Rupert Huber
censoratorium

1;

it is possible that institutions such as "fas" (federation of american scientists) are employing multilingual language recognition programs to scan international telephone, fax and e-mail lines for certain keywords for purposes such as combating terrorism in accordance with the "ukusa" agreement.

2;

censoratorium is an x-ray image of the censorship inherent in this situation, a structure developing from a concrete, reactive ban to an active end in itself. taking the reversal of the principle of censorship as the point of departure — the censored passage is made audible instead of repressed — this oratorio stages a compositional/ composed exhibition fight between music and language: instrumental music is occasionally and, gradually, more frequently interrupted by these sought-after trigger-words and ultimately suppressed by them.

columns of words erect themselves, become enlarged, coalesce into a wall of words enclosing the realm of words. the libretto takes shape on its own from the catalog of stimulus words and the noises tapped in realtime. the instrumental music is an empty space; the words that are sung fall into it as if plunging directly into an orchestra pit.

3;

duel of music and language

the piece begins with instrumental electronic music. its flow is disturbed more and more frequently by the emotive words intoned by three human voices and three electronic ones. one keyword blots out the sound of the same frequency or category. Vocal and lingual tones remain.

3a;

1st part: instrumental music is "repressed" by human voices.
2nd part: sampler is added, instrumental music/sampler/human voices
3rd part: instrumental music repressed, verbal density: rhythmic and high-frequency

4;

far off in the audience section, microphones are installed. they provide an impulse that prompts the voices to articulate the triggering words according to strictly established parameters. In the mind of the censor, the keyword catalog was drawn up out of fear of their possible consequences. the vocal trio, in which each keyword eradicates the musical tone of the same frequency, volume and rhythmic position, is then supplemented by and ultimately overshadowed by a machine-processed pool of keywords, advancing the process of development from an instrumental to a vocal composition.

5; keyword catalog

this has to do with words that, in the view of a censor, open up the possibility of a prohibited mental or emotional activity, or are already the result of such activity.

since words and language cannot be grasped — in both senses of the word — one-dimensionally, whereas the system of (multilingual!) censorship can operate only with concrete/one-dimensional meanings — although its operators are, at the same time, aware of this limitation and therefore extend the system of censorship to the point of absurdity (since, ultimately, each word/each human being constitutes a threat) — the keyword catalog is automatically enlarged over the course of time. the range and thoroughness of the censorship deployment effort likewise increases: less information escapes review, more information is forbidden, the circle of suspects grows ever larger.

it becomes impossible to manage the task without the help of machines. the frequency of interventions by the censor rises. ultimately, the entire level of human vocalization becomes a trigger for the machine. all stimulus words are made devoid of stimulative power. language becomes vocal intonation; word sequence becomes rhythm — a separate keyword language takes shape, with its own rhythm, its own sound, one that is an end in and of itself. the censorship machinery thus creates its own world. in this world, it might even be possible to carry on (disallowed!) mental and emotional activities by means of combinations of censored words (rhythm, sound, content) …

the machine becomes a phenomenon per se.

6; music-suppressive keywords

word shadows are realms of a word that accommodate a supplementary significance without actually denoting it explicitly — undertones, shadings and nuances, ulterior motives; the various word shadows, the range of meanings of a word — direct, indirect, foreground/background — also emerge in the filtering and articulation of a word or sound. analogous to a word's potentially multifaceted significance, the censor also goes about breaking the word down into its component parts; individual letters become ever more suspect.

along the contours of this fundamental pattern of suspicion, doubt, mistrust, and fear, there develops a rhythm of words and sounds that, it seems, is pursued to the point of extinguishment of any type of depth of significance and crystallization of form of words; henceforth, each individual letter ought only be attributed with its own "actual" tonal meaning.

the effort to control language by means of ban ultimately leads to the intention of dissolving it; the terminal point of the censorship program is silence — not that of the language but rather that of the censor, who suffocates under his own pressure and shifts his burden of impotence to the computing capabilities of a machine.

7; the fading away of a word

special emphasis is placed upon the relation between music and the physical area in which a certain language is spoken, since the capacity of music to form a word is frightening to the censor and intensely annoying to him.

forms of interplay of sound and language are attributed to individual words whose meanings have evolved historically; thus, censorship does not omit from consideration the musical-historical possibility of interpretation.

7a;

two meanings emerge from one word; two rhythms emanate out from one word/ point.

8;

the singers proceed according to a rehearsed fundamental structure serving as the basis of an impromptu live score. the cast is not situated on a stage, but rather delivers its performance from a sort of centralized location enabling the control of space.

9;

the catalog of stimulus words has been set up — in words and in sounds — in the WWW. parallel to the overall performance, the audience microphone input will be broadcast live via real audio in the WWW. In this way, the structure of the piece and the reaction of the censor in the internet become transparent, discernible and audible.

10;

censoratorium is, at the same time, a station of the super collider project (see page 270); the performance is part of an evening program designed by tosca.

11; The UKUSA Community1

Canadian SIGINT activities take place, and can only be understood, in the wider context of the UKUSA SIGINT community, a secret SIGINT alliance that traces its origins to the Second World War. The postwar continuation of this intelligence alliance was formalized in 1947 or 1948 with the signing of the still-secret UKUSA SIGINT co-operation and information-sharing agreement between the United Kingdom and the United States. The member agencies of the UKUSA community include the Communications Security Establishment, the United States' National Security Agency (NSA), the United Kingdom's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), Australia's Defence Signals Directorate (DSD), and New Zealand's Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB). A number of other countries' SIGINT agencies also participate in the UKUSA community, including those of Germany, Japan, Norway, South Korea, and Turkey. These countries are sometimes described as "third party" members of the agreement. In addition, some countries, such as China, host UKUSA SIGINT stations or share SIGINT on a more limited basis.

Cast and Crew

human and electronic voices, music electronics, visual configuration of space, director, www: Gisburg, Anna Clementi, Bettina Wackernagel, Mike Daliot, Isabella Bordoni, Richard Dorfmeister, Rupert Huber, Daniel Scheffler.

1 http://www.tscm.com/cseukusa.html

Further information: http://www.fas.org/irp/nsa, http://www.cse.dnd.ca, http://www.nsa.gov, http://www.odci.gov/cia

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