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French Forum, Volume 40, Number 1, Winter 2015, pp. 79-91 (Article)

Published by University of Nebraska Press
DOI: 10.1353/frf.2015.0009

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Marie Darrieussecq is part of a generation of contemporary writers in France faced with the task of formulating the possibilities of literary expression in the wake of various strands of twentieth-century French and Francophone literary experimentalism and in response to increasingly vociferous complaints about the decline of French literature.[1] In an interview with John Lambeth, Darrieussecq retorts: "ça pèse beaucoup sur l'Europe cette idée que la littérature est finie, qu'il n'y a plus rien à dire, etc. Et moi, je suis complètement dans la sensation inverse, tout reste à découvrir, faire entendre, faire voir" (809). Shirley Jordan has suggested that the emergence of this "so-called 'new generation'" of French writers was largely shaped by the advertising and promotional strategies of French publishers over the course of the 1990s (52). While literary history has certainly taught us that the coherence of movements and generations is often imposed externally or retrospectively, and while the relative lack of the ideologically driven manifestoes of previous generations makes it more difficult to generalize about contemporary literary production, there are nevertheless a few trends to note. These include the rise of autofiction and minimalism, as well as the general "retour au récit."[2] Darrieussecq's novels, like those of many of her contemporaries—Camille Laurens, Linda Lê, and Marie NDiaye, for example—blend tradition with formal experimentation.[3] And like Lê's in particular, her novels are especially attuned to the relationship between the traumatic event and its problematic rendering in linguistic form.

In interviews and in her non-fiction, Darrieussecq speaks of her project as an attempt to uncover what is hidden beneath the word, to render the emptiness at its center: "La littérature trace une ligne d'horizon qui est comme dessoudée du ciel et de la terre. Espace ouvert, angoissant et désir-

able, au bout duquel il n'y a rien, sinon un objet qui manquera toujours et dont l'absence même permet d'écrire" (*Rapport* 379). Her novels repeatedly engage themes of loss, exile, hauntings, and the dissolution of the family.[4] Each one seeks new ways to articulate not only the absence that accompanies such loss, but also the ways in which this absence determines the individual's connection to physical and emotional spaces, and to silence and voice. Moreover, as I hope to suggest here, Darrieussecq seeks to explore in her work the extent to which literature can represent the inexpressible precisely by representing it *as inexpressible*.

This essay will focus on the relationship between sound and the physical and emotional spaces of mourning in *Tom est mort* (2007).[5] The first-person narrative is presented in the form of an intimate journal and recounts a woman's grief after the accidental death of her four-and-a-half-year-old son ten years earlier. The narrator is a French woman living in the Blue Mountains with her English husband and two remaining children. Her son Tom died from impact after falling from the second-story window of the family's apartment in Sydney just two weeks after their arrival in Australia. She begins writing the journal two days after her first brief experience of peace, her first momentary freedom from the knowledge that her son is dead. But if, as she notes, the narrator's goal is to record it all (86)—"l'histoire de Tom, l'histoire de la mort de Tom" (27–28)—her narrative actually circles the unstated trauma at its center,[6] refusing to name the cause of Tom's death until the novel's final lines and instead tracing the soundscape of the narrator's own experience of loss: her scream, her father's scream, her period of mutism, the tone of her husband's voice as he tells his parents over the telephone that their grandson is dead, the voices that whisper on the line as she tells her own mother, the daily recordings she makes of her apartment in an effort to capture Tom's spectral calls. These echoes emanate in concentric circles which draw both the narrator and the reader in to the center, the originary moment, which is the death of Tom and which is itself presented in acoustic terms: "il faudrait commencer par le commencement, c'est-à-dire le jour où Tom est mort. . . . Où est le début? J'entends un bruit inhabituel" (18–19).

The narrative, which emerges from this void where the son should be, assumes a circular structure and reconstructs the event and its aftermath in a temporally disjointed text that shifts from the present moment of writing to the moments immediately following Tom's death to the recent past to the days, weeks, and years preceding the accident. It moves among multiple geographic spaces—France, Canada, Australia, the UK—and emotional

