



Radio ghosts: Phenomenology's phantoms and digital autism

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Abstract

Günther Anders offers one of the first phenomenological analyses of broadcast radio (in 1930) and its transformation of the contemporary experience of music. Anders also develops a reflection on its political consequences as he continues his reflection in a discussion of radio and newsreel, film and television in his 1956 'The World as Phantom and Matrix'. A reflection on the consequences of this transformation brings in Friedrich Kittler's reflection on radio and precision bombing. A further reflection on Jean Baudrillard's notion of 'speech without response' permits a review of digital culture and the self-creation of the digital consumer absorbed in what Anders named a *schizo-topia*, that is, today, an autistic culture of distraction, displacement, and self-driven surveillance.

Keywords

active listening, American juke box culture, being-in-music, digital autism, loudspeakers and party rallies in the Third Reich, radio phenomenology

From phenomenology to critical theory

Günther Anders is an increasingly important hermeneutic phenomenologist of technology, from his early critical reflections on radio through to a lifetime studying the structural exchanges of human society.¹ In this essay, I review Anders's media archaeological analyses along with his musical reflections² in his description of radio broadcast and reception in his 1930, 'Spuk und Radio',³ expanded in his 1949 'The Acoustic Stereoscope', offering an experimental phenomenology of proto stereophony, using two radio receivers to demonstrate the isomorphism of our two ears, left and right.⁴

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As Friedrich Kittler will later write, ‘Hi-fi stereophony can simulate any acoustic space, from the real space inside a submarine to the psychedelic space inside the brain itself’.⁵ Like Anders’s observations, Kittler’s point grows out of the ‘total mobilization’ Ernst Jünger reflected from the front in 1922: ‘Every brain, from the simplest to the most complicated, vibrated with the waves of the monstrous, which propagated itself over the landscape’.⁶

Hermeneutico-phenomenological and critical socio-political analyses are also to be seen in Anders’s 1956 masterwork on human antiquated- or outdatedness (*Die Antiquirtheit der Menschen*) in the ‘second industrial revolution’⁷ as well as in the second volume emphasizing the ‘third industrial revolution’, published in 1980.⁸ Anders offers readings of television and film, phantom and matrix, to articulate the culture industry which we today call media or digital culture.⁹

Anders’s academic formation included a wide range of studies, but his most determinative influence was the phenomenological tradition, including a 1924 dissertation under Husserl¹⁰ and a year with Heidegger in Marburg in 1925.¹¹ At the same time, Anders followed his own star and offered critical responses to both Husserl and Heidegger.¹² Like Husserl, Anders’s approach to acoustic perception was informed by the experimental psychology of Carl Stumpf, also known to Anders from his father’s [William Stern’s] invention of the tone variator for the quantitative study of tone perception. In Anders’s proposed habilitation on what he called the situational sociology of music,¹³ Anders highlights the perspective of the composer and the artist (Anders himself played both the violin and the piano) but not less the attuned musical listener. Indeed already in 1927 Anders can begin to propose ‘a phenomenology of listening-to’ [*Zur Phänomenologie des Zuhörens*].¹⁴ Anders’s attuned listening foregrounds what he also names being-in-music, varying and expanding upon Heidegger’s being-in-the-world, highlighting the specifically musical ‘situatedness’ of hearing. The term ‘being-in-music’ also permits Anders to differentiate both the listener’s attunement as well as between composers who deliberately strive for what he describes as a ‘voluminous’ or ‘massive’ effect by contrast with other types of music in the past, including the more modern forms he writes about, specifically Ferruccio Busoni and others.

The hyphenated language of ‘Being-in-music’ recalls Heidegger’s Being-in-the-world, but it also evokes elements of Nietzsche’s reflections on ‘aesthetic science’.¹⁵ In this way, Anders’s *attuned listener* would be what Nietzsche would call a creative/active listener (Babich, 2019a), and to this extent not unlike the composer or performer. Thus Anders highlights the distinction between a listener who is in-music by contrast with an ‘unmusical’ member of the audience, such as a recreational listener who listens to music for entertainment or else, more radically as Anders regarded it, as a way of filling time as this becomes increasingly ubiquitous. For Anders, the modern, technological era is the first time in history that music would be able to serve such a function, called up ‘on demand’ as we say today and broadcast as such: ‘Non-stop listening to music fills the vacant [*Sprachleeren*] hours’ (Anders, 1996: 195).

Key to the notion of attunement, a musician’s hearing characterizes the [*musikalisch*] musically-attuned listener as much as performer and composer. As an amusing sideline, the acoustic joke in Georg Kreisler’s 1959 song, *Der Musikkritiker*, explaining a popular music critic almost seems to correspond to the engaged intentionality of Anders’s



Figure 1. Opening scene from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927).

