

DIRTY EAR REPORT #1

sound, multiplicity, and radical listening

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it might be a question of how we understand "the public" ... transmission? ... the democratic? ... the making of a collective voice ... and yet ... what comes against the body as a type of pressure ... undercover ... they wait, pause, to remember - what appears out of nowhere ... the break ... and the gathering ... no, that's not what i said ... volume ... can we construct a form of critical togetherness ... shadows ... listening ... the affective labor so necessary for relating ... into the center ... if the possibility should arise ... - to create the conditions ... and what did you hear? ... something about singularity, autonomy, the independent scene ... how sound can join together the disparate and the displaced ... solidarity? a home? ... and the time, so fragile ... for this ...



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that in this sense the voice in radio becomes text. While they stress the real process, fearing that the text crystallizes a present, they forget the situation of reception, which is never clean. Interestingly, they were in their radio practice quite clear about this issue, enjoying the dirty situation of reception by inviting listeners to talk in other tongues.

The dirt of radio is the dirty situation of the distributed voice – that is never pure. And – to quote John Mowitt from his study on radio – even the voice is not only haunted by a multiplication, not only haunted by its acousmatic character, but especially haunted by a nearly unhearable sound, a certain humming; Adorno calls it “hear-stripe”, something that is there, that whistles in a kind of uncanny way, since it has no human origin at all. This dirty sound is radio. Dirty by nature.

How to draw the consequences for the still often quite clean walls of the white cube? And we have to take into account that the cybernetic means are already trying to clean the everyday from all dirtiness.

OF WHAT IS HEARD AND NOT HEARD / ANJA KANNGIESER

I

it was a room that dwarfed its inhabitants  
its walls a smear on the horizon, its ceiling extending to the stratosphere  
feet on a floor stretching beyond the edges of where the eye could see  
clouds piling up in a corner, damp and mute

thirteen people sat in a circle  
bent heads some small smiles some nervous hands some  
discussion to be had  
activity to be planned and plotted and engaged  
imagined equilibriums  
more or less

voices thrown into the cavernous space  
conquering with assertive vowels and forceful consonants  
electrified waves of opinions  
waves so well formed and interlocking

each voice shrinking the room bringing the concrete into relief  
bringing worn carpet into relief bringing dusty windows into relief  
bringing the rain outside into relief and the sharp smells of age and mould  
each voice illuminating a bright face  
buffered by the vibration of the self making plans, being useful, participating  
until you

silence  
gaps  
pauses  
endings

until you

you said nothing  
you said nothing  
not a thing not even a stutter  
you said nothing

and the room it exploded  
into vertiginous space  
the cold of stratospheric ice  
freezing the clouds in the corner  
the floor a sinkhole  
you made the unknowable

again

II

in the very same land, a land watered by the blood of genocides, people began  
to write to trees  
they wrote of their love for the trees, their adoration for their branches, their  
roots  
the shadows they cast and the vast stillnesses they held

they wrote stories for the eucalypts and elms  
of running fingers over their flesh, their rough edges, peeling back the outside  
those bodies quietly holding onto histories  
histories invisible until heard

they wrote to the trees of human politics  
of uncertainty and parallel struggles separated by oceans and ideas  
events of war  
they wrote of economic collapse

they wrote of their own daily heartbreaks and angers  
as though the trees could heal their human sorrows  
the trees but resonance chambers for their own echoes  
the trees emanating some sense of weight to ground their distress

some counselled the trees  
commiserated with changing drought patterns and heat  
commiserating against displacement and planning  
reassurances over pages and words and screens

in some cases the trees wrote back  
trees designated by strings of numbers and human voices  
bearing messages in human tongues  
bearing thanks for their attention

but the trees did not tell of the red that soaked their soils  
the trees did not tell of their musky sap  
the trees did not tell of the cyclical strippings of beetles of bark of moths  
the trees did not tell of territories carved violently into existence

she said to me if you were a tree i would write you love letters  
that was how i found out

III  
that humanity is implicated in the sixth mass extinction  
the dawning comprehension  
of how many species disappeared, evaporated into the air  
shadows painted onto shrubs and concrete as though they were remainders  
of what?

groups of scientists

for decades at this point, listening to the gradual silencing that cannot be seen  
mapping evaporations onto neon templates  
like some kind of dialogue with dispossession  
but in actuality one sided

the groups of scientists  
standing in clusters with microphones and measurements  
for decades at this point, recording and recording  
almost imperceptible renderings of death  
told in the slightest movements of a limb

over decades these recordings played together  
a litany between timestamps transcribed onto graphs  
a public space between species  
each sound witnessing  
a fleeing, a curling inwards into burrows

silence being only strong when chosen  
when imposed, as an exile  
from patterns of habitation  
refusals transmitted in marks on sand  
or in abandoned dams and shells and seed pods

what is made of the public silence  
when it is in languages unregistered?  
when it is found in traces and spurs  
but not in collective knowledge  
where the silence goes unheard

the groups of scientists  
transducing silence into evidence  
of anthropogenic damage

relaying catastrophe on earthly timescales  
waiting until it nudges at the limits of concern

the fallacies of conversation  
trapped in feedback loops

#### IV

held by masses of human bodies talking, sweating and shifting and generating  
heat onto one another  
breathing the same air  
bodies linked in exhalations, in accidental contact

bodies gathered to proclaim, disclaim, reclaim  
to tell their stories and to make common  
across the boundaries of fabric, skin, stances, teeth  
across the ways in which they arrived there  
across the ways in which they will leave  
and the stakes they hold

the police took away loud-speakers  
from masses of bodies uncomfortable in the heat uncomfortable in proximity  
but anchored in assembly  
linked in inhalations, linked in exhalations

the chains of bodies  
creating chains of sound  
each voice heard a thousand times a thousand times one thousand times  
a connection and disconnection  
repeating a mess of passions  
tone become mass

hitting up against brick and glass sliding over pylons and benches filling crevices and passageways  
strident manifestations  
made collaborative, collaborative in speech

a voice not compelling enough

a voice fallen out  
(in this the fantasy of what is seen)  
a body pushed into a gap  
(melting difference into overheated bodies)  
the space closed again, behind and lost  
to no attention

to no notice