spaces—rage, depression, guilt, alienation. What is perhaps most striking, however, is that the narrator repeatedly figures mourning and memory as auditory sensations and thus encourages us to ask how a turn to the aural within literary studies might help us imagine the unimaginable horror of mourning one's child. The cacophony of sounds to which the novel gives voice, even those implied by the period of mutism, serves a specific purpose. According to Darrieussecq, the narrative gives "une existence à ce qui est passé sous silence? . . . ce qui insiste, c'est le silence. C'est toute la matière de mon travail. J'écris parce qu'on n'a pas parlé."[7] In a certain sense then, given the autobiographical resonance of the theme, the novel approximates the work and form of a cure: "ça se déroule, ça se renroule, ça fait des spirales."[8] Darrieussecq is not evoking the loss of her own child, but the death of her brother before she was born, a subject that was not spoken of during her childhood. The author, who is herself a trained psychoanalyst, has alluded to the simultaneous possibility and impossibility of the literary work as cure, noting that all of her books in some way endeavor to peel back [*déplier*] the layers of the inherited trauma.[9]

But there is no center, no end to the spiraling and unspiraling. The novel's last lines, which finally explain Tom's death and thus the unusual sound with which the novel begins, circle us right back to the beginning. And indeed, the reader is tempted to start again, this time looking, together with the narrator, for all the signs she hadn't intercepted before Tom's death (*Tom* 51, 105). And though, as critics have noted, many of Darrieussecq's narrative innovations are linked to her attempts to render the physical sensation of mental and emotional states,[10] in this novel she pushes her reader to "entend[re] l'abîme" behind each word and at the heart of the novel itself. Darrieussecq's acoustic rendering of mourning in the literary text opens a space, harrowing and appealing, in which she returns to Jacques Lacan's lesson on language as lack. In his structuralist and poststructuralist rewritings of linguistics and Freudian psychoanalysis, Lacan theorizes the individual in relation to both society and language, claiming that when we enter into language (the Symbolic), we are split between our conscious and unconscious lives, and banished from the imaginary fullness that precedes this process. In one of his attempts to illustrate such loss, Lacan returns to Descartes in order to undo the cogito, reframing self-identity as self-estrangement. As such, "Je pense donc je suis" becomes "Je pense où je ne suis pas, donc je suis où je ne pense pas" (517). The desired object, meaning, or person—be this person one's self or another—can never be given in "the potentially endless movement" of Lacan's signifying chain (Eagleton 145). This metonymic

movement from signifier to signifier is that of human language, which functions according to deficiency. In language, we use signs to designate the real objects that are not present and words that signify only to the extent that they exclude other words. Darrieussecq's novel, rather than propose an imaginary repossession of the beloved son or the narrative of his death, examines the language used in its telling as an empty metaphor that stands in for the missing object and that acquires meaning only through its constant movement of difference and absence. Indeed, both Tom and "Tom," that is, the word used to name him, are repeatedly swallowed up in the gap between signifier and signified.

In attempting to record the period of mourning that followed her son's death, the narrator often questions the capacity of language to express both the concrete existence of Tom and the horror of his passing:

> Peut-être y a-t-il des unités de mémoire comme il y a des unités du langage. Peut-être le souvenir peut-il se diviser en fragments de plus en plus petits, jusqu'à trouver les noyaux, les atomes. La mémoire n'est pas un grand récit. Les mots y sont des souvenirs de mots, des souvenirs de phrases dites. Les images et les sensations n'y existent qu'à travers nous. Mettre des mots là-dessus, c'est comme essayer de raconter un rêve, et Tom est dans ce bazar-là. Il n'est plus que là-dedans. (16)

She can name Tom, she can attempt to tell his story, but these words no longer correspond to a material referent in the world, because that referent is missing. The memory of her son exists in a jumble, and as such, the words she calls forward to designate him are immediately alienated from their descriptive function: "Toucher ses cheveux si soyeux. Le toucher, l'emporter—*soyeux*, qu'est-ce que ça veut dire?" (27). And later: "Qu'est-ce que c'est, Tom?" (98). The same is true of her own suffering, which she likens to the shock experienced by the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Just as the latter resisted the words "disappearance" and "destruction," which were inappropriate when even the traces of the missing sites were themselves obliterated, the narrator insists that the word "mourning" cannot possibly name what she has experienced. She cannot accept a word already found in the dictionary, a word so banal and so incapable of registering the assault on the cosmic order that her son's premature death represents. She is searching for a word of her own, a new vocabulary in which she might take refuge (66). Throughout her narrative, the narrator seeks to render the images and sensations that simultaneously penetrate and surround her, and that threaten to escape her words, returning to her memory not as a readily

intelligible material that can be examined, dissected and divided into units of significance, but instead, as a kind of opaque material, the interior of which is hidden from her. In her narrative, she taps this memory as if it were a physical object not unlike those Don Ihde studies in his discussion of the "Shapes of Sounds," listening for the echoes and reverberations it produces and attempting to render those echoes in written form. As Ihde notes, "*it is to the invisible that listening may attend*" (14).