Zu-hören or listening-to: mocking those who are enraptured by music, Kreisler's critic balefully refuses to listen: '[er] hört nicht zu'.¹⁶

Anders's texts are at times provocative and this has also meant that his writings have tended to be difficult to understand, as he alienated some readers both in his own lifetime and afterwards. This would be compounded by the lack of academic appointments, but his greatest disappointment would be his failure to secure a publisher for his 1931 novel, *Die molussische Katakombe*, in spite of a personal recommendation by Bertolt Brecht and despite the fact that the novel had been suppressed by the Nazis. Anders's novel would not appear until after his death: finally published, with posthumous irony, by C. H. Beck, the same Munich-based publisher that published his main works in his lifetime.¹⁷

Delayed so long, this publication spoke from (rather than of) an era that had refused its voice, marked by misadventure, replete with codes, complete with versification. Anders's fairytale collection, *The Molussian Catacomb*, mystifies readers with its mythic resonances between Athens and Jerusalem, in addition to metric musical associations that can, perhaps, illuminate the machine imagery articulating the novel's constellation of transformation and concealment, echoing the *molossus* (—), itself a metrical foot, like the *dactyl* (—) or *anapest* (—): the metric repression in their underground tunnels, as we hear the footfall of the workers changing shifts at the beginning of Fritz Lang's 1927 film, *Metropolis* (Figure 1).¹⁸

Radio transforms: Politics and music

'Spuk und Radio'¹⁹ appeared in February of 1930 under the name of Günther Stern in *Anbruch*, a monthly journal of modern music, featured as the final essay in an issue dedicated to the 'so-called opera crisis'. The same journal included an essay by Theodor Adorno on Wagner, and there is an important parallel as Adorno too was to undertake a political and socio-cultural 'phenomenology of radio', as Adorno characterized it,²⁰ composed while living in New York from 1938 to 1941 under the auspices of the Princeton Radio Project.²¹ For his part, Anders's brief journal essay – casually and yet

densely written, the text takes up no more than two pages – describes a phenomenology of radio in the life world including elements of active and passive variation in addition to a Heideggerian hermeneutic of ‘listening to’ the radio qua musically attentive listener, articulated and conceived with reference to a then-new technology (the first commercial radio broadcast began with a single sender in Berlin in 1923). Using the psychological framework of acoustic perception together with a musically reflective hermeneutic phenomenology, Anders relates the change(s) in musical space-time experience, i.e. the life-world transformation of listening adumbrated by modern technology.

On its own terms, radio technology would revolutionize everything on nearly every level: from communications and wartime tactics/techniques to propaganda and the political. In addition, as Anders underscored this, it was also to transform the human relationship – both phenomenologically and sociologically – to music.²² It is perhaps a sign of that same accomplished transformation of life and especially of musical experience that we today may find it difficult to imagine the difference radio broadcast would have to make for the experience of listening. Yet many who lived through this – Anders, Adorno, Arnheim, as well as Brecht, and not excluding Heidegger himself – do seem to have written about radio.²³ In addition to what would soon be used to transmit socio-political, i.e. Nazi, and other propaganda, the very fact of radio transmission permitted the same musical performance to be broadcast to a range of tuned radio receivers in a given community, at a given time. Anders analysed the spooky or haunting play of experiencing the *same* music playing on the *same* station as one might move from place to place in the world. Thus we can understand the acoustic ghost effect Anders describes moving in his own apartment, listening to the radio from room to room, and in its phenomenological, retentive and protentive, extension as he, leaving his apartment, encountered other radios playing in other apartments.

To compound this phenomenological analysis of what might be assessed as an otherwise insignificant artifact of acoustic experience, it is important to underline that *loudspeakers* were specifically engineered and developed for party rallies in the political sphere.²⁴ Writing his infamous Black Notebooks a few years later, Heidegger will decry Nazi party gatherings for what he describes as a “gigantic ‘prostitution’ in to *noise*” (Heidegger, 2014: 92), gatherings he had earlier characterized in terms of their ‘organized screaming’ (Heidegger, 1989: 131), a phrase that might also be applied to today’s riled up crowds, the far-right raging to boiling, the collectivity of the ‘they’. That loudspeakers are the dedicated means to collimate this screaming is the point Albert Speer argues, characterizing Hitler’s dictatorship as the

first dictatorship in the present period of technical development, a dictatorship which made complete use of all technical means for the domination of its own country. Through technical means like the radio and the loud-speaker, eighty million people were deprived of independent thought. It was thereby possible to subject them to the will of one man. (cited in Snelly, 1959: 7)

Loudspeakers, large in the case of party gatherings, more minimal in the case of the radio in Anders’s living room, entail an acoustically transformed world. As Anders

observes (and Adorno and, later, Kittler will only continue this), they also change, precisely beneath our notice of the fact, the way one hears. We listen not merely with our ears or even with our minds, but also – and this is something Heidegger highlights in *Being and Time* – with our bodies and *with* the world around us and as we live in and find ourselves in this world.

In the political sphere, as this also becomes an intimate correspondent of and to the private sphere in the 20th century, loudspeakers allow us, or better perhaps, *compel* us, to hear more resonantly than heretofore, with sonic sub- and super-liminality. As Anders emphasizes in his essay, as Adorno will later write about this, space-time, world-space and world-time are altered by sound. The way we hear loudspeakers, the replication of and placement of loudspeakers and, *ceteris paribus*, earphones, shifts everything.

