



Source: Ian Black, 'A country in crisis as fearful government cracks down on Islamist opposition', *Guardian Unlimited*, 19/07/07.

Tags: [diplomacy](#)

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One: inflection

Two: deflection

One: inflection

Two: deflection

One: in...flection

Two: You added a pause. De...flection?

One: Let's stop breathing for a second.

Two: Okay, do you mean 'hold our breath' or just not mark it with 'in...' and 'de...' ?

One: Inde. Independent.

Two: Oh, I thought they were diversions from 'infection —deflection'.

One: They can be.

Two: I've often feared that my breathing was defective, somewhat derailed from the normal path where the in and out are in harmony.

One: I doubt that they are supposed to be harmonious acts. Each is there to accomplish its own task.

Two: Most would say that the two are inextricable.

One: Perhaps as much as One is linked to Two, and Two to One.

Two: I can add.

One: inflection

Two: deflection

One: inflection

Two: deflection

One: in...flection

Two: de...de...deflection

One and Two continued breathing with those words. Pausing here and there to converse, to argue some would say. Agreement far from view, they simmered. Yet they walked together, aimlessly in the same direction. A directionless aim, the other would say. Each breath synched with a single step, their walk akin to the stilted ceremonious rhythm of pallbearers. They had traversed war zones and shopping malls alike with the peculiar pace. Steady but with a hint of a teeter, as if each step suggested a heretofore imperceptible edge on the ground. Each step deflecting the ground and its presumed firmness to reveal a simmering surface precipitously unsure of its hold on gravity. The edge lasted as long as one wished to linger giddy in the vertiginous moment.

One: i...in...in...inflection

Two: deflection

One: inflection

Two: deflectionnnn

One: inflect...ion

Two: dedeflection

One: You can't help the stutter, can you?

Two: And you can't help but to improvise.

One: So?

Two: Ya, so?

One: Standoff.

Two: Standup and shut up.

One: That went well.

Two: At least brevity was on call.

...

One: inf flection

Two: deflection

One: inflection

Two: deflection

One: inflectttttion

Two: ddd...deflection

...

One and Two continued breathing those words. Pausing now and then to chat, to quarrel some would say. Once One-two, now clearly needing an 'and' inbetween them. The inbetween had created the dialogue, prior to that there had been no need. Only doubt hindered decisions once in a while. The inverse pair, Two-one, had been proposed to mitigate mounting resentment, but no compromise was possible. 'A series of events begins with One' One declared. And when Two answered, that was it, 'and' officially inserted itself in the pair. There for good. Sometimes hidden in the form of a comma or just a space, but always there. 'And' adds up, it is a plural engine, the ands, they separate as they add, to count is their act. 'Conjunction my ass!' Two clamored, 'you are no part of, but apart, and away, as far as possible.' Hinges tend to squeak. AS FAR AS could be the banner synopsis of their relation, formerly a sole, now two poles.

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One: infe...infect...inflect...ion

Two: deflllllllllllllection

One: in...out...out...in...inflection

Two: deflectionooooooooon

One: inflection

Two: deflection

...

One: Breathing bores me.

Two: I'm sure the air is bored by your lungs too.

One: Alveoli.

Two: Smartass, I have some extra carbon dioxide for you, here,...take it!

One: I am deserted by the desert.

Two: I am a deserter ready for dessert.

One: Your wordplay is as far from clever as possible.

Two: I win.

...

One: infin fllllectcttion

Two: deeeeeeeeflection

One: inflection

Two: deflection

One: iiiinfflectionnonononon

Two: dded...deflection

...

One and Two continued breathing words. Pausing once or twice to chew the fat, to feud some would say. They stepped on the volcano just as the eclipse triggered the tsunami. All was well, the disaster written.

One and Two continued. A breath. A pause.

One and Two continued.

One and Two paused.

One

and

Two.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Christof Migone.*