As she will throughout her journal, the narrator conveys the rage of her grief by emphasizing the failure of language. The first sound that follows the unusual noise with which the narrator begins is the scream, the scream that surges forth from her throat, the scream to which her own body gives physical shape, the scream she inhabits as one would a prison or asylum. The word is repeated thirteen times in two pages, and with each repetition, the scream assumes a new dimension and becomes further detached from the being producing it. With the scream, the narrator offers a spatial representation of mourning at the intersection of her physical and psychological responses: the scream is a red cube in which she is trapped, a room where the scream replaces thought and then the thinking self. It marks the mother's psychic rupture, her becoming two: one woman sits in a white room, solemnly accepting her son's death, while the other is consumed by the scream, enveloped by the red, viscous horror of the knowledge it contains. The scream is not hers alone, however. We later learn that her father, too, is overcome by the news of his grandson's death, and is lost in his own scream. He is hospitalized because he cannot stop screaming, just as the narrator will soon be hospitalized for her inability to utter a sound. The father, she says, is screaming for both of them, and his scream "creusait un trou où Tom avait été, à cet emplacement béant, qu'il fallait maintenir béant" (*Tom* 120).

The next paragraph, which is located roughly at the center of the narrative, recounts the theft of Edward Munch's *The Scream* (1895) from the National Gallery in Oslo. Munch's painting, the narrator tells us, has disappeared into "les ondes concentriques autour du cri de mon père qui avaient englouti le tableau, avalé dans sa gueule" (120). The painting, like the narrator's journal, is a visual representation of emotional anguish and of sound, and like the narrative, the curved lines that dominate its composition emanate from the gaping hole at its center. *The Scream* is often understood as a representation of an existential crisis, the moment of trembling vertigo in which the individual recognizes his profound solitude. Munch's figure is not alone in the painting. Just as the narrator of Darrieussecq's novel is surrounded by her family, the screaming man is accompanied by two friends.

And yet, both are isolated from these others, seemingly unaware of or unaffected by their proximity.

But if some read the image as one of desolate solitude, others have identified it as a representation of the angst of creation, the necessary moment of panic that precedes and inspires the creative process. As Sue Prideaux has noted, many have associated the painting with Arthur Schopenhauer's roughly coterminous challenge to the expressive capacities of the visual arts, and in particular his call "for pictorial art to reproduce a scream" (151).[11] Darrieussecq's inclusion of the painting in a novel concerned primarily with documenting the internal thoughts and emotions of its narrator is evocative, not only for the potency of its psychological portrait, but also for the parallels we might draw between the two creative acts. In other words, the painting allows us to pause briefly at the mid-point of the narrative and reflect on the expressive capacities of the written word to represent the scream of mourning. In fact, the novel appears to be playing with two orders of signification. In the first, we have the scream, which represents mourning, but which does not signify because it is not a word. In the scream, language degenerates into a brute sound that is not meaningless, but that also serves no representative function. The scream occupies a vocal space or a sound shape beyond that of communicative language and seems to exist in and for its force alone. As Daniel Heller-Roazen has noted in his discussion of exclamations, animal sounds, and noise, "it is here that one language, gesturing beyond itself in a speech that is none, opens itself onto the nonlanguage that precedes it and that follows it" (18). In the second order, however, we have the word "scream," which is repeated throughout the novel, and which represents the sounds that cannot themselves signify. What is especially interesting about Darrieussecq's playfulness here, particularly given the author's indebtedness to James Joyce, is that it makes relatively little use of onomatopoeia to make the point, relying instead almost exclusively on descriptive language. In attempting to write the scream, and thus in confronting and gesturing beyond the limits of her language and her medium, the author seeks to open the work of literature onto multiple sensory experiences and imaginative realms. In so doing, she also encourages her reader to "read with her ears,"[12] and thus listen for the different registers of meaning that may be hiding beyond the written word.