The space and the time of the everyday world, Husserl's lifeworld, is charged by sound as sound specifically mediates (and is mediated by) both space and time, and both space and time are transformed by technology. To this same extent, the crowds gathered in Nuremberg would not have (because they could not have) listened to these speeches in the same way, in the space, at the same distance and in the same lived temporal relation as one would have heard the speeches of Pericles in Athens or Lincoln in Gettysburg.²⁵ Radio broadcast speeches make the point still more clearly, if the sound analysis is yet more complicated as Adorno writes in the same modality, using his own terminology not of a situationally attuned listener but highlighting 'radio physiognomy' instead (Babich, 2014, 2016a).

In sum, anticipating aspects of today's debates on 'Post-Truth', Anders writes:

no one will deny that for the production of the kind of mass man that is desired today, the formation of actual mass gatherings is no longer required. Le Bon's observations on the psychology of crowds have become obsolete, for each person's individuality can be erased and his rationality levelled down in his own home. The stage-managing of masses in the Hitler style has become superfluous: to transform a man into a nobody (and one who is proud of being a nobody) it is no longer necessary to drown him in the mass or to enlist him as an actual member of a mass organization. (Anders, 1956: 15)

In the case of listening to music, what had been a phenomenological analysis of a lived-world experience of a live broadcast radio performance, untethered to its actual locus and thus able to haunt or follow the listener as a trailing echo (this was the 'spooky' experience of the radio broadcast), became quite another thing, ubiquitous (as both Anders and Adorno argue) as a means for the crystallization of political opinion, before and after the Second World War, and not less for advertising. Thus Anders reflects in 1979 that:

Inasmuch as in the age of electronic media there is no longer any place where one cannot be informed/dis-informed [*informiert bzw. desinformiert*], or, more accurately, where one may escape the obligation to be informed/dis-informed, therefore no provinces – there are also no places where one's ears are not filled with idle chatter concerning the '*loss of meaning*' by vulgar philosophers, psychoanalysts, and radio preachers. (Anders, 1980: 30)

If Anders goes on to offer a critical take on the ubiquity of information/disinformation (what we call ‘fake news’) of electronic or digital media, Anders’s original 1930 essay on radio is remarkable as a phenomenology of radio listening. In this way, Anders is a witness to the acoustic transformation of the lifeworld effected by radio broadcasting for experiencing sound as perceived in the lived world. This acoustic life-world is the technological condition, existentially and politically, for Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932). It goes without saying that we today take all of this for granted.

From phenomenology’s ghosts to Anders’s ‘schizo-topia’

Anders undertakes his discussion of radio ghosts via the *phenomenological* modalities he learned as a student of both Husserl²⁶ and Heidegger. Thus Anders offers not only a picture-book phenomenology of music and spatiality, positionally differentiated in space, but takes care to highlight the curious circumstance whereby it is specifically technology that ‘accidentally brings ghosts along with it’ (Stern/Anders, 1930: 66). Radio ghosts, like the more familiar projection artifact of television ghosts, are part and parcel of broadcast phenomenology – a point Kittler will also foreground, albeit without reference to Anders, in his 1986, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*.²⁷

It is the phenomenological ‘variation’ that adumbrates Anders’s reflection on radio. Phenomenologically, Anders observes, music can be acoustically located in space, from the perspective of the subject, the listener, who can thus characterize what is heard directionally and in terms of distance, just as one might, sitting in a café, hear a busker play in the street or, to use Anders’s example, the sound of a street organ moving past. With these examples, Anders illustrates the *method* of Husserlian free-variation including a parallel case, but Anders takes care to note that listening to radio broadcast made possible an acoustic experience that had never been heretofore experienced, and was thus an artifact of modern technology. Beyond listening to music at a distance or to a street organ rumbling by, or else, as in Rilke’s *Duino Elegies*, hearing a violin as one passes under an open window, one can also vary one’s own disposition or position in the world by walking into and out of range of broadcast radio music, complete with the opportunity to encounter a musical twin or triplet [*Doppelgänger* ... *dreifachgänger*],²⁸ undergirded with the distant echoes of the self-same sound.

Where the visual object is specifically to be seen here and not there, and thus is fixed or localizable, music tends rather to permeate space, producing in accord with the design of the composer a more or less ‘voluminous’ space, ‘massive’ or widely dispersed or more or less narrow, but largely spatially encompassing, and thus neutral in the sense of being not as such here or there but which ‘real presence’ is annihilated by radio. Anders thus describes hearing the radio still playing behind him as he walks out of his apartment. With the door closed, the sound is muffled but still to be heard as he walks down the hallway. Note, to be sure, this is the relevance of distance and directionality, that the sound he hears – think of the experimental psychologist’s tone variator – as he steps out of his apartment is the (now) distant sound of the radio heard in his living room. This Anders names the ‘schizoid-topic’ moment, the trail of sound in the distance that accompanies his hearing as an echo as he moves to hear once again, and still with overtones of his own radio, the same radio music playing in the next apartment.

Husserl uses parallel examples in his 1905 and 1911 reflections on internal time consciousness. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger adverts to the direct apprehension via hearing of a ‘creaking wagon or a motorcycle’ or ‘the column on the march’ (Heidegger, 2006: 163). Yet Heidegger emphasizes that we never hear tones as such, but always life-world indices: a particular conveyance, the lark, a certain airplane overhead; later he will refer to the sound made by a specific make of automobile. Thus, via Heidegger, Anders argues for an acoustic phenomenology yielding radio ghosts and virtualities.

