned and anxious about some kind of network of microphones that are imbedded in a public space?

RICHARD: I tend to think personally they would be hugely resistant. I suppose part of this theory points to that that in two senses. One is something we've avoided with this particular body of research but it's what the voice is actually saying, as it were, not only that the voice carries content so clearly when one speaks one could be disclosing secrets or confidential information whereas an image of one in a public place is usually less something that we worry about. But the second and perhaps more profound point is that there's something about the voice and our inner condition and this is I guess really so, isn't it? This is the idea that the voice and speech provide privileged access to our internal mental condition, believing such a thing, whereas writing is somewhat distant etc. etc. So anyway that's my own theory. Two of those issues: The very idea of content and meaning but then also just simply something about the voice and its immediacy, who we are and what we are which perhaps contradicts the idea of the cut in distance but maybe not.

JANE: Thank you very much everyone for terrific questions and Richard for his answers. I'm a bit unsure where to go now at ten to five..

MAN: I think we should hear the guest with the CDS work.

MAN: I'll be quite quick.

JANE: That will be fabulous and we can chat and respond here or elsewhere as we see fit.

MAN: If anyone else has to go now just grab a postcard and try it out at your leisure.

JANE: What do you need to set up?

MAN: Just that..

MAN: If anyone needs to leave at five they should feel free to do that but if people want to stay and hear Pierre's work and then no doubt they can always say something conclusive [inaudible]

MAN: What we have said is a kind of general invitation to everyone if they want in the afternoon to show short pieces of their own work they should step forward and do that and we had Nigel Johnson do that once and now Gerhard Dunlop has offered to do the same and it's a moment of kind of being prompted in these sessions.

MAN: Did you say we were retiring to the pub afterwards?

MAN: I didn't say that but actually I was going to say that, yes, we will all maybe go out for a drink.

JANE: For those of you who don't know him good, Donald Piers, [inaudible due to background noise] Is that right, Pierre? And he's a teacher of digital media, has his own practice and an artist who uses additional media and has done many projects some of which go directly with architecture and different kinds of build environments and Gareth if there's things I haven't said you want to have said about you then say them.

GARETH: .. Can you pass me that black note book? Cheers. Thanks. Okay. I'm critical. This is actually the centrifuge bit at Orford Ness that I was talking about just a little while ago and it seems an extraordinary environment. This is where we expand it, so they used to spin bits of Polaris missiles to see if it still worked and because they had to have a sort of perfect vibration free fit to do that, that's why it actually is an astonishing acoustic environment. I want to talk about its infrastructure. As well as the modern infrastructure of modernism there's a kind of sidekick infrastructure if you like, a kind of influencing kind of machine if you like that what actually recruits people into the modern? This is some work that I've been really quite interested in and I work on this with another artist called Dan Norton.

This is about new towns and about recruitment processes of largely a kind of modern. What we're really interested in was the fact that there was an incredible belief in the idea of progress that as John Gray said "Belief in progress is the Prozac of the thinking classes." Now, you can either believe, you can believe that there is such a thing as progress without actually believing in the process of progress and it is crucial as that got recruited into places like new towns and how we actually started to look at that was to think about how modernism is always held as this perfect moment but in fact it's crumbling, it's dirty. It's actually a process of entropy, at least as much as a process of ever-renewing freshness. The trouble is really the belief in progress is that once you have made something that embodies progress then that's it and that kind of assumption of progress kind of short-circuits your ethical involvement in the social realm and at Cumbernauld there's a really fascinating example of a short-circuit of that . What we did was we asked if they wanted to combine archive relation to place, the actual lived experience, so into the archive, into copies of architectural review [music], get to wander, get to experience the place as a desiring of a physical entity, just to reconstruct it, build a kind of utopian radio within it, as it were. [music continues] You would have to explore it yourself. This is a sort of, we've had several people have come to me and say "Why don't you make it more accessible?" but it's kind of [siren sound] Hidden within this is the voice of authority, the voice of Magnus Magnusson, who represents a certain era of what's good for you kind of voice and within this project [sounds] we wanted to re-inhabit it with the circumstance of play. This was the time Times Only Hotel, for example, which was demolished in 1977. [sounds continue]. [inaudible] turn the city itself into a signboard. Again I'm playing with the different layers of things but on the actuality of the place it was something that was fantastically intended. The original concept is absolutely wonderful, talking about reconfigurable space.

