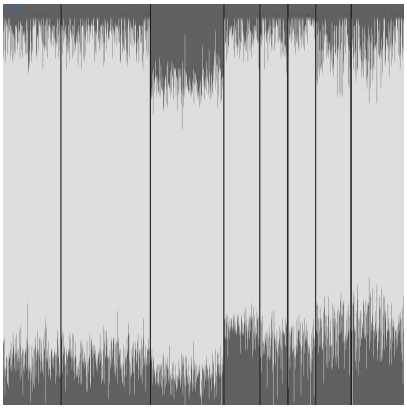


Pause for effect

Description

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I have been blogging about text-to-speech and voice cloning apps. Iâ??ve also been turning compilations of my posts into audio files using Speechify suitable for podcasting. (See previous posts.) It seems the TTS (text-to-speech) tools I am using do not accommodate TTS HTML or other reliable means of introducing intonations and pauses into the readings. Iâ??m particularly exercised by the lack of a decent pause between my posts in the audio of such compilations. The synthetic voice just reads through the text ignoring section or chapter breaks.

Leaving aside the technical challenges, I feel the readerâ??s experience is diminished by this lack of pauses. Pauses are important. As â??silencesâ?• within written and recited texts they are â??not nothing.â?• See earlier post Silent night.

The idea of the pause is useful in the context of architecture as it relates to spatiality. It is the gap or void, defined by what is around it (i.e. physical and social boundaries). Moving in and out of the pause implicates various threshold conditions. The pause is also a moment of respite, relief from the incessant â??chatterâ?• of people and objects. See posts about attention fatigue and restoration theory.

Iâ??ve investigated the seminal book on the history of punctuation, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* by M. B. Parkes (Routledge 1992). The author reinforces the idea that the pause is a *deliberate* and *crafted* element of written communication, not an afterthought. It is not simply absence or empty space, but a *designed* element, mediated by a system of signs, that shapes the readerâ??s (or listenerâ??s) experience. (Iâ??m indebted to ChatGPT 5.0 for this summary in relation to my topic.)

According to the AI, â??The pause is not just an empty gap: it is the moment when one soundscape (or one architectural space) yields to another. In urban terms, itâ??s stepping from a noisy street into a quiet cloister, or pausing in a colonnade before entering a building.â?•

With the importance of the pause in mind, Iâ??ve introduced spaces in a compilation of 8 posts published January and February of 2012. Currently, it seems the best way to introduce a pause between sections is to create separate voice audio files and import them into an audio editing app.

I used Garageband. In this case I also deployed different synthetic voices, excluding my own. I resisted the temptation to include other sounds into the pauses. The collection runs for 1 hour and 10 minutes. Comments are welcome.

Category

1. Architecture
2. Podcast

Tags

1. sound
2. threshold
3. voice

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