It is sound, as both Husserl and Heidegger attend to this, but with Anders’s attention to being-in-music, noting the spatiality of tuning along with the active listener’s attunement ensures the kind of sensibility, for better or for ill, that allows or permits the kind of claims that Adorno makes, because the jazz he analyses is exactly not ‘live’ but recorded or broadcast on a television or radio program.

In a ‘schizo-topia’, offering an echo of his analysis of simultaneity – *Zugleich* – Anders reflects on the acoustic and affective phenomenon heard on the radio, in whatever event (say a sports broadcast) or musical experience or an exceptional moment, qua transmitted. Later, writing on the ‘antiquatedness’ of the idea of the masses as radio has transformed the ‘masses’ by 1961, describing the changed ingredients needed to make a world-class event: listening, together, en masse:

Even while vacuuming her rug, the housewife is not only at home between her own four walls, but is simultaneously under the vast cupola of St. Peter’s, since the organ music accompanying the Coronation of the Pope is playing in her house. (Anders, 1980: 85)

Via the music, in this modality, one is both where one is *and* at the same time one is elsewhere. To this extent, listening to the music one first heard as a young person *can*, in a locational transposition, *take us back*. The language is spatial, further specified: *in time* – again the term is *schizo-topia*, as Anders explains, and a great deal about modern social media’s experiential phenomenology is thereby illuminated:

Because the radio can be installed anywhere, at home, in the car, or in any public place, in a way it represents a *common denominator device* which is capable of neutralizing the differences between these places where we spend our time. And since with their help we are always somewhere else, that is, we are never home, we are also always and everywhere *at home* by virtue of their help. (Anders, 1980: 86)

Observing ‘*If the radio is the embodiment of his de-privatization, the car is the embodiment of his always being-at-home*’ (Anders, 1980: 86), Anders invokes the complete coordination of these two instruments, radio and car, just so radio and airplane, as this describes our current digitally adumbrated, mediated human condition.²⁹

Anders’s ‘Prometheus effect’³⁰ domesticates and disenchant the world, to use language Adorno and Horkheimer and Marcuse use to note the same phenomenon. Baudrillard explored the same condition as endemic to modern digital media as what he names, paradoxically it may seem to us, as we seem to ourselves to be more directly engaged with media than ever before in our socially mediatized lives, is its one-way directionality, which Baudrillard names ‘speech without response’ (Baudrillard, 1981: 169).

For Baudrillard:

The mass media are anti-mediatory and intransitive. They fabricate non-communication – this is what characterizes them, if one agrees to define communication as an exchange, as a reciprocal space of a speech and a response, and thus of a responsibility (not a psychological or moral responsibility, but a personal, mutual correlation in exchange). (Baudrillard, 1981: 169)³¹

Media archaeology for Baudrillard ‘always’, by design, ‘prevents response’ (Baudrillard, 1981, 170).³² We are inclined to overlook the one-way glass that is the mediatic *screen* – which is surely part of the way it works – whenever we tweet or post on Facebook, if we can hardly limit this scopic directionality to television (cable or network), YouTube and streaming music feeds, not to mention other social media, where we post and wait, usually bootlessly for a response to our responses which social mediatic forms (Babich, 2019b) may be counted as so many varieties of ‘speech without response’ (Baudrillard, 1981: 169).

The transformation is hard to see because it has succeeded, as Nietzsche says of the ascetic ideal in his *On the Genealogy of Morals*. And for Anders, in consequence, we are everywhere and nowhere at home:

Partly, today, we are nomadic, because, even when we are home, we are, at every moment, residing somewhere else; and partly sedentary, because, even then when we are actually driving through a foreign country, we can consume the comforts of being at home; and this means, paradoxically, that we also have the possibility of finding ourselves in another, that is, transmitted place. (Anders, 1980: 87)

In the same way, Anders analyses ‘background music’, i.e. music we have no choice but to ‘enjoy’. In this measure, and so far from offering us an antipode to Adorno, Anders allows us to understand what Adorno names the ‘culinary’ with respect to the culture industry and to music in particular.³³ In just this measure, explicating both the culture industry and the culinary, Anders invokes Adorno’s reference to breath (and suffocation). Anders writes:

We have been plunged into an *industrial oral phase*, in which the cultural pap [*Kulturbrei*] slides smoothly down our throats. In this phase, what is supplied does not even have to be perceived, but merely absorbed. (Anders, 1980: 254)

No sooner do we note that association than we also may observe that Anders here similarly echoes Adorno’s charged reflections in *Minima Moralia*, as so many variations on ‘air’:

The supplied commodity is, for the listener, ‘air’; and indeed in a twofold fashion: 1) it is something taken for granted; but 2) one cannot breathe without it. This kind of destruction, the liquidation of the object, via dissolution, liquidification, is not some kind of special feature of radio and television, but is characteristic of all production today. (Anders, 1980: 254)

Anders's analysis includes multitasking and displacement. If the later Anders reprises Adorno, he had earlier drawn on Heideggerian motifs for his 1959 reflection on the 'antiquatedness' of space and time, nevertheless combined with a Frankfurt School style critique of the culture industry as this industry commandeers the space of our lives and our minds:

