

# My Somerset Life

## A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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# A talk on silence and my reaction to it



Sarah Anderson

Today **A scientific and Medical Network** monthly book talk took place with David Lorimer and Sarah Anderson author of the book '**The Lost Art of Silence – reconnecting to the power and beauty of quiet**'

This was just the inspiration I needed for today's diary theme. As you may have noticed, there have been no entries for the past three days, when I have been re-adjusting from being in London back to Somerset. My diary entries of my visit consumed quite a lot of my time and I have other things to do like preparing for my 80th birthday party in a couple of weeks.

Our duties included clearing out our garden pond which had the result of four or five years of sludge in the bottom. This apparently affects oxygenation and is better off in reaching the soil of our garden and probably more likely our allotment. The three fish are swimming around enthusiastically as they enjoy their fresh clear water.

# Silence

Anyway, back to the topic of Silence. The speaker, who owned the bookshop which was featured in the film Notting Hill with Hugh Grant, spoke about the lost art of silence and commented that in the case of musical performances, the silence between the notes was just as important as the notes themselves.

She reflected that after a performance of Bruchner's seventh Symphony there was a pause of about 30 seconds before applause started. The speaker spent some time in the Arctic on a sea cruise. She was taken with others on a dinghy and at some point in the journey the motor was turned off and they were aware of complete silence where upon it started snowing.

I jumped in when David asked for comments and questions and said that Sarah should be congratulated on her use of English which is not something I often hear. A language should be musical and poetic as indeed it was in her case and there were no meaningless interjections such as the word 'like' which every teenager feels obliged to use in describing a particular event.

I recalled the time when I was in Finland in the winter and in the dark. There was no sound, no birds, no human beings, no machines, and we were deep in snow. A profound a new world opened up to me and I was aware of a whole range of sensations that in my normal state I was not perceiving..

With regard to musical performances I said that I dreaded going to live concerts because of mobile phones that might go off never mind when one actually rung, the fact that the audience do not listen respectfully to the music, the fact that for example at the promenade concerts in the Royal Albert Hall ignorant visitors clap between each movement.

I recall that the tenor Ian Bostridge stopped a concert because people were being invited by the management to clap

and film as they so chose.

I recall that instead of a respectful silence at the end of a work, there is now somewhat of a competition as who could clap first; I cited the Rite of Spring by Stravinsky as a culprit. As you will know from my previous writings a few days ago the noise level at the Indian restaurant was so great that I could not think never mind listen to other people

We also discussed listening and I said that listening was a sacrament and a holy thing and enabled other people to explore sides of themselves that they did not dream existed. I have said before that if I lost all my skills the last one that I would let go would be the art of listening which requires a sacrifice of the ego, great respect for the processes that may be going on in others irrespective of the coherence, and gently teasing out from people what the truth or their truth might seem.

David Lorimer recalled writing in one of his journals that an individual based in the Gulag in Russia had everything taken away from him and remark that he saw this as total Freedom, Nelson Mandela was probably someone who used a prison as his monastery and he worked on himself so when that he came out he was the person he became.

Sarah the speaker reflected that she was very against silencing of freedom to choose and that in the last 18 months, over 1600 different titles had been taken off the shelves in 32 States in American schools and libraries including classics like To Kill a Mockingbird was removed which until recently has been on every school syllabus.

On my own I find it very difficult to be silent for a longer time though I think if I went to a quiet weekend at a monastery for example when other people were being quiet and not saying anything, I would be happy to join in with them.

The word Silence is used in various contexts.

# Silence in court is a matter of discipline where an absence of distraction is required in order that business can take place.

# There can be a tense silence between two people when communication has broken down.# There can be silence when someone has said something so profound that everyone is stunned.

# Silence can also happen when there is nothing to say for example when someone has been shot or taken with a heart attack. 'There are no words to express etc'

# silence can occur when a happy couple are sitting on a bench watching the sun set. Words are not necessary.

I don't see silence as a negative thing, I see it as a point of focus outside the physical world where we can bring our mind and our spirit into harmony which means tuning out of noise.

*There is a huge silence inside each of us that beckons us into itself, and the recovery of our own silence can begin to teach us the language of heaven.*

and

*The very best and noblest attainment in this life is to be silent and let God work and speak within. Therefore it is said: 'In the midst of silence the secret word was spoken to me'.*

Meister Eckhart

—VIDEO LIBRARY—

Wonderful new site, Climate Etc. run by JudithCurry.com

featuring for example ' **How we know that the sun changes climate**'

How Our Consciousness is Used to Create Reality- **Loosh Explained** – The Alchemist

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