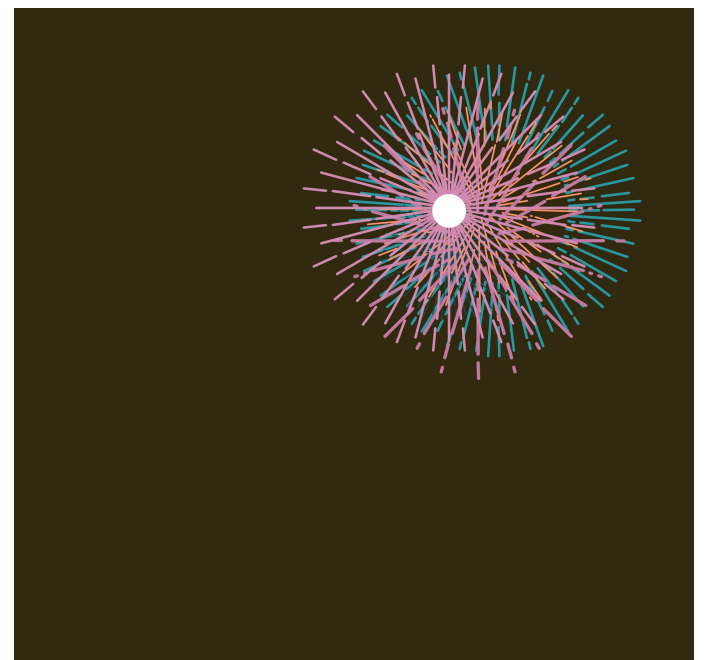
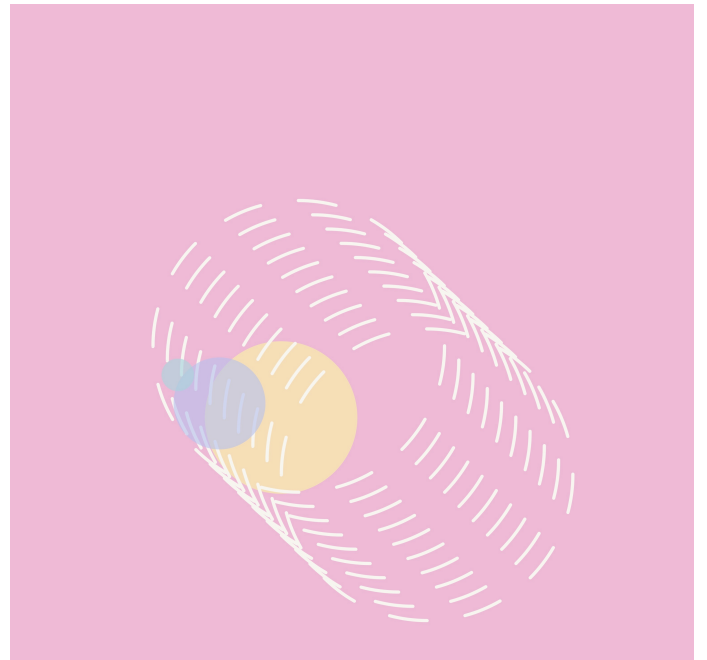


Emergent Ears

A disquisition on thinking through sound

Vonrik Haug

Album Releases (Vonrik Haug)





**“In some far off place
many light years in space
I’ll wait for you
where human feet have never trod
where human eyes have never seen
I’ll build a world of abstract dreams
and wait for you.”¹**

¹ Sun Ra. “Liner Notes: Monorails and Satellites” (1968)

Introduction

“Your ears have had their optical capacity switched on. In a strange way your ear starts to see... all the other senses can go through the ear as well.”²

We listen to histories as our histories are in the process of sounding out and between the sounded and sounding we find a site of self mystification, a residue where the self is accumulated, engineered and multiplied. There was a time when I found it difficult to understand philosophical concepts, up until a point that I could use sound as a means of thinking through and doing philosophy. It was then that philosophy took on a material form and suddenly I could hear philosophy all around me. For seeing is believing, but listening is full of doubt. To doubt one's surroundings and what appears to the body is at the heart of a continental philosophy, one that is immersed in encounter and speculates the unheard. Working with and thinking through sound is doing philosophy, philosophical questions are resolved through the materiality of praxis. When language fails, sound elaborates and merges itself with architectural space and technological arbitration, wrenching apart archaic correlations between subject and object with the contingency of the sonic event. Sonic materialism as it is explored throughout this disquisition is not an objective material but a material that produces subjective objectifications, aggregates of a privatised sound world that incubates objects inside the head and hatches forms of imagination that are often unearthly. Sound nests inside the ear and hatches a place that eyes never saw, a place that can only be imagined through the ear.

This disquisition is ragged, torn and disjointed like the very situations that the sonic materials were conceived within. It has become apparent that the trajectory from which I began this research has taken many deviations and deflections, but the goal has always remained the same; to explore the very morphogenic capacities of sound, to listen, to think and to trace the bubbling proliferations of sonic intensity upon the body. My research initially took the form of a fourfold consisting of spatial audio, electronic instrumentation, improvisation and philosophy and I attempted to find surrogate connections between these areas distinct from any hegemonic methodologies borrowed from the humanities. In turn this gave my practice the emancipation to spawn its own relations, to accelerate and create its own images of thought whilst at the same time exponentially fabricate a range of monikers and fictional selves that could produce without the expectations of the other. I have inhabited unknown crevices and intervals between all four nodes and throughout this research the demarcations between each terrain seemed less defined. I have established a topology of knowledge that hinges on folds, tangles, knots and slopes rather than a geometry of logical deductions. The intermingling of materiality, thought, and language informs the work both structurally and stylistically. If my work in all of its forms cannot lull, seduce, agitate or challenge the reader or listener then it is lifeless and not of any value to myself or the other. If anything this text is a way of bringing words back to the sounds, cataloguing difficulties and slippages in translation from sensation to perception, experience to language and from sense to sound. I use language to combat its own limitations in grasping the sensual and sensuous and at times elliptical and ambiguous statements are left hanging.

“Riveting your ears until you're staring at the sound.”³

My contemplations at times have lacked clarity and displayed contradictory terms, but I have found that this was the only way that I could permit myself to wander in a *dérive* of sonority; to inhabit nomadic ears and attempt to decipher the somatic side of the audible whilst at the same time speculating the peripheries of the un-heard. Phenomenology is problematic to the extent that it relies on intention towards something, in contrast, the sonorous event is affective rather than solely epistemic. Dwelling inside the sonorous does not always rely on a transcendental directionality and the propagation of exteriority and interiority. Becoming with and through sound rather than a linearity towards it, is at the heart of my endeavours. To unpack experience from all directions simultaneously and work through embodied presence towards the vicissitudes of listening to oneself listen; as I emerge from sound simultaneously sound emerges. This text is situated and partial and aims to render affects and sensations textual, whilst simultaneously inhabiting iteration and the transient. It assembles diverse and heterogeneous voices and occupies multiple narrators and material agencies concurrently. Ultimately I probe the depths of representation and signification to the very vibrational forces that occupy the real, where objects spill into the symbolic as congealed forms that are circulated, exchanged, represented and repeated. If anything I strive to tease out the vibrational drift that is populated by affects and intensities that are beyond the symbolic, towards a plane of interactions and contractions devoid of the metaphorical and the signification of

² Eshun. “More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction”. (1998) page 181

³ Eshun, “More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction” (1998) page 148.

absence that language occupies. I want to make it clear that I am not positing a dualism between affect and perception, but rather my intention is to unravel how the sensible is managed and how the virtual (affect/potential/difference) becomes actualised (cognitive/object/diversity) and subsequently effects sonic encounter by either undermining or over-mining sound in-itself.

Method

The method of research instigated had a specific process of 'doing and thinking through doing' and then reflecting on my experiments and experiences with critical rigour in order to multiply different informed perspectives. Finding ways that individual imagination and personal sensibility could find an entry point into the research became consequential at the intersection between academic discourse and creative sensibilities. Clearance is given when academic language is allowed room to manoeuvre and spill over into fiction and poetical writing. It became a method of thinking with ones ears, an investigation that burrowed through sound rather than an investigation about sound. It became a practice of repositioning vector points between overlapping theoretical and practical experiments, that acted as a propelling agency into thought experiments. The ears became a central mode of orientation within discourse, where I could begin to gauge the velocity and gravity of critical reflection as it became audible and noisy. A style of research emerged that was mangled, oddly shaped, narratively dense and energetic in its articulation. Rather than subtracting from this and refining my artistic tangents for a selected viewer, listener or reader I decided to push it towards its extremities. At times it felt nonsensical but non the less continued to afford novel ways of thinking through sound whilst also liberating my articulation so that it became performative and exhilarating. It became an interchange where I funnelled concepts through sound and sounds through concepts in order to extricate epistemologies from their sensorial regimes, affording them space to deviate. Concepts were activated and misused in order to explore sound corporeally through amalgamation, production, transmission and repetition which resulted in alternative mutations from which to engineer a body of artistic research.

'Technology makes the body queer, fragments it, frames it, cuts it and transforms desire.'⁴

This research is essentially an inquiry through sound, sensation and the reconciliation with the self that I have endeavoured to investigate, whilst at the same time proliferating an ontology that hinges on allure and attraction. It is an ontology that is grounded in materiality, accidents and contingency and posits a non-philosophy of decomposition, degrading repetitions and vibratory cycles of erasure. Sound has the capacity to radiate obscure references and produce alternative rhythms of imagination, where sounds begin to seep into words. At times the research methods deployed hinge on being illegitimate but are essential in fuelling the engine that creates sensory epistemologies that deviate from institutional, historical and academic frameworks that often rely on the apparatus of logic, calculation, syllogism and sign operations. I highlight the potentiality of the actual and virtual as it unfolds from materiality, as a plethora of excitations that buffer the real. I elude polemics and instead weave together a dialogical tapestry of conduits that at times sacrifice chronology, theoretical totems and orientation in order to reconcile sonic encounter with sound-in-itself and sound as it is for me. I manoeuvre away from silencing the intensity of the heard with the written word and maintain an artistic sentiment with accelerated thought and loose gatherings of fictions, poetics, observations and speculations that have arisen from sonic encounter. I have come to hypothesise that sound is never in-itself but rather always in the process of outdoing it-self, going beyond it-self, becoming abject to its very own shape of evocation.