The scream—the one the narrator shared with her father—acts as both anchor and portal, tying the woman to Sydney, the place of death, and transporting her via the sound waves it generates to her hometown in France, where her father is hospitalized, and to the Ekeberg fjord in East Oslo. It also

opens onto the plane beneath or beyond the material world, the space into which both the painting and her son have disappeared:

> Les cercles dans l'air marquaient le point où Tom était à nouveau englouti. Je me postais au centre pendant quelques secondes, et ils pulsaient. Je les voyais, les cercles, à les toucher. Tom avait été là. . . . Tom avait été là, sa voix avait creusé un bref point de silence dans le bruit et le néant de la vie à Bondi. (137)

Finally, the scream opens onto and is engulfed by the narrator's inevitable silence, which follows the realization that the earth bears no tangible trace of Tom's existence, no scar to match the one from her Cesarean section. And in the narrator's turn to silence, language is reduced to nothing. Her refusal to speak is at first a form of defiance, a refusal to acknowledge that Tom has left no trace, that she will never again hear his voice. Then it is beyond her volition, a paralysis that has taken control of her vocal cords, which can only vibrate without making a sound. At the moment when her youngest is acquiring language—English, the language of the narrator's husband, the language of Tom's death—the narrator herself is losing her ability to communicate.

After her brief hospitalization, the narrator begins weaving the sounds pulled forth from her memory with reflections on the memories of sounds, sounds that existed once but that have now disappeared. The first sounds are those of her own voice, the absence of which seems to have direct bearing on the narrator's ability to give a coherent temporal progression to her story. Shortly after her return home, the narrator is visited by a police officer, who seeks to close the case on Tom's death and asks the grieving woman simply to recount what happened. Wanting to cooperate with the officer and clarify the timeline surrounding the accident and the subsequent events, the narrator tries to speak:

> J'ai dit, ou j'ai voulu dire: *after*. C'était après la mort de Tom. J'ai voulu le dire en anglais, *after*, dans la langue australienne du flic. . . . Je m'efforçais de dire ce *f*, le *f* de *after*, souffler à vide entre mes lèvres, *ffff*, ça n'avait aucun sens. Et rendre audible le *t*, faire exploser un peu d'air entre mes dents. Et le *a,* et le *e*, et le *r*, je voulais bien, lever le barrage, je voulais fixer une temporalité, pour le flic, le moment des faits, l'avant et l'après, l'incinération. . . . impossible. Atrophie. Ankylose. (130)

The word "after" exists clearly in the narrator's auditory imagination, and is repeated multiple times in her internal dialogue. She knows the word,

remembers its acoustic shapes, but in her attempts to articulate it, the unit crumbles, disintegrates on the tip of her stammering tongue. She can only produce isolated phonemes severed from the rest of the unit. Each phoneme is thus reduced to a burst of air, which like Antonin Artaud's *mots-souffle*, transmits the narrator's internal chaos while also pointing to the limits of language.[13] But Darrieussecq is once again playing with two orders of signification. In musical notation, the designation "fff" represents "forte fortissimo," or the loudest relative volume to be attained within a given piece. The much more rare indication of "ffff" would then signal an unusual extreme, an almost impossibly loud sound. This impossibly loud sound is perhaps that of the scream, which as noted above, does not itself signify, and which has now been silenced. It is also interesting to note that had the narrator attempted to speak the same word in French, "après," she would have been stuttering the corresponding "pppp," which indicates the opposite extreme, or an almost inaudible sound. Here Darrieussecq is using the sign of relative loudness to designate her inability to utter a sound that would signify. At the same time, in this passage she is using language to communicate the experience of not being able to use language and is thus underscoring the power of literature to express what raw expressions of experience cannot.

The narrator's inability to speak prevents her from giving her full testimony—in the end, she manages only to scribble a few words on a Post-it note—and the police file remains open until her husband is able to make an official declaration. Further, her inability to produce this word—after—can be said to reflect her own inability to successfully mourn her son's death, and in the process reestablish a temporal progression within her life. And in fact, she's told eight months after the accident that her mourning has become pathological. She notes, "Le temps n'a pas passé, il y a mille ans que Tom est mort et il meurt tous les jours" (150).

But it is not only the memory of her own voice that resurfaces during her period of mutism; the memory of her son's voice also returns to haunt her: "J'entendais *maman* tout le temps . . . Tom m'appelait" (135). In the pages that follow this declaration, the narrator presents a detailed rendering of her domestic *soundscape*, that is, the mingling of noise, silence, and sound that make up her acoustic environment, "la chanson de Victoria Road," as she calls it, "familière et assourdissante, familière et horrible" (135–36): the silence of the apartment, the strange cries of the Australian birds, the regular ding of the buses passing below, the rhythmic sounds of the "walk/don't walk" sign. This urban din becomes Michel Serres's parasite, the noise that

permits the signal of Tom's voice to be momentarily received before it swallows it up again as a pond swallows a skipping stone. The narrator buys five tape recorders and dozens of cassettes in order to capture Tom's spectral calls, hiding one in each room and recording the space during the day—as soon as the rest of the family is gone—and again at night. Soon, she realizes she needs a sixth machine to play back her recordings, which she listens to daily as she continues to tape:

> J'entendais ma propre respiration; ou le bruit de mes pas. Le frigo que j'ouvrais et refermais. Le téléphone parfois, le répondeur, et si c'était ma mère le petit clic quand je décrochais, suivi par mon silence . . . j'écoutais les bandes des jours précédents, cinq enregistrements par jour, un par pièce, et le son qui sortait de ce magnétophone était enregistré à son tour—je ne voulais pas utiliser de casque de peur de rater Tom *en direct*. Les durées se superposaient, le silence se dédoublait, se redoublait, se feuilletait, et j'entendais l'abîme, l'intérieur du temps. Je reculais, je remontais vers une source. (138–39)

With her recordings, the narrator creates her own series of superposed concentric circles in which she is constantly recording herself listening to her recordings. But with each new day of recording she is further removing herself from the present moment, such that on day five of the paranormal experiment, for example, the narrator's emotional energy is still invested in the acoustic events of day one. The result is a sort of temporal tunneling through which the narrator retreats into the past, taking refuge in the layers of her own silence and the white noise of her cassette tapes. At the same time, this looping back leads her to a void, inside or perhaps prior to time, where she is able to hear the echoes and reverberations of the child otherwise invisible to her. And what she discovers in this void is a new language, a "langue lacunaire" (142) again punctuated with the vibration of isolated phonemes, breathed rather than spoken: "une langue faite des répétitions et de chocs, un bégaiement; parfois des sons mouillés; mais aussi de longues séquences modulées, des phrases" (139).

In her study of sound and German modernist narratives, Kata Gellen tells us that the sensory challenge leveled by noise, particularly indeterminate sounds, is what motivates the narrators of Kafka, Musil, and Rilke to imagine and explain, in short, to narrate. It is, in fact, the inexplicable nature of the noises she locates in these German narratives—their status somewhere between sense and senselessness—that enables narration. Darrieussecq's novel offers a sensory challenge of a different sort. The narrator

is not perplexed by the unknown origin of the sounds she hears. On the contrary, both the meaning and the origin of the sounds are perfectly clear to her: she identifies the 'm-m' of mama. She hears the letters 'v,' 'c,' and 'z' repeated, which she immediately understands to mean that Tom was left behind in Vancouver, where the family lived before relocating to Sydney, perhaps, she notes, in British Columbia's *Zone of Silence*. Indeed, in Darrieussecq's novel, it seems that the sensory challenge leveled by the spectral calls is aimed at the reader, who recognizes that rather than invite interpretation, the sounds captured in the narrator's recordings raise the very question of interpretation. For it is the reader, and not the narrator, who recognizes the paradoxical status of these sounds between sense and senselessness, but also between materiality and immateriality. The reader understands that what the narrator hears are disembodied sounds, electronic voice phenomena perhaps, that never assume any materiality beyond their acoustic effects. And yet, for the reader, these sounds are primarily apprehended through the materiality of the written word. Any acoustic effect attributed to a given sound is supplied by the reader interpreting the words, letters, or phrases that give textual shape to that sound. Whereas the narrator discovers a new language and meaning in this moment, and is comforted, the reader is left wondering what other interpretive possibilities exist and how these possibilities have taken shape throughout the novel.

Within the diegesis, the disembodied sounds found in the series of tapings connect the narrator's spaces of mourning—physical, emotional, temporal, pathological—allowing her to occupy these spaces fully. At the same time, at the level of the narration, the presentation of the narrator's grief in predominantly acoustic terms opens the literary work of mourning onto multiple sensory experiences, encouraging the reader to encounter it via different imaginative realms and to question the interpretations offered by such realms. Further, if we consider the metafictional qualities of the novel, that is, the extent to which Darrieussecq's narrative, as Linda Hutcheon has put it, "includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity" (1), we might say that the primary goal of the novel is to explore mourning on a formal level. For if Darrieussecq's narrator is mourning the loss of her son, Tom, the novel itself is exploring its own experience of loss, that of "le mot." Indeed, in its repeated interrogations of the expressive capacity of the written word, and in its meditations on the relationship between signifier and signified, difference and absence, the text reveals a certain metaliterary narcissism, gazing back at itself, as if in a mirror. "T-o-m" is the mirror image of "m-o-t." The missing object and

