



MY NAME IS THE SOUND I USE
TO INTRODUCE MYSELF

Albert Rask

Essay

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My name is the sound I use to Introduce myself

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Notes for a film:

to grow up

it's not that I mind it
the body growing
ageing
shrinking
but the awareness
I mind the awareness
when the awareness is
a constitution
a code
a conduct
a social system
that I am forced to force to follow
because I am growing up
because I should be responsible
and because responsibility is a system
not made to feel
but made to follow
to forget
to listen
and I have forgotten as much
as I'm a soldier
who is a good soldier

because the soldier is good at saying
“yes sir”
and not
[question]
and
[not feel]
themselves or others
so that they will not
talk about [not agreed on] topics
and move with [not agreed on] movements
when [for example] dancing
because talking and dancing are games
and games has rules
and rules are to be followed
as when you [for example]
go to the doctor
to talk [about something]
to feel better
isn't unlike going to an event
or gathering
or party
to feel [something]
and later leave
without having felt so much
that the constitutions have been relevant to mention

Albert Rask

**My name is the sound I use to
introduce myself**

Thesis 2022



Gerrit Rietveld Academie

This thesis is about the feeling behind decision making and the trust in being, such as the feeling of stepping into a store to buy eggs, or the feeling of stepping into a store not to buy eggs, and then leaving the store with the feeling that you did the right thing.

“The human mind is incredibly averse to uncertainty and ambiguity; from an early age, we respond to uncertainty or lack of clarity by spontaneously generating plausible explanations. What’s more, we hold on to these invented explanations as having intrinsic value of their own. Once we have them, we don’t like to let them go.”

Joan Didion says that we tell ourselves stories in order to live. Maybe our stories are the conscious parts of our fundamental ideas of right and wrong, but where do these ideas of right and wrong come from? Are they logical or beyond our understanding and can I make sense of them? Can I make sense of what is beyond my understanding?

I am not sure when it began, but two years ago I started noticing, that all products I buy in the supermarket have the same colour. I do not write shopping lists and usually I do not know what I want to buy beforehand. My fashion of shopping might be perceived as random. Supermarkets are anyway cruelly organized in my opinion. The way they start with the vegetable and fruit section to lead you as far into the shop as possible before you can choose yourself where to go. The most basic products, such as bread and milk that always hide in the back of the store and the sweet section to cheer you up while waiting in line for the counter. There are no shortcuts. Only shelf after shelf after shelf of decisions. Big decisions. Huge decisions. Decisions about

your personal health and mental strength and then the decisions about the health of the environment and survival of the planet. I remember when I first moved out of my parents and had to do the full independent household groceries alone. The number of decisions left me with panic attacks, so I almost had to cry when reaching the egg section and I had to choose between supporting “the good life” of the chickens I have never met or saving my wallet for a cheese. I fell asleep on the floor before I managed to unpack my bag every time I came home that first month of independently keeping my independent household.

Half a year earlier I had attended a lecture by a professor who spoke about decision making as cutting down trees in a forest. Deciding was for him not picking one option out of the mass but cutting each option in the mass away until you were left with one option. He said that this was why it took so much energy for us humans to decide and talked about an experiment where two groups of people had their hands in ice water. One group sat in silence while the other group got asked plenty of questions. The group in silence could keep their hands in the water longer than the group who had to come up with answers because answering drained their energy he said.

If you keep your hands in ice water long enough, the nerves in your hands die and your fingers will turn numb. My grandfather says the old fishermen at the

Atlantic does this to the young fishermen on their first tour at sea so they never would have to feel pain again. My first job was in a fish store. I only got half the sensations left in my fingers by now. I am not sure how I think about that. It did not help me much in decision making. But I have started to believe in simple things just to make the rest easier, such as choosing to support “the good life” of the chickens I will never see, because I have chosen that supporting a “good life” for others makes my own life a little better. A simple thing. A simple thought. And what a weird thought, that I can buy myself to having a better life and being a better human. According to the Danish writer and journalist Kristian Leth it comes from Christianity. I have also chosen to believe in Kristian Leth. Mainly because I find him sympathetic. He has done studies in religion and occultism and often talks about these subjects in radio shows. I like to listen to his reflections. I know he likes the same music as I. Somehow that makes him relatable to me. Kristian Leth says that what makes Christianity ground-breaking different from Judaism is, that Christians believe in an afterlife. But an afterlife that carries consequences of your actions on Earth as having been an overall good or bad person. I had a similar conversation in the fish store with my old colleague Tom when I was thirteen. He asked what I believed in, and I had just discovered punk music, and punk music had just brought nihilism to my life, and

I said that I did not believe in anything. Then he took out his lighter from his pocket, lit it, and asked me to put my finger in the flame.