The guy who invented it and designed it was really thinking it. If shopping patterns change, people will phone up the town centre, drive there and their shopping will be plopped into their car in a pod like arrangement and the whole motion of the place has actually been fossilised and all these incredible notions of exchange and interchange never quite actually occurred. So there's all kinds of ideas, British ideas of the modern and how it was always slightly not very well done.

So, moving on to, after that, is a project called *Tomorrow's Project*. We wanted to look at the idea of the future's always used as a certain kind of recruitment. There's so many different ways to experience the future and we went to the Scottish [inaudible], all these kinds of official futures that you were offered, whether it was housing, whether it was in new jobs, whether it was the new technologies that they come and rescue us and new technologies always float by and they always tend to let you down somewhat so we wanted to actually allow people to find their own way through it and the way that people wander through that entropic town centre, we actually want people to wander through these visions of future. So we were very much looking at what kind of metaphors can we have for this and we wanted to think about pods of meaning. We didn't want to think about one kind of zone. So we began to look at how these things exist as fragments. We divided things up into little Heisensteining meaning chunks [music and sounds] So you can play with it yourself and you can build all these elements from the town and the city that we built. This is actually where the M77 is now going to be built on on the south side of Glasgow so they just caught up with this, by the way, so people can construct their own meanings from this, you can look at the meanings of different kinds of place, different kinds of how you are supposed to live with this new cells, these wonderful new houses you are going to get. [music] images of futures from 1939 World Fair which was held in Bellahouston Park [music and sounds continue]. You can play with it yourself and draw your own conclusions and build your own elements of how these futures were held out to you, how these existential cells were put there as something you could identify with. [music and sounds continue] So again all these theories enjoying these notions of architectural self and play self and future self, what you can do is come to your own, we don't tell people how to use the interface, it's actually a process of actually coming to grips with it in the same way that the idea of grasping the future is somewhat vague. Everyone will find their own path, it will amplify your own relations technology as you play about. Just finally, as well as having it online, we've worked with it as a kind of expanded cinema tool where we've actually worked at it in cinema audiences and places like Glasgow Film Theatre, Commonwealth Film Festival, Manchester. We've worked on it with improvised, live improvised musicians as well. So it's terribly urban but it's quite fun and you actually understand how you land up at the present, the recruitment process of getting you to today can be elements of the modern of the past and this is what we've been doing. So I don't know how it quite fits with everything you've been talking about today but just a little..

RICHARD: Fantastic. Thank you.

[Applause]

MAN: This sort of, the density of the options that you employ speaks of a kind of urbanism, doesn't it?

GARETH: Yes, I can't work out how to play the same thing twice so..

MAN: There's nothing suburban and dispersed about, it's very densely..

GARETH: There's a lot of sites which are places like power schemes in the country. Power schemes are actually a big part of this, you can spend hours trying to join the fragments trying to make your own relations between power schemes and hydro-electric dams in new towns but they're actually just as a play tool, at least as much as that, so if you want to take it as a kind of joining your own dots of the contemporary then that's great. It's also play. So people can come in at it at all kinds of levels.

MAN: You have a postcard, do you, that gives your URL?

GARETH: I've got it there, yes.

MAN: What I meant about urban I didn't mean that it was urban elements that you were giving us elements. I meant that the complexity of this kind of matrix of choices that the site offers, the different ways you can navigate through it is very urban. It's itself a kind of an image of the city and the kind of complexities of navigation any city offers. The thousands of ways of walking through a city.

