

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 affec-
tive 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 dispa-
rate 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