“Put your finger in the flame” he said, “keep it there.”

“This is how it feels all over your body, every second in hell”.

He switched off his lighter and we never spoke about religion again.

Soon after I started to wish for something to believe in. Something that would make living greater than reproduction but without viewing humans as a species on Earth that are more special than other species on Earth.

Today I have four flies buzzing around in my room. They were in my old apartment as well, and the apartment before that. Always four. I once killed them all, but half an hour later they were back. Four flies. Dancing together. They never touch me. They keep their distance. They do not seem interested in my food. I have asked my neighbours if they also got flies in their rooms, but they all say they do not. Maybe it is because I keep my window wide open. Maybe it is my ancestors. It is just a thought, that it could be my ancestors. I am not sure I usually would believe that my deceased relatives would come dancing to me in the shape of flies, but now that I have thought the thought, I cannot help myself from thinking about them as my dead relatives. It is as if the thought itself just made them my

relatives. A simple thought. Yesterday I was lying on the floor for an hour speculating whom it might be. My two grandfathers? My great grandparents? I often have a feeling that my grandfather is nearby. When he was living, he would often be in the room without saying much, but you would never doubt his presence. I have difficulty picturing him as a fly though. He had too much of a beer belly to become a fly. And why would they come to stay with me all the time? Do they not also have other souls they want to visit?

I usually keep count on how much time I spend with my friends and family. I do not want to feel that I am neglecting anyone. Maybe because I am afraid someone would neglect me. I do not know where this idea of time as a matter you can give, take, maybe even accumulate comes from. Thinking of time as matter makes me depressed because of all the time I have spent doing badly paid jobs, grocery shopping, and attending obligatory classes. Which makes me think of another day in elementary school. We came in a little late from the break. Our teacher made us stand in front of the class and made us count how many people that were in the room waiting for us. We were five minutes late and there were twenty-five people in the room.

“That makes 5 x 25 minutes” he said, “which is a hundred and twenty-five minutes. So, you have wasted one hundred twenty-five minutes of your classmate’s time by being five minutes late” he concluded.

Time is abstract, I understood. As with the universe for example. The universe that is estimated to be around fourteen billion years old according to measurements of the cosmic radiation. How can humans in any way understand billions of years when we at a maximum live a little more than a hundred years ourselves? Humans who even struggle to remember things that have happened the very same day. I believe we understand everything according to ourselves, so I cannot help doing the same math as my teacher:

The population on Earth today is around seven billion people and the universe is fourteen billion years old. If you accumulate two years of all humans living today, you have the entire life of the universe:

$2 \times 7\,000\,000 = 14\,000\,000$. Two years does not sound like a lot, I think. So, the age of the universe can be tangible, though it makes the age of humanity rather intangible. And according to scientists, time is even not a constant. In *The General Theory of Relativity* by Albert Einstein time changes according to gravity and speed. Time moves faster on top of a mountain than at sea level. Therefore, all our satellites run on a slower clock to be in sync with time on Earth. And time as a constant universal unit only became a thing when the railway started carrying more than one train, I have heard on the radio. Until then every town had its own time, and no clocks were synchronized. Now they are digitally matched up by satellites that have a different

clock time to have the same clock time as us.

I killed one of the flies earlier. It came close when I was lying on the floor again and I snapped it dead with my index finger. I think it was a female. It had the presence of a mother. I do not know how to relate to what I have just done. Did I free its soul from its fly body? Did I kill someone who came from an afterlife just to be close to me? The awful feeling is, that I have perceived the flies as my ancestors for so long that I have started to believe it. That fly was definitely someone who felt close to me, and I just killed her. A psychologist said on the radio today, that everything we experience is true in our brains. That is an amazing thought I think, but it also feels heavy since it makes me capable of having multiple and conflicting truths.