WOMAN: Have you had a chance to show it to people in Cumbernauld themselves and have there been lots of reviews?

GARETH: I've had quite a lot of responses some of which are quite abusive and some of which are really interesting! [Laughter]

MAN: Abusive? Why? Who doesn't like it?

GARETH: Well, some people just, they hate the town centre so much, a lot of people are saying why do you glorify this vile piece of horror and if it had actually been built as it was intended and in a place that was a little bit more suitable than the wettest, windiest hilltop in Scotland it actually might have worked.

MAN: If it had been maintained..

GARETH: Yes, there is that..

MAN: ..in a remotely respectful way instead of just being allowed to fester and gather piles of rubbish and muck and this combination peeling paint.

GARETH: The tragedy of the town centre was that the whole of the town after the development corporation phase it went to a kind of council, it didn't really care for it and in fact saw it as a threat to the existing town centres, you know, the wonderful metropolises of Court Bridge and Airdrie. So that was the tragedy of it, it never did actually did develop to its take-off point really.

MAN: I think it required an appreciation of what was trying to be achieved and there was an unwillingness to think through how modern retail, for instance, could be applied to that and so we get the shared stuff next door which at the wrong level could be almost a feature of the place.

MAN: Do you think that you could, that if enough people from, well from anywhere but specifically from Cumbernauld could be convinced to play this it might have a rehabilitating effect and that it might lead to a kind of appreciation of the place and the values embodied in it and the intentions so that it would then lead to a rehabilitation and it would be maintained again and would become a nice place again?

MAN: I think it's too late for that. There's no takers. Milner and Janet Street-Porter and what's his name? that plonker from the Channel 4 thing, Kevin McLeod. Noel Edmonds condemned it.

WOMAN: He came out for the demolition, the top one in the first demolition series..

MAN: Yes, this is the top building to be demolished in the country and just one [inaudible] on the switch found.

MAN: But you could lay in, you could take these people on and say "Wait a minute." All guns blazing.

GARETH: Well, we've had a collaboration with a group called Crossmark, landscape architects. We did a, had some fun with them then this was part of a joint thing at the Rotterdam Architecture Biennale. Unfortunately, the day before the opening all the tech was stolen so it didn't go quite as well as it could have done!

WOMAN: All the what?

LEON: All the what?

MAN: All the equipment, computers, projectors, all that sort of stuff so be very careful if you're going to be working in Rotterdam.

[Laughter]

LEON: Or maybe the things..

WOMAN: Who said it wasn't going out of this room?

MAN: No, not me, it's the camp.

MAN: Yes, so, no, it's a place there.

MAN: Thank you.

[Applause]

LORENS: I guess we're done but I'd like to just say one or two very short words like thank you to everybody who has been here. Thank you, not just to the presenters who obviously I thank an awful lot, all of you, Leon, Grahame, oh God I'm really tired..

MAN: Richard

LORENS: ..Sorry, Richard, Richard, I'm sorry, forgive me. But also to everybody who's here today – and Jane, Jane [laughter], everybody who's been here today and for the past sessions participating in this workshop. We, our intention with this, if you don't know, is to first off to, we're looking to publish the papers or publish some version of them. Just to say that I think at the outset we had what turned out to be rather elaborate ambitions about actual publishing the edited transcripts of all the discussions which is partly why Reuben who I haven't mentioned and also deserves a big hand [applause] has been taping this. We may still do a little bit of that but we clearly didn't budget for the kind of support we would need to get fantastic discussion transcripts for publication but we will be doing the papers. We're in the process now of looking at a number of options, either the special issue of a journal or perhaps even a slim book to publish the papers in and I guess generally what we're interested in doing as the Geddes Institute is to keep the urban agenda afloat and alive at Dundee and to come out of that..

END OF TAPE FIVE

1 hour