the sign that would designate it thus reflect one another as do earth and sky at the point of the horizon. And at the center of both is the gaping hole, the "O" that threatens to drown the narrator midway through the narrative,[14] the space which, to cite Darrieussecq again, is "ouvert, angoissant et désirable, au bout duquel il n'y a rien, sinon un objet qui manquera toujours et dont l'absence même permet d'écrire." And if we are to return to the dirge with which this essay began, it may be that the future of French literature is itself the missing object that this novel simultaneously mourns and works to "découvrir, faire entendre, faire voir" (Lambeth 809). Like others in her generation, Marie Darrieussecq writes works of fiction that represent the crisis of fictional representation, works that willingly step into the abyss in an effort to reaffirm the representative power of literature.

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Notes

1. These lamentations, which it should be noted are countered by other, more optimistic voices, include Jean-Marie Domenach, *Le Crépuscule de la culture française?*; Pierre Jourde, *La Littérature sans estomac*; Richard Millet, *Le Dernier Écrivain*; and Tzvetan Todorov, *La Littérature en péril*.

2. See Simon Kemp's cogent summary of experimentalism and post-experimentalism in *French Fiction into the Twenty-first Century: The Return to the Story* (1–18).

3. Along with Darrieussecq, Laurens, Lê, and NDiaye are among the most innovative, prolific, and successful authors in France today, and close study of their respective projects reveals a shared interest in autofiction, metafiction, mourning and loss, and passage and transformation. Of course, the formal and/or thematic parallels that might be said to link these authors have also given rise to conflict among them, and my reference to Laurens and NDiaye in particular is not an innocent one. After the publication of Darrieussecq's *Naissance de fantômes* in 1998, NDiaye accused her of drawing the novel's atmosphere and some of its plot points from Ndiaye's own *Un temps de saison* (1994) and *La Sorcière* (1996). Laurens, for her part, denounced Darrieussecq's "plagiat psychique" in 2007, claiming that in writing *Tom est mort* the latter had despicably usurped her identity as a mourning mother.

4. For Jordan, Darrieussecq "has in essence one story to tell. The disappearance of loved ones, solitude and mourning, ghosts and hauntings, broken families and family secrets are the raw materials to which she returns with therapeutic determination, working them up then unraveling them to reintegrate them into new and formally more ambitious patterns" (53).

5. The narrator's diary offers a record of her response to the loss of her child, and in the first instance, presents an account of mourning as outlined in Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia." In other words, it documents the narrator's opposition to a world that does

not recall Tom's existence and to the accompanying demand to withdraw her attachment to her son as loved object and turn that libidinal energy elsewhere: "Je ne voulais pas de bébé, je voulais Tom" (*Tom* 197). But as the narrative progresses, it also becomes clear that her mourning borders on the pathological and is thus also captured to some degree by Freud's discussions of melancholia, behaving like "an open wound, drawing into itself cathectic energies . . . from all directions, and emptying the ego until it is totally impoverished" (253).

6. Jordan identifies this same sort of circling around an unnamed trauma in each of Darrieussecq's novels (54).

7. See her discussion of trauma and representation: http://www.journeesecf.fr/portfolio/les-7-minutes-de-marie-darrieussecq/. Last accessed: 23 January 2014.

8. Ibid. She continues: "C'est le mouvement de la cure, quoi."

9. Ibid.

10. See, for example, Jordan, "'Un grand coup de pied dans le château de cubes': Formal Experimentation in Marie Darrieussecq's 'Bref séjour chez les vivants,'" and Kemp, "Marie Darrieussecq and the Voice of the Mind," in *French Fiction into the the Twenty-first Century: The Return to the Story* (77–95).

11. Prideaux also notes that Munch rejected this reading, claiming that he only discovered Schopenhauer after he had completed the painting.

12. This is a modification of Adorno's phrase, "mit den Ohren denken," "thinking with our ears." See Feiereisen and Hill (6).

13. See Gilles Deleuze's discussion of Artaud's "deviant syntax" in "He Stuttered," *Essays: Critical and Clinical* (112).

14. The narrator's husband is reading and commenting on the journal as the narrator is writing it, noting in a few places the narrator's obsession with words, and more importantly perhaps, pointing out instances in which she has left something out. One such omission concerns the family's trip to Tasmania eight months after Tom's accident: the narrator had neglected to mention that she almost drowned after letting herself be pulled too far out to sea (161–63).

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