I also heard on the radio, that NASA and Space X do their best to get to Mars. The private company Space X wants to bring a colony. At first a few people. Then a thousand. Then a million. I believe these people will need laws to minimize the number of truths, but who will make these laws? I believe every law on Earth is made in relation to other laws and their surroundings. A law only exists in context. And obviously there will be self-explanatory laws on Mars such as: do not kill each other and partake in the shared community a space base must be. But what will be the context of being on "Not Earth"? How are the "interesting" laws going to be made? The laws about decision making

and decision justification. The complex laws about ethics. Power needs an agreed direction. Otherwise, things fall apart in conflict. At least I believe so, because I have never been in a country, friend group or family without a spoken or unspoken direction of decision making. Are the people of Mars going to have a democracy? Will it be a representative democracy? A direct democracy? Or is democracy too dangerous for an isolated group of people?

My grandfather taught literature at a school. He always made his students read William Golding's *Lord of The Flies*. I did not like the book when I read it. He thought it was amazing. I found it stupid and silly. He said it was the most horrifying novel about human behaviour on a philosophical level. I found it two dimensional with too much good goodness and evil evilness. It all seemed fake to me. He thought that presenting a difficult topic with a distance makes it easier for the reader to reflect and then relate to a topic. I think he might be right about that, and maybe the context of the book, the struggle of the kids, and the danger in every society is not too far from being real? My favourite part of the book though is my grandfather's explanation of the title. Lord of The Flies. The semantic meaning of the Hebrew given name Baal-Zebub or Beelzebub, a deity worshipped in the Philistine city of Ekron. In The Bible Beelzebub appears as a nickname for The Devil. An evil force we all might carry around.

And the same evil force appears not only inside of people but personified as a snake and horn carrying manlike monsters. As if evil has many faces. But are they the same evil? Can evil change or can we change evil by changing its name? As when the devil is called Lucifer. Lucifer, the fallen angel of enlightenment. An evil created in a conflict of inequality maintained by different insight and knowledge. From Greek mythology Lucifer is Venus, son of dawn, the morning star whose light will get out lit by the sun as it strikes towards the top of the sky.

A month ago, I was sailing a boat from Norway to Sweden with my family. We left the coast just before midnight with a handheld scout compass as a temporary replacement for the maritime compass that had broken two days before. The needle of the compass was moving along with the waves and the waves were moving across each other amplifying one another. Keeping a steady direction was impossible and we could see absolutely nothing. Only feel our bodies getting thrown up and down through the night as a physical nightmare. Some got seasick and fell asleep of exhaustion. Then the clouds lifted. Some stars broke through, and until dawn we sailed with the direction of Venus that went higher and higher until it got out lit by the sun. In the early daylight we looked around. The entire horizon was only water, and we were alone on Planet Earth.

When the conditions are ideal, Mars will be distanced by thirty minutes delay of communication and seven months of transportation from Earth. The colony of Mars will probably maintain contact with Earth, but not directly. Earth will be a star on their night sky, so should Earth control Mars or will getting to Mars in twenty years be as getting to America four hundred years ago?

When Moses brought The Israelites out of Egypt they roamed around the desert. God called Moses to the top of Mount Sinai to bring him the Ten Commandments and Moses spend forty days and forty nights on the mountain. When he came back to his people with the law in his hands, they had made The Golden Calf. A deity. To Moses and his God, it was blasphemy. A breach of the very first commandment, and he made the people believing the same God as him kill the others. "The Levites did as Moses commanded. About three thousand people were killed that day." The story makes no sense to me. Moses never showed The Israelites the Commandments. They did not know they could not have other Gods. How could they be killed from not knowing The Word they had not been told? How could their friends and family make themselves kill them? They must all have "believed" in The Law. And this is what I find interesting about any law. A law you do not believe in is just an obstacle. You cannot build a society on obstacles. I believe you must build

a society on faith. Faith in a greater good. But where does a greater good come from? Does there then also exist a greater evil? A Beelzebub or Lucifer? Who first agreed on the existence of good and bad? The Israelites left from slavery in the empire of Egypt. An empire with written right and wrong. Isolated in the desert they wrote their own right and wrong. They made a society whose rules still form the life of millions of people today. I wonder what right and wrong the people in the desert of Mars will write and whom it will affect in the future. What good and evil will the people living where humans cannot breathe chose to believe in?