Everyone knows that life today often proceeds down two roads simultaneously. Thus, e.g. while we travel along the track of our main occupation, we listen to music on the parallel track. And do not believe that we only love this double road of existence merely because we want to cover over the necessity of work with the sweetness of *energeia* (music enjoyment). (Anders, 1980: 346)

This is like the schizo-topic moment analysed above, but this doubling can also be applied to the self as we seek to distract ourselves from ourselves:

To the contrary, we often look for something to do whilst listening to music in order to offset the unbearable character of the enjoyment which is good for nothing apart from its own existence. 'I just can't enjoy Beethoven without doing my knitting' [*in English, in the original*], is not the expression of an eccentric woman, but the epoch's confession of faith. (Anders, 1980: 346)

In addition to the increasingly consummate deployment of the human being as the creator of himself/herself as 'consumer', curating himself/herself for others, that is: for transmission or 'broadcast' for similar consumption (this is the point of social media) and as him/herself reproducing him/herself as a homemaker on him/herself as consumer (in the scheme of industrial consolidation), we distract ourselves from our surroundings as from one another.

The world ignored becomes a specter, estranged and distant as Anders observes in 'The World as Phantom and Matrix', a phantom quality that is a direct consequence of technological determinism. Thus, Anders argues – and note the claim as it may also illuminate some of Adorno's related arguments – 'the phonograph and radio have robbed us of live music performed in our homes' (Anders, 1956: 18).

Anders hardly asserts that we lament the loss of such 'live music' – indeed: what's to miss? Even Anders himself in his 1949 essay on the 'acoustic stereoscope' argues that there is effectively, given the right kind of stereophony, no difference at all. We have never had more 'music' in our lives as we can arrange via a variety of streaming services to have music with us anywhere we like, screwed into our ears, synchronizing our thoughts on nearly any occasion, all on demand, better said: on autoplay. For Anders, wired as we are for sound in the open world, we have changed our relation to ourselves and to one another and to our listening, specifically to our musically attuned, oriented or 'active' capacity for listening, to-music. To this extent we hardly need the loudspeakers of Huxley's 1932 *Brave New World* or Orwell's 1984 (inverting the year of its publication in 1948) for the sake of social conformity.

Anders's concern is with what thereby becomes obsolescent or outdated: autonomy, *Mündigkeit*, as Kant speaks of it: human self-determination. The eclipse of self-determination could not be more radical. As Kittler reflects:

The literally unheard-of is the site where information technology and brain physiology coincide. To make no sound, to pick your feet up off the ground, and to listen to the sound of a voice when night is falling – we all do it when we put on a record that commands such magic. . . . As if the music were originating in the brain itself, rather than emanating from stereo speakers or headphones. (Kittler, 1999: 37)

Kittler emphasizes the role of wartime innovation in such technologies, reflecting on the precise triangulation of wartime bombing missions, sound and the pilot's brain, all one synaesthetic event, and it is important to cite this at length because 'the hypnotic command' of which Kittler speaks was as precise as a pressing a button:

Long before the headphone adventures of rock'n'roll or original radio plays, Heinkel and Messerschmitt pilots entered the new age of soundspace. . . . Radio beams emitted from the coast facing Britain, for example from Amsterdam and Cherbourg, formed the sides of an ethereal triangle the apex of which was located precisely above the targeted city. The right transmitter beamed a continuous series of Morse dashes into the pilot's right headphone, while the left transmitter beamed an equally continuous series of Morse dots – always exactly in between the dashes – into the left headphone. As a result, any deviation from the assigned course resulted in the most beautiful ping-pong stereophony (of the type that appeared on the first pop records but has since been discarded). And once the Heinkels were exactly above London or Coventry, then and only then did the two signal streams emanating from either side of the headphone, dashes from the right and dots from the left, merge into one continuous note, which the perception apparatus could not but locate within the very center of the brain. A hypnotic command that had the pilot – or rather, the center of his brain – dispose of his payload. (Kittler, 1999: 100)

As Kittler remarks, 'Ever since EMI introduced stereo records in 1957, people caught between speakers or headphones have been as controllable as bomber pilots' (Kittler, 1999: 103). For Kittler, and as I argue in *The Hallelujah Effect*, likewise for other philosophical analysts of music and war, 'The world-war audiotape inaugurated the musical-acoustic present. Beyond storage and transmission, gramophone and radio, it created empires of simulation' (Kittler, 1999: 107–8). Kittler means this literally:

Funkspiel, VHF tank radio, vocoders, Magnetophones, submarine location technologies, air war radio beams, etc. have released an abuse of army equipment that adapts ears and reaction speeds to World War n+ I. Radio, the first abuse, lead from World War I to II, rock music, the next one, from II to III. Following a very practical piece of advice from Burroughs's *Electronic Revolution*, Laurie Anderson's voice, distorted as usual on *Big Science* by a vocoder, simulates the voice of a 747 pilot who uses the plane's speaker system to suddenly interrupt the ongoing entertainment program and inform passengers of an imminent crash landing or some other calamity. (Kittler, 1999: 111)

