



# What we might have heard in the future.

Script for a Radio Drama

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**Cast (2014):**

Parrhesia.....Alexis Sottile  
 Computer.....Erin Douglass  
 Narrator.....Erin Douglass  
 Speaker.....Ryan Holsopple  
 Audience Member #1.....Alexis Sottile  
 Audience Member #2.....Ryan Holsopple  
 Friend #1.....Erin Douglass  
 Friend #2.....Ryan Holsopple  
 Radio Journalist #1.....Erin Douglass  
 Radio Journalist #2.....Ryan Holsopple

**Music and Effects (2014):**

Theremin.....Rob Schwimmer  
 Interstitial Sounds.....Angel Nevarez & Valerie Tevere

**Production Assistance (2014):**

Lori Hiris  
 Tom Ng

**Post-production (2014):**

Angel Nevarez & Valerie Tevere

**Special Thanks:**

Dr. Luis Amorós, Regine Basha, Carmen Conesa, Casino Luxembourg, Hannah Conroy, Alfredo Cramerotti, Antonio Escolar, Hedwig Fijen, Berit Fischer, Chema García Ibarra, Grupo Schwarz, Bettina Heldenstein, Ralf Homann, Sandra Kolten, Rían Lozano, Stéphanie Majerus, Kevin Muhlen, Manifesta 8 team, Museo Hidráulico Molinos del Río Segura, Pablo Parra López, Khaled Ramadan, Francisco Riquelme, Lola Riquelme, Silvia Riquelme, Yolanda Riquelme, Hernán Rodríguez, John Szeluga, Isabel Teruel, Esmeralda Valera Bernabé

Spanish-language version produced in part by *Manifesta 8 Region of Murcia, Spain*, 2010.

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English-language version produced in part by *Casino Luxembourg*, 2014.

**Scene One: Interior. Parrhesia in front of Computer**

SOUND: THEREMIN BEGINS WITH SUBTLE INTRODUCTION THAT BUILDS UP AND THEN SLOWLY FADES TO A SOFT TONE.

SOUND: HANDS TYPING ON COMPUTER KEYBOARD.

**PARRHESIA(1):**

"We exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force."(2)

**COMPUTER:**

Vowel sound is distorted. Lower body of tongue.

SOUND: HANDS TYPING ON COMPUTER KEYBOARD; PARRHESIA INHALES.

**PARRHESIA:**

"We exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force."

**COMPUTER:**

Pace of breath is not recognized. Slow your inhalation.

SOUND: PARRHESIA TAKES TWO DEEP BREATHS.

**PARRHESIA:**

"We exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force."

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**COMPUTER:**

Make space for pause.

**PARRHESIA:**

"We exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force."

**COMPUTER:**

Pitch pattern inoperable. Increase larynx modulation.

SOUND: THEREMIN; HANDS TYPING ON COMPUTER KEYBOARD

**NARRATOR:**

The future's past has caught up with itself. In the Citadel residents are equipped with special auditory mechanisms for acute hearing. Communication has been stripped down to its most basic level; the voice and its aural residuals. Here, voice recognition technology controls the flow of social exchange. The Interlocutors of the Citadel control the social order as well as the very limited resources of life.

The voice is the key to pass. The Interlocutors guard vocal codes with full authority. Those in the half-light exist on the periphery without access.

**Scene Two: In the Corporation**

**SOUND: ETHERAL DRONE SYNTHESIZER CONTINUES WHILE GAVEL HITS PODIUM FOUR TIMES CREATING THUNDEROUS SOUND IN AUDITORIUM.**

**SPEAKER:**

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We are on a brink of pioneering further exploration into the realm of voice verification and pattern mining. Our template matching and “feature analyses” are inimitable in precision and response. This advanced system is based on the unique geometry of the speaker’s vocal tract. It can mark linguistic difference to the nth decibel.

**SOUND: AUDIENCE APPLAUDS.**

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #1:**

This is the future, it is no longer about the forensic study of dialect and accent, but a mechanized system that will trace and eliminate suspected breaches.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #2:**

Right now, it seems a bit of science fiction, but it has a lot of promise.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #1:**

And yet only a computer is required to run the verification software.

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### Scene Three: Parrhesia meets friend near the Citadel

SOUND: DARK DRONE INTRODUCES EXTERIOR URBAN SOUNDS; URBAN SOUNDS CONTINUE WHILE CHARACTERS PARTAKE IN URGENT DIALOGUE.

**FRIEND #1:**

Parrhesia! Parrhesia!

**PARRHESIA:**

“Electric fences line our new freeway here, in the half-light. ... Control has enabled the abandoned wires again.”(3)

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**FRIEND #1:**

Yes, it’s “strange, how the scale forms on my antenna... in tiny patterns...”(3)

**PARRHESIA:**

Security has increased since two were captured trying to pass. Were you able to carry it out?

**FRIEND #1:**

Yes, I was able to.

