

DANIELA CASCELLA

two characters walking in a circle, anticlockwise and diametrically opposite

SOUND [singing along to the refrain of Flanders and Swann's *The Gnu Song*] I'm a s-sound. A most sinister s-sound...

WRITER [serious] S-Sound? Stop and stop it, will you? We need to talk.

SOUND [keeps singing and walking] ...the sinister-est s-sounding all around...

WRITER [exasperated] How am I to stop you and address you?

SOUND [patronising] Writer, writer, it certainly is good to hear from you, but then again, you are good with useless things: words. You infect me with your generalisations: you call me Sound. You're asking the wrong question here.

WRITER [dithering] Are you not Sound?

SOUND I'm [pauses] s-s..., I'm eroded by your words and I vanish through time. Would you write this vanishing, instead of calling me Sound?

WRITER [confused] What does this mean, Sound? Are you speaking of a vanishing, or isn't it a making, every time you sound and every time I write after you? There is something ghostly as you take on acoustic features that are to dissolve and yet mark your being differently, every single time. So tell me, what are you?

SOUND [whispering] I am s-s... and infinitely less. Your words after me are approximations of nothing. I exist in dissolving and yet you write after me, away from me. The risk is to lose me...

WRITER [hopeful] ...the gain is to keep chasing you, along this circle, around and around. Yourself, do you ever feel lost?

SOUND [sharp] Sometimes I find mys-s in sounds I don't recognise. And I keep moving! But listen, I have some advice for your fellow writers: tell them to stop discussing the absolute values of Sound, with difficult words.

WRITER [disheartened] But they will tell me that I'm ignorant and a fool, and that I blame their knowledge and discourse.

SOUND [firm] And you tell them, from me, they might be damned.

LONG PAUSE

WRITER [sighing] Tell me then, what is at the end of Sound?

SOUND [furtive] Perhaps, if somebody attempted to write my many contradictions, they might glimpse past my vanishing. Listen, and you will know you're being framed by my dissolving, and... you keep writing, don't you?

WRITER [in the vain attempt to conclude] Well, what have we been talking about so far?

SOUND [ironic] What talk? There has been no talk, we have sounded sounds. Nothing has been reported or documented, nothing. We've been chasing each other, sounding. You should not have called me Sound, but told me of the sounds in s-s, addressed me with incoherent stories and undecipherable acoustic traces, signifiers whose sense is uncertain and that yet mean. *Then* we would have had something to say. Think about it: Absolut Sound is a slogan to sell, an instrument of power, a portal into emptiness and oblivion.

WRITER [yielding] No words, then, for and after Sound?

SOUND No words: your words are to be for and after s-s...ounds. [starts singing again; skips off the circle, laughing] ...Your sh-shifting words of s-s, round and round...