Kittler's methods of counting historical intervals match Ander's own reflections,³⁴ especially where Anders insists as early as 1956, in 'The World as Phantom and Matrix', a text he took care to see published in English, that we 'program' ourselves:

The pairs of lovers sauntering along the shores of the Hudson, the Thames or the Danube with a portable radio do not talk to each other but listen to a third person – the public, usually anonymous, voice of the program which they walk like a dog, or, more accurately, which walks them like a pair of dogs. Since they are all audience in miniature which follows the voice of the broadcast, they take their walk not alone, but in company of a third person. (Anders, 1956: 18)

Anders invokes nothing more ominous than the transistor radio. Today, we can program ('stream') the precise soundtrack we prefer, from music to meditation apps – using the fetishized distraction of our devices to undo the distraction of our devices – tune in to a GPS system so that we do not lose our way along the Thames, or Danube, ensuring that 'Intimate conversation is eliminated in advance' (Anders, 1956: 18).³⁵ Thus people driving, often to destinations they happen to know, can opt to listen to GPS guidance, as opposed to speaking with one another. For Anders, the radio voice/GPS lady voice, is an invited third, as we transform ourselves of ourselves into passive – as opposed to active – listeners. This is being-online, being-connected, getting-a-signal. And as Anders helps us understand, this is not a given condition but an intentional status to be achieved, attended to.

Broadcast radio changes in its effects, in its dynamic working, by drawing on, transforming what Anders described as 'being-in', the matrix that is absorbedness in music. Listening to music on television, or as Anders's example detailed the vacuuming housewife as listening to a mass (the papal coronation) or listening to the news effects a similarly transformed experience of being in the world.

Here the first few stages of what Anders – who was fond of lists – counts off as a collective move to a virtual or phantom existence are worth noting. Beginning from a crucially Heideggerian *In- Sein*, Anders explains that:

1. When the world comes to us, instead of our going to it, we are no longer 'in the world' but only listless, passive consumers of the world.

As in-being, qua being-in, the modality or tone of our own existence is transformed.

2. Since the world comes to us only as an image, it is half-present and half-absent, in other words, phantom-like; and we too are like phantoms.

Anders, who could draw upon the early years of loudspeaker and radio technology, continues,

3. When the world speaks to us, without our being able to speak to it, we are deprived of speech, and hence condemned to be unfree. (Anders, 1956: 20)³⁶

The result Nietzsche had already diagnosed as the reaction condition of modern impotence, and for Anders this impotence changes our way of relating to the world:

4. When the world is perceivable, but no more than that, i.e. not subject to our action, we are transformed into eavesdroppers and Peeping Toms (Anders, 1956: 20).

Again: we do this ‘peeping’ or ‘eavesdropping’ by checking out any video that catches our attention every time we ‘check’ Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, what have you, as all of these means of Baudrillardian ‘speech-without-response’ replicate a scopic transformation. As audiences, we continue to relate to the world in the incorrigibly un-free fashion Anders analyses, ‘spectacle’ as Guy Debord contended in the 1960s, or via what Ivan Illich in the 1970s and 1980s named the ‘Age of the Show’. And like Adorno, Anders emphasized the transformed experience and the space-time of the same for the lifeworld of the human being.

In this way, in a section entitled ‘The Return of the Soloists’, reflecting in 1961 on the general outdatedness that it is to invoke the ‘masses’, Anders offers a phenomenological sociological analysis whereby what is abolished is the external world, namely the community: the public world. If Arendt herself focuses on the political public sphere in this exchange, Anders helps us see, as Nietzsche in his own century responding to a differently totalized experience of entertainment and culture, that in the wake of the loss of the public sphere, we are increasingly given over to what can seem an utterly self-focused absorption, in which one also loses the private sphere and thereby the private self as well.

Collective autism

Referring in the 1960s to American jukebox culture, the diner culture continuing throughout the 1970s, only to end with the 1979 development of the Walkman, ‘The customers behave *in public as at home*’ (Anders, 1980: 84). Autism thus acquires both a technological expression and justification. Using earphones, the consumer focuses on himself or herself, alone, or together with his or her companions. To this extent, the ‘privacy or isolation of the receiver disguises the mass character of the commodity and the mass character of its transmission’ (Anders, 1980: 80; see further, Babich, 2013).

We permit ourselves the same autism when we focus on our cellphones/iPads at home, with our families, as in office meetings, on public transportation, and so on. The games we play, the music we listen to, the social media we ‘follow’, permit us to participate, on our own terms, in this very same mass character:

each of us is supplied personally not only with our de-individualization and our form of mass existence, but also, at the same time, with the illusion of privacy (insofar as it is generally a question of a dual conditioning). (Anders, 1980: 81–2)

To this extent, the same issue concerned Horkheimer and Adorno in their analysis of the culture industry and its industrial product, namely music, entertainment of all kinds, newspapers, etc. For Anders, to recall his homemaker as described above, we create ourselves in the image of this same culture industry in our digital era, day and night, even to the extent of interrupting sleep that we might, were Anders still counting, name our age the fourth – or perhaps we are up to the n-th – industrial revolution:

One experiences pleasure at home when one consumes in the family circle (which has actually been transformed into a mere juxtaposition of individuals) the program that millions of other consumers are consuming at the same time, in an equally ‘private’ way. (Anders, 1980: 82)

This is how the culture industry works, and if we do tend to see this as benign or suppose ourselves unaffected by this industry, it is the theme of Anders's as of Adorno's/Horkheimer's analysis of the culture industry that this effected a de-individualization matched from the start with the illusion of choice and above all, as Anders emphasizes this, the illusion of privacy.