The same afternoon Tom taught me about hell, he stole half a salmon from the store. We got paid our salary the week after and no one saw him before he had lost the money at drunk gambles. Whatever he believes in I believe it is fear, and I feared him from the moment he returned, glass eyed and with a lost faith in a future. I started avoiding him. If he were in the kitchen I would ask to be in the store. Most the time he was drinking in the back. His brother worked there too. He was a strong man in tight white T-shirts. He pulled a joke on me once a day about how my arms would not grow bigger from wearing loose T-shirts. I was a head taller than him but had to look up to him every time he spoke. Tom's appearance seemed to harm his dignity. They talked about it without words and filled the air

with dynamics. Everyone started acting silent. Walked silent. Spoke silent. Things first came back to normal when our boss got his license taken by the police for drunk driving. I have never gotten my license. I do not dare to. I see more car crashes a year in films than I sit in cars myself. I believe that fictional experiences can be true in our brains as the psychologist on the radio suggested, and I am convinced the accident will happen at any moment no matter how empty the road is. The only thing I have found that works to calm myself down is accepting that I will feel alright dying in this very moment. That I am satisfied with my life as it is. At this point I have had to tell myself that I am fulfilled so many times that I have started to believe it myself. Like the flies. It feels like I no longer fear to die, though I would prefer to live longer. I have no clue if this is a sustainable survival mechanism, but when driving and debating my relation to life and death I am always confronted with the idea of an afterlife of regrets. Regretting all the things I have done and all the things I did not do. My biggest sorrow in my self-constructed afterlife reflection is that I did not manage to have any children. But why is having children so important to me? Would I prefer leaving someone behind? Is it my fear of being neglected by not having anyone noticing my sudden absence? Sometimes I believe that an extension of me will be living in a child of mine. That a child will make me immortal. Sometimes reproducing

myself even feels like the only purpose of my life and dying childless would be as having taken my life for granted. For what am I living? Is there a before and an after or am I just a piece in a reproducing chain of human genetics? Pure biology and completely soulless?

On December 16th 2017, The New York Times released the article *Glowing Auras and "Black Money": The Pentagon's Mysterious U.F.O. Program*. The article reveals that The Pentagon have had a program observing Unidentified Aerial Phenomena for several years but kept it secret from the public and congress. Many of the phenomena are recorded by US navy pilots on several cameras and radars. Some recordings from fighter jets got leaked to the public in 2020 and later confirmed to be authentic by The Pentagon.

"The program produced documents that describe sightings of aircraft that seemed to move at very high velocities with no visible signs of propulsion, or that hovered with no apparent means of lift" the article says. A former Danish fighter pilot, an astrophysicist and a journalist discussed the videos on the national radio this morning. They all agree that something physical is moving on all the videos. They also agree that it is moving and accelerating faster than any known technology. Some of the videos are recorded on infrared cameras. The former fighter pilot explained that they do this in the military to see the heat produced by the vehicle. From the exhaust for example. But these objects do not produce heat. The

former fighter pilot said that everything that moves through air produces heat or at least the air around the tip of the object would appear warm on the camera. But the camera shows that the air around the objects is unaffected. They all three agree that the objects do not look aerodynamic and that they have no clue how they are flying without producing any heat since all known engines on Earth produce heat. They discussed if the Chinese or Russians might have invented a new technology. They discussed if the Americans themselves have invented a new technology but pretend not to know of it themselves. Then the astrophysicist said, that with our laws of physics it is a better explanation to assume that the vehicles are either bending space time or existing in a parallel dimension to move and accelerate without affecting the air around them than to assume that any country has invented a new technology that can move through matter without leaving an imprint. Within quantum physics parallel dimensions are apparently possible and Einstein's General Theory of Relativity makes time, gravity, and speed dependent on each other. Moving with the speed of light will make time stand still for the one moving compared to anyone not moving and same goes for gravity. At the centre of black holes light is incapable of escaping and a second is expected to be an eternity when you look from the outside. But what are the national radio and science community trying to tell

me? Are there several dimensions here on Earth and objects reaching through them? Are the objects capable of bending time and space itself but still interact with simple things such as airplanes and humans? I am not sure how to make sense of any of this. I am not even sure if I can make sense of this at all. It is conflicting with everything I have ever related to and based my existence on. Time, space, this world as being this world. Maybe there is a second me somewhere. Maybe he is right here where I am but just not here because we do not share dimension. That is totally weird. And what is even more weird is that I somehow have the feeling I understand it. I understand that something might be able to manipulate time and space and travel through and around everything I thought I knew. Somehow, I have the feeling that I understand it by accepting that I will never be able to understand any of it. And maybe most other humans do so to. Maybe that is the one human superpower. Being able to make sense of things, phenomena, actions, and ideas that are beyond our perception, but only by accepting that we will never be able to understand or relate to them.