**PARRHESIA:**

Thank you.

**FRIEND #1:**

Don’t say a word as to where this came from. You know where I work. What are you using it for anyway?

**PARRHESIA:**

"Please don't ask questions... I need a place to wait for morning..."(3)

**Scene Four: Interior. Parrhesia in front of Computer**

SOUND: THEREMIN BEGINS WITH SUBTLE INTRODUCTION THAT BUILDS UP AND THEN SLOWLY FADES TO A SOFT TONE.

SOUND: HANDS TYPING ON COMPUTER KEYBOARD.

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**PARRHESIA:**

"We exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force."

**COMPUTER:**

Differ movement of lips and tongue upon enunciation.

SOUND: HANDS TYPING ON COMPUTER KEYBOARD.

**PARRHESIA:**

"We exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force."

**COMPUTER:**

Filter sinus cadence. Extract sinus obstruction.

SOUND: PARRHESIA BLOWS HER NOSE.

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**PARRHESIA:**

"We exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force."

**COMPUTER:**

Simulate brain stem control.

SOUND: EERY SYNTHESIZER SOUND WITH THEREMIN THAT BUILDS UP AND SLOWLY FADES OUT.

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**Scene Five: Café conversation. Parrhesia & Friend #2**

SOUND: INTERIOR SOUNDS OF A CAFÉ – BACKGROUND CONVERSATIONS AND DISH CLANGING CONTINUE WHILE CHARACTERS DIALOGUE.

**FRIEND #2:**

"Our Historical situation is not an easy one because it is dialectical: we are criticizing the language of [the status-quo under its very reign]. Therefore we must be both analytical and utopian, calculating the world's difficulties as well as its wild desires."(4)

**PARRHESIA:**

"It is important that through all of this we strive to be historical contemporaries of the present. *What would become of a society that ceased to reflect upon itself?*"(4) Yet it is not only critique that will break the code. I need more information. We must be strategic and pragmatic, I must make access, before...

SOUND: POLICE SIRENS INTERRUPT DIALOGUE; THEREMIN FOLLOWS  
THEN FADES OUT UNDER MONOLOGUE OF NARRATOR.

**NARRATOR:**

Security forces arrest picketers just outside of the Citadel.  
Parrhesia disappears into the dampness of the night.

**Scene Six: Interior. Parrhesia in front of Computer**

SOUND: LOW END SYNTHESIZER HUM BENEATH SOUND OF HANDS TYPING  
ON COMPUTER KEYBOARD.

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**PARRHESIA:**

"We exercise the force of language even as we seek to  
counter its force."

**COMPUTER:**

Increase tonal receptors.

SOUND: TUNING OF RADIO TO LOCAL NEWS REPORT.

**RADIO JOURNALIST #1:**

In breaking news: there has been a recall of all dB 1204 model  
type audition implants. Those utilizing the dB 1204 model type  
must seek implant extraction specialists immediately.

In other news...

Decibel levels of noise pollution have shifted dramatically.



**RADIO JOURNALIST #2:**

During the early part of the twenty-first century, the source of most noise pollutants worldwide came mainly from construction and transportation systems. Urban planning gave rise to noise pollution placing industrial sectors in residential areas. In today's environment increasing levels of voice recognition data competing for radio frequency allocation have outweighed earlier pollutants.

50 These level shifts have interrupted the eco-system - fish are mutating from over-stimulation. Whale echolocation systems have been diverted and cold-water whales have been found in warm water locales. Contemporary residuals of our marine life are only found in the stone effigies that float on the surface of polluted waters.

Fish in the rivers of Southern Europe have been found to contain molecular mutations which have shifted their swimming patterns.

SOUND: LOW END SYNTHESIZER HUM BENEATH SOUND OF HANDS  
TYPING ON A COMPUTER KEYBOARD. SYNTHESIZER CONTINUES  
UNDER DIALOGUE.

**PARRHESIA:**

"We exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force."

**COMPUTER:**

Clear esophageal cavity.

SOUND: PARRHESIA COUGHS AND CLEARS THROAT.

**PARRHESIA:**

"We exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force."

**COMPUTER:**

Reduce speed of articulation.

**PARRHESIA:**

"We exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force."

**COMPUTER:**

Access Granted. You may enter.

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SOUND: SYNTHESIZER AND THEREMIN PERFORM.

**THE END**

**References:**

1. Foucault, Michel, Fearless Speech, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001). The name *Parrhesia* was borrowed from Foucault's characterization of the term *parrhesia* as "a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself)", (19).
2. Butler, Judith, Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative (New York: Routledge, 1997).
3. Dolby, Thomas, "Airwaves", The Golden Age of Wireless. LP. US Release, Capitol-EMI, Harvest imprint, 1982. Producers Thomas Dolby and Tim Friese-Greene.
4. Barthes, Roland, "What would become of a society that ceased to reflect upon itself?", The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

*What we might have heard in the future.*

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