The point is easily extended to Facebook/Snapchat/Instagram/Twitter, and Anders reflects on its efficacy precisely as something we do to ourselves and as ourselves, on our own dime – Anders liked to emphasize that we pay for this – and thus and therefore, completely on our own terms:

For this conditioning is disguised as 'fun'; the victim is not told that he is asked to sacrifice a thing; and since the procedure leaves him with the delusion of his privacy or at least of his private home, it remains perfectly discreet. (Anders, 1956: 16)

Thus Anders's 'solo performers', referring to the consumer as he/she creates him or herself as such, surfing the net, 'designs' his own advertising experience as he or she does so. 'Modern mass consumption is a sum of solo performances, each consumer an unpaid homemaker employed in the production of the mass man' (Anders, 1956: 14).

Thus as Anders describes a mid-20th-century living room interior arranged around a television – note how constant that feature remains, even as it has migrated to our pockets as well – his description matches current mediatic self-inversion. The scene is familiar to the philosopher – it is Plato's cave:

The seats in front of the screen are so arranged that the members of the family no longer face each other; they can see or look at each other only at the price of missing something on the screen; they converse (if they still can or want to talk with each other) only by accident. They are no longer together, they are merely placed one beside the other, as mere spectators. (Anders, 1956: 17)

Speaking of radio, we noted above with reference to Kittler that gramophones and phonographs, went together with the loudspeaker technology developed along with mass programmed Baudrillardian speech-without-response that is radio broadcasting. In this way, Anders can observe that:

The stage-managing of masses in the Hitler style has become superfluous to transform a man into a nobody . . . it is no longer necessary to drown him in the mass or to enlist him as an actual member of a mass organization. (Anders, 1956: 16)

Today's Hitler would need no access to radio and not even mass-party demonstrations (Anders, 1956: 16). If, today, Trump has Twitter, it may also be argued that,³⁷ quite in the spirit of Gil Scott-Heron's 1971 *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*,³⁸ any revolution to come will require attention to the limitations that follow from our confinement to our screens,³⁹ including the same Twitter that remains sufficient to effect control as well as the illusion of participation.

Anders's concern, as we have seen, is with the 'unilaterality' of social media. This is curated self-creation, tweaking our own feeds, all the better for data-miners as we today

may well observe. For his part, Anders emphasizes: ‘Soft totalitarianism likes nothing better than allowing its victims to have the illusion of autonomy or even to engender this illusion’ (Anders, 1980: 238). But what is expropriated from the average American is what had previously been most properly, most intimately, his own. To this same extent, what is taken is never property: relations of capital are not to be put in question (banks are always to be ‘bailed out’). Instead:

The ‘sole’ thing that must be taken from him is his ‘particularity’ [*Eigentümlichkeit*], his *personality*, his individuality and his privacy: solely himself. In contrast with routine socialization, which involves what the person has, we are here concerned ‘only’ with a socialization of that which the human being is. (Anders, 1980: 239)

In his own anticipation of Baudrillard’s 1988 reflection on America, itself a twist on de Tocqueville, Anders reflects that ‘America uses psychoanalysis *for the sake of* the establishment of conformism’ (Anders, 1980: 237). Today’s neuropsychology follows along, as we, absorbed in our eternally new, eternally data-mined, surveilled and curated autism, create and re-create ourselves in the current remix – or n-th industrial revolution? – in the age of digital reproduction.⁴⁰

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Notes

1. See, to begin with, Anders (2016).
2. See, for a beginning, Franz-Josef Knelangen’s reading (1992), which itself needs differentiation, especially in Knelangen’s critical engagement, sustained in his footnotes, with Thomas Macho’s 1990 lecture at an Anders conference held in Vienna, where Knelangen observes that Macho reads Anders’s reflections religiously, which seems a fair criticism as one thereby oversprings the directness of phenomenology with respect to music – and indeed just to the extent that Anders distances himself from this notion with a direct reference to Simmel’s ‘Musik als Religion von heute’. Anders (as Günther Stern) (1930: 65). Fascination with a putative theological turn shows no signs of abating (see Alvis, 2017, and Macho, 1992). See further Ellensohn (2008). See too, more obliquely, Wittulski (1992).
3. Anders (Stern) (1930).
4. Anders (Stern) (1949). Also, followed by a German translation by Werner Reimann in Anders (2017).
5. Kittler (1999: 103).