Working from and through sound has facilitated a genesis of new life forms that are created from the digitised, meshed and networked connections that somehow radiated new rhythms for the body to step into. Interjections, turns and detours afforded a stylistic freedom that repeatedly hovered between illegitimate and legitimate epistemologies and wandered in the sensory domain towards a nomadic science. This was a manner of working intuitively and contingently where anomaly is straddled through materialities processual manifestations which debased the visceral. This allowed a species of text and a species of sound to coexist and spawn their own trajectories and offspring that resided at the peripheries of the academic whilst at the same time injected divergent models and approaches into artistic research. It is a site where the appropriation of concepts and the mingling of them with sonic events creates a misreading and a redefining of the concept. Thought itself is granulated and porous resulting in a cloud of spores that are multi sensory, multi historic and ultimately heuristic in their nature. Sound is a thought synthesiser, one that connects and disconnects regions of contemplation that previously had not confronted one another. Ultimately experimenting with sound distils a

⁴ Herbrechter. "Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis" (2013) page 98.

form of analysis that does not rely on subject, predicate, object or preposition but rather creates a nomadic analysis that is as mobile and transient as sound itself with its generative neologisms.

“If an artist can disengage himself from the practicable fields to devote himself so exclusively to colours and tones. It is because he finds himself receptive to the imperatives he finds in the colours and tones, that their own ordinance be seen or heard.”⁵

It is pertinent to understand that there is knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance at play throughout the research and I approached concepts as materialities to bend, shape, sample and mutate. Ideas and words are noisy and are as material as stones and houses and I was always cautious about silencing the heard with the written word. It became evident that what remained at the core of my research was the question... From what perspective do I speak and from what perspective do I listen? This led me to explore numerous modes of articulation that inhabited the very fibres between ways of doing and thinking and meander between tension, intention and attention without a need for a stable subjective position. This research resides in having a sense of possibility, where idiosyncrasies and sensibilities of sounds presence linger within a multiplication of sonic personas. Moving between phenomena and introspection towards unclear inclinations has acted as a nervous foundation, a trembling foothold from which to stand and observe with continued uncertainty. Ultimately working through sound and thinking sonically is an emancipation device, it allows one to become both noisy and quiet at the same time, it allows one to resonate beyond ones immediate space of being and cross sonic worlds of sensation at infinite speeds.

Sine 1

I will briefly conceptualise a threefold between the ontological, ontic and metaphysical in relation to sonic encounter and sound in-itself. Ontology analyses sonic entities by means of knowledge based categories. It surveys the diversity of sonic objects and the qualities that they express through the actual phenomena that they unleash. The ontic is a pre-categorical realm, which can be understood as occupying the undifferentiated, this can be further understood as the virtual and vibratory potentials of affect, the very force of difference that surges up into the ontological and creates a diversity of forms. Metaphysics takes into consideration parts of both the ontic and ontological, it is the residue of existence that resides between the object, subject and superject. This residue bridges the ontic and ontological and continues to be a primary focus of my artistic endeavours. Coming to understand sound in-itself is to posit a critical realism, one that takes into consideration the notion that sense data can accurately represent external objects whilst also understanding that sense data can also produce illusions and inaccurately represent external objects. This ultimately creates a double sided position where a mind dependent reality turns in on itself to posit that there is a reality that exists independently of the mind, a dependence on independence. This can be understood as the positing of the unheard and the waiting to be heard, that which resides beyond sensation and perception but non-the-less agitates and disrupts phenomena.

“Life forms, whether organic or artificial, exist in any space where material forces are actively aestheticised, where matter is sculpted and vital agents are managed, organised, affected and otherwise made aesthetically active.”⁶

The musical field is constructed as a field of signs that are in relations of reference to other signs, subjects and objects. The musicological perspective can be understood as a tracing of these signs, subjects and objects and what it is that they historically reference. This tracing gives specific cultural forms their meaning, value and normative gradients. Ontologically I reject essentialism with its fixity and focus primarily on accident and a multiplicity of interpretations, in order to ensure that meaning resists stability. Rather than reject realism through positing experience as that which is mediated by the symbolic field I prefer to locate a domain that resides outside of the symbolic, a site of meaning that is beyond discourse or a pre-discursive reality. This positioning dissolves the fissure between culture, which is widely understood as the domain of meaning and signification and on the other hand the domain of nature as inert matter. This is a method of side stepping the provincial anthropocentric tendencies that galvanises the symbolic and human discourse as a privileged position that excludes nature. Throughout this text there is a signalling towards a neo-Kantian dualism between phenomena and noumena but not in the sense of noumena as a site that excludes intelligibility but

⁵ Lingis. “The Imperatives” (1998) page 107

⁶ Coley and Lockwood. “Cloud Time” (2012) page 42

rather a place in which contingency dwells and accidents spill out and over into a realm that accelerates creative practice.

I make continual assertions that sound in-itself is a material substance that resides external to signification which permits sound to express itself beyond the indexical. In this sense I postulate a post-vernacular body that is not inextricably tied to language, a body that has non-the-less travelled through language but has the capacity to come out at the other end. I position an undiluted freedom of experience that resists indexicality and at times can sound romanticised. Indexicality is broadly concerned with semiotics and linguistics in which a sign/sound points to an object that is at times absent in the immediate context of a sound's production. This indexicality reduces sound to a text which needs deciphering in order to reveal its meaning and value through the historical accumulation of references the sound gathers. This can be further understood as a bundle of representations, connotations and second order meanings a sound assembles over time, as cultural alliances that obscure the sound in itself. Ultimately I outline a somatic epistemology that occupies a state of experience that goes beyond one's own voicing of it. I have explored elements of which I cannot begin to speak about, the parts of experience that escapes words and articulation. It has been a central endeavour to resolve the influence of neo-Kantian dichotomies on cultural theory, in which phenomena and noumena are organised as either linguistic/non-linguistic and cultural/natural. I stress that the limits of discourse are certainly not the limits of meaning and this is why meaningfulness and significance are vehemences that go beyond meaning and signification. I want to carve out a space that allows thought to be somewhat chaotic and find a place outside of the linguistic, a place where the visceral body is in a symbiosis with the intensity of sound.

“Human beings are only one of many species that evolved a sense of territory based on the size of their acoustic arena.”⁷

If we re-think Henri Bergson's concept of multiplicities and absorb them through a sonic filter then sound affords the notion of continuous multiplicities that are immersive and constant, an enveloping of infinite audible streams. Physical objects alternatively are composed of discrete multiplicities that are at a distance from one another and have spatial overlaps in a grid of historical montage. Continuous multiplicities are qualitative, subjective, they meld via fusion, their differences are virtual and they follow a continuous chain of temporal succession and inhabit duration. Whereas discrete multiplicities are quantitative, objective, they meet via juxtaposition, their differences are actual and they are discontinuous. Sound affords a continuous mode of succession, a temporal circulation without end and a beginning that is prior to our beginning with the symbolic, a womb of vibrations before birth. In order to cleave open the neo-Kantian dualism between phenomena and noumena, I will further extrapolate through the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer posited the world as 'representation' and the world as 'will'. If I reassess this dichotomy through a sonic lens then I understand that the 'world as representation' concerns itself with the appearance of sound whilst the world as 'will' is the explosive energy and force of sound in-itself. Working through sound, vibration and installation practices is a means of accessing the propulsion of sonic 'will' indirectly and offers a means to explore the everyday intensities of sound that often go unnoticed. Field recording, electromagnetic sniffers, contact microphones, hydrophones or transducers act as entry points into listening to the animating voices of materiality, a tool being that excavates and teases out the minuscule imperceptibles that reside behind appearance. Listening finds a relation to both the 'representation' of a sound and the 'will' of a sound. The force, action and movement of sound rattles the body and begins to distinguish personal experience from that of the other. Sound art is a mode of harnessing the 'will' of sound and its irrational force to cause agitation, disquiet, uneasiness and despair. Sound unearths its cultural indexicality and historical genre continuum and allows sonic materials to express the 'will' of nature itself, a voice of constant change. This understanding is a way of accessing a mode of listening as a method of composition, a way of understanding that there is no nature/cultural dichotomy. Bruno Latour suggested in his text "We Have Never Been Modern" that it is necessary to move towards a "parliament of things" which is ontologically flat and equally becoming noisy. Ultimately this diminishes anthropocentric chauvinism and allows one to witness the generative production of nature as a site where organic, sentient and inorganic forms coalesce and continually produce difference and meaning.