I am back on the floor with the flies. I think I understand that I am living. This might make me a conscious being. "I think, therefore I am." This is an old argument placing humans above animals as more conscious beings because most animals are not seen as aware of their own existence. One day I will no longer

live. We call it, that I one day will die. In some chain of thoughts, dying becomes what makes me alive now. A contrast. But can I understand that contrast? Can I understand death? To me living is everything, I have ever experienced and related to. It seems that the closest I will get to understanding dying, is accepting that it is beyond my understanding. As the phenomenon from the radio. To me it is only understandable by the acceptance that I cannot understand it. I wonder if those vehicles are carrying living creatures as well. If they are from a second dimension or if time is not a linear thing in their lives, how do they then understand and experience not living? If they are a time travelling entity, they might as well be us.

I am starting to feel lost and rather confused. I like the idea of an afterlife. If all we are is electrical communication between neurons and nerves, we might as well just be biological computers. I do not want to be a computer. I want to be something more. I want the world to be something more. I want there to be a greater good in buying eggs consciously from the supermarket. If everyone is just computers what does moral, existence, and everything in between mean? Why should we go to Mars? If other dimensions are reaching through and appearing in our dimension what does our existence mean?

The Danish philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard published three books in 1843. In each of the

books there is a character representing an existential consciousness. The characters discuss each other's existential stage in life and criticizes the other's way of living. There is A, the aesthetic, who seeks the beauty and passion. A is criticized by B, the ethic, who exist per choice. B says to A: "Do it or do it not. You will regret both." I find something appealing in this bold statement. There is a beauty in the absurdity of existing per choice but knowing, that no matter what you choose for you will regret it. Maybe the aesthetic philosophy appeals to me. Maybe because I also feel lost. Almost excluded from society by thoughts, but Kierkegaard says there is a way back. A way back into society, through belief. He calls it the religious stage and uses Abraham as example to explain the consciousness of the religious existence. *"Abraham believed and that let him loose of the world into infinity. Leaving the world through reflection is easy. It is re-entering the finite world that is difficult. (...) and Abraham did by believing. Abraham re-entered the finite world with Isaac."*

Forty years later in 1882 Nietzsche made the declaration:

"God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have

to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?"

Spotify recently introduced me to post post ironic punk. A song suggested by the algorithm made me aware, that my name is just a sound when I introduce myself to people. In other words, I might be nothing, so I might as well wish for something to believe in. I might wish to have faith in a greater good and I might wish to be Kierkegaard. To have a living God and not have to become God myself to belief. But I am born in 1997, as a child of science, and as a child of Nietzsche. I buy groceries in the supermarket in colour codes, and I doubt that there is any meaning behind it. I talk to flies on the floor and listen for life on public radio stations in despair. And I remember a day years ago before anyone had ever died in my life. I was visiting my grandparents. In their backyard we found an anthill. My grandfather asked if I could follow a single ant with the eye and I could not. It disappeared among the others as quick as I separated it from the mass. We found blue flowers and throw them onto the hill. The ants covered them, and the flowers turned yellow.

"Do you not think they are confused where the flowers come from?" my grandfather asked. We looked at them. We looked at them even closer. They did not look back. We waved to them few centimetres from the surface. They did not seem to notice or connect anything with us, as if we did not exist. Maybe they did

not understand that we were waving at them. Maybe they did not understand that we were beings. Maybe understanding was not the most important.

Endnotes

- 1 Konnikova, Maria. *Why we need answers*, The New Yorker 2013.
- 2 99% invisible. *Matters of Time*. 2021.
- 3 Matthew 12:25-28
- 4 Exodus 32:28
- 5 Sørensen, Søren
- 6 Andersen, Anja Cetti
- 7 Gottlieb, Frederik Dirks
- 8 DR Lyd. *Flyvende Tallerken*. 2020-22
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