6. Jünger (1922: 20). It is, however, more common to dismiss such analyses and foreground our choices and our rationality instead. I dedicate the first third of Babich (2016) to exploring this conviction. For a discussion see Babich (2015).
7. Anders (1956).
8. Anders (1980).
9. I discuss this complicated constellation in the first two-thirds of Babich, *The Hallelujah Effect* (2016a).
10. Anders (Stern) (1924).
11. It was also in Marburg that Anders would first meet Hannah Arendt, who went on, in a short-lived marriage, to become his wife in 1929.
12. In addition, relevant to the articulation of his phenomenological sociology, Anders was Max Scheler's assistant.
13. Still *Stern* at the time, Anders unsuccessfully undertook to habilitate himself with a study entitled *Philosophische Untersuchungen über musikalische Situationen* under the supervision of Paul Tillich, who demurred, claiming incompetence on his part (see Anders, 2017: 15–140).
14. Anders (Stern) (1926–7).
15. Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* thus contrasts the creator's/performer's aesthetic, that is, 'the artist's aesthetic' with the 'spectator's aesthetic'. What Nietzsche called a creative aesthetic he also named an artist's or 'masculine' aesthetic by contrast with an impact-driven reactive or receptive or 'feminine' aesthetic Babich (2019a). See, for a general discussion of masculine and feminine aesthetics in Nietzsche's use of the contrast, Babich (2016: 254ff), complete with an illustration, relevant to Anders, of Nietzsche's commissioned woodcut of *Prometheus Unbound*, in connection with Beethoven (p. 255).
16. The refrain is as follows, varied in Kreisler's specific fashion throughout, 'Nur ich sitz da und hör nicht einmal hin: / Weil ich unmusikalisch bin!'
17. Anders (1992). Anders might have been pleased to see (or perhaps not) that two decades later the novel would inspire an experimental film by Nicolas Rey, *Anders, Molussien (autrement, la Molussie/differently, Molussia)* (2011). Rey explicitly notes his inability to read the novel. For discussion, see Blümlinger (2012).
18. I argue this metric point in Babich (2013). Cf. Reicha (1834: Vol. 2: 472).
19. Anders (Stern) (1930).
20. See for a discussion, including further reference to the literature on this study, Babich (2014).
21. See Adorno (2006). Much of this text was originally published in English, translated, as I point out in Babich (2014), by a colleague of Adorno's, teaching geography at Queens College.
22. Adorno writes on this in the *Current of Music* and it is the subject of Babich (2016).
23. See, for a discussion focusing on Adorno in addition to these other figures, Babich (2014).
24. See, for a discussion, Epping-Jäger (2018: esp. 396–7). And see too Thadeusz (2011).
25. The Greeks were aware of magnifying sonic effects as these could be induced via stone itself and the resonance of certain enclosed spaces – think tholos tombs – and, hence, the design of the theaters themselves, open spaces, and also focused via theater masks which may have been thus musical. See, in addition to the third section of Babich (2016), very specifically and in physical detail Vovolis (2009).
26. Ellensohn attends to Husserl in his book, citing the authority of Malwida Husserl to testify to Anders's phenomenological facility (in Ellensohn, 2008).
27. Kittler (1999: 99). Kittler references the Jürgenson wave in his introduction (Kittler, 1999: 13), via Walter Rathenau as well as Cocteau's 'radio theory', including a reference to 'doppelgänger' (Kittler, 1999: 192).
28. Anders (Stern) (1930: 66).

29. Heidegger (2014: 265), to be sure, also indicts the prevalence of radio sets seemingly everywhere, in all the rooms of the house, as an indication of 'planetary idiotism'. I discuss this instantiation of radio and its phenomenological significance in Babich (2016b).
30. The phrase combines both Müller (2016) and Babich (2016a).
31. Cf. further Baudrillard (2005).
32. As Baudrillard analyzed this, the media thus make 'all processes of exchange impossible (except in the various forms of response simulation, themselves integrated in the transmission process, thus leaving the unilateral nature of the communication intact). This is the real abstraction of the media. And the system of social control and power is rooted in it' (Baudrillard, 1981: 169).
33. Franz-Josef Knelangen contradicts Anders's assertion that 'only Adorno would have understood' the tonal reference of rising and ascending tones (Knelangen, 1992: 79), yet I argue that, complicatedly enough, Anders may have been justified in this claim (Babich, 2013).
34. See for one author who draws a connection, although shying well away from Anders's critical reflection, Kaerlein (2013), and see too, albeit largely with approbative reference to Simonon, Carrozzini (2008).
35. This preconditioning is the condition for what has been called the current age of omnipresent surveillance, well beyond any Benthamite or Foucauldian panopticon. There are many discussions, but see, in addition to Galič et al. (2017), Hauptman (2009), and, for a recent popular account, Matsakis (2018).
36. Cf. Baudrillard (1981) as well as and further Babich (2018).
37. Hofheinz (2007) but see too Morozov (2011) as well as Frischmann and Selinger (2018) and, very conventionally, Patrikarakos (2017).
38. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=vwSRqaZGsPw. See, for a discussion, Lester (2015). In addition to an array of cultural influences and echoes, including remix, this is also the self-reflexive title of a documentary that should have been a point-counterpoint of the Venezuelan coup contra Hugo Chavez (see Stoneman, 2008).
39. See, for the challenges beyond radio, Babich (2019b).
40. This is thematized as our consumption of mass media in Anders's interview with Manfred Bissinger. Anders contends that the fact that you appropriate something not yours as yours, does not make it yours. The point (and this is why one must take Anders' distancing of himself from Heidegger with more than just a grain of salt) is a matter of *Eigentlichkeit*.

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