Creativity does not require conscious agency but rather is a system of ecological relations that are constantly shuffling and re-configuring themselves in infinite fractal patterns. Sonic materialism is a transformative agency, a continuous abundance of oscillation speed differences that are both self-generative and degenerative. Sound can dissolve into the plasma of ontological noise or poke through into the representational realm at any given moment, it is an infinite mode of temporal ornamentation and vibrational intensity that congeals the state of a listening body in a time that instantly

⁷ Blesser and Salter. "Spaces Speak Are You Listening: Experiencing Aural Architecture."(2007) page 27.

passes. If we deploy Deleuze's notion of the "actual" to mean empirical units and the "virtual" to mean the forces and intensities that buffer these empirical units then we can arrive at an understanding of how sound can both propagate representations, appearances and a diversity of forms whilst also occupying the intensive combustion that creates a world of forms. Meaning and difference are located not through language and a system of signs but rather through the differencing of materiality itself, which includes; mechanical, digital, physical, biological and chemical ignitions that are the force of difference. This moves away from representation and pushes materiality to that which presents itself as the force of 'will' as a constant mode of production, an unparalleled difference engine. Following from this sound and vibration can be speculated as something that is both prior and post to the empirical whilst at the same time it produces the phenomena that we experience. Working primarily with recording devices allows one to step into the a-signifying noisy states of reality, the auditory background plasma that is populated with a contingency of hazy, murky and ghostly forms. Cultivated timbres, pitch and interval separation are restored back into the microtonal happenings of the everyday, where the score is dissolved back into the audible mess from which it was sculpted. Recording allows one to bathe in the real, the parts that one missed, the happenstances that went unnoticed, the densities of acoustic spaces that exist in the background of sonic landmarks.

"We are in an outside that carries inner worlds".⁸

It is important to stress that I do not refer to noise as the everyday noises of things in the environment but rather an ontic noise, a larvae from where all sound emanates. I envisage this as a deep vibrational noumena behind sonic appearances and phenomena, a site of ontic quivering smoothness, an undifferentiated soup, a density and pressure where creases arise and pierce through the surface into the symbolic. I can make a simple analogy to white noise which covers the entire range of audible frequencies at equal intensities until it is filtered and subtracted. The body is noise and perception is music, a language, a domesticated sensibility that shapes encounter. What is it that remains in the background of thought, vague, and unarticulated? How do my presumptions and assumptions intervene in my understanding of the sensible and how is it administered by language? What I find pertinent are several slackened correlations; sensation does not always equate to experience, thought does not always belong to language and possibility does not always equate to the thinkable. Central is the unpacking of nomenclature and unearthing that which I take for granted and cannot explain but non-the-less use to explain other things, a univocal epistemology that finds its core in the somatic and visceral.

Sine 2

"Identity is actualised as it is performed, rather than being caused by an inner essence identity is open to disruption".⁹

As we think through and from listening sound opens pathways of resonance and remembrance, it evokes dislocated sites and happenstance, incidents both witnessed and unnoticed. Listening is socially composite, sound spills between neighbouring spaces, a gathering machine that traverses disengaged moments, startling and awakening the lulled. In this sense, listening is not an act or a passive consumption that hinges on an extraction from reality, rather it is a performative engagement. Sound does not belong to anything but itself, it confronts itself through a veil of a devised temporal self (the listening body). As listening is activated and reaches out to orientate the self, sound creates a larval self in the making, one that is impulsive and implied, one that does not subjugate but is rather liminal and hinged on the next event, pure facticity, towards an unadulterated thrownness. Sounds switch channels with other sounds and suggest forms that are not always present, bestowing ghost forms or what I term ambient semblance. The soundscape is composed of redolent themes at the fringes of becoming, a gene pool of audibility where sounds fight it out to be heard; mask one another or support one another. Sound creates a more extensive multiplicity of novel forms than vision ever could because distinct physical objects cannot occupy the same space, they are bound by distance. In contrast, sound collapses both succession and coexistence into instances. Objects and vision give rise to a linearity of thought that sound can unnerve and dislodge.

*"The object as thing is an activity, it is to do; being as the production of possibilities rather than the appearance of totality."*¹⁰

⁸ Sloterdijk. "Bubbles: Microsperology" (2011) page 27.

⁹ Kozel. "Routledge Companions to Research in the Arts". (2012) page 208

¹⁰ Samolé Vogelin (Page12. 2012) (ethics of listening)

To some extent physical objects are rivals that exclude one another whilst sounds clash and participate in one another, they are able to occupy the same space, rather like moods; love, joy, and sadness can occupy the same moment and push against one another without losing their personality and character. It becomes evident that things and objects do not exist as states but as events that create a manifold between the actual and virtual. We can understand the virtual as forces of nature and objects as the actualities that emerge from such forces. In this sense the actual points towards objects and things whereas the virtual posits the buffering and perpetually differing forces that unleash actual forms. The virtual coincides with affect which is not to be confused with emotions but rather intensity prior to the subject. Actuality proliferates representation and signification. For example, a musical instrument can possess extensive properties such as, long and thin, which are actual properties. In addition to actual properties things have intensive capacities to make a sound; to be blown, struck or plucked. Intensive capacities are as real as an instrument's actual properties, but still, they need to be actualised inside an encounter. This can be understood as the virtual by which I mean real but not actual, a space of possibilities where materiality actualises and transforms qualities within an event. Being long and thin is an actuality, but blowing, bowing, striking and plucking are events and events are always double-sided; to make sound and to be heard, to strike something and to be assaulted by the intensity of a sound. Ultimately capacities meet one another; a container can be hit or bowed, but it cannot be plucked or blown, so potentialities rely on a relational exchange and shared affordances activate specific capacities. The virtual exists as a sonic potential, the un-heard and the about to be heard, an object possesses a world of unheard timbres, waiting to be excited and activated and each materiality gives birth to a plurality of evocations.

“Alongside and inside singular human agents there exists a heterogeneous series of actants with partial, over-lapping, and conflicting degrees of power and effectivity. Here causality is more emergent than efficient, more fractal than linear. Instead of an effect obedient to a determinant one finds circuits in which effect and cause alternate positions and redound on each other.”¹¹

The habitus is nothing more than the habit of saying 'I.' This constant iteration of saying 'I' is what gives durability to the citadel of a false interiority. I want to proliferate an absence of the interior/exterior correlation and stress that there is no origami of an outside folding inside. Sound experiences itself immediately, it originates itself at the point of its origin where I begin to originate, visceral, somatic and vibratory.

“On the fragile border (borderline cases) where identities do not exist or only barely so- double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject”¹²

How does a feeling feel or how does a feeling feel itself as it coincides with itself as it comes to be? If anything, I am a collection of tendencies and habits that often need to be interrupted, disrupted and re-organised in order to reveal to myself the very particular nature of becoming and listening. I am listening to things because I do not know something and this is the very search for possibility in the grains of the actual. Sound has the capacity to disrupt, agitate and entrain a body, making it vulnerable towards a constant drowning in noise and un-noise. A body is awakened by affect and subsequently side chained to a feeling, then a perception, then an experience and finally a contemplation. Perception is analogous to the subtractive, reality is sculpted away in order to be communicative to oneself and the other, filtered through language. This raises questions... Does language limit or extend experience? Is perception instantaneous or does it apprehend sensation itself? Sound always seems somewhat more than just a sound. Sound has its own presence of myth, a myth where we take place and can begin to place others.

“The sensitisation of the material will be extreme. Requiring the virtual destruction of the filtering device; It will be intensive potency, potency of the intensities, and will not refer to the unity of the musician-musical body but to surges in tension, to intense singularities. In fact, there is no device to receive these intensities; their singularity consists in their not being related by memory to units of reference in the phenomenological body.”¹³

Listening pushes things inside from an already positioned inside, akin to immanence meeting immanence or the placing of a transcendental inside immanence. A material substrate that buffers its own echo and creates the illusion of a reality at a distance. One can imagine the sonorous as a giant shell in which a body is situated but in actuality the sonority is a

¹¹ Bennett. “Vibrant Matter” (2010) page 32

¹² Harrison and Wood “Art in Theory 1990-1999: An Anthology of Changing Ideas.” (1999) page 1016

¹³ Lyotard, J.F; *Several Silences* page 93 (1972)

plateau that we surge up from. A liquidic landscape from which listening bodies are spewed, emanating from its endless configuration. To listen as a foreigner, for words to lose all semantics and become purely phonetic is an alien phenomenology that does not rely on intention alone but rather relocates the physical and visceral within the perceptual. I emphasise a bodily encounter located at the perimeter of sensation as it strikes upon the flesh, as the first site of encounter that precedes perception and experience. This can be likened to becoming a foreigner in one's own mother tongue or body, to momentarily dislodge perception and to test its thresholds. There is not a pre-existing essence or a transcendental subject that exists somewhere prior to encounter but rather the subject is the expression of each and every encounter. Can listening be alien? The ears cannot stop to tangle themselves in the acoustic plasma that hisses and shrills as it composes a body from noises, one that is unstable, shifting and uneasy. The acoustic density is a tapestry of places, a place that places us at a place that we call us. For some reason by listening within, we think we exist at the centre, whereas, we are always emanating from a sound, we are activated by it, individuated by amplitude and impulses. The self becomes constructed at the moment of its response to a sound. A social setting is like a swarm of hieroglyphs that fizz over the edge of a container, spilling across the surface of a table and eventually it comes to find its own self level. A substance becomes an event when it takes charge of the body, loses its object-hood and begins to merge with space through irritation and irregularity.

I sometimes ask myself, how can I listen any longer and will my listening continue when I cease to exist? May I borrow your ears and listen through you? Can we listen to an image? The image of you in my mind is fading, all that I hear are traces of moments that resonate at different intensities, gradients of the past recorded onto a surface that is forever changing, a slip road. I am nothing more than a voice that uses a shared vocabulary. My tongue is a sampler and in my utterances and murmurs, one can find meaning even if it is doubtful and uncertain. To be with you for that moment as we listened was bliss. If I lose my senses will I still be able to evoke a memory of you or is every relation with my surroundings where you dwell? You inhabit all of my relations, I adored the sound of you even when you were noisy. To be awoken by the sound of the other even if it is too early in the morning is something to behold and cherish.

"This delay between action and cognition- has been biologically demonstrated; an action is set in motion before we have decided to perform it. To be specific, an action is set in motion by the body approximately 0.8 seconds before we have the conscious experience of that acting."¹⁴

Vibration (virtual) can affect the body but not arouse perception (actual); we can become affected without knowing exactly the origin of intensity. It has become apparent that thinking relies on being but being does not necessarily rely on thinking. There are modes of being that act beneath intellect and are closer to physical impulses and urges rather than rational determinations. If I invert Descartes Cognito "I think therefore I am" to something akin to a Lacanian antithesis "I am, where I do not think" then this simple inversion moves me closer to the surface of listening beyond language. To become a post-vernacular body is to become and act through sound rather than thinking about sound. To listen is to already think and I am already listening before I think about listening. Reason is reconciled with remembrance and a sound is never itself, pure sensible or never for us, solely signifying. It is a manifold of continuity that constantly oscillates between the sensible and signified.

Sine 3

Is it possible to hide within a sound? I suppose that in some sense we hide in the making of a sound; emitting a mumble, slur or stutter is to entertain the other; volume camouflages. In sound we find a hollowed heart, an organ that departed the body, from over here, to over there and to somewhere else. Ricochets and rackets are a typography of the intimate. Can I ever be silent? Not in the sense of an absence of sound, but rather in the sense of becoming unnecessary, redundant, abandoned or somewhat ignored. Can you hear someone think? Can one listen to oneself think? Every sound is inherently spatial and tells a story of the location it resounded in, even if it is historical rather than architectural. Resonance on the other hand coincides with remembrance, a familiar sound can quickly become alien when it finds a new material to mediate itself through. To stand amongst a swarm of acoustic properties is to become the skin, beaten by rhythms, some aggressive, some gentle, some symmetrical and others hysterical. We are all membranes waiting to be excited like any other drum, our surfaces are at once anti-modal. Contingency situates me in a self that I can talk to you about, how something felt and how this feeling confronted a language that I typed before you now.

"In its ontological liminality the monster 'polices' the boundaries between the possible and its realisation, especially in techno cultural

society, and it functions as a warning; if 'you', if 'we' transgress this boundary, we ourselves are in danger of becoming monsters! But in fact this warning should read: then we no longer know 'who' or 'what' we are. Monsters thus have cultural geographic and controlling functions and are positioned between known and unknown territory. " ¹⁵

Sound unfolds the teratological, a body that is not quite yet a body. The ear becomes a mouth; it speaks to sound, deciphers it, speaks through it and colours the eardrum, a domesticated lobe that makes temples through its synthesis. A micro-politics of frequency individuates fleshy bodies, voices mark out the silhouettes of the self as we become interpolated into sonority, hailing from across the street, calling your name. Welcome to the ideological apparatus that is saturated in audibility. We are encapsulated into auditory alterity, to be amongst the other is to listen to the other and to be heard by the other. To make a noise is always a political action. Politicians speak for nations, but first, they must listen to nations, which they rarely do. The ears make detours and follow certain sounds, the acoustic attracts and summons listening; teasing out and looming towards non-linguistic imperatives. Language does not always summon, however the hum and glisten of things merging together always does. Materiality is an unparalleled attractor, it calls forth a riposte. Cutting open deeper the aperture of doubt, I am not alone because I can hear things happening. These happenings become a blanket of comfort, dark intersubjective parallels; even though we are all listening at the same time we hear everything differently. To listen to others is to allow all meaning to sing, to make distinctions between the reality that is given and the signification that this given can acquire over time. Experience is offered intensities that are subsequently animated by metaphors that carry beyond the moment and hint towards an alliance of absences or rather a presence of absences. The body becomes a site of translation with a desire to place sound before a self, ultimately letting sound speak for itself as reality and intelligibility coincide. Sound does not need a body to actualise itself, but it does need a body to manifest itself as metaphorical, latent, hinting and insinuating.

Sine 4

Engulfed, enveloped, absorbed and enmeshed towards immersion and habitation...but why? To create a synthesised performance space as rich and diverse as reality itself? Contigere, to touch upon all sides, saturated with signals and sines whilst simultaneously hearing and being touched by sounds presence, towards a phenomenal plenitude, a sadistic barrage of noise. What can the ears handle? Spatial audio has been a central concern in expanding and concluding my artistic works but it has also infected how I listen and approach composition; elevation and azimuth have become a material syntax in which to think spatially about the audible materials that I deploy. Not only are sounds of central importance but also the movement and placing of them in space has allowed me to think and compose in terms of depth, proximity, distance, regions, foreground/background and spatial resolutions. A creative mixture of ambisonic orders forms a sonic scenography of 'things happening' around me at varying resolutions, akin to real-life encounters with the auditory world. An emphasis on spatiality has effected not only multichannel composition but also how I approach stereo recordings; sometimes omitting any spatial movement at all and maintaining a sounds static positioning. Sine waves are held in a mono position where field recordings are pushed to the peripheries, almost inaudible, resulting in a straining towards deciphering, a reaching outwards and towards a familiar situation at the edges of place. A hindsight has continuously arisen when working with multichannel composition and that is, immersion is emotional,

This has not only given voice to the objects that occupy the environment but given voice to the environment itself, purely spatial and dotted with temporal monuments and auditory markers. Working with spatial audio cannot be reduced to loudspeakers and encoders/decoders but posits a re-orientation of the spatial signatures of the every day. Vicinity and proximity are probes in which to orientate oneself and become sensitive to the lyricism of space it-self before it becomes metaphorical and analogous. Using multichannel as a way to re-explore my compositional techniques has allowed a sensitive excavation of my practice, opened an alternative way to experience my sound works, to extend them and open deeper dimensions beyond the stereo image and also inside the stereo image itself. Sound acts as a transitional material that takes thought elsewhere, a teleportation device that relies on evocation or what I term the sonic allure. Sound can either discipline or liberate a body, evoke images other-worldly and can leave one lost for words and feeling like a foreigner in ones own body. Drowning in sines, bathing in frequencies and swimming in amplitude swells are ways that sonority encapsulates a body, towards an ontology of gasping and breathing. Central to the synthesised sound worlds that I inhabit is making the sounds as nuanced and varied as a human voice, putting breath into the hollowed-out machine and making these recorded reproductions as fleeting as the everyday rather than archival mausoleums. For archives are still very much alive.

¹⁵ Herbrechter. "Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis" (2013) page 89

“Archival ecology is awash in a dynamic noise of data, an immanent informational static, an atmosphere rather than a layer, something which gets into the individuals, such as the modulations and intensifications to its rhythm bring about physical and biological changes, a transmission of affect”.¹⁶

In this research, ideas are manifest in relation to things caught up in encounter, mossy and unformatted. Knowledge is caught up between relations and embodied in situations away from any syllogism or deceptive logic and grounded purely in experience as it is for me. Moments of formlessness becoming formed are where a certain stylisation unfolds from the transient, where the ears follow sounds capacity to go elsewhere, the sonic allure has its own language of attraction. It is a pure summoning of the curious and careless. At times I have become merely a spectator to the creative act, setting the difference engine/synthesiser in motion and eagerly awaiting the outcome. Sometimes I am present and sometimes I am not, for it speaks a language that needs no translation, witness or deciphering. Working against the indexical towards referential diversity, where enunciation and transmission seem to find their broadcast without ever having a specific audience in mind. This has prolonged a temporising between sound, self and sense, affording mutants to form within the gene pool of audibility, a species of sound in itself without reference to its source.

“As long as sounds remain properties of other things and ontologically subservient to them, we will never be able to hear them truly. To counteract indexicality's inherent tendency to dominate perception because indexicality obscures and obliterates ontology.”¹⁷

At times it feels as though I occupy the position of an entomologist who reveals disguised species of insects, but in my case, these are living archives of sounds which act as gene pools of audibility from which to create sonic species from improvising with these genes. This finds kinship with Francesco Lopez's notion of sonic creatures, sounds as distinct from their sources; sound as a species in itself. The air is animated not with the sounds of birds, but the sound is a creature distinct from the physical bird, sounds are things just as much as any other things. Rather than sounds being secondary qualities of primary substances, sounds are rather placed on a flat ontology where everything exists in itself without an indexical substrate.

*“Mimesis is simultaneously a loss and a gain, where the represented system (signified) loses its structural integrity in the mimetic transposition, while the representation system (signifier) gains in phantasmic complexity and epistemological ambiguity.”*¹⁸

The forms of life; the soundscapes of urban and rural areas, bird calls, thunder, the sound of rain and the rustling of animals has given rise to a life of forms; intricate granulated patterns, the sharp plucks of karplus strong synthesis provides an analogy of walking footsteps crunching branches and the liquidic random pitch of an oscillator that sounds like a babbling brook. This approach to sound design has brought my working method in proximity to the themes outlined in Allen S. Weiss text; *Varieties of Audio Mimesis; Musical Evocations of Landscape*. It has become evident that technological incursion into the landscape, is a device to unearth the ear, where the ear has been cultivated nature provides infinite gradations of tonality and microtonal modulations. Technology is a means of speeding rates of becoming up or slowing them down, mining beneath the surface of things to reveal differences that often go unnoticed; the microscope, microphone, hydrophone, stethoscope are means of getting a glimpse of the singularities that form perceived diversities, getting to the very heart of things as they unfold differences.

“Auditory attention converts vision into watchfulness”¹⁹

In this sense, I can suggest that putting ones ear to the ground and listening to what is forming and deforming is a way of unveiling the moments of the in-itself that entities possess. It is to probe the concealed and proliferate to some extent the Lacanian real, the undifferentiated abyss of noumena that props things up for phenomenological encounter. This can be comprehended as the shadowed side of the sensible and the very site of formlessness. If I can articulate

¹⁶ Coley and Lockwood “Cloud Time” (2012) page 57

¹⁷Francesco Lopez. (Page 2 Sonic Creatures 2019)

¹⁸ Allen S.Weiss (Page 42. Varieties of Audio Mimesis; Musical Evocations of Landscape. Errant Bodies press)

¹⁹ Ingold. “The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill” (2011) page 277

this further; teasing out the concealed singularities as they form diversities is what art does, zooming in and out, speeding up and slowing down frames and scenes. This can be further understood as the mining of appearances to detect what aggregates formed them with a further visual analogy to the notion of an exploded diagram of an object, a way of hearing and seeing things in order to see their parts. The synthesiser is very much an auditory microscope and a difference engine that urges me to listen in novel ways each time that I encounter it. It reveals discrepancies and unexpected detours that take possibility beyond the thinkable and pushes ideas beyond the vernacular. It is undoubtedly a world with its own *dérive*, a blinking city of LED lights and its dense cabled interface is akin to an underground electrical grid that connects dwellings across the city. It mutters utterances that feel suggestive in forming a post-vernacular communication, rather than borrowing words it forms them real-time. Its sounds are released sporadically, if anything it is a process of material poetry.

"If we continue to translate mimesis by imitation, what must be understood is the contrary of the copy of a preexisting reality, and we must rather speak of creative imitation. And if we translate mimesis by representation, we must not understand by this word a redoubling of presence, as we can still hear in the platonic mimesis, but the cut that opens the space of fiction." ²⁰

Working with modular synthesis as a difference engine propagates a certain objective distance. It is as though I have by chance stumbled across an audible subterranean world that resides underground, a speculative reality towards a rodent ontology. What is it that the rat hears? The rat hears the sounds of things in its tunnels but rarely locates the source, it is constantly surrounded by disembodied sounds. How does everything but myself hear and listen? This creative splitting of the self is the exploding of the anthropocentric into parts, which has allowed me to occupy fictional positions outside of myself. Ian Bogost postulates what it is to inhabit an alien phenomenology, what it is like to be a thing or something not human. Thomas Nagel asks, what is it like to be a bat? This approaches Deleuze's notion of becoming-animal, to feel intensity afresh, a way of thinking in which one attempts to loosen the modalities that have disciplined the senses, away from the cultivated towards the nomadic. Empty the body of its organs or reduce the whole body to the skin alone. The propagation of exteriority, interiority and of the 'over there' is rather reformulated in favour of a plane of immanence from which everything emanates and is connected to. This seems to raise a plethora of issues concerning representation and notions surrounding the real and the copy, which is problematic with regards to recording a reality or the recording understood as a new reality. Alan Weismann in his text *The World Without Us*, speculates what the world would be without humans; cities would decay, towering skyscrapers and concrete jungles would erode, sinking into the swamp of weeds and crawling ivy that eats and swallows fabrication, cockroaches that could survive a nuclear fall-out would perish without heating systems. Weismann theorises the effects of a de-populated earth and speculates how the environment quickly conceals human inhabitation. Buildings would deteriorate and fall apart as winds tear off roofs and leaks rust the nails that hold structural timbers together, walls would sag and foundations corrode. Weismann offers the composer a mode of intensive listening to the subtleties of buildings and environments and attempts to bracket out the body in order to imagine the sounding world without humans. What would the earth sound to an unformatted ear that floats through transforming urban terrains as they become engulfed with foliage and thriving wildlife, where species of birds and other animals proliferate? What would the world sound without human interference? I favour the creation of multiple realities from every different perspectives that is witnessed and expressed; difference produces differences. Listening is not an act or a mode of consumption that subtracts from a pre-existing reality, it is rather an allure that has its own reality, its own species away from the liminality of representation. The air is animated with infinite realities waiting to be heard, waiting to be felt and waiting to engineer a listening body.

"The task is to hear the how, to hear the condition of a singular actuality, in order to learn to listen out for alternative conditions that exist not apart from it, that are not its fictional parallel world, but that are real alternatives that sound a present polyphony, even when they are not listened to or heard." ²¹

I have become increasingly aware of singularities, precise details and tiny differences in materiality and the events that bifurcate change. This is akin to the Leibniz notion of tiny perceptions, the ocean roars as a whole, as a unified voice. However, it is built from an infinite number of tiny sounds from the waves and swells. As a sonic artist, I can attempt to amplify and tease out these tiny perceptions, to make the faint and barely audible more explicit, or make the explicit more ghostly and reduce its presence to an absence, bordering towards the very thresholds of perception itself. It has become pertinent to allow curiosity to overarch any form of virtuosity, specialism or fidelity to historical continuums of

²⁰ Paul Ricoeur. (Page 67. Temps et Récit, vol. 1. Paris, le Seuil, 1983)

²¹ Salomé Voegelin. (Page 19. The Political Possibility of Sound)

thought and practice. Fiction itself is witnessed from the intermingling of entities, as is the very idea of a self, caught up at a confluence between things happening. The repetition of these things happening over time creates an outline of a body that we feel is filled with 'our' experience. This finds affinity with Whitehead's concept of the superject. The subject is that which experiences and the superject is the residue of those experiences, that which leaves traces and impressions. The etchings of encounter lay bare like hieroglyphs in the canals of the ear, a kingdom that resides in the gristle of the earlobe with a succession of gates and pathways that lead to what one has heard and what one wants to hear. It has become apparent that perception is a language like any other spoken semantics. It scaffolds the very moment the body finds itself assaulted by intensity, which is then collapsed into an experience or rather 'my' experience. An experience that is saturated, distorted and often limited by a historical body with its tastes, dispositions and preferences. Moments of intensity are compressed and sensation becomes split into the shadowed side of the un-felt and the parts which perception apprehends, grasps and reduces. It is chained to how a feeling feels, how an affect is categorised and reduced by language to ultimately become discursive towards the stronghold of nomenclature.

"When one is listening, one is on the lookout for a subject, something (itself) that identifies itself by resonating from self to self, in itself and for itself, hence outside itself, at once the same and other than itself, one in the echo of the other, and this echo is like the very sound of its sense." ²²

Moving towards a disciplined looseness, the listener is never allowed to feel comfortable. An ethics of connectivity between, themes, motifs, rhythms, speakers, bodies, machines, times and spaces. Movement and rest are relations of speed, towards a tempo war with its shapes of acceleration. Listening is dividual, a collectivity that cannot be reduced to the individual which results in the existence of a forest of ears, an intersubjective resonance and the webbing of sonority. There are always other beings, entities and things listening with us, alongside us and at times through us. Stretching sounds beyond their extensive properties we can begin to open sounds up into grains and particles. Layering place onto placelessness, the temporal presence of a recorded past. The intrinsic power of audibility is its propensity to body snatch, disconcert the ears and take imagination elsewhere. Listening to and listening with technology allows the improviser to become a spectator to unfolding forms, a witness to the spluttering language of gates, triggers and voltages. Who is it that is playing? Is it playing itself? The incremental accumulation of frequencies turns a system of objects and relations into a force, not forms but rather forces, intensities and densities that possess impulse, momentum and energy. The synthesiser replaces the linguistic imperative in which language produced meaning towards a technological imperative where it is the machines that produce meaning.

*"A geography of sound has no maps; it produces no cartography. It is the geography of encounters, misses, happenstance and events; invisible trajectories and configurations between people and things, unfolding in the dimension of its possibility, and sincerely performing the impossible territories of a poet on the night-time sea."*²³

Broken hardware creates broken dreams and in broken dreams we find ghosts to occupy, to dwell in the transparent skin of error and malfunction. Recorded environments are used to earth the synthetic and create imaginary places and situations which dislocate sites. The use of field recording as scores is an audible landscape in which to create incisions and sculpt around the preexisting. This is understood as grounding sines with signs, embedding signs within sines, exploiting noise rather than producing narrative and structure. It moves towards the surface of a sonic terrain with endlessly malleable parameters. Recorded media is the trace of an event, an etching of sorts that can be replayed, recycled and re-worked. The actual patina or grain of different reproductions are in themselves a surface of affects, of embodied intensities waiting to be re-played and felt. Inhabiting the imperfections of recorded material; the distortions, phases, crackles and hiss creates resonances of bad fidelity, non-places to linger and reside. An entire audible universe resides between the original and the copy, in a liminal space between object and event and its technological incisions. In this sense it is a movement towards the simulacra (meaning bad copy) which breaks from the binary of the original and the copy and produces a difference. It is within this space, between originals and copies that nuance flickers and the punctum of parts reveal themselves, recording becomes a difference engine that propels momentum into the fictional. The texture of the recording apparatus; tape, reel, digital, analogue, moves away from the documentary realism pursuit of the ideal copy towards the singularity of simulacra, where resonance, indirect sound, spillage and background noise are inventive interferences that are included. Rather than accuracy and precision the compositional process moves towards a genealogy of mutations and variations that trace material paths that can be followed but not

²²Jean Luc Nancy. (Page 9. Listening)

²³ Salomé Voegelin. (Page 75. The Political Possibility of Sound)

predicted. In this sense contemplations are proliferated from the concrete operations of reproduction. Rather than a pre-given form imposed upon matter it is rather a reciprocation between the technological apparatus and the material ecology. The technological phylum is the endless productive continuum of materiality that enables self-multiplying lines that breed detour and détournment. Objects individuate themselves as events, towards an entering of the compositional process and tracing modulations real-time. The forest of ears is an aesthetic of moving forward into a sonic atmosphere, built from noises and impulses which create transient architectures from the processes of rhythm, accidents and skewed trajectories.

"Even before materialising or becoming a signal, the sonorous sound-in order to be must leave a trace, like a parasite in order to exist it first needs a host." ²⁴

If we accept that the invention and techniques of sound art and composition allow us to think and listen differently then we must be able to admit that thought itself does not have an inherent nature. The twofold of language is that it can extend experience or it can reduce experience when it positions singularity in a series of generalisations. The sound of a train reduces audibility to that of a train rather than a sound in-itself. I want to inhabit the idea of post-vernacular encounter, a way of doing and working through the materiality of sound without the search for meaning and signification. Thought and contemplation are parasitical modalities that are shaped from an encounter, from the intermingling of entities and events which are bound together by audible allures. A body is a sensory domain that is shaped through what I call frequency scars and amplitude traumas. A historical body formed from a politics of audition, a turning away from noise or rather a turning towards a noise, non-the-less a noise is interference. It has the power to break communication, it is only when it becomes noisy that it can unhinge ideology and become a weapon of sonic warfare. Sound can be understood parasitically if we posit an idealist approach and say that sound actualises itself at the ear and needs an ear to become a sound. On the other hand if we navigate towards a realist perspective we can say that sound exists regardless of whether one hears it or not. If we analyse materiality as that which expresses itself, then we can understand that something is diffused through an environment that will make a difference either to us, the other or anything in its vicinity. Listening follows the agitation of things getting agitated. In this sense, the language of material encounter is central when it is not grounded in an interest of ones own potential to affect others but rather the intensity that is already there waiting to be encountered.

Sine 5

There is always a profuseness of unexpressed possibilities, what might be and what might have been. The language of materiality differs from the language of the spoken/written word and artistic practice as a language of materials uses different amalgamations and bricolage in order to express itself. Working primarily with sound and the language of sound without the artificiality of written language is a language of encounter, an affective syntax of twitches, convulsions and spasms. Is it possible to grasp thought beyond language?

The emotional and physical urges and impulses of an ancestral body are cast into a post-vernacular future and language is no longer the habitual effect of thought or the articulation of memory. Language expresses ones past to the present and generalises a fragmentary past. A post-vernacular body is not entombed in words but rather becomes akin to what it is to become a foreigner in one's own language. Is it possible to use sound as a way to invite and evoke novel imaginary experiences that dislodges language from itself and opens a body to the great outdoors? Sonic experience dissolves the naming of objects towards the un-naming of things. It substitutes grammar and syntax for the equivalence of the parasitical that surges up, ruptures and breaks the surface of the skin and effects the pace and cycle of thought so that it can become vivid and untimely. Sound is immersed in the immediacy of social intercourse. In contrast, recorded sound can lay dormant until activated and listened to at various times and at diverse places. It has an infinite potential to transform the experience of the immediate when it is activated, a catapult, a time bandit. As a composer and listener or rather listening as composition, sustained observation, dwelling and concentrated attention results in an opening to the audible irrelevancies, everything is ontologically flat and everything possesses its own importance. Sound has an inherent publicity of its own expression, it crosses spaces, places, times, rooms and echoes way beyond its material excitation. What is interesting are the inevitable imperfections in translation between the languages of materiality; from sound to body, from meaning to language, from sensation to perception and onwards to experience. It

²⁴ Francois Bonnet. (Page 7. The Order of Sounds. A Sonorous Archipelago)

is these collapsing translations where emergence and potentiality allure thought towards the fissures of the every day, the dead spots of confusion, the grey parts on a map, the bubbling problematics. Sound is a destabiliser.

“Technology is society made durable.”²⁵

The synthesiser is not simply a collection of parts that interact with one another and produce sound but rather it is a mode of thinking, a mode of stretching out vector points that produce possible sonic worlds that can be colonised by the ears. The machine is a being and interfacing with the machine produces the cyborg which projects an atmosphere of unsteady rhythms and elliptical timbres. The geometrical machine produces an asymmetry of space, rather like story telling, it takes place within a situation rather than a material compound. To bridge the fissure between the grain of sound and what it indicates, is to dissolve effort and output and produce abnormal cacophonies of sounds in an instant. The synthesiser renders itself as an unfolding narrative with mutating patterns that mobilise atmospheres and splintered histories. It speaks of futures waiting to be drawn into sounds expressions as their own gravitational pull. Sound speaks of nothing other than itself and I am filled with doubt and suspicion when something represents something that is absent. The machine is always present. The synthesiser propels you forward with the urgent feeling that there is always something else that could be happening, there is always more that is happening and at any moment or movement the soundscape that you are straddling can disintegrate. Technological malfunctions and errors are crucial in the species shaping of styles and artistic approaches; these malfunctions are opportunities that the composer catches onto. "Error is on the side of the angels (or from the perspective of the machine, the side of demons, error as horror).²⁶ Following from 'Cracked Media', "malfunctions and glitches are eruptions of potentiality, 'the crack' is a point of rupture or a place of chance occurrence, where unique events take place that are ripe for exploitation toward new creative possibilities".²⁷ The body connects to machines and technologies to become, to connect to what it is not, to become other in a mutual process of re-production that transforms and maximises itself. The ear connects to headphones or speakers, the finger tips connect to rotary knobs and percussion pads that create perceptions beyond the human and reveals how the body can be transformed by connections to technology and machines. Difference and 'lines of flight' reside in the continual process of connection and dis-connection, wiring oneself into an ecology of malfunctions, errors, disruptions and breaks. The body becomes a composer, producer and engineer when connected to a mixing console, sampler, instrument or computer. The ear connects with sound and becomes a listener, the mouth connects with language and becomes a speaker.

“What recent philosophers referred to as “being in the world” first of all, and in most cases, means being in spheres. If humans are there, it is initially in spaces that have opened for them, because, by inhabiting them humans have given them form, content, extension and relative duration.”²⁸

In, *Bubbles*, Peter Sloterdijk makes a number of interesting analogies to spheres, bubbles and foam. He proposes that humans are immersed in spheres of interconnectivity and the discovery of the self can be likened to the blowing of a bubble and watching your breath depart from the body as you follow its journey amongst other bubbles and see yourself standing at a distance. When these bubbles of otherness collide they create foam, which he terms the poetics of plurality, where art, music and other creative practices can be located. The foaming embellishments of being are the archaeology of the intimate, Sloterdijk creates a theory of the air, what he really unearths is that human beings are always immersed in something extremely active even though it may be imperceptible, it is nonetheless always real and constantly changes our states of being. One has one's own intimate bubble but shares spheres with the collective which has a kind of air conditioning where breath always participates in a shared subtlety of the spheres expansion, which delicately highlights the intimacy between beings and objects and offers an interesting insight into the sounding ecology. The ideas that Sloterdijk proposes resonate with my particular interest in objects and intimate spheres of engagement. He highlights the notion of a shared inside, lives immersed in lives, he states that 'being in' is always togetherness. This notion of mutual interpenetration is where objects and subjects live 'in and for' one another but still retain autonomy. One senses the affects of things in-them-selves but not directly; they animate personal bubbles and collective spheres beyond one's perception and phenomenal experience of them. Sensual objects and qualities are

²⁵ Herbrechter. "Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis" (2013). (Latour 1991-129) page 159

²⁶ Coley and Lockwood. "Cloud Time" (2012) pg 44

²⁷ Kelly. "Cracked Media" (2009) page 4

²⁸ Sloterdijk. "Bubbles: Microspherology" (2011) page 27.

reminiscent of Sloterdijk's notion of pluralities of foam, a frothing and proliferation of the real through an indirect relation of bubbles that collide and burst.

Fiction and literary fantasy allows a way of imagining what it is that we are unable to know. Fiction allows one to entrain odd ideas and create a scenario from a bric-a-brac of materials and dispersed movements. This moves towards a form of writing that is emotional and situational rather than rational and universalising. Sound affords the endowment of the subject with a new sense of place, a detachment, similar to fiction, it allows a detachment from a certain professional milieu of academic discourse and allows thought to mashup genres and disciplines.

"Sound does not propose but generates the heard whose fictionality is thus not parallel but equivalent; it produces a possible actual fiction rather than a possible parallel fiction and sounds as "world-creating predicate". Sonic fictions do not propose a bridge between the actual and the possible but make the possibility of actuality apparent, building reality in the continent and rickety shape of its own formless form"²⁹

The following vignettes speculate bionic relations between the creatures and materials of the earth and the amplified and technological surfaces of the future. It is an escape from traditional genre designations which are often insufficient in articulating sonic experience and rather permits sound to engineer its own myth sciences. The incentive is to spawn a post-human landscape where imagination is boundless in finding new connections between language, experience and materiality. The desire is to transcend the limits of perceived human dimensions through technological co-relations and co-evolutions. I augment the narrative sources of the human in order to fuse corporeality with imagination and technological objects, as transmedial portals where bodies are intermixed with machines and sentient creatures. What these writings suggest is a plugging in and out of imagined entry and exit points within the ecology. Concepts confront controlled voltages, animals and sentient creatures produce cultural artefacts. This is not to allow sound and music to enhance literary and theoretical vision but rather it is an archeology of the richness to be found in sound itself as a constant form of fictional germination. I have attempted to allow my imagination to be as mobile and transformative as sound itself which leans towards a sonology of history rather than a historical contextualisation of sound through a musicological inspection.

Fictions

A long narrow corridor stretches across an entire city's underground network. The corridor is populated on either side with doors of varying sizes that are all open at dissimilar angles. Within each room a scene unfolds in which spores and wires are convolving and emitting various globule shapes, sparks and slopes that are topologically stretching familiar forms beyond recognition. From room to room each scene carries with it a segment of the room before, a copy and pasting from one site to another, duplicating differences at accelerated rates of change. The faster the body moves along the corridor with its hatched rhythms of movement, stumbling and slipping begins to create a forgetfulness, intermittently pausing and looking backwards along the corridor. There is very little silence, certainly no space to think but space to feel as the corridor begins to grow narrower. At the end of the corridor resides a large copper box with an oxidised patina and ebony wooden legs. Inside the box are 100 odd prosthetic ears, some fleshy, some metallic and others silicone. The ears are of different sizes and shapes, from different points of history and coloured with different cultural tarnishes. Beside the box is an engraved invitation that reads "You may attach the ears to your head and listen through another being". Attaching the ears to my head I begin to listen through the audible domestication of another being's life, their frequency etchings and acoustic histories are mashed together, hybridised with my own acoustic history. I begin to understand that connecting the odd ears to my already existing ears creates a strange dialogue between the left and right, fictions begin to unfold between multiple evocations, a tapestry of audible histories begins to weave throughout me. I am enthralled in listening to the dialogue between the odd ears, where themes are hazy, diluted and suggestive. Suddenly a peculiar communication emerges, a gargling neologism, a language unknown to myself but the more that I listen to it the more I can begin to decipher it until eventually it begins to make sense. The sounds that were for a moment otherworldly begin to become masked by voices that are not present, akin to muted stories, tales and narratives that are not yet audible but waiting dormant, lingering to become experienced, a silencing of mutant noises with the tongue. Each sound evokes an alliance of images not yet encountered, a promise of something to come, as the sounds create the presence of a landscape that is devoid of the human, a world without us. The landscape is populated by low moving clouds and vast swathes of crystalline dust that settles slowly over the surface of

²⁹ Samolé Voegelin (Page 51.2014) The political possibility of sound; Fragments of listening

each object. The crystalline dust connects everything together beneath a veil of faint visibility, as the objects share a new threshold of the ecology, as the sky seeps into the earth. As I observe the dust I become aware that the dust is a form of language that is passed from one region to another. The crystalline dust begins to change colours as it rests on varying provinces of the objects. The objects are transforming the dust, infecting its pigmentation and creating unseen colours as the diaphanous is contaminated. Language cannot begin to seize the differences that are melding together in front of me. I search my vocabulary for preordained words to articulate the intensities but language fails me. I begin to feel a pressure on the surface of my eyes, it is as though I am a witness to a damaging spark on my retina, slowly the colours begin to lose their vibrant illuminance and gradually dim into a violet presence. All around me the colours become one and I see the emerging skeletal remains of the cities infrastructure eroding into sound, as subsistent objects dissolve into an ether of frequency.

Hung on hinges and moved with a push, a door pivots between the threshold of two spaces, a crease in spatial differentials, that provides privacy and solitude or becomes a site in which to escape. Hollowed out are a large pile of heads fabricated in wax at the peripheries of the room. The temperature of the room gradually increases and the heads begin to change form and meld together creating mutant textures. The diversity of forms between facial features become liquidic and insinuating. The body begins to stretch itself and lay across the hot melting heads, wriggling and writhing, becoming contaminated with the oozing material, sap like and warm. A small window is high up in the room, above head height. The body comes to its feet and attempts to step up onto the heap of wax heads in order to peer out of the window at a black windmill that turns slowly. A faint breeze is suggesting the windmill to move but it is resistant. I do not feel the breeze but rather see it from the window and remember how it felt. Each time that I attempt to take a step, the wax gives way beneath my feet. I frantically begin to scramble towards the window, a slipping down and a climbing up is repeated until the floor and body are covered in de-forming wax features, segments of noses, ears and lips are scattered across the floor and cling to the body, creating a population of things not quite human, resembling strangers that are preternatural. Purple traces of romantic heartaches are plotted like varicose veins amongst the molten wax. I begin to trace them with the eyes as they connect unhurriedly and disconnect to form new patterns. The bubbling wax becomes a pocked face that bares traces of encounter, craters that were once sealed are now opened to the air, the floor is breathing in the heat. The window begins to shrink in size, like a portal which reduces the light emitted from outside. The room slowly dims and turns black, the only sensibility that remains is my hearing. In the black room the sound of the liquid wax is soothing, hissing and spitting small hot particles as its gargles a post human genesis. I sit amongst the spitting wax, close my eyes and listen intensely at what is happening around me. It is a granulated atmosphere that continually suggests the silhouette of a childhood memory, as I slid down the sand dunes at the beach, wearing orange shorts. The window size begins to expand, gradually emitting light back into the room. Even though my eyes are tightly closed I can feel the shadows of the windmills sails turning on the wall, increasing in speed, like a strobe pulsating in synchronisation with the waxes breathing. At once I feel a freezing cold chill beneath the floor and the presence of fresh air. As the wax begins to stop sounding I am left with nothing other than the silence of my own body and all that I hear is my bodies internal mechanisms pumping blood. I open my eyes and see that the spitting wax has subtracted the walls of the room and I now I am in the open air, the particles of wax dissolved the exteriority of the space and imbedded me into the landscape. The landscape resembles the ceiling of a cave, inverted with stalagmites which have now become the ground, uneven and shard like. It is a landscape of fracture.

A ripple reproduces itself at varying proximities, gradually effecting something far at a distance. Standing at the edge of the lake one begins to see a multiplication of ruptures on the surface, things poking through into the phenomenal realm, as though the real is speaking from the withdrawn and concealed abyss. Twigs and driftwood harbour a thousand insects that embark on a voyage across the lake, aimlessly being pushed by forces unknown to themselves and yet indulging in the currents. A lashing of rain excites the surface of the lake and produces a membrane in which all things below are encapsulated, like clingfilm being stretched over the cavity of the ground and punctured by pins, the rain provides air pockets for the fish below to enjoy as a convention. The multiplicity of ripples creates eyes that gaze up at the sky, as if the water is startled into perceiving what is above. The African lung fish can breathe outside of the water, filling itself with air, it can live between the symbolic and the real, it occupies the liminality between the reptilian and aquatic, the flesh and the scaled. A cracking of thunder rips the sky open, it highlights the grey and cleaves open the equilibrium of the ecology, making one wonder at the giant electroacoustic snapping in the sky. A sound so powerful that it silences all that is around and leaves the ground voiceless. Energetic possibilities are profound and performed, there is earth and sky but certainly no divinities or mortals, just idolatry folding in on itself creating totems and shrines. The aquatic carries signals 600 times faster than air. The lake is polluted with the noise of engines, sea life is becoming increasingly more disorientated and confused, as their syntax is interrupted with mechanical noises that

rumble continuously and agitate the bandwidth plateaus of communication. The amphibious puzzle boy exists primarily beneath the surface, like an iceberg that has 80% of its mass submerged, bobbing on the surface and glimpsing both sides of reality. He dives down into the lake and reemerges breathless and gasping, as though his corporeality had been squeezed. He realises that there are two realms of audition, one below and one above, both at times acoustic and both at times vibratory. He is effected by the waves even if he no longer perceives them. The pressure escapes perception and resides in the purely affective state of intensity beyond his recognition. If he chooses to stay entirely in either realm he will forget the difference between the mediums, similar to the fish that does not know that it is in water until it has left the water. The amphibious puzzle boy chooses to reside in the liminality between both realms. Just like the African lung fish, he chooses to have the possibility of comparison and the difference between mediums.

An anthropology of the hand that continuously references itself and transcribes its own transcription is ordered with plagiarism as it responds to objects built especially for its capacity. It points, demands, threatens and counts and can lose a digit to a daily hazard. This effects the way that it holds, clasps and cups, for it is no longer a hand but rather a tool that reduces reality to what can be grasped, held and touched. Towards the surface of things and beneath the purpose of things, grazed by rough moments is the dry and withered hand. Trepidation owns that which wants to become other to itself. Transformation is limited by measurement but only if you are counting and marking time, we do not necessarily need to find a pulse. An anthill is below ground, a maze of pathways, a labyrinth of motorways that produce a nexus of lost time. Scuttling from one region to the other, a chain of bodies is linked by resources, urgent and needing, carrying things that never needed to be moved, a rearrangement of space, towards a bunker that is withdrawn and waiting to be abandoned. Occupying that which cannot be seen by the eye is a grid like matrix of dwelling and material flow. The ant is entrained in step sequencing, passing from one tier to the next where it is side-chained to the other. The ant never rests, an insect of pure potential, a gathering machine, exhausting itself in consistency, all that they can do they do tenfold. For the ant is present, but its dwelling is concealed, its process of collection is revealed to the viewer but the assemblage it constructs is withdrawn underground. The ear is witnessed as a visual object but what it hears is privatised by an internalised landscape that marks out the very fabrication of the self. For the nexus exists in the head, a chasm, a maze of absences, things that happened that no longer happen, an availability to a standing reserve. A collection of traits, habits and dispositions are compounded over time creating a density that becomes impregnable, forming a fortification within the imaginary. Imagination ingresses in on perception, a projection device that is selective and authoritative. Intention has a weighted content and its act and object of intention are fused into a persistent sentiment of fictional distances, that which is beyond the body, yet the body only exists in relation to what is beyond itself. Like conciseness itself, it can only be conscious of something. It is activated by the ecology and that which unnerves it into existence. If all sound ceased to exist, an evolution of a non-ear would begin and a unfamiliar sense would emerge, one between all senses, a synaesthetic nucleus that finds a novel threshold of sensation, one that has not yet been harboured or its depths plumbed by recognition.

An amorphous globule that we call home. Thinking is diagrammatic and compresses parts into a perceived object that reassures us that it is continually waiting to be revisited as a state. Its rate of change is slower than ours. Listening is certainly a cochlear cartography which connects the field of objects within a shifting field of networks, it is this connection that creates evolving forms. Matter is pregnant and capable of generating form on its own, language does not cut reality but rather is cut from reality. We listen to novel languages as things mingle amongst themselves and buffer one another's qualities into sonic evocations. A constant swarm of tiny heterogeneities, the air is animated with countless forms, a multitude of frequencies each with their own micro-politics. Sound employs bandwidth plateaus in which to express itself amongst the countless expressions. Working with successive forms, temporal and spatial is an architectural endeavour in finding ways that sounds could possibly communicate, which space they want to occupy and cross and which order they want to follow and disrupt. Existence is a fleshy stethoscope were one can simply put one's ear to the ground and hear what is forming and deforming, this inhabits an aesthetic that is determined by indeterminacy whose future is not predicted from the past. This is far from an essentialist postulate which implies a conception of matter as an inert receptacle for forms that come from the outside. It is rather that form surges up from within objects and between objects, objects are difference engines that reproduce the priority of combustion and explosion.

Cables and lights flicker like an active cityscape without visible bodies but currents are shifting across the surface in an algorithmic fashion. The hand gets caught in between sliders and rotaries, an entanglement that offers a sense of accomplishment. Snakes appear headless, poked into numerous metal holes, burying their heads for controlled voltages and gates that open and close. I am a spectator to things happening, a witness caught up in a sonic situation.

It offers no rest for the ears, for it will speak even if it is not spoken to, it is a hydra head and if anything a metallic medusa that turns the body into a pure receptor. One cannot move because one is too immersed in listening, agency is spread like a distributed smear from one point to another. There is no clear causality but rather a continuous non linear chain of reactions. I have found myself entwined amongst it all too many times, swinging between parts and attempting to find a footing. Tangled for sure and consistently uncertain, a transist machine, the excursions have taken me to many places, some I cannot real and other I can never repeat in my imagination, for it was always otherworldly and obtuse. A composite of many moments fold into an instant that somehow makes me feel as though I own it, but with hindsight I have never owned a sound nor its relations to other sounds. All of these ideas were spawned from the relation between things exterior to myself, but at the same time, there is no distance. Ideas penetrate and peer through me and find a response, a resting place for a moment to be regurgitated as my own expressive capacity. The rights of a copy and the copy of rights, a simulacra is where I rest my head, fused with a head that somehow appears to be mine but it is not. A mirror stage that is misty and condensed with moisture, I have come to realise that my sense of belonging has wained and the mirror no longer affords me any sense of identification.

A monolithic tree spans and spreads across an infinity expanding acre of land. Its roots engender cities that plummet down into a nanoscopic mountain range. The trees trunk is embellished in fractals, infinite systems of repeating patterns that converge at points and produce the illusion of a turning in on oneself. The body stands motionless as the branches of the tree unfold and disperse, just like time itself, not inside of time but rather the force of time. The trees branches act as arms, long tentacles that reach out into a persistent present that changes only subtly, a reorientation of geography as the floor shifts. The uneven texture and patina of the trunk contains channels of movement, grains that expand and contract audibility as they exhale and inhale milieus. Viscerally tracing ones hand over the surface of the trunk creates a language of braille, a hieroglyphic ecology pressed into material form. Its rings are exposed as historical loops that aim to age you, as you bear witness to its breadth and range, the self realise its own mortality. An etcher sketcher of time that operates over vast expanses and fades into the landscape of pitted mounds, embankments manufactured of moss that contains the liquids of the sky. Strings woven between branches create an expansive harp, each movement of the branches tunes the harp and reorganises its temperament. An instrument that is diffused and embedded into the entire landscape connecting each offshoot as an ensemble. The trees location is continuous and its event is primarily that of memory. It remembers itself moving, as everything else around remained static. A forest of ears is a dense forest, a space that listens to the one that listens, a space populated with audible genealogies, each plane of the canopy is tuned to certain frequency registers. The sound of a dense forest, its foliage tightly knotted, the node of each branch opens a plethora of ears, hung like leaves, pendulous at various heights and swaying in the breeze. The veins on the leaves connect the ears in a constellation of latency as each ear responds in different time spans to the sounding stimuli. The tree performs cycles, periods of operations as the ears become attuned to and filter the ecology. The ecology is one of redundancy, where messages are interfered with yet remain understandable in spite of the floors noise which rises and subsides beneath the canopy of ears.

Glimmering birds perch on top of a rock, singing and signalling movement, wingspan tucked away, they call out for motion, echoing their mates that wait at a distance. Their refrain marks a territory, one that is formed by a nomadic flock, a territory that is transient, it comes and goes and it follows the seasons. The purpose of their singing is vanity, to appear fit and healthy, for a bird that no longer sings is one that needs no attention, one that omits its sonic attractor, a silent observer. The bird defends the sky from other birds, hollowing out a nest from ad hoc pieces, bound together with a tight weave. Listening identifies a species, but does the sound belong to the bird? Courtship duets, as the space is filled with communication, caught up in the joy of song, but what are the dangers of singing? The energy it takes to produce loud clear tones can also attract predators, for it is easy to be criticised when one is recognised. The lyrebird is the sampler and can mimic both natural and artificial sounds, shy and difficult to approach, singing half the hours of the day, its syrinx is the most complex muscle of song birds, unmatched in vocal repertoire, a rendering of perfect fidelity. The lyrebird can carry multiple tunes at the same time, modifying and creating variations, mashups and remixes. They begin to copy from one another, ecological impressions and being to being relays that create faint coded voices of cultural artefacts that ultimately sing the future. The lyrebird clears a space for its stage within the landscape, a temporary amphitheatre in which to perform and seduce. I imagine seeing all the birds in the sky at once, witnessing them escape the terrestrial and climb higher into the sky where they eventually leave the earths atmosphere and find a new ground beyond this world. I imagine what it sounds like to be in the sky, as if my ears are attached to air filled balloons and suspended high above my head. Dislocated ears are mounted on the back of a bird as it glides and dives. Its long stiff flight feathers are arranged in accordance to its compact contour feathers making its aerodynamic cutting of the sky appear effortless and seamless. The bird cuts the fabric of the sky with its bristles and allows a little chaos to

pour in from the outside, one wonders whilst looking upwards what exists beyond the sky and what can be heard from beyond the earth's atmosphere as if a being is listening down. Sitting still for an extended duration in the South African wilderness I listened to the birds their ever-changing songs as they morphed into zaps from ray-guns, energy weapons that fly past the head at every angle imaginable, invisible lasers that are constantly beaming sonic lines, as volume wars are played out, acoustic missiles and frequency bombs.

The crab without a shell is the hermit crab. It moves between dwellings, sonorous envelopes, from caves to encrustations, from interiority to exteriority it scuttles without a home to reside in. For a moment it feels comfort and in another moment it seeks refuge inside the ocean's shell. The entire sound of the ocean occupies the shell, for it can hear everything inside a single space, the roaring minuscule and the maximal intricacies. The hermit crab inhabits the land and shifts to the ocean in order to reproduce. It needs the medium of waves to produce its offspring, the waves carry the eggs along in the currents. It communicates with sound and movement and emits croaking and clicking sounds akin to morse code. Its flicking antennas generate currents, a variable symphony of sound echoes beneath the sea, acoustic signals and pulses of noise are received and transmitted, a conductor of electromagnetic waves. Its pincers convene particulars regarding its surroundings and obstructions that cross its path. Forming a line one after the other, a group of hermit crabs seek a new abode, a new shell, each taking turns to try on the shell for size, fashioning its sonority for suitability. Does the crab hear the entire ocean or only each wave in its singularity?. The scavenger that resides on land and possesses the possibility of transition towards the ocean's bed. The empty space of the mollusc provides protection for the crab's fragile exoskeleton as it adorned itself with a found architecture. Occupying the interiors of others, a protective mobility, a continuous metamorphosis from extreme situations where the whole body can retract inwards, inside a space that is not one's own. For it is always a foreigner in the space it occupies, a body inside the skin of another. Its home is abandoned and exchanged at short notice, for something more attractive and resilient. Headphones are artificial sonorities that allow one to switch between audible backdrops, a space snatching from the virtual that diverges from the actual soundscape. A patch of sonorities can be randomly switched between, to shuffle is to scuttle just like the hermit crab into caves of intimacy, a recoiling into spiralling sound. Repetition has engraved the atmospheres into a network of entry points without an exit, connotations are pressed into one another which creates a dialogue that spans histories and times. The hermit crab maps changes between geographical plots, land marks are plotted across the shoreline. The waves forever intrude and create pressure points on the shell that gradually refine its shape and smooth over the rough edges. The raging intensities of the ocean hollow out the shell through constant dynamic swells. The hermit crab is caught up in the amplitudes of a bipolar wave.

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Recommended Listening

- Helena Gough “Spores”
- R benny “Cascade Symmetry”
- Lightbath “Murici”
- Herbert Eimert “Klangstudie II”
- Peter Cusack “Sounds from Dangerous places”
- Rodrigo Sigal “Sinapsis”
- Luca Nasciuti “Through the core of your chest”
- Elsa Justel “Yegl”
- Claudia Molitor “Decay Mix”
- Jean Claude Risset “Mutations”
- Katherine Norman London “Three sound pieces”
- Diana Salazar “La Voz Del Fuelle”
- Beatriz Ferreyra “L’Orvietan”
- Miriam Young “Inner”
- Maja Zeco “Grains of sound”
- James Wyness “Dead sound”
- Laurie Spiegel “The expanding Universe”
- Jo Thomas “Dark sound”
- Louise Rossiter “Black velvet”
- Annie Mahtani “Aeolian”
- Elaine Lillios “Arturo”
- Pete Bachelor “Fissure”
- Barry Traux “Riverrun”
- Ross Whyte “Orphans”
- Nick Virgo “Red lorry”

- Manuella Blackburn “Switched on”
- Pauline Oliveros “Mneomics III”
- Hildegard westerkamp “Kits beach Soundwalk”
- Adam Stanovic “Foundry Flux”
- Ake Parmerud “Alias”
- Erik Nyström